

# THE JEWISH STATE AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE: ISRAELI INTELLECTUAL THOUGHT FROM THE SIX-DAY WAR TO THE 1980S \*

Yosef Gorny

*In what ways does the existence of the State of Israel shape the national consciousness and identity of different Jewish circles in Israel? This research explores that question through the perspective of three central concepts around which the conceptions of the different circles move. The first concept is defined as "general normalization," i.e., the view that perceives Jewish existence, whether in its religious expression in the diaspora or in its national-territorial expression in the State of Israel, as a moral phenomenon that does not differ from other nations or religions. The second is "unique normalization," an attitude prevalent among the majority of Jewish intellectuals in the U.S. who, on one hand, consider Jewish existence as similar to that of other ethnic groups in their country in its characteristics and status; on the other hand, they emphasize its unique relationship with the State of Israel. The third concept carries the paradoxical name "Jewish normalization," meaning the streams in public thought that view the Jews as one nation in spite of their territorial dispersion and cultural fragmentation; i.e., the normal element emphasizes Jewish nationality while the unique Jewish element as compared to other nations consists of the disruption of the conscious relation between nationality and national territory that characterizes the other two attitudes. This article examines the first and third of those concepts from the Six-Day War in 1967 to the present.*

For one thousand and eight hundred years we were a people without a state. Now we are in danger of being a state without a people.

— A.Y. Heschel at the Zionist Congress, 1972

After 1967, the non-radical Zionist outlook, that way of thinking which did not dream of creating a social and cultural utopia, not dazzled by the splendor of political power and immune to messianic fervor, continued to follow its consistent policy of adapting itself to changing circumstances. In this process, which had led from Hibbat Zion to political Zionism, and thence to synthetic and constructive Zionism and onward to militant Zionism, the Six-Day War was yet another

\* This article is based on sections of a book entitled *The Quest for Collective Identity: Jewish Public Thought in Israel and the U.S.A., 1945-1985* (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1990) (Hebrew).

milestone, ushering in a new era, one of the most paradoxical in its history. On the one hand, this was the first time that the Jewish masses in the West had displayed spontaneous, direct national emotion, undisguised by humanitarian, philanthropic, altruistic, or religious considerations.

On the other hand, it very soon became clear that this national identification reflected a sense of common destiny but not the desire for a common way of life. Moreover, it was precisely the radicals within American Jewry, the element who stressed the ethnic-national interest of the Jews in both the local and international spheres, who considered themselves to be totally rooted in the culture and society of their country of birth. Underlying this paradoxical phenomenon of simultaneous identification and repulsion was the possibility of a dialectical development which could prove dangerous to Zionism. In other words, when the Jewish people acknowledge the first principle of Zionism, unity on a national basis, but reject the second principle, territorial concentration in the national homeland, what remains of Zionism? Up to the Six-Day War it was argued that Zionists had no reason to fear the specter of dual loyalty and that their political support for Israel was unconditional and guaranteed. After the Six-Day War it became clear that this fact was valid for all Jews. And thus Zionism forfeited its monopoly in this sphere as well.

In the absence of such momentous historical events as the Holocaust, the establishment of Israel and the Six-Day War, the limits of the new era are set by public developments which may prove in the future to have been of historic significance. These would include the Israeli political upheaval of 1977, which encouraged the neo-conservative mood within the American Jewish community; the 1982 Lebanon War, which aroused renewed criticism of Israel's Middle Eastern policies by radical liberal Jewish circles; the controversy on the right of Jewish emigres from the Soviet Union to choose their destinations; the storm which erupted in 1985 around President Reagan's visit to Bitburg, and the protracted campaign of protest against the election of Kurt Waldheim as Austrian Chancellor; the Pollard affair; and finally, the storm of protest against the proposal to change the definition of who is a Jew in the Israeli Law of Return.

The motives behind the public debate on all these issues are not related solely to the events as such, but should be assessed against the background of constantly evolving ideological and emotional factors originating in previous eras. On the national plane, the debate can be defined as a struggle between trends promoting national unity and those seeking deliberately or inadvertently to undermine it. These conflicting trends are inherent in the issues under discussion such as the autonomous status of diaspora Jews in relation to Israel, the right to criticize Israel's official policies, the question of who is a Jew, etc. All in all, the

present era is marked by uncertainty and even confusion. In this respect, it is reminiscent of the 1940s and early 1950s.

### **A. General Normalization — Post-Canaanite Liberalism**

The term “post-Canaanite liberalism,” used to define the various standpoints in the 1980s which advocate general normalization of Jewish existence, contains within it both continuity and change. On the one hand, the Canaanite ideology of the 1940s and 1950s, as a romantic-cultural myth and a political utopia linked to the Semitic world, has run its course. On the other, the liberal element, which perceives citizenship and nationality in American terms, and was a prominent component of Canaanite philosophy after statehood, has endured. We are now witnessing a new phenomenon in Jewish public thought, an attempt to define nationhood not on the basis of the combination of people and religion, as the Zionists believed, and not in terms of the Semitic cultural heritage, as the early Canaanites believed, but on a territorial-political basis, as in the Western countries. In this respect, this approach is influenced directly and obliquely by the views of Hillel Kook, as expressed forty years previously. Hence, it should be stressed, there is a fundamental difference between post-Canaanite liberalism and traditional Zionist liberalism. Proponents of the liberal outlook within the Zionist movement, and even those who supported the socialist ideology, were not ready to forgo the identity between the state and Jewish nationality. Even Marxists like Hashomer Hatzair, who favored a binational state, did not substitute territorial-political nationalism for historical nationalism, as ostensibly called for by the proposed political settlement. The transition from liberal Canaanism to Canaanite liberalism is particularly striking in the case of Boaz Evron. After the Six-Day War, Evron abandoned the Canaanite philosophy propounded by Yonatan Ratosh.<sup>1</sup> The shock of the 1967 events brought it home to him that the rules of normalization did not yet totally apply to Jewish existence. He realized that the Jewish plight to which Zionism had drawn attention still existed. And, he said, he now understood that the formal definition of nationality on the basis of territory and language was not appropriate to the Jewish people in light of the spontaneous emotional reaction of the Jewish masses throughout the world when the State of Israel was in danger. Consequently, he concluded that there was no point to “denying the fact of the existence of the Jewish people”; but, he added, paradoxically, once this people had established their state, “at that same moment the principle of political territorial-linguistic organization began to operate.” In other words, Evron’s reconciliation with Zionism to the point where he is ready to identify with it as long as the state is in danger is

merely temporary. He was convinced that "in our case as well, the political principle will eventually and inevitably triumph over the ethnic-religious principle, since the triumph of this principle is essential for the existence of the state."

Twenty years later, in view of the political changes that took place in Israeli society, Evron came to the conclusion that one cannot sit back and wait for the leisurely completion of the normalization process — one should hasten the sequence of events. In his book *The National Reckoning*, following a historio-philosophical analysis of Jewish existence over the generations, he concludes that "the state must function as a state in order to exist. Acceptance of the responsibility of national existence means perforce the acceptance of a system of rules on international behavior and functioning at their level. That is the meaning of the original Zionist goal that has been forgotten — the normalization of the Jewish nation. This normalization consists of the negation of values, patterns and outlooks of the religious Jewish *edah* and the creation of a new Israeli nation." This implies changing the "national Israeli definition," from the value of ethnic-religious origin to the territorial principle. As a result of this change the state will cease to be Jewish and the Law of Return will be abolished. In its place will come a common liberal law that provides asylum to persecuted refugees, Jews and Palestinians alike. In his opinion, regarding the existing connection between Judaism and Zionism in the national sense, it is not only that he is untraditional concerning the Law of Return, but also could be calamitous for Judaism. For Evron, messianic Zionism, which had come to the fore in Israel since the Six-Day War, was undermining Israel's moral foundations. It was a kind of neo-Sabbetaianism whose consequences, once expectations were belied, could be no less ruinous than those of the original Sabbetaian movement. In order to preserve the spirit of Judaism, it was necessary to create separation between the state and the Jews outside its borders, or, as he phrased it, "to refute the myth of 'one people' in order to ensure Jewish continuity and sanity."<sup>3</sup>

Evron's territorial normalization is based to some extent on Canaanism, but with some modifications. He now acknowledges Judaism not only as a religious denomination, as Ratosh defined it, but also as an established cultural civilization creating in various languages. "There is no possibility of distinguishing ancient Hebraism from the vast and rich reservoirs of Jewish culture. One cannot leap over two and a half millennia and cast them aside; awareness of Hebrew nationhood will always be associated with Judaism."<sup>4</sup> Evron was relinquishing the Zionist nationalist-unitarian approach in favor of a Jewish cultural unitarian outlook.

In this he was undoubtedly influenced, directly or not, by the secular Jewish outlook of the prewar Bund. He recognized the justice of the

claim that a Jewish national entity had developed in Eastern Europe. At the same time, and for this very reason, the Jews of the world should not be considered as constituting one people since the development of the Jewish communal collective depended on the milieu. According to this Bundist-Hebrew viewpoint, just as a Yiddish national entity had evolved in Eastern Europe, a Hebrew nation had come into being in Israel. The connection between them and the other Jewish communities which are unable and even unwilling to be included within a single national definition is culturally-based. In other words, even in Evron's radical normalistic approach, the anomalous element of Jewish life is now lacking. The cultural connection between people of different nationalities and Jewish origins, according to Evron, is not only religious, as is the case with Catholics or Moslems. He regards culture primarily as a secular phenomenon. How else can one understand the connection he postulates between Eastern European secular Yiddish culture and the Hebrew culture which emerged in Eretz Israel, and exists in the State of Israel.

In conclusion, there are two levels to the territorial-Hebrew essence, as Evron sees it. One is political and stripped of any Jewish or Zionist significance, not only because of Evron's views on Judaism and his objections to Zionism, but also for universal-existential reasons: "The *raison d'être* of the state is its existence, just as in the case of a private individual."<sup>5</sup> The second level is spiritual, based on the belief that the Hebrew culture of most Israelis is linked to the historical dimensions of Jewish culture, and hence to those people of Jewish origin who are citizens of other countries whose links are the same.

Professor Yosef Agasi's national liberal views are close to Evron's Hebrew nationalist outlook. In his book *Bein Dat U-leum — Likraat Zehut Leumit Yisraelit* (Between Religion and Nationality — In Search of Israeli National Identity) he makes a theoretical contribution to clarifying the differences between the Jewish-Israeli and diaspora-Jewish entities, and is clearer and more explicit than Evron.<sup>6</sup> Whereas Evron perceives the liberal state in American terms, as an institution consolidating a nation, Agasi, under the influence of his mentor Karl Popper and his friend Hillel Kook, recognizes the liberal nation as an entity in itself, and as an ideological concept and social institution which consolidates individuals into a group with collective identity.<sup>7</sup> The nation, as he sees it, is a social territorial phenomenon, and the liberal nation is pluralistic as well. The Jews of Israel belong to the pluralistic Israeli nation, while the Jews of the world are affiliated to the nations in whose territories they live, on condition that these are liberally spirited, i.e., do not consider the Jews to be an alien element.

So far there are almost no differences between the two and, naturally enough, Agasi, like Evron, rejected the Law of Return as it is for

disrupting the normal order of liberal nations by fostering extraterritorial national links between the Jews of Israel and those of other nations.<sup>8</sup> He concedes that "the Law of Return was just, necessary and even visionary at the time the state was established," but "today it is being forced on the Jews of the world, at least the Jews of the free countries," and he advised them to dissociate themselves from it. At the same time it should be preserved for Jews in distress, who qualify as refugees.

Thus far, Agasi, in his own special way, has remained within the framework of general normalization. But he goes on to advance theories closer to "distinctive normalization." Unlike the veterans of the Hebrew-Canaanite tradition, Agasi is not a dogmatic territorialist. He, too, holds that nations are territorial entities, and that Jews living in countries with liberal regimes, the majority of the contemporary Jewish people, are part of those nations. But he goes on to establish that "it is easy to agree that the Jews are a distinctive people, since each people has its unique qualities." At least where the Jews are concerned, Agasi distinguishes between the nation as a territorial phenomenon and the people as a super-territorial entity. Thus, he does not agree with Evron that Judaism is a religious denomination. "Throughout the generations," he writes, "the Jewish people has been an abnormal people, not only because of the lack of territory of its own, but also because they are a nationality-religion." Since the establishment of Israel, the total normalization of the Jewish people has been made possible by separation of nationality from religion. Separation of the Israeli nation from the Jewish religion will make the relations between Jews and non-Jews in the state and between Israeli Jews and Jews of other nationalities more human. In the former case, there will be civil equality among them, and in the latter, the state will cease making demands of diaspora Jews, such as immigration, which they cannot satisfy. The establishment of internal normalization in the State of Israel will facilitate "creative cooperation between Israel and the Jews of other nations — on matters of religion and Jewish culture."

Moreover, in the spirit of *Ahad Ha-am* and under the influence of Martin Buber, Agasi proposes a general debate on the possibility of setting up a world Jewish religious center in Israel, or even various centers of this type, as well as the similar possibility of establishing secular Jewish cultural and spiritual centers. He foresees the setting up of a Jewish-spiritual center in Eretz Israel, on condition that it is separated from the Israeli official establishment.

In short, the "general normalization" of Jewish existence, for Agasi, is partial and not all-embracing. "The Jewish nation is the political heir of the Jewish people, but the Jewish people has not disappeared as a religion and an historical entity."<sup>9</sup> Under the impact of the American ethnic culture, he determines that even in the United States there is a distinctive quality to Jewish life in comparison to that of

other groups, such as the Italians or the Irish. These latter ethnic groups separate religion and ethnic origin, while among the Jews "religion and ethnic culture go hand in hand. Hence, we can refer to the Jewish people as against the Israeli nation." This suggests that the rules of normalization which are valid for Israeli Jews do not apply to the Jews of other nations. The existence of the Jewish people as a cultural religious-secular entity continues to be abnormal.

Moreover, Agasi argues that "the links of the people to the nation and the religious and cultural ties between the dispersed people and the nation residing in its own land could be highly desirable," on condition "that the national identity of a member of the nation is not eroded as it is in Israel today." The very existence of this connection, even when subject to the conditions Agasi specifies, indicates to what extent, in the universal sense, the existence of the Jewish people is anomalous. And since Agasi does not believe in the prospect of the ingathering of the exiles, and, at the same time, accepts the idea of Jewish cultural unity, he thinks that the ambiguous nature of the normal Israeli Jewish existence and abnormal diaspora existence could endure perpetually.

Thus it is evident that the anti-Zionists presume the existence of an Israeli nation, a community of citizens, but do not deny the existence of Judaism as a religion, as a people with a common history or culture maintaining historical continuity and unity between its various strata.

Paradoxically enough, there are points of contact between the post-Canaanite liberals and the radical Zionists. Just as forty years previously there had been a consensus between Hillel Kook and Yonatan Ratosh on the question of territorial normalization, even though their ideological starting points were very far apart, now the principle of normalization served as a common denominator for their heirs. The barrier between the two approaches was the attitude towards the Law of Return with everything it implied for Jewish and Israeli life. Midway between them stood the group which established the Israeli Congress,<sup>10</sup> which removed the desire for normalization from the domain of individual thought and transformed it into a public need. The very name of this body, echoing the "Zionist" Congress, reflected the shift from Zionism to Israelism.<sup>11</sup> Its manifesto refers to "a normal people in a normal state" identified as Israelis and not as Jews, and it warns that "Israel must be normal, democratic, modern, if it seeks life." The words "Zionism" and "Jew" are not mentioned.

In a letter to one of the heads of Gush Emunim, in which he clarified the Congress' views on the Jewish character of the state, Yigal Eilam asked: "What does 'Jewish state' mean? We believe that there can be only one interpretation — Israel will be a Jewish state in the same sense that England is English, and France is French." In other words, its cultural character will be determined naturally by the

culture of the majority of its citizens. According to Eilam, "the Israeli Congress arose in order to combat the atavistic concept of 'a nation dwelling apart'...a concept which undermines the foundations of the State of Israel and endangers its future. Our task is to pose the concept of the democratic state as an element without which it is impossible today to maintain a state, to explain its application to Israeli reality and to create a bridge between it and the Jewish view of nationality and culture, as fashioned by the Zionist revolution."<sup>12</sup>

Eilam does not refer to the Law of Return. In private conversation he reveals that he takes a neutral view of this law because, practically speaking, it is less important than the shaping of the democratic-liberal Israeli entity. At the same time, he is not far from Shulamit Aloni in his views in this issue. She holds that the idea of the ingathering of the exiles, aimed at giving expression to the Law of Return, is a kind of "affirmative action — correcting an historic injustice," the significance of which is to grant members of the Jewish people the right and opportunity of returning to their historic homeland. The Law of Return, she says, applies to Jews as individuals and not as a people. It should not be ignored since it grants "extra-territorial priority to people with affinity to the Jewish people in the laws of entry into the country, but once these people are living in the sovereign state and within its sphere of jurisdiction, one law applies to all."<sup>13</sup> Henceforth, all citizens are Israelis. Consequently, the state is not the national home of the Jewish people but of its own citizens. The Jewish people does not enjoy special status there. Only Jews as individuals are granted the right to return under the provisions of the Law of Return. Hence, this law should not be regarded as the expression of discrimination on a national basis, but as a humanitarian gesture towards individuals belonging to an ethnic group which has experienced extraordinary suffering throughout history.

As noted, on the other side of the dividing line stand the radical or maximalist Zionists. Their Zionism is based on negation of the diaspora, and the more extreme the negation, the profounder their recognition of their own Israelism. In this respect, it reinforces Evron's and Eilam's interpretation of historical Zionism as a movement for the normalization of Jewish national existence, the crux of which is existence itself, which requires no justification save the will of the Jews.

The first and most extreme spokesman of this outlook was Hillel Halkin, who in 1977 published a book that had considerable impact, particularly in the United States, entitled *Mikhtavim Le-yedid Yehudi Be-America* (Letters to an American Jewish Friend).<sup>14</sup> Halkin was born in the United States and was a member of the radical Zionist movement of the 1960s, but, unlike most of his comrades, he immigrated to Israel and has remained there.

Halkin's Zionism may be defined as radical in its efforts on its own

behalf, and minimal in its external significance. It starts out from the assumption that Judaism no longer has a universal message to offer the world, nor are the Jews different from or superior to other peoples, ethically and intellectually. Now that they have forfeited their distinctive qualities, the rules of normalization valid in an open society are applicable to them as well, and will expedite their integration within that society. Judaism as a particularist religious culture, he says, can be comprehended and lived only in a closed system. Territorial and political Zionism is recreating the framework which is gathering in the remnants of Judaism, which was laid open by the stormy development of modern history.

For him, Zionism, meaning life in Israel, is primarily a Jewish existential matter, and he does not deem it necessary to seek any meaning and justification beyond this argument. He believes that, at best, the Jews in Israel will succeed in developing a national-secular culture without outstanding content or achievements as compared to other national cultures, but this Israeli culture will be Jewish, just as Albanian culture is Albanian and Finnish is Finnish. It is no coincidence, of course, that Halkin, in order to emphasize his minimalist approach, chose to mention two peoples on the margins of international events. He was challenging those Zionists, like Buber and Ben-Gurion, who believed in the universal mission and feared the transformation of Eretz Israel into another Albania.

Halkin, as a national existentialist, proclaims that "we are what nature has made us....It is not our business to decide whether we deserve to exist or not. It is our business to exist." Even more explicitly he says: "I do not know why a man must be a Jew. I do not know if the world needs us. I do not know if God needs us. I know only that we need ourselves. To that end, one has no need of reasons and pretexts...."<sup>15</sup>

Halkin's Zionist existentialism is not lacking in historical significance. The reverse is true. He is awed by the four thousand year old historical drama of a people which entered its land, was expelled from it, and returned after a long saga of suffering and achievement. This people, he says, has returned to the same historical places, the same language and the same disputes with neighbors as in the distant past. And if, thanks to Zionism, "if we have ourselves, if we are willing to be ourselves, we do not need their reasons either....And yet, just between the two of us, since no one is listening and we are free to say what we want, are we not a most marvelous people?"<sup>16</sup> It appears, therefore, that the normalization which Halkin favors is a kind of return to the province, to the place where we can exist as a people without being subjected to constant existential and value trials. And thus, as against the traditional Zionist aspiration for normalization, with its moral, spiritual and even utopian dimensions, Halkin proposes what may be called an "Albanian normalization."

Amos Oz expressed himself in the same spirit and in similar terms. He, too, like Halkin, is gripped by "the secret of the Zionist enchantment," and he regards Zionism as "a great achievement (in contrast to the sober prognoses of two generations ago)," but also as "a crushing failure (in contrast to the dazzling dreams)." He accepts this dual significance of Zionism, perceiving this to be its charm. And, hence, he suggests that the Jewish people should be content with existing achievements since "we have achieved several gains which have few parallels in history. Not only a patch of territory guarded by aircraft and tanks, but two other aspirations as well have been realized: we have more or less achieved a larger degree of responsibility for our own destiny, and we have attained the beginning of the cure of the disease of the Jews."<sup>17</sup>

Five years later, in Autumn 1982, travelling the length and breadth of Israel and faced with the resentful frustration of the people of the development towns and the messianic fervor of Gush Emunim, he pondered: "Perhaps it was a lunatic proposition: to transform, in two or three generations, a mass of persecuted, intimidated Jews, consumed with love-hate towards their countries of origin, into a nation serving as a shining example to the Arab surroundings, a model for the entire world. Perhaps we aimed too high...perhaps it was a wild pretension beyond our powers or, indeed, any human powers. Perhaps it is necessary now to cut ourselves down to size and to renounce the messianic dreams."<sup>18</sup> He found the answer to these questions in the provincial immigrant town of Ashdod, "a little Mediterranean town...a pleasant unpretentious town with a port and lighthouse and power station and factories and many pleasing boulevards. It does not pretend to be Paris or Zurich and does not aspire to be Jerusalem."<sup>19</sup>

So far it seems that the post-Canaanite liberals, with their various traditions and shades of ideology, no longer advocate the total normalization of Jewish life. They have accepted the fact that it cannot be judged according to general criteria. Boaz Evron, unlike his spiritual progenitors, acknowledged the continuity and unity of Jewish culture; Yosef Agasi seized on the existence of the Jewish people as a super-territorial entity; Yigal Eilam does not object to the Law of Return; James Diamond does not deny the Jewish character of the state; Hillel Halkin offers a Zionist interpretation of the course of Jewish history; and Amos Oz argues that Jewish society in Israel has not yet achieved normality and requires a protracted process of therapy. But it is the writer A.B. Yehoshua who has devoted the most thought to the perfection of this concept, in the Jewish context. In the past ten years, Yehoshua has been the tireless champion of the "right to normalization," arising out of his radical Zionist outlook.<sup>20</sup>

He understands the term "normalization," first and foremost in its profoundest Jewish sense, as self-responsibility. He writes: "Normality

does not mean emphasis on worthy content or values, but the indication of the existence of a framework in which a man is considered responsible for his actions." As a result, from the historical viewpoint, "the abnormality of Jewish existence in the diaspora...lay in the renunciation of responsibility for the central and important spheres of life. It stemmed from the very fact of Jewish dispersal and their submission to...other peoples....This renunciation is a negative moral decision."<sup>21</sup> In other words, the value is not normality but self-responsibility. Thus, once the Jews were afforded the opportunity to undertake responsibility for themselves in their own country, Jewish life in the diaspora became immoral. The tragic expression of this immoral decision is the role of the Jews themselves in the Holocaust which befell them. Therefore, says Yehoshua, "when I request that, on Holocaust Memorial Day, instead of bewailing the evil deeds of the goyim, we state simply that this is the end which awaits a people who cling leechlike to other peoples, I am seeking to draw attention to our own responsibility, in addition to the responsibility of antisemites, for our intolerable historical condition."

The responsibility which Yehoshua seeks to impose on a people which evades responsibility is not confined to the present day, when, after the establishment of Israel, Jews have been given the chance to take responsibility for their lives. He believes that galut as escape from responsibility is a pathological-historical phenomenon unique to the Jewish people. To his mind, "golah was not forced on us, we forced it on ourselves. It should not be considered an accident or a catastrophe, but a profound internal national distortion."<sup>22</sup>

This suggests that the source of the distortion is the strong national aspiration to be a unique people. The refuge of those evading normality is galut, since there alone is it possible to remain a chosen people. However, he sees this psycho-national condition as more complex than the choice of exile itself. The Jewish people is in a constant state of tension between practical advocacy of the diaspora and its theoretical negation as a permanent state. "A paradoxical, almost pathological situation is created. The Jewish people are attracted to the go-lah...hate it and do everything possible to endure there, but at the same time they postpone the return to their own land due to their ever-improving quality of endurance. The Jewish people feel guilty for not returning to their country, and consequently praise and laud it more and more, sanctify it, all this in order to justify the fact that they are not worthy to return there. On the other hand, they describe it as a nightmare, a dangerous country 'which consumes its inhabitants,' in order to justify their fears of return."<sup>23</sup>

Yehoshua defines this internal conflict as a neurotic condition, from which there can be no escape as long as galut endures. The cure for the Jewish national neurosis is twofold: a matter of will, namely,

immigration to Israel, and an involuntary, perhaps inevitable matter: the gradual disappearance of the diaspora through assimilation. Faced with these two alternatives, Yehoshua calls for immigration and regards assimilation almost with equanimity. He argues that the continued existence of the diaspora creates difficulties for the state. In the short term, its disappearance would harm the state, but in the long term, it will remove the threat of an alternative Jewish society, which prevents it from being an absolute national entity, as are other peoples.<sup>24</sup> And meanwhile, as long as the diaspora exists, it is necessary to educate the Jews there and particularly the young for immigration, and at the same time, to create a kind of "tactical detachment" between the two entities in order to highlight the fundamental difference between them, "to establish clearer borders between total Jewish existence, namely Israel, and Jewish existence."

The first step in the direction of this tactical separation is the semantic alteration of national identity from Jewish to Israeli,<sup>25</sup> though not in the meaning of the term perceived by the heirs of the Canaanites. He writes: "The recent confusion and obfuscation around the term 'Israeli,' stem from the fact that we confuse the element of citizenship contained in the term with the element of identity." There is nothing unique or abnormal in this, since "very many concepts of national identity contain this duality within them....For example, the term 'Frenchman' is both a concept of identity and of citizenship." Through this semantic modification, for the time being, he hopes to achieve two aims which will help the society achieve normality. Firstly, the distinction between the civil and the national entities guarantees the continued existence of the historic Israeli nation. Unlike Boaz Evron and Yoram Kaniuk, Yehoshua rejects the U.S.-style national-civil idea.

Secondly, in replacing the term "Jew," a late term used to define Judaism as a religion, by the term "Israeli," which is an ancient expression of the comprehensive existence of the people, he is approaching the separation of religion and nationality. Yehoshua, however, is aware that the time for general normalization has not yet arrived. He acknowledges that "any true secular stand, which proclaims the legitimacy of secular Judaism, must recognize that a Jew can also be a Christian-Jew or a Moslem-Jew....But somehow, it seems that within the zealous secular community there will be few who will be ready to acknowledge the right of a Jew to cross this border....I, too, confess, for all my loyalty to the principle of secular Judaism...I cannot as yet accept the right of any Jew to change his religion to Christianity or Islam and remain a Jew."<sup>26</sup> Thus, en route to total national normalization, reflected in separation of state and diaspora, religion and nationality, he creates a kind of twofold compromise. He distinguishes clearly between the terms "Israeli" and "Jew," with emphasis on the fact that the term "Israeli," because it is ancient and because of its totality,

contains the term "Jew" within it. Then, again, he distinguishes between the Israeli state and the Jewish diaspora, without renouncing the Zionist idea, the crux of which is the demand for immigration. Through this advocacy of compromise, Yehoshua becomes the spokesman of incomplete normalization, aimed at changing the course of Jewish history, but also aware, with varying degrees of intensity, that it cannot totally detach itself from that history.

## **B. Jewish Normalization — From Concentration to Centrality**

The paradoxical consequence of the "Zionization" process as expressed above was the spread of a mood of Zionist scepticism among many first-rank Israeli intellectuals. This mood, which generated not defeatism but a search for new meaning for traditional views, was lucidly expressed in an interview given by Gershom Scholem three years after the Six-Day War.<sup>27</sup> Asked whether he considered Zionism to be the solution to the Jewish question, he said: "In my writing you will not find a word suggesting that Zionism is a 'solution' to what is called 'the Jewish question.'" It is not a solution but a form of action. "When you begin to move forward you choose one direction and not others, and pay the price for your decision and action. This is the significance of action in history." He considered Zionism to be "a noble attempt to tackle the Jewish problem. One can do no more than tackle a problem on the historical plane. The Zionists were not afraid to take historical responsibility upon themselves, and therein lies their greatness."

Scholem's claim that there is no solution to the "Jewish problem" even through Zionism does not mean that he denies the existence of a Zionist goal, which is, first and foremost, to stem those trends to normalization which intensified in Israeli society after the Six-Day War. Normalization, by its very nature, contains within it "Canaanite" elements which are anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish in character. In Scholem's view, on the other hand, "the State of Israel is of value only because of Jewish continuity." To sever this historical continuity could diminish the universal significance of the state for Jews everywhere. In contrast to the leaders of the Zionist Organization, he held that it would be a mistake to assign Israel the task of reviving the sense of exile of the diaspora. "This task cannot be carried out by a state which has renounced religious and metaphysical components, since these components alone could endow it with influence..."<sup>28</sup> In other words, Scholem, like Halpern, thought that it was the ethos of galut and redemption which had preserved the Jewish people. But, as a believer in his own way, Scholem considered this ethos to be a manifestation of religious and metaphysical faith, while Halpern saw it as a manifestation of overall cultural isolation.

Thus, Scholem was more pessimistic than Halpern as to the prospects for Jewish survival, since Halpern believed that Jewish existence was being preserved thanks to the objective isolation which was imposed on Jews, while for Scholem, the sole ray of hope was belief in redemption. However, this hope was absent from both the diaspora and Israel. It was the misfortune of the diaspora, he wrote, that those living there "deny its realities" while large parts of the Jewish people, living in the West "find countless excuses for...eradicating the consciousness of exile."

Something even graver had happened to the self-realizing Zionist movement. "The flower of our country's builders, perhaps inadvertently, have emptied the concept of galut of the germ of redemption which was contained within it...." This could be explained and perhaps even justified against the historical background, in light of pressing needs, of the struggle for livelihood, for security and for physical survival, but yet, "together with the bonds of exile, they have also cast off the promise of redemption, and thereby transferred the problem of galut, in different but no less threatening guise, to the fields of the homeland....," creating in Israel itself a fundamental imbalance.<sup>29</sup>

According to this viewpoint, the idea of Israel as the center of Jewish life is of scant importance, and central importance is attributed to the yearning for redemption, since this yearning alone can make diaspora Jews aware of their true condition and restore the State of Israel to its historic-religious heritage. Scholem was by no means convinced that this was, in fact, what would happen. The reform of diaspora Jews, he wrote, depended "neither on us nor on our historical logic but on the air they breathe." Yet his scepticism does not lead him to despair. In referring to Israel, where he discerns an imbalance between revolution and tradition, he writes that the situation there "has not yet been put right." And rectification in Israel, unlike the diaspora, depends not on the milieu but on the Jews themselves. Hence, the very possibility of independent activity within history holds out hope for the creation of a society in which the religious spirit prevails, and where self-awareness will consist of recognition of its ideal anomalous essence.

Ephraim Urbach also favored anomaly, considering it to be the distinctive feature and power of the Jewish people among other nations, of the Zionist movement within the Jewish people, and of the State of Israel among other nations. But, in contrast to Scholem, he did not perceive the state as a metaphysical entity or Zionism as a messianic movement. It was enough for him that the establishment of the state had been the joint effort of various, diverse sectors of the Jewish people.<sup>30</sup> For Urbach, the centrality of Israel was an axiom, but, unlike Ahad Ha-am, he conceived this centrality in the political rather than the spiritual sense. The history of relations between Eretz Israel and

the diaspora demonstrates that it was due to the loss of sovereignty and independence in their own country that Eretz Israel ceased to be the center for Jews. "Without these elements, all attempts are doomed to failure and all historical conceptions regarding the center and the periphery are idle speculations."<sup>31</sup> From the days of the Tannaim, through Samson Raphael Hirsh to the present time, it has been repeatedly stated that spiritual centers can exist outside Eretz Israel as well. Examination of the historical facts shows that "even in periods in which the centrality of Eretz Israel was undisputed, the centrality was expressed through something which could not exist in the diaspora — namely, sovereignty, the independence of the Jewish people in one place alone, Eretz Israel."

The historical lesson, according to Urbach, is that "objective factors will determine whether Israel is to become a center and these are: political independence and sovereign institutions." Links with such a center become a religious obligation rather than a question of choice. For example, in ancient times the shekel was donated to the Temple as a national duty, and not through some appeal for funds. Herzl had conceived the idea of the Zionist shekel but his idea had been cast aside and became a marginal issue, replaced by the fund-raising campaign, which was a very different thing.

Responding to criticism, Urbach clarified that he had no intention of belittling Israel. "Its centrality, I say, does not depend on its quality and image. But they can, of course, add validity and significance to that centrality, which is objective and given. It did not drop manna-like from Heaven nor was it given on a silver platter. It is the fruit of a great and supreme effort which entailed great sacrifice." Unlike Scholem, who considered the essential heroic effort to run contrary to the Zionist concept of redemption, Urbach appreciated its intrinsic value. At the same time, unlike pro-Zionists in the diaspora who were also content to regard Israel as a political center, Urbach did not believe that Israeli centrality could guarantee the lasting existing of the diaspora.

At the opening session of the 28th Zionist Congress in 1978, he declared that "those who present the existence of the diaspora not as the outcome of fleeting circumstances, but as stemming, as it were, from the Jewish national character, and therefore equal in value to the center in Eretz Israel, are denying not only political Zionism but also the conception of galut and nation in the course of Jewish history."<sup>32</sup> For Urbach, Zionism was grounded on immigration, and he saw the collective effort to encourage it and absorb it as the main aim of national activity in the diaspora. Precisely because of his desire to transform Israel into a place to which Jews would not only turn but also immigrate, he was obliged to add to the concept of the political center a dimension without which immigration could not take place — namely, the social

image of the state. But here, again, he was referring to social quality rather than to metaphysical essence.<sup>33</sup>

This attempt to prove that the political dimension of Zionism was sufficient in itself to transform Israel into the center of Jewish national life was taken even further by Yaakov Katz. Where Urbach had expressed reservations and linked the image of the Jewish state, as regards social values, to the essence of Zionist ideology, Katz distinguished between them. From his study of history, Katz concluded that the two utopias which Zionism had envisioned, based on romantic-religious and secular-modern ideals, had not been achieved. Religious Zionism had not succeeded in consolidating a traditional Jewish society in Israel, safe from the threat of cultural assimilation. Secular Zionism has not achieved its goal of building a progressive modern society, free of the anomalies which had characterized the Jewish people, so it claimed, in the course of its long exile.

Katz did not deny the historical value of the Zionist utopia. What attracted the first waves of immigration to Eretz Israel, he said, was not the Jewish plight but the Zionist utopian vision. All in all, "the utopistic expectations linked to the Zionist immigrations and the establishment of Israel were not fulfilled. What developed was a kind of communal Jewish destiny with validity extending above and beyond the decisions of individuals or of groups."<sup>34</sup> His conclusions, based on a study of Jewish history, lead him to formulate two definitions of the essence of Zionism after statehood and the Six-Day War. A Zionist, he declared, was one who accepted the view that the existence and survival of Israel are essential to the survival of the Jewish people. Any attempt to introduce into the Zionist ideal extraneous ideals or ideologies, such as religious beliefs, socialist ideologies or liberal convictions, is problematic. Katz does not deny that these ideas have helped Zionism in the past in the process of implementation and might do so in the future. But he takes issue with the view that they are an integral part of the Zionist idea, which is essentially political in nature. Hence, the great triumph of Zionism was the establishment of the state. Now the state is the sole entity able to preserve the unity of the Jewish people, and this is its historical role and national contribution. One should not seek more than this, and those who do so in the name of some ideology could arrive at denial of Zionism and renunciation of Judaism.<sup>35</sup>

This trend to identify Zionism exclusively with Jewish sovereignty finds its most extreme expression in Yeshayahu Leibovitz, whose views have remained unchanged for decades. "I define Zionism thus: we were weary of the rule of gentiles over the Jewish people...it is possible that gentile rule is very good today...but some Jews are tired of being ruled by goyim, and this is the essence of Zionism."<sup>36</sup>

The views of religious Zionist thinkers on the essential link between Zionism and Jewish and universal values vary widely. Gershom

Scholem was "convinced that behind its secular front, Zionism contains potential religious content, and that this religious potential is stronger than the present actual content, which find expression in the 'religious Zionism' of political parties."<sup>37</sup> Urbach confined his discussion to the importance of the social-value dimension in Zionism. For Katz, the various extraneous ideologies play a merely auxiliary role, while Leibovitz draws a sharp distinction between Zionism and value systems of any kind. According to the extreme viewpoint, the state is not central to Jewish life, either because it has no metaphysical message, according to Scholem, or because this is in no way its task, as Leibovitz believes. Urbach and Katz consider that centrality stems from the political sovereignty acknowledged by the Jews of the world.

This view was not shared by secular thinkers, who were united in the awareness that, in respect to the Zionist outlook, political sovereignty in Israel was not enough.

Yehoshua Arieli, who took part in the above-mentioned debate with Urbach and Katz, agreed with them that the centrality of the state among Jews stemmed from its sovereignty. However, the sovereign dimension did not fully reflect the essence of the state. Jewish society in Israel, he asserted, by its very nature had a greater interest in diaspora Jewry than the diaspora had in Israel because of the particularist nature of national existence in Israel. Moreover, an integral part of the essence of Israeli sovereignty is acknowledgement of responsibility for the fate of diaspora Jewry, and this was the manifestation of the abnormal character of Jewish society in Israel, namely its mission vis-à-vis the Jews of the diaspora. Israel's centrality also derives from the nature of Jewish life in the diaspora, which lacks the necessary power to preserve its integrity without the State of Israel.

Because of the principle of comprehensive responsibility, Arieli stressed the existence of interdependence of all sectors of the Jewish people and did not deny the right of all diasporas to autonomous status. It was in the interest of the state, he declared, to promote the emergence of internal forces in Jewish communities in order to strengthen them. As long as the diaspora remained Jewish, it would support the state, he said. Ten years later, in the face of the growing controversy between religious and secular factors on the character of the State of Israel, Arieli cautioned that any attempt to transform Israel into a religious state, which would entail renunciation of the secular and pluralistic aspects of Jewish society, would spell the end of Zionism, since the state would no longer be a cohesive, rallying force for the Jews of the diaspora.<sup>38</sup>

Somewhere between the concepts of the sovereign center and the Zionist mission, Nathan Rotenstreich formulated his theory of preferential status. The term "centrality of Israel," which was endorsed by the Zionist movement in 1968 and 1972, had, he said, become

a tired cliché. This was mainly because in the course of history, because of various crises and difficulties, the ideal or idyllic type of Jew envisaged by Ahad Ha-am's utopian imagination had not come into being.

In place of centrality in the moral-cultural sense, Rotenstreich preferred the terms "priority, preferential status, Israel as primate." This meant, in practical terms, that "if there is a conflict of interests between the diaspora and the state, the state's interest takes preference.... There is a difference between helping one's brethren in times of trouble and the injunction to redeem captives...and support for the struggle for the historic-collective place of the Jewish people."<sup>39</sup> It should be recalled that this was written in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, and in the face of the increasing pressure among U.S. Jewry to extend aid to their brethren in Israel in their plight. It was for this reason that Rotenstreich emphasized that this was no ordinary plight, but a national problem brought about by the conscious collective decision of the Jewish people to restore their national sovereignty. In other words, he sees at the center of the stage not the spiritual-qualitative center, but the collective national effort. And Israel was not merely "primus inter pares," but decisively prior in status, "because it is thanks to this sovereignty that the Jewish people has achieved its standing in world history, with all this implies." It should be noted that the Israeli-American Dialogue of 1977 ("The Contemporary Significance of Zionism: Definitions and New Directions") adopted Rotenstreich's definition of Israel's preferential status. One of the resolutions passed by that body stated that "Zionists affirm the role of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people, and as occupying a special and primary role in the life of that people everywhere, while acknowledging the existence of other valid and ongoing centers of Jewish creativity."<sup>40</sup>

The status which Rotenstreich accorded the state brought him back, paradoxically enough, to the idea of the spiritual center. Ten years later, in a discussion of the negation of the diaspora, he wrote: "We note that the very existence of the state does not serve as a motive for secession from the diaspora. In a certain sense, this existence does not take the form of a spiritual center, but it replaces a spiritual center — that is to say, maintains Jewish inertia."<sup>41</sup> There is a twofold paradox inherent in this statement: the first relates to the historic fate of the Zionist movement whose ideology, according to Rotenstreich, "did not foresee it. One could almost say, with all the differences entailed, that just as it did not predict the Holocaust, it did not foresee the problems of the prosperous Jewish communities." The second paradox stems from Rotenstreich's own view of the preferential status of the state, which, as it were, substitutes for centrality. Any attitude which grants it national priority over other considerations, in the given condition, recognizes it as a spiritual center, a center to which the Jews of the

diaspora are linked by emotional, political, charitable, religious and cultural ties. But despite these ties, Jewish national life is not cast in uniform cultural molds.

The interpretation given here to the term "substitute for a spiritual center" leads to Rotenstreich's next conclusion, namely that in light of the existence of affluent Jewry and the absence of the possibility of maintaining a "spiritual center," national sovereignty cannot suffice, as Urbach and Katz believed, but should be supplemented by the abnormal essence of Jewish life. He held that the abnormality derived from the standing which the state had chosen for itself. This was because "the State of Israel as a Jewish state, that is to say, as a state which is not detached from the Jewish people, refutes normalization in the simple or unambiguous meaning of the term. The 'abnormal normality' of the Jews maintains this link between Israel and the Jewish people."<sup>42</sup> This "abnormal normality," which, incidentally, is not far removed from the term "Jewish normalization," is not only an expression of a specific existential condition, but also has significance in terms of social values. For example, Rotenstreich regarded the materialistic drive of Israeli society, its abandonment of the principle of Jewish labor, as a dangerous manifestation of normalization. This was because the loss of moral distinctiveness would not only distort the image of society, but also undermine the standing of the state among diaspora Jews.<sup>43</sup> Hence, Rotenstreich sought to revive the pioneering spirit of the past, which had inspired the youth movements of the socialist labor movement, since he saw it as "one of the factors able to influence and guide in our times." This new pioneering elite would be motivated not by hatred leading to the awakening of will, but by the historical vision of the Jewish people, by awareness of the need to maintain the collective survival of the Jews, and the need to maintain reciprocal ties between the individual and the public domains of the Jewish people."

This appeal for the revival of the pioneering spirit contained a partial historical truth. On the one hand, this pioneering spirit was nurtured more by the national-social utopia, but had developed in a milieu of distress and suffering, from which it drew the emotional drive for action and the readiness for sacrifice. This background no longer exists in the Western countries, and thus, what is required is a pioneering elite motivated by historical awareness and a sense of historical mission. Rotenstreich was attempting to transform the pioneering activism of the few into the central deed of the Jewish people, contributing to the moral rehabilitation of Israeli society and the national strengthening of the diaspora. Therein, he thought, lay the possibility of preserving Zionism as an ideological movement and not merely a remnant of the past.

Shlomo Avineri and Eliezer Schweid, disciples of Yaakov Katz and Natan Rotenstreich, who grew up with the state, continued the

line of thought of their mentors. According to Avineri, the centrality of Israel in Jewish life derived, primarily, from the fact that it fulfills the function of religion and of the Jewish community in giving public expression to collective Jewish identity. Consequently, "today, in the wake of the process of modernization and secularization, it is the normative expression of the preservation of this collective survival of the Jewish people." Avineri saw this as the crux of the significance of the Zionist revolution, historically speaking, the renewal of a Jewish public domain in place of the community and its religious institutions.<sup>44</sup>

This definition of the essence of the central status of the state, he asserted, establishes the basic distinction between sovereignty and life in the diaspora. Referring to the question of "negation of the diaspora,"<sup>45</sup> Avineri said that if this negation meant that no kind of Jewish life could exist outside the borders of the state, it was unacceptable. But there was a fundamental difference between the diaspora and Israel on the level of values relating to Jewish life. Whereas life in the diaspora is a fact which will undoubtedly endure, life in Israel, despite its insecurity, is a value. The existence or non-existence of an organized Jewish community in any place in the world, even the United States, is not decisive for the continuation of Judaism. The important thing is that the Jews in those places be permitted to live as free individuals. This was not true of Israel. What matters in this case is the existence of the corporate body, and not the welfare of the individual. If, Heaven forbid, something terrible happened to Israel, the effect of the catastrophe on the Jews of the diaspora would be far-reaching, not only because of the fate of the Jews living there, but because of the meaning of the existence of Israel for diaspora Jewry.

Eight years later, in the wake of the Pollard affair and the initial response of Jewish leaders, Avineri added a subjective interpretation to his objective definition of the galut. He said that galut, as a symptom of insecurity, apprehension and apologetics, is part of the Jewish soul.<sup>46</sup>

The conclusion of Israel's objective status in Jewish life, as Avineri saw it, is the need for the moral essence and values of the state. The choice is between Israel as a just and enlightened society, evoking pride in the hearts of diaspora Jews, and Israel deteriorating into a society in which it is hard to take pride. This is a question which should concern not only the Jews of Israel, but Jews throughout the world. Avineri, unlike Rotenstreich, does not abandon the idea of the spiritual center as envisaged by Ahad Ha-am, and casts responsibility for its construction on Israeli society. Only they can transform Israel into the central value in the lives of Jews. At this point, paradoxically enough, he concludes that Israel can become the normative center for diaspora Jews only if its life differs from theirs. "Israel will continue to be the focus for normative identification for the Jews of the world only if it is fundamentally different from world Jewry. If Israel is only a mirror of what

is occurring among world Jewry, if it is only yet another Western consumer society," then the Western Jew who perceives therein only a facsimile of his own life, will be unable to identify with it.<sup>47</sup>

Avineri took Urbach's theories to extremes. As regards patterns of thinking, if not content, his approach resembles that of Gershom Scholem. Both advocated radical change in Jewish life, and both pinned on this change and its distinctiveness the centrality of Israel. Scholem, however, spoke of the metaphysical-religious essence of the state, while Avineri warned against the loss of the original social values of Zionism.

Eliezer Schweid went even further than Avineri in distinguishing between the significance of life in Israel and the essence of Jewish diaspora life in Western society. He wanted to adapt the old idea of "negation of the diaspora" to the new reality and to transform it again into the central ideal of Zionism, fashioning an alternative way of life to that of the diaspora. As he saw it, negation of the diaspora is an ideology aimed at consolidating a new Jewish morality as a value in itself,<sup>48</sup> unconnected to and unconditional on a specific historical situation, with threefold foundations: the value of national force, namely rule over power factors of various types and readiness to use them for the defense of Jewish life; national independence, signifying the aspiration of Jews to undertake responsibility for their survival as a nation; national distinctiveness, aimed at bestowing on the Jewish people a comprehensive framework within which their original creation can be maintained and developed without limitation and self-effacement and with proper balance between the particularist and the universal. Today, those who do not accept these three positive values of Zionism can claim, with a large degree of justice, that there is no galut in the free world. On the other hand, "those who accept the values of Zionist morality will not doubt the claim that the Zionist analysis of the condition of the Jewish people in the diaspora is still valid."

In other words, the *golah* has no political independence. The political power of the Jews is worthless when there is a discrepancy between Jewish interests and the interests of the countries where they live. The Jews do not control their own fate, and have no chance of maintaining their original culture in the long run; the free diasporas cannot become the "new Babylon." The conclusion is, therefore, inevitable: "In the present-day galut as well, Jewish life is parasitic. As a people, insofar as the Jewish people is still acknowledged to have its own unique framework, they are nurtured by the creativity of others, lean on the strength of others, need them to the point of self-abnegation, and exploit their endeavors. This is a vulnerable way of life. Any strong social upheaval will expose the tensions of competition and hostility between the Jews and their surroundings and uncover their weakness and inability to defend themselves."

It is worth noting that for Schweid, in the historical sense and in the present context as well, negation of the diaspora is not negation of the Jews living in the diaspora. "On the contrary, those who advocate negating the diaspora as negation of the condition of the Jewish people can also appreciate the great and vital potential inherent in the people. They also know that the ingathering of the Jewish people into their country is not a one-time event, but a historical process. In order for this process to proceed, it is not enough to step up immigration. What is required is as strong an infrastructure as possible, in other words we must strengthen Jewish association in the diaspora and particularly Jewish education."<sup>49</sup> Moreover, as long as the majority of the Jewish people live outside their homeland, the validity of the diaspora also affects collective Jewish life in Israel. This finds reflection in the weakness of the state in the international arena, and in "internal assimilation" in the cultural sense, which is occurring within Israeli society. No part of the Jewish people can liberate itself from galut through emancipation or auto-emancipation. Until the vision of the ingathering of most of the exiles is realized, the entire Jewish people, in varying degrees, is in galut.<sup>50</sup> The question under debate is evaluation of the prospects for the continued existence of the Jewish people in the diaspora and the selection of the means and methods of bolstering it. The ability and the scope are limited, but it is important to do the little that can be done.

This is not to say that Schweid believes in a kind of *Ahad Ha-am*-like "spiritual center." This is because of the basic assumption that culture cannot be imported. "Culture is, primarily, an everyday lifestyle, patterns of behavior, the symbols and values shaping them and lending them meaning, and anything that man creates in his spheres of action. In all these respects, the Jews of the diaspora can only live within the context of the national cultures around them."<sup>51</sup>

Both Rotenstreich and Schweid, therefore, hold that a spiritual center had some prospect as long as authentic Jewish life existed in the diaspora, as in Eastern Europe. The center is a factor aiding the existence of a national culture, but it does not create it. This dissociation from the idea of a spiritual center does not imply approval of the normalization trend in Israel-diaspora relations. The reverse is true. "The conclusion of this analysis is very clear. Israel can be a factor stemming the tide of assimilation and bolstering Jewish identity only if the base of its relations with the diaspora is the Zionist goal, demanding implementation. If the basis is only a static reality, a diaspora seeking to institutionalize itself on a permanent basis and a state content with its role within the Jewish people, there will commence a process of estrangement between the Jews of Israel and of the diaspora. This will be inevitable because, even as regards identification, the focus of interest

will not be the same. Even if the diaspora endures for several more generations, it will develop a separate identity from that of Israel."<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, intensely aware of the danger threatening the Jewish people, Schweid, in the fortieth year of statehood, clutched at the conviction that systematic and constant educational efforts, shared by Israel and the diaspora, and a constructive dialogue between all the ideological currents in Judaism could gradually create a true spiritual center in Israel, reflecting the aspirations of Jews for independence and unity.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Schweid is the most emphatic opponent of the "distinctive normalization" approach, based on the unique ties between the Israeli center and the Jews of the world. He is an ardent advocate of "Jewish normalization" based on non-acceptance of the perpetual existence of the diaspora. Here, like Rotenstreich and Avineri, he sees the continuation of Zionism as conditional on the striving to realize Jewish normalization in the original social sense, in the spirit of the historical endeavor of the pioneering labor movement.<sup>54</sup>

The negation of diaspora life and the building of a society with a normal national moral foundation "are interconnected and face the Jewish people, and in particular the Zionist movement, with an arduous task, bordering on the utopian," namely to shape a society founded not on Western normalization but on a special Jewish-Zionist formula, combining the Jewish cultural heritage and the social vision of the Zionist labor movement.

The views of those who believed that Zionism could not survive without social utopia were summarized by the historian Shmuel Ettinger, who claimed that precisely because Zionism as a national movement with collectivist aims operates in the present in an individualistic society, it cannot continue to exist without proposing an overall ideological moral approach, which will restore to public awareness the value of labor, and the importance of quality for individual and society.<sup>55</sup>

Another and unique viewpoint, in this ideological mood, was further elaborated by Professor Daniel Elazar, who immigrated to Israel from the United States in the 1970s.<sup>56</sup> His starting point, in the early 1980s, was that the era of secular-messianic ideologies has reached its end. Following in the footsteps of Daniel Bell, who had predicted this at the end of the 1950s, Elazar concluded that Zionism as a messianic-secular ideology with many different variations has also ended its important and even decisive task. Henceforth, Zionism should be regarded as a current in Jewish faith, like any other. As such, it defines the Judaism of most of the Jewish inhabitants of Israel, and has become a kind of civil religion for the state. As one of the currents of Judaism, Zionism is no longer a revolutionary movement with a comprehensive ideology, offering an alternative to existing patterns of Jewish life, but is now an ideology which is in harmony with them.

According to Elazar, two traditional Jewish outlooks have always been at war within Zionism: Saducceanism and Phariseanism. The modern Saduccean approach sees Israel as the political center of the Jewish people and is content with this, while the Pharisean outlook, which Elazar has adopted, seeks to restore to Zionism, in accordance with the antidoctrinarian and practical approach of the Pharisees, the operative vision, based on *yir'at shamayim*. This vision is grounded on biblical principles: the covenant (*brit*) of the Jews among themselves and between them and their God, which gives meaning to their Jewish existence; the grace (*hesed*) which reflects the emotional links among Jews. In the Zionist sense, *hesed* means constant concern for the continued existence and unity of the Jewish people: "a survival and unity that is always in doubt but at the same time is never doubted." The third principle is the constant need of Jews to wrestle with God in the proper way, rejecting doctrinarianism while preserving faith. The final principles are justice and law (*tzedek u-mishpat*) which are the foundations of a just society.

According to Elazar, this Zionist Pharisean tradition must become the way of life of world Jewry. It is also a political tradition, he says, as opposed to political ideology, of Judaism. Zionism has undergone three stages in its attitude towards the Jewish people, he declares: first it aroused its political consciousness, then it established the Jewish polity. Now it has reached the third stage of traditional Jewish policy. The roots of this policy lie in the Bible, in medieval philosophy and in Zionism, parts of which are linked to biblical sources. In this context the Jews of the United States have a contribution to make. They were educated in the American political tradition, which is not only anti-doctrinarian, but linked, in many respects, to the spiritual traditions of the Bible.

In conclusion, Elazar's neo-Zionism is the continuation of messianic-secular Zionism, because it does not dismiss its achievements but tries to establish a new outlook on that old foundation. With the end of the secular-Zionist era comes the era of Pharisean Zionism. This, according to its practical non-doctrinarian essence, is reconciled to the existence of the diaspora and the numerous forms of expression of Judaism, Israeli Zionism being one of its forms. At the same time, in principle, the center of Pharisean Zionism is the State of Israel, because only there and by that means can the five principles be realized, particularly the Jewish covenant and fraternity which preserve the integrity of the Jewish people. It could be said that Elazar seeks to pour the biblical political tradition into the mold of Zionism through the operative vision of the Pharisees and within the Saduccee political framework. This entire viewpoint, as a public-national way of life, is influenced by the American political tradition.

At this point, one cannot refrain from commenting that Elazar,

while rejecting one ideology, created another. Close examination of messianic-secular Zionism, as he defines it, with all its political currents and shades of opinion, demonstrates that it was not doctrinarian, as he claims, and that its method of operation, from Hibbat Zion through Weizmannism to the constructive Zionism of the labor movement, was impelled by the "operative vision" no less than was the "Pharisean" version. Thus, there is a certain element of exaggeration in his emphasis on the fundamental contrast between the path of secular Zionism, which believed in the "earthly Messiah," and traditional Judaism which dreamed of celestial redemption. The inescapable conclusion is that the innovation in Elazar's new Zionism lies not in the method but in the view of Jewish national existence in a religious-pluralistic light.

In conclusion, in the attempt to revive the assumptions of classic Zionism in the new post-Six-Day War situation, politicians and intellectuals were divided. The idea of the centrality of Israel, adopted by the Zionist Organization, was grasped by politicians as a unique and revolutionary idea and as a means of reviving the political and cultural hegemony of Zionism in the diaspora. But this idea, while revolutionary, was also open to compromise. It was entirely based on acknowledgment of the disappearance of exile and the eternity of the diaspora since the status of the center is dependent on its periphery.

The intellectuals, on the other hand, did not take a simple view of matters. For them, the idea of the center in the political and cultural sense could not suffice to maintain the Jewish-international entity. They extended and deepened the concept of galut. Theirs was a galut which was no longer a golah, and its significance was even greater because of the disappearance of the Jewish plight. It was galut because the welfare of the individual was in conflict with the integrity of the group; because the Jewish collective will and expression were waning there; because of the lack of authentic Jewish culture and the total dependence on the surrounding society. And they even extended the concept to cover society in Israel, mainly because it had abandoned the Zionist social utopia.

There was no connection between this galut, which was socio-historical and particularist, and galut as a universal existential or even metaphysical religious concept. Its focal point was not the alienation of man in society nor the exile of the Divine presence, but the special condition of the Jewish people as an objective fact and the threat of disappearance because of its subjective shortsightedness. Thus, they negated the diaspora with varying degrees of intensity, but out of the same concern.

Paradoxically, the overall negation of galut relating to the diaspora and to Israel was more valid vis-a-vis Jewish unity than the idea of the state as center. It reinforces national self-awareness, strengthens

the inner cohesion of the Jewish communities in the diaspora, unites Israel and the diaspora in a shared yearning, and rouses the few activist forces to rebel against the galut experience. Thus, there is a kind of reconciliation between this negation of the diaspora and the desire to revive autonomous Jewish community life there, to extend and intensify Jewish education, to struggle against discrimination, etc. And the supreme expression of this effort was immigration to Israel. Thus it emerged that in the historical situation in which the *golah* disappeared as a Jewish phenomenon, negation of the diaspora became the consciousness maintaining the *tefutza*. It became the central concept in Jewish life, and placed Israel at the heart of Jewish life.

In conclusion, it might be said that in the last decade since the Six-Day War the two approaches have come closer to some mutual understanding on the level of national principle, but differ very much on the more pragmatic level of civil rights.

On questions of principle, it seems evident that the proponents of general normalization are no longer totally committed to territory as the shaper of collective national consciousness. The recognition of the historic unity of the different strata of Jewish culture, and not only on a religious basis, and the assumption that there is an extra-territorial Jewish people, attest to the change in this outlook, which is bringing it closer to the Jewish consensus. Forty years ago, in contrast, those who upheld similar views placed themselves, in the ideological and political sense, completely outside this consensus. On the other hand, on the more practical plane, on such issues as the Law of Return, applicable only to Jews, the rift between them and the other approaches has only widened.

## Notes

1. See the second part of an interview conducted with Boaz Evron two years after the Six-Day War, in Ehud Ben-Ezer's book *Ain Shaananim Be-tziyon* (Unease in Zion) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1986), pp. 178-188.
2. Boaz Evron, *Ha-heshbon Ha-leumi* (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1988).
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 410, 411, 424.
4. Boaz Evron, interview in *Yediot Ahronot*, 11.3.88. See also his article analyzing the Canaanite outlook and its contemporary implications: Boaz Evron, "Solutions and Problems," *Jerusalem Quarterly* (1987).
5. Boaz Evron, "Ha-medina Adayin Lo Hukma," *Politika* (October 1987). See, *ibid.*, Yoram Kaniuk's emotional and forceful article "Tzomet Akhzar," which expresses similar ideas. See also interview with the

- writer Benyamin Tamuz: "Yesh Li Pehadim Sheha-tziyonut Tigmrom Lemapolet," *Yediot Ahronot*, 6.11.87.
6. Joseph Agassi, *Bein Dat U-leom — Likraat Zehut Leumit Yisraelit* (Religion and Nationality — Toward an Israeli National Identity) (Tel Aviv: Papyrus, 1984).
  7. Joseph Agassi, "Leumiyut Liberalit Kan Ve-akhshav," *Kivunim* (August 1985).
  8. *Ibid.*, *Bein Dat U-leom*, pp. 198-204.
  9. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.
  10. "Declaration of the Israeli Congress," *Ha-aretz*, 20.4.88.
  11. Three years previously the founders of the Israeli Congress, Yigal Eilam and Zvi Kasseh, issued a manifesto entitled "Likraat Tziyonut Hevratit" (Towards Social Zionism) (Ha-midrasha Le-tziyonut Hevratit, 1985). At the time they were still affiliated with the liberal-socialist wing of the Zionist consensus.
  12. Personal letter from Yigal Eilam to Shilo Gal, Head of the Etzion Bloc Regional Council.
  13. Shulamit Aloni, "Mi-leda Ve-ad Petira Ve-ad Bikhlah Madua Hashem 'Yisraeli' Ko Mekomem Otam?" *Politika* (October 1987).
  14. Hillel Halkin, *Letters to an American Jewish Friend* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977).
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
  16. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
  17. Amos Oz, *Sod Ha-kesem Ha-tziyoni — Be-or Ha-tkhelet Ha-aza* (in: Under this Blazing Light — Essays) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1980).
  18. Amos Oz, *Po Ve-sham Be-Eretz Yisrael* (A Journey in Israel — Autumn 1982) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1983), p. 189.
  19. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
  20. See A.B. Yehoshua, *Bi-zkhut Ha-normaliyut* (Between Right and Right) (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1980).
  21. A.B. Yehoshua, "He-hazon Ha-tziyoni shel Ha-normaliyut," *Ha-aretz*, 6.1.88.
  22. *Bi-zkhut...*, p. 21.
  23. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
  24. A.B. Yehoshua in A. Burg, ed., *Mahu Yehudi — Symposium*, (World Jewish Congress, 1987), p. 25.
  25. A.B. Yehoshua, *ibid.*
  26. A.B. Yehoshua, "Ani Yisraeli (I am an Israeli)," *Yediot Ahronot*, 12.6.87.
  27. Gershom Scholem, "Ha-tziyonut — Dialektika Shel Retzifut U-mered," *Ain Shananim Be-tziyon*, pp. 291-292.
  28. *Ibid.*, p. 317. See also "Yisrael Vaha-golah," *Devarim Be-go*

- (Explications and Implications — Writings on Jewish Heritage and Renaissance) (Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 1975), pp. 133-144.
29. Gershom Scholem, "Ha-galut Nitrokna Me-nitzanei Ha-geula," *Devarim Be-go*, pp. 219-222.
  30. Ephraim Urbach, "The Contemporary Meaning of Zionism...The 12th American-Israel Dialogue, 1976," *Congress Monthly* (March-April, 1977).
  31. Ephraim Urbach, "Muda'ut Shel Ha-merkaz Veba-tefutzot Be-yoldot Yisrael Ule-ahar Kum Ha-medina (1974)," *Al Tziyonut Ve-yahadut, Iyunim U-masot* (Jerusalem: Hasifriya Hatziyonit, 1985), pp. 120-121.
  32. Ephraim Urbach, "Darka U-mashmauta Shel Ha-tziyonut Be-yameinu," *ibid.*, pp. 3-12.
  33. See Ephraim Urbach, "Zionism, The Moral Challenge," in Moshe Davis, ed., *Zionism in Transition* (New York: Herzl Press, 1980), p. 372.
  34. Yaakov Katz, "Ha-tziyonut Veba-zehut Ha-yehudit," *Leumit Yehudit — Masot U-mehkarim* (Jerusalem: Hasifriya Hatziyonit, 1979), pp. 82-84.
  35. Jacob Katz, "The Core of Zionism, The 12th American-Israel Dialogue (1976)," *Congress Monthly* (March-April, 1977).
  36. Yeshayahu Leibovitz, *Al Olam U-melo'o — Sihot Im Michael Sheshar* (Jerusalem, 1987), p. 28.
  37. Gershom Scholem, "Hagigim Al Teologia Yehudit," *Devarim Be-go*, pp. 588-589.
  38. Yehoshua Arieli, "On Being a Secular Jew in Israel," *Jerusalem Quarterly* (Winter 1988).
  39. Natan Rotenstreich, "Tmurot Ba-yahasim She-bein Medinat Yisrael Ve-golat Yisrael (1975)," *Iyunim Be-tziyonut Ba-zman Ha-zeh* (Jerusalem: Hasifriya Hatziyonit, 1977), pp. 38-43.
  40. *Congress Monthly*, (March-April 1977).
  41. Natan Rotenstreich, "Shlilat Ha-golah Az Ve-ata," *Gesher* (Summer 1985).
  42. Natan Rotenstreich, "Al Normaliyut U-vaayoteha," *Iyunim Ba-tziyonut Ba-zman Ha-zeh*, p. 81. See also "Bein Medinat Yisrael Veba-tziyonut," *ibid.*
  43. See "Al Normaliyut...". See also Natan Rotenstreich, "Zionism as Ideology and Historical Force," *Zionism in Transition*.
  44. Shlomo Avineri, *Ha-raayon Ha-tziyoni Li-gvanav* (Varieties of Zionist Thought) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1980), pp. 247-257.
  45. "Negating the Diaspora — A Symposium," *Jewish Frontier* (December 1979).
  46. Shlomo Avineri, "Mikhtav Le-yedid Yehudi be-America," *Maariv*, 17.3.87. See also his remarks in "Is America Exile?" *Forum* (Spring 1988).

47. Shlomo Avineri, *Ha-raayon Ha-tziyoni*, pp. 253-256.
48. Eliezer Schweid, "Shlilat Ha-golah Ki-yesod Ha-musar Ha-tziyoni," *Mi-yahadut Le-tziyonut, Mi-tziyonut Le-yahadut* (Between Judaism and Zionism) (Jerusalem: Hasifriya Hatziyonit, 1983), pp. 162-168.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
50. Eliezer Schweid, "Elements of Zionist Ideology and Practice," *Zionism in Transition*, p. 245.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Eliezer Schweid, *Shlilat Ha-golah*, pp. 201-202.
53. Eliezer Schweid, "Israel as a Spiritual Center for the Diaspora," *After Four Decades — The Responsibilities of Israel and the Diaspora to Jewish Life and Culture* (Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, 1988).
54. "Kesem Ha-galut U-veayat Ha-normalizatzia," *Mi-yahadut Le-tziyonut...*, pp. 153-154.
55. Shmuel Ettinger, "Zionism and its Significance Today," *Forum* (Winter 1978).
56. Daniel J. Elazar, "Renewing the Zionist Vision," *Zionism in Transition* (1980), pp. 285-300. See also Daniel J. Elazar: "Toward a Jewish Definition of Statehood for Israel," "Zionism and the Future of Israel," "The State of World Jewry — A Contemporary Agenda," "Contemporary Jewry Between Two Revolutions" (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs).