**"Forging Israel’s Intellectual Right: How Neoconservatism Made Aliyah"**

**Book Proposal**

**Dear Publisher,**

Jewish political conservatism has emerged as a compelling force, shaped by the intricate dynamics between a nation-state and its diaspora. In this book, we delve into the fascinating realm of Jewish conservatism, offering a unique perspective on the translation of American neoconservatism into Israeli society and the transformation of Israel’s intellectual Right since the 1990s.

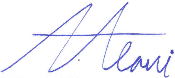
Despite its profound influence, the story of Israeli conservatism remains untold. Without understanding this story, one cannot understand Israeli politics in the 21st century. Even the 2023 upheaval around the judicial reform can only be fully understood by understanding its ideological and sociological roots. Some go as far as the 1980s when such ideas were conceived back in Princeton. This story is also critical to understanding Israel’s relationship with American Jewry, as well as the evolution of conservatism in the West in a broader sense. And this story has never been told.

This book focuses on the evolution of Israeli conservatism by examining prominent players such as The Tikvah Fund, the Shalem Center, and the Kohelet Policy Forum. In addition, a primary emphasis lies on the two influential journals published by Shalem: *Tchelet* (Hebrew) and *Azure* (English). These publications were the cornerstone of this movement's intellectual development, shaped its trajectory, and left a lasting impact. By uncovering the stories and ideologies of crucial players, this book offers a vital contribution to understanding contemporary Israel at a time when more and more people are perplexed by it. This book will be invaluable for many readers, from all walks of life, who seek a well-founded explanation for a reality they wrestle to understand.

I am excited about the opportunity to share this important work with the world, and I am confident that it will make a significant contribution to the field and engage a wide and diverse audience. Thank you for considering my proposal, and I eagerly anticipate the possibility of collaborating with you to bring this project to fruition.

Sincerely yours,

Aharon Ariel Lavi



**Structure and Main Argument**

“Ideas have consequences.” Coined in 1948 by American author Richard M. Weaver, this sentence became a catchphrase in the White House during Ronald Reagan’s (1911-2004) administration, the 40th president of the United States of America, from 1981 until 1989. During those years, the Iron Curtain fell, and the Cold War ended; the American economy underwent far-reaching changes that freed up the market; and on the other side of the ocean, Israel began to liberate its economy while establishing itself as a regional power and developing its emerging high-tech industry. Those born during those years, such as your faithful servant, are often referred to as “Millennials” or “Generation Y”. After the generation that defeated Nazi Germany, and its successor that turned the United States into the undisputed global superpower, my generation is considered by many to be a somewhat fuzzy generation, not sure what it is up to. This is not necessarily our fault. We were the first to witness the invention of the Internet as children, to dream of peace as youth, and to experience the shattering of this dream as soldiers.

Against this background, a group of young students formed at Princeton University in New Jersey in the mid-1980s. They were Jewish but not from an orthodox background or very knowledgeable about their tradition. They were Zionists, and even then, they felt that the American academia tended to criticize Israel disproportionally. They barely spoke Hebrew but dreamed of immigrating to Israel and establishing the first Liberal Arts Jewish university there. The original plan was to join an existing settlement in Judea and Samaria or establish a new one, and contribute conceptually to the State of Israel. “We realized that none of us was going to be chief of staff or a businessman,” told me Dr. Daniel Polisar, one of the founders and leaders of that group, “so we decided to position ourselves in the world of ideas.” And ideas, as aforementioned, have consequences.

The group will later call itself “The Eye of the Tiger” (named after Princeton’s logo and inspired by the “Rocky” movies of the time), move to Eli, and establish a small educational program for students called IALA (pronounced: Yalla). This will become the seed for the Shalem Center, established in 1994. It will be difficult to overstate the importance of Shalem in Israeli politics, and primarily in the evolution of rightwing intellectual conservatism in Israel. Shalem may not have been the only actor in the field, but arguably it was the most important and influential one. It is safe to say that one cannot understand Israeli politics in the 20th century, without understanding this story. Even more so, the 2023 upheaval around the judicial reform can only be fully understood by understanding its ideological roots, seeded by Shalem in the 1990s. These ideas go as far back as the 1980s when they were conceived in Princeton. This story is critical to our understanding of Israel and its relationship with American Jewry. And this story has never been told.

At the heart of this story lie Shalem’s two influential journals: *Tchelet* (Hebrew) and *Azure* (English). These publications were the cornerstone of this movement's intellectual development, shaped its trajectory, and left a lasting impact. *Tchelet* did not pretend to be a neutral academic journal. Instead, it was perceived by its creators as a tool in the culture war. It had a specific mission: to arm the new conservative camp with intellectual ammunition and thus inspire an intellectual elite that could shape the future of the Jewish people and the Jewish state. On the one hand, *Tchelet* remained faithful to this mission for 16 years, but on the other, it played a much more mediating role than one would have expected. Whether by giving voice, respect, and publicity to non-conservative agents, leading the Kinneret Declaration, or building a big Zionist tent, *Tchelet* aimed to serve larger Jewish and Israeli society and not just a small niche group. To be more precise, it aimed to give what started as a niche group the means to play a role on the national stage while strengthening the national stage as a whole and not tearing it apart.

As a profoundly intellectual and moderate movement, Israeli conservatism sought common ground. That ground, the safe haven for a post Rabin assassination torn Israeli society, was Zionism itself. Hence it called for the creation of a big Zionist tent, without any side giving up its core beliefs and intellectual depth and integrity. Unfortunately, however, as years went by, the Israeli version began to adopt the local patterns of polarization and dispute, instead of offering an alternative.

This book focuses on the establishment of Jewish political conservatism (not to be confused with the religious denomination called “Conservative Judaism”) in Israel, since the mid-1990s to the 2020s. Its goal is to understand the mutual impact and cross-pollination between the parallel processes in Israel and the US and the translation of conservative ideas, or neoconservative to be exact, between these two focal points of the Jewish world. Due to the pivotal role neoconservatism played in American politics during this period, and the fact American Jewish thinkers disproportionally led this movement, this book can be of interest not only for those interested in Israel, but for anyone trying to better understand America.

I intend to tell this untold story by analyzing the major actors who played a role in this process and ask the following questions: 1) How did the Jewish conservative movement evolve in the US and Israel, and what were primary sources of inspiration and leading strategies? 2) To what extent has there been an “Israelization” of these ideas and strategies, what happened to them in the translation process and later over time? 3) What was the mutual influence between these two parallel processes, and how did they impact how Israelis and American Jews perceive one another? From this standpoint, how can the connection and friction lines between US and Israeli Jewry be reunderstood?

The main argument of the book is that Jewish political conservatism is a subset of American conservatism, or more accurately, American neoconservatism: an ideological movement founded in the 1950s that merged vital elements of classic conservatism (empiricism, reformism, and later nationalism) with neo-liberal economic thought and American exceptionalism and expansionism. The Jewish version is unique in that it was formed within the tension between ideas and actors rooted in the leading Western liberal democracy, and ideas and actors rooted in the only Jewish liberal democracy. Meaning, in the tension between a nation-state and its diaspora. Hence, understanding US Jewish conservatism requires a better understanding of Israel itself, while understanding Israeli conservatism requires a better understanding of US conservatism.

Interestingly enough, during 2023 millions around the world witnessed one of the peaks of this process: the judicial reform in Israel which led to the most severe internal crisis in the country’s history (to date). However, only a handful of people understand this event in its proper historical context, and many are completely puzzled and overwhelmed by the it. This book will respond to the need to understand the judicial reform, and due to the high profile of this event is expected to draw vast attention.

In short: reforming, adjusting, or correcting the judicial system has become almost a defining characteristic of the Israeli political Right and conservative camp. Its central argument is that what has been termed “the constitutional revolution”, led by Supreme Justice Dr. Aharon Barak in the mid-1990s, should be rolled back. From a rightwing perspective, the Supreme Court appropriated disproportional power unilaterally and unbalanced the balance of powers. Underlying this philosophical argument lies a more political sentiment, according to which most (if not all) judges in the Supreme Court are left-leaning and hold a progressive worldview. However, they represent only a shrinking minority of Israel’s population and are forcing their worldview upon the right-leaning, traditional, and conservative majority.

Although this opposition and criticism is a relatively new phenomenon, it is older than most people think. For example, in an article published in 2020, Dr. Yehudah Yifrach quoted the late Prof. Ruth Gavison, who criticized Barak’s modifications to the judicial system in an interview she gave back in 1999.[[1]](#footnote-1) “Her fierce criticism on her own camp”, wrote Yifrach, referring to the progressive camp, “was said many years before the Right woke up and understood the fallacies of the judicial system.” A legal reporter with training in Law, Yifrach is an expert on this matter and has written extensively on the judicial system. He also covers it for *Makor Rishon*, Israel's largest and most influential right-leaning newspaper. If he thinks that the Right’s criticism of the Supreme Court, and the legal system in general, was relatively new, it is safe to assume that most conservatives and people on the Right also think so. However, the roots of this trend go much deeper than that, and the fact that even a rightwing expert on Israel’s legal system was unaware of this can teach us something about the fluid and elusive nature of the dispersion of ideas.



Azure Third Issue, which focused on the judicial revolution – Front Cover

Winter 1998

I argue that the roots of this phenomenon should be traced back to *Tchelet*’s first issue (1996) and even to the first issue of the *Tory,* which preceded it (in 1984), and presented almost similar arguments against the activism of the United States Supreme Court. In 1996, Yoram Hazony criticized Barak’s declaration that from now on, the main guiding principle would be the “enlightened public” perceptions.[[2]](#footnote-2) This issue was thoroughly discussed two issues later, titled “Revolutionary Justice”. It offered two comprehensive critical analyses of Barak’s judicial revolution. Most of the arguments that appeared there, for the first time in Israel’s intellectual history, seem like they were written by any random rightwing columnist in 2023, even though they were written almost three decades earlier. This connection is not incidental. Shalem, Tikvah and *Tchelet* spawned an entire ecosystem of conservative organizations, think tanks, and activists in Israel. Almost all key figures in this ecosystem, to date, passed through one of Shalem’s or Tikvah’s programs, were influenced by *Tchelet*, or both. The book will offer a full account of this historical process in a manner and depth never done before.

**The Motivation to Invest in Israel**

Conservative American Jews viewed Israel as a place they deeply care about and can influence and shape in accordance with their values. Their financial power was a significant factor in this process but by no means the only or decisive one. It was accompanied by a deep commitment to their well-articulated ideas and a belief in the importance of the battle of ideas. On top of this, they brought with them best practices, strategies, and tools from America. They helped their Israeli partners craft a conservative movement that infused the Israeli right with intellectual depth. Israelis, in parallel, viewed their American counterparts as a source for both ideas and best practices from the world's leading democracy, as well as a resource for strategic financial investment, which is still very difficult to obtain in Israel despite the meteoric rise in the number of Israeli mega-wealthy individuals.

Importing and translating American conservatism into Israel was no different from importing and translating European socialism or American progressivism. In fact, it was an inevitable outcome of the Zionist project. Once the Jewish people decided to reclaim its place in world history, it also had to face the fact that although it had infused the West with many of its core ideas, from liberty to equality, it lacked an implementable tradition of political practice adequate for the modern era. This intellectual need led to collaboration between ideological groups in Israel and the US. In this sense, this book also tackles the distancing hypothesis and argues that while from a certain and viable standpoint Israel and North American Jewry are moving apart, from the ideological perspective they are actually coming closer together, with progressives and conservatives on each side of the ocean deepening their collaboration.

**Structure and Methodology**

To explore these questions, we must first review the history of the relationship between Israel and US Jewry. Accordingly, I will dedicate the first part of this book to a brief review of this relationship in the second half of the 20th century. This will serve as background to the emergence of Israeli conservatism in the tension between a nation-state and its diaspora. This part will also present an overview of conservatism itself. I will start with the fundamental debate between Right and Left, explore the connection between conservatism and Judaism and then focus primarily on the evolution of American conservatism (and more specifically: neoconservatism) in the second half of the 20th century.

The second part will constitute the leading innovation and contribution of this book and will tell the story of Israeli conservatism. Based on dozens of interviews with key players, historical documents, and archival materials, I will construct the story of the transition and translation of US neoconservatism into the Israeli version of conservatism. I will take a deeper dive into one significant portion of the intellectual history of Israeli conservatism: the group of students who studied at Princeton in the 1980s and their magazine: *The Princeton Tory*. This magazine preceded *Tchelet* and *Azure*, and understanding it will be of great value as we review them. I will then dedicate a chapter to a thorough analysis of the discourse and ideas conveyed, discussed, and shaped by *Tchelet* in its 16 years of existence. *Tchelet* had an unprecedented impact on the intellectual elite in Israel in general and had a decisive impact on the intellectualization of the Israeli Right, in particular. It managed to take a minority position in American Jewry and translate it into the intellectual infrastructure of Israel’s rightwing majority while anchoring it in Jewish tradition as an inevitable conclusion. However, I will also place this process in its proper context, as there were other historical processes that pushed for a paradigmatic change in Israeli society even before *Tchelet*, or at least regardless of it. For example, the liberalization of the Israeli economy began in the late 1970s and scaled up after the 1985 economic stabilization plan. This was mainly due to the imperative need for change, given the bankruptcy of the previous economic system outlined in the Ben-Gurion era. Similarly, the widespread disappointment and failure of the Oslo process, and later the Disengagement, triggered significant societal disillusionment, leading to a tectonic shift to the Right. In parallel, the teshuvah movement (a return to religious Judaism) emerged in the 1970s and marked a massive return to the Jewish bookcase and traditionalism. *Tchelet* created a discourse with an attentive and influential audience at the right time in an era of big questions that sought answers.

The most significant change in this translation process was the transition from a niche intellectual movement to a mass movement, and from intellectualism to activism. This shift reflects a change in quantity and quality, as the Israeli movement became much more revolutionary and active than its American counterpart. Here lies a fascinating paradox this book uncovers. Essentially, conservatism is based on a moderate mindset that strives for agreements and prioritizes social order and stability above anything else. To a large extent, conservatism was a counter-reaction to big ideas, especially utopian ones. It is skeptical and ironic about changes and warns of their destructive potential. The populist part of the contemporary Right in Israel is not conservative in this sense because it undermines the social order instead of stabilizing it. While most contemporary conservative intellectuals know this, many think they can “ride the tiger,” using the energy of their political camp’s rage and infusing it with more profound ideas. However, this might be an illusion that goes against the accumulated experience of conservatism, which experienced several cycles of being challenged by populist movements. Traditionally, the conservative aspiration is to imprison the tiger, not to ride it. Since if you try to ride it, you might get eaten by it. In conclusion, I suggest that the following factors played a crucial role in inducing this change:

1. Intensifying polarization pushed conservatives and progressives to take more solid positions and left less and less room for a “big tent” approach.
2. The long-standing Zionist-Israeli tendency to “get things done” and bring enormous ideas down to earth.
3. A sense of urgency in light of a (perceived or actual) tide of ultra-progressive ideas threatening the traditional family, community, and religious structures.
4. The availability of a large pool of “early adopters”, especially in the religious sectors.

It is difficult to say what the future holds for Israeli conservatism. What is clear now is that *Tchelet* was a defining event in the evolution of ideas in Israel. David Hazony, one of the founders of Shalem and *Tchelet*, told me that they brought about “an amazing moment in Israeli history when all these scholars created an intellectual community.” A generation after the publication of the first issue of *Tchelet*, the brainchild of young students from Princeton, that intellectual community has already become a real movement that reshaped Israeli politics and society.

In summary, this book presents an in-depth exploration of Jewish political conservatism in Israel, shedding light on its formation, evolution, and impact. The study aims to fill a significant gap in our understanding of modern Jewish history and deepen our insights into the unexplored world of Jewish conservatism. The journey from Princeton to Jerusalem has shaped not only the Israeli Right but also the ideological landscape of contemporary Israel. By delving into this critical period, the book seeks to enrich our understanding of the interplay between ideas, politics, and society in Israel and the Jewish world.

**Distinctiveness of This Book**

If conservatism, in general, is disproportionally studied, then academic research has entirely neglected Jewish conservatism. This is even though earlier versions of conservatism ruled Jewish political thought and practice most of the time until the modern era. Even when conservatives became a minority in the Jewish world, it was still a sizable and influential one, yet under-studied and even ignored. For example, an essay from 2014 reviewing the neo-liberal shift in the Israeli economy failed to identify this emerging movement. It held that Israel’s economic shift was conceived and executed by no more than a small group of professional economists, whom Netanyahu joined later as Minister of Finance between 2002-3.[[3]](#footnote-3) While it used the term “neoconservatism” several times, it failed to identify the ideological and intellectual movement that evolved in Israel since the 1990s.

Several years earlier, Murray Friedman edited a series of scholarly articles on Jewish conservatism, which was a pioneering (and almost only) work in the field. Friedman argued that a considerable Jewish conservative tradition exists despite American Jewry being liberal-progressive. Yet, the “virtual absence of a historical literature on political conservatism in this country has tended to obscure this”.[[4]](#footnote-4) Sarna agrees with Friedman and says that “while studies of American Jewish liberalism proliferate, Jewish political conservatism lies untended; it is a neglected field of study.”[[5]](#footnote-5) He mentions Kazin's suggestion that academic scholars tend to research social movements they sympathize with, which explains why there is no historiography of American conservatism in general. “If the story of American conservatism lies unwritten”, concludes Friedman, “the story of American Jewish conservatism continues to remain ignored as well.” Friedman suggests another reason for this disproportionate lack of historical research on Jewish conservatism: the threat it holds – in some people's minds – to Judaism itself: “even Jews who have been drawn to political conservatism have had to battle against anti-Jewish tendencies within the movement.”

As for neoconservatism, some studies have been published, but mostly of polemic nature. “The fact is”, says Friedman, “the story of neoconservatism, like the story of American Jewish conservatism itself, remains to be written”. Although these words were written over 20 years ago, I have found that little progress has been made since then in this field of research.

This book will contribute to expanding our knowledge and understanding of this critical historical movement and offer a new understanding of the evolution of Jewish conservative ideas. In addition, this book will contribute to our knowledge of three more significant phenomena, briefly described above, which are barely studied as well: a) the role of Jewish conservative institutions in the field of Israel and North American Jewry relations; b) the translation of ideas between American Jewry and Israel; and c) the emergence of the intellectual Right in Israel.

**Target Audience**

"Forging Israel’s Right" is a compelling and comprehensive exploration of one of Israel's most critical processes in its 75-year history. This book, with its far-reaching impact on Israeli society, will resonate with a diverse yet focused audience. Israelis seeking deeper insights into their country's intellectual and political history will find this work enlightening, shedding light on the forces that have shaped their nation. American Jews will be captivated by the role their own political tradition played in influencing Israel's development, fostering a better understanding of the interconnectedness between the two nations. Moreover, individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish, from around the globe eager to gain a richer comprehension of Israel will be drawn to its illuminating pages. Additionally, scholars specializing in Israel studies, Democracy studies, history of ideas, and political history will discover a valuable resource to enrich their research and scholarship. "Forging Israel’s Right" beckons a wide range of readers with its captivating narrative and unique insights into Israel's remarkable journey of transformation.

**Alternative Titles:**

"Forging the Intellectual Right: The Evolution of Jewish Conservatism in Israel and its Impact on Transnational Jewry"

“The Conservative Evolution: The Migration of Jewish Political Conservatism from the US to Israel, 1985-2015”

**Potential Reviewers:**

**Prof. Jonathan Sarna, Brandeis University (**[**sarna@brandeis.edu**](mailto:sarna@brandeis.edu)**)**

 the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of [American Jewish History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_United_States) in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Sarna#cite_note-nejs-1) and director of [the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies](https://www.brandeis.edu/israel-center/index.html) at [Brandeis University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brandeis_University) in [Waltham, Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltham,_Massachusetts). Author of more than 30 books, among them: *American Judaism: A History*.

**Prof. (Emeritus) Steven M. Cohen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (steve34nyc@aol.com)**

A leading sociologist of the American Jewish community.

**Prof. Gil Troy, McGill University (website:** [**www.giltroy.com**](http://www.giltroy.com)**)**

A leading American historian and prolific thinker.

**Timetable:**

The research and writing phases of this book have already been completed. Hence, I can propose the following estimated timetable, pending a signed publishing contract:

1. **Editing and Revisions (Duration: 3 months):**
   1. Review and revise the first draft for clarity, coherence, and accuracy.
   2. Address any gaps or areas that need further development.
   3. Professional and thorough editing of the manuscript.
   4. Submission to publisher.
2. **Production Phase (Duration: 6-12 months):**
   1. Work with the publisher's editorial team to make final revisions.
   2. Collaborate with a cover designer and layout artist for the book's appearance.
   3. Review and approve the final proofs.
   4. Signing off on a final version for print.
3. **Marketing and Promotion (Duration: Ongoing):**
   1. Work with the publisher on marketing strategies and promotional efforts.
   2. Develop a personal marketing plan, including book signings, interviews, and social media promotion.
4. **Book Launch and Distribution (Duration: 1 month):**
   1. Celebrate the book launch through various events and activities.
   2. Ensure the book's availability through online and physical bookstores.

**About the Author (see full CV attached):**

Lavi is a serial social entrepreneur, bridge builder, and community organizer. With a belief in the power of networks to shape the future, he co-founded MAKOM, the national umbrella organization for intentional communities in Israel. He also founded Hakhel, the Jewish Intentional Communities Incubator in the Diaspora (awarded the 2020 Jerusalem Unity Prize), and was a partner at CallAnswering, an AI-based call center solutions startup. Lavi is now the Managing Director of the Ohr Torah Interfaith Center.

A thinker who sees the potential for Judaism to inspire all aspects of life, Lavi holds Rabbinic Semicha and academic degrees in Economics, Geography, and History and Philosophy of Ideas. He recently completed his dissertation on the migration of ideas between US Jewry and Israeli society. Lavi's expertise extends to Judaism and economics, environmentalism, and other topics. When not working, he enjoys mountain biking as a professional racer, trainer, and trail builder.

Lavi's latest book, "Seven," presents innovative ideas on economics, social issues, and the environment inspired by Shmita principles (the biblical sabbatical year). It was an Amazon best seller and won the Global Book Awards Bronze Medal.

**Two Sample Chapters**

## The Emergence of Israeli Conservatism

On the background of a long-standing American neoconservative movement (led disproportionally by Jews), which was at its prime during the Reagan administration, a group of young Jewish students at Princeton founded in 1984 a student magazine called *The Princeton Tory*, which runs to this day. They formed a group called “Eye of the Tiger” with the purpose of establishing the first Liberal Arts Jewish university in Israel. In the late 1990s, they made *aliyah* and *teshuvah* (not necessarily in this order) and settled in Eli.226F[[6]](#footnote-6) In 1992 they established a small program called IALA (Israeli Academy of Liberal Arts), which grew into a more extensive project called “Merkaz Shalem” (The Shalem Center), founded in 1994. Two years later, Shalem started publishing one of the most influential ideological magazines in the history of Israel, in both Hebrew and English: *Tchelet* (*Azure*). In parallel, it established several research institutions, a fellowship program, and the Shalem Press, which translated Western classics into Hebrew. These efforts planted the seeds for the Israeli conservative movement of the early 2000s. Let us now unpack this unusual piece of history.

The group leader was undoubtedly Yoram Hazony, who came to Princeton in 1983 and studied in the Department of East Asian Studies (he even translated a book from Japanese to English). Dan Polisar, who would be his senior partner in establishing Shalem in the next decade, had arrived at Princeton a year earlier and studied political science. Dan and Yoram were roommates and classmates, but their leading joint venture was debating. They were very successful and won several important contests.

Over the years, they were joined by several other students, some of whom would later join the group that would establish Merkaz Shalem and *Tchelet*. Politically, the members of the group were conservative, or rather neoconservative. Although they met Podhoretz and Kristol no more than once or twice, they were deeply influenced by their writings and by *Commentary*. Kristol even gave them the first grant to establish their student magazine.227F[[7]](#footnote-7) It was called: *The Princeton Tory* and the first issue was published in October 1984 (with Yoram Hazony as editor and Daniel Polisar as executive editor). The term “Tory” refers to the British conservative view that sanctifies the stability of the social order. It was not yet *Azure* or *Tchelet* but a much more modest journal with about 40 pages per issue. However, it was the group's first experience in serious writing, which prepared it for the publication of one of the most influential journals in Israel.

After the group graduated, it bequeathed the journal to younger students. It continues to be published to this day, and during 2021-22 its publisher was a young Jewish student named Adam Hoffman from Austin, Texas. “The first Jew after nearly a decade in which the journal was dominated by Catholic students”, he told me.228F[[8]](#footnote-8) Unfortunately, only the last few years of the *Tory* archive are accessible online (where it is published anyway). The earlier issues can only be found in boxes in a locked room on the third floor of the Student Journal Building at 48 University Place, Princeton, New Jersey. “We tried to digitize the archive,” Hoffman told me, “but there was strong opposition to this from the board (the executive committee of the association responsible for the journal, AAL) and the alumni.” The reason for this, according to Hoffman, is that many of those who wrote in the *Tory* twenty or thirty years ago now hold senior positions in a variety of institutions, and making their articles as young students publicly available could confront them with quotes that would cause them unnecessary complications. In the next chapter, we will review the *Tory*’s first years and discover what valuable insights we can gather from the years that preceded the aliyah of the group to Israel. This will be the first time this archive has been thoroughly researched.

### Disappointment and Teshuvah

About twenty members of the Princeton group became *ba’aley teshuvah*, meaning they adopted an Orthodox Jewish way of life and later made aliyah to Israel. A few even went to special *yeshivot* in Israel (a yeshivah is a Jewish academy for religious learning).

Yoram Hazony, for his part, was born in Rehovot in 1964 and moved with his family a year later to the US due to his father’s academic career. He came from a non-religious family but was deeply impressed by his uncle, who married a religious woman. The two were among the founders of Kedumim (a settlement in northern Samaria). He spent many weekends with them when he came for a gap year to Israel at 18 and decided he wanted to make aliyah and raise a religious family. And he did.

Two more interesting and leading figures in the Princeton group were Joshua Weinstein and Evelyn (Evie) Gordon. Weinstein was born in Israel to what he describes as Jewish American Hippies who moved to Kibbutz Yotvata deep in the Arava Desert searching for a more utopian way of life. Weinstein was born in 1967, and his parents moved back to the US when he was five. He went to Jewish day schools and grew up in a *masorti* (traditional) family, so he was able to maintain his Hebrew.

Weinstein studied Physics at Princeton between 1983-87 and came back to Israel in 1989, together with the same group of Polisar and Hazony. He met them through the Jewish community, but more specifically through a mutual friend, Evelyn Gordon, who also studied physics and shared a laboratory with Weinstein.

Like many other university campuses in the US, Princeton also had Hillel on campus, but there was another institution called “Yavne”. It was in charge of the kosher kitchen and was integrated into the university’s food services. Unlike other places, Weinstein explained to me, Jewish students who kept kosher could eat with everybody else in the same place. The borders were blurred because it was inside the campus, and you didn't have to decide in advance to eat kosher, hence separating yourself from the rest of the students. “You could use the same card to eat *treif* (non-kosher food) today and *kosher* tomorrow.”229F[[9]](#footnote-9)

This unique model existed only at Yeshiva University and Brandeis University, both predominantly Jewish institutions. Princeton was, according to Weinstein, “goyeshkeit of the goyeshkeit” (meaning, as non-Jewish as it can get). For comparison, he says, in Harvard, a third of the students were Jewish, and in Columbia, you had to look for non-Jews. So, Princeton’s kosher kitchen was very unusual, and it turned the place into a machine of *hachzara be-teshuvah*. “You could become religious as a matter of course; you could have stumbled into it.” But, the environment was very non-Jewish, leading people to choose one of two extremes: assimilation or return to Judaism. The result was that teshuvah and aliyah were relatively common phenomena in Princeton at the time.

Weinstein agrees that this was not a local or outstanding phenomenon. “Consider Rav Kahanna”, he tells me, “his message was that you need to choose, you can’t have it both ways.” Another significant factor was the struggle for Soviet Jewry, which stimulated Jewish identity. On top of this, an American teshuvah movement emerged after the 1967 War, as Rabbi Sacks puts it: “suddenly it became acceptable to be different and to wear one’s Jewish identity openly with pride.”230F[[10]](#footnote-10)

At the same time, the Israeli teshuvah movement was gaining momentum and gradually became the largest teshuvah movement in Jewish history. According to recent data, the Israeli teshuvah movement is about 400,000 people strong and comprises about 20% of Ultra-Orthodox society.231F[[11]](#footnote-11) Unlike the American case, it was rooted in the traumas of the Yom Kippur War (1973) followed by the Second Lebanon War (1982), which left many Israelis in an identity crisis that they sought to reconcile. For some, the answer was a return to the origins and the identity that preceded modern Israeli identity. For another part, the solution was to move forward towards post-Judaism and post-Zionism, this phenomenon would be one of the significant catalysts for the establishment of Shalem and *Tchelet*.

However, there was no direct connection between the Israeli movement and the American one, let alone the Princeton group. The Princetonians barely knew of the Israeli teshuvah movement of the time, and in any case, they did not integrate into it, nor could they have done so. This is because most of the Israeli ba’aley teshuvah spoke Hebrew, joined the ultra-orthodox world, and distanced themselves as much as possible from Western culture, including academia. Think, for example, of Rabbi (and former actor) Uri Zohar or the first ba’aley teshuvah who joined the Breslov “shul” in Me’ah She’arim many years before Rosh Hashanah in Umman became the largest gathering in the Jewish world. Although the Princetonians adopted an Orthodox lifestyle, unlike their Israeli counterparts, they aspired to bring the core of traditional Western academia to Israel, not to distance themselves from it. In the future, they will work hard to show the connection between Judaism and conservatism and the enormous influence Judaism had on the West. Hence, creating more room for Western thought in Israeli discourse does not go against the grain of Judaism but rather the other way around: it brings Jewish political ideas back to life in the renewed Jewish state.

Although there was no practical connection between the two teshuvah movements, and of course, they were not of similar magnitude, the timing was not incidental from a deeper perspective. These two movements were connected at their roots, although they differed in their manifestation. This process was predicted two generations earlier by one of the most important Jewish thinkers of the 20th century and an icon of neoconservatism: Leo Strauss.

Strauss was born in 1899 to an Orthodox Jewish family in Germany. He received his doctorate in 1921 in Hamburg and was active in the Zionist movement. After the Nazis rose to power, he left Germany and settled in Chicago. He was in touch with many of the leading intellectuals of his time, taught several generations of students, and published fifteen books. Interestingly enough, he passed away in 1973, the year that marked the beginning of the Israeli teshuvah movement.

In the mid-1920s, Strauss published his book on Spinoza's *Theolgico-political Treatise*. In the preface, he wrote that the Jew who leaves the traditional world hoping to find a free world that will receive him with open arms would be deeply disappointed.232F[[12]](#footnote-12) This is simply because such a world does not exist outside the writings of the thinkers who dream of it:

The Western Jewish individual who or whose parents severed his connection with the Jewish community in the expectation that he would thus become a normal member of a purely liberal or of a universal human society, and who is naturally perplexed when he finds no such society.

Strauss predicted this disappointment would give rise to an identity crisis so deep that the only answer would be a return to the traditional sources. “The solution to his problem”, he says, “is return to the Jewish community … *teshubah* in the full sense of the word” (he used the transliteration of the Hebrew word “תשובה”). He acknowledged that most of his contemporaries think this is impossible, given the blow faith has taken from modern science. History has proved them wrong. Young Israelis experienced the disappointment Strauss described amid endless wars, especially after the 1973 war. It was also shared by young Jewish students at Princeton within the walls of the academia, which was already biased and unfair in its attitude towards Israel. The disappointment there may have been even more significant.

Stewart Schnee, who was responsible for marketing and public relations at Shalem between 1996-1999, was also an American Jew of the same age as Hazony, Polisar, and their friends. He did not study with them but instead studied at Rutgers. He testifies that in those years, Jews could not feel at home in the Republican party, even if they were conservative.233F[[13]](#footnote-13) On the other hand, in the ideological conservative movement, they did feel at home because there the Jews were a majority, and they owned one of the most influential journals in the field (*Commentary*). This disappointment, or dissonance, gave rise to a variety of reactions.

For example, Polisar says that just as the neoconservatives responded to the counterculture movements of the 1960s in the USA, he and his friends responded to the world in which they lived “and we also responded to the fact we knew nothing.”234F[[14]](#footnote-14) “As a child I thought I was the best student in my Sunday School (School of Jewish Studies on Sundays, AAL) and they told me that we are simply different from the Orthodox” he says. “I thought that the Orthodox who are similar to me know about the same as I know. Then when I met Orthodox Jews for the first time in my life, I realized that I don't know nothing, I realized I was deceived.” Similar reflection can be found in one of Hazony’s early essays, describing a speech by Rabbi Meir Kahanna at Princeton in 1984: “he told us that we were ignorant about Judaism, that we knew more about Christianity and Marxism than we knew about being Jews.”235F[[15]](#footnote-15) Similar impressions can be found among Israeli ba’aley teshuvah from the 1970s to the present day (such as in Rabbi Uri Zohar's famous book *They Didn't Give a Chance*236F[[16]](#footnote-16)).

Beyond its sheer size, the impact of the teshuvah movement is exceptionally prominent in the musical and cultural arena (Shuli Rand, Beitar Banai, Eti Ankri, and more). But its influence goes deeper and broader than that. Consider the impact of rabbis such as Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz on Talmud study; Rabbi Yitzhak Ginzburg, Yuval Ashrov, and Aric Naveh on the study of Kabbalah; Rabbi Menachem Fruman on the Hassidic revolution and interfaith dialogue; and more. The teshuvah movement has also manifested political influence in the form of transferring entire mandates from one side to another. This subject deserves thorough research in and of itself, and like Israeli conservatism, it has yet to be studied. I only mention it briefly because of its importance for understanding the social and cultural background against which Shalem and *Tchelet* evolved. From a meta-historic point of view, it is difficult to see nothing but coincidence here. One does not need to revert to mystical explanations, and it would be safe to assume that it was simply the spirit of the time that gave rise to social fluctuations of this kind.

This specific fluctuation is of utmost importance for understanding the translation of American conservatism since, upon arrival in Israel, it met a fertile ground in the form of a trend towards traditionalism. On the other hand, this trend was accompanied by distancing from Western thought and culture. Hence, the Israeli version of conservatism had to emphasize its Jewish and biblical roots to gain traction. On top of this, Shalem enjoyed the benefit of perfect timing. If it had been established a decade earlier it might have gone unnoticed.

### Liberal Arts Education

“Most students in Israel think about the benefit of their BA”, says Weinstein, “but in the US, people don't think that way. We wanted to expose people to the option of liberal arts education.”237F[[17]](#footnote-17) Weinstein’s own personal intellectual and academic path exemplifies this. Half his bachelor’s degree was in physics, mathematics, and computer science. But the other half was in international relations, sociology, religion, literature, history, and philosophy. When Weinstein hit the philosophy course, he said to himself: this is it. So he pursued a master’s degree in philosophy at the University of California, Irvine. This is where he met Plato and his *Politeia*. “The book made a huge impression on me”, he says, “because it irritated me, and I said to myself: a book written 2,000 years ago and still gets under my skin and irritates me? That’s an achievement”. Thus, Weinstein, who began as a physicist, wrote a dissertation on Plato’s Politeia and published a book about it in Cambridge University Press.238F[[18]](#footnote-18)

Weinstein argues that there is an intellectual problem in Judaism that sees its texts as authoritative. The problem is that there must be more clarity between authority and understanding. If I understand the right thing to do, I don't need someone with authority to tell me what to do. Authority gains power exactly when you don't understand the text, and the problem is that if you think this text is the words of the living God, it can be an excuse to avoid understanding it. The challenge of Jewish education is to advance understanding without giving up on authority. In liberal arts education, the text is authoritative only because it was chosen to be on the syllabus. It has no authority beyond that you need to read it, and there is no commitment to accept anything you read. Your only commitment is to understand it.

In 1987, close to his graduation, Weinstein approached Hazony and asked him: is it easier to start a new liberal arts college or take over an existing one? Weinstein proposed a candidate for invasion in the US, not in Israel. Hazony was in favor of establishing a new place. The question remained undecided. What’s important to notice here is that at least at some point, the plan was to establish a Jewish college in the United States and not in Israel. Later, when the group’s leaders make aliyah, they will bring this idea with them as a central piece of the translation process of American conservatism into Israeli society.

After completing their studies and making teshuvah, members of the group immigrated to Israel separately and studied in different yeshivot until the late 1980s. Then some returned to the US for advanced studies. For example, Weinstein completed his Ph.D. in California, Hazony completed a doctorate in political thought at Rutgers, and Daniel Polisar completed a doctorate in political science at Harvard.

They regrouped in Israel in the late 1980s and set the goal of establishing the first liberal arts college in the country. “Liberal Arts Education” is the traditional curriculum of academia in the West, which is nothing but a continuation of the ancient Greek study method. This method is intended to give its students a general education about the world and the ability to investigate and understand universal questions. It is different from study programs aimed at specific professional or technical training. Put simply, liberal arts education focuses on transmitting ideas rather than tools. And ideas, lest we forget, have consequences.

It is no coincidence that a group with such a vision emerged at Princeton and not, for example, at Stanford. Students at Stanford also established a conservative student magazine (the *Stanford Review*), as did students at Harvard (the *Harvard Salient*, founded by Yitzhak Klein, whom we will meet later on). Other conservative student magazines appeared in the universities of Chicago, Cornell, and Dartmouth as part of the general intellectual awakening of the 1980s (the last three have since shut down). The CIA funded some of these journals as part of the fight against the spread of communist ideas. The relationship between the remaining journals is maintained to this day. One of the largest funders of them is a graduate of Stanford and one of the most prominent technology ventures of our time: Peter Thiel.

The difference was that at Stanford, for example, students studied computer science and integrated into the high-tech industry. At Princeton, on the other hand, students studied economics, politics, and public policy and integrated into these systems accordingly.239F[[19]](#footnote-19) Furthermore, an article published a few years ago in the *Atlantic Review* defined Princeton University as the home of the political conservative movement in the US, and this has been true for generations.240F[[20]](#footnote-20)

To conclude, the Princeton group and *The Princeton Tory* did not emerge in a vacuum but rather in the context of a vibrant American conservative ecosystem which included everything from students magazines and programs (such as the ISI) through “adults” magazines (such as *Commentary*), senior advisors to the President, and all the way to President Reagan himself, who gave American conservatism a place of honor. Upon arriving in Israel, the group will meet a right-wing government, yet an intellectual vacuum on the Right. It will then seek to fill this vacuum by translating the ideas it grew up on and anchoring them in Jewish and Israeli traditions.

### Conservatism Makes Aliyah

In 1988, ten Princetonian families settled in the settlement of Eli in central Samaria, and some of them still live there to this day. Other families preferred living in the city, some pursued advanced studies in Israeli universities, and some left due to various reasons

Back then, the Jerusalem Post was looking for contributors, and people who made aliyah from Ivy League universities were hired. Matt Kaplan worked for the Jerusalem Post and got Josh, Evelyn, and Yoram to work there. Yoram became editor of op-eds, and when Netanyahu came to chief editor Bar-Ilan and asked him if he knew someone good at writing, Bar-Ilan made the connection between Netanyahu and Hazony. As a result, Yoram joined Netanyahu’s team and participated in the Madrid process during ‘91-‘92, which was the precursor to the 1992 Oslo process.

Eli was chosen because the group was looking for a place that is not too established so that they could strengthen it but that would also be willing to accommodate the group's educational ventures. The famous “Bnei David” pre-military academy was established that same year.241F[[21]](#footnote-21) Polisar says that the group was deeply impressed by Rabbis Eli Sadan and Yigal Levinstein (a ba’al teshuvah as well, by the way) and the first cohort of Bnei David. So the group decided to establish an association called *Milta* (literally: “word” in Aramaic, similar to the Hebrew word *mila*). It was an acronym that stood for: *The Institute for Theoretic and Humane Studies* (מכון ללימודים תיאורטיים ואנושיים). Under Milta, they established the IALA (Israeli Academy of Liberal Arts) program, and it's no coincidence that its name is pronounced like *yalla* in Hebrew, which means “let’s move on” (it is an Arabic word in fact, but it penetrated Israeli slang). They couldn't register as IALA because you can't use the word “Israel” if you are not an official state organization and cannot use the word “academy” if the Israeli Council of Higher Education does not approve you. Hence, Milta was the organization’s official name, and IALA was the program’s name. Milta exists to this day, and it is the body on which what we know as the Shalem Center operates.242F[[22]](#footnote-22)

IALA was a summer program for English speakers in Eli. It hosted mostly olim (new immigrants) from America, Britain, South Africa, and Israelis who were descendants of olim, with English as a first language.

The 1992 Course Catalogue of IALA listed the organization’s leadership, which was quite broad and impressive for a young organization. It featured some names we already met, or that will appear in Tikvah later. The director was Yoram Hazony, and the managing director was Daniel Polisar. Alongside them were Karen Bell as Executive Director, Evelyn Gordon as Comptroller, Ziv Hellman on the steering committee, and Joshua Weinstein as the Education Director. The Advisory Board featured figures such as Peter Berkowitz from Harvard, Jason Rosenblatt, and Shmuel Weinberger. The booklet opened with the verse from Isaiah: “For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Eternal from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). IALA described itself as “devoted to the highest ideals of humane learning, inspired by the academies of the classical world and by the vision of Israel as a center of enlightened learning for all peoples.” IALA sought to enable its students to deepen their understanding of their intellectual heritage and to encourage them to deal with contemporary issues. Last but not least, the academy aimed to create a supportive environment for the growth of future leaders. The program stressed that it is complementary to academic programs and introduces the students to “crucial leadership disciplines not stressed in conventional academic programs.” The program was built around discussion rather than lectures. It exposed the students to classic Western texts, works neglected by Western and Jewish thought, formal training in speaking and writing (deemed necessary leadership skills), and tours of Israel. Furthermore, the academy insisted that the integration of the Greek and Hebrew traditions of thought, separated by the modern academy on the one hand and by the yeshivah world on the other, are both necessary for “comprehending modernity and for addressing its intellectual and ethical needs.” Israel was framed as a “society being born”, an exciting laboratory for real-world applications of the issues being studied at the academy. The booklet also emphasized the fact that the Academy is not affiliated with any political organization or religious movement and detailed the rich student life available on campus, the admission process, and admission fees (the admission fee was $1,750, excluding airfare to Israel, books, and personal expenses). IALA raised funds for those who couldn’t pay (Initial funding, in the amount of several thousand Dollars, came from a private businessman named Barry Klein). In any event, the tuition barely covered the costs, and most staff worked voluntarily.

The criteria for admission reflect the values and worldview we will see in the *Tory*:

* Students should be self-motivated, desiring understanding for its own sake.
* Students should have an active concern for the world’s future, and the initiative to act on their convictions.
* Students should have the creative and expressive capacities to be leaders in active and contemplative pursuits.
* Students should be sensitive to the concerns and feelings of others, both in and out of the classroom.

The range of topics covered by IALA was rather broad and, in a way, set the stage for the issues *Tchelet* will deal with in the future: Domestic Israeli politics, biblical leaders, economics, democracy, Zionism, liberalism, community, biblical literature, western literature, Jewish philosophy, and Greek philosophy.

The team was predominantly Jewish but was joined by Joe Reisert, a Catholic scholar the group met in Princeton. The pre-military academy assisted with logistical support during the program’s first two years (1991-92). In 1993, the activity moved to Jerusalem, to the Ohel Nechama synagogue in Katamon, because the founders realized it was not feasible to maintain the program in Eli, where young students have no social framework in the isolated settlement beyond their group. In addition, they realized that if the college was to be built in Eli, between Ramallah and Nablus, only a particular segment of Israeli society would come. They intended to “attract students from all over the country and from the entire ideological-political-conceptual spectrum,” explains Polisar.243F[[23]](#footnote-23) This tendency will become characteristic of Shalem.

One of the shortcomings members of the group noticed upon their arrival in Jerusalem is that men who came from the USA had a wide variety of options to choose from if they wished to study Torah. On the other hand, women had no options at the time, so the group joined forces with Rabbanit Henkin. Together they founded Midreshet Nishmat (in IALA’s catalog, Yael Hazony is referred to as co-founder of Nishmat). Nishmat was a groundbreaking institution for Torah study for women, and this was another effect of that small group of students from Princeton.

After the 1992 elections, Polisar was drawn into the Peace Watch organization, which focused on monitoring the implementation of the Oslo Accords by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Sharansky says that Polisar came to him and said: “You monitored the crimes of Moscow and the Soviet Union, let us establish a group that will monitor Israel and the Palestinians and how they are doing in fulfilling their Oslo commitments.”244F[[24]](#footnote-24) The group was not entirely rightwing. Sharansky adds that he was impressed by Polisar’s ability to draw people from all different factions of Israeli society to speak from a clear conservative standpoint and yet be able to talk to the entire Israeli society.

As we will see henceforth, this cross-sectoral spirit will become a leading character of Shalem and *Tchelet*. At least for a certain period Shalem and *Tchelet* were indeed able to attract scholars and contributors from a relatively broad spectrum of Israeli society. IALA, Peace Watch, Shalem, and *Tchelet* aimed at creating a broad coalition of ideas on the Zionist spectrum and refrained from being an exclusive home for a narrow ideological circle. At the same time, Shalem became the central hub for emerging rightwing thinkers. This melting pot of ideas is emblematic of the translation process I am looking into in this work.

Weinstein says that “as early as 1991, it was obvious that the direction is a full-fledged college. IALA was just the pilot stage. We later raised millions of dollars based on the success of this pilot”. So let us now see how IALA evolved into Shalem.

### Shalem Center

*I do not believe that a policy paper can change the future of the State of Israel – but the Shalem Center might. We will be able to judge this within 50 years*

Yoram Hazony, 2008

The Shalem Center was the next step, officially established in 1994. The name “Shalem” was suggested by Ofir HaIvry, who would also be the founding editor of *Tchelet* two years later.



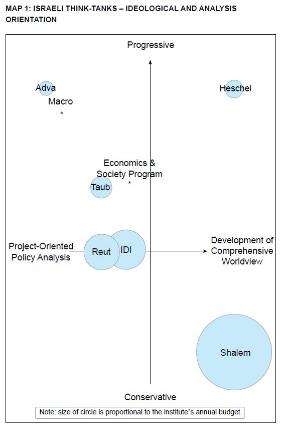
Images 1-2: Position Papers Published by the Shalem Center, 1997

The initial money for Shalem Center came from the well-known Jewish philanthropist Ronald Lauder, who was introduced to Yoram Hazony by Netanyahu. Lauder was interested in establishing an American-style think tank that would influence decision-makers and agreed to fund one-third of the Center's costs. Hazony made it clear to him that even though the deal was acceptable, as soon as they got the opportunity, they would establish a college because that was the real thing for them. Both strategies were rooted in American culture and somewhat foreign or new to Israeli society. In this sense, even before translating the first article Shalem had already started translating American strategies and modes of operation into Israeli society. During its first years, Shalem did publish several position papers. Prof. Moav conducted policy-oriented research, Polisar published several position papers together with Yitzhak Klein245F[[25]](#footnote-25), Hazony fought to change the school’s history curriculum, and the center as a whole advocated for “Herzl’s day”, which was eventually legislated in 2004 and is mentioned every 10th of Iyar (Herzl’s Hebrew birthday, usually in May). Most of Shalem’s papers did not have any notable impact, certainly not an impact approaching today's Kohelet Policy Forum. Yet, they deserve to be recognized for their pioneering work in the field.

This tension will accompany Shalem for years to come. “When you have a liberal arts program and a political think tank, you get a hybrid creature”, told me Weinstein. There was also a built-in tension between Netanyahu and Shalem. He wanted it to be “his” institute so that he would bring the money, and they would do what he thought was needed. “But when you recruit good people”, says Weinstein, “they don't want to follow orders but rather do what they think needs to be done.” As the tension between these two strategies grew, Lauder eventually withdrew his support.

Contrary to popular opinion, the connection between Shalem and Netanyahu was only sometimes successful, and in any event, Shalem was an independent institution. Although Hazony helped Netanyahu write his book, *A Place Under the Sun*246F[[26]](#footnote-26), it was Netanyahu's book, and Hazony was not a shadow writer. Netanyahu does acknowledge Hazony’s contribution to the book’s background research which helped solidify its credibility, but this is almost the only mention of Hazony or Shalem in his 591 pages long recently published autobiography.247F[[27]](#footnote-27) When senior Israeli newsperson Amnon Abramowitz once accused Shalem of working in Netanyahu's service, Shalem threatened to file a libel suit. Abramowitz folded back and apologized.248F[[28]](#footnote-28) Schnee told me there was an instruction on behalf of the Center's management to convey a clear message: “We are not Bibi's center nor Bibi's assistants.” For example, as the Center's spokesperson, Schnee received frequent requests from the media to interview Yoram Hazony about Netanyahu. He turned them all down while trying to promote interviews with Yoram Hazony about his ideas and Merkaz Shalem, which received relatively little attention. Later on, not only did Netanyahu not help Shalem, but he also torpedoed donations to the Center. The money they raised came from donors unrelated to Netanyahu or those who decided to donate despite his opposition.

In 2008, Bensimhon-Peleg published a thorough research examining Israeli think tanks and dedicated an entire chapter to Shalem.249F[[29]](#footnote-29) Beyond stating the facts we already reviewed, Bensimhon-Peleg confirms and elaborates on the uniqueness of Shalem, compared to other think tanks on the scene: 1) it explicitly promoted a neoconservative, rightwing worldview; 2) it declared that it aimed to help formulate a neoconservative ideology, which is adapted to Israeli society and the Jewish world at large; 3) it saw itself as laying the foundation of a new form of political and social thinking, which will ultimately change Israeli society. As aforementioned (see page 95 above), although at least one rightwing think tank preceded Shalem (the JCPA) and at least one rightwing magazine preceded *Tchelet* (*Nativ*), none of them set such clear, ambitious, and long-term goals.



**Image 3: Israeli Think Tanks in 2008**

**Source: Bensimhon-Peleg, 2008**

Shalem's strategic focus was not influencing contemporary policymakers but cultivating future leadership and intelligentsia. The Center emphasized the long-term, spanning decades and even generations. According to Hazony, the center prioritized tackling the big questions and investing in education over attempting to exert immediate influence on a particular government policy.

“I do not believe”, told Hazony to Bensimhon (I could not get an interview with him myself, despite multiple attempts), “that a policy paper can change the future of the State of Israel – but the Shalem Center might. We will be able to judge this within 50 years. We will be able to see whether there is a new mode of thinking, a new worldview, for Israeli society … A comprehensive worldview that, in turn, will affect policy making. In order to provide this, we need first to address the fundamental questions of truth, human nature, the existence of a Jewish state, etc. We need a worldview that will provide the reasoning for us living in this place … If we have that, I will be able to claim that we [the Shalem Center] have succeeded.”250F[[30]](#footnote-30)

To this end, the three main programs of Merkaz Shalem were designed to influence public opinion and discourse from the very beginning and to lay the foundations for the future college. A college, in their perception, should be a combination of research, teaching, and publishing. Shalem was structured to comply with that vision: a) research institutes in various fields; b) programs for students; and c) Shalem Publishing, *Tchelet,* and *Azure*.

The Center created six primary research areas, organized as “research institutes.” Each institute was viewed as the platform for a future department at the Liberal Arts College to be formed or even a university. These institutes included Zionist history and ideas; philosophy, politics, and religion; archeology; economic and social policy; law and constitution; and strategic studies. Each institute had a defined research agenda. For example, *The Institute for Philosophy, Politics and Religion,* established in 2001, sought to develop an innovative approach to those disciplines that form the heart of the modern humanities curriculum. The mission of *The Institute for Zionist History and Ideas* was “to assist in strengthening the intellectual foundations of Jewish nationalism and the State of Israel by constructing a comprehensive, academically sound history of Zionism, and by exploring and contributing to the development of Zionist thought.” As we will see in *Tchelet*, Shalem argued that Israeli scholars have been challenging traditional Zionism by portraying the history of the Jewish State as a sequence of moral failings and its customs and beliefs as fabricated and deceptive. This institute's work is based on the premise that the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, and later rabbinic literature must be brought into a dialogue with the Western canon on the most significant issues in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and political theory. This approach is critical to our understanding of Shalem’s translation process, and I will later ask to what extent it was received or rejected in Israel.

*The Archeology Institute* was established to provide historically proven foundations for the Bible. *The Institute for Economic and Social Policy* promoted advancing a public philosophy that aligns with the principles of free markets. It advocated for reforms that aimed to enhance economic freedom and stimulate growth. Its objective was to position Israel's economy among the world's most competitive and free markets, which according to Shalem, was crucial to the success of Zionism itself, as we will see henceforth. *Finally, the Institute for Strategic Studies* was dedicated to exploring the regional and global challenges facing Israel and the West.

Finally, *The Institute for Law and Constitution* was created to influence the public debate regarding formulating a constitution for the State of Israel and to ensure that the adopted constitution will strengthen Israel's identity as a Jewish state. This was also the motivation for establishing a separate organization in the emerging conservative ecosystem: the Institute for Zionist Strategy, founded in 2004 by Israel Harel. Harel was a member of the public forum assembled by the Israeli Institute for Democracy to promote a constitution. Still, he soon felt he was brought in as a rightwing fig leaf. So he decided to part ways and establish his own institution to draft an alternative constitution, securing Israel as a home for the Jewish people.251F[[31]](#footnote-31) Although Harel initiated this move regardless of Shalem, it soon connected with Koppel’s efforts to promote the Nation-State Basic Law and became part of the larger emerging Israeli conservative ecosystem. We will return to this part of the story later.

The various research institutes under Shalem Center had a team of research fellows who conducted research and delivered lectures in the center's programs. The center housed approximately 30 scholars at its peak, and all publicly associated themselves with the Center, reflecting its increasing credibility and reputation among Israel’s intellectual elite. In addition, Shalem also awarded post-graduate and post-doctoral fellowships to Israelis and visiting students and organized international academic conferences.

As noted above, one of Shalem's main goals was to position itself as a new academic and teaching center. To this end, it initiated courses and educational programs to propel fundamental change in Israeli society and train future academics, journalists, and decision-makers. One of the first programs was the “Tchelet Fellows”, launched in 1995 with only four people: Assaf Sagiv, Ofir HaIvry, Yoav Sorek, and Yehoshua Weinstein. “When we started”, said Hazony, “we did not realize how big the need for such an institution was. Students who come here are not looking for a degree; they are looking for answers. They want to learn and to think about the “big questions.” They want a real discussion, and they want a real exchange of ideas, which they do not seem to be getting at university.”

On the publishing side, Shalem was known for its Tchelet journal and its book publishing, which brought the best of Western literature to the Israeli reader in a masterful and complete Hebrew translation. The library does not include only conservative thinkers but also thinkers such as Locke and Hobbes, with the understanding that a conservative intellectual needs to be broadly familiar with the field of ideas. Both the book publishing and *Tchelet* were a response to the same problem identified by Shalem’s founders: the victory of the Right is an empty victory, and it needs conceptual depth. However, almost all of the Center’s donors opposed this, as their goal was political: to bring Netanyahu to power and influence immediate policy-making. The only one who strongly supported this was Zalman Bernstein, as we shall see.

In HaIvry’s opinion, the Right in the third decade of the 21st century is repeating the same mistake within the *Shibboleth* Library, for example (the Tikvah Fund’s line of books), which focuses on publishing books that have a lifespan of about five years, instead of publishing books that will be taught in universities even in 50 years. “It costs two hundred thousand dollars to get Hume out,” he says, “but it will be here for another hundred years.” Similarly, raising money for a leadership seminar for young people is relatively easy. Still, it is much more difficult to find donors with long-term thinking who will support writing dissertations on the Maharal's political doctrine, for example.252F[[32]](#footnote-32) This tension, between the urgent and the important, between the short and the long term, will accompany Shalem for years to come.

From a broader perspective, prioritizing the important over the immediate needs has been a long-standing position of American Jewry about the nascent State of Israel. American Zionists, such as Kaplan, acknowledged that this was the privilege of those not accountable for Israel's mere existence.253F[[33]](#footnote-33) Yet, their external viewpoint can tremendously benefit Israeli leaders who sometimes fail to see the big picture. To a large extent, Shalem’s leaders brought this traditional approach with them from America. Even though they chose to live and operate in Israel, they did not adopt the local tendency to prioritize the immediate over the important. This is key to understanding their role as translation agents.

In the second generation, though, the short-term attitude became more prominent in HaShiloach magazine (founded in 2016) and the Kohelet Policy Forum. As a result, a delicate integration between long and short-term thinking emerged. This is yet another example of how ideas have been translated into Israel, and we will review it more deeply below.

David Hazony, the younger brother of Yoram Hazony and the editor-in-chief of *Tchelet* between 2004-07, adds that book publishing was also one of the things that opened the door to the academic world for Shalem. “Shalem Publishing managed to do such high-level translations of important books”, he says, “that the universities could not take books from another publisher with an old and partial translation.” This concept endured in Shalem's book publishing for years to come. For example, while I was working on this research, Shalem was working on a masterful translation of “The Wealth of Nations” by Adam Smith, a project that has been going on for many years (under Assaf Sagiv’s management, who was also *Tchelet*’s last editor). In a conversation with Sagiv, he explained to me that the work takes so long because, for them, the quality of the translation is above all else, and every comment or explanation is carefully checked. The rationale is the same: “Because we know this book will be read in universities for another 50 years”.254F[[34]](#footnote-34)

### The Israel Connection

*Of course, Zalman’s money played a key role, but even before the money there was a dream*

Natan Sharansky

Around the same time, Israelis who shared a similar worldview joined Shalem, and in the meeting between the groups, the founding group of *Tchelet* began to take shape. One of the central figures in this process was Ofir HaIvry, who also served as the founding editor and editor-in-chief of the journal between 1996-2000 (the first eight issues). He came to Shalem following a local Israeli intellectual circle called “Shiloach Group” (חוג שילוח), which operated from the early 1980s to the early 1990s. No, there is no connection to the historical journal *HaShiloach*, and certainly not to the contemporary journal by the same name. Instead, the group was named after Zvi Shiloach, who founded and organized it. Shiloach was a socio-political activist who started at Mapai (the Israel Labor Party, the ruling party until 1977 and the predecessor of the contemporary Labor Party, *HaAvodah*). Similarly to American neoconservatives, he abandoned socialism, joined Moshe Shamir and Natan Alterman, and started the Likkud Party, which would come to power in 1977. Members of this group saw themselves as the successors of activist Zionism. It was a small group of about thirty people, many of them young such as the HaIvry, Gideon Sa'ar, Zvi Hauser, and Eran Bar-Tal. Similarly to the Princetonians, HaShiloach circle also published a magazine called *HaMesser* (the message) and thought the Israeli Right was mired in ideological stagnation. This analysis was the common ground for the connection between the American and Israeli groups.

The Israeli group and its magazine deserve thorough research, which I plan to conduct in the future. The historical roots of this group are already being studied by my colleague Uri Appenzeller whose dissertation covers the origins of Jewish political conservatism in the earlier 20th century. What is clear, in any event, is that on one level, the connection between those two groups was made on an equal basis, and HaIvry recruited Hazony and Polisar to his project just as much as they recruited him to theirs. The ideological differences were minor and revolved around root philosophical questions rather than their practical implications. For example, from an economic point of view, the Israeli group supported an open economy. Still, not because Sa'ar or Hauser read the writings of Hayek and the Austrian school, but because they thought that socialism might have been good for its time, but today (that is, in the early 90s), the situation is different. A free economy is the way to advance the country. As I will show, promoting a free economy on Zionist grounds will also appear later in *Tchelet* (see page 244 below).255F[[35]](#footnote-35)

However, the organizational differences were significant. Hazony and Polisar followed the traditional American way of doing business. They recruited a Jewish mega-donor, a patron, who believed in them and decided to support their efforts for years to come. Dozens of think tanks, research institutions, and many other not-for-profit organizations were established this way in American Jewry, and America in general. Without reaching out to American donors, securing multi-year-multi-million-dollar support for such an effort would have been virtually impossible for the HaShiloach group. The reason is not only that Israel did not have enough high-net-worth individuals back then (which it does today256F[[36]](#footnote-36)). The deeper reason is cultural, as Israel has yet to sprout its own culture of strategic mega-giving. Israeli mega-donors do exist, but Israeli philanthropy is still, by and large, confined to traditional causes such as education, hospitals, and welfare. Strategic mega-giving is much more common in the United States, and in this sense, Shalem did not bring to Israel only ideas and even not only writing and publication methods. Instead, it brought to Israel a new kind of philanthropy, and as I will show henceforth, it was one of the first organizations to do so and definitely the first one on the Right.

In 1992, the Likkud government fell after 25 consecutive years in power since the 1977 turnover. Moshe Shamir left the Likkud, and the chair’s position was taken by a young and energetic politician who had recently finished his term as Israel's ambassador to the United States Binyamin Netanyahu. For HaShiloach, this was an opportunity to invest in promoting ideas and not just immediate political action. At the time, the Likkud and the Right had no significant educational, political, economic, or strategic plans. HaIvry concluded that it was time to formulate such strategies for the day when the Right would return to power (similar to the process American neoconservatism underwent in the 1970s, see page 85 above). He was friends with Zvi Hauser, who worked with Yoram Hazony at Netanyahu's office at the time, and that's where the connection was made.

According to Weinstein, Ofir Haivry was independent and had his own line of thought before he met Yoram. From his perspective, “he recruited us”, and not vice versa. Each side brought things the other side lacked, and this connection between Israeli Sabras and New Olim was bound to yield significant results.

Natan Sharansky joined Shalem in 2004 and was one of the most prominent figures. Sharansky, a former national hero, leader of the Soviet Jewry movement, and former senior politician and government minister recalls Hazony and Polisar as two impressive young men who came to Israel with an obvious idea in mind: “They were always talking about how important it is that Israel will also have some ‘Jewish Princeton’.”257F[[37]](#footnote-37) According to Sharansky, they viewed Princeton as the central place that trains people who go into the US government and infuses them with American values, which then become the administration’s values. They were weary that although the Jewish people played a significant role in designing the free world’s values, this was somehow entirely lost. They thought it was essential to renew the connection between Western philosophy and Jewish values, and they wanted to establish a college that would do precisely that. “I was very sympathetic to those people”, he says, “but at the time, it seemed to me like delusions.”258F[[38]](#footnote-38) According to Sharansky, if they had not brought their vision of a “Jewish Princeton”, he is not sure any of what we see today would have existed. “Of course, Zalman’s money played a key role”, he says, “but even before the money, there was a dream.”259F[[39]](#footnote-39) As for Netanyahu, Sharansky says that as far as he can remember, Netanyahu had a good connection with Shalem since he was also a conservative, believed in the free market, and identified with American values.260F[[40]](#footnote-40) Even though he is aware of the personal dispute between Netanyahu and Shalem, he still thinks that back then, Netanyahu realized that there weren’t any intellectual organizations on the Right. So he felt good about Shalem being there.

In any event, Hazony and HaIvry agreed that the ideas crisis in Israel only reflects a broader global crisis. They felt this way even though conservatism was still at its prime politically. Reagan and Thatcher were no longer in power, but their places were taken by George Bush and John Major (respectively), and a conservative hegemony was created in the West. At the same time, socialism went bankrupt, the communist empire collapsed, and the world seemed to be moving to the Right. At that time, Fukuyama even published his famous book about the “end of history” and the victory of the West, a declaration that, in retrospect, seems far-fetched but captured the hearts of many at that time.261F[[41]](#footnote-41)

Despite all this, HaIvry and Hazony thought this was not a real ideological revolution but a coalescence between the interests of different groups who joined in curbing communism. They identified that with communism out of the way, the conservative movement is heading toward a big intellectual crisis. The background for establishing Shalem and *Tchelet* was the insight, then, that the victory of conservatism is a *fata morgana*, an empty vessel that needs to be filled with content. “We thought that just as nationalism and monotheism are inventions that the Jews gave the world,” says HaIvry, “now we will also become a center of ideas for the entire world.” However, there was no creative space for the ideas of the Right. “If you were an intellectual,” explained to me David Hazony, “you would either be in the academia or on the Left, even if you felt Zionist.”262F[[42]](#footnote-42) There was a feeling that rightwing Israel was based on traditional and radical messianic religiosity, mixed with some kind of romantic Hebrew nationalism from Eastern Europe.

This strategy is not to be confused with Ahad Ha’Am, who believed there should be a spiritual and intellectual center in the Land of Israel, but without a formal state which could contaminate the spiritual effort. On the contrary, according to the founders of Shalem, a real and practical Jewish state is an essential part of the Jewish idea, according to which you adopt a particular lifestyle and become a better person as a result, even if you do not fully understand everything that stands behind this lifestyle.

The founders and leaders of Shalem wanted to bring Anglo-American conservatism to Israel and make it the new foundation for intellectual Zionism. To a certain extent, the idea was to recreate Princeton in Israel. However, they did not talk about the “rightwing camp”, certainly not in the way that the Right has become almost wholly identified with conservatism during the late 2010s. They tried to transfer and translate a different approach from American conservatism: The Big Tent strategy.

### The Big Tent

After Barry Goldwater's failure, Reagan's secret sauce for success was creating a grassroots movement that brought together conservative ideas with the interests of the individual (such as reducing taxes), along with harnessing the evangelicals to benefit the benefit of the Republican party. It was Reagan who coined the term “Big Tent”, and his strategy was to create a broad ideological coalition that would translate into massive political support. In those years, even a significant portion of the Jews voted for the Republican party, more than in any other election in the history of the United States.263F[[43]](#footnote-43)

This worldview was inherent to Shalem as well. As Schnee says, Hazony did not like the definitions of “Left” and “Right.” Schnee once asked him why he supports people on the Left so much. Hazony answered that it’s enough to agree that Israel is a Jewish state; we don’t have to agree on its borders. Sharansky adds that his sense of Shalem’s conservatism was that it was tolerant conservatism. “Here in Israel, the more Orthodox you are, the less tolerant you are”, he says, “but that was not what I felt there.”264F[[44]](#footnote-44)

This worldview persisted in the long run. For example, in 2018, Hazony published his best-selling book, *The Virtue of Nationalism*, which argued that nationalism is the most critical barrier in the face of tyranny.265F[[45]](#footnote-45) In this book, Hazony goes against the grain of research in nationalism and political history and argues that the real battle is between two competing paradigms: nationalism and imperialism. The imperialists in our generation are organizations like the UN and the EU; the problem is that they have to govern by forcibly coercing their subordinates. On the other hand, national frameworks enable people to interact freely while maintaining a sense of belonging. He sees this worldview as similar to Marxism: “an interesting and deep philosophical worldview, which denies reality.” As a result, he became a rising star on the global rightwing intellectual stage. In an interview he gave *HaAretz,* he warned of the deepening social polarization in Israel and of a situation in which the Left will denounce the Right entirely and vice versa. This was his first interview with an institutionalized media body in 20 years. 266F[[46]](#footnote-46) “It is hard to see how they (the United States and Britain) will get out of it”, he told the reporter, “and it’s important for us not only because the United States is a good and supportive friend, but also because Israelis have a tendency to import every social phenomenon that evolves in the United States.” Coming from the man who brought American neoconservatism to Israel, this statement deserves special attention. I do not cynically mean this. As I explained above, all significant ideas that impacted Israeli politics were imported from the West in this way or another. What Hazony is saying, in my understanding, is that this process has to be moderated and specific, like the process Shalem led, which translated a particular form of Western conservatism.

Assaf Sagiv, who joined *Tchelet* as a deputy editor at the end of 1999 (issue 8) and would later be the editor-in-chief (from 2007 until the journal's closure in 2012), says that the people who founded Shalem were part of a great intellectual awakening of their time and wanted to bring it to Israel. Part of the idea was to recreate Reagan’s “Big Tent”, except this time for the Zionist movement, and to implement the same strategy of a broad ideological coalition here in Israel. This is one of the reasons why Shalem was never politically identified and rarely dealt with geopolitical issues, as I will show below. Similarly, Shalem played a significant role in drafting and promoting the “Kinneret Treaty”, which aimed to promote solidarity in Israeli society, and even devoted to discussing it a vast space in the *Tchelet*.267F[[47]](#footnote-47) In this sense, Shalem’s approach can serve as an example of an attempt to instill Israeli national solidarity (ממלכתיות) as opposed to polarizing identity politics.

One prime example of Shalem’s support for people on the left would be Yossi Klein-HaLevi, today a senior researcher at the Hartman Institute, “which is sort of on the other side” compared to Shalem.268F[[48]](#footnote-48) Klein-HaLevi made aliyah in 1982, right after the First Lebanon War, which had a significant impact on him. He had initially started in Beitar (a rightwing youth movement, identified with Jabotinsky and Begin). Eventually, he became involved with the Jewish Defense League in the US, the brainchild of Rabbi Meir Kahanna.269F[[49]](#footnote-49) However, he emphasized that the JDL in the US was not a racist movement like Kahanna’s movement in Israel. Like many others, Klein-HaLevi chose to detach himself from the movement when it became ideologically racist. Upon immigrating to Israel, HaLevi realized that his rightwing ideology did not adequately address the Palestinian problem and other issues. Consequently, he shifted towards the political center. Despite not identifying with Shalem's conservative ideas and having limited knowledge of economics, he still decided to join the Center. Another example would be Rabbi Dr. Yosef Isaac Lifshitz, who told me he does not see the discussion about conservatism and progressivism as intellectually exciting or engaging. These two competing ideologies have debates about how to run the world, but that is not philosophy. “This is my personal opinion against all of my friends at Shalem.”270F[[50]](#footnote-50) Similarly to Lifshitz, Shalem's conservative ideology did not interest Klein-HaLevi, and the heads of Shalem knew it; there were no secrets. He was not interested in proving that Western democracy came from Jewish roots and was not excited about the classic philosophical books. It was the peak of the second intifada, and Klein-HaLevi wanted to be in a place willing to fight against the demonization of Israel. Michael Oren brought him in and received a scholarship for six years to write his book *Like Dreamers*, which was eventually published after eleven years.271F[[51]](#footnote-51)

But the differences were not only ideological but also strategic. For example, during the Second Lebanon War, Klein-Halevi and Michael Oren opened a “war room” at the Shalem Center that worked with foreign media in English. Yet, he notes that not everybody at Shalem saw this activity favorably, as some of them thought this was the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For them, Shalem had a different mission and was committed to the long-term cultivation of ideas. Adherence to such a task sometimes required ignoring the immediate events of the hour, and in retrospect, Klein-Halevi admits that they were probably right. The proof, according to him, is that they were able to realize an idea they conceived as young students in the US and establish a college in a different country without any prior knowledge or relevant connections.

Interestingly enough, Klein-HaLevi was not the only person at Shalem that Kahanna had influenced. According to a report in *HaAretz*, one of the galvanizing events in Hazony's life was an encounter with Kahanna in the fall of 1984 (around the time the *Tory* was established). *HaAretz* correspondent Akiva Eldar published excerpts from a eulogy Hazony wrote in 1990 after Kahanna’s assassination in New York. “We were mesmerized,” Hazony wrote about the meeting with Kahanna at Princeton. Most of his friends, he noted, had never before spoken with a Jewish “believer” and were amazed to discover that an Orthodox Jew could be an intelligent person capable of defending his opinions against a group of Princeton students. They had all entertained an image of Judaism as something primitive. “We listened in astonishment, and finally in shame, when we began to realize that he was right.” However, *HaAretz* did not do justice to Hazony in this report. For a start, the actual headline of the article was “Farewell, from a 'non-Kahannist'. “ Secondly, when Eldar cited the words “we began to realize he was right”, he omitted the last part of the sentence, which gives it an entirely different meaning: “… he was right. We did know nothing”. Meaning, Hazony agreed with an Orthodox rabbi that he and his 20-year-old friends at Princeton knew nothing about Judaism. I believe any historian or sociologist of Judaism, let alone any rabbi, in America at the time would have agreed. This does not infer agreement with Kahanna’s views whatsoever. Hazony did applaud Kahanna for inspiring many young Jews to become observant, move to Israel, or at least become more active on Jewish issues. Yet he emphasized that “neither I nor any of my friends from college ever adopted Kahane’s political views.”272F[[52]](#footnote-52) Eldar cited none of this, unfortunately, which raises a question about the honesty of his report. Thirty-two years later, by the way, Hazony will say that Kahanna did not have as significant an influence on him as people think.273F[[53]](#footnote-53)

### Scaling Up

*The Zionist is a Jew who advocates for another Jew to give money to send a third Jew to the Land of Israel.*

Berl Katznelson274F[[54]](#footnote-54)

The significant growth of Shalem was made possible thanks to the entry of a unique and significant donor into the arena: Zalman Bernstein (1926-1999). Bernstein was a New York Jew who made a considerable fortune in wealth management. In addition, he got closer to Judaism through Rabbi Shlomo Riskin and the synagogue he founded in Manhattan (Lincoln Square Synagogue) and embraced the Orthodox Jewish way of life. Interestingly, this is another important character in our story who was a ba’al teshuva.

Hazony knew Rabbi Riskin, who agreed to introduce him to one of his most significant donors. Yoram convinced Zalman that a liberal arts college was a cause worthy of his fortune. This went against the advice of his close friend Arthur Fried who told him not to engage with higher education since it’s a bottomless pit and the results are never measurable. Bernstein asked how much they needed, Weinstein did the math, and they told him they needed $300 million. He didn't give that amount, but in 1997 he decided to start investing in Shalem alongside Lauder and even forbade the Center's leaders to engage in additional fundraising so they would not spend time on it. Shalem’s budget has doubled every year since then, and Bernstein also tried to implement organizational changes and pushed the Center to work more efficiently from a budgetary and administrative point of view. This task was not easy for them in the beginning.

It should be noted that this characterizes a sweeping change in Jewish philanthropy that began around the same time. As part of that change, American donors started to demand that the supported organizations raise their professional level and business conduct using tools and best practices from the private sector. In this sense, Shalem was part of translating and transmitting American ideas and business strategies, and procedures.

Natan Sharansky testifies that in his meetings with Bernstein, unrelated to Shalem, he realized that Bernstein was an admirer of this young group. “I can’t even say he was a conservative”, he adds. He also shared an interesting anecdote that sheds more light on Bernstein’s character. Bernstein attended Rabbi Avi Weiss’s synagogue several times (Weiss is a leading figure in American liberal and open Orthodoxy). Then all of a sudden gave Weiss a significant contribution to his synagogue (Sharansky can’t remember if it was a hundred thousand or a million Dollars). The reason was that although Rabbi Weiss’s synagogue was Orthodox, it allowed for a very equal and symmetric setting of men and women instead of what Bernstein identified as the “Haredization” of American synagogues (meaning, moving further to the Ultra-Orthodox side). Sharansky thinks that Bernstein was a conservative liberal, which is valid for the Shalem group as a whole. “Today being a conservative is close to Trump”, he says, “but back then, it was almost the other way around.”275F[[55]](#footnote-55) As I have shown above, the tension between moderate and populist conservatism was a recurring phenomenon.

A year later, in 1998, Bernstein had already become the primary donor of Shalem. However, Lauder was unwilling to increase his contribution to the Center. A year later, unfortunately, Bernstein passed away at the age of 72, but he secured the enduring existence of the Center through the Tikvah Fund he founded before his death. Tikvah had two other “sister” foundations, all created from Bernstein’s estate: the Keshet Foundation, which deals with Jewish education in the US, and the Avi Chai Foundation, which promoted Jewish renewal in Israel. The first two foundations were entrusted to Bernstein's widow and several of his friends. The Tikvah Fund was entrusted to his business partner Roger Hertog, who was several years younger than him. At the time of Bernstein's passing, it contained approximately 160 million dollars, and although its guidelines were defined during his lifetime, he left Hertog considerable room for his discretion. Except for a brief passing episode of several investments in Israeli high-tech companies, the only thing Tikvah did in its early years was to support the Shalem Center, and it continues to keep it to this day, according to Bernstein's will. But it has expanded beyond that since then, and one cannot understand Israeli conservatism, or even the Israeli Right, in the 21st century without understanding Tikvah.

## Major Themes

In this part, I will analyze the major themes *Tchelet* dealt with and try to understand the discourse it aimed to induce in each field. I will rely on essays as they were published and assume their writers meant what they wrote in them. I will also show how different pieces interplayed with one another and how, over time, *Tchelet* seeded ideas and became a magnet for debates over them.

Another thing to remember is that *Tchelet* was not monolithic or a one-person show. It was a summary of different worldviews and strategies that competed inside Shalem. We have already learned above about the tension between two competing strategies to influence Israeli society and intelligentsia: one would prioritize profound philosophical writing aimed at the long-term impact. From this standpoint, quality and profound impact come first, even if the cost is publishing fewer books and being less relevant to day-to-day events and political discussion. The other strategy prioritizes immediate response and reaching mass numbers, even at the expense of quality. We saw it, for example, in the tension around Klein-HaLevi’s quick response to world media during the Second Lebanon War, in the internal debate between Ran Baratz and Eric Cohen in Tikvah, and the stark difference between Tikvah Israel under Ammiad Cohen’s leadership and the previous model of Shalem. *Tchelet*, in this sense, belonged to the first strategy, as Ofir HaIvry told me: “In every issue I publish I want at least one article that is an in-depth article that will be relevant even in 50 years”.437F[[56]](#footnote-56)

Assaf Sagiv (editor between 2007-12) followed a similar line. It was important for him to arouse Israeli intellectual thought, yet he opposed immediate political influence and focused on the long-term. In this sense, he followed the first strategy, and to this day, he is considered an outlier in the Israeli conservative movement and one of the only thinkers that criticize it from within. His most famous attempt in this direction was his article published by the Van-Leer Institute, which condemned Israeli conservatism for adopting counter-conservative, radical, and revolutionary approaches and methods.438F[[57]](#footnote-57) After his first year as a young fellow at Shalem, Polisar, and Hazony asked Lifshitz whether or not they would keep him and Assaf Inbary for another year. Lifshitz told them: “If you want one of the most important authors in Israel and one of the most important thinkers in Israel to be ours, give them money to keep them here. If you want them to belong to Hartman and such, let them go.”439F[[58]](#footnote-58) They accepted his advice on this matter.

## The Importance of Ideas

As I have shown earlier, “ideas have consequences” was a common neoconservative catchphrase. In Tikvah seminars, one often heard teachers relating to the “battlefield of ideas.” The mission of *Tchelet* and Shalem was, first and foremost, to fight this battle and win.

“The Jewish state is first and foremost a political idea”, wrote Yoram Hazony in the first issue of *Tchelet*.440F[[59]](#footnote-59) When we discuss *Tchelet*’s conservatism, we will dive deeper into this article, but for now, what’s important is that Hazony also pointed to the fact that prominent Western thinkers such as Smith, Burke, and Hayek were never translated into Hebrew; only anti-nationalist Marxism was, which undermined Zionism instead of strengthening it. “Yoram said that the Soviet Union disappeared because of ideas”, Schnee shared with me, “not because of tanks that took over it. They simply stopped believing in the idea.”441F[[60]](#footnote-60) *Tchelet*’s mission, in this regard, was to strengthen the political idea of a Jewish state, to ensure its survival and flourishing.

A similar approach was expressed in Ofir HaIvry’s lamentation after the 1999 elections. It was the first time direct voting for the Prime Minister was introduced, which inflated the power of small parties (Shas, for example, received 17 seats in the parliament back then) and led to political chaos. It was canceled soon after. However, in real time HaIvry argued that to revitalize the Jewish state, we need an effort of the political mind, “which alone can bring the restoration of national ideals to the center of political discourse”, and restore honor and authority to the Knesset.442F[[61]](#footnote-61)

In the same issue, Irving Kristol argued that Jewish tradition does not train Jews for foreign affairs and political thought. Furthermore, American Jewry could not exist without Israel, and vice versa, and both require a healthy Jewish political tradition.443F[[62]](#footnote-62) To fix this, we can do nothing but exhausting educational activities.

*Tchelet* took on this mission rather seriously as the publication arm of Shalem, which was and still is primarily an educational institution. Developing a tradition entails more than presenting complex views on contemporary affairs. It requires digging deeper and revealing the roots of political, social, and economic ideas. *Tchelet* was deeply engaged in such efforts, as well as Shalem Press.

For example, Ethan Dor-Shav wrote on how Kohelet (the biblical book, not the policy forum which didn’t exist yet) deals with the philosophical search for happiness by a man who has everything.444F[[63]](#footnote-63) He concludes that the true eternal thing is wisdom and ideas. “The belief in knowledge as the most elevated form of spirituality was the defining character of Judaism for generations,” wrote Dor-Shav, “and it teaches that even today only ideas can stand the test of time and change the world.”445F[[64]](#footnote-64) The translated essay brought in that issue by Leo Strauss, went in the same direction and explained that liberal education is all about learning not only about the great thinkers of the past but also from them. Three years later, David Hazony added that to grow great leaders, society must invest in education, specifically in higher education focused on history, ideas, and values.446F[[65]](#footnote-65) In Israel, this should manifest in the form of Jewish Humanities. Yet this field is underfunded. In 2008, his brother Yoram referred to Shalem’s educational efforts and asserted that Shalem was trying to challenge the dichotomy between the yeshivah world and the Kantian-based secular world by establishing no less than an alternative academy.447F[[66]](#footnote-66)

The battlefield of ideas also has real implications on the battlefield of, well, weapons. According to David Hazony, for example, the main weakness of the West in its struggle with radical Islam is not weapons, human resources, or technology but rather a lack of coherent ideology: “The greatest dangers for the West and for Israel lie not in military equipment of battle arrays, but rather in the perception of the conflict.”448F[[67]](#footnote-67) Winning this conflict requires, first and foremost, “a battle of ideas, which will borderline the conflict and bring about an assessment of the values at hand.”

By positioning themselves on the battlefield of ideas, *Tchelet* and Shalem also drew fire and made quite a few enemies. For example, relatively early on, when Hazony published his book “Jewish State”449F[[68]](#footnote-68) (excerpts of which appeared in *Tchelet* and *Azure* as well), he drew significant opposition from academics in Israel (an entire convention was held against the book). Hazony’s main argument was that Israel was under attack by its intellectual elite, coordinated by members of the Hebrew University, which served as one of its power bases. This attack was more dangerous to Israel than physical attacks, and it must be met with a “counterattack” on the “battleground of ideas.” In this sense, to a large extent, Hazony’s book and the Tchelet-Shalem-Azure project were massive weapons in this non-violent battle. The book confronted him with Prof. Israel Bartal, who wrote the history curriculum for Israeli schools.450F[[69]](#footnote-69) It was also criticized by Mark Lila, former editor of *The Public Interest* (during the 1980s), one of the leading neoconservative journals in America.451F[[70]](#footnote-70) Lila’s primary argument was that neoconservatives are not anti-intellectuals but “counter-intellectuals”. They assume that the primary motivations underlying most academic work are progressive. Their intellectual mission, thus, is motivated by aspirations to influence the political field, and restore the cultural *status quo ante*, rather than deciding on a purely historical debate.

I will add that it goes deeper than that. Shalem translated into Israel the American respect for ideas and intellectualism, the mere concept according to which “ideas have consequences.” This is not to say that Israeli society was ignorant or had no respect for its intellectuals and scholars. On the contrary, Israel is known for its vibrant cultural and intellectual scene. However, Israeli intellectuals' political and public “weight” is far lower than the United States. In Israel, it would be fair to say that military ranks have far more consequences or political weight than intellectual excellence. Indeed, the US has also seen a few generals going into politics and even becoming presidents. Still, it is almost a natural career path for former high-ranking officers in Israel.452F[[71]](#footnote-71) True, recent years have seen a shift in this regard, with four former Chiefs of Staff going into politics with extremely high expectations and hitting a glass ceiling (Ya’alon, Ashkenazi, Eizenkot, and Gantz). As of May 2023, only two are still in the Knesset, without significant power. This apparent shift in Israeli politics and society deserves research in and of itself. For this research, it will suffice to say that at least in the 1990s and early 2000s, military ranks still played a very significant role in Israeli politics. What’s important to remember in this context is that the founders and leaders of Shalem had no significant military background, if at all. I can cautiously argue that they were trying to create an alternative or complimentary center of gravity in Israeli politics, organized around intellectualism rather than militarism. This might be key to understanding the cultural translation process they had led.

In 2000, Lila noted that Hazony aimed to bring counter-intellectualism to Israel. He predicted that Hazony’s book would help him create a network of writers, editors, academics, and foundations to promote this “battle of ideas”. He also predicted that Hazony would succeed and then fail, like American neoconservatism. More than two decades later, let us take a deep dive into the major themes and ideas crafted and promoted by *Tchelet* and ask whether or not Lila was right.

## Judaism

*Tchelet* positioned itself as a magazine promoting “Ideas for the Jewish Nation”, or “Israeli Thought”. As such, it is only natural that Jewish topics were extensively discussed in the magazine, and “Israeliness” was viewed as another milestone in a millennia-old Jewish journey. While this may seem obvious to many, it is not apparent to many progressive Israeli thought leaders, who view the “new Israeli” as a leapfrog from traditional Judaism, which is connected directly to biblical Judaism ("מהתנ"ך לפלמ"ח"). Fighting against this notion and grounding every aspect of contemporary Israeli identity and society in deep Jewish roots was one of the major undertakings of *Tchelet*.

The scope was rather broad and included anything from theology through Jewish history and antisemitism to trends in contemporary Jewish life. *Tchelet* was generally pro-Jewish, perhaps even pro-Orthodox. The Jewish discourse within it marked Jewish wisdom and history as critical components in modern Zionist and conservative identity and thought. Furthermore, several essays argued that Jewish thought and tradition were one of the major, if not the major, sources of Western thought and civilization.

To understand the role *Tchelet* tried to play in this discussion, we need to put it first in a broader context. The vast majority of Israelis were people who, or their ancestors, broke away at some point from traditional Judaism, and pledged their allegiance to a modern secular ideal: liberal democracy in its Zionist form. Although this new form of Judaism was rooted in the Jewish language, Jewish land, and Jewish tradition, to a large extent, it was also removed from traditional Judaism and, to some extent, tried to create an alternative to it. For several reasons that deserve separate research, this complexity led many Israelis into an identity crisis that burst into after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. As shown above, a vast teshuvah movement was one significant response to this crisis. On the far end of the spectrum, by 2018 (according to Israel’s *Statistical Yearbook*), approximately 250,000 Israeli Jews defined themselves as “*hozrim be-teshuvah*” (a term synonymous with *ba’aley teshuvah*, “newly observant” or “returnees”). If anything, the number is too low since the statistics cover only those over twenty. Such *ba’aley teshuvah* have ended up at every point on the spectrum of Israeli observance and affiliation. In the Haredi world alone, they constitute about 20 percent of the total. However, this process wasn’t binary, and between Ultra-Orthodoxy on the one hand and Ultra-Secularism (for lack of a better word) on the other, a plethora of Jewish affiliations and levels of observance emerged since the 1970s (Sephardi Jews reclaiming their heritage, Jewish renewal, open Batey-Midrash, “social justice” Judaism, combinations of Kabbalah and Eastern spirituality, to name a few).

This process was not so different from what Leo Strauss had predicted fifty years earlier in his forward to Spinoza’s theological-political essay. As we may recall, he predicted that the response to the disappointment from Western liberalism would be *teshubah* (see page 107 above). To Strauss, viewing the problem in the Western context, the solution was an individual one. However, as it scaled up and reached hundreds of thousands of individuals, it had enormous social implications. This article was never directly referenced in *Tchelet* (although it was taught at some of Tikvah’s seminars). Still, given Strauss's significance for Jewish conservatism, I can cautiously assume that Tchelet’s leaders were well aware of this idea. Hence, Strauss’s framing of the “Jewish predicament” will enable us to understand the Jewish conservative discourse over Judaism better, as it appeared in *Tchelet*.

Indeed, as early as its fourth issue, *Tchelet* celebrated what seemed like a movement of return to the Jewish bookshelf: “When it comes to Judaism, Israel is a staunchly conservative country”, wrote David Hazony, and pointed to the fact that amounting research shows a growing interest in the Jewish bookshelf in Israel.453F[[72]](#footnote-72) This new legitimacy to Jewish tradition was a significant contribution to the Jewish State, in Hazony’s eyes, and he counted the “cultural shakeup” caused by the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin as a possible reason for this movement. This thesis is shared by many other Israeli thinkers and activists, who saw the assassination as a turning point in the level of interest in Jewish learning among secular Israeli Jews. Several influential organizations and communities for non-religious Jewish studies were established (or grew significantly) in the aftermath of the murder, such as Kolot, Alma, and Niggun HaLev. Interestingly enough, almost all of them were related in some way or another to the Avi Chai Foundation and Beit Avi Chai in Jerusalem, funded by the same Zalman Bernstein who supported Shalem and *Tchelet.*454F[[73]](#footnote-73)

The same issue also brought a review (by Adam Pruzan) of Abrams’ book on Jews in America.455F[[74]](#footnote-74) Abrams advocated for choosing Orthodox Judaism to sustain Jewish identity in a Christian America (yet he did not necessarily suggest a full-fledged embracement of halachic life).456F[[75]](#footnote-75) This book review and similar pieces can be a prime example of how inherently Jewish-American concepts traveled into Israeli discourse, perhaps even unintentionally.

In the US, Jewish identity is inevitably tied with some religious version of Judaism. It can range from Ultra-Orthodox Hasidism through Reform Judaism and all the way to fringe denominations such as Reconstructionism. Yet, all of these are on the religious spectrum. Secular Judaism in American society is rare and unstable, as it quickly leads to disengagement with Jewish life and assimilation. In Israel, however, it has been proven for several generations that a solid national Jewish identity can exist and thrive with only minor religious components (and even with significant anti-religious components). Analyzing Jewish nationality through Jewish religiosity is, to a large extent, an imported American concept. It seems like the underlying assumption was that the more religious Israel would become, the more conservative it would become. Let us continue reading and testing this hypothesis.

A fascinating viewpoint on this matter was presented in *Tchelet*’s sixth issue, dedicated to Israel’s 50th anniversary, by Dr. Jamal Zahalka (back then, an Arab political activist who later became a Member of Knesset).457F[[76]](#footnote-76) Surprisingly enough, Zahalka joined the lamentation over the fading Jewish identity. He projected that the “introspective Judaism” (closed Orthodox Judaism) “will attract no one else to return to it”, and that secular Jews will revert to either Western culture or even Christianity. His solution was binational: “Arab support could rescue them (the Jews) from disintegration and Westernization. This leaves room for optimism”.458F[[77]](#footnote-77)

Another relevant essay was published by Yossi Klein-Halevi, in the 18th issue, where he Analyzed the social and cultural impact of the Yom Kippur War (this essay did not appear in *Azure*).459F[[78]](#footnote-78) Klein-Halevi argued that the sense of uncertainty the war had created brought about the end of the founders' generation and brought back the pathological relationship of the Jews with the world. This led to renewed interest in religion and a movement of *teshuvah* and spiritual seeking alongside consumerism and nihilism. His words emphasize what I have shown above:

For the first time in one hundred years the [1973] war slowed down the trend of abandoning religion, and even reversed it to some extent: thousands of secular Israelis did the unbelievable and became Ultra-Orthodox. This was an ultimate rejection of Zionism, some sort of a post-Yom-Kippur surprise attack on secular Israel. The most famous *Hozer BeTeshuvah* was Uri Zohar, a videographer and cultural symbol. But many more of the Ashkenazi elite followed his footsteps: Kibbutzniks and artists, pilots, and elite combat units fighters.460F[[79]](#footnote-79)

Although Klein-Halevi did not advocate for adopting the Ultra-Orthodox way of life, similarly to Abrams, he did view this trend as a positive development and an opportunity to renew Zionist identity.

In this sense, the emphasis on Jewish identity did not change in the translation process from the Us to Israel. What did change is the context, since in Israel, expanding or strengthening Jewish identity also equals increasing the political power of the Right, in most cases. On the other hand, there was an inherent resentment among the religious Right against “imported” Western ideas, which were perceived as opposed or foreign to authentic Judaism. As I will show now, *Tchelet* acknowledged and tackled this challenge.

### Judaism and Western Civilization

*Tchelet* invested a lot in showing that Jewish thought was no less significant in the evolution of the Western mind than Greek, Roman, and Christian thought. In many cases, according to *Tchelet*’s leading contributors, it preceded and informed them. This tendency exemplified *Tchelet*’s role: mediate between the Jewish state and Western political and cultural tradition and serve as a translator by showing that the two are synonymous.

On the other hand, Jews and the Jewish state should not feel like guests or newcomers but as the “founding fathers” and owners of their Western cultural, philosophical, and political heritage. This notion is critical from a Jewish conservative point of view since one cannot call for conservative loyalty by Jews (and the Jewish state) to Western ideas if those ideas have little to do with Judaism (while Judaism has its own long-standing tradition).

For example, in the fourth issue, Yoram Hazony argued that the true source of the Western tradition of disobedience was not Greek philosophy but rather the Hebrew Bible, which gave the intellectual and moral force to the Allies to judge the Nazis in Nuremberg on the grounds of “general principles of Justice.”461F[[80]](#footnote-80) This idea that human morality precedes any humanly created law, even in a democratic regime, is a fundamentally Jewish idea that the West inherited, enabling it to defeat pagan Nazism not only on the physical battlefield but also on the battlefield of ideas. This was “the highest triumph of the Jewish political idea in history.”462F[[81]](#footnote-81)

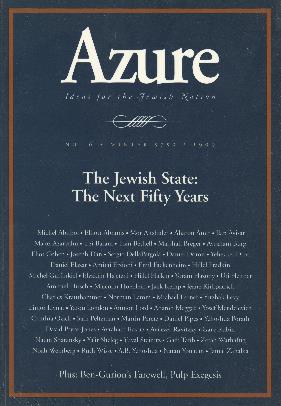
In the editorial of the following issue, HaIvry argued that “Israel’s nationality is probably the oldest nationality in the world”, and added that one might even say that the mere concept of nationalism, and a nation-state, originated in the Hebrew Bible.463F[[82]](#footnote-82) In a similar vein, Hillel Fradkin (Shalem’s Washington office director) argued that the idea of nationalism is of Jewish origin: “No one can seriously dispute that the claim of the Jewish people to be a nation is the most ancient the world knows”464F[[83]](#footnote-83); Assaf Inbary argued that the idea of a nation, not a tribe or a kingdom, was a unique invention of the Hebrew Bible465F[[84]](#footnote-84); and Joshua Berman (a Bible scholar from Bar-Ilan University) argued that the Bible is the source of the idea of equality.466F[[85]](#footnote-85)

In the 13th issue, Fania Oz-Salzberger argued that as of the 17th century, there was a thought tradition built on investigating the Jewish Bible and trying to derive political principles from it.467F[[86]](#footnote-86) According to Oz-Salzberger, these principles were no less than the foundations for the Western and European republics and the freedom we know today. More specifically, Jewish sources were the prime source for three primary attributes of the republic: (a) the non-feudal model of state and law, according to which general unified law will reign in a given geographic unit; (b) the idea of a “moral economy” which includes mutual assistance and limitations on private property; and (c) the model of a federative republic. These ideas cannot be traced back to ancient Greek or Rome but to ancient Israel. For Oz-Salzberger, this was not just about bringing historical justice to the Jewish sources, which “deeply influenced European political thought in the early modern era”, but instead, there were actual cultural and political gains to realize.468F[[87]](#footnote-87)

A translated essay analyzing the thought and legacy of Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), the former UK Prime Minister (1868-74) of Jewish descent, argued that Disraeli was a conservative who started on the Left and he is the father of contemporary conservatism in Britain. The Bible and Jewish culture profoundly influenced him, “and the more we examine the evidence it becomes clear that the modern state is founded on Jewish ideas, both ancient and modern.”469F[[88]](#footnote-88)

In another essay, Yoram Hazony argued that Jewish tradition's role in shaping the modern Western state had been neglected and ignored for good and for bad.470F[[89]](#footnote-89) He emphasized the difference between Judaism and Christianity and warned that things become dangerous when people believe they have encountered the divine. Unlike Christianity in the Middle Ages, Judaism allowed multiple interpretations of the holy scriptures to exist in parallel. Hence it enriched the public discourse instead of suffocating it. He also concluded that “it is possible that the path to a modern Christian state will be found in a renewed encounter with the political wisdom of the People of Israel.”471F[[90]](#footnote-90) Understanding Jewish political thought, then, is not essential only for Jews or for the sake of historical research. It is crucial for contemporary and future Jewish and non-Jewish political thought and practice.

Two issues later (issue #25), it seemed like Shalem – and Hazony – had taken a step further in this direction. An advertisement on page 11 announced the new “Hebraic Political Studies Journal”, which will be “devoted to recovering the Hebraic political tradition and examining its place, alongside the traditions of Greece and Rome, in political history and the history of political thought.” The associate editor was a member of Shalem: Merav Jones. As we may recall, she was the first person the young Jonathan Silver (current editor of Tikvah’s *Mosaic*) met when he walked into Shalem in the early 2000s to pick up a fight with Yoram Hazony over his interpretation of Hobbes. Jones offered him that they read Hobbes together, and he became her assistant editor. Many of the editorial board members were also members of Shalem or published in *Tchelet* and *Azure* before: Moshe Halbertal, Yoram Hazony, Leon Kass, Menachem Loeberbaum, David Novack, Fania Oz-Salzberger, Jason Rosenblatt and Shmuel Trigano. Analyzing this journal lies beyond the scope of this research. Still, it will be sufficient to say it served as another example of Shalem’s efforts to put Jewish thought in its rightful place in the history of political thought.



Azure Special Issue for Israel 50th anniversary Front Cover

Winter 1999

Similarly, *Tchelet* also gave a respectful place to John Selden (1584-1654), the most notable Christian Hebraist. A year earlier, Jason Rosenblatt published a book on Selden472F[[91]](#footnote-91), and in a review of this book, Grosby (fellow editor of *Tchelet*) concluded that “the Hebraist tradition has had, then, a significant importance for the political and judicial intellectual history of the West. John Selden played a major role in shaping this tradition and expanding its influence.”473F[[92]](#footnote-92) Ten years later, Ofir HaIvry will take this to the next level and publish a book on Selden’s Hebraism.474F[[93]](#footnote-93)

When it comes to general philosophy, an essay by Ethan Dor-Shav argued (against conventional wisdom) that the Bible does have a developed and consistent metaphysics, no less so than Greek philosophy or Christianity.475F[[94]](#footnote-94) Through brilliant scholarly work, he showed that the Bible’s metaphysical theory is based on four elements: earth, water, wind, and fire. Moreover, this idea appeared in the Bible before it was adopted by Aristotle or even proposed for the first time by Ampedukales. Hence, the Bible is not a premature text but a “cohesive, thorough, and even revolutionary philosophical text.”476F[[95]](#footnote-95) This essay was applauded in many letters sent by readers, one of them praising Dor-Shav for enabling us (Jewish readers) “to know we no longer drag our feet following the footsteps of the Greek, who claim to be the first to develop an all-encompassing theory of the universe.”477F[[96]](#footnote-96) David Hazony added that “the Torah is not a toy. It is the spiritual text lying at the foundations of the faith of Israel and Western civilization as a whole”.478F[[97]](#footnote-97)

The same is valid for conservatism itself. For example, HaIvry’s leading essay in the fifth issue argued that Jewish, or Israeli, conservatism has “superior strength and quality” over other conservative traditions, and that it played a vital role in shaping Western conservatism.479F[[98]](#footnote-98) A similar idea, yet this time by an external author, appeared in the special issue celebrating Israel’s 50th anniversary (issue #6). Rabbi Noah Weinberg, founder and head of Aish HaTorah Yeshivah in Jerusalem, wrote that “we (the Jewish people) defined the moral makeup of humanity.”480F[[99]](#footnote-99) He added that *tikkun olam* (“rectifying the world”) is the purpose of Judaism and that the Jewish people have an obligation to offer moral codes to all of humanity. In the then-newly established column for Talmudic readings, Ido Hevroni (Associate Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Politics, and Religion at the Shalem Center) emphasized the uniqueness of Jewish thought and its superiority over Greek and Roman philosophies. He said that “Judea may have fallen to Rome, but the legacy of Rabbi Akiva continues to leave its mark throughout the world.”481F[[100]](#footnote-100)

In parallel, *Tchelet* emphasized the universalist aspect of Judaism over the particularistic one, such as in an essay by James Diamond, who analyzed the biblical concept of love and its call for a universalist love of God.482F[[101]](#footnote-101) Menachem Kellner, a Shalem affiliate from Haifa University, responded in a letter and applauded Diamond for presenting an alternative to Jewish particularism.483F[[102]](#footnote-102) Diamond gladly accepted the praise and added that (according to Maimonides) the Jewish God is “not Jewish”, and all humans have the same life mission: reaching ethical and intellectual perfection.484F[[103]](#footnote-103)

The elevation of Jewish thought did not imply that *Tchelet*’s leading contributors were satisfied with its shape at the time. For example, David Hazony wrote that many thinkers agree that Judaism has become a technical religion and has abandoned its prophetic principles. The late Rabbi Professor Eliezer Berkovits was, according to Hazony, one the most important thinkers of Jewish moralism who offered the most successful integration between Judaism's legal system, moral values, and vision for improving human fate.485F[[104]](#footnote-104) As such, he deserves renewed interest, and indeed, Shalem published several of his books and a collection of his most important essays (in both Hebrew and English).486F[[105]](#footnote-105) In a similar vein, Daniel Gordis (senior vice president and fellow at Shalem) published an article arguing that the Tower of Babel’s story represents the Bible’s political doctrine, as it presents the first instance of peoplehood and shows that humanity “*ought* to separate into distinct nations.”487F[[106]](#footnote-106) In the last part, he made the connection to contemporary discourse. He argued that “this biblical vision is especially pertinent today when the nation-state is commonly rejected as a thing of the past … the insistence on the importance of the ethnic-cultural state lies, we have seen, at the very core of the Hebrew Bible.”488F[[107]](#footnote-107)

*Tchelet* also promoted the idea of the uniqueness of the People of Israel, such as in two essays by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik (fellow editor of *Tchelet*): the first arguing in favor of Jewish choseness, the other arguing that while the Torah's laws of Kashrut (dietary laws) seem not to make sense, the true meaning behind them is to emphasize the uniqueness of the People of Israel.489F[[108]](#footnote-108)

### Jewish History

On certain occasions, *Tchelet* also dealt with Jewish history, but only when they found it relevant to contemporary debates or reinforcing Jewish and Zionist core beliefs. More than once, *Azure* and *Tchelet* published articles supporting the historical realism of the Bible, such as the editorial of the 16th issue, which attacked articles published by archaeologists who claimed that the kingdom of David and Solomon never existed. According to David Hazony, the editor at the time, these archaeologists must be faced with serious research coupled with a change in public opinion.490F[[109]](#footnote-109) Similarly, a book review by Ra’anan Eichler on the history of David and Solomon also argued for biblical realism.491F[[110]](#footnote-110)

Since the publication of these articles, in 2004 and 2007, respectively, it has been well proven that the kingdom of David and Solomon existed indeed, but back at the time, this was still an open question.492F[[111]](#footnote-111) *Tchelet*’s interest in this specific subject was not rooted in mere intellectual curiosity, of course. To a large extent, it was similar to its interest in the history of Zionism and to its long-standing battle against the “new historians”. Meaning, if the biblical story is refutable, Zionism and Jewish nationalism may also be refutable. On the other direction, strengthening the belief in the realism of the biblical story can support Jewish nationalism.

### Contemporary Jewish Affairs

The winner of the 2005 essay contest was Aharon Rose, a former Hassidic Jew who wrote a defense of Haredi society.493F[[112]](#footnote-112) He argued that although most modern researchers of Haredi society see it as a modern phenomenon, from a Haredi standpoint, it is an ancient society committed to millennia-old values. While most secular Israelis cannot accept this, it would be wise, at the very least, to respect this. He also argued that the teshuvah movement is evidence of Haredi society’s renewed prosperity. This is another example of the struggle around “authentic” Judaism, what it is, and who owns it. *Tchelet* devoted significant space to this discussion, and awarding the first prize of its writing contest to an essay on this issue should come as no surprise.

Interestingly enough, this essay drew three long responses, yet all were from US Jews talking about an Israeli domestic issue.494F[[113]](#footnote-113) They all criticized Rose for misrepresenting Haredi society, being unable to present a convincing alternative to mainstream academic analysis of Haredi society, and ignoring the deeper aspects of the tension between the Haredim and secular Jews. In his response, Rose said they allowed him to further sharpen his argument and concluded, "Haredi society is headed towards greater integration into general Jewish national life.”495F[[114]](#footnote-114)

Issue #36 brought an analysis of the Chabad Hassidic movement by Tomer Persico (a scholar of religions).496F[[115]](#footnote-115) Persico Reviewed the history and contemporary situation of the Chabad Hassidic movement and said it is too early to determine whether the more reasonable part of Chabad will overcome or the messianic faction of it. If the latter overcomes, he concluded, it will be the end of an important Jewish movement, and every Jew should lament its loss.

Several issues later, Rabbi Meir Soloveichik wrote on the principle of matrilineal descent in Judaism, a heated debate in contemporary Jewish affairs. His main argument was that the halachic code of matrilineal descent goes beyond historical or sociological circumstances; it points to the fact that Judaism is founded on biological families.497F[[116]](#footnote-116) In response, Rabbi Michael White wrote that to preserve the Jewish nation, we should also accept patrilineal descent.498F[[117]](#footnote-117) Soloveitchik responded that the matrilineal descent principle existed earlier and reflected an essential view of womanhood and motherhood. He accused White of failing to learn from history that “no religion flourishes by surrendering to the spirit of the time.”499F[[118]](#footnote-118)

The detailed arguments for and against Haredi society, Chabad messianism, or patrilineal descent are not our concern here. Instead, as we investigate the translation of ideas, what's essential for us is understanding the larger context of these debates. In the first case, the Israeli author (Rose) emphasized the sociological undercurrents in Haredi society, which he knew from the inside out as someone who grew up in that society. His opponents, however, stressed the theological and theoretical aspects of Ultra-Orthodoxy, and I argue it is no mere coincidence that they were all Americans. In the second case, an Israeli scholar analyzed an American-based Jewish movement and lamented its potential loss for the Jewish people.

The third case touched upon one of the open wounds of contemporary Jewish life yet dealt with it from a purely American perspective. In the Israeli context, the issue of patrilineal descent is virtually non-existent since, according to the Law of Return, children of Jewish fathers are eligible to make aliyah anyway. Hundreds of thousands of such olim live in Israel, serve in the military, and are fully integrated into society. The discussion in Israel is different and revolves around the question of conversion and whether or not Israel’s rabbinical establishment (which is entirely Orthodox, by law) should be more or less flexible when considering conversion requests of Israelis who are culturally and nationally Jewish, but not halachically Jewish. Such a discussion would not make sense outside Israel, as it belongs only under Jewish sovereignty.

Reading Rose and Soloveichik side by side allows us to understand one of the most profound differences between the Jewish-Israeli and American contexts and how the translation of ideas interplays in the space between them. In the Israeli context, Jewish continuity is a non-issue, and the struggle between different Jewish groups is focused on the past: who owns and is the heir of authentic Judaism? By implication, who should decide, then, what are the Jewish characteristics of the Jewish state? Are they only based on religious rituals, or should they also include more abstract values such as social justice, equality, and freedom? This discussion is irrelevant in America, where Jews are a minority group and have no aspiration or will to shape their country according to Jewish law or values. On the contrary, the separation of church and state receives overwhelming support from Jews as a religious minority.500F[[119]](#footnote-119) In a similar vein, the debate between patrilineal and matrilineal descent is irrelevant in Israel, and we can safely assume that most Israeli readers never heard about it until they read about it in *Tchelet*. On the other hand, the main issue in the American Jewish context is Jewish continuity, while Jewish authenticity is much more flexible and fluid.

One last issue to consider in this context is that *Tchelet* also dealt rather often with antisemitism, but primarily in Europe and even more so in France (the *Tory* did not deal with that at all).501F[[120]](#footnote-120) Antisemitism in the United States was not a big deal back then. It was discussed once as part of a book review published in 2008 by James Kirchick, in which he argued that “Antisemitism is not a part of the past. It will be with us in the future as well, in the form of Yale students cheering for dark conspiracy theories”.502F[[121]](#footnote-121) But, as we now know, the United States has also seen a rise since then in the more traditional and violent forms of antisemitism as well.

### Judaism and Christianity

Whether *Azure* was designed to appeal to American-Christian readers in English or not, *Tchelet* undoubtedly took the task of educating the Hebrew reader about Christianity and advocating for better Jewish-Christian relations. Even though Christianity was criticized more than once on theological or philosophic grounds, when it came to real politics, *Tchelet* promoted greater understanding and cooperation between what some of its contributors saw as the two animating forces of the West. This is one of the only issues that cannot be traced back to the *Tory*, as it is relevant solely to a Jewish audience.

For example, Sagiv’s editorial criticized Israeli leaders for disrespecting Pope Benedict during his famous visit to Israel.503F[[122]](#footnote-122) He examined the unbridgeable gap between Judaism and Christianity and several Jewish thinkers who looked more positively at Christianity. He said that “despite the considerable differences, Christianity and Judaism also have a great deal in common”, such as the Hebrew Bible, belief in God, and espousing absolute values. Moreover, both had served as the “foundation of Western civilization ever since the Middle Ages.” But the main thing uniting Judaism and Christianity, according to Sagiv, is the shared threats for them and the world they wish to create: “Both religions are on the same front of an all-out war that radical Islam has declared on the West and its values.”504F[[123]](#footnote-123) He concluded by calling upon Christians to forsake their hope that all Jews will one day abandon their heritage and become Christians and calling upon Jews to stop demanding public repent from Christianity and “see the great religion to which it gave birth as a partner and an ally, one deserving of our appreciation and respect.”505F[[124]](#footnote-124) In light of Islamic fundamentalism on the one hand and deepening materialism and nihilism on the other, Judaism and Christianity should join forces wherever they can to face these challenges out of mutual appreciation. This call aligns with the typical American perception of a Judeo-Christian alliance.

This essay received several responses from readers, one of them by Daniel Rossing of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Relations. He applauded Sagiv and added that Jews ought to reconsider their negative attitude toward Christianity.506F[[125]](#footnote-125) However, the most interesting response came from a young Rabbi named Yehoshua Pfeffer, who would later become the Tikvah Fund’s director of operations in the Haredi public.507F[[126]](#footnote-126) In his letter, which appeared only in *Azure*, he agreed with Sagiv and said that his “demand for unity on pragmatic grounds was well-founded.” According to Pfeffer, the main reason for the shift in Christianity’s attitude towards Judaism was the founding of the State of Israel which proved that Jews are, in fact, not condemned for all eternity. He agreed only with the practical aspect of Sagiv’s argument and wrote that his demand for forgiveness towards Christianity was unfair. According to Pfeffer, Jews must remain wary of such an attempt at reconciliation.

Another example is David Hazony’s essay in the 18th issue, which dealt with the famous film actor and director Mel Gibson.508F[[127]](#footnote-127) According to Hazony, Gibson led a positive revolution in the American film industry at the time by repositioning religion as a significant theme in his creation (probably rooted in Gibson’s attraction to the Christian faith). Yet, Hazony heavily criticized his latest movie at the time, “The Passion of Jesus”, which diverted from this positive trend and instead of a heroic religious fighter revolved around a passive saint.

Another pro-religious or pro-liberal essay by Linker argued that recent atheists claim that religion is dangerous and deceitful, representing a long tradition of atheists. Yet, America remains a religious nation, and the new atheists should concern primarily secular liberals who would like to avoid any of the sides forcing their method on everybody else.509F[[128]](#footnote-128) The same issue also brought a classic lecture by William James, the 19th-century American philosopher, and psychologist, in which he argued against the so-called logical approach, which considers all forms of faith as irrational. Faith is, in fact, a rational choice, given our limited knowledge.

The attempt to promote a Jewish-Christian relationship was unheard of in Israel then, and remains so to this day. *Tchelet* and *Azure*, in this sense, did a somewhat pioneering work in this regard which serves as another example of the translation and transmission of ideas from an American context to an Israeli one. In the American context, Jews are a minority within a larger Christian society, hence they have to find ways to collaborate. In the Israeli context, however, Jews are the majority, Muslims are a sizable minority, and Christians are a negligible minority which most Israelis will never meet. Hence, discussing the Jewish-Christian relationship is somewhat detached from Israeli reality. Nevertheless, like in other cases, here as well, *Tchelet* sought to challenge the common Israeli perspective and offer an innovative outlook informed by American Jewish experience and insights. Although these are not “conservative” insights per se, they do serve the more significant effort to promote conservative ideas in Israel by legitimizing Western thought (which is at least partially Christian) and by promoting a pragmatic big tent approach that seeks to form broad alliances in light of shared goals and threats. With this in mind, let us take a closer look at how Tchelet discussed, defined, and conveyed conservatism.

## Conservatism

### Defining Conservatism

In my literature review, I have laid out what I understand to be the fundamental principles of conservatism, and more accurately, of neoconservatism: empiricism (as opposed to rationalism), reformism (as opposed to revolutionism), and nationalism (as opposed to cosmopolitanism). In addition, neoconservatism emphasizes economic liberalism and support for Israel. The burden of proof, then, lies upon my shoulders to show that this was the version of conservatism translated, adjusted, and presented by *Tchelet* for the Israeli reader and discourse and to understand how it was done. I have already shown how it played out in *The Princeton Tory*; let us see if the same applies to *Tchelet* and *Azure*.

As a distinctive concept, the term “conservatism” appeared as early as the second issue of *Tchelet* (1997). Ofir HaIvry described Berlusconi’s regime in Italy and the lessons one can learn from Italian conservatism (which is characterized by flexibility and balancing political forces, and above all, seeking stability without tyranny).510F[[129]](#footnote-129)

The following issue (issue #3) continued the same line of thought, with the opening editorial arguing that conservatism has paradoxically won in many Western countries, as left-leaning politicians now promote free market ideas.511F[[130]](#footnote-130) However, real conservative leaders, such as Reagan and Thatcher, knew well that conservatism lies on deeper foundations. Therefore, to rejuvenate, conservatism needs to build a new coalition and return to its ideas of the past.

In a piece published towards the end of *Tchelet*, Professor Jonathan Jacobs (from CUNY’s Department of Philosophy) explained that modern philosophers tend to reject medieval philosophy, based on revelation, as irrelevant and archaic. Yet, tradition should be taken more seriously, specifically Jewish tradition. We must ask if it has proven helpful in creating appropriate lives, good behavior, and encouraging human perfection. “It is sufficient to know, then, that tradition can still teach us many important things”, he says, “and that it is not the rationale’s nemesis; on the contrary, often it speaks to us in the loud and clear voice of rationality.”512F[[131]](#footnote-131) Yet, relying on tradition did not mean simply replicating the past, in the eye of *Tchelet*’s leaders, but rather its modernization. For example, the same issue brought an essay by Evelyn Gordon and Hadassah Levy saying that halacha, Jewish law, barely dealt with public policy issues and if Judaism fails to supply answers to the questions at hand, the State of Israel will have no choice but to adopt the secular solutions of the West. “If this happens”, they warned, “nothing “Jewish” will be left in the Jewish state.”513F[[132]](#footnote-132) On a more positive note, in Ido Hevroni’s Review of the *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Story*514F[[133]](#footnote-133), he wrote that Jewish tradition is moving to the center of the stage in Israeli society, and this encyclopedia plays a role by reviving Jewish storytelling.515F[[134]](#footnote-134)

One of the main tools for presenting conservative and neoconservative ideas to the Israeli reader was simply translating classic pieces into Hebrew. For example, the second issue brought a translation of Michael Okshot’s most important article: *Rationalism in Politics* (Okshot, 1901-1990, was an important British and conservative political philosopher). The essay deals with modern rationalism, and Okshot argues that “of all worlds it seems like the political one is the least appropriate for handling by the rationalist – as politics is deeply imprinted with tradition and temporary circumstances.” He accused rationalists of replacing traditional ideas with “ideology”, and for assuming that a political mechanism could replace moral and political education. But, as explained above, empiricism is the opposite of rationalism, which serves as the fundamental conceptual basis of conservatism.

In the fourth issue, *Tchelet* brought the Israeli reader a classic piece by Francis G. Wilson (1901-1976, a leading conservative professor of political thought in the United States), in which he described what he found to be the most important five components of conservative thought516F[[135]](#footnote-135):

1. Learning from history what is possible and what is not in internal and foreign policy.
2. Basic suspicion towards human nature, viewed as a mixture of sense and nonsense.
3. Humans are part of a global moral order from which they can derive policy principles.
4. Government power has to be limited.
5. Protection of private property (long before modern Capitalism).

Another iteration of neoconservative principles was laid out by Yonah Goldberg, a Jewish-American journalist, in his criticism of Francis Fukuyama’s book (Fukuyama started as a leading neoconservative thinker, but in this book changed course)517F[[136]](#footnote-136):

1. Opposition to seeping social engineering.
2. Belief that America is a force for good in the world.
3. International institutions cannot be reflexively trusted to protect American interests.
4. The internal nature of regimes has a bearing on their moral stature, which should inform how America trusts them (rejecting Nixonian idealism).

Self-criticism of neoconservatism could also be found in *Tchelet*, such as in a translated essay by Michael Bran, who argued that conservatives doubt it is wise to mix politics and love. At the same time, the main mistake of socialists and liberals is the belief that love can be extended to include the entire society. But, on the other hand, as conservatives took it upon themselves to defend the market economy, they forgot the role of love where the market is irrelevant.518F[[137]](#footnote-137)

Another critique, not to mention a harsh one, was published in response to Norman Podhoretz’s 2007 book defending neoconservatism. Neoconservatism suffered a serious public image blow back then due to its leading intellectuals’ encouragement for Bush’s “war on terror”, which for many Americans proved to be a senseless and costly crusade in Iraq. Podhoretz was one of those leading intellectuals and one of the leading neoconservative thinkers of the time. His book was reviewed by Benjamin Kerstein (one of *Tchelet*’s deputy editors), who wrote that “there is no doubt that neo-conservatism is experiencing a moment of crisis. The Iraq war, for which the neo-conservatives, fairly or unfairly, have shouldered most of the credit and blame, has turned their name into an epithet in many circles”.519F[[138]](#footnote-138)

According to critiques of neoconservatism, it was misled by its hubris and pride after 9/11, believing it could forcibly bring democracy to the Middle East. Podhoretz’s book defended this theory, said Kerstein, yet it was likely to “satisfy only those who have already been convinced.” According to Podhoretz, there is a straight line between Nazis, Communists, and Islamists. This is the story of the 20th century, the war between freedom and tyranny. He says that the US fell into the same “Munich policy” it used in the face of Hitler and suffered severe loss and damage. Spreading democracy in the world is indeed a conservative position, according to Podhoretz, even though many conservatives disagree on that and call for American isolationism. Kerstein applauded the book for showing a “moral reading of history” and grasping the “immense importance of ideas to modern conflicts.” However, he criticized its heated rhetoric and inability to convince anyone but those who are already convinced.520F[[139]](#footnote-139) He concluded that neoconservatism is usually optimistic, yet Podhoretz’s book is not so: “There is an air of pessimism and desperation to *World War IV* that seems out of sync with neo-conservatism’s usually optimistic tone.”521F[[140]](#footnote-140)

A book review by Daniel Mandel followed a similar line of introspection and applauded Levin’s book, which posed challenging questions to the American conservative movement.522F[[141]](#footnote-141) Mandel argued that one of the reasons this book became relatively popular is that it was easy to read and not apologetic, while it thoughtfully laid out the worldview of the United States’ founding fathers. Meaning, it did not adhere to conservatism as it was in 2009, but rather as it should have been in 1776. Levin tried to convince his fellow conservatives that the only way for the Republican party to come back to power (the book was published right after Obama won the first presidency) was to return to the principles of the founding fathers: liberty, free markets, religion, tradition, and authority. He added that the fundamental difference between conservatives and liberals is not that conservatives don’t care about people experiencing poverty, and liberals do. Instead, they differ on how this challenge should be addressed: “Conservatives see *reform*, gradual improvement, as the best tool for change; liberals, on the other hand, call for *innovation* or change through substitutes.”523F[[142]](#footnote-142)

In conclusion, it is safe to argue that *Tchelet*’s point of reference was the neoconservative version of conservatism. Although it did not use this term specifically but instead stuck to the more general term of “conservatism” (which is true to this day in Tikvah), if we look at the different definitions offered throughout the years for “conservatism”, we will see they were almost identical to neoconservatism: empiricism, respect for inherited institutions (including religion), doubts regarding the innate good of human nature, and support for free market economy (see more below) and for American interventionism (with a specific emphasis on Israel).

Let us now recall that neoconservatism is, to some extent, a sister or daughter movement to fusionism, the version of conservatism that fused libertarianism and traditionalism. This basic premise poses a challenge in the context of the Zionist movement, which was a rather revolutionary and anti-traditional movement. Let us now see how *Tchelet* sought to reconcile the two.

1. Yehudah Yifrach, “The Chronicles: What Is Going on Here?,” *HaShiloach* 21 (September 2020): 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hazony, “The End of Zionism?”, p. 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ronen Mendelkorn, “Epilogue,” in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism - Hebrew Edition*, by David Harvey, trans. Herling Guy (Tel Aviv: Molad - The Center for Democratic Renewal, 2015), 271–91. The original book in English was published in 2005 by Oxford University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Murray Friedman, “Opening the Discussion of American Jewish Political Conservatism,” *American Jewish History*, 1999, 101–12. Friedman refers in this statement to conservatism as a whole, not only Jewish conservatism [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Jonathan D. Sarna, “American Jewish Political Conservatism in Historical Perspective,” *American Jewish History*, 1999, 113–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Aliyah” means to immigrate to Israel. “Teshuvah” means to change someone’s lifestyle into a Jewish Orthodox lifestyle. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Interview with Daniel Polisar; Interview with Shula Bahat. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Interview with Adam Hoffman, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Princeton, November 15, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Interview with Joshua Weinstein, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Jerusalem, April 6, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Jonathan Sacks, *Judaism’s Life-Changing Ideas: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2020), 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. According to the Social Review of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 5.7% of Israeli Jews above the age of 20 define themselves as *hozrim be’teshuvah* (synonymous with *ba’aley teshuvah*), which equals about 250,000 people. Including children and youth under the age of 20, it is safe to assume that the total number of *ba’aley teshuvah* in Israel is anywhere between 300-400 thousand. The Haredi public is estimated at about 500,000 adults above the age of 20, and given the large size of families the total amount of haredim is estimated at about 1,000,000 people. Hence, after discounting non-haredi *ba’aley teshuvah*, it is safe to assume that ba’aley teshuvah comprise at least 20% of the Haredi world.

    Source: “The Social Review - Changes in Level of Religiosity” (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018)., table 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Leo Strauss, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion* (New York: Schoken Books, 1965), 7. The original book was written between 1925-28 in Berlin, and was republished in 1965 in English. The preface was written in August 1962 by Strauss in Chicago. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Interview with Stuart Schnee, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Beit Shemesh, October 3, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Interview with Daniel Polisar. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Yoram Hazony, “Farewell, from a ‘Non-Kahannist,’” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 8, 1990, https://www.yoramhazony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Farewell-from-a-Non-Kahanist-Nov-8-1990.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Uri Zohar, *They Didn’t Give Us a Chance* (Jerusalem: The Kest-Leibowitz Library for Jewish Roots and Heritage, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Interview with Joshua Weinstein. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Joshua I. Weinstein, *Plato’s Threefold City and Soul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Interview with Adam Hoffman. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Emma Green, “It’s a Weird Time to Be Young and Conservative,” *The Atlantic*, December 29, 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/12/princeton-young-conservatives-trump/604192/. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “Bnei David” (“Sons of David” literally) is the first pre-military academy in Israel. It offers up to a year of religious learning for high-school graduates before they draft to the IDF. Over the years, alumni of Bnei David assumed high ranking positions in the military, as well as in other places in Israeli society, politics, and economy. 26 of them were killed in action, including some famous names every Israeli knows such as Roi Klein (who jumped on a grenade to save his soldiers) and Emmanuel Moreno (who was the commander of the *Sayeret* *Matkal* special forces unit). Rabbi Eli Sadan, the founder of Bnei David, won the Israel Prize (Israel’s highest civilian honor) in 2016 for a life-long achievement. Due to its success and prominence in the Israeli Right, Bnei-David became a target for attacks from the Left, accusing it of leading a hardline approach on several disputable issues such as LGBT rights. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. From a formal point of view, “Shalem College” currently operates under a public interest company, for technical reasons, but the management of the association and of the public interest company is the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Interview with Daniel Polisar. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Interview with Nathan Sharansky, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, Online, December 26, 2022.

    “אתם עשיתם מוניטורינג של פשעי מוסקבה וברית המועצות בואו נעשה קבוצה שעושה מעקב עבור ישראל והפלסטינים עד כמה הם מקיימים את ההתחייבויות של אוסלו”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Yitzhak Klein and Daniel Polisar, “Decisions for Israel’s Economy: Economic Policy for 1997-2000” (Jerusalem: Shalem Center - Institute for National Policy, 1996); Boaz Ganor, “Israel and Terrorism: Before and After the Oslo Accords” (Jerusalem: Shalem Center - Institute for National Policy, December 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Binyamin Netanyahu, *A Place Among the Nations: Israel and the World* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Binyamin Netanyahu, *BIBI: My Story*, Hebrew (Jerusalem: Sella Meir, 2022), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Shuki Tausig, “Edelson Is Not at the Center,” *HaAyin HaSehvi’it*, January 1, 2010, https://www.the7eye.org.il/26079. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Bensimhon-Peleg, “Jewish Philanthropy and the Israeli Third Sector: The Case of Israeli Think Tanks,” 50–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bensimhon-Peleg, 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Interview with Adi Arbel and Elon Avior, In person, Jerusalem, February 15, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (1512-1609), also known as the Maharal of Prague, was a prominent rabbi, philosopher, and Talmudic scholar who lived in the 16th century. He wrote extensively on Jewish law, ethics, and theology, and his works include commentaries on the Bible and Talmud, as well as several philosophical treatises. The Maharal's teachings and writings continue to have a significant influence on Jewish thought and philosophy to this day, and he is widely regarded as one of the most important Jewish scholars and thinkers of the early modern period. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For example, he says: “What strategy is to a military campaign, a philosophy is to Zionism. The establishment of the State of Israel was, no doubt, a great tactical victory for Zionism. But has it been consolidated into a strategic victory? … We cannot stress sufficiently the urgency of the immediate tasks that confront Israel. The resettlement and development of the land and safeguarding its borders from hostile attacks cannot wait for the outcomes of discussions of strategy. They must be given priority over our other Jewish responsibilities and activities. But we dare not permit those immediate tasks to blur the larger Zionist perspective which takes in the whole of world Jewry”. (Kaplan, *A New Zionism*, 14.) [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Interview with Assaf Sagiv, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Jerusalem, May 31, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See: Daniel Doron, “Daniel Doron’s Response to: ‘The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years,’” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 6 (Winter 1999): 57-60 (68-72); Sam Peltzman, “Sam Peltzman’s Response to: ‘The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years,’” *Tchelet (Azure)*, Winter 1999, 157-160 (166-169); Daniel Polisar, “Taxes and Error (Death by Taxes),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 15 (Autumn (Summer 2003 2003): 21-28 (23-32). *Tchelet* dealt extensively with free market issues and the Israeli economy, and published a total of 59 articles on these matters throughout the years (about 10% of all publications). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. As of April 2023, Tel Aviv is ranked 30th among the world’s wealthiest cities, with 35,600 millionaires. Jerusalem is ranked 53rd, with 15,100 millionaires. See: “World’s Wealthiest Cities: New York Leads the Chart, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem Are In as Well,” *Calcalist*, April 19, 2023, https://www.calcalist.co.il/world\_news/article/skbdvz6z3. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Interview with Nathan Sharansky.

    “דיברו כל הזמן על זה שמאוד חשוב שבישראל גם יגיע משהו [כמו] פרינסטון יהודי, ככה הם מסבירים לי, פרינסטון זה מכון שהכין הרבה אנשים שאחרי זה עבדו בממשל ונתן להם בסיס של ערכים אמריקאים שזה הפך לבסיס לממשל”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. “הייתי מאוד מסמפט את האנשים האלו אבל הכל היה נראה לי כמו חלומות באספמיה” [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Interview with Nathan Sharansky. “כמובן כסף של זלמן שיחק תפקיד סופר חשוב אבל עוד לפני כסף היה חלום” [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. According to Baratz, who served as Netanyahu’s Chief of Advocacy for about six months in 2016, Netanyahu did not want to be called a “conservative”. He would rather define himself as a national-liberal, a student of Jabotinsky. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Interview with David Hazony, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, October 3, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Stephen J. Whitefield, “The Jewish Vote,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 62, no. 1 (1986): 1–20; Milton Himmelfarb, “Are Jews Becoming Republican?,” *Commentary* 72, no. 2 (August 1, 1981): 27; Alan M. Fisher, “Jewish Political Shift? Erosion, Yes; Conversion, No,” in *Party Coalitions in the 1980s*, 2017, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Interview with Nathan Sharansky.

    “אצלנו בישראל אם אתה יותר אורתודוכסי אתה פחות טולרנטי אבל זה לא מה שהרגשתי שם”. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Yoram Hazony, *The Virtue of Nationalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Roni Dori, “The Nation State is the Solution: Interview with Yoram Hazony,” *Haaretz*, October 22, 2020, https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/article-print-page/.premium.highlight-MAGAZINE-1.9251009. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. David Hazony, “The Treaty of Hope (Miracle on the Sea of Galilee),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 13 (Autumn/Summer 2002): 11-21 (13-26). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Interview with Yossi Klein-HaLevi, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, Online, July 23, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rabbi Meir Kahanna (1932-1990) was a prominent American rabbi who was identified with the far Right and was often accused of racism. He established the Jewish Defense League in the US, which protected old and poor Jews against antisemitic harassments. He was elected as Member of Knesset in 1984, after several failed attempts. In 1988 he was banned of running again on the grounds that his party encouraged racism. He was murdered by a Muslim terrorist in 1990 while in New York. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Interview with Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Lifshitz, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Jerusalem, February 7, 2022. “זו הדעה האישית שלי, נגד כל החברים שלי בשלם” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Yossi Klein-Halevi, *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The rest of the sentence reads: “We were never able to reconcile the Judaism we learned with his predilection for violent solutions to problems, nor with his abusive manner of presenting his case for these solutions” [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Dori, “The Nation State is the Solution: Interview with Yoram Hazony.” [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Katznelson shared this phrase as a popular joke of the time, in a lecture he gave to teachers on August 8th, 1941 (Berl Katznelson, “Zionism as a Movement of Actualization,” in *The Collected Works of Berl Katznelson*, vol. 5 (Tel Aviv: The Israel Workers Party Publishing House, 1947), 342–60.).

    “יש הלצה עממית ידועה האומרת: הציוני הוא יהודי העושה תעמולה ליהודי אחר שיתן כסף כדי לשלוח לארץ-ישראל יהודי שלישי”. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. “ שמרן היום זה משהו קרוב לטראמפ ואז היה כמעט הפוך”. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Interview with Ofir HaIvry, interview by Aharon Ariel Lavi, In person, Tel Aviv, June 13, 2021.

    HaIvry was the first editor of both *Tchelet* and *Azure*, between 1996-99. In the 9th issue (Spring 2000) he was replaced by Daniel Polisar and remained a “senior contributor”. Polisar was the Editor-in-Chief until 2004, when he handed it over to David Hazony who was the Editor from the 18th issue (Autumn 2004) until the 28th issue (Summer 2007). As of the 29th issue, Assaf Sagiv was the editor until *Tchelet*’s last issue (issue #46, Winter 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Assaf Sagiv, “The Peculiar Case of Radical Conservatism,” *HaZman HaZeh*, May 2020, https://hazmanhazeh.org.il/conservatism/. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. “אם אתם רוצים שאחד הסופרים החשובים במדינת ישראל ואחד ההוגים החשובים במדינת ישראל יהיו שלנו, תשלמו להם כסף כדי שישארו. אם אתם רוצים שהם יהיו שייכים להרטמן, תנו להם ללכת”. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Yoram Hazony, “The End of Zionism?,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 1 (Summer 1996): 74–88., p. 75.

    “המדינה היהודית היא בראש ובראשונה רעיון”. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Interview with Stuart Schnee. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ofir HaIvry, “The Knesset Divided Against Itself,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 8 (Autumn 1999): 8-12 (10-15).

    “על מנת להפיח מחדש חיים בפוליטיקה הישראלית, נדרש מאמץ משולב: מאמץ של הרוח הפוליטית, שרק על ידיו ניתן להשיב את האידיאלים הלאומיים למרכז השיח הפוליטי; ומאמץ של הגוף הפוליטי, כלומר, נטישת השיטה האלקטורלית הקיימת לטובת שיטה שתשיב הן את הכבוד והן את הסמכות לכנסת”. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Irving Kristol, “On the Political Stupidity Of the Jews,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 8 (Autumn 1999): 40-53 (47-63). This article was adapted from the inaugural Zalman C. Bernstein Lecture in Jewish Political Thought, which Kristol delivered in Jerusalem on June 17th, 1999, and became a famous piece in Jewish neoconservative thought. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ethan Dor-Shav, “Koheleth, the Temporary and the Eternal,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 18 (Autumn 2004): 92-109 (67-87). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. “האמונה בידע כצורה הנעלה ביותר של רוחניות הייתה דגלה של היהדות לאורך הדורות, והיא מלמדת גם היום שרק רעיונות יכולים לעמוד במבחן הזמן ולשנות את העולם”. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. David Hazony, “Spiritless Leadership,” *Tchelet*, no. 29 (Autumn 2007): 19–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Bensimhon-Peleg, “Jewish Philanthropy and the Israeli Third Sector: The Case of Israeli Think Tanks,” 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. David Hazony, “The Next Cold War,” *Tchelet*, no. 28 (Summer 2007): 13–18.

    “הסכנות הגדולות ביותר האורבות אפוא למערב ולישראל טמונות לא בחימוש צבאי או במערכי קרב, אלא בדרך תפיסת הסכסוך ... אך תוצאה זו מחייבת, ראשית לכל, מאבק רעיוני, שיתחום את גבולות הסכסוך ויביא לבחינת הערכים המוטלים על הכף”. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel’s Soul*. For the sake of intellectual integrity, it should be noted that classical conservatism was very suspicious of the revival of nationalism at the end of the 19th century since it was perceived as a revolutionary movement. It was not until the 1950s that the two movements merged, see page 46 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Rynhold, “In Search of Israeli Conservatism.” [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Lila, “Zionism and the Counter‐intellectuals.” [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Out of 46 US presidents (as of April 2023), only nine were former military generals or commanders-in-chief of the US armed forces. Eight of them were in power between 1789 (Washington) and 1877 (Grant). Only one military general became president since then, in almost 150 years, and that was two generations ago (Eisenhower, 1953-61). In Israel, for comparison, out of 13 Prime Ministers to date (without double counting Ben-Gurion and Netanyahu) 10 had significant military background, all the way from commanders in the pre-state undergrounds and World War II (Shamir, Sharet, Eshkol, and Begin), through high ranking officers in Israel’s special forces (Netanyahu and Bennet), and all the way to senior generals in the IDF (Rabin, Barak, and Sharon). Peres and Meir did not have significant military background per se, yet they took a significant part in building Israel’s armed forces through raising funds and playing a role in arms procurement. The only Israeli Prime Minister with no significant military background to date was Ehud Olmert (although he as well served in the IDF as a Sargent). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. David Hazony, “Dusting Off the Jewish Bookshelf (Who Is a Secular?),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 3–6.

    “בכל הנוגע ליהדות, ישראל היא מדינה שמרנית אדוקה ... אפשר שמגמת הפנייה אל ארון הספרים היהודי מייצגת גם דבר מה מעניין הרבה יותר: תשובה חדשה לאתוס המתפורר של המפעל הציוני”. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Zohar Elmakayas, “20 Years after the Rabin Assassination: What Has Jewish Renewal Renewed?,” *HaAretz*, November 12, 2015, https://www.haaretz.co.il/labels/avi-chai/2015-11-12/ty-article-labels/00000180-8db7-d234-a9f8-cdbfded30000. This report was also published on the Beit Avi Chai website, in a slightly modified version, see: Elmakayas, “21 Years after the Rabin Assassination: What has Jewish Renewal Renewed?” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Elliot Abrams, *Faith or Fear: How Jews Can Survive in a Christian America* (New York: Free Press, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Adam Pruzan, “Who Is Afraid of Christian America? (Closing the Christian Gap),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 123-128 (137-144). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Zahalka, “Jamal Zahalka’s Response to: ‘The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. “היהדות החרדית הסגורה לא תמשוך אליה עוד 'חוזרים בתשובה'“; דווקא המשענת הערבית יכולה להציל את התרבות העברית והזהות הישראלית מהתפוררות והתמערבות. יש מקום לאופטימיות, שכן יחס של שוויון ושותפות בין שני עמי הארץ יבטיח “מקום לכולם במפגש הניצחון”“. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Yossi Klein-Halevi, “War and Repentance,” *Tchelet*, no. 18 (Autumn 2004): 23–29. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. “לראשונה מזה מאה שנה הביאה המלחמה לבלימת הסחף החזק של נטישת הדת, ואפילו להיפוכה החלקי של המגמה: אלפי ישראלים חילוניים עשו את הלא-ייאמן והפכו לחרדים. זאת הייתה ההתנערות האולטימטיבית מן הציונות, מין מתקפת פתע פוסט-יום-כיפורית על ישראל החילונית. החוזר בתשובה המפורסם ביותר היה אורי זוהר, איש קולנוע וסמל בוהמה. אך בדרכו הלכו עוד רבים וטובים מבני העילית האשכנזית: קיבוצניקים ואמנים, טייסים ואנשי סיירות”. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Hazony, “The Jewish Origins of the Western Disobedience Tradition.”, p. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. “אימוץ תורת האי-ציות היהודית על ידי המערב הוא ההישג המזהיר ביותר של הרעיון המדיני היהודי בהיסטוריה – הישג שאפשר למערב, שליחו הגדול של רעיון זה בפני האנושות, להביס את המדינה הנאצית הפגאנית, לא רק במערכה הצבאית, אלא גם בשדה הקרב הרעיוני”. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ofir HaIvry, “Who’s Afraid of The Nation State?,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 5 (Autumn 1998): 3–6.

    “הלאומיות שלה (של מדינת ישראל) היא הוותיקה בעולם”. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Hillel Fradkin, “Hillel Fradkin’s Response to: ‘The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years,’” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 6 (Winter 1999): 161-164 (84-87).

    “אחרי ככלות הכל, איש אינו יכול לחלוק ברצינות על היותו של העם היהודי העם העתיק ביותר שהעולם מכיר”. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Assaf Inbary, “The Spectacles of Isaiah Berlin,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 23 (24) (Spring 2006): 72-98 (82-112). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Joshua Berman, “The Biblical Origins of Equality,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 37 (Autumn/Summer 2009): 39-59 (76-99). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Fania Oz-Salzberger, “Jewish Roots of the Modern Republic (The Jewish Roots of Western Freedom),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 13 (Autumn/Summer 2002): 89-130 (88-132). [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. “בהקשר זה, יש יותר מעוול היסטורי גרידא בהשכחתם של המקורות היהודיים שהשפיעו השפעה עמוקה על המחשבה הפוליטית האירופית בתקופה המודרנית המוקדמת”. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. David Gelrnter, “Benjamin DeIzraeli: The Father of Modern Conservatism,” *Tchelet*, no. 21 (Autumn 2005): 88–110.

    “ככל שבוחנים את הראיות, מתברר יותר ויותר שבבסיס המדינה המודרנית עומדים רעיונות יהודיים – מודרניים ועתיקים כאחד”. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Yoram Hazony, “Judaism and the Modern State,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 23 (21) (Spring/Summer 2006): 39-53 (33-51). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. “אפשר שהדרך למדינה נוצרית מודרנית תימצא דווקא במפגש מחודש עם המשנה המדינית של עם ישראל”. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England’s Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Steven Grossby, “Rediscovering John Selden,” *Tchelet*, no. 29 (Autumn 2007): 132–36.

    “למסורת ההבראיסטית נודעה אפוא חשיבות לא מבוטלת להיסטוריה האינטלקטואלית, הפוליטית והמשפטית של המערב. ג'ון סלדן מילא תפקיד מרכזי בעיצובה של מסורת זו ובהרחבת היקף השפעתה, אך למרבה הצער לא זכה עדיין להכרה הרחבה לה הוא ראוי”. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. HaIvry, *John Selden and the Western Political Tradition*. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ethan Dor-Shav, “Soul of Fire: A Theory of Biblical Man,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 26 (Winter 2007): 31–64. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. “המקרא איננו טקסט “בוסרי” מבחינה מטפיזית, אלא דווקא יצירה פילוסופית מגובשת, מקיפה ואף מהפכנית”. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Bentzi Cohen, “Soul of Fire,” *Tchelet*, no. 28 (Summer 2007): 9.

    “כמה מרענן לדעת שאין אנו עוד משרכים רגלינו בעקבות היוונים, הטוענים לכתר הראשוניות בפיתוח תיאוריה חובקת-כל של היקום”. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Hazony, “Pulp Exegesis.”

    “התורה אינה צעצוע. זהו הטקסט הרוחני המונח ביסודם של אמונת ישראל ושל הציביליזציה המערבית כולה”. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Ofir HaIvry, “The Way of the World (The Way of the World: The Origins of Israeli Conservatism),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 5 (Autumn 1998): 34-82 (13-76). P. 48 (30) [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Noah Weinberg, “Noah Weinberg’s Response to: ‘The Jewish State: The Next Fifty Years,’” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 6 (Winter 1999): 88-91 (219-222). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Ido Hevroni, “Circumcision as Rebellion,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 28 (Summer/Spring 2007): 61-73 (107-122).

     “יהודה אמנם נפלה בידי רומא, אך מורשתו של רבי עקיבא ממשיכה לחרוט את רישומה בקורות העולם”. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. James Diamond, “Love Is as Strong as Death: A Biblical Warning,” *Tchelet*, no. 44 (Summer 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Menachem Kellner, “Love Is Strong as Death (Biblical Love) - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 45 (46) (Autumn 2011): 3-4 (3-4). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. James Diamond, “Love Is Strong as Death (Biblical Love) - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 45 (46) (Autumn 2011): 7-9 (8-11). [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. David Hazony, “Eliezer Berkovits and the Revival of Jewish Moral Thought,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 11 (Autumn 2001): 106-142 (23-66). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Eliezer Berkovits, *Essential Essays on Judaism*, ed. David Hazony (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2002).

     אליעזר ברקוביץ, תרגום: להד לזר, עורכים: דוד חזוני ויוסף יצחק ליפשיץ (ירושלים: הוצאת שלם, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Daniel Gordis, “The Tower of Babel and the Birth of Nationhood,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 40 (Summer/Spring 2010): 65–78.

     “האנושות, מצהיר הכתוב, **חייבת** להיפרד לעמים נבדלים, שלכל אחד מהם ארץ משלו ושפה משלו”. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. “חזון מקראי זה נראה רלוונטי מתמיד דווקא בימינו אלה, בעידן שבו נתפסת מדינת הלאום בעיני רבים כנחלת העבר ... ההכרה בחשיבותה המכרעת של המדינה האתנית-תרבותית נטועה, כפי שראינו, בלב לבו של המקרא” [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Meir Soloveichik, “Locusts, Giraffes, and the Meaning of Kashrut,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 26 (Winter 2007): 90–117. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Hazony, “Memory in Ruins.” [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ra'anan Eichler, “Robbers of the Lost Kingdom,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 26 (Winter 2007): 153–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Avraham Faust and Yair Sapir, “The ‘Governor’s Residency’ at Tel ‘Eton, The United Monarchy, and the Impact of the Old-House Effect on Large-Scale Archaeological Reconstructions,” *Radiocarbon* 60, no. 3 (2018): 801–20, https://doi.org/10.1017/RDC.2018.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Aharon Rose, “The Haredim: A Defense,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 25 (Autumn/Winter 2006): 34-61 (29-60). [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Joel Worthman, “The Haredim: A Defense - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 26 (Winter/Autumn 2007): 7-8 (3-4); Lippman Bodoff, “The Haredim: A Defense - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 26 (Winter/Autumn 2007): 8-9 (4-5); Jason Lustig, “The Haredim: A Defense - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 26 (Winter/Autumn 2007): 9-10 (5-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Aharon Rose, “The Haredim: A Defense - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 26 (Winter/Autumn 2007): 10-12 (6-9).

     “החרדיות מתקדמת, ככל הנראה, לעבר יתר השתלבות בחיי העם היהודי ... ואני, באופן אישי, מברך על כך”. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Tomer Persico, “Chabad’s Lost Messiah,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 36 (38) (Summer/Autumn 2009): 64-96 (82-127). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Meir Soloveichik, “The Jewish Mom’s Theology,” *Tchelet*, no. 22 (Winter 2006): 60–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Michael White, “The Jewish Mom - Response,” *Tchelet*, no. 25 (Autumn 2006): 13–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Meir Soloveichik, “The Jewish Mom - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 25 (Autumn 2006): 14–16.

     “בארצות-הברית, למשל, הדתות שהצליחו להעביר את עיקריהן הלאה לדור הבא – היהדות האורתודוכסית, הכנסייה הקתולית והכנסייה המורמונית – הן כולן אמונות שהדגישו את חשיבות המסורת. טבעי שרב יבקש להבטיח את “המשך קיומה ושגשוגה” של דתו (מצטט את הרב וייט), אבל אם ללמוד מן ההיסטוריה הוא מבקש, צריך וייט לדעת ששום דת אינה פורחת באמצעות כניעה לרוח הזמן”. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. See: Cohen and Liebman, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences*, 106–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. See, for example: Claire Berlinski, “Ramstein and the Return of Tevtonian Rage,” *Tchelet*, no. 21 (Autumn 2005): 31–61; Natan Sharansky, “The Roots of Modern Antisemitism,” *Tchelet*, no. 17 (Summer 2004): 103–20; Kirchick, “Has South Africa Lost Its North?”; Assaf Sagiv, “Silence of the Cuckoo Clock (Switzerland’s Choice of Friends),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 37 (38) (Autumn 2009): 19-26 (33-41); Assaf Sagiv, “The Secret Passion of the New Antisemitism,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 44 (45) (Summer 2011): 15-30 (15-29). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. James Kirchick, “In Front of a Twisted Mirror,” *Tchelet*, no. 30 (Winter 2008): 115–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Assaf Sagiv, “A Blessing for the Decipels of Jesus (Coming to Terms with Christianity),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 36 (38) (Summer/Autumn 2009): 23-31 (23-32). [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. “ועם זאת, למרות הפערים הבלתי מבוטלים הללו, הנוצרים והיהודים חולקים לא מעט, והמטען המשותף הזה – שזכה לכינוי הפופולארי “המורשת היודאו-נוצרית” – מונח בתשתיתה של הציוויליזציה המערבית מימי הביניים ואילך. שתי הדתות שואבות את השראתן מן הטקסט המקראי ומן הנראטיב ההיסטורי שהטקסט הזה מגולל; הן מאמינות בהשגחה עליונה, באלוהות מיטיבה המנחה את המין האנושי אל המנוחה והנחלה; ואולי חשוב מכל – הן ניצבות על מסד של **ערכים** מוחלטים, המשקפים, לדידן, את הסדר המוסרי הראוי וההולם, שעל פיו צריך האדם לנהוג. אולם מה שמאחד יותר מכל את הנצרות ואת היהדות – מה שמציב אותן, למעשה, בחזית אחת – הרי הן הסכנות המשותפות הנשקפות להן ולעולם שה מבקשות לכונן. בעת הנוכחית הן נדרשות להתמודד עם האיום הגלום באיסלאם הרדיקלי, שהכריז מלחמת חרמה על המערב ועל ערכיו”. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. “היהדות, מצדה, צריכה להותיר מאחור את המרירות ותחושת הנקם, להפסיק לתבוע התנצלויות וגילויי חרטה פומביים בכל הזדמנות, וללמוד לראות בדת הגדולה שהגיחה מקרבה שותפה ובעלת ברית, הראויה לכבוד ולהערכה”. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Daniel Rossing, “Jewish-Christian Relations - Response,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 38 (39) (Winter 2010): 21-23 (7-10). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Yehoshua Pfeffer, “Jews and Christians - Response,” *Azure*, no. 39 (Winter 2010): 3–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. David Hazony, “Mel Gibson’s Revolution (Breach of Faith),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 18 (Autumn 2004): 15-20 (13-19). [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Damon Linker, “Atheism’s Wrong Direction,” *Tchelet*, no. 31 (Spring 2008): 45–52. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Ofir HaIvry, “The New Prince: Silvio Berlusconi and the Italian Conservative Tradition,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 82-121 (104-146). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Ofir HaIvry, “Tony Blair and Other Tory Notions,” *Tchelet (Azure)* 3 (Winter 1998): (3-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Jonathan Jacobs, “Tradition for Thinking People,” *Tchelet*, no. 43 (Spring 2011): 56–67.

     “נסתפק אפוא בידיעה שהמסורת יכולה עוד ללמדנו דברים רבים וחשובים, ושאין היא אויבתו המושבעת של השכל; אדרבה, תכופות היא מדברת אלינו בקולה הרם והצלול של התבונה”. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Evelyn Gordon and Hadassah Levy, “Halacha’s Moment of Truth,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 43 (Spring/Winter 2011): 68-99 (58-96).

     “הקורפוס ההלכתי העצום שהתפתח לאורך דורות רבים של קיום גלותי אינו מרבה לעסוק בשאלות אלה (מדיניות ציבורית, צבא וכיוצ”ב), והמעט שיש לו לומר בדרך כלל אינו עולה בקנה אחד עם מציאות החיים במדינה ריבונית מודרנית. הלקונה הזו טומנת בחובה סכנה אמיתית: אם היהדות לא תשכיל לספק תשובות לבעיות הדוחקות הנערמות לפתחה, לא תהיה לישראל ברירה אלא לאמץ את הפתרונות החילוניים של המערב – ואם כך יקרה, לא ייוותר במדינה היהודית שום דבר “יהודי”“. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Yoav Elstein, Avidov Lipsker, and Rella Kushlevsky, eds., *Encyclopedia of Jewish Story* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Ido Hevroni, “The Neverending Story,” *Tchelet*, no. 23 (Spring 2006): 130–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Francis Wilson G., “The Conservative Spirit in Politics,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 106–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power and the Neo-Conservative Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Jonah Goldberg, “Fukuyama’s Second Thoughts,” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 27 (25) (Spring/Summer 2007): 152-158 (114-122). [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Michael Knox Bran, “Conservative Compassion Vis-à-Vis Liberal Mercy,” *Tchelet*, no. 28 (Summer 2007): 44–59. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Benjamin Kerstein, “Neoconservatism’s Defense Speech (Preaching to the Choir),” *Tchelet (Azure)*, no. 32 (Summer/Spring 2008): 117-124 (175-184).

     “אין ספק כי הניאו-שמרנות מצויה כעת בתקופת משבר. מלחמת עירק הפכה את עצם המושג לכינוי גנאי בחוגים רבים”. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. “רק אישים מעטים בזירה האינטלקטואלית האמריקנית בת-זמננו היו מוכנים לצאת נגד רוח הזמן ולהציג קריאה מוסרית של ההיסטוריה ... אין ספק שיש קסם מסוים בקריאה כזאת, ולו רק מפני שהיא עומדת על מה שפרשנים רבים של המאה העשרים אינם מעריכים – דהיינו על חשיבותם העצומה של רעיונות בסכסוכים המודרניים”. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. “בספרו שוררת אווירת ייאוש שאינה הולמת את הרוח האופטימית בדרך כלל שמפגינים הניאו-שמרנים”. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Daniel Mandel, “Minimizing the Big Brother,” *Tchelet*, no. 39 (Spring 2010): 121–28; Mark R. Levin, *Liberty and Tyranny: A Conservative Manifesto* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. “השמרנים רואים *ברפורמה*, בשיפור הדרגתי, את המכשיר הנאות לשינוי; הליברלים, לעומתם, קוראים ל*חדשנות* או לשינוי באמצעות תחליף”. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)