

Translator's Introduction

This sermon ([see here for the Hebrew original](#)), which was given by Rav Shagar around *Yom HaAtzma'ut* in 2005 during the lead-up to the Disengagement, is of a pair with [the last sermon that I translated](#), given for Purim of that year.

This sermon tackles the problem of the violence inherent in the law. Its starting point is the passionate redemptive love of the land that Rav Kook enshrined into Religious Zionism. Love of the land contrasting with the violence law of the current nation- state forms a tension deep in the heart of Religious Zionism. The Disengagement threatened to tear the movement apart, into those following the state and those the redemptive vision. Shagar attempts to overcome this problem by proposing two complementary reimagined visions of the state and its law as based on love, not violence, one based on Rosenzweig and one on Rav Kook.

In discussing Rosenzweig, Shagar contrasts his understanding of the unique nature of commandments with that of law (as presented by Santner). As opposed to law, which is always ultimately a matter of force, commandments are derived from the revelatory encounter between two individuals, and fulfilling a commandment re-enacts that encounter in the present moment. To perform a commandment, then, is to do something for your lover because you love them.

Shagar extends this logic to the state. What if we regard the state as a lover? Suddenly, filing tax returns becomes an act of love, as does obeying the speed limit and deciding to walk all the way to the cross-walk instead of just crossing in the middle of the street. Lovers don't have to be perfect, they're allowed to be flawed. All we really want of our lovers is that they love us back. So too the state does not have to be perfect, it just has to love us back.

Herein lies the crux Shagar's vision: what happens when your lover kicks you out of your home? Or asks you to help kick out other members of your family? Is there a point where you stop responding with love? Shagar says no. Even though the lover, or the state, has shifted from acts of love to acts of force, you must continue with acts of love.

The second approach renews Rav Kook's project. First, Shagar argues for a passionate love of the land as an important part of Religious Zionism. This is in contrast to the way Religious Zionism has come to focus largely, perhaps even exclusively, on the political entity of the state. This presents an opportunity for non-Israeli Jews in particular, who often find themselves at odds with the politics of the state to be wildly in love with the land itself.

Second, Shagar tackles the way Israeli Religious Zionism sees the state as the beginning of the process of redemption, yet he state has done much to contradict this understanding. Re-

solving this tension requires reconceptualizing the process of redemption itself, such that developments like Post-Zionism and the Disengagement do not actually contradict it. Shagar does this by exploring one of the more neglected aspects of Rav Kook's messianic teachings, the death of Mashiach Ben Yosef as the death of nationalism, and the current Post-Zionist age as Maschiah ben David. Shagar consciously taking up Rav Kook's project of interpreting history and carries it beyond where Rav Kook even went.

Law and Love

Between the Love of the Land and the Sovereignty of the Stateⁱ

(Translated by Levi Morrow, edited by Alan Brill)

The Song of Songs

In the writings of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, the land of Israel is above all love, and more specifically, falling in love. His sentences of light and splendor are the sentences of a love-drunk lover, repeating himself again and again in almost every paragraph.

“In the land of Israel the letters of our souls expand, they reveal a torrent... the air of the land of Israel manifests the refreshing growth of these letters of life, in their splendid beauty, with pleasant niceness and joyous power full of the influence of holiness.”ⁱⁱ

With his immigration to Israel, the man of God, student of the Volozhin Yeshivah, fell in love with the land and its pioneers. Like a beloved revealing herself to her lover, the land of Israel revealed its secrets to Rav Kook. There the broad expanses that he had never before known in his life in the exile, in the time when he yearned for the land, opened up before him, expanses that became primary aspects of his teachings: the ideas of all-inclusive unity, collectivity, idealism, holiness in nature, freedom, universalism, redemption, harmony, and ascending development - all of these are the love songs of his encounter with the land. The lover and the beloved reveal themselves to each other. “I am my beloved's and his desire is for me” (Song of Songs 7:11).

The lover is illuminated and enveloped in a delightful world of grace. Everything shines, everything is full of radiance and enveloped in wondrous harmony. He feels free and liberated. Not for nothing did mystics of every generation describe their mystical experiences in terms of falling in love, which is an experience of altered consciousness; intense oneness, transparency, grace, and salvation. “How much does the heart yearn to love everything, all beings, all of the works, all of creation.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Rav Kook brought this love into the core of Religious Zionism. The love of the Song of Songs is a fundamental experience in the life of the Religious Zionist; the intimacy between lover and beloved that the Song of Songs projects is the intimacy of two who are connected to their environs, and the setting of the land of Israel is an integral part of this intimacy. The intimacy between lovers occurs in the land's natural setting, with nature involved in their love. This love has absorbed the vistas of the land and the seasons of its year. The *shulamit* whose hair "is like a flock of goats streaming down from the Gilead," whose nose is like "the Tower of Lebanon" looking down on Damascus, whose eyes are "pools in Heshbon," and whose neck is "like the tower of David, built to *talpiyot*," this is the beloved in the land of Israel. Nature, time, the individual, and love all come together in this wondrous song, and this connection is the basis of the spiritual world of Religious Zionism.

The sages who explained this song as a love song between the people of Israel and her lover, God, understood that a different sort of religious language was present in this song. It was not exilic, but was connected to and deeply involved with the land, derived from a relationship with it. Nature itself becomes a different nature, a divine nature; nature that resonates with the song of Hannah Senesh: "My God, may it never end/the sea and the sand/the splash of the water/the brilliance of the sky/the prayer of man."^{iv}

Law Versus Love

There's no doubt that Gush Katif is one of the clear manifestations of Rav Kook's Song of Songs's style love. This desolate piece of land began to bloom after the encounter with its lovers. This is a reciprocal love story, both the loved and the beloved are not distant and aloof. Rather, she reveals her love - the land blooms. This is how one of the lovers put things:

For a generation we have been living in a magnificent settlement project in this beloved strip of land. The project was set up on virgin soil that had known no man since the creation of the world, and yet it miraculously responded to us, as if we were chosen, as if it knew how much we loved it.

In the course of a generation, our souls have become connected to this beloved land, and to each other. With great effort and integrity, we have set up beautiful towns and splendid communities... No evil and no impurity, only goodness and grace. Doors that have never been locked and open hearts are our symbols... A place of Jewish and Zionist pride, a place that is the dream of every proud Jew... The spirit of man is what turned a barren desert into a blooming garden and a band of strangers into the most wondrous of communities.^v

Against this youthful love full of grace and trust - "I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride... in a land not sown" (Jeremiah 2:2) – the Disengagement

stands like a heavy cloud. The state decreed on this strip of land the decree of the Disengagement, and revealed, painfully, the foundation of sovereignty, the violence that underlies its laws.

What manifests itself as the law's inner decay is the fact that rule of law is, in the final analysis, without ultimate justification or legitimation, that the very space of juridical reason within which the rule of law obtains is established and sustained by a dimension of force and violence that, as it were, holds the place of those missing foundations. At its foundation, the rule of law is sustained not by reason alone but also by the force/violence of a tautological enunciation—"The law is the law!"^{vi}

More than anything, the Disengagement symbolizes the crime of the legislation of the law itself, the violence that it bears within it, the recognition that, in truth, violating the law is less serious than the crime of making the law. The inner decay that exists in the rule of law is expressed in the claim heard constantly in the mouths of those who support the disengagement law: This is the law, and the law is the law! - And therefore, it must be respected. The arbitrariness of its legislation strengthens the tautology of the law. A justifying "judicial wisdom" is entirely lacking. Its justification is simply the legality of the process: the process is legal, it is confirmed and organized in the Knesset.

The law is justified not by ethics or judicial wisdom but by the simple fact that its legislation is the hands of the majority. The violence required to enact this law, removing people from their land, is not the extraneous remainder of the process but the very heart of law: the violent claim that the law is law. This violence, "the fearfulness of the government,"^{vii} implanted in the very heart of sovereign existence that justifies itself with brute force, is what motivates the prophet Samuel to rebuke the nation with "the law of the king" that he lays out before them.^{viii}

If so, then the love of the land and the sovereign violence of the state are tragically clashing before our very eyes - law versus love. For us, as Religious Zionists, this clash is incredibly harsh. Just as Rav Kook implanted love of the land within Religious Zionism, he similarly implanted it with the understanding and the faith that the state is the greatest manifestation of, and pathway to, redemption. "Our state, the state of Israel, is the foundation of God's throne in the world."^{ix} According to him, this is a state "that bears within its existence the greatest idealistic content."^x He saw the state as a necessary and decisive step in redemption, and his teachings of redemption deal with it and its ongoing at length.

Faced with the Disengagement, it is impossible not to ask: Is the State of Israel really the beginning of redemption? Can it, or any state, really take part in salvation? The threat of exile that hangs over the residents of Gush Katif, the roots of which lie in the forcefulness of the state, present us with the sharp contrast between the "idealistic content" full of light and love from the teachings of Rav Kook, and the opaque and unmoving law of the state.

From Law to Commandment

Rav Kook undoubtedly recognized the violence hidden within the idea of the state, and he even wrote about it;^{xi} if so, what led him to teach that the state of Israel “is actually the greatest happiness of man”^{xii}? Is there a depiction of the state, “an ideal state,” that does away with sovereign violence? That presents a state where law does not impinge on love? I intend to depict here two possibilities of such a state, one that arises from the thought of Franz Rosenzweig and one that can be derived from the teachings of Rav Kook himself.

What happens when God stands at the top of the pyramid and is the one who justifies the rule of the king or the law? In such a case, the laws turn into commandments. Does this remove their violent sting? According to Rosenzweig - yes, and this in light of his principled distinction between a law and a commandment:

To me as well, God is not a law-giver. He is a commander. Only a person in his laziness devolves the commands... into laws - well ordered... without the urgency of being commanded, without the “I am the Lord.”^{xiii}

The imperative of the commandment makes no provision for the future; it can only conceive the immediacy of obedience. If it were to think of a future or a forever, it would be, not commandment nor order, but law. Law reckons with times, with a future, with duration. The commandment knows only the moment; it awaits the result in the very instant of its promulgation.^{xiv}

A commandment is not an instruction or a law. It does not support itself with external force, rather it receives its support from the fact that it itself is a holy act. The “command” aspect is an inherent part of it. For example, just as two objects in space bear a relationship to “the law of gravity” and act according to it, moved as part of their very existence rather than being forced artificially, so too there is an intrinsic, immanent, connection between the commander and the commandment that cannot be severed. This connection is not a function of the past, just as gravity is not a function of the past, rather it is an event that happens in real time.

According to Rosenzweig, a commandment is fundamentally an unmediated relationship between two individuals, and therefore the heart of the commandment is revelation. A person who performs the same actions “without the urgency of being commanded” therefore cannot encounter God through them. “In that moment we only know the moment itself, and we know it with all the greatness of the divine-human substance of the commandment, from which we can say: ‘Blessed are you’... only from the unmediated state of the commandments can we speak to God... a person hears the voice of the commander only within the commandment.”^{xv}

That is to say, whereas the law bears no relevance for those under its authority, rather it just attempts to force on the present that which is past, that which is written in a book, a commandment bears within it significant meaning for the commanded - there is an active relationship and encounter between the commander and the commanded. In other words: the commandment

is the way the Torah organizes the falling-in-love of revelation. The commandment carries with it the ongoing revelation of the lover, God, to the Jew, and the outcome of this - the statement, "love me": "No third party can command [love] or extort it. No third party can, but the One can. The commandment to love can only proceed from the mouth of the lover. Only the lover can and does say: love me!"^{xvi}

A commanded person experiences the command as directed to him personally, an experience that is lacking in the alienated law that anchors itself in self-referential tautology - the law is the law. The sovereign does not turn towards his servants but rather imposes laws upon them. What, then, would an ideal Jewish state, with commandments rather than laws, look like?

Let me clarify with an example: imagine a driver at an intersection in the dead of night. There are no other drivers on the road, but the traffic light is red. The driver knows that no one is watching him and he could safely cross the intersection, without fear of accident or police. I know many people who even in the middle of the night, with no one watching, would not drive through a red light, because of the religious framing of "governmental law" ("דינא דמלכותא"); from their perspective, crossing the intersection would be "a religious prohibition" ("איסור"). Just as they would never consider eating pig even in a hidden room in the dead of night, so too they would not illegally run a traffic light. The applicability of the divine law come from its divine commander rather than its content, and therefore it applies in all contexts. The commandment is not a function of content but of relationship. The same person stops at the red light not because of fear of the law but because of inner connection, identification, not with the content of the action but with the action itself - you don't drive when the light is red.

A state whose laws do not rely on violent power to enforce their fulfillment but are exchanged for commands, will lead, in psychological terms, to "release from the punishing pressures of the superego [that] is a form of grace... a grace *internal* to those rigorous imperatives... rather than one that suspends the law in its 'fulfillment.'"^{xvii} Thus, for example, a father does not care for his children because of the law but as a manifestation of his intention and his freedom. He is not driven by an external force which compels him but from internal compulsion, from the obligation he finds in the very fact of his being the father of his children, an obligation that is his very freedom.

Similarly, would an ideal state not collect income tax, for example, by compulsion but rather it would be paid as a commandment? Would a person who fills out the assessment for his income tax feel the same feelings that he feels when he gives charity to the needy? A person gives charity as part of his relationship with the need individual, a relationship that is parallel to his relationship with God, who commanded him to give charity; income tax would be paid from the place

where a person forms an internal relationship with the state, a relationship that requires the assessment.^{xviii}

A State of Falling-In-Love

An in-depth study of Rav Kook's teachings on redemption, and understanding what is so novel in them, enables us to learn about another possible avenue for sovereignty without violence.

The redemptive teachings (התורה הגואלת) of Rav Kook are not just a depiction of the end of days or of the spiritual greatness of the land of Israel; they are a drawing down (המשכה) of lights. This teaching is itself an act of drawing out the lights of the land of Israel, lights that to a certain degree did not exist in our world before their revelation, and Rav Kook was the one who drew them into the world. Rav Kook's teachings create a different religious mindset, innovating over everything that preceded them - "religious Israeliness," and not just "religious Jewishness."^{xix}

Parenthetically, I would say that even with the difficult events that are threatening us and disturbing our *Yom HaAtsma'ut* (Israeli Independence Day) celebration, we must celebrate this teaching, the teaching of the redemption of the land of Israel, a teaching to which we are bound and that is bound to us.^{xx}

In the deepest sense, Rav Kook's teachings about the drawing of lights did not just identify the process of redemption; they also enabled it. It blazed a path for the Jews from exile to the land of Israel, one that was not simple, and according to many was impossible and undesirable. Redemption is not a historical-factual, material process; rather it is not separate from the specific teaching that lays out and enables the process.^{xxi} Without the spirit of its interpreters, a spirit that grants the process its sensibility and its unique "light," the redemption cannot happen. Hence, the vitality of the teaching, Rav Kook's teaching, for redemption.

What was the spiritual situation before Rav Kook's teachings? What was that "religious Jewishness" that we mentioned?

Rabbi Elazar said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And many peoples shall go and say: Go and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths" (Isaiah 2:3)? The Talmud notes that Jacob is the only Patriarch mentioned and asks: Is He the God of Jacob and not the God of Abraham and Isaac?

Rather, the verse specifically mentions Jacob to allude to the fact that the Temple will ultimately be described in the same way that Jacob referred to it. It will **not** be referred to **as** Abraham referred to it. **It is written of him** that when he prayed at the location of the Temple mountain, he called it **mount**, as it is stated **"As it is said on this day: On the mount where the Lord is seen"** (Genesis 22:14). **And** it will **not** be referred to **as** Isaac

referred to it. **It is written of him** that he called the location of the Temple **field** when he prayed there, **as it is stated: “And Isaac went out to meditate in the field” (Genesis 24:63). Rather,** it will be described **as** it was referred to by **Jacob, who called it house, as it is stated: “And he called the name of that place Beth-El” (Genesis 28:19),** which means house of God.^{xxii}

Jewish space is not a space connected to the earthly and external, rather it is a space anchored within itself. “The inner point” [*described by the author of the book*] *Sefat Emet* [*of the Hasidic author Rabbi Yehudah Alter of Gur*] is a clear expression of this type of existence. Jewishness is the home (הבית) - “Jacob who called it a house,” not the mountain or the field of Avraham and Yitzchak, the mountain and field that are integral parts of the Song of Songs. Jewishness resides in the family, in “the children of Jacob” whose “bed was complete.”^{xxiii}

Rosenzweig taught that the expressions of Jewishness are commitment and being rooted in the covenant, which are the fundamental acts of Judaism. According to this definition, the Jewish exile is the creation of a sheltered a-historical, family space, without concern for surroundings or engaged in the rules of history.^{xxiv}

The Jews “lack the passionate attachment to the things that constitute the primary... ‘objects’ of other historical peoples and nations, attachments that ultimately constitute their vitality and endurance as peoples and nations: land, territory, and architecture; regional and national languages; laws [=state laws], customs, and institutions.”^{xxv}

Their land exists only as a holy land for which they yearn, and their holy language is not their first language, not the language that they speak in their daily lives. Jewishness connected only and entirely in itself. “Our life is no longer meshed with anything outside ourselves. We have struck root in ourselves.” “And so, in the final analysis, [the Jewish nation] is not alive in the sense the nations are alive: in a national life manifest on this earth, in a national territory, solidly based and staked out on the soil. It is alive only in that which guarantees it will endure beyond time, in that which pledges it ever lastingness, in drawing its own eternity from the sources of the blood.”^{xxvi}

The meaning of the Jew being connected only in himself is that the nation in its very being is that the “outside,” other nations and cultures, either do not exist from the Jew’s perspective, the “outside” does not enter his horizon at all, or is brought inwards into the “house” via “hospitality” (“הכנסת אורחים”).^{xxvii} For example, the body - it either doesn’t exist, in which case the Jew is not involved or bothered by it, or it is ignored as irrelevant; or it is internalized as a medium for delighting in God, such as in the Hasidic worship via “raising up the sparks.” This is hospitality - the “outside” ceases to play the role of “outside” and behaves like “inside,” as part of the home.

The gaping difference between Jewishness and Israeliness is the difference between the images of the mother and the lover, that same lover depicted in the Israeli love song of the Song of Songs.^{xxviii} The primary female image in the world of the Jew is the maternal-familial image; “Happy are all who fear the LORD, who follow His ways... Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons, like olive saplings around your table. So shall the man who fears the LORD be blessed... and live to see your children’s children. May all be well with Israel!” (Psalms 128). This is not the figure of the lover who descends from the hills of Gilead to see the flowering vines. For sure, the vine - a fruitful vine - and the olive saplings are present here, but they are organized around the familial table of the home.

The image of the lover expresses revelation and the happiness of encounter, while the image of the mother expresses the womb, familiarity without encounter; no stranger is, or could be, present in its light. This difference is not simple, and it demonstrates the innovative nature of the Song of Songs in the Jewish world, and the boldness of Rav Kook’s teaching; he returned us to the lover and the beloved, he took us out of the home and into the field, he returned us to history. Not only the lover and the beloved show themselves to each other, but also the land reveals itself to them, they are enveloped in it and it in them, and all of this in strong contrast to the disconnect of the exilic Jew from all external connection to the world.

The teachings of Rav Kook, then, return us to the outside world, to nature, to the land, as an embodied nation. The Jew no longer yearns for the land and grounds himself internally, but reaches the lands and delves into it, into its environment.

Our original question thus returns in full force: Does Rav Kook return us to the violence that is in the outside world, to the forcefulness of the body, to the compulsion of state institutions and the arbitrariness of law?

We could probe further and challenge. Is Rav Kook’s vision of redemption, the vision that returned us to nature and naturalness, the same as the Zionist vision of normalcy, of “the house of Judah like all the other nations” (Ezekiel 25:8) - a nation alongside other nations, a culture alongside other cultures? Is giving up on Jewishness [in favor of Israeliness ~LM] the same as normalcy? Furthermore, does not the lover, caressed by God’s grace, prefer to escape from the world and delight in his love? Does not returning to the world contradict the love that gushes within him,^{xxix} and doesn’t Rav Kook, the great lover, return us to this world?

Rav Kook describes an abnormal redemption,^{xxx} a redemption of falling in love, of man and nation “sick with love,” a redemption where existence itself shines with a different light. Existence itself shines with the light of falling in love. Rav Kook’s utopia is a miraculous world, a world that shines with the unending light of miracles. In this utopia, existence does not just look different, it is different on an essential level. The state and its institutions ascend and shine with a different light. This is a mystification of material being (הישי). Like the kabbalists, Rav Kook thinks that redemption is an ontological shift in existence - the very material of the world will

change and be purified. The State of Israel as the foundation of God's throne in the world is an ideal state that shines. At its center lies not force but light: "through the strength of Israel, their expansion and the revelation of their lives, in whatever form this takes, reveals the light of the highest level of non-being (האינ העליון), revealed as tangible existence (שי), and illuminates the whole world with the light of life, sustaining and improving and elevating everything."^{xxxix}

I will attempt to sharpen this idea. The land of Israel, as presented in the Song of Songs, is the living background for the love of the lover and the beloved; it is present in their love, which paints it with blazing colors of beauty and desire. The land simply seems different, aromatic, blossoming, loving, and full of plentiful waters from flowing rivers. Rav Kook's land is where human life shines with the light of God's love, with divine vitality behind the growth and pleasure of all things.

The lenses (כלים) by which the lover grasps reality are different from those of a regular person, and these different vessels grant lenses a different meaning. However, this is not just a matter of understanding. Kabbalah teaches that the lenses (כלים) affect the light itself - enabling it and shaping it;^{xxxix} the world of the lover is really a different world.^{xxxix}

Just as a lover eating in the presence of his lover experiences the food differently, seeing the eating itself as a gesture of love and closeness, so too Rav Kook living in the land of Israel lived constantly in *shabbat*, his weekday meals were *shabbat* meals. For him, the land of Israel and the state of Israel were lit up with the light of *shabbat*.^A

Imagine a *shabbat*-style state. I don't mean a state where no one works, where there are no police or banks, but a state where the days of the week shine like *shabbat*: the cops will smile, the faces of the clerks will beam, and the store-owners will sing... this is a state where love and grace, not force, are at its center.

New Lights

Rav Kook saw great purpose in the land and the Zionist institutions in his lifetime. In the continuing development of the state and its institutions he saw the lofty goal of a shining utopia, of a time when force will disappear, replaced by love, solidarity, and brotherhood. This was how he experienced the beginning of redemption. He identified the Zionist settlement of the land of Israel as part of a process leading to utopia. Without the consciousness that a certain degree of utopia is realized already in the present, creating a feeling that it could come at any moment - that it is coming now, waiting just behind the door. If so, Rav Kook's utopian redemption would be no different from the faith of every other Jew in an eventual messiah.^{xxxix}

Can we also relate like this to the State of Israel as it is today, without a fundamental change in how we think of utopia? In my opinion, we cannot, and this is the hopeless situation that we are confronted with today and that we cannot deny.^B The State of Israel does not scintillate light and love but force and law, so how should we relate to it? Should we shrink away from

understanding it to be the beginning of redemption? This understanding as the beginning [of redemption] is what gives the state its meaning, explaining that what is happening is part of a utopian process, and the utopia is already partially realized with the process being well underway.

We have to consider the present reality. We cannot decide in advance our interpretation of events and be caught up in dogmas regarding redemption. It is possible that the events of our time demand of us, as the events of Rav Kook's time demanded of him, to construct new lenses, to formulate new concepts, in order to be able to properly grasp and understand them. The possibility of taking up Rav Kook's project, of identifying holiness in historical processes, is in our hands. Rav Kook stood before secular Zionism, knowing how to elevate its holy sparks by formulating new religious concepts through deeply and innovatively interpreting old concepts.

The process of redemption may be different from how Rav Kook foresaw it, and we may not yet understand this process as it should be understood. Perhaps everything happening now can, and should, be understood in light of Rav Kook's famous words regarding the nullification of nationalism:

With the Mashiach Ben Yosef, the messiah descended from Joseph, the nation of Israel rediscovers its sense of nationalism. However, the ultimate purpose is not isolationist and elitist nationalism but rather the attempt to unite all members of the world into one family, under God... When the world needs to transition from nationalism to universalism, then the things that developed out of a narrow view of nationalism will need to be destroyed, for they demonstrate a corrupted and particularistic love. This is why Mashiach Ben Yosef is going to be killed, and the true and lasting reign will be that of Mashiach Ben David.^{xxxv}

In light of these words, the process of redemptions may not be held up at all, in fact just the reverse, it is happening even faster than Rav Kook could have foreseen or than we normally think. The feeling of not being at home (איבוד ביתיות) that is welling up within us even more forcefully due to the Disengagement Plan flows from the rapid pace of the changes. Perhaps the crude destruction is actually progress, and perhaps Post-Zionism is actually the killing of Mashiach Ben Yosef to make way for Mashiach Ben David.

A person feels comfortable with the world and accustomed to his understanding. Therefore he feels violently shaken by drastic shifts that happen, or could happen, to him. However, he can see these changes as processes that announce the coming of the messiah. A person feels, rightly, that his old world will be destroyed, and who knows what will be with the new one? What is its nature, and what will it bring with it? To this, Rav Yosef responded in his famous statement: "He will come, but I will not see him."^{xxxvi}

Indeed, the Talmud depicts the “week” wherein the messiah will come as consisting of harsh and terrifying events. “On Friday - disharmonies, on Saturday - wars, - on Saturday night - the arrival of the messiah.”^{xxxvii} The Maharal taught that the arrival of a new world, a world of redemption, is bound up with the destruction of the old, and therefore anarchy and war must precede the arrival of the messiah.^{xxxviii} The birth pangs of the messiah in our day are opinion wars and cultural revolutions.

Disobedience to Force

In conclusion, I want to say a few words about disobedience (הסרבנות).^{xxxix} Disobedience manifests itself specifically in the same place where we find the violent basis of the law. Disobedience is not disobedience to the law but to the forceful element that is its foundation. In this context, justifying disobedience means making peace with the position that says the only response to the fundamental violence of the law is a corresponding act of force. Is that what we want, that force should overpower force? The true rebellion is not force but its abandonment. The ability to abandon the game of force and violence is truly a messianic option. We do not dream of a time when the right power will win out, but for a time when power and might will not make right at all. We seek pleasure (עונג) and not reality (מציאות)^{xl} - this is the true messianism.^{xli}

The prophet, describing the arrival of the messianic king, used these images: “Rejoice greatly, fair Zion; Raise a shout, fair Jerusalem! Lo, your king is coming to you” (Zekhariah 9:9). As readers of this verse we expected a monarchical appearance full of pathos and strength, but to our surprise all of the shouting is simple over this. “He is victorious and triumphant, yet humble, riding on an ass, on a donkey foaled by a she-ass” (ibid.). The humble man riding on a donkey is the one who destroys the bow of war and speaks peace to the nations unto the ends of the earth. “He shall banish chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem; the warrior’s bow shall be banished. He shall call the nations to peace; his rule shall extend from sea to sea and from ocean to land’s end” (ibid., 10).

Does the messianic process that we are living in contain the possibility of creating a religious avant garde that is not politically right or center but left, that refuses (מסרב) to grab for power, calling us to rebel against force? Will a non-right religious Zionist political party arise that will truly be a prophetic party? I am not talking about a party like “Meimad,” with its “bourgeoisie” (“בעלבתית”) relaxedness and its unconditional devotion to consensus, but about a party that will shatter the status quo of existing political options and lead us to new territory. Perhaps the path there is already being paved. The claims of the right against the Disengagement are essentially drawn from the humanistic discourse of the Israeli left.

In our situation, force inevitably triggers an opposing force, drawing itself into the constraints of force and wallowing in them. We must break this vicious cycle, as a step toward redemption.^c

For he has grown, by His favor, like a tree crown, like a tree trunk out of arid ground. He had no form or beauty, that we should look at him; No charm, that we should find him pleasing. He was despised, shunned by men, a man of suffering, familiar with disease. As one who hid his face from us, he was despised, we held him of no account. Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, Our suffering that he endured. We accounted him plagued, smitten and afflicted by God; (Isaiah 53:2-4)

Thus he shall judge the poor with equity and decide with justice for the lowly of the land. He shall strike down a land with the rod of his mouth and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips. Justice shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his waist. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid; The calf, the beast of prey, and the fatling together, with a little boy to herd them. (Isaiah 11:4-6)

Appended Notes

A These words remind me of a debate that arose in a class I where I taught Rav Kook's famous words on the holiness of eating, "the very essence of eating... and all movements and sensations of life are full of light and holiness" (*Shemoneh Kevatzim*, Collection 2, #65, p.271). One of the students claimed that he wanted to eat an "ordinary steak" and not a "holy steak." This claim reveals the gap between Rav Kook's approach and that of Haredi Judaism. Haredism does not seek to replace the outside world. It leaves a neutral world, outside the Jewish home, and even when it is drafted - from time to time - for the sake of holiness, its neutrality remains and the indifference toward it does not change. In contrast, Rav Kook's Israeli (ארצישראלית) demand is total: he desires to eliminate any neutrality of the outside, and to turn it into holiness despite its being "outside." How does this happen? Does a beloved who eats "ordinary ice cream" in the company of his beloved feel anomalous because of what the act represents? Is he interested in "ordinary ice cream" or in the act of eating ice cream with her, an act that turns into a deep gesture of love - without overriding its ordinariness?

B There are those who deny and attempt to ignore the chasm above which we are standing. For example, not too long ago I sat at a table at a bar mitzvah with two important Jerusalemite rabbis, a kollel student from "Har HaMor," and a relative of Haredi appearance. The latter told us all woefully about how he had been a major in the IDF: "For thirty years I faithfully served the state, year in and year out, doing long stints of reserve duty, and here the state has gone and turned into a state like all the nations;" he was referring to the ruling of the High Court on the topic of Reform conversions. He continued, asking: "Can anyone still believe that the state is the beginning of redemption?" The rabbis joined in angrily, lamenting the destruction of the religious councils and the Kashrut system by the Prime Minister's son. The kollel student did not take long to respond - he spouted the normal line about delays in the process of redemption; the safety net is already spread out in case the Disengagement should actually happen.

C This, too, is a form of battle, because it turns the gaze towards the other and reveals his violence. See also the words of Ami Shaked: "As a community, without innocents and after years of struggle have taken even the good out of us, we are obligated to fight in a way fitting for our way of life, for our nature, for the goodness of our hearts and for our commitments to the fate of our community. Despite this, our destiny commands us to wear our garments white and our heads anointed. We are committed to a painful battle, one that will shake the nation of Israel in its nobility and its uniqueness, its concern for the collective despite the danger to its own project" (above, note 4).

ⁱ Quotations from Rosenzweig's "Star of Redemption" and Santner's "On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life" are taken from English volumes rather than being original translations from the Hebrew sermon. Unbracketed footnotes are Shagar's, bracketed footnotes are from the original editors of the Hebrew volume, and italicized brackets are mine.

ⁱⁱ **Orot** (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1993, p.12. There is a famous story about Brenner, the elder writer, who joined Rav Kook for the third meal and left quickly, saying: there is too much light there, and I cannot stay.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Shemoneh Kevatzim** (Hebrew), Jerusalem 2004, Collection 3, Paragraph 20, p.366. [*Translations of Rav Kook by this author.*]

^{iv} "Walking to Caesarea," **Diaries, Songs, Testimonies**, Tel Aviv 1994, p.221. [*Translated from Hebrew by Vivian Eden.*]

^v A. [Ami] Shaked, Security and Military Coordinator of Gush Katif - <http://www.katif.net/art.php?id+1273&table=art>. [*Translation by this author.*]

^{vi} Eric Santner, **On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig**, Chicago, University of Chicago, 2001, pp.56-57.

^{vii} Bavli Avodah Zarah 4a.

^{viii} I Samuel 8:11-20.

^{ix} **Orot HaKodesh** (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1985, III, p.191.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} **Orot**, *ibid.*, p.14, #3.

^{xii} **Orot HaKodesh**, III, *ibid.*

^{xiii} **Selected Letters and Diary Excerpts** [Hebrew], Jerusalem 1987, p.326. [*Translations from this text are by this author.*]

^{xiv} **The Star of Redemption**, trans. William Hallo, New York Chicago San Francisco 1971, p.177.- zzz not original

^{xv} **Selected Letters and Diary Excerpts**, p.336.

^{xvi} **The Star of Redemption**, p.176.

^{xvii} **On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig**, p.109.

^{xviii} Regarding this it is said, "God desired to give merit to Israel, therefore he gave them expansive Torah and commandments" (B. Makkot 23b)...

^{xix} We can learn about the difference between Jewishness and Israeliness from the fact that there were sages who wanted to physically hide the Song of Songs which, as we saw, expresses the Israeli (ארצישראלית) relationship, which Rav Kook drew out, between man and God, and attempted to prevent its inclusion in the canon (m. Yadayim 3:5).

^{xx} See **Bayom Hahu**, p.250 and forward.

xxi See *Bayom Hahu*, p.143.

xxii B. Pesachim 88a. [Translation from sefaria.com.]

xxiii **Shir HaShirim Rabbah** 4:17. [The correct citation seems to be 4:7.]

xxiv See *Bayom Hahu*, p.176 and forward.

xxv **On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig**, p.110.

xxvi **The Star of Redemption**, pp.305, 304.

xxvii See **On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig**, p.116; Shagar, *B'Tsel HaEmunah* (Hebrew), p.106-11.

xxviii For a different understanding of these images, see *Bayom Hahu*, pp.123-127.

xxix See “*Mered V’Hesed*,” *B’Tsel HaEmunah* (Hebrew), p.43 and on. Regarding Rav Kook, see “*Az Nedaberu Yirei Hashem*,” *Zeman Shel Heirut* (Hebrew), pp.179-186.

xxx On the views of the Maharal and the “Sefat Emet,” who greatly influenced Rav Kook, see **Bayom Hahu**, pp. 193-199.

xxxi *Shemoneh Kevatzim*, *ibid.*, Collection 2, #319, p.339. [Translation by this author.] Also see, *ibid.*, #189, p.299. In these words Rav Kook departs from a central theme in the teachings of Hasidut - discovering the divine as the nullification of the world as opposed to its construction.

xxxii As we saw regarding Rav Kook’s teachings about redemption.

xxxiii [“The world of a happy person and the world of a depressed person are different worlds.” (L. Wittgenstein, **Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus**, Tel Aviv 1995, paragraph 6.43) -Yeshai Mevorach]

xxxiv See *Bayom Hahu*, p.140.

xxxv *Orot*, *ibid.*, p.160, #6. Famously, Rav Kook identified Mashiach Ben Yosef with the Zionists.

xxxvi B. Sanhedrin 98b.

xxxvii *Ibid.*, 97a.

xxxviii *Hiddushei Aggadot* (Hebrew), 3, Sanhedrin, p.204. See also *Bayom Hahu*, p.204.

xxxix [This is regarding the call by many Religious Zionist rabbis for IDF soldiers to disobey orders that have to do with removing settlers in the Disengagement Plan. -Y.M.]

xl See *ibid.*, p.150, 160.

xli See *ibid.*, pp.138-139.