# CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION

# The deeply rooted religious and mystical beliefs of Israel’s fundamentalists are one of the most serious obstructions to the full implementation of the 1993 Oslo accord. The increasing political activism of the religious Orthodox Jews and the more strictly observant religious ultra-Orthodox Hasidic Jews to oppose the Oslo accord has created both a need to understand more clearly the hopes and fears of religious fundamentalists, as well as to appreciate the extent to which they have increasingly commandeered Israel’s policies of peace with the Palestinians.[[1]](#footnote-1) The purpose of this thesis is to reveal that religiously motivated political pressures on Israeli leaders have played and will continue to play a powerful, obstructionist role to all efforts at compromise with the Palestinians to implement the 1993 Oslo accord.

The principle obstacle in the current search for peace through the Oslo agreement is the determination of Jewish fundamentalismto dictate, in absolute terms, the conditions of final settlement over the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[[2]](#footnote-2) The religious political parties of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox having increased their control over the political dynamics in the Israeli Knesset in recent years are resolutely opposed to the implementation of Articles I and V of the 1993 Oslo accord’s Declaration of Principles (DOP), based on full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967.

# Specifically, Article I of the Oslo accord states that the aim of the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242. In the Oslo accord proper, Article V, paragraph 3 identifies Permanent Status Negotiations, the specific reference to negotiations, where the remaining issues of settlements, Jerusalem, and refugees are to be finalized.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The primary objection to the Oslo accord by Israel’s Jewish fundamentalists is found in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, passed by the UN Security Council on November 22, 1967, which stipulates the following:

*Emphasizing* the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every state in the area can live in security.

*Emphasizing further* that all member states in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter;

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
   1. Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories of recent conflict;
   2. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

Implementation of these terms would mean the dismantlement of the settlements, the abandonment of the Old City and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and a massive influx of Palestinian refugees into the West Bank. None of these is acceptable or possible from an Orthodox Jewish position. Based on their interpretation and observance of the laws of the Torah[[4]](#footnote-4) as specified in the Talmud[[5]](#footnote-5) and the Halacha,[[6]](#footnote-6) Israel’s Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that they are not permitted to share the land of Israel, nor are they permitted to share dominion over it with non-Jews.

# The giving of the land of Israel [[7]](#footnote-7) to Abraham in a sacred trust by God to the Jews - and only to the Jews - remains one of the most important and non negotiable beliefs of Jewish fundamentalism. Israel’s more observant religious Jews in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities believe that to compromise the status quo and accept the principles of Permanent Status Negotiations, which involve the establishment of an autonomous Palestinian state in the midst of the land of Israel, is anathema and must not proceed. The religious Orthodox believe unquestioningly that any concessions regarding the surrender of West Bank land and Jerusalem, or the acceptance of Palestinian refugees back to the land of Israel, is tantamount to a betrayal against Judaism, and worse, an abomination in the eyes of the Almighty.

# INCREASING POLITICAL CONTROL BY JEWISH FUNDAMENTALISTS

# The power of the former secular Labor government to resolve the permanent status of borders, settlements, Palestinian refugees, and future control of Jerusalem as part of the Oslo agreement has been usurped by Jews with a religious political agenda.[[8]](#footnote-8) Since 1975 when land expansion by religious activists began in the West Bank, the Israeli population has steadily opposed any attempts at administrative control by non-Jews over any part of Israel. This renewed sense of purpose is evident in the 1996 and 1999 elections, when religious party candidates elected in large numbers pledged outright to vote the will of their Orthodox rabbis in the Knesset.[[9]](#footnote-9)

# This trend reflects a growing mindset among Israeli Jews that the land, the Temple and the status of non-Jews, when viewed in the context of their religion, is a central concern as they examine the role and purpose of the State of Israel for the Jewish people. The expanding political voice and voting power of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews in the Knesset has moved many of Israel’s less religious Jews to view the collective support or political affirmation of the tenets of Judaism as constituting part of their true identity in Israeli politics.

# The 1994 Guttman Institute study on the religious beliefs of Israeli Jews concluded that there is a continuum from strictly observant to the non-observant Israeli Jews in terms of religious practice, rather than a great division between a religious minority and a secular majority that is often perceived by non-Jews outside of Israel. The 1994 Guttman Institute study of Israeli Jews provided the fullest and most comprehensive source of data

# about what Israeli Jews believe, how they view Jews of different religious orientations, and what role they feel religion ought to play in Israeli public life. The study found that Israeli Jewish society has a strong traditional bent toward religious practice and observance and that Jews are strongly committed to retaining the religious traditions and character of their country. The Guttman Institute study asserted that Israel Jews are committed to a religious connotation of what it means to be a Jew, if not to Judaism.

# The Guttman Institute report revealed the following: Fourteen percent of Israeli Jews defined themselves as strictly observant. Fifty percent firmly believe the Torah was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai and that Divine Providence watches over everyone and that the Torah and *Mitzvot* are God’s commandments.[[10]](#footnote-10) Eighty percent reported visiting the Western Wall on the Temple Mount, and considered it a visible symbol of the continuity of Jewish history and heritage.

On beliefs, values and principles of faith, the Guttman study found that sixty percent firmly believe in the existence of God. Fifty percent of Israeli Jews believe that the government should be concerned that public life complies with Jewish religious tradition. Forty two percent favor separation of state and religion. Fifty percent believe the Jews are a chosen people.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**TENSION BETWEEN THEOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY**

Since 1948, the State of Israel has made an effort to present an image to the world community that it is able to govern itself as a western style democracy. Yet the growing number of Orthodox Jews elected to the Knesset in the 1990’s has increasingly threatened the underlying secular democratic framework of Israel’s parliamentary form of government. The desire to be accepted as a member of the community of nations is in tension with domestic pressures from politically active Orthodox and ultra- Orthodox Jews to observe the religious tenets of Judaism, rather than comply with the terms of the Oslo accord signed by the government of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Since 1993, the State of Israel has refused to make substantive concessions on the key issues regarding Permanent Status Negotiations under the Oslo accord.[[12]](#footnote-12)

For a majority of Israel’s religious Jews the terms of the Oslo accord and the compromises implicitly contained therein are in direct contravention to God’s laws and commandments,[[13]](#footnote-13) scuttling the agreement is in their view not only justified, but the survival of Judaism depends on it. It is this strong anchoring in religion and a commitment to strict religious observance to God’s laws that religious Jews experience and assert their uniqueness as Jews and in their relationship with the divine. The implementation of the Oslo accord portends a failed Torah prophecy for the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox in that they believe it would prevent the coming of the Messiah. Instead, the urgency with which Jewish settlements are being created as ‘facts on the ground’ in Israel can be more deeply understood as an effort to hasten the coming of the Messiah and the redemption of the Land of Israel.[[14]](#footnote-14)

# As a result, the emergence of politically active religious groups and the direct influence of their rabbis in the Knesset has held the future of any peace agreement hostage, and adversely affects the stability of the Middle East as a whole. The Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox population in Israel has already played a significant role in sabotaging related peace initiatives based on UN Security Council Resolution 242.[[15]](#footnote-15) The permanent peace envisioned by the Oslo process is vanishing quickly as the persistent religious agenda of Jewish fundamentalists has exacerbated tensions with Palestinians, leading Israel toward more conflict and violence with Arabs.

# This research first reveals the connection between the “messianic” Orthodox Jews and their beliefs regarding the land of Israel and recent settlement expansion. This is accomplished by identifying settlement activists, identified as the messianic Orthodox, and their core strategies for reclaiming biblical land. Some of the most important messianic Orthodox activist groups include the *Ateret Kohanim* and the Jerusalem Reclamation Project, the *Gush Emunim* and the Council of Yesha Rabbis, and the Temple Mount Faithful, devoted to wresting the Temple Mount from Muslim control.

Next, the research investigates the more dogmatic and politically active *Ashkenazi* ultra-Orthodox groups in Israel, exploring what is behind their recent political activism against the Oslo agreement, and the motivations driving their actions. Yet while distinguishing among the different groups within the messianic Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities, it also becomes clear that while the strategies of the different fundamentalists groups may differ, their goals and objectives are the same. The Gush Emunim, led by Moshe Levinger, is a messianic Orthodox national group that wants to annex all of the biblical land of Israel by force while two other groups, the *Makteret* (Underground), led by Yehuda Etzion, and the Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva, led by Rabbi Noah Livant, are waging a violent campaign to control and rebuild the Second Temple on the Muslim controlled Haram al-Sharif. In examining the different ultra-Orthodox groups and their leadership, including the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, the *Chai ve-Kayam*, and the more extreme zealots, a better understanding of the motivations and aspirations of these groups is revealed.

An exploration of the mythical[[16]](#footnote-16) and mystical underpinnings of Judaism in the *Kabbalah* as it relates to the Land of Israel and the status of non-Jews is then undertaken, identifying the substantive connections between key thinkers such as Rabbi Yitzak Luria and Rabbis Abraham and Zvi Kook, and later Rabbi Meir Kahane, as at the heart of fundamentalist opposition to the peace process. This section also explores the role of charismatic leadership to political action, which provide the substance and justification for establishing Israel’s manifest destiny according to the Torah.

Chapter 6 details how religiously observant Jews across Israel’s political spectrum have organized themselves into a largely sophisticated network with vast organizational and mobilization capacity, working together in coordination with one another to undermine and effectively destroy the Oslo peace process, through both violent and non-violent campaigns. This research supports the view that there is a well-oiled network with similar goals and agendas toward the land, Jerusalem and the future status of non-Jews in Israel. It means that these activists and ‘refuseniks’ should not be considered as anomalies or renegades, but rather as an increasingly powerful and purposeful driving force, with a central focus, in Israeli politics. Indeed, this research reveals that the primary support behind the anti-Oslo campaign is now inside the Israeli Knesset.

This thesis identifies the core religious and historical beliefs as the underlying reasons why Orthodox Jews oppose the 1993 Oslo accord and UN Security Council Resolution 242. The academic literature, as well as essays from respected journalists, reveals that Orthodox Jews, faithfully and in keeping with their religious convictions, believe they must vehemently resist by all means available the implementation of the Oslo peace agreement.

The methodologies employed seek to establish a credible hypothesis through research of the academic literature, in order to identify the primary currents of religious and mystical thought underlying contemporary Orthodox fundamentalism opposing the Oslo accord. Part of the research design sought to grasp the essence of terms and concepts in the lexicon of contemporary Jewish religious thought. Terms such as *Zionism, Messianism, Torah, Redemption, Covenant, Dogma, Talmud, Halacha, Mysticism, Prophesy, Hassidism, Sanctification, and Kabbalah* are fundamental concepts, movements and beliefs essential to understanding Israel’s current situation. This research identifies the main thinkers, activists and the methods employed by Orthodox and ultra-Orthodoxgroupsin West Bank yeshiva colleges, whose intentions and capabilities can significantly undermine all current and future peace initiatives with Palestinians. In establishing the close relationship between these thinkers with leading Israeli politicians, this research also attempts to bring the disparate literature together to reveal the extent to which Orthodox clergy have become a significant political influence in the Israeli Knesset to discern their ability to significantly affect decision-making and policy, and to assess their import on the future of the Oslo accord. The contribution of this thesis lies in providing a coherent rationale and detailed origin of the underlying forces driving the escalation of Arab-Israeli violence in the Middle East and demise of the Oslo peace process from the Israeli side.

# CHAPTER 2

# THE LAND, JERUSALEM AND ORTHODOX JUDAISM

# Among the most politically active Israeli Jews opposed to a land for peace agreement with the Palestinians are the Orthodox nationalJews who are predominantly members of Israel’s National Religious Party (NRP). Although the NRP is far to the religious right in Israeli politics, and has been at odds with Zionist Labor governments since the June 1967 Six Day War over the future of the West Bank territories, it still recognizes the authority of the State of Israel.

# ORTHODOX JUDAISM AND THE MESSIANIC REDEMPTION

# What is distinctive about Orthodox Judaism is the view that the process of redemption can be accelerated by human initiative in actively preparing for the Messiah’s arrival. Orthodox Jews believe this process can be facilitated or hastened by establishing certain pre-conditions. These include expanding and annexing the land in the West Bank, re-establishing the presence of Jews in large numbers on the land that God promised to them through His covenant with Abraham, and re building the Second Temple on its former site in Jerusalem for the purposes of re instituting temple sacrifice and adjudicating Judaic law.

# Psychologically, Israel’s victory over the Arabs in the June 1967 Six Day War was a religiously mystical and nationalistic event for Orthodox national Jews. After 1,900 years in exile from Jerusalem, Jews were once again on holy ground praying at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. The occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem and the presence of Israeli soldiers on the Temple Mount was for every Jew a triumphal experience. Jewish contact with the biblical soil on which Abraham made his covenant with God was an especially powerful experience for Orthodox Jews for another reason: it confirmed their belief that this generation was about to experience the long awaited, prophetic age of Messianic Redemption.[[17]](#footnote-17)

# The Orthodox believe that final events leading up to the Messianic Redemption, when they happen, will improve the state of man, society, the world, and perhaps the cosmos as a whole. The arrival of a messianic age is expected to lead to a more perfect state of things, replacing what has been perceived by Jews to be an imperfect, and often deeply painful, present. Orthodox nationals perceive the 1967 victory as God’s divine intervention to deliver the Messiah to the Land of Israelso that He may redeem the Jews as God’s chosen people. After 4,000 years of Jewish history, the Orthodox are certain that the Messiah is ready to appear.[[18]](#footnote-18)

# The Orthodox rabbinical leader most influential and largely responsible for interpreting the 1967 Israeli victory in this manner was Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook (1891-1981), the founder and head of the *Mercaz Harav* Yeshiva, in Jerusalem.[[19]](#footnote-19) Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook emerged after the June 1967 Six-Day War as a rabbi of near prophetic stature. His status was based on a vision, which he related to his followers before the War, where he claimed to have seen all of the biblically described land of Israel under Jewish sovereignty.[[20]](#footnote-20) Kook told his followers that the liberation and occupation of the West Bank by the Israeli Army was confirmation of God’s intervention in the final destiny of the Jews.

# After Israel’s victory in the fall of 1967, Kook rejected international pressure to force Israel to accept United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 that called for the withdrawal of all Israeli military forces from the newly occupied territories in the West Bank. Instead, Kook’s response to UN Security Council Resolution 242 was to encourage the opposite, arguing forcibly for an immediate and rapid expansion of Jewish settlements in the newly acquired territories.[[21]](#footnote-21)

# Further, Kook took the Israeli government and secular Jews to task, arguing in January 1974 that:

# [the Israeli government is] illegitimate if it does not represent the desire of the people, which is to accelerate the Redemption by means of settling in the territories. Those [secular Jews] who want to withdraw from Judea and Samaria will be cursed by the Almighty.

# We are commanded by the Torah, and not by the government. The Torah is eternal while this government is transitory and unacceptable.[[22]](#footnote-22)

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# Strongly influenced by the thinking of Rabbi Kook, a group of rabbis, war veterans, and young activists from the National Religious Party (NRP) formed a settler’s movement called *Gush Emunim* “Block of the Faithful” in the spring of 1974.[[23]](#footnote-23) *Gush Emunim* became the political core of a national movement to actively settle Jews on the newly acquired land in the West Bank.[[24]](#footnote-24) Their aim from 1974 to the present has been to ensure that the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are permanently incorporated into the State of Israel, in precisely the same occupied areas of the West Bank intended to be returned as Arab land under UN Security Council Resolution 242.

# *Gush Emunim* settlers believe that religious imperatives command them to establish sovereignty over the entire biblically described Land of Israel, which Ehud Sprinzak identifies in his book *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* as existing in modern-day Jordan, Syria and Iraq, and to substitute Jewish Orthodox governance, in accordance with the Talmud, in lieu of a Western styled liberal democracy.[[25]](#footnote-25)

# Since its beginnings, *Gush Emunim* developed from a loose association of settlement activists and ultra nationalist Orthodox rabbis in the West Bank into an organization of interdependent, ultra religious groups under the direction of the Council of Yesha Rabbis. The majority of the leaders in the movement, operating under the guidance of senior rabbis are young, highly motivated, educated, upper middle class AshkenaziJews.[[26]](#footnote-26) The goal of the *Gush Emunim* is to accelerate the coming of the Messiah and the Redemption with the slogan, “the land of Israel, for the people of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

# THE MESSIANIC ORTHODOX

# The most extreme religious Jews among Orthodox nationals in the West Bank are identified as *messianic* because of their unquestioning belief that forceful occupation and permanent domicile on the land of Israel solely by Jews will actually initiate the age of the Messiah. Considered the father of the settlement movement, Rabbi Moshe Levinger, a disciple of Rabbi Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook and one of the principal founders of the *Gush Emunim*, is viewed as the most radical of the messianic fundamentalists. Levinger’s charisma and “in your face” persistence has successfully mobilized the *Gush Emunim* to active settlement and Jewish maximization of Palestinian land in the West Bank.[[28]](#footnote-28) In 1968 there were no Jewish civilians living on the West Bank, while today there are 144 settlements and over 150,000 settlers living in the occupied territories.[[29]](#footnote-29)

# In addition to being one of Israel’s most celebrated messianic extremists, Rabbi Levinger is also one of the most important Orthodox figures to emerge from modern religious Zionism.[[30]](#footnote-30) In a poll taken in 1990 for the Israeli newspaper *Hadashot*, Rabbi Levinger was identified as the most influential Israeli of the 1980’s. He is resolutely committed to God’s commandments requiring Jews to transform the land of Israel into a nation guided by the laws of the Torah, the Talmud and the Halacha, and is willing to martyr himself for the Jewish right to rebuild the ancient kingdom of Judea and Samaria in the West Bank.

# Exemplifying the Orthodox Jewish expression *mesirut hanefesh,* in Hebrew meaning “complete devotion to a cause”, Rabbi Levinger has done more than any other

# messianic activist to pressure successive Israeli governments to defy UN Security Council Resolution 242 by expanding and funding Jewish settlements in the West Bank.[[31]](#footnote-31) Paul Findley has estimated that a significant portion of the 3 billion dollars Israel receives in annual economic and military aid from the United States has been drawn on for Israeli settlement projects.[[32]](#footnote-32) Friedman noted that Rabbi Levinger made the distinction between God’s laws and secular laws clear during an April, 1991 Passover interview in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, where Dr. Baruch Goldstein would later embark on a murderous rampage:

# Zionism [NRP Orthodoxy] does not think in rational terms, in terms of practical politics, international relations, world opinion, demography, social dynamics, but in terms of divine commandments. What matters only is God’s promise to Abraham as recorded in the Book of Genesis.[[33]](#footnote-33)

# It is God’s laws and not the laws of the state that matter most. God’s law rules out compromise. Even if the Arabs wanted to compromise we couldn’t. It’s our country and it’s our destiny to live in our land as a nation of priests.[[34]](#footnote-34)

# Levinger has argued that Palestinians have no national rights or future political status in the State of Israel whatsoever. In an interview with Israel’s most influential daily newspaper *Ha’aretz*, Friedman reported that Levinger asserted:

# National sovereignty for the Palestinian people is a Jewish (secular Zionist) invention. This land does not belong to the Palestinian people. In all its history it has belonged to the Jewish people. Because it is our place, we have to build more settlements and bring more Jews to live in *Eretz Israel*.[[35]](#footnote-35)

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# Levinger believes he has a *mitzvah,* a commandment, from the Torah to rebuild the ancient kingdom of Israel and is convinced he will play a principle role in making it happen. Levinger and several hundred of his armed followers live in the center of Hebron, a city of 405,00 Palestinians, and a place of significance to Orthodox Judaism because it is the place of the Tomb of Abraham.[[36]](#footnote-36) There is no other place in the West Bank where Orthodox extremism is so deeply rooted and uncompromising as in this community of messianic religious fanatics.[[37]](#footnote-37) Rabbi Levinger is determined to transform Hebron from an Arab city into a Jewish one. He refuses to recognize the existence of Arab schools, a university, mosques, shops, and cafes as traditional evidence of established Arab residency. Carrying old charts and maps, Rabbi Levinger wanders about the city looking at the doors of Arab homes for telltale markings of *mezuzahs,* pieces of parchment inscribed with passages from Deuteronomy. They are rolled up in a tube and affixed permanently to the front door frame of Jewish homes. The existence of *mezuzah* markings lends credence to Levinger’s belief of prior Jewish occupancy. Rabbi Levinger continues to push the Israeli government to confiscate all such properties from Palestinian owners and to renovate them for occupancy by Jewish settlers.[[38]](#footnote-38)

# Levinger has also demonstrated a personal capacity for violence. On September 30, 1988, in the center of Hebron, he shot and killed Khayed Salah, a Palestinian shoe store owner, and wounded Ibrahim Bali, an Arab customer. Levinger explained that he was protecting Jewish life when Palestinians began to throw stones, at his car, from the direction of Salah’s store.[[39]](#footnote-39)

# Levinger conducts his life according to ancient Judaic scriptures written during the age of the prophets. To his Orthodox critics, he is the direct descendent of Eleazar ben Jair*,* the Jewish zealot leader at Masada*,* who brought catastrophic ruin on the Jewish nation in 70 C.E, when he led them in the first major revolt against Rome, that effectively put an end to the Jewish state for almost two thousand years.[[40]](#footnote-40)

# So committed are Levinger and his cabal of messianic extremists in Hebron that many Israelis fear that if the Israeli government ever attempted, as Menachem Begin did when he returned the Sinai back to Egypt, to dismantle West Bank Jewish settlement towns and remove Jews from their homes as part of final status negotiations in the Oslo accord, Levinger has the tenacity, the capability and the determination to ignite a civil uprising in Israel.[[41]](#footnote-41) Many Israelis now believe that he, or one of his followers, is capable of initiating horrendous acts of violence to stop the Israeli government from implementing UN Security Council Resolution 242 linked to the Declaration of Principles enumerated in the Oslo accord.

# Other Israeli Jews have spoken out against the extremism advanced by Levinger and have warned of the dangers these groups pose for the state of Israel. In his book *zealots for Zion,* Robert I. Friedman reported that Israeli novelist, journalist and intellectual Amos Oz said that Levinger’s ultimate reaction to the Oslo accord would be “not to wipe out the Arabs, but to wipe out the State of Israel [for signing the Oslo accord] and proclaim in its stead the messianic Kingdom of Judah.” Friedman said that Oz has called Levinger the “high priest of a cruel obdurate sect that emerged, several years ago, from a dark corner of Judaism.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

# THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OVER JERUSALEM

# Control over the Old City of East Jerusalem was the most difficult issue to approach in final status negotiations, let alone resolve in the July 2000 round of Oslo peace negotiations at Camp David, Maryland. The psychological value of Jerusalem for both Jews and Muslims cannot be overstated. In addition to being deeply rooted in religious symbolism and meaning for both religions, all of the important events in monotheism occurred in this city. It is here that that Solomon built the First Temple, where Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers, and where Mohammed is said to have risen to heaven to see God. Jerusalem is also the place where strict religious observance is most real for Orthodox Jews. Half the population of the world is composed of adherents of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all of which have the fate of their divine savior and their own redemption associated with the geographical space of Jerusalem.[[43]](#footnote-43)

# Adding to the complexity and long-standing religious meaning of Jerusalem is its future relationship to the status of the Palestinian state. The future of East Jerusalem and its holy places has always been the most sensitive and intractable issue of the Oslo accord because it involves what may be the future site for the capital of a new Palestinian state. The persistent actions of Orthodox extremists to reclaim East Jerusalem’s Old City and redeem it from its Christian and Muslim inhabitants has effectively threatened and undermined the peace process dealing with the future of Jerusalem.[[44]](#footnote-44)

# For messianic extremists, the fate of Jerusalem is crucial. The leader of *Ateret Kohanim*, a volatile extremist group committed to assuming control over all of Jerusalem, Dan Matityahu and his followers, believe the Messiah will make his appearance in Jerusalem. Since they also believe the Land of Israel was given to them by God, and must be secured and defended at all costs, there is little or no room for the continued residency of non-Jews in the city. For the *Ateret Kohanim*, their willingness to displace by force the over 320,000 Arabs remaining in Jerusalem, and put their lives in jeopardy to establish complete Jewish residency and control over the Old City, is even more important than the principle of *pikuach-nefesh*, the most sacred of Jewish laws pertaining to the preservation of Jewish life.[[45]](#footnote-45)

# In spite of the 1993 Oslo accord to maintain the status quo until permanent status negotiations begin, land in East Jerusalem has surreptitiously been moving from Arab to Jewish hands. The land “creep” instigated by Orthodox NRP messianists has been the most provocative action contributing to the tension and frustration among Palestinians throughout Israel. The increasing Jewish presence in the Muslim and Christian Quarters of Jerusalem’s Old City has created serious breaches of trust and put into question Israel’s intentions and good faith to complying with their part of the Oslo agreement.

# Efforts by Orthodox extremists to physically take over East Jerusalem properties are not new and have been going on for some time prior to the Oslo accord. One effective strategy for redeeming the city was put into motion on the first night of Hanukkah in 1978, when eight Orthodox students from West Bank settlements announced that they were setting up a yeshiva in the Muslim quarter of the Old City, calling it *Ateret Kohanim*. The yeshiva students moved into the Old City, claiming that they were preparing for the last quintessential battle between good and evil that will precede the End of Days, a time when all of mankind is redeemed in the Jewish faith and the Second Temple is rebuilt. The religious students insisted that their actions were in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.[[46]](#footnote-46)

# *Ateret Kohanim* has developed a strategy to buy hundreds of building properties and parcels of real estate in the Old City’s Muslim Quarter.[[47]](#footnote-47) The objective of this real estate venture, known as the Jerusalem Reclamation Project, is to turn Old Jerusalem, including its Muslim and Christian enclaves, into an entirely Jewish City.

A crisis between *Ateret Kohanim* and East Jerusalem’s Palestinians occurred on April 11, 1990, during Easter Holy Week and Passover, when 159 Jewish settlers, affiliated with *Ateret Kohanim*, moved into the seventy room St. John’s Hospice building, near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Since 1932 the hospice, owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, had been leased to Martyos Matossian, an Armenian. Matossian rented rooms in the hospice to Arab families and European pilgrims. On June 28, 1989, Matossian sublet the building for $3.5 million to an unknown Panamanian Company called SBC Ltd. The SBC turned the building over to *Ateret Kohanim* members who promptly occupied the property. They renamed the site Ne’ot David, put the Star of David on the roof, and invited then minister of housing Ariel Sharon to visit.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The Greek Orthodox Church ruled that the sublease was illegal and took the case to court. The Israeli court ordered the *Ateret Kohanim* members to vacate the property but permitted twenty of them to remain in the building as “security maintenance employees” pending further litigation.[[49]](#footnote-49) The response to the Orthodox takeover was immediate. All the major Christian Churches in Israel and in the occupied territories closed on Friday, April 27, 1990, in protest. It was the first time that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City had been closed in eight hundred years.[[50]](#footnote-50) Throughout the 1990’s, *Ateret Kohanim*’s continued acquisition of property holdings interspersed among the 20,000 Muslims properties in the quarter further aggravated tensions and has seriously compromised the future of Permanent Status Negotiations.[[51]](#footnote-51)

In his book, Friedman reports that *Ateret Kohanim*’s Chief Rabbi Shlomo Aviner declared at an annual fundraising dinner in New York City in May, 1990, that

the Arabs are squatters. I don’t know who gave them authorization to live on Jewish land. All of mankind knows this is our land. We must settle the whole land of Israel and over all of it, establish our rule.

In the words of Nachmanides, ‘do not abandon the land to any other nation’. If that is possible by peaceful means wonderful, and if not, we are commanded to make war to accomplish it.[[52]](#footnote-52)

To circumvent a Palestinian Authority law that has made it a capital crime for Palestinians to sell property to Jews, *Ateret Kohanim* has often employed Christian Arab middlemen to purchase property in the Muslim Quarter, in order to disguise the identity of the buyer.[[53]](#footnote-53)

*Ateret Kohanin* officials say that for the first time since the Herodian period, a completely Jewish Jerusalem is possible if Jews outside Israel will financially support it.[[54]](#footnote-54) Aviner, Matityahu, the *Ateret Kohanim* yeshiva students and their supporters, in their desire to prepare the way for the Messiah, are resolutely committed to redeeming the Old City stone by stone until Jerusalem becomes the exclusive holy city in the service of the reconstructed Second Temple.[[55]](#footnote-55)

# HARAM AL – SHARIF: NOBLE SANCTUARY

# Inside Jerusalem’s Old City walls is the thirty five-acre parcel of elevated ground known to the Jews as the Temple Mount, and to the Muslims as Haram al-Sharif. For two millennia the Temple Mount has been the object of political and religious aspirations for Jews and Christians and for over 1,300 years for Muslims.[[56]](#footnote-56) The mosque that dominates the Haram al-Sharif is the Dome of the Rock Mosque. It is the third most holy site in Islam. The presence of the Dome of the Rock Mosque and a second mosque in the sanctuary, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, make the Haram al-Sharif the most politically volatile piece of ground on earth.[[57]](#footnote-57)

# The faithful from among the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam believe that the world as we know it will come to an end in Jerusalem when the Messiah, sent by God, appears. Religious Jews believe that a New World will then be created, a world as they have imagined it for the last 3,000 years. The fight for Jerusalem and control over the Temple Mount is about controlling the dynamics of a volatile, totally self- absorbed religious environment that, for the messianic Orthodox, determines the reality of their future. If the Temple Mount is a “stage” on which the Messiah will make his appearance, what remains is for Jews to take control of that stage so that prophecy and God’s promise may be fulfilled and the New World created.

# In addition, the Temple Mount carries deep religious significance for religious Jews who (according to Jewish law) are forbidden to pray on the Temple Mount, unless they have a special status within Jewish Orthodoxy. The Talmud dictates that for observant Jews to mistakenly pray on the Temple Mount or to set foot there until the Messiah appears and rebuilds the Second Temple is sacrilege.

# The prohibition enforced by the Israeli government, since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, serves a political as well as theological purpose as it has kept Muslims and Jews separated. The reason for the prohibition is that for centuries religious Jews believed that somewhere on the Temple Mount is located the holy of holies*,* the innermost sanctum of the original Temple. It is also the place where the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred vault that held the Commandments given to Moses, was kept.[[58]](#footnote-58) This is the place that in ancient times only the Jewish high priests were permitted to enter for the purposes of uttering the Tetragrammaton*,* the secret name of God, on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.[[59]](#footnote-59)

# Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Shlomo Goren has publicly said he wants to build a synagogue in the courtyard between the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock Mosque. Disregarding the beliefs of his ultra-Orthodox colleagues, Rabbi Goren has interpreted Jewish religious law to mean that all religious Jews are not only permitted, but are urged to pray on the Temple Mount. Goren believes that Jews praying on the Temple Mount are *not* committing sacrilege but are instead facilitating the coming of the Messiah. Scores of Jewish extremists, religious fanatics, and rabbinical deans of several high profile yeshivas accept Goren’s view of prayer on the Temple Mount. On several occasions religious extremists have taken it upon themselves to “liberate” the Temple Mount from Muslim control.

# Controlling the Temple Mount carries other implications for the Orthodox Jews. It would allow for the re-institution of ritual animal sacrifice in the Temple, which for Orthodox Jews, means a direct mystical connection with the past and physical protection for Jews under the watchful eye of the Almighty. The Temple has always been central to the religious history of Judaism. Jews pray for the rebuilding of the Temple each day including the Sabbath, and sing a song called *Yibbane ha-Mikdash*, meaning “We will rebuild the Temple.” One third of the 613 commandments of Judaism outlined by Maimonides concern worship in the Temple.[[60]](#footnote-60)

# The most active group attempting to ‘liberate’ the sanctuary is the Temple Mount Faithful. Founded in the 1980 by Rabbi Gershon Solomon, this group agitates for the right of Jews to pray and hold ancient religious rites within the Temple Mount sanctuary itself. Solomon is convinced that the salvation of the Jews will come as prophesied only through human action by the faithful to facilitate the coming of a Messiah. Extremists like Rabbis Solomon and Goren view Muslim control of the Temple Mount as a sign of both Jewish impotence and as an obstacle to Messianic Redemption.[[61]](#footnote-61)

# Solomon and his followers believe that the Jews return to Judea and Samaria, evidenced by the successful settlement of more that 140,000 Jews in the West Bank, is proof that the Messianic Age has begun. To ensure the continued advancement of the messianic redemptive process, Solomon and other religious extremists like him, believe they must take absolute control of the Temple Mount sanctuary, rebuild the Second Temple, and re-establish ritual sacrifice.

# No Jewish group has done more to arouse Muslim fury than Rabbi Solomon’s Temple Mount Faithful. In 1989, Solomon unsuccessfully sought police permission to hoist a huge cornerstone, weighing three tons, onto the Temple Mount grounds. Rabbi Solomon proclaimed that the cornerstone was to be part of the future reconstructed Second Temple, and at a press conference unveiled a set of architectural details of the proposed structure.[[62]](#footnote-62)

# On another occasion, Solomon organized a large public demonstration adjacent to the Temple Mount on the Jewish religious holiday of Sukkoth, whichthe Torah traditionally commands Jews to make a pilgrimage to the Temple Mount. In response, 5,000 Palestinians gathered on the Haram al –Sharif to prevent the Temple Mount Faithful from laying the cornerstone that Rabbi Solomon again announced would be for the re building of the Second Temple. During the demonstrations, Israeli police fired on and killed seventeen Palestinians and seriously wounded 150. It was the deadliest confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem since June 1967.[[63]](#footnote-63)

# To show the Arabs that the Temple Mount is in fact under *de facto* Israeli authority, the Temple Mount Faithful has carried on an ongoing lawsuit against the Waqf*,* the Supreme Muslim Council that administers the day-to-day operations of the Haram al –Sharif. Solomon’s group sued the Waqf in 1986 for allegedly destroying and damaging important Jewish antiquities that he claimed dated back to the First Temple era.[[64]](#footnote-64)Solomon has admitted that the litigation is a ploy and a tactic designed to weaken the Waqf’s hold on the Temple Mount. The continuing lawsuit, Solomon hopes, would eventually require the Israeli government to enforce Israeli law on the Mount, thus giving Israel some kind of *de facto* legitimacy. Solomon declared that:

# It is our testimony and license to this land. It’s a known fact that whoever controlled the Temple Mount controlled all of the Land of Israel. The Arabs know very well

# that once we gain control of the Temple Mount we will close the circle and the legitimacy of our control over the land will be complete.[[65]](#footnote-65)

# Each year since Israel’s annexation of East Jerusalem following the June 1967 Six Day War, armed religious zealots have attempted to storm the gates of the Temple Mount, with the intention of ‘liberating’ the holiest place in Judaism from Muslim control.[[66]](#footnote-66) The Temple Mount has continued to be, through the centuries, both a profoundly religious and nationalistic symbol for Jews.

# From the time of King Solomon and King Herod to the present, the Temple has remained the unchanging focus of political and cultural life for the nation of Jews, as well as the focus and essence of Judaism. Since the founding of the State of Israel, the Temple Mount continues to be, more than ever, Judaism’s center of gravity.[[67]](#footnote-67)

**CHAPTER 3**

# ISRAEL’S ULTRA-ORTHODOX:

# PIETISTS, SEPARATISTS & VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

# *HAREDIM*

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# More dogmatic than Orthodox national Jews are the pious ultra-Orthodox Jews, known collectively as the Haredim. The Haredim are the most God-fearing among the Jews, most readily identifiable by their long beards, black suits, coats and black hats. Ultra-Orthodox rabbis are considered as ultimate sages because of their assiduous study of the Torah, the Talmud, and Halachic law. The Haredi community is comprised of Ashkenazi Jews, those with an ancestry from eastern European Jewish ghettos, and Sephardic Jews, those of Middle Eastern origin.

# The Haredim are determined to preserve their pious existence separate and apart from all non-Jews, whom they refer to as Goyim*.* Their determination to remain apart have forced them into increasing political activism and confrontation with the secular segment of Israeli society. Though not a homogeneous theological group, the Haredim have in recent years collectively increased their opposition to the Israeli government. They say Israel’s Zionist leaders betrayed Judaism the moment they became party to the Oslo peace process.[[68]](#footnote-68)

The Haredim are the oldest religious residents in Israel. Their roots can be traced to the old *Yishuv,* the term given to Jews who settled Palestine before the beginning of Zionist immigration in the early twentieth century. They are the pious defenders of the faith and strictest observers of Jewish law-the Halacha. The Haredim consider themselves neither apostates nor heretics, and therefore believe they have a special status and relationship with God. They refer to themselves as *erlicher yidn,* virtuous Jews as opposed to other less observant Jews.

Haredi traditional beliefs are strongly oriented toward the past. The present generation views themselves as a repetition of previous generations of religiously observant Jews, as in a procession going backward. They view their Haredi forebears as a model for today, tomorrow, and forever. The Haredim can be likened to ancient religious Jews living in the present, striving both to restore and maintain a Haredi society deeply rooted in the past to preserve unchanging continuity.[[69]](#footnote-69)

For the Haredim, the idea of new is never considered an improvement, but rather is only corrupting. The modern world and lifestyles are considered evil, and the Haredim fear that all Jews universally have been on a destructive and downward spiral since the period of the Enlightenmentin the 18th century.[[70]](#footnote-70) In order to preserve this way of living, the Haredim choose to seclude themselves by passive separation from both secular Jews, who they view as heretics, and all non-Jews, who they regard as non-persons. Instead, they live in a supra-religious world largely detached from Israel’s secular culture, isolated into separate geographical, social, and spiritual spaces, where holiness and study of the Torah and the Talmud can continue uncorrupted.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The ultra-Orthodox community views Zionism and the State of Israel as a meaningless rebellion against God. The most pious of the Haredim totally repudiate Zionist values, which they deem to be contrary to the Torah and Talmud, as well as to those relating to political institutions, economic structures, national symbols, and to the secular rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court.[[72]](#footnote-72)Haredim believe the secular State of Israel will not survive and that an Orthodox Jewish nation will emerge in its place, to be ruled by a council of rabbinical sages.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Further complicating the relationship between ultra-Orthodox Judaism and the State of Israel is the marked ambivalence of the Haredim toward Zionism. The most pious Haredim feel a strong sense of outrage against the secular Zionist founders, Theodore Herzl and Leon Pinsker, whom they believe desecrated the name of God and disobeyed

God’s instructions when they established secular Zionism in the land of Israel to facilitate the transfer of Jews from the Diaspora.

# The most significant point of contention against Zionism is the deeply rooted Haredi belief that, unlike the Zionist movement that encouraged a return to Zion, they have been instructed by God to remain in the Diaspora and patiently wait for the Messiah to arrive before the redemptive process can begin in Israel.[[74]](#footnote-74) Until the Messiah intervenes directly, the ultra-Orthodox are to remain in the divinely ordained exile, and to assiduously obey the same three oaths taken by the people of Israel after the destruction of the Second Temple in the seventh century C.E. The three oaths are: first, Jews should not take collective action to return *en masse* to *Eretz Israel*. Second, they should be loyal to the lands and governments of their dispersion. Third, they should not to pray forcefully lest they hasten the arrival of the Messiah before He is ready to reveal Himself.[[75]](#footnote-75) Since the second century, Rabbinical Orthodox Judaism has warned Jews against initiating human actions designed to restore Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel, but rather to patiently await their redemption in exile at the hands of the Messiah.[[76]](#footnote-76)

# The success of the Zionism in the 20th century in establishing the State of Israel, through human efforts as a refuge for the world’s Jews, is therefore understood by the Haredim as a clear apostasy, an outrageous affront, and an abrogation of God’s direct instructions to his chosen people. Worse, they are convinced that Jews living in contravention to God’s will in Israel may further delay the arrival of the Messiah, and will ultimately lead to the collapse of the secular State of Israel.

# Until the signing of the Oslo accord in 1993, the Haredim had not, as a group, participated in politically sensitive issues involving the State of Israel. Yet in the 1990’s, the Palestinian question, and Israel’s relationship with neighboring Arab states, have driven them to fear that there is a real possibility the Oslo accord could facilitate an autonomous Palestinian state with more than 3 million Palestinians in their midst. As a result, the ultra-Orthodox in the 1990’s have become the preeminent political force against Oslo accord.[[77]](#footnote-77)

# Unlike Orthodox nationals, most Haredim do not recognize the sovereign authority of the State of Israel. Nevertheless, Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox have become more and more politically active against the Oslo accord, which they see as a threat to their traditional Jewish way of life as it existed prior to the modern era in 17th and 18th century Europe.[[78]](#footnote-78) The *Sephardic* ultra-Orthodox community has traditionally been more passive, but they too have been increasingly politically active in the last two Israeli elections fearing that the Oslo agreement threatens a range of religious beliefs and could force them to co-exist in close proximity with non-Jews and the degrading Western lifestyles that secular Israelis have adopted.

## **THE RIGHT WING CHALLENGE OF THE *HAREDIM***

The ultra-Orthodox Haredi community is significantly more right wing than any other sector of the Israeli population. Conducting surveys of the Haredi community in Israel, Dr. Tamar Hermann of the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research found that only 9% of Haredi respondents were in favor of the Oslo accord as opposed to 24% among the Orthodox nationals. Of his findings, Dr. Hermann asserted “this public holds hawkish, ultra nationalist views which have their roots in religion.” Two Israeli studies in 1998 and also reported in *Ha’aretz* demonstrated that 100% of the ultra-Orthodox community polled held right wing political views.[[79]](#footnote-79)

In another survey, conducted by Dr. Roby Nathanson of the Israeli Institute of Economic and Social Research to explore the link between religious fundamentalism and radical nationalism, not one Haredi respondent supported the principle of land for peace, in contrast with 10% of the Orthodox national-religious respondents. This study corresponded with the Tami Steinmetz Center findings that the Haredi public continues to be one of the strongest opponents of the Oslo peace process. In response to questions dealing with Palestinian unrest, Dr. Nathanson found that 90% of national religious Jews, and 85% of Haredim, supported free rein for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the West Bank and Gaza.[[80]](#footnote-80)

With more than 300,000 Haredim living in Israel, the ultra-Orthodox community now constitutes 14% of Israel’s over five million Jews. In the 1996 and 1999 elections, Haredi political parties demonstrated their growing political clout in Israel, together winning 14 and 17 seats respectively of 120 in the Israeli Knesset.[[81]](#footnote-81) In Israel’s parliamentary system, small parties can wield disproportionate and often substantial power as they hold the key to governing coalitions. As such, they are in a position to dictate terms and policies, effectively holding more centrist views hostage. There is no question that elected Haredi deputies pledged to vote the views of their rabbinical sage councils as the final authority on all issues, now pose a serious, and potentially fatal, challenge to future ratification or continuation of the Oslo process.[[82]](#footnote-82)

One former Knesset member, Prof. Shevah Weiss, estimated that participation by Haredim in Knesset and prime ministerial elections in 1996 increased by ten percentage points more than any other sector in the population, and grew in municipal elections by 20-50%. As a result of this massive mobilization of the Haredim, Prof. Weiss believes that the ultra-Orthodox contributed greatly to the overall increased representation of Orthodox parties but also to the election of Binyamin Netanyahu, where Weiss notes that over 95 percent of the ultra-Orthodox population voted for Netanyahu.[[83]](#footnote-83)

For the Haredim, the emergence into political activism has been a cultural, political and religious battle to take control of their future and a strong reaction to the fear that the Oslo accord can seriously and permanently compromise religious lifestyles. The political power and influence of the ultra-Orthodox is now an established reality in Israeli politics. In the 1990’s they have used both the political process and their presence in the Knesset to impose their religious will on the domestic and foreign policies of a secular Israeli society.

Further, there is growing evidence that ultra-Orthodox politics are becoming increasingly ‘mainstream’ in Israel. A 1998 study by the Institute for Socioeconomic Research demonstrated that the ultra-Orthodox population has “the highest tendency” to endorse the use of violence and violation of the law with regard to the Oslo peace process. Their study revealed that “Some 70 percent of the ultra-Orthodox showed a high level of support for taking the law into their own hands compared with 45 percent of the religious sector and 40 percent of the non religious sector.” The study also noted that the “ultra-Orthodox sector has the highest propensity toward illegal and violent moves, followed by those who define themselves as religious Jews." Researchers conducting the study warned about the potential implications for the rule of law in Israel, “seeing that Halacha considers civilian law subordinate to itself.” Additionally, the researchers concluded that “It seems that the willingness to take the law into one’s own hands is not the problem of a specific group. This trend has become part of Israeli political culture.”[[84]](#footnote-84)

## **ULTRA-ORTHODOX JUDAISM AND THE OSLO ACCORD**

The ultra-Orthodox believe that the Oslo process as accepted by secular Jewish leaders and moderate Israeli Jewish voters violates the laws of the Torah. This argument is made on several grounds, most important of which is that it threatens to halt the Redemption process by compromising Jewish control over all the land. Second, it denies resumption of sacrificial ritual in a reconstructed Second Temple necessary for the arrival of the Messiah. Third, the Oslo accord threatens to allow more than 3.2 million Palestinian refugees back to the Land of Israel through the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State.

This third point not only complicates Jewish control and security relative to preserving Jewish life, but also challenges the Haredi requirement to live in separate communities. The presence of non-Jews in the land of Israel is unacceptable and non- negotiable, as it threatens to vitiate the process of Redemption. The ultra-Orthodox insist that they are commanded by God to rid the land of all non-Jews only when the Redemption is in progress. Conversely, the messianic Orthodox national position is that they must force all non-Jews out of Israel *before* the Redemption can begin.[[85]](#footnote-85) The ultra-Orthodox can never live with the reality of Palestinian national sovereignty (a Palestinian state) on the same land. Ultra-Orthodox Jews would not likely agree to a withdrawal from the territories on the basis of *pikuach nefesh*, the most sacred principle of preserving Jewish life. The key elements of the Oslo accord are therefore in direct contravention to what pious Jews have come to understand and expect from Torah prophecy.

All attempts by the United States, the United Nations and the international community to bring the Oslo peace process forward to final status negotiations which include the “right of return” for Palestinian refugees will force increased political activism from the Haredi community.

# THE KAHANISTS - SEPARATION

One of the most important religious political parties in Israel today that has support within ultra-Orthodox Judaism is *Kach*, founded by Rabbi Meir Kahane. The legacy of Rabbi Kahane began in 1968 when he founded the controversial and violent Jewish Defense League (JDL) in New York City.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Kahane’s philosophy identified with the term *ahavat Yisroel,* meaning a love of Jewry. The essence of *ahavat Yisroel*, Kahane asserted, is the mutual responsibility for all Jews everywhere to come to the aid of fellow Jews who are the victims of violence, racism and persecution by Gentiles. Sprinzak quotes Kahane:

the pain of a Jew, wherever he may be, is our pain. The joy of a Jew, wherever he may be, is our joy. We are committed to going to the aid of a Jew who is in need without distinction, without asking what kind of a Jew he is.”[[87]](#footnote-87)

On his view of the role and destiny of the Jewish people, Kahane writes:

*Ashavat Yisrael* is the understanding that there is one Jewish people, indivisible and eternal, with each and every Jew a permanent part of it and with duty to people as a cornerstone of personal Jewish existence.[[88]](#footnote-88)

The Jewish people exist as a religio-nation and to be considered a Jew is to partake of both qualities. Thus the external fusion of religion and nation is what makes the specific uniqueness of the Jew.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Where Kahane preached a love of Jewry, he also preached revenge against Gentiles who persecuted Jews.[[90]](#footnote-90) He declared that Jews were no longer obliged to bow to their oppressors but were now free to respond in kind to acts of violence and physical force.[[91]](#footnote-91) As the leader of the JDL, he trained armed militants whom he called *Chayas* to patrol the mixed Jewish and Black neighborhoods in New York City. Kahane claimed his *Chayas* were to be a new breed of Jew, free of traditional ghetto thinking, and likening themselves to the *Brit Habrionim*, the legendary Jewish zealots in ancient Judea who revolted against Rome.[[92]](#footnote-92)

# In the early 1970’s, the JDL publicized the plight of Soviet Jews wanting to immigrate to Israel.[[93]](#footnote-93) Between 1970-1971, the JDL undertook violent actions against Aeroflot, In-Tourist, several cultural centers, Russian diplomatic missions, and the residences of Soviet officials in New York and Washington. Claiming responsibility by phone, the JDL slogan “never again” uttered by the caller to authorities, meant that never again would the Jews behave like sheep.[[94]](#footnote-94) U.S. federal indictments connected to the attacks forced Kahane to immigrate to Israel with his family in 1971. There he settled in *Kiryat Arba*, on the West Bank, and established a political party he called *Kach*.[[95]](#footnote-95)

# In 1984, Kahane, as head of the *Kach* Party, ran for the Knesset and was elected by 26,000 votes. This was 1.2% of the total Israeli Jewish vote. Another poll gave him an estimated 2.6% of the vote, the equivalent to three seats in the Knesset. Support for *Kach* came from the Ashkenazi *Haredim*, Orthodox nationals, and ultra-Orthodox Jews from the U.S. who were seeking a political outlet for their religious beliefs.[[96]](#footnote-96)

# During the 1972 Munich Olympics when eleven Israeli athletes and their coaches were held hostage and then killed by Palestinian terrorists, Kahane demanded revenge for the killings. On September 21, 1972, he issued a response to the Arab violence, “there is only one solution to Arab terror; Jewish counter terror.”[[97]](#footnote-97)

# Kahane coined the acronym TNT, to mean “Jewish terrorism against Arab terrorism”. He suggested that a worldwide Jewish anti-terror group be established, organized and aided in exactly the same way terrorists were being aided by Arab governments. He wanted TNT to operate globally to help Jews in trouble even if it meant disregarding the local authorities and their laws.[[98]](#footnote-98) Kahane set up elaborate and effective organizations to smuggle weapons to Jews around the world. He organized arms deals in order, he said, to defend the Jews of the Diaspora against Arab terrorism.[[99]](#footnote-99) When in 1976 Arab terrorists attacked and killed twenty children at a secondary school in the Israeli border town of Kiryat Shimoha, Kahane reacted to the killings by writing a short essay entitled *hillul a-shem,* which he interpreted to mean the desecration of the name of God.[[100]](#footnote-100)

# At the core of *hillul a-shem* was Kahane’s belief that the centuries of vilification heaped on the Jews by the Gentile had continuously desecrated and humiliated the name of God. *Hillul a-shem*, he argued, was the condition of the Jews in exile in all parts of the world who had been relegated to minority status and persecuted for their religion. For Kahane, the State of Israel was the opportunity to stop Jewish persecution and anti-semitism in a Gentile world. The victory in the June1967 Six Day War, he claimed, made Israel a major military force in the Middle East, giving Jews unprecedented strength. This strength Kahane interpreted as *kiddush a-shem,* which he interpreted as the sanctification of the name of God.[[101]](#footnote-101)

## Kahane’s use of *kiddush-a-shem* was not the conventional *Halachic* form of interpretation. The conventional meaning of *kiddush a-shem* had referred to Jews during the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition, who chose to be put to death rather than to be forced to convert to Christianity. *Kiddush a-shem* was understood as an act of conscience and dignity to worship God and to remain true to one’s faith. It was, in some respects, an act of defiance in the face of the Gentile. The deepest meaning of *kiddush a-shem*, for Kahane, is all action, even if extremely violent, constitutes worship of God.

## **KAHANE AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

# Rabbi Kahane attributed the establishment of the State of Israel to God’s anger with Gentiles for the systematic persecution of the Jews in the Diaspora. It was therefore a vengeful God that created the State of Israel, both as an expression of His vengeance and as a punishment to be meted out to Gentiles for the humiliation they inflicted on the Jews. The essence of the State of Israel is therefore *kiddush a-shem*, the sanctification of the name of God.[[102]](#footnote-102) Sprinzak quotes Kahane’s writing:

# “Do you want to know how the name of God is desecrated? It is when the Jew, His chosen people, are desecrated! When the Jew is beaten, God is profaned! When the Jew is humiliated, God is shamed! When the Jew is attacked, it is an assault on the name of God. Every pogrom is a desecration of the name.

# Every Auschwitz and expulsion and murder and rape of a Jew is the humiliation of God. Each time a Jew is beaten by a Gentile because he is a Jew, this is the essence of *hillul a-shem*. An end to the Gentile fist upon a Jewish face”. [[103]](#footnote-103)

# Kahane reasoned that if God can be vengeful when the Jew is persecuted and humiliated, then Jewish vengeance by Jews, his chosen people, is also justified under similar circumstances. Kahane understood his revenge against Arabs and other non-Jews to be an expression of the will of God. Kahane also appeared to have an insatiable urge to personally defeat the Gentile for two millennia of Jewish suffering.[[104]](#footnote-104)

# A preoccupation with humiliation and subsequent revenge by the Jews remained a persistent theme in Kahanist philosophy. Though Kahane was satisfied with Jewish national sovereignty, embodied in the State of Israel, sovereignty was not sufficient closure for him to satisfy his need to avenge centuries of Jewish persecution.

# While the sovereign State of Israel had eradicated the misery of exile and created a refuge for Jews, Kahane believed much larger wounds remained to be healed: the pain of humiliation, the misery of thousands of years of discrimination, victimization, and the memories of generations of Jews killed for their religion. For Kahane, the Holocaust in Europe and the countless pogroms that preceded it inflicted serious damage on the Jewish collective psyche. The creation of the State of Israel alone would not and could not possibly redress the physical and psychological suffering. Only revenge through the physical humiliation of the Gentiles would suffice to address and take away the pain.[[105]](#footnote-105)

# Sprinzak quotes Kahane’s view of *kiddish a-shem*:

# A Jewish fist in the face of an astonished Gentile world that had not seen it for two millennia – this is *kiddish a-shem*. Jewish domination over the Christian holy places (in Jerusalem), while the (Catholic) Church that sucked our blood vomits its rage and frustration. This is *kiddish a-shem*…

# Reading angry editorials about Jewish ‘aggression’ and violations rather than flowery eulogies over dead Jewish victims. That is *kiddish a-shem*…

# Violence is legitimate in Judaism. The Bible says there is a time for war and a time for peace. Sometimes the Bible commands Jews to go to war. When you are in danger then it is an obligation to go to war. [[106]](#footnote-106)

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# Kahane viewed the IDF as the Jewish fist in the face of the Gentile just as he also admired the heroes of ancient Judea, whose revolts had twice defied Imperial Rome.[[107]](#footnote-107)

# Kahane’s theology of violence is strongly tinged with an emotional sense of doom, an apocalyptic view and a catastrophic premonition of Jewish destiny that he has passed on to his followers and his children. He was convinced that before the condition of the Jews got better, things would get worse. Kahane’s writings and public speeches reveal that his revenge theory and legitimacy of Jewish violence against non-Jews is consistently intermingled with a sense of catastrophe.[[108]](#footnote-108) Reinforcing his apocalyptic premonitions, Kahane viewed Jewish history from the destruction of the Second Temple as nothing but a series of holocausts, the last of which was during WW II that finally moved God to establish the State of Israel.

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## **KAHANE AND THE STATUS OF NON-JEWS**

# Absolute separation from the non-Jew is a fundamental objective of Kahanist ideology. Kahane wanted to separate and preserve Judaism from what he said was “contamination” and assimilation through mixed marriages. “In every Arab village in Israel you find Jewish women married to or living with Arabs. The Halacha forbids such unions. I want to get rid of all the Arabs living in Israel.”[[109]](#footnote-109) The Jewish demand for separation, he said, was based on the axiom that truth and falsehood cannot mix:

# Judaism has the truth and Judaism can only teach its truths to man, when it (Judaism) stands aside, separated and chosen. If we have pride in the perfection of Torah we would be worse than mad to destroy it by assimilation and integration. Jewish *hadar* speaks of the uniqueness of the Jew, of the perfection of his Torah and of the need to preserve this *havdala,* separatism.

# God wants us to live in a country of our own, isolated so that we live separately and have the least possible contact with what is foreign so that we create as far as possible a pure Jewish culture based on the Torah. True Judaism means to purify Jewish culture from Gentile influence.[[110]](#footnote-110)

# The retreat from moral standards, crime, drugs, intermarriage. We deceive ourselves into thinking that the secularization of western youth cannot happen in Israel. The spiritual and national disaster that faces our people in the de-Judaizing of Israeli youth is by far the most serious problem facing the Jewish State.”[[111]](#footnote-111)

# Kahane, like Levinger felt that the only hope for the Jewish people was to preserve their own existence and claim every inch of land liberated in 1967, as well as to push for massive immigration and settlement in all parts of the land.[[112]](#footnote-112) After all, Kahane reasoned, “in the end, at times of crisis, there are no allies for the Jew. Who can the Jew ultimately trust? None but himself.”[[113]](#footnote-113) Kahane called for a policy of crash programs for immediate Jewish settlement in the heart of major Palestinian cities such as Hebron, Shehem, Jericho, Gaza and Ramallah.[[114]](#footnote-114) Kahane wrote that “the Land of Israel is the home of the Jewish people, and of no one else. There has never been a Palestinian people, and there never will be.”[[115]](#footnote-115)

# As such, Kahane did not see a peace with the Arab for many years. To his followers, he declared:

# The truth is that for many years at least there will not be a sincere *de jure* peace with the Arabs. Our enemy in the long run is weariness. It is against this enemy that we must struggle. We must gird ourselves with tenacity and determination never to tire of what appears to be a never- ending struggle.[[116]](#footnote-116)

# ISRAEL’S MODERN “ZEALOTS”

# Israel’s modern day zealots are the most radical among the larger extremist groups in the messianic Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities who have gravitated toward political violence. Like other fundamentalists, zealots are determined to live precisely according to religious law in strict obeisance to the Torah and the Talmud. They are the

# “true believers” for whom the 613 Commandments of the Halacha, the canon of Jewish religious law, are absolute truth. Isolating themselves in small settlement yeshivas in the West Bank, zealots see themselves as elitists. They embrace the *Gush Emunim* holy trinity of Israel, which they see as the Torah of Israel, the people of Israel, and the land of Israel. However, unlike other Orthodox fundamentalists, zealots are the most deeply Messianic and significantly more committed to political activism and violence toward realizing their aims.

# Zealots claim to be the Sons of Light who will defeat the Sons of Darkness, to replicate Joshua’s victorious army battling the Canaanites. Zealots believe a second holocaust awaits the Jewish people, and squarely place the blame on the secular Zionists for what they consider to be their treachery in negotiating both the 1977 Camp David Accords and the1993 Oslo accord.

# Israel’s modern zealots in the West Bank today insist that there is only one guideline for fixing the borders of the land of Israel: the divine promise made by God to the Patriarch Abraham. Zealots quote Genesis where God proclaims “To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates”. (Genesis 15:17)

# Zealots have interpreted this passage as a testimony of God’s Will that must be obeyed whatever the cost. Zealots believe that no Jew has the right to settle for borders any narrower than these, and negotiating a land for peace settlement with the Palestinians is therefore unthinkable because it cuts short a manifest destiny of the Jews not yet realized. Zealots not only question the basis for signing the Oslo peace agreement, but also feel a religious obligation to create havoc in Israel to prevent its realization.

# In the 1990s, zealots have further argued that the concept of peace as conceived in the Oslo peace process has turned into a destructive instrument against Judaism, because zealots know that guns have been given to the Palestinian Authority, in violation of *pikuach nefesh,* the most sacred Jewish dictate to protect Jewish life at all cost. For zealots, the Oslo accord cannot be seen as a peace agreement, because if fully implemented, Palestinian guns directly place the lives of Jews in jeopardy. In addition, zealots openly detest the possibility of coexistence with the Palestinians. Their beliefs are based on a particular passage from the Talmud: “Esau hates Jacob. You cannot make peace with those that hate you.”[[117]](#footnote-117)

### THE JOSEPH STILL LIVES YESHIVA

# The Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva is at the core of Zealotry in Israel, and a magnet for radical and messianic religious fundamentalists in the West Bank where Zealot activity is institutionalized and organized. The yeshiva is in the Palestinian city of Nablus, the biblical city of Shechem, near the site of Joseph’s Tomb, one of the most important Jewish religious sites.

# Rabbi Noam Livant, a well-known intellectual and messianic Orthodox national, is the dean of the Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva. He is a volatile extremist who is regarded by many young religious Jews as a hero. He lives in the West Bank settlement of *Elon Moreh* and is active in the messianic movement called *Chai Ve-Kayam* “Lives and Endures”.[[118]](#footnote-118) Livant was raised a strictly observant Orthodox Jew, having studied under his uncle the Rabbi Zalman Shlomo Orbach, a recognized religious authority among the ultra-Orthodox Jews.

# Livant shares the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox worldview that is deeply suspicious of modernity, the secularization of Jewish life, the admiration for western materialism, the 1977 Camp David Accords that returned the Sinai to Egypt, and the Oslo accord relinquishing parts of the West Bank to the Arab world as only hastening Israel’s decline toward total ruin.

# Livant has melded his strict religious education with an ultra nationalism toward the State of Israel. According to Karpin and Friedman, Livant openly stated that Israel should seek war with Arabs. In an article entitled *Against Peace Now*, published in *Chai Ve-Kayam*, Livant argued that

# … as the ultimate of radical right wing Messianists, we look forward to the Redemption, to the ruling over the true whole land of Israel, from the river of Egypt, to the Euphrates. This integrity will undoubtedly be attained through conquest and wars.[[119]](#footnote-119)

# Livant’s stance on the Oslo peace process is also closely connected to the process of Messianic Redemption:

# I know that redemption will come in any event, but if the Oslo process takes over, the state of Israel will be a fleeting episode. It will collapse and everything that has been accomplished in the past century will be destroyed. But if the Oslo accord is nullified, the process of collapse will be halted and the process of redemption will move forward.[[120]](#footnote-120)

# Arguing that his followers “are self styled idealists” and “emissaries of the people,” Livant insists that they “are protecting the Land of Israel from the curse of Oslo. You know that when the compromise was signed in Oslo, the Mountain of Curse grew higher and the Mountain of Blessing began quaking.”[[121]](#footnote-121)

# One of Livant’s comrades and a leader of *Chai Ve-Kayam*, is Yehuda Etzion. In the early 1980’s, Etzion headed a band of settler vigilantes called *Makteret* (underground). Like other extremists, Etzion believes that secular Zionism and the State of Israel are no longer tenable. The failure of the State of Israel to become Jewish, redeem the land, assert authority over the Arabs, and start rebuilding the Second Temple is cause enough in his view to make the Israeli government illegitimate. Etzion has argued that God has slowed the process of redemption because He does not approve of the secular government’s Oslo peace agenda with the Palestinians.[[122]](#footnote-122)

# Etzion is said to be the chief ideologue and driving force behind plots to blow up the Dome of the Rock Mosque. For one plot, he received seven years in prison in 1984 for conspiracy. Etzion’s more recently formed group, *Chai Ve-Kayam*, whose activists number about fifty, is deeply involved in underhanded schemes to pray as a group on the Temple Mount. In spite of government detentions and house arrests associated with their terrorist activity, they continue their crusade to take control of the Temple Mount. Their activism and devotion to the site has kept tensions high in the Old City. *Chai Ve-Kayam*’s potential for extremist activity has escalated since Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, the most important sage rabbi of the Tomb of Joseph Yeshiva in Nablus, began participating in its activities.

# Etzion’s campaign to purify the Temple Mount is in tandem with Noam Livant’s desire to re-build the Second Temple, and to accelerate the redemptive process with the help of followers from the Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva.[[123]](#footnote-123) It is not beyond the realm of possibility that *Chai Ve-Kayam* or perhaps the Temple Mount Faithful were in some way connected to Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount in September 2000, the incident that triggered the latest round of violence in the West Bank, known among Palestinians as the Al-Aqsa *Intifada*.

# CHAPTER 4

# KABBALAH AND MYSTICISM –THE SOURCE OF RABBINICAL POWER

# Mysticism has remained an important component of core Jewish religious beliefs among all the Orthodox groups since the time of Moses. In the last several hundred years, interpretations and teachings of a written mysticism known as the Kabbalah have become singularly important to understand the beliefs and actions of Ashkenazi ultra- Orthodox Jews and their view toward non-Jews. Whereas ultra-Orthodox, pious “Torah Jews” from the Sephardic community have pursued a more passive approach to metaphysical and eschatological events, mysticism has provided the Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox with an exclusivist, racist and often demonizing perspective, that has had significant consequences for non-Jews.[[124]](#footnote-124)

# While mysticism had previously been an oral tradition in Judaism, it began to creep into the writings of Jewish scholars in 8th century. In southern Italy the first text appeared with the publication of *The Book of Formation.* The Book of Formation dealt with the ecstasy of experiencing God, and Jewish mystics used its secret formulas of incantation and ritual to hasten the coming of the Messiah.[[125]](#footnote-125)

# In the 13th century a second book called the *Zohar* appeared. Written in Spain, theZohar was an encyclopedia of Jewish occultism and metaphysical speculations on God, heaven, science, and the universe. Interpretation of theZohar went in two directions: first a more rationalist school emerged that sought scientific truth that later led to western European philosophy and science. The second theme in the Zoharwas pure mysticism and by the 16th century, its mystical content had degenerated into Jewish superstition. The Book of Formation and the Zohar together became known as the written Kabbalah, a distinct work of Jewish mysticism, metaphysical philosophy, and the occult.[[126]](#footnote-126)

# The Kabbalah claimed its authority from scripture and was read by religious Jews alongside the Torah and Talmud. As political and social conditions worsened for Jews in Eastern Europe between the 13th and 16th centuries, Jews placed more emphasis on secret formulas and incantations from the Kabbalah as the means to hasten the arrival of the Messiah, who it had been prophesized would be sent by God to alleviate the miserable condition of Jewry. For most Jews during this period, comprehension of the mystical elements found in the Kabbalah were less difficult to master than the rigorous concentration needed for the study of the Torah and the Talmud. The Torah and Talmud required logic and reason to search for truth, while the Kabbalah offered what was believed by many Jews to be an easier way. It permitted Jews to create mythology and to accept the prophetic passages found in Torah text. The Kabbalah allowed readers to experience truth based on their own intuition of what they were reading. Truth and insights about God and the universe were subjectively symbolized rather than painstakingly understood through intellectual pursuit.

# In myth and in mystical tradition, Jews believed that they could control destiny, and through the Kabbalah could possess secrets that would influence the coming of the Messiah. In this way, Jewish mysticism offered a shortcut, an easy way for non-Torah Jews to achieve a sense of self-confidence and credibility with their followers. The Kabbalah was not the traditionally accepted route taken by pious scholars who studied the Torah and obeyed God’s law to wait patiently for the Messiah to reveal himself.[[127]](#footnote-127)

# In the late 13th century, mystics adopted a methodology referred to as practicing “prophetic Kabbalah.” The practitioner placed himself in a “state of prophecy,” so as to be able to control events in the present. The methodology of prophetic Kabbalah did not involve the study of the Torah directly, but involved the mystical permutation of divine names in Torah verse as it broke words and syntax into constituent letters. Musical vocalizations, body postures, and controlled breathing were frequently part of the ritual. The purpose of prophetic Kabbalah was not for the individual to come to a deeper appreciation of the Divinity, as in the traditional study of the Torah, but for the practitioner to achieve an intensely personal and mystical transformation.[[128]](#footnote-128)

# ULTRA-ORTHODOX HASSIDISMAND MYSTICISM

# In the latter part of the 18th century, the world of eastern European Jewry was swept up by Hassidism, a spiritualistic, pietistic and charismatic ultra-Orthodox movement in Poland, Russia, the Ukraine and the Austro Hungarian Empire that had at its core strong influences from mystical Kabbalah.[[129]](#footnote-129) Hassidism emphasized that true piety and the love of God was not to be attained by intellectual scholarship, but by the outpouring of the soul through prayer. Closely tied to Kabbalah, Hassidism spiritually repaired the strain of anti-Semitism and enforced poverty that Jews were enduring in the exile by offeringhope through mysticism and prayer.

# Hassidism differed with traditional Judaism that was characterized by the aloofness of rabbis in their relationships with the faithful. Hassidic followers developed a very close relationship with their leaders whom they called Rebbes. Each Rebbe was considered a Zaddik; a religious leader who was believed to be a perfectly righteous man. The Hassidic communities had faith in their Rebbe’s extraordinary power for spiritual contemplation and their ability to make “contact” with God as a charismatic and mystical intermediary.[[130]](#footnote-130)

# As Zaddikim*,* Rebbes were considered a pipeline to heaven; a continuum from Moses through the prophets to the individual Zaddik.[[131]](#footnote-131) Each Rebbe played a crucial role in defining the nature of his brand of Hassidism.[[132]](#footnote-132) The emerging influence of the Rebbe evolved because he was perceived to have the capacity for spiritual repair. The Rebbe

# was looked upon as a messianic redeemer and his presence marked a kind of return to the era of the prophet and a new kind of Judaism.[[133]](#footnote-133)

# The most pious traditional Lithuanian Jews condemned Hassidism on the grounds of their own attachment to Talmudic law that they believed, unlike the Hassidism, constituted true Judaism. Known as Misnagdim*,* Lithuanian Jews objected to the idea of Zaddik. For them the genuine authority of rabbis came from scholarship, and not from the mystical hocus-pocus of Zaddiks. The Misnagdim sought guidance from the rabbinical heads of their Talmudic academies, who they called the *rosh* yeshiva. For the Misnagdim, it was the rosh yeshiva rabbi’s scholarship that was the true mark of the rabbi. The Zaddik, as far as the Misnagdim were concerned, were simply unschooled Jews.

# By the end of the 19th century, Hassidism began to influence the Misnagdim. The relationship that the Misnagdim developed with the rosh yeshiva began to evolve into a similar kind of relationship the Hassidism had with their Zaddik Rebbe and his court. Gradually, by the beginning of the 20th century, Hassidism and Misnagdim began to resemble each other as both groups now identified with the concept known in Hebrew as *Da’as* Torah.

# Da’as Torah referred to the ability of rabbinical scholars to interpret every day events in proper Torah light so as to be able to anticipate the ramifications of day-to-day current events in the future. The concept of Da’as Torah effectively joined the mystical prophetic power of the Hassidic Rebbes with Misnagdim Torah scholars, bringing the two groups together.[[134]](#footnote-134)

# The Misnagdim called their Torah scholars *talmid chacham,* as the bearers of Da’as Torah, and for many believers the *talmid chacham* are the Torah itself. Therefore the Misnagdim believed that as God gave the Torah to Israel, God also placed the essence of the Torah within each *talmid chacham*. “My will is the will of heaven,” Hassidic Rabbi Avraham Mordecai, Alter of Ger, wrote in a letter to his followers. This is distinctive of the Ashkenazi Haredim, which also allows certain clergy considerably more flexibility and subjective discretion in sanctioning political agendas of religious extremists.

# As the secular Zionist trend toward western modernity and cultural assimilation gained momentum throughout the 20th century, threatening the survival of Torah Judaism and Talmudic scholarship, Hassidism and Misnagdim joined together. Hassidic Rebbes now act more like Misnagdim, as they emphasize Torah and Talmudic study, while the Misnagdim, “Torah Jews”, in turn eschew the mysticism of Hassidism. Politically the Misnagdim represent all the ultra-Orthodox “Torah Jews” and the ultra-Orthodox Hassidism are their close allies in a vociferous, and violent campaign to reverse the Oslo accord and all of its political, social, cultural and religious ramifications. Collectively, both the Hassidism and Misnagdim now appear to this author to make up the *Haredim* community in Israel today.

# INTEGRATING PROPHETIC KABBALAH IN THE 20th CENTURY

# The contemporary use of prophetic Kabbalah among the messianic Orthodox /NRP and the *Gush Emunim* rabbis like Moshe Levinger and Yitzhak Ginsburg began with one of the most influential Israeli thinkers, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935). Rabbi Kook was appointed by the British in 1921 to serve as Palestine's first Ashkenazi chief rabbi, where he became convinced that secular Labor Zionism was not only to help Jews return to Palestine but was also a movement destined to facilitate the process of redemption. In spite of his understanding that Zionism did not follow Orthodox teachings and Torah commandments, Kook felt that Labor Zionism was nevertheless unwittingly serving God’s divine plan for the Jews.

# Rabbi Abraham Kook believed there was a connection between the congregation of Jews of Israel and the God of Israel that would facilitate joining the national idea and the idea of the divine to the State of Israel. Kook’s writings supported political activism on the messianic question of establishing an organic connection between Jewish nationalism and religion. Rabbi Kook believed that the secular Zionists were heretics who had cast off the yolk of the Torah and faith in a systematic and deliberate way, yet in spite of his core religious convictions, he desperately wanted to introduce a strong Judaism into Zionist secular nationalism.

## **REVISIONIST ZIONISM**

# Rabbi Kook achieved prominence among a growing number of right wing Zionists, under the leadership of Vladimir Jabotinsky who were agitating against the British for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The movement was to become known as Revisionist Zionism. Kook believed that “the time when Israel returns to Jerusalem and its stronghold [the Temple] is the very root of the coming of the Messiah”.[[135]](#footnote-135) Kook placed extreme importance on the absolute necessity of Jewish control over Jerusalem, because it became for him and his followers a precondition for the appearance of the Messiah. Rabbi Kook drew on the revival of prophecy to guide the reawakening of Jewish life in the land of Israel. He believed, in the 1930’s, that a future State of Israel should have a sacred basis, with messianic and metaphysical standards to live up to. Kook pronounced, “this shall be our state, the State of Israel, the pedestal of God’s throne in this world.”[[136]](#footnote-136)

# As chief rabbi during the 1920's and early1930's, Kook introduced several religious ideas strongly based on the thinking of Rabbi Yitzhak Luria (1534-1572) into secular Zionism. For political reasons, Kook linked his pro-active messianic redemptive message into secular Zionism with a dialectical interpretation of the mystical drama of breakage and repair conveyed in Lurianic Kabbalah.

# BREAKAGE AND REPAIR: RABBI LURIA

# Rabbi Luria taught that all matter and thought evolved through a three-stage cycle beginning with what he called *contraction,* or the thesis. The second, he identified as the *breaking of the vessels*, or the antithesis, and the third stage was the *restoration,* he called the synthesis.[[137]](#footnote-137) The three stages represent the myth of the destruction and reconstruction of worlds. Kook accepted Luria’s myth of destruction and repair and expressed it in the context of a past, present, and future Jewish experience in terms of human destruction for the sake of construction.[[138]](#footnote-138) The myth of breakage and repair for Kook were symbols of actual events from the Jewish past that could also serve to prophesize about events in the future. Kook deemed that suffering associated with all the pangs of breakage and the ill effects of this destruction was all worth it in order to bring forth a perfected and restored world of redemption.[[139]](#footnote-139)

# Kook believed the Messiah is not to be identified as the redemptive process itself, but rather accepted the messianic imagery of the Lurianic Kabbalah and ancient Jewish traditions that there will be two Messiahs, Ben-Joseph and Ben-David. The first Messiah Ben-Joseph is associated with the final battle, *the breakage* that is to take place on the eve of the redemption. Messiah Ben-Joseph who he associates collectively with the *elect* among his followers is called to battle to help the Jews toward salvation, but in that process suffers defeat. Ben-Joseph though slain in battle thereby paves the way for the utopian appearance, *the reconstruction* of the final redeemer, sent by God, the Messiah Ben-David.

# Kook’s Lurianic imagery is about the final battle, the final breakage that will take place on the eve of redemption. In Kook’s teachings there is the strong myth and imagery of Luria’s descriptions of a calamitous event involving bursts of light, rising sparks, shattering of vessels; a process of destruction, to be followed by a perfect *reconstruction,* or the *final redemption*.[[140]](#footnote-140) Luria’s descriptions of a constant state of contraction, the breaking of vessels and the reconstruction supported Kook's belief that it is necessary for his followers, the members of his elect to accept several cycles of breakage and reconstruction, or upheavals, in Judaism, perhaps in there struggle with the Gentile, until final redemption.[[141]](#footnote-141)

# ROLE OF THE “ELECT”

# Kook saw the crucial role of charismatic personalities, the elect*,* as the conduits for breakage and repair toward the process of redemptive guidance. The “elect” would come from among his cadre of followers who, he promised, would not stand aloof from the rest of the world, as Torah Jews and Talmudic scholars had done in past centuries. The “elect”, he argued, had to actively involve themselves in society by exerting political influence. Only through this kind of political activism would the elect have any chance to save Judaism and the Redemption. It was in this context that the National Religious Party (NRP) was founded in the 1920s, as a bulwark against threats to Jewish fundamentalism, and which remains today one of the more important and viable political parties in Israel today.

# After Abraham Kook’s death, his messianic theology was carried on by his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda ha-Cohen Kook (1891-1981). Zvi Yehuda Kook became the dean of the Messianic Redemption movement, an ideologue and educator of his father’s writings in the religious Zionist camp. Zvi, though writing little on the matter himself, took the written Orthodox national ideology of his father and put it into practice through his Merkaz Ha Rav Yeshiva.[[142]](#footnote-142) Zvi Kook put his father’s religious Zionism into a solid reality; and delivered the prophetic message that the Messiah was on His way. It was here that the *Gush Emunim* was born. Zvi Yehuda Kook and his yeshiva carried the elder Kook’s notion of redemption to its logical extreme. Zvi’s greatness was the translation of his father’s teachings which he galvanized into an Orthodox national movement. The NRP has maintained a political viability for more than 80 years. The existence of the State of Israel is further proof that Abraham Kooks’s divine prophecy has come true, thereby proving the coming of the Messiah. Kook’s ideology assumes the imminent arrival of the Messiah. In his view there can be no turning back now that the redemption of the Jewish people has begun to unfold.[[143]](#footnote-143) Zvi Yehuda Kook writes that

# the divine historical imperative clearly revealed to us to put an end to the Exile. It cannot be changed or distorted, either by wickedness and stubborn resistance of the nations or by our own mistakes and (uncharacteristic) Jewish deviations. It is the cosmological determination to guide the current movement to its destiny.[[144]](#footnote-144)

# KOOK’S PHILOSOPHY AND THE OSLO ACCORD

# The mentality that characterizes the messianic activism of the Orthodox nationals and the Haredim against the Oslo accord today is strongly oriented around Kook’s philosophy. Prophetic Kabbalah took Kook’s Orthodoxy to a cosmological determination, a messianic determinism that says the end result is foreseen, that the Messiah is about to reveal Himself. It is this foreknowledge, this belief in prophecy, that motivates the messianic Orthodox leaders and their true believers to intensified efforts to defy UN Security Council Resolution 242 and to ultimately scuttle the Oslo accord. They believe they have deciphered the secret of the redemptive path of history and have no fear of being mistaken.

# Kook’s messianic theology has clear implications for the contents of the Oslo accord as it impacts the politics of Israel’s borders, Jerusalem, and the use of the Israeli military against the Palestinians who are perceived as threats to Jewish life.[[145]](#footnote-145) What appears to Palestinians to be confiscation of their land for subsequent settlement by Jews is viewed by Orthodox Jews as not stealing, but rather sanctifying the land. From a Kabbalistic perspective, the land is seen as redeemed and sanctified by being transferred from the satanic to the divine sphere.[[146]](#footnote-146)

# Kook’s rabbinical followers today draw on Kook’s view of the elect, believing that one messianic sect has to guide non-observant Jews corrupted by satanic Western culture, with its rationality, democracy, and the current Oslo peace initiatives.[[147]](#footnote-147) Kook believed that for those who refuse to renounce their secular habits (coexistence with non-Jews) and embrace the true faith, the use of force against them is permitted whenever necessary by the elect in order to accelerate the arrival of the Messiah.[[148]](#footnote-148)

# LURIANIC KABBALAH AND NON-JEWS

# An understanding of the status of non-Jews in the Kabbalah and how this has affected contemporary Jewish beliefs regarding the Palestinians and their right of return under the Oslo accord can be found in the 16th century writings of Rabbi Yitzhak Luria. Rabbi Luria introduced into propheticKabbalaha philosophy with metaphysical overtones that directly influenced how Jews who follow the Kabbalah evaluate their relationship with non-Jews.

# The basic tenets of Lurianic philosophy contain the belief in the absolute superiority of the Jewish soul and body over the non-Jewish soul and body. Luria argued that the world was created solely for the sake of the Jews; the existence of non-Jews was considered subsidiary. Lurianic doctrine delved into the satanic by believing that non-Jews had satanic souls and that souls of non- Jews were said to come from the female part of the Satanic sphere.[[149]](#footnote-149) For this reason, Luria believed the souls of non-Jews were to be considered evil, having been created without divine knowledge; the implication is that non-Jews are unable to either experience or know God.

# STATUS OF NON-JEWS IN THE KABBALAH

# As described by Israel Shahak, the status of non-Jews in the Kabbalah has not been discussed realistically. He says that scholars who have written about the Kabbalah in languages other than Hebrew have avoided revealing that Kabbalic text, as opposed to Talmudic verse, emphasizes salvation only for Jews. Shahak repeatedly maintains in his writings that accurate descriptions of Lurianic doctrines and their wide influence upon Orthodox Jews can be found in numerous studies written only in Hebrew. He says that books and articles written in other languages and read by non-Israeli Jews and non-Jews alike do not provide accurate analysis and descriptions of Lurianic doctrine. He feels that such honest analysis is often deliberately left out, leaving most non-Jews ignorant about the real political, social, and religious implications of the Kabbalah.[[150]](#footnote-150)

# According to Lurianic Kabbalah, the earthly embodiment of Satan is the non-Jew. Shahak states that the role of Satan is always minimized by authors writing about the Kabbalah in non-Hebrew languages. Therefore, accurate accounts of the National Religious Party or its hard-core *Gush Emunim* and Yesha Council politics have not been accurately depicted.[[151]](#footnote-151) Revelations such as these are politically volatile. He argues instead that Messianic Jews have attempted to repress the fact that Lurianic doctrine has considerable credence, and runs deep in the psychology of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities. Shahak says that the degree of success that religious Jews hope to reach toward the Redemption depends on how quietly they can keep the implications of Lurianic doctrine to themselves and away from the Gentile world. Shahak believes that the contents of Kook, Chabad Hassidic, and other Orthodox ideological doctrine relating to the status of non-Jews that has roots in Lurianic Kabbalah could be calamitous for the Jews if widely publicized outside Israel.

# For example, the writings of Rabbi Abraham Kook serve as the sacred texts for the messianic Orthodox. Reading them requires in depth knowledge of Talmudic and Kabbalistic literature. This is the reason why his writings are not widely disseminated. The more extreme aspects of *Gush Emunim* dogmas and beliefs have deliberately not been revealed, having been successfully hidden from the popular Western print media.[[152]](#footnote-152) It is not what has been written that bodes ill for Orthodox Judaism; it is rather what has not been written outside the Hebrew that could be calamitous for world Judaism.[[153]](#footnote-153)

Shahak says that Hassidism as a continuation of Jewish mysticism is still a living movement with hundreds of thousands of active adherents fanatically devoted to their rabbis. Many of these rabbis he says have great political influence in Israel among political party leaders in the Knesset and in the higher echelons of the Israeli army.[[154]](#footnote-154) In discussing Chabad Hassidism and non-Jews, Shahak gives an example of the *Hatanya,* the fundamental book of the Chabad Hassidic movement. In reaffirming the distinctiveness of the Jew, all non-Jews are described in this book as totally satanic creatures “in whom there is absolutely nothing good. Even a non-Jewish embryo is qualitatively different from a Jewish one, the very existence of a non-Jew is inessential whereas all of creation was created solely for the sake of the Jews.”[[155]](#footnote-155)

Shahak maintains that this book has been circulated in numerous editions and propagated in discourses of the Chabad movement. Its ideas are widely disseminated among the Jewish public at large and within the schools and the army. Shahak says that scholars who have written about Chabad Hassidism in English always suppress the contents of the old Hassidic texts like the Hatanya and the political implications of such books. In Shahak’s view, suppressing Lurianic doctrine from outside view has been a conscious crime of deception.[[156]](#footnote-156)

# LUBAVITCHERS AND JEWISH ‘EXCEPTIONALISM’

Modern Hassidic expressions of the Lurianic Kabbalah are evident in the writings and teachings of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who headed the politically powerful Chabad Hassidim Lubavitch movement in Israel and the U.S. from 1965 until his death in 1993. Among the religious settlers in the Occupied Territories, the Chabad Hassidism represent an extreme ultra-Orthodox group in Israel. The Lubavitchers have institutionalized themselves in Israel’s political life and share many religious concepts and positions with the messianic Orthodox nationals. From the June 1967 Six Day War until his death, Rabbi Schneerson and his followers actively supported Israeli’s political parties that opposed any retreat from the occupied lands, or the right of return for Palestinian refugees living outside the land of Israel.[[157]](#footnote-157)

The Lubavitchers, as Hassidim, stress the joy of knowing God through mystical devotion, believing prayer to be more pious than the dry legalistic study of the Torah.[[158]](#footnote-158) In the Lurianic tradition which emphasizes the inability of non-Jews to experience God, a number of Lubavitchers have insisted that it is this Jewish “exceptionalism”that allows the Jews to agitate for exclusive policies against non-Jews in Israel on moral and religious grounds.

# Lubavitcher Rebbe Schneerson, for example, proclaims that the fundamental differences separating the Jew from the non-Jew exist at the level of species. He bases this argument on both material and metaphysical grounds:

# This is what needs to be said about the body. The body of a Jewish person is of a totally different quality from the body of other members of the human race. Even though Jewish bodies look as though in substance they are similar to non Jewish bodies, it is the inner quality that is so great that they should be considered different species.

# The same difference exists in regard to the soul. A Jew was not created for some other purpose. He himself *is* the purpose, since the substance of all divine emanations was created only to serve Jews.

In addition, Rebbe Schneerson draws on Scriptural support to bolster his views when he says that

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ means that the heavens and the earth were created for the sake of the Jews who are called *the beginning*. This means that everything, all developments, all discoveries, the creation including the heavens and the earth are vanity compared to the Jews. The important things are the Jews because they do not exist for any other aim. They themselves are the divine aim.[[159]](#footnote-159)

This position allowed the Lubavitchers, and Rebbe Schneerson, to actively seek the expulsion of all non-Jews from the Land of Israel and the annexation of the occupied territories, insisting that the Torah absolutely forbids surrendering so much as one inch of the Holy Land to those he called idolaters.[[160]](#footnote-160)

Shahak writes that Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, from the Joseph Lives Yeshiva and a leading Hassidic authority on Jewish mysticism, also draws on material and metaphysical distinctions to support Jewish exceptionalism with clear implications for relations with non-Jews. Ginsberg has spoken freely of a genetically based spiritual superiority of Jews over non-Jews. He asserts that Jewish life has greater value in the eyes of the Torah. In an interview April 26, 1996 in New York’s *Jewish Week,* Ginsberg declared that:

if every simple cell in a Jewish body entails divinity, is part of god, then every strand of DNA is part of god. Therefore something is special about Jewish DNA. There is something infinitely more holy and unique about Jewish life than non-Jewish life.[[161]](#footnote-161)

The belief in the essential differences between Jewish and non-Jewish life is evident in the approaches taken toward Palestinians and justifications for violence toward non-Jews. According to Jewish law, the murder of a Jew, particularly if committed by a non-Jew, is considered the worst possible crime.[[162]](#footnote-162) Religious settlers have emphasized the moral issues of shedding Jewish blood in the current conflict with the Palestinians, but have shown little concern for the shedding of non-Jewish blood. Shahak writes that *Gush Emunim* leaders have relied on Maimonides, who argued that “A Jew who killed a non- Jew is exempt from human judgement and has not violated the religious prohibition of murder.”[[163]](#footnote-163)

# In his book *Intifada Responses* published in 1990, Gush Emunim leader Rabbi Shlomo Aviner issued plain Halachic responses to such concerns as to what pious Jews should do if a Palestinian child intends to threaten a Jewish life. Aviner explained that if a non-Jewish child intended to commit murder by, for example, throwing a stone at a Jew in a passing car, the non-Jewish child should be considered as a persecutor of the Jews and should on that basis be killed.[[164]](#footnote-164) Citing Maimonides as Talmudic authority, Avenir maintains that killing a non-Jewish child in this instance is both allowed, and indeed necessary, to save Jewish life.

# Rabbi Aviner posed and answered another question: does the Halacha permit inflicting the death penalty upon Arabs who throw stones? His answer was that, not only is it permitted, but it is mandatory for pious Jews. Aviner asserted that a rabbinical court“has the power to punish anyone by death if it is believed that the world will thereby be improved.”[[165]](#footnote-165) Aviner, the *Gush Emunim*, and the Council of Yesha Rabbis in the West Bank believe that this power of a rabbinical court to judge and to put Arab stone throwers to death can legitimately devolve to the Israeli government provided that the government abides by correct religious Halachic rulings.[[166]](#footnote-166)

# *Gush Emunim* leader Rabbi Israel Ariel reiterated that Jews who killed Arabs should not be punished. This is a policy that has been followed by the Israeli government, under both Labor and Likud leadership, which has demonstrated a systematic policy of refusing to release Palestinian prisoners with Jewish blood on their hands, but not hesitating to free Jewish prisoners with non-Jewish blood on their hands. This is also why negotiations with Palestinians on the release of Palestinian prisoners who have killed Jews have gotten no response from the Israeli side.

# CHAPTER 5

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY TO STOP THE OSLO ACCORD

# The primary protest apparatus of Israel’s religious right against the Oslo accord is simply known as the Joint Staff. A coalition of organizations that includes Orthodox nationals, ultra-Orthodox Haredim,and the less religious ultra-nationals, the Joint Staff is dedicated to one objective: to ensure that the Oslo accord is never implemented. There are three core divisions that collectively make up the Joint Staff: the Political Guidance Headquarters, the Action Headquarters and the Council of Yesha Rabbis.

# The Political Guidance Headquarters (PGH) is the strategic planning arm of the Joint Staff that works from within the Knesset. The PGH coordinates and approves all proposals submitted by the Joint Staff to conduct political protests, and specifically targets demonstrations aimed at defeating the Oslo agreement. Its members are made up of Knesset deputies representing the Likud, the NRP, the ultra-Orthodox SHAS party, and other smaller religious parties. In effect, the PGH is the entity that works directly against the land for peace efforts of the Labor Party and other “peaceniks” inside the government who would acquiesce to UN Security Council Resolution 242.[[167]](#footnote-167)

# Outside the Knesset, at the street level and on a national scale, the day-to-day anti-government organization against the Oslo accord is the Action Headquarters. Managed mostly by volunteer yeshiva students, Action Headquarters has the organizational

# capability to mobilize tens of thousands of demonstrators into the streets on short notice. Action Headquarters has arranged torchlight parades, vigils on street corners, and protests against the actions of key government officials anywhere in Israel. Action Headquarters has ready access to religiously observant Jews through its direct ties with yeshivas, religious seminaries for women, religious neighborhoods and settlement activists.[[168]](#footnote-168)

# Ya’akov Novick directs the Action Headquarters from an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Jerusalem. In his forties, Novick is Haredimand a member of new breed of ultra-Orthodox nationals. He has a talent for organizing large-scale demonstrations and protest events. At his command is small army of Haredi yeshiva students who he can move around the country very quickly on short notice. He has printing facilities for mass-producing posters, placards that he can place in their hands at almost any venue. Financial support comes from the Yesha Council of Rabbis.

# Gadi Ben- Zimra is Novick’s deputy and also Haredi, who lives in the West Bank settlement of Ma’aleh Levonah. Zimra studied under Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg in the Joseph Still Lives Yeshiva in Nablus. In 1989, during the height of the intifada*,* Zimra was charged with killing a thirteen- year old Palestinian girl in the village of Kifl Harith.[[169]](#footnote-169)

# Meir Indor, another activist at Action Headquarters, is a founding member of *Gush Emunim* and the head of Victims of Arab Terror, a small group of extremists that began demonstrating against an Israeli /Arab peace process before the Oslo accord was signed. In 1994, after Oslo was signed by Yitzhak Rabin, it was Indor who produced the first provocative and prophetic placards with the words “Rabin Is A Traitor”, a standard feature at all Action Headquarters events against Rabin prior to his assassination.[[170]](#footnote-170)

# Baruch Marzel is another extremist and veteran of Meir Kahane’s *Kach* movement. In his forties, he is near the top in the Action Headquarters leadership. Marzel served as Kahane’s parliamentary assistant in the 1980’s, and after Kahane’s assassination went on to become *Kach*’s most prominent activist. At the time Israel signed the Oslo accord, Marzel declared, “We are planning to do everything we can to halt the peace process. Peres’s fantasies will be washed away in a river of blood.”[[171]](#footnote-171)

# In a 1994 Israeli police intelligence report, Marzel was described as violent and dangerous. He has been indicted eleven times on charges ranging from disturbing the peace to rioting, assault, and vandalism. He draws most of his power and influence from his close association with Rabbi Moshe Levinger. In 1985, irked by a government decision to release Palestinian prisoners, Marzel was photographed damaging Palestinian cars in Hebron while Rabbi Levinger, armed with a rifle, provided him with cover. In 1990, Marzel was sentenced to 5 months in prison for killing a Palestinian shopkeeper in Hebron’s marketplace.[[172]](#footnote-172)

# Israeli authorities placed Marzel in administrative detention and house arrest for two years in 1994. Despite limitations on his movements, Marzel was the driving force behind the Action Headquarters “incitement” campaign against Yitzhak Rabin during that time. Efraim Cohanin, the treasurer of the Yesha Council of Rabbis confirmed this relationship: “Marzel was the Action Headquarters of Hebron, but quietly Novick was his cover.” Thus a traceable connection existed between the violent *Kach* leader and a coalition of radical religious elements that waged Israel’s most virulent anti Rabin, anti Oslo peace campaign.[[173]](#footnote-173)

# Before Ehud Barak became Prime Minister in June 1999, a direct connection had existed that began in 1993 between Likud representatives and Marzel through the Political Guidance Committee in the Knesset and the Action Headquarters. The link operated primarily through Knesset member Tsachi Hanegbi, Benjamin Netanyahu’s closest and most trusted ally and through the head of the Likud operations division, Reuven Zadok. In 1994, Hanegbi was Reuven Zadok’s superior in the Likud’s chain of association with the Action Headquarters, supervising him on a daily basis. Zadok, as the chief liaison between Likud and Action Headquarters, described those contacts as follows:

# The activities with the Action Headquarters took place on two levels. On the higher level, representatives of the opposition parties met to set down principles. Our representative there was Tsachi Hanegbi. They discussed plans down to the level of the placards.

# The lower level, that of coordination, was comprised of Novick and Reuven Cohen, head of City Headquarters, and me [Zadok] as the representative of Likud. Our meetings took place in Novick’s office or mine. We would coordinate everything down to the smallest detail.

# After the meeting with Action Headquarters people, I would present a work plan and budget to the Likud Executive. Bibi Netanyahu participated in and addressed all of the demonstrations that we initiated with the Action Headquarters.[[174]](#footnote-174)

# The Council of Yesha Rabbis, as the third core organization of the Joint Staff, is made up of Jewish leaders from the city councils and local governments in the West Bank. The Council of Yesha Rabbis is the principle lobbyist and operations organization for the Jewish settlers, having replaced *Gush Emunim* in the 1980’s as the chief liaison group with the Israeli government and Knesset members.

# The Council recruits and directs local activists through a network of small groups known as the Cities Headquarters. Cities Headquarters is responsible for mobilizing activists for local and national rallies, demonstrations and vigils. It also conducts tours and lectures for Israelis Jews visiting the territories to raise awareness of settler needs. Using lists, core groups of dedicated activists reached hundreds of sympathizers during the 1995 protests against Yitzhak Rabin. Cities Headquarters held vigils with banners, large posters, and placards at major intersections throughout the country. By the summer of 1995, Yitzhak Rabin could hardly move anywhere in Israel without encountering at least a small group of protesters. Posing as journalists to obtain information about the Prime Minister’s schedule, Cities supporters waited at the venues of Rabin’s engagements to taunt him with shouts of “traitor” and “murderer.”[[175]](#footnote-175)

# When Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo accord in 1993, the Council of Yesha Rabbis made the decision not to oppose the Oslo accord directly, but decided instead to create and execute a plan to publicly de-legitimize and discredit the Prime Minister. The strategy was to separate Rabin the man and his government from the State of Israel. Rabbi Yoel Bin –Nun, a leading member of the Yesha Council, confirmed that in 1994 meetings the Yesha organization savagely and directly attacked the Prime Minister. The deliberate aim, according to Bin-Nun, was to:

# tarnish his image, and to discredit his legitimacy and the credibility of those around him. At Yesha Council staff meetings there was explicit talk of a campaign directed personally against the Prime Minister. I heard such discussions with my own ears. To my regret, I was present in the room.[[176]](#footnote-176)

# THE PLOT TO DESTROY YITZHAK RABIN

# The strategy to destroy Yitzhak Rabin initially began in 1993, when Orthodox rabbis in Israel and abroad had revived two obsolete and nearly forgotten Halachic terms relative to traitorous acts. The first was *“din rodef”,* translated from the Hebrew to mean “the duty of a Jew to kill a Jew who willfully imperils the life or property of another Jew.”[[177]](#footnote-177) The second term, *din moser* refers to the duty of Jews to eliminate or to stop any Jew who intends to turn a fellow Jew over to non-Jewish authorities for punishment.[[178]](#footnote-178)

# Until the Oslo accord, these two injunctions had been studied only in yeshivas, yet by 1994, the precepts of *din-rodef* and *din-moser* were spontaneously being discussed by respected Orthodox rabbinical scholars. The emerging discussions reflected a firm belief in religious circles that Yitzhak Rabin’s Oslo peace initiatives threaten to place the lives and property of Jewish settlers in grave peril. A broad interpretation of *din-rodef* and *din-moser* by influential rabbis concluded that Rabin, by agreeing to relinquish territory in the West Bank and Gaza to Palestinian rule, had endangered Jewish lives. The application of *din-rodef* to his person was therefore justified.[[179]](#footnote-179)

# By branding Rabin a *rodef* and a *moser*, the rabbis effectively declared open season on his life. In effect, any Jew faithful and obedient to the Halacha was permitted, if not actually obligated, to kill Rabin and political allies around him.[[180]](#footnote-180) In the months leading up to the Prime Minister’s assassination in early November 1995, other rabbis questioned whether or not *din-rodef* and *din- moser* could legitimately be applied to Rabin. Orthodox rabbis in Israel and the United States consulted one another about whether Rabin fell into the category of a *rodef* or a *moser*. Word of the rabbinical discussions leaked out, inspiring heated, public debates on the issue in the religious communities. By mid-summer 1995, *din-rodef* and *din-moser* were suddenly in common usage.

# Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch, the head of the Birkat Moshe yeshiva in the West Bank and a respected Halachic authority in the occupied territories, publicly stated that Rabin was subject to *din rodef* in the fullest sense of the definition. In an article published in *The* *Jerusalem Post*, in July 1993, two months before the signing of the Oslo accord, Rabinovitch compared the political positions of the Rabin government with those of the *Judenrate* in Nazi occupied Europe.

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# In a column entitled “Generals, Jews and Justice,” published in the Jerusalem Post on December 1993, Rabinovitch justified his citation of Rabin as a *rodef* and *moser*. He did so by citing Maimonides’s definition of a *rodef* as one “who delivers his fellow Jew into the hands of the Gentiles to be killed or beaten, and a *moser*, as one who delivers his fellow Jew’s property into the hands of the Gentile.”[[181]](#footnote-181) In a broadcast on the *Voice of Israel* in August 1995, Rabinovitch defined Rabin as a *moser* “who according to Maimonides is liable to death.”[[182]](#footnote-182) Rabinovitch further claimed that other rabbis had pronounced the same ruling on Yitzhak Rabin. He identified the other rabbis as Sephardi Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, and Rabbi Dov Lior of Kiryat Arba.[[183]](#footnote-183)

# Opposed to the Oslo process, Rabbi Rabinovitch has often delivered his messages in a kind of code familiar to those who understand the Halacha. In *Issue,* the journal of the Rabbinical Council for the Land of Israel, he declared: “Any action that diminishes our hold on the country or drives Jews out of the precincts of our land is definitely prohibited and is heresy against our sacred Torah.”[[184]](#footnote-184)

# KAHINISTS – THE COMMITTEE FOR ROAD SAFETY

# In October 1993, Palestinian terrorists brutally attacked and killed a number of soldiers, settlers, and Israeli civilians. The incidents immediately radicalized the Council of Yesha Rabbis and led to what came to be known as the Jewish Intifada.[[185]](#footnote-185) Members of the Council subsequently ruled that shooting Palestinian attackers and their collaborators was legitimate and the Council rabbis told their religious followers that no legal barriers should stop them from “pursuing their interests.”[[186]](#footnote-186) The dramatic eruption of Palestinian terrorism gradually pushed the Kahane *Kach* vigilante militants to center stage.[[187]](#footnote-187) The use of violence by the Kahanists suddenly appealed to a larger number of settlers who had not previously shared Kahane’s 1980’s philosophy of revenge violence.[[188]](#footnote-188)

# *Kach*’s operational arm against Palestinian violence continues to be the Committee for Road Safety. The organization was formed in mid 1980’s by Kahane’s *Kiryat Arba* followers as a Jewish response to intensifying Arab violence on the roads of Judea and Samaria. The purpose of this vigilante committee headed by Baruch Marzel and Shmuel Ben Yishi was initially established to provide protection for Jewish drivers in the Hebron and *Kiryat Arba* area. Citing the inability of Israel’s army to guarantee safe passage for Jewish-owned vehicles Kahane’s people formed a volunteer force to fill the gap. The outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada in 1987 increased the demand for the Committee’s services. The Committee was very instrumental in protecting Jewish mourners who sought to bury relatives or visit graves in East Jerusalem’s Mount of Olives.[[189]](#footnote-189)

# In the 1990’s *Kach*’s Committee for Road Safety has moved from protecting cemetery mourners to armed vigilante ambushes and revenge raids into Palestinian neighborhoods.[[190]](#footnote-190) In 1993, *Kach* leader Baruch Marzel outlined the strategy of the Committee for Road Safety whereby he urged *Kach* followers to move into densely populated Arab areas and create provocative actions to cause violent Palestinian responses. *Kach* would then react to the Palestinian violence in kind, and in so doing create highly tense and explosive situations that would prevent the realization of implementing key articles of the Oslo accord.[[191]](#footnote-191)

# The most vicious response from *Kach* came from one of its leading members at dawn on February 25, 1994, during the feast of Purim.[[192]](#footnote-192) Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a physician from *Kiryat Arba* had dressed in his military reservist uniform at home and picked up his M-16 rifle before leaving. He then drove to the Cave of the Patriarchs, the holy site of Abraham, shared by Muslims and Jews. Goldstein calmly entered the hall where hundreds of Muslims were on their knees at morning prayers. He aimed his rifle at the congregation, fired on the automatic position and methodically gunned down 29 Palestinians.[[193]](#footnote-193) Dozens in the hall who had not been killed or wounded overpowered him and beat him to death with fists and fire extinguishers.

# Goldstein, a medical doctor and a respected member of the ultra-Orthodox Hassidim community, had committed an atrocity. Speculation was that he slowly came to the fatalistic conclusion that unless the Oslo peace process was stopped by dramatic acts to please God and shake the foundations of the earth, the Oslo accord and the peace process would crush the dream of the coming Redemption.

# It has been widely believed among some Orthodox Jews that Goldstein acted out of a deep religious conviction that he had been chosen the agentto save the Redemption.[[194]](#footnote-194) Dr. Goldstein saw himself as a representative of the people of Israel, and was ordered to act in accordance with God’s will to stop a political peace process he considered fatal to Jews. Goldstein felt that only an act of *Kiddush a-shem*, of self-sacrifice, for the sanctification of the name of God could change history and return the messianic process back on its proper course.[[195]](#footnote-195)

# The Kahanists in *Kiryat Arba* who were Goldstein’s comrades have since turned his grave into a shrine and published a book entitled *Baruch ha Gever*, “blessed is the man”. They praised his act of self-sacrifice as the supreme expression of religious conviction and encouraged others to emulate it. Rabbi Elitsur Segal of the Yeshiva of the Jewish Idea in the settlement of Tapuach, the bastion of Kahane’s supporters, wrote that the rabbinical sages in the past had never condemned the kind of suicide mission undertaken by Goldstein.[[196]](#footnote-196)

# The “Struggle Center to Stop the Autonomy Plan” has become steadily more influential recently in dictating several actions in the campaign against the Oslo accord. Established in 1991 by *Kiryat Arba* attorney Elyakim Ha’etzni, the “Center” was established out of fear that the Rabin government’s self- rule plan for Palestinian autonomy would inevitably lay the foundation for a Palestinian state.[[197]](#footnote-197)

# Elyakim Ha’etzni was the first to introduce the language of personal de-legitimization into the vocabulary of the radical right. It was Ha’etzni who in 1985 threatened Prime Minister Shimon Peres with a death sentence for considering the idea of an international peace conference. The threat was made through an analogy to France’s Vichy regime and the personality of Marshal Philippe Petain.[[198]](#footnote-198)

# Elyakim Ha’etzni is a founder of the Yesha Council of Rabbis and a former Knesset member from the now defunct radical right wing *Tehiya* Party.[[199]](#footnote-199) In 1993, he was one of three former Knesset members who signed an open letter calling upon soldiers and police to defy future orders given to them by the government to evacuate Jewish settlements. Ha’etzni warned that if the government relinquished any territory to the Palestinians it would spark a civil war.[[200]](#footnote-200) Ha’etzni asked his listeners to respect the right of Jewish settlers to disobey orders involving the abandonment of West Bank territories.[[201]](#footnote-201)

# CHAPTER 6

#### FUTURE OF THE OSLO ACCORD

# The Oslo peace process, as a result of increased objections based on ultra-Orthodox beliefs and activities, is in serious jeopardy. The effect of ultra-Orthodox activism has been to move the Israeli political system toward a more theocratic democracy while at the same time precipitating more open confrontation with Palestinians.

# Given the increasing power of ultra-Orthodox radicals and extremists and their demonstrated organizational capacity and ability to subvert the Oslo process, this research confirms the hypothesis that the primary obstacle to implementation of the Oslo accord can be identified in the emerging political activism and influence of ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Israeli society. A number of conclusions can then be drawn for the future of the Oslo process, the direction of U.S foreign policy, and the prospects of regional stability and peace.

# ISRAELI POLITICS: TOWARDS A THEOCRATIC DEMOCRACY

# Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Israelis have been unable to prevent Judaism from being intertwined with Israeli nationalism. Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling argues that the reason for this is that Israel’s “collective national identity… is defined in large part by terms, values, symbols, and collective memory of which most is anchored in the Jewish religion.”[[202]](#footnote-202)

# In reaction to the Oslo peace process, ultra-Orthodox Jews have emerged as political players, mobilizing massive and highly sophisticated and focused campaigns at the grassroots and political levels. These campaigns have brought increased tensions with Palestinians through direct provocations, with two principle effects: first, they have effectively undermined the Oslo accord, and secondly, Palestinian responses have moved mainstream Israeli Orthodox Jews closer to the ultra-Orthodox position in embracing more religiously based views.[[203]](#footnote-203)

# The 1994 Guttman Institute Report confirmed that Israeli Orthodox Jews are strongly influenced by their religious beliefs and that religion is more deeply embedded in Jewish psychology and political behavior than has previously been acknowledged outside Israel.[[204]](#footnote-204) Shahak quotes Kimmerling:

# The values of the Orthodox Jewish religion, at least in its Orthodox form that prevails in Israel, cannot be squared with democratic values. No other variable, neither nationality nor attitudes about security, nor social or economic values, nor ethnic decent and education-so influences the attitudes of Israeli Jews against democratic values as does religiosity.[[205]](#footnote-205)

# Kimmerling concludes that there are secular Jews throughout the world as well as in Israel but there is grave doubt that there is such a thing as secular Judaism.[[206]](#footnote-206)

# Since the signing of the Oslo accord, both Labor and Likud governments have attempted to project to the international community an image of Israeli governance as one ready to assume Western democratic values in an effort to compromise with the Palestinians in sharing the land and to work toward peace. In reality, the politics of religion in the Knesset to support continued settlement expansion in the West Bank have thwarted all efforts by the State of Israel, and Israelis collectively, to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242 and the full implementation of the Oslo accord. The recent election of military hawk and political conservative Ariel Sharon is strong evidence that within the higher echelons of the Israeli government, opposition to the Oslo accord will certainly continue.

Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox deputies in the Knesset with broad base support will influence the policies and composition of future peace initiatives as they set a legislative religious agenda to stop full implementation of Oslo. The Council of Yesha Rabbis will continue to enjoy open access to cabinet ministers and more clout to lobby effectively for *yeshivot* funding, the expansion of settlements and their protection by IDF security forces throughout the occupied territories.

The Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis will continue to exercise a shadow influence over extremists across the politico-religious spectrum, as they retroactively sanction, through religious justification, violent acts by Jewish extremists. Powerful rabbis will continue to protect core religious beliefs while simultaneously bolstering personal power and influence through political action, mysticism and myth. The rabbis see themselves as playing a critical role in prophesizing future events in order to accrue power and sustain credibility among the true believers. Subsequently there is an urgent need to recognize these rabbis as key players whose influence in determining Israel’s courses of action should not be discounted or underestimated in future efforts toward peace.

The continued control over the conditions necessary for the Messianic Redemption will likely continue specifically, those dealing with Israel’s borders, Jerusalem, and the status of non-Jews in the Land of Israel.

**ISRAEL’S BORDERS**

Israeli leaders have been pressured from both the religious Orthodox and secular nationalist camps to “sidestep” the spirit and the letter of the Oslo agreements. Jerome Slater writes that as early as October 1995, Yitzhak Rabin announced to the Knesset a detailed plan for a permanent settlement with the Palestinians that differed dramatically from the international consensus of the true meaning of the Oslo agreement. [[207]](#footnote-207)

# Rabin explained to the Knesset that there would be no return to the pre-1967 borders and that a united Jerusalem including settlements in East Jerusalem, and its suburbs, would remain under exclusive Israeli sovereignty. He had maintained that most of the settlements in the West Bank, and especially the water aquifers, would as part of his plan continue to be under Israeli control indefinitely.[[208]](#footnote-208)

Rabin continued that the Gaza strip would stay in place under Israeli sovereignty, and that a wide range of Israeli only by pass roads would be built throughout the territories to ensure free military access to protect the settlements. Rabin said that Israel would retain its settlements and military bases in the Jordan River Valley deep inside Palestinian territory. In exchange, the Palestinians would receive an “entity” that would be the home to most Palestinian residents living in the West Bank and Gaza strip. “We would like this to be less than a state,” he added.[[209]](#footnote-209) The present circumstances in the West Bank and Gaza strip continues to reflect the essence of Rabin plan and the prognosis is that there will be little change for the future.

A commission, led by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, has called for a total freeze in settlements as part of a series of confidence building measures to help end eight months of fighting between Palestinians and Israelis.[[210]](#footnote-210) Coinciding with the Mitchell visit in July 2001, Israel’s housing and construction minister Natan Sharansky announced that 700 hundred new housing units have been approved to be built in the West Bank.

**OLD JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE MOUNT**

Rumors about what lies beneath the foundation stones of Old Jerusalem’s Temple Mount persist. The Ark of the Covenant, as some rabbis believe, is buried somewhere under Temple Mount. The mystery and symbolism of the Temple Mount, the significance of what the Temple was for observant Jews in the past and what it portends to be in the future is too tempting for the devoutly religious to ignore. The threat exists that religious extremists are planning an incident directed at the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa mosques on the Haram al-Sharif, thus sparking a serious international breech with the entire Muslim world. Attempts by messianic fanatics to alter the status quo on the Temple Mount, in some dramatic fashion to establish a Jewish “foothold” there could precipitate terrible bloodshed and destroy the prospects for peace indefinitely.[[211]](#footnote-211) Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Jerusalem

warned of the tantalizing danger for religious extremists:

The Temple is within human reach. That’s the danger. They’re almost there. They can feel it, you’re standing at the foot of the (Temple) Mount. If you believe that God is not going to abandon you then your not intimidated by a billion Muslims.[[212]](#footnote-212)

# STATUS OF NON-JEWS IN ISRAEL

# Orthodox thinking on the future status of non- Jews in Israel is based on a combination of racism, economics, demographics and religion. Israel Shahak has said that Jewish biblical scholars as far back as 1915 advocated the expulsion of the Palestinians. “All were outwardly dovish, but employed formulas which could be manipulated in the most extreme anti-Arab sense.” Shahak adds that

# all [rabbis] seemed to be gentle persons who even when advocating expulsion, racism, and genocide [against the Arab] seemed incapable of hurting a fly – and just for this reason the effect of their deceptions was the greater.[[213]](#footnote-213)

# Findley reports that Israeli historian Benny Morris noted David Ben-Gurion, as a Jewish leader in Palestine in the early 1930’s, clearly wanted as few Arabs as possible to remain in a future Jewish State.[[214]](#footnote-214) In internal discussions after 1948, a number of Israeli officials proclaimed publicly that they wanted no non-Jews in their new state. Knesset member Eliahu Carmeli at the time said “I am not willing to take back not even one Arab, not even one Goy. I want the Jewish State to be wholly Jewish.” Moshe Dayan’s father Shmuel, also a Knesset member, said he opposed any return (of Arabs), even in exchange for peace.[[215]](#footnote-215)

# Jerome Slater reported in *Tikkun* magazine that David Ben-Gurion agreed to the1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine only as a necessary tactical step that he felt would later be reversed.[[216]](#footnote-216) Ben-Gurion told a Zionist Congress in 1947 that “when we become a strong power after the establishment of the state we will abolish partition and spread throughout all of Palestine.”[[217]](#footnote-217) Other extremist rabbis, politicians, and messianic ideologues like Meir Kahane consistently compare Palestinians to the ancient Canaanites whose extermination or expulsion by the ancient Israelites was, according to the Bible, predestined by a grand design.

# SETTLER VIGILANTISM

# Kahane’s assassination in November 1990 did not eliminate the militant inner core of his movement.[[218]](#footnote-218) Kahane managed to leave a cadre of hard-core followers capable of carrying out his political and religious ideology. Convinced of the righteousness of Jewish violence against all Gentiles who threaten Jewish lives, Kahanists will seek total confrontation with the Palestinians. The movement’s young leaders like Meir Kahane’s late son Benjamin Kahane, Baruch Marzel, Tiran Pollack and Noam Federman have preserved the Rabbi’s legacy, rebuilding extremist groups like *Kach* into a movement of hundreds of activists and supporters.[[219]](#footnote-219)

# *Kach*’s vigilante activity in the tradition of *Chaya* squads will in all likelihood continue in the West Bank as Jewish settlers support them against Palestinian unrest in Hebron, Nablus, Jericho and Ramallah. As more Jews are killed in bombings and ambushed on the roads in the West Bank and Gaza radical groups like *Kach* and the Committee for Road Safety will find easy recruits among the 180,000 plus Jewish residents in the West Bank to support vigilante violence against the Palestinians.

Expect increased vigilante activity by Jewish settlers anxious to force Palestinians out of Israel. This kind of violent action will be just as much a threat to peace as any deliberate effort on behalf of Israel’s government to quell Arab terrorism. By asserting their religious vision, *Kach* will incite Palestinian responses that invite harsher IDF retaliation. In this way, settler vigilantism is rewarded and therefore unlikely to diminish as an agitating force in future Israeli and Palestinian relations.

In their classic study *When Prophecy Fails,* Leon Festinger and David Rappoport argued that dis-confirmation of fundamentalist beliefs tends to lead to invigorated

activity, intensified proselytizing, and reinterpretation of salvation by the faithful.[[220]](#footnote-220)

Festinger showed that while individual believers may become disillusioned and fall into disbelief, the “messianic collective,” in the form of movements and groups, tend to survive.[[221]](#footnote-221) The authors argued that the danger of dis-confirmation may push true believers to choose catastrophic terrorist acts. In a messianic frenzy to show God that they do not deserve desertion and are worthy of God’s favor, they may try to blackmail Him, through “suicide runs,” into keeping His original plan for salvation.

# There is little question that an increasingly religious Israeli polity is embarking on a collision course with its Arab neighbors. This may have been clear from the outset when Israel was established. According to Tom Segev in his book The First Israelis, David Ben-Gurion in 1949 commented that:

# before the founding of the state our main interest was self defense. But now the issue at hand is conquest not self-defense. As for setting the borders it’s an open ended matter.” [[222]](#footnote-222)

# CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR PEACE

# The international community, short of the use of force and economic sanctions will find it difficult to effect Israeli compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 242 or continuation of Final Status Negotiations leading to full implementation of the 1993 Oslo accord. Each attempt by the U.S. and the Gentile world to restart negotiations toward full implementation of the terms of the Oslo accord or to criticize Israel’s use of force during the present Al Aqsa Intifada creates anxiety among the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox camps in that it threatens to abort the arrival of the Messiah. Religious Jews are prepared for gentile rebuke. The notion of a hostile world is deeply embedded in the Jewish tradition and the impression that the world is basically hostile and often anti -Semitic characterizes the way religious Jews view national security policy.[[223]](#footnote-223)

# Continued U.S. pressure to compromise on East Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and right of return for an estimated 3.2 million Palestinians creates a scenario that could see the U.S. as potential target of Jewish extremism in the future. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that one or several of the most violent and extreme zealots would be willing to become martyrs to sanctify the name of God and to ensure the Messianic Redemption. For extremists across the religious spectrum defiance feels good and it feels good now as the Messiah approaches. The psychology is positive: “there is no shame, there is only pride in being a Jew.”[[224]](#footnote-224) This is the essence of Kahane’s *kiddush a-shem.*

# It would appear that the religious Orthodox community never intended that the Oslo accord should be implemented. The reason is that the peace process as outlined in the Oslo accord is predicated on a Zionist government’s acceptance to disobey God’s commandments to violate the very precepts of the Torah. Orthodox fundamentalism is ideologically a highly potent and very influential political force in Israel against coexistence with the Palestinians. The myths, attitudes, and policies of Orthodox Jews have laid the groundwork to perpetuate this psychology for decades. Israel’s Orthodox Jews have an unswerving psychological need to defend Jewish life, to justify rabbinical authority, maintain separatism, Jewish purity and preserve prophecy. Their core theological beliefs orchestrate thinking that accepts, without question, how the universe will be structured. To convince rabbis that they must compromise on their beliefs, therefore, means asking them to betray the Torah and Talmud*.*

# The serious flaw in the Oslo accord is that it postponed final status negotiations on the topical issues at the heart of the conflict. The borders of an expected Palestinian state, the status of Jewish settlements within those borders, control of East Jerusalem, the holy sites and the future disposition of Palestinian refugees outside Israel are viewed as political issues in the eyes of a secular and Gentile world, but they are the core religious issues imbedded in the psychology of the Jewish Orthodox that will not vanish. For religious Jews the entire land of Israel is the Judaic center of gravity and its innermost sanctum the Temple Mount.

# There are no solutions that will elicit compromise from the Orthodox on land, borders, Jerusalem, the reconstruction of the Second Temple, or the right of self- determination for non-Jews in Israel. Unless religious Jews can be convinced that they have been mistaken in their religious beliefs about the validity of the Torah and the Talmud for the last 3,000 years there will be no movement in their positions. Unless obedience to the 613 laws of the Torah, collectively known as the Halacha, is no longer required for their redemption as God’s chosen people, or that the Torah and Kabbalah can be reinterpreted to allow intermarriage with the non-Jew, there will be no movement in their positions.

# Orthodox Jews oppose Oslo because they see it as an obstruction to Torah prophecy. Oslo threatens to deny elite rabbinical Torah scholars, prophetic messianic extremists, Zaddiks, and mystics the opportunity to experience a vision of God. Each rabbi and mystic practitioner thinks he may be the chosen one, the one who has the strength of mind to experience God through the study of the Torah or through practicing Kabbalahto experience the Divine. The Oslo accord disrupts the prerequisite alignment of the land, Jerusalem, and the status of non-Jews. This alignment is what certain Orthodox fundamentalist rabbis need which will enable them to achieve the prophetic status alongside the great Rabbis Akiva, Maimonides, Luria, the Kooks, and Schneerson.

In conclusion, there has been a tendency by the U.S. to perceive Israel as a like-minded country with similar democratic values. This *mirror-imaging* has proven to be dangerous and misleading, because it deflects attention away from the powerful undercurrent of religion as a driving force in Israeli political life.

Because of the politicization of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis, Ariel Sharon is unlikely to move toward implementation of the Oslo accord. Instead, sidestepping and continuing land reclamation and expansionist policies are to be expected. It’s also unlikely that another peace agreement with the same conditions of the Oslo accord will be signed by Israel anytime soon. As a result the Oslo accord, as a document, has increased value. The Oslo accord will likely continue to be the only written agreement for which Israel, despite its domestic pressures, feels obligated and accountable. However, given the massive opposition and organizational capacity of religious opponents inside Israel to the Oslo agreement and UN Security Council Resolution 242 on which it has been based, it is unlikely that it will be the core element to achieve real peace.

It is also unlikely that the U.S., despite its traditionally close relationship with Israel, will be able to coerce Israel into adhering to the terms and conditions of the Oslo accord. Instead, the only likely scenario whereby Israel will change its current trajectory with regard to biblical land, Jerusalem and the status of non-Jews, is through the reassertion of non-extremist, secular mainstream Israeli political action, that can be mobilized against the escalatory positions of the ultra-Orthodox and the settlers. If implementation of the existing Oslo accord is a desired goal for American foreign policy, direct coercion may prove extremely costly and perhaps dangerous for the US. Active support and encouragement of moderate Israelis is the most prudent avenue to pursue.

The Oslo peace process today cannot move forward until the power brokers in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbinical enclaves rein in the activists and extremists and proceed to sit at the table with Israeli political leaders to discuss the issues.

Separating religion from the state, if that is possible, may be the only solution that will permit Israelis to compromise on the land, Jerusalem and the political equality of Palestinians. Persistent adherence to prophetic religious imperatives will only sink the conflict deeper into a quagmire of violence and bloodshed. Instead, look to see Zvi Yehuda Kook’s prophetic vision fulfilled as there will be a good chance that Israel will reoccupy 100 percent of the West Bank, forcing Palestinians to either accept confinement in the several restricted enclaves of Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, and Jenin or leave the land altogether.

The Palestinian Authority will continue to be undermined by the new joint commitment to the armed struggle of the nationalist Palestinians of Fatah and the religious Islamists, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This struggle perpetuates deep Jewish insecurities and thereby providing the justification necessary for further Israeli military action. In a sense the same kind of fusion between the Israeli Jewish nationalists and the religious Orthodox has occurred limiting the ability of both sides to negotiate a lasting peace through compromise and mutual trust.

The Israeli right in recent months has grown into a larger mix of the religious Orthodox their religious imperatives fused with the more moderate religious and nationalist secular Jews. The Orthodox see the events unfolding as part of the prophecy that will rid the land of non-Jews, and the more moderate secularists see an Israel rid of the non- Jews as a solution to maintaining their physical security. For the time being, the religious and non-religious have a common foe – the non-Jew (Palestinian). So the future is going to be more about justification on the basis of both religion and nationalism to reoccupy all Palestinian towns and controlled areas in the West Bank

Palestinian violence and retaliation for Israel’s recent assassinations of Palestinian leaders suspected of bomb making may trigger the Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian controlled territory and Israel is increasingly unlikely to offer inducements to get peace back on track.

The peace process inaugurated by the signing of the Oslo accord in 1993 has probably reached the limit of its potential. The Israeli religious right has played a key role in attempting to block this Oslo process and can be expected to continue to do so. From Israel’s side, therefore, as well as from the Palestinian and Arab side, the prospects for further advances in the peace process are not bright, at least in the near term.

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# ESSAY ON MAJOR SOURCES

# The primary authors selected for this research reflect the views and research of contemporary Jewish scholars and academicians currently living in Israel, who have evaluated the Hebrew newspapers and academic journals and have written credibly and extensively on the messianism of the Orthodox. These authors are explicit in detailing the religious core beliefs of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox leadership, demonstrating how myth and mysticism have been extensively drawn upon in shaping events in fulfillment of prophesy.

# Foremost among these authors, Israel Shahak is an Israeli writer, sociologist and human rights campaigner in Israel well-known for exposing what he believes to be dangerous elements of Israeli society. Shahak has translated, annotated and reproduced hundreds of articles from the Israeli press to highlight the connections between Zionism, Judaism, and repressive policies against non-Jews in Israel. Shahak believes that what the Israeli government presents to international audiences through the Western media is not factually accurate, arguing instead that what Israeli leaders say in the Hebrew language media is more truthful. In this regard, Shahak’s work is a major contribution enabling non-Hebrew speaking Middle East scholars to glimpse and understand the forces and complexities driving Israeli politics. In works only recently translated from the Hebrew into English, Shahak writes about the growing political influence and power of Jewish fundamentalism throughout the State of Israel.

# In *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (1999), Shahak traces the history and development of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel while highlighting the major differences among different strains of fundamentalism. Shahak draws on Jewish religious sources and traditions to demonstrate the rising role and presence of Jewish fundamentalism in Israeli politics, while spelling out its dire implications for the Oslo peace process. In this work Shahak views the rise of Jewish fundamentalism as deeply threatening to Israel’s Western style democracy, because rabbinical leaders oppose equality for all citizens and seek absolute power. In so doing, Shahak identifies the messianic Orthodox national Jews as the most dangerous part of Israeli society for their threat to the political process as well as for their singular determination to disrupt Oslo peace efforts.

In *Jewish History, Jewish Religion* (1994), Shahak rejects the argument of state secularism in Israel by making explicit the religious orthodoxies, mythologies and worldview that have been central to shaping the Israeli state, some of which, he argues, are lethal and potentially explosive. Again, Shahak relies on Talmudic and other Jewish religious traditions to make sense of seminal moments in Israeli history. Specifically, Shahak outlines the religious justifications surrounding the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin within the context of a Jewish rabbinical tradition pertaining to punishment and execution of Jews perceived to be heretics. In his chapter on Dr. Baruch Goldstein, he establishes that Goldstein was not a singular crazed individual but rather an Orthodox *Hassid*, a Kahanist and an important part of a much larger circle of religious extremism against compromising with the Palestinians on the Oslo peace process.

# Raphael Mergui and Philippe Simonnot present convincing evidence that the actions of the religious right in Israel are a formidable force that must be reckoned with in *Israel’s Ayatollahs: Meir Kahane And The Far Right In Israel,* 1987. The authors observe that rabbinical leaders within messianic nationalist orthodox in *Kach* and the *Gush Emunim* advocate the goal of a greater Israel and the brutal repression of the Palestinians. These groups represent a growing threat not only to Middle East peace, but also to the established political order in Israel, supporting Shahak’s claims. For their work, Mergui and Simonnot talked to the leaders of the far right about their intentions and attitudes toward religion as a part of the State of Israel. These interviews are referenced in this research, and provide useful corroborating evidence and quantitative support for measuring the presence and power of different Jewish fundamentalist groups and their relation to Israeli society.

# In order to understand the relevance and role of the Jewish settler movement, Robert Friedman’s *zealots For Zion: Inside Israel’s West Bank Settlement Movement* (1992) provides an insider’s view of the activities and philosophies of Israel’s settler movement. Friedman demonstrates the tenaciousness and the religious foundations of Israeli zealots who are behind the aggressive establishment of Jewish settlements, and the Jewish Americans who fund, encourage, and justify them. He says that the fault of American diplomats pursuing the peace process with the Israelis tends to minimize the religious messianic movement as an irritant that can be managed by the Israeli government when the time comes.

# Friedman documents the extent to which Israeli political figures have used the messianic movement for their own purpose just as the messianic movement has used the Israeli political establishment. Friedman argues that there is a general unwillingness of many Israelis to thwart religious activism for this very reason. Friedman’s book is an investigation of militant right wing religious Zionists to re-institute the ancient civilization of Eretz Yisrael on lands seized by Israel in the 1967 Six Day war. Robert I. Friedman is a staff writer for The Village Voice his work has appeared in the New York Review of Books, The Los Angeles Times, Mother Jones, Harpers, and the New York Times.

# Ian Lustick has written *For The Land And The Lord - Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel,* 1988. Lustick reveals the struggle to determine the territorial shape and the meaning of Israel as a contemporary nation. Lustick looks at activities of Jewish fundamentalists who are bent on rapid achievement of messianic prophecy through direct political action. Lustick believes the political ascendancy of the Jewish fundamentalism within the Likud bloc may well mark the demise of true democracy in Israel. The greatest threat to Israel he says are Jews dedicated to infusing the concepts of messianic prophecy and redemption with a violent political activism and ambition. His conclusion is that Jewish fundamentalism is the greatest obstacle to negotiating a real Palestinian, Israeli peace and will relegate Israel to decades of strife with the Palestinians.

# Samuel C. Heilman has written in *Defenders of the Faith,* 1992that traditionalism is so entrenched within members of the ultra-Orthodox that they perceive their own sages and community leaders to be inferior to those Jewish leaders of previous generations. Heileman is professor of sociology and anthropology at CCNY. He differentiates between the many varieties of ultra-Orthodox Jews collectively known as the *Haredim*. His study reinforces the perception that the ultra-Orthodox live in a world where the theological is a given. As an Orthodox Jew Heileman journeyed into the Jewish sector of Old Jerusalem as a participant observer learning about the *Haredim* by living with them and participating in their rituals. Only a religious Jew could undertake such a project among the ultra-Orthodox, as non-Jews would probably not have been admitted to the inner circles of ceremonial gatherings. Heileman relates his personal experiences with well-written background information about the ultra-Orthodox *Hassid* movement so the reader is more familiar with Jewish practices. Heileman chose the Jerusalem Hassidic communities because he felt they make the least accommodation to the modern world. Heileman studied them as a subculture within the Haredim.

# Aviezer Ravitsky, author of *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, probed Orthodoxy’s divergent positions on Zionism ranging from approval to radical condemnation. Ravitzky traces the roots of Haredi ideology which opposes the Zionist enterprise and shows how the Haredim living in Israel have come to terms with the state in order to change it. Ravitzky examines the *Gush Emunim* and Orthodox nationals and discusses the recent transformation of Chabad Hassidism from a conservative to a radical messianism.

# Ehud Sprinzak who wrote *Brother Against Brother* and *The Ascendance of Israel’s Radical Right* is a noted Israeli political scientist who says that that Jewish extremism has been in Israel from the founding of the nation in 1948. Right wing violence he says has accelerated in recent years thanks to the Oslo peace accords and Palestinian terrorism.

# A review of the study completed by the Guttman Institute of Applied Social Research for the Avi Chai Foundation in Jerusalem. The purpose of the Guttman study, completed in August (1992) was to map the extent of religious (Orthodox) observance among Israeli Jews. A review of the Guttman report followed, by Charles S. Liebman and Elihu Katz, published by the State University of New York Press and entitled, *The Jewishness of Israeli Jews – Responses to the Guttman Report.*

# Finally, to place modern Orthodox Jewish radicalism in context, *Jews God & History* by Max Dimont provides an excellent appreciation of what the Jews have experienced in the last 4000 years of their history and what they are expecting as the final out come of their devotion to the Torah. Many other Jewish historians could be cited, but Dimont provided perhaps the best synthesis for the general reader of many possible recommendations for this genre.

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1. See Emmanuel Rackman, “Orthodox Judaism,” in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought,* Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds. (New York: The Free Press A Division of Macmillan, Inc., (1988), 679-684. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. # Fundamentalism, as the term is used in a strictly Orthodox Jewish religious sense, is an undeviating belief in a religious tradition dedicated to the literal interpretation of specific Biblical scriptures. Jewish fundamentalists believe that all Jews living in the land of Israel shall surrender obedience to God’s laws, as given to them through His covenant with Abraham, and the law as revealed to Moses in the Torah.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See “The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement: A Documentary Record,” by the Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington, DC, 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See James Kugel, “Torah,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 995-1006. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Talmud (“instruction,” “study,” “learning” in Hebrew) is a compilation of rabbinical commentaries and decisions on the Torah , with complete instructions for Jewish social and religious life. The Talmud, comprising over 15,000 pages, is also a compilation of Jewish law and oral traditions. See Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History*, (New York: Penguin Books), 166-185 for additional information the origins of the Talmud. See Adin Steinsalz, “Talmud,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 953-958. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Halacha (“accepted” in Hebrew) refers to the entire body of Jewish religious law, doctrine and rules of Judaism that are codified into juridical law. See David Hartman, “Halakha” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 309-316. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Elizer Schweid, “Land of Israel,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 535-542. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. # Religious national Jews are organized in the National Religious Party, the NRP. In the 1996 elections, the NRP won 10 seats in the Israeli Knesset and the ultra-Orthodox religious parties won 14 seats. The NRP is the least aggressive in trying to change the character of the state but is more radical in its religious politics. NRP voters make up 11% of Israel’s Jews while the ultra-Orthodox now constitute 14% of Israeli Jews. See Paul Findley, *Deliberate Deception: Facing the Facts About The U.S. Israeli Relationship* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1995), 8.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. # The three largest religious parties may have different constituencies and agendas, but the core beliefs of Orthodox “Torah” Judaism are the same. In the 1999 elections, for example, the more traditional, ultra-Orthodox *Sephardic* Jews, who are members of the SHAS party, won 17 seats. SHAS claimed more than 430,000 voters out of 3.3 million votes cast and now controls the third largest block of seats in the Knesset. See Jeffrey Smith, “A War Over Culture,” *The Washington Post*, 3 May 2000, A16.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Moshe Waldoks, “*Mizveh*”, in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 627-628. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See *Beliefs, Observances and Social Interaction Among Israeli Jews, The Guttman Institute Report* by Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz found in *The Jewishness of Israelis:,Responses To The Guttman Report*, Charles S. Liebman and Elihu Katz, eds. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. # The 1993 Oslo accord stipulated a five-year long process after which a final settlement toward Palestinian self-rule would be negotiated. In the minds of the Palestinians, this meant the establishment of a Palestinian state.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Weshayahu Leibowitz, “Commandments” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 68-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Israel’s budget for 1999 included close to US $400 million in identifiable spending for settlement-related activities. See The American Committee on Jerusalem’s website: [www.acj.org/settlements.htm](http://www.acj.org/settlements.htm), accessed 23 April 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. There are at least 430,676 *Haredim* (or 13% of the total Israeli population) living in Israel, based on 1996 election figures citing 430,676 cast votes for SHAS, the ultra-Orthodox party. See Israel’s Central Election Committee website, [www.virtual.co.il/elections.html](http://www.virtual.co.il/elections.html) , May 20, 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Galit Hasan-Rokken, “Myth,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 657-662. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. # Messianic Redemption refers to beliefs or theories regarding eschatology; that is final events. In the Diaspora, the condition of the Jews in ‘exile’, for nineteen hundred years is viewed as having been unsatisfactory, plagued by centuries of persecutions, suffering, and oppression. During those centuries Jews believed that their condition would be changed by a new messianic age to relieve their suffering and negative experiences. Redemption is understood to mean an end to the days of Jews in exile where they are to be redeemed out of exile in the Diaspora, back to the land of Zion (Israel). The advent of the Messiah, the restoration of the Jewish people to their land, the unification of mankind in service of the one true God are all parts of what has come to be known as the “redemptive process.” The whole process is considered as the “final Redemption” or “complete Redemption.” Complete redemption will come only when the Jews show devotion to service and obedience to Gods laws according to his covenant made with Abraham and Moses. See R.J. Werblowsky, “Messianism” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 597-602. See also Arthur A. Cohen, “Redemption” in Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 761-766. For more on eschatology, also see Arthur A. Cohen, “Eschatology,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 183-188.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. # The word *Messiah* is derived from the ancient Hebrew *mashah* meaning to anoint. It identifies a person who has been given a special mission from God, who may exist either in fact or metaphorically. For the Jews the Messiah is the ultimate redeemer, the expected King of the Davidic line. He is the one who will deliver Israel from foreign bondage and restore the glories of the golden age. See Werblowsky, 597-602.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See Samuel Peleg, “Religious Violence in Israel: Premises, Dynamics, and Prospects,” in Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, vol. 20, no. 3. 1997; 231. See also Aviezer Ravitsky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago &London: The University of Chicago Press 1996), 79-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ian Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord,* (Washington D.C:Council on Foreign Relations 1988), 36. See also Ravitsky, 79-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. # Michael Karpin, and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God - The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 39, 40.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. # Karpin and Friedman, 39-40.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. For more on the *Gush Emunim*, see Peleg, 229, 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. # Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 145-179.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Sprinzak, 145-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Messianic Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox extremists are for the most part Ashkenazi Jews, meaning “German” in Hebrew, a common name for Jews from north central and eastern Europe, and their descendants. Jews of Middle Eastern or North African origin are called Sephardic Jews. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. # Sprinzak, 152-155.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. # Rabbi Moshe Levinger studied at the Mercaz Ha Rav Yeshiva where he became strongly influenced by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. In 1969, Levinger, along with forty Orthodox families established *Kiryat Arba*, the first Jewish settlement on the outskirts of Hebron. The town is now one of the largest Jewish settlements on the West Bank attracting the most dynamic and committed religious activists. See Robert I. Friedman, *zealots For Zion* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 4, 11-17.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See also Sprinzak, 150-152.

    Peace Now’s Settlement Watch Report No.8 in 1999 reported the last official Israeli government figures (1995) for the number of inhabitants in the settlements at 138,048 (132,771 in Judea and Samaria, and 5,277 in the Gaza Strip). According to the rate of population increase, Peace Now estimates that by June 1996 the number of settlers would number 145,000. See Peace Now In Israel Homepage, “www.peace-now.org/watch”, page 1 of 1, April 23, 1999.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Ben Halpern, “Zionism,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 1069-1076. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. # Rabbi Moshe Levinger and Rabbi Eliezer Waldman took over the Park Hotel in Hebron and established a small illegal Jewish presence inside the hotel during the spring festival of Passover 1968. Levinger and Waldman refused to move from the Park Hotel, and after more than a year and half of dodging attempts by the Israeli government to evict him, he and his followers were permitted to establish *Kiryat Arba.* This settlement is adjacent to the biblical town of Hebron, the site of the Tomb of Abraham and the Patriarchs Issac and Jacob. It is also the place where 80,000 Palestinians continue to make their home. See Robert I. Friedman, 2-3, 15-16 and Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut To Jerusalem* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 260-262. See also Sprinzak, 150-152.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Findley, 178-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. On a clear night more than three millennia ago, the Jews say a man named Abraham stood in the desert and heard the voice of God say, ‘lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it ; for I will give it unto thee.’ Genesis 13:14-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. # Friedman, 4.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. # Friedman, 10.

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    [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See The Economist Intelligence Unit; London, April 2000, 65. Country Profile: Israel and the Occupied Territories, based on Israel’s *Population, Housing and Establishment Census* for 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. # See Raphael Mergui and Philip Simonnot, *Israel’s Ayatollahs: Meir Kahane And The Far Right In Israel* (London: Saqi Books, 1987), 121-135. See also Friedman, 5.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. ## Friedman, 20. See also Mergui and Simonnot, 121-135, on the *Gush Emunim*.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. # It wasn’t until seven months after Salah’s killing that Levinger was finally indicted on manslaughter charges. At his trial, Levinger said that a group of Palestinians began to stone his car as he drove through downtown Hebron, in the company of his two sons, a daughter, and granddaughter. Witnesses at the scene said Levinger parked his car, got out, and walked determinedly toward the stone throwers. They said as he walked he drew his pistol and fired it several times. Salah was hit in the chest, while he was closing the metal shutters of his store. Levinger accepted a plea- bargain agreement and pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide. He was sentenced to five months but only served ten weeks. Widely quoted in the Israeli press Levinger declared, during the trial, that he wished that he had “had the honor of killing an Arab”. See Friedman, 37-39.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. # Masada was the ancient mountaintop fortress in the Judean desert near Hebron where Jewish zealots held a superior Roman force at bay between 70 –73 C.E. On the second day of Passover in 73 C.E, Roman legionnaires stormed Masada and found the Jewish defenders, 960 men women and children, dead. They had committed suicide rather than endure Roman captivity. Jews later claimed that Eleazar ben Jair, Masada’s rebel chief and leader of the Sicarii zealots, was agitating not for his political freedom but to express his esoteric religious beliefs. His fanaticism and that of the other zealot groups in Judea put an end to the Jewish State for two thousand years. To some Israelis, Rabbi Moshe Levinger considered a modern day zealot, is the direct descendent of Eleazar ben Jair and the one they believe who could once again bring ruin to the Jewish nation. See Dimont, 96-115, and Friedman, 41-42.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. # The political activism of the Orthodox nationals in the NRP accelerated with the signing of the Camp David Accords on September 17, 1978. Israel’s then Prime Minister Menachem Begin, under intense U.S. and international pressure, agreed to return all of the Sinai Desert won in the June 1967 War back to the Egyptians, and pledged to work toward Palestinian autonomy in Judea and Sumaria and Gaza. As part of the agreement to give back the Sinai, Begin was forced to evacuate key Jewish settlements. Camp David was seen as a prelude to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Religious Jews felt that Menachem Begin had betrayed the nation. In signing the Camp David Accord, Begin not only subscribed to UN Security Council Resolution 242, which established the principle of trading the occupied territory for peace, but he had also acknowledged the legitimate rights of Palestinians. His surrender of Yamit, a key Jewish settlement in the Sinai, similarly implied his willingness to accept Israel’s return to the borders of 1948, a compromise that could have led to the surrender of Judea, Samaria, Gaza, the Golan, and East Jerusalem.

    # See Ehud Sprinzak, *Ascendance of Israel’s Radical Right* (New York: Oxford Press, 1991), 73-74.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. # Friedman, 3-4.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. # See Jeffery Goldberg, “Israel’s Y2K Problem” in *New York Times Magazine*, 3 October 1999, 38; Daniel Klaidman and Jeffrey Bartholet, “The Real Jerusalem” *Newsweek*, 24 July 2000, 18-27; Kenneth L. Woodward, “A City That Echoes Eternity” *Newsweek*, 24 July 2000, 28; and Serge Schmemann, “Rival Claims On Jerusalem Lie at Heart of Palestinian-Israeli Hostility,” *The New York Times*, 27 October 1996, 14.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Six out of eight deputy mayors of Jerusalem are from the religious bloc. The total membership of the Jerusalem city council is 31, twenty-four of which have formed a coalition within the council. Fifteen of the twenty-four city council members are from the United Torah Judaism, SHAS, and the NRP parties. See “Religious Dominate J’lem Coalition,” in *The Jerusalem Post*, February 19, 1999, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. # “*Pikuach nefesh*” is the most sacred tenet of Judaism. It is the belief that Jewish life, including the life of the secular Jew, is sacred and that the killing of Jews is absolutely forbidden. Because Jewish life is sacred, Jews must also not take actions that would put their life or the life of another Jew jeopardy. See Sprinzak, 102-103. For more on Arab displacement by the *Ateret Kohanim*, see The Economist Intelligence Unit; London, April 2000, 65. Country Profile: Israel and the Occupied Territories, based on Israel’s *Population, Housing and Establishment Census* for 1997.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. # See Paul Findley, *Deliberate Deceptions: Facing The Facts About The U.S. Israeli Relationship* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1995), 181-183. See also Friedman, 96-97.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Findley, 181-183. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ariel Sharon created a furor three years earlier, in 1987, when he said “We have set a goal for ourselves of not leaving one neighborhood in East Jerusalem without Jews. This is the only thing that can assure a united city under Israeli sovereignty.” Sharon at the time of this statement occupied an apartment in the Muslim quarter that had been purchased for him by *Ateret Kohanim*. See the Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*, July 1992. See also Findley, 181-183.  [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Friedman, 99-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The students were allowed to remain on the properties until the courts resolved the legal issues. The Israeli Cabinet decreed that the settlers had a right to remain in the hospice until the issue was resolved. In the interim Jerusalem police were tasked to provide the settlers police protection. Friedman, 99-100. According to the Jerusalem Post, the Shamir government, through the Housing Ministry, financially helped the *Ateret Kohanim* operation. David Levy, housing minister at the time, revealed that $1.8 million had been covertly channeled by his ministry to the Himnutta Company, a subsidiary of the Jewish National Fund. The Himnutta Company passed the money to SBC to subsidize the purchase of the sublease*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. # Hillary Appelman, “U.S. Tax Policy Aids Israeli Settlements,” *The Washington Times*, 5 October 1997, 22. See also Friedman, 98.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. # Friedman, 115, 118.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Friedman, 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. # Dr. Irving Moskowitz, a Miami physician and *Ateret Kohanim* Board member, has donated millions to its real estate projects, including St. John’s Hospice. Moskowitz purchased the 50 room Shepard Hotel in East Jerusalem and in 1984 formed the American Friends of *Ateret Kohanim* as a charitable tax exempt foundation in New York State. According to the foundation’s statement of purpose, the purpose of the American Friends of Ateret Kohanin is to acquire land, rooms, or houses in Arab East Jerusalem, by any manner whatsoever, and especially by grant, gift lease purchase. See Friedman, 36, 96-97. Rabbi Sholom Klass, the editor and owner of *The Jewish Press* in New York, with a circulation of more than 160,000, has used his considerable clout to assist in supporting *Ateret Kohanim*. See Friedman, 116. In 1991, New York senator Alfonse D’Amato delivered the main address at the annual *Ateret Kohanim* fund raising dinner in Manhattan. “ I applaud the philosophy of the Jerusalem Reclamation Project, which holds that Jews like everyone else have the right to legitimately acquire lands and homes and institutions in any part of Jerusalem.” Friedman, 120.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. # Friedman, 118.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. # The First Temple on this site, known as Mt. Moriah, was built by King Solomon, in the 10th century B.C.E, and was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. A Second Temple was built on the same location, and later renovated in a more elaborate form in the first century C.E by King Herod. The Second Temple was also destroyed by the Tenth Roman Legion of the Emperor Titus, following a revolt by Jewish zealots that lasted from 66 –73 C.E. The Temple is believed by Jews to stand in the same spot where the Muslims built the Dome of the Rock Mosque in the seventh century C.E. All that has remains now is the western retaining wall of the Temple Mount compound. The western retaining wall, known as the Wailing Wall, is presently the site of Jewish prayer and lamentation and is the closest point to the platform that Jews are permitted to pray. See Friedman, 124, Armstrong, 71, 72 and Dimont, 111.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. # Jeffery Goldberg, “Israel’sY2K Problem” in *New York Times Magazine*, 3 October 1999, 38–40.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Armstrong, 25. See also Arnold Eisen, “Covenant,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 107-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Tetragrammaton connotes the four Hebrew letters transliterated to mean YHWH for *Yahweh*, or JHVH for Jehovah, used as the proper Biblical name for God. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was a Spanish, and then later Egyptian, rabbinical authority, philosopher, and physician. Since the 12th century, he has been considered by Jewish scholars as the indisputable center of medieval Jewish interpretations as Halachic authority and the greatest post-Talmudic spiritual leader of the Jewish people exerting incalculable influence on present day Orthodox Judaism. See Dimont, 183-185, and Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, (New York: First Ballantine Books, 1993), 194-196. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. The website of the Temple Mount Faithful describes the long-term objectives of the group, which involve first “liberating the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation.” The website comprehensively lays out the philosophy and political ideology of the group, including short-term objectives, policy statements, vision of redemption and writings of Gershon Salomon. See [www.templemountfaithful.org](http://www.templemountfaithful.org), February 21, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. # Friedman (1992), 123-124. See also [www.templemount.org](http://www.templemount.org) for detailed plans, dimensions, and descriptions of the cornerstone they intend to place for the foundation of the Temple.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Sermons in Al-Aqsa mosque the previous week, had called upon all Palestinians to defend the integrity of the Noble Sanctuary. At 8:30am on the morning of October 8th, twenty thousand Jews filled the plaza in front of the Western Wall, below the Haram al-Sharif, to celebrate Sukkoth. After the Jewish service ended at 10:30am, Rabbi Gershon Solomon and 50 followers attempted to enter the sanctuary, at the Mughrabian Gate above the Western Wall Plaza. His group held a banner “Temple, Mount- the Symbol of Our People is in the Hands of Our Enemies.” It was reported that Palestinians began to throw rocks over Haram al-Sharif’s walls hitting Jews on the Western Wall plaza below. As Israeli police tried to prevent the groups from clashing, a police officer accidentally or deliberately dropped a tear gas canister that rolled among a group of Palestinian women. The Palestinian crowd responded by throwing rocks at the police. The police, feeling threatened, began to fire their weapons into the crowd. See Friedman, 124-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. # Three Israeli Supreme Court Judges in 1991 visited the Temple Mount. Jewish archeologists from the Antiquities Authority who were asked to go along told the jurists that the Arabs had not vandalized Jewish antiquities, and in fact praised the Waqf for their restoration programs. See Friedman, 135. Also see “The Politics of Archeology,” by Amy Dockster Marcus in The Washington Post, July 9, 2000, B3 for more about digging under the Temple Mount.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. # Friedman, 142.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. # On May 12, 1980, Rabbi Meir Kahane and Bronx born Andy Green were imprisoned for conspiring to blow up the Dome of the Rock. They were detained for six months under the 1945 Emergency Powers Law promulgated by the British Mandate in Palestine. In 1982, Alan Goodman, a young New York Orthodox Jew walked onto the Temple Mount with an M16 rifle and shot to death one Arab and injured another. Kahane paid Goodman’s legal fees and made him an honorary JDL member. A few months after Goodman’s shooting spree, Israeli police acting on an informant’s tip, caught four Orthodox youths trying to plant explosives inside Al- Aqsa Mosque by entering a subterranean passageway beneath the Old City of Arab East Jerusalem. The police eventually arrested more than 40 people in connection with the plot to blow up the Mosque. Among them was a well- known Orthodox rabbi in whose apartment police found a weapons cache’ and diagrams of Muslim holy places. In January 1984, the Lifta Gang was caught try to haul 28 pounds of TNT and 15 hand grenades over the wall of the Temple Mount. On August 9,1990 Shimon Barda, the leader of a mystical religious cult living in an abandoned Arab village near Jerusalem, was arrested. Barda was charged with conspiring to blow up the Dome of the Rock after Israeli police discovered in his possession a weapons stockpile that included a U.S. made, shoulder held missile launcher. See Friedman, 126-127, and Lustick, 67-71.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. # Nation refers to the Jewish people as a cultural group comprising the descendents of the original 12 tribes of Israel.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. # The *Haredim* are divided into two political parties: *Yahadut Ha’*Torah “Judaism of the law” is the party of the Ashkenazi *Haredim*. The second is SHAS, the party of the Sephardic *Haredim*. See Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel*, London & Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 1999, 7. See also Ravitsky, 145-174.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Heilman, Samuel, *Defenders of the Faith -Inside Orthodox Jewry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 11-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. # The Jewish Enlightenment, known in Hebrew as “*Haskalha*”, was the movement and ideology within European Jewish society in the late 18th and 19th centuries that advocated secular education and assimilation as a precondition for Jewish emancipation in the modern state. See Robert Seltzer, “Enlightenment” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 171-176. *Haredi* rabbis have asserted that the Holocaust, including the deaths of 1.5 million Jewish children, was a well-deserved divine punishment for the sins of modernity, faith renunciation, and the decline of Talmudic study in Europe. Shahak, 31.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. # Maintaining this lifestyle in Israel’s modern environment has not been easy: when ultra-Orthodox Jews actively opposed sexually titillating provocative advertising in the Israeli media through street protests, their strategy of seclusion was compromised. The Haredim want to ban all forms of entertainment, including radio and television broadcasts, cinemas, and all the trappings of what they view as decadent lifestyles. Furthermore, Haredim youths are increasingly exposed to the secular lifestyles and Western

    # culture so prevalent around the growing tourist industry in Israel. See Sprinzak, 91-92.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. In 1998, ultra-Orthodox rabbis opposed Israeli Supreme Court rulings allowing reform or conservative rabbis to become part of local sage rabbinical councils. See Herb Keinon, “Haredim won’t dance to court’s tune,” *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 February 1999, A3. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. # The closest group to a preeminent body of rabbinical authorities in Orthodox Judaism today is an ad hoc collection of Halachic scholars known as *poskim*, the decision-makers. The poskim are consulted by the rabbis of individual Haredicommunities for judgments on specific Halachic issues. See Karpin and Friedman, 108.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. # Unlike Messianic Orthodox nationals, the ultra-Orthodox firmly believe that all Jews in Israel are figuratively still in a divinely ordained exile, having not yet been freed from the g*alut*, or exile. See Sprinzak, 88-91. See also Arnold Eisen, “Exile,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 219-226.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. # Shahak, 19.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. # Lustick, 27. See also Dimont, 128.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. The Haredim today see themselves both as a part- and not as a part- of Israeli society. The Guttman Institute Report found that the sense of being a part of Israeli society has been growing among the Haredim; yet the Haredi paradox remains. They live in an Israeli Jewish society with modern Western permissive trappings, an environment they view as demonic; yet if they were to stop resisting this libertarian environment they would undermine their cultural autonomy. Media, sports, and entertainment have been the objects of Haredi attacks. See Liebman and Katz, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. # Karpin and Friedman, 10.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. “Ultra-Orthodox Jews’ Extremism Analyzed,” TA1103122198 Tel Aviv *Ha’aretz*; 11 March 1998. Document ID FTS 19980311000612. Accessed on Intelink 11 March 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Shahar Ilan, “Haredi Jews Out in Right Field” in *Ha’aretz,* 11 March 1998, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See Hillel Schenker ,“The Israeli Elections 1999: A Guide for the Perplexed,” in *Tikkun* vol. 14, no 3, May/June 1999. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. # Shahak, 6-8. See also The Economist: “The Great Divide,” October 9, 1999, 49.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. “Voting Trends of Ultra-Orthodox Jews Viewed”, TA3103125198 Tel Aviv *Ha’aretz;*, 31 March 1998. Document ID FTS 19980331000645. Accessed on Intelink 31 March 1998, 1,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. “Ultra-Orthodox Found Inclined to Defy Law”, TA2804173198 Tel Aviv Ha’aretz in Hebrew; 27 April 1998, B2. Document ID FTS 19980428001268. Accessed on Intelink 28 April 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. # Shahak, 20.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. # The JDL emerged out of anti-Semitic violence by Blacks and Puerto Ricans against Jews in several of the City’s Orthodox neighborhoods. Kahane was a veteran journalist for The Jewish Press who reported regularly on the violent anti-Semitism he found in the streets. For twenty years The Jewish Press published three separate columns per issue by Rabbi Kahane. One was written under the pseudonym David Sinai. His life experience with the issues led him to rationalize violence against Gentiles who attacked and harassed New York Jews. Until his assassination in November 1990, Kahane used the newspaper to launch the JDL, and later the anti-Arab *Kach* Party movement in Israel. See Meir Kahane, The Story of the Jewish Defense League; (Radnor, PA: Chilton Books, 1975).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. # Sprinzak, 187-193.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Kahane, 134. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Kahane, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. The Jewish Defense League’s website continues the Kahanist message, including regularly updated newsletters, action alerts, chatrooms and a variety of the group’s focus and activities, also details the five main principles of the JDL: First, *Ahavat Yisroel*, or love of Jewry; second *Hadar*, or dignity and pride; third *Barzel*, or iron; fourth *Mishmaat*, or discipline and unity and finally, *Bitachon*, or faith in the indestructibility of the Jewish people. See the Jewish Defense League’s website, [www.jdl.org](http://www.jdl.org), August 12, 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. # Sprinzak, 187-193.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. # In Roman ruled Judea during the first century C.E, Jewish zealots advocated rebellion against Rome. They wanted to reconstruct the Davidic Kingdom that would hasten the advent of redemption. In the space of seventy-five years two major revolts against Rome erupted; the great revolt 66-73 C.E, and the Bar Kochba Rebellion of 132-135 C.E. Each of the revolts was based on a Jewish fundamentalist appeal to the Romans that God’s direct commandments to his chosen people mandated Jewish independence in the Land of Israel, and the integrity of the Temple cult. See Sprinzak, 102 and Dimont, 104-110.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. # The influx of Soviet Jews to Israel helped redress a demographic imbalance caused when Israel took control of the territories in the West Bank inhabited by a large Palestinian population.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. # See Rachel M. Sater, “Bombings Involving Jewish Extremists in the United States” in the TVI Report, vol. 1, no. 4, 1995, 9 for a detailed description of bombing attacks by Jewish extremists in the US from 1970 to 1994.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. # The *Kiryat Arba* settlement in the West Bank continues to harbor the most virulent strain of Kahane / *Kach* zealots. *Kach* militants in recent years have initiated violence through countless operations against Palestinians in an effort to deliberately force their massive emigration. See Mergui and Sominnot, 114, as well as “the Voice of Hebron” and “The Judean Voice” on *Kach’s* website for detailed updates on events and action alerts in the area, at [www.kach.org](http://www.kach.org).

    [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Mergui and Sominnot, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. # Mergui and Simonnot, 20.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. # Sprinzak, 209.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. # In 1972 Kahane was arrested at Tel Aviv Airport for trying to smuggle a cache of grenades and explosives bound for the U.S. See Mergui and Simonnot, 21.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. # Sprinzak, 180-181.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. # Sprinzak, 180-181. See also Hyam Maccoby, “Sanctification of the Name,” in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought,* Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds. (New York: The Free Press A Division of Macmillan, Inc.,1988), 149-154.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. # Sprinzak, 180-181. See also Karpin and Friedman, 45 and Maccoby, 849-854.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. # Sprinzak, 182.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. # There has been a close connection between terrorist violence and the *Kach* party movement: in early 1984, TNT, suspected of being the armed wing of the *Kach* Party, took credit for an attack on a Palestinian bus in Jerusalem in which four people were killed. Kahane was taken into custody dozens of times for such bombings but was never indicted. Kahane openly approved of attacks on West Bank Arab mayors in 1980. In March 1982, one of Kahane’s American followers, Harry Goldman, murdered two Arabs in the Old City of Jerusalem. *Kach* also approved of the killing of students at the Islamic College in Hebron in 1983. See Mergui and Simonnot, 21-22 and also Sprinzak, 182-3.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. # Sprinzak, 183.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. # Sprinzak, 188-189, and 192-193.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. # See Sprinzak,182 and Dimont, 106-123.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. See the Kach newsletter at [www.kach.org](http://www.kach.org). [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. # Kahane, Meir, *Our Challenge* (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Chilton Book Company, 1974), 98.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. # Kahane, 47.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. # Kahane, 56.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. # For Rabbi Kahane, the Camp David Accords of 1977 were a profound shock. Menachem Begin in his view surrendered Jewish rights and sovereignty in the Sinai under pressure from the Gentile. Begin’s treachery was, in a word, *hillul-a-shem*, “the humiliation and the desecration of the name of God.” Kahane felt that Begin had traded his Jewish faith to appease the Gentile (U.S.). See Sprinzak, 192.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. # Kahane, 107.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. # Kahane, 37.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Kahane, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. # Kahane, 32.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. # Karpin and Friedman, 8-10.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. # Karpin and Friedman, 13.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. # Karpin and Friedman, 13.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. # Karpin and Friedman, 13.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. # Karpin and Friedman, 15.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. See Raphael Cohen Almagor, “Combating Right Wing Political Extremism in Israel – Critical Appraisal”, in *Terrorism and Political Violence,* Vol. 9, No.4; Winter 1997, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. # Karpin and Friedman,. 11-14.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Dimont, 274-291. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. # Dimont, 275-276. See also Armstrong, 265-266.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. # Moshe Idel, “Mysticism,” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, 643-656.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. # Rabbinical writings point to a type of mysticism that is attained through Torah study. The assiduous study of the Torah is a means through which the sage acquires the knowledge of its mysteries and seeks a vision of the divine presence in this world. Torah mysticism seeks to establish a relationship between the study of Torah and the attainment of a mystical experience that allows the sage to be constantly aware of his proximity to the Throne of Glory. See Armstrong, 211-212.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. # Idel, 643-655 and Armstrong, 213-214.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. # Bal Shem Tov, 1700-1760, founded the gospel of Hassidism. The Talmud said that no ignorant man could be pious. Hassidism preached the reverse. It affirmed the Jewish spirit without the Jewish tradition. It proclaimed itself more Jewish than Jewishness itself. Bal Shem Tov opposed the Talmudic intellectuals and believed the gospel of Hassidism was to know God through the joy of being Jewish. By 1760, Hassidism embraced half the Jews in Eastern Europe, but after Tov’s death, Hassidism went in different directions, as each Hassidic rabbi seized a piece of territory creating hundreds of Hassidic courts with their own rabbis. See Armstrong, 334-339, Dimont, 286-289. See also Arthur Green, “Hassidism” in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr, eds., 317-324.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. See Armstrong, 335-338. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. The attitude of simple Jews toward rabbis and rebbes was to reinforce their influence and power while totally discounting their own ability to interpret events for themselves. This kind of relationship with charismatic leaders and their institutions remains embedded in the character of ultra-Orthodox Jewish life. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Hassidism was divided into courts, each of which followed its own rebbe. Each new rebbe shaped Hassidism into a personal image and asserted that their version of what being Hassidic meant was the correct one. Hassidism of each court fostered a collective intimacy with the rebbe*.* See Heilman, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Heilman, 21-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Heilman (1992), 11-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. # Ravitsky, 92.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Ravitsky, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Dimont, 277, see also Armstrong, 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. # Rabbi Abraham Kook saw the Gentile as the embodiment of Satan and explained that the loss of Gentile lives in WWI was necessary “in order to begin to break Satan’s power.” WWI was seen as birth pangs, a cleansing, a shaking up, and purification leading to the rebirth of Jewry. WWI was a final shattering of vessels toward reconstruction. Zvi Yehuda like his father applied the same Kabbalistic explanation to the destruction of European Jewry during WWII by saying that non-observant Jews had to be purged in order to create an observant Judaism worthy of redemption. See Ravitsky, 109.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. # Rabbi Yehuda Amital, the *Gush Emunim* leader appointed by Shimon Peres in November 1995 as minister without portfolio, has said “War is directed against the impurity of Western culture and against rationality as such. The alien culture has to be eradicated because all things foreign draw us closer to the alien. In its messianic dimension the struggle is against civilization in its entirety. Thus learn that the only explanation for wars is that they refine and purify the soul. As impurity is removed, the soul of Israel, by virtue of the war, will be refined”. Shahak, 63.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. # Ravitsky, 105-106.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Ravitsky, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Zvi Yehuda Kook died in 1982. Through him and the Merkaz Ha Rav yeshiva, the Orthodox nationals draw authorization and strength to actively accelerate the redemption, seen as the most crucial challenge facing Orthodox Jewish fundamentalists. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Ravitsky, 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Ravitsky, 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. # The messianic theology of Zvi Yehuda Kook’s Merkaz ha Rav Yeshivah is very much involved in hawkish politics and the political and military power of the State of Israel. See Ravitsky, 133-134.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. # Shahak (1999), 76-77.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. The influence of Abraham Kook through his son Zvi Yehuda is part of a continuum from the Revisionist Zionist/NRP camp of the 1920’s and 30’s, to the *Gush Emunim*/NRP messianic Orthodox nationals today. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Shahak, 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. # Shahak reports that Yesaiah Tishbi, an authority on the Kabbalah, explained in his scholarly work, *The Theory of Evil and the Satanic Sphere in Lurianic Kabbalah,* (1942)that Rabbi Yitzhak Luria’s chief interpreter, Rabbi Hayim Vital, wrote in his book *Gates of Holiness* that Lurianic doctrine delved deeply into the satanic. Shahak (1999), 58.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Shahak, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. # *Gush Emunim*’s rabbinical council selected by some mysterious criteria from among the most outstanding disciples of the Rabbis Kook make policy decisions derived from their distinct interpretation of Jewish mysticism from the Kabbalah.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. # *Gush Emunim* followers believe that Satan, as described in the Kabbalah, is rational and well versed in logic. They believe that the power of Satan and of his earthly manifestation, the non - Jew, can at times only be broken by irrational action. *Gush Emunim* thus founded settlements on the exact days of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker’s arrival in Israel as part of a mystical design to break the power of Satan and its American incarnation. See Shahak (1999), 66.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. # Rabbi Ben Zion Katz in his book *Rabbinate,* Hassidism*, Enlightenment: The History of Jewish Culture Between the End of the Sixteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century*, which has been translated from Hebrew, explains that Lurianic doctrine became part of ultra-Orthodox Hassidism in the 19th century. Katz believes that accurate descriptions of Lurianic doctrines, and their widespread influence on religious Jews can be found in numerous studies written only in Hebrew. Shahak (1999), 58.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *The Jerusalem Post* reported in an article entitled *New zealots* on July 6, 2001 that the Israeli army has seen an increase of ultra-Orthodox enlistments into an infantry company known as the Nahal Brigade. The Brigade is being sent on operational duties in Ramallah and is to be bolstered into a new battalion that will be known as the Jericho Brigade. Deputy Defense Minister Dalia Rabin-Pelosoff noted to the press that she was “impressed by their fighting spirit, wish to contribute to the army, and, in some cases, commitment to military careers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Shahak (1999), 59-60.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Shahak (1997), 24-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. # During the Israeli elections in 1988 thousands of Hassidic Lubavitchers living in Europe and America with valid Israeli passports went to Israel to vote for the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael Party in accordance with the instructions of 90 year-old Rabbi Menachem Schneerson. See Friedman, 162-164, Shahak, 61-62 and also Ravitsky, 196-203.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Lubavitch comes from the name of a village in Eastern Europe where the sect was founded. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. # Shahak (1999), 59,60.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Friedman, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Shahak (1999), 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Shahak (1999), 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Shahak (1999), 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. This thinking is applicable to the most recent Al Aqsa Intifada of 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. # Israel Shahak says that during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon the military rabbinate in Israel influenced by the Kooks exhorted all Israeli soldiers to follow in the footsteps of Joshua and to re-establish his divinely ordained conquest of the Land of Israel that included the extermination of non-Jewish inhabitants. Ashkenazi Orthodox messianists from the *Gush Emunim* have been and still are officers of the Israeli army’s select units. They have been known for their excellent combat qualities and their willingness to beat up Palestinians during the Intifada. Oriental Jews although unwilling to join army units have supported and continue to support *Gush Emunim*.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. # Abraham Kook’s early writings dealt with the relationship between Jewish national revival and the laws of the Torah. In one of his essays he calls for the reconstitution of the Great Sanhedrin, the supreme religious and judicial assembly of sages in ancient Palestine. “Jerusalem’s Sanhedrin will bring together the most distinguished rabbis to give the body the authority enjoyed by the ancient sages to legislate, and mend breaches in the wall of religion, and to teach a singular Torah and a code of laws to the entire people.” Kook wanted the reconstitution of the Sanhedrin as soon as the circumstances were right (Ravitsky, 89) to fulfill the prophetic verse from Isaiah 1:26 “I will restore your magistrates of old before the coming of the Messiah.” See Shahak and Mezvinsky, 76, 77.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. # Karpin and Friedman, 61-63.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. # Karpin and Friedman, 70-71.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. # Ballistics proved that the bullet came from Ben-Zimra’s gun. Convicted for aggravated assault, he was sentenced to eight months in prison. Karpin and Friedman, 70.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. # Karpin and Friedman, 71.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Karpin and Friedman, 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. # Karpin and Friedman, 71-72.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. # In an interview in October, 1996, Marzel revealed that “*Kach* was integrated within the public bodies and the activity against Rabin. I wouldn't say exactly where, because not everyone is interested in having it known that they were working with the *Kach* People.” Marzel has powerful supporters in the Haredi community including associates of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the rabbi who delivered the eulogy at Meir Kahane’s funeral in Jerusalem. See Karpin and Friedman, 73.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. # Karpin and Friedman, 74 –76.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. # Karpin and Friedman, 64-65.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. # The Council of Yesha Rabbis met with a select group of psychologists, and public opinion analysts to discuss ways to crush Rabin’s spirit and drive him to resign. Karpin and Friedman, 66.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. See Akiba Lerner, “Feeling Betrayed by the Tribe,” in *Tikkun*, vol. 11, no.1, 52-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. # The law of the pursuer, *din rodef* commands every Jew to kill or to severely wound any Jew who is perceived as intending to kill another Jew. According to Halachic law proof of intent is sufficient for rabbinical authorities to announce that the law of the pursuer applies to such a person. See Shahak, 137. The law of the informer *din moser* identifies a Jew who has informed non-Jews, especially non-Jewish authorities, about Jewish affairs, or who has given non-Jews information about Jewish property or who has delivered Jewish persons or property to the rule of law or authority under non-Jews. Karpin and Friedman, 105-106.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. # *Din rodef* derives from the *Mishnah*, the core of oral law compiled and edited at the beginning of the 3rd century C.E by Rabbi Judah Hanasi. The automatic license to kill a *rodef* is essentially an extension of the right to self-defense. The Mishnah cites the right of a Jew to protect oneself against harm and places a duty on Jews to save the life of a Jew who is in danger of being killed by another Jew. See Karpin and Friedman, 106.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. On the events leading up to the assassination of Rabin, see Amos Elon, “Israel’s Demons”, in *The New York Review of Books*, vol. XLII, no, 20, December 21, 1995, 41-46. For more on Rabin’s assassination from Jewish religious perspectives, see Raymond P. Scheindlin, “The Assassination of Light of Jewish Religious Law,” in *Tikkun*, vol. 11, no. 1, 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. # Maimonides established that it was necessary to catch a *rodef*, but not to summarily kill him. Only if all attempts to stop a *rodef* by other means failed was it a duty for a Jew to kill. In *Laws of Murder and Perservation of Life,* Maimonides wrote that Jews who deny the Torah and prophecy are heretics and should be killed. See Karpin and Friedman, 117.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. # In August 1998, the Israeli media warned that Jewish religious fanatics intended to assassinate Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Mordechai because of the Wye Plantation Agreement, in which Israel agreed in principle to withdraw from an additional 13% from the West Bank.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. # Karpin and Friedman, 119.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Karpin and Friedman, 118-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. # The event leading to the Jewish Intifada was the murder of Chaim Mizrahi, a Beit El settler who was burned alive by a Palestinian group belonging to Yasser Arafat’s Fatah organization. It was the murder of Chaim Mizrahi that prompted the Yesha Council of Rabbis to attempt to bring the Rabin government down. See Karpin and Friedman, 8.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Spinzak, 230. See also Almagor, 82-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. At the same time a plan to create a vigilante settler militia called *Hashomer* was unveiled by the Council of Yesha Rabbis. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. # In 1983, *Kach* called for the expulsion of all Arabs from historic Palestine. Nearly 26,000 or 1.3% of Israelis voted for *Kach*, including 2.5% of Israeli soldiers.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. # During the Intifada the Old Jewish cemetery had nearly been shut down. Only armed convoys could get safe passage. The cemetery is a site sacred to Jews for its view of the Temple Mount, and its role in the coming of the Messiah who, it is said, will come through the gate of the cemetery.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. # David Raziel was the first commander of the Irgun in Palestine in the 1930’s. Kahane was attracted to Raziel’s position on Arab terrorism. It was Raziel who in 1937 introduced counter terrorism against the Arabs in opposition to the official Zionist policy of restraint. Raziel’s position was that even though Arab civilians were not involved in terrorism against Jews, they should nevertheless pay for what was happening to Jewish civilians. Sprinzak, 209.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. # Karpin and Friedman , 13, 14, 27, 28. The Committee for Road Safety recruited 1,000 volunteers for their missions. About 350 served as the committees’ hard core. Pollack reported roughly 500 incidents per year.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. # Purim commemorates the rescue of the Jews in antiquity from a plot by the Persians to annihilate them.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. # Alan Cooperman and David Makovsky, “Hebron’s Old Blood Feud,” in *Israel Today*, January 1997. Goldstein’s murderous act instantly upgraded Hamas retaliation by removing all inhibitions regarding the killing of civilians inside the “green line”, the border of pre-1967 Israel. Tel Aviv is now a Hamas target. See Karpin and Friedman, 15-16.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. # A native of Brooklyn, New York Goldstein was a very close disciple of Meir Kahane. Kahane placed Goldstein as the third candidate on *Kach*’s Knesset list in the 1983 elections. Goldstein believed himself to be a pure man, a physician, a pious soul, with clean hands. These are religious prerequisites necessary for one to be chosen for a “sacred mission”. Shahak and Mezvinsky, 96-112; see also Samuel Peleg, “They Shoot Prime Ministers too, Don’t They?” in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1997, 243.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. # Karpin and Friedman, 44.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. # Goldstein’s actions and his death at the scene were quickly embraced by Jewish extremists, who now revere him as a saint. See Sprinzak (1999), 240- 241 and Dilip Hiro, Sharing the Promised Land: A Tale of Israelis and Palestinians, Olive Branch Press, New York, 1998: 153-155.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Robert Friedman, 246-247. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Karpin and Friedman (1998), 68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Lustick (1988), 114-124 and Lustick (1987), 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Karpin and Friedman, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Spinzak, 199-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. # See Baruch Kimmerling, “Religion, Nationalism and Democracy in Israel,” in *Z’manim*, Winter 1994, no. 50-51, Tel Aviv University, Arane School of History publication, 2-3.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. According to Israeli political scientist Samuel Peleg, “Extremists see religion as a framework to install order. It has clarity, the uniformity, the discipline and the sanctions of a holistic world-view that dispel obscurity. The undisputed authority of the clergy and the spiritual malleability of the believers, both, render religion as an ample bastion of comfort against the vicissitudes of the outside. All religions have this view of good against evil.” See Samuel Peleg, “Religious Violence in Israel: Premises, Dynamics, and Prospects,” in Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, vol. 20, no. 3. 1997; 243. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. *The Guttman Report*, 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Shahak (1999), viii. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. # Shahak (1999), 105.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. See Jerome Slater, “Israel, Anti-Semitism and the Palestinian Problem,” in *Tikkun*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2001, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. See A.J Venter, “The Oldest Threat: Water in the Middle East,” in *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, February, 1998, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. # See Israel Shahak, Open Secrets – Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies. London, Pluto Press, 1997, 163.

     # Since Oslo, Israel has implemented Rabin’s view of the Oslo agreement. Palestinians have ended up in a series of isolated enclaves cut off from each other and surrounded by Israeli settlements and military bases. The reality is that a conscious effort to comply with the letter and spirit of the Oslo accord has been ignored by all Israeli governments. Neither Rabin, Netanyahu, or Barak advocated the evacuation of a single Jewish settlement as a compromise toward peace. *Gush Emunim*’s influence upon all Israeli governments and political leaders of varying political persuasions has been significant.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. # “Israel Approves More Building in West Bank,” *International Herald Tribune,* 30 May 2001, 4.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. # Friedman, 146.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. # Jeffrey Goldberg “Israel’s Y2K Problem,” *New York Times Magazine*, 3 October, 1999, 77.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. # Shahak, 28-29.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Findley, 22-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. # Demographic Time Bomb - Zionists were early aware that the Jews were on a collision course with Palestinians, who were not only a Palestinian majority, but also had a higher birthrate than Jews. At the time of the UN Partition Plan in 1947 the demographic problem was of greatest concern to the Zionists. Palestinians outnumbered Jews by 2-1 in Palestine. In 1948, after their first war with the Arabs, Israeli policy became official that Palestinians should not be allowed to return. Today the demographic problem still remains a concern. From the 1967 War to the start of the Intifada in 1987, the population of Palestinians inside Israel rose 18%. The Jewish population grew by 50%, much of due to immigration. By 2005, Palestinians are projected to number 1.3 million. This would increase the total number of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to 2.5 million by 2002. See Findlay, 22-23, 26.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. # The 1947 UN Partition Plan confined the Jewish State to 5,893 sq. miles equal to 56.47 percent of Palestine. By the end of the 1948 Arab Israeli War Israel controlled an area of 8,000 sq. miles or 77.4 % of the land. After the 1967 War, Israeli military forces controlled all of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, plus Syria’s Golan Heights, and Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, a spread of territory totaling 20,870 square miles. See Findley, 17.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Jerome Slater, “Israel, Anti- Semitism and the Palestinian Problem,” *Tikkun*, Vol. 16 No. 3, 2001, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. # In November 1990, Meir Kahane was murdered in New York while making a public appearance. His funeral in Jerusalem was attended by an estimated fifteen thousand mourners and was eulogized by no less a personage than his spiritual mentor, Mordechai Eliyahu, then the Chief Rabbi of Israel.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. See “Son of Slain Rabbi Kahane Dies with Wife in West Bank Ambush,” in The New York Times, January 1, 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. # Threats to the expected progression toward redemption came in 1978 when Israel’s Prime Minister Menachem Begin agreed at Camp David to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for peace, and made a commitment regarding a future Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza. Begin insisted that he compromised on Sinai to make peace with Israel’s most dangerous enemy, thereby saving Judea and Samaria as the spiritual and historical heartland of the land of Israel. Camp David implied a dis-confirmation of the redemptive process by the orthodox, moderated by Likud and religious party efforts to continue settling Jews in the West Bank. Eventually the success of the settlement process was seen by the religious as reconfirmation of the 1967 messianic promise as interpreted by Zvi Yehuda Kook. Begin, however, was never forgiven for what was viewed by many as a “betrayal”.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. See Festinger (1989) and Rappoport, (1988) in Sprinzak, 238-239. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. See Slater, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. # Rabbi Jacob Moses Harlap, one of Abraham Kook’s leading disciples, explicitly predicted final salvation on a paradoxical worldwide outburst of hostility toward the Jewish people. “When the age of redemption dawns the other nations will regret having helped the Jews. They will turn into persecutors paving the way for us to behold the light of redemption.” See Ravitsky, 134.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. See Kahane, Chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)