



# **State and Religion in Israel**

## **Possible Scenarios**

**Shlomo Hasson**

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## SCENARIOS FOR *STATE AND RELIGION IN ISRAEL 2023*

The increasing role of religion in the Middle East has by no means spared Israel, and in the course of 2014 the religious aspect became even more prominent in the multi-layered Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as in Israeli domestic politics. Thus, whoever wishes to forecast what Israel will be like for its 75th anniversary must also seriously examine – in addition to its geopolitical position and relations between Arabs and Jews – the relations between religion and state. While the first two topics were previously analyzed by GIIS research papers in this series (2011 and 2012), this one examines the role of religion in Israeli society, a topic that is perhaps already receiving more critical attention than ever before. In fact, between when the essay was written in early 2014 and when this preface is added, in early December of the same year, religion has overflowed the banks of the status quo and made its presence inescapable, especially in Jerusalem, with the Temple Mount /Haram al Sharif and the so called “Nationality bill” in the Knesset as only two of the foci.

State and Religion, as discussed here, encompasses at least four fundamental disagreements that cleave Israeli society. First is the struggle over the place of religion in public life, such as personal status law, conversion, burial, and the like. Second is the struggle for equality, whether of men and women, or for non-Orthodox streams of Judaism, exemption from military service for “Ultra-Orthodox” Jews, and attitudes towards non-Jews. Third is the struggle over Israel’s public space, such as in public transportation, on billboards, in archaeological excavations, and so forth. And, of course, the struggle over the borders of the state.

Within each one of these struggles, opposing values and ideologies are confronting each other over the following questions: What is the source of authority: supremacy of the civil law or of religious law? Freedom of choice, or the traditional strictures of religion? Liberal democracy, with its emphasis on the value of equality, or the sublime value of national unity?

Examination of the cultural camps that are engaged in these passionate disputes, and careful review of the forces shaping the character of these camps and the relationships between them, lead, according to Hasson’s research, to four possible scenarios regarding the future relations between state and religion in Israel: 1) stagnation, 2) occupation, 3) divisions, 4) connections. Today, Israel is stumbling along the stagnation path, but there is a serious danger that it will soon deteriorate to division or even to the conquest of one camp (most likely the secular) by the other.

So, at the conclusion of the study, Hasson goes beyond neutral description of the current state of affairs and the presentation of alternative scenarios, and

takes a clear stand which poses the following ultimate question: What can and should be done in order to increase the likelihood that the fourth scenario, that of connections, will prevail?

This booklet is the third and the last in a series of publications collectively known as “Israel 2023,” which have been published by the Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies at the University of Maryland. The two previous publications aroused wide interest, zealous debates, and enthusiastic discussion in both Israel and the United States, and we expect this one will spark similar reactions.

The Israel 2023 series is one of a number of studies conducted by the Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies (GIIS). Since it began full operations in 2009, it has become the largest institute for Israel Studies in the US. In the academic year 2013-14, 600 undergraduates were enrolled in 16 different GIIS courses on Israel, covering the fields of history, politics, society, culture and conflict. In 2012 we initiated a graduate studies program, which grants both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in partnership with other university departments. In 2014, we started a series of “global learning” classes, in which UMD students take advantage of new technology to study together in real time with students in Israel.

GIIS is also the home of Israel Studies Review, the official journal of the international Association for Israel Studies. The institute holds symposia, conferences, and seminars, and participates actively (although non-partisan) in the crucial discourse on Israel and the Middle East that goes on in Washington DC. Additional information about the Institute and its activities can be found at <http://www.israelstudies.umd.edu>.

The Israel 2023 research project was coordinated and written by Professor Shlomo Hasson, head of the Shasha Center for Strategic Studies at the Hebrew University. Prof. Hasson is an internationally recognized expert in the field of complex social systems analysis. In this study, he has employed the “scenario” method, which is superior to simplistic predictions because it emphasizes the deep social processes underlying current realities, analyzes the forces that affect these processes, and is able to estimate with a reasonable degree of certainty in which directions societies are likely to turn in the future.

As with the two previous publications in this series, we very much welcome comments and critiques of this paper. We hope that you find all three stimulating, provocative and even, recognizing the seriousness of the many dilemmas facing the world today, enjoyable.

Yoram Peri

Abraham S. Kay Professor and Director of the Gildenhorn  
Institute for Israel Studies, University of Maryland, College Park

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## INTRODUCTION

Tension between state and religion has been part of Zionism since its inception as the movement of Jewish national revival. From the beginning, this tension has been a struggle between national and religious codes over supremacy in the consolidation and unification of the Jewish people. While religion has placed its hope in God to bring redemption at the end of days, the Zionist movement, in contrast, has sought to bring the Jewish people back to history as a sovereign subject in the land of its ancestors in the present time. The contrasts following from this are clear: While religion sees God as the source of authority, Zionism views the people and its political life and activity as that source. Instead of the particularistic Jewish religion, Zionism upholds the national spirit in all its universal and secular manifestations as the source of identity that would rally the Jewish people and unite it within the family of nations.

These differences in outlooks have also created tensions between the sense of certainty associated with a theocentric source of authority and the more diffuse anthropocentric focus, and between the centrality of religious identity and the salience of a national-secular identity.

These tensions remain in force to this day. They reveal themselves in deep controversies over the role of religion in a state that defines itself as a democratic and Jewish. Creating deep rifts within Israeli society, these tensions center around the role of religion in determining the character of public life (marriage, divorce, burial, conversion, and so forth); arguments between religious principles and the principles of equality; tensions between the rule of law and religious views over issues of settling the land; and differences between the religious view and the pluralistically-oriented view of public space. Although they are ostensibly different, all of these issues are an expression of the tensions inherent between the theocentric and the anthropocentric source of authority and between particularism and universalism.

In their essence, these are also arguments regarding the essential source of the unity of the Jewish people: Is the people united by religion, with its sets of laws and commandments, or by the State of Israel, with its systems of law and justice, obligations and rights, shared problems and experiences, and cultural creations?

In his novel, "Shadows on the Hudson," the Jewish writer Isaac Bashevis-Singer puts relevant words in the mouth of Hertz Dovid Grein, the novel's protagonist, who writes to Morris Gombiner,

I am now in Israel, and for some time I have been able to observe the enlightened Jews here. They give the appearance of having fled from assimilation, but in reality they have brought it with them. They speak Hebrew, but they imitate the Gentiles at every turn. The country is infested with their Gentile books, their Gentile plays are performed to popular acclaim. Indeed, the Jews here are deeply distressed that they cannot imitate the Gentiles even more closely than they do already. In regard to family life, I had better say nothing. The Israelis call themselves Jews, but in what way are they Jews? Hebrew – or a language that was virtually Hebrew – was also spoken in Moab and other countries neighboring Canaan. For a while I perused the Israelis' newspapers, read their books, went to see their plays. All of them are filled with idolatry, adultery, and bloodshed, not to mention slander, gossip, obscenity, mockery, and idle talk.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in his book, "Homeland Lesson," A.B. Yehoshua presents an entirely different perspective on Jewish identity:

Jewish identity in Israel, which we call Israeli identity (as contrasted with Israeli civil identity, which is shared also by Arabs, who also live in the homeland that is shared by two peoples, although their national identity is Palestinian), deals with all of the components of life through the obligatory and sovereign framework of a state in a defined territory, and the extent of its implementation in life is infinitely fuller and wider and more significant than the Jewishness of an American Jew, for whom the most significant and important decisions of his life are made through the framework of his American nationality or citizenship.... Homeland, national language, and the obligatory framework are the basic components of the national identity of all human beings.<sup>2</sup>

Is it enough, as Yehoshua contends, that Jews live in the State of Israel, write and create in Hebrew, (usually) marry other Jews, bear (most of them) the burden of obligation, and enjoy rights in order to preserve Jewish identity? Or perhaps Bashevis-Singer's protagonist is right: Non-Jewish Jews are being raised in Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> Singer, 1998, p. 546-7.

<sup>2</sup> Yehoshua, 2008, 64 (Hebrew).

Does religion maintain Jewish identity or is it enough to merely live in the State of Israel?

The extremists in both camps have been determining the tone of the debate. The one side proclaims that the only Israeli nation is the one constituted by observance of Jewish law, and it is thus possible to be a Jew anywhere in the world as long as there is a synagogue, a *yeshiva* (religious school) and a community that maintains a religious lifestyle. The other side insists that there can be no fully Jewish life outside of the State of Israel. One side sees the Torah as the sole source of peoplehood and nationality; the other sees the State.

These contrasting views have an effect on the definition and meaning of the central values of the State of Israel. What are these values? Do they derive from the cultures of the world, modern education, enlightenment, and literacy? Or do they derive from a religious culture that, in its most extreme forms, rejects any change?

With the establishment of the State of Israel, leaders made an effort to articulate a status quo agreement between the sovereignty of religion and the sovereignty of the state. According to that compromise, the religious sector was granted specific authority, especially as related to the observance of the Sabbath, kashrut, personal status and education.<sup>3</sup> Some regard this as a capitulation by the state to religious power and argue that the state waived essential components of democracy, including freedom of choice in the establishment of a family. In contrast, others argue that because the status quo made religion compromise and limit itself to agreed-upon areas of authority, the agreement subordinated religion to the state.

Yet the tenuous agreement has held, and any change would create a new arrangement and demarcate a new line between the authorities. In truth, there is a strong pragmatic component to the relations between state and religion, based on the search for compromise and workable arrangements. Crises surface in interim stages, when the previous arrangement is disrupted and a new one has yet to be set.

The implications of these arrangements, and the power accorded to the Orthodox rabbinical establishment, extend beyond the state itself and have an influence over the Jewish people outside Israel. This is especially true with

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<sup>3</sup> The authority of this status quo agreement in Israel is a letter sent in 1947 by David Ben Gurion, in his capacity as the head of the Jewish Agency, to the World Organization of Agudath Yisrael, in which he set out the main principles regarding Sabbath observance, kashrut, personal status and education.

regard to the issue of acceptance or rejection of the validity of non-Orthodox religious groups, such as the Conservative and Reform communities, which form a majority outside Israel, especially in North America. Rejection could lead to a severe rift between Israel and the Diaspora, especially should the state continue to support the Orthodox monopoly over conversion and matters of personal status.

Indeed, one of the purposes of this article is to examine through the prism of scenario-building the dividing lines and the quality of new arrangements that might be established between state and religion.

## The Conceptual Framework

Scenarios present different answers to our central question: In what ways might the relationship between Jewish religion and the nation-state established in Israel develop? One possible development is a **struggle** between secular-universalist nationalism and the Jewish-religious character of the State of Israel. This struggle could lead to **several possible results**: religious **domination** over the state or to **separation** between religion and state. Another possible development is a **compromise** that combines religion and state.

This essay explores the different possibilities regarding the relationship between state and religion through three key questions:

1. The first question relates to central controversies between state and religion in Israel, as expressed in several central areas of life:
  - a. **The place of religion in public and private life** (marriage, divorce, burial, conversion, the nature of the Sabbath, observance of kashrut in public space, and so forth) and the monopoly granted to the Orthodox stream, which excludes and discriminates against other streams in Judaism, including Reform and Conservative. This question pits democratic thinking, freedom of choice and pluralism, on the one hand, against preservation of the unity of the Jews within the State of Israel, at the expense of ignoring the unity of the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora, on the other.
  - b. **The principle of equality** – The struggle over the principle of equality expresses itself in many areas, including gender equality, equality between Jews and non-Jews, equality in the obligations of military service, and economic contribution. This is a broad controversy, with numerous stakeholders, and the coalitions involved change over time according

to the specific issue at hand. Thus, for example, the controversy over gender equality pits secular against religious, even though the religious camp is divided with itself in this regard, and the national religious position is not the same as the ultra-Orthodox position. With regard to equality between Jews and non-Jews (e.g. and especially, Arabs in Israel), a large part of the Jewish-secular camp agrees with the religious and ultra-Orthodox.

- c. **The borders of the state and the rule of law** in the territories under Israeli military control. In this controversy, which is creating severe rifts within Israel, those who believe in the rule of law, the rights of the (Palestinian) other, and the importance for Israel of international legitimacy are confronting those who emphasize the imperative of faith and Israel's security interests and believe that these justify settlement in the area of Judea and Samaria, even if this undermines the rule of law. At times, this controversy has spilled over into civil war, between representatives of the rule of law and radical religious groups that violate the rule of law and attack its representatives.
  - d. **The character of public space** – the controversy in this arena covers numerous areas, including social behavior, freedom of speech, aesthetics and ethics. Who will determine the character of this space? Will it be religion? Free men and women? Advertising agencies? Or cultural institutions?
2. The second question through which I will examine possible relationships between state and religion is: What factors will determine the decisions in these controversies? Finding an answer to this question requires a careful consideration of future driving forces that may shape the relationship between state and religion, the manner in which the different controversies will be resolved at any given point in time, and the results. Among these forces, one may include demographic changes, the cultural map, the political strength of the cultural groups, processes of modernization, the level of governability, extra-parliamentary processes, the level of tolerance between the different groups, and geopolitical processes.

Some of these forces entail a great degree of certainty as it is possible to predict their future direction; others are shrouded in uncertainty. For instance, demographic processes will increase the proportion of the ultra-

Orthodox within the general population. The probability of this is quite high. But the effect of various cultural and social processes on the ultra-Orthodox population is not clear at all. Will these processes change their attitudes towards state, society and the economy? Will they enter the work force in greater numbers? Will they enlist in the military in greater numbers?

The effect of the driving forces will determine the manner with which society deals with these controversies – through compromise or struggle – and the results of the controversy, that is, the character and nature of state and society. In other words, decisions in four areas – public life; equality; the borders of the state; and the character of public space – will not be made in a vacuum. Variable forces will have an influence, including the balance of power between cultural groups with different orientations and the forces at work within each group.

3. The third question is: What will the results of decisions about these controversial issues be, and how will they shape the character of the State of Israel? In other words, in terms of sources of authority, identity and the issues with which it identifies, what will the character of the state be? And how will these decisions influence Israel's international standing and economic growth?

An examination of these questions is particularly crucial with regard to scenarios that deal with the relationship between state and religion. The prevailing tendency is to focus on the relationships between the two and on the basic mechanisms that determine these relationships, while ignoring the ways in which these mechanisms could influence various spheres of life.

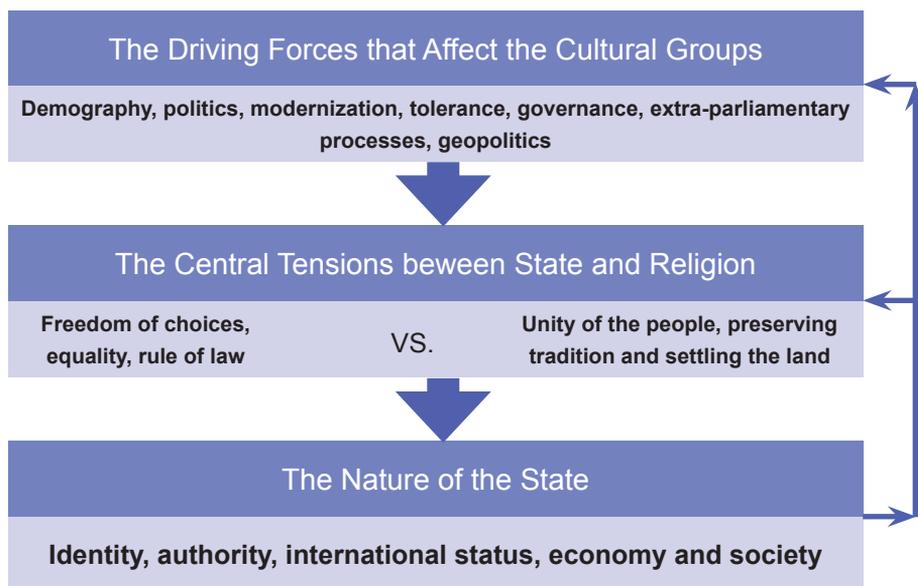
While it is true that Israeli society and the state might be able to prevent conflict and crisis through continuous compromises, this may have significant effect on authority, identity, identification, and sustainability, including deep social rifts; a decline in educational levels; a slowdown in economic growth; intensification of international delegitimization of Israel; social despair; and disdain for leadership. Thus, it is necessary to examine the results of these systems of inter-relationships and their significance for the future of the State of Israel, especially with regard to Israel's growth or the possible demise of the state.

In this context, it is important to examine additional issues: What will be the nature of the regime and public life? What will be the nature of the economy and society, in terms of the level of economic development and economic gaps

between different groups? What will be the nature of the state, in terms of Israel's future borders? What will the nature of the Jewish people be? And what will the relationship between the State of Israel and the Jewish people in the Diaspora be like?

Illustration 1 presents the conceptual framework of this essay and clarifies the manner in which the scenarios have been developed:

### **Illustration 1: The Conceptual Framework Underlying the Scenarios**



As a methodology, scenario development is not intended to predict the future or to present a desired one, but rather serves to clarify the possibilities of what might or could happen. The presentation of a number of possible future scenarios can help to critically examine the manner in which Israeli society is developing and, as a consequence, to devote a greater effort to creating preferential and consensual futures.

### **Previous Scenarios**

The pervasive effect of the relationship between state and religion on the nature of the state – which extends well beyond the domain of public life (marriage, divorce, burial and conversion) – has received little attention on the part of those who have studied this topic, including those who developed scenarios.

Most of the scenarios dealing with religion and state have focused on a single narrow area, most frequently the nature of public life; on one driving force, most frequently demographics or politics; or on one trend, usually domination or pluralism. Previous scenarios have pointed to the demographic and political changes that will lead to the increased influence of the religious community on the map of population distribution and public life, including the exclusion of women.<sup>4</sup> One scenario, for example, predicts a trend towards increased national chauvinism among the ultra-Orthodox political parties. Another scenario, focused on the behavior of the ultra-Orthodox community, predicts that the security and economic burden on the State of Israel will continue to grow until the state collapses.<sup>5</sup> All of the scenarios point to the change in power-relationships within the State of Israel due to the increasing power of the religious communities. According to these scenarios, the secular public, which established the Zionist movement and the State, has become defensive and vision-less, while the religious and ultra-Orthodox communities are becoming an active force and shaping new maps of population distribution and culture.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the scenario presented by Menachem Friedman, whose research focuses on ultra-Orthodox society, provides an exception. Friedman developed a Malthusian-like scenario that portends the collapse of ultra-Orthodox society due to the combination of rapid demographic growth and the lack of available resources, on the other hand. At a later stage, Friedman corrected this scenario and acknowledged that he had not foreseen the extent of innovation, initiative and voluntarism within ultra-Orthodox society.<sup>7</sup> It is clear that a deeper analysis that attends to additional driving forces and their influence on the character of the state and society is needed.

In addition to their focus on a narrow band of results and driving forces, one may notice a trend towards the creation of extreme scenarios that range from a threatening dystopian future to aglorious utopian one. The authors do not pay adequate attention to the mechanisms through which the scenarios have been created but rather focus on the results, which they then wish to accept or reject.

In one particularly dystopian scenario, Yeshayahu Leibowitz foresees a process of assimilation within the State of Israel which would sever the Israeli people living in Israel from religious law and tradition. Even though they continue

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Fischer, 2012; and Leon, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Bystrov and Soffer, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Leon, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Friedman, 1991 (Hebrew).

to call themselves a Jewish people, they will have nothing in common with Judaism, just as there is nothing that connects modern Greeks to ancient Greeks.<sup>8</sup> Yigal Elam is convinced that Judaism thrived in the Diaspora because it was only in the Diaspora that religion was able to maintain the people as a separate group.<sup>9</sup> Life in the state means the end of religion as a unifying framework and its replacement with the framework of the state. In these two scenarios, Judaism will come to its end, whether due to secularization or replacement by a formal political framework. These scenarios deal with identity and identification and utterly ignore the type of governance, Israel's position within the world, and economic developments.

Dystopian scenarios describe a very different future. In "Jeremiah's Inn," author Benjamin Tammuz presents a threatening and grotesque scenario in which religion dominates the state and turns it into a deteriorating theocracy.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to this pessimistic scenario, Yossi Beilin presents an optimistic scenario, involving a geopolitical peace agreement, annulment of the rabbinate's monopoly over personal affairs, ultra-Orthodox moderation, including integration into the military and the economy, and replacement of religion as the unifying core with a secular cultural core in which Israel becomes the heart of the Jewish people.<sup>11</sup>

These two types of scenarios are both characterized by polarized models and the manner in which they were composed is unclear. Systematic development of scenarios requires distance from ideological positions that impose their values on the future and a systematic analysis of possible processes, with concomitant attention to the various driving forces. For this reason, there is no point in focusing on one possible future, whether it is a desirable future or not. Instead, it is necessary to explore the various trends of development and use them to deduce the possible future relationships between state and religion.

Within the framework of the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, an effort was made to conduct this type of systematic exploration. The team focused on one topic: relationships between the ultra-Orthodox and the rest of the population, but it ignored the national-religious community and its influence on the character of the State. The members of the team emphasized that in the area of daily life, there is great similarity between the national-religious population and the secular population. Unlike other scenario development teams, this

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<sup>8</sup> Liebowitz, 1975. p. 240 (Hebrew).

<sup>9</sup> Elam, 2000, p. 63 (Hebrew).

<sup>10</sup> Tammuz, 1984 (Hebrew).

<sup>11</sup> Beilin, 2007, pp. 766-769 (Hebrew).

team expanded its scope and defined a large number of driving forces, which it arranged in two primary groups: the social-normative system and the decision-making system.<sup>12</sup> The normative-social group of forces attended to the social-cultural relationship between the ultra-Orthodox and other populations groups (religious, traditional and secular) on an axis ranging between growing extremism and increased moderation. The decision-making group of forces attended to the foci of decision-making with regard the identity of the state, the allocation of rights and responsibilities, and the character of daily life on an axis ranging from decisions made by the political system through negotiations, to coalition-building and compromise to decisions taken formally within the legal or the religious-legal arenas.<sup>13</sup>

The intersection of these two axes created six scenarios:

- a. The scenario of separation and integration, based on an assumption of increased moderation in social-normative relations between the cultural groups, decline in the power of the political system's ability to manage relationships between religion and state, and strengthening of legal and religious institutions.
- b. The scenario of a multi-national, multi-cultural society, based on increased moderation in social-normative relationships and an increase in the power of the political system to determine the directions in which the state will develop with regard to critical issues.
- c. The scenario of cultural war, which anticipated growing extremism in normative-social relationships between ultra-Orthodox, religious, and secular. This scenario further assumed that the ability of the political system to regulate these tensions would diminish and would be replaced by legal and religious institutions.
- d. The scenario of a new arrangement, based on an assumption of increased extremism in the normative-social relationships between ultra-Orthodox and secular. Against this background, the Likud and Labor parties would articulate

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<sup>12</sup> The research group operated within the framework of the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies during the years 2000-2002. The team was led by Shlomo Hasson. The team included Rabbis Yosef Azran and Naftali Rothenberg (who is also an academic); academics Tamar El-Or, Amiram Gonen, and Neri Horowitz; journalist Shachar Ilan, and jurist Amnon de-Hartog.

<sup>13</sup> See Hasson (Editor), 2002 (Hebrew).

an agreement according to which both parties would adopt a common platform with regard to religion, society, and the economy, and would remain committed to the principle of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

- e. The scenario of the departing secularists, with its two possible conclusions (the plucked chicken and the kosher chicken). The scenario was based on an assumption of increased extremism in the normative-social relationships between ultra-Orthodox and religious and secular. The political system was thought to be monolithic, due to the demographic and political changes in society. The two main changes noted were the extensive emigration of seculars out of Israel and the creation of two political fronts promoting two different agendas: strengthening Israel's Jewish character and strengthening Israel's democratic character.
- f. The scenario of conflict management under conditions of overload, which assumed increased extremism in the normative-social relationships between ultra-Orthodox and religious and the seculars. In contrast to the scenario of departing seculars, this scenario did not assume a monolithic political system and assumed that the government would be made up of different camps with varied interests. Even though the political system was weak, it was able to regulate the conflict and prevent the outbreak of cultural war.

Twelve years after they were completed, it is interesting to re-examine these scenarios. At the time of writing this essay, in the year 2014, it would appear that the tensions between state and religion are deeper and more complex than those cited in the scenarios produced by the working group at the Floersheimer Institute. In addition to tensions between the ultra-Orthodox and the rest of the population, there are tensions between the general population and the national-religious camp, which supports the settlement project even in opposition to government decisions. These tensions are no less severe than the previously-considered ones. The vast majority of the general public has despaired of the likelihood of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, but still believes in a national Jewish and democratic state. The scenarios of a culture war, on the one hand, or a multi-national and multi-cultural society, on the other hand, have also not come true. Yet these scenarios are not without worth. Continued Israeli control over Judea and Samaria and the increase in the numbers of refugees coming into Israel may yet turn Israel into a multi-national society.

## **Conclusion**

The status quo arrangements between state and religion that evolved over time entailed numerous tensions, focused on authority, identity and sustainability. Most of the scenarios developed in the past attend to a single central issue and present the possibility of disruption of the existing order and a redesign of the character of the state and society. There is a need for a more in-depth exploration that would pay attention to the variety of tensions, factors and results.

This is the purpose of this essay: to develop scenarios that will take the multiple factors, conflicts and possible outcomes into account. This process is based on a central question: What will happen if events develop in this or another way? What, then, would the character of the state be? An examination of this question requires clarification and definition of everything connected to this process: identification of the cultural groups within Israeli society and the relationships between them with regard to issues of state and religion; identification of the tensions between the different cultural groups; elucidation of the driving forces that influence the cultural groups and the relationships between them; and development of scenarios and their influence on the character of the state.

This introduction has presented the general conceptual framework of this essay and the main research to date. The first and second chapters will discuss relationships between state and religion, focusing on accommodation relations and controversies. The third chapter will describe the cultural map of Israeli society and the manner in which the relationships between its components shape the resolution of disagreements. The fourth chapter will delineate the driving forces that influence the way in which tensions are dealt with. The fifth chapter will present the scenarios, and the conclusion will explore the significance of the scenarios and their implications.

# CHAPTER ONE: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATE AND RELIGION: RELATIONSHIPS OF ACCOMMODATION

## Introduction

Tensions between state and religion are not unique to Israel. Concomitant with processes of democratization that center on individual freedom of choice, numerous countries in the West and the East have also experienced a surge of religious groups that seek to shape public life according to religious principles. As a result, religion ceases to be a private, individual matter and becomes a public and political issue.<sup>14</sup> These processes are especially striking in the Catholic countries in Western Europe and in various countries in the Middle East where Islamic parties seek to shape public and political life.

Do these processes pose a threat to democracy? The answer is – not necessarily. In contrast to the view that contends that a complete separation between state and religion is a necessary condition for the existence of a democracy, reality reveals various possibilities for democratic countries. This is evident in Catholic countries in Western Europe, such as Italy and Spain, for example, in which the Church has some influence over education and culture, yet this influence does not undermine democratic foundations.<sup>15</sup>

## Relationships of Accommodation

In the State of Israel, relationships of accommodation between state and religion are discerned on the national and socio-political levels as well as in other aspects of life.

**On the national level:** Relationships of accommodation are clearly manifested in the return of Zionism to the biblical past and the central symbols of the Jewish people. This process was accompanied by tensions and compromise between the concepts of the historical homeland and the divinely-promised homeland; between Hebrew as a spoken or as a sanctified language; and between the Bible, holidays and rituals as national cultural sources and their religious aspects.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> Barbalet, Possamai and Turner, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Dreisden, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Ravitsky, 2005, p. 32 (Hebrew).

connection between Zionism and religion has been maintained not only in the return to the land, but also by the manner in which one is able to join the Jewish people. Even after the establishment of the state, joining the Jewish people requires a religious act of conversion. An ongoing argument persists over the affiliation of the rabbis permitted to perform the conversion (Orthodox, Conservative and/or Reform), but not over the principle of religious conversion. There is a one-way bridge between Judaism and citizenship: Any Jew who has immigrated to Israel may obtain Israeli citizenship, but the route from citizenship to Judaism goes through conversion. In this way, the relationship between religious affiliation and national affiliation has been perpetuated. At the same time, connections between nationalism and religion have attenuated in the cultural arena. Among secular Jews, the connection to Jewish sources has diminished, and this is especially evident in education. Secular schools emphasize subjects necessary for economic success in modern society and universal humanistic themes. This is opposite to the values inculcated by ultra-Orthodox education. The connection between religion and historical memory has been maintained by religious- and secular-national groups. This connection has centered primarily on the sanctity of the land and the obligation to settle all of the land. This connection, however, diminished the importance of moral considerations and removed them from religion and the national perspective.<sup>17</sup>

**On the political level:** Relationships of accommodation between state and religion are revealed in the fact that the majority avoids using its power when making decisions over controversial issues. Instead, a model of consociational democracy has developed, which strives for political accommodations with the religious minority, including the ultra-Orthodox and the national religious, while respecting their demands in critical areas, including Sabbath observance, personal status, public space, kashrut observance in public space, and education.<sup>18</sup> Historically, the situation in Israel reflects the tendency to maintain democracy while creating pragmatic accommodation arrangements between state and religion, to be more precise, between political parties with different values and interests. This is especially critical in a divided society such as Israel.<sup>19</sup> In such societies, as Lijphart has shown, the rule of the majority and respect for the rights of the minority lead towards various forms of accommodation and power sharing that

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<sup>17</sup> Schiffman, 2012 (Hebrew).

<sup>18</sup> Don-Yehia, 1996 (Hebrew).

<sup>19</sup> Don Yehia and Liebman, 1984.

express four main principles: a modicum of autonomy for the minority groups so that they can maintain their lifestyle; proportional representation in the various institutions that affect the life of the minority; observance of the status quo; and the right to veto decisions that are perceived as a violation of the status quo.<sup>20</sup>

**On the social level:** Relationships of accommodation are revealed in the commitment of the majority of the secular Jewish population in Israel to religious symbols and rituals and in the faith in God held by a majority of the secular population. Most of the public in Israel, including the secular public, integrates some religious foundations into their lifestyle. This is expressed in the way in which the different population groups in Israel define themselves. It appears that a dichotomous presentation of religious vs. secular ignores the hybridism that characterizes the relationships between the two groups and the common denominators that have grown up around ethnic, national, and cultural belonging. The Avi Chai survey reveals that most of the secular Jewish population in Israel feels committed to symbols, ceremonies, and life milestones that are connected to religion, such as circumcision, Bar Mitzvah, religious marriage, religious mourning periods, Passover Seder observance, and observance of kashrut in public.<sup>21</sup> According to the 2009 social survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics, four-fifths (82 percent) of the secular public always participate in a Passover Seder; two thirds (67 percent) always light Hanukah candles; a third (29 percent) always light Sabbath candles; a quarter (26 percent) always fast on Yom Kippur; and a fifth (22 percent) are careful to eat kosher food during Passover.<sup>22</sup>

Relationships of accommodation at the social level are also revealed in the increased integration of the ultra-Orthodox into the political, voluntary and economic systems, as well as into the military. An additional expression of these relationships of accommodation is the central role that the national-religious Jewish camp has taken upon itself with regard to shaping the character of the state, military service, and its influence in the shaping of the civil agenda.

**On the cultural level:** the separation between the secular and religious camps never has been sharp or clear. Those who sought to disengage from the belief in redemption and to create something new have returned to nest in remembrance

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<sup>20</sup> See Lijphart, 1977.

<sup>21</sup> See Avi Chai Report, 2011 (Hebrew).

<sup>22</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010. Social Survey 2009 – Religiosity in Israel – Characteristics of Different Groups

of the past, the Bible, Zion, and historical roots. Even the attitude of socialist Zionists, who followed Dov Ber Borochoy and the “historical necessity” of the return to Zion, or, as he referred to it, a “spontaneous historical process,” had deep, covert and irrational roots.<sup>23</sup> If the secularists had indeed freed themselves from religion and faith, and ensconced the sovereignty of the individual and his/her responsibility for his/her fate in their place, then what was the transcendental power that pushed for the creation of a national collective in Zion, rather than in Uganda or Birobidzhan? Indeed, has the release from God and tradition been complete? And if so, has not one religion simply been replaced by another, one that is Zionist, secular, and centered around the belief in the return to Zion based on a historical-cultural connection?

Today, there are also those within the Israeli public who seek to turn their backs on the past: the post-Zionists and the anti-Zionists. These “new Israelis” call for ignoring common Jewish history, abandoning the constitutive texts that forged the connections among the members of the Jewish people in the past, while celebrating the creation of a new Israeli people in the State of Israel. This view calls for a civil transformation of nationalism. It is nurtured by the presence of a large Arab minority in Israel, post-Zionist ideology, and the presence of non-Jewish immigrants who came to Israel under the Law of Return. The organization of non-Jewish religious Zionist youths illustrates this development.<sup>24</sup> Could this trend portend the transformation of Jewish nationalism from a Jewish state to an Israeli state?

## **Two-Way Accommodation**

Accommodation and adoption of hybrid patterns of tradition and secularism, past and present, religion and democracy are not solely the province of the secular camp. Among religious groups, one could note some fascinating processes of political, cultural, and economic integration into Israeli society. The national-religious population has been a partner in the Zionist enterprise since its inception, but for many decades, it played only a minor role in the political system. Beginning

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<sup>23</sup> According to Gideon Katz (2011, pp. 51-60), this attests to irrational thought in the Zionist paradigm, which secularists prefer to repress and forget. Directly coping with these hidden thoughts could, in my opinion, create a link to Jewish religion or establish in its place a different secular religion based on national, historical and cultural foundations. In this case, one religion, supported by the seculars, would replace the other.

<sup>24</sup> Kemp, 2001 (Hebrew).

in the 1970s, this camp took on a leading role in promoting the settlements, and in shaping Israel's border map. Subsequently, national-religious Judaism became an influential factor in the army. Even though this group numbers only approximately one-tenth of the overall population in Israel, it now represents some forty percent of the officers in the army.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, national religious personalities now head right wing-oriented think tanks that are deeply involved in designing curricula, legislation and policy. Prominent among these think tanks are the Shalem Center, the Jerusalem Center for Public Policy, and the Institute for Zionist Strategy.

The ultra-Orthodox population is also showing signs of accelerated integration into government and the Israeli social system. Among the signs of this process are their presence in senior positions in the Knesset and government; obtaining modern higher education; the entrance of ultra-Orthodox women and some men into the work force; a slow increase in the numbers of ultra-Orthodox men who serve in the military; and growing ideological, hawkish, right wing extremism with regard to the geopolitical struggle and nationalism. There are some who believe that this is a sign that Zionism has permeated the ultra-Orthodox sector.<sup>26</sup>

A number of forces have come together to create these processes. One of them is related to the penetration of the general Israeli discourse into ultra-Orthodox society through the media. In this discourse, the ultra-Orthodox tend towards the right because the latter employs images and expressions that derive from the world of Jewish tradition and culture. The second force is the national iconographic change and the transition from symbols of secular pioneering settlement before 1967 to religious sites that are rooted in Jewish religion and consciousness after 1967, such as Jerusalem, Hebron, and Rachel's Tomb. The third force is the attenuation of the authority of the generation of sages who held moderate views and warned against attempts to hasten the messiah and provoke the Gentiles. And finally, we note the influence of the establishment of settlements over the Green Line for the ultra-Orthodox. These communities have led the ultra-Orthodox to adopt hawkish positions similar to those held by the national-religious settlers.

## **Conclusion**

It would appear that in various ways the Jewish public is returning to the far-reaching teachings of Moses Hess, who viewed the Jewish people as a nation that

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<sup>25</sup> Regev, 2011 (Hebrew).

<sup>26</sup> Yadgar, 2011, p. 30.

combines religion, tradition, belief, morality and sovereignty.<sup>27</sup> Hess's prediction, which combined political Zionism, spirituality, religion, and state, has become one of the central attributes of Zionism today. This view combines the past and the future, continuity and change, religion and political process. Even among the most fervent representatives of political Zionism and its fulfillment, recognition of the importance of religion in political renewal has filtered through.

This recognition became even stronger because of the long-term existential need for a separate existence that would distinguish Israel from other peoples. What is the point of remaining in a state that is under a constant barrage of internal and external threats if there is nothing particularly Jewish about life here? The religious camp has identified specialness in God's choice, the Covenant. The national-religious see the settlement enterprise as the beginning of the process of redemption. Ben Gurion looked for a unique consciousness of the Jewish people associated with the universal mission of the prophets of Israel. As a completely secular Jew, he identified specialness in the renewal of the prophets' message for humanity.

The question of Jewish specialness in the act of returning to the land of Israel has become more focused as a result of attitudes held by the family of nations. It has soon become apparent that the political wish to transform the Jewish people into a nation like all others is unlikely to be fulfilled, at least not in the short run. Even at the time this essay is written, 66 years after the establishment of the state, the world refuses to relate to the State of Israel as it does to all the other nations in the world. The extensive coverage in the world media and the unparalleled criticism of Israel compared to the policies of other nations give rise to the thought that the Jew, even when residing in his/her own state, is the "other" through which the Christian examines his or her own identity. In other words, the relationship between religion and state is not only an internal Israeli issue; it also has global significance that continues the ancient tradition of complex relationships between religions and cultures.<sup>28</sup>

Despite divisions and sectarianism within the Jewish people, which are nothing new, religion continues to function as a unifying factor. The unification takes place along several lines, common to all the different streams in Judaism: belief in God and adherence to similar forms of ritual; adherence to the concept of the Chosen People – even though the meaning of that chosenness is controversial;

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<sup>27</sup> Hess, 1918.

<sup>28</sup> In Avi Beker's view (2013) at the center of these complex relations is the theological controversy regarding the "chosen people."

defense of the continued existence of the Jewish people; a strong sense of difference from other peoples; common distress over a sense of persecution; and, finally, deep connection to the history and fate of the Jewish people. All these existed before the establishment of the state, although the establishment of the state provided them with an additional meaning – the defense of the State of Israel.



# CHAPTER TWO: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE AND RELIGION: THE MAIN CONTROVERSIES

## Introduction

Numerous accords between religion and democracy are possible due to the fact that strong driving forces – rooted in religion, historical tradition, international relations, and the geopolitical situation – push towards unity. At the same time, there are inherent tensions between these two systems. Most of the public (58 percent) assesses the relationship between religious and secular as “not good,” and a similar number (57 percent) believe that religion and state should be separated in the State of Israel.<sup>29</sup> In other words, despite the common denominators, tension between secular and religious, and between religion and the State of Israel, is deep and ongoing.<sup>30</sup> Time and again, this struggle between conflicting worldviews and principles expresses itself in central areas of life: the role of religion in public and private life (including the character of public space); the Orthodox monopoly that excludes and discriminates against other religious streams in Judaism; the attitude towards women; the status of Arabs in the state; the military exemption and benefits given to those who do not serve in the army and are not employed; illegal settlements established by national-religious groups; and violation of the rule of law by radical religious groups.

Four main controversies stand at the center of the relationships between religion and state:

1. The struggle over the role of religion in public life, which pits the principle of free choice against religious commandments and rabbinic injunctions.
2. Struggles over gender equality, equality between Jews and non-Jews and equality with regard to burden of service.
3. Struggles between the rule of law and the religious injunction to settle the land.

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<sup>29</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010 (Hebrew).

<sup>30</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that according to the Jewish public in Israel, the tension between secular and religious is second in strength only to tensions between Jews and Arabs. 70.6 percent of Jews defined the tension between Jews and Arabs as strong, while 59.7 percent defined the tension between secular and religious in the same way. Following them in terms of strength are the tensions between rich and poor (55.7 define this as a strong tension), between right and left (51.8 percent) and finally tensions between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim (23.3 percent.) See Hermann et als, 2012, p. 105.

4. Struggles over the character of public space, including possibilities for free expression in dress, advertising, entertainment, and use of public facilities.

Most of the public's attention is focused on tensions and struggles that are openly expressed in daily life, yet covert tensions belie the deep divisions over the nature of the State of Israel, the sources of its authority, and the future social and economic sustainability of the State of Israel. In order to clarify the relationship between the overt and the covert disagreements, in the final section of this chapter, which deals with public space, I will discuss the transition from an overt struggle to a deep, covert struggle related to values and faith.

## **The Role of Religion in Public Life**

This relates to the identity of the state and the role of religion in public life. At the center of this controversy are political laws and arrangements with regard to the relationship between the character of the state as democratic and Jewish. On the one side is the view that emphasizes the importance of democracy, freedom of choice, and principles of equality and pluralism. On the other side is the view that emphasizes the importance of preserving the unity of the people in the State of Israel while maintaining the connection to the Jewish faith even at the expense of democracy. Among the laws reflecting the relationship to the Jewish religion are laws relating to personal status (marriage, divorce, burial, and so forth); conversion according to Jewish law; declaration of the Sabbath as the formal day of rest; the prohibition against selling food that is not kosher for Pesach during the holiday; and others. The law of marriage and divorce is the only law in which the state has granted legal status to the laws of the Torah. The law of the day of rest is a municipal ordinance which is valid only with regard to certain narrow aspects of public space.

The issue of marriage is at the center of the tension between religion and democracy. There are those who believe in the basic right of every human being to marry freely, without religious coercion, as defined by the United Nations 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. Supporting this position are secular Jews, as well as Reform and Conservative Jews who demand religious pluralism and the individual's right to free choice in the establishment of a family. By contrast, the rabbinical establishment and the majority of religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews believe that in order to preserve the identity and unity of the Jewish people, it is necessary to maintain the current role of religion in public life, including marriage,

divorce and conversion. This struggle is anchored in two opposing systems of belief. On the one hand is the belief in the principles of liberal democracy, centered on the individual and his or her right to free choice. According to this view, the individual and the state maintain a social covenant which obligates the state to defend this right. On the other side we find the belief in the covenant between the Jewish people and its God and the principle of mutual responsibility. These principles create concern for the individual, lest he or she risk a mixed marriage that would threaten the continued existence of the Jewish people.

It is difficult to bridge this chasm. Democracy is committed to freedom of religion, but also to freedom from religion. The principle of freedom from religion is undermined when religion attempts to shape the character of the people through legislation that grants a monopoly to the religious courts with regard to marriage, divorce, and conversion. Whoever believes that the Orthodox rabbinic monopoly is necessary for the unity of the people will find himself in deep conflict with the principle of free choice and religious pluralism. According to this view, the principle of individual free choice could bring him to leave the community of Israel. In opposition to this is the view that belonging to the people is expressed through life in Israel; contribution to the state and its security and economy; shared culture; literacy; elections to the Knesset; and service in state institutions. Indeed, Israel is slowly developing an Israeli people whose children feel a deep national connection to the land and its residents.

In opposition, the religious viewpoint contends that replacing the religious-Jewish attachment with a national-Israeli affiliation will lead to rifts between the newly created nation living in the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. Essentially, this is an argument over the nature of national identity.<sup>31</sup> For this reason, some support legislation intended to preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel and its very existence as a Jewish state, even if, as a result, it entails the violation of some civil rights. According to Shifman an example of this is the Rabbinical Court Jurisdiction (Marriage and Divorce) Law, 5713-1953. The law states that “marriages and divorces of Jews shall be performed in Israel in accordance with Jewish religious law”.<sup>32</sup> Free choice in marriage and free conversion would lead to divisions within the nation.

Despite existing legislation, some 62 percent of the general Jewish population believes that civil marriage should be permitted in Israel.<sup>33</sup> Many Jews bypass this

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<sup>31</sup> Yisraeli, 2010, p. 356 (Hebrew).

<sup>32</sup> Shifman, 2012 (Hebrew).

<sup>33</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010 (Hebrew).

law by being married abroad in a civil marriage, and this is reflected in the fact that the number of marriages in the rabbinic courts is not growing and remains stable at approximately 25,000 marriages a year – which means that more than 20 percent of marriages are not performed by the official rabbinate.<sup>34</sup>

## **Tensions Over Equality**

The second source of tension stems from the question of equality: equality between different religious streams, gender equality, equality between Jews and non-Jews, and equality in carrying the economic and security burdens. Here, too, there is a clash between two perspectives: a perspective based on the principles of dignity and universal equality, including equality in carrying of burdens; and, in contrast, one that distinguishes between and discriminates by gender and against certain population groups, including women, non-Jews, and young people who are obligated to provide military or national service.

The exclusion of women is a severe and significant violation of the principle of equality and involves numerous areas of life, including suitability for providing testimony in religious courts, participation in religious councils, prayer at the Western Wall, a woman's right over her body, and esthetics in the media. In addition to discrimination against women, some rabbis also discriminate between Jews and non-Jews. This position has been publicized with regard to renting apartments to Arabs and the fear of interactions between Jewish and non-Jewish students.

The struggle for equality between the general Jewish population and the ultra-Orthodox population offers a central arena for the struggle between the two opposing perspectives. In contrast to the view that supports defending the security of the country, the ultra-Orthodox support defending the spirit and tradition of Judaism by the Jewish people's true soldiers and guards – those who study the Torah in the study halls of the yeshiva – and justifies the preferential treatment and economic benefits accorded to them by the state.

It was possible to ignore this phenomenon as long as it was limited to several hundred young yeshiva students. But today, only a small proportion of yeshiva students enlists every year – approximately 17 percent of the enlistment cohort,

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<sup>34</sup> This issue also indirectly affects a large group of Israeli citizens who are not defined as either Jews or Muslims – non-Jewish immigrants from the FSU. This group has protested against the existing situation and has tried to change it. These people see themselves as fully Israeli. They live in Israel, serve in the IDF, speak Hebrew, identify with the goals of the State, but in terms of their identity, they are not Jews.

which, in 2012, was estimated at some 7,300 young men eligible for conscription,<sup>35</sup> in contrast to a rate of 88 percent among the non-ultra-Orthodox population. In other words, more than 80 percent of conscription-age ultra-Orthodox young men do not enlist.<sup>36</sup> The number of ultra-Orthodox men of conscription age whose conscription is postponed from year to year according to the regulation that stipulates that “his Torah study is his profession” amounts to some 62,500 (some of those who postpone their service do, in fact, enlist later on.)<sup>37</sup> In 2010, there were only approximately 2,500 ultra-Orthodox soldiers.

This situation illustrates the conflicts between the values of the different societies: the value of equality, anchored in a deep belief in democracy versus the value of the study of the Torah and the preservation of the nature of the Jewish people. The exemption from military service leads to bitter feelings of discrimination among those who serve the country against those who close themselves off in the study halls of the Torah and are protected by those who do enlist.<sup>38</sup>

The Law for Equality in Sharing of Burdens, which passed its third reading in the Knesset in March 2014, actually undermines the principle of equality. According to this legislation, conscription of ultra-Orthodox men will begin after a period of adjustment that extends until 2017. After that, mandatory conscription will be extended to yeshiva students, but 1,800 “continuing students” and 300 students in Zionist graduate yeshivas will be entitled to continue to defer their military service until they reach the age of 26; at that point, the Minister of Defense will be permitted to entirely exempt them from military service. The law also determines that in the second period, from 2017 onwards, in which the obligation of conscription will become incumbent on the ultra-Orthodox as well as the general public, the Minister of Defense will be permitted to defer conscription

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<sup>35</sup> These numbers are based on the data supplied by the Ministry of Education regarding the number of ultra-Orthodox students in religious educational institutions and parallel to 12<sup>th</sup> grade during the 2012 academic year, as compiled by the Knesset Research Center. See Almasi, 2012, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Almasi, 2012 (Hebrew).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> The Tal Law did try to regulate this issue. The law was passed in the Knesset in July 2002 and perpetuated the exemption from conscription into the IDF for yeshiva students. The law determined that at age 22, a yeshiva student could choose whether to continue his studies or transfer to a framework in which he would serve a shortened period of service and then enter the labor market. Five years later, the law was extended for another five years. In response, a series of petitions were presented to the High Court of Justice, contending that the law entailed a disproportionate violation of the principle of equality because it provided an exemption from service to a growing group of yeshiva students. On February 21, a majority of High Court justices, headed by then-president Dorit Beinisch, accepted the petitions and cancelled the law.

of all yeshiva students, from year to year until they reach the age of 21. However, those who are supposed to enlist will be offered the option of serving in a civilian capacity, should they agree to this. These three mitigations undermine the principle of equality. Secular youth are conscripted at age 18 and no specific group within their cohort receives an exemption, nor are they entitled to choose to serve in a civilian capacity. Even in this limited format, which undercuts the principle of equality, the law has encountered rabbinical opposition.<sup>39</sup>

Inequality in carrying the burden is even stronger in light of economic realities. Because they are engaged in full-time study, a large proportion of ultra-Orthodox men do not work. Rather, they receive a grant from the state and pay very low taxes. They are essentially supported by the large working population that does pay taxes. Transmitted through the ultra-Orthodox educational system, which glorifies full-time Torah study, the problem becomes increasingly severe from generation to generation. The issue at hand pertains to the state's ability to force ultra-Orthodox educational institutions to adopt a core curriculum (which is the basis of the curriculum in the state-sponsored schools) that includes subjects that are essential for participation in an advanced labor market. The high rate of natural growth of the ultra-Orthodox population and the low rate of work-force participation cast a pall on Israel's economic development, and some predict economic collapse if these trends continue. Furthermore, a group that feels discriminated against and taken advantage of by another group may lose its own motivation to contribute, which could lead to a loss of a sense of commonality and solidarity.

## **The Borders of the State**

The third topic creating tension between state and religion is regarding the future borders of Israel, centered around the conflict between the rule of law on the one hand and the religious injunction to settle the Land of Israel on the other. Opposing the divine commandment and national commitment that emphasize the importance of settling deep within Judea and Samaria is the view that supports the rule of law, the rights of the Palestinians, and the importance of international legitimacy for Israel.

Since its inception, religious-Zionist settlement deep in the territories of Judea and Samaria (in contrast to the Jordan Valley or the areas close to the Green Line) has clashed with the rule of law. This clash has started with the initial

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<sup>39</sup> Security Service Law (Amendment No. 19 Temporary) [conscription of yeshiva students], 2013.

attempts to settle in Sebastia, and reaches its climax in today's illegal outposts deep in the territory of Judea and Samaria. Over the past few years, the number of illegal outposts has grown, as have challenges by extreme national-religious groups to the rule of law, including "Price-tag" attacks, uprooting of Palestinians' olive trees, burning of mosques, and attacks on IDF soldiers and military bases, which disrupt the very foundations of the democratic regime. Furthermore, these activities also tarnish the image of Israel among Jews living outside of the state and in world public opinion. Legal lethargy in the face of these incidents is worrisome and raises doubts about the strength of the rule of law in Israel and its ability to withstand further attacks.

Once again one confronts the contradictions between the values and beliefs of the two sides: One camp believes that the proper way to achieve peace is to return the territories, including parts of Judea and Samaria. The other camp believes that these territories must not be returned in exchange for peace because this is divinely promised land, which is also essential for Israel's security. The one camp believes that evacuation of Judea and Samaria is a basic requirement for the existence of a Jewish and democratic state that enjoys the legitimization of the nations of the world. The other camp sees this as a denial of the commandments of the Torah and an existential threat.

## **Tensions Surrounding the Nature of Public Space**

A fourth focus of tension is the role of religion in shaping the nature of public space, in which ultra-Orthodox and secular groups are both trying to fulfill their rights and values. For many years, Jerusalem was the focus of these struggles; today, they have spread to other places as well. In the past, the central struggles concerned archeological sites where burial caves were discovered, which the ultra-Orthodox view as a violation of the sanctity of the dead. Other struggles focused on the nature of public space on the Sabbath, including traffic on main transportation arteries and the operation of establishments of entertainment. However, the struggle over the nature of public space soon expanded to include esthetics and gender. In this context, advertisements that the ultra-Orthodox public perceived as an abomination were defaced and images of women were erased from billboards. At the same time, in several incidents, women who were dressed "immodestly" were attacked in the vicinity of ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods. Some ultra-Orthodox areas maintain separation between men and women on buses and in some communities there are even separate sidewalks.

The majority of the public has rejected these rules of behavior, and especially the attempt to shape the character of public space on the Sabbath according to ultra-Orthodox specifications.

Even though two-thirds of the general Jewish population believes that a special character of the Sabbath should be retained in the state, majorities support the opening of places of entertainment (64 percent), shopping centers located out of city-centers (60 percent), and operation of public transportation on the Shabbat (53 percent).<sup>40</sup>

Struggles over the character of public space take place on three interconnected levels: on the overt level, the struggle centers on the function of space, including the system of behavior and gender relationships and relates to issues such as means of movement, expression and leisure time; styles of dress; styles of communication between people; and gender relationships. The secular life style includes driving and shopping on the Sabbath and creating new forms of observance and entertainment on Sabbath and festivals. It also includes styles of dress that are very different from and conflict with those of the ultra-Orthodox; different interactions between the sexes; and different patterns of communication among men and women, adults and children, and so forth. On the second, covert, level, is a struggle between values and codes that reflects conflicting interests, aspirations, and assessments as to what is true, just, and aesthetic. On the third level, the struggle is over the contradiction between a belief in individual freedom, which derives from an inner human voice, and subordination of the individual to a code of supra-human rules.

Table 1 presents the transition from the overt, above ground struggle, to the underlying level of symbols and belief systems.

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<sup>40</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010 (Hebrew).

**Table 1: The Character of Public Space: Function, Values and Beliefs**

LEVEL	SECULAR	ULTRA-ORTHODOX
<b>Functional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modern and multi-cultural socialization</li> <li>• esthetic expression</li> <li>• expressions of erotica</li> <li>• cultural pluralism</li> <li>• socio-cultural openness: presentation and criticism</li> <li>• support for varied public functions, with emphasis on leisure time</li> <li>• freedom of behavior in the public sphere</li> <li>• gender equality</li> <li>• fulfillment of individual liberty as long as it does not harm others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uni-cultural and traditional socialization</li> <li>• esthetic ascetics</li> <li>• elimination of temptation</li> <li>• monolithic culture</li> <li>• social-cultural closure: separation and isolation and conformism</li> <li>• opposition to threatening public functions: parks, public swimming pools, cinema</li> <li>• constant supervision of individual behavior in the public sphere</li> <li>• gender inequality</li> <li>• subordination of the individual to religious dictates</li> </ul>
<b>Values</b>	<p><b>Higher Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skepticism, critique and openness: science, knowledge and debate</li> <li>• values emphasizing liberty and free choice</li> </ul> <p><b>Esthetics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasis on the unique, flamboyant and difference at the center,</li> <li>• environmental sensitivity</li> </ul> <p><b>Erotica</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interaction between the sexes</li> <li>• pleasure and leisure in public space, high tolerance for difference</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sacred Studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conformist and closed: Torah studies and limitation of secular studies</li> <li>• values emphasizing obedience, supervision and direction</li> </ul> <p><b>Asceticism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasis on common denominators, similarity and conformism,</li> <li>• inattention to the environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Restraint of Instinct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single-sex interactions,</li> <li>• avoidance of enjoyment and entertainment in the public sphere, distancing and harassing of those who break the rules</li> </ul>
<b>Beliefs</b>	<p><b>Individual liberties with respect for others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief in individual liberties, expression of liberal and modern values as long as they do not harm others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Superiority of religion dictates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life dictated by a code of regulations and religious laws that supersede the individual</li> </ul>

What initially appears as a local tension – modesty of dress or maintaining distance between the sexes in defined places, for example – actually stems from the covert struggle between beliefs and conflicting universal perspectives. Are we aware of the ongoing culture war? Not necessarily. There are guiding social intermediating forces that intervene between the underlying system of values and beliefs and overt forms of behavior in the public sphere. To a certain extent, these forces are wrapped in uncertainty, and they can moderate or exacerbate the influence of the belief systems on patterns of behavior. Reality reflects the deep ideological conflict, as if it were a warped mirror.<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

All of the struggles described in this chapter reflect different expressions of the conflict between religion and democracy in Israel. To a great extent, the results of these struggles will shape the character of the state. They will determine the **identity** of the state, the **source of authority**, Israel's **borders and position in the world**, Israel's **socio-economic vitality**, and the **character of public space**. The results of these struggles will determine the State of Israel's course of development: waning and demise or flourishing and growth. It therefore behooves us to examine each of these components separately:

**Identity** – What is a Jewish and democratic state? Is it Jewish in religious terms, or is it the state of the Jewish people, based on the Jewish people's right to self-determination? What makes us a people? Is it historical nationalism, which has been fulfilled in the national state and its hopes for the future, or religion with its attending rules and commandments? Nationalism and religion both function as belief systems with specific and differentiated rules, symbols and rituals. They can accommodate, compete or struggle with each other.

Balance between the Jewish state on one hand, and the democratic nation-state and multicultural society that integrates democracy and religion on the other, would be an optimistic development. If the conflict between the Jewish perspective and the democratic perspective becomes deeper, and if Jewish identity comes to conflict powerfully with national-democratic identity, the social-cultural conflict

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<sup>41</sup> Jewish thought and philosophy tend to concentrate on the deeper conflicts and focus on the encounter between the religious and democratic discourses. Sociology and anthropology tend to deal with the overt aspects and the values that underlie them. Thus, there is almost no connection between the disciplines, and only limited synthesis between beliefs, values, and patterns of behavior.

will become more pronounced, and society will be in danger of division and separation; this is the pessimistic possibility. An interim development, located somewhere in a grey area, may occur if a clear decision is not taken; under such circumstances, the search for a golden mean between the Jewish state and the democratic state would continue. In this case, we can anticipate two-directional flows between the identities, lack of clarity and confusion, and continued processes of modernization alongside economic and social isolation and decline.

**Source of Authority** – What is the source of authority? Is it the civil legal and justice system or the rules of religious law? What will happen in cases of conflict between the two systems, especially with regard to issues such as education and military service, settlement and determination of borders? This tension has great significance in a society that is as conflicted as Israeli society. Who will determine the content of education? When given commands, whom will religious soldiers obey? Acceptance of the rule of law – even if begrudgingly – by everyone will be an optimistic development. Rejection of the rule of law is the pessimistic option. Ignoring violations of the law while maintaining discriminatory policies will be the grey area.

**Determination of borders** – Will the sovereign representatives elected by the voters serve as the source of authority, or will it be religious law and the rabbis? An optimistic development would entail an agreement with regard to the source of authority. A negative development would entail disagreement, and the persistence of the political and social conflicts with regard to settlement, education, personal status and conversion. An intermediate development, located somewhere in the grey area, would entail lack of clarity with regard to the source of authority.

**Economy** – Will the ultra-Orthodox public participate in the security and economic burdens, or will they continue to segregate themselves and demand benefits and welfare allotments to ease their poverty? An optimistic development would entail finding a way to combine studies with work, so that a community of scholars would continue to exist alongside a community of working scholars. A pessimistic development will occur if the ultra-Orthodox population continues to grow without any significant change in the rates in which ultra-Orthodox men participate in the work force. Furthermore, the demographic growth of this population will force the productive population to allocate a large proportion of its income to the non-productive population. In addition to the damage to

the economy, this will also exacerbate anger towards the ultra-Orthodox. The secular public may respond in different ways, including social protest, political organization to transfer resources to productive groups, or even emigration. Persistence of current trends, including the gradual abandonment of the yeshiva for the workplace, slow integration in the work force and societal and economic decline are the intermediate possibilities found in the grey area.

**Public Space** – What will it be like? Will this be open space, in which gender equality is maintained, or closed space in which the individual must obey religious laws? Will there be mutual tolerance and understanding of the others' values, or will public space become an arena for cultural struggle? The optimistic development will occur if both sides act with mutual tolerance and sincerity. Social life will proceed according to the principles of pluralism, religious freedom and freedom from religion. The pessimistic development will occur if there is an attempt to impose religion over public life and to shape public space according to religious values. This will lead to cultural conflict and culture wars in public space. The intermediate, grey-area development entails segregation and lack of contact between the cultural groups, lack of mutual respect and conflicts whenever cultural-spatial borders are crossed.

All the struggles stem from the conflict between mutually-exclusive systems of values: democracy vs. religion, autonomy vs. heteronomy, internal source of authority vs. external source of authority; rights vs. the yoke of the commandments; a social contract vs. a contract based on divine promise and choice.

At this point, two main questions come up: 1) what are the cultural groups that influence and shape the relationships between state and religion in Israel? 2) What are the driving forces that shape the behavior of these groups? The following chapters deal with these questions.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE CULTURAL MAP

The mode of resolving the controversies between state and religion largely depends on the relations between the cultural camps in Israel as they have evolved and changed over a prolonged historical process.

### **Background: The Evolution of the Cultural Camps**

Political Zionism sought to return the Jewish people to history as a sovereign agent. It sought to achieve this by transforming Judaism, using political activism to detach the people from the passive religious tradition of waiting for theological redemption, and make it into a nation like all others. Its most prominent representative was Theodor Herzl, and the first waves of immigrants who came to settle the land were its primary activists. With the UN decision for partition and the establishment of the State of Israel, Zionist political activity reached its zenith and fulfilled its dream.

As dream became reality, the Zionist movement revealed its ambivalence towards religion and tradition. While on the one hand, it attempted to separate itself from religious law, on the other hand, the movement put great emphasis on the historical memory of Zion and Jerusalem and the cultural traditions of the Jewish people.<sup>42</sup> To this day, large parts of the secular and traditional communities in Israel share this ambivalence.

In religious circles, too, the response to secular Zionism's political-national initiative, which entailed a rejection of religion and faith, was conflicted. The success of political Zionism created a complicated dilemma for the religious camp, posing a choice between secular-political redemption in the present or continued waiting for theological redemption at the end of days. The religious Zionist camp, led by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, viewed Zionist settlement as the beginning of a divine process during which the entire Jewish people would come together in the homeland to constitute the "Kingdom of Priests and the Holy People" and serve as a moral example for all peoples of the world.<sup>43</sup> In the works of his son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook, at the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva, the

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<sup>42</sup> For an extensive discussion of Zionism's ambivalence towards religion and tradition, see Ella Belfer, 2004, pp. 26-30, who writes, "On the one hand, the physical-human redemption of the Jewish people was stripped of its faith-based and religious principles; but on the other hand, the focus on the historical-geographic aspects of the Land of Israel served as an umbilical cord that tied the Zionist revival to the tradition of covenant and Messiah." (p. 26, Hebrew)

<sup>43</sup> Kook, 1921 (Hebrew).

emergence of Gush Emunim, and settlement in Judea and Samaria were viewed as the completion of the redemptive process.

The ultra-Orthodox camp, in contrast, never viewed Zionist settlement as the beginning of the redemptive process. According to the ultra-Orthodox, the return to the Land of Israel should not come about as the result of forcing the arrival of the end of days or through the approval of the family of nations, but rather as a result of reconciliation between the people, who had been exiled from the land because of their sins, and their God, who would then redeem them in their land at the end of days.

The ultra-Orthodox, anti-Zionist camp remained loyal to the three oaths that God adjured upon the world: not to migrate from Exile to the Land of Israel *en masse* and not to rebel against the other nations. The third was incumbent on the other nations, who were sworn not to subjugate the Jews excessively.<sup>44</sup> According to this camp, “Israel is only a nation in its Torah” and not by territorial gains or the establishment of political institutions to manage that territory. For these reasons, to this day the extremist groups in this camp reject the validity of the existence of the State of Israel and view life within the State as a continuation of the Exile.<sup>45</sup>

## The Cultural Map

According to Charles Liebman, the cultural map of the Jewish community in Israel is composed of three main cultures: religious culture, which includes two subcultures – religious Zionism and ultra-Orthodoxy; “secular Jewish” culture, which pays respect to Jewish religious and cultural tradition; and “Western, post-modern consumer culture,” which is indifferent or hostile to Jewish tradition.<sup>46</sup> In my opinion, the cultural map is more complex, and includes four main groups: secular Judaism with a nationalist orientation; secular Judaism with a post-Zionist orientation; national-religious Judaism; and ultra-Orthodox Judaism. (See Illustration 2).

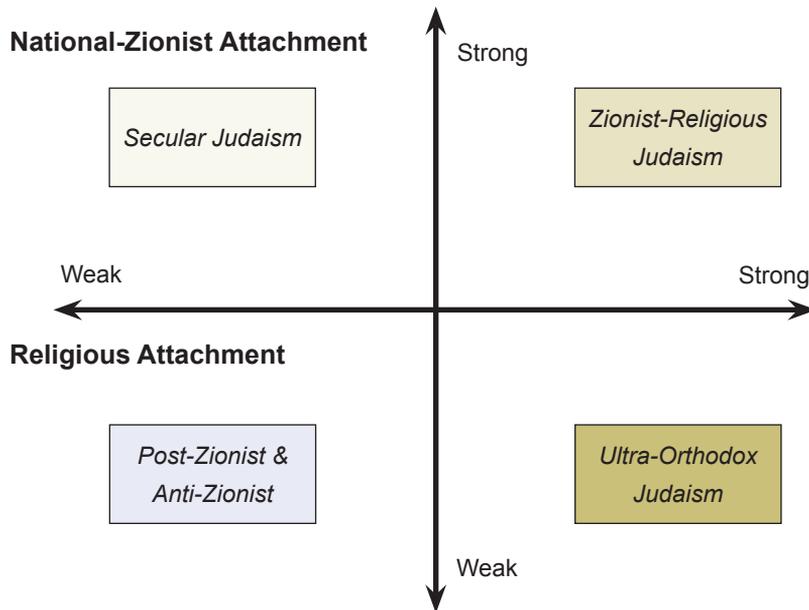
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<sup>44</sup> Babylonian Talmud: Ketubot 111a.

<sup>45</sup> Vinman, 1995 (Hebrew).

<sup>46</sup> See Liebman, 2001 (Hebrew). For Liebman “Culture... finds its expression in the habits and norms of daily life. Its symbolic creations, and especially the literary and artistic creations, are merely its more dramatic expression.” (p. 2).

**Illustration 2: The Cultural Map**



The two religious subcultures described by Liebman – religious Zionism and ultra-Orthodox culture – actually represent two distinct and even hostile religious camps, with essentially different positions, traditions, and attitudes towards the state, Zionism, and Western culture.<sup>47</sup> The ultra-Orthodox camp can be viewed as an “enclave culture,” which, as described by Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2004), is characterized by the fences with which it defends itself from the external, surrounding cultures. These fences limit contacts between members of this group and the surrounding culture and accord far-reaching in-group socialization powers to the community sages and yeshiva rabbis. The groups enclosed within the fence may be different from each other, but these differences are insignificant in comparison to their collective difference from the groups that are on the other side of the fence. The ultra-Orthodox seclusion is essentially religious-spiritual and does not necessitate, as Moshe Grylak makes clear in his book, *The Haredim*, seclusion from the people of Israel nor from its technology and progress.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> According to The Democracy Index for 2012, 36 percent of the ultra-Orthodox see themselves as not-so Zionist or not at all Zionist, in contrast to 11.1 percent of the national ultra-Orthodox and only 6.1 percent of the national religious. See Herman et al., 2012, p. 83.

<sup>48</sup> Grylak, 2002.

Grylak argues that the purpose of their secluded cultural enclave is to ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people. In this regard, the ultra-Orthodox camp is characterized by its strong national attachment to the continued existence of the People of Israel. However, this attachment has nothing to do with Zionism as a national movement that sought to disengage from tradition and bring the Jewish people back into history as a sovereign subject in charge of its own fate.

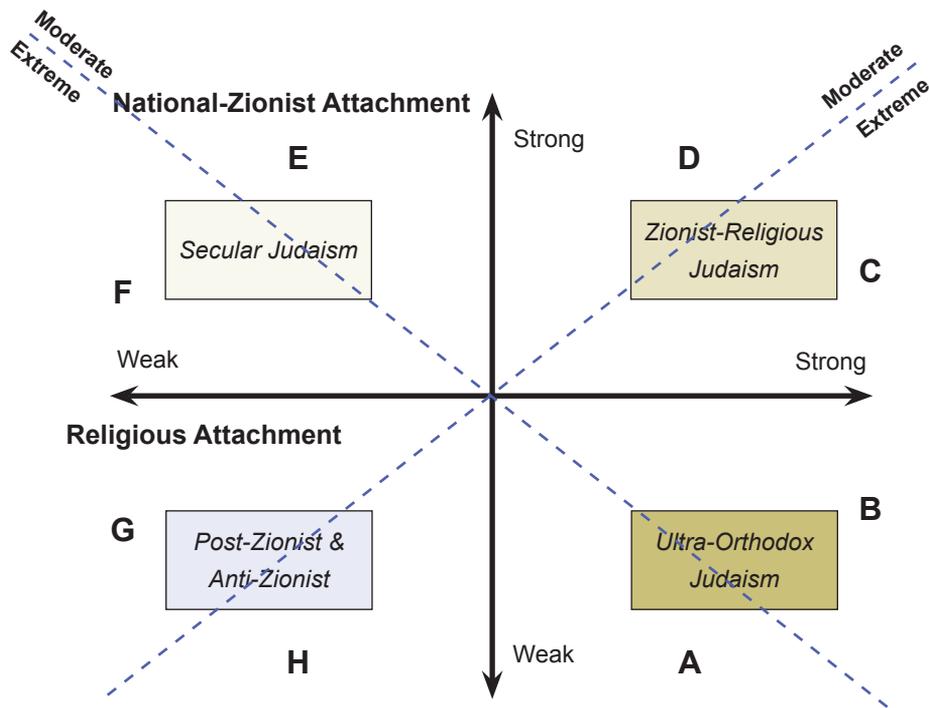
The Zionist-religious camp, in contrast, has adopted the Zionist ideal, elevating it to the “beginning of the redemption.” Its attitude towards public space differs from that of the ultra-Orthodox camp, as its patterns of residence, forms of entertainment, dress, and behavior reveal. This camp is integrated into leading positions in society and state. For these reasons, the Zionist-religious camp should be regarded as a separate cultural camp (see Illustration 2) that has adopted a critical attitude towards the ultra-Orthodox camp and cooperates closely with the secular camp, as the elections to the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset clearly proved.

Each cultural camp is composed of sub-groups that cope differently with the tension between religion and state and between religion and democracy. In general, it is possible to distinguish within each cultural camp between extreme and moderate orientations, while other camps may be found in-between. (See Illustration 3).<sup>49</sup> These groups meet in the political-cultural space in which controversial issues of state and religion are decided; they determine whether these decisions will be made through accommodation or conflict; and they shape the character and nature of the state. We can distinguish between eight primary groups:

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<sup>49</sup> An in-depth distinction between different groups within the cultural system was made by Avinoam Rosenak (2005). Rosenak identified eight different ideological positions based on the manner in which they deal with the tensions between religion and state and between religious law and democracy. His discussion is philosophical, focusing on the opinions of rabbis and thinkers. The distinctions in Illustration 3 are political-cultural.

**Illustration 3: The Cultural Relations Map**



There are two groups in the Ultra-Orthodox camp: The group that seeks to separate and seclude itself (A) and the group that seeks to maintain its own culture while integrating into economic and social life (B).<sup>50</sup> Within the Zionist-religious camp one can detect a group that is involved in a process of increasing extremism, nationalism and religiosity (C) as well as a group that seeks to maintain a more moderate religious-political culture (D). The extremist group is moving closer to the Ultra-Orthodox life style, tends to reject the rule of law and at times even takes the law into its own hands. It is from this group that the Jewish Underground, the “Price Tag” groups, the terrorist groups and the assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin emerged. The moderate group in the Zionist-religious camp rejects and denounces this process of increasing extremism in education and culture and obeys the law.

<sup>50</sup> In this regard, the scenario proposed by Amiram Gonen regarding “Two Brothers” that appears in Hasson, 2002, is fascinating. A current expression of this scenario may be the divide between the new Ultra-Orthodox and the traditional Ultra-Orthodox who continue to maintain the old patterns.

One part of the secular Jewish camp seeks to build bridges between the past and the present and between state and religion. This group includes secularists who respect tradition as well as traditionalists who are close to being secular (E). The other part of the secular public tends to disassociate itself from the past and wishes to create a full separation between state and religion (F). In the post-Zionist and anti-Zionist camp, there are those who want to integrate into the existing political system, even if they oppose that system on ideological grounds (G), and there are those who seek to subvert existing institutions, dismantle the Jewish state, and replace it with another system, such as a bi-national state or a state of all of its citizens (H). The different cultural groups are represented by different parties, NGO's, sources of authority, public figures and influential private citizens.

The map points to numerous groups, motivated by different world views and competing with each other in the political-cultural arena. In contrast to the cultural map that presents four camps (Illustration 2), the actual situation (Illustration 3) is much more variegated and complex.<sup>51</sup> In reality, the internal conflicts within each of the cultural camps are no less interesting and influential than the conflicts between the camps.

The cultural map clarifies the political coalitions that have formed the governments since the establishment of the state. When Mapai and its descendants (the Ma'arakh and the Labor Party) formed the most prominent parties, the ruling coalition was composed of the parts of the secular camp that maintained a nationalist and socialist connection (E and F), Zionist-religious Judaism (C and D) and, for a short period, ultra-Orthodox parties (A and B). The political reversal in 1977 brought a different coalition to government, in which the Zionist-religious parties and the ultra-Orthodox parties were led by a nationalist-secular party. That coalition included parties that represented the cultural groups A, B, C, D and some of group E. This represented the connections between religious and Ultra-Orthodox groups and the groups with a strong rightwing national identity, providing a firm base of support for the rightwing national government. In the elections to the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset (in 2013), a coalition was formed between cultural group E (Likud Beitenu, Yesh Atid and HaTnua) and cultural groups C and D (HaBayit Hayehudi). The leftwing parties, including parts of group E, group

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<sup>51</sup> Reality is more complex and variegated than maps can reflect. For instance, the Conservative and Reform streams of Judaism are located between group D and group E and the Mizrahi traditionalists are in the middle between these two groups. But this is sufficient to convince us that it is necessary to sharpen the distinctions and avoid attitudes based on stereotypes.

F, whose connection to Zionism and religion is weak, and the Ultra-Orthodox groups A and B, whose connection to the national state of the Jewish people extends from apathy to hostility, were left out of the coalition. In this coalition, the Yesh Atid party replaced the Ultra-Orthodox parties.

The nature of future coalitions will be determined by the demographic make-up of the population, the nature of the geopolitical conflict, the ideology and values presented by their leadership, and the extent of the rapprochement between the groups. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, the ultra-Orthodox, who today make up some 10 percent of the population, will make up 12 to 13 percent of the population in 2019 and between 14 to 21 percent of the population in 2034.<sup>52</sup> Assuming that the ultra-Orthodox will make up between 17 and 18 percent of the population, and that they will be proportionally represented in the Knesset, they will have some 22 representatives in the Knesset, as compared to the 18 representatives that they now have. In the absence of dramatic changes, such as the Arab parties joining the coalition, the ultra-Orthodox are likely to return to the coalition – and this may happen faster than anticipated, since the geopolitical situation will accelerate these trends. This is because the conflict enhances national attachment and accords great power to coalitions composed of secular, religious, and Ultra-Orthodox parties in which nationalistically-oriented and religious camps join forces. A waning of the geopolitical conflict, a change pushing for conflict resolution or strong pressure from the outside could breakup the coalition that was formed in the 2013 elections due to the lack of agreement within group E (national secularists) with regard to the nature of the relationships with the Palestinians.

In other words, the relationships between state and religion, which are affected by the political and cultural attachments of the groups, could also be influenced by demographic and geopolitical developments. In this context, it is possible to contemplate various potential coalition arrangements that could determine the future relationships between state and religion:

1. A right-leaning secular coalition that cooperates with the Zionist-religious and ultra-Orthodox parties, much like the coalitions that were prevalent until the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset. Such a coalition will accord significant power to the Zionist-religious and ultra-Orthodox and this will have a major effect on the nature of public life. This coalition will also allocate resources to the settlers in Judea and Samaria and to the ultra-Orthodox. Opponents of this coalition

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<sup>52</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012, p. 7. (Hebrew).

include the secular public that bears the brunt of the economic and security burdens, including large parts of group E, F, and G and H. In other words, extra-parliamentary forces will try to disrupt this coalition.

2. A right-leaning secular coalition with Zionist-religious groups that excludes the ultra-Orthodox, such as the coalition formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset. The Zionist-religious parties will have significant influence over the allocation of funding towards settlement in Judea and Samaria and will try to cut back on allocations to the ultra-Orthodox. The demographic growth of the ultra-Orthodox could, in the long run, upset this coalition. In the short run, the coalition could fall apart because of disagreements over geopolitical issues. As a result of these disagreements, the Habayit Hayehudi party would leave the coalition, to be replaced by the ultra-Orthodox parties or the Labor Party.
3. A right- or left-leaning secular coalition with the ultra-Orthodox, to the exclusion of the Zionist-religious. A coalition of this type has never been established. However, the anger and frustration felt by the ultra-Orthodox because Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu excluded them from the coalition could bring them closer to the left-leaning parties. And the ultra-Orthodox would be happy to take revenge on the Habayit Hayehudi party and repay them in the same currency – by cutting back on investments in the settlements and even evacuating some of them. A coalition of this type would increase ultra-Orthodox influence and allocations to them.
4. A coalition of moderate forces from all camps. This coalition would limit allocations to the ultra-Orthodox and to the settlers in Judea and Samaria. Thus, for example, the B group among the ultra-Orthodox, which seeks to maintain its own culture while financially integrating into the general economy and even serving in the military, could create a coalition with the moderates of Group D within the Zionist-religious camp. This coalition would seek to influence not only budgetary allocations but also legislation calling for equal military service as well as the character of public spaces.
5. Given the continued population growth of the ultra-Orthodox and religious populations, one should not discount the possibility of a future ultra-Orthodox-religious coalition, in which the secular population plays only a secondary role. Such a coalition would attempt to change resource allocations, legislate

laws that strengthen the role of Jewish religious law in public life, undermine the principle of equality, and significantly influence the Israeli economy.

The cultural map will determine to a large extent the character of political coalitions and subsequently the future relations between religion and state. In itself, this map will not be shaped solely by demographic processes but also by the ideologies and ideas filtering into the various cultural groups and by the influence of public figures and public-opinion leaders. The relationships between the cultural groups will also be influenced by processes of modernization in the ultra-Orthodox camp, including exposure to new ideas and opinions, entry into the workforce, increased empowerment of the individual, and the role of women in society. Other forces that may shape the relationships between the different cultural groups are the level of governability and the power of extra-parliamentary groups, which may decrease the influence of the coalitions. Geopolitical developments are the last, and decisive, force to be discussed. They will affect the relationships within the groups, causing them to tighten internal links or leading to deep rifts. For these reasons, one must examine the driving forces that shape social and political relationships between the different cultural groups.

## **Conclusion**

The history of the relationship between state and religion points to processes of splitting and reconciliation among the various groups. This has led to a complex, multi-faceted cultural map, driven by national, religious and other ideological forces. This cultural map will determine the character of the relationships within the social spheres and the nature of the political coalitions leading the country. These coalitions will play a central role in shaping the relationships between state and religion in Israel. They can contribute to rapprochement between the groups, but can also lead to increased tensions between them. The nature of social relationships and the composition of the coalitions are, in turn, dependent upon demographic, social, economic and political developments, which are described in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER FOUR: THE DRIVING FORCES

The driving forces shape the relationships between the cultural groups and the manner in which disputes between state and religion are resolved. In this complex, contradiction-ridden field, one can identify several driving forces, including the demographic balance, the political strength of the various groups, modernization processes, the level of tolerance, the level of governability, alternative sources of authority and the influence of geopolitical processes.

Driving forces are connected to various societal processes. The process of globalization, for example, conflicts with the ascendance of nationalist forces. Processes of modernization and democratization conflict with the destabilization of governability and the avoidance of responsibility; the power of ideologies conflicts with charismatic forces outside the individual; the increase in violence collides with the attempts to restore humanism; and, finally, the principles of liberty, tolerance and dialogue collide with the praxes of propaganda and alienation.

### Demography

**The demographic composition of the state** is a central driving force in shaping the relationships between the cultural groups, the manner in which controversies are resolved, and the nature of the relationship between state and religion. Demographic processes during the first decade of the 21st century reveal that the proportions of religious and religious-traditionalist groups have remained stable, while the proportions of ultra-Orthodox groups rose from 6 percent of the overall population in 2002 to 9.9 percent in 2009, a figure that represents 12.4 percent of the Jewish population, while the non-ultra-Orthodox make up 87.6 percent of the total Jewish population.<sup>53</sup>

Changes in the demographic balance would be even more dramatic were it not for the large wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU) during the 1990s, when some 1 million people, most of them secular, immigrated to Israel. Without this wave of immigration, the relative weight the ultra-Orthodox and national-religious populations would be even greater, due to their markedly higher birth rates compared to other Israeli groups. According to the intermediate prediction by the Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2024, the ultra-Orthodox

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<sup>53</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012 (Hebrew).

population will make up 17.9 percent of the Jewish population and 14.7 percent of the overall population in Israel.<sup>54</sup>

What are the economic implications of this growth, and how will it influence social welfare in Israel? Does this growth trend necessarily mean that the ultra-Orthodox will continue to be largely dependent on public funds, or will a way be found for them to become economically independent, as they are in London or New York? How will this demographic change affect the political system? Will the relative weight of the ultra-Orthodox and religious parties increase, or will the votes of these groups be diverted to other camps?

The national and religious variety of the Jewish population in Israel is another demographic factor to be taken into consideration. Ever since the 1990s, the proportion of non-Jewish immigrants to Israel has grown. Close to a third of the immigrations from the FSU are not Jewish. At the same time, the numbers of Reform and Conservative Jews has increased. These numbers raise pertinent questions regarding status-quo arrangements, especially with regard to the monopoly held by the rabbinic courts over personal status and conversion.

## **Political Power**

**The political power of the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties** is the second driving force. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset (2013), the political representation of the Zionist-religious and ultra-Orthodox does not reflect their relative proportion in the general population, since today they hold only 30 parliamentary seats.<sup>55</sup>

The decline in the power of the ultra-Orthodox parties has been visible since the coalition negotiations following the elections to the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset and was particularly notable once again following the elections to the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Knesset, Ariel Sharon formed a government without the ultra-Orthodox parties and this government cancelled the allocations that had discriminated in their favor. In the elections to the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset, the successful centrist “Yesh Atid” party, headed by Yair Lapid, received 19 seats; this led to even greater limits on the political power wielded by the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties. Indeed, since its inception, the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset has instituted legislative processes intended to cut back on allocations to yeshiva students and religious schools that

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<sup>54</sup> Brodet, 2008, p. 201.

<sup>55</sup> Since this population numbers approximately one-third of the Jewish population, and since the number of Jewish members of Knesset is 109, the number of these parties should total a third of the overall number of Jewish members or even more, since their voter turn-out rate is very high. That is, they should number some 36 MK’s as opposed to 30 they have while writing this essay.

do not teach a core curriculum; it has also attempted to develop a framework for sharing the burden of army service. As a result, hundreds of married yeshiva students (Avrechim) lost their Kollel (an institute for full-time, advanced study of the Talmud and rabbinic literature), and as journalist Shahar Ilan has noted, “it’s not easy to manage with less funds, and the Torah Sages (*Gdolei Hatorah*) who refused any compromise could blame only themselves”.<sup>56</sup>

The quest for a centrist party has become a permanent feature of Israeli politics. For over 40 years, centrist parties, in one form or another, have given expression to the sentiments of the middle class, which seeks to limit the power of the ultra-Orthodox, reduce levels of corruption, and advance the diplomatic process with the Palestinians. In the future, the rise of these centrist parties may limit the influence of the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties.

Does the establishment of centrist parties point to a changing trend in which these parties hold the balance of power and compete against the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties? At this point, demographic-political trends remain uncertain.

The composition of the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset indicates a complex rift between the ultra-Orthodox parties and three others: Habayit Hayehudi, which represents the national-religious public; Yesh Atid, which represents the secular bourgeoisie; and Likud-Israel Beiteinu (an electoral alliance formed in 2012 by the center-right Likud and the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu to contest the January 2013 Knesset elections), which capitulated to Yesh Atid’s pressure.

## **Modernization**

Processes of social modernization related to higher-education, greater employment, increased income, and changes in consumer patterns form the third driving force. The demographic increase in the ultra-Orthodox population raises questions regarding its economic development and effect on the over-all economy. Combining religious studies with the professional training necessary for integration into the labor market would allow for mobility and economic growth, a decrease in the burden on the general public, and a reduction of social tensions. The emergence of a generation of young people who have been exposed to modern communications technology and consumer culture, as well as increased education among women, who now seek to improve their standard of living, could intensify these processes, especially in the context of the deepening world economic crisis. In response to this crisis, increasing numbers of ultra-Orthodox

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<sup>56</sup> Ilan, 2014 (Hebrew).

men are also working outside of the home. The ultra-Orthodox leadership, which would prefer to keep the men in the religious study centers, has come to understand that women's employment cannot fill the community's needs, and that it is necessary to release some of the men from the commandment to study and to direct them towards employment.

The level of employment among ultra-Orthodox men is very low: 45 percent in 2011, in contrast to 78 percent among men in the general population. The rate of employment among ultra-Orthodox women is higher than that of ultra-Orthodox men – 61 percent– but it is still low relative to the rate of employment among women in the general population, which is some 66 percent. In the past few years, there has been a rapid growth in the percentage of ultra-Orthodox men participating in the work force, from 39 percent in 2009 to the 45 percent in 2011. Despite this increase, this is still far from the level of 60 percent that the government set as its goal for the year 2020. Furthermore, the percentage of men employed in the business sector is still low compared to other Jews, since more than one third of ultra-Orthodox men are employed in public services, including religious services. Finally, the number of hours worked per week by the ultra-Orthodox is lower than for other Jews. All these lead to lower incomes, making it difficult for the ultra-Orthodox to rise above poverty.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, according to Eran Yashiv, the integration of the ultra-Orthodox into the workplace at a rate similar to that of secular Jewish men would add two percent to the GDP, or approximately 15 billion shekels.<sup>58</sup>

The cutback in social benefits, which has forced many Torah scholars to find at least part-time work in order to survive, is the main reason that ultra-Orthodox men are entering the work force. Some 40,000 men are formally listed as full-time yeshiva students for whom “Torah is their profession”. Many of them illegally work part time for very low salaries. Yet, despite their efforts, they are unable to support their large families. As noted, the critical problem is their lack of modern education and professional training, which limits them to low-level employment.

Thus, although public benefits remain relatively high even after the cutbacks, poverty levels among the ultra-Orthodox are the highest in Israel, with some 55 percent of the ultra-Orthodox population living below the poverty line, in contrast to 24 percent in the general population.<sup>59</sup> Two main reasons seem to explain this

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<sup>57</sup> Bank of Israel, 2012, p. 205-206 (Hebrew).

<sup>58</sup> Sadeh and Dettel, 13.7.2012 (Hebrew).

<sup>59</sup> Bank of Israel, 2012 (Hebrew).

situation: a voluntary choice to prefer Torah study over modern education and work, and the large number of children in ultra-Orthodox families. There is a great deal of intersection between these forces: Cultural gaps lead to educational gaps, educational gaps lead to gaps in employment, and gaps in employment lead to income gaps.<sup>60</sup> The secular public believes this socio-economic problem could undermine the state. Enraged, the ultra-Orthodox public insists that it has the right to make its own choices and that its adherents prefer a modest lifestyle based on religious studies. The secular public retorts that this choice is forcing others to allocate ever-increasing resources to support the ultra-Orthodox that prefer not to work or contribute to the economy.

In an effort to promote integration of the ultra-Orthodox into the workforce, vocational instruction programs have been established for yeshiva students who lack basic professional skills. Some private and public initiatives are already in place, especially in the fields of finance and high-tech. But these initial steps cannot in themselves provide a solution to the problem of poverty. The slowdown in the world economy and its impact on Israel's will cause the level of Israeli exports to drop – and with that, the chances for the ultra-Orthodox to integrate into the work force will also decline. Under these conditions, many of the ultra-Orthodox will come to the conclusion that it is preferable to live off of public welfare rather than invest their efforts in obtaining an education and a profession that will not provide them with gainful employment in any case.

The low level of integration of ultra-Orthodox men into the work force has put the brunt of the economic burden on ultra-Orthodox women, who carry the double burden of raising and providing for their families. Tamar El Or points to the changes taking place among ultra-Orthodox women. True, it is not a gender revolution, but it is definitely a palpable change.<sup>61</sup> In order to prepare their women for this double responsibility, the community provides them with a broader education than the men receive, including advanced skills in accounting, Hebrew, history, psychology, and English. Thus, they develop professional skills that the men, who study only Torah, do not have. Many ultra-Orthodox women obtain an academic education and gain professional skills that enable them to work in consulting, technology, PR, marketing and management. In the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of ultra-Orthodox women who are employed in senior positions in the general society.

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<sup>60</sup> Dahan, 1998 (Hebrew).

<sup>61</sup> El Or, 1992 (Hebrew).

Some of ultra-Orthodox rabbis, from both the Lithuanian and Hassidic camps, are fearful of what they perceive as the dangers facing ultra-Orthodox women as they integrate into society and the economy. For this reason, among others, they have forbidden professional and academic training at the prestigious network of Beit Ya'akov high schools, while the religious Zionist and Sephardic ultra-Orthodox streams are already offering a wide variety of professional training to women. Single-gender high-tech companies, which enable women to develop a professional career without threatening the ultra-Orthodox social and familial fabric, for example, have received approval from some of the ultra-Orthodox rabbis.

Poverty makes it difficult for ultra-Orthodox families to obtain proper housing, and this problem, already severe, is growing worse. In the 1950s, ultra-Orthodox families could purchase apartments for their children. For the second and third generations – the children of the Torah scholars – this is impossible, and they can afford housing only in the West Bank or development towns. In development towns, they live in cheap housing, where they limit the towns' growth potential because they deter stronger populations and businesses from moving in.

The ultra-Orthodox, dependent on cheap housing provided by the state, have become political pawns. It is an irony of history that of all groups it is the ultra-Orthodox – who rejected Zionism, settlement throughout the country, and interaction with Arabs – who are being sent by the state to settle in outlying areas: in Harish in the Wadi Ara region, in Modi'in Illit, Emanuel, Beitar Illit in the West Bank, and in the future to Kassif in the Negev. The combination of poverty and national challenges is likely to strengthen nationalism and chauvinism within the ultra-Orthodox community, which is now forced to live in Israel's geographic periphery or in the West Bank.

The ultra-Orthodox community is facing fateful questions: Can it continue to exist given the cutback in resources? Will the women continue to bear the burden, or will they push for changes in existing arrangements? Will the sages be able to maintain the "society of scholars"? Will the general public rebel against the greater burden that it is forced to bear?

It would seem that the crisis is impending but has not yet come to the fore. In the future, the ultra-Orthodox world may fall apart because it will not be able to continue to exist in the world that its forefathers constructed. Criticism of its leadership because of its inability to deal with financial difficulties, along with attempts to find new solutions, is already evident. Some rabbis explicitly support joining the workforce. The head of the Belz Hasidic group has published

a call to reestablish ultra-Orthodox small businesses. Rabbi Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman, one of the most prominent of the yeshiva rabbis, supports entry into the workforce for those who do not study.

Concomitantly, women are now willing to bring up problems that until recently were considered taboo, especially violence in the ultra-Orthodox family, and their power in the community is increasing. These changes point to a slow but clear trend towards equal rights for women – and this could affect the entire society.

These processes of modernization expose the ultra-Orthodox to new trends, lower the fences that separate the ultra-Orthodox from the rest of society, diminish the power of the sages, and, in the long run, may lead to changes in patterns of higher education and employment. As a result of these processes, a new group within ultra-Orthodox society has sprung up, known as “the new ultra-Orthodox.” This group includes those who work for a living and even serve in the military. They pay a heavy price: their children are not accepted into ultra-Orthodox educational institutions; they live within the community but have no political power.

## **Tolerance**

**The extent of cultural-social tolerance** is the fourth force that affects the relationships between different cultural groups and between state and religion. Tolerance refers to willingness to accept compromises and to look for a way to live together while acknowledging social difference and respecting the rule of law. At the core of tolerance is the ability to find a balance between religious commandments and individual and collective rights and liberties. Such a balance is predicated on mutual respect, respect for the rule of law, and avoiding the overuse of political power in order to advance narrow group interests.

Creating a balance between religious commandments and individual and collective rights and liberties requires coping with viewpoints and differences that appear unbridgeable. There is an obvious conflict between an ideology that emphasizes the principle of the covenant between Israel and God and joint responsibility for the existence of a holy society, even at the expense of imposition of religious law, and one that emphasizes the social contract between the individual and the state and is centered on upholding individual rights and liberties. This contract is based both on the principle of freedom *of* religion and freedom *from* religion and opposes any form of coercion. In this context, any

legislation intended to diminish the power and influence of religion is viewed positively. In its most extreme form, this contract could lead Israeli society to disengage from the Jewish people. Given these diametrically opposed positions, is it possible to build tolerance among the different cultural groups? The religious side has no capacity for tolerance: in their eyes, a secular individual is merely an “innocent child” caught in the hands of the Gentiles who must be returned to the fold. This arrogant view lacks genuine tolerance; it also celebrates the religious covenant and diminishes the social contract between the individual and the state. There seems to be no possibility of resolving the conflict between these two diametrically opposed views.

Perhaps it would be possible to advance tolerance through pragmatic arrangements that do not entail either arrogance or coercion – for example, arrangements based on spatial separation. Tolerance with regard to residential areas does not necessarily mean freedom and equality in the choice of place of residence or equal rights to live in the same area. In fact, a society that respects the principles and liberties of the other and their effect on public space will welcome residential separation.<sup>62</sup> With regard to public transportation, there is room for an understanding of the religious public’s sensibilities within their own neighborhoods. At the same time, public transportation on Shabbat should be permitted in other areas.

Tolerance based on the principle of equality also requires recognition of the other’s needs and sensibilities. It is not right to exempt some citizens of the state from obligatory military service and core curriculum studies, to offer preferential welfare payments, and to allocate additional resources for education and affordable housing at the expense of the rest of the public. These processes contradict the principle of equality. It would be proper to resolve these conflicts through pragmatic discussions; legislation without discussion is likely to exacerbate alienation and hatred. The development of genuine tolerance requires social sensitivity, mutual recognition and true dialogue. In public life, tolerance could be expressed by permitting alternative forms of marriage, divorce, conversion and kashrut observance. Tolerance could bring religious law closer to the people by emphasizing respect for tradition and freedom of choice.

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<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of intolerance in Judaism with regard to public space, see Fischer, 2003.

## **Governability**

**Governability** is the fifth force shaping the relationships between cultural groups and between state and religion. Israel and Israeli society need a political system with the ability to chart a course, lead, and create a vision for the future that will be acceptable to the various cultural groups. The government must show determination in the face of violation of the rule of law. This is particularly so with regard to illegal construction by settlers in areas of Judea and Samaria and the refusal on the part of ultra-Orthodox communities to implement a core curriculum in their schools, equally share economic burdens, and serve in the military.

This kind of governability does not exist today. The Israeli government is in a deep strategic crisis, operates poorly with weak leadership, and is pervaded by a sense of uncertainty and insecurity. Because of its own lack of stability, inability to make decisions, and its actions which undermine the balances between the branches of government, the current government finds it difficult to govern, plan and implement.

Under these circumstances, the locus of decision-making has moved from the legislative branch to other institutions: the courts, the rabbis, and the organizations that make up civil society. The courts have been forced to fill the vacuum left by the legislative and executive branches, which have failed to take decisions regarding politically-loaded issues such as evacuation of settlements and homes built on privately-owned Palestinian land, conscription of yeshiva students into the military, and conversion in Israel by non-Orthodox rabbis. Decisions taken by the High Court of Justice are confronted by an opposing coalition of rabbis, politicians and social organizations that attempts to undermine them. The persistence of these processes could further destabilize the rule of law and undermine the status of the Knesset, the government, and the courts.

## **Extra-Parliamentary Activities and Alternative Sources of Authority**

**Extra-parliamentary activities and alternative sources of authority** form the sixth driving force. Secular, Reform, and Conservative social institutions and civil organizations are attempting to change the relationships between state and religion through various petitions to the courts, addressing issues such as shared burdens, the nature of public space, open roads on the Sabbath, recognition of

Reform and Conservative conversion, women's prayer at the Western Wall, barring settlements on privately-owned Palestinian land, and many others. As a result of these petitions, the courts have become a central force for maintaining democracy and protecting human rights.

On the other side, social institutions and rabbinic leadership are challenging the authority of the Knesset and the government. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who led the national-religious camp until his death in 1982, provided religious legitimization for the actions taken by his camp and undermined the authority of the government with regard to settlement in the West Bank. Today, many religious-Zionist and national-ultra-Orthodox rabbis likewise support activities that violate the law. Representatives of the law and the courts are not eager to fulfill their roles and thus make the problems of governability even worse. The status of the rabbis in the national-religious camp is constantly growing stronger, and they wield considerable influence.

In the ultra-Orthodox camp, the leadership consists of the prominent religious scholars of the generation (called *Gedolim*, "great men of the generation", *gedolei Torah* or *gedolei Yisrael*). These "great men" make decisions regarding public issues, and their decisions are accepted without reservation within the ultra-Orthodox camp because they are considered to be in accordance with *Da'at Torah*, that is "Knowledge of Torah". Ultra-Orthodox members of parliament are selected by the rabbis who form the supreme rabbinical policy-making council, the "Council of Torah Sages", and are beholden to them. These familiar forms of authority have grown stronger in Israel because of the need to deal with a new, complex reality in which an "exiled" Jewish minority exists within the Jewish state, which is how the ultra-Orthodox see themselves. Among the prominent men who contributed to the development of the "great men of the generation," were Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz, known as the "Chazon Ish" (1878-1953), and his successor, Rabbi Elazar Menachem Man Shach (1899-2001). Rabbi Karelitz was willing to cooperate with the Zionist institutions in order to receive money and support, with the goal of establishing a cultural and social enclave. He convinced Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to exempt Torah scholars from military service and developed a comprehensive educational system, from pre-school through post-high school studies, in order to establish an intellectual elite of Torah scholars who would fill the role of the previous rabbinical intellectual elite, which had been annihilated in the Holocaust. He also developed a comprehensive educational system for girls that prepared them to be devoted partners to their scholarly husbands, give birth to many children and bear the brunt of their

education, and support the family by working full-time as teachers. Rabbi Shach continued this tradition.

The question to be posed is: To what extent will future generations obey the “great men of the generation”? The leadership of the religious and ultra-Orthodox camps has not managed to cultivate worthy heirs, and a struggle over the crown of leadership in the ultra-Orthodox camp has ensued. The newly appointed leader, Aharon Leib Shteinman, who took over the reins after the death of Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashiv, is considered a pragmatist with regard to entry into the workforce. In the 1990s, he cooperated with several attempts to create dialogue with the wider society, including the Kinneret Convention, establishment of an ultra-Orthodox unit in the army, and the Tal Committee. These activities contradicted the views of Rabbi Shach. It would appear that Rabbi Shteinman is very aware of the fact that the rapid increase in the ultra-Orthodox population and the decline in public allocations are forcing the ultra-Orthodox community to adopt different policies. But not everyone accepts his leadership.

## **Geopolitical Influence**

**Geopolitical influence**, referring to the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict and Israel’s position in the world, is the seventh factor that shapes relationships between cultural groups and between state and religion. On the one hand, growing geopolitical threats against Israel create cohesion, reinforce solidarity, and lower the intensity of internal tensions, including the tensions between state and religion. These processes bring ultra-Orthodox groups closer to Zionism, which they had rejected in the past. The ultra-Orthodox are settling in the territories, adopting nationalist positions, and supporting the deportation of foreigners. On the other hand, against the background of these geopolitical conditions, differences between religious and non-religious are enhanced, leading to deep polarization over inequality in sharing the burdens of society as well as violation of law in the occupied territories.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the driving forces that are likely to shape relationships between cultural groups and the system of relationships between state and religion. Table 2 summarizes the primary trends that may characterize the behavior of these driving forces:

**Table 2: Driving Forces – Possible Trends**

<b>Driving Forces</b>	<b>Possible trends</b>
<b>Overall Trends (High probability Driving Forces)</b>	
<b>Demography</b>	Increase in the influence of the ultra-Orthodox and religious camps due to high birth rates and large numbers of youth
<b>Game Changers (Uncertain Driving Forces)</b>	
<b>Political Power</b>	Will the ultra-Orthodox and religious parties continue to serve as the decisive balance or will they be pushed aside by the centrist parties?
<b>Modernization</b>	Will modernization break up religious frameworks, or will they accommodate each other?
<b>Tolerance</b>	Will the different cultural groups develop mutual tolerance or will the relationships between them become more extreme?
<b>Governability</b>	Will governments adjust to changes and direct them or face them helplessly?
<b>Extra-Parliamentary Processes and Alternative Sources of Authority</b>	Will the extra-parliamentary processes bring pragmatic discussion or confrontation and appeals to alternative sources of authority? Will these alternative sources obey the law?
<b>Geopolitics</b>	Will the geopolitical conflict persist and intensify the internal rifts with regard to borders and military service, or will it come to an end, leading to internal reconciliation and allocation of resources to the resolution of internal tensions?

Among the seven driving forces, only the demographic force is highly predictable, while the others are surrounded by a thick layer of uncertainty. The probability is high that in the future the relative weight of the religious and ultra-Orthodox populations in Israel will increase, given the high birth rates of religious and ultra-Orthodox women. Even if birth rates were to significantly decrease in the coming years, the large number of young people will significantly increase the proportion of ultra-Orthodox within the general population.

The political influence of the religious and ultra-Orthodox communities cannot be predicted with any certainty. The religious parties may continue to tip

the scales, but this could be reversed by increased strength of the secular centrist parties.

The influence of modernization runs between two poles: it could break down existing religious frameworks or they could gradually adjust to modernity while maintaining their existing values and patterns of behavior. The dichotomous presentation – modernization vs. religious attachment – ignores the complexity of the relationship between them.

The low level of governability that characterizes the current political system might continue to lag behind developments. At the same time, one should not rule out the possibility of stronger governability due to changes in voting methods, the way in which the government is formed, and the ascendancy of a new form of leadership.

In the future, alternative sources of authority may conflict with elected institutions. On the other hand, they could also reinforce proper governability if they comply with their role as an unelected force.

Geopolitical tensions can intensify or attenuate, thus influencing the character of the Jewish identity of the state. Continuation of the existing situation can lead to a de-facto bi-national state and to increased tensions regarding issues of the territories and the burden of service. In contrast, a compromise in which Israel becomes the nation-state of the Jewish people while observing the principles of democracy could bring the secular and national-religious groups closer.



## CHAPTER FIVE: THE SCENARIOS

Relationships between state and religion, shaped by cultural groups and by a wide variety of driving forces, will largely determine the future character of the State of Israel, including the character of government and public life, Israel's borders and its geopolitical position in the Middle East and the world, and the state's level of economic development (See Illustration 1). In other words, to a great degree the relationships between state and religion will shape the future of the State of Israel – whether it will flourish, deteriorate, or stagnate.

### The Scenarios

From Israel's point of view, the unpredictable driving forces could operate in a positive, negative or neutral manner. Based on these differences four different scenarios are suggested: Stagnation, Occupation, Divisions, and Connections. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the effect of the driving forces, each and every one of these scenarios could come to fruition in the future (See Table 3).

**Table 3: The Scenarios, by Uncertain Driving Forces**

<b>Uncertain Driving Forces</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Power of the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties</b>	Moderate to strong, the ultra-Orthodox and religious parties promote understanding and compromise	Moderate, due to the rise of centrist parties that tip the balance of power	Strong, increasing religious extremism and rejection of mutual understanding and compromise
<b>Modernization</b>	Integration into modern systems while maintaining religious tradition	Partial acceptance of modernization	Rejection of modernization by the ultra-Orthodox
<b>Tolerance</b>	High, with openness and sensitivity to the other	Partial compromises	Low, with seclusion, extremism and conflicts
<b>Governability</b>	Deliberate and directive	Caught between leading and being led, lacking initiative	Powerless and led

<b>Uncertain Driving Forces</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Extra-parliamentary processes and alternative sources of authority</b>	Solidarity among cultural groups, support for existing system based on good citizenship and understanding of social and market needs	Controversies, partial compromises	Deep rifts, opposition to the existing system and promotion of particularistic interests
<b>Geopolitics</b>	Resolution of the conflict and high social solidarity	Resolution of the conflict and intensification of internal conflicts	Perpetuation of the conflict, deep internal rifts

The construction of these scenarios, as presented above, is based on several primary principles:

1. **Complex systemic thinking.** Building scenarios demands examination of numerous factors: political relationships and social-cultural systems that include numerous stakeholders, such as the secular, ultra-Orthodox, and national-religious communities, the rabbinic establishment, Jews in the Diaspora, and others. These groups are divided within themselves, and these subgroups, in turn, are influenced by a broad spectrum of driving forces. The controversies and reconciliations among these groups shape the relations between state and religion in numerous areas, including identity and identification, authority, and economic and social sustainability. The common research perspective tends to focus on one dimension (political or social) and only on one or two groups (secular and ultra-Orthodox) or on one topic (exclusion, military service, settlements in the territories, etc.)
2. **Identification of uncertainties.** The driving forces are divided into two groups – factors with high probability (such as demography) and factors that are unpredictable, such as political power or modernization, which have the power to change social mechanisms and historical patterns and push the system into other relational patterns.
3. **Historical thinking and long-term horizons.** Scenario building requires identification of possible trends in the behavior of the driving forces, including

continuation of the existing situation or change in past patterns over periods of time ranging from ten to twenty years. In this regard, construction of scenarios differs from prevailing trends in research and policy, which tend to limit the time frame to the past and present, due primarily to their lack of certainty in identification of future trends and uncertain processes.

4. **Examination of alternative futures.** This includes the construction of possible (although not necessarily desirable) scenarios that attend to possible systems of relationships between state and religion and to the influence of these relationships on the character of the State of Israel over time.
5. **Strategic development.** This requires identification of existing strategies according to past decisions and presentation of alternative strategies.

## **Stagnation Scenario**

### **Summary**

This scenario is based on continuation of current trends (“business as usual” scenario). The state’s leaders do not have a guiding vision or strategic plans regarding the relationship between state and religion. Politics deals with putting out fires and is unable to anticipate future developments. All energies are invested in an attempt to reach agreements within short-term coalitions, even at the price of sacrificing the future. In this scenario, political parties are concerned with their own survival and give preference to short-term considerations while ignoring long-term interests. The level of governability is low; the ultra-Orthodox control over public life is growing stronger and is limiting the role of the non-Orthodox streams even further. The result is a lack of alternatives with regard to marriage, divorce, and conversion; exclusion of women; control over public space; and constraints on alternative religious streams. There are attempts to generate change, including calls for equality in military service, for two states for two peoples, for establishment of commissions that are meant to create change; however, when the rhetorical dust settles, it is clear that the situation does not change significantly. This stagnation is largely due to the opposition of the national-religious parties to any change in the borders; the refusal on the part of the ultra-Orthodox to share in the economic and security burdens; and the opposition of the rabbinical establishment to any change in the character of public life.

## **The Scenario in Detail**

### **Modernization**

Processes of modernization among the ultra-Orthodox are merely superficial. After minimal exposure to general studies at *talmud torah* (primary school), ultra-Orthodox boys move on to yeshivas where they do not continue to study English, mathematics or science, which would be necessary for their integration in the modern workplace, and they speak Hebrew poorly. Most ultra-Orthodox young people prefer to continue to devote themselves to religious studies and those who do enter the workplace are not capable of modern, financially viable employment. Most of them work part time at low-paying service jobs within their own communities. As a result, the growing participation of ultra-Orthodox men in the labor force does not appreciably contribute to the economy.

The fact that the ultra-Orthodox community, a large part of which is not productive, will make up approximately one-fifth of the total Jewish population in Israel in 2023 leads to deterioration in the state's economic position. However, even in the face of this development, the ultra-Orthodox continue to refuse to contribute to society or the economy and, instead, they continue to demand aid from the State. They successfully refuse to teach the required core studies that are essential for participation in the modern economy. They continue to work in marginal positions whose contribution to the family and the economy are minimal. The low income is reflected in low levels of consumerism, a poor tax base, and a continued drain on the market and the economy. The ultra-Orthodox continue to refuse to serve in the military or to contribute equally to maintaining the security of the state.

The ultra-Orthodox population takes advantage of its strong representation in the Knesset and the government in order to guarantee the continued flow of money to their voters. Continued economic transfers to the ultra-Orthodox create a wave of protest and counter-response against the draft. Rage grows as the ultra-Orthodox continue to impose their culture on the environment through violence and legislation.

### **Politics**

The results of the elections leave the ultra-Orthodox and religious parties with extensive influence. In an age of deep political rifts and the disappearance of the larger parties, governing parties need their support. Although the growth of the centrist parties does limit the influence of the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties

to a certain extent, it does not eliminate this influence entirely. A long-term view points to the return of the ultra-Orthodox to positions of power from which they were excluded at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Knesset. The reasons behind this include expansion of the ultra-Orthodox population; growth in the political power wielded by the ultra-Orthodox parties; the ultra-Orthodox community's need for public resources; and controversies and rifts between right-wing and national-religious parties and the centrist parties with a moderate view towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The vacuum created by the departure of the moderate centrist parties from the coalition is filled by the ultra-Orthodox.

Ultra-Orthodox and religious parties' participation in the government enables them to channel public resources to their constituencies and to provide them with extensive benefits, especially with regard to housing and welfare. Settlements located deep in the heart of Judea and Samaria continue to grow and expand, preventing any possibility of establishment of a contiguous, economically-sustainable Palestinian state. This set of national priorities, dictated by coalition considerations, discriminates against geographically peripheral settlements within Israel proper. The population in the Galilee and the Negev is neglected, and the Jewish population of these regions is abandoning their homes. In the absence of necessary allocations of resources and housing, the Arab population suffers the most. The result is illegal construction by Arabs on agricultural and state-owned land. The government does not attend to the problems of the Bedouin in the Negev, who continue to seize land throughout the area.

## **Tolerance**

Agitation and opposition increase in response to successful attempts to take advantage of coalition membership in order to promote a national-religious, ultra-Orthodox, and ultra-nationalist agenda. Anger and alienation among the different social groups is on the rise. Each group isolates itself in its own space – secular suburbs, national-religious neighborhoods, expanding ultra-Orthodox enclaves, and Arab ghettos in the peripheral regions. The ultra-Orthodox intensify their attempts to exclude women, and in most of their own living spaces there is complete separation between men and women on sidewalks, on public transportation, and in public institutions. Occasionally, the ultra-Orthodox deface property or are violent towards secular women and families who live in proximity to them. There are sporadic attempts to close streets near the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods to traffic on the Sabbath.

Israeli society is split and divided. The secular and national-religious communities bear an increasingly heavy burden, while the government refuses to impose sanctions against the ultra-Orthodox and continues to support the yeshiva students. As a result, the rift between those who serve and those who dodge the draft deepens, and bitterness and anger increase.

## **Governability**

The government has no effective response to the ever-deepening rifts in Israeli society. It establishes committees in order to deal with controversial issues, but capitulates to its coalition partners. The government merely exists and has no vision, strategy, or ability to govern. Under these circumstances, the balance of power moves towards extra-parliamentary groups and alternative sources of authority.

## **Extra-parliamentary processes and alternative sources of authority**

Extra-parliamentary groups, operating outside the political system, protest against the current system because it gives preference to the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious settlers. The leaders of this protest against the government's social and geopolitical agenda are young and middle-class seculars. They take to the streets demanding social justice, shared burdens, a Jewish and democratic nation-state, and peace. The secular public is weak and divided among itself; there are frequent protests, but secular leaders are unable to offer a vision or program of action that would unite the protesting groups.

The secular, Reform, and Conservative communities remain on the margins. They occasionally petition the courts, and the courts decide in their favor, but the government prefers compromise that favors the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious. Rabbis, government ministers, and members of Knesset denounce the courts. These processes exacerbate the sense of frustration and anger felt by the secular community towards the ultra-Orthodox community and intensify their reservations about the religious monopoly over individual and family life. There are sporadic incidents of violence towards the ultra-Orthodox and their institutions, and, on the margins, there are discussions about draft-dodging or refusing to serve in the reserves. The public continues to demonstrate, but the demonstrations do not lead to change. Israel is divided, and the American Jewish community is very critical of the state.

Extensive extra-parliamentary activity is also taking place in the national-religious community in the regions of Judea and Samaria, deep in the West Bank. Unlike secular youth, these groups are motivated by a clear vision. In their own eyes, they are shaping the future map of Israel and they enjoy widespread support among the higher military echelons. National-religious youth view their military service as a sacred task. The percentage of religious officers is increasing, reaching some 50 percent of the officer corps. A large proportion of these officers were educated in pre-military academies and live in settlements; they serve as brigadier generals and battalion commanders, and they are role models for younger soldiers. Large public allocations are continuously directed towards the territories, at the expense of investment in Israel's social periphery. The fact that the ultra-Orthodox actually receive a relatively small portion of the public coffers in comparison to the national-religious settlers remains hidden from the public's attention.

## **Geopolitics**

The Middle East has entered into a long period of instability. Anarchy prevails in some of the countries where the governments have been overthrown. The Islamic parties and extremist radical groups that ascended to power prove unable to deal with the social, economic and security challenges. The army is largely independent, and is in conflict with the Islamic forces. Internal fights among Sunni groups and between Sunni and Shi'ites are on the rise. The conflict between Iran and its neighbors in the Gulf worsens, while the superpowers look on helplessly without a comprehensive strategy.

In this context, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been pushed aside. The Palestinian Authority refuses to recognize Israel as the State of the Jewish people, the rift between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza persists, and the economic situation in the Palestinian Authority is desperate. Under these conditions, there is no pressure on Israel to evacuate the territories, and Israel has no intention of abandoning the settlements. Continued Jewish presence in the West Bank, due to the absence of a geopolitical solution to the conflict, leads to integration of the populations in Israel and the West Bank, and subsequently to the development of an embryonic bi-national identity.

Jerusalem leads this trend and has already become a bi-national city. Arabs in Jerusalem work, go to Israeli colleges, shop at the malls, and frequent the coffee shops and restaurants in the Western part of the city. Jewish residents of

the Western part of the city go to the Old City and East Jerusalem frequently. The Palestinians set up a municipal party that makes a successful run in the municipal elections, based on a non-political platform that deals solely with civil rights. The Jerusalem model of living together peacefully becomes a model for Palestinians throughout the West Bank.

### **The Character of the State**

The model of democracy that developed with the establishment of the state is disintegrating. Formally, Israel is a democracy, but in practice the rule of law gives way to the national-religious settlers and excludes non-Orthodox streams of Judaism. These processes create unrest, increase criticism of Israel on the part of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, and lead to social divisions within the country. The social divisions are accompanied by economic deterioration. The field of high-tech continues to provide well-paying jobs, but ultra-Orthodox youth lack the skills necessary for these positions. As a result, high-tech companies locate themselves abroad, where there is a suitable labor force. Israel's economic growth is minimal. Income from taxes decreases. The public coffers are emptying out. At the same time, the impoverished ultra-Orthodox community continues to demand greater public allocations.

The combined strength of the national-religious and their nationalistic compatriots on the right prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state. On both sides, there are those who abandon the idea of a peace agreement based on separation into two states, and instead demand equal rights within the framework of a single state. In reality, there are two separate political frameworks: the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). However, the PA is on the edge of collapse and is having difficulty pursuing its goal of a sustainable state. There is no Jewish majority in the territories of Judea and Samaria, and Israel does not have the critical mass necessary in order to annex the territories and maintain a Jewish and democratic state. Continued control over the territories means that between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River there will be either a Jewish state that is no longer democratic, or a democratic state that is no longer Jewish.

## **Occupation Scenario**

### **Summary**

The central process of this scenario is the conquest of the centers of power in Israeli society by the national-religious group together with the nationalistic right. Both camps are attempting to realize their vision of the Greater Land of Israel. In their view, secular Zionism has fulfilled its historical role: To build the foundations for the establishment of the State of Israel as a home for Jewish refugees. Now the time has come to fulfill Israel's true goal: The establishment of a Jewish state based on religious and nationalist principles. Towards this goal, extensive planning and efforts are invested in order to occupy the centers of power, including government, the military, the civil service, the media, think tanks and the academia.

The political coalition is composed of the right wing parties, the national-religious parties, and the centrist parties. Supported by the national religious, the coalition turns against the ultra-Orthodox and forces them to enlist in the military. This coalition cannot reach an agreement with the Palestinians and allows the national-religious camp to reinforce the settlements, which ultimately leads to a bi-national state. In this scenario, the national religious camp basically conquers the political system and destabilizes the Zionist vision of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, predicated on democratic principles.

### **The Scenario in Detail**

#### **Extra-Parliamentary Processes and Alternative Sources of Authority**

Revolutionary Zionism, which presented the ideal of redemption in a secular vision, has bowed off the stage of history. For a long time, from the beginning of the Second *Aliyah* of immigration, through the period of settling the frontiers and planting the deserts, and up until the establishment of the state, secular Zionism presented an ideal of national redemption that unified most of the population under its secular, revolutionary leadership. The ideal of the return of the Jewish people to history as a sovereign nation in its own land, and the creation of a socialist society with a universal mission, was at the center of this revolution. The kibbutz and moshav were thought of not only in terms of their national significance, but also as symbols of redemption and deliverance. In the mid-1960s, as Israel's frontiers were settled, this secular revolution began to wane.

The Six-Day War (1967) created a second, religiously-oriented wave of Zionist ideology, with the return to the ancient map of Jewish settlement at its center. The significance of the symbols of the previous wave, such as Degania, Negba, and Tel Hai, declined; they were replaced by the Western Wall, the Cave of the Patriarchs, Shiloh, and Sebastia. The torch passed from the secular Zionists to the religious Zionists. Religious messianism from the school of Rabbi Kook and his students replaced secular Zionism as the standard-bearer for the state.

The collective vision of the founding fathers, centered on an exemplary socialist society with a universalist orientation, has been replaced by a vision centered on the Greater Land of Israel as a crucial step towards religious redemption. The vision of belonging to the family of nations and recognition by the peoples of the world has been replaced with isolation and deterioration of human and national rights. The vision once centered on the state is now centered on land, and the vision of social redemption has been changed to a vision of religious salvation; secular-national perspectives have become religious-nationalist. This change has been accelerated due to the processes of individualism that have taken root among secular Zionists. The collective perspective – the existence of the state, commitment to society, national solidarity, and belonging – that was once such a central part of the Zionist vision has become anachronistic. Values related to “we” have been pushed aside by the value of “I.”

The Six-Day War (1967) brought a sense of security that also contributed to the dissolution of the solidarity that had been nurtured in the shadow of the threat of annihilation. In this context, new secular streams sought to replace the familiar national narrative with a new civilian narrative, centered on the redemption of the individual. National-Jewish solidarity has been replaced with individual rights. Instead of the relationship between the people and the state, there has been a new emphasis on the relationship between the individual and the state. Those who remained in the veteran secular Zionist camp were left ideologically homeless. Some of them were quite naturally attracted to the individual-civil narrative. A large proportion transferred their political loyalty to the national camp. The Yom Kippur War (1973) marked the end of the cultural-political centrality of the socialist-oriented national secular camp.

In contrast to the demise of the secular camp, the national-religious camp has experienced a dramatic surge. It began with religious belief centered on a program of political redemption with a messianic aspect. According to this program, political processes have been geared towards higher program not visible to most of the people. Only a select few, the religious Zionist rabbis and their students,

understand this program and are actively promoting it. The establishment of the state by secular Zionists represents, according to this program, a deep, concealed process, the goal of which is to gather together the Jewish people in the Land of Israel so that it can fulfill its true goal: “And you shall be to me a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). The future state and its society will serve as an example of moral excellence for all of humankind. As Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook articulated the Jewish national idea, “This people must have a political and social state and a national throne that is at the height of humanity: A wise and sage people and a great nation.”<sup>63</sup> This means that the existence of the Jewish nation state in the Land of Israel holds great religious significance.

The first signs of the changing of the generations of Zionist ideology were evident when Gush Emunim made a massive attempt to settle in Sebastia in July 1974, in violation of the rule of law. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the son of Rabbi Avraham Isaac Hacoen Kook, the founder of the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva, played a central role in this confrontation. In contrast to the settlers in the Jordan Valley, who were allied with the Labor Party, and also in contrast to the settlements established close to the Green Line in order to provide a higher quality of life for their inhabitants, the religiously-driven settlers were motivated by their belief in the commandment to settle the land and to safeguard life. In order to prevent the possibility that these settlements might be evacuated in the future, religious youth were instructed to fill the ranks of the elite units of the IDF and to serve as officers. These elite units, once identified with secular members of the kibbutzim, are now identified with the national-religious settlers.

## **Geopolitics**

The Right’s rise to power portended the rise of the national religious camp and its position as the leading force in national politics. Geopolitical developments, which reinforced national religious perceptions, also contributed to this. Palestinian refusal to recognize the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish People and the shock waves shot through the region since 2011 have made the possibility of reaching an agreement based on two states for two peoples even more remote. The construction in the settlements continues unabated, and the prestige of the national religious military officers who have come from special yeshivas and the pre-army programs in the settlements has grown. These officers view military service as a sacred duty, but their primary obedience is to their religious teachings.

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<sup>63</sup> Kook, p. 104 (Hebrew).

The secular public has accepted this situation. Secular soldiers are enthralled by the faith, patriotism, sacrifice and courage of the national religious officers, but they have been blind to the rabbis, the settlements, and the religious rulings that have been at the root of the development of this new generation of officers. These young religious officers have moved up the ladder of the military hierarchy quickly, and today they fill the ranks of the division commanders and other senior positions in the IDF. But when the time comes, if they have to choose between obeying the law and obeying the rules of their rabbis – it is unclear how they will behave.

The religious rulings handed down by the religious Zionist rabbis have reinforced the religious-national camp in the State. Some rabbis have ruled that any diplomatic agreement that entails withdrawal should be considered a real and present danger and that, in such a case, it is incumbent upon each and every individual to prevent it. This has provided legitimacy for attacks on Jews as well. In the hands of these rabbis, the Torah of Israel, whose paths are paths of peace, has become the Torah of “brother against brother.” Other religious rulings have prohibited secular studies in research institutes allied with the yeshivas and have called for separation between men and women in the military.

The primary controversy concerns the centrality of the state, which was once so dear to the religious Zionist camp. Individual soldiers have been forbidden from refusing commands but have been told that when the time comes, soldiers do not have to display any motivation to obey commands that contradict the values that they have learned. Thus, the centrality of the state, which once could be taken for granted, has become a grey area, open to different interpretations by religious-national rabbis. The State Attorney, the defense establishment, and the police have accepted these rulings meekly, like cowards.

The transformation of the IDF from an army led by members of the kibbutzim and moshavim to an army that is led by the national-religious settlers was only one step in a much broader process. Throughout this process the national-religious group managed to take over the government and its institutions, to gain control over the bureaucratic system, and to change the character of higher education.

Within the academy, new think tanks and researchers associated with the national-religious group have developed programs in support of the settlements, providing legal and security legitimization for their continued expansion. Because they believe that current media outlets are led by the liberal left, they have established their own media, which are identified with the values of religion and nationalism.

## **Tolerance and Openness**

To the architects of the process of the national-religious conquest, it is clear that their plan could never come to fruition as long as centers of opposition among the intelligentsia and the media, who uphold individual liberties and the right to criticize the government, persist. They know that it is necessary to neutralize these influences, so they portray the intelligentsia and media as extreme leftists who have lost their attachment to their homeland and the state. With money collected abroad, they have established think tanks and organizations with a nationalist orientation, whose purpose is to break up the cultural hegemony of what they refer to as the “camp of the post-Zionist left.”

The next stage has therefore involved taking control of the media and the centers of cultural dissemination. The cultural power thus accumulated has enabled them to complete their political conquest and transform the ideology of the educational system, banning textbooks, expelling critical supervisors, and limiting the educational process to a single narrative. The educational system is attempting to change the map of Israeli settlement, creating a Jewish map that includes the ancient sites of the forefathers and the prophets, and wipes out the Palestinian presence. Field trips to religious sites are mandatory, including trips to Hebron and the City of David – a site that is administered by El-Ad, a religious and political organization. Thus, the educational system now provides pedagogical justification for the settlement enterprise.

The settlements enjoy extensive public investments while peripheral areas within Israel proper continue to decline. Any attempt to break through the religious monopoly and promote recognition of other streams of Judaism is destined to fail.

The Israeli silent majority has accepted these processes, sometimes even enthusiastically. Most of the public is tired of the criticism and smearing of the state, which began in the universities and then extended to the press. Religious-Zionist think tanks, the activities of the Ministry of Education, and the publications of the right-wing press have gained the support of the silent majority, whose voice is no longer heard in the cultural public square.

## **Politics**

The natural growth of the national religious and the ultra-Orthodox populations has strengthened their political conquests and, as a result, the influence of their parties in the Knesset has increased markedly. These parties, which once held the

balance of power between left and right, have become the major political bloc without which it is impossible to establish a government.

## **Governability**

The level of governability has improved. The right-wing leadership's self-confidence is now established. The pact between the national-religious and the ultra-Orthodox camps provides fertile ground for the conquest of cultural power, which had once been in left-wing hands. The process is cleverly presented as democratic and Zionist, designed to "free" culture from the camp that, it was claimed, had taken over democracy and prevented other forces from emerging. A large part of the secular public has lost patience with what it at first referred to as "left-wing whining" and, at a later stage, as "post-Zionism," and now supports these changes. Some university personnel have identified with the call for boycotts and sanctions against Israel and adopted the Palestinian narrative, which has enraged the public. The support that the universities provided to the democratic and liberal camp exposed them to broad public criticism and to growing support for the national-religious think tanks that present an alternative intellectual school of thought.

In this context, the appearance of the national-religious camp on centerstage is seen as rescuing a ship that has lost its way. In the second and third decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the loss of Zionist purpose that characterized the previous two decades has been replaced with new, religiously- and nationally-imbued content.

## **Modernization**

The seizing of the cultural and political centers of power by the national-religious forces provides support for the advent of processes of modernization within the ultra-Orthodox community, encouraging their increasing integration into public life and greater sharing of the economic and military burden. Many in this community, who had rejected what they viewed as the wantonness of the IDF, the ideology of the left, and the heresy of the members of the kibbutzim and moshavim, are now better able to accept the military frameworks, which by now have imposed complete separation between men and women.

Religious Zionism reveals greater tolerance and consideration for the ultra-Orthodox community. The national-religious rabbis understand why some of the ultra-Orthodox will not serve in the military; some of them have even justified

their evasion of employment by arguing that this is an expression of the ideal of living modestly. This did not prevent numerous ultra-Orthodox men from serving in the army and integrating into the work force; indeed, the processes of modernization within the ultra-Orthodox community have continued, including higher education. These processes have accelerated, thanks to the tolerance shown by the national-religious community and the fact that some of the heads of the national-religious yeshivas were actually members of a newly-evolving national-ultra-Orthodox camp. All this creates a platform for dialogue and rapprochement. The religious-Zionist model, based on deep involvement in national affairs combined with a religious lifestyle, becomes attractive to the ultra-Orthodox and the rate of enlistment in the IDF has grown from 20 to 50 percent, while the truly gifted Torah students continue their religious studies.

### **The Character of the State**

As a result of these processes, Zionism has become increasingly religious and now holds a place of honor in the Jewish-religious code of values. In contrast, the liberal components of the secular camp have distanced themselves from Zionism, which they now view as a fundamentalist and fascist concept that has run its course. Given these two contradictory options, most of the public has chosen the first, accepting and admiring the leadership provided by religious Zionism. As a result of this process, it has become clear to the secular camp that it had “fallen asleep on its watch” because of its own short-sightedness. It thus celebrated the erosion of the status quo, free commerce on the Sabbath, and breaking of the rabbinate’s monopoly over issues of personal status. It had focused its rage against the ultra-Orthodox community, without realizing that it was religious Zionism that was actually the rising force taking over the centers of power. Intellectuals from the moderate religious camp largely contributed to the blindness of the secular camp. These moderate religious intellectuals had genuinely believed that it was possible to bridge the gaps between the world of faith and the world of Western secular culture; between religion and commitment to Western-oriented democracy. Through their writings and lectures they disseminated this type of dualism, and managed to convince large parts of the secular public. But then reality slapped them in the face. It was soon proved that the moderate intellectual discussion had concealed the political-religious take-over and the deep change in Israeli society. By the time the theocratic democracy was established, it was too late.

In public space, separation between men and women is strongly enforced. Conscription of women into the military has been curtailed. Public space is increasingly supervised and any relationships between the establishment and the Reform and Conservative communities have been undermined. Legislation intended to bypass the High Court of Justice has expanded, reinforcing religious control over the state. Conversion, marriage and divorce are conducted solely by the Orthodox rabbinical institutions, without any alternatives. Religious coercion was established with a light hand, even as individual rights were clearly curtailed. Israel became increasingly distant from the Western world and grew closer to its neighbors in the Middle East.

The prevailing ideology in Israel has become more like that of the surrounding Arab states, with a tight combination of religion and nationalism. This ideology enjoys great support from the conservative and evangelical Christians in the United States. They sponsor support trips to Israel and raise funds to support Zion and the settlement enterprise. The geopolitical result has been the gradual merging of the State of Israel with the Palestinian Authority. The religious-nationalist settlers on the West Bank, who compose a large portion of the senior officer corps in the military and post-nationalist groups in Israel welcome these developments. In the international community, opinions are divided. Liberals who had previously criticized Israel now welcome the creation of a bi-national state. Many in this camp view Judaism as little more than a religion and not a nation, and so in their opinion there had been no place for a Jewish state from the outset. Others in the liberal camp view Israel as a rejectionist nation that refuses to act in accordance with international norms.

Those who still support the concept of a democratic nation state for the Jewish people understand that Israel does not have the critical mass necessary to hold on to the entire area of Judea and Samaria, and especially not deep within the West Bank. The submission to the national-religious camp while remaining invested deeply in the West Bank is, in their eyes, tantamount to abandonment of the vision of the founding fathers: The establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel. They understand that the process that they are experiencing will lead to a country with a bi-national character. In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some perceive these processes as a belated Israeli recognition of the need to integrate into the region in order to continue to exist. Others interpret the current reality as a betrayal by the rightwing parties and their religious and ultra-Orthodox partners of the vision of the founders of the State.

Against the background of these processes, the liberal community in the Jewish Diaspora has become increasingly disaffected and has renewed its demand for the establishment of an alternative Jewish center in the spirit of humanistic Judaism outside the borders of the State of Israel. Within the state, too, secular-liberals are protesting and once again calling for the reestablishment of the state on the basis of democratic and humanistic principles. Despite this, the ideological and political system persists due, to a great extent, to the deepening conflict between the West and Islam. The nuclear proliferation of Iran has led to a nuclear race, and terrorist groups have received support and encouragement from countries that already have nuclear weapons. These processes present Israel as the spearhead of the struggle against radical Islam and have increased support from the conservative forces in Israel and abroad, which at the same time are encouraging Israel to remain in the territories. Right-leaning Orthodox communities in the Diaspora have joined forces with rightwing and conservative groups in Israel, who call on Judeo-Christian civilization to wage battle against Islam. All these have undermined the character of Jewish culture as one of tolerance and have turned the conflict from a political conflict into a religious war.

Secular-liberal, well-educated and economically-comfortable Jews have despaired at the religious extremism. Subsequently they chose to leave Israel, feeling that “they’ve taken away my country.” As a result, human capital resources have dwindled and economic growth in Israel has been stymied.

On the other hand, investments by rightwing groups in the territories have grown, especially by evangelical and nationalistic Christians throughout the world. Christian millennialism has combined in a fascinating way with the intellectual descendants of Rabbi Kook’s messianic vision of redemption. Both camps see Zionist settlement and the ingathering of the Jewish people in Zion as the fulfillment of a divine plan.

## **Divisions Scenario**

### **Summary**

The Scenario of Divisions is driven by forces that seek to disconnect nationalism from religion by creating a multi-cultural democracy in Israel. The central driving forces are extra-parliamentary groups, which attach central importance to the individual in the design of the state, together with a new coalition, which is interested in advancing a multi-cultural, liberal democracy in Israel. In this scenario, the country is deeply divided and tolerance is low. Attempts to promote multicultural liberal democracy encounter wide-spread opposition from the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious camps. Governmental policies attempt unsuccessfully to deal with these divisions and to make decisions. As a result of their failure, more and more groups distance themselves from Israeli life.

### **The scenario in detail**

#### **Tolerance**

The scenario of divisions occurs against the backdrop of increasing tension in the relationships between the ultra-Orthodox and the secular communities and lack of agreement between national-religious and secular with regard to the character of the state, as well as continued settlement activity. The process of division was visible as early as the 1970s, when the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious parties became central components of the governing coalitions. Coalition agreements were financed by the working public, who watched with dismay as their tax monies were transferred to a community that did not share in bearing the burden and was attempting to impose its way of life on public space. The monopoly of the religious courts over issues of personal status has been another source of frustration for the secular public. Many secular couples did find alternative solutions, but the very fact that the individual was denied the freedom to establish a family as he or she saw fit has stimulated outrage. The secular public feels that they have been taken advantage of, especially in light of the discriminatory arrangements signed by the coalition partners behind closed doors. As a result, the secular public has lost its faith in the government. Its spokespersons continuously contend that a government built on unequal and unfair civic arrangements is not truly democratic.

There have been those in the secular camp who have protested against the continued occupation of the territories. Out of public sight, tax monies are regularly

transferred to the territories and invested in construction of new settlements and development of infrastructure that, in the future, will not be part of the State of Israel. According to these groups, targeting the ultra-Orthodox is little more than an attempt to divert attention from the improper use of the funds that are being directed to the territories.

### **Extra-Parliamentary Processes and Alternative Sources of Authority**

As the secular community stages protests, its leaders declare their support for a Jewish-Israeli state predicated on democratic foundations. They emphasize the importance of separation between religion and state, the principle of shared burdens, and the illegality of continued settlement in the territories. In an attempt to end discrimination against non-Jews, they demand construction of a Jewish-Israeli nationalism open to members of other nations, thus breaking the connection between religion and nationalism, which is the basis for that discrimination. As the other nations are open to members of various nationalities, they argue – just as French and American nationalism are open to Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists – so Jewish nationalism should be open to any member of any nation who wants to be an Israeli. This view maintains the cultural connection between Jewish nationalism in Israel and religious tradition, while disengaging it from the religious-faith bonds.

In contrast to the Canaanite movement of the 1940s, which sought to create a Hebrew people in the Land of Israel that would integrate into the Semitic region; this perspective seeks to maintain the connection to Jewish history and culture while removing the test of religion as the criteria for entry into the Jewish-Israeli nation. To the Jewish Diaspora, they have explained that Israel has developed a new form of nationalism that included non-Jews.

The vacuum created by the removal of religion from the Jewish-national equation has led to a new mosaic of Israeli society, now made up of shared citizenship based on liberal-humanist values, especially the values of individual freedom, human dignity, equality, shared Israeli culture, and a shared identity predicated on a defined territory and representational governmental institutions. In this society, the position of an individual is determined according to his or her contribution to society and the country. The demand for Israeli nationalism is supported by the large numbers of immigrants who are not religiously Jewish and by the growing numbers of foreign workers and has been further accelerated by the Israelization process among Arabs who are citizens of Israel. As a result

of these changes, the number of Arab volunteers for national service, and even military service, has grown considerably, and this has reinforced the process of separation between religion and state.

## **Geopolitics**

Geopolitical developments in the Middle East have also strengthened the secular-civil camp. The ascent of Islamic forces in neighboring countries; the calls in Egypt and Jordan for abrogation of the peace agreements with Israel; continued condemnations by the European Union; and the constriction of the US-Israeli relationship have all contributed to Israel's international isolation and have led to doubts regarding the path that Israel has chosen, especially with regard to the logic of continued settlement in the West Bank. This creates the impetus for political decisiveness.

## **Politics**

Party politics, which guaranteed the superiority of the national-religious camp and the ultra-Orthodox parties for four decades, has met its demise. The bourgeoisie secular camp, with its moderate geopolitical orientation, has replaced the ultra-Orthodox and national-religious camps, coming to power on a wave of middle class disaffection over the processes that were destroying Israel from within as well as the growing external geopolitical threat. Continued allocation of funds to the religious and the ultra-Orthodox, along with the continued preference accorded to the settlements in Judea and Samaria over the regions within Israel proper, created a tremendous wave of resentment, leading the secular community to coalesce into a social and political protest movement against the status quo.

The people demand social justice, and, on the margins, some are also protesting against the castration of democracy. These protests sought to replace existing political patterns with a pluralistic and liberal model, centered on the individual and liberty. The *raison d'être* of the State of Israel is now once again perceived as a process of returning the Jews to history, not merely as a people seeking to ensure its own survival through sovereignty, but also as individual citizens, each of whom is committed to the normative values of individual liberties, civic equality, and equality for minorities. Centrist parties, which sought to advance a more democratic, fair and egalitarian system, were wise enough to engage the energy of the protests and to translate that energy into political

power. These parties offered a liberal-pluralistic framework intended to facilitate dialogue among the different streams while replacing national belonging with civic loyalty to the legal and legislative systems. Responsibility for religious issues was transferred from the state to the individual and the community. This has included mutual recognition even among groups whose values contradict each other, since each group has been able to uphold its own values within its personal and communal frameworks. With the twin goals of creating a common civilization and maintaining cultural diversity, this new politics has favored change through agreement and war against law-breakers.

There have also been those who have attempted to go even further and replace nationalism with civic patriotism. In their view, the state should ignore any and all identification that is not based on civic belonging shared by all Israelis. The dominant majority, however, rejects this approach and seeks to integrate nationalism and citizenship, Judaism, and being an Israeli.

This new politics has attracted many in the national-secular camp. The new political leadership is brave and imbued with a sense of mission, but it has limited political savvy and poor negotiating skills. In the area of religion and state, it has kept its promises to the public and created appropriate new legislation: obligatory core curricula, vocational training shared burden, establishment of civil marriage and divorce, religious pluralism, and promotion of the concept of two states for two peoples. Indeed, the beginning was promising. It was easy to unite the secular and national-religious public around decisions that related to the ultra-Orthodox. However, with time, the attempt to refashion the role of religion in public life and to reshape the pattern of settlement has grown stronger, and as it grows, religious opposition to the new political plans has grown stronger as well.

## **Governability**

The ultra-Orthodox have been vehemently opposed to the decisions taken by the government. The “great men of the generation” within the ultra-Orthodox community have determined that the decisions of the government regarding conscription and education are tantamount to a call for the destruction of the Jewish people and should be opposed in every way, including refusal to obey the law. The attempt to forcibly conscript ultra-Orthodox youth has been met with violence. The ultra-Orthodox community has taken to the streets in huge demonstrations that have received extensive international attention. The decision to permit civil marriage and divorce has also encountered opposition, and the

principle of equality has also been rejected in the name of religious values and maintenance of Jewish unity. The decision to evacuate settlements from the heart of Judea and Samaria has been met with active opposition by the settlers, and senior military officers have refused to obey the evacuation orders. Deep divisions, unprecedented in their intensity, have appeared within the military, and political dialogue has been replaced with rejection, violence and struggle.

## **Tolerance**

The various social camps have rejected all attempts to create agreement through dialogue. The few agreements that have been signed have not been supported by the public, and so they have little or no public value. The secular protest movement has lost its faith in politics and is petitioning the Supreme Court, turning the Court into the central arena for political activism. In its decisions, the Supreme Court regularly supports the concepts of equality and individual liberties. These rulings have enraged the national-religious community, which had become accustomed to expressing its political positions in accordance with the rulings of the rabbis. The ultra-Orthodox have closed themselves off in their communities. Thus, each group has its own source of authority – the courts, the national-religious rabbis, or the ultra-Orthodox rabbis – that unites the in-group and expresses its own set of values and view of the world.

The attempt by some public figures to create complementarity between Judaism and democracy and to maintain both the unity of the people and the rights of the individual has failed. Public space became an arena for broad battles. The ultra-Orthodox demonstrate against the assault on the sanctity of Judaism. The settlers protest in front of the Knesset and the secular camp demonstrates in the big cities. There is no way to resolve all of these controversies or to bridge the gaps between the camps.

## **Modernization**

The processes of modernization have not moderated the conflict. Although increasing numbers of ultra-Orthodox men have joined the labor force, their low levels of education have left them mired in poverty, and ultra-Orthodox women continue to bear the brunt of their families' economic burdens. But the women's interactions with secular society, resulting from their employment, have exacerbated tensions within the ultra-Orthodox communities, leading them to isolate themselves in an attempt to prevent integration. The rabbis

have extended their supervision, attempting to cut back on women's academic studies and referring men with academic degrees to instrumental professions such as accounting, economics and law. They are also enforcing new modesty requirements in public space.

In the year 2023, the ultra-Orthodox make up some 30 percent of the cohort of men available for conscription, but only a few thousand actually enlist. The programs intended to integrate them into the military have failed, primarily because the army refused to accommodate their demands, especially the demands regarding service in environments in which there are no women. Furthermore, these demands enraged the secular public, and, in response, feminist and human rights organizations petitioned the Supreme Court. These petitions make it even more difficult for the military to accede to ultra-Orthodox demands.

### **The Character of the State**

The inability to take agreed-upon steps and to take and implement decisions wisely has led to deep divisions within society and, in turn, to social and economic decline. The Jewish public in Israel has separated into different camps, particularly with regard to marriage and divorce. The secular boycott of the settlements has gained ground, and most of the secular public keeps its distance from the very places religious Zionists view as the birthplace of the Jewish people.

Alienation and enmity between the ultra-Orthodox and the secular have intensified. Ultra-Orthodox isolation in the area of employment and residence persist, and even their limited involvement in the IDF and higher educational systems have come to an end. The national religious groups have also begun to isolate themselves in their own neighborhoods in the larger cities and in the settlements. The power of the rabbis in the national-religious yeshivas has grown stronger, and they have adopted a national-ultra-Orthodox line. The spatial-social result of this cultural isolation includes ultra-Orthodox ghettos, national-religious settlements in the territories and in the heart of the mixed cities, isolated secular neighborhoods in the cities and suburbs, and cultural wars on the streets.

These processes of divisions have also had an effect on the economy: as the level of participation in the work force has decreased, there has been a clear process of economic decline. As a result, the government, in which the secular bourgeois camp had played such a central role, has fallen apart. The public feels that its new leaders have brought it to the edge of doom and searches for a new political-ideological platform that will connect the conflicting camps.

## **Connections Scenario**

### **Summary**

The scenario of connections evolves as a result of reconciliation between the values of democracy and the values of religion. The accelerated process of modernization in the ultra-Orthodox community has led to its integration into the economy and society. The rabbis have less control over the modern religious community, which is searching for new ways to express its national religious identity. The secular community, which is oriented towards nationalism, has found allies among the national religious and the ultra-Orthodox, with whom they share a cultural view that their common Jewish history, religion and culture provides a foundation for familiarity and a sense of a common fate. Elected representatives, rather than external sources of authority, make the crucial decisions for society.

Growing external hostility towards the State of Israel in the aftermath of the geopolitical changes in the Middle East has intensified solidarity and interactions between different sectors within Israeli society. These changes influence voting patterns among the ultra-Orthodox constituency. While ultra-Orthodox voters once supported almost solely the ultra-Orthodox parties, they now give their support to the various parties whose platforms include a nationalist orientation. The nationalist parties' rise to power facilitates a high level of governability, which makes it possible for the government to reach an interim agreement with regard to borders, based on the intent to create a state with a Jewish majority. This high level of governability also allows for structural reforms in education and professional training. As a result, levels of education for the entire population are on the rise, and gaps between different cultural groups and different regions of the country have become less pronounced. Processes of globalization reach the general public and the rate of economic growth is impressive.

### **The Scenario in Detail**

#### **Extra-Parliamentary Processes and Alternative Sources of Authority**

Past experience has taught the public that there is no magic solution to questions of the relationship between state and religion. The secular public understands that any attempt to impose its values through force rather than agreement will lead to civil war and, in the end, will undermine the rule of law and governability. They acknowledge that the decisions of the Supreme Court are worthless if the religious community refuses en masse to accept them. Thus, the Supreme Court

has lost its power to influence public life with regard to contentious issues of religion and state.

Similar developments have taken place within the ultra-Orthodox and national-religious communities. The generation of great leaders of the ultra-Orthodox community has not left any worthy successors and the community has split into sub-communities. This has undermined their monolithic stands, with trends spanning the range from integration to isolation. Modern ultra-Orthodox, especially new immigrants from the West, have called for involvement in the economy and society, provision of a dignified life for their families, and respect for the State of Israel. Newly observant individuals have also actively sought to integrate into employment and the public sector, especially once they came to realize that they would never be fully accepted as equals within the traditional ultra-Orthodox society. Some of the ultra-Orthodox support core curricula programs and certain fields of higher education, because they understand that this will be their ticket into the labor market.

### **Levels of Tolerance**

Concomitant with these developments, the various cultural groups have come closer to each other, and levels of tolerance are on the rise. The successes of the feminist revolution in the religious-Zionist camp have made this community more democratic and more egalitarian. Well-educated nationalist religious women play a central role in shaping public opinion and leadership. They have opened the community to new viewpoints and values in culture, science and leadership. Some of these processes have also trickled into the communities of ultra-Orthodox women. Within the national-religious community, the voices of those who support the rights of the others and the principle that “man was created in the image of God” have grown stronger.

The enhanced position of women in the ultra-Orthodox sector, their increased contact with the secular community through voluntary organizations, civic and military service and their entry into the workforce have led to changes in secular public opinion. Secular people no longer view religious and ultra-Orthodox communities as extremist, parasitic groups who consistently avoid their responsibilities. They have come to realize that integration of the ultra-Orthodox into the workplace and the market could play a crucial role in Israel’s economic growth, and that the retreat of national-religious fundamentalism will lead to an improvement in Israel’s status in the international arena.

Each cultural group has increasingly come to realize that it must find a balance between universal rights and Jewish particularism. Israeli society has come to understand that Israeli democracy is unique and can be referred to as “national democracy.”<sup>64</sup> In this type of democracy, the people serves as the source of authority and sovereignty and the people has preference over the individual; moreover, the source of the authority of the people is anchored in the special history and culture of the Jewish people, who created a collective identity whose importance is greater than individual identity. While this does not impose on anyone who views the individual as the source of authority, it does present a clear cultural-political alternative.

## **Geopolitics**

The geopolitical threat has accelerated the process of rapprochement among the groups. International criticism of Israel over the continued occupation, internal criticism, international boycott and a new intifada have created doubts within the religious Zionist community with regard to the wisdom of remaining in the territories. The various sides have come to understand that without internal solidarity, Israel will find it difficult to deal with the social and geopolitical challenges that it faces. In this context, the government of Israel has come to understand that it must promote an arrangement focused on borders that guarantee national homogeneity and the existence of a democratic state.

## **Politics**

In the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, two models of democracy face off against each other: republican democracy, which accords preference to the Jewish nation

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<sup>64</sup> The idea of national democracy is comprehensively discussed by Eliezer Schweid, 2010. This concept is at the heart of this scenario. According to this view, the right to express national and religious belonging has preference over the rights of the individual and his or her liberties. This is not totalitarian democracy. As Schweid shows, this democracy pays respect to alternative democratic ideals and allows those who wish to do so to live according to their view of the world. This solution requires mutual compromise and concessions. However, Schweid does not make it clear how a compromise that respects shared identity and views it as a general interest can co-exist with a position that treats the rights of the individuals or the minority as having preference over the general interests of the Jewish people. The scenario presented here takes a different position. It recognizes the independent status of the different positions, that is, it includes different interpretations of democracy as well as actualization of the rights of the individual and fulfillment of the values of the Palestinian nation. The choice among the different interpretations with regard to the relationship between religion and democracy is not necessarily anchored in philosophy but rather in democratic elections, while safeguarding the rights of the individual and of the minority.

as an expression of the self-determination, vs. liberal-pluralistic democracy, which accords preference to the individual citizen and seeks equality among all citizens of the state and between the Jewish and the Arab national groups. Elections to the Knesset reveal a clear preference for republican democracy. This democracy has been shaped by the map of cultural identifications and not by abstract principles. The State of Israel came into existence in order to return to the Jewish people its basic democratic right to be a free people in its own land. It has been agreed that relationships between Judaism and democracy, i.e., between the collective and individual rights, reflect a central conflict regarding the appropriate model of democracy suitable for the State of Israel. This conflict is anchored in the special historical experience, culture, and religion of the Jewish people. The model of republican democracy has dulled the conflict between religion and democracy, although tensions between the two still exist. The coalition includes secular groups with a national or left-wing orientation, national-religious groups, and ultra-Orthodox groups.

### **Governability**

The political leadership is well aware that principles that were quickly cobbled together at the time of the establishment of the State and immediately afterwards, including the exemption given to the ultra-Orthodox from military service and capitulation to religious dictates regarding settlement in Judea and Samaria, must be changed. These changes, it is now recognized, must be created through dialogue and the articulation of new compromises. Several processes have aided this trend, including erosion of the authority of the religious sages, the growth in power of the centrist parties, and the decline in power of religious parties, who no longer hold the balance of power. This has led to enhanced governability and power of the political leadership.

The coalition has devised a basic vision of the Zionist state that is both democratic and Jewish. This has required mutual concessions and compromises among exigencies and beliefs, with the goal of maintaining a Jewish and democratic state that enjoys international legitimacy. The government and society have reached the conclusion that continued control over all of the territories endangers the existence of the State of Israel as a state in which the Jewish people can fulfill its right to self-determination. Accordingly, the state has made efforts to evacuate parts of the territories, either through agreements with the Palestinians or on the basis of unilateral decisions. In the socio-economic sphere, the government

has decided to increase conscription of the ultra-Orthodox into the military through a process of dialogue with the different groups within the community. These decisions have brought Israel international legitimacy, contributed to the development of economic ties, and encouraged economic growth.

On the public level, the government has decided to enable free choice in marriage and divorce. Surprisingly, this decision has enhanced the influence of religion over public life. The secular Jewish public, now able to choose freely among different cultural sources, no longer feels the need to defy religion. Jewish law once again enjoys respect and honor as it slowly makes clear that it will allow for free choice and does not devalue the other. The secular public now shows respect for religious institutions and the rabbinate and has chosen to return to the traditional “Jewish bookshelf.”

### **Modernization**

Processes of modernization have intensified as increasing numbers of ultra-Orthodox men and women enter the workforce. These processes accelerated as a result of the economic demise of ultra-Orthodox families and their inability to support their children as they had once been able to do. Due to the growth of the ultra-Orthodox population and the prolonged economic crisis, it is no longer possible to continue to support the community, and the government has been forced to cut back on social welfare benefits. This has forced ultra-Orthodox men to enter the workforce, while women have begun to leave teaching, which has been the traditional profession for ultra-Orthodox women, in favor of high-tech, accounting, social work, and psychology. The universities have opened up programs that are specially tailored to the needs of the ultra-Orthodox.

At the same time, the ultra-Orthodox community has been exposed to the tremendous expansion of alternative sources of media and to opinions that differ from those of the rabbis and heads of yeshivas. Together with entry into the job market, this has changed consumer behavior among the ultra-Orthodox community; once focused on modest, conservative purchases, the ultra-Orthodox now respond to the various dictates of culture and fashion. This increased consumerism has had a positive influence on housing, transportation, and food; increased the number of available jobs; and has led to an overall improvement in the economy. At the same time, ultra-Orthodox families have begun to leave their segregated neighborhoods and to make the acquaintance of the general public, which widely admires their economic contribution. The ultra-Orthodox have

finally been able to integrate functionally, live in close proximity to secular life styles, and still maintain their traditions and religious beliefs.

The numbers of ultra-Orthodox men serving in the military has increased significantly, reaching some 60 percent of every cohort. This has come about for several reasons: in a pragmatic decision, the rabbis have encouraged less successful students who drop out of the yeshiva to enlist in the army and learn a trade, rather than turning into a burden on the community. Others understand that military service itself provides them with a respectable entry ticket to the world of work and income. In coordination with the IDF, appropriate environmental conditions have been established for the ultra-Orthodox, making it easier for them to maintain their beliefs while serving in the military. The Shas political party plays an important role in promoting these processes. It has made a tremendous investment in the development of institutions for training in vocational trades and encourages men to enter the work force and serve in the military.

### **The Character of the State**

These processes have been achieved due to extensive compromises reached by the different cultural groups with regard to the major contested issues. In the field of public life, religion has been separated from the state, and the public can choose to avail itself of religious services as it sees fit. Surprisingly, most of the secular public chooses religious services provided by the Orthodox rabbinate; however, a significant minority does turn to the Reform and Conservative movements as well as civil arrangements. In public space, mutual sensitivity and consideration are on the rise. Each group maintains its own particular style of life within its residential areas while respecting the feelings and rights of neighbors who are different. The borders of the country have been designed so as to allow for the existence of a state with a Jewish majority and a democratic regime. In the economic sphere, the rise in the participation of ultra-Orthodox men in the work force is impressive and has resulted in financial growth. The government has adopted the model of a republican, rather than a liberal, democracy, which focuses on the right of the Jewish people to its own nation-state. In this state, the rights of the minority and the individual are respected, while according priority to the principle of ensuring the safety and security of the republic.



## CONCLUSION

Public opinion is highly divided on the status of religion in Israel. Many believe that the control assumed by religion over public life has gone too far. It is often argued that legislation of a religious nature threatens to undermine democracy, especially with regard to free choice. The low levels of ultra-Orthodox participation in the work force are of concern, and in the long term, as the population grows, they could cause the Israeli economy to collapse. Settlement in the heart of Judea and Samaria and “Price Tag” activities are viewed by some groups as illegal. According to this view, the preference accorded to settlement in the territories, which does not represent a valid national set of priorities, will soon put an end to the vision of a democratic and Jewish state.

On the other side, there are those who believe that religion is losing its grasp on the Jewish community, despite its traditional contribution as the guardian of Jewish people’s identity. The national-religious communities in Judea and Samaria believe that they are defending the state from the existential danger posed by the establishment of a Palestinian state. In the ultra-Orthodox world, there is a widespread sense that they are the true soldiers of the People’s Guard and that their prayers are what defends the state.

Relationships between state and religion, as they are as this essay is written, could be the source of an existential threat to the State of Israel in a wide variety of issues, including the quality of public life, the future of the economy and the market, the outlines of future borders, and the character of public space.

The question of solidarity hovers over all of these disagreements. Does Israeli society have the ability to generate agreement among the different cultural groups? Could members of Israeli society live together and develop in a way that will enable the State of Israel to face the external threats?

The question of solidarity threatens the country much more than the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors. Internal cohesion, social resilience, higher levels of education, increased production and the wise use of the power that Israel has developed and amassed over the years will enable Israel to successfully cope with external threats. In contrast, if the relationships between religion and state lead to deep cultural divisions, shared common identity will be undermined, the government will be torn apart, and the lack of a sense of internal cohesion will make it difficult for the State of Israel to deal with the threats emanating from outside.

The purpose of this essay has been to present the relationship between state and religion in the State of Israel in all its complexity, drawing a broad

and comprehensive picture. For this reason, I have presented the various cultural groups that make up these relationships and shown the driving forces that influence the groups. The scenarios that have been developed illustrate the various possibilities, including the risks and opportunities.

## **Codes of Discourse**

The discourse regarding state and religion is essentially a cultural one. At the center of this discourse are the codes through which the concepts of democracy and religion are examined. These codes are located along an axis that ranges from narrow to broad perspectives.

A narrow perspective of democracy is first and foremost functionalist: it focuses on public order and security, fair and equal elections won by a majority, and proper administration. In contrast, a broad perspective specifies the principles and the world view that are at the heart of democracy, including individual autonomy, equality, human and minority rights. This perspective requires a democratic political system that has a high level of governability and enforcement.

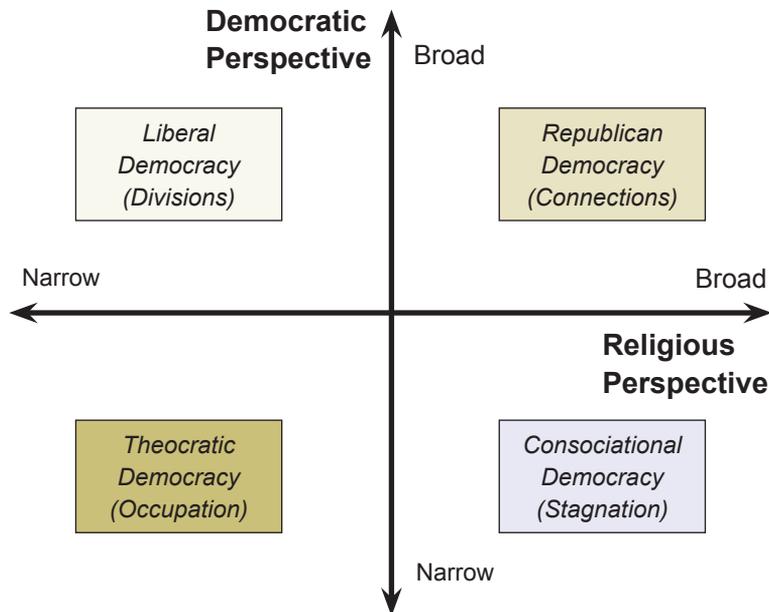
A narrow view of religion is predicated on fulfilling religious commandments without question. According to this view, individual behavior is dictated by religious law as interpreted by the sages. This view encourages the exclusion of women and separation of the sexes, limited democracy, and low tolerance of the other. This narrow view of religion conflicts with the broad view of democracy. On the other hand, broad view of religion emphasizes the interplay between the commandments and universal morality. In a world in which the power of the individual is expanding, a level of openness is necessary in order to resolve the conflict between observance of the religious commandments and accepted ethical principles, including respect for others and equality. The broad view of religion is compatible with a broad view of democracy.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> In this conceptual development, I have relied on Mary Douglas's anthropological research into natural symbols. In her research, she examined interaction between cultures with different codes, extending from a restricted to an elaborated code. The restricted code focuses on functional aspects of culture, while the elaborated code attempts to explain the functional aspect by reaching down to the root of the reasons, feelings, views and ideas that are at their base. The restricted code is revealed in the prohibition against or the obligation to perform a certain activity; for example, the prohibition against hurting animals, which is presented without any reason or interpretation. The elaborated code, in contrast, would explain why this action should not be committed and interpret the social and moral implications. Instead of restricted code and elaborated code, I preferred to use the terms narrow perspective and broad perspective. See especially Chapter 2, pp. 24-58 in Douglas (1970).

Illustration 4 presents the four scenarios described above according to their democratic and religious codes and the resulting democratic models.

**Illustration 4: Scenarios by Codes and Democratic Models**



The Stagnation Scenario is associated with “consociational democracy.” It is located at the intersection between intermediate perspectives of democracy and religion. As such it reflects a set of pragmatic arrangements between state and religion that have accorded significant influence over daily life to religion. These arrangements began with the establishment of the state but have been continuously undermined since the 1970s. Groups guided by broader perspectives of democracy and religion collide with groups characterized by narrow ones. This is an all-out conflict between religious and democratic views. The increasing strength of these groups may undermine pragmatic compromise, leading to a slippery slope away from pragmatic arrangements towards broad cultural clashes. Extra-parliamentary forces, the extent of tolerance and openness to other views, the level of governability, and external threats will determine the stability of the pragmatic arrangements.

The Occupation Scenario is characterized by a move towards a “theocratic democracy,” which is based on narrow perspectives of both religion and

democracy. Essentially, it reflects the victory of religion over democracy. The increased strength of religion could lead towards a model of theocratic democracy similar to the one prevailing in Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's President at the time this essay is written. This regime relates to democracy as a tool based on free choice and proper procedure, in which the state plays a central role in maintaining law and order. According to this view, religion stems from a divine source and its values take priority over those that form the foundations of democracy, including the values of equality, individual free choice, and autonomy.

The Divisions Scenario reflects a failed attempt to move towards a model of liberal democracy. The leading idea beyond this move is to create a synthesis between broad perspectives of both democracy and religion, through the transformation of religion into a private matter that tolerates no state intervention. This view, prevalent in American society, accords respect to religion as a source of faith, understanding, and norms, and maintains freedom of religion as well as freedom from religion. The attempt to promote this model creates deep divisions in Israel due to the collision with narrow views of religion and democracy. Ultimately, it fails. The rabbis, who oppose liberal trends, lead the opposition and call for a boycott of the courts. The opposition could lead to political violence, terror, and even civil war.

Finally, the Connections Scenarios portrays a situation of cultural unity formed around the model of "Republican Democracy." Basically, it reflects a combination of a relatively broad view of democracy and a relatively broad view of religion, centered on a republican model. Both democracy and religion view the source of authority as residing outside the individual, but each one upholds a different source. The democratic view sees the Jewish people in the land of Israel as the source of authority; the religious view emphasizes the religious component in the identity of the Jewish people. According to this scenario, the state is seen as a nation-state in which the Jewish people fulfills its right to self-determination, along with sensitivity to the rights of the non-Jewish minority and defense of the rights of the individual. This scenario could be the result of far-reaching cooperation between the national-religious camp and the secular Zionist camps, together with the new ultra-Orthodox; however, unlike the prevalent model of consociational democracy, which is built on short-term compromises based on interests and political pressures, republican democracy is built on a long-term vision and is supported by a majority of the public.

## Where are We Now?

The scenario of stagnation reflects the temporary quality and fragility of the current situation and raises the possibility of the development of the three other scenarios. Initial signs of these scenarios are already visible.

At this time, the Israeli political-cultural system seems to move from the stagnation scenario, centered on consociational democracy, to the scenario of occupation, which leads to a theocratic democracy. In the background, various groups are actively attempting to promote the scenario of divisions, centered on a pluralistic liberal democracy, while others are promoting the scenario of connections, which seeks to promote a republican democracy. The strongest signs point towards the transformation from the scenario of stagnation to the scenario of occupation, but we should not ignore the other possibilities. A review of the scenarios reveals that they are fluid, and that it is possible to almost imperceptibly move from the scenario of stagnation to the scenario of occupation and then to the scenario of divisions and the scenario of connections.

Almost without our noticing it, these changes are already taking place: the cultural group that leads the scenario of occupation is a national-religious one with a high sense of mission. Many in the secular community seek to ally themselves with this group, due to geopolitical threats and cultural affinity: this is a group that works, serves in the military, speaks the same language and shares public space.

Most of the public is unaware of the gradual realization of the occupation scenario because their attention has been diverted by the “ultra-Orthodox spin.” Israel’s most pressing problems, including the lack of diplomatic progress in the geopolitical arena, the de-facto creation of a bi-national state, and Israel’s international delegitimization, have no connection to the ultra-Orthodox. With regard to these problems, it is the religious-nationalist group that plays the central role. The smoke-screen of the struggle against the ultra-Orthodox, in which both the secular and national-religious groups are taking part, is obfuscating the reality of the situation that is developing before our very eyes. The occupation scenario entails another, more distant threat: the anomaly of the “society of learners” formed among the ultra-Orthodox in Israel. Members of this “society” take pride in avoiding work, and regard study as their profession. In the past, ultra-Orthodox Jews both worked and studied in Israel as they continue to work and study in other Western countries. The new model of a society of learners, who avoid work, is a distorted invention supported by rabbis and politicians in order to maintain

their control over their constituencies. More than half of the ultra-Orthodox community is already poor, compared to one-eighth of the general population. Under these conditions, the continued growth of the ultra-Orthodox population could lead to economic collapse.

The central challenge facing all cultural groups entails the creation of internal cohesion while changing what must be changed. The State of Israel is facing increasing external threats. Closing the ranks and creating a progressive, productive society provide the only means to survive these threats.

## **Concluding Insights**

Freedom of choice is a central component of any democratic regime. This freedom collides with the unique character of the Jewish religion, which demands certain attachments between religion and state and requires compromises in terms of democracy. The status quo arrangement recognized the necessity of maintaining these attachments and thus created a system divided between two systems of authority: state and religion. This was a pragmatic arrangement that allowed for a dialogue between the democratic and religious discourses, but it did not allow for the full fulfillment of either worldview. It is not an ideal arrangement, and it is certainly not broadly democratic, but it allows both views to move forward, as the scenario of connections reveals.

The scenario of connections is predicated on open discourse and relatively broad views of both democracy and religion. Agreements and controversies in the relationships between state, religion, and society, which are reviewed in the first and second chapters, show us that in political, cultural and social terms, Israeli society is not as polarized as it may seem, and that there is extensive space for conflict resolution, as previous historical-social developments show. In this essay, I have attempted to examine the extent of this space, in order to promote an open, respectful dialogue between religion and democracy.

With regard to the controversies reviewed in the second chapter, any appeals to the extremes could lead to uncompromising struggles and irrevocable divisions. One cannot rule out the scenario of a culture war, which will end with either occupation or divisions. However, history indicates a consistent effort to find compromises and instill a common denominator so that the two views can co-exist, as shown in both the stagnation and the connections scenarios. The divisions between the communities are not so polarized: ultra-Orthodox, traditionalists,

and even secularists agree that for the sake of unity, it is necessary to compromise over universal principles.

Indeed, the system of forces and coalitions tends to change as one moves from questions regarding the role of religion in public life to a discussion of equality. Thus for instance, with regard to the issue of shared burden, coalitions of secularists, traditionalists and national-religious confront the ultra-Orthodox. Nor is the polarization so total with regard to settlement in the territories. In the past as well as now, the national-religious involved in these processes enjoyed the support of many traditionalists and secularists. These shifting coalitions show that the relationship between state and religion is most complex. Most of the time we tend to ignore this complexity, because the extremists in both camps are leading the discussion, while the divided and silent majority remains on the margins.

The scenarios of stagnation and connections lead to national unity. The scenarios of occupation and division lead to crisis. What is the secret of the first two? These scenarios entail an effort to bridge over the extremist positions, recognizing that it is impossible to resolve the tension between state and religion by taking a unilateral-purist decision. The existence of a democratic, successful state is dependent on an on-going dialogue that relates to all contested issues: core curriculum studies, participation in the security and economic burdens, the outline of the borders, and the nature of public space.

The key to an open dialogue around these issues is education. There is a need to examine the values of all groups, and the seculars have no exemption from that process. Currently, secular Jewish education does not contain a curriculum that exposes the student to the spiritual and cultural richness of Jewish tradition. The existential question we are facing is: How can we define a Jewish particularity within the secular public, and how can we instill humanistic, modern universalism within the ultra-Orthodox community?

Our primary efforts should be invested in education. We must redefine the values that secular schools teach our young people, and these must include Jewish values. We must also examine the extent to which the ultra-Orthodox educational system is open to new values. We must redefine the values that guide the relationships between the different cultural groups and learn the codes that will enable us to conduct an open dialogue.

Our future is dependent upon our ability to maintain the connections between Jewish history and religion and with the large parts of the public who never abandoned religion, yet always knew how to reconcile and accept the values upheld by the nations of the world, including civil and human rights.



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