

The Urban Well

The Mercy Seminar 2025, Term III.2

Rav Abraham Kook (1865-1935), Rav Tzvi Kook (1891-1982) and Religious Zionism

The land of Israel is not some external entity.
It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people.
It is not merely a means of uniting the populace.
It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence.
It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence.

Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning.
It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life.
Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities.

The extraordinary qualities of the land of Israel and the extraordinary qualities of the Jewish people are two halves of a whole.

Eretz Cheifetz I

In the land of Israel,
Grow the letters of our soul.
There,
They reveal illumination.
They draw down mighty life
From the blaze of life
Of the Congregation of Israel.
Eretz Cheifetz, p. 24

We have a great obligation to awaken the ancient love of Zion: a love that is eternal and burns in a flame of holy fire within the hearts of the Jewish people wherever they may be.

We must fight with all our strength against any hatred of our holy land—which has begun to affect some of us. With a mighty arm of the spirit and with the eternal holiness of the beloved land, we must destroy the contamination of the spies, a contamination which began to spread at the very point of the possible redemption.

“The word of our God will stand forever.”

The holiness of the land and its loveliness has never changed and will never change. All the bitter circumstances, physical and spiritual, which have affected the Holy Land will not overcome it.

Just as no physical destruction can destroy our love for the beloved land, so can no spiritual desolation reduce our holy and profound love of that land of life.

The deep connection between the soul of the Jew and Zion, with all that takes place there, stands firm forever. And the light of that love will increase seven-fold.

It will enflame every heart and exalt every spirit, sanctifying and encouraging everyone.

Moadei Harayah, pp. 419-20

There is a sense of being a stranger that you may feel outside the land of Israel.

That sense connects the entire inner desire of your spirit ever more strongly to the land of Israel and its holiness. Your hope to see it grows. The impression, the inner image, of the holy structure of that land upon which God always gazes grows increasingly deeper.

There is a depth of holy yearning for beloved Zion, a recollection of that entirely desirable land. When that grows in even a single soul, the wellspring flows for everyone: for tens of thousands of souls connected to that soul.

Eretz Cheifetz (quoting *Orot*), p. 48

The basis of keeping all the commandments, from the aspect of their inner and ultimate being, can take place only in the land of Israel.

Those commandments not specifically related to the land of Israel, which apply as well outside the land, are not intended to attain to their ultimate purpose outside the land.

Rather, they bring the Jewish people to the land; they guard our holiness, so that when we return, we will not need to begin from nothing, like a young nation which only recently has come to the altar of life. They will ensure that our path in life—eternal and temporal—will be firm before us, as is proper for a powerful and ancient nation, whose sources are primal, from the beginning of the world.

Eretz Cheifetz, p. 31

The unique quality of the land of Israel and the unique quality of the nation of Israel are complementary. The nation of Israel has the unique ability to come to a divine elevation in the depths of its life-force. Correspondingly, the land of Israel—which is the land of God—improves the Jewish nation that dwells upon it as its eternal inheritance, an inheritance sealed with a covenant, a vow and a promise. The Jewish people's eternal nature is founded upon the divine nature permanent in the imprint of this wondrous desirable land, which is united with the people whom God has chosen as His special ones. Together, the soul of the people and the land bring to the fore the foundation of their being. They demand their goal: to bring their holy yearning to fruition.

Eretz Cheifetz, p. 7

Someone once told Rav Kook, “God willing, we will move to the land of Israel.”

Rav Kook replied, “God is certainly willing. What counts is that you be willing.”

Shivchei Harayah, p. 208

In 1929, the Arabs, supported by the British authorities in the land of Israel, were attempting to deny Jews the right to pray before the Western Wall.

When Rabbi Kook appeared before a commission set up to deal with the matter, he turned to the head of the commission and said in a trembling voice:

“What do you mean by saying that this commission will decide who has ownership over the Western Wall? Does this commission or the league of nations control the Wall? From whom have you received permission to decide who owns it? The entire world is the possession of the Holy One, blessed be He, the Creator of the world. And the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the nation of Israel possession of the entire land of Israel, including the Western Wall. No power in the world, no League of Nations and not this commission can suspend this divine right.”

The commission head commented that almost two thousand years had passed since the Jews had

possessed the land of Israel, including the Western Wall. To this, Rav Kook replied quietly and calmly:

“In Jewish law, there is a concept of an owner’s giving up his right to his property—including his land. But when a person’s land was stolen from him, and he protested and continues to protest, his rights never expire.”

Malachim Kivnei Adam, p. 179

Yosef Sharvit tells that during the controversy at the end of the 1920s over control of the Western Wall, the judge, Mordecai Elias, presented the question of possession in an ambiguous form. On the one hand, the Jewish community does not demand control of the Western Wall, only free access to pray next to it. On the other hand, the terms of ownership and control do not apply to a holy place such as the Wall. This approach was based on appeasing the non-Jews without denying the rights of the Jewish people.

But when Rav Kook learned of this, he protested and opposed it with all his strength. “Heaven forbid! We have no right to do so. The nation of Israel has not given us the authority to give up the Western Wall in its name. Our possession of the Wall is a divine possession. It is with that right that we come to pray there.”

Malachim Kivnei Adam, p. 178

“The Nineteenth Hymn,” Rabbi Tzvi Tehuda Kook, May, 1967

On Israeli Independence Day in May of 1967, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook gave the following address to the community members of his yeshiva in Jerusalem.

Nineteen years ago, on the night when news of the United Nations decision in favor of the resurrection of the State of Israel reached us, when the people streamed into the streets to celebrate and rejoice, I could not go out and join in the jubilation. I sat alone and silent; a burden lay upon me. During those first hours I could not resign myself to what had been done. I could not accept the fact that indeed “they have...divided My land.” (Joel 4:2)! Yes, where is our Hebron—have we forgotten her?! Where is our Shechem? Our Jericho? Where? Have we forgotten them? And what about all the land beyond the Jordan—each and every clod of earth, every region, hill, valley, every plot of land, that is part of the Land of Israel? Have we the right to give up even one grain of the Land of God?

On that night, nineteen years ago, I sat trembling in every limb of my body, wounded, cut, torn to pieces—I could not rejoice. The next day the great Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap came to our house. He felt the need to come, and how could he not come? We sat together, the two of us, in that small hallowed room in “Beit HaRav.” Where else if not there? We sat shocked and silent. Finally, regaining our strength, we said, the two of us as one: “This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes.” (Ps. 118:23) There comes to my mind another incident: in the later part of his life, Rabbi Meir Bar Ilan was present at an important dinner held by the “Mizrahi,” of which he was then the Chairman. Mr. Berl Locker, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency, was invited to speak. It was at that time that the debate on the internationalization of Jerusalem was being held at the UN. Berl Locker mentioned the discussion concerning Jerusalem in his speech, describing it as a delicate problem, requiring much tact and careful treatment, etc., etc. Upon hearing these words Rabbi Meir burst out in Yiddish, calling out from his seat in a voice of thunder: “Vehr Hirt Zei?! Who is listening to what they are saying? Who cares what they think? Will they determine for us what we will do in Jerusalem?” That was the reaction of a political

leader imbued with the greatness of spirit that comes with belief and faith in God, instilled with the sacredness of the Eternal Jerusalem, the City of our Holiness and our Glory.

The Order of Redemption

The question has been asked, “Is this the state that our prophets envisioned?” And I say: This is the state that the prophets envisioned. Of course, it has not yet attained perfection. But our prophets, our sages, and those who followed them, said: The seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will return and will reestablish settlement and independent political rule in the Land. We were not told whether those who return will be men and women of righteousness. The prophet said: “When I shall have gathered the house of Israel...then shall they dwell in their own land...And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards.” (Ezek.28:25-26) The prophet is speaking of real vineyards, not symbolic ones. As a result of the return of Israel to their Land, there will come about the increase of Torah and its glorification. But the first step is the settlement of Israel on their Land!

Rabbi Eliyahu Guttmacher wrote: “It is clear to me that if 130 families of Israel begin to till the land in our holy land, this will be the beginning of the redemption (*Geulah*) even if the people are not yet worthy.” Certainly, this great saint desired the increase of Torah and its glorification, but the order of redemption is: (1) agricultural settlement, (2) the establishment of the state, and as a consequence (3) the uplifting of that which is sacred, the dissemination of the teaching of Torah, its increase and glorification.

This Year, We Sing the Nineteenth Song

The true Israel is Israel redeemed, the kingdom of Israel and the armies of Israel, a people in its wholeness and not a diaspora in exile. Thus, when Israel was sent into exile, heavens and earths throughout the universe trembled. And so it was with the coming of the redemption. A tremor spread through the universe, billowing from step to step, the chain of Torah, until it reached us. The process is gradual and continuous, and each and every year [of Israel's independence] is a new hymn, a celestial song, another link in the chain. This year, we sing the nineteenth song. Psalm 19 is comprised of two sections. In the first section we perceive the wonders of God in nature and see Him manifest in the Creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps. 19:2). The second section depicts God's pure and illumining Torah—His commandment—and the awesome fear of God: “The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.” (Ps. 19:8-10) Both the Kuzari and the Maharal expound upon this parallelism: the power of God is revealed in the majestic world of nature. But, as we rise in holiness, immense is the measure of the force of His revelation through the Torah and the awesome fear of God which has been given to Israel. “And He said unto me: Thou art My servant, Israel in whom I will be glorified.” (Isa. 49:3)

Such is our Mizmor [Psalm] 19. From within our earthly natures, we reach out to the spiritual and the heavenly. We build with matter and afterwards consecrate what we have built. We are commanded to occupy ourselves in our earthly abode with the revelation of the Holy, in support of the divine work of creation. “Ascribe ye strength unto God;” (Ps. 68:35) “Exalt the Lord with me and let us extol His name together.” (Ps. 34:4) Sanctification of the Name is Greater than Desecration of the Name. In saying this,

it is not our intent to flatter heretics and Torah scoffers. There are in the State of Israel many grievous things in which there is much *Chillul Hashem* (Desecration of God's Name). Nonetheless, with all that is shocking from the aspect of desecration, there is an enormous value of *Kiddush Hashem* (Sanctification of God's Name) which cannot, by any account, be set aside in relation to the State and Israel's Day of Independence. In Ezekiel, Chapter 36, the program for redemption is set out: "And I will sanctify My great name" this will come about because "I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land." Only afterwards will come "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your uncleanness...And I will...cause you to walk in my statutes." (Ezek. 36:23- 26)

The repentance of the people will come only after the Ingathering of the Exiles. At first glance, there is a balance between the sanctification of building of the kingdom of Israel, on the one hand, and the desecration involved on the other. And, as the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of the settlement of the Land of Israel continues to grow within our midst, as the tens of thousands of members of Israel are gathered within the Land, out of the completeness and greatness of faith in the realization of the "works of the Lord," we may attain the right to see desecrations and profanations gradually be abolished and disappear. "Let every valley be raised, every hill and mount made low. Let the rugged ground become level and the ridges become a plain. The Presence of the LORD shall appear, and all flesh, as one, shall behold—for the LORD Himself has spoken." (Isaiah 40:4-5)

Rabbi David Samson is author of the book "*Torat Eretz Yisrael*" on the life and teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook

HaRav Tzvi Yehuda made it clear that in any discussions with non-Jews, the starting point must be that the other side acknowledge, without any room for negotiation or compromise, that the entire Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish People for all eternity. Over and over, the Rosh Yeshiva stressed that our rule over Eretz Yisrael is founded upon the Divine Promise of the Land to the Jewish People. He compared the situation to a man who was forcefully expelled from his home, Afterwards the home was stolen by one conqueror after the next. That is exactly what happened to us. In the past century, when we returned to Eretz Yisrael, the country was in the hands of the Turks who turned it over to the British, who were internationally commissioned with the task of helping the Jews establish a State.

Rabbi Kook stressed that the Arabs had, and have, absolutely no national right to the Land. If they deny the justice of our cause, and choose to go to war against us, then we must persuade them, he said, with our tanks. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized that not only the surrender of any piece of our Land was forbidden, even all expressions of surrendering territory were as strictly forbidden as eating pork. In a time of war, he said, expressions of weakness are anathema to the strengthening of the Nation.

All proposals of withdrawal, autonomy, and foreign sovereignty over the smallest part of the Land of Israel are *traif* [unkosher], he said, and must be adamantly avoided. Just as no letter of the Torah is allowed to be erased, and no Jew is allowed to be abandoned, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda vehemently maintained that no handful of Israeli soil, however small, is allowed to be transferred to foreign control. He taught that we must instead strengthen our rule over Israel, throughout all of our Biblical borders, and that all interference on the part of the Gentiles is null and void.

Gush Emunim: Settling All the Land, By Rabbi Ed Snitkoff

Gush Emunim was founded in 1974 under the slogan “The Land of Israel, for the people of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel.” Its founders perceived the state of Israel as the instrument through which God was bringing redemption, making it imperative upon the people and the state to take practical steps to ensure Jewish sovereignty over all parts of the Land as it was defined in the Bible.

The roots of the Gush Emunim philosophy are found in the writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and the later interpretations of his son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook. The elder Rabbi Kook believed that the Jewish people and the Land of Israel were mystically bonded by the spirit of God. The Zionist movement, even at its most secular, was a divine instrument in bringing the redemption, which is close at hand. He interpreted Zionism according to the kabbalistic notion of “practical messianism,” which links divine redemption to the actions of human beings. According to Rabbi Kook, the return to Zion and the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel will lead to redemption and the Messianic Era.

Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook took over as head of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva upon his father's death in 1935. He spent the next 50 years teaching, expanding, interpreting, and publishing his father's practical-messianic ideas. Eventually, the elder Rabbi Kook's belief that settling and building the Land of Israel would bring the Messiah would be interpreted by his son to apply especially to lands captured in the 1967 Six Day War.

While both father and son were highly respected in the national religious community, many leaders of this camp distanced themselves from their messianic teachings. Some moderate religious Zionists felt that the younger Kook was misinterpreting the teachings of his father according to his own, more radical theological and political beliefs.

Between 1948 and 1967, the national religious camp became an important part of the political landscape in Israel, bringing a moderate interpretation of Judaism that fully integrated itself into Israeli society. This political moderation was massively transformed by the Six Day War.

Three weeks before the Six Day War, Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook gave a speech that set the agenda for the future of the young generation of the national religious camp:

“Nineteen years ago, on the night when news of the United Nations decision in favor of the re-establishment of the state of Israel reached us, when the people streamed into the streets to celebrate and rejoice, I could not go out and join in the jubilation. I sat alone and silent; a burden lay upon me. During those first hours I could not resign myself to what had been done. I could not accept the fact that indeed ‘they have...divided My land’ (Joel 4:2)! Yes [and now after 19 years] where is our Hebron--have we forgotten her?! Where is our Shehem, our Jericho--where?! Have we forgotten them?!

“And all that lies beyond the Jordan--each and every clod of earth, every region, hill, valley, every plot of land, that is part of *Eretz Israel* [the Land of Israel]--have we the right to give up even one grain of the Land of God?! On that night, nineteen years ago, during those hours, as I sat trembling in every limb of my body, wounded, cut, torn to pieces --I could not then rejoice.”

These words would resound prophetically following the Six Day War in June 1967, which resulted in Israel's takeover of all of Jerusalem, Shehem (called Nablus by the Palestinians), Jericho, and Hebron.

Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook and his followers were confident that the victory was another sign from God that the redemptive process was fully underway.

As it became clear that the Israeli-Arab impasse would remain, the Israeli government began to plan and establish strategic settlements in areas occupied in 1967. These settlements were built to widen and defend the pre-1967 border (known as the Green Line), usually avoiding areas of concentrated Arab populations. At the same time, the messianic overtones of this period led many within the national religious world to dream of settling all of Judea and Samaria, the biblical heartland.

The national trauma following the 1973 Yom Kippur War equaled the ecstasy that followed the Six Day War. At this time, the members of the young religious faction left their burned out tanks and bunkers with renewed determination that the secular, strategic settlement plan was not to be depended on any longer. This crisis led to a meeting in Kibbutz Kfar Etzion in 1974, the outcome of which was the founding of Gush Emunim.

Gush Emunim's platform defined the movement's mission in the following way: "To bring about a major spiritual reawakening in the Jewish people for the sake of the full realization of the Zionist vision, in the knowledge that this vision's source and goal in the Jewish heritage and in Judaism's roots are the total redemption of both the Jewish people and the whole world."

According to Harold Fisch, an ideologue of Gush Emunim and a professor at Bar Ilan University, the Jewish people's divine imperative to settle every inch of the Land was a value above all others. In his 1978 book, *The Zionist Revolution*, he interpreted Zionism according to the Gush Emunim worldview, stating that the covenant between the Jews and God behooved the Jewish people to act in the interests of the Land of Israel and exercise their right to settle and control it.

To Fisch, the Arab opposition was "suicidal," and the Jewish people must not compromise with them in any way. The Jews' role as the vanguard of the redemption means that they will never be a normal nation among the nations, and they must operate in a different dimension, fulfilling their God-given destiny.

But Gush Emunim was by no means monolithic, and there were many clashes within the movement. Moderates wanted to concentrate on settling the land while downplaying the messianic undertones; militants emphasized the redemptive aspects of the settlements and were interested in rebuilding the Temple, displacing the Arabs, and re-establishing the biblical kingdom. In addition, about 20 percent of Gush Emunim supporters were secular, attracted to the movement by its idealism and nationalism, rather than by its messianic aspects.

In light of its view that settling the Land of Israel will hasten the redemptive process, Gush Emunim established settlements throughout the territories captured in 1967, especially in Judea and Samaria. The belief that Jews have a God-given right to settle every part of the Land of Israel—and that no government, foreign or Israeli, has the right to prevent this—became a central pillar in the tactics and planning of the movement.

After the conservative Likud party won control of the Israeli government in 1977, Gush Emunim found a sympathetic partner in Prime Minister Menachem Begin and other hawkish leaders, who supported

Gush Emunim's efforts to populate large areas of Judea and Samaria in order to thwart the possibility of an eventual “Land for Peace” agreement with the Palestinians.

Gush Emunim members also succeeded in bringing the practical-messianic message to center stage, as Gush Emunim's philosophy became widely accepted within the religious community. Many students of Merkaz Harav and similar *yeshivot* became teachers in the state religious school system, allowing them to disseminate “practical-messianic” notions on a large scale. Additionally, the personal commitment of Gush Emunim members inspired the young generation, many of whom joined the ranks of the settlers.

Gush Emunim saw itself as taking the baton of pioneering Zionism and running to complete the Zionist vision, bringing the redemptive process to a zenith. The Gush Emunim outlook became normative in most national religious circles, although many moderate Orthodox rabbis, educators, and leaders were vocal in their opposition to the movement.

Following the death of Tzvi Yehudah Kook in 1983, conflicts among Gush Emunim leaders intensified. Rabbi Moshe Levinger, for example, felt the movement's leaders were too involved in politics and settlement building, leading to the loss of ideology and direction. He told the *Ha'aretz* newspaper: “Over the years, we continually talked about the value of Jewish settlements... We never mention the Jewish people's spiritual mission in the world, our duty to be a ‘kingdom of priests and a holy nation,’ nor do we explain that, just as that mission could never have been carried out in Uganda, it can never be carried out in only part of the Land of Israel.”

A major crisis occurred in 1984, when police uncovered a Jewish underground whose members--many of them linked to Gush Emunim--planned attacks on local Arabs and aimed to destroy major Muslim landmarks, such as the Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem. Their arrests opened a major debate over the nature of the movement and its relationship to the rule of law.

These debates were soon moot, as the post-Kook Gush Emunim movement became overshadowed by the products of its success. The Amana organization, created by Gush Emunim to establish settlements in all areas of the Land of Israel, and the Yesha Council, the Council of Jewish Settlements of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, took over the pragmatic settlement and political work, leading to a gradual demise of Gush Emunim through the 1980s.

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*Israel's Ayatollahs:
Meir Kahane and the Far Right in Israel.*

*By Raphael Mergui and Philippe Simonnot
Scanned and edited by Avraham Eliav*

G~d's Law: an Interview with Rabbi Meir Kahane (1932-1990)

Q: What exactly is a Jewish state?

A: A Jewish state means that, at a minimum, there must be a majority of Jews; a Jewish sovereignty with the power to make our own laws. This is why Jews have left Europe and have come here. If we were now to apply to the letter the principles of Western democracy, we would have to agree that decisions are to be made by a majority. It's at this point that I ask a question that sends Israelis crazy, both on the Left and on the Right. The question is as follows: if the Arabs settle among us and make enough children to become a majority, will Israel continue to be a Jewish state? Do we have to accept that the Arab majority will decide? Obviously, nobody in Israel can accept this. Because to accept this would amount to being anti-Zionist!

Q: Would you accept a situation in which there was democracy only for the Jews and not for the Arabs?

A: I'll answer that question later. First let me explain why everybody is mad at me. It's because I have confronted people with the following contradiction: you can't have Zionism and democracy at the same time. And for those who criticize me, it's very difficult to get out of this contradiction.

Now let me answer your question. First of all, Western democracy has to be ruled out. For me that's cut and dried: there's no question of setting up democracy in Israel, because democracy means equal rights for all, irrespective of racial or religious origins. Therefore democracy and Zionism cannot go together. And Israel's Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed this state to be a Jewish state, is a totally schizophrenic document. You just can't, on the one hand, want a Jewish state and at the same time give non-Jews the right to become a majority.

Q: Do you mean to say that if Zionism is not religious, there 'is no point in having a state of Israel?'

A: For me, the word Zionism means G~d's order that we live in Israel. And to have this state is a miracle that comes from G~d. As far as I'm concerned, we are living the end of time. We are living a messianic era. We survived 2,000 years without a state, without an army, without power, scattered to the four corners of the world. Think of the pogroms, of Auschwitz, the concentration camps, the Inquisition -- we survived all that! People who believe that we have survived all that, being atheists, are completely blind. The Jews have come back from hundreds of countries just as the Bible said they would. We had a brilliant victory in the Six Day War, and a few years later, during the Yom Kippur War, we lived through three terrible days. The difference between these two wars is explained by G~d's will. If the Jews become religious again and do what G~d wants, then the Messiah will come today. The creation of the state of Israel only marks the beginning of the messianic era. The Messiah will come. For my part, I don't doubt it for an instant.

The question is: how is he going to come? In the Jewish tradition, he may come in two ways. If we deserve him, he may come at this instant, in glory and in majesty. And if we don't deserve him, he'll come all the same, but in the midst of terrible sufferings. This is why I am fighting today. I am fighting so that the Jews become good Jews, so that there is not a catastrophe at the coming of the Messiah.

Q: What would you say if all Israeli Arabs decided to convert to Judaism tomorrow?

A: Obviously, we wouldn't agree to it, because they wouldn't want to convert for honest reasons. It takes years to convert a person, don't forget that. Anyway, the Arabs won't do it. They think that Jews are their enemies. As a matter of fact, leftist Jews despise the Arabs. I don't despise the Arabs. Liberal Jews think that they can buy the Arabs. Jewish racists think that there can be good Arabs, nice Arabs. They believe that they can educate them to be good Arabs. What the leftist Jews call good Arabs are not what I call good Arabs. For me, the good Arab is a proud Arab. And I understand this good Arab. Because I too have national pride. At the bottom of their hearts, the Israeli Left has this feeling that it is not entirely natural for Jews to be living here in Israel. So they feel guilty. They feel obliged to defend the Arabs on all the questions they raise, including the end of the Jewish state. But you won't buy the Arabs by raising their standard of living. The Arab is proud and he is concerned about the way his Arab brothers live. And when certain Jews say to the Arabs: 'Look what we've done for you, all the good we have done. We found a desert here and we transformed it into a garden,' the Arab replies, with good reason: 'This may be true, but it was my desert and now it has become your garden.' So I understand the Arabs completely. It's insane to believe that you can buy them, that because you send them to Hebrew University they are going to turn into 'good Arabs' in the sense that the Israeli Left means. It's quite simply false. On the contrary, they will turn into the most dangerous Arabs. Revolutionaries are recruited among the very intellectuals whom we are educating in our universities. We have such a sense of guilt that we keep saying: 'Let's buy them.' You can't buy everything. That's why I say the Arabs must leave Israel, precisely because I believe that if the Arabs stay, they'll become the 'good Arabs' as I understand the term.

Q: So that means war, then?

A: No, that doesn't mean war. At the present time, right now, we have the means to show them the door. Twenty years from now, we won't have the power to throw them out.

Q: Why won't you have that possibility twenty years from now?

A: Because in twenty years from now, we'll have as many Arabs as Jews in this country. We have a terrible problem in Israel. It's not the Arabs of the Occupied Territories who are the problem. We can get rid of those Arabs now. The real problem is that there are many Arabs in Israel who have Israeli citizenship. And these Arabs are making many, many children.

Q: Professor Neeman has written that the demographic ratio between Jews and Arabs has not changed since 1967.

A: Another fraud. A statistical fraud. It's a lie by the Tehiya [nationalist party], because this party has a very serious problem: it wants to annex the Occupied Territories and keep the Arabs living there. The real question is the following: do we need another million and a half Arabs? In fact, the latest statistics show that Arabs from the West Bank territories go to work in Kuwait because there's work there and there's no work here. Besides, Neeman is talking about the Arabs living in the Territories, but I'm talking about the Arabs who have Israeli citizenship. And this Arab population is growing twice as fast as the Jewish population. Israel's Arabs are high-quality Arabs; they all go to school, they are intelligent; they have tremendous qualities. Northern Israel will be completely Arab in the near future.

Galilee already has an Arab majority. Umm el-Fahm [a village in Galilee] already has an overwhelming Arab majority. We're sitting here doing nothing, watching what is happening without lifting a finger. Once the Arabs have a majority in this country, they're going to do what any self-respecting nationalist would do. They are not going to accept living in a country called a Jewish state, in a country with a Law of Return that applies solely to the Jews. Once the Arabs have gained a majority, they'll change the laws and the nature of this state, and they'll be right. Completely right. And this is why I want to move them all out now. I say now, because we need a minimum of force to do it. If I were the minister of defense, if I were talking to you now as minister of defense, the mere fact of hearing me say what I just said would sow panic among the Arabs. The Arabs are afraid of me, because they know that I understand them.

Q: Are you intending to drive the Arabs out by military means?

A: Yes, obviously, but that won't be necessary for most of them. I'd offer financial compensation for those who want to leave the country voluntarily. I would only use force for those who don't want to leave. I'd go all the way, and they know that.

Q: If an Arab came to you right now and said: 'OK, give me some money to leave,' would you give it to him?

A: No. I don't have any money, and it's not my job to make such payments. It's the job of the Israeli government, of the Jewish people, to give the money. It's not mine.

I'd like to raise another question here: the Arabs owe a lot of money to the Sephardic Jews who were obliged to leave Arab countries without compensation. I want an account of everything the Jews from Arab countries left behind them. Then we'll see who owes money to whom.

In any case, I am prepared to offer compensation, and the amount of the compensation will depend on what the Jews from the Arab countries left behind. But in any event, we're going to have to offer the Arabs something so as to stimulate them to leave.

The real problem is that I am not about to ask them to leave. I want to make them leave. I'm saying to them that they must leave, and I'll make them leave. As to the circumstances under which they are going to leave, this is not up to them to decide.

Q: Therefore it won't be your party that will expel the Arabs, What you want is to force the government to do it.

A: Of course! Because there are no other practical means of doing it. You need government means for an action like this. But I'm convinced that my party will be in the government. I have no doubt about that.

Q: In the meantime, you engage in, actions such as in Umm el-Fahm or in Taibeh, to scare the Arabs and to force them to leave.

A: Absolutely. I want to scare them and I want to make them realize that, contrary to what they have believed for fifteen years, time is not on their side. That it is completely false that time is on their side.