



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון  
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

## **Rabbi Abraham Isaac ha-Cohen Kook**

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## 1. Rabbi Isaac Breuer

*Breuer (1883–1946) was a rabbi in the German Neo-Orthodoxy movement of his maternal grandfather Samson Raphael Hirsch, and was the first president of Agudat Israel Workers.*

“On this day you became a nation” (Deuteronomy 26:9). Israel became a nation, when they received the Torah at Mount Sinai and they took it upon themselves to keep the commandments...and this consciousness which was created by the Torah didn't result just in making Israel a religious group, but it made them a nation.

But those Zionists are strange. Their ancestors were loyal to the Torah. But you can see how Zionist culture has shaped their character...they denied their tradition which lay in their hearts, they rejected spirituality, which they believed had damaged the nation. With a zealous love they became one with the land, in order to plant a new generation that is healthy and strong; solid as steel; with their head in the real world, and their roots in the ground, but their back turned from God: The Zionist nation!...In this zealous devotion to the land they form the basis for a new nation – an “*eretz Yisraeli* nation.” Maybe they would develop a new culture – on the basis of the farming experience, but it won't be the Jewish people anymore, it won't be a Jewish culture anymore, because the national homeland would be the end of the Jewish people.

"היום הזה נהיית לעם" (דברים כז, ט). ישראל נהיה לעם, כאשר קיבלו את התורה בהר סיני והתחייבו לשמור את מצוותיה.... והתודעה הזאת שנוצרה על ידי התורה לא הפכה את ישראל לחברה דתית גרידא - שאין לה כל זיקה לארץ מסוימת - אלא היא הפכה אותם לחברה לאומית דווקא.

(אבל הציונים ה)אלה הם טיפוס מוזר. אבותיהם היו ברובם נאמנים לתורה. אך בהם כבר ניכרת פעולת החינוך הציוני... הם התכחשו לעבר שבלבם, הסירו מדעתם את הרוחניות, שהביאה רעה על האומה. באהבה קנאית התמוזגו עם אדמת הטרשים, למען יצמח ממנה דור חדש: דור בריא ועז, חזק כפלדה, פניו אל המציאות, שורשיו באדמה, ועורפו פונה לשמים: האומה הציונית!... בהתמסרותם הקנאית לאדמה עלולים הם להניח יסוד לעם חדש - עם ארץ-ישראלי. אולי אף יפתחו תרבות חדשה - מן ההתחלה הפרימיטיבית של הווי איכרים, אך שוב לא יהיה זה עם 'יהודי', ולא תהיה זו תרבות 'יהודית', כי הבית הלאומי יהיה סוף העם היהודי.

## 2. Rabbi Yitzchak Yaacov Reines: Declaration of Rabbis in Support of Zionism, Hamelitz 1899

*Yitzchak Yaacov Reines (1839-1915) was a Lithuanian Orthodox rabbi and the founder of the Mizrachi Religious Zionist Movement.*

Anyone who thinks that the Zionist idea is related to redemption to come at the end of days and to the coming of the Messiah, and therefor thinks that it negate and nullifies one of the pillars of our holy faith – are just wrong! There is nothing of Messianism within it. The all idea of Zionism and its establishment is just about the improvement of the situation of our suffering brothers.

כל החושבים שיש ברעיון (הציוני) איזה ענין של גאולה העתידה וביאת המשיח, ועל כן רואים שיש בזה הריסה לעיקר אחד מעיקרי אמונתנו הקדושה, אינם אלא טועים. אין בזה קורטוב של הענין מהגאולה. כל עקרו של הרעיון הזה ויסודו אינו אלא הטבת מצב אחינו האומללים.

## 3. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: Excerpts from Orot Yisrael, § 5-8.

*Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook [1865-1935] was the first Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel.*

Sometimes, nationalism is embedded with the spirit of impurity and wickedness, until it imputes wickedness also onto the people who believe in a national movement.

Although, in the End of Days, when Israel will awake and come to love the Land of Israel, the passion of the nation will grow and it will be easier to sanctify the Spirit. Because the notion of holiness is deeply connected to the Land of Israel... The despoiled Spirit – the Spirit that was corrupted by nationalism - will be cured. As it is written "and will make expiation for the land of his people."

The state is not the ultimate happiness of man. This, you can say, regarding regular states, states whose goals aspire to no more than national responsibility... But this is not true for a state that is essentially an ideal, that carves into its very essence the highest ideal content, which is the truest, highest happiness of every individual. This state is truly the highest rung on the ladder of the pursuit of happiness, and this state is our state, the state of Israel, the foundation of the throne of the God in the world, that all her desire is that God will be one and His name one, which is truly the utmost level of happiness.

לפעמים רוח לאומי יהיה כרוך ברוח של טומאה ושל רשעה, עד שישפיע רשעות גם על הדבקים בו. אמנם באחרית הימים, כשיתעוררו ישראל לאהבת ארץ ישראל, ותהיה תשוקת האומה גדולה אליה, יהיה נקל לקדש את הרוח, מפני שרעיון הקדושה קשור הרבה בארץ ישראל... על כן תטהר גם את הרוח אשר נפגע וקלט בקרבן איזה זוהמא, כי "וכפר אדמתו עמו" כתיב...

אין המדינה האושר העליון של האדם. זה ניתן להאמר במדינה רגילה, שאינה עולה לערך יותר גדול מחברת אחריות גדולה... מה שאין כן מדינה שהיא ביסודה אידיאלית, שחוקק בהויתה תוכן האידיאלי ביותר עליון שהוא באמת האושר היותר גדול של היחיד. מדינה זו היא באמת היותר עליונה בסולם האושר, ומדינה זו היא מדינתנו, מדינת ישראל, יסוד כסא ד' בעולם, שכל חפצה הוא שיהיה ד' אחד ושמו אחד, שזהו באמת האושר היותר עליון.

#### **4. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: A Four-Fold Song (Orot Hakodesh, Volume II, pp. 458-459)**

There is one who sings the song of one's own life, and in himself he finds everything, full spiritual satisfaction.

There is another who sings the song of his people. He leaves the circle of his own individual self, because he finds it without sufficient breadth, without an idealistic basis. He aspires toward the heights, and he stretches himself with a gentle love to the whole community of Israel. Together with her he sings her songs. He feels grieved in her afflictions and delights in her hopes. He contemplates noble and pure thoughts about her past and her future, and probes with love and wisdom her inner spiritual essence.

There is another who reaches toward more distant realms, and he goes beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the song of humanity. His spirit extends to the wider vistas of the majesty of humanity in general, and its noble essence, aspiring towards humanity's general goal and looking forward towards its higher perfection. From this source of life he draws the subjects of his meditation and study, his aspirations and his visions.

Then there is one who rises toward wider horizons, until he links himself with all existence, with all God's creatures, with all worlds, and he sings his song with all of them. It is of one such as this that tradition has said that whoever sings a portion of song each day is assured of having a share in the world to come.

And then there is one who rises with all these songs in one ensemble, and they all join their voices. Together they sing their songs with beauty, each one lends vitality and life to the other. They are sounds of joy and gladness, sounds of jubilation and celebration, sounds of ecstasy and holiness. The song of the self, the song of the people, the song of humanity, the song of the world all merge in her at all times, in every hour... It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, and a fourfold song. It is the Song of Songs of Solomon, Shlomo which means peace or wholeness. It is the song of the Highest One in whom is wholeness.