Nation-Statist Soteriology and Traditions of Defeat: Religious-Zionism, the Ninth of Av, and Jerusalem Day

Yaacov Yadgar[1] and Noam Hadad[2]

Abstract

We ask how the theopolitics of nation-state, and especially its soteriology, engage with traditions that preceded the state and relay messages that contradict this theopolitics. To discuss this question, we address the evolving (re-)interpretation of the Ninth of Av – a ritual commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Jewish (Judean) self-rule in ancient times – by Religious-Zionist commentators. We further compare this interpretation to the Religious-Zionist appropriation of Jerusalem Day, a civic holiday celebrating the establishment of Israeli control over East Jerusalem in the June 1967 war. We argue that the statist imperative of the superiority of nation-statist theopolitics suggests that traditions are co-opted to fit in with its soteriology, with varying degrees of resistance or willing accommodation by carriers of these traditions. This co-opting may result in either the de-politicization of what the statist view would see as religion or the religionization of the state's own civic and so-called secular holidays.

1 School of Global and Area Studies and Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, yaacov.yadgar@area.ox.ac.uk

2 Independent Scholar, Nahariya, Israel, noamh45@gmail.com

1

Introduction

How does the theopolitics of the modern, sovereign nation-state cope with traditions that preceded it and carry messages that may contradict those which the state wishes to promote? And how do these traditions, in turn, react to nation-statist actions of (or attempts at) appropriation, interpretation, adoption, silencing and erasure?

As William Cavanaugh (2003, 2) explains, the term "theopolitics" is aimed at stressing that "[f]ar from being 'secular' institutions and process," the state and other modern constructs (such as globalization and civil society) are "ways of imagining [that] organize bodies around stories of human nature and human destiny which have deep theological analogies. In other words, supposedly 'secular' political theory is really theology in disguise". Specifically, the term "theopolitics" explicates the fact that "the modern state is built upon a soteriology of rescue from violence," a foundational "myth of the State as Savior", the basis of the modern concept of sovereignty (Cavanaugh 2003, 2; see also: Milbank 2006; McAllister and Napolitano 2021; Brody 2015).

Among other things, this soteriology is constructed via (and expressed by) political myths, symbols, and rituals (Bottici 2007; Bouchard 2017; Nicholls 2016) that "imagine" (Anderson 1998) the nation and "invent" (Hobsbawm and

Ranger 1992) its traditions. To do so, nation-statist ideologies and political cultures use a variety of sources, including such that originate in traditions that preceded the state – carried, practiced, interpreted, and updated by the communities from which the state shapes the nation in the name of which it is sovereign. (This is not to suggest that the state has an independent agency akin to human agents. Rather, as Bevir and Rhodes (2010, 1) explain, the state can be seen as "a series of contingent and unstable cultural practices, which in turn consists of the political activity of specific human agents.")

The so-called secular political tradition of the state would tend to label these preceding traditions as sectarian, parochial, and, most importantly: religious, implying (or forcefully explicating) that they do not fit -- at least prior to being reformed and nationalized -- within the modern, inclusive, and secular framework of the nation-state (Cavanaugh 2009). Needless to say, the process of nationalizing these traditions is not always smooth, as the traditions at hand might not be attentive to the needs or the views of the sovereign nation-state. Sometimes they contradict its theopolitics or forcefully negate what for the state must be beyond doubt (for example, the soteriology it propagates).

Our question, then, has to do with the ways in which the new traditions of the state cope with or handle older traditions that have preceded it and continue to live alongside it, and how these traditions, in turn, may react to the statist actions. More specifically, we are interested exactly in those cases where the nation-statist soteriology conflicts with narratives, symbols and memories

3

carried by tradition that either mark the opposite of salvation and redemption (commemorating, that is, collective defeat, catastrophe, exile, etc.), or at least undermine and complicate the state's claim (via its ideology and political culture) to the role of savior, a claim which is entailed in the ideology of the nation-state.

We will approach this question by retracing the ways in which a political ideology that self-identifies as an instance of religious nationalism -- proclaiming, that is, to uphold a commitment to nationalism or nation-statism that views itself as an embodiment and fulfilment of religious tradition itself – negotiates the tension that arises when the message entailed in this tradition conflicts with the nation-statist soteriology. The ideology at play is Religious-Zionism (Schwartz 2008; Inbari 2012; Don-Yehiya 2014; Hellinger, Hershkowitz, and Susser 2018; Sagi and Schwartz 2018; Katsman 2020; Hadad 2020; Yadgar and Hadad 2021), and the specific tradition (or element of Jewish tradition) at hand is that of the commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, the end of Jewish (rather: Judean) self-rule, and the onset of exile in antiquity, marked by fasting and mourning in the Ninth of Av. As we will show below, the message traditionally propagated by the story of the Ninth of Av and the rituals commemorating and propagating it – a story of sin, divine punishment, catastrophe, and a hoped-for eschatology of ultimate redemption – directly contradicts some of the most foundational elements of Zionist nationalism and the political mythology of Israeli nation-statism. We will seek

to explicate this tension by also considering a relatively new addition to the nation-statist tradition, Jerusalem Day, which tends to directly contradict certain elements of the message of the Ninth of Av commemoration.

Like any other such case-study focused intervention, our retracing of the specific political-history at hand should be of relevance to scholars interested in the wider questions at hand, namely the ways in which nation-statist political theologies copes with (potentially, at least) competing traditions. Clearly, the idiosyncrasies of the (Jewish, Zionist) case at hand should not distract us from seeing the wider theoretical contexts in which the case may be placed, such as the study of religious-nationalism (e.g. Barker 2008; Haselby 2015; Juergensmeyer 2001, 2010, 2019), or the exploration of the complicated relation between religion and nationalism (e.g. Cesari 2018; Hastings 2018; Rehman 2018), specifically what Rouhana and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2021) titled the "sacralization" of politics (see also: Ji 2021; Fitzgerald 2005).

Zionist soteriology and Jewish tradition

The question of Zionism's and Israeli nation-statism's relation to Jewish traditions that preceded them is far from being a neglected aspect of the field of research. The predominant discourse on these issues tends to accept the secularist epistemology, presupposing the modern nation-state as secular, and seeing its encounter with what the discourse (following the state) sees as religion as a complicated matter, to say the least. These interventions tend to

5

assume the nation-state as superior to religion, but acknowledge that a clear break from religion has not been a viable option for Zionism (e.g.: Samuel Almog, Reinharz, and Shapira 1998; Salmon 2002; for a critical appreciation of the secularist discourse on study of Israeli nation-statehood see: Yadgar 2017, 2020; Herman 2019).

More immediately relevant to our topic here, scholars have also charted the convoluted relation between Israeli political culture, on its political myths and symbols, and traditional Judaism and its symbols and myths (Don-Yehiya 1980; Don-Yehiya and Liebman 1981; Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a, 1983b; Zerubavel 1995; Shoham 2017). These have tended to frame the discussion as a question of the secularization of Jewish tradition and to employ the category of civil religion to refer to the system of myths, symbols, beliefs, and narratives propagated by the state (following, of course, Rousseau, and, more immediately, Bellah 1967; Bellah and Hammond 1980). In doing so, they have unwittingly reified the dichotomy of the secular vs. religion, even when their own analysis has clearly challenged both the viability and the utility of this categorical distinction. Importantly, by employing the concept of civil religion, they have preserved the state's self-fashioning as secular, denying or obscuring its theological claims, which are lucidly captured in its soteriology. They have also played, even if only implicitly so, into the debate of whether Judaism fits within the category of religion (Batnitzky 2011; Boyarin 2004, 2018; Magid 2021).

"Generically" speaking, soteriology narrates a movement between "two states of human existence," from "a state of deprivation (sin, corruption)" to "a state of release from that deprivation (salvation, liberation)". It also tells of "an event that produces a change from the first state to the second" (Root 1986, 145). Much of nationalist ideology, with its common glorification of an archaic, lost "golden age" of the ethnos/nation that is to be revived by the modern nation-state (Smith 1997) revolves around a soteriology in which the state plays the role of savior. Probably the most important soteriology of Western modernity is that of the very form of the so-called secular modern nation-state itself, captured in what Cavanaugh titles "the creation myth of the wars of religions":

> The story goes that, after the Protestant Reformation divided Christendom along religious lines, Catholics and Protestants began killing each other for holding to different doctrines. The wars of religion […] demonstrated to the West the inherent danger of public religion. The solution to the problem lay in the rise of the modern state, in which religious loyalties were marginalized and the state secured a monopoly on the means of violence. (Cavanaugh 2009, 123)

This, then, is "a story of our salvation from mortal peril," where the modern, sovereign state is cast as savior. The lesson taught here, simply put, is Western modernity: It legitimizes – necessitates, even – the present order of things, the

7

configuration of power where the state has a monopolistic claim to sovereignty (Cavanaugh 2009, 123–24).

While the Jewish people as a collective cannot claim to have an active role in the European story of the Wars of Religion, the political Zionist rendition of Jewish nationalism, which nourishes heavily on the (European, Christian) notion of modern nation-statist sovereignty (Herman 2019; Yadgar 2017), is clearly indebted to the modern notion of the sovereign nation-state as savior this myth legitimates. Zionism narrates a soteriology where the calamity of national exile – meaning primarily the (political) state of lacking sovereignty – is to be redeemed by national ingathering and the establishment of a Jewish sovereign nation-state. It is this soteriology that renders Zionism a messianic and redemptive ideology (Hertzberg 1997, 14–100; Saposnik 2021). Importantly, this soteriology identifies religion with exile, depicting Judaism (meaning in this context a narrow sense of Jewish religion, which is preoccupied with ritual and oblivious if not outright hostile to collective political action) as a collective malaise of passivity and deprivation (Don-Yehiya 1992; Raz-Krakotzkin 2013). Redemption is to be achieved also by a release from this religion. It is important to note that Zionism freely and constantly employs all of these terms – exile, ingathering of exiles, redemption, etc. – whose theological or religious origins are too well established to allow us to ignore the fact that Zionism's so-called secular political language is rooted in religious terminologies and ways of thinking. As Arthur Herzberg (1997, 16)

put it in his definitive survey of Zionist ideology, "From the Jewish perspective messianism, and not nationalism, is the primary element in Zionism" (for alternative renditions of Jewish political theologies see: Vatter 2021; Raz-Krakotzkin 2011). This message – in effect, the replacing of religion by nation-statism, and of God by the state – is commonly held to be the core of the Zionist secularization of Judaism (Avineri 1998; Shimoni 1995, chap. 7), regardless of the fact that given the heavily theological language of this political ideology of the state it is hard to see the merit of the secularist terminology here (Raz-Krakotzkin 2021; Rouhana and Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2021).

The interest of legitimizing the nation-statist configuration of power has played a role in shaping the ways in which Zionist ideology and the political culture of the state of Israel have approached elements from within the traditions carried by Jewish communities who came to compose Jewish-Israeli society. This approach oscillates between rejection and adoption, reinterpretation and appropriation, ignoring and celebrating. Indeed, a study of the developing and diverging ways in which various streams within Israeli political culture have approached this issue makes for one of the most illuminating narrations of Israeli political history *per-se* (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a).

In the following, then, we wish to contribute another chapter for this political history, by focusing on a case in which a message entailed in a traditional narrative and the ritual commemorating it directly contradicts the

9

statist soteriology. After offering the necessarily summative background of the Ninth of Av ritual, we move on to discuss the wider context in which to understand the dilemma it presents a nation-statist political theology with, namely the common reference to the State of Israel as the resurrection of the "Third Temple." We then move on to present our analysis of the Religious-Zionist discourse on the Ninth of Av and Jerusalem Day.

The Ninth of Av and the Zionist politics of redemption

If the celebration and commemoration of victories is an almost fixed feature of nation-statist political culture, the Ninth of Av is the exact opposite, a commemoration of defeat. A daylong ritual of mourning and fasting, the date is traditionally seen to be memorializing and lamenting a series of defeats and catastrophes that befell the Israelites, Judeans, and the Jewish people throughout many generations. Primarily, the day marks the destruction of the Judean temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE (tradition has it that its predecessor, too, was destructed on the same day in 586 BCE) and the exile that ensued. Importantly, this ritual carries obvious political messages, exemplifying rather brilliantly the futility of attempting to distinguish the political from the religious in Judaism or Jewish traditions. Read theologically, the ritual is meant to commemorate the divine punishment that befell the sinning people. Yet at the same time, politically, it is the commemoration of the end of Judean (or, anachronistically: Jewish) self-

rule in antiquity and the beginning of exile: The punishment from God is (among other things) also a *political* condition. The day marks the onslaught of a prolonged state of deprivation and subjugation (when Zionism emerged in 19th century Europe, Jews have been symbolically counting two millennia of being in exile). Traditionally, the day and its rituals also hold a message regarding the hoped-for end of this state of deprivation, an eschatological act of redemption in which the temple will be rebuilt by divine fiat, marking not only the end of exile but also, in some interpretations, the end of time itself. This eschatology fits in a wider traditional interpretation of Jewish history, where the divine punishment of exile is also read to mean that only God can have the agency to redeem the people. (Famously, it is Zionism's challenge against this interpretation and its claiming of human agency in redemption itself that renders this ideology heretical in the eyes of certain, mostly Ultra-Orthodox streams within the Jewish world).

Furthermore, the Jerusalem temple and the city it stood in and stands for symbolize in this scheme the life of the nation. Their destruction marks the onslaught of national deprivation, and their divine rebuilding the ultimate mark of redemption. Indeed, it is the same centrality of the temple, with its location on mount Zion, that made the latter a synonym for the Land of Israel as a whole. Later, European Jewish nationalists would utilize the same identification to label their ideology "Zionism."

To understand the challenge that the Ninth of Av presents Religious-Zionism with, it is helpful to consider the wider ideological context in which the Religious-Zionist dilemma takes place:

It should be clear enough why the Ninth of Av, the mourning of exile and destruction that are the result of divine punishment, would be challenging to a self-professed modern (and largely secular) Jewish national movement, who narrates a story of national revival and redemption from exile by means of human agency.

Symbolically, much of the tension at hand is captured in a common, highly charged discursive exercise of referring to the State of Israel as the "third temple" (for example, *Haṣofe* 7 Aug 1984; the exact Hebrew term commonly employed is *bayit shelishi*, literally "third home/house"; we will address the connotational gap opened by this difference between the literal and figurative meanings shortly). To begin with, the symbolism at play captures Zionist theopolitics by its horns: it speaks directly to the Zionist sense of the State of Israel being the re-establishment of a divinely-ordained polity, charging the political body with a sense of sacredness that is reserved, in the secularist-nationalist own terminology, to the religious (i.e., apolitical, metaphysical if not outright irrational) realm. It is clear enough why a national movement would seek to appropriate such a foundational element of the collective memory that preceded. It renders the existence of the State of Israel the fulfilment of the

millennia-long (expression of) yearnings of the Jewish people, in effect making Jewish history as a whole Zionist.

Yet it is interesting to note some of the maybe unintended consequences of this likening of the political, this-worldly organization to what Josephus famously named a "theocracy". Firstly, it renders the Zionist aim to make the Jewish people "a nation like all other nations" hollow. There is nothing mundane in the mythic image of the temple or the kingdom it represents, the rebuilding of which is assumed by various Jewish traditions to be the result of a messianic revelation, an eschatology in the most basic sense of the word. Secondly, it immediately evokes (either implicitly or explicitly, as symbols often do) a sense of the precariousness of the very existence of the state. If anything, even if looked at solely secularly and historically, the fact that the two predecessors (i.e., *bayit rishon* and *bayit sheni*, the first and second temples and their associated Israelite and Judean kingdoms) where ultimately destroyed looms large. Moreover, if considered in the framework of the traditional narration of the destruction of the temple (captured most fully in the Ninth of Av mourning rituals), the likening of the state to *bayit shelishi* also evokes the covenantal and hence *conditional* nature of this existence. In the biblical narration, the condition has to do with the Israelite's upholding of the covenant with God; in some rabbinical interpretations, a further stress is also put on avoiding internal strife (*sin'at ḥinam*). Modern iterations play a rather free hand when suggesting their conditionals. It is not uncommon for Israeli

13

commentators to warn that failure to attend to this or that political matter would ultimately bring about the destruction of *bayit shelishi*.

It is indeed a peculiar feature of Israeli political culture that the fear of a potential end of the polity – a destruction of the state itself – is ever present in political commentaries, always looming – either in the background or the foreground – as a menacing end-of-times catastrophe. (Maybe most famous of these was Moshe Dayan's, then Israel's Defense Minister, warning at the outbreak of the October 1973 war that "the temple [*bayit shelishi*] is doomed" (Manor 2017, 125).) As Benjamin Kedar (1982) noted, referring to what he identified as the "Masada complex" of Israeli politics (the Masada story being, in this context, a dramatic representation of the wider catastrophe of national destruction), the framing of this-worldly politics in this mythical, eschatological framework necessarily yields a problematic decision making process, to say the least.

Yet it is safe to assume that many Israelis use the term without knowingly accounting for these symbolic problematics. Myths, generally, allow us a layered approach to their narrations, where an implicit message may not only add to- but even contradict the explicit message of the story. Particularly in our case, language also allows a degree of ambiguity that services the nationalist-statist theopolitics and the tendency of the self-perceived secular to deny its indebtedness to what it depicts as the religious. As we noted earlier, the Hebrew term at hand, *bayit shelishi,* drops the word "temple" (*hamiqdash*) itself. In this,

the term simply follows the traditional Hebrew usage of the term. But given that *bayit* in for itself stands for important political, nation-statist values (i.e., Israel being the "national home" of the Jews), it is conceivable that a commentator's use of the term is meant to aim (only) at this supposedly non-religious level (see: Kotef 2020, 2–3, 17).

The tension entailed in the symbolism of Israel as "the third home" is further accentuated with reference to the Ninth of Av, and the Zionist endeavor to cope with it is indeed illuminating. Specifically, for self-identified secular Zionists in Mandatory Palestine, and especially for those among them who have self-fashioned as rebels against Jewish religion and adopted an aggressively confrontational attitude towards the Jewish traditions from which they have emerged (epitomised by Socialist-Zionism, but surely exceeding its ranks: Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a, chap. 2), the Ninth of Av presented a unique problem. While it was easy enough to simply ignore the ritual, "religious" aspects of the date and to question the theological message it professes, the political message it entails – decrying exile and the loss of self-rule – corresponded positively with certain premises of Zionist ideology, especially in the pre-state era. In addition, the material, physical location of the Western (or Wailing) Wall in Jerusalem – identified as the last remnant of the (second) temple – presented the Palestine based Zionists (in the pre-state period) with a unique challenge, standing too prominent to simply ignore or cast aside. (It may be relevant to remind the reader here that for most of the Jewish people, living

15

throughout the world, for most of Jewish history, the Ninth of Av does not have a material, physical locus.) As attested to by Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi, a leading Socialist-Zionist activist, when she approached the wall, "a desire to cry out to the wall in protest against the weeping arose within me […] to cry out against the unfortunate verdict of fate: no longer will we live in the land of destruction, we will rebuild the ruins and regenerate our land" (quoted in Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a, 54). Socialist-Zionists thus fashioned themselves – in place of God – as those who would ultimately heed the mourners' cries, professing that "the house of Israel will be rebuilt with bricks, not with prayers and mourning" (quoted in Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983a, 54; see also: Saposnik 2015).

But this self-professed rebellious, secularist confrontation with tradition could not sit well with a self-professed religious, Orthodox ideology. And the relatively fast progression of politics and history rapidly underscored this problem.

While Zionist ideology was comfortable with presenting the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 as the achieving of redemption and as the political equivalent of building a third temple (in the Religious-Zionist parlance, the State is, at the very least, the "*beginning* of redemption"), the failure to capture Jerusalem during the 1948 war allowed Religious-Zionists to maintain the tension between the triumphant celebration of the state as redemption itself and the defeatist, mournful message of the Ninth of Av. It was the 1967 war, during which Israel has captured Jerusalem, that presented

Religious-Zionists with a critical challenge in this regard: it put the two political messages – the one entailed in the traditional commemoration of the Ninth of Av and the one professed by Zionist ideology and Israeli statism – in obvious confrontation. A tradition of mourning the destruction of Jerusalem and the onset of exile conflicted with a (new) tradition celebrating Jewish sovereignty – which now also included Jerusalem itself – as the expression of redemption itself.

The tensions entailed in these political symbolisms are further highlighted when the dynamics of the Religious-Zionist approach to the Ninth of Av are compared to the Religious-Zionist approach to a newly established Israeli national holiday, Jerusalem Day. First proclaimed in May 1968, Jerusalem Day celebrates the establishment of Israeli control over East Jerusalem in the 1967 war. While it is an official, national holiday, Jerusalem Day has come to be identified most clearly with the Religious-Zionist camp, whose rabbinical leaders also instituted the day as a religious holiday (celebrated in synagogues by recitations of a series of psalms – the *hallel* – as is traditionally done in Jewish holidays), and who has led public celebrations of the holiday in parades and other ceremonies. The fact that other sectors of the Israeli public tend to be either indifferent to or critical of the holiday (which, it is important to stress, cannot be read outside of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict generally, and the symbolically charged contest over Jerusalem specifically) only further highlights the unique Religious-Zionist approach to the holiday.

17

Religious-Zionism, the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics

In what follows we trace some of the main themes and developments in the ways in which Religious-Zionist spokespeople have constructed and interpretated the meaning of the Ninth of Av since 1967, and compare this to the Religious-Zionist appropriation of Jerusalem Day. Our analysis is based on a comprehensive analysis of thousands of publications in Religious-Zionist platforms, focused on the public debate they offered surrounding critical events in Israeli history between 1967 and 2014 (for a comprehasive discussion of this analysis see: Hadad 2020; Yadgar and Hadad 2021). Specifically for the purpose of the present work, we have consulted all publications in these platforms on the Ninth of Av and Jerusalem Day throughout the period.

The story we tell below is one of a continuous, developing framing and reframing of both the traditional and the newly-declared holidays to fit within a nation-statist soteriology. In the case of the Ninth of Av the narrative arch moves from attempts at adapting and updating the commemorative ritual so as to fit within the statist soteriology to the side-lining of the ritual by relegating it to an apolitical realm of religion and even initiatives at reforming to comply with statist soteriology. Jerusalem Day, on the other hand, has moved along an arch of sacralisation – the originally civic holiday gradually put on a theological garb, playing its role in sanctifying sovereignty.

Fitting the Ninth of Av into the statist soteriology

Religious-Zionist spokespeople had to confront the tension in the immediate aftermath of the June 1967 war, as Jews throughout the world prepared to mark the Ninth of Av in August of that year. Given that Religious-Zionist identity was heavily invested at the time in the (secularist, statist) dualism distinguishing nationalism from religion (and seeking to uphold both by synthesizing the alleged separate realms), these spokespeople found themselves tasked with holding the stick from both ends: to remain loyal to the religious tradition of mourning the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, while at the same time celebrating what they clearly saw as the newly achieved political, national liberation of the city and its rebuilding.

The attempt to negotiate the tension between a tradition of mourning (a tradition, as one writer reminded his readers, that aims to teach us of divine providence and to encourage us to contemplate the ways of God (Auerbach 1968)) and a political triumphalist message (in which it is human agency – the military of a secular state, at that – that achieved liberation) shaped much of the Religious-Zionist discourse on the Ninth of Av for years to come. A primary solution employed in Religious-Zionist public venues consisted primarily of assigning a theopolitical meaning to the Ninth of Av itself, aiming to incorporate it within the political Zionist narrative, while at the same time preserving – separately, as it were – a tradition of religious mourning.

Ultimately, this religious aspect, too, put on an increasingly Zionist, political meaning as the years progressed.

This discourse ultimately coalesced around a nationalist, theopolitical reasoning, in which what was seen as a religious argumentation was motivated by Zionist considerations. The development was gradual, and the confusion caused by the recent establishment of Israeli control over Jerusalem was palatable. Thus, for example, an editorial in *Haṣofe* (11 Aug 1967) the Religious-Zionists' flagship daily, betrayed a certain uneasiness with the Israeli Chief Rabbinate's decision not to declare the mourning rituals of the Ninth of Av obsolete following the 1967 war. Indeed, the editorial says, certain texts traditionally recited during the Ninth of Av's rituals in synagogues "include paragraphs that differ from the existing facts", but as long as the Temple Mount itself remains "desolate" ("*shomem*" in the original Hebrew) and the ingathering of the exiles incomplete (i.e., Jewish communities are present elsewhere from Israel), the general orientation of preserving the mourning rituals is ultimately justified. Another writer later reminded his readers that although the city of Jerusalem is no longer "mournful, ruined, despised and desolate", the fact remains that in place of the temple stands "an abomination" ("*shiquṣ*"), and the nation is unable to "restore the crown to its glory", i.e., to rebuild the temple itself (Dichovsky 1972). A leading rabbi suggested that while the "old mourning" for Jerusalem is no longer valid, since the city has already been rebuilt, even before the "liberation" of East Jerusalem in 1967 (Jerusalem – the

western part of the city – has been declared Israel's capital city, and extensively built since 1948), and since Zionism has already achieved the national revival Jews have prayed for, a "new mourning" – for the fact that the temple is not rebuilt – is in place, marking "our yearning to those days of the existence of our temple" (Goren 1983b).

Marking the first Ninth of Av following the 1967 war, *Haṣofe*'s editorial depicted an image that directly contradicted the mournful image of the desolate Jerusalem traditionally evoked in the synagogue rituals of the day. Reassuring its readers that "the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem find great consolation in the liberation of the city, the Temple Mount and the Western Wall from the hands of enemies," the editorial went on the reaffirm that the unified city of Jerusalem is "no longer deprived of its honor, its head is no longer lowered, and foreign legions have been expelled from it". Yet the editorial also explicated a *political* reasoning for maintaining the religious mourning rituals: The Jewish people, the editorial asserted, acknowledges the miracle it experienced but continues to mourn the fact that "a great superpower re-arms the Arab armies and conspiracies are devised against Israel and Jerusalem." The religious mourning ritual gains in this setting a political value as it "strengthens the spirit, arousing the people to be worthy of achieving its missions" against such hostility (*Haṣofe* 15 Aug 1967).

Commentators also sought to include their continuously developing assessment of political reality as part of what they presented as a religious,

halakhic (i.e., in accordance with *halakha*, Jewish law) process of reasoning on the matter of preserving the mourning rituals of the Ninth of Av. In one writer's view, for example, halakhic reasoning should acknowledge the facts that the ancient city of Jerusalem remains settled by Gentiles, "foreigners" keep on building their houses of warship in it, and more generally "Jerusalem is still far from what all generations have hoped to see in it as the center of learning and holiness" (Katz 1974). He thus suggested that until this political reality is not fundamentally changed, the mourning rituals should remain in place. Note that such halakhic, so-called religious reasoning draws the Ninth of Av towards a utopian horizon that is necessarily detached from the reality of politics: Any realist assessment would have to concede that religious considerations need to be suspended (as it is unreal to expect the above conditions to be fulfilled outside of an eschatological framework), leaving the stage for the state's theopolitics to dominate.

A similar reasoning, in which a political argument is made for the continued validity of observing the "religious" ritual was later expanded to include other aspects of the Israeli-Arab conflict, such as recent attacks on Israelis as well as the danger that international peace initiatives may lead to the limiting of Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount (*Haṣofe* 4 Aug 1968; 11 Aug 1970). Echoing the rabbinic tradition that the ultimate cause of the destruction of the temple was internal strife, writers also argued that persistent

political divisions further justify the maintaining of the mourning rituals (*Haṣofe* 1 Aug 1971).

Writers also repeatedly sought to instill new, contemporary (and political, if this confusing duality is of any relevance here) meaning in the (religious) mourning rituals, struggling to allow for the continued observance of the religious tradition of mourning as part of a theopolitical tradition of triumphant national revival. One editorial, for example, instructed its readers to contemplate the unfortunate fate of the State of Israel – being in a continuous state of war – when observing the Ninth of Av rituals (*Haṣofe* 24 Jul 1977). Commentators have mentioned time and again that the redemption of Jerusalem is incomplete as long as the Temple Mount is held by "foreigners"; that the international community refuses to acknowledge Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem; that many Jews remain abroad, and they are also joined by emigrating Jewish Israelis; that even among those Jews who do live in Israel, there is division (*Haṣofe* 24 Jul 1977; 2 Aug 1979; 31 Jul 1990; 7 Aug 1984).

As the settlement movement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, led by Religious-Zionists, grew in size and became the focus of political controversy, its fate, too, was mentioned as cause for mourning on the Ninth of Av. Decrying the demand that Israel withdraws from territories it occupied in 1967 as manifesting disregard for the Land of the Patriarchs, one editorial explained the relevance of the Ninth of Av to contemporary Israel, drawing on a tradition that

dates the biblical story of the Twelve Spies (Numbers 13:1-33) to the Ninth of Av:

> The crying for generations in the Ninth of Av was instituted to mourn the urge to return to slavery and degradation, so as not to carry the heavy load of the highest freedom and its responsibility […] Yet that same crying unfortunately returns in our generations, too […] In the Ninth of Av we must remember the persistent problem that caused the destruction, the first sin, the sin of the Twelve Spies […] We have experienced many destructions because of the failures of the Spies. And in our days, there is a new version of spies, who slander the Land (*Haṣofe* 19 Jul 1983).

The intensification of the political fight over Jerusalem, which has become a flashpoint of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, only further instilled the Ninth of Av with political meaning. The fact that the enemies of the State of Israel "want Jerusalem as their capital" renders the current campaign over Jerusalem part of the story of the Ninth of Av that stretches "from ancient times to our time" (*Haṣofe* 27 Aug 1993).

Yet at the same time it became harder and harder to ignore the material, physical and political development of the city and the strengthening of the Israeli hold over it. In some Religious-Zionist readings, this political background only further highlighted the importance of the Ninth of Av, in effect reading the religious ritual as manifesting and reinforcing a contemporaneous stance in a political conflict. Any hesitation regarding the continued relevance

24

of the mourning rituals is out of place, one editorial proclaimed at the midst of the first Palestinian uprising (*intifada*), since politics proves the point of its relevance: "The events we are witnessing make it clear that the meaning of this day continues to be valid. […] The People of Israel is yet to settle peacefully in its land, and [enemies] try to harm us in various ways, both by direct attacks and by diplomatic maneuvers". Furthermore, Jerusalem itself is far from enjoying peace, and people refrain from going to the Western Wall for fear of attacks. There is no question, then, of the relevance of mourning on the Ninth of Av: "Jerusalem has yet to be completely redeemed, and foreigners stride the Temple Mount." The prayers of the day are hence as valid today as they ever were (*Haṣofe* 10 Aug 1989).

Jerusalem Day and the theologizing of a civic holiday

As the Ninth of Av was reassessed, its religious meaning re-formulated against a dynamic political reality, Jerusalem Day came to embody the antithesis of the traditionally mournful Ninth of Av. Importantly, Jerusalem Day allowed Religious-Zionists to frame the ideologically and politically proper attitude towards the city and the nation, its symbolic referent: celebration instead of mourning, redemption in place destruction, and, especially important, reaffirming sovereignty as opposed to bemoaning exile. Contrary to their predicament in relating to the Ninth of Av, Religious-Zionist spokespeople were free from the ideological tension between a traditional, religious defeatist

25

message of destruction and exile and a political triumphalist message of liberation and rebuilding. Jerusalem Day allowed them to propagate a narrative released from a mournful tradition, celebrating the city as the epitome of national revival. Importantly, the celebration of the city in Jerusalem Day was released from the issue of the absence of the temple; the fact that the latter remains unbuilt seemed to be irrelevant. As a leading rabbi explained, it is the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem – and not to the rebuilding of the temple itself – that is the "symbol of redemption" spoken of in scripture (Goren 1983a).

Released from traditional "religious" ambiguities, the celebration of Jerusalem Day became defiantly sectorial, partisan even, as it was mobilized also to discredit political rivals. This celebration, explained one editorial, manifests "not only our spiritual tie to Jerusalem, but also our determination – to build […] in all parts of the city, every day and always, because Jerusalem is ours and it symbolizes the eternity of the Jewish people… We will do everything to guard it, so it is not harmed by instigators and agitators, who have yet to come to terms with the city's reunification" (*Haṣofe* 23 May 1990). Against a backdrop of political contestation over the fate of Jerusalem in any future agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, an editorial insisted that Jerusalem's exultant national status – symbolized by Jerusalem Day and not the Ninth of Av – must be kept away from debates over the fate of the territories conquered by Israel in June 1967. "Except for a marginal minority", the editorial claimed, "the whole nation feels and believes wholeheartedly that

Jerusalem, undivided, will remain forever the capital city of Israel and under Israeli sovereignty" (*Haṣofe* 11 May 1983). In the same spirit, it was suggested that Jerusalem day should be used to manifest and strengthen "both internally and externally" Israeli sovereignty over the city (*Haṣofe* 12 May 1991), and to facilitate a wider campaign of annexing the city's eastern suburbs (*Haṣofe* 15 May 1988).

This trend gained further strength in the mid 1990's when the Israeli government and the PLO negotiated and signed what came to be known as the Oslo Accords. The political debate at the time revolved also around a potential partition of Jerusalem as part of any Israeli-Palestinian agreement, and much of the Religious-Zionist discourse on Jerusalem Day focused on what its spokespeople saw as the danger threatening Israeli sovereignty over the city (e.g. *Haṣofe* 19 May 1993; 28 May 1995).

This sense of threat also shaped the Religious-Zionist approach to the Ninth of Av, which was now dominated by nationalist, political messages that pushed the "religious" ones aside. Viewed through the lens of a contemporary threat to Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem, the Ninth of Av gained a renewed political relevance. In light of the looming danger, writers argued, we must remember the historical destruction of the city and to mourn it in light of the impending destruction that a disloyal government is about to bring about. In effect, the danger of the Oslo Accords helped these writers tie the Ninth of Av and Jerusalem Day into a unified narrative: Jerusalem is indeed currently rebuilt

27

under Israeli sovereignty, but any celebration of this fact is hampered by the fact that the third destruction is already on the horizon (*Haṣofe* 17 July 1995; 6 Aug 1995).

The re-politicization of the Ninth of Av

The first three decades following the establishment of Israeli control over Jerusalem have thus been dominated by a Religious-Zionist struggle to remain loyal to a mournful tradition and to the religious meaning of the Ninth of Av and to weave it into a Zionist political narrative by continuously attempting to instill it with new, contemporary political meaning. Yet as the years progressed, this discourse gradually became focused on nationalist, political and allegedly secular content, mainly concerned with reaffirming Israeli control over the territories occupied in 1967, Jerusalem first among them. Religious-Zionist thought struggled to uphold what it read as a religious nature of the Ninth of Av alongside the obvious political messages it entailed, and this religious character was increasingly being politicized, read through an exclusively triumphalist Zionist ideology.

It must be stressed that Religious-Zionist spokespeople have not sought to strip away the mournful religious meaning of the Ninth of Av (what could be viewed as the secularizing of the day); instead, they focused on finding a proper role for the day in the state's theopolitics, to preserve the day's status as an important day in the Hebrew calendar, and to transform its meaning to fit in

within a modern, Religious-Zionist interpretation of Jewish history. This was taking place against a general background of a general Zionist (secular) indifference to the Ninth of Av.

Gradually, as Religious-Zionist ideology itself was reassessing its commitment to a notion of synthesizing religion and nationalism, realigning along a reasserted sense of commitment to the theopolitics of the state, the struggle to uphold the Ninth of Av's religious meaning was losing steam. The Ninth of Av was rendered politically irrelevant, relegated to the status of one among other, minor days of mourning in the Jewish calendar, that are no longer seen to carry explicit contemporary political meaning (such as the fasts of Esther and Gedalia). During the late 1990's the commemoration of the Ninth of Av was largely pushed to the side-lines of the main discussions on Religious-Zionist platforms.

Renewed political struggles, however, pushed the Ninth of Av back into center stage. Thus, for example, when the Religious-Zionist camp was campaigning against what became known as the Disengagement Plan (Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank in the summer of 2005), its spokespeople depicted the Ninth of Av as carrying crucial *political* meaning. The fact that the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip took place immediately after the Ninth of Av was read as a premonition of sorts, encouraging writers to focus exclusively on the contemporary, Zionist and political meaning of the day, suspending its historical-traditional meaning. The

historical destruction was used to depict the current Zionist tragedy in the Gaza Strip. One writer, for example, decried "the end of the state", pronounced by the Ninth of Av:

> The basic premise of the state – its 'statism' – is emptied of all content […] This, then, is the pronouncement of these days. Not for nothing do we suffer [in this time of year]. From the chaos, a picture becomes clear: A sinking state that has reached the end of its way (Eitam 2005)

Writers either implicitly or explicitly suggested the parallels between the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the destruction of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip (Felix 5765). Some even suggested that a new day of fasting and mourning, commemorating the destruction of these settlements, shall be established (Qani'el 2004). They argued that the Ninth of Av of 2005 sees Israeli society falling into another destruction, as it is led into "the implosion-point of the renewed attempt to unify forces and identify a secular leadership as part of the laying of a path for the Messiah" (Ḥevroni 2005).

Jerusalem Day and the sanctification of sovereignty

Against this background, there was little room in Religious-Zionist discourse to attend to Jerusalem Day. In retrospect, it is clear that this was but a temporary suspension of a trajectory that began earlier, namely the appropriation of Jerusalem Day as *the* Religious-Zionist day of celebration. While some writers, identifying the increasingly sectorial nature of Jerusalem

Day, decried this development and suggested the national character of the civic holiday should be reiterated (Sherlo 5765), others have propagated a reading of the holiday that stressed its role as celebrating Religious-Zionist identity. They have used the holiday to contrast Religious-Zionism with what they depicted as a diminishing secular Zionism.

Reflecting the strengthening status of the Temple Mount itself and a growing political campaign to rebuild the Third Temple in certain Religious-Zionist circles (Persico 2017), writers also increasingly voiced the demand that Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount should be exercised. Tellingly, this focus on the Temple Mount was also framed within a political, nationalist frame, as the exercise of Israeli sovereignty over the holiest of holy places was depicted as a matter of Zionist expediency. Most writers whose comments focused on the Temple Mount sought neither the rebuilding of the Third Temple nor the permission to warship on the mount, but the statist exercise of sovereignty itself. "Since we are sovereign over the Temple Mount by virtue of our very being Jews", explained one writer, "we cannot stomach a foreign rule over the mount, and we cannot stomach that Jews deprived of a sense of mastery and incapable of naturally exercising sovereignty give up on what is ours by right and by law" (Eldad 2014).

The Temple Mount was made into a Zionist, political symbol along the lines of the nationalization of traditional Judaism itself. And when rabbinical reasoning that nourishes on this tradition came into conflict with the interests of

31

the sovereign state (as interpreted by Religious-Zionist commentators, of course), the latter was assumed to be supreme. Thus, for example in *Haṣofe* editorial (11 May 2007) decrying the "miserable mistake" of the Chief Rabbinate in deciding to uphold a halakhic ruling that forbids Jews from visiting the Temple Mount (on grounds of the place's sacred status) following the June 1967 war as damaging the interests of the state. The conclusion is clear: "halakhic trepidations, too, have a limit", and the time has come to prevent these from impairing sovereignty: "it is time to decide whether we relinquish our excessive halakhic trepidation or relinquish the Temple Mount" (Segal 2005). The rabbis' failure to fit their halakhic rulings to the demands of sovereignty was criticized as perpetuating the destruction of the temple, a deplorable "obsequiousness" that plays into the hands of the enemies of the state (Meidad 2012). Reflecting the same logic, another author called what he saw as the state's refusal to exercise its sovereignty over the Temple Mount a sin, and the "despicable state of the Jewish people there" its "punishment" (Eliṣor 2013). The "national honor" was deemed as necessitating that Jewish Israelis are allowed access to the site (Khalfa 2014). Tellingly, these nationalist reasonings were brought up also as part of the commemoration of the Ninth of Av, exemplifying the importation of the discourse usually developed around Jerusalem Day into what was considered to be a religious discourse.

The religionisation of the Ninth of Av

As we mentioned earlier, the main discursive strategy adopted by Religious-Zionist writers attempted to instill the Ninth of Av with a renewed, political meaning, that in turn tended to push aside the traditional mourning of the destruction of the temple and the city. This tendency lost steam in the 1990's and was gradually replaced by a reframing of the Ninth of Av as a religious ceremony that lacks a political or actual meaning. Among other things, this was manifested in writers' focus on the destruction of the temple itself, while the mourning of the destruction and desolation of the city was significantly played down. As one writer put it, the real meaning of the mourning during the Ninth of Av in a time when the city of Jerusalem is flourishing under Israeli sovereignty is the realization that is it a "mourning for something that will not return", that the "dead" temple will not be rebuilt (Me'ir 2009). Another author reiterated that "the stages of redemption we have been blessed with" should not undermine the mourning for the absence of the temple itself. "The national body has already stepped out if its grave, the national resurrection is in its midst, but the heart, the heart is missing, and it is missing so much we do not feel its absence" (Elyashiv 2014).

Such pronouncements suggest that the tension between the triumphalist Zionist narrative and the Jewish tradition of mourning is solved (or at the very least negotiated) here by reformulating the tradition to fit the statist theopolitics. This necessarily entails a drastic rewriting of the meaning of the ritual at hand, in effect annulling its traditional meaning and forcing it into a framework

33

matching the ideal of national revival. We must stress that such rewriting of Jewish tradition was not novel: Socialist-Zionists have long established this confrontational attitude toward Jewish tradition, aggressively rewriting the meaning of traditional symbols to fit the emerging Zionist ideology (Don-Yehiya and Liebman 1981). But while this attitude coheres with the Socialist-Zionist sense of rebellion against the religious Jewish past, it sits rather awkwardly with a proclaimed Religious-Zionist commitment to an Orthodox observance of this tradition.

See, for example, how one commentator described the proper role of the remembrance of the destruction of the temple in the framework of a consciousness of renewed sovereignty. While the temple remains unbuilt and the divine presence is absent, he says, "we must continue and mourn". Yet political reality is dramatically different:

> Our blood is not freely spilled by Gentiles who seek to persecute us and annihilate us. Our daughters are not freely given to raping and abuse. We do not live in constant fear of pogroms and religious persecutions to death. The community [in Israel] remains strong, and the forces of spiritual creation in it grow stronger.

Therefore, according to Jewish law itself, "we must not mourn as if we still live in exile […] Many of those born here, in this blessed and tormented land, do not at all feel the burden of exile," which was the cause of the institution of the mourning rituals. Forcing these young generations of Israelis who enjoy the

reality of Jewish sovereignty to uphold the tradition of mourning only further alienates them. The solution, then, is clear: "Determining a framework that reflects the depth of exile we currently experience combined with the blessing of revival" (Berkovitch 2011).

Another writer was even more daring, suggesting a novel model for commemorating the Ninth of Av, replacing its traditional meaning with a modern Zionist one: The day will be for generations marked as the time in which "we remember the horrors of the prolonged exile". Instead of the traditional daylong fasting, Jews will only fast during the night. While short and nightly only, the fast "will not be just symbolic", since it will be "an active night, where many people roam the streets" and public gatherings take place "in every city and in every place in Israel". These will be dedicated to reading the traditional texts bemoaning the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as to other public happenings. During the daytime, the Ninth of Av will no longer be a day of public mourning. Importantly, this "popular" reminder of the "scars" of exile that will take place in a "positive atmosphere of building and growth" will only apply to Israeli Jews. Jewish people leaving outside of Israel, outside of the sovereignty of Jews, would uphold, by this suggested reformulation, the traditional customs of the Ninth of Av (Sorek 2010).

Conclusion

The transformation of the Ninth of Av into a religious ritual that lacks an explicit, contemporary political meaning is derived from the wider ideological developments within Religious-Zionism. The Western duality of (nation-statist) secular politics versus private and apolitical religion, to which Religious-Zionism was historically committed (Yadgar and Hadad 2021), necessarily created a tension surrounding a "religious" ritual commemorating a political catastrophe.

This was further compounded by the direct confrontation between the Zionist message of national resurrection and the traditional Jewish assignation of redemption to God. This tension, like others in Religious-Zionist ideology (see also: Inbari 2012, 2021), was solved by a decisive reassertion of the theopolitics of the sovereign nation-state as a primary directive of this ideology, subsuming Jewish religion under the dominance of the state. In this frame, Zionism and Judaism were read as synonymous, and there was no longer a need to demarcate a politically neutral sphere for religion to reside in. The radical proposals of reforming and rewriting the traditional rituals of the Ninth of Av were but an extreme expression of this trend. The foregoing of all attempts to instill the day with contemporary political meaning that will fit in with its traditional (political) message was but a less blunt (and arguably more consistent) expression of the same trend. In effect, nestled fully within the embrace of nation-statist sovereignty, Religious-Zionist commentators have given up on the endeavor to uphold the Ninth of Av as a relevant Jewish ritual.

Instead, they have transformed Jerusalem Day into a major (sectorial) holiday symbolizing the reformed or updated Religious-Zionist commitments, focused as they are on sovereignty itself.

The Religious-Zionist commitment to the nation-state does not conflict with what we may call traditional Jewish theology, nor does it merely serve or compliment it. Rather, it becomes the very essence of this theology. God, who had always been the very center of Jewish theology, is either replaced in Religious-Zionist thought by the state or understood to be sacralizing the state and putting it center stage, in effect receding to the side-lines to enable the theopolitics of the state.

The Religious-Zionist endeavor to cope with the Ninth of Av is, then, a story of the subsuming of religious traditions by the theopolitics – and especially the soteriology – of the nation-state that identifies as Jewish. Confronted with these theopolitics, tradition was either politicized or depoliticized (i.e., rendered lacking a relevant political message) so as to make it compatible with the dominant, statist soteriology. The Religious-Zionist proclaimed commitment to an orthodox observance of this tradition only further charged this process with complexity (compared, for example, to a secular Zionist indifference to the ritual or an Ultra-Orthodox, non-Zionist commitment to a traditionalist upholding of it), but did not challenge the main thrust of the story: tradition is interpreted (by some of its carriers) to fit in within the theopolitics of the nation-state.

Furthermore, the appropriation of Jerusalem Day as a Religious-Zionist holiday also suggests some ways in which this theopolitics might co-opt what it would see as religious tradition by introducing into this tradition political rituals and narratives, which ultimately amount to a (new) religious worship of the state.

Lastly, we must stress that we do not wish to argue for a one-sided course of relationship between nation-statist theopolitics and religious tradition. Israel's own history demonstrates how political crises may lead to the resurgence of "old" interpretations of tradition to challenge statist soteriology and amend it. Thus, for example, in the enduring "myth of defeat" of the Yom Kippur (October 1973) War – an ultimately successful military campaign that is to this day remembered and commemorated as an Israeli defeat – allowing for what Charles Liebman has called the "resurface[ing] at the unconscious level" of "the contradiction between Zionist ideology" and "the threat of destruction" (Liebman 1993, 413; see also: Macleod 2008).

As we noted earlier, it is our contention that the lessons of the case at hand exceed its idiosyncrasies. The ways in which the nationalist ideology at hand has coped with messages entailed in a tradition which this ideology views itself as committed to orthodoxly observe are far from unique. They tell a wider story of how nation-statist political theology negotiates, shapes and in turn is influenced by messages entailed in traditions that it wishes to appropriate or to

replace. This, in other words, is a particular instance of a universal phenomenon.

References

Almog, Samuel, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira, eds. 1998. *Zionism and Religion*. UPNE.

Anderson, Benedict. 1998. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.

Auerbach, Simḥa Bunem. 1968. 'Ḥazon Veneḥama Beyamenu'. *Haṣofe*: 3.

Avineri, Shlomo. 1998. 'Zionism and the Jewish Religious Tradition: The Dialectics of Redemption and Secularization'. In *Zionism and Religion*, eds. Shlomo Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira. Boston: UNPE, 1–12.

Barker, Philip W. 2008. *Religious Nationalism in Modern Europe: If God Be for Us*. London: Routledge.

Batnitzky, Leora Faye. 2011. *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Bellah, Robert N. 1967. 'Civil Religion in America'. *Daedalus* 96: 1–21.

Bellah, Robert N., and Phillip E. Hammond. 1980. *Varieties of Civil Religion*. San-Francisco: Harper & Row.

Berkovitch, Dov. 2011. 'Avlut Mishtana'. *Makor Rishon*: 11.

Bevir, Mark, and R. A. W. Rhodes. 2010. *The State as Cultural Practice*. Reprint edition. OUP Oxford.

Bottici, Chiara. 2007. *A Philosophy of Political Myth*. Cambridge University Press.

Bouchard, Gerard. 2017. *Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries*. University of Toronto Press.

Boyarin, Daniel. 2004. 'The Christian Invention of Judaism: The Theodosian Empire and the Rabbinic Refusal of Religion'. *Representations* 85(1): 21–57.

———. 2018. *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Brody, Samuel Hayim. 2015. 'Is Theopolitics an Antipolitics?' In *Dialogue as a Trans-Disciplinary Concept: Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue and Its Contemporary Reception*, Studia Judaica, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr. Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter, 61–88.

Cavanaugh, William T. 2003. *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time*. London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark.

———. 2009. *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA.

Cesari, Jocelyne. 2018. 'Unexpected Convergences: Religious Nationalism in Israel and Turkey'. *Religions* 9(11): 334.

Dichovsky, Shelomo. 1972. 'Tishʿa Beʾav Birʾi Hahalakha'. *Haṣofe*: 3.

Don-Yehiya. 2014. 'Messianism and Politics: The Ideological Transformation of Religious Zionism'. *Israel Studies* 19(2): 239.

Don-Yehiya, Eliezer. 1980. 'Secularization, Negation and Accomodation of Conceptions of Traditional Judaism and Its Terms in Socialist Zionism'. *Kivunim* 8: 29–46.

———. 1992. 'The Negation of Galut in Religious Zionism'. *Modern Judaism* (12): 129–55.

Don-Yehiya, Eliezer, and Charles S. Liebman. 1981. 'The Symbol System of Zionist-Socialism: An Aspect of Israeli Civil Religion'. *Modern Judaism* 1(2): 121–48.

Eitam, Noa. 2005. 'Habesora Shbetokh Haḥurban'. *Makor Rishon*: 21.

Eldad, Aryeh. 2014. 'Har Habayit Leyadenu'. *Bashevaʿ* 394.

Elişor, Uri. 2013. 'Habayit Hashelishi'. *Makor Rishon*: 10.

Elyashiv, Natanel. 2014. 'Halev Ḥaser Akh Einenu Margishim'. *Makor Rishon*: 8.

Felix, Menaḥem. 5765. 'Al Ma Avda Haʾareṣ'. *Meʿat min haʾor* 293.

Fitzgerald, Timothy. 2005. 'Problems with "Religion" as a Category for Understanding Hinduism'. In *Defining Hinduism*, Routledge.

Goren, Shelomo. 1983a. 'Binyan Yerushalyim Kesemel Hageʾula'. *Haṣofe*: 5.

———. 1983b. 'Meʾevel Lenaḥama'. *Haṣofe*: 5.

Hadad, Noam. 2020. *Religious Zionism: Religion, Nationalism and Politics*. Jerusalem: Carmel.

Haselby, Sam. 2015. *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism*. Oxford University Press.

Hastings, Derek. 2018. 'Nation, Race, and Religious Identity in the Early Nazi Movement'. *Religions* 9(10): 303.

Hellinger, Moshe, Isaac Hershkowitz, and Bernard Susser. 2018. *Religious Zionism and the Settlement Project: Ideology, Politics, and Civil Disobedience*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Herman, Didi. 2019. 'Christian Israel'. In *Reimagining the State: Theoretical Challenges and Transformative Possibilities*, eds. Cooper, Davina, Dhawan, Nikita, and Newman, Janet. London: Routledge, 114–32.

Hertzberg, Arthur. 1997. *The Zionist Idea; a Historical Analysis and Reader*. Philadelphia and Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society.

Ḥevroni, Ido. 2005. 'Koḥo Shel Hamanhig'. *Makor Rishon*: 3.

Hobsbawm, Eric J., and Terence O. Ranger. 1992. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Inbari, Motti. 2012. *Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises*. Cambridge University Press.

———. 2021. 'Prophetic Disappointment and Ideological Change among Israeli Settlers' Rabbis: The Case of Rabbis Yehuda Amital and Shmuel Tal'. *Religions* 12(11): 1017.

Ji, Zhe. 2021. 'Stating the Sacred: Religion, China, and the Formation of the Nation-State by Michael J. Walsh (Review)'. *Journal of Chinese Religions* 49(2): 336–38.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2001. 'The Global Rise of Religious Nationalism'. In *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases*, eds. Dwight Hopkins, Louis Ann Lorentzen, Eduardo Mendieta, and David Batstone. New York: Duke University Press, 66–83.

———. 2010. 'The Global Rise of Religious Nationalism'. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64(3): 262–73.

———. 2019. 'Religious Nationalism in a Global World'. *Religions* 10(2): 97.

Katsman, Hayim. 2020. 'The Hyphen Cannot Hold: Contemporary Trends in Religious-Zionism'. *Israel Studies Review* 35(2): 154–74.

Katz, Dov. 1974. 'Avlei Ṣion Veyerushalayim'. *Haṣofe*: 5.

Kedar, Benjamin. 1982. 'Masada: The Myth and the Complex'. *Jerusalem Quarterly* 24: 57–63.

Khalfa, Zebulon. 2014. 'Zeqifut Haqoma Hale'umit'. *Kipa*. https://bit.ly/3EivCbh.

Kotef, Hagar. 2020. *The Colonizing Self: Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine*. Duke University Press.

Liebman, Charles S. 1993. 'The Myth of Defeat: The Memory of the Yom Kippur War in Israeli Society'. *Middle Eastern Studies* 29(3): 399–418.

Liebman, Charles S., and Eliezer Don-Yehiya. 1983a. *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 1983b. 'The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional Culture and Political Needs: Civil Religion in Israel'. *Comparative Politics* 16(1): 53–66.

Macleod, Dr Jenny, ed. 2008. *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era*. Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Magid, Shaul. 2021. 'Is Judaism a Religion and Why Should We Care?' In *What Is Religion?*, eds. Aaron W. Hughes and Russell T. McCutcheon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 85–89.

Manor, Udi. 2017. *Yigal Allon: A Neglected Political Legacy, 1949-1980*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.

McAllister, Carlota, and Valentina Napolitano. 2021. 'Political Theology/Theopolitics: The Thresholds and Vulnerabilities of Sovereignty'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 50(1): 109–24.

Meidad, Yisrael. 2012. 'Kolo Biydey Haʿaravim'. *Makor Rishon*: 4.

Me'ir, Yiṣḥak. 2009. 'Avlut ʿal Ma Shelo Yashuv'. *Makor Rishon*: 14.

Milbank, John. 2006. *Theology and Social Theory : Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Nicholls, Angus. 2016. *Myth and the Human Sciences*. New York: Routledge.

Persico, Tomer. 2017. 'The End Point of Zionism: Ethnocentrism and the Temple Mount'. *Israel Studies Review* 32(1): 104–22.

Qani'el, Sehlomo. 2004. 'Ṣom Gush Qaṭif'. *Nequda* 273: 10.

Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon. 2011. 'Jewish Peoplehood, "Jewish Politics," and Political Responsibility: Arendt on Zionism and Partitions'. *College Literature* 38(1): 57–74.

———. 2013. 'Exile, History and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist Notion of History and Return'. *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3(2): 37–70.

———. 2021. 'Religion and Nationalism in the Jewish and Zionist Context'. In *When Politics Are Sacralised: Comparative Perspectives on Religous Claims and Nationalism*, eds. Nadim N. Rouhana and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 33–53.

Rehman, Mohammad Adnan. 2018. 'Nation as a Neo-Idol: Muslim Political Theology and the Critique of Secular Nationalism in Modern South Asia'. *Religions* 9(11): 355.

Root, Michael. 1986. 'The Narrative Structure of Soteriology'. *Modern Theology* 2(2): 145–58.

Rouhana, Nadim N., and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. 2021. *When Politics Are Sacralized: Comparative Perspectives on Religious Claims and Nationalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Sagi, Avi, and Dov Schwartz. 2018. *Religious Zionism and the Six Day War: From Realism to Messianism*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Salmon, Yosef. 2002. *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press,Israel.

Saposnik, Arieh. 2015. 'Wailing Walls and Iron Walls: The Western Wall as Sacred Symbol in Zionist National Iconography'. *The American Historical Review* 120(5): 1653–81.

———. 2021. *Zionism's Redemptions: Images of the Past and Visions of the Future in Jewish Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schwartz, Dov. 2008. *Religious Zionism: History and Ideology*. Boston: Academic Studies Press.

Segal, Arnon. 2005. 'Laʿalot El Hahar'. *Nequda* 281: 50.

Sherlo, Yuval. 5765. 'Yom Yerushalayim'. *Shabaton* 220.

Shimoni, Gideon. 1995. *The Zionist Ideology*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England.

Shoham, Hizky. 2017. *Israel Celebrates: Jewish Holidays and Civic Culture in Israel*. Brill.

Smith, Anthony D. 1997. 'The "Golden Age" and National Renewal'. In eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schopflin. London: Hurst & Co., 36–59.

Sorek, Yoav. 2010. ''Im Lo Tirṣo...' *Makor Rishon*: 24.

Vatter, Miguel. 2021. *Living Law: Jewish Political Theology from Hermann Cohen to Hannah Arendt*. New York, NY: OUP USA.

Yadgar, Yaacov. 2017. *Sovereign Jews: Israel, Zionism, and Judaism*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.

———. 2020. *Israel's Jewish Identity Crisis: State and Politics in the Middle East*. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Yadgar, Yaacov, and Noam Hadad. 2021. 'A Post-Secular Interpretation of Religious Nationalism: The Case of Religious-Zionism'. *Journal of Political Ideologies*: 1–18.

Zerubavel, Yael. 1995. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.