

RELIGIOUS THINKERS

by Dr. Meir Tamari

HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook זצ"ל [2]

Ed. Note: Last week's article began with a statement that Rav Tzvi Yehuda was Rav Kook's only child. It should have read, his only son. Rav Kook had three daughters. Thank you to YM and GK (a cousin of R'Tzvi Yehuda) for calling the error to our attention.

Hei Iyar was not to be the end to Harav Tzvi Yehuda's Torah. Every Yom Haatzmaut there is a 'tisch' in Merkaz Harav; Reb Tzvi Yehuda would speak at length about geula, the religious renewal through the establishment of Israel but in 1967 there was a traumatic change. He erupted with anguished cries, "where is our Hevron? Where is our Shechem? Where are all the parts of Eretz Yisrael which are not under our rule? Have we forgotten all of them?" That Yom Haatzmaut was tense and foreboding for an Israel surrounded by threats of imminent war on all fronts without support from anybody but world Jewry. A few weeks later, the Six Days War was won and Harav's prophetic words were facts; the Kotel, Yericho, the Golan, Yehuda and Shomron were now all part of Israel.

It was a euphoric trauma for the whole country which simply went on holiday to travel everywhere in what was Eretz Ha'avot. A wave of religiosity swept many sections of Jewry after Hashem's miraculous deliverance. Now Israel was no longer a small, weak and

threatened state, so some thought of a Greater Israel while the Tanach brought thoughts to others of an Israel of David and Shlomo. Religious Zionists were convinced that here was another step in geulah. Others saw an opportunity for peace with Jordan and Egypt who were the main losers in the war; the idea of land for peace soon became the hidden or open policy of every government. There were also those Israeli's who felt the immorality of retaining these areas with their large Arab population to which we could never give equal rights. To them this meant either becoming colonialists in an apartheid society or returning them these territories. Variations of these ideas have remained part of Israeli society and government ever since.

Bur not for Harav Tzvi Yehuda. His became the voice rallying young and not so young to settlement in Hevron, in Shomron, in Yehuda, in the Golan; a whole new movement for settlement, Gush Emunim was created for settlement anywhere and everywhere. This sparked off discussions in Israel and in the galut, in Jewish circles and international forums, of Messianic Zionism or of mystical nationalism. However, for Harav Kook it was simply another stage in the process of redemption. Both his father and Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that this redemption was an inevitable process, an almost mechanical one that human desires or plans could not affect or halt, just as Yetzi'at Mitzrayim had been. They both pointed out that Israel never left Egypt voluntarily but were rather chased out by Par'o and dragged out by



G-d. The Torah always speaks about Hashem taking us out of Egypt or delivering us from bondage but not of our simply leaving. There is a midrash about only a fifth leaving Egypt; the others were killed during the darkness because they did not want to go out. Yechezkiel describes how Hashem pulled them out by the hair on their heads. Redemption then was linear and so is redemption in our time.

Successive governments encouraged these settlements while others operated against them; often the same government did both. The same Reb Tzvi Yehuda who would not previously allow the slightest criticism or opposition to the government or for that matter of any of the state institutions, now encouraged illegal and anti-government actions necessary for settlement. His pupils settled in Hevron against government policy, ostensibly just to celebrate Pesach but then refusing to move out. So there were overnight settlement in Yehuda and Shomron, illegally presenting the authorities with facts on the ground. He ruled that returning any part of Eretz Yisrael was "yeihareig v'al yaavor, requiring martyrdom rather than obeying; like idolatry, adultery and murder. Unlike the other religious Zionist thinkers, Landau, Shragai and Unna, social issues, economic injustice and corruption only featured marginally in Rav Kook's agenda. For him, kedushat and shleimut ha'aretz now became the dominant values driving personal and public thought and action and determining morality. Many of the Yeshiva high schools, the Ulpanot for

girls and the Hesder Yeshivot combining army service with their studies, had his pupils either on their faculty or at their head. His teachings and value judgments therefore spread rapidly and widely until they became the accepted ideology of the bulk of religious Zionism; Landau's Torah va-Avoda, social justice, public rule of Choshen Mishpat and the religious renaissance through physical labor, gave way to Harav Tzvi Yehuda's vision of the irrevocable geulah and Eretz Yisrael Hash'leima. ★