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# DeProgram Program

*From the Mind of Sha'i ben-Tekoa*

*Transcript*

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*Shalom laYehudim, Shalom laBnai Noach, Shalom laGoyim.* It is the evening of the 6th day, *kaf-bes beMenachem Av, Parashas Ekev, tav-shin-ayin-vav*, the evening of the 5th day, Thursday, 25 August 2016, webcasting from the hills of Judea, origin of the word Jew, which surely contributes to the hostility toward the so-called settlers who live in the settlements in Judea and Samaria a.k.a. the "West Bank."

As I take note in my book, one night in March 1938, after midnight, a convoy of trucks and buses transporting a group of young Palestinian (!) Zionist pioneers and their equipment, among them atheistic, socialistic khalutzim Moshe Dayan and Yigal Allon, reached their destination along the uninhabited border with Lebanon and threw up a fence for defense, a watchtower, a dining room, and tents to sleep in, and they were the heroes of the day in the *yishuv*, the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael, for their pioneering, brave effort. Setting up a settlement there was considered going into the "lion's jaw," because there were so many Arabs in the vicinity.

But when religious Jews build settlements in Judea and Samaria, well, that's another story. For Dayan and Allon and their community that produced Rabin and Peres, etc., building communities for Jews for religious reasons is a no-no. These were atheists, these were socialists, and so horrifying was the sudden possession in 1967 of Judea and Samaria for its religious associations, the sabra elite here would not even use the names Judea and Samaria. It was the *hashtakhim hakevushim*/ "conquered areas," and even to this day the "West Bank," which my book shows came into use in 1968, is used to describe the territory that Jordan had overrun in 1948 and annexed the next year. "West Bank," I aver, is evidence of the lie of a "Palestinian" people because normal peoples bestow names on

natural features like mountains, rivers, lakes and streams. Historically, the Arabs never had a name for the hills of Judea and Samaria. “West Bank” was the name invented after the illegal Jordanian conquest. It was the “west bank of the Kingdom of Jordan,” but that still is no name, just a topographical description.

And that is the name the sabras preferred then and still use for Judea and Samaria. The “West Bank” covers up the name on maps for thousands of years, a name identifying the land with the Jews.

So here is the lede in the JPost story today about the Brussels Airlines decision never to carry produce from Judea and Samaria. It seems an antiJew passenger flying out of Tel-Aviv complained that he was served halvah made by Jews in Judea and Samaria – only, of course, that was not the name he used, and not the name JPost used. Listen to this: “Brussels Airlines has taken halva off its menu after a disgruntled passenger alerted it staff that the vanilla-flavored snack was made in an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. Belgian media cited a pro-Palestinian group as saying that the national airline had not been aware of the nature of the product and the violent and illegal institutions behind it.”

On one level, this is just another outbreak of BDS fever. But that is not my concern here. I am not concerned with the behavior of this disgruntled antiJew air passenger or the airline. It is the Jerusalem Post that concerns me for using the terms Israeli “settlement” and “West Bank.”

What dejudaized Israelis like these don’t get is the connection between their own work, particularly in the Jerusalem Post read by the world that is interested in what goes on here, and the hostility to Israel in the world. By referring to Judea and Samaria as the “West Bank,” the Jerusalem Post, and all Jews who use this lexicon, contribute to antisemitism by affirming the proposition that Jews do not belong in Judea and Samaria. They are “settlers,” as opposed to the enlightened denizens of Ramat Aviv, site of Tel-Aviv University built on what used to be the crummy Arab settlement of Sheikh Munis, now called a “village,” when none of these Arab communities deserved that name.

Morally, legally, the so-called settlements in Judea and Samaria are no different from Tel-Aviv as a Jewish settlement begun in 1909. If breaking ground for Kibbutz Hanita in 1938 by Moshe Dayan and friends was kosher, breaking ground for every Jewish community built in Judea and Samaria post-1967 was also kosher.

The League of Nations explicitly allowed for the amputation of Eastern Palestine, as it was marked on maps, as a separate Arab entity, which became Jordan, but then all the rest of Western Palestine west of the River was to be the site of the Jewish homeland explicitly called for in the Mandate. Every Jewish community in Judea and Samaria is as kosher as Kibbutz Hanita, which is still there on the Lebanese border to this day.

And that Israelis like the Jerusalem Post journalists publish articles using vocabulary that covers up the Jewish connection to this real estate, calling it “West Bank,” is an abomination.

But then again, it is all perfectly understandable since the post-religious Zionist movement envisioned a non-Jewish Jewish state, a non-religious Jewish state. How blind and intellectually and spiritually crippled they were to think that there could be such a thing as a Jewish identity without the religion.

Actually, I should not be surprised. This is the story of my own family, representative of millions of American Jews of a certain generational cohort, the 2 million who reached America between 1881 and 1921.

The No 1 newspaper that many of them read, with a daily circulation of 200,000 at its peak – the largest socialist newspaper in the country – was the *Forverts*, the Jewish Daily Forward, my grandfather and grandmother's community. He was a labor union organizer for the Jewish textile workers. He had begun life as a *yeshiva bucher* in Vilna, Lithuania, but like legions of his contemporaries, at a certain point, the tidal of Enlightenment begun in western Europe more than a century before caught up with eastern Europe and off went his kippa and his kashrut, and I have some of his books. I have *Das Kapital* in Yiddish. I have Darwin's *Origin of Species* in Yiddish. I have Engels and Bakunin also in Yiddish.

He became a Bundist, a social democrat and also a Yiddishist, like Sholom Aleichem, "grandfather" so to speak, of *Fiddler on the Roof* and other Yiddish writers at the time, all of them heretical Jews who still loved the Yiddish language and the Jewish people and thought that this affection could sustain a new, non-religious Jewish identity. As a founding president of the Furriers Union, a labor organizer, he also, for a time, was employed by the Hebrew Actors Union when there were 20 working Yiddish theaters active in New York City doing plays about Jewish life in Yiddish but also, in translation, Chekhov, Strindberg and Shakespeare.

They too wanted a Jewish identity without the religion that they made fun of. Such types would on Yom Kippur chow down at a banquet of ham and cheese sandwiches to exercise their liberation from "the opiate of the masses."

I once asked by grandmother of blessed memory what they thought of the Zionists in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century and she said that in her town in Poland there were only a handful and everybody thought they were crazy.

But despite the difference of philosophies, between the Yiddishists who went to America and the Zionists who came here, they all shared the mistaken belief that it was possible to sustain the Jewish people without the Jewish religion.

And so there was this week the dispute, mentioned last webcast, over how to spend 65 million dollars on outreach to Americans of Jewish extraction, which quest seems to have resulted from, among other things, a recent Pew poll, back in 2013, showing 40% of American Jews between 18 and 29 who feel no attachment to Israel.

That is a death sentence.

That poll also records 75% of them thinking Israel is not making a sincere effort toward peace. Democrats, for sure.

And I say that I am glad most of the money is going to Chabad and Olami, which I do not know but was reported to be like Chabad as an Orthodox, what JPost calls, an ultra-orthodox organization.

The reality is that without the Jewish religion, there is no Jewish identity, no national identity.

Arutz 7 yesterday reported on a new committee of directors-general of different ministries who want to legalize violating the Sabbath in Tel-Aviv, officially, more than it already is. They want some 160 stores to be allowed to do business on the Sabbath and holidays.

And who is leading the charge in this campaign, making the argument that the people of Tel-Aviv have the democratic right to live as they choose? Why, it is City Councilman Miki Gitzin whom we heard about last webcast, he who heads the NGO called *Israel Khofsheet*, meaning, “Free Judaism.” He’s the guy who wants punitive action taken against those 300 rabbis who wrote a letter supporting Rabbi Levinstein’s vocabulary that Gitzin cannot tolerate.

In other words, this is just another story of some Israelis going on a crusade to deJudaize Israel. It is a perennial problem in this people even older than the age of the Maccabees.

\* \* (Musical Interlude) \* \*

JPost yesterday reported on another poll recording that only half of the Israelis polled believe Israel is responsible for Jews outside the country. That poll was commissioned by the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, and it also found that the majority of respondents were unenthusiastic about investing funds in Jewish identity efforts in the Diaspora. Only 9% strongly agreed with the idea, 18% just agreed, the rest did not.

And I am pretty much with the ones who did not. Because I suspect that fostering Jewish identity in the Diaspora is the last thing that Israelis can do, that is, the non-religious ones. What Jewish identity did the pollsters have in mind? What is this identity without the religion?

I knew American Jewry was on the way out – that is, the non-Orthodox ones – about twenty years ago when there was a piece in the Wall Street Journal on a Hillel House in some Midwestern college whose most popular weekly event had nothing to do with Shabbos but just sitting around a television together and watching the *Seinfeld* program.

A wonderful program, one of a long string of television comedy successes dominated by Jews, but there was nothing in it to pass on to the next generation.

It is no surprise that Israelis care so little for Jews abroad because, in truth, those abroad have so little in common with them, other than a common gene pool. It is a well-known fact that the million-plus Israelis who left Israel and made their homes in the US,

do not mix with American Jewry. They don't identify with them, because both groups are not religious, by and large. The way of life that linked Jewish communities everywhere in the world of the Diaspora for thousands of years for American Jews is not more.

This city councilman Miki Gitzin is a crusader for a more deJudaized Israel. And he is a sly one. He says his plan is not to duplicate the weekday Tel-Aviv but just to allow people walking to the beach to buy a bottle of water on the way.

This is rubbish. His community drives to the beach on Saturday anyway and brings whatever food they want from home.

He just wants another crack in the wall, another hole with no little Dutch boy to plug it up.

The war against Jewishness by Jews like him is eternal.

If I were a politician, I might offer the Miki Gitzins of Israel a deal. Many of them would love to go to a normal workweek of five days and a two-day weekend. Non-religious types say that of course that they jump into their cars on Shabbos to go shopping and have fun with their kids because that is the only day they can.

What might be worth a test for a couple of years is the following: Israel goes to a week with a Sunday as in the West, for a shopping and traveling and not working, but Shabbos itself would become more observant in Israel than ever before. A real observance by the entire country. No commerce, which means no restaurants, no cafes, no movie theaters, no live theater, no Israeli television.

One of the great benefits of the Sabbath is the time that families spend with one another, eat meals together, undistracted by TV and iPhone and computers. A real Shabbos day unlike in any other country in the world.

Now that's what I call Jewish identity, and that is why it is wise for the bulk of funds allocated for those in outreach at least be in the hands of religious Jews.

For the old Israel of *khalutzim*/pioneers, taking back the desert and making it bloom is ancient history. Israel is like other countries in the West now. One of its problems is too much traffic, gridlock for the number of cars on the roads.

Israel is also building skyscraper apartments and office buildings 60, 70, 80, stories tall. There are cranes working all over the country.

Likewise, Modern Hebrew everyday molts a little bit into a kind of Hebrew-English, like Yiddish was a Hebrew-German combo, and Ladino a Hebrew-Spanish *mélange*. Like the language of Caucasian Jewry called, strangely enough, "*Jewry*."

In Israel's first two decades, 1948-68, there was no television here. Entertainment was other people. Israel was very much cut off from the rest of the world. They were behind the times in fashion and music. Israelis overseas, those who could afford to go, were recognizable by their dress and carriage, the way they carried themselves.

Today, Israelis in Tel-Aviv and Haifa who speak Hebrew still come across as non-Jews, in apparent unconscious imitation of the culture they see daily on the Internet and in the movies and on TV and when traveling abroad.

So what is this Jewish identity that some Israelis think they can market overseas? Just what is it that they are going to sell to these alienated Americans of Jewish descent? What are they going to teach them? How to handle M-16 when confronted by an Arab with a knife? It happened yesterday in the Shomron. Some soldiers were bent on arresting an Arab up to no good, taking him into custody for some infraction, who pulled a knife and stabbed one of the soldiers, who shoved him back and in a flash aimed his weapon properly, squeezed the trigger and deprived the barbarian of his brutish life.

\* \* (Musical Interlude) \* \*

So if the topic in the previous segments concerned Jewish identity, if it is possible at all without the religion, religion also remains the hard core of the violence here, Islam's inability to let Jews live free of their tyranny, and this is how to understand another news story. On Tuesday night, and not for the first time, the IDF had to ride to the rescue of 60 Breslev Hasidim who had gone to the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus -- that name, by the way, more evidence that there never was a Palestinian people. Nablus is nothing but the mispronunciation of the Greek name *Nea Polis*, new city. Today's Balestinians, in other words, have no Balestinian name for that town.

Officially, Jews are allowed to visit the tomb but only once a month, holidays and special memorial days but always under armed, IDF guard.

Tuesday night's unlicensed adventure led to their bus being stoned by the local barbarians and the call to the army to save them, which they did. But then the army angrily arrested many of them for this unauthorized visit to the Tomb of Joseph the Righteous, Joseph the son of *Imeinu Rachel*.

A police spokeswoman said afterwards, "We view this incident very seriously. It's a criminal offense to enter Area A without permission."

And I say this is another abomination that Israelis have learned to tolerate precisely because it concerns religious Jews who do not represent the non-religious ruling class.

It is a disgrace, like referring to Judea and Samaria as "West Bank." That Israel tolerates these restrictions on our religious life in our one and only country is pathetic.

This is why I've imagined a policy for the Temple Mount that denies Jews the right altogether to enter, and as a result, Israel can tear up the Oslo documents and rule as we choose. And live wherever we want in Judea and Samaria.

The conflict here, the endless violence here, is akin to what the Communists in the Soviet Union did to religious people, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists. The official religion/ideology of the Soviet Union was atheism. It was taught in schools. And to the

enlightened Communist mind, it was right to suppress manifestations of this “opiate of the masses.”

And so here Islam cannot tolerate free Jews practicing their religion freely undisturbed and in peace. “No way,” say the Muhammadans.

But modern Israel, still hostile to traditional Jewish identity, refuses to fight for its religious freedom and rights. That we (!) enforce a prohibition on Jewish prayer at Joseph’s Tomb as a criminal offense is mindboggling.

The problem is that Israelis, the ruling class, have no spirit to fight for the Jewish religion any more than they have to, or want to, in order to preserve the tourist industry.

That Israel tolerates these restrictions on Jewish religious observance is a stain of disrespect for oneself.

Given the spiritual/psychological physics of this world, I’d venture that Israel would do much better in the area of public opinion not by lying that Israel wants a Balestinian state and peace but fights for its legal and religious rights, which it never has. If Israel is the object of scorn and contempt in some quarters, maybe it is because it demeans itself by putting up with the lies of these people and their 24-7 aggression against us and the free exercise of our religion in our ancient homeland.

Livni and Beilin say if Israel defines the conflict as religious, not nationalist, there is no hope of peace.” And I say, “We won’t go wrong disagreeing with these antiJew fools.”

I say just the opposite. Only when Israel re-brands the conflict for what it is, a religious conflict, and focuses on Islam’s imperialist need to dominate us, will Israel receive the respect it deserves when it starts to respect itself.

\* \* (Musical Interlude) \* \*

Last item: It seems there is new book out there written by Wall Street Journal journalist Jay Solomon called, *The Iran Wars*, which surely is a bland title unworthy of the real story beneath, which the author himself seems to miss.

Solomon’s “revelation” is that Obama did not help the opponents of the Iranian regime in the elections of June 2009 -- when the regime stole the election -- because he wanted a nuclear deal with Iran. Another commentator on the book says it deals with Obama’s “obsessive drive to turn Iran from enemy to friend.”

And that is where I differ, big time. Obama may have looked on the surface to be trying to change minds and hearts in Iran, but underneath, he had no criticism of this most powerful Muslim regime.

The photo archives contain pictures of Obama smiling into the face Erdogan, the latest version of a Turkish sultan, a tyrant, a supporter of Hamas, a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Obama was not out to turn Iran into a friend of the US, I think.

He was out to support Iran and not be an obstacle in its drive to topple Israel from its post as the strongest military player in the region.

This is the reason for his fidelity to getting a deal with Iran, that is no deal. It is all smoke and mirrors. The Iran deal is just Obama catering to the Iranians because they are unique in the region for their ability to build nuclear weapons and destroy Israel, G-d forbid, which aspiration is deepest in the hearts of all serious Muslims.

Obama did not want Iran to have a change of heart. He has been a supporter of Iran, signing off on sanctions only to create the impression of resistance to its A-bomb project.

I hope this man spends eons burning in Muslim hell.

*Leila tov miEretz Yisrael.*