

The Teachings Of
HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook

ERETZ YISRAEL

Commentary by
Rabbi David Samson and Tzvi Fishman

TORAT ERETZ YISRAEL PUBLICATIONS

Jerusalem

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The "Lights on OROT" series is dedicated to the memory of HaRav Yehuda Hazani, Z"L, who devoted his life to the rebuilding of the nation in Israel. His deeds in educating a generation of Israelis to settle all of the country's borders remain a living memorial to the Torah of Eretz Yisrael.

Letter of Blessing

HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira, *Shlita*,
Rosh Yeshiva, Mercaz HaRav, Jerusalem, and
Former Chief Rabbi of Israel

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LETTER OF BLESSING

HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira, *Shlita*
 Chief Rabbi of Israel
Rosh Yeshiva, Mercaz HaRav, Jerusalem

My student, HaRav David Samson, *Shlita*, showed me the manuscript of his book - a translation and commentary in English of the book, OROT. Over a period of many years, HaRav Samson was a student in the Yeshiva under the personal tutelage of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, ZT"L, and absorbed in a close and intimate fashion, an encompassing understanding of the teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda's father, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, ZT"L, the Rabbi of all *Bnei Yisrael*. This explanation of our Rabbi's teachings was given over to HaRav Samson by Rabbi Kook's foremost pupil, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, ZT"L, himself.

The author, along with his colleague, Tzvi Fishman, "HY"V, have already achieved recognition for their previous compilation, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, which was received with great enthusiasm by

our English-speaking brethren. Once again, in an even more magnified manner, they have raised the banner of Torah with the publication of a commentary on the first chapter of the book, OROT, which illuminates the subject of *Eretz Yisrael*. They have achieved a great deed in making the deep Torah understandings and philosophies of Rabbi Kook available in a clear and insightful fashion to the remnant of our nation in the Diaspora.

In these times, with the revival of the nation of Israel in its land, there is a special need to familiarize ourselves with the luminous writings of our master, HaRav Kook, ZT"l.

Therefore, I grant them a faith-filled blessing, that they will merit, amidst spiritual and material bounty, to successfully continue to translate and explain the writings of HaRav, ZT"l, and thus bring everlasting benefit to the myriads of our people.

May it be the Almighty's will that we may soon merit to fulfill the words of our Prophets, "*For from Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*"

With blessings of the Torah,
HaRav Avraham Shapira

Sivan 5756

PREFACE

"Lights on OROT" is intended to be a series of commentaries on Rabbi Kook's pivotal work, OROT. The book of OROT is the key to Rabbi Kook's teachings on the nation of Israel and its role in world redemption. Rabbi Kook wrote the essays over a period of several years, and only after his death were they arranged in book form by his son, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, ZT"l.¹ At the *Mercaz HaRav* Yeshiva in Jerusalem, which Rabbi Kook founded, the book of OROT is learned in depth, along with other seminal treatises on Jewish faith, such as the *Kuzari*, and the writings of the Maharal. Often, a single essay of OROT will be the basis for many probing hours of lecture and class discussion. Because of the book's startling insights, its difficult Hebrew, and often esoteric style, OROT has remained the cherished possession of Rabbi Kook's students and a generation of Torah scholars who

1. For a detailed account of the history surrounding the publication of OROT, see *Orot*, Introduction and Translation by Rabbi Bezalel Naor, Jason Aronson Publishers.

have been privileged to learn from his son, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda. To make the book accessible to a wider readership, we have undertaken the "Lights on OROT" series, and are, with G-d's help, beginning with the publication of commentaries to *Eretz Yisrael*, and *War*, the first two chapters of OROT.

Accompanying the original Hebrew is an English translation, which is meant as a guide, and not as a definitive text. In the commentaries, we have tried to remain true to the in-depth investigation which Rabbi Kook's writings demand, without commenting on every phrase or idea in the essay. Because many of the concepts find their source in the esoteric literature of our Sages, extra effort was taken to illuminate these themes in a clear, yet comprehensive fashion. While the themes of the essays frequently overlap, it is hoped that the repetition will help to bring Rabbi Kook's vision into clearer, more definitive focus.

At this point, we would like to acknowledge the help of our teachers, who have been our guides to the intricacies of OROT. Foremost among them, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, ZT"l, whose classes on OROT opened up vistas which would have otherwise been closed to even the most diligent readers. We have also felt free to incorporate insights gleaned from the classes of HaRav Tzvi Tau, *Shlita*; HaRav Shlomo Aviner, *Shlita*; HaRav Yehoshua Zuckerman, *Shlita*; HaRav Chaim Sabato, *Shlita*; HaRav Oded Volansky, *Shlita*; HaRav Yaacov Filber, *Shlita*; HaRav Dov Begun, *Shlita*, and others from whom we have been privileged to learn. In addition, the notebooks of HaRav Yehuda Hazani, ZT"l, and his personally annotated copy of OROT lay open before us as we prepared the final draft of our manuscript. If, however, misunderstandings or mistakes appear in the commentaries, the

fault rests solely with the authors. Finally, special thanks go Rabbi Moshe Kaplan for his knowledgeable and expert editing the text, and his scholarly work on the sources. He is also to commended for the book's readable layout and design.

INTRODUCTION

by

Rabbi David Samson

The past several years, many of my students have asked me the same question: how are we to understand that after longing for the Land of Israel for nearly two-thousand years, a government in Israel began giving away sections of the country? Biblical cities that once inspired awe in the hearts of the Jewish people are often spoken about as problems which have to be discarded to save the modern-day State. Hebron, the home of Abraham, and the capital of King David's kingdom, is perceived by some people as an Arab city. The city of Gaza, which was once part of King Solomon's kingdom, has been handed over to terrorists. Even the capital of Israel, Jerusalem, is perceived by many Jews as an obstacle to peace.

Once, when Rabbi Kook was Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*, in the year following the tragic massacres of 1929, the Mufti

threatened to continue hostilities against the Jewish community in Palestine unless the Jews conceded that the *Kotel* was Islamic property. The British government wished to achieve a compromise between the Arab claim and the Jewish position. The leaders of the Jewish community approached Rabbi Kook, begging him to have mercy on the Jews and spare further violence by agreeing to a compromise. In spite of insistent appeals by the leaders of the *Vaad HaLeumi*, Rabbi Kook stood firm. Political gain was not to be achieved, and could not be achieved, by denying the Jewish nation's inherent connection to *Eretz Yisrael*.¹

Since G-d has promised to give the land of Israel to the Jewish people as an everlasting inheritance, our weakened connection to *Eretz Yisrael* must be seen as a spiritual crisis as well as a political dilemma. Our willingness to surrender the very portions of *Eretz Yisrael* where the Bible unfolds is symptomatic of this spiritual malaise. Rabbi Kook, in his penetrating wisdom and foresight, predicted this distressing phenomenon at the foundation of the Zionist movement. In the book, *OROT*, he writes:

"We recognize that a spiritual rebellion will come to pass in *Eretz Yisrael* amongst the people of Israel in the beginnings of the nation's revival. The material comfort which will be attained by a percentage of the nation, convincing them that they already have completely reached their goal, will constrict the soul, and days will come which will seem devoid of all spirit and meaning. The aspirations for lofty and holy ideals will cease, and the spirit of the nation will plunge and sink to the depths."²

1. B'Yom Chailecha, Volume in Memory of Yochanan Yismach, Pg. 39ff.

2. *OROT, Orot HaTechiya*, 44.

The last few years of our history have brought the Jewish people to a crossroads. What is the nation of Israel to be? A modern nation which champions the values and ideals of the West, or a modern nation which is guided by the Divine tenets and teachings of the Torah? A prevalent vision sees financial prosperity as the foundation of a new Middle East, at the expense of abandoning our own Jewish speciality. Regarding this identity crisis, Rabbi Kook writes in *OROT*:

"Our life history is long and therefore our life path is extensive in scope. We are indeed great, and accordingly, our mistakes are great, our tribulations are awesome, and our consolations are as equally monumental.

"Retreating from all of our enhanced Jewish specialty is a cardinal misconception, representing a crisis in the understanding that *"You chose us from all of the nations."*... If we shall know our towering stature, then we will know ourselves, and if we forget our greatness, we forget ourselves, and a nation that forgets itself is certainly small and debased."³

Rabbi Kook envisions a more noble future when the nation of Israel shall return to its roots:

"A storm of revolution will appear, and people will come to see clearly that the power of Israel lies in its eternal holiness, in the light of G-d and His Torah, in the yearning for spiritual light, which is the ultimate valor which triumphs over all of the worlds and all of their powers.... these are the pangs of *Mashiach* which come to refine and purify the entire world through the pains which they cause."³

3. *Ibid.*, 5.

Rabbi Kook teaches that the nation of Israel comes to embrace its ancestral heritage and calling, precisely through these vicissitudes of *Mashiach*. He assures us that we will emerge even stronger from spiritual crises which seem at first glance to cause irreversible setbacks:

"Israel will rise to stand on its feet; will rise with valor in its cherished land; will express the statement of its prophecy from the source of its soul; it will awaken to revitalize the seeds of its Divine life that are dormant in the heart of every man and every living thing - *Every soul shall praise G-d, Halleluya!*"⁴

For this great revival to occur, education is needed. We need to study who the Jewish people truly are by delving into the treasures of our past. We must strengthen our connection to *Eretz Yisrael* by taking a more penetrating look at our sources. In this reawakening, Rabbi Kook's writings in the book of OROT can be our inspiration and guide.

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4. Ibid., 72.

RAV AVRAHAM YITZHAK HACHOHEN **KOOK**

ERETZ YISRAEL

One

Eretz Yisrael is not a peripheral matter, an external acquisition of the nation; it is not merely a means toward the goal of the general coalescing of the nation, nor of strengthening its material existence, nor even its spiritual.

Eretz Yisrael is an independent unit, bound with a living attachment with the nation, bound with inner *Segulot* with the nation's existence.

As a result, it is impossible to comprehend the essence of the inner *Segula* of the *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*, and to reveal the depths of its love, through any form of human conceptualization; but only through the Spirit of *Hashem* which acts on the nation as a whole.

This *Ruach Hashem* on the nation, the natural spiritual formulation of Israel's soul, sends its rays in natural colors in all paths of sensitivity. It shines its exalted rays in direct accordance with the exalted *Ruach HaKodesh* which fills with life and exalted

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joy the hearts of the holy thinkers and those who are involved in the deep contemplations of Israel.

The thought regarding *Eretz Yisrael* that it has merely a peripheral value to facilitate the subsistence of the unified nation; even when it comes to fortify the concept of Judaism in the Diaspora, in order to preserve its form, and to strengthen the belief and fear of *Hashem*, and to strengthen the performance of the commandments in a proper fashion - this orientation toward *Eretz Yisrael* is not worthy of lasting fruition, for its foundation is rickety in light of the towering, unshakable *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*.

The concept of Judaism in the Diaspora will only find true strength through the depth of its involvement in *Eretz Yisrael*. Only through its longing for *Eretz Yisrael* will Diaspora Judaism consistently receive its inherent qualities. The yearning for Salvation gives the Judaism of the Diaspora its power of stamina; whereas the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is the Salvation itself.

Chapter One

ERETZ YISRAEL

The book, OROT, explores the deepest understandings of the nation of Israel, and Israel's role in world redemption. In compiling the essays which make up the book, Rabbi Kook's son, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, ZT"l, chose to begin with selections of his father's writings on *Eretz Yisrael*. This choice is, in itself, a great innovation. Rabbi Kook explains that a proper understanding of the nation of Israel can only be obtained after one first recognizes the significance of *Eretz Yisrael* to the Jewish people.¹ To understand who we are as a nation, and to actualize our role in the world, we first have to understand the special relationship between the Divinely-chosen people and the Divinely-chosen land.

1. Similarly, Rashi begins his commentary on the Torah by emphasizing that the Land of Israel is the unique inheritance of *Am Yisrael*, Genesis, 1:1.

The first essay of OROT is not only a study of our connection to the Land of Israel, it is also an introduction to the *Segula* of the nation, one of the main themes of Rabbi Kook's writings. This *Segula*, a Divine inner attachment to G-d unique to the Jewish people is the key to understanding the unity of the nation of Israel, the Torah, the Land of Israel, and G-d.²

To comprehend the depths of Rabbi Kook's writing, we first must recognize that the world has both a physical and spiritual dimension. A world perspective encompassing the physical and spiritual worlds does not come easily. Much work is needed to activate our inner natures, and to cultivate our spiritual powers. This is our task as Jews and a holy nation - to link the physical world with the Divine. As Rabbi Kook makes clear, *Eretz Yisrael* is the G-d given place ideally suited for this task.

Upon a superficial examination, one might think that our attachment to *Eretz Yisrael* is based merely on a historical relationship, or on the need for a homeland to bring our oppressed and scattered people together. Rabbi Kook rejects this understanding outright. He calls upon us to probe beyond surface explanations toward a much deeper contemplation. Our connection to the Land of Israel, like the connection of the soul to the body, transcends rational explanations. The connection is a deep spiritual bond. Rabbi Kook tells us that *Eretz Yisrael* is an intrinsic and inseparable part of the nation, a deep inner root of the nation's existence - and not merely a branch.

How are we to understand this? In his commentary to the *Siddur*, Rabbi Kook explains that, "The holy connection between

2. Letters of Rabbi Kook, Letter 555.

the nation of Israel and its holy land does not resemble connections which exist in the natural world."³

For instance, our connection to *Eretz Yisrael* is not dependent on history. *Eretz Yisrael* was given to Avraham Avinu without previous historical connection. The bond between Avraham and the land was not based on any external reason. The *Brit* between Avraham and the land was Divine. Only in the Holy Land can the national life of the Chosen People be totally uplifted to G-d. The prophecy exclusive to the Land of Israel, the *mitzvot* unique to the land, and the *Beit Hamikdash* are all manifestations of this Divine connection. It is an attachment based on *Ruach Hakodesh*, beyond scientific inquiry and rational explanation. This first essay of OROT introduces us to this higher vision and to the need to perceive *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael* in a deeper, more poignant light.

אַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָהּ דָּבָר חִיצוֹנִי.

"Eretz Yisrael is not a peripheral matter."

The Hebrew word חִיצוֹנִי in this important first sentence has the meaning of external, superficial, peripheral, secondary; a side matter lacking central importance - something which is not integrally vital to existence. Before explaining what the land of Israel is in positive terms, Rabbi Kook tells us what the land of Israel is not. He first rejects the mistaken understanding which views *Eretz Yisrael* as a means to a goal, and not as a goal in itself. He wants to negate the opinion which maintains that while the Land of Israel has historical and even strategic importance, it

3. *Olat Riyah*, Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Vol. 1, Pg. 203.

is not something vital to Jewish existence.

A few simple examples will help us understand the difference between an external matter and the central matter itself. When a person wakes up in the morning, he dresses and begins his daily routines. The clothes he chooses to wear are an important part of his day, but they are not the person himself. While there is a popular expression, "The clothes make the man," one readily recognizes the superficiality of this phrase. Though a person may feel more attractive wearing a blue shirt than a black one, his choice of attire does not represent his essential self. Joseph Cohen remains Joseph Cohen whatever suit of clothes he wears.

Similarly, a person may feel different riding to work in a Cadillac than in a Chevrolet, but the car remains an external appurtenance and not the man himself. A man's identity is much more than his profession, his clothes, his car, his job, or his residence. All are external elements which influence his life, but they do not constitute his inner self.

One can readily understand these examples. In the case of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, however, the relationship is not an external one. The connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel is not a peripheral matter. On the contrary, the nation of Israel and the Land of Israel are inseparably united. As Rabbi Kook will explain, the Land of Israel is an absolute foundation of the Jewish nation. The Jewish people without the Land of Israel are not the essential Jewish people, but rather a mere shadow of their inner potential.⁴

4. Lamentations, 2:9. Rabbi Moshe Kaplan, "*Teshuva*: National Goal or

The thought that *Eretz Yisrael* is an accessory to Judaism, and not a central pillar in itself, is a tragic distortion which was caused by the nearly 2000 year exile of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel. After years of wandering in foreign countries, scattered among the gentiles, and separated from our homeland, our orientation to the Land of Israel became distorted and confused. Instead of being a day-to-day reality integral to our lives, *Eretz Yisrael* became a faraway dream. In our Diaspora existence, the most important aspects of Judaism were the matters which affected our daily lives - Torah study, prayer, the Sabbath, *Kashrut*, and the *mitzvot* which we were still able to perform. *Eretz Yisrael* became something of secondary importance - a place to which we would one day return, but not an essential part of the Jewish experience.

This misconception results when we misunderstand the true culture of the Jewish people. The foundation of our culture is not just the holidays and the performance of precepts, but in our being the nation which brings the word and blessing of G-d to the world.⁵ As we will learn, our national attachment to G-d can be achieved exclusively through the Land of Israel.

To help us remember the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* to Judaism and to the nation of Israel, let us reflect on a few teachings of our Sages regarding the special qualities of the land of Israel.

The *Zohar* calls **the Land of Israel, the heart of all lands.**⁶

Private Matter?" *Merhavim*, Vol. V, Pg. 3.

5. Genesis, 12:3; Isaiah, 49:6.

6. *Zohar*, 3:221B.

The word of G-d goes forth to the world only from the land of Israel, as the prophet says, "*From Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of G-d from Jerusalem.*"⁷

The *Midrash* tells us that the goodness which G-d grants to the Jewish people emanates from Zion: "*All of the blessings and consolations, all of the good which the Holy One, Blessed Be He, brings to the Jewish people, all of them come from Zion.*"⁸

Additionally, all of the blessings which G-d sends to the world flow out of *Eretz Yisrael*: "*All of the vitality of all of this world, and all of the blessings and Divine Influence to all - they all come down initially to Zion, and from there, they are proportioned to everyone on earth.*"⁹

Furthermore, we will learn in Essay Three of OROT, "*Eretz Yisrael*," that this blessing comes to the world in all of its fullness only when the Jewish nation is situated in its homeland. Concurrently, as Jewish sovereignty spreads over all parts of the Land of Israel, greater and greater Divine blessing flows into the world.¹⁰

Hashem divided the world between nations and gave each nation a land suited to it. He fashioned and formed the nation of Israel and set it in the center of His world blueprint, in the land particularly suited to its holiness.¹¹ *Eretz Yisrael* enjoys a

7. Isaiah, 2:3.

8. *Midrash Tehillim*, 20 and 128.

9. *Anaf Yosef* to *Yoma* 54B.

10. Ezekiel, 3:12. "Guide for the Perplexed," 1:8. Also *Chessed L'Awaham*, Spring 3, River 7.

11. *Kuzari*, 4:17, "He is called G-d of the land (of Israel) because it possesses

special relationship with the Almighty. It is the meeting place, the point of intersection between the Divine and the physical world. For example, when the Divine seeks written expression in the world, the result is Torah. When *Hashem* seeks a national, earthly expression, the result is *Am Yisrael*. So too, the manifestation of *Kedusha* in geographic terms appears only in *Eretz Yisrael*, "*for the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation. This is My resting place; here I will dwell.*"¹² These Divinely designed receptacles of holiness, the Torah, *Am Yisrael*, and *Eretz Yisrael*, are united in their essence. "G-d, Israel and Torah are one."¹³

A special Divine Providence graces *Eretz Yisrael* to the exclusion of all other lands. It is "*The land where the eyes of the Lord our G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year till the end.*"¹⁴

Certainly, G-d reigns the world over. From our point of view, however, there is a great difference in our ability to receive the Divine content. Our Sages teach us that G-d has placed angelic forces to rule over all other lands. Only in the land of Israel is G-d's Providence direct, without any intermediary angels.¹⁵ Only in Israel is the worship of G-d pure without any barriers or impurities. This is how the Ramban explains the

a special power in its air which unites in a *Segula* assisting in the attainment of prophecy, and joined with this *Segula* are the conditions of soil and climate, which in connection with tilling the ground assists in improving the species."

12. *Tehillim*, 132:13-14.

13. *Nefesh HaChaim*, 4:11 based on *Zohar*, Leviticus, 73A.

14. Deut. 11:12.

15. Ramban on the Torah, Leviticus, 18:25. Also, *Derech Hashem*, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, Part 2, Ch. 4:8.

Gemara's startling declaration that "All who live in Eretz Yisrael resemble someone who has a G-d, and all who live outside the land of Israel resemble someone who has no G-d."¹⁶ In *Chutz L'Aretz*, the worship of G-d only reaches the level of the celestial angels, whereas in *Eretz Yisrael*, Divine service is direct to G-d Himself, with no interference whatsoever.¹⁷

This unique, life connection between *Hashem* and the Jewish people in Israel has very real quantitative and qualitative advantages. For instance, *Eretz Yisrael* is the land where the *Shekhina* appears,¹⁸ and where prophecy is transmitted to the Jewish people.¹⁹

Eretz Yisrael is the only place on earth where the Torah can be observed in all of its fullness.²⁰ The commandments themselves were only given to be performed in Israel.²¹ Our

16. *Ketubot* 110B.

17. See, *Orot*, "Eretz Yisrael," Essay Four, and the commentary which appears in this book.

18. *Moed Katan*, 25A, Rashi, "For the *Shekhina* does not reside outside of the Land of Israel."

19. *Kuzari*, 2:14; 2:16; 4:17.

20. *Ibid*, 2:14. *Sifre, Ekev*, "There is no Torah like the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*"

21. Ramban on the Torah, Leviticus, 18:25, "For the essence of all of the precepts is that they be performed in the land of *Hashem*." See Rabbi Kook, Introduction to *Etz Hadar*. Also, Celebration of the Soul, Genesis Jerusalem Publications, by HaRav Moshe Tzvi Neriah, translation by Rabbi Pesach Yaffe, Pg. 106. See Responsa of the Rashbah, Part 1, Response 134, in answer to a question regarding the *Gemara* in *Ketubot* 110B that a Jew who lives in *Chutz L'Aretz* is like someone who has no G-d: "The principal doing of the Torah commandments are all in the Land of Israel so much so that some of the commandments can only be

Sages teach that the commandments which we perform in the Diaspora are only reminders until we can return to Israel to observe them properly.²² The true value of the *mitzvot* is only in *Eretz Yisrael*.²¹ Outside the land, the precepts have an educational value, but the Torah repeatedly tells us that *Eretz Yisrael* is the place for their performance.²³ Accordingly, our Rabbis have told us that dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael* is equal in weight to all of the commandments of the Torah.²⁴

In the Land of Israel, we are a living people. In the Diaspora, we are like bodies lacking spirit - the physical shell of a people without inner life.²⁵

This seems preposterous. After all, the Jewish people survived in *Galut* for nearly 2000 years. Many of our greatest Torah scholars lived in *Galut*. Profound Talmudic works were written there. Orthodox communities thrived all over the world. How can this vast Jewish achievement be considered a mere physical shell?

practiced in Israel." See also, *L'Netivot Olam*, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, (5727 edition) Part 1, Pg. 197, regarding the Chofetz Chaim who maintained that the commandments performed in *Chutz L'Aretz* have only one-twentieth the value which they possess in *Eretz Yisrael*.

22. *Sifre, Ekev*, 11:18. Rashi, Deut. 11:18. Also, Ramban, Leviticus, 18:25.

23. Deut. 1:8,21,26; 3:18; 4:1,5,14,40; 5:27-20; 6:1-3,18; 7:13; 8:1; 11:9.... See also, *L'Netivot Olam*, Ch. 3 "The Torah and the Land." Also, *Zohar, Emor*, 93B. Iban Ezra, Deut. 31:16. *Haskamah* of the Netziv to *Ahavat Chesed*, re: Kings, 2:17, beg. "The statutes of the Lord of the land...."

24. *Sifre, Reah*, 80.

25. *Likutei HaGra*, at the end of *Safra D'Tzniuta*. Ezekiel, 37:12-14.

First, it must be made clear that the lack of life and spirit referred to is not on the individual level, but in reference to our national life as *Clal Yisrael*. A proper understanding of *Clal Yisrael*, of the Jewish people as a whole, is vital to an encompassing understanding of Torah, and to the writings of Rabbi Kook. To understand the life-giving connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, we first have to comprehend who we are as a *Clal*.²⁶ The normal definition of a *Clal* is a collective, a gathering of individuals for the purpose of furthering a common goal. In a partnership, when the goals have been achieved, the partners can split up and go their own way. The partnership or collective never takes on a life of its own, but rather only exists to serve the needs of its members. This is not the case with the Jewish people. *Clal Yisrael* is not just the sum total of the Jewish people at any one time. It is the eternal soul of the nation, past, present, and future. It is a Divine creation, above time and physical space, which was formed before the world came into existence.²⁷ The soul of the Jewish people, the Torah, and Eretz Yisrael are one.²⁸ Their roots exist in transcendental unity in the most exalted realms of the Divine.

Our true life is as a *Clal*, and not as a collection of individual Jews. In the Diaspora, Jewish nationhood is shattered. We lack the Divine spirit which fills *Clal Yisrael* when the nation is living its full sovereign life in Israel. The prophet Ezekiel's

26. For an in-depth discussion of the *Clal*, see the book, *Torat Eretz Yisrael, The Teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Torat Eretz Yisrael Publications, Ch. 2.

27. *Bereshit Kabbah*, 1:4.

28. *Zohar*, Leviticus, 73A. *Nefesh HaChaim*, 4:11. *Chofetz Chaim*, *Parshat Bo*. Also, *HaShla*, Genesis, 11A regarding the Torah as Israel's soul.

vision of the valley of dry bones is a picture of the Jewish people in *Galut*.²⁹ Outside the Land of Israel we are like corpses without spirit. Only with the ingathering of the exiles to Israel do our dry bones come to life:

*"Thus says the Lord G-d; Behold O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O My people, and have brought you up out of your graves, and I shall put My spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land..."*³⁰

Eretz Yisrael is the land Divinely created for *Clal Yisrael*.³¹ By Divine fiat, the Jewish people cannot be a nation in Germany, Uganda, America, or in any other land.³² Only in *Eretz Yisrael* can we be a sovereign people with our own government, language, and army. Everywhere else on the globe, we are citizens of foreign countries, alienated from our own true national framework and land. Thus, because Jewish nationhood is a foundation of Torah, the most complete Judaism is the Judaism practiced by the Jewish people when they are sovereign in their own land. As Rabbi Kook tells us at the end of this essay, true Jewish life is being Jewish in Israel.

29. Ezekiel, 37:11, Radak.

30. Ibid, 37:12-14.

31. *Bamidbar Kabbah*, 23:7: *"The land is dear to Me... and so is Israel... I shall place Israel, which is dear to Me in the land which is dear to Me."* See the book, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, Ch. 5, "Eretz Yisrael."

32. Samuel 2, 7:23, and Sabbath *Mincha Amidah* prayer, "And who is like Israel, one nation in the land." See, *Zohar*, Emor, 93B.

In the light of this introduction, we can take a more meaningful look at Rabbi Kook's first sentence.

אַרְצֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָנָה דְבַר חֵיצוֹנִי, קִנְיֵן חֵיצוֹנִי לְאַמָּה, רַק
בְּתוֹר אֲמִצְעֵי לְמִטְרָה שֶׁל הַהֲתַאֲגְדוֹת הַכְּלָלִית וְהַחֲזֻקָה
קַיִמָה הַחֲמָרִי אוֹ אֲפִלּוֹ הַרְוִיחָנִי.

"Eretz Yisrael is not a peripheral matter, an external acquisition of the nation; it is not merely a means toward the goal of the general coalescing of the nation, nor of strengthening its material existence, nor even its spiritual."

Generally, people believe that the reason a nation needs a land is to insure its physical existence. Obviously, a place to live is a foundation of any nation. According to this world view, the land only provides a physical shelter. The culture of the nation evolves from the society which the people establish, and not from the land, which possesses only external importance.

Rabbi Kook begins his essay on *Eretz Yisrael* by rejecting this way of thinking. He tells us that *Eretz Yisrael* is not merely a means towards a goal, lacking value in itself. A means is something which you can live without if you have a suitable replacement. This is the world view which led Theodore Herzl to look toward Uganda as a possible site for the re-establishment of the Jewish nation. To his way of thinking, the land was merely the means toward the goal of creating a national homeland. Of course, the Land of Israel had historical significance, but Uganda or Argentina could do just as well. Herzl and other early Zionists also understood that a Jewish homeland was needed for cultural reasons - to prevent assimilation and shelter the nation

from the dangers of foreign ideologies, but the land itself, its location, climate, features, and history were not the deciding factors. The goal was the physical coalescing of the nation - the land was merely a vehicle to help achieve this end.

Obviously, the plan for Uganda never materialized. "*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but the counsel of G-d is what stands.*"³³ Among the laws of the universe which G-d created is that the Jewish people belong in Israel. Jews can live as scattered individuals throughout the world, from Yemen to Brooklyn to Paris, but they can only live as a sovereign NATION in Israel.³⁴

Rabbi Kook writes that *Eretz Yisrael* is not merely a place of physical refuge for downtrodden Jews. Nor is it even a place to attain spiritual heights or to do extra *mitzvot*. How then are we to relate to the Land of Israel? Once we are freed from erroneous understandings, we can attempt to discover a deeper, more encompassing vision.

אַרְצֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיא חֲטִיבָה עֲצֻמוֹתִית קְשׁוּרָה בְּקִשְׁרֵי חַיִּים עִם
הָאָמָה חֲבוּקָה בְּסִגְלוֹת פְּנִימִיּוֹת עִם מְצִיאוֹתָהּ.

"Eretz Yisrael is an independent unit, bound with a living attachment with the nation, bound with inner Segulot with the nation's existence."

What is the meaning of this difficult sentence? Firstly, the Land of Israel is not merely a means, but a value and goal in

33. Proverbs, 19:21.

34. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Ch. 1.

itself. It is connected by a living bond which is inseparable from the nation. The land and the nation cannot attain their full life and expression, one without the other. They are complementary, united, with an active spiritual and physical union. Without the Jewish people in Israel, the land is doomed to lie in desolation,³⁵ as it had throughout nearly 2000 years of exile. Similarly, just as the land is desolate when Jews are not in it, the Jewish people are desolate when they are not in the land.³⁶ Outside the land of Israel, the Jewish people are wanderers without their own country, waiting to rise to resurrection and rebirth. True, Jews can be successful and make outstanding contributions to world civilization, but only on an individual level. Without our own land, we exist as individuals, stripped of our national foundation and splendor.

Rabbi Kook tells us that at the core of the bond between the land and the nation is an inner *Segula*, a unique spiritual holiness granted by G-d which the land and the nation share in common. The concept of *Segula* is usually translated into English as "a special treasure." The Torah tells us that the Jewish people is to be G-d's *Segula* among the nations. "*You shall be My own Segula from among all of the peoples.*"³⁷ This *Segula* is expressed in Israel's Divine chosenness, in being G-d's special treasure amongst the other nations of the world. Our distinction as G-d's chosen people is manifest in our *Kedusha*, our eternity, and in our prophetic potential. We are the bearers of the word of G-d in the world.³⁸

35. Leviticus, 26:32 and Ramban on that verse.

36. Ezekiel, 37:12-13. *Kuzari*, 2:12.

37. Exodus, 19:5. Also, Deut. 26:18-19.

38. Deut. 28:10. Isaiah, 43:21.

The inner *Segula* of *Clal Yisrael* is also shared by *Eretz Yisrael*. A special Divine chosenness unites the two in an inseparable holy bond. For instance, in our daily morning prayers, in the section of *Pesukei D'Zimrah*, we say, "*For the Lord chose Zion, He desired it for His habitation,*"³⁹ and in almost the same breath, we continue, "*For the Lord chose Yaacov as His own, Israel as His Segula.*"⁴⁰ Both the land and the nation of Israel are chosen. "*For Hashem will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His heritage.*"⁴¹ G-d's heritage is the Land of Israel, as we learn from the verse, "*Then He established it for Yaacov as a statute, for Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, To you I shall give the land of Canaan, the lot of your heritage.*"⁴² The nation and the land are eternally intertwined in G-d's plan for creation. Even their names are the same. *Yisrael* refers to both the land and the nation.

Thus, *Eretz Yisrael* is much more than a means. It is of supreme value in itself. The *Kedusha* of the land does not evolve from the *mitzvot* performed there. Rather, the unique *mitzvot* of the land stem from the inherent holiness of the land. This is why they are called "the *mitzvot* that depend on the land." The land is *Kodesh* by itself.⁴³

How is the inner specialty of the Land of Israel manifested

39. *Tehillim*, 132:13.

40. *Ibid*, 135:4.

41. *Ibid*, 94:14.

42. *Ibid*, 105:10-11. *Chronicles*, 1, 16:17-18.

43. "*Shabbat HaAretz*," *HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook*, Pgs. 62-63. *Kaftor V'Perach*, Ch. 10. Also, *Responsa, Chatam Safer, Yoreh Deah*, 234, "The *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael* comes from itself, and not because of the precepts related to it."

in our physical world? In the essay's next sentence, Rabbi Kook will tell us that Israel's inner *Segula* is a spiritual concept beyond rational, intellectual understanding. Thus we can only hint at a few of the unique characteristics which distinguish *Eretz Yisrael* from every other location on earth.

We have already mentioned that the Land of Israel lay in barren destruction during the nearly 2000 years which the Jewish people were in exile. Conqueror after conqueror tried to cultivate its once fertile soil, but all of them failed. The land's unwillingness to nurture foreign rulers is an example of the special connection between *Eretz Yisrael* and *Am Yisrael*. Even in the land's waste and destruction, its faithfulness to the Jewish people remains steadfast, as the Ramban makes clear:

"And that which is stated here, '*And your enemies will rule over the desolate land,*' is a blessing which guarantees that through all of the ages, our land will not receive our enemies, and this is a great proof and promise for us. For you can not find in the entire world a land which is good and bountiful, that was once settled, and is now as desolate as is Israel. For since we left her, she never received any other nation."⁴⁴

Only with the return of her children in our time did the land of Israel return to life. In a miraculously short time, the desert land became a major world exporter of fruits and flowers. The meeting between the Land of Israel and the people of Israel gives life and strength to both. The Holocaust decimated Jewish life like no other nightmare of history, yet upon our return to Israel, we transformed almost magically into a dynamic world power. This

44. Ramban on the Torah, Leviticus, 26:32.

supernatural connection is pointed to by the verse from Isaiah, "*He grants breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them who walk therein.*"⁴⁵ With our return to Jerusalem, to the valleys of the Jordan River, and to the shores of the Kinneret, our dry bones come to life.

Rabbi Kook tells us that the specialness of the land and of the nation is something above the general, rational understanding of man. For instance, one of the most outstanding aspects of the *Segula* of the land is prophecy. Just as the Jewish people are the people of prophecy,⁴⁶ the Land of Israel is the place of prophecy on earth. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, in his book, the *Kuzari*, explains how prophecy distinguishes Israel from all other lands.⁴⁷ In the same way that one country may have an abundance of oil, and another vast resources of gold, *Eretz Yisrael* holds the monopoly on prophecy. It occurs only in the Land of Israel, or pertaining to the Land of Israel.

Prophecy is one way in which the Land of Israel facilitates the culmination and adulthood of the Jewish people. Only by living in Israel can the Jewish people attain their true and maximum potential, and be a kingdom of prophets as in the days of King Saul when prophets roamed the land.⁴⁸

Similarly, if the Jewish people are in any other land, our prophetic channel is closed - unless the prophecy already began

45. Isaiah, 42:5. *Ketubot* 111A.

46. *Kuzari*, 1:95; 2:32.

47. *Ibid*, 2:14,16; 4:17.

48. *Megilla* 14A. Samuel I, 10:5,11.

in the Land of Israel, as in the case of Ezekiel,⁴⁹ or unless it specifically concerns the Land of Israel, as with prophetic calls for *Aliyah*.⁵⁰ For Divine truth to be revealed in the world, the Jewish people need to be in Israel.

ומתוך כך אי־אפשר לעמוד על התבן של סגלת קדשת ארץ־ישראל, ולהוציא לפעל את עמק חבֿתה, בשום השכלה רציוֹנלית אנושית כי־אם ברוח ד' אשר על האמה בכללה, בהטבעה הטבעית הרוחנית אשר בנשמת ישראל, שהיא ששולחת את קויה בעצבים טבעיים בכל הארחות של ההרגשה הבריאה, ומזרחת היא את זריחתה העליונה על־פי אותה המדה של רוח הקדשה העליונה, הממלא את חיים ונעם עליון את לבב קדושי הרעיון ועמקי המחשבה הישראלית.

"As a result, it is impossible to comprehend the essence of the inner Segula of the Kedusha of Eretz Yisrael, and to reach a deep love for it, through any form of human conceptualization; but only through the Spirit of Hashem which acts on the nation as a whole. This Ruach Hashem on the nation, the natural spiritual formation of Israel's soul, sends its rays in natural colors in paths of sensitivity. It shines its exalted rays in direct accordance with the exalted Ruach HaKodesh which fills with life and exalted joy the hearts of the holy thinkers and those who are involved in the deep

49. Ezekiel, 1:3. See the Commentary to Chapter Six of "*Eretz Yisrael*" in this book.

50. *Kuzari*, 2:14.

contemplations of Israel."

As a result of our inner connection to *Eretz Yisrael*, it is impossible to totally comprehend the exalted essence of the land through any intellectual means, because this inner spiritual *Segula* is above the realm of man's cognitive capabilities. By definition, the Jewish people should have a Kingdom in Israel. Like the orbits of the planets in the heavens, and the vitalness of air on earth, Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* is a Divine necessity of Creation.⁵¹ When this occurs, the world is healthy. Its heart is in place, channeling Divine life and blessing to all of existence. But when Israel is uprooted and scattered all over the globe, the Divine connection is shattered, and the world recedes to a dark, chaotic, disordered condition, alienated from its Creator.⁵²

Thus, the only language we have to express the connection between the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael* is through *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Divine Inspiration which resides in the Divine national soul of *Clal Yisrael*. Without *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Land of Israel will seem like any other land. What then are we, ordinary people, to do? How can we hope to grasp this intangible bond? How are we to understand these secret matters? Through the exalted rays of Divine Inspiration transmitted to us through the deep and holy thinkers of Israel. These are the great Rabbis who delve into the deepest understandings of Torah, and who are most deeply connected to the life of the *Clal*. They are our conduits for receiving the exalted spiritual content which is

51. *Netzach Yisrael*, Ch. 1.

52. See the Commentary to Chapter Eight of "Lights on OROT," Vol. 2, *War and Peace*, Torat Eretz Yisrael Publications.

otherwise beyond our intellectual grasp.⁵³

If we are not yet prophets, our forefathers were, and our descendants shall be. A general Divine Inspiration exists within the Jewish people, attached to our national soul.⁵⁴

"And as for Me, this is My covenant with them, says Hashem. My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have placed in your mouth (prophecy) will not be withdrawn from your mouth, nor from your children's mouth, nor from the mouth of your children's children, says Hashem, from this moment and forever."⁵⁵

The deeper understandings which Rabbi Kook refers to are the more esoteric formulations of *Am. Yisrael*. The system of logic which can express the special *Segula* of *Eretz Yisrael* and its living bond with the nation is not a rational formula, but rather the logic of Kabbalah. The word, *Kabbalah*, means to receive. It is the deeply rooted spiritual blueprint which is implanted in the Jewish people from Above. It is not a system of philosophy or science which we invented on our own. It is a system of wisdom which Moses and the Jewish people received directly from G-d at Mount Sinai. Therefore, if a person wants to discover the depth

53. Regarding Rabbi Kook's writings on the deep holy thinkers of Israel, and their influence on the world, see *Orot*, *Orot Yisrael*, 8:8; *Orot HaKodesh*, Vol. 1, Pg. 138; Vol. 2, Pg. 295 and 305; and Vol. 3, Pg. 117. Letters of Rabbi Kook, Vol. 3, Letters 753, 852.

54. *Mishpat Cohen*, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Pgs. 175-176, "As it has already been made known, even though prophecy has stopped, *Ruach HaKodesh* has not ceased among those fitted for it in each generation, as Rabeinu Chaim Vital, ZT"L, has written in *Shaare Kedusha* (Part 3, Gate 7)." Also Rabbi Kook, *Arpilei Tohar*, Pg. 17.

55. Isaiah, 59:21. See, Chapter Two, in this book.

of the connection between the Jews and *Eretz Yisrael*, the proper dimension for his search is not to be found in the realm of human reasoning - he has to delve into the depths of Kabbalah and the esoteric teachings of Israel. It is here, in this transcendental world, where we encounter the essential oneness of *Clal Yisrael*, the Torah, the Land of Israel, and G-d.²⁸

The inner understandings which Rabbi Kook brings to light in his writings deal with the influence of the Spirit of G-d on *Clal Yisrael*. Not every individual Jew is cognizant of these influences, just as not every person is aware of his subconscious being and the underlying influences affecting his life. Sometimes very good psychologists can discern that an individual is being motivated by factors hidden from view. So too with the nation of Israel. For instance, as we will learn in Essay Eight, a national movement like Zionism, which may seem completely secular in nature, stems from the awakening of deep spiritual yearnings in *Clal Yisrael*. This is the inner vision granted to the deep, holy thinkers of Israel. These masters of the secrets of Torah are to be our guides, illuminating our connection to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rabbi Kook writes that a proper orientation and connection to *Eretz Yisrael* affects the psychological and spiritual health of the nation, and enlightens the individual according to the level of *Ruach Hakodesh* which he has achieved.⁵⁶ Of course, *Ruach Hakodesh* is not easy to acquire. There are books, among them

56. *Hazone HaGeula*, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Ch. 1, "The love of our Holy Land is a foundation of Torah which brings the entire nation and the whole world to their perfection. Whoever has a greater love for the Land of Israel and whoever exerts himself more ardently in the settlement of the Holy Land, he is blessed first, and he is closer to perfection."

Mesillat Yesharim, and *Shaare Kedusha*, which outline the intricate and demanding steps on the path toward *Ruach Hakodesh*. Only those who have achieved it, who have steeped themselves in the encompassing depths of Jewish knowledge, practice, and *Kedusha*, can lead us toward the enlightenment which we would surely fail to attain on our own.

הַמְחַשְׁבָּה עַל-דִּבְרֵי אֶרֶץ-יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁהִיא רַק עֶרֶךְ חִיצוֹנִי בְּדֵי
הַעֲמֻדָת אֲגֻדַת הָאָמָה, אֲפִלּוּ כִּשְׁהִיא בָּאָה בְּדֵי לְבַצֵּר עַל-
יְדֵה אֶת הָרַעֲיוֹן הַיְהוּדִי בְּגוֹלָה, בְּדֵי לְשַׁמֵּר אֶת צְבִיּוֹנוֹ
וְלִאֲמֹץ אֶת הָאֲמוּנָה וְהַיְרָאָה וְהַחֻזֵק שֶׁל הַמְצִוּוֹת הַמְעֻשָׂוֹת
בְּעוֹרָה הַגּוֹנָה, אִין לָהּ הַפְּרִי הָרְאוּי לְקַיֵּם, כִּי הִסּוֹד הַזֶּה
הוּא רְעוּעַ בְּעֶרְךָ אֵיתָן הַקֹּדֶשׁ שֶׁל א"י.

"The thought regarding Eretz Yisrael that it has merely a peripheral value to facilitate the subsistence of the unified nation; even when it comes to fortify the concept of Judaism of the Diaspora, in order to preserve its form, and to strengthen the belief and fear of Hashem, and to strengthen the performance of the commandments in a proper fashion - this orientation toward Eretz Yisrael is not worthy of lasting fruition, for its foundation is rickety in light of the towering, unshakable *Kedusha* of Eretz Yisrael."

Here, Rabbi Kook returns to re-emphasize his original teaching that the Land of Israel is not something secondary to Judaism and to the Jewish nation. He is addressing an erroneous belief that the Jewish people can live without *Eretz Yisrael*. This viewpoint asserts that the Judaism of the Diaspora is an end in

itself, and that Jewish life in the *Galut* is a positive goal. In Rabbi Kook's eyes, this philosophy lacks foundation when compared to the towering *Kedusha* of Jewish existence in *Eretz Yisrael*. Like the exile itself, this *Weltanschauung* of *Galut* lacks lasting value and the fruitfulness to insure its continued existence.

We mentioned that Herzl and other secular Zionists saw *Eretz Yisrael* as merely a means to unite the countryless Jews and thus preserve the physical nation. They failed to understand the vital connection between the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael* because they did not realize that the nation of Israel was essentially different from the nations of the world. They did not understand our true identity and our true national ideal which reaches culmination with the building of the *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem and the export of Divine blessing from Zion to the rest of the world.

Rabbi Kook writes that this short-sightedness is not limited to secular Zionists, but can be found in religious circles as well. Sometimes it takes the form of an outright rejection of the land of Israel. Proponents of this view claim that Jews can live a full and even better Jewish life in the *Galut* than in *Eretz Yisrael*. Others, less extreme in their rejection of Israel, agree that *Eretz Yisrael* is the ideal Jewish homeland, but at some later date, with the advent of *Mashiach*.⁵⁷

57. *Kuzari*, 2:24. Letter of Teman, Rambam, "The obligation of the commandments is not dependent on the coming of *Mashiach*. Rather we are to busy ourselves with Torah and precepts, and to strive to fulfill everything we can.... However, if a man will stay in a place where he sees the Torah is waning, and where the Jewish people will be lost with the passage of time, and where he cannot stand by his faith, and say,

As a general rule, Diaspora leaders focus on strengthening their Diaspora communities, and not on bringing their communities to *Eretz Yisrael*. This Diaspora outlook on Judaism downplays the centrality of Jewish nationhood in order to strengthen Jewish life in *Galut*. If *Eretz Yisrael* is made out to be no longer important, the building of Torah in exile is seen to be the highest and ultimate goal. For instance, many books have been written on Judaism which do not even mention *Eretz Yisrael*. Until very recently, even the writings of Rabbi Kook which have been translated into English have neglected his writings on the Land of Israel. By concentrating on "*the four cubits of Halacha*"⁵⁸ in *Galut*, and minimizing the value of Israeli nationhood, Diaspora existence is given added importance.

In this philosophy, *Eretz Yisrael* is seen only as a means to an end.⁵⁹ The mission of Judaism is to unfold in the Diaspora.⁶⁰ The Torah is no longer to go forth from Zion, but rather from Berlin and New York. The Jews, it is maintained, can be a more

I will stay here until *Mashiach* comes, and survive where I am,' this is nothing but an evil heart and a great loss, and a sickness of reasoning and spirit."

58. *Berachot* 8A, "Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One Blessed Be He has nothing in the world save for four cubits of Halacha alone."

59. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook would mention that this philosophy can be seen in the German Orthodox movement of the last century. See, "Nineteen Letters," Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Letter 16, "For the independent national life of Israel was never the essence or purpose of our existence as a nation, but only as a means of fulfilling our spiritual mission." See also "*Horev*" Pg. 436.

60. Ibid, Letter Nine. "Now the nation was scattered to the four corners of the earth, among all of the nations and unto all the regions of the world, in order that, in dispersion, it might fulfill its mission."

influential light to the nations when they are scattered amongst the gentiles. *Eretz Yisrael* is reduced to being a faraway, metaphysical, future ideal. More important than the place of Torah worship is the feeling in the heart. This distortion can transform *Galut* communities into bastions of Judaism in much the same way as some Jews in Babylon erroneously believed they had discovered a new Jerusalem outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.⁶¹

Moreover, the material and physical demands of a homeland are seen as dangers interfering with Torah, *mitzvot*, and the service of G-d.⁶² This view relegates the *Gemara* in Tractate *Ketubot* to Aggadic legend. The *Gemara* states: "Always a Jew should live in the Land of Israel, even in a city where the majority of inhabitants are idol worshippers, and not live in the Diaspora, even in a city where the majority of residents are Jews."⁶³

This is also the Halachic decision of the Rambam⁶⁴ and the *Shulchan Aruch* regarding a married man who wants to move to *Eretz Yisrael* even though his wife refuses.⁶⁵ So important is the

61. Jerusalem Talmud, *Nedarim* 6:8. *Berachot* 63A and B. *Kuzari*, 2:24; Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Commandment 153. *Chatam Safer*, Responsa, *Yoreh Deah*, Response 234. See, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, Pgs. 209-213.

62. "Nineteen Letters," Rabbi Hirsch, Letter Nine, "It became necessary to take away the abundance of earthly goods, the wealth, and the land which had led Israel to stray from its mission. Israel was forced to leave the happy soil which had seduced it from its allegiance to the Almighty." See also *Ketubot* 110B, Tosefot regarding the opinion of R. Chaim HaCohen. See, the book, *M'Afar Kumi*, by Rabbi Tzvi Glatt for a refutation of this opinion.

63. *Ketubot* HOB.

64. Rambam, Laws of Kings and Their Wars, 5:12.

65. *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer*, 75:3. Rambam, Laws of Marriage, 13:19. See

mitzvah of living in Israel that the man is permitted to divorce his wife, without any *Ketubah* payment whatsoever.

Placing the Diaspora in the center of Jewish life negates the inner *Segula* of *Eretz Yisrael* to the nation. *Eretz Yisrael* is seen as something external to the spirituality of Torah, without any spiritual content of its own. Only the Torah remains.⁶⁶

Torah, however, is more than a spiritual ideal. As we will learn in Essay Three, Judaism is G-d's plan for uplifting all of the world to the service of G-d, the physical side of life as well as the spiritual; the national as well as the individual. This exalted goal can only be achieved by the example of a nation - when Israel lives its complete Torah life in *Eretz Yisrael*. We are to be a light to the world, not just as righteous individuals scattered throughout the four corners of the globe, but as a Divine holy nation with an army of Torah scholars, as well as a army of tanks; a justice system founded on Torah; Divinely-ordained agricultural laws; and with the Temple at the center of national life. This is the call of Sinai which Moshe brings to the nation, in his very first teaching in the book of *Devarim*: "You have dwelt long enough in this mountain, turn away

also, Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Commandment #4, "This is a positive commandment which applies in every generation."

66. See "Nineteen Letters," Rabbi Hirsch, Letter Nine, "Nothing was to be saved except the soul of its existence, the Torah. No other bond of unity was henceforth to exist except 'G-d and its Mission' which are indestructible because they are spiritual concepts. But Israel's mission did not cease with the end of its statehood, for that had been intended only as a means to an end."

and take up your journey... go in and possess the land."⁶⁷

The Torah was not given to be lived in the wilderness of Sinai, but in the hills and valleys of *Eretz Yisrael*. In desiring to keep the spiritual side of Torah alone, and not its holy, earthly component, the Spies brought about the death of their entire generation.⁶⁸ The lack of faith they displayed in rebellion against the commandment to settle in the promised land reverberates through the annals of Jewish history.⁶⁹

Of course, if our nation has been scattered in exile due to its sins, making it physically impossible to return to our land, we are not punished for not fulfilling the *mitzvah* of living in Israel. Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook would compare this to a situation which frequently occurred in Russian communities when Jews were unable to procure an *etrog* during the holiday of *Sukkot*. In a case like this, a Jew has no recourse, and he cannot perform the *mitzvah*. But the *mitzvah* of taking an *etrog* on *Sukkot* does not disappear. So too with the *mitzvah* of living in Israel - the moment the *mitzvah* returns to our hands, it is our sacred obligation to fulfill it.⁷⁰

Thus, Rabbi Kook writes that if we look upon *Eretz Yisrael* as a sidelight to Judaism, our connection to Judaism will fail to bear fruit. As generations pass, Judaism will fail to survive in our children because Judaism's foundations in the Diaspora are weak

67. Deut. 1:6-8.

68. Numbers, 14:26-35. See *Mesillat Yesharim* on the Spies, Ch. 11.

69. Deut., 1:26. *M'afar Kumi* by Rabbi Tzvi Glatt, Section 1.

70. Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer Mitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Commandment #4.

in comparison with the towering *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*. Therefore, relegating *Eretz Yisrael* to a secondary role in the life of the Jewish nation is to be rejected even when it comes for the seemingly positive purpose of strengthening the Judaism in the *Galut*. Ultimately, any Jewish outlook which undermines our connection to *Eretz Yisrael* is destined to fail, because the Judaism of *Galut* is, by its very nature, temporary,⁷¹ a punishment and a curse.⁷²

Thus the Land of Israel is not something external to Jewish life - it is an inner, existential necessity.

הָאָמוּם הָאֲמִתִּי שֶׁל רְעִיּוֹן הַיְהוּדוּת בְּגוֹלָהּ בֹּא יבֹא רַק מֵעַד
עֵמֶק שְׁקוּעוֹ בְּאֶרֶץ-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמִתְקַוֶּה אֶרֶץ-יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבֹּל
תְּמִיד אֶת כָּל תְּכוּנֹתָיו הָעֲצֻמִּיּוֹת. צִפִּית-יְשׁוּעָה הִיא כְּחֹ-
הַמַּעֲמִיד שֶׁל הַיְהוּדוּת הַגְּלוּתִית, וְהַיְהוּדוּת שֶׁל אֶרֶץ-יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִיא הַיְשׁוּעָה עֲצֻמָּה.

"The concept of Judaism in the Diaspora will only find true strength through the depth of its involvement in Eretz Yisrael. Only through its longing for Eretz Yisrael will Diaspora Judaism constantly receive its inherent qualities. The yearning for Salvation gives the Judaism of the Diaspora its power of stamina; whereas the

71. It is illuminating to note that land in *Chutz L'Aretz* is halachically not considered land. Rather it has the perishable status of movable property, not land. Land, regarded as permanent property, is only found in *Eretz Yisrael*. See, *Tosefot*, beginning, "Em," *Shitot HaGaonim*, Tractate *Bechorot* 53A.

72. Leviticus, 26:33. Deut. 28:64. Ezekiel 36:20-24.

Judaism of Eretz Yisrael is the Salvation itself."

Here, we find a very illuminating insight. If one wants to truly strengthen Judaism in the Diaspora, the only lasting way is to strengthen its connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. This means that there is no essential independent essence to the Diaspora.⁷³ It has meaning only in its relation to Israel. *Galut* is a passing phenomenon. A blemish which will heal. A punishment which is destined to come to an end. No matter how pleasant certain exiles may seem, Jewish life outside of Israel is an abnormal situation, an unhealthy Judaism,⁷⁴ a destruction of our national format, and a curse.⁷⁵ In *Galut*, we are ill with a lingering sickness. Our body is shattered and spiritually diseased.⁷⁶ We continue to partly function, but, as Rabbi Kook will explain in Essay Three, our existence in *Galut* is not our healthy ideal. To think otherwise is to deceive ourselves and build a structure which is destined to collapse.

73. *Orot*, *Orot HaTechiya*, 8 and 28.

74. *Chagiga* 5B. *Shabbat* 145B.

75. Deut. 11:16-17; 28:62-65; 29:18-27.

76. Ezekiel, 37:1-14. *Likutei HaGra*, of the Gaon of Vilna, at the end of *Safra D'Tzniuta*: "Since the Temple was destroyed, our spirit and our crown departed, and only we remained, the body without the soul. And exile to outside of the land is a grave. Worms surround us there, and we do not have the power to save ourselves. They, the idol worshippers, it is they who devour our flesh. In every place there were great societies and *Yeshivot*, until the body decayed, and the bones scattered, again and again. Yet, always, some bones still existed, the *Talmidei Chachamim* of the Israelite nation, the pillars of the body - until even these bones rotted, and there only remained a rancid waste which disintegrated into dust - our life turned into dust."

The strengthening of Torah learning and practice in exile will not come by minimizing the need to be in *Eretz Yisrael*, and by making *Galut* a valid Jewish option in itself, but by linking Diaspora Judaism to the source of Divine Jewish life and holiness in *Eretz Yisrael*.

In reality, the Diaspora is the means, and Eretz Yisrael is the goal. The exile is merely a way station, a detention center, a transitory stop until we return to our true life in Israel.⁷⁷ For this reason, the *Halacha* forbids us to build houses of stone in the Diaspora,⁷⁸ because stone is a symbol of permanence, while we

77. *Megilla* 29A, "In the future, the synagogues and houses of study in Babylon will be reestablished in Eretz Yisrael." See *Orot*, *Orot HaTechiya*, 28: "The *Kedusha* in the world, this is the *Kedusha* of Eretz Yisrael. And the *Shekhina* which went into the *Galut* with *Am Yisrael*, this is the ability to establish *Kedusha* not in its natural place. But this *Kedusha* which is antagonistic to nature is not complete *Kedusha*. It has to be engulfed in the loftiest extract of the highest *Kedusha*.... The *Kedusha* in the exile will forge a bond with the *Kedusha* of Eretz Yisrael, 'In the future, the synagogues and houses of study in Babylon will be reestablished in Eretz Yisrael.'"

78. See the *Shlah HaKodesh*, *Amud HaShalom*, last paragraph of *Sukkah*: "When I saw the Jewish people building houses like princes, making permanent houses in this world, and in the land of defilement, in spite of what our Rabbis of blessed memory have said, 'The houses of the righteous are destined to come to Eretz Yisrael,' ...and this building (in *Galut*) seems like one who divorces his mind from Redemption. Therefore, my children, may the Lord watch and redeem you, if the Lord will give you much wealth, build houses only in accordance with your basic needs and no more, and build not towers and walls in grandeur and pride - rather only that you may have an abode fitting with your station and rooms for seclusion and Torah and repentance." See also, *Chatam Safer* on *Yoreh*

are always too long to return home to Zion.

Thus we learn that *Eretz Yisrael* is the true goal of the Torah, and not the *Galut*. In reality, it is Diaspora existence which is peripheral, external, secondary to Judaism. In this light, we can understand Rashi's commentary concerning the commandment of *Tefillin* which reappears in the second paragraph of the *Shema*. On the verse, "And you shall put these words of Mine on your heart,"⁷⁹ Rashi explains that the commandment of *Tefillin* is reiterated after the warning of exile to teach that we are to perform the *mitzvot* even after we are exiled from *Eretz Yisrael* so they will not be new to us when we return - for the true place of Judaism and the *mitzvot* is in the Land of Israel.

A Jew's true relation to Judaism comes not when he asks what Israel can do for him, but when he asks what he can do for Israel. The complete Judaism is the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael*. This, Rabbi Kook teaches, is the Salvation itself:

"The yearning for Salvation gives the Judaism of the Diaspora its power of stamina; whereas the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is the Salvation itself."

In emphasizing the yearning for Salvation, Rabbi Kook is

Deah 138, "Regarding someone who builds a big house of stone unnecessarily in the Diaspora, in order to have more space, and will despair of the Redemption coming, in this manner his building is a danger and not a precept which will protect him."

Deut. 11:18, See Rashi.

referring to a *Gemara* which relates that when a person dies and reaches the Heavenly court, he is asked several questions: "*Did you deal honestly in business? Did you set aside fixed times for the study of Torah? Did you yearn for Salvation?*"⁸⁰

What does it mean to "yearn for Salvation"? The commentary of the Ran explains this as a yearning for the fulfillment of the words of the Prophets in one's lifetime?⁸¹ A Jew has to have one eye on the *Tanach*, and one eye on the daily headlines to see how the prophecies of Redemption are being materialized in his lifetime. Many great Sages, including the Ramban, Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, the *Gaon* of Vilna, and Rav Kook himself, interpreted this yearning to mean packing up one's books and going to live in Israel. This is the Salvation itself - the return to our national Torah life in Israel.

What affords the Jewish people stamina through our long years of exile? The yearning for Salvation. This means salvation from the Diaspora. Our daily prayers for the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of *Eretz Yisrael* grant us the fortitude to survive.⁸² The Psalm, "*If I forget you O Jerusalem,*"⁸³ is the bond which holds us together and which gives Diaspora Jewry its meaning and form.

80. *Shabbat* 31A.

81. Ibid, the Ran, there. See also, the *Sefer HaMitzvot HaKatan, Mitzvah #1*, for the understanding that the yearning for Salvation is a basic foundation in the belief of G-d, as it says, "*I am the Lord Who brought you out of the land of Egypt*" - the G-d who redeemed us in the past is the same G-d who will gather us and redeem us in the future."

82. *Amidah* prayer.

83. *Tehillim*, 137:5.

A Diaspora can be in Paris, in Crown Heights, or in a very lovely suburb of Johannesburg. It can be a very comfortable exile, but it represents a destruction of our national wholeness which we are commanded to mourn nonetheless. The book, *Mesillat Yeshtarim*, explains that the mourning over the exile, and the yearning for Israel's Salvation are essential foundations in the righteous Jew's service of G-d:

"Every Sage in Israel who possesses the words of Torah according to their true understanding, and grieves over the honor of the Holy One Blessed Be He, and for the honor of Israel all of his days, and yearns and feels pain for the honor of Jerusalem and for the Temple, and for the swift flowering of Salvation, and the ingathering of the exiles, he merits Divine Inspiration in his words... A *Hasid* of this kind, aside from the Divine service he performs in carrying out the precepts with this motivation, must certainly feel constant and actual pain over the exile, and over the destruction of Jerusalem, because of their tendency to minimize the honor of the Blessed One. And he will long for the Redemption, so that the honor of the Blessed One may be raised."⁸⁴

The Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is to be our true goal. Jerusalem is to be the center of Torah and Jewish life. This is the Salvation

Geula unfolds a little at a time, קמעה קמעה, like the awakening which every heart should long for. Our Sages teach us that the of dawn.⁸⁵ Today, we are in the middle of the process, witnessing the gradual, inevitable cessation of *Galut*, and the equally gradual upbuilding of the Jewish nation in *Eretz Yisrael*. Slowly,

84. *Mesillat Yeshtarim*, Ch. 19.

85. Jerusalem Talmud, *Berachot*, 1:1.

increasingly, the yearning for Salvation is giving way to the Salvation itself - the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Chapter One

SUMMARY

1. *Eretz Yisrael* is not merely an external means toward the physical or spiritual strengthening of the nation.
2. *Eretz Yisrael* is inseparably connected to *Am Yisrael* by a Divine *Segula*.
3. This inner *Segula* cannot be expressed in rational formulas, but only through the Divine Spirit which resides in our national soul.
4. The understanding of the inner connection between *Eretz Yisrael* and the Jewish people comes to us through the Rabbis who delve into the deepest realms of Torah.
5. Any superficial orientation to the Land of Israel, even when it is used in a positive fashion to strengthen Judaism in the *Galut*, has a faulty foundation in light of the true exalted value of *Eretz*

Yisrael.

6. The strengthening of Diaspora Jewry will not come through strengthening Jewish life in the *Galut*, but through strengthening its connection to *Eretz Yisrael*.

7. The stamina and cohesive force of Diaspora Judaism is the yearning for Salvation.

8. The Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is the Salvation itself.