

# Judaism: A Religion, Not A Nationalism

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*Jews United Against Zionism*



# Judaism: A Religion, Not A Nationalism

A lecture by **Rabbi Dovid Feldman** of **Neturei Karta International**, on November 23, 2010  
at the De Montfort University in Leicester, England

Good evening, shalom aleichem, peace to you all.

May we act in the name of the Almighty and be successful. I pray to the Almighty that my words should be fitting, as it is written in the Book of Psalms (121:2), "My help is from G-d, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

First of all, I want to thank the Palestine Peace Society for inviting me, for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you, and for giving you the opportunity to become familiar with the ideas and opinions that are held by countless thousands of Jews around the world, yet have few opportunities to be publicized in the mainstream media.

I will try to present for you the traditional Torah view on several matters:

- The philosophy of Zionism
- The existence of the Zionist state
- The ongoing tragedy in Palestine
- The great importance of doing whatever we can to help those suffering in Palestine

Many lies have been propagated by the Zionist movement for about 100 years, and they are constantly repeated in the media throughout the world, with the goal of justifying, supporting and silencing all opposition to the Zionist state and all of its actions. Take, for example, the well-known false Zionist slogan: "A land without a people for a people without a land."

I will concentrate here on a few of these lies, which we deal with on a regular basis.

The Zionist movement carries on a constant propaganda campaign to present Judaism and Zionism as being one and the same, claiming that Jews and Zionists are synonymous and that the Jewish people is to be identified with the Zionist state.

They also paint a picture of Arabs as haters of the Jews from time immemorial, of the Zionists as the saviors of the Jewish people and of the Zionist state as the safe haven for Jews.

They present us with all these lies in order to lead us to a series of false conclusions:

- That the philosophy of Zionism is rooted in Judaism
- That the Torah justifies the actions of the Zionist state
- That every Jew agrees to what the Zionists do in Palestine
- That whoever loves Jews supports the Zionist state
- That whoever is against the actions of the Zionist state is an anti-Semite
- That the conflict in the Middle East is a religious one, and that so long as each side clings to its religion, no solution can be reached.

They paint this picture for two reasons: 1) To gain support for the Zionist state by tricking all Jews into following it, tricking all those who respect the Jewish religion into thinking that G-d wants this state, and tricking those nations who feel sympathy

for Jews due to what happened in the Holocaust into having sympathy with the state. 2) They wish to silence all opposition to the state and discourage people from being active in the pro-Palestinian cause, and to persecute and brand whoever does so as anti-Semitic.

I want to pose two important questions that everyone should ask:

1) If the Zionist philosophy is written out clearly in the Torah, and if the Zionist state is good for the Jewish people, then why didn't the idea of Zionism arise in the minds of religious, G-d-fearing rabbis? Why did it occur only in the mind of the self-declared heretic Herzl, who was known to be an enemy of Judaism? It is well-known that he prided himself on not giving his son circumcision - one of the fundamental commandments of the Torah, which even most assimilated Jews keep. He also conceived plans to convert the entire Jewish people to Christianity.

2) If the Arabs hate us with an anti-Semitic hatred, just because we are Jews, and they hated us this way from time immemorial, then how could it be that Jews lived in peace and harmony with the Arabs in Palestine for many, many generations, as well as in all the other Arab countries of the world?

To answer these questions, we have to first understand some important parts of Judaism, as well as some facts of history.

Judaism is a religion that teaches that we must believe in G-d, serve Him, follow in the covenant between Abraham and G-d, be loyal to Him, and follows the commandments of the Torah that Moses received from G-d on Mount Sinai.

The Jewish people is a people that serves G-d. One of the greatest rabbis in Jewish history, Rabbi Saadia Gaon (882-942), said, "Our people is only a people by virtue of the Torah." The only thing that makes Jews a people is their keeping the Torah. Judaism always meant pure spirituality and closeness to G-d, loyalty to Him and dedication to His Torah. Political power was never a goal of Judaism.

Zionism, on the other hand, is a purely political and materialistic ideology. It has no connection with Judaism or with religion in general. The Zionists try to connect their movement with Judaism in order to win the support of many people, but in truth Zionism and Judaism are two completely different ideas.

The Zionists always use the argument that G-d promised the Holy Land to the Jewish people to silence all dispute over whose land it is. It is true that G-d promised the land to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendents (Genesis 15:18, 26:3, 28:13). But one must not forget that this promise was given with a condition. The Torah says (Leviticus 20:22), "You shall keep all my laws and statutes, and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to settle should not vomit you out."

In the period prior to the destruction of the Temple, G-d, speaking through the prophets, warned the Jews to repent and

correct their ways so that they might be able to remain in the Holy Land. If not, they would have to be sent into exile (see for instance Jeremiah Chapter 7). Unfortunately, this warning was not completely heeded. G-d punished them: the Temple was destroyed, and the Jews were sent into exile. It is an important part of our faith that the exile was a Heavenly decree, not due to our physical weakness. We express this concept in our prayers, "Because of our sins we were exiled from our land."

After the destruction of the Temple, G-d, through the prophets, commanded the Jews the Three Oaths, the rules of exile: We must not leave exile before the proper time, we must not rebel against the nations, and we must not go up to the Holy Land in large groups.

The Jewish people's hope is for the redemption, which will be brought about by G-d Himself, not by human power. We await the day when G-d will make a spiritual change in the world, such that the whole world will recognize the one G-d peacefully and willingly, with no disputes among people, as the prophet says (Isaiah 11:9), "The earth will be filled with knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea." All nations will together begin to worship the one G-d, as is foretold (Psalms 102:23), "When nations and kingdoms gather together to serve G-d." We express this in our prayers as well, "And they will all form one group to do Your will wholeheartedly." It will be a time of complete peace, not war and bloodshed, as the prophet says (Isaiah 2:4), "They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn war anymore." And then the famous prophecy will be fulfilled (Isaiah 11:6), "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the goat, the calf, the lion and the buffalo will be together, and a little child shall lead them."

The Zionist philosophy of striving for a political state is a denial of the concept of exile as a Divine decree, as well as the concept of a spiritual redemption. It sees exile as a purely physical problem, and therefore it proposes an earthly solution.

Therefore, when the Zionist movement set out to create a political homeland for Jews using physical, military strength, it was not only a serious violation of the Three Oaths; it transformed the entire spiritual meaning of Judaism from a religion into a nationalism, and it rejected the foundations of the Jewish faith in the area of exile and redemption. This was all, needless to say, a terrible tragedy for the Jewish people.

Everything we have said so far would have applied even if the Zionists had established their state in an empty land, without harming or disturbing any other people. In other words, even if the Zionist slogan of "a land without a people for a people without a land" were accurate, the Zionist movement would have been a tragedy for the Jewish religion and the true Jewish people.

But what the Zionists did is much worse because they made their state in an inhabited land, and in the process of establishing their "Jewish homeland" they murdered, robbed,

expelled and oppressed the inhabitants. In doing so they transgressed countless laws of the Torah, including some of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not murder" and "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:13). They violated the basic principles or morality that G-d gave to humanity.

For all these reasons, all of the greatest rabbis in Europe and in Palestine opposed the Zionist ideal sharply, starting about 120 years ago when it was first introduced. They predicted that the Zionist plan would only bring catastrophe. For the same reason, in 1947, one year before the founding of the state, the Jewish communities of Jerusalem and their rabbis pleaded with the U.N. not to establish a "Jewish state."

Now we have answered our first question above. Since the Zionist philosophy stands in such stark contrast to Judaism, it could only have been conceived in the mind of outspoken heretics like Herzl and his colleagues, who publicly scoffed at the holy Torah.

All the crimes committed by the state could only have been committed by a government of irreligious Jews, who have no scruples about religion, humanity or ethics. Politics and power are their only guide.

One might ask: how did it come about that an ideology so foreign to Judaism has become accepted among certain groups of religious Jews?

The answer is that until the Holocaust, all the greatest rabbis of Europe opposed Zionism, but in the Holocaust almost all of those great rabbis were killed, and the Jewish people was left like sheep without a shepherd. The survivors of the Holocaust were desperate for help, and the Zionists promised to protect them and give them everything they needed. That is why many Jews were fooled and became drawn after the Zionists.

There is another reason why Zionism became accepted, and this brings us to the answer to our second big question above. One of the most effective tactics that has been used in the past by the Zionists to fool Jews, and continues to be used to this day, is to convince them that the Arabs are anti-Semites who wish to kill all the Jews. Most of their propaganda in this field consists of plain lies. There are many books (such as Ben-Gurion's Scandals, by Naeim Giladi) documenting the fact that the Zionists themselves planted bombs in the synagogues of Arab countries to scare the local Jews into fleeing to the Zionist state. It is true that there are some Arabs today who feel hatred toward Jews, but that is only in reaction to the Zionists' provocations against them. For example, in 1929 Arabs perpetrated a massacre against Jews in Hebron, a city in which the Jews and Arabs had always gotten along beautifully. Their animosity was aroused only by Zionist claims to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, which is part of one of Islam's most holy sites.

The fact is that despite all the great differences between Judaism and Islam, Jews always lived peacefully with their Muslim neighbors in all the Muslim lands - until the rise of

political Zionism. Jews were loyal citizens of the Muslims countries, as the Torah requires them to be. They kept the Torah and enjoyed the respect of their Muslims neighbors. It was only in the 1920s, when it became public knowledge that the Zionists were planning to take over Palestine, that the conflict began.

And that answers our second question above. Because the truth is that we Jews lived in peace with the Arabs in Palestine before the Zionist movement, and we can return to that peaceful coexistence in the future. The fear, encouraged by the Zionists, that the Arabs want to kill us is a total lie. It is pure false propaganda.

It is important to know that countless Jews around the world are against the Zionist philosophy and oppose the entire existence of the Zionist state. These Jews awaiting the complete dismantlement of the state, because they hold that no true peace can be achieved as long as even a part of that state remains. This was foretold long ago in the Torah (Numbers 14:41), "Why do you transgress the command of G-d? It will not succeed." These Jews are extremely troubled and upset over what is being done to the suffering Palestinians, and they are especially ashamed that this is done in the name of the Torah and in the name of the Jewish people.

In conclusion, my message to the Jews present here is: if

you want to be full-fledged Jews, you must be loyal to G-d and follow all of His commandments, which include being opposed to Zionism and the brutal actions that they regularly commit.

To the Palestinians present here, my message is: remember the difference between Jews and Zionists, and when you criticize the Zionist state, don't use any negative words about Jews, because then you are playing into the hands of the Zionists, who wish to portray you as anti-Semites.

For all the rest of you, I want to repeat that many Jewish communities around the world are very pained over what is going on in Palestine, and they encourage every upright person to do everything possible to help the suffering people there.

We also ask everyone to help spread our message, because, as everyone knows, it gets very limited coverage due to the powerful Zionist influence on the media.

I want to end with a prayer to G-d for the speedy and peaceful dismantlement of the entire Zionist state, after which the peaceful coexistence and respect between Jews and Arabs of previous centuries can be reinstated once again. And at the same time, let us pray for the redemption of the world, the day when the glory of G-d will be revealed over the entire world, and all of humanity will serve Him in peace and brotherhood, may it be soon, amen.

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**Rabbi Dovid Feldman** is an active rabbi of *Neturei Karta International*, an organization founded in the 1930s in Jerusalem to protect the Jewish community there from the new Zionist movement. Over the past few decades, NKI has been active in giving publicity to the voice of opposition of many Jewish communities around the world to the Zionist ideology and the Zionist state. They explain to the world the distinction between Judaism and Zionism, that the relatively new Zionist movement is a rebellion against G-d, and that it does not represent the holy Torah, nor the entire Jewish people.

Rabbi Feldman and his colleagues appear frequently at public demonstrations, university lectures, television and radio interviews and pro-Palestinian conferences. They fly often to various countries around the world, including Arab countries, to express their sympathy with the suffering people of Palestine. They meet with political and religious leaders, and have been very successful in building bridges between the Jewish and Arab communities.

Two times over the past year, Rabbi Feldman and his colleagues have visited the besieged Gaza Strip, where they delivered to the oppressed population truckloads of medical aid purchased with tens of thousands of dollars they collected. They were warmly received there and in other Arab countries.

*For more information contact us at:*

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