



The People Sanctify the Land and the Land Sanctifies the People

A.D. Gordon

A.D. Gordon was born in 1856 in Podolia, Russia to a pious family who were related to the magnate Baron Horace Guenzburg. At age 47 Gordon decided to come to Eretz-Israel and begin a life of agricultural labor first in Petah Tikvah, later in Rishon Le-Zion and finally making his home in Degania, the first of the *kvutso*t. It should be remembered that Gordon had been a white-collar worker all his life and had no experience of agricultural labor. However, he believed that physical effort on the land would not only bring about his personal redemption but also that of the Jewish people. He attributed pioneer work a semi-religious status, arguing that it created an organic interrelationship between the man, the land, and culture.

Gordon became the inspiration for a generation and more of Labor Zionists who saw in his example a way to personal and national fulfillment. A number of youth movements were influenced by his teachings and one, Gordonia, took his name as the rallying call for their work. Gordon died in 1922 and was buried in Degania where he had lived during his final years.

LOGIC FOR THE FUTURE (1910)

AND WHEN, O Man, you will return to Nature ~ on that day your eyes will open, you will gaze straight into the eyes of Nature, and in its mirror, you will see your own image. You will know that you have returned to yourself, that when you hid from Nature, you hid from yourself. When you return you will see that from you, from your hands and from your feet, from your body and from your soul, heavy, hard, oppressive fragments will fall and you will begin to stand erect. You will understand that these were fragments of the shell into which you had shrunk in the bewilderment of your heart and out of which you had finally emerged. On that day you will know that your former life did not befit you, that you must renew all things: your food and your drink, your dress and your home, your manner of work and your mode of study ~ everything!

Sanctifying the Land and the People

AD Gordon in **The Zionist Idea** pp 382-3

It is life we want, no more and no less than that, our own life feeding on our own vital sources, in the fields and under the skies of our Homeland... We want vital energy and spiritual richness from this living source. We come to our Homeland in order to be planted in our natural soil from which we have been uprooted, to strike our roots deep into its life-giving substances and to stretch out our branches in the sustaining and creating air and sunlight of the Homeland. It is our duty to concentrate all our strength on this central spot. What we seek to establish in Palestine is a new re-created Jewish people.

Richard Rubenstein, **After Auschwitz**, pp 134

Zionism is the Jewish people's yearning to return to its ancient homeland, and to find a creative reunion with earth's powers.... The reestablishment of Israel marks the rebirth of the long forgotten gods of the earth within Jewish experience. Increasingly it means that the earth's fruitfulness, its engendering power, will once again become the central spiritual realities of Jewish life. No more will God be seen as the transcendent Lord of nature controlling it as if it were a marionette at the end of a string. God will be seen as the source and life of nature.

Rav Kook **THE LAND OF ISRAEL (1910-1930)**

Eretz Israel is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people; it is no mere national possession, serving as a means of unifying our people and buttressing its material, or even its spiritual, survival. Eretz Israel is part of the very essence of our nationhood; it is bound organically to its very life and inner being. Human reason, even at its most sublime, cannot begin to understand the unique holiness of Eretz Israel; it cannot stir the depths of love for the land that are dormant within our people. What Eretz Israel means to the Jew can be felt only through the Spirit of the Lord that is in our people as a whole, through the spiritual cast of the Jewish soul, which radiates its characteristic influence to every healthy emotion. This higher light shines forth to the degree that the spirit of divine holiness fills the hearts of the saints and scholars of Israel with heavenly life and bliss.

To regard Eretz Israel as merely a tool for establishing our national unity or even for sustaining our religion in the Diaspora by preserving its proper character and its faith,

piety, and observances is a sterile notion; it is unworthy of the holiness of Eretz Israel. A valid strengthening of Judaism in the Diaspora can come only from a deepened attachment to Eretz Israel. The hope for the return to the Holy Land is the continuing source of the distinctive nature of Judaism. The hope for the Redemption is the force that sustains Judaism in the Diaspora; the Judaism of Eretz Israel is the very Redemption.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook
In **The Zionist Idea** p.412

Eretz Yisrael is not something apart from the soul of the Jewish people: it is no mere national possession, serving as a means of unifying our people... Eretz Yisrael is part of the very essence of our nationhood; it is bound organically to its very life and inner being. Jewish original creativity whether in the realm of Ideas or in the arena of daily life and action, is impossible except in Eretz Yisrael.³⁵ ;In the Holy Land man's imagination is lucid and clear, clean and pure capable of receiving the revelation of divine truth... there the mind is prepared to... be illumined by the radiance of the Holy Spirit.

Rabbi Isaac HaCohen Kook
Quoted in Uriel Tal, "**The Land and The State of Israel in Israeli Religious Life,**"
Proceedings of the Rabbinic Assembly 38, (1976) p.9

"... (People) speak of the beginning of Redemption... We are in the parlor, not in the vestibule... the return to Zion, the Kingdom of Israel being rebuilt anew... This is the revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven... The Israel Defense Force is total sanctity; it represents the rule of the people of the Land in His Land... We must know that the Kingdom of Heaven is being revealed in this kingdom, even in the kingdom of Ben Gurion
...

Torat Eretz Yisrael by Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Kook p. 162

"The chosenness of the Land, and of the nation, ore a Divine perfect union, brought into unison by the Creator of the World and of history. They constitute one vital whole. *The heavens are the Lord's, and the Aretz, He gave to man.* First, the principle foundation of the Land is brought to light, this Divine tract of earth, and afterward comes the illumination of the nation inheriting its place in the Land. The earth was given to mankind, and the special, Divine Land was given to a special type of man. They are mutually intertwined, one with the other."

"Indeed, the time of the Jerusalem Talmud has come. After (he Sages of (he Gemara, the Rambam appears He encompasses the entire Torah. from the Laws on the Fundamentals of Torah; to the delineation of the Kingdom of Israel, in the Laws of Kings and Their Wars.

According to most of the Poskim, whenever there is a disagreement between the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, the Halachah is like the Babylonian. However, the Rambam decides the law a number of times like the Jerusalem Talmud. The Gaon of Vilna mentions, in his commentary on the Shulchan Aruch that the Rambam, 'Relied on the Jerusalem Talmud, as he usually did in the majority of places.' This is because the Rambam so totally identified with Klal Yisrael. He is Messianic in scope. Redemption in his essence. Thus he decided Halachah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael."

The inner line of the populated world is the Land of Israel, which is called the omphallus (i.e.. the navel) of the world' and around it there are seventy nations; so also regarding the Glorious Name (*shem neikhbad*)), he inner line and the heart (i.e.. the center) are the source of the power of Israel . . . and around it there are seventy names and all of them depend upon and are sustained by (the efflux) from the center . . . This is the reason why the inhabitant of the Land of Israel (receives directly from its (i.e.. the Land's) power and is under its (sphere of) influence and is similar to someone who has a God;" whereas whoever dwells abroad actually must resort to (the efflux he receives from (he name which is appointed (i.e.. has dominion) over him . . . But at the time of the resurrection, the souls, even of (those who died in the Land of Israel, will return through its area.1' using the inner path"* which ascends to the inner line of the Glorious Name which is called "the bundle of life."