

# להיות עם חפשי-מחפש בארצנו

## To Be a Free-Seeking People in Our Land

R. Yonatan Cohen, Congregation Beth Israel  
In Memory of Eli Resnikoff, z"l and Esther Schikman, z"l  
Shabbat HaGadol 5773

### 1. Yehudah Amichai (1924-2000), "gods change, prayers remain forever," From *Open Closed Open*

Musings on the eve of the Seder, *Ma Nishtana*, we asked  
What is different tonight from all other nights.  
Most of us grew up and we don't ask anymore but a few  
continue to ask all our life, just as we ask  
*How are you or what time is it*, while continuing to walk  
without hearing an answer. *What is different every night* –  
soothing and settling like the ticking of an alarm clock:  
What's different, everything will be different. The difference is God.  
Musings on the eve of the Seder. The Torah speaks of four sons:  
one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one  
who does not know how to ask. But it does not speak there  
of one who is good, or one who loves.  
And this is a question that has no answer, and if it will have an answer  
I won't want to know it. I passed thru all the sons  
in different variations, I lived my life, the moon shone  
on me without need, the sun came and went, the Pesach holidays  
passed without an answer. What is different. The difference  
is God, death is His prophet.

### 1. קטע מתוך: פתוח סגור פתוח / יהודה עמיחי

הרהורי ליל הסדר, מה נשתנה, שאלנו  
מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות.  
ורובנו גדלנו ולא נשאל עוד וְאֶחָדִים  
ממשיכי לשאול במשך כל חייהם, כמו ששואלים  
מה שלומך או, מה השעה וממשיכים ללכת  
בלי לשמוע תשובה. מה נשתנה כל לילה,  
כמו שעון מעורר שתקתוקו מרגיע ומרדים  
מה נשתנה, הכל ישתנה. השינוי הוא האלוהים.  
הרהורי ליל הסדר. כנגד ארבעה בנים דיברה  
תורה, אחד חכם, אחד רשע, אחד תם, ואחד  
שלא יודע לשאול. אבל לא מדובר שם  
על אחד טוב ולא על אחד אוהב.  
וזו שאלה שאין לה תשובה ואם תהיה לה תשובה  
לא ארצה לדעת. אני שעברתי את כל הבנים  
בצירופי שונים, חייתי את חיי, הירח האיר  
עלי ללא צורך והשמש הלכה לה וחגי פסח  
עברו בלי תשובה. מה נשתנה. השינוי  
הוא הא-לוהים, המוות נְבִיאָו.

### 2. Transcript of President Obama's Address to Israeli Students, March 21, 2013

[...] I come to Israel on the eve of a sacred holiday – the celebration of Passover. And that is where I would like to begin today. Just a few days from now, Jews here in Israel and around the world will sit with family and friends at the Seder table, and celebrate with songs, wine and symbolic foods. After enjoying Seders with family and friends in Chicago and on the campaign trail, I'm proud to have brought this tradition into the White House. I did so because I wanted my daughters to experience the Haggadah, and the story at the center of Passover that makes this time of year so powerful.

It is a story of centuries of slavery, and years of wandering in the desert; a story of perseverance amidst persecution, and faith in God and the Torah. It is a story about finding freedom in your own land. For the Jewish people, this story is central to who you have become. But it is also a story that holds within it the universal human experience, with all of its suffering and salvation. It is a part of the three great religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – that trace their origins to Abraham, and see Jerusalem as sacred. And it is a story that has inspired communities around the globe, including me and my fellow Americans.

[...] For the Jewish people, the journey to the promise of the State of Israel wound through countless generations. It involved centuries of suffering and exile, prejudice, pogroms and even genocide. Through it all, the Jewish people sustained their unique identity and traditions, as well as a longing to return home. And while Jews achieved extraordinary success in many parts of the world, the dream of true freedom finally found its full expression in the Zionist idea – to be a free people in your homeland.

That is why I believe that Israel is rooted not just in history and tradition, but also in a simple and profound idea: the idea that people deserve to be free in a land of their own. And over the last 65 years, when Israel has been at its best, Israelis have demonstrated that responsibility does not end when you reach the promised land, it only begins.

### 3. Mishnah Pesachim 10:4

They pour him a second cup, and here the child asks his father, and if the child has insufficient understanding his father instructs him: *How is this night different from all other nights...* And according to the knowledge of the child his father instructs him.  
He begins with disgrace and completes with praise, and he interprets from *My father was a wandering Aramean* until he concludes the whole portion.

### 3. משנה פסחים י, משנה ד

מזגו לו כוס שני, וכאן הבן שואל אביו. ואם אין דעת בבן, אביו מלמדו, מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות... ולפי דעתו של בן, אביו מלמדו.  
מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, ודורש מארמי אובד אבי, עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כלה.

### 4. Deuteronomy 26:1-11

- 1) When you enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a heritage, and you possess it and settle in it,
- 2) you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God will choose to establish His name.
- 3) You shall go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, "I acknowledge this day before the Lord your God that I have entered the land that the Lord swore to our fathers to assign us."
- 4) The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God.
- 5) You shall then recite as follows before the Lord your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.
- 6) The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us.
- 7) We cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression.
- 8) The Lord freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents.
- 9) He brought us to this place and gave this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- 10) Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, O Lord, have given me."  
You shall leave it before the Lord your God and bow low before the Lord your God.
- 11) And You shall enjoy, together with the Levite and the stranger in your midst, all the bounty that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you and your household.

### 4. דברים פרק כו

א והיה, כִּי-תבוא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, נתן לך נַחֲלָה; וירשיתה, וישבת בה  
ב ולקחת מראשית כל-פרי האדמה, אֲשֶׁר תביא מארצך אֲשֶׁר יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נתן לך--ושמת בטנא; והלכת, אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר יבחר יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם  
ג ובאת, אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן, אֲשֶׁר יהיה, בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם; ואמרת אליו, הַגִּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לִי-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כִּי-באתי אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְיָ-הוָה לְאַבְתִּינוּ לָתֵת לָנוּ  
ד ולקח הכהן הטנא, מִיָּדְךָ; והניחו--לפני, מִזְבַּח יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
ה וענית ואמרת לפני יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲרָמִי אָבִד אָבִי, וירד מצרימה, ויגר שָׁם בַּמִּתִּי מֵעַט; ויהי-שָׁם, לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עֲצוּם ורַב  
ו וירעו אתנו המצרים, ויענונו; ויתנו עלינו, עֲבָדָה קָשָׁה  
ז ונצעק, אֶל-יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ; וישמע יְיָ-הוָה אֶת-קִלְנוֹ, וירא אֶת-עֲנִינוֹ וְאֶת-עַמְלָנוּ וְאֶת-לַחְצוֹנוֹ  
ח ויוצאנו יְיָ-הוָה, ממצרים, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבַמָּרָא גָדֹל--וּבְאֵתוֹת, וּבַמִּפְתִּיּוֹת  
ט ויבאנו, אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה; ויתן לנו אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ  
י ועתה, הִנֵּה הבאתי אֶת-ראשית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה, אֲשֶׁר-נתתה לי, יְיָ-הוָה; והנחתו, לִפְנֵי יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ, לִפְנֵי יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְאוּשְׁמַחַת בְּכָל-הַטּוֹב, אֲשֶׁר נתן לך יְיָ-הוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ--וּלְבִיתְךָ: אֶתָּה, וְהַלְוִי, וְהַגֵּר, אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ.

### 5. Ruth Calderon (b. 1961), 'The Heritage Of All Israel,' Inaugural Speech in the Knesset, (02/14/2013)

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial-opinion/opinion/heritage-all-israel>

*Editor's Note: Ruth Calderon, founder of a secular yeshiva in Tel Aviv, spent several years living in New York recently, teaching at the JCC in Manhattan and other venues. This was her inaugural speech in the Knesset this week as a member of Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid party.*

Mr. Chairman, honorable Knesset, the book I am holding changed my life, and to a large extent it is the reason that I have reached this day with the opportunity to speak to the Knesset of Israel as a new member. The copy in my hands belonged to David Giladi – a writer, journalist, editor, man of culture, and the grandfather of the head of our faction. He was mentioned here yesterday, too. I had the great honor of receiving it from his daughter, writer Shulamit Lapid.

I did not inherit a set of Talmud from my grandfather. I was born and raised in a quaint neighborhood in Tel Aviv. My father, Moshe Calderon, was born in Bulgaria and immigrated to this land as a young man. After the difficult war years, he began studying agriculture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and was immediately conscripted to defend Gush Etzion during the War of Independence.

Eventually he specialized in entomology, the study of insects, and became a global expert in grain storage. My German-born mother, who had the combined misfortune (at that time) of being Jewish, left-handed, and red-haired, made *aliyah* as a teenager, and met my father courtesy of the British siege of Jerusalem. By the time the siege ended and they went to meet the families as a match that had already been made, the Bulgarian neighbors could not say anything but, “She’s really nice, Moshiko, but are there no Jewish girls left? You have to marry an Ashkenazi girl?”

I am recounting all of this in order to say that I grew up in a very Jewish, very Zionist, secular-traditional-religious home that combined Ashkenaz and Sepharad, [Revisionist] Betar and [Socialist] Hashomer Hatzair, in the Israeli mainstream of the 60s and 70s. I was educated like everyone else my age – public education in the spirit of “from Tanach to Palmach”. I was not acquainted with the Mishna, the Talmud, Kabbala or Hasidism. By the time I was a teenager, I already sensed that something was missing. Something about the new, liberated Israeli identity of [Moshe Shamir’s] Elik who was “born of the sea”, of Naomi Shemer’s poems, was good and beautiful, but lacking. I missed depth; I lacked words for my vocabulary; a past, epics, heroes, places, drama, stories – were missing. The new Hebrew, created by educators from the country’s founding generation, realized their dream and became a courageous, practical, and suntanned soldier. But for me, this contained – I contained – a void. I did not know how to fill that void, but when I first encountered the Talmud and became completely enamored with it, its language, its humor, its profound thinking, its modes of discussion, and the practicality, humanity, and maturity that emerge from its lines, I sensed that I had found the love of my life, what I had been lacking.

Since then I have studied academically in *batei midrash* [Jewish study halls] and in the university, where I earned a doctorate in Talmudic Literature at the Hebrew University, and I have studied *lishma*, for the sake of the study itself. For many years I have studied *daf yomi*, the daily page of Talmud, and with a *chavruta* [study partner]; it has shaped who I am.

Motivated by my own needs, and together with others, I founded Alma – Home for Hebrew Culture in Tel Aviv, and Elul, Israel’s first joint *beit midrash* for men, women, religious, and secular. Since then, over the course of several decades, there a Jewish renaissance movement has begun to flourish, in which tens and hundreds of thousands of Israelis study within frameworks that do not dictate to them the proper way to be a Jew or the manner in which their Torah is to become a living Torah.

I am convinced that studying the great works of Hebrew and Jewish culture are crucial to construct a new Hebrew culture for Israel. It is impossible to stride toward the future without knowing where we came from and who we are, without knowing, intimately and in every particular, the sublime as well as the outrageous and the ridiculous. The Torah is not the property of one movement or another. It is a gift that every one of us received, and we have all been granted the opportunity to meditate upon it as we create the realities of our lives. Nobody took the Talmud and rabbinic literature from us. We gave it away, with our own hands, when it seemed that another task was more important and urgent: building a state, raising an army, developing agriculture and industry, etc. The time has come to re-appropriate what is ours, to delight in the cultural riches that wait for us, for our eyes, our imaginations, our creativity.

Instead of telling you about this book’s beauty, I wish to tell you a story from Talmud, one small story, the story of Rabbi Rechumei, which appears in *Ketubot* 62b, and through it to say some words about this moment and about the tasks I will set for myself in the Knesset.

I have brought the text. Anyone who wants, we can pass it out – but only to those who want it.

[...] I aspire to bring about a situation in which Torah study is the heritage of all Israel, in which the Torah is accessible to all who wish to study it, in which all young citizens of Israel take part in Torah study as well as military and civil service. Together we will build this home and avoid disappointment.

*Translated by Elli Fischer. Based on the transcript available on the Knesset website.*

**6. Kobi Oz (b. 1969), *Prayer of the Secular, From Psalms for the Perplexed***

Father, oh merciful Father  
 Be to me a trusted soul-mate  
 Cushion my heart in Your faith  
 Lend to me awe at the sound of Your Name

**6. תפילת החילוני, קובי אוז**

אָבָא הוּי אָב הַרְחָמֵן  
 הֵיָה לִי יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ נֶאֱמָן  
 רַפֵּד לִבִּי בְּאַמוּנָתְךָ  
 תֵּן בִּי יְרָאָה לְמִשְׁמַע שְׁמֶךָ

<p>I never made me a rabbi and my laws are improvised  When I am in distress I take a pill  I made great progress (descendant of monkeys)  And for all my weaknesses, my parents are to blame</p> <p>And there's no well-ploughed furrow, it's a multi-lane highway  That leads to the general mall  And if a miracle happens, it's really no big deal  Doesn't happen because of me</p> <p>Father, oh merciful Father  Be to me a trusted soul-mate  Cushion my heart in Your faith  Lend to me awe at the sound of Your Name</p> <p>That's how I prayed at a minyan of Jews  Next to me a Haredi trembled a volcano of fears  For the sake of G-d he is a systematic robot  Hugely sweaty, blessed with (many) children</p> <p>Next to us a National Orthodox who worships dust  And for all his invasion of the past  He praises battle-dress as if the battle's won  And we all live by his sword</p> <p>An immigrant and caretaker decorated in a hunched back  A Jewish Refromer with a brand new look, or a different book.</p> <p>A traditional and his lad,  A Bar Mitzvah boy  Kuzaris without candies</p> <p>And from behind there is a wild rustling and whispering  Headscarves and wigs and hair-do's  For on the other side of the divide lifts the sensuous sound  The feminine voice  Of the non-counted</p> <p>Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai wept from on high out of sadness, or maybe  happiness, and the rain fell or he wiped a tear  A sigh escaped from my heart  All are thy students, Powerful Hammer, Candle of Israel, Right-hand  Pillar  Bless thy children of all kinds, both religious and secular</p> <p>Father, oh merciful Father  Be to me a trusted soul-mate  Cushion my heart in your faith  Lend to me awe at the sound of Your Name</p>	<p>לא עשיתי לי רב וחוקותיי הן אלתור  כשאני במצוקה אני לוקח כדור  מאד התקדמתי  (מוצאי מקופים)  ובכל חולשותיי אשמים ההורים</p> <p>ואין איזה תלם יש כביש מהיר רב מסלולי  המוביל אל הקניון הכללי  ואם מתרחש נס זה לגמרי לגמרי סתמי  לא קורה בגללי</p> <p>אבא הוי אב הרחמן  היה לי ידיד נפש נאמן  רפד לבי באמונתך  תן בי יראה למשמע שמך</p> <p>כך התפללתי במנין יהודים  לצדי חרדי רעד געש פחדים  כי למען השם הוא רובוט שיטתי  מיזע כמותי, מכונת ילדים</p> <p>לידנו דתי לאמי שסוגד לעפר  ומרב התפלשות בעבר  מתהלל החוגר כמשיל חגורו  וכלנו חיים על חרבו</p> <p>עולה ושמש מעטר חטוטר  רפורמי בשנוי גברת או בשנוי האדרת</p> <p>מסרתי ונערו  חתן גיל המצוות  כוזרים חשוכי ממתקים</p> <p>מאחור יש רחש ולחש חפשי  מטפחות ופאות ועצוב מספרות  כי מעבר פרגוד רם הקול החושי  קם הקול הנשי  של הלא נספרות.</p> <p>רבן יוחנן בן זכאי בכה מלמעלה מצער, אולי  משמחה  והגשם ירד או דמעה הוא מחה.  מלבי נפלטה אנחה,  כלם תלמידך פטיש החזק, נר ישראל, עמוד הימיני  ברך את בניה מכל הגוונים גם דתי גם חלוני.</p> <p>אבא הוי אב הרחמן  היה לי ידיד נפש נאמן  רפד לבי באמונתך  תן בי יראה למשמע שמך</p>
<p><b><u>7. Meir Ariel (1942-1999), A Letter to Dov Elboyim, Sefer HaKtavim</u></b></p> <p>For quite some time now, I've been asked about the phenomenon of <i>chazarah bi'teshuvah</i> (the return to faith), and I don't understand what they want from me.</p>	<p><b><u>7. מכתב של מאיר אריאל לדב אלבוים, ספר הכתבים</u></b>  (נכתב ב-18/5/97)</p> <p>מזה זמן פונים אליי בעניין תופעת החזרה בתשובה ואני לא מבין מה רוצים ממני.</p>

I am not a penitent, at least not one about whom they say 'in the place where penitents stand, the complete righteous ones cannot stand,' such as one who exploited a widow or an orphan and ceased from doing so. If you put my back against the wall, I will meekly admit that I have faith in God, in the law of Moses, and in the People Israel. What I do with it is really no one's business, as it is not my business what someone else does for their faith.

I agree with John Lennon and Elton John that whatever let's you make it through the night is fine. Money, football, sex, art, fashion, pain pills, drugs, gambling, media, food - what do I care. What fixes your head is acceptable to me. In practice, what you believe and do is a religion. What gives you direction, sense of perspective, self-confidence, and meaning – is faith. Every person is a believer. It is not possible for any person to be without some kind of faith, and faith cannot but take some kind of form and expression. The form of one's faith is his religion. Everyone is religious. All forms of faiths have rituals, dress codes, traditions, codes of conduct, and members with inside information. For example, 'I heard behind the scenes [literally, ritual curtain] of FIFA that they are considering canceling the law of offside and plan to award points for brilliant tactical moves.'

[...] Now, if one's actions indicate their belief then it is possible to argue that any Jew who circumcises his son maintains awe for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Even if this is the slightest degree of awe, even if his lifestyle testifies to other forms of faith and he can be easily confounded by the question, "How does an enlightened person like yourself, in our advanced and modern times, do such a thing?", still his awe is true awe when he mutters at the circumcision ritual, "The Lord reigned, the Lord reigns, the Lord will reign forever and ever," even if he is a declared liberal, die-heart Communist, sworn rationalist, nouveau critic. Indeed, none of those present witnessing the circumcision shows concern for a blessing recited in vain.

Now, if the vast majority of the Jewish people is recognizable through the Jewish religion – for it is impossible to separate the Jews and their religion – it must be that the nation is holding fast to its religion – for otherwise there would be no people. Accordingly, the people can never really return to a faith the people had never really abandoned. How much more so, I cannot return to a place where I've never been. The most I can do is to go to such a place, but who would this interest, and why. Every person and their pose.  
Sorry, what was the question?  
Yours in friendship,

**8. Rav Menachem Froman (1945-2013), *Rav Froman Passed from this World – An interview on Arutz Sheva, Uzi Baruch, 04/03/13***  
<http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/252437>

Faith demands that we wait and see, that we remain open, and that we prepare for surprises. Because there is something that is higher, maybe what will happen in our world is not what we planned or wanted. To be religious means to be free, to be liberated from ourselves, from our ideologies, our plans, our worldview, even if it is a religious worldview. ... I continue to anticipate redemption, on a national scale as well as on a personal level, we are all anticipating redemption.

אינני חוזר בתשובה, בכל אופן לא זה שעליו נאמר 'במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים, צדיקים גמורים אינם יכולים לעמוד', כגון מי שעשק אלמנה ויתום וחדל מזה. אם לוחצים אותי לקיר, אני מודה בשפה רפה שיש לי אמונה בא-לוהים, בתורת משה בעם ישראל. ומה שאני עושה עם זה, זה ממש לא ענייניו של איש כשם שזה לא ענייני מה מישהו עושה בשביל האמונה שלו.

מקובלת עליי אמרתם של ג'ון לנון ואלטון ג'ון שמה שמעביר אותך את הלילה זה בסדר גמור. כסף, כדורגל, מין, אומנות, אופנה, כדורים נגד כאבים, סמים, הימורים, תקשורת, אוכל – מה אכפת לי. מה שמסדר לך את הראש – מקובל עליי. למעשה כל מה שאתה מאמין ועושה זה דת. כל מה שנותן לך כיוון, קנה מידה, ביטחון עצמי, טעם – זה אמונה. כל אדם מאמין. אי אפשר לאדם בלי אמונה כל שהיא ואי אפשר לאמונה שלו בלי צורה, גוף. והגוף של האמונה שלו זו הדת שלו. כולם דתיים. לכל האמונות יש טקסים, תלבושות, מסורת, שולחנות ערוכים ויודעי חן. למשל שמעתי מאחורי הפרגוד של פיפ"א ששוקלים לבטל את הנבדל ולהעניק נקודות למהלך טקטי מבריק.

[...] ואם המעשה מעיד על אמונה אפשר להגיד שכל אדם מישראל שעושה לבנו ברית מילה יש בו יראת אלוהי אברהם יצחק ויעקב. אפילו מידת יראתו קטנה שבקטנות. אפילו אורח חייו מעיד על אמונה אחרת ואפשר להביך אותו בשאלה: "איך אדם נאור שכמוך בעידננו המתקדם עושה מעשה כזה", עדיין יראתו יראה כשהוא ממלמל בטקס הברית "ה' מלך ה' מלך, ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד" אפילו הוא ליברל מוצהר, קומוניסט שרוף, הגיוניסט מושבע, מחקריסט חדש. ואיש מהנוכחים העדים לא חושש לנשיאת שם לשווא.

ואם רוב רובו של העם היהודי ניכר עפ"י הדת היהודית – שאי אפשר להפריד בין היהודים ודתם – יוצא שהעם מאמין ומחזיק בדתו – כי אחרת לא היה עם. יוצא שהעם לא ממש יכול לחזור לאמונה שלא ממש עזב. לא-כל-שכן אני לא יכול לחזור למקום שלא הייתי בו. לכל היותר אני יכול ללכת למקום כזה אבל את מי זה צריך לעניין ולמה. כל אחד והפוזו שלו. סליחה, מה הייתה השאלה?  
שלך בידידות,

**8. הרב פרומן הלך לעולמו, ראיון בערוץ שבע, עוזי ברוך, כ"ב באדר תשע"ג**  
<http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/252437>

האמונה מחייבת אותנו לחכות ולהסתכל, להיות פתוחים, להיות מוכנים להפתעות. כי יש משהו שהוא גבוה יותר, אולי מה שיקרה בעולם שלנו זה לא מה שאנחנו מתכננים ורוצים. להיות דתי פירושו להיות חופשי להיות משוחרר מעצמינו מהאידיאולוגיות שלנו מהתכניות שלנו ותפיסת העולם שלנו ואפילו אם היא תפיסת עולם דתית. ... אני ממשיך לצפות לישועה גם באופן לאומי וגם באופן פרטי כולנו מצפים לישועה.

### **9. The Hope**

*Naphtali Herz Imber (1856-1909)*

As long as in the heart, within,  
A Jewish soul still yearns,  
And onward, towards the ends of the East,  
An eye still gazes toward Zion;

Our hope is not yet lost,  
The hope of two thousand years,  
To be a free people in our land,  
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

### **9. התקווה**

*נפתלי הרץ אימבר*

כל עוד בלבב פְּנִימָה  
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמֶיָה  
וּלְפָאֲתֵי מִזְרַח, קְדִימָה,  
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפֶיָה,

עוד לא אֲבָדָה תְּקוּתָנוּ,  
הַתְּקוּהָ בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים  
לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֲפְשֵׁי בְּאֶרְצָנוּ,  
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

To follow the guiding questions online, [click here](#).

1. [Haredi](#) – Ultra-Orthodox. The literal translation of ‘haredi’ would be ‘quaker’, or ‘trembler’.
2. The phrase “blessed with children” is now, among other things, a political phrase. It recalls the fact that large families are eligible for significant government subsidies, far more per child than small families.
3. Here the reference is to the religious settlers who value the land of the Bible. The continued settlement of Biblical lands on the West Bank is, in this song, blamed for Israel’s continuing wars with her neighbours.
4. Here Kobi Oz raises a question as to whether Reform Judaism has reformed Judaism, or created an entirely different religion.
5. The Khazar nation, that legend has it [converted to Judaism](#) after the persuasions of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi in the Book of the Kuzari, was a blond nation. Sephardi legends have it that the Ashkenazim are descended from the Kuzaris. The tradition of throwing candies at a Bar Mitzvah is a Sephardi tradition. Hence if you are a descendent of the Kuzaris, you will be without candies...
6. A [Jewish prayer quorum](#), a *minyan*, requires 10 people to pray together. In orthodox and ultra-orthodox Judaism, this number refers only to men: women are not counted.
7. The story of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that Kobi Oz draws on is from the Babylonian Talmud Gittin 55b-57a. When the Romans were besieging Jerusalem, extremists were in control of the population of the Holy City. In order to hasten the coming of the messiah, these zealots even burned all the food stores of Jerusalem. It was at this point that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai decided to sneak out of the city. The Roman commander Vespasian came upon him, and Yochanan ben Zakkai cried out: “Greetings, Emperor of Rome!” Before Vespasian could explain to ben Zakkai that he was not the Emperor, a messenger from Rome arrived with the decree naming Vespasian Emperor. Vespasian was so impressed with ben Zakkai’s prophetic powers, he offered to grant the Rabbi’s any request. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai did not ask for Jerusalem to be saved, or for the Holy Temple to be spared destruction. Instead, he asked for “Yavneh and her sages” – the permission to establish a Jewish scholars’ academy in the city of Yavneh. In Yavneh, following the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, these scholars built the Jewish religion anew. This religion would have no centralizing Temple, nor would it be ruled by the hereditary Priestly caste: it would be, in Kobi Oz’ words, a privatized religion, interpreted differently in different places. The multi-denominational, multi-customed Judaism that we know today was set in motion – so Kobi would maintain – by the fateful decision of Yochanan ben Zakkai.
8. Kobi Oz sees Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai as something of a ‘Patron Saint’ of Pluralism. He is so pluralist, suggests Kobi, that he even has three names! These three names are given to R Yochanan Ben Zakkai on his deathbed, by his distraught students, when asking him to bless them as he weeps. (Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 28b)