



GEULAS YISRAEL

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Moral Relativism and the War in Israel

This war has multiple layers. We are battling homicidal enemies on two borders whose stated aim is to erase Israel from the map. Additionally, we are facing a global outbreak of rabid antisemitism. Calls of “death to Jews” have become normalized.

Any attack upon the people of Hashem is a chillul Hashem. That this horrific massacre occurred on Shabbat and on Simchat Torah exacerbates the desecration of Hashem’s name. Hundreds of years ago in France, during the Crusader invasion, as Torah scholars were being murdered, the author of the Tisha b’Av kinah entitled *החרישו ממני ודברה* pleaded with the Torah to intercede with Hashem and implore Him for mercy:

תורה תורה חגרי שק והתפלשי בעפר

We also plead with Torah to intervene, and to solicit Hashem for mercy: for His people and for the repair of the despicable chillul Hashem of October 7th.

Beyond the military, antisemitic, and theological aspects of this war, there is a fourth tier. We have been thrust into a vicious cultural war. Over the past two decades our culture has shifted, traditional values have eroded, and society has been plunged into an identity crisis. Hyper-liberalism has abolished classic values replacing them with wokism and radical progressivism. Strangely, these

modern ideologies have been weaponized against our people. Much of the antisemitic vitriol stems from college students who have been reared upon this new value system.

All this isn’t surprising. We were selected by Hashem to inspire humanity toward a lifestyle of monotheism and morality. Through our religious behavior we showcase the nobility of a life of commandment and commitment. Not only do we model religion, but we are also meant to fashion a culture of spirituality and values. When the surrounding culture ruptures and its values become corrupted, we offer an alternative model. We are responsible for cultural reconstruction. Even if the degraded cultural values aren’t inherently immoral, they still threaten the fabric of society and its moral fiber. Just as it is our historical task to repair immoral behavior it is also our mission to repair broken cultures.

RADICAL HUBRIS

The beginning of Parshat Noach portrays a debauched society which had fallen into complete and total moral collapse. Hashem decided to wipe them off the planet and reboot both humanity as well as the natural order.

The same parsha, though, closes with a very different scene. The generation of migdal Bavel wasn’t morally degenerate or rebellious. Having fashioned the first

industrial revolution in history, they became intoxicated with their own human prowess. Their generation was the first to manufacture bricks and the first to urbanize. Empowered by technology and emboldened by their success, they abandoned dependency upon Hashem. Though they didn't commit grave sins, they crafted a culture of narcissism and self-importance. A few years after the tower fell, Avraham emerged to revolutionize religious consciousness. He repaired their broken culture.

About two thousand years later a different decayed culture demanded reconstruction. Amassing boundless wealth, Shushan degenerated into a culture of ostentation and exhibitionism. During the six months they luxuriated on marble beds and binge drank from golden chalices, no one worked or shouldered any responsibility. An endless party in open display in the royal courtyard.

Esther and Mordechai renovated this rotten culture of opulence and voyeurism. Esther was nicknamed Haddasah which is a fragrant bush. Mordechai's name sounds similar to a spice called 'mar d'ror'. Together they refreshed a rancid culture.

Some generations spiral into a moral abyss. Others develop unhealthy social and cultural norms. Either way it is our mission to protect humanity against its lesser self.

Evidently, we stand at a cultural crossroad. Something is happening to our culture and somehow it is intertwined with our struggle to return home to Israel. Eventually we will triumph. We will convince the world that Hashem awarded us this Land. We will also repair the broken culture around us.

How did our culture break and how has it been weaponized against us?



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THREE AGENTS OF POSTMODERNISM

The contemporary "dissolution" of traditional values was caused by three events over the past three centuries.

Democracy and Capitalism revolutionized the modern world, by replacing oppressive systems with empowering ones. These potent revolutions unleashed immense human potential, dramatically improved the quality of life, and restored the dignity of human experience. However, these benefits came at a steep cost to our traditional value system. By stressing the individual over the collective, modern society glorified personal choice and personal expression. National, communal, or collective identities which preach traditional values have become disregarded. To each his own or her own. Without strong communal or national identity, traditional values such as family and morality erode.

Secondly, the world is still suffering collective PTSD from the horrors of the 20th century, during which humanity suffered from violent attempts to place loyalty to State above personal conscience. Haunted by the crimes of Nazism and Fascism, modern society recoils at any attempt to impose common or universal values. Any attempt to encourage conformity to common values smells like odious Fascism.

The internet revolution has further dissolved our traditional value system. Social media, in particular, offers virtual communities to replace actual ones. Without real communities and real neighbors, it is difficult to develop loyalty to family and loyalty to community. To each his own. To each her own.

These three dynamics have created a modern jungle teeming with moral swirl. Suffering through an extended identity crisis, the younger generation feels lost and bewildered. Sadly, when society feels bewildered, they look for scapegoats to assign blame. Jews have always provided easy scapegoats.

The fact that we can now defend ourselves in our own country is even more riling to our enemies. The scapegoat has horns and can now fight back. Our haters are furious.

MORAL RELATIVISM

Our confusing postmodern culture has generated a dangerous theory called moral relativism. Moral relativism asserts that moral truth isn't absolute or universal but is

subjective and is merely a social construct. What is considered morally right or wrong varies, depending upon cultural norms, personal beliefs, and historical contexts. The boundary between good and devil has been erased.

We watched in horror as cowardly and confused University Deans from whom we naively expected more, defended calls to murder Jews because every statement must be assessed "in context". This was the ugly and grotesque face of moral relativism at its worst.

Dishonesty prevents us from standing in the presence of Hashem. Dovid Hamelech describes honesty as the core trait granting us entry into the precincts of Hashem:

מי יגור באהליך ומי ישכון בחצר קדשיך הולך תמים ופועל צדק ודובר אמת בלבבו

Intellectual honesty is crucial for religious conscience and for deeper understanding of Torah wisdom.

Chazal though, speak not about an *individual* who is dishonest but groups of people who lose sight of truth. The gemara in Sotah (42a) warns that a "band of liars" aren't welcome in Hashem's presence:

ארבע כתות אין מקבלות פני השכינה... כת של שקרנים

Our society has become a כת של שקרנים, a culture of photoshopped truths and false narratives. Social media has become a cacophonous chamber of lies, propaganda and hate. When truth fades, conversation collapses. Without healthy and substantive conversation all communication fails. Unable to agree even to baseline truths we default to shouting slogans and to spewing hatred. As the social fabric punctures society splinters into warring factions. Welcome to the jungle of fiction and lies.

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Zecharyah promises that one day, Yerushalayim will be crowned as the city of truth and honesty. Humanity will assemble in the city of Hashem to embrace the Shechinah and applaud God's children. The lies will fade and the culture will be repaired. Truth will reside in Yerushalayim. Not relative truth but absolute moral truth. Not human fiction but the presence of Hashem- the ultimate and only אמת

כה אמר יקוק שבתי אל ציון ושכנתי בתוך ירושלם ונקראה ירושלם עיר האמת והר יקוק

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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CZ7N8ZJB>

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