



Engaging Israel: Jewish Values and the Dilemma of Nationhood

Judaism: The Value of Peoplehood

Before we can begin to think about the place of Israel in our lives, we must address the role of peoplehood in modern Jewish identity. In a world of intense individualism, can Judaism be defined primarily as a personal and internal experience, or is there a sense of belonging to a Jewish collective which gives meaning and purpose to contemporary Jewish life?

Zionism: The Question of Sovereignty

Zionism is the realization of Jewish self-determination: the re-establishment of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. To ensure a vibrant collective identity, must there be Jewish sovereignty, connected to territory and rooted in the land Israel? How does Jewish sovereignty relate to the self-identity of Jews living throughout the world? How do we reconcile the Jewish claim to the land with those of the Palestinian people?

Israel: The Challenge of Power

All democratic countries struggle with the moral challenge of exercising power in a complex world. Since its inception, Israel has been engaged in violent conflict with its neighbors and has had to deal with the challenges of occupation. How can Israel respond to these challenges and use its power in a way that is consistent with the highest standards of morality and Jewish values? How does Israel balance the legitimate right of self-defense with the values of peace and the rights of others?

Jewish State: The Dilemmas of Democracy

The central aim of Israel is to serve as the homeland of the Jewish people. What does a Jewish state mean? Can a Jewish state be reconciled with the values of pluralism and religious freedom? How does a Jewish state deal with minorities in its midst and stay true to its democratic values? Does the aspiration for a Jewish state automatically define Israel as a racist/apartheid state?

Values Nation: The Promise of Israel

Israel is the laboratory of the Jewish people where Jewish values and ideals meet the challenges of governance and everyday life. What resources are there within the Jewish and Zionist traditions which contribute to the moral and democratic aspirations of Israel and the Jewish people? What does the Jewish national project have to offer in responding to global challenges and advancing the value of *Tikkun Olam*?