Ksharim
Lesson 41

The Origins of Zionism

Outline:
1. Historical background and influences: Emancipation, Enlightenment, nationalism and persecution.
2. Proto Zionists: Rabbi Judah Alklai, Rabbi Tzvi Kalischer, Moshe Hess
3. The first Zionists: Pinsker & Herzl.

Introduction:
Zionism has changed the face of Judaism and the course of Jewish history. Was the development of Zionism a revolution - a break with all Jewish ideology that went before it, the birth of a new Jew as master of his own destiny? Or, was it a realization of the unbroken loyalty the Jewish people held for their ancestral land? Was it a Jewish manifestation of nineteenth century state nationalism or a yearning for socialist utopia? Or maybe it was just another way to survive? Its origins, like Zionism itself, are complex and varied. In this lesson we will study the different ingredients and personalities that gave rise to modern Zionism and ask ourselves: did Zionism/the State of Israel provide the solutions to the problems its originators envisioned.

Goals:
1. Study of Jewish history in the 19th century and the various Jewish responses to the upheavals felt by a changing world.
2. Familiarity with proto-Zionists and some of their writings.
3. Examination of the beginnings of modern Zionism.
4. Discussion of Zionism as a revolution or a culmination and the repercussions of each perception.

Expanded Outline:

1: Historical Background and Influences

1. Jews of Western Europe: From the end of the 18th century on more and more countries in Western Europe repealed laws that discriminated against Jews allowing them to enter the general society as equal citizens of their respective countries. This new freedom came at the cost of Jewish communal autonomy. It replaced the concept of Jewish nationhood with that of Judaism as a religion only thus allowing Jews to be “equal” members of any nation, loyal to their “fatherland.” One of the most interesting examples is Napoleon’s reconvened Sanhedrin. In 1807, fifteen years after the emancipation of the Jews in France, Napoleon, recognizing the dangers of continued Jewish autonomy as well as the benefits of
unlocking Jewish wealth and enterprise, established “the Great Sanhedrin” (71 members - 46 Rabbis and 26 layman. Rabbi David Sinzheim of Strassburg was its President.) They were presented with 12 questions regarding the positions of Jewry regarding polygamy, divorce, usury, other faiths, and most important whether they considered France to be their Fatherland (see source 1). Napoleon demanded and received from the Sanhedrin affirmations that rabbinical jurisdiction would be limited to matters of religion, tradition and practice, that France alone had claim on their political allegiance and that the dream of a return to Israel had been renounced forever. (It is interesting to note that later Napoleon used these answers as a justification for limiting Jews’ rights and passing decimator laws.)

This perception of Jewishness, approved by the “Sanhedrin” became accepted in Western Jewish communities where Jews sought to integrate fully into society. These Jews, now equal or almost equal citizens in their respective in states, were free to live where they pleased, engage in business and professions as they chose. The Jews proved themselves loyal, productive citizens, sure that this was the basis for their equality. They saw themselves as Germans or Frenchmen or Americans of “Mosaic” faith and gradually dropped the references to Zion in their ritual (ritual itself became less meaningful as more and more left religious life altogether). The messianic period was perceived as an era of universal brotherhood as opposed to a time of return to the land of Israel. They were educated and wealthy, organized and influential. They were concerned with the well-being of Jews in other places and succeeded at times in intervening on their behalf; for example during the Damascus Blood libel of 1840. These Jews were the minority of the Jewish people but they were the elite. Paradoxically, while these Jews had had no Zionist sentiments and indeed were striving for the very opposite goal of integration in their countries, their success, wealth and influence served as both an inspiration and means for the first Zionist thinkers.

Questions for Discussion:

- Read source 1: How would the participants answer those questions if they were asked now of American Jews?
- Last year the French Government was outraged when Israeli ministers called for massive aliya from France in the face of growing anti-Semitism. How does that relate to the Sanhedrin’s assurance of loyalty to the French fatherland in Napoleon’s times? How would you feel as a French/American citizen today in response to such a call?
- Does the existence of the State of Israel ease or exacerbate the question of Jewish national identity?

2. **Jews of Eastern Europe:** In Eastern Europe, where the majority of Jews resided, life was not so good. Most were living under the repressive Romanov rule in Russia where they were confined to the Pale of Settlement and suffered many restrictions
in opportunity for livelihood. Most lived very traditional lifestyles in small villages, shut off from all modern influences and ideas. Here Zion was a cherished dream and hope always present in liturgy and ritual. The messianic ideal was a return to the Holy land – the Jewish people transplanted to a Zion physically restored. Yet at the same time as a result of the disaster of false messiahs there was an equally entrenched belief against “forcing the end”. Redemption would be a physical revival in the Land of Israel but it would happen miraculously.

In 1855 Alexander the Second became Czar and repealed some of the more repressive laws. He allowed Jews to move out of the Pale, allowed Jews into the Universities and practice professions. This period was the beginning of Eastern European enlightenment (Haskalah). Humanism and secularism became popular, urging Jews to become productive members of larger society. Liberalism, humanism and secularism influenced many Jews as they left the shtetl. At the same time Russian Jews placed more value on their heritage than their Western European counterparts. For example there was a revival of Hebrew as many Haskalah writers chose it as their language of expression instead of Yiddish. Others urged Jews not to reject their ancestral loyalties in their quest to become citizens of the world. (see source 2).

In 1881 Alexander the Third became Czar after his father was assassinated by revolutionaries. He was a reactionary, almost immediately enacting the May Laws that closed all further rural areas to Jews even within the Pale, thus forcing many out of countryside and into the city slums. Rural Jews were the object of enforced “Russification.” Quotas were put on high schools and universities and professions closed once again to Jews. At the same time the Jews were equated with revolutionaries and a series of pogroms erupted throughout Russia and the Ukraine. This is the time of the infamous “policy” to rid Russia of its Jews as reported by the minister of Interior: a third of the Jews will die, a third will emigrate and a third will assimilate. The majority of European Jews once again found themselves in a desperate situation with their very continued existence in question. This renewed persecution shattered Russian Jewry’s illusions of equality. Even their faith in enlightenment was destroyed as academics and intellectuals joined in the anti-Jewish campaign. (See source 3). There was a strong awareness of the need to leave. Most saw the United States as the best refuge yet a minority of Jewish thinkers argues that to continuing being a minority anywhere was no longer the answer. (see source 4)

3. Nineteenth century Europe was replete with nationalist movements. Between 1850 and 1914, strong nation-states developed. France under Napoleon III, Germany was united under Bismarck, Italy united. Pan-Slavic movements, Hungarian and Slovakian nationalisms emerged. These movements and their successes inspired early Zionist thinkers who asked “Why should we be any less worthy or capable than other people?” (see source 5)
Questions for discussion:

- Do you see Zionist thinking arising as a vision of an ideal Jewish identity or as an answer to a pressing need for Jewish existence? Notice the same question arises about the establishment of the State of Israel itself that was realized only on the heels of the Holocaust.
- If persecution and discrimination were forces behind the emergence of Zionism why didn’t it evolve before the late 19th century – There was plenty of Jewish suffering before? Compare the conclusions of the first Zionists to those of the medieval philosophers and Jews who went to the land of Israel on the heels of the expulsion from Spain; what similarities find, what differences?

2: Proto-Zionists

Decades before Herzl, there began to appear treatises and articles outlining the need for establishing a Jewish presence in the Holy Land. These writers drew mainly from the Orthodox world and the messianic dream but where as their predecessor spoke of a mystical redemption they urged and implemented practical initiatives to bring about the return of large numbers of Jews to their ancestral land. These writings can be seen as catalysts that helped set the ideological stage for the emergence of political Zionism.

1. Rabbi Judah Alkalai: Born at the end of the 18th century R. Alkali served as a preacher in the Sephardic community of Semlin, near Belgrade. In 1839 he published a book in Ladino-Hebrew called Darchei Noam (Pleasant Paths) in which he wrote of the need to establish Jewish colonies in the Holy Land as a prelude to the Redemption. Later he published a book called “Shema Yisroel” (Hear O Israel) where using proof texts he argued that human initiative and effort were justified as means needed to bring the redemption. In 1843 He published a booklet called “Minchat Yehuda” (the Offering of Judah) calling on twenty two thousand Jews to settle the land as a pre-requisite or initial stage of the final redemption. (based on the Biblical passage “Return O L-rd, unto the tens and thousands of families in Israel” which the Talmud says proves that the Divine Presence can be felt if there are at least two thousand and two tens of thousands of Israelites together). R. Alkali published his ideas extensively and settled himself in Palestine where he managed to organize a small group of followers including Simon Leob Herzl – Theodor Herzl’s grandfather.

R. Alkalai saw in the “miracle” of Jewish intercession for the victims of the Damascus blood libel a precedent for utilizing the wealth and influence of the wealthy Western European Jews to settle Jews in the Holy land. A forerunner of the ideas that Herzl later realized, R. Alkalai envisioned
encouraging Jewish unity through an all embracing organization a “Great Assembly” and the creation of a national fund to purchase land. (see source 6).

2. Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kalischer: Born in 1795 in a village in western Poland. He grew up on the border between western and eastern Poland, influenced both by the Orthodoxy of the east and enlightenment of the west. He was recognized as an outstanding Talmudic scholar, known for his saintliness. R Kalischer was also versed in both Jewish and general philosophy as well as Kabala. He served as the Rabbi of a large congregation in Thorn, Prussia. He too saw the triumph of Western emancipation as a harbinger of messianic redemption in Palestine. In 1843 R. Kalischer first published his views in two volumes called “Emunah Yesharim” (An Honest Faith) and in 1862 published “Drishat Zion” (The Search for Zion). Using proof texts from the Bible and Talmud R. Kalischer argued that the salvation of the Jews as foretold by the prophets could take place through natural means, by self-help as opposed to waiting for the messiah. Therefore the settlement of Palestine should start immediately and even the revival of sacrifices was permissible in the Holy land. Only when many pious Jews lived in the land would G-D heed their prayers and speed the days of the redemption. R. Kalischer was a man of action, not just words and prayers. He urged the formation of a society of rich Jews to undertake the colonization of Zion, including settling Jews in the land, training them in self-defense and even establishing an agricultural school. In 1836 he petitioned Anschel Rothchild to purchase the Land of Israel or at the very least the Temple Mount. Rabbi Kalischer saw these practical acts as necessary for bringing the redemption. Later, together with a few influential contemporaries, R. Kalischer formed a “Society for the Colonization of the Land of Israel” At R. Kalischer’s initiative the “Alliance Israelite Universelle” - French Jewish philanthropy, provided the initial subsidy for a Jewish Agricultural school which was established in 1870 near Jaffa and called “Mikveh Yisrael” (The Hope of Israel). In 1872 R. Kalischer was asked to serve as the religious overseer at Mikveh Yisroel but due to his age and infirmity was unable to travel. R. Kalischer died in 1874 in Thorn. (see source 7)

3. Moses Hess: Moses Hess was born in Bonn to an Orthodox family in 1812. He received a traditional Jewish education but as an autodidact learned German and French as a means to secular learning. Initially, Hess was a utopian socialist but following his acquaintance with Marx he moved from philosophy to ideological politics. Influenced by the Damascus blood libel, the writings of Mazzini and the unification of Italy and the emergence of German anti-Semitism, Hess eventually returned to his Jewish roots. His
booklet Rome and Jerusalem; The Last National Question, written in 1862, is evidence of this change. In it he argues: (1) The Jews will always remain strangers among the European peoples, who may emancipate them for reasons of humanity and justice, but will never respect them so long as the Jews place their own great national memories in the background and hold to the principle, "Ubi bene, ibi patria." (2) The Jewish type is indestructible, and Jewish national feeling can not be uprooted, although the German Jews, for the sake of a wider and more general emancipation, persuade themselves and others to the contrary. (3) If the emancipation of the Jews is irreconcilable with Jewish nationality, the Jews must sacrifice emancipation to nationality. Hess considered that the only solution of the Jewish question lies in the colonization of Palestine. He confidently hoped that France would aid the Jews in founding colonies extending from Suez to Jerusalem, and from the banks of the Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean. Hess's proposed Jewish State was to be socialist in nature. Rome und Jerusalem met with a cold reception. Hess died in 1875 in Paris although at his request was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Cologne. In 1961 his remains were transferred to Israel where they were buried in the Kinneret cemetery alongside other Socialist-Zionists such as Nahum Syrkin, Ber Borochov, and Berl Katznelson.

Questions for Discussion:

- Most of the main themes of modern Zionism are present in Alkalai, Kalischer and Hess's writing yet at the time their work had little influence on their respective audiences and seemed to have no lasting effect. Why? Was the difficulty in their personalities or the surrounding audience?
- The Zionists writers that arose twenty years later were unfamiliar with these men and their works even though the arguments set forth are very similar. The second time these ideas were set forth they set off a continuous, growing process that became Zionism, why didn’t it start with these personalities?
- Do their arguments convince you today? Why or why not?

3: The First Zionists: From Pinsker to Herzl.

The Proto-Zionists lived and wrote at the height of mid-century liberalism, in a time of optimism on the future of Jewish emancipation in Europe. Most of their argument and philosophy were based on messianic beliefs or renewed nationalism. They lacked urgency. Hess was the first to argue that not only Jewish religious or national ideals needed fulfillment in the land but that physical survival also demanded it; but in his day the climate was of emancipation, enlightenment and liberalism, which held only promise for the future - not threats - making such arguments less than convincing.
Most of these writers hailed from the Orthodox world (even Hess, who left it, returned to his Jewish roots) and so they failed to reach or have relevance for the secular, liberal, enlightened Jews. It took the renewed persecution in form of the May Laws, the pogroms that erupted in Russia and eastern Europe, and outbreaks of anti-Semitism in western Europe to crystallize Zionist thought into a form meaningful to the secular liberal Jew. The continuous history of Zionism can be traced from 1881.

**Leon Pinsker**: Born in to an enlightened family in Odessa, Pinsker studied first law in the University of Odessa and then Medicine in the University of Moscow. Until the pogroms in 1871 Pinsker was an adherent of emancipation and enlightenment. He was one of the founders of a Russian-language weekly which encouraged Jews to speak Russian and was later a contributor to a weekly which urged Jews to assimilate. After the events of 1881, government-sponsored anti-Semitism caused Pinsker to make a complete about-face. He no longer viewed the Enlightenment and Haskalah movement as the correct course for Russian Jews and no longer believed that humanism would defeat hatred of the Jews. He came to think that anti-Semitism was rooted in the fact that Jews were foreigners, and that they should emigrate to Eretz Yisrael. He traveled to western Europe where he tried to convince Jewish leaders of his plan for Jewish survival. In 1882 Pinsker published his essay “Auto-Emancipation” (originally written in German). It was the first time that the vulnerability of the Jews as a homeless people was systematically demonstrated. Pinsker argued that Jews would never be treated with respect until they attained national equality with the other nations in their own land with their own government and representation as opposed to being an unnatural “phantom people” among the nations. (see source 9)

In 1884 Pinsker summoned a national conference of the various Zionist study groups that had begun to function in many of the Pale’s towns and cities, known since the 1870’s collectively called Chovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion). Thirty four delegates met in the German city of Kattowitz and reached a consensus to finance Jewish settlement in Palestine. The organization’s central office was established in Odessa with Pinsker as its president. Chovevei Zion grew rapidly in the 1890’s with branches in many parts of Europe and even in the States. Pinsker died in 1891, pessimistic about the reality of settling Palestine after the Ottomans outlawed Jewish immigration. He began to consider forming a Jewish country in Argentina. In 1934 his remains were moved to Mount Scopus in Jerusalem.

**Theodor Herzl**:  
Born in 1860 to a prosperous, emancipated Budapest family, he was fluent in German and French but lacked Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian; he was secular, cosmopolitan intellectual, a doctor of law, a successful journalist and editor and a minor playwright. Preoccupied with the Jewish question form the early 1890’s what catalyzed Herzl's conversion to Zionism was the Dreyfus affair in France. In 1894-95 Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish officer, was wrongfully convicted of treason and confined to Devil's Island. The trial triggered a wave of anti-Semitism in France. Herzl himself wrote that it
was the crowd shouting at Dreyfus “A la Mort les Juifs” that caused his own critical moment of recognition.

In 1895 Herzl met with Baron de Hirsch and tried to unsuccessfully convince him to support Jewish political education for self-support and ultimately self-government in a land of their own. Undiscouraged by Hirsch’s refusal Herzl continued to meet influential Jews and in 1896 he published Der Judenstaat, or The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question. In it Herzl argued that anti-Semitism was a fact that could not be wished away and that the Jewish question was neither social nor religious but national. All attempts to merge with national communities have failed and therefore the only solution was to gather all Jews from all over the world into a land of their own. Most of the essay detailed in practical terms, how to go about this Jewish exodus and transplantation. He argued that gradual settlement, which had been advocated until now, was not enough but first there must be international recognition of the right of the Jews to collective national settlement. While Palestine was the logical first choice because of historic ties, Herzl was prepared to consider other locations such as Argentina or later Uganda.

While scorned by the liberal European press and Jews, Herzl met with the Turkish grand vizier and foreign minister, to whom he offered what he had outlined in his essay: Jewish financiers would relieve the economic distress off the Ottoman Empire in exchange for a charter of Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Sultan refused. In 1896 he met with Baron Edmond De Rothschild in Paris who was also less than impressed with Herzl’s scheme. Meanwhile his essay had made its way to eastern Europe where it was enthusiastically received. Chovevei Zion asked Herzl to accept leadership of the movement. As a result of the growing mass support Herzl decided to organize “a general Zionist day;” after being refused cooperation in Munich, Herzl organized the first Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland on August 29, 1897. 204 delegates from 15 countries participated. The congress established the Zionist Organization. Herzl kept up his international efforts to secure a charter for Jewish settlement. He hoped to win the support of Kaiser Wilhelm and eventually the Sultan himself, but was unsuccessful due first to the Sultan’s refusal and later to the refusal of the Jewish philanthropists to finance the project. Later Herzl tried to convince the British to allow Jewish settlement in Cyprus or el Arish.

In 1903 Joseph Chamberlain (British Colonial Secretary) offered Herzl Uganda. Although Herzl initially refused the offer, a wave of pogroms that swept through Russia that year convinced him of the need to find an immediate solution. The sixth Zionist congress in 1903 was bitterly divided over the idea. Herzl died in July 1904. In 1949 Herzl’s remains were flown To Israel where they were interred on a ridge facing Jerusalem called Mount Herzl.

What made Herzl unique as opposed to Pinsker and the other Russian and eastern European Zionists was the fact that he was a secularized, emancipated Jew living
successfully in a pluralistic Hapsburg society. His was the first time these arguments were presented without being based on Jewish tradition or culture. Herzl’s articulate essay introduced Zionism to European readers, scholars and statesmen in a language they could understand. At the same time his regal appearance and charisma captured the imagination and hearts of the Jewish masses, especially in eastern Europe, who saw him as a modern day Moses. More important Herzl saw the attempt to resolve the Jewish question not just as an idea of a Jewish State but as a real political solution attainable through the help and collaboration of the European powers. He took Zionism from the realm of ideas and dreams to the real world of politics and statecraft. Theodor Herzl put Zionism on the map. He in effect invented Zionism as a true political movement and an international force.

Questions for discussion:

- Has the State of Israel helped solved the Jewish Question – has it mitigated anti-Semitism as Pinsker and Herzl envisioned?
- Has Israel become the world’s Jew as Natan Scharansky argues (see: http://www.geocities.com/munichseptember1972/on_hating_jews.htm)?
- As American Jews does having a “homeland” enrich your Jewish identity or complicate it?

Conclusion

The roots of Zionism were many and varied. It can be argued that modern Zionism was a revolution, a break with all that had defined Jews and Judaism for two thousand years. Indeed the Zionist leaders saw themselves as New Jews, different and divorced from the weak subjugated Jews of the Diaspora. Does that mean that the State of Israel as the realization of Zionism also has no connection to the “old Jewish” identity and culture and tradition? Two thousand years of history are to be erased? Or it can be said that Zionism was but a Jewish version of state nationalism that was prevalent in the 19th century. Does that mean that it has no place in today’s “global’ world? Both arguments ignore the sources that Zionism drew almost instinctively from Jewish thought, religion and philosophy. Zionism was an innovation but it was also a culmination of the 2000 years that led to its evolution. The new Jew has realized the old Jew’s prayers – or has he? The first Zionists had disdain for assimilated Jews trying, in vain, to become equal members of European society. Does that mean the State they envisioned was culturally different from the West? What about the “Americanization” of Israel today (the most prevalent restaurant in the country is MacDonald’s)
Second Question:

Is divorce allowed by the Jewish religion? Is divorce valid when not pronounced by courts of justice by virtue of laws in contradiction with those of the French Code?

Answer:

Repudiation is allowed by the Law of Moses; but it is not valid if not previously pronounced by the French code.

In the eyes of every Israelite, without exception, submission to the prince is the first of duties. It is a Principle generally acknowledged among them, that, in every thing relating to civil or political interests, the law of the state is the supreme law. Before they were admitted in France to share the rights of all citizens, and when they lived under a particular legislation which set them at liberty to follow their religious customs, they had the ability to divorce their wives; but it was extremely rare to see it put into practice. Since the revolution, they have acknowledged no other laws on this head but those of the empire. At the epoch when they were admitted to the rank of citizens, the Rabbis and the principal Jews appeared before the municipalities of their respective places of abode, and took an oath to conform, in every thing to the laws, and to acknowledge no other rules in all civil matters...

Fourth Question:

In the eyes of Jews, are Frenchmen considered as their brethren? Or are they considered as strangers?

Answer:

In the eyes of Jews Frenchmen are their brethren, and are not strangers.

The true spirit of the Law of Moses is consonant with this mode of considering Frenchmen. When the Israelites formed n settled land or independent nation, their law made it a rule for them to consider strangers as their brethren.

With the most tender care for their welfare, their lawgiver commands to love them, "Love ye therefore the strangers," says he to the Israelites, "for ye were strangers in the...
land of Egypt."
Respect and benevolence towards strangers are enforced by Moses, not as an exhortation to the practice of social morality only, but as an obligation imposed by God himself.

A religion whose fundamental maxims are such--a religion which makes a duty of loving the stranger--which enforces the practice of social virtues, must surely require that its followers should consider their fellow-citizens as brethren.

And how could they consider them otherwise when they inhabit the same land, when they are ruled and protected by the same government, and by the same laws? When they enjoy the same rights, and have the same duties to fulfill? There exists, even between the Jew and Christian, a tie which abundantly compensates for religion--it is the tie of gratitude. This sentiment was at first excited in us by the mere grant of toleration. It has been increased, these eighteen years, by new favors from government, to such a degree of energy, that now our fate is irrevocably linked with the common fate of all Frenchmen. Yes, France is our country; all Frenchmen are our brethren, and this glorious title, by raising us our own esteem, becomes a sure pledge that we shall never cease to be worthy of it.

**Fifth Question:**

In either case, what line of conduct does their law prescribe towards Frenchmen not of their religion?

**Answer:**

The line of conduct prescribed towards Frenchmen not of our religion, is the same as that prescribed between Jews themselves; we admit of no differences but that of worshipping the Supreme Being, every one in his own way.

The answer to the preceding question has explained the line of conduct which the Law of Moses and the Talmud prescribe towards Frenchmen not of our religion. At the present time, when the Jews no longer form a separate people, but enjoy the advantage of being incorporated with the Great Nation (which privilege they consider as a kind of political redemption), it is impossible that a Jew should treat a Frenchman, not of his religion, in any other manner than he would treat one of his Israelite brethren.

**Sixth Question:**

Do Jews born in France, and treated by the laws as French citizens, consider France their country?

Are they bound to defend it?
Are they bound to obey the laws and to conform to the dispositions of the civil code?

**Answer:**

Men who have adopted a country, who have resided in it these many generations—who, even under the restraint of particular laws which abridged their civil rights, were so attached to it that they preferred being debarred from the advantages common to all other citizens, rather than leave it—cannot but consider themselves as Frenchmen in France; and they consider as equally sacred and honorable the bounden duty of defending their country.

Jeremiah (chapter 29) exhorts the Jews to consider Babylon as their country, although they were to remain in it only for seventy years. He exhorts them to till the ground, to build houses, to sow, and to plant. His recommendation was so much attended to, that Ezra (chapter 2) says, that when Cyrus allowed them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, 42,360 only, left Babylon; and that this number was mostly composed of the poor people, the wealthy having remained in that city.

The love of the country is in the heart of Jews a sentiment so natural, so powerful, and so consonant to their religious opinions, that a French Jew considers himself in England, as among strangers, although he may be among Jews; and the case is the same with English Jews in France.

To such a pitch is this sentiment carried among them, that during the last war, French Jews have been seen fighting desperately against other Jews, the subjects of countries then at war with France.

Many of them are covered with honorable wounds, and others have obtained, in the field of honor, the noble rewards of bravery.

**Eighth Question:**

What police jurisdiction do Rabbis exercise among the Jews?

What judicial power do they enjoy among them?

**Answer:**

The Rabbis exercise no manner of Police Jurisdiction among the Jews. It is only in the Mishnah and in the Talmud that the word Rabbi is found for the first time applied to a doctor in the law; and he was commonly indebted for this qualification to his reputation, and to the opinion generally entertained of his learning.
When the Israelites were totally dispersed, they formed small communities in those places where they were allowed to settle in certain numbers.

Sometimes, in these circumstances, a Rabbi and two other doctors formed a kind of tribunal, named Beth Din, that is, House of Justice; the Rabbi fulfilled the functions of judge, and the other two those of his assessors.

The attributes, and even the existence of these tribunals, have, to this day, always depended on the will of government under which the Jews have lived, and on the degree of tolerance they have enjoyed. Since the revolution those rabbinical tribunals are totally suppressed in France, and in Italy. The Jews, raised to the rank of citizens, have conformed in every thing to the laws of the state; and, accordingly, the functions of Rabbis, wherever any are established, are limited to preaching morality in the temples, blessing marriages, and pronouncing divorces....

**Ninth Question:**

Are these forms of Election, and that police-jurisdiction, regulated by law, or are they only sanctioned by custom?

**Answer:**

The answer to the preceding questions makes it useless to say much on this, only it may be remarked, that, even supposing that Rabbis should have, to this day, preserved some kind of police-judicial jurisdiction among us, which is not the case, neither such jurisdiction, nor the forms of the elections, could be said to be sanctioned by the law; they should be attributed solely to custom.

2. **Peretz Smolenskin:** *Am Olam (An Eternal People)* published in *HaShachar* in 1872:

“The willfully blind bid us to be like all other nations, and I repeat after them: let us be like all other nations, pursuing and attaining knowledge, leaving off from wickedness and folly....Yes, let us be like all other nations, ashamed of the rock whence we have been hewn, like the rest in holding dear our language and the glory of our people.”

3. **Lev Levanda Rassviet:** *(A Russian Jewish Journal as recorded in “A history of Israel “ H. Sachar p/13

“When I think of what was done to us, how we were taught to love Russia and the Russian word, how we were lured into introducing the Russian language and everything Russian into our home and how we are now rejected and hounded... my heart is filed with corroding despair from which there is no escape.”
4. **Moshe Lilienblum**, (b in 1843, raised in an Orthodox home and taught Talmud in his younger years, became interested in the Haskala and moved to Odessa where he became a distinguished humanist writer, hid in a basement in Odessa during the riots of 1881 which totally changed his world view and he devoted the rest of his life to Zionist movement. He was a significant factor in Hibbat Zion and a active supporter of Herzl) 

From his diary: “May 7 1881: ..The rioters approached the house I am staying in. The women shrieked and wailed, hugging the children to their breasts, and didn’t know where to turn. The men stood dumbfounded. We all imagined that in a few moments it would all be over with us... but thank G-D , they were frightened away by the soldiers and we were not harmed. I am glad I have suffered. At least once in my life I have had the opportunity of feeling what my ancestors felt every day of their lives...”

Later he wrote of those days cowering in a basement as Russian mobs rampaged his neighborhood: “All the old ideals left me in a flash. There is no home for us in this or any other Gentile land.”

5. **Moses Hess: Rome and Jerusalem:** “On the ruins of Christian Rome a regenerated Italian people is arising, ...The nations will awaken once more...only a national renaissance can endow the religious genius of the Jews, like the legendary giant when he touches mother earth, with new strength, and raise its soul once again to the level of prophetic inspiration”

**R. Tzvi Hersch Kalischer, Seeking Zion:** Why do the people of Italy and of other countries sacrifice their lives for the land of their fathers, while we, like men bereft of strength and courage do nothing? Are we inferior to all other peoples, who have no regard for life or fortune as compared with love of their land and nation? Let us take to heart the examples of the Italians, the Poles? And the Hungarians who laid down their lives and possessions and who struggle for national independence, while we, the Children of Israel, who have the most glorious and holiest of lands as our inheritance, are spiritless and silent. We should be ashamed of ourselves, for our duty is to labor not only for the glory of our ancestors but for the glory of G-D who chose Zion.”

6. **Rabbi Judah Alkalai; Minchat Yehuda** “In the first conquest, under Joshua, the almighty brought the children of Israel into a land that was prepared....This New redemption will – alas because of our sins - be different: our land is waste and desolate, and we shall have to build houses, dig wells, and plant vines and olive trees... Redemption must come slowly. The land must by degrees be built up and prepared....The Redemption will begin by the efforts of the Jews themselves; they must organize and unite, choose leaders and leave the lands of the exile. Since no community can exist without a governing body, the very first ordinance must be the appointment of the
elders of each district, men of piety and wisdom, to oversee all the affairs of the community. I humbly suggest that this chosen assembly – the assembly of the elders – is what is meant by the promise to us of the messiah, the son of Joseph.”

7. **Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kalischer; Drishat Zion (Seeking Zion):** “My dear Reader! Cast aside the conventional view that the Messiah will suddenly blast on the great Trumpet and cause all the inhabitants of the earth to tremble. On the contrary, the redemption will begin by awakening support among the philanthropists and by gaining consent of the nations to the gathering of some of the scattered of Israel into the Holy Land........ I would suggest that an organization be established to encourage settlement in the Holy Land, for the purpose of purchasing and cultivating farms and vineyards. Such a program would appear as a ray of deliverance to those now living in the Land in poverty and famine... The situation would be different if we were inspired by the fervor of working the land with our own hands. Surely G-D would bless our labor and there would be no need to import grain form Egypt and other neighboring countries, for our harvest would prosper greatly....another great advantage of agricultural settlement is that we would have the privilege of observing the religious commandments that attach to working the soil of the holy Land.

...Such a policy would also raise our dignity among the nations, for they would say that the Children of Israel, too, have the will to redeem the land of their ancestors, which is now so barren and forsaken.”

8. "After an estrangement of twenty years I am back with my people. I have come to be one of them again, to participate in the celebration of the holy days; to share the memories and hopes of the nation, to take part in the spiritual and intellectual warfare going’ on within the House of Israel, and between our people and the surrounding civilized nations. The Jews have lived and labored among the nations for almost two thousand years but none the less they cannot become rooted organically within them. A thought which I believed to be for ever buried in my heart has been awakened in me anew. It is the thought of my nationality, which is inseparably connected with the ancestral heritage and the memories of the Holy Land and the Eternal City-the birthplace of the belief in the divine unity of life and of the hope in the future brotherhood of man...."

“...the main problem of the Jewish national movement is not of a religious nature but centers on one point, namely on how to awaken the patriotic sentiment in the hearts of our progressive Jews, and how to liberate the Jewish masses, by means of this reawakened patriotism from a spirit deadening formalism. If we succeed in this beginning then no matter how difficult the practical realization of our plan may be, the difficulties will be overcome by
experience itself... The objections of progressive Jews to the restoration of a Jewish state... rest in moral and intellectual narrow mindness, which is unable to risotto that high humanitarian standpoint from which one can see the depth of the misfortune of our people, as well as the means of its salvation.”

For details on Pre-Zionists see:

www.jafi.org.il/education/timeline/prezionists/

9. Leon Pinsker; Auto-Emancipation: excerpts

“The Jews are not a nation because they lack a certain distinctive national character, inherent in all other nations, which is formed by common residence in a single state. It was clearly impossible for this national character to be developed in the Diaspora; the Jews seem rather to have lost all remembrance of their former home. Thanks to their ready adaptability, they have all the more easily acquired characteristics, not inborn, of the people among whom fate has thrown them. Often to please their protectors, they recommend their traditional individuality entirely. They acquired or persuaded themselves into certain cosmopolitan tendencies which could no more appeal to others than bring satisfaction to themselves.”

“In seeking to fuse with other peoples they deliberately renounced to some extent their own nationality. Yet nowhere did they succeed in obtaining from their fellow-citizens recognition as natives of equal status.

But the greatest impediment in the path of the Jews to an independent national existence is that they do not feel its need. Not only that, but they go so far as to deny its authenticity. In the case of a sick man, the absence of desire for food is a very serious symptom. It is not always possible to cure him of this ominous loss of appetite. And even if his appetite is restored, it is still a question whether he will be able to digest food, even though he desires it.

The Jews are in the unhappy condition of such a patient. We must discuss this most important point with all possible precision. We must prove that the misfortunes of the Jews are due, above all, to their lack of desire for national independence; and that this desire must be awakened and maintained in time if they do not wish to be subjected forever to disgraceful existence -- in a word, we must prove that they must become a nation.”

“But after the Jewish people had ceased to exist as an actual state, as a political entity, they could nevertheless not submit to total annihilation -- they lived on
spiritually as a nation. The world saw in this people the uncanny form of one of the dead walking among the living. The Ghostlike apparition of a living corpse, of a people without unity or organization, without land or other bonds of unity, no longer alive, and yet walking among the living -- this spectral form without precedence in history, unlike anything that preceded or followed it, could but strangely affect the imagination of the nations. And if the fear of ghosts is something inborn, and has a certain justification in the psychic life of mankind, why be surprised at the effect produced by this dead but still living nation.

A fear of the Jewish ghost has passed down the generations and the centuries. First a breeder of prejudice, later in conjunction with other forces we are about to discuss, it culminated in Judeophobia.

“If the basis of our argument is sound, if the prejudice of mankind against us rests upon anthropological and social principles, innate and ineradicable, we must look no more to the slow progress of humanity. And we must learn to recognize that as long as we lack a home of our own, such as the other nations have, we must resign forever the noble hope of becoming the equals of our fellow-men. We must recognize that before the great idea of human brotherhood will unite all the peoples of the earth, millenniums must elapse; and that meanwhile a people which is at home everywhere and nowhere, must everywhere be regarded as alien. The time has come for a sober and dispassionate realization of our true position.

With unbiased eyes and without prejudice we must see in the mirror of the nations the tragi-comic figure of our people, which with distorted countenance and maimed limbs helps to make universal history without managing properly its own little history. We must reconcile ourselves once and for all to the idea that the other nations, by reason of their inherent natural antagonism, will forever reject us. We must not shut our eyes to this natural force which works like every other elemental force; we must take it into account. We must not complain of it; on the contrary, we are in duty bound to take courage, to rise, and to see to it that we do not remain forever the Cinderella, the butt of the peoples. We are no more justified in leaving our national fortune in the hands of the other peoples than we are in making them responsible for our national misfortune. The human race, including ourselves, has hardly reached the first stage of the interminable road to perfection in human conduct, providing the goal is to be reached at all. We must, therefore, abandon the delusion that we are fulfilling by our dispersion a Providential mission, a mission in which no one believes, an honorable post which we, to speak frankly, would gladly resign, if the odious epithet "Jew" could only be blotted out of the memory of man. We must seek our honor and our salvation not in self-deceptions, but in the restoration of our national ties. Hitherto the world has not considered us as a firm of standing, and consequently we enjoyed no genuine credit.
If other national movements which have risen before our eyes were their own justification, can it still be questioned whether the Jews have a similar right?"

“If we would have a secure home, give up our endless life of wandering and rise to the dignity of a nation in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world, we must, above all, not dream of restoring ancient Judea. We must not attach ourselves to the place where our political life was once violently interrupted and destroyed. The goal of our present endeavors must be not the "Holy Land," but a land of our own. We need nothing but a large tract of land for our poor brothers, which shall remain our property and from which no foreign power can expel us. There we shall take with us the most sacred possessions which we have saved from the ship-wreck of our former country, the God-idea and the Bible. It is these alone which have made our old fatherland the Holy Land, and not Jerusalem or the Jordan. Perhaps the Holy Land will again become ours. If so, all the better, but first of all, we must determine -- and this is the crucial point -- what country is accessible to us, and at the same time adapted to offer the Jews of all lands who must leave their homes a secure and undisputed refuge, capable of productivization.”

For complete essay see: http://www.mideastweb.org/autoemancipation.htm

10. Theodor Herzl; The Jewish State, excerpts

The idea I have developed in this pamphlet is an ancient one: It is the restoration of the Jewish State. . . The decisive factor is our propelling force. And what is that force? The plight of the Jews . . . I am profoundly convinced that I am right, though I doubt whether I shall live to see myself proved so. Those who today inaugurate this movement are unlikely to live to see its glorious culmination. But the very inauguration is enough to inspire in them a high pride and the joy of an inner liberation of their existence. . .

The plan would seem mad enough if a single individual were to undertake it; but if many Jews simultaneously agree on it, it is entirely reasonable, and its achievement presents no difficulties worth mentioning. The idea depends only on the number of its adherents. Perhaps our ambitious young men, to whom every road of advancement is now closed, and for whom the Jewish state throws open a bright prospect of freedom, happiness, and honor perhaps they will see to it that this idea is spread . . .

It depends on the Jews themselves whether this political document remains for the present a political romance. If this generation is too dull to understand it rightly, a future, finer, more advanced generation will arise to comprehend it. The Jews who will try it shall achieve their State; and they will deserve it . . .

I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we
must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council.

We are a people — one people.

We have sincerely tried everywhere to merge with the national communities in which we live, seeking only to preserve the faith of our fathers. It is not permitted us. In vain are we loyal patriots, sometimes super loyal; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow citizens; in vain do we strive to enhance the fame of our native lands in the arts and sciences, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In our native lands where we have lived for centuries we are still decried as aliens, often by men whose ancestors had not yet come at a time when Jewish sighs had long been heard in the country...

Oppression and persecution cannot exterminate us. No nation on earth has endured such struggles and sufferings as we have. Jew-baiting has merely winnowed out our weaklings; the strong among us defiantly return to their own whenever persecution breaks out. . . Wherever we remain politically secure for any length of time, we assimilate. I think this is not praiseworthy. . .

Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. . . Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who will it shall achieve their State. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our own homes peacefully die. The world will be liberated by our freedom, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness. And whatever we attempt there for our own benefit will redound mightily and beneficially to the good of all mankind.

For entire text see:  
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2.html