

# Who versus Them:

A political imagination of Judaism through securitization in Israel



*Jerusalem, November 2017*

Master Thesis

Linde Draaisma

23 August 2018

Religion, Conflict and Globalisation - Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies - University of Groningen

Supervisor: Dr. Erin Wilson

Second Reader: Dr. Joram Tarusarira

Wordcount: 19914

## Abstract

*This thesis studies how Judaism is imagined in contemporary Israeli politics through processes of increased securitization. Previous research has detected processes of societal securitization in Israeli, in which the Jewish identity of the state is presented to be under threat. Such presentations – or securitizing moves – typically involve an “us versus them” rhetoric and thereby subscribe a singular identity to both parties. Whereas previous publications interpreted Israeli Jewish identity in terms of ethnicity, this study focuses on the religious component, which it argues is interwoven with the state. This thesis aims to elucidate how the Judaic character of the Israeli state is propagated and institutionalised by Israeli politics. Through discourse analysis and identifying Ninian Smart’s dimension of religion, the religious component of the singular identity subscribed to Israeli Jews by PM Netanyahu is mapped in five speeches. This thesis shows that God, the Tanakh, spiritual sites and Jewish rituals are present in his imagination of Judaism, although they only act as contributors to a stronger political and spiritual connection between the Israeli Jews and Israel. This study concludes that religion and state are amalgamated in Israeli politics, as the securitizing moves as well as the imagined Judaism are based on a mutual dependency present between the Israeli Jews and the Jewish state. The conclusions are especially significant to debates on the relationship between religion and state in Israel. These debates are expected to further intensify as the Ultra-Orthodox community - which is in favour of a more religiously inspired political system – continues to grow.*

## Contents

Introduction .....	5
Chapter One: Securitization Theory and Religion .....	9
Securitization Theory .....	9
Securitization Theory and Religion .....	12
Critiques of Securitization Theory.....	13
Securitization in Israel.....	13
Conclusion.....	14
Chapter Two: Judaism in the Jewish State .....	16
Judaism and the Founding of the Jewish State.....	16
Religious Institutions.....	18
Religious Courts .....	19
Shabbat and kashrut .....	20
Education .....	20
Jewish Identities of Israel.....	21
Conclusion.....	23
Chapter Three: Methodology of the Current Study .....	25
Discourse Analysis and Securitization Theory .....	25
Studying Religion.....	27
Dimensions of Judaism .....	30
Data collection .....	31
Conclusion.....	33
Chapter Four: PM Netanyahu’s Speech Acts .....	35
Speech A.....	35
Securitizing Move.....	36
Imagining Judaism.....	37
Speech B.....	39
Securitizing Move.....	39
Imagining Judaism.....	40
Speech C.....	43
Securitizing Move.....	43
Imagining Judaism.....	44

Speech D .....	46
Securitizing Move.....	47
Imagining Judaism.....	49
Speech E.....	52
Securitizing Move.....	52
Imagining Judaism.....	54
Conclusion.....	58
Discussion.....	60
Conclusion.....	64
Bibliography .....	66
Appendix .....	71
Hebrew Concepts and Words .....	71
Speech A.....	72
Speech B.....	72
Speech C.....	72
Speech D .....	72
Speech E.....	72

## Introduction

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his worries about the future of Israel during a Bible study session in Jerusalem on 10 October 2017. He told the attendees that the chances of Israel being able to celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 30 years depends on its ability to cope with existential threats. He noted that ‘all kinds of people’ threaten the future of Israel by attempting to attack ‘the first and highest foundation on which we stand’, which according to Prime Minister Netanyahu, is the Bible.<sup>1,2</sup>

Through the lens of securitization<sup>3</sup> theory, the warning of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu (henceforth referred to as PM Netanyahu) can be labelled a “securitizing move”. Such a move involves a leader presenting a referent object to be under threat, in which an “us versus them” rhetoric is typically adopted (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998). The “us” that PM Netanyahu creates here seems to include only Israeli Jews, as not all Israeli citizens see the Bible as the Holy Book (Lerner, 2007). Furthermore, he refers to Israel as ‘the state of the Jewish people’. Are the non-Jewish people not considered members of his society? And what role does PM Netanyahu imagine the Bible plays amongst “his” people? This thesis will explore how Judaism is understood and institutionalised in Israeli, by analysing the “us” that is created in securitization processes by PM Netanyahu.

Previous research points out that securitization of Israeli society has accelerated since the outbreak of the second intifada – or Palestinian uprising against Israel – in 2000 (Abulof, 2014; Ochs, 2011; Olesker, 2014). These publications conclude that Israeli politicians present Israeli identity to be under threat, as these politicians argue that the growing Israeli Arab population is jeopardizing the preservation of Israel as the Jewish state. The authors all understand the Jewish identity in terms of ethnicity. However, Jewish

---

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-netanyahu-israel-must-face-future-security-threats-to-reach-100-1.5456720>

<sup>2</sup> Netanyahu uses the words “*Torah*” and “*Bible*” interchangeably to refer to what Christians call “the Old Testament”. Throughout this thesis Netanyahu’s choice of wording is followed. When referring to the wider Jewish religious canon of which the *Torah* is part, the word *Tanakh* is used.

<sup>3</sup> The spelling (“securitization” or “securitisation”) differs per author. Ole Wæver himself uses different spellings in different articles (“securitisation” in Wæver, 2003 and “securitization” in Wæver, 2009). However, the foundational texts on this theory (Buzan et al., 1993; Buzan et al., 1998; Wæver, 1995) spell “securitization”, and therefore I adopt the same spelling.

identity is a complex concept. Alongside ethnicity, it involves notions of culture, religion, and in the Israeli context also nationality (Stern, 2017).

In the past, the different components of Jewish identity were perceived to create one cohesive, static whole (Stern, 2017). Certain developments in recent generations brought about a restructuring of the elements that make up this Jewish identity (Lerner, 2007). Most significantly, the centrality of the religious component of Jewish identity is no longer self-evident. Whereas in the past, being Jewish necessarily meant adhering to (what is now considered) Orthodox Judaism, many Israelis today still identify as Jewish, even though they do not observe Judaism as their religion (Stern, 2017).

This restructuring of the Jewish identity does not only take place on an individual level. There is ongoing discussion regarding the place of Judaism in Israeli politics. Whereas some see a political system based on the *halakha* (Jewish religious law)<sup>4</sup> as a necessity for the Jewish nation-state<sup>5</sup>, others prefer religion and state to be separated (Edrei, 2017).

Israeli Jewish identity is a complex and ambiguous concept and by exploring the political imagination of Judaism in Israel, this thesis attempts to elucidate the present-day Jewish character of the Jewish state. This thesis will study how the religious component of Israeli Jewish identity is imagined in Israeli politics. The central question of this thesis reads as follows:

*How is Judaism imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics?*

“Contemporary Israeli politics” in this case refers to the policy of and speeches delivered by the past two, and the current sitting government of Israel. The 31<sup>st</sup> government (2009-2013), the 32<sup>nd</sup> government (2013-2015) and the 33<sup>rd</sup> government (2015-present) have been headed by PM Netanyahu. Since many interpretations of Israeli Jewish identity exist, and changes in legislation take time, analysing speeches from the three governments headed by the same PM increases the chances of detecting continuity.

---

<sup>4</sup> For list of Hebrew words and concepts, see Appendix

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/final-text-of-jewish-nation-state-bill-set-to-become-law/>

This thesis primarily aims to understand how Judaism is imagined by the Israeli government. Besides, this thesis aims to explore how Judaism can be approached in the securitization framework, without disregarding the complexity of different interpretations and the complex nature of religion itself. This thesis will explore an approach to the imagination of Judaism that does not limit the possible outcome by using a narrow and static definition of what religion is.

To explore how Judaism is imagined, this thesis is divided into four chapters which will each tackle one sub question.

Securitization theory is central to the first chapter. The sub question “What is securitization and how does it operate in the Israeli context?” is answered here. As this thesis looks at Judaism through the framework of securitization, it is vital to understand what constitutes securitization processes and why these are significant to the political imagination of Judaism in Israel.

The second chapter is concerned with the sub question “To what extent is Judaism institutionalised in Israel?” This chapter explores the relationship between religion and state in Israel. This sub question is important to understand whether Israeli governments have any influence on how Judaism is understood and practiced in Israel.

The methodology that will be used to study the imagination of Judaism is addressed in chapter three. The sub question in this chapter is “How can the imagination of Judaism be analysed through the framework of securitization?” This chapter suggests that discourse analysis – the study of text and context - offers the most appropriate method. In studying securitizing moves, it is of central importance to understand the wider context, as the possible effect of securitizing words depend on what they mean to the audience (Buzan et al., 1998). This chapter further explains why Smart’s dimensions of religion (1998), rather than a static and closed definition of Judaism, will be utilised to study Judaism.

The fourth chapter contains an analysis of speeches delivered by PM Netanyahu. The analysis consists firstly of a detection and description of a securitizing move. Secondly, PM Netanyahu’s imagination of Judaism is identified in each speech.

The discussion connects the outcome of this study to the wider context of Israeli politics on the one hand, and research on the other. The main goals of this thesis are addressed and recommendations for follow-up research will be given.

To conclude, the main research question, “How is Judaism imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics?” is answered.

This thesis aims to answer this question by approaching Judaism through the framework of securitization. In the next chapter this framework will be studied and previous research on securitization in Israel will be discussed.

## Chapter One

### Securitization Theory and Religion

This chapter addresses the sub question “What is securitization and how does it operate in the Israeli context?” The first segment elucidates what securitization theory is, with special attention to securitization of identity. Building on that, the second segment discusses the place of religion in securitization theory. Including the concept of identity in securitization theory has also resulted in critique, which is considered in the third segment. Prior research on securitization in the Israeli context is addressed in the fourth segment.

To understand how Judaism in the Israeli context is imagined through processes of securitization, it is vital to understand what constitutes such processes and why these are significant to the understanding of identity.

#### Securitization Theory

Towards the end of the last century understandings of conflict and war were being reshaped. As the Cold War unravelled, the centrality of the threat of (nuclear) war in security studies was being questioned by states, organisations and scholars, who attempted to widen the security agenda into other arenas, such as the economic, environmental and societal sectors (Williams, 2003). The monopoly position of political-ideological systems as a root cause for war was threatened by culture and identity as additional hotbeds for conflict (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000). Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” (1997) is widely criticised for it is now regarded as oversimplified and deterministic<sup>6</sup> and might even exaggerate the importance of religion and culture to conflicts (Suleman, 2017). Nonetheless, the discussion that Huntington’s work triggered at the time and the influence it continues to have in the policy sector can be seen as a manifestation of the rising attention for the role of religion and culture in conflicts.

---

<sup>6</sup> For some of the most important critique on Huntington’s theory, see: Berman, P. (2004). *Terror and liberalism*. WW Norton & Company., Ash, T. G. (1999). *History of the Present*. Penguin Books Limited.

Scholars arguing for incorporating non-military sources of threats in security studies - the “wideners” - were confronted by “traditionalists”, who argued that security studies should be confined to military threats. Traditionalists wanted to prevent the field of security including too many sectors, which could potentially dramatically widen the field of security studies (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998).

The Copenhagen School, a school of thought mainly influenced by the writings of Buzan and Wæver, sought to develop a new framework for analysing security, by accommodating arguments from both sides of this debate (Wæver, 2003). In their framework for security, threats can derive from military as well as non-military areas, from state-actors as well as non-state actors, threatening territorial as well as non-territorial objects or subjects. Moreover, they incorporate the process of presenting certain subjective issues as security concerns, rather than only objective threats (Sheikh, 2014). For something to be regarded as a security issue in their framework of securitization, it must be presented as an existential threat, accepted as such by the audience, and subsequently it legitimises emergency measures (Buzan et al., 1998).

According to securitization theory, the choice to frame something as a security threat is a deliberate choice that securitizing actors make (Wæver, 1995). The threat can be an objective or a subjective threat. The threat does not need to be proven to be real; rather, it must “feel real”. The potential danger can still be substantive, but the objective accuracy of the threat is not the priority (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The perception of the threat does not necessarily have to be pre-existing either; the audience may only start to feel threatened after the securitizing actor has presented them with the threat, making security a self-referential practice (Wæver, 1995). This means that by using the words “security”, or “threat”, the issue becomes a threat and a matter of security.

Accommodating the “wideners”, securitization comes in many forms and takes place in different sectors. The person staging the threat as existential, the securitizing actor, can be literally “in power”, in the sense that he/she holds a position in government. Anyone in a position to have social influence over an audience can be a securitizing actor; religious leaders, celebrities, activists, a CEO of a popular corporation and so on.

Securitization theory also accommodates the concerns of the “traditionalists”, as there are certain criteria that must be met for something to be classified as a security issue. The process of securitization according to the Copenhagen School, is two-tiered (Buzan et al., 1998).

Firstly, there must be a “securitizing move”, performed by a securitizing actor, such as a sermon delivered by a Rabbi, or a speech at a political rally around election time, which frames a phenomenon as an existential threat to a “referent object”.

Secondly, the audience witnessing the securitizing move must accept that the phenomenon is a threat that needs to be dealt with, and thereby legitimises the break from politics as usual, allowing authorities to take extraordinary measures to protect the referent object. The duration of the exceptional politics depends on the duration of the threat, or at least on the duration of the experience of the threat. A strategy of combating a threat might even become institutionalised if the threat is persistent, such as with airport security protocol or mandatory military service (Buzan et al., 1998).

In the primary books on securitization theory, the authors set out strictly defined criteria for a threat to be considered a security issue, but simultaneously widen the agenda by including threats deriving from economic, environmental and societal sectors (Buzan et al., 1998; Buzan, Wæver & Lemaitre, 1993; Wæver, 1995). Sectors are ‘(...) views of the international system through a lens that highlights one particular aspect of the relationship and interaction among all of its constituent units’ (Buzan, Jones, & Little, 1993, p. 31). The five main sectors identified by Buzan et al. (1998) – the military sector, the environmental sector, the economic sector, the societal sector and the political sector – each have their different threats as well as referent objects. The military sector, for example, is preoccupied with territorial integrity, the political sector with governmental authority, and the societal sector with collective identity (Williams, 2003).

Societal securitization typically takes place when a (religious-, ethnic-, political- or other) community experiences a threat to their survival, and more specifically to the survival of the collective identity of the community (Bosco, 2014; Buzan et al., 1998). Olesker (2014) claims that due to the subjectivity of collective identities, societal security is especially susceptible to exploitation, and can be corrupted by elites to create or reinforce hierarchical

structures in a society. Manifestations of the identity, such as language, religious rituals and texts, and more tangible objects such as identity cards, can become weapons in protecting the collective identity from the experienced threat (Buzan et al., 1998).

### Securitization Theory and Religion

Initially, religion was only mentioned as a form of identity in the societal sector, alongside identities such as clans, tribes, nations, races, etc. (Buzan et al., 1993; Buzan et al., 1998). In 2000, Ole Wæver, the only founding father of securitization theory who has written explicitly about the position of religion in the theory (Sheikh, 2014), published an article in a special issue of *Millennium*.

In this article, Wæver and co-author Laustsen state that the supporting role that had been prescribed to religion in securitization theory oversimplifies religion. They propose a separate sector for religion, as they claim that religion as part of the societal sector ‘...does not do justice to the distinctly religious’ (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000, p. 709). Religion should be handled as a separate sector as religious identity would be perceived to be more fundamental than other forms of identity (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000; Sheikh, 2014).

Through an exploration of writings of Søren Kierkegaard, Georges Bataille, and Ninian Smart, Laustsen and Wæver argue that religion is a system of ideas, which is based on faith, and which guides devotees in their attempt to bridge the contraposition of the immanent/profane on the one hand, and the transcendent/sacred on the other, through mediating practices such as scriptures, rituals and ethics. In the religious sector, “faith” would be the corresponding referent object and “being” the criterion of survival: ‘If the practice of faith is threatened, one’s very identity as man (one’s being) is endangered’ (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000, p. 719).

A religious discourse can easily be (mis)used for increasing the chances of success of a securitizing move, as the audience is more prone to accept a securitizing move if sacred objects and arguments are deployed (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000). Religious factors can be found in non-religious conflicts and even if a religion is presented as being central to securitization – either as a referent object or as a threat -, it would be too simplistic to claim that these are purely religious in nature, as the motives behind threatening or behind

securitization are not free of political, military, or economic objectives, and neither is the strategic action to counter the threat (Cavanaugh, 2009; Laustsen & Wæver, 2000).

### Critiques of Securitization Theory

Just as Huntington is accused of oversimplifying and generalizing cultures and religions (Sen, 1999), so has securitization theory been arraigned for ascribing a single identity to society. According to Bill McSweeney - arguably the most distinct opponent of securitization theory - this is not only false, but also potentially dangerous. The idea of the singular identity of a society might be misused as a legitimization for intolerance (McSweeney, 1999).

Notwithstanding the risks of misunderstanding the diversity in societies and identities, Williams (2003) explains that false uniformity is precisely what is presented in a securitizing move. When an existential threat is presented to the survival of society, an “us versus them” logic is invoked. Discrimination of minorities, whether institutionalised or not, is therefore a plausible consequence of societal security (McSweeney, 1999; Olesker, 2014).

### Securitization in Israel

Whilst securitization theory has become prevalent in analysing some countries' security issues, as is the case with Turkey and the United States, the case of Israel has remained underexposed (Lupovici, 2014; Olesker, 2014). Lupovici (2014) argues that the institutionalised securitization and prominent discourse of traditional security in Israel is to blame for the lack of studies that apply securitization theory to Israel. Since its birth in 1948, Israel has been in a constant political and legal state of emergency (Gross, 2003). “Politics as usual” is carried out in a state of emergency. The lines between what is normal and what is exceptional are blurred, which makes Israel a complex and unattractive case for securitization theory (Lupovici, 2014). Only a few comprehensive studies of securitization in Israel have been published, which is surprising considering the frequent use of the existential threat rhetoric by Israeli speakers and the prominent security discourse, in the region but especially in Israel (Lupovici, 2014). A small number of publications discusses security issues in Israel closely related to securitization theory without labelling it as a process of securitization (Bar-Tal, Magal & Halperin, 2009; Maoz, 2009). Within the limited

school of literature where securitization theory is explicitly applied to Israel, most consideration is given to the economic- and environmental sector of securitization theory: the securitization of water in and around Israel (Schäfer, 2012; Turton, 2003; Zeitoun, 2007). Traditional securitization in Israel, focussing on the military and political sector, is also well represented (Barak & Sheffer, 2013; Michael, 2009).

Abulof (2014), Coskun (2010), Ochs (2011) and Olesker (2014) have all published comprehensive studies on societal securitization in Israel. These four studies describe the securitization of the Jewish character of the state of Israel through different approaches. However, they all conclude that the identity of Israel is perceived to be under threat, with Israeli Arabs or Palestinians jeopardizing the existence of the Jewish state. Three out of four argue that this process of securitization is driven by Israeli politics (Abulof, 2014; Ochs, 2011; Olesker, 2014), whilst Coskun emphasises the securitizing power of historians (2010). In all four publications, identity is labelled as the referent object and the authors consider ethnicity to be the characteristic of collective identity.

To the best of my knowledge, no study has been published on securitization and religion in Israel. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian published a book in 2015, named 'Security theology, surveillance and politics of fear'. In contrast to what the title might suggest, the book does not focus on religious identities, but the "theology" refers to the all-encompassing obsession of the Israeli state institutions with security and surveillance, which penetrates the everydayness of the lives of Palestinians.

Although Laustsen and Wæver (2000) refer to Israel as 'a well-known example of a securitization of faith' (p. 721), a study into the securitization of religion in Israel has not yet been published. This thesis addresses this gap by studying how Judaism is imagined through the framework of securitization.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that although Israel knows many examples of securitizing rhetoric, there has been little research on this topic, due to a blurred line between normal politics and extraordinary security measures. Nonetheless, processes of securitization of Israeli identity by Israeli politics have been detected in previous research. These publications

interpreted Israeli Jewish identity as ethnicity and did not consider its religious component. Therefore, this thesis will build on previous research regarding securitization yet will add a new approximation of Israeli Jewish identity. How this new approach will be executed will be explained in chapter three. The following chapter will introduce the Israeli context, as it discusses the past, current and possible future relationship between religion and state in Israel.

## Chapter Two

### Judaism in the Jewish State

This chapter addresses the second sub question and explores to what extent Judaism is institutionalised in Israel.

The chapter is divided into three segments. Firstly, the chapter provides a short exploration of the different attitudes towards and hopes for the realisation of the Jewish state. Secondly, the chapter maps religious services provided by the state to examine the religion and state relationship in Israel. An exploration of the current- and anticipated Jewish demographics of Israel will follow in the third segment. The focus here lies on how the main Jewish communities of Israel see themselves in relation to the state and what they imagine the role of the government should be in relation to Judaism.

To answer the central research question in this thesis, an understanding of how contemporary Israeli governments give substance to the religious component of the Jewish character of the state is needed. As this thesis explores how Judaism is imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics, it is vital to understand the relationship between religion and state, and to explore whether Israeli governments have any authority over how Judaism is understood and practiced in Israel.

#### Judaism and the Founding of the Jewish State

In examining to what extent Judaism is institutionalised in Israel, it is important to understand that the realisation of the Jewish state in 1948 was neither solely a religious enterprise based a godly promise<sup>7</sup>, nor was it merely a late attempt by the international community to create a safe haven to the Jews. Although these motivations were of influence, the resettlement of the Jewish people in Israel was primarily the result of a process of reimagination of the Jewish identity through the nineteenth century (Edrei, 2017). This reimagination was shaped by two developments: the emancipation of Jews in

---

<sup>7</sup> Since the Jewish people consider themselves to be the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom the Land of Israel was promised, the Bible provides a sacred argument for the location of the Jewish state of Israel (Genesis 15:18-21; Genesis 26:3; Genesis 28:13).

nineteenth century Western Europe and the Jewish enlightenment, or *haskalah* (Smart, 1998).

Through the emancipation, Jews did not only acquire an equal legal status in Christian Europe, but the physical and cultural ghetto walls that had surrounded the Jewish community were broken down (Fishman, 1995). This paved the way for cultural exchanges and forced the isolated, retracted Jewish community to reinterpret their identity in correspondence with Western European modernising culture (Dubin, 2005).

The cultural exchanges in Western Europe resulted in a variety of religious identities and intellectual movements within the Jewish community (Kasper-Marienberg, 2017). The importance given to the religious segment of the Jewish identity differed, varying from being central to the Orthodox Jews, to being virtually absent in the secular nationalist “Zionist” movement (Brafman, 2017; Edrei, 2017).

A state in which a government does not rule based on religion, and in which religious authorities (“the church”) do not have legal and legislative power, is often used to describe a “secular state”. Secularism can take many forms, however. It can refer to an array of worldviews and normative-ideological state projects. Apart from a simple separation of church and state, secularism can refer to multiple legal-constitutional frameworks (Casanova, 2011). A softer form of secularism might see religious institutions and governments officially working independently from each other and striving to be open to every religion (including the lack thereof). A harder form of secularism, such as implemented in France (*laïcité*), might entail a legal and legislative aggressiveness against religion and religious symbols in public places (Calhoun, 2010). Although not aiming to create a general definition of secularism, the word “secular” in the context of Zionism refers to the aim for a political system that is not based on the *halakha*. This does not mean that the movement was anti-religious in character (Edrei, 2017).

The Zionist movement interpreted Jewish identity as a nationality rather than a religion, and sought to ‘challenge the linkage and the traditional balance between these two components of Jewish identity – the religion and the collective – and at the same time, to espouse a commitment to the continuity of particularistic Jewish existence’ (Edrei, 2017, p. 339). To ensure this continuity, they lobbied to realise a state for the Jewish people. This

movement's increased popularity confused and divided the Orthodox communities (Ravitzky, 2007).

The Orthodox Jews attached religious significance to the resettlement of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. The doctrine of the coming of the *Messiah*, who will bring redemption to the Jewish people, is central to Judaism (Smart, 1998). The reinstatement of the Jewish state in Israel is seen as a necessary step in the messianic process. Whereas some celebrate the idea of a new Jewish state as a step towards their salvation, and embrace Zionism despite its secular political character, others reject it as they believe redemption should not be forced, and the *Messiah's* coming should be passively awaited (Ratzabi, 2016).

Those who saw salvation in the reinstatement of the Jewish state and the secular Jewish nationalists worked together towards the realisation of their ideal. Although both had very different motivations, they shared a common goal; a Jewish state. Their different motivations were, and still are, represented in what relationship they imagined between religion and state (Edrei, 2017).

### Religious Institutions

Although political Zionists challenged the necessity of the connection between the Jewish people and Judaism, they could not implement a separation of religion and state such as they had seen developed in twentieth century France. Western models for church and state relations are based on a division of roles as laid out in the New Testament.<sup>8</sup> A Jewish state could not have adopted such a model, even if the religious community had allowed it. The *halakha* (Jewish religious law) has always been at the centre of all areas of life (Smart, 1998). How could the particularistic Jewish existence be preserved, if the *halakha* would have no place in the Jewish state?

To prevent a major conflict between religious and secular political elites over the place of religion in the Jewish state during pre-state negotiations, it was proposed to maintain the *status quo*. This included a set of judicial institutions and laws concerning religious matters that had first been instated during the Ottoman Empire and later during

---

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus told them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's (Mark 12:17)

the British Mandate, in which religious courts were authorised to deal with religious matters for their own community (Barak-Erez, 2008). Alongside keeping the peace, the justification for state funded religious services is based on the view of religion as a basic human need. Just as the state provides benefits, military protection and basic health care, the state also comes to meet the religious needs of the people (Edrei, 2017). However, there is no official state religion and the freedom of religion is mentioned as one of Israel's core values in its Declaration of Independence (Cochran, 2017).

The *status quo* has been in effect for over seventy years. Although some amendments have been made, governments have been wary to change the arrangement and open the discussion. Since all government have been formed through coalitions, the more secular parties cannot afford to anger the religious political parties by changing the *status quo* (Mahler, 2010).

### Religious Courts

The religious courts in Israel have authority over issues related to religion, within their respective religious communities, namely the Jews, Muslims, Druze and Christians. Although nine Christian communities are recognised, it is important to note that the Orthodox Rabbinical courts have authority over all Jews, including those who are not religious at all (Lerner, 2007).

The Orthodox Jewish community has a monopoly position in state-sponsored religious- and social affairs in Israel (Feder, 2011). This monopoly is manifested in the Chief Rabbinate, which is an influential, state-funded institution in Israel recognised by law.<sup>9</sup> The Chief Rabbis – who are appointed by the Minister of Justice and oversee the Rabbinical Courts – are the official spokesmen of Judaism in Israel and are authorised to give their opinions on any legal matters relating to *halakha* (Mahler, 2010). Even though non-Orthodox Jews are excluded from becoming a Chief Rabbi or from serving in a Rabbinical Court, all Jewish citizens rely on these courts for marriage, divorce, burial, *kashrut* supervision, and other religious issues (Edrei, 2017). As matters related to personal status and conversion are also overseen by Rabbinic Courts, the Orthodox community in practice gets to determine who is considered Jewish and who is not (Lerner, 2007).

---

<sup>9</sup> See: Chief Rabbinate of Israel Law, 5740-1980

Although Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is not the official state religion of Israel, the religious authority over Jews in Israel lies with the Ultra-Orthodox leaders. This is not new: as explained, the *status quo* has not been altered since the founding of Israel. However, this endorsement of Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is still relevant to understanding how contemporary Israeli politics imagines Judaism, as every government has the right and option to change this *status quo*. By maintaining the *status quo*, Ultra-Orthodox Judaism is being endorsed in contemporary Israeli politics.

### Shabbat and kashrut

The observance of *shabbat* and *kashrut* are examples of the incorporation of a Judaic tradition into Israeli culture. Most Israeli Jewish citizens want to keep the *shabbat* as the official day of rest and keep *kosher* at home (Pew Research Center, 2016). However, there is an ongoing debate regarding to what extent the state is responsible for their compliance.

As is with matters relating to personal status and marriage, the *shabbat* and *kashrut* legislations apply to all Israeli Jewish citizens, without taking into consideration the many different interpretations of that identity (Barak-Erez, 2017).

### Education

The current Israeli education system is largely based on the model adopted by the Ottoman Empire and later under the British Mandate. This model included a state funded school system based on ethnic identification and autonomous, private schools (Cochran, 2017)

The state-funded Israeli education system consists of four distinct streams – *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox), *Mamlachti dati* (National Religious), *Mamlachti* (National), and Arab schools (Stern, 2017). All four are dependent on state funding, however, Jewish schools receive more in comparison to Arab-Israeli schools (Coursen-Neff, 2004). *Haredi* institutions are financially dependent on the Ministry of Education yet are free to create their own curriculum (Sachs & Reeves, 2017).

The study of Judaic texts, Jewish history and Judaic holidays has been incorporated in the state curriculum.<sup>10</sup> Although schools are free to critically study the *Tanakh* rather than teaching it as the absolute truth, this is another example of the cultural incorporation

---

<sup>10</sup> See: State Education Law, 5713-1954, 7 LSI 113, § 2(1) (1952-53) (Isr.), as amended by Statutes Education Law, 2000, S.H. 122

of Judaism in Israel (Maoz, 2007). As of 2007, the study of the Bible has been placed further to the centre of the state curriculum. The Public Committee for Bible Education, appointed by the Minister of Education, recommended daily discussion of passages from the *Torah* to be institutionalised in every school, 'in view of the growing gap between schoolchildren and the Bible's world and language and the growing polarization between the religious and secular in Israeli society.'<sup>11</sup>

This growing polarisation in Israeli society was also the subject of the speech of President Reuven Rivlin at the annual Herzilya Conference in June 2015. In this speech - now known as the "four tribes speech" – the President warns that a transformation is taking place which will 'restructure our very identity as "Israelis" (...) there is no escape from this change'.<sup>12</sup> He predicts that the polarisation between religious and secular Jews will continue to grow, fuelled by the separate, isolated educational streams.

### Jewish Identities of Israel

In the first decades of the new Jewish state, the cultural differences between the new Jewish immigrants were regarded the biggest challenge in creating a new Israeli society. Especially *Ashkenazi* (Roman) and *Mizrahi* (Middle Eastern) Jews were at odds and the Israeli government insisted on creating a "melting pot" in which individual cultures would disappear and shared Jewish tradition and history would take their places (Weingrod, 2016).

Indeed, over the years the ethnic divisions have become less significant, through intermarriage and generations of Jews being born in Israel (Stern, 2017; Weingrod, 2016). However, an increasing isolation of Jewish communities through separate educational streams in combination with changing demographics in Israel, have resulted in religious divisions taking the ethnic clashes' place (Cochran, 2017; Sachs & Reeves, 2017).

The four main Jewish identities present in contemporary Israel society are *Haredi* (Ultra-Orthodox), *Datiim* (Modern Orthodox), *Masortim* (Traditional) and *Hilonim* (Secular) (Sachs & Reeves, 2017; Stern, 2017). According to a report by Pew Research Center (PRC),

---

<sup>11</sup> The Public Committee for Bible Education is being launched, The Ministry's spokesperson's announcement, Jan. 9, 2007 (Isr.) (translation by Asher Maoz)

<sup>12</sup> See: [http://www.president.gov.il/English/ThePresident/Speeches/Pages/news\\_070615\\_01.aspx](http://www.president.gov.il/English/ThePresident/Speeches/Pages/news_070615_01.aspx)

based on face-to-face interviews among 5,601 Israeli adults (ages 18 and older) from October 2014 through May 2015,<sup>13</sup> virtually all Israeli Jews self-identified with one of these four labels: about half of the Jewish population of Israel identify as *Hilonim*, 30% as *Masortim*, 13% as *Datiim* and 10% identifies as *Haredim* (PRC, 2016, p.5). Although currently the secular Jews constitute the biggest group, the predictions read that mainly due to much higher birth-rates, the Ultra-Orthodox community will continue to grow at a much higher rate than the other Jewish communities in Israel (PRC, 2016, p.44; Stern, 2017). On average, an *Haredim* woman will bear 7 children in her lifetime (PRC, 2016), in comparison to a national average of 3.1 in 2016.<sup>14</sup> This high number can be explained by the fact that few *Haredim* participate in the workforce (Stadler, 2002), as well as the understanding that having large families is a *mitzvah* (commandment).<sup>15</sup> As President Rivlin argued, these new demographics will pose several challenges.

Firstly, this trend will challenge the Israeli economy. Most *Haredi* men withdraw themselves from the labour force, as they believe God will sustain them (Stern, 2017). At least until the age of 40, most men primarily dedicate their time to studying the *Tanakh* in the *yeshiva* (learning institution for religious education) (Stadler, 2002). *Haredi* education, also outside the *yeshiva*, is mostly comprised of religious studies and covers to a lesser degree “general education”, such as maths and foreign languages (Finkelman, 2014). When the Ultra-Orthodox community will grow faster than other communities, new generations of Israeli Jews will be less equipped for the labour market. In practice, the *Haredim* are financially dependent on the economy of the same state of which they are trying to isolate themselves from (Finkelman, 2014).

Secondly, the changing demographics will challenge the religion and state relations in Israel. The Orthodox community is in favour of a government that promotes more religious values and is in favour of making *halakha* the only official law for Jews in Israel (PRC, 2016, p. 193). Simply put, a growing Ultra-Orthodox share of Israeli society can change the political landscape and strengthen the position of those in favour of a government more involved with religious affairs.

---

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.pewforum.org/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/>

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://data.oecd.org/pop/fertility-rates.htm>

<sup>15</sup> ‘And God blessed them; and God said unto them: ‘Be fruitful, and multiply (...)’ (Genesis 1:28)

Lastly, a growing *Haredim* community will mean a weakening of the Jewish commitment to the Israeli state (Halbertal, 2016). As the *Haredi* view modern culture as a threat to the Jewish existence, they lead a life that is very isolated from the rest of society (Finkelman, 2014). Most Ultra-Orthodox Jews do not identify as Zionists (PRC, 2016, p. 150; Ratzabi, 2016). Whereas *Haredi* Jews reject Zionism, *Datiim* embrace it as a religious virtue (Ettinger, 2017). Unlike the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, Modern Orthodox Jews believe in an active participation for Jews in the messianic process (Fishman, 1995). This contrast in attitudes towards the Zionist project also appears from the non-participation of Ultra-Orthodox in the Israeli army (Sachs & Reeves, 2017; Stern, 2017).

This description of the present and expected religious demographics in Israel is of importance to understand the context in which the speeches of PM Netanyahu are delivered. Although the four main Israeli Jewish communities differ from one another, this diversity is not reflected in how the government institutionalises religion in Israel. Furthermore, the growing Ultra-Orthodox community can influence the debate on the role of the state in religious affairs.

## Conclusion

This chapter explored to what extent Judaism is institutionalised in Israel. By looking at the historical, current and possible future relationship between religion and state, this chapter has shown that the two are very much interwoven. This is important to the research question of this thesis, as this amalgamation consequently means that through institutionalisation of religion, the state can influence the way Judaism is practiced and understood in Israeli society. Although the relationship between religion and state is and has been a topic of much debate, this chapter has shown that the state has effectively been prioritising Ultra-Orthodox Judaism over other interpretations of Judaism in Israel. Furthermore, this chapter has argued that the growth of the Ultra-Orthodox community can lead to a loss of shared identity among Israeli Jews on the one hand, and a shifting towards an even more amalgamated religion and state on the other.

Chapter two has clarified the context in which PM Netanyahu imagines Judaism in Israel. The methods which will be used for analysing five speeches delivered by the PM will be discussed in chapter three.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology of the Current Study

This chapter addresses how the role of securitization in imagining Judaism in Israel by PM Netanyahu can be analysed. To begin with, the most fitting method for studying securitization is described and applied to the context of this thesis. Furthermore, the framework that will be used to interpret the imagined version of Judaism will be introduced. Finally, the process of data collection will be described.

### Discourse Analysis and Securitization Theory

A process of securitization is typically analysed through discourse analysis (Wæver, 2003). The theory behind discourse analysis is based on the idea that language is socially constructed, and that language in turn influences social reality (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Discourse analysis questions epistemic realism, in which objects have a fixed meaning, independent from interpretation (Campbell, 1993). Instead, it is concerned with the consequences of presenting and interpreting an issue in a certain way (Milliken, 1999). In practice this means that the analysis does not only focus on what is described in a text, but rather takes into consideration the context of the language and the way issues are presented (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

Authors have criticised the Copenhagen School for solely relying on discourse analysis, arguing that this focuses too much on the securitizing move and does not give enough significance to the role of the audience (Olesker, 2014; Stritzel, 2007). These critics argue that discourse analysis is limited to the context and content of the securitizing move – the speech act – whilst a process of securitization can only be complete when the audience accepts this move and consequently allows exceptional measures (Balzacq, 2005; Floyd, 2011; Stritzel, 2007; Williams, 2003). Nonetheless, this thesis focuses on the imagination of Judaism in Israel by the PM, whilst the acceptance of this speech by the Israeli public is beyond the scope of this research.

There is no consensus as to how discourses are best analysed. There is even discussion as to whether discourse analysis would benefit from “doing” methods at all (Herrera & Braumoeller, 2004). Milliken argues that although discourse analysts want to challenge “scientism”, or an obsession with methodology, they should still engage in debates on research and method (Milliken, 1999). Milliken’s contribution to such a debate is now considered one of the most concise overviews of discourse analysis in International Relations (Holzscheiter, 2014). In this article, she elucidates three main concepts that discourse analysts commit to in their analyses, and how these can be incorporated in methods of discourse analysis. Although her work is focused on discourse analysis in International Relations and this thesis is concerned with national discourse, her three commitments fit well with securitization theory as they both revolve around how authorities influence the formation of common sense and shared identity.

According to Milliken (1999), discourse analysis is postulated on three main commitments. Firstly, the concept of “discourse” refers to what Milliken calls a ‘system of signification’. These systems are built from a combination of words, actions and symbols and it is within these structures that social reality is created (Wilson, 2012). As described in chapter one, according to securitization theory an issue can become a threat by presenting it as such (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). The focus of chapter four is to analyse how, through the presentation of an existential threat, an interpretation of Judaism is promoted as something all Israeli Jews share and must protect. It is through a combination of words, actions and symbols, that this threat as well as this version of Judaism receives social significance and becomes “reality”. As Campbell argues, threats can be real, however, ‘danger is an effect of interpretation’ (Campbell, 1992, p. 2).

The second commitment that Milliken mentions is to the concept of ‘discourse productivity’. This concept implies that a discourse not only enables the interpretation of social reality, but that discourses also organise and control social reality and structure power relations within that reality. A discourse can define authority; who has the authority to speak, to implement policies which change others people’s lives and to define what is “common sense” or “our way of living” (Milliken, 2015). Discourse analysis is especially relevant to this thesis as chapter four focuses on the imagination of a shared identity of Israeli Jews. The use of discourse analysis emphasises how a social reality of “us versus

them” is created, in which the Israeli government must act to protect “the” Israeli Jewish religious identity.

The third and last commitment is closely related to the second and lays down how authoritative figures or institutions try to fix meanings according to their discourses and can disqualify other truths or interpretations. Milliken calls this “the play of practice” (Milliken, 1999). This play is central to this thesis as it studies how through the presentation of an existential threat a feeling of insecurity is invoked, which creates a dependence on authorities to protect the audience. This dependency, according to securitization theory, makes the audience accept the implementation of extraordinary measures (Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998). Although the possible acceptance of the move and the subsequent extraordinary measures fall beyond the scope of this thesis, discourse analysis is still relevant to the creation of a common identity for Israeli Jews in the face of an existential threat.

The analysis of the speeches by PM Netanyahu will be based on Milliken’s three commitments. Firstly, a system of signification will be distinguished, by looking for specific words such as “existential threat”, “dangerous” and “survival” and phrases in which an existential threat and referent object are presented. Secondly, the discourse productivity will be mapped by looking at what social reality is presented within the system of signification. Who is considered part of “us”, and what binds them together? What interpretation of Judaism does PM Netanyahu promote as the shared religious identity of Israeli Jews? To further structure the imagination of Judaism, the seven dimensions of religion as dictated by Ninian Smart will be identified. These dimensions will be further explored in the next section. Lastly, the play of practice is addressed. By distinguishing what PM Netanyahu presents as the consequences of not addressing the threat, it will become clear how he makes his interpretations “stick”.

### Studying Religion

It would be impossible to give a short and satisfying answer to the question “What is Judaism?”, as its meaning completely depends on time, location and individual interpretation (Satlow, 2006). In addition to it being an impossible question, any answer

would be superfluous, for this thesis is not interested in a singular definition of Judaism, but rather aims to describe how PM Netanyahu endorses an imagination of Judaism in Israel.

Without a delineated conception of what constitutes a religion or worldview, an analysis of religious references in PM Netanyahu's speeches would not be possible. To distinguish this imagination, guidelines are needed to recognise what parts of the speech refer to what he includes in his imagination of Judaism, and what parts refer to something outside of it. However, a narrow definition of religion, such as Laustsen and Wæver use, as explained in chapter one, treats religion as a static and fixed phenomenon. According to Laustsen and Wæver (2000), a religious discourse can easily be (mis)used for increasing the chances of success of a securitizing move, as the audience is more prone to accept a securitizing move if sacred objects and arguments are deployed. A (singular) religious discourse implies a monolithic and nation-wide understanding of Judaism.

For a religious speech act to be accepted by a larger public, it must fit or at least overlap with the individual interpretations of the people. However, many different interpretations of what it means to be Jewish exist today in Israeli society. As explained in chapter one, there is no consensus in Israeli society about what role Judaism should play in the lives of Israeli Jews. On the contrary, the discussion on religion and state relations has intensified and divisions between Jewish communities have deepened.

A static definition of religion at the base of the analysis can make for an equally static and limited outcome. Therefore, rather than defining what religion – and Judaism in particular – is or should be, I will identify the seven dimensions of religion as determined by Ninian Smart in my analysis.

According to Mona Sheikh, Smart's dimensions are particularly fitting for the study of religion in the securitization framework. Including Smart's dimensions in a securitization analysis '(...) cultivates an approach to religion that goes beyond the treatment of religion in singular terms and points towards the manifold dimensions of religion as well as the manifold meanings ascribed to each dimension in the representational practices of religio-political actors' (Sheikh, 2014, p. 262).

Smart sought to find a way to approach religion through elements that could be recognised to some extent in all world views and religions. He formulated the following seven dimensions:

1. The Practical and Ritual Dimension
2. The Experimental and Emotional Dimension
3. The Narrative or Mythic Dimension
4. The Doctrinal and Philosophical Dimension
5. The Ethical and Legal Dimension
6. The Social and Institutional Dimension
7. The Material Dimension

The perceptibility of the respective dimensions may differ, from being essential to being virtually absent to a religion or worldview (Smart, 1998). This gives the conception of what religion is or should be more flexibility. It opens the definition of religion to empirically analyse what is present and to what extent, rather than excluding characteristics based on a theoretical definition.

This empirical approach to study a deeply personal and at least partly internal phenomenon might seem contradictory. Smart himself notes that 'core-type religious experiences are intrinsic to the human psyche' (Smart, 1998, p. 177). Why, then, study empirical manifestations rather than the personal experience?

While this question might formulate a justified objection to using Smart's dimensions in some studies, this thesis studies not the internal experience of a religion, but rather the publicly expressed imagination of Judaism by the most prominent political figure in Israel. This study seeks to understand how this politically endorsed version of Judaism is presented to the public through speeches, and is therefore not focused on internal religiousness, but on linguistically presented manifestations of Judaism.

Smart's reluctance to define the main object of his research, namely religion itself, is considered a weak point in this theory (Monius, 1999). If we do not know what religion is, how can we then see its dimensions?

This objection can be refuted by the same argument as the one before. Although to some studies this objection might be essential, this thesis focuses on what is presented as

Judaism, not on what religion essentially is. Whether this interpretation of Judaism fits within a theoretical definition of religion or not, is not relevant to this study.

According to Talal Asad (1993) and William Cavanaugh (2009), the ongoing debate on how to define religion is futile as there is no transcultural and or transhistorical concept of religion. They argue that religion is a constructed category which cannot and should not be defined independently from its context. By approaching Judaism through discourse analysis and Smart's contextual working definition of religion, this thesis adopts a methodology in which the political imagination of Judaism is not artificially separated from its context.

### Dimensions of Judaism

Before conducting an analysis of PM Netanyahu's imagination of Judaism, it is important to briefly explore the dimensions of medieval Judaism. Understanding the dimensions of "classic" Judaism according to Ninian Smart (1998) will make it easier to recognise and understand elements from the PM's speeches.

According to Smart (1998), the **ritual** life of Jews was mostly inhabited by the injunctions and commandments of the *Tanakh*. The Ten Commandments also form the core of the **ethical dimension**. The main **doctrine** central to medieval Judaism was strict monotheism.<sup>16</sup> Another doctrine was the coming of the *Messiah*, which the Jewish people awaited with great anticipation. They believed the *Messiah* would redeem the Jewish people and relieve their sufferings. Awaiting their redeemer was also central to the **mythical dimension**, as '[t]he sufferings of the Jewish people were still a necessary continuation of the special dedication of this community to God' (Smart, 1998, p. 273). Next to this suffering, the Jews also **experienced** unity with God through mystic techniques. The **organisation**, or social cohesion of Judaism was maintained through travel and trade. The synagogues and religious manuscripts formed the core of the **artistic dimension**, decorated with mosaic, illustrations of the *Torah*, and object such as the *menorah*.

---

<sup>16</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3)

## Data collection

The following chapter contains a discourse analysis of the speeches published on the website of the PM.<sup>17</sup> These texts are translated in English, Hebrew and Arabic, which implies that they are meant to reach a wide audience. Therefore, these speeches are appropriate for a securitization analysis; a securitizing move made during a private Knesset discussion or a speech for a small audience cannot be accepted (or rejected) by the wider Israeli public and consequently does not assist in answering the main question.

Unfortunately, the PM's website does not have a search tool. Therefore, all approx. 450 speeches published on the website, given by the PM since his election in 2009, have been read and considered. To distil the most relevant speeches, all transcripts were checked for the following criteria:

1. Does the PM address the Israeli public in this speech?

This thesis focuses on how PM Netanyahu imagines the Jewish "us" in the "us versus them" rhetoric typical to securitizing moves. Therefore, speeches addressed to third parties such as the U.S. Congress<sup>18</sup> or the World Economic Forum<sup>19</sup> are not relevant to this analysis.

2. Can a securitizing move be detected?

As this thesis is interested in how Judaism is imagined through processes of increased securitization in Israel, the speeches relevant to this case must include a "securitizing move". In this move, an existential threat is presented to the audience, and a possible remedy is offered (Buzan et al., 1998). This also means that the threat must be relevant to contemporary society. In some speeches, PM Netanyahu speaks about the threat of anti-Semitism a century ago, or about the Holocaust specifically.<sup>20</sup> These speeches are not relevant to this thesis.

3. Is this securitizing move part of a societal securitization process?

As stated before, societal securitization typically takes place when a (religious-, ethnic-, political- or other) community experiences a threat to their survival (Bosco, 2014; Buzan et

---

<sup>17</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/ENGLISH/MEDIACENTER/SPEECHES/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechCongress030315.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> See: [http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speech\\_forum250118.aspx](http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speech_forum250118.aspx)

<sup>20</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechyadvashem150415.aspx>

al., 1998). Many of the speeches are focused on security, but some only focus on a threat posed by “them”, and not at all on “us”. For example, in a speech delivered on 4th of May 2017 at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center, PM Netanyahu clearly presents the audience with an existential threat (‘When it comes to Israel’s security – there are no compromises, and against the danger of radical Islam we are honing our defensive and offensive capabilities and thereby ensuring our existence’) and a possible way to combat this threat (‘Whoever attacks us or tries to attack us, we will retaliate. There will be no ‘trickle’, no agreement and no restraint’)<sup>21</sup>. However, this securitizing move is not significant to this thesis as the identity of the referent object is solely defined as “Israel”.

After checking the transcripts against these criteria, 33 speeches remained. Out of these 33 provisionally selected speeches, five were ultimately selected. This selection was based on;

#### A. Information richness

Although some speeches might include a securitizing move that concerns the social sector, not all speeches contain enough information to distinguish an interpretation of Judaism. For example, a speech delivered by PM Netanyahu at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center<sup>22</sup>, contains a clear securitizing move. The PM presents an existential danger (radical Islam), but does not describe who the referent object is, other than “Israel”. Furthermore, the speech only consists of 10 lines of text. This is not enough information to paint an image of the PM’s imagination of Judaism.

#### B. Diversity of audience

Three speeches given at the yearly Anniversary Ceremony of the Unification of Jerusalem at Ammunition Hill (2012<sup>23</sup>; 2015<sup>24</sup>; 2017<sup>25</sup>) would have been relevant based on all the criteria above. However, selecting all three of them might result in an unrepresentative analysis. This thesis focuses on what interpretation of Judaism is promoted by PM Netanyahu to the

---

<sup>21</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechBegin040517.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechBegin040517.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechjeru200512.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechJerusalem170515.aspx>

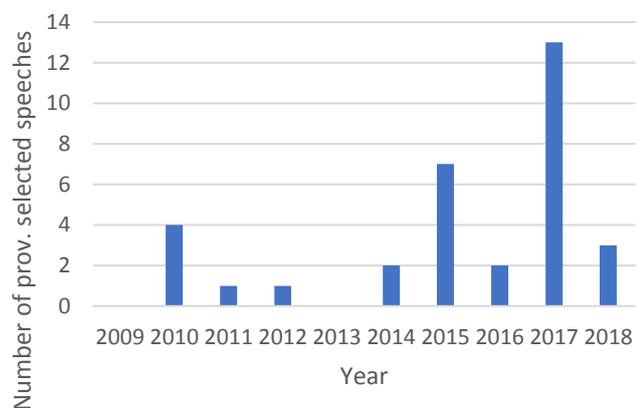
<sup>25</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechHill240517.aspx>

whole Israeli Jewish public. The three speeches given at the same location are more likely to attract a certain public, for example because of accessibility or costs. Therefore, not all three speeches were selected. Speeches given at other locations, with other audiences, have been included, such as speeches at Jerusalem Day Celebrations at *Mercaz HaRav yeshiva*<sup>26,27</sup>, a speech to Knesset<sup>28</sup> and at the Herzliya Conference<sup>29</sup>.

### C. Representation in time span

As this thesis focuses on a time span between 2009 and 2018, it would be unrepresentative to analyse multiple speeches delivered in the same year. However, from the original 33 speeches, 13 were delivered in 2017. Therefore, one speech per two years (2010<sup>30</sup>; 2012<sup>31</sup>; 2014<sup>32</sup>) and two speeches from 2017 (Jerusalem Day<sup>33</sup>; Knesset<sup>34</sup>) were selected.

Provisionally selected speeches per year



## Conclusion

The methodology for analysing the role of securitization in reimagining Judaism in Israel by PM Netanyahu has been clarified in this chapter. Although the Copenhagen School has been criticised for limiting itself to discourse analysis, the arguments for this critique do not apply to this thesis. Therefore, discourse analysis will be adopted as the method for analysing PM Netanyahu’s speeches. Rather than handling a narrow, fixed meaning of what constitutes religion, the imagination of Judaism in Israel by PM Netanyahu will be mapped through

<sup>26</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechjerday280514.aspx>  
<sup>27</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/sppechHarav240517.aspx>  
<sup>28</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechKnesset240517.aspx>  
<sup>29</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechherzliya030210.aspx>  
<sup>30</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechherzliya030210.aspx>  
<sup>31</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechjeru200512.aspx>  
<sup>32</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechjerday280514.aspx>  
<sup>33</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/sppechHarav240517.aspx>  
<sup>34</sup> See: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Speeches/Pages/speechKnesset240517.aspx>

Ninian Smart's seven dimensions of religion. This analysis will be executed in the next chapter.

## Chapter Four

### PM Netanyahu's Speech Acts

In this chapter, the fourth sub question of this thesis is addressed: What interpretation of Judaism does PM Netanyahu promote in speeches where he securitises Jewish identity in Israel?

The chapter is divided into six segments. In each of the first five segments, one speech of PM Netanyahu is analysed through discourse analysis. Each analysis contains the detection of a securitizing move and point out the solution to the threat as presented by PM Netanyahu. After detecting the securitizing move, the seven dimensions of Smart are distinguished and defined.

It is of central importance to explore what interpretation of Judaism PM Netanyahu promotes in these speeches to answer the central question of how Judaism is imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics. This chapter shows how the interpretation of Judaism that PM Netanyahu imagines to be shared by the Israeli Jewish people in the face of existential threats, is constructed.

#### Speech A

This speech was given by PM Netanyahu on 3 February 2010 at the Tenth Annual Herzliya Conference. This conference took place on the Campus of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, Israel. According to its own website, the Herzliya Conference is an annual gathering on global policy. It covers a broad span of issues, but mainly focuses on security, finance, and energy. The audience is comprised of participants from government, business and academia.<sup>35</sup>

The text of this speech can be found in the Appendix – Speech A.

---

<sup>35</sup> See: <http://www.herzliyaconference.org/eng/?CategoryID=426>

## Securitizing Move

Although PM Netanyahu introduces the topic of security early on, by talking about reaching peace with the Palestinians, the securitizing move in this speech does not involve the Palestinians. On the contrary; he says he has high hopes and uses rather positive and optimistic words to describe the state of the conflict (No. 14 – 29)<sup>36</sup>. Via a reference to the disengagement plan of PM Sharon, in which all Jewish settlers were taken out of the Gaza strip and parts of the West Bank,<sup>37</sup> PM Netanyahu introduces his strategy for ensuring the future of the Jewish people, which is one of engagement rather than disengagement (No. 30 – 33).

PM Netanyahu views the survival of the Jewish people as irrefutably connected to the survival of the Jewish state (No. 35-37), and therefore deems a powerful military force and strong economy necessary for their survival (No. 46 – 94). However, in this speech, he does not focus on a military- or economic threat, but rather a societal threat called “cultural shallowness” (No. 151).

A clear securitizing move can be observed when PM Netanyahu argues that military force and a strong economy cannot ensure the survival of the Jewish people in Israel if the commitment to the land of Israel is lost (No. 95 – 97). The solution to this existential threat is presented in line number 98, where he argues that this commitment to Israel can only be preserved through education. He states that although weapons, the military, the economy, innovation and export are all very important to Israel, the existence of the Jewish state (and therefore the survival of the Jewish people) ‘depends, first and foremost, on the knowledge and national sentiment we as parents bestow on our children, and as a state to its education system. It depends on our culture; it depends on our cultural heroes; it depends on our ability to explain the justness of our path and demonstrate our affinity for our land – first to ourselves and then to others’ (No. 127 – 132).

However, the PM sees a contradiction in Israeli education (and in education in other countries), as the balance between ‘integrating into the world at large and maintaining our identity and our uniqueness’ seems to be off (No. 147 – 157). Rather than just teaching

---

<sup>36</sup> These numbers refer to the lines added to Speech A in the Appendix

<sup>37</sup> For the whole plan, see the text: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-gaza-disengagement-plan>

young people to be cosmopolitans (No. 150), education should be preoccupied with ‘... educating children about the values connected to our identity and heritage, teaching children to know our people’s history, educating young people and adults to deepen our ties to one another and to this place’ (No. 108 – 110). As discussed in chapter two, this has been institutionalised by a Judaic component in the state curriculum.

### Imagining Judaism

Throughout the speech, PM Netanyahu speaks about “our children”, “our heritage”, “each child”, etc. He does not specify who belongs to this group. However, he also says ‘I believe that this education starts, first and foremost, in the Book of Books – in the Bible – a subject that is close to my heart these days. It starts there. It moves through the history of our people: The Second Temple, the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, leaving the ghettos, the rise of Zionism, the modern era, the wars fought for Israel’s existence – the history of Zionism and of Israel. A people must know its past in order to ensure its future’ (No. 112 – 116). The Second Temple is of no significance to any other group living in Israel than the Jews. Thereby he excludes Israeli Arab children from his **institutional dimension** and speaks here about the Jews in Israel. In lines 35 – 44 he also speaks of a shared experience of being ‘a proud people with a magnificent country and one which always aspires to serve as “a light unto the nations”’. Before the founding of the Israeli state in 1948, the Jews were ‘just a collection of individuals, communities and fragments of communities’ (No. 38 – 40). However, now Judaism has a different organisational form in Israel: the Jews have their own territory and have become a sovereign collective (No. 40 – 41).

This territory, with all its significant biblical and Zionist sites, forms the **material dimension** of PM Netanyahu’s imagined Judaism. Almost half of the speech (No. 136 – 138; 159 – 278) is dedicated to describing how important it is for young Israeli citizens to know and connect with their country. This connection between the Jewish people and Israel also forms a **dogma**: ‘the fate of the Jewish people is the fate of the Jewish state’ (No. 35 - 36). This entire speech is based on the proposition that the connection between the land and the people is essential, and how their faith is linked.

In lines 209 – 212, where PM Netanyahu explicitly encourages the public to visit Jewish historic sites in Israel with their families. In the **practice** of visiting historic sites, he imagines that fathers can transmit the legacy of the Jewish people to their sons, which has a

‘profound significance’. This profound significance lies not only in the fact that teaching young people about Jewish heritage and history is in line with the PM’s strategy of engagement. The significance is also profound, as it is a fulfilment of the biblical commandment “And tell your son”<sup>38</sup> (No. 112). By endorsing and directly referring to a commandment from the Bible, PM Netanyahu indicates the Bible has some **ethical** authority in Israel.

PM Netanyahu’s imagination of Judaism in Israel entails two separate, for some contradictory, **narratives**: Judaism and Zionism. His solution for the existential threat of cultural shallowness is engaging with the past to ensure the future (No. 116). He argues for education in which the ancient history of the Jewish people is studied through the Bible, and its modern history is studied through the rise and victory of Zionism (No. 112 – 116). He does so again in line number 175 – 198, where he tells the audience about two significant historical sites – one biblical (Tel Lachish) and one Zionist (Aaronson’s lookout) – that need to be accessible to ‘every boy and girl in Israel, every house, every family, every citizen’ (No. 204 – 206).

Another example of the amalgamation of the religious narratives of the Bible and the secular political ideology of Zionism can be found in line number 43 – 44. In this passage, he argues that the survival of the Jewish people depends on the survival of the Jewish state, as ‘[o]ur ability as a collective to determine our own destiny is what grants us the tools to shape our future – no longer as a ruled people, defeated and persecuted, but as a proud people with a magnificent country and one which always aspires to serve as “a light unto the nations.”’. Here, PM Netanyahu refers to God’s promise to the people of Israel, to return them to their homeland (the Promised Land) (Genesis 15:18-21; Genesis 26:3; Genesis 28:13). Not only would they be able to return, but Israel would also become an example for other countries to look up to (Isaiah 42:6; Isaiah 49:6; Isaiah 60:3). The reference to this promise indicates that according to PM Netanyahu, the Jewish people in Israel should still aspire to be what God had in mind for them. As discussed in chapter two, the Ultra-Orthodox community generally does not see the current Israeli state as the

---

<sup>38</sup> ‘Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation’ (Joel 1:3).

‘Promised Land’, as they believe they have not been redeemed yet. In this regard, PM Netanyahu articulates a *Datiim* opinion.

This expression of the aspiration to be an example to others relates to the **emotional dimension**; according to PM Netanyahu, the Jewish people of Israel feel like they are serving a higher purpose. They are committed to their country, love the pioneering spirit and are willing to mobilise and sacrifice. However, he fears that these shared experiences might dissipate. He argues that losing these feelings endangers the future of the Jewish people in Israel, and therefore he attaches great importance to them (No. 134 – 138). The widening gaps between Jewish communities have also been discussed in chapter two. Whether PM Netanyahu refers here to the gaps created by separate education streams and a growing *Haredim* community is unclear.

## Speech B

This speech was delivered on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2012, at *Givat Hatachmoshet* (Ammunition Hill) in East Jerusalem. PM Netanyahu spoke during the National Memorial Ceremony, commemorating the IDF soldiers who fell during the Six Day War in 1967. This war was fought between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria (backed by many other Arab states and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation) and resulted in the seizure of East Jerusalem and the West Bank (previously controlled by Jordan) and the Golan Heights (previously part of Syria)<sup>39</sup>.

This memorial event was attended by politicians such as President Peres, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, Chief of General Staff (IDF) Benny Gantz, and bereaved families.<sup>40</sup>

The text of this speech can be found in the Appendix – Speech B.

## Securitizing Move

In this speech, PM Netanyahu refers multiple times to the threat of a divided Jerusalem. Possibly, he does so to clearly state his view on a discussion within Israeli politics that has been going on for years. As the Palestinian National Authority is committed to making East

---

<sup>39</sup> See: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-six-day-war>

<sup>40</sup> See: <http://www.gojerusalem.com/events/389/Jerusalem-Day-2012--A-week-long-celebration/>

Jerusalem the capital of their future Palestinian state, Israeli politicians are divided on the topic of splitting the city between the two states to attain peace.<sup>41</sup>

Whilst clearly laying out his own position, PM Netanyahu states in his speech that dividing Jerusalem would form an existential danger to Israel ‘because an Israel without Jerusalem is like a body without a heart’ (No. 20 – 21)<sup>42</sup>. Even though he does also refer to the military threat this division could result in (No. 25 – 33; 35 – 37), the choosing of the word “heart”, implies also a deeper threat. According to the PM, Jerusalem is ‘the heart that unites our people’ (No. 22). Therefore, he implies that dividing the city would also threaten the unity of the Jewish people.

Even though the societal threat can be clearly distinguished, it is not so clear who poses the threat. In lines 25 – 26, he states that there are ‘people’ who want to see Jerusalem divided, as they think this will bring peace. He disagrees with them: ‘[t]hey believe that, but they are wrong’ (26 – 27). These people are apparently in support of the two-state solution, but whether they are Palestinians, Israelis or members of the international community, is not clear.

The solution that PM Netanyahu presents to this threat is simple: ‘We will preserve Jerusalem’ (No. 20 – 23). He does not elaborate on how he will ensure this, but he seems confident: ‘A city divided became whole – and it will remain so’ (No. 54 – 55).

### Imagining Judaism

The **institutional dimension** again includes only Israeli Jews. The Jewishness of PM Netanyahu’s “us” can be deduced from lines 13 – 16, where he speaks about how praying Jews face Jerusalem; ‘the same direction our people have faced for thousands of years’. By placing “Jews” and “our people” in one sentence, he creates an “us” which is solely comprised of Jews.

Another section where he reinforces this group identity follows later in the speech, in lines 47 – 50, where PM Netanyahu argues that his generation is witnessing the fulfilment of the prophecies: restoration of the sovereignty of the people of Israel in the Land of Israel

---

<sup>41</sup> See: <https://www.incontextinternational.org/2018/01/02/in-late-night-vote-knesset-passes-law-to-hinder-east-jerusalem-withdrawal/>

<sup>42</sup> These numbers refer to the lines added to Speech B in the Appendix

(Ezekiel 37:21-22), the ingathering of the exiles (Isaiah 11:11-12) and the resurrection of Zion/unification and rebuilding of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:4-8). These prophecies are from the *Tanakh* and are therefore significant to the Jews.

The third reference he makes to “us” as being Jews, but specifically Israeli Jews, follows soon after, in lines 57 – 60. Here he reminisces about the day that Jerusalem was unified, and the Temple Mount came into ‘our possession’ (No. 57). The Temple Mount became part of Israel that day, so he could be speaking about all Israeli citizens. However, he subsequently asks the audience a question which can only imply that he is not speaking about all Israeli citizens, but only the Israeli Jewish citizens: ‘Who did not think then about David and Solomon, about Isaiah and Jeremiah, about the prophecies of hope and the lamentations of destruction? Who did not feel the prayer of generations that beats within us? I felt it and so did you’ (No. 57 – 60). Again, the figures he refers to are from the *Tanakh*.<sup>43</sup> By explicitly assuming that the audience also thought about these figures, he is effectively excluding any non-Jewish listener.

The references to prophets and kings from the *Tanakh* form important **narratives** for PM Netanyahu’s interpretation. He refers to different sections of the *Tanakh*: the prophecies in the books of Ezekiel, Isaiah and Zechariah (No. 48 – 50), the wake-up call from Isaiah (Isaiah 51:17) (No. 54 – 55), the aforementioned associations with David, Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah during the unification of Jerusalem (No. 58 – 58), and lastly in the final section (No. 76 – 78) where he predicts that the Jews in Israel will ‘continue[...] to light the future of our people and shine a light across the world – the light of Jerusalem’ (No. 76 – 78). This “light across the world” can be interpreted as an implicit reference to Isaiah’s prophecy of Israel becoming a moral and spiritual leader to other countries – “a light unto the nations” - once the Jews have returned to their land (Isaiah 42:6; Isaiah 49:6; Isaiah 60:3).

Alongside these ancient, biblical narratives, PM Netanyahu also places more recent narratives in the centre of his Judaism. He explains how the IDF soldiers fought like lions, (No. 39 – 41), and rather dramatically describes how ‘the heart that unites our people began

---

<sup>43</sup> Solomon: 1 Kings 1–11; 1 Chronicles 28–29, 2 Chronicles 1–9. David: Talmud Tractate Bava Batra 91a; 1 Chronicles 3:1–3; 1 Chronicles 3:1–3; 2 Chronicles 11:18.

to beat again with full strength' after Jerusalem was reunited in 1967 (No. 21 – 23). The PM also attaches a lot of spiritual weight not only to the biblical narratives, but also to these military victories. As discussed in chapter two, Ultra-orthodox Jews argue that the messianic process – of which the return to the Land of Israel is a part – should not be forced by human military power (Don-Yehiya, 2014). However, PM Netanyahu seems to endorse an interpretation of the Jewish **dogma** of messianism in which the Zionist military strategy should be celebrated; it even has brought about 'the fulfilment of the words of the prophets' (No. 47 – 48).

The **legal dimension** is difficult to distinguish in this speech. Only once does PM Netanyahu refer to what is considered ethical or legal. The PM claims that 'only under Israeli rule, under Israeli sovereignty – access and freedom of religion and freedom of worship for all religions has been and will continue to be ensured' (No. 29 – 33). Although these freedoms are considered a human right (article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and are documented in Israel's Declaration of Independence, they directly contradict the Second Commandment, which explicitly forbids the worship of any Gods other than the God of Israel (Exodus 20:3-6). This contradiction is an illustration of the ambivalent role that religion plays in the Israeli state, with 'secular' courts and religious courts operating alongside each other.

The PM describes that all Jews of different denominations, such as Ashkenazi Jews and Sephardic Jews, are connected by Jerusalem; 'the place that has always been the centre of our national and spiritual life, the place that reminds us of our glorious past and serves as the focus of our hopes for the future' (No. 18 – 19). Since Jerusalem plays such a central role in this interpretation, it also constitutes parts of the **material dimension**. This material dimension includes spiritual objects such as synagogues all over the world (No. 6 – 16) and other 'unparalleled spiritual treasures' in Jerusalem (No. 67). However, the whole of Jerusalem is part of the material dimension, including the "earthly" parts of Jerusalem such as its universities and museums 'where the genius of our people is expanding the limits of science, medicine, technology, the material sciences and the life sciences, and many other sciences' (No. 67 – 71). These sites are also part of PM Netanyahu's interpretation of Judaism, as he describes that the development of Jerusalem, including spiritual treasures

and universities, 'will ensure that its golden light continues to light the future of our people and shine a light across the world – the light of Jerusalem' (No. 76 – 78).

PM Netanyahu describes in lines 57 – 60 the **emotions** and thoughts when Jerusalem was united: a trembling heart, hope, mourning and 'the prayer of generations that beats within us'. As he unambiguously expects – almost demands – the other Israeli Jews to have felt the same emotions and to have had the same thoughts as he did, he seems to assume that these experiences are part of being Jewish in Israel during the unification of Jerusalem.

This focus on Jerusalem is also relevant to the **ritual** he emphasises: PM Netanyahu describes that all Jews face Jerusalem when they pray (No. 13 – 16). He does not seem to pay attention to the different Jewish identities that exist in Israel today, as discussed in chapter two.

### Speech C

This speech was delivered on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2014 at the *Yom Yerushalayim* Ceremony, marking the 47th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem. The ceremony took place in Jerusalem at *Mercaz HaRav yeshiva*, one of the largest Talmudic colleges in Israel. This nationalist-religious Jewish learning institution was founded in 1924 by the first Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook.<sup>44</sup>

The audience was mostly comprised of the Orthodox students and teachers of the institute, and some press.<sup>45</sup>

The text of this speech can be found in the Appendix – Speech C.

### Securitizing Move

As described in the analysis of the securitizing move in Speech B, the possibility of dividing Jerusalem between Israel and a future Palestinian state is a topic of much discord (Jabareen, 2010). PM Netanyahu, however, is again very clear about his position in this debate. He opens his speech with an unambiguous statement: '47 years ago, Jerusalem – the unified city – was joined together again. This is the way it has always been, and this is the way it

---

<sup>44</sup> See: <http://www.mercazharav.org/index.html>

<sup>45</sup> See: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4524629,00.html> and <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-to-remain-united-forever-netanyahu-says/>

always will be' (No. 8 – 9<sup>46</sup>). As in Speech B, he refers to Jerusalem as 'the heart of the nation', which must be preserved (No. 41). Referring to the words of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the founder of the *yeshiva* where the PM is speaking, he declares that the city 'must be connected to the great soul of Eternal Israel, to the Torah and to the intellectual assets created by our Sages throughout the generations' (No. 44 – 45). This connection is apparently so existential, that he believes 'his people' cannot survive without knowledge of Judaic studies (No. 66 – 68). It is not clear, however, who poses this threat to the eternity of his people. Nonetheless, it is clear what can be done to prevent the destruction of his people: he importunately endorses the study of the Torah (No. 67 – 68; 71 – 72). As explained in chapter two, the study of the Torah has become part of the state curriculum.

### Imagining Judaism

Although PM Netanyahu turns to all citizens of Israel in his well wishes ('Happy holiday to all the people of Israel' (No. 72- 23)), he does again form an "us" that only includes Jews in Israel. He does so, for example, in lines 43 – 45, where he speaks about 'our capital' necessarily being connected to the Torah, and in lines 66 – 67, where he states that every child should know the Torah. Although not impossible, it is highly unlikely that he is speaking of non-Jewish citizens of Israel experiencing a connection to the Torah, or non-Jewish children studying the 'Book of Books'. Any doubt about who he includes in his **institutional dimension** is eliminated in lines 61 – 63, where he announces that many nations want ties with Israel, because they know Israel is a special place for it has 'a people that survived for thousands of years against all odds, returned to their homeland, rebuilt their homeland, established their state and built an unprecedented military force'.

The location of the speech – the Mercaz HaRav *yeshiva* – is also of significance for the institutional dimension. As said, the *yeshiva* is an important learning institution for religious education. However, it is more encompassing than a "normal" school. According to Don-Yehiya (2014), it is 'an all-inclusive life-framework, the objectives and concerns of which are determined by a strictly religious world view' (Don-Yehiya, 2014, p. 148). For some time, the *yeshiva* was only open to Ultra-Orthodox Jewish boys and contributed to the isolationist culture the *Haredi* had adopted. Nowadays, some *yeshivot* are also open to

---

<sup>46</sup> These numbers refer to the lines added to Speech C in the Appendix

women and non-Orthodox Jews who want to study religious texts<sup>47</sup>. This *yeshiva* was founded by one of the first Orthodox Rabbis who proclaimed the religious value of Zionism.<sup>48</sup> Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook believed that the Jewish people should act in bringing about the messianic redemption (Ratzabi, 2016).

The fact that PM Netanyahu speaks on this location, in addition to the warm words he uses to describe the Rabbi (No. 9 – 22), indicates that the PM considers this man to be of importance to Israel. He even calls him the ‘personification of a modern-day biblical prophet who emerged from the pages of the Bible’ (No. 21 – 22). This reveals how significant the teachings of Kook are to PM Netanyahu.

The amalgamation of the Bible and Zionism forms the **doctrinal dimension** of this interpretation of Judaism. PM Netanyahu agrees with Rabbi Kook in his belief that the spirituality of the Bible is necessary to justify the secular cause of Zionism (No. 22 – 24). Conversely, the spirituality of Judaism also needs the political strategy of Zionism, as ‘there is no spirit without substance. There is no flour without the Torah’ (No. 24 – 25). This last saying is a quote from *Pirkei Avot* (3:21)<sup>49</sup>, or “Ethics of the Fathers”, and refers to the necessity of being provided with physical essentials to study the Torah.<sup>50</sup> Both phrases illustrate what PM Netanyahu has already said in other words: the profane (Zionism) and the spiritual (Judaism) are mutually dependent.

This relationship is also reflected in the PM’s description of Jerusalem, which partly constitutes the **material dimension**. In lines 37 – 41, he describes the two sides of the city: on the one hand ‘Jerusalem is factories, including advanced hi-tech factories’ and on the other hand it is ‘Mount Zion and Moriah Mountain and the Western Wall and "Eternal Israel"’. He jokingly illustrates this paradox by referring to Isaiah 2:3, saying ‘From Zion will the software come forth’<sup>51</sup>. The new, technological sites together with the old, spiritual sites such as Mount Zion and the Temple Mount (Moriah Mountain) form the heart of the Jewish

---

<sup>47</sup> See: <http://matzav.com/sarah-schenirer-ah-the-mother-of-the-bais-yaakov-movement-on-her-yahrtzeit-today-26-adar>

<sup>48</sup> See: <http://www.mercazharav.org/index.html>

<sup>49</sup> See: [https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei\\_Avot.3.17?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en](https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.3.17?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en)

<sup>50</sup> See: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/no-food-no-torah-no-torah-no-food/>

<sup>51</sup> ‘For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem’ (Isaiah 2:3)

people. Furthermore, PM Netanyahu shows that *yeshivot* are also of significance to his interpretation of Judaism by delivering the speech at the *yeshiva*.

He describes how he reads one portion of the Bible every Saturday (*shabbat*) (No. 47 – 49). On two other occasions he refers to the importance of reading the Torah (No. 65 – 68; 71 – 72), and therefore it can be concluded that reading the Bible or Torah is an important **ritual** in the PM's interpretation of Judaism. Moreover, it can also be concluded that studying the Torah and the commandments it harbours, together form the **ethical dimension**. He shares with the audience how relevant he finds the Bible to be - 'both spiritually and practically' – and how much strength he draws from reading it (No. 49 – 50).

However, PM Netanyahu's imagination also encompasses a more "secular" **experience**. In lines 20 – 26, he tells the audience that Rabbi Kook had something special which 'beats inside us'. Kook's uniqueness – which has been passed on to all the Jews in Israel - lies in that he was a great Zionist, but also believed that 'Zionism must not disengage from Judaism'.

The **narrative dimension** is also inhabited by both the spiritual and the profane. The many biblical references (No. 24 – 25; 37; 40 – 41; 43 – 45; 49 – 50; 65 – 68; 71 – 72) are supplemented by historical and Zionist narratives, such as the immigration of Kook (No. 10 – 11), the Return to Zion (No. 15 – 17), the teachings of Kook (No. 20 – 25) and the restoration of Jerusalem (No. 31 – 33).

## Speech D

On the 24th of May 2017, the Knesset gathered for a plenary special session to mark Jerusalem Day. The special session was attended by members of the Knesset, and honorary guests President Reuven Rivlin, Supreme Court President Miriam Naor and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat.<sup>52</sup> Besides PM Netanyahu, Knesset Speaker Yuli-Yoel Edelstein and opposition leader MK Isaac Herzog also delivered a speech.

The text of the speech of PM Netanyahu can be found in the Appendix – Speech D.

---

<sup>52</sup> See: [https://www.knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR\\_eng.asp?PRID=13432](https://www.knesset.gov.il/spokesman/eng/PR_eng.asp?PRID=13432)

## Securitizing Move

Yet again, in this speech, PM Netanyahu presents the Israeli connection to the land of Israel, including a unified Jerusalem, as a prerequisite to the survival of the Jewish people. The first securitizing move in this speech is three-tiered.

Firstly, there was the military threat of the Six Day War. PM Netanyahu tells the audience that the Israeli troops were able to turn the 'existential threat against us into a great miracle of salvation' during the war in 1967 in which Jerusalem was reunited (No. 23 – 26<sup>53</sup>).

Secondly, the PM does not only explicitly use the words "existential threat" in the securitizing move, but also implicitly presents the situation in which the Israeli people were living within pre-1967 borders as an existential security issue. Maintaining this situation could have meant the end of the Israeli people, according to the PM: 'How could we have continued to live in a narrow strip of land just 12 kilometers wide, with the well-being of our citizens in constant danger[?]' (No. 71 – 74). According to PM Netanyahu, the Israeli victory in the Six Day War was not only necessary for defending the Israeli people, but was also necessary as the geographic situation before the war was untenable.

Thirdly, even though the threat was military in character, PM Netanyahu also presents this threat as part of a societal securitization. He claims that the Israeli victory had great consequences for the identity of his people. The war gave the people the chance to return to a unified Jerusalem; 'the land of our forefathers, in which our identity as a people was forged' (No. 21 – 26).

In this first securitizing move, the military threat of the Six Day War is presented as existential in terms of geographical integrity, well-being of Israeli people and their identity. The last part of the first move is consistent with the second securitizing move, introduced in line number 95. This second move portrays the connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem currently to be under threat.

---

<sup>53</sup> These numbers refer to the lines added to Speech D in the Appendix

PM Netanyahu tells the audience that there is a desire to censure Israel and to deny the connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem (No. 105 – 107). Although he does not explicitly mention who has this desire, he does refer to UNESCO as an example.

The Executive Board of UNESCO adopted a controversial resolution on 2 May 2017, just weeks before PM Netanyahu's speech. The resolution refers to Israel as 'the occupying Power' and calls all legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel in East Jerusalem 'null and void'.<sup>54</sup> The resolution condemns Israeli excavations and works, as these alter the character of the Holy City, which is of high significance to the three monotheistic religions. Before the vote in May 2017, PM Netanyahu had already explained that he does not recognise UNESCO as an authority and had stated that '[t]here is no other people for whom Jerusalem is as holy as for the Jewish people'.<sup>55</sup>

PM Netanyahu considers the idea that other people than the Jews have authority over Jerusalem 'absurd' and 'a lie' (No. 108 – 110). According to him, these lies are intended to 'erase our roots in Jerusalem' (No. 105 – 107). PM Netanyahu presents these claims as a societal security threat, as the Holy City of Jerusalem is at the core of the Israeli Jewish identity (No. 101 – 103). This is an example of societal securitization, as denying the connection between the Jewish people and that which constitutes the core of their identity is threatening the survival of the collective identity of the community (Bosco, 2014; Buzan, Wæver, & De Wilde, 1998).

In conclusion, the two securitizing moves executed by PM Netanyahu are military and societal in character. The first securitizing move relates to a threat in the past; the Six Day War. This threat was fought and overcome by the IDF.

The second securitizing move relates to a current societal threat; the denial of the connection between Jerusalem – which constitutes the core of the Israeli Jewish identity – and the Jewish people. This threat, according to PM Netanyahu, should be fought by challenging these claims and telling the truth; '[b]ecause the truth is stronger than any lie' (No. 109 – 110).

---

<sup>54</sup> See: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002481/248139e.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> See: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/unesco-passes-resolution-critical-of-israeli-policy-in-jerusalem-1.5467397>

## Imagining Judaism

Even though this speech is addressed to all members of Knesset, in which the Israeli people are represented - rather than the Jewish people - an **institutional dimension** in which PM Netanyahu includes Israel Jewish “us” is visible.

An evident division between who he considers part of “us” and “them” is pronounced in lines 45 – 47. He speaks about Jewish immigration, and how these new Jewish immigrants contributed to the great development of Israel. After the Jewish immigrants arrived, ‘[w]e established villages, kibbutzim, farming communities, cities. We developed agriculture and industry’. PM Netanyahu clearly creates a “we” in which he only includes the (descendants of) Jewish immigrants. He himself was not alive at the time of this immigration wave prior to World War II, however, he does seem to identify with these Jews.

Straight after mentioning who he considers part of his people, PM Netanyahu also clearly declares who is not part of this “us”. The villages, cities and industry that the Jewish people established ‘became magnets for Arab immigration to the Land of Israel’ (No. 47). The fact that he mentions these two groups apart, indicates that he does not consider Israeli citizenship as a main identity. Rather, he distinguishes between the Jews (“us”) and Arabs.

These two groups did not manage to live in peace together, as PM Netanyahu explains further on. However, after the Six Day War, Jerusalem was united again, which ‘was an event of historic justice: Jerusalem – our national capital for 3,000 years returned to its original owners, whole and united. For generations, it was solely our national capital and not that of other peoples’ (No. 78 – 80). He refers here to the Jewish state that existed millennia ago, which had Jerusalem as its capital (Lerner, 2007). By stressing that Jerusalem had been “our” capital for 3,000 years, ‘and not that of other peoples’, PM Netanyahu explicitly excludes “other peoples” who were not part of that historic Jewish state.

The **narratives** of PM Netanyahu’s imagined Judaism are mainly these references to the original Jewish state. This narrative could refer to the *Torah*, in which Abraham and his descendants were sent by God to settle in a foreign land now known as the Land of Israel (Genesis 12). However, there is also non-Biblical evidence for the existence of this nation (Bloch-Smith, 2003). Regardless of the source of proof, PM Netanyahu emphasises the

historic relation between the Jewish people and the land of Israel multiple times (No. 24; 78 – 80; 101 – 103). This connection is important to the narrative of his version of Judaism.

Because of this relationship, he considers the victory of Israel in the Six Day War ‘an event of historic justice’ (No. 78 – 79). He claims that the legality of Israel’s sovereignty over the whole of Israel stems from the connection the Jewish people have with the land, regardless of what others – such as UNESCO – might say. To support this claim, he quotes Motta Gur in saying that Jerusalem will be the eternal and unified capital of Israel, because it ‘is all justifiably ours’ (No. 121). Therefore, the deep connection between Israel and the Jewish people is also the basis of the **ethical dimension**. However, it again is not clear if PM Netanyahu relies on a Biblical or non-Biblical narrative to explain the connection.

Another returning reference to what is considered ethical by PM Netanyahu, is the freedom of religion protected by Israel (No. 29 – 30; 81 – 82; 92 - 95). The fact that he holds this freedom in such high regard is interesting, as the Second Commandment – which stands at the core of the general Jewish ethical dimension – explicitly forbid worshipping other gods than the God of Israel (Exodus 20:3-6). This reference seems to imply that “civil” rights come before religious commandments. However, as discussed in chapter two, Israel has a hybrid judicial system in which religious- and civil courts operate alongside one another.

When speaking of the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967, PM Netanyahu calls this a ‘success and salvation for Israel’ (No. 69 – 71). The PM also referred to the military victory of the Six Day War as ‘a great miracle of salvation’ in lines 23 – 24. In lines 30 – 31, he claims that the Jewish people have ‘redeemed Jerusalem’ in their victory of claiming the city. The words “salvation” and “redemption” insinuate that Israel has been saved from (something) evil. It is interesting that PM Netanyahu uses these words, as the words also have religious connotations. The Hebrew word for salvation and redemption is the same (הַגְּאֻלָּה) and is used to refer to the coming of the *Messiah*, a central component of Judaic doctrine (Smart, 1998). Although he does not explicitly refer to the *Messiah*, this word does hint at the **doctrine** of the messianic process. He therefore enforces an active participation in this process, which is rejected by the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, as explained in chapter two.

PM Netanyahu keeps emphasizing the importance of the city of Jerusalem to the Israeli Jewish identity. He calls special attention to some of the sites in Jerusalem with

arguably the most spiritual value: The Western Wall (No. 14 – 15; 18 – 21; 21 – 26; 62 – 63; 98 – 99; 101 – 102; 114 – 116; 123 – 124) and the Temple Mount (No. 62 – 63; 101 – 102; 114 – 116; 116 – 119; 123 – 124). The number of times that he mentions these spiritual sites, in combination with the fact that he calls them ‘the core of our identity’ (No. 101 – 102), indicates that they are of great significance to his imagination of Judaism. Therefore, the city in general, and the Western Wall and Temple Mount in particular, combined with Jerusalem’s *yeshivot*, are central **materialisations** of his imagination of Judaism.

The way he speaks about the *yeshiva* is interesting, as he mentions *yeshivot* and “startups” in one sentence (No. 84 – 86). By doing so, he puts this significant religious institution next to a modern, economic enterprise, which might seem paradoxical to some. The paradox lies in the fact that those attending the *yeshiva* have often withdrawn themselves from the labour force, as described in chapter two. Start-ups, on the other hand, are responsible for a relatively big part of the economic growth in the country, giving Israel its nickname “Startup Nation” (Senor & Singe, 2011). The nonchalant way the PM presents these organisations alongside each other suggests that he does not find them to be paradoxical at all. He calls the two organisations ‘tremendous investments in Jerusalem’ (No. 84), serving different people but both important to the character of the city.

The **experimental dimension** also relates to the Western Wall. The PM mentions how emotional the Israeli soldiers were when they ‘liberated’ Jerusalem and could walk up to the Western Wall to touch its stones (No. 17 – 18). He also states that this moment was a joyous occasion to watch (No. 21 – 23). Furthermore, he declares to have felt moved by watching President Trump standing at the Western Wall (No. 13 – 15). Apparently, this historical and spiritual site also is of great emotional importance to PM Netanyahu. Not only that, but he also expects others to experience the same thing: ‘I am sure that you were as moved as I was’ (No. 13 – 15).

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is considered the holiest place to pray for a Jew (Liebman & Don-Yihya, 1983). President Trump and his family visited the site to touch the walls and pray there, by putting written prayers in the cracks between the stones. Although

he does not identify as Jewish, President Trump did pray and even wore a *kippah*<sup>56</sup>. These practices and **rituals** moved the PM and can therefore be considered of special importance to him and to his interpretation of Judaism.

## Speech E

On the same day as Speech D was delivered - Jerusalem Day 2017 – PM Netanyahu also addressed the students of the *Mercaz HaRev yeshiva* for Jerusalem Day Celebrations. As explained at Speech C, this learning institution focuses on the study of religious texts.

Most of the audience was comprised of *yeshiva* students and teachers. Chief Rabbi David Lau was also present at the ceremony, alongside the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Shlomo Amar, and the Chief Rabbi of Ramat Gan, Yaakov Ariel. Some ministers and members of *Knesset* were also present.<sup>57</sup>

The text of the speech of PM Netanyahu can be found in the Appendix – Speech E.

## Securitizing Move

Although PM Netanyahu introduces the topic of war very early in the speech, he does not do so in the form of a securitizing move. Rather, he speaks about the Six Day War as if to him it is a happy, joyous memory. According to the PM, '[t]he war was characterised by excited embraces, a flood of tears of longing and joy unparalleled in our history' (No. 14 – 16<sup>58</sup>). In this war of 1967, the Israeli army managed to unite Jerusalem under Israeli rule.

The first threat that PM Netanyahu presents in this speech is not the threat of returning to the situation of war, but rather to the situation before the war, in which East Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount and Western Wall, was under foreign authority.

In lines 39 – 47, he raises the spectre of a destroyed Old City, under the authority of ISIS. He claims that this will happen, if radical Islam can take over the holy sites of Israel (No. 44 – 47). Although he does not specify how ISIS or radical Islam would be able to take over, he does claim that this could happen if Jerusalem would be divided again. He could be

---

<sup>56</sup> See: <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-05-22/video-trump-becomes-first-sitting-us-president-visit-western-wall-jerusalem>

<sup>57</sup> See: <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/230154>

<sup>58</sup> These numbers refer to the lines added to Speech E in the Appendix

referring to the ongoing negotiations with the Palestinian Authority in which the question of authority over East Jerusalem plays an important role. Although the Palestinian Authority wants East Jerusalem to be its capital, PM Netanyahu states in lines 50 – 51 that Israel ‘will not make concessions’.

Later on, he clearly connects the survival of the Jewish people with the state of Israel being located in the Land of Israel (No. 118 – 120).<sup>59</sup> Contemporary Israel does not exactly match the borders of the Land of Israel dictated in Ezekiel,<sup>60</sup> as south-east Israel is not included in this biblical *Eretz Yisrael*, whereas a large part of contemporary Lebanon is. Although PM Netanyahu does not clarify if he means that the restoration of these borders is also necessary for the continued existence of the Jewish people, it can be derived from the multiple references he makes to the importance of Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem that he means that the Jewish people need a unified Jerusalem to survive (No. 24 – 27; 38 – 47; 49 – 51; 89 – 93; 95; 128 – 130).

The solutions that PM Netanyahu proposes to counter these threats are rather simple. To combat radical Islam, he reports to have banned the Northern Faction of the Islamic Movement. Although he said to have been warned about the risks of banning the organisation, this strategy has proven to be effective, as ‘they are not there anymore’ (No. 43 – 44). Interesting here is to note that the PM refers to this organisation as the “Islamist movement” instead of “Islamic Movement”. Whereas “Islamic”- or “Muslim” - simply refers to religion-based tradition and culture, “Islamist” is generally understood to relate to a political ideology in which the creation of an Islamic nation with *sharia* law is central (Lombardi & Brown, 2006) . The word also bears an association with terrorism, as not all supporters of Islamism chose peaceful means to realise this ideology.<sup>61</sup> Although the Islamic

---

<sup>59</sup> According to Jewish tradition, the Land of Israel – or *Eretz Yisrael* - is the territory promised by God to Abraham and his descendants (first mentioned in Genesis 15:18-21).

<sup>60</sup> The northern border will begin at the Mediterranean Sea, then continue eastward to Hethlon, to Lebo-Hamath, then across to Zedad, 16 Berothah, and Sibram, which is on the border between the two kingdoms of Damascus and Hamath. The border will end at Hazer-Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. So the northern border will run between the Mediterranean Sea and Hazar-Enon, which is on the border between Damascus and Hamath. The eastern border will begin on the border between the two kingdoms of Hauran and Damascus. It will run south along the Jordan River, which separates the territories of Gilead and Israel, and it will end at the Dead Sea near the town of Tamar. The southern border will begin at Tamar, then run southwest to the springs near Meribath-Kadesh. It will continue along the Egyptian Gorge and will end at the Mediterranean Sea. The western border will run north along the Mediterranean Sea to a point just west of Lebo-Hamath (Ezekiel 47:15-20)

<sup>61</sup> See: <https://www.cgpolicy.org/multimedia/islamic-vs-islamist-in-the-fight-against-terror/>

Movement is politically active and leaders as well as members have been convicted for links with *Hamas*, the movement was originally founded to lead Arab citizens of Israel back to Islam (Rubin, 2014). The formulation of the PM could be a translating mistake, but the PM could also have deliberately used the word “Islamist” to imply a direct connection between the movement and terrorism.

To counter the existential threat of geographical inconsistencies between the Land of Israel and the state of Israel, PM Netanyahu simply declares that he will keep Jerusalem unified (No. 24 – 28), as this ‘is my responsibility as prime minister, with God’s help and with yours’ (Speech E, No. 118 – 120). He states that he will not make concessions to give up the Temple Mount or the Western Wall (No. 50 – 51).

### Imagining Judaism

That PM Netanyahu addresses the Jewish public, rather than the Israeli public in this speech, is apparent from the location and audience: he delivers this speech at a *yeshiva*, an institution for religious Jewish people.

Although he wishes a happy holiday to the people of Israel in lines 135 and sends blessings to ‘the lovers of Jerusalem in Israel and around the world’ (No. 132 – 133), he again creates an “us” that only involves Jewish people in Israel.

The formulation of his **institutional dimension** is most apparent in lines 118 – 125. In this part of the speech, he presents the existential dependence of the Jewish people on a state that is located in the Land of Israel. He states that previous and future generations of Jews expect “us” to bring about a ‘rebirth’. Seeing as he keeps referring to contemporary Israel as a return to the ancient Jewish state (No. 20 -21; 69 – 71; 80 – 83; 92 – 93; 95; 110 – 116), it is plausible that this rebirth refers to the revival of the ancient Jewish state. This revival is both national and spiritual in character, says PM Netanyahu. This “us” must therefore be connected in a shared spirituality (Judaism) and nationality (Israeli).

The reading of the Torah is an important weekly **ritual** for the PM. In lines 103 – 106, he explains how his son and he learn from each other by reading together. Other rituals that PM Netanyahu emphasises are the touching of the stones of the Western Wall (No. 17 – 21), and the blowing of the *shofar* (No. 43 – 55).

The Western Wall is the most sacred place where Jews can pray (Liebman & Don-Yihya, 1983). The wall is connected of the holiest place in Judaism; the Temple Mount. Jews are not allowed to enter the Temple Mount, and therefore, touching the stones of and praying at the Western Wall is the closest Jews can get to the destroyed Second Temple (Lundquist, 2008). PM Netanyahu here describes how he touched the stones not to pray, but to celebrate the Israeli victory and reunification of Jerusalem. As he touched the stones, the PM does not feel connected to God, but rather, to the people who touched these stones for millennia before him.

PM Netanyahu speaks of another important ritual: the blowing of the *shofar*. Blowing on a ram's horn is both a spiritual ritual and a military one. This horn is blown to mark certain significant Jewish holidays and is said to be a reference to the sacrificed ram in the story of the binding of Isaac by Abraham, as described in Genesis 22:1-19 (Sendrey, 1969). Alongside this spiritual function, the *shofar* was also used as an announcement of war (Liebman & Don-Yihya, 1983).

What PM Netanyahu describes in lines 53 – 59, is a “new” ritual: the *shofar* was blown to mark the victory of the Israeli army. The blowing of the horn during the unification of Jerusalem symbolises Jewish autonomy and authority over Israel to him. He hereby assigns a third role to the *shofar*: next to a religious and military significance, the *shofar* also embodies Zionism for the PM.

Apart from the Western Wall (No. 15 – 17), Temple Mount (No. 17 – 18) and the *Shofar* (No. 53 – 54), PM Netanyahu also speaks about the significance of ‘our return to the land of our fathers – to ancient Jerusalem, to Rachel’s Tomb, to the Cave of the Patriarchs’ (No. 75 – 83). All these **material** sites are of great religious significance to Jews. When speaking about the ‘land of our fathers’, it is improbable that PM Netanyahu refers to the country that belonged to his own father. Rather, he refers to the Patriarchs of Judaism; Abraham (who the Jews call Father Abraham, or *Avraham Avinu* in Hebrew), his son Isaac, and Isaac’s son Jacob (or “Israel”) (Levenson, 2012). According to the **narratives** of the *Torah*, God promised the Land of Israel to them and their descendants.<sup>62</sup> The PM attaches great importance to the narratives of the *Torah*, as he bases his main argument for the

---

<sup>62</sup> Genesis 15:18-21; Genesis 26:3; Genesis 28:13

Israeli presence on this promise: 'This is our homeland. We have a primordial right to it, and that right is as deep as the stake we planted in its soil'. (No. 85 – 87). He even quotes the founder of the *yeshiva* in comparing the Balfour declaration, in which the British government expressed being in favour of a Jewish nation in Palestine, to the edict of Cyprus<sup>63</sup> (No. 71 – 72). In lines 111 – 113, PM Netanyahu says that those who serve in the IDF hold the swords of David (1 Samuel 17) and Gideon (Book of Judges 6-8), both Jewish heroes from the *Tanakh*.

All these dimensions – the institutions, rituals, materials and narratives – that PM Netanyahu emphasises, reflect the **doctrine** of the PM's imagination of Judaism in Israel; it is all based on an amalgamation of Judaism and Zionism.

This doctrine can also be detected in lines 107 – 116. Here, PM Netanyahu quotes a narrative of the *Torah*, in which God explains to the Israelites what will happen if they do not obey his commandments, and what will happen if they do. In Leviticus 26:13, God tells the Israelites what they owe him. God explains that he liberated them and empowered them: "[I] made you go upright."<sup>64</sup> PM Netanyahu does not associate this God-given strength with an inner power or spiritual resilience, but rather understands being able to go "upright" in a Zionist sense. To him, going upright means that the Jewish people can defend themselves and their nation against threats. According to him, God has empowered them to have 'returned to our land and restored our national existence, and we relearned how to hold back the attacks against us, because otherwise there would be no Jewish existence' (No. 106 – 116).

The PM also refers to the doctrine of the suffering of the Jewish people as an expression of their dedication to God, in lines 99 – 100: 'Against a feeling of exhaustion and depression glows the flame of faith in our righteousness'. Nonetheless, he speaks about the 'magnificent war of our salvation' (No. 35 – 36) and 'our redemption' (38 – 39), claiming that the Jewish people have already been redeemed. Whether PM Netanyahu means that the *Messiah*, who according to Jewish doctrine will redeem the Jewish people, has already

---

<sup>63</sup> 2 Chronicles 36:22-23

<sup>64</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright (Leviticus 26:13)

come, if he believes the messianic process is unfolding now, or if he does not believe in this doctrine, is not clear.

With the belief that the Jewish people of Israel have been redeemed, the PM emphasises only positive **emotions** since the Six Day War. Whereas before the war the Jewish people experienced a yearning and a burning desire for the Western Wall (No. 34 – 35) and felt exhausted and depressed (No. 99 – 100), the PM now speaks about excitement (No. 15), connectedness with the past (No. 21 – 22) and strength (No. 89 – 91; 95 - 99).

According to PM Netanyahu, the Jewish people have a ‘primordial right’ to live in Israel. Even though some ‘parties around the world’ want to challenge the legitimacy of the Israeli authority over Jerusalem and change Israel’s borders (No. 89 – 91), the sovereignty over the historic homeland of the Jewish people and the ability to defend themselves stems from God himself, according to PM Netanyahu (No. 106 – 116). These statements imply that he attaches more importance to the *Torah* than to international law, which considers the Israeli authority over East Jerusalem to be **illegal**.<sup>65</sup>

This makes it even more striking that PM Netanyahu claims that ‘only under Israeli sovereignty (...) there is freedom of worship and freedom of religion for all religions’ (No. 49 – 50). Although the *Torah* explicitly forbids the worship of any other God than the God of Israel (Exodus 20:3-6), PM Netanyahu attaches great importance to preserving these freedoms.

---

<sup>65</sup> See UN GA resolution A/RES/2253 of 4 July 1967

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the sub question “What interpretation of Judaism does PM Netanyahu promote in speeches where he securitises Jewish identity in Israel?” has been answered. Five speeches delivered by PM Netanyahu have been analysed.

The securitizing moves in all five speeches focus on the connection between the Jewish people and the Jewish state. According to the speeches, both a literal division of Jerusalem and a spiritual disconnection from Jerusalem and Israel form an existential danger to the Jewish people. The PM also presents solutions for these threats. He declares to keep Jerusalem united, but does not elaborate on how he will do so. To counter spiritual disconnection, he suggests education in national and spiritual Jewish sentiment.

To structure PM Netanyahu’s imagination of Judaism, Smart’s dimensions of religions and world views have been identified in all five speeches. The PM includes only Israeli Jews in the institutional dimension of his interpretation of Judaism. The relationship of mutual dependence of the Israeli Jewish people and Israeli Jewish state that was leading in his securitizing moves is also central to the interpretation that PM Netanyahu promotes in his speeches. This relationship forms the main doctrine and is further reflected in all other dimensions. For example, Zionism and Judaism are often fused together in his narratives of the spiritual impact of the military victories of the IDF. On multiple occasions, he even refers to these military victories as the redemption or salvation of the Jewish people, as if the Zionist soldiers are embodiments of the *Messiah*.

Interesting to note is that PM Netanyahu never speaks about the relationship that Jewish people (should) have with God. He only mentions God once, when he says he will keep Jerusalem unified, ‘with God’s help and with yours’ (No. 118 – 120). In his speeches, the spiritual connection he emphasises is often with Israel, rather than with God. Nevertheless, PM Netanyahu referred numerous times to the *Tanakh* and stressed the value of reading the *Torah*. The passages he refers to relate to the biblical Land of Israel. These speeches show that the PM puts the biblical connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel central; arguably even more central than the connection between the Jewish people and God.

In the next chapter, the consequences of this imagination of Judaism for Israeli politics and for broader research and policy will be explored.

## Discussion

This chapter will provide a discussion of the consequences of this thesis for Israeli politics and for broader research. It discusses the current study in light of previous work, address the main goals of this thesis, provides an analysis of its strengths and limitations, and gives suggestions for follow-up research.

The goal of this thesis is two-tiered. The first aim of this thesis is to elucidate how Judaism is imagined in Israeli politics. The second aim is to explore how Judaism can be approached in the securitization framework without disregarding the complexity of different religious interpretations and the complex nature of religion itself. In this discussion, the appropriateness of the methods applied to fulfil these objectives are reviewed. The substantive answer to the research question, which overlaps with the first aim, will be given in the conclusion.

This study shows that the Israeli Jewish identity is being securitized in Israeli politics. In this regard, it is in line with previous research on identity and securitization in Israel (Abulof, 2014; Coskun, 2010; Ochs, 2011; Olesker, 2014). However, whereas Abulof, Coskun, Ochs and Olesker aim to demonstrate the consequences of such a process for the citizens of Israel (both Arab and Jewish), this thesis approaches securitization as a framework in which imaginations of religion can be studied. The securitization framework proves to be appropriate in uncovering the imagination of Judaism by PM Netanyahu. In his speeches, he invokes an “us versus them” logic, in which he prescribes a singular identity to Israeli Jews and leaves little room for nuances or internal disagreement. It can – and should – be argued that this is not a realistic representation of Israeli Jewish society. However, the securitization framework through which Judaism is studied uncovers the core of what PM Netanyahu presents as the religious component of Israeli Jewish identity, and therefore makes for a suitable approach to study religion. In follow-up research, it would be interesting to explore to what extent this framework can also be effective in other case studies in which imaginations of religion are studied.

The singular identity that PM Netanyahu prescribes to Israeli Jews evidently does not do justice to the different interpretations of Judaism in Israel. The danger of describing the exclusive and narrow imagination of Judaism that he promotes is that in doing so this paper

may inadvertently endorse this singular identity (McSweeney, 1999). This effect would be diametrically opposed to the aim of this research, which is to approach Judaism without disregarding the complexity of different interpretations and the complex nature of religion itself. This work respects different interpretations of Judaism not by describing every possible version of Judaism, or by developing the perfect description of Judaism that fits every individual interpretation, but rather by calling attention to how the Israeli government imposes one version of Judaism onto all Israeli Jews. It attempts to do justice to the different interpretations by pointing out that the PM prescribes a singular identity to Israeli Jews through institutionalisation and the presentation of one version of Judaism. Although this study does not focus on demonstrating the consequences of securitization for the citizens of Israel, it cannot be ignored that securitization of Israeli Jewish identity has discriminating consequences for Israeli Jews with alternative interpretations of Judaism. It would be more appropriate for a state that claims to protect freedom of religion and regards free practice of religion to be a basic human need, to leave more room for individual interpretations.

In addition to the presented identity being unrealistic, it might also be insincere; it could well be the case that PM Netanyahu does not believe that this imagination of Judaism is what is shared among all Israeli Jews. The motivations he might have for presenting Judaism the way he does are not considered here however. For follow-up research it would be interesting to connect the findings of this research to a study into the possible motivations for PM Netanyahu to present such an imagination. Could the imagination that he promotes serve as a modernisation of Judaism to get young and less religious Jews to connect with Judaism again?

As this thesis appears to be the first research into imaginations of Judaism in Israeli politics through the framework of securitization, it is impossible to detect a trend or shift in what version of Judaism is promoted by PMs. This thesis cannot establish whether PM Netanyahu's endorsed interpretation is similar to that of previous governments or if it is part of an alternation of the *status quo*. To better understand the results of this thesis, it would be beneficial to conduct similar research into the imagination of Judaism by other governments.

Not only would this help the reader to further understand the political interpretations of Judaism, it would also lead to a better understanding of the debate on religion and state in Israel. Questions that could be asked in follow-up research are: How has the debate developed under PM Netanyahu? How can his imagination of Judaism be seen in connection to the political parties with whom he has formed coalitions? Is there political gain involved for PM Netanyahu in imagining Judaism the way he does? How does this imagination of Judaism correspond with the growing Ultra-Orthodox community?

This thesis approaches the imagination of Judaism in Israel without adopting a clear definition of what religion, Judaism, or religious securitization is. This choice has been made deliberately, as definitions can be exclusive and treat religion as a static phenomenon, such as is the case with Laustsen and Wæver (2000). They claim that religion should be handled as a separate sector as religious identity would be perceived to be more fundamental than other forms of identity (Laustsen & Wæver, 2000; Sheikh, 2014). This understanding of religion completely disregards the possibility of religion not being central to every religious person's identity. As we have seen, different interpretations of Judaism exist in Israeli society and the opinions on the centrality of Judaism in Israeli society vary. This thesis argues that Laustsen and Wæver's approach to religion is too constricted, at least for the study of Judaism.

By not adopting a definition of what religion or Judaism is, the current approach carries the risk of including components of which one could argue are not distinctly religious, but rather cultural, political, economic, national, etc. Does this thesis truly study an imagination of Judaism in Israel, or does it study an imagination of Israeli Jewish life in general? Concerns regarding the adopted methodology could be addressed in two points. Firstly, by locating Smart's seven dimensions of religion, this study focuses on the main elements that constitute religions. This method does not result in a complete image of everything that makes up this imagination of Judaism, however, it does draw an outline. Secondly, this thesis argues that religion in general, and Judaism in particular, cannot and should not be considered separable from culture, politics, nationality, etc. As stated before, Israeli Jewish identity is built from different components, and these components are not isolated, but rather overlap. Previous research on the securitization of Israeli identity approaches ethnicity as an isolated form of identity (Abulof, 2014; Coskun, 2010; Ochs,

2011; Olesker, 2014). This approach is debatable, as they leave the reader with questions such as: If the preservation of the Jewish character of the state rests on the conservation of an ethnic Jewish majority, do converts not contribute to its Jewishness? Disconnecting the religious component of Israeli Jewish identity from the other components would leave the reader with similar questions: If most Jews believe that Israel has been promised to them by God, how can a dispute over territory be strictly political, and not also religiously significant? If most Jews, whether they believe in God or not, come together with their family to share Passover Seder, how can that be a strictly religious celebration, and not part of Jewish culture? Such questions illustrate how interconnected the components of Israeli Jewish identity are. This thesis shows that by adopting an open and flexible approach to religion, the complex nature of Israeli Jewish identity can be respected whilst still emphasising the main elements of this imagined Judaism.

To conclude, there is one major issue in Israeli society which this thesis only addresses very briefly: the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This conflict plays a major role in Israel's national and international politics, and the absence of a discussion on this topic is not a reflection of ignorance or political motivations on the side of the author. While not ignoring the issue when it comes up, a short study such as this will not be able to do justice to the complexity of the conflict. Rather than to oversimplify or overgeneralise an extremely sensitive and intricate situation, a choice was made to leave it out of the scope of this work. However, this thesis hopes to act as inspiration to a study that does put the consequences of securitization of Jewish Israeli identity for Israeli Arabs central. Questions that could be asked, are as following: How is Islam imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics? How do processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics influence Jewish public perception of Israeli Arabs?

## Conclusion

This thesis explores how Judaism is imagined through processes of increased securitization in contemporary Israeli politics. It concludes that religion and state are closely connected in Israel, and that PM Netanyahu, as a public representative of the state, significantly influences how Judaism is understood and institutionalised in Israel. This study demonstrates that through securitization and institutionalisation, Judaic religion and the Israeli state are merged.

Through maintaining the *status quo*, Israeli governments treat religion as an integral part of Israeli Jewish identity. The *status quo* fuses religious and state affairs. This amalgamation of religion and state is also visible in the securitizing speeches of PM Netanyahu. He presents the two to be so connected that he portrays the survival of the Jewish people and Israel to be mutually dependent on one another.

The survival of the Jewish people can according to PM Netanyahu only be ensured through a strong spiritual connection to Israel, and a solid military and political claim on Jerusalem and Israel. PM Netanyahu considers this military and political claim on Israel and Jerusalem to be his responsibility as PM. The spiritual connection between the Jewish people and Israel however is what is expected to be shared amongst Israeli Jews and should be passed on to new generations. This spiritual connection to the state is his imagination of Judaism.

In the imagination of Judaism, the state is celebrated rather than God. This is not to say that God does not have any significance: God is still to thank for allocating Israel to the Jewish people. However, as the Jewish people are considered to have been single-handedly redeemed by the Israeli army, God has been assigned a more secondary role. The shift from God to state is also manifested in how the literal reading of the *Torah* is replaced with a more historical reading which supports the Jewish entitlement to Israel. In addition to the *Tanakh*, the religious canon has been supplemented with more recent history of the success of the Zionist project.

This nationalistic imagination of Judaism is further reflected in the current amalgamation of religion and state: Israel's hybrid judicial system reflects an institutionalised mix of sacred commandments from the *Torah* and democratic values and

secular laws. Furthermore, certain religious symbols, traditions and rituals stemming from classical Judaism are now considered expressions of nationalism.

The interpretation of Judaism presented by PM Netanyahu is essentially different to the Ultra-Orthodox Judaism promoted through the religious services funded by the government. Although he funds Jewish organisations that impose an Ultra-Orthodox Judaism on all Israeli Jews, PM Netanyahu actively promotes a nationalist imagination of Judaism. This juxtaposition in what is institutionalised and what is endorsed in PM Netanyahu's speeches could suggest a future change of the *status quo* towards a more nationalist standard of Judaism. However, as similar research into the imagination of Judaism by previous PMs do not yet exist, it cannot be concluded that this trend is a recent one. To place the results of this thesis in context, future research into imaginations of Judaism by past governments would be valuable.

By presenting his imagination of Judaism, PM Netanyahu presumably aims to emphasise what Israeli Jews have in common – a connection to Israeli – rather than underlining what divides them. Nevertheless, dictating a religion goes against the right that Israel holds in such high regards: freedom of religion. Furthermore, by explicitly including Israeli Jews and excluding dissenters and non-Jewish communities, the imagined Judaism effectively creates a “them” at least as plainly as an “us”.

## Bibliography

- Abulof, U. (2014). Deep Securitization and Israel's "Demographic Demon". *International Political Sociology*, 8(4), 396-415.
- Asad, T. (1993). The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category. In T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (pp. 27-54). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Balzacq, T. (2005). The three faces of securitization: political agency, audience and context. *European Journal of International Relations*, 13(3), 171-201.
- Barak, O., & Sheffer, G. (2013). *Security Networks: Israel in a Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Barak-Erez, D. (2008). Law and religion under the status quo model: Between past compromises and constant change. *Cardozo Law Review*, 30, 2495-2507.
- Barak-Erez, D. (2017). What Does It Mean for a State to Be Jewish? In C. H. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law (Cambridge Companions to Religion)* (pp. 365-385). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bar-Tal, D., Magal, T., & Halperin, E. (2009). The Paradox of Security Views in Israel: A Social-Psychological Explanation. In O. Barak, & G. Sheffer, *Existential Threats and Civil Security Relations*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Bloch-Smith, E. (2003). Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 122(3), 401-425.
- Blommaert, J., & Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical discourse analysis. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 29(1), 447-466.
- Bosco, R. M. (2014). *Securing the sacred: religion, national security, and the Western state*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA: University of Michigan Press.
- Brafman, Y. (2017). New Developments in Modern Jewish Thought: From Theology to Law and Back Again. In C. H. (Ed.), *Cambridge Companions to Religion* (pp. 287-314). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B., & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: the structure of international security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B., Jones, C., & Little, R. (1993). *The Logic of Anarchy: neorealism to structural realism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & De Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Lamaitre, P. (1993). *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. Copenhagen: Centre for Peace and Conflict Research Copenhagen.
- Calhoun, C. (2010). Rethinking Secularism. *The Hedgehog Review*, 12 (3), 35 - 48.
- Campbell, D. (1992). *Writing Security: United States Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Campbell, D. (1993). *Politics without Principles: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Casanova, J. (2011). The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms. In M. J. Craig Calhoun, *Rethinking Secularism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cavanaugh, W. (2009). *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cochran, J. A. (2017). Israel: Divided by Religion and Education. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 26(1), 32-55.
- Coskun, B. B. (2010). History writing and securitization of the other: the construction and reconstruction of Palestinian and Israeli security discourses. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 23(2), 281-298.
- Coursen-Neff, Z. (2004). Discrimination against Palestinian Arab children in the Israeli education system. *NYUJ International Law and Politics*, 36:749, 101-161.
- Don-Yehiya, E. (2014). Messianism and Politics: The Ideological Transformation of Religious Zionism. *Israel Studies* 19 (2), 239-263.
- Dubin, L. C. (2005). Enlightenment and Emancipation. In N. M. De Lange, & M. Freud-Kandel, *Modern Judaism : An Oxford Guide* (pp. 29 - 41). Oxford: OUP Oxford.
- Edrei, A. (2017). Judaism, Jewish Law, and the Jewish State in Israel. In C. H. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law (Cambridge Companions to Religion)* (pp. 337-364). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ettinger, Y. (2017). *Privitizing religion: The transformation of Israel's Religious-Zionist community*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis. In T. v. Dijk, *Discourse as Social Interaction* (pp. 258-284). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Feder, A. (2011). Masorti: Political Party or Socio-Religious Lobby? *Conservative Judaism*, vol. 62, no. 3-4, 34-49.
- Finkelman, Y. (2014). The Ambivalent Haredi Jew. *Israel Studies*, 19(2), 264-293.
- Fishman, A. (1995). Modern Orthodox Judaism: A Study in Ambivalence. *Social Compass* 42(1), 89-95.

- Floyd, R. (2011). Can securitization theory be used in normative analysis? Towards a just securitization theory. *Security Dialogue* 42(4-5), 427-439.
- Gross, O. (2003). Providing for the unexpected: constitutional emergency provisions. *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights* 33, 13-44.
- Halbental, D. (2016). Religion and State, One and the Same. In E. Ben-Rafael, J. H. Schoeps, Y. Sternberg, & O. Glöckner, *Handbook of Israel: Major Debates* (pp. 122-130). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Herrera, Y., & Braumoeller, B. (2004). Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis. *Qualitative Methods*, 15-19.
- Holzscheiter, B. C. (2014). Structures of Signification: Discourse Theory and Analysis in International Relations. *International Studies Perspectives* (15), 142-162.
- Huntington, S. P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Simon and Schuster.
- Jabareen, Y. R. (2010). The politics of state planning in achieving geopolitical ends: The case of the recent master plan for Jerusalem. *International Development Planning Review*, 32(1), 27-43.
- Kasper-Marienberg, V. (2017). From Enlightenment to Emancipation . In C. H. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law (Cambridge Companions to Religion* (pp. 189-214). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laustsen, C., & Wæver, O. (2000). In defence of religion: Sacred referent objects for securitization. *Millennium*, 29(3), 705-739.
- Lerner, N. (2007). Religious Liberty in the State of Israel. *Emory International Law Review*, 21, 239-276.
- Levenson, J. D. (2012). *Inheriting Abraham: The legacy of the patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
- Liebman, C. S., & Don-Yihya, E. (1983). *Civil religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and political culture in the Jewish state*. Berkeley, California, USA: University of California Press.
- Lombardi, C., & Brown, N. (2006). Do Constitutions Requiring Adherence to Sharia Threaten Human Rights?: How Egypt's Constitutional Court Reconciles Islamic Law with the Liberal Rule of Law. *American University International Law Review* Vol. 21 (3), 379-435.
- Lundquist, J. M. (2008). *The Temple of Jerusalem: past, present, and future*. London: Praeger.
- Lupovici, A. (2014). The limits of securitization theory: Observational criticism and the curious absence of Israel. *International Studies Review*, 16(3), 390-410.

- Mahler, G. S. (2010). *Politics and Government in Israel : The Maturation of a Modern State*. Lanham, Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Maoz, A. (2007). Religious Education in Israel. *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review*, Vol. 83:679, 679-728.
- Maoz, Z. (2009). Threat Perception and Threat Manipulation: The Uses and Misuses of Threats in Israel's National Security, 1948-2008. In O. Barak, & G. Sheffer, *Existential Threats and Civil Security Relations*. Lanham: Lexington Press.
- McSweeney, B. (1999). *Security, Identity and Interests*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Michael, K. (2009). Who Really Dictates What an Existential Threat Is? The Israeli Experience. *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32 (5), 687-713.
- Milliken, J. (1999). The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research Methods. *European Journal of International Relations* 5(2), 225-254.
- Milliken, J. (2015). Discourse Study: Bringing Rigor to Critical Theory. In K. Fierke, & K. Jorgensen, *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation* (pp. 136-159). London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Monius, A. (1999). Review: Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs by Ninian Smart. *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 79, no, 3, 503-505.
- Ochs, J. (2011). *Security and suspicion: An ethnography of everyday life in Israel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Olesker, R. (2014). National identity and securitization in Israel. *Ethnicities* Vol. 14(3), 371-391.
- Pew Research Center (2016). *Israel's religiously divided society: Deep gulfs among Jews, as well as between Jews and Arabs, over political values and religion's role in public life*. <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/03/Israel-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.
- Ratzabi, S. (2016). The Secular State in Rabbinic Thought. In E. Ben-Rafael, J. H. Schoeps, Y. Sternberg, & O. Glöckner, *Handbook of Israel: Major Debates* (pp. 146 - 165). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- Ravitzky, A. (2007). *Messianism, zionism, and jewish religious radicalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rubin, L. (2014). Islamic Political Activism in Israel. *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, Analysis Paper*, 32.
- Sachs, N., & Reeves, B. (2017). *Tribes, identities and individual freedom in Israel*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

- Satlow, M. L. (2006). *Creating Judaism : History, Tradition, Practice*. . New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schäfer, P. J. (2012). *Human and Water Security in Israel and Jordan*. Berlin: Springer.
- Sen, A. K. (1999). Democracy as a Universal Value. *Journal of Democracy*. 10 (3), 3-17.
- Sendrey, A. (1969). *Music in ancient Israel*. New York City, USA: Philosophical Library.
- Senor, D., & Singe, S. (2011). *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*. . New York, USA: Random House Digital, Inc. .
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2015). *Security theology, surveillance and the politics of fear*. . Cambridge University Press.
- Sheikh, M. K. (2014). The Religious Challenge to Securitisation Theory. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies Vol. 43(1)*, 252–272.
- Smart, N. (1998). *The World's Religions (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stadler, N. (2002). Is Profane Work an Obstacle to Salvation? The Case of Ultra Orthodox (Haredi) Jews in Contemporary Israel. *Sociology of Religion*, 63:4, 455-474.
- Stern, Y. Z. (2017). *Religion, state, and the Jewish identity crisis in Israel*. Washington: Brookings Institute.
- Stritzel, H. (2007). Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond. *European Journal of International Relations vol. 13(3)*, 357-383.
- Suleman, M. A. (2017). Return of the Clash: Operationalizing a Tainted Worldview. *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(4), 49-70.
- Turton, A. (2003). *The Political Aspects of Institutional Development in the Water Sector: South Africa and Its International River Basins*. PhD thesis. Department of Political Science. Pretoria: Univeristy of Pretoria.
- Wæver, O. (1995). Securitization and Desecuritization. In R. Lipschutz, *On Security* (pp. 46 - 86). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wæver, O. (2003). *Securitization: Taking Stock of a Research Programme in Security Studies*. unpublished manuscript.
- Weingrod, A. (2016). What Has Become of the Ethnic Devil? Reflections on the Current State of Israeli Ethnicity. In E. Ben-Rafael, J. H. Schoeps, Y. Sternberg, & O. Glöckner, *Handbook of Israel: Major Debates* (pp. 281-303). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
- Williams, M. C. (2003). Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics. *International Studies Quarterly* 47, 511-531.
- Wilson, E. K. (2012). *After secularism: Rethinking religion in global politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Zeitoun, M. (2007). The Conflict Vs. Cooperation Paradox: Fighting Over or Sharing of Palestinian-Israeli Groundwater? *Water International* 32(1), 105-120.

## Appendix

### Hebrew Concepts and Words

Most definitions are from the website [www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com)

<i>Cohanim:</i>	descendants of the sons of Aaron who served as priests in the Temple in Jerusalem
<i>Datiim:</i>	Modern Orthodox Jews
<i>Halakha:</i>	Jewish religious law
<i>Hanukkah:</i>	Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem (164 BCE)
<i>Haskalah:</i>	‘Nineteenth-century Jewish enlightenment, following on the opening up of Judaism to European thought and culture’ (Smart, 1998, p. 272)
<i>Haredi:</i>	Ultra-Orthodox Jews
<i>Hilonim:</i>	Secular Jews
<i>Kippah:</i>	Brimless skullcap worn by Jewish men and boys
<i>Kosher:</i>	Adhering to <i>kashrut</i> (Jewish dietary laws)
<i>Mamlachti:</i>	National
<i>Mamlachti dati:</i>	National Religious
<i>Masorti'im:</i>	Traditional Jews
<i>Menorah:</i>	Traditional Jewish seven-branched grandiole
<i>Messiah:</i>	Human being who will help usher in the redemption of the Jewish people
<i>Mitzvah</i>	Commandment derived from the Hebrew Bible. There are 613 <i>mitzvot</i> in total

<i>Passover Seders:</i>	Ceremonial meal and telling of the Passover story on the first two nights of Passover
<i>Shabbat:</i>	A weekly 25-hour observance, from just before sundown each Friday through the completion of nightfall on Saturday
<i>Shofar:</i>	A ram's horn that is sounded during the month of Elul, on Rosh Hashanah, and on Yom Kippur. It is mentioned numerous times in the Bible, in reference to its ceremonial use in the Temple and to its function as a signal-horn of war.
<i>Tanakh:</i>	Hebrew Bible (an acronym for Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim, or the Torah, Prophets and Writings).
<i>Torah:</i>	The Five Books of Moses, by Christians also referred to as the Old Testament.
<i>Yeshiva:</i>	A traditional religious school, where students mainly study Jewish texts
<i>Yom Kippur</i>	The Day of Atonement, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar and, with Rosh Hashanah, one of the High Holidays



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

## Speech A

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

*Translation*

1  
2 February 3, 2010

3  
4 **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the Herzliya Conference**

5  
6 Thank you Professor Reichman, for that introduction. You are a visionary and practical man.  
7 You established an amazing organization. When Ron Lauder told me about your plans, he told  
8 me to wait and see how you would mobilize to create a national and international forum every  
9 year that would shape patterns of thinking and refresh them. My friend Uzi Arad joined you  
10 and worked alongside you to help do this, and our friend Professor Rubenstein is doing so  
11 now. I think you have proven over the years that one can think better and dream realistically.  
12 That is actually what Herzl was saying in that quote you just mentioned.

13  
14 We share a common dream – to reach peace with our neighbors. There is good reason for me  
15 to hope, realistically, that in the next several weeks we will renew the peace process with the  
16 Palestinians without any preconditions. For some time, I have said that the international  
17 community has learned to recognize that Israel wants and is ready to renew the peace process.  
18 Since the moment that recognition was internalized, central players in the international arena  
19 have begun to accept the practical feasibility of such a step.

20  
21 There is a saying: it takes two to tango. In the Middle East, sometimes it takes three to tango,  
22 or at least to start to tango. Later, I suppose, we will be able to continue on as two.

23  
24 I hope there is a willingness on the Palestinian side – not only to build up the Palestinian  
25 economy and Palestinian institutions, but to begin to build the peace itself. The only way to  
26 achieve a peace agreement is to begin conducting negotiations towards a peace agreement. If  
27 this willingness really does exist now, we will see a renewal of the process in the next several  
28 weeks.

29  
30 I know that one of my predecessors, Ariel Sharon, spoke from this podium about  
31 disengagement. Today I would like to speak not of disengagement, but rather of engagement:  
32 engagement with our heritage, with Zionism, with our past and with our future here in the land  
33 of our forefathers, which is also the land of our children and our grandchildren.

34  
35 You are dealing with our people's fate because it is clear today that the fate of the Jewish  
36 people is the fate of the Jewish state. There is no demographic or practical existence for the  
37 Jewish people without a Jewish state. This doesn't mean that the Jewish state does not face  
38 tremendous challenges, but our existence, our future, is here. The greatest change that came  
39 with the establishment of the Jewish state was that Jews became more than just a collection of  
40 individuals, communities and fragments of communities. They became a sovereign collective in  
41 their own territory. Our ability as a collective to determine our own destiny is what grants us

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

83 country, here in Herzliya – everywhere. It will no longer take years; it may take months. Plans  
84 won't have to go through clerks or nerve-racking procedures; a great proportion of the  
85 process will be done on the internet. Then the approvals will arrive, some automatically, and  
86 one just needs to report them.

87  
88 We have already begun the planning and construction reform, the national transportation  
89 network and the freeing up of land, and have laid the groundwork to them. All these plans  
90 encourage growth, as will other plans I will detail in the next year. Strengthening the economy  
91 is an integral part of these plans. I want to clarify that the State of Israel is already considered a  
92 regional economic powerhouse, and in my vision, we will establish and fortify our position as a  
93 global technological powerhouse.

94  
95 This is a necessary condition, but it is not enough, because a strong army and a strong economy  
96 are not enough of a guarantee for our existence here if we are not committed to being here  
97 from the outset. This, distinguished guests, can only be created through one thing – through  
98 education.

99  
100 Education is the melting pot in which our national strength is forged. It has two parts:  
101 acquiring the tools and knowledge to deepen our children's capabilities; and excellence –  
102 getting the most from each child and giving him the ability to learn math, to learn English, to  
103 learn computers, to learn science, to know how to compose a sentence, to put words together,  
104 express himself. All these abilities are essential, and they are what the Minister of Education is  
105 working so hard for. I spoke about this with Dov Lautman many times, as well as with many  
106 others. This is a central issue, but it is not the main thrust of my comments here tonight.

107  
108 Tonight, I refer to something even more basic. I am talking about educating children about the  
109 values connected to our identity and heritage, teaching children to know our people's history,  
110 educating young people and adults to deepen our ties to one another and to this place.

111  
112 I believe that this education starts, first and foremost, in the Book of Books – in the Bible – a  
113 subject that is close to my heart these days. It starts there. It moves through the history of our  
114 people: the Second Temple, the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, leaving the ghettos, the rise  
115 of Zionism, the modern era, the wars fought for Israel's existence – the history of Zionism and  
116 of Israel. A people must know its past in order to ensure its future.

117  
118 There is a well-known story about Napoleon. One day, he passed by a synagogue on Tisha  
119 B'Av and he heard the weeping of the worshippers. He asked what they were crying about, and  
120 the Jews told him: "We are weeping because our Temple was destroyed." He asked: "How can  
121 it be that I heard nothing about this?" He liked knowing what was going on. He wasn't really  
122 interested, but he would have received a report. So the worshippers told him: "Sir, it happened  
123 more than 1,700 years ago." And he told them: "A people capable of remembering its past so

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

124 clearly has a guaranteed future.” But the opposite is also true. Yigal Alon said so. He said that  
125 a people that doesn’t remember its past, its present is uncertain and its future is unclear.

126  
127 In other words, our existence depends not only on a weapons system, our military strength, the  
128 strength of our economy, our innovation, our exports, or on all these forces that are indeed  
129 essential. It depends, first and foremost, on the knowledge and national sentiment we as  
130 parents bestow on our children, and as a state to its education system. It depends on our  
131 culture; it depends on our cultural heroes; it depends on our ability to explain the justness of  
132 our path and demonstrate our affinity for our land – first to ourselves and then to others.

133  
134 We must remind ourselves that if our feeling of serving a higher purpose dissipates, if our  
135 sources of spiritual strength grow weak, then – as Yigal Alon said – our future will also be  
136 unclear. It will happen if our young generation is not committed to our people and our  
137 country; if they do not love the pioneering spirit, if they do not travel our country, if they do  
138 not want to mobilize and sacrifice – then our future is truly unclear.

139  
140 Every year at this Conference, we exchange thoughts and ideas about our vision, and we are  
141 accustomed to aspiring to obtain all the “luxuries”. We want economic abundance and social  
142 justice and cultural richness and a groundbreaking spirit of excellence in the sciences, in  
143 medicine, in technology, in the business sector. But this culture, the culture of opulence – we  
144 have in great measure achieved it. But alongside this is a great challenge of which I would like  
145 to speak today.

146  
147 That challenge is to not get carried away by the illusion that we – each and every one of us – is  
148 allowed to become preoccupied solely with self-development. There are a great many talented  
149 young people here, and they are being taught to think, quite justifiably, that they are  
150 cosmopolitans. But they cannot be just cosmopolitans. A great many of them are taught in  
151 surroundings of cultural shallowness, of diluted knowledge and spirituality – and this dilutes  
152 and weakens the national strength we have spoken of here today. We have guests here from  
153 overseas. I know you know that this problem is not unique to Israel. It affects many other  
154 peoples and nations. But nowhere is it more critical than in the State of Israel, because no  
155 other country faces the challenges and the threats that we face. Therefore, we must find the  
156 balance between integrating into the world at large and maintaining our identity and our  
157 uniqueness.

158  
159 I travel the country and I meet students who have chosen to leave their comfortable urban  
160 lives. Like the pioneers of our past, they establish communities in the Negev and the Galilee.  
161 They are part of all sorts of very exciting projects and initiatives. I meet teenagers who, right  
162 before they begin their military service, decide to contribute an extra year of their lives to assist  
163 underprivileged communities or to strengthen youth movements. We are going to expand this  
164 program so that it will include all sectors of Israeli society and allow everyone – from the ultra-

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

165 orthodox public to the Arab public – to contribute to their communities. I see wonderful, even  
166 exciting, young people in the pre-army preparation academies. They are caring and sensitive,  
167 wrestling with the question, “how can we be Zionists in 2010?” But I honestly must tell you  
168 that this is a very small group of young people, and we must – we simply must – get a much  
169 broader group of young people interested in our Zionist heritage and continually encourage  
170 them to identify with the people of Israel and the Land of Israel. I want to tell you that the  
171 simplest and most original way of doing so is to connect these young people to our homeland  
172 through their feet – through becoming familiar with the country, travelling the country. But it  
173 is not certain that if one travels the country, one becomes attached to our heritage.

174

175 Several months ago, I visited the Lachish Region. I saw a large mound. In this case, the  
176 mound was one of the few I had not already seen during my army service. I told the  
177 motorcade to turn around. We made a u-turn, and they said to me: “Mr. Prime Minister, you  
178 cannot climb that hill. We didn’t make security arrangements there.” I answered: “But there’s  
179 no problem. You know why? Because there’s no one here!” It was Tel Lachish, one of the  
180 most dramatic places in the history of the Jewish people. Carvings of it were found in Iraq and  
181 this mound was subject to the siege of Lachish that is described in the Bible – and there was no  
182 one there. After some time, a group of Russian tour guides arrived. I was there for almost an  
183 hour, and not one veteran Israeli came.

184

185 Several years before that I was a chaperone on a trip for one of my children, on the way to the  
186 Atlit detention camp at night. At night, they do field exercises on the path to the detention  
187 camp. We were on a gravel path along the shoreline, and suddenly I saw a house, a structure,  
188 near the water. I left the group and walked over there, and I saw a house – a single structure, a  
189 single room near the water – about to crumble. I asked what it was. I was told: “That is the  
190 house where Aaron Aaronson and the NILI underground signaled the British.” I always  
191 thought they signaled them from the Carmel, but clearly they couldn’t because the Turks would  
192 have seen the signals from the shore. However, from the water line they could signal to them  
193 and they did. This is a part of our magnificent history, without which we would never have  
194 freed our country. It helped the British take control and free the Land of Israel. It opened up  
195 the way to Zionism.

196

197 Here are examples from both our ancient and our recent past, two sites that one would simply  
198 pass by, not see, not know about. No one visits them. We are going to change that. At the  
199 end of next month, on Tel Hai Day, I intend to present the government with a work plan that  
200 will reverse the neglect of heritage sites. We initiated a national plan to rehabilitate and  
201 strengthen infrastructure at heritage sites. I call it the “Heritage Plan.” We are going to  
202 preserve tourist sites, archaeological sites, historic buildings and museums. We will also  
203 preserve less physical and tangible infrastructure, such as archives, photographs, films, books,  
204 songs and music. We will make all these available to the general public. We will utilize new

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

205 technologies and free up these works so that they are accessible to every boy and girl in Israel,  
206 every house, every family, every citizen.

207

208 I want you to think about a family outing with your children or grandchildren at one of these  
209 sites. I am not telling you not to go to the movies or to a bar. That's alright; you can do those  
210 things, but add in this layer and understand the deeper meaning behind it. I speak from  
211 experience. Think about a father and son visiting a Jewish historic site, about the profound  
212 significance of transmitting the legacy exactly as commanded in the Bible: "And tell your son."  
213 The plan of which I speak will be financed with government funds and will be spread out over  
214 five years. It will encompass a broad range of activities, projects, organizations, authorities and  
215 the education and information system – and it is only the first stage. Our commitment is to  
216 breathing new life into the Israeli experience. I am talking about rehabilitating those same  
217 assets that tell the story of the people of Israel and the Land of Israel; the story of the Jewish  
218 settlement; our artistic assets; our nostalgic spirit and memory. A significant portion of those  
219 assets are being destroyed or disappearing, and we will take them and preserve them, and fortify  
220 them and we will explain them in a way that is accessible to an audience, in simple and clear  
221 language. And all this will be integrated into the education system that serves the children of  
222 Israel.

223

224 We recently learned in a study that the teenagers who are highly motivated to serve in the  
225 military are those who have travelled the country extensively. The example I like to give, which  
226 is a highly successful one, is the Israel Trail. It has been a tremendous success. Within a  
227 decade, the project's founders have succeeded in transforming this trail into a desirable  
228 destination, one that attracts a huge number of young people and not-so-young people. By  
229 travelling the Trail, they become familiar with the country and connect to it. According to the  
230 plan I will present to the government, we will, within five years, inaugurate two additional trails  
231 alongside the Israel Trail. One is the historic Land of Israel trail, which will connect between  
232 dozens of ancient archaeological sites. Within our tiny piece of land, there are 30,000 ancient  
233 sites, 800 of which have clear national importance. Sadly, only 50 of those sites are open to the  
234 public, and even they are not in great shape. That is going to change on a huge scale. The  
235 second trail will be the "Israel Experience" trail. This trail will include the treasures of our  
236 country, and will serve as a living Land of Israel museum. It will connect between dozens of  
237 stops celebrating the history of the Jewish *Yisbuv* [the Jewish population before the  
238 establishment of the State of Israel]. It will include historic buildings, settlement sites, small  
239 museums, memorial sites and personal stories – all of which are part of our Zionist heritage.

240

241 I know people will ask: "This is the topic you chose to speak of here, at a discussion about our  
242 national strength?" My answer is yes. Sometimes small steps lead to great things. I want to  
243 give you an example of two steps similar to what I have just described that changed our  
244 people's history. I was recently in London. I visited the basement of the Palestine Exploration  
245 Fund. It was established in 1860 by Queen Victoria in order to map and scientifically explore

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה  
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

246 the Land of Israel. Queen Victoria sent two men here. One was named Claude R. Conder,  
247 who was the head of the expedition. The second was a 21-year-old second lieutenant named  
248 Kitchener, who would in time become the 1st Earl Kitchener. Together, they began to map  
249 the country, including this place. They made wonderful, accurate topographical maps, and  
250 found all the ancient places and reinstated their names. They came armed with all the most  
251 advanced measuring tools of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and with the Bible. The PEF is responsible for  
252 some of what we now know. For example, they brought Warren here, and he found Warren's  
253 Shaft and many other ancient sites in Jerusalem and across the Land of Israel.

254

255 This fired up the imaginations of the both the aristocracy and common people in Britain. You  
256 have no idea what an effect it had. It made them think that perhaps the Land of Israel wasn't  
257 an abstract place. This land is concrete, and maybe it could be revived, be brought back to life,  
258 if the original people who lived there could return to it. That started people talking. It took  
259 several decades to happen.

260

261 The second project, also a modest project, was one that fired the imaginations of young Jews.  
262 It was Baron Rothschild's project. He established villages at several sites after the PEF had  
263 been here, from Rosh Pina to Petah Tikva. These new communities revived the ancient land  
264 though not on a huge scale; there were only several thousand people living there. However,  
265 this action ignited a blaze. One of the people who was carried away by this blaze was a young  
266 Jew who came here in 1898 – Benjamin Zeev Herzl. He visited, using – by the way – the PEF  
267 maps. He visited all these places and understood what was here, and much more. He dared to  
268 dream about what could be. These two blazes are what ignited the greatest empire to rule the  
269 world and the new prophet of the Jewish people and many other young Jews – these two blazes  
270 merged together and became Zionism.

271

272 I won't tell you that we don't have tremendous tasks to undertake in all the important fields.  
273 We do have them, and we will undertake them. But we will do so only if we are committed to  
274 our past in order to ensure our future. Therefore, in light of the plans I laid out today, I hope  
275 you will invite me back here in five more years; invite Tzvi Hauser – he is in charge of  
276 implementing all this. Our purpose today is to reignite the flame, to introduce a new spirit into  
277 the blaze of our lives and reconnect with this land – our land – the unique and singular Land of  
278 Israel.

279

280 Thank you.

281

282

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465/7, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972 (2) 6705465/7, Fax: +972 (2) 5669245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@IT.PMO.GOV.IL

# Speech B



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

*Translation*

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

May 20, 2012

**PM Netanyahu's Speech at the Ceremony Marking the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Unification of Jerusalem at Ammunition Hill**

Just days ago, I visited the Altneu Synagogue in Prague, the Maharal's [Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel] synagogue. Three months ago, I visited the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam. These are two of the most remarkable synagogues in the world. One has been serving the Jewish community of the Czech Republic for nearly 800 years. The second has served the Jewish community of Holland for 350 years. One is Ashkenazi, the other Sephardic. One is small and intimate. The other is large and magnificent.

But what connects them is what connects every synagogue around the world. When Jews pray in Prague or in Amsterdam, in New York or in Moscow, in Mexico City or in Hong Kong, in Haifa or in Beer Sheva, the face the same direction our people have faced for thousands of years. They face Jerusalem.

They face the place that has always been the center of our national and spiritual life, the place that reminds us of our glorious past and serves as the focus of our hopes for the future. And we will not turn our backs on those who have faced Jerusalem for generations. We will preserve Jerusalem because an Israel without Jerusalem is like a body without a heart. It was on this hill, 45 years ago, that the heart that unites our people began to beat again with full strength; and our heart will never be divided again.

There are people who believe that if we just divide Jerusalem, which means eventually conceding the Temple Mount – they believe we will have peace. They believe that, but they are wrong. I am doubtful, to put it mildly, that if we grant other forces control over that square above the Temple Mount, we won't see the situation deteriorate so quickly that will devolve into a religious and sectarian war. I also know that this is the lesson of the ages – that only under Israeli rule, under Israeli sovereignty – access and freedom of religion and freedom of worship for all religions has been and will continue to be ensured. Only under Israel. Only under Israel will the quiet be maintained; only under Israel will peace between the religions be maintained.

Sustainable peace is made with strong nations, and an Israel without a unified Jerusalem will be like a body with a weak heart. I want to say something else: a nation that is willing to sacrifice its heart will only convince its enemies that it lacks the willpower to fight for anything.

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

**3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL**



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

38

39 Forty-five years ago, this place saw our people's determination and the iron will of our fighters.  
40 They fought like lions in these trenches, against wave after wave of machine gun and heavy fire.  
41 They fought like lions, but more than that, they fought for Jerusalem and they won.

42

43 During that same fierce battle, 36 of our best men perished – and in all of Jerusalem, 182 IDF  
44 fighters died, and Jewish history changed forever. A city divided became whole – and it will  
45 remain so.

46

47 Our generation has been granted a great privilege: we are witnesses to the fulfillment of the  
48 words of the prophets. We saw the resurrection of Zion; we saw the restoration of the  
49 sovereignty of the people of Israel here in the Land of Israel; we saw the ingathering of the  
50 exiles; and we saw the unification and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Our generation also bears the  
51 tremendous responsibility of ensuring that we safeguard this transformation for future  
52 generations.

53

54 The prophet Isaiah said: "Wake, wake! Arise, O Jerusalem." Well, Jerusalem has arisen. After  
55 centuries of repression and intolerance by other faiths, Jerusalem has arisen and been unified.

56

57 I remember the day when Motta Gur said that the Temple Mount was in our possession.  
58 Whose heart did not tremble? Who did not think then about David and Solomon, about Isaiah  
59 and Jeremiah, about the prophecies of hope and the lamentations of destruction? Who did not  
60 feel the prayer of generations that beats within us? I felt it and so did you.

61

62 And with this great power, we ushered in a transformation here that could not be imagined.  
63 What was less than a century ago a forgotten, impoverished and neglected backwater has now  
64 become a bustling, vibrant, developed and advanced metropolis, the greatest requisite of Israel  
65 – and the united capital of our nation.

66

67 Jerusalem is where our past has been uncovered and our future has been built, the place where  
68 our unparalleled spiritual treasures reside, a place of world-renowned universities and museums,  
69 a place where unprecedented numbers are studying our heritage and where the genius of our  
70 people is expanding the limits of science, medicine, technology, the material sciences and the  
71 life sciences, and many other sciences.

72

73 For 45 years, we have built and developed Jerusalem – North and South, East and West. We  
74 will continue to build Jerusalem.

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

**3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245**  
**E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL**



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

75

76 We will continue to develop our capital and we will continue to ensure that its golden light  
77 continues to light the future of our people and shine a light across the world – the light of  
78 Jerusalem.

79

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL

# Speech C



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

1 27/05/14

*Translation*

2  
3  
4 **Address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**  
5 **at the Ceremony Marking the 47<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Unification of Jerusalem**

6 May 27, 2014, Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva

7  
8 47 years ago, Jerusalem – the unified city – was joined together again. This is the way it has always been,  
9 and this is the way it always will be. We mark this date – the 28<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 1967. It is a significant date,  
10 particularly in this place, because on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Iyar 1904, 63 years earlier, Rabbi Abraham Isaac  
11 HaCohen Kook, founder of this important yeshiva, the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva, immigrated to Israel.

12  
13 I feel at home here because Rabbi Kook had a tremendous impact on my grandfather, Nathan  
14 Mileikowsky. He derived endless strength and inspiration from the Rabbi. Rabbi Kook delivered a  
15 beautiful eulogy for my grandfather. Another connection is your beloved father, Rabbi Avraham  
16 Shapira, who used to tell me how, as a small child in Jerusalem, he would often listen to my grandfather  
17 talk about Zionism, the Land of Israel, Jerusalem, the Return to Zion. He told me that my grandfather  
18 was a great orator. I feel at home here. This is my home.

19  
20 There was something unique about the spirit of Rabbi Kook which beats inside us. Rabbi Kook was a  
21 great Zionist. He saw Herzl as a messenger of history. I see him as the personification of a modern-day  
22 biblical prophet who emerged from the pages of the Bible. But Rabbi Kook also believed that Zionism  
23 must not disengage from Judaism as he believed that nationalism alone, disconnected from the eternal  
24 sources of the people of Israel, has neither justification nor viability. There is no spirit without  
25 substance. There is no flour without the Torah. This is the essence of the connection between the  
26 "spiritual Jerusalem" and the "profane Jerusalem".

27  
28 As the Prime Minister of Israel, I am occupied with the "profane Jerusalem". We dig tunnels and pave  
29 roads and build bridges. You see the tremendous work on the path to Zion. All you see in Mevasseret  
30 Zion today are the bulldozers paving the paths to and inside our capital city. We are responsible for the  
31 building, development and prosperity of Jerusalem, and there is still great work to be done. Jerusalem  
32 has developed remarkably. Jerusalem after the Six Day War was not a small village, but it was not  
33 exactly a big metropolis either. Today, Jerusalem is a big metropolis. It stands out in all its glory.  
34 Jerusalem is Beit Hakerem, Kiryat Yovel and Har Homa, our "southern gate", which I was privileged to  
35 establish during my first term as Prime Minister.

36  
37 Jerusalem is factories, including advanced hi-tech factories, "From Zion will the software come forth",  
38 and it will come forth to the entire world. Jerusalem is all of these things, but it is also Yad Vashem and  
39 Herzl's Tomb and the Mount of Olives, where my grandfather and grandmother, Menachem Begin and  
40 many of our forefathers are buried. Jerusalem is also Mount Zion and Moriah Mountain and the  
41 Western Wall and "Eternal Israel". We preserve our heart, the heart of our nation.

42  
43 We will never divide our heart – never. As we believe that our capital is the heart of our nation, it must  
44 be united, as the Rabbi just said, it must be connected to the great soul of Eternal Israel, to the Torah  
45 and to the intellectual assets created by our Sages throughout the generations.

46

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

47 Each Shabbat, I draw strength from reading one book, one portion, uncovering one surprise. Most of  
48 the time there is a wise student, more or less your age, to help me, and from time to time we surf the  
49 net. The amount of strength we draw from the Bible is tremendous. Never have I read it without  
50 discovering how relevant it is to our situation today, both spiritually and practically.  
51  
52 The Rabbi spoke of inner strengths. Let me tell you, you need strength to be Prime Minister of Israel.  
53 It is not the easiest job in the world. From where do we draw our strength? Where does this nation –  
54 which rose from the ashes and made miracles, a nation revered throughout the world – find its  
55 strength? This is my responsibility.  
56  
57 I was in China where Israel is admired. I was also in Japan where Israel is also admired. I spoke with  
58 the Prime Minister of India (I'm talking about the small countries) who respects Israel and wants to  
59 have ties with us, and many others. There is also a great deal of hatred, anti-Semitism and slander  
60 directed at us, but there is also great admiration because many among the nations of the world know  
61 that there is something special here, a spiritual spark, an eternal spark, a people that survived for  
62 thousands of years against all odds, returned to their homeland, rebuilt their homeland, established their  
63 state and built an unprecedented military force.  
64  
65 There is a unique spirit here, and it all concentrated in one place – Jerusalem. It is concentrated in the  
66 Book of Books, in studying it and nurturing it. Every child in our country should know this book,  
67 Judaic studies. I am telling you this with a deep conviction. Simply put, I believe it is necessary to  
68 ensure our people's eternity.  
69  
70 This is the reason I am here this evening. I am here to celebrate the joy of Jerusalem with you.  
71 "Be glad with Jerusalem and rejoice in her", said the Prophet Isaiah. I am here to encourage you to  
72 keep studying the Torah. I congratulate you on this festive day, the festive day of Jerusalem. Happy  
73 holiday to all the people of Israel. Blessings.

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL

# Speech D



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

1

2 May 24, 2017

3

4 **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Remarks at the Knesset Special**  
5 **Session Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reunification of Jerusalem**

6

7 -Translation-

8

9 I can say with certainty that the eyes of the entire world were focused on us  
10 this week, certainly of the Jewish world, which is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup>  
11 anniversary of the reunification of our eternal capital, but also of the rest of  
12 the world, which saw the President of the United States Donald Trump  
13 welcomed to Jerusalem with dignity and warmth. I am sure that you were as  
14 moved as I was to see President Trump and his family stand beside the  
15 Western Wall, touching its stones.

16

17 The soldiers who liberated Jerusalem during the Six Day War did the same  
18 thing with an outburst of emotion stemming from the depths of their souls. I  
19 remember the human flood when a hole in the wall surrounding the city was  
20 breached near City Hall and it flowed into the alleyways and we finally  
21 reached the Western Wall and touched those stones in person. Seeing our  
22 soldiers standing near the Western Wall at that historic occasion was joyous  
23 for three reasons: our success in turning the existential threat against us into  
24 a great miracle of salvation; our return to the land of our forefathers, in which  
25 our identity as a people was forged; and the wondrous unification that joined  
26 us and proved that by standing together, we could overcome any challenge.

27

28 We liberated Jerusalem and transformed it into one city – not perfect, but  
29 whole. It is an advanced city. It has flourished, is open to all and the believers  
30 of the various religions are respected here. We redeemed Jerusalem from the  
31 ongoing neglect and distress it had suffered. We are the ones who brought it  
32 to a high point in its development. What was here in Jerusalem before that?

33 What was the city like at the dawn of our national rebirth, when we began  
34 returning to it? There was almost nothing here. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was there  
35 an advanced kingdom here in Israel? Was there a vibrant Palestinian capital?

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

36

37

The truth must be told: Jerusalem, like the entire Land of Israel, was a peripheral and desolate district of the Ottoman Empire. A long list of famous visitors provided their impressions of the Holy Land: de Chateaubriand, de Lamartine, Mark Twain, Herman Melville – the greatest writers and poets in human history. They were not Zionist agents. They wrote about what they saw, and they all painted the exact same picture: a remote country, the great majority of which was dull and barren, shrouded in a feeling of unease.

44

45

The great change came with Jewish immigration. We established villages, kibbutzim, farming communities, cities. We developed agriculture and industry. These became magnets for Arab immigration to the Land of Israel. Arab migrants joined the Arabs who were already here, but this is what drove the great development in the Land of Israel, its great renewal. It is true that Jerusalem already had a Jewish majority in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and it developed more when we moved outside the walls of the Old City, but in the 19 years Jerusalem was divided and scarred, it again reached a low point: Jewish buildings were destroyed, headstones from the Mount of Olives were toppled and desecrated. I remember going to check on my family members' headstones after the war, my grandparents' headstones. Had they too been desecrated? Many others did the same. Some breathed a sigh of relief and others did not. Go look for those stones; they are now construction and foundation stones.

59

60

A winding border line cut deeply through the middle of Jerusalem, at the heart of which stood barricades to block sniper fire, barbed wire fences and minefields. We stood there, trying to catch a glimpse of the Temple Mount and the Western Wall from afar, but we could not approach them.

64

65

Distinguished guests,

66

67

We will never return to this situation. The dark cloud that hung over Jerusalem was dispersed 50 years ago. We embarked on an unprecedentedly justified defensive war and won a resounding victory. Some people view the Six Day War as a disaster for Israel; I see it as a success and salvation for Israel. How could we have continued to live in a narrow strip of

68

69

70

71

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

72 land just 12 kilometers wide, with the well-being of our citizens in constant  
73 danger, including here in Jerusalem on King George Street, where we had to  
74 walk behind walls.

75

76 From a narrow and threatened coastal country, we became a defensible and  
77 secure country, a country whose capital is not forfeited to enemy soldiers.  
78 Above all else, this was an event of historic justice: Jerusalem – our national  
79 capital for 3,000 years returned to its original owners, whole and united. For  
80 generations, it was solely our national capital and not that of other peoples.  
81 Only under our sovereignty did it become an island of tolerance and freedom  
82 of religion in the heart of the stormy, turbulent, intolerant Middle East.

83

84 We are making tremendous investments in Jerusalem in every field. It has  
85 neighborhoods and parks, culture and research, yeshivas and startups,  
86 transportation and tourism. There is still a great deal to do, and we will  
87 continue our work in all parts of the capital, for all its residents.

88

89 Next Sunday, we will hold a festive government meeting in the Western Wall  
90 Tunnels. We will announce new initiatives that will improve the quality of life  
91 in Jerusalem, including in the eastern part of the city. However, members of  
92 Knesset, here is a paradox about Jerusalem: We succeeded in strengthening  
93 the city's status, developing it, preserving its unique character, defending  
94 freedom of religion and worship and it has become a wonderful symbol of  
95 Zionist actions. But the more advanced the city becomes, the more we hear  
96 denials and lies about the connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem.

97

98 I told President Trump that his visit to the Western Wall destroyed in one fell  
99 swoop all of UNESCO's false propaganda. What is this wall anyway? Just a  
100 pile of stones that suddenly appeared out of nowhere? Maybe sacred  
101 Buddhist stones from Nepal? No. This eternal wall and the mount behind it  
102 are the core of our identity. They testify a thousand testimonies who was here  
103 first, when we were here and what brought us back to our homeland.

104

105 However, the desire to censure Israel does not take the facts into account:  
106 again and again, there are attempts to erase our roots in Jerusalem, deny our  
107 connection to it, dissolve our sovereignty over it. It is a fight. We have to fight

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

108 it all the time. It may take a little more time, perhaps a great deal more time,  
109 but I am certain that this absurd play will eventually fail. Because the truth is  
110 stronger than any lie.

111

112

Members of Knesset,

113

114 Twenty-two years ago, shortly before he passed away, further to his amazing  
115 statement about the liberation of the Western Wall and the Temple Mount the  
116 deputy minister of defense, Motta Gur, said something here at the Knesset.

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

After turning to the veteran paratroopers, Motta said the following: "The Temple Mount is in our hands, Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel and you did it; and if someone tries to take that away – they will not take it. They will not take it because you will not give it. You will not give it, because there is no justice in giving it. It is all justifiably ours." For Motta, and for all the paratroopers and fighters, for you, members of Knesset and for all the citizens of Israel and the entire world, I wish to clarify: The Temple Mount and the Western Wall will forever remain under Israeli sovereignty. The correction of the historic injustice that was achieved through the courage of our fighters 50 years ago will stand forever. Judah will be inhabited forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL

# Speech E



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

1 May 24, 2017

2

3 **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Remarks at the Jerusalem Day**  
4 **Celebrations at the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva**

5

6

*Translation*

7

8 If anyone has any doubts as to whether *Am Yisrael Chai* [the people of Israel  
9 lives], they should come here to Mercaz HaRav where they would hear that  
10 the people of Israel are very much alive. Thank you, my friends, for your  
11 tremendous support. My wife and I greatly appreciate it and we love you.

12

13 Today in Jerusalem I saw many stones, but also, as you said, Rabbi Shapira,  
14 many hearts. During the Six Day War, there was a full merging of heart and  
15 stone. The war was characterized by excited embraces, a flood of tears of  
16 longing and joy unparalleled in our history, embracing the stones of the  
17 Western Wall. And I remember this. I remember the river of people when we  
18 heard that the Temple Mount and the Western Wall had been liberated. We  
19 flooded through the alleyways to the Western Wall, and like many other  
20 people, I touched the stones. They were the very same stones touched  
21 thousands of years ago by kings and prophets, *Cohanim* and Levites. By the  
22 way, I am a Levite on both sides of my family, and I felt it.

23

24 I am deeply committed to continuing to keep Jerusalem unified, to protect the  
25 Western Wall, the Temple Mount and all the holy places of Israel. Jerusalem  
26 will never revert to being Aelia Capitolina, and Jerusalem will never again be  
27 a divided city, as it was after 1948.

28

29 Distinguished head of the yeshiva, Rabbi Shapira: As a seventh-generation  
30 Jerusalemite, you must certainly remember the Jews going up to Mount Zion  
31 and standing on the roofs of the Musrara neighborhood to try and catch a  
32 glimpse of the Western Wall. That's how it was back then. We would go up to  
33 the roof, trying to see the Western Wall, craning our necks to catch a glimpse  
34 of it. It was not easy, to say the least, to see the object of our yearning from

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

35 afar. That which was missing burned in our hearts. And, my friends, all at  
36 once it changed during the magnificent war of our salvation.

37

38 I hear people describe what happened to us as a disaster. It was our  
39 deliverance, it was our redemption and we all felt it. I still feel it today. Does  
40 anyone want us to go back in time? To what? To a divided city, with ISIS on  
41 the Temple Mount? There were Islamist movements there, the Northern  
42 Faction. Have you heard of it? It is illegal. We were told that if we made the  
43 movement illegal, who knows what would happen. We declared them illegal  
44 and they are not there anymore. Nothing happened. Do we want radical Islam  
45 to take over the holy sites of Israel? Do we want the square kilometer of the  
46 Old City to turn into what we see in Palmyra or Aleppo or Mosul? That is what  
47 will happen.

48

49 It is only under Israeli sovereignty that there is freedom of worship and  
50 freedom of religion for all religions. And we will not make concessions – not  
51 the Temple Mount, not the Western Wall. We will not divide the city again.

52

53 I remember crowds of people rushing to the Western Wall. I remember that  
54 the shofar was blown once again near the Western Wall, and this time it was  
55 the shofar of freedom. It was the complete opposite of the Mandate Period,  
56 when Rav Kook told the foreign regime that he would not break his Yom  
57 Kippur fast if the shofar blowers, the underground prisoners, were not  
58 released. Rav Kook played an important role in reinforcing the walls of  
59 Jerusalem, both nationally and spiritually. Alongside him worked other men,  
60 such as Zeev Jabotinsky, one of my mentors, and, if I may, my grandfather,  
61 Rabbi Nathan Mileikowsky Netanyahu.

62

63 I have previously discussed the close relationship between my grandfather  
64 and Rav Kook, who so eloquently eulogized him. Rav Kook eulogized my  
65 grandfather. However, this year that relationship takes on special meaning,  
66 as we mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, a central  
67 milestone in our national revival. My grandfather compared the declaration on  
68 the establishment of a national home for our people to “the flash of lightning  
69 tearing through the dark skies of the Jewish people.” Rav Kook took it one  
70 step further and compared Balfour’s words to the Biblical edict of Cyrus the

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

71 Great. The Rav wrote, "The Bible... is what created for us the Declaration...  
72 [and] has formulated the redemptive word."

73

74 The recognition of the right that stemmed from the Bible guided his path, and  
75 he bequeathed that awareness to his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. It is no  
76 coincidence that Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook was one of the first people to arrive  
77 at the liberated Western Wall, together with Rabbi David Cohen. Yoram  
78 Zamosh, one of the paratroopers who raised our flag above the Western  
79 Wall, made sure to bring the excited rabbis to the remnant of the Temple  
80 Mount in a military jeep. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda, whose late father was a beacon  
81 of love for Israel, understood very well the significance of our return to the  
82 land of our fathers – to ancient Jerusalem, to Rachel's Tomb, to the Cave of  
83 the Patriarchs.

84

85 We are no longer a nation of wandering refugees. This is our homeland. We  
86 have a primordial right to it, and that right is as deep at the stake we planted  
87 in its soil.

88

89 I always think of this basic right when I resolutely and decisively stand up to  
90 parties around the world that seek to revoke our sovereignty over Jerusalem  
91 and reinstate borders in which we will not be able to defend ourselves. I never  
92 forget from whence we came and whither we returned. I do not only speak of  
93 Jerusalem; I speak of our country, our homeland, the Land of Israel.

94

95 I declare to the world that the people of Israel has returned home to its roots.  
96 We will hold on to our land and our capital Jerusalem even more firmly. We  
97 will extend our roots deeper and expand our branches higher. Our strong  
98 spirit withstood countless tests in the past and it will continue to support us in  
99 the future as well. Against a feeling of exhaustion and depression glows the  
100 flame of faith in our righteousness. It erupts from the pages of the Bible, and  
101 from the prodigious biblical writings composed over generations.

102

103 I read the most recent Torah portion – and, by the way, let me tell you, I do it  
104 every week, certainly every week my son is home from the army; I learn from  
105 him and we become wiser thanks to him. He's a *yeshiva bocher* [yeshiva  
106 youth] par excellence, even though he went to school not far from here. I read

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245  
E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL



משרד ראש הממשלה  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

107 in the most recent Torah portion the words, “[I made] you go upright.” What  
108 does this mean, upright?

109

110 First and foremost, this means sovereignty, sovereignty over our historic  
111 homeland, the ability to defend ourselves. Today these students before me  
112 serve in the Israel Defense Forces and they hold the sword of David and the  
113 sword of Gideon. This is ‘upright’ and it is the great change that took place in  
114 the history of our people. We returned to our land and restored our national  
115 existence, and we relearned how to hold back the attacks against us,  
116 because otherwise there would be no Jewish existence.

117

118 The Jewish people cannot endure without the State of Israel in the Land of  
119 Israel, and that is my responsibility as prime minister, with God’s help and  
120 with yours. I never forget this, not for even a fraction of a second. I know what  
121 we have been entrusted with; I know that generations of Jews before us are  
122 looking at us and I know what generations of Jews to follow expect of us.

123

124 This is the essence of our path – national and spiritual rebirth – and you are  
125 making great contributions to it.

126

127 The world of the Torah is flourishing, and the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva is one of  
128 the flagships so gloriously leading it. On Jerusalem Day, we continue to  
129 strengthen the capital of Israel and will add to its beauty and depth to bolster  
130 its spirit.

131

132 Happy holiday, my friends, and blessings from Zion to the lovers of Jerusalem  
133 in Israel and around the world.

134

135 Happy holiday to the people of Israel.

136

137

138

רח' קפלן 3, הקריה, ירושלים 91919, טל: 02-6705465, פקס: 02-5669245

3 Kaplan St. Jerusalem 91919, Tel: +972-2-670-5465, Fax: +972-2-566-9245

E-MAIL: MEDIA@PMO.GOV.IL