



“The Israeli Government” and “The Jewish State” Are Not the Same

Alon Friedman

When you build a new house, you take into account that sometime in the foreseeable future, things will start falling apart and the need for fixing and maintenance will kick in. But in the current era of abundance and immediate gratifications, most of us are not keen on “fixing and maintenance”. When was the last time you had your TV, dryer, or PC repaired? If it’s broken – we get a new one.

These modern-day consumption habits also influence the way we treat relationships. The constant surge in divorce derives exactly from the same place: Maintaining a marriage? Fixing a relationship? We might as well replace it with a new one, there are plenty alternatives out there...

Zionism is the relationship between Jews and their homeland. Like other relationships, it requires attention, refinement and timely adjustments in order to survive. But **unlike** other relationships Zionism is based exclusively on the affiliation of the Jews with Israel. Here, there is no option to exit the relationship. Jews will never have a different homeland; Israel will never be another people’s home. For Zionism, there aren’t any alternatives in the market.

Since inception, Zionism evolved around the dream of establishing “A Jewish State”. Today, 77 years into that state’s sovereignty, the new Zionist discourse must learn to differentiate between two entities: **The Jewish State**, and **The Israeli government**.

While the physical fulfilment of the Zionist dream was achieved in 1948 (Jews have a state - Israel is a country), the Zionist vision is still very much a “work in progress”.

Israelis have much work to do in that sense, mostly around education and socialization of their children, until we eliminate the “negation of the diaspora” which is still widely

spread, mainly due to ignorance and absence of personal encounters between Jews in Israel and abroad. Israelis must also understand that they are living in the **only** Jewish state in the world, that the state is the homeland of **all** Jews, and that we are **one family**, even if half of us don't live at home and don't intend to move in.

As for Diaspora Jews, they will need to realize that the **State** of Israel is not the **Government** of Israel. Americans (including American Jews) do not give up on America even when they think that their current president jeopardizes the foundations on which it was established. Americans patriotically fight to unseat their administration because they don't have a different America to go to.

The same should be the directive when it comes to fighting **for** Israel, **alongside** Israelis **to topple** its current government. When the Israeli government goes astray, as severe and far-off as it currently does, it doesn't mean that the state of Israel broke covenant with world Jewry or with the Zionist vision. It means that its current leadership is bad.

World Jewry cannot simply scratch "Israel" off their Jewish list and look for an alternative component to fill the void in their Jewish identity. World Jewry established Israel the first time around. They can't afford to exempt themselves from rebuilding it alongside their Israeli family - now.

Alon Friedman is the founding executive director of "*Enter: The Jewish Peoplehood Alliance*", a social startup that aims to strengthen relations and mutual commitment between Israel and World Jewry. ENTER created and operates "One2One", the world's largest Jewish Online Encounter's Platform, with over 12,000 participants in less than 4 years. Alon is 54 years old; he resides in Hod-Hasharon with his wife Joni and their 3 children.