



Imagine a Reality: Israel and Judaism In an Era of Religious Freedom and Equality

- Imagine an Israel in which the State treats all expressions and streams of Judaism and other religions with equal respect and dignity; where the State recognizes the right to freedom of religion and freedom from religious coercion and allocates resources for religious needs in a just and equitable fashion.
- Imagine an Israel in which every couple is free to marry in their country in the ceremony of their choice, whether religious or civil, and no one has to leave the country in order to wed.
- Imagine an Israel in which anyone who is litigating a dispute before a rabbinic court, or other religious tribunal, is doing so of their own free will; where those who willingly accept the religious authority of the particular religious court are subject to that authority in matters of personal status.
- Imagine an Israel where entry into Judaism is embracing and inclusive. Emigrés from the former Soviet Union who are members of Jewish families are welcomed into the Jewish People. Rabbis of all streams are free to convert individual students who complete appropriate training and demonstrate a sincere desire to enter into the Jewish fold. Where converts feel confident that they will continue to be accepted by the State as Jewish throughout their lives.
- Imagine an Israel where Judaism blossoms in all its nuanced shades and colors; where religious and secular movements flourish side-by-side and those who explore beyond Judaism in search of meaning are able to forge new spiritual paths within Judaism.
- Imagine an Israel in which the duty of military service is shared equally by young Israelis of all Jewish streams; where those entitled to exemption from military service perform national civil service instead; and where an appropriate number of excelling yeshiva students are granted exemption from military service as well as national service and receive financial stipends allowing them to study.



- Imagine an Israel in which the curriculum in all elementary and secondary schools includes mathematics, science, civics, and English. This would afford all parents the opportunity to educate their children in accordance with their own values while advancing societal cohesion, helping to ensure that every student has the capacity to join the workforce and pursue higher education.
- Imagine an Israel that experiences rapid economic growth buoyed by the contributions of a workforce that includes those who have not previously fully participated for reasons of religion or social pressure. Increased revenues would allow the government to invest more in health, education and welfare. The devastating cycle of poverty within those groups and other sectors of Israeli society would finally be broken.
- Imagine an Israel in which gender equality fully guides the state and women are not demeaned or otherwise disadvantaged based on religious dictates on public bus lines, in proceedings regarding personal status, at the Western Wall and in other public venues and services.
- Imagine an Israel in which religious authorities from each of the streams of the Jewish people may issue certifications of Kashrut; where standards of halacha include concerns for the welfare of workers, animals and the earth.
- Imagine an Israel where public transportation will be available for all who desire it, including the disabled, the infirm, the elderly and the young; and this transportation will be designed with respect and deference for the unique character of Shabbat.
- Imagine an Israel where funerals and burials are available throughout the country that honors diverse religious traditions and includes gender separation and gender equality as well as civil options.
- Imagine an Israel where the State engages in the respectful and dignified removal and reburial of remains from ancient graves discovered during work on public roads and development projects; where such removal and reburial are conducted in accordance with appropriate religious standards of the relevant faith.
- Imagine the quality of life that Israel can achieve when it realizes the fundamental promise in its Declaration of Independence, namely to build a society based on the “foundation of freedom, justice, and peace according to the vision of the prophets of Israel,” and the principles of “freedom of religion and conscience.”