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Rabbis for Religious Freedom & Equality in Israel



“The State of Israel... will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience...”
Israel's Declaration of Independence (May 1948)

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Introduction

March 16, 2017
3 Nissan 5777



Dear Friends,

It seems as though many societies are experiencing similar trends simultaneously: a large proportion of the population seeks equal rights, and another portion of the population resists and espouses an entirely different vision of the purpose and destiny of the nation.

This week's articles demonstrate the spread of the desire to open marriage to all, as a democratic society should guarantee and as Israel's Declaration of Independence promises. Here's the opening line from the Jerusalem Post article:

“Civil marriage is one of the most encumbered issues in the Jewish state, but the religious-

For first time, religious group campaigns for civil marriage in Israel

The Jerusalem Post, March 26, 2017

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

Currently, all matters of marriage and divorce are conducted by the established religious authorities.



[Click for video](#)

Civil marriage is one of the most encumbered issues in the Jewish state, but the religious-Zionist organization Ne'emenei Torah

*Zionist organization
Ne'emanei Torah
Va'Avodah began a
campaign Sunday
advocating for the
introduction of such a
possibility in Israel."*

Ne'emanei Torah
Va'Avodah produced an
entertaining and interesting
cartoon as a protest
against the Rabbinates's
control of all religious
issues in the State. We
have included that as well.

The High Court of Justice
weighed in on the case of
the Agunah from Safed,
demonstrating how
halakhah can be
appropriately modified to
respond to modernity and
bring increased humanity to
historic Jewish life.
Obviously such cases
occur because of medical
technology only recently
available. We witness here
an uplifting case of
halakhah responding to
benefit Jewish lives and as
a guidepost to morality. The
High Court demonstrates
how halakhah can
appropriately be utilized in
a modern state.

Rabbi Marc Angel wrote a
superb article encouraging
our communities to donate
our funds to further our
causes and not to aid those
who block our equal
participation in Jewish life.
As we all know, many
Jews donate to

Va'Avodah began a campaign Sunday advocating for the
introduction of such a possibility in Israel.

The group, which is on the liberal end of the religious-Zionist
community, says it is the first time a religious organization has
called for civil marriage, which is generally considered to be an
anathema to religious communities and leaders.

To start the campaign, NTA created a comical, animated video
underlining the problems inherent in the monopoly of the Chief
Rabbinates over Jewish marriage in the state.

...

Defeat for Chief Rabbi Yosef in High Court ruling on 'Agunah from Safed'

The Jerusalem Post, March 30, 2017

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

***In 2014, the Safed Rabbinical Court issued an
innovative ruling in Jewish law issuing a bill of divorce
to a woman whose husband was in a permanent
vegetative state, on behalf of the husband.***

In a defeat for Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef, the High Court of Justice
gave its final decision on Thursday on the Agunah from Safed
case, ruling definitively that the Supreme Rabbinical Court may not
hear a third party appeal to a lower court divorce ruling.

The ruling is a blow to Yosef who fiercely opposed the precedent
set in the case, and a victory for the woman herself and the Mavoi
Satum organization which represented her and which claimed that
severe damage would be done to the finality of all rabbinical court
rulings if third party appeals were heard by the Supreme Rabbinical
Court.

The case of the Agunah from Safed relates to a 34-year old woman
whose husband sustained severe injuries in a motorcycle accident
nine years ago, from which he fell into a coma and has never
recovered.

...

organizations that actually would deny them rights to practice Judaism in the Jewish State. Marc Angel encourages us to redirect our support to the organizations that further our vision of a democratic Israel for all Jews.

Finally, we have sent a Hebrew article that shows how far to the right some organizations can go. Rabbis Yitzhak Shapira and Yosef Elitzur of the Od Yosef Hai Yeshiva have published a follow up book, *Torat HaMelech 2*, explaining how a Jewish kingdom could enslave and even kill non-Jews, and advocating for Israel to become such a state. They have been investigated by Israel for incitement to racism in the past, but without bringing charges. We reproduce the article before Pesah to demonstrate where a small group of extremists would take the State of Israel, and how they are being opposed by more responsible rabbis who understand that Jewish law does not sanction such cruelty.

May you have a meaningful and joyous Pesah.

We would love to hear from you at: organizers@RRFEI.org, or on our Facebook group for Rabbis

תורת המלך 2: ספר ההמשך מדריך איך ממנים מלך ומה לעשות עם נתיניו הלא יהודים

יותם ברגר, יאיר אטינגר, הארץ, March 21, 2016

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

אחרי שהסבירו מתי ולמה מותר להרוג לא-יהודים, מחברי "תורת המלך", שאף נחקרו בחשד להסתה לגזענות, הוציאו ספר המשך. על פניו זו פנטזיה על מונרכיה דתית, אך בציונות הדתית יש החוששים כי הנחיות הספר את מי מותר לשעבד וכיצד לנהוג במורדי מלכות לא יישארו על הכתב בלבד

מלך — כמה פשוט. במקום ההתנהלות המייגעת הכרוכה בדמוקרטיה, יומלך מלך, שליט יחיד בעל זכויות יתר היכול לשעבד שבויי מלחמה ולעשות ככל העולה על רוחו. בלי בג"ץ ובלי בחירות. החלק השני של "תורת המלך" — חיבור של רבני ישיבת "עוד יוסף חי" — אמנם כתוב בשפה הלכתית ומצטט מקורות, אבל מגלה את השאיפות הכמוסות של הקיצונים בין המתנחלים. החיבור מוקדש כולו לדיני "ציבור ומלכות", כלומר כינון שלטון דתי-יהודי מונרכי, שיחליף את הדמוקרטיה החילונית בישראל, ומתאר עולם שבו המלך הוא כל יכול, בעל עבדים ושפחות. עולם שבו...

ישיבת עוד יוסף חי ביצרה הרוויחה ביושר את הפיכתה לסמל הקיצוניות של ישיבות הגדה המערבית. חלק ניכר מפרסומה חייבת הישיבה לחיבור הראשון של ספר ההלכה "תורת המלך", שפרסמו רבניה יצחק שפירא ויוסף אליצור, ספר שמתיר למעשה בשלל מצבים את דמם של לא-יהודים ובמקרים מסוימים אף את דמם של יהודים. פרסום הספר הוביל לחקירה משטרתית נגד כותביו בחשד להסתה לגזענות, אך איש מהם לא הועמד לדין.

...

Do our charity dollars work for or against our ideals?

Rabbi Marc Angel, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

We are good-hearted people who do our best to be kind and charitable. We want to build a better society, ease suffering, aid the needy, support worthy institutions etc. We are barraged by those who solicit funds for one cause or another. We may give a few dollars to each; we may give a lot to a few; we may

for Religious Freedom and
Equality.

Chag Sameach,

Mark

Rabbi Mark H. Levin

RRFEI Editor

***give more or less, depending on our mood when we
receive the solicitation for charity.***

Do we have a philosophy that governs our charitable outlays? Or do we just make contributions randomly, based on who asks us first or who approaches us most respectfully?

I would like to suggest that we think carefully about our charitable giving, and view our charitable dollars as a means of advancing our vision of a better Jewish community and a better world.

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Contact us

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Not yet a member?

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Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel represents a broad spectrum of Jewish belief and practice, and champions the values of religious freedom and equality fundamental to World Jewry, in partnership with Hiddush for the realization of these principles in Israel and the Diaspora.

Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel
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