

# Israel lacks a nation-state, democracy, or secularism



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OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

**When we talk about the government of Israel, which government are we talking about? It is commonly said that we are dealing with a secular government, and this secular government has little to do with the ancient Jewish teachings. However, if we look at it through the perspective of the political theology, we might actually be dealing with a theocratic government where all elements of Jewish theology can be observed in the foundations of Israel's structure.**

In general, a fundamental feature of Jewish theology is a theological principle known as exclusivism or "chosenness," which is not seen to the same extent in any other religion as it is in Judaism. In contrast to this approach, there is inclusivism, which encompasses other religions and beliefs and forms the main basis of faith. However, in this approach, there is a kind of sectarianism that seems to indicate a special privilege for being Jewish, and this is very pronounced in Judaism. From this perspective, Judaism faces a crisis that is also observed in Israel.

When we talk about a Jewish person, what are we referring to? This is an important theological question, and many Jewish philosophers discuss it. The difference Judaism has with Islam and other religions is that Judaism is based on a culture, while it is also based on blood. In other words, un-

til recently, there was a debate among Jewish scholars about whether it is possible for someone to convert to Judaism. Judaism is not a matter of faith; it is a blood-related and exclusive relationship with God. These debates are very contemporary in Israel.

One of the researchers who have worked on Jewish theology is Israel Shahak. He says that being Israeli in the contemporary era has replaced being Jewish in theological texts. When we talk about an Israeli, it is as if we are talking about a Jewish person in a theological context, and the same exclusivity is imposed on the Israeli person, and the country Israel replaces the people of Israel.

This is the same theme that we are looking for in political theology. In political theology, we are interested in how modern political concepts in the new era have transformed traditional theological concepts.

This is an important point that we pay less attention to.

Shahak even says that the term "Jewish government" indicates that we are facing a situation in Israel that is distinct from all other places in the world. The idea of a Jewish government becomes prominent from Herzl to the present day. Shahak says that when we talk about the Jewish government, it seems that we are not dealing with a national government; rather, we are dealing with a government whose identity is distinct from all other governments in the world. Therefore, Israel always has problems with the concept of "citizenship" in its domestic politics. A Palestinian is never a first-class citizen in Israeli society and is always considered secondary because the theological foundation of Judaism is based on exclusivity. I have a book titled 'Political Theology of Jews' that will be

published, but this is not the time to discuss its topics at length. However, where we smell violence in theological texts is exactly where the superiority of the Jewish race is discussed. Despite the claim that the government of Israel is secular, this exclusivity is precisely transferred to the citizens of Israel in these texts. The term used for non-Jewish humans, other than the children of Israel, is "goyim," translated as "trash."

In other words, in the view of a radical Jewish believer, essentially, a non-Israeli human is not entitled to citizenship rights. This issue is also observed internationally. For example, Israel does not want any country to be closer to the United States than itself. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in an interview with the Iranian TV show, Shokaran, posited that [in retrospect] during the reign of Iran's former Shah, it

was not feasible for Iran and Israel to get along. Israel never wanted another lover for the United States. It was as if there was a marital relationship between Israel and the US that no other country could enter. I want to say that this issue is also very pronounced in the theology of Judaism.

One of the chapters of a book I wrote is about the theology of sex, which is a very important issue. But apart from the discussions that Jews have in this regard, they believe that the people of Israel are like the spouse of God, and even if they betray, God must return to them. You know that the history of the Jewish people is full of disobedience and return. Therefore, according to their theology, if a Jew betrays, God returns to them because if He does not return and has no jealousy for this rebellious wife, He is without honor. These interpretations are

