

ITME FELLOWSHIP | 2025

BY AVI MELAMED

“TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE MIDDLE EAST”

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SESSION ONE	Historical Framing of the Middle East
SESSION TWO	Nationalism In The Middle East
SESSION THREE	Islam is the Solution The Rise of Militant Islam
SESSION FOUR	Turkey and Neo-Ottomanism Erdogan and his Quest for Regional Power
SESSION FIVE	The Islamic Republic of Iran: An Insider perspective
SESSION SIX	The Israeli Palestinian Conflict A view from the Region
SESSION SEVEN	The West Bank and Gaza An Insider's Perspective
SESSION EIGHT	Israel Path, Identity, Direction
SESSION NINE	Lebanon, Syria & Iraq Identity and the struggle for sovereignty**(extended session 1:00 - 3:30 pm EST)
SESSION TEN	Jordan A Monarchy in Transition
SESSION ELEVEN	The Arab Gulf Monarchies and the Region Middle East Entering a New Era
SESSION TWELVE	Regional Update & Reflections ** (extended session 1:00 - 3:00 pm EST)

ITME FELLOWSHIP | SESSION #8

| COURSE OVERVIEW

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SESSION #8 ISRAEL | PATH, IDENTITY, DIRECTION

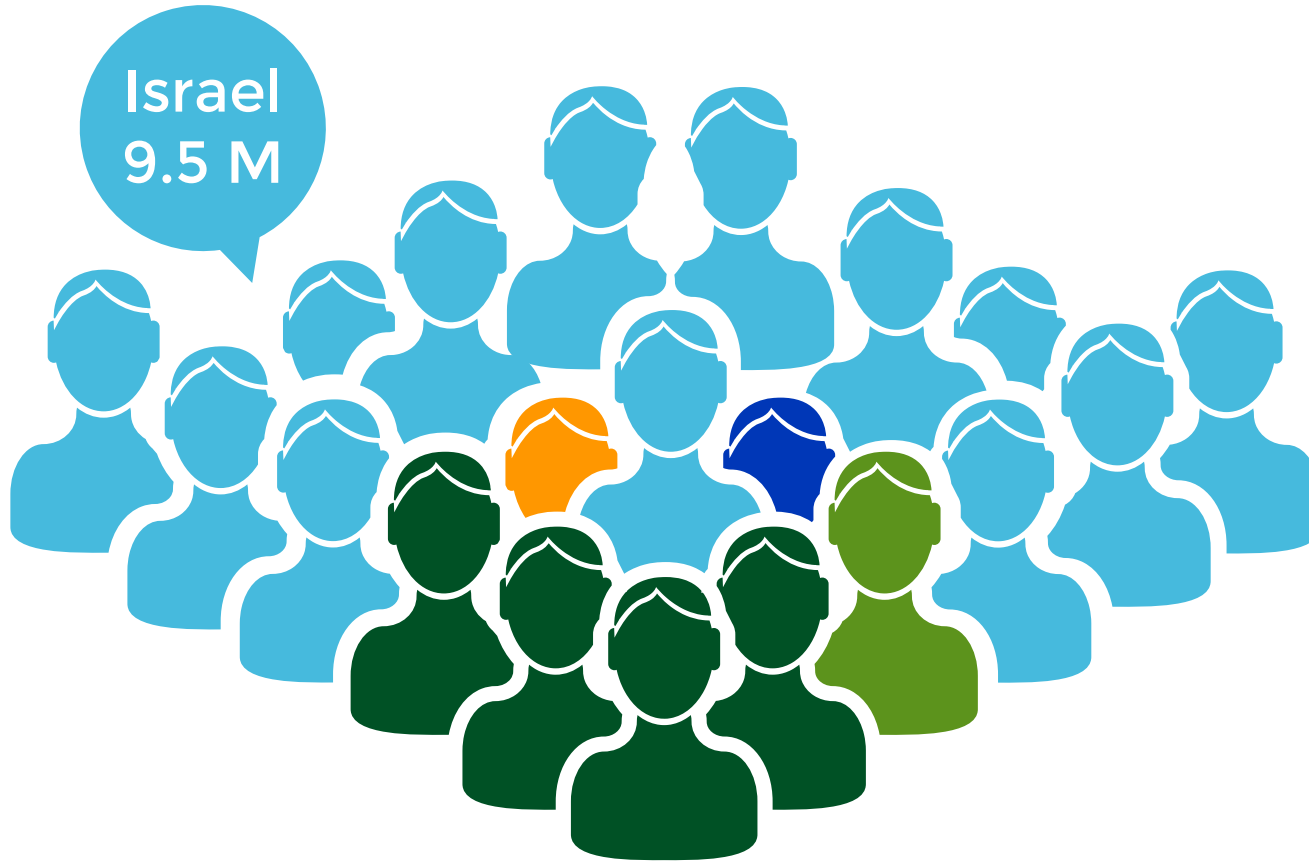
3/16/2025

ITME FELLOWSHIP

EDUCATOR
AVI MELAMED

“TO UNDERSTAND ISRAEL, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE MIDDLE EAST”

ISRAELI SOCIETY | 2025



Israeli
Jews

70 %
7 Million



- Israeli Arabs -
Muslims Christians

18 %
1.75 Million



3 %
250,000



Druze &
other groups

2 %
150,000



Jerusalemite
Palestinians
(mostly Muslim)

4 %
350,000

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DEMOGRAPHICS



THE KNESSET

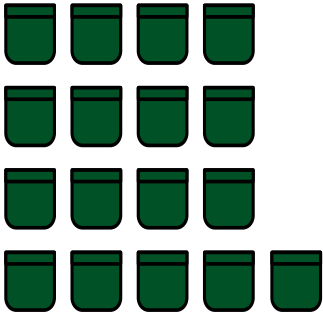
HAREDIM

RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

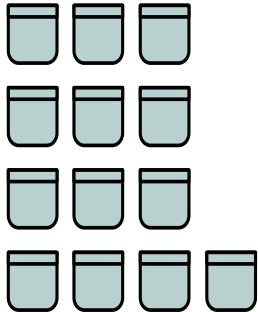
MAINSTREAM ZIONISM

ISRAELI ARABS

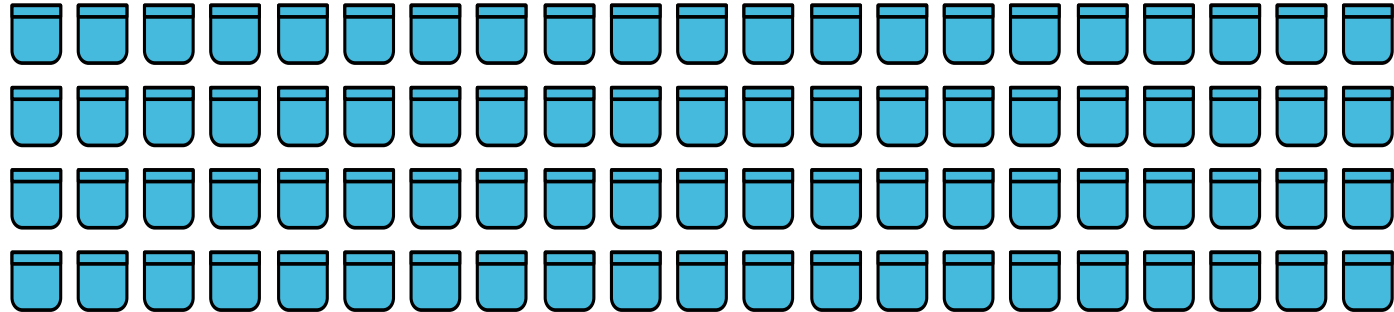
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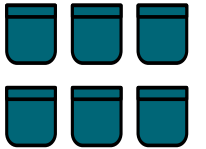
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| ISRAELI POLITICS 2025



IDENTITY

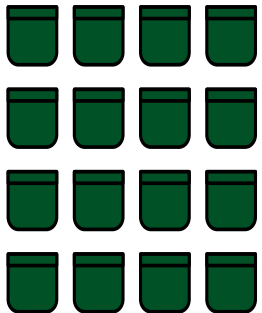
HAREDIM

Inflexible ideological framework.

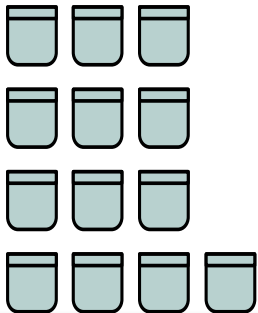
Strict **Religious codex** that **dictates uniformity** in terms of behavior and cultural, political, religious, social values.

Total rejection of Western core values.

18



14



RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Somewhat flexible ideological framework.

Combines **religious codex & nationalism** which **guides a collective-based identity** in terms of behavior and cultural, political, religious & social values and codes

Mostly remote from Western core values.

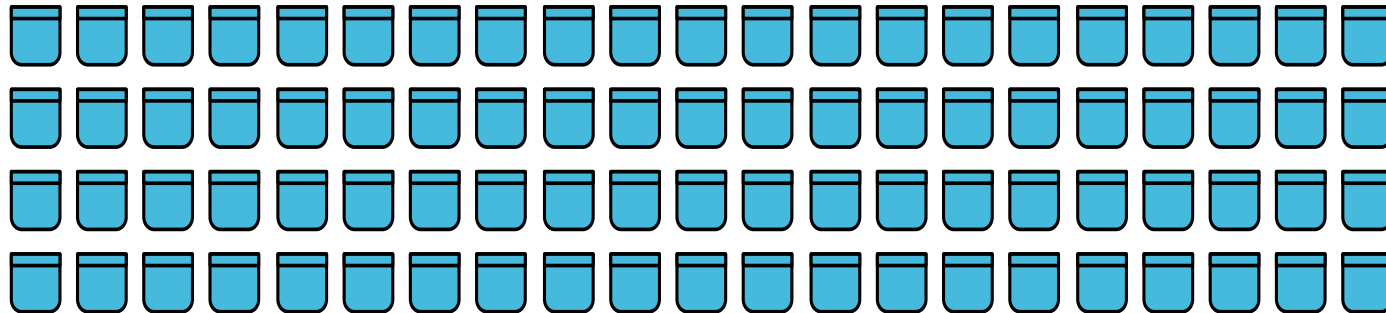
MAINSTREAM ZIONISM

Flexible ideological framework. Combines **religious pluralism & nationalism**.

Enables individual-based identity in terms of cultural, political, religious & social values, codes, & norms.

Mostly adopts Western core values.

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ISRAELI ARABS

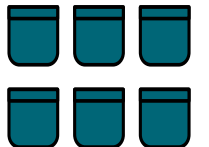
A Multi-layer identity comprised of :

Citizenship - Israeli
Religion - Christian or Muslim

Ethnicity - Arab
Political Beliefs - Varied and non-Zionist.

Mostly remote from Western core values.

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| ISRAELI SOCIETY 2025

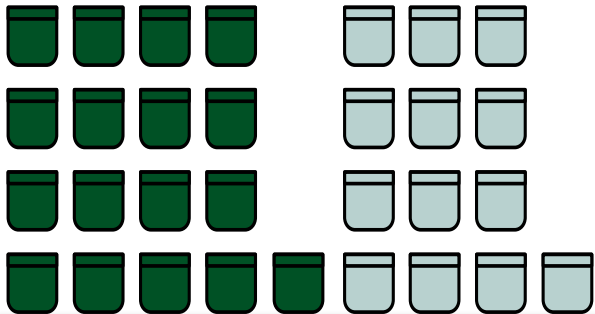


WHAT DOES THE FLAG STAND FOR?

**HAREDI
NON-ZIONISTS**

7

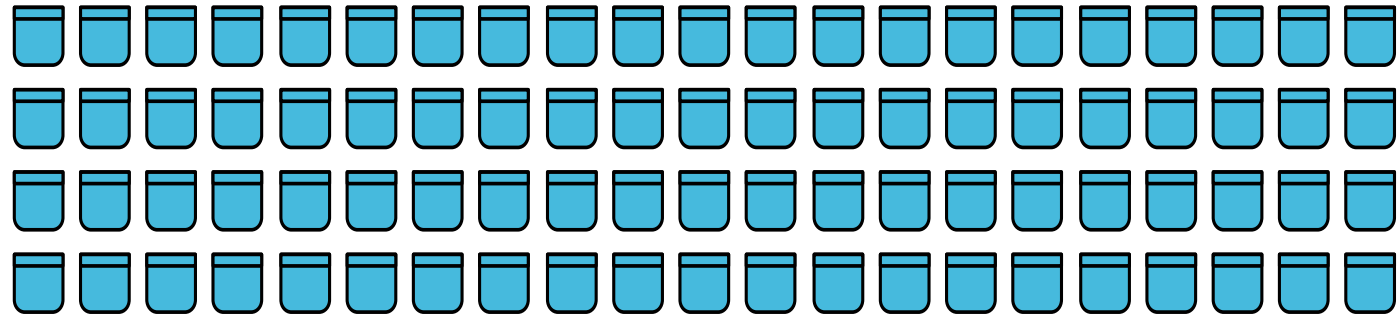
“Israel” is a **FUNCTIONAL** Apparatus on the path to religious mega-structure



**HAREDI
SEPHARDIC** **RELIGIOUS
ZIONISM**

11 + 14

“Israel” is a **STEP** on the path to ideological & political mega-structure (“**ERETZ YISRAEL**”)



MAINSTREAM ZIONISM

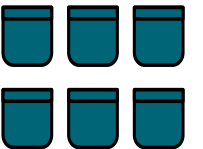
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“Israel” **IS** the political and ideological mega-structure

**ISRAELI ARABS
NON-ZIONIST**

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“Israel” is a **FUNCTIONAL** Apparatus



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| **ZIONISM & ISRAEL**



NO OTHER HOME, YET A DIFFERENT ONE

- The Root of the Current Crisis in Israel is a Built-in Tension Between Nationalism, Religion, and Western Characteristics and Values in Israeli Jewish Society.
- Israel's Backbone is - and will continue to be - the Mainstream Zionist Camp. The Current Coalition and Government are Unprecedented. Because for the 1st Time in Israel's History, the Largest Part of Israel's Ideological and Political Spine (the Mainstream Zionist Camp) is Not a Part of the Government.
- The Current Crisis will Likely Result in a Complex Process of Public and Political Discussions which will Attempt to Define - and Perhaps Broaden - the Foundations of Consensus and the "Ground Rules".
- That Process is Likely to be Encompassed with Political Fluctuations and restructure - Particularly within Likud and the Religious Zionist Camp.

