



THE TIKVAH FUND
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Zionist Statesmanship: Ben-Gurion and Begin

August 3, 2014 – August 8, 2014

Dean: Nathan Laufer
Instructor: Daniel Gordis

I. Description:

Our goal in this weeklong seminar will be to examine the worldviews and leadership styles of two of Israel's founders, David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) and Menachem Begin (1913-1992), in order to surface their underlying conceptions of Jewish (and thus Zionist) statesmanship. We will ask questions such as: Can one speak meaningfully of a Zionist notion of statesmanship? If not, what ought to guide Israel's policymaking? And if one *can*, in fact, speak of such statesmanship, what are (or should be) its fundamental constituent components?

We will focus on a series of specific incidents in the lives of these two men and the state that they founded. The (relatively brief) readings will give you the background that you need and, in some cases, will tie the issues at hand to either classic Jewish textual discussions or to broader discussions particularly in the world of contemporary political philosophy. Our goal, ideally, will be to spend some time covering the basic narratives of what transpired, but then to engage in extended, thoughtful seminar-style discussion of the issues that these events and narratives raise, exploring their unfolding in Israel's past and reflecting on their implications for Israel's future.



THE TIKVAH FUND
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

II. Course Calendar:

Sunday, August 3: A Tale of Two Personalities (David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Readings:

- Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), Chapter 4, pp. 31-41
- Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), pp. 33-53
- Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 45-62
- B.T. Megillah 12b (brief selection)
- Please familiarize yourself with the basic biographies of both David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin, with something as simple as their Wikipedia entries. It would be useful do to the same for Theodor Herzl and Ze'ev Jabotinsky, as well.

Monday, August 4: A Civil War with the Enemy at our Gates (The Altalena)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Readings:

- Daniel Gordis, *Menachem Begin: The Battle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Schocken Books, 2014), Chapter 7, pp. 79-97
- Shapira, *Israel: A History*, pp. 187-194

Tuesday, August 5: Tisha B'Av – no sessions

Wednesday, August 6: The Limits of Forgiveness (Reparations)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Readings:

- Gordis, *Menachem Begin*, Chapter 8, pp. 98-112
- Shapira, *Israel: A History*, pp. 260-268
- Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life*, pp. 141-152

Thursday, August 7: Of Whom Ought We be Afraid (Robert Soblen; Peace with Egypt)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Readings:

- Gordis, *Menachem Begin*, Chapters 9, 12, 13 (pp. 113-122, 157-183)
- Genesis, Chapter 10
- Deuteronomy, Chapter 2
- Micah, Chapter 4
-

Friday, August 8: Towards a Conception of Jewish Statesmanship

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Readings:

- Gordis, *Menachem Begin*, Epilogue, pp. 229-238
- Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 175-183
- Israel Declaration of Independence [Hebrew Included]
- United States Declaration of Independence



THE TIKVAH FUND
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

III. Faculty Biographies:

Core Instructor:

Daniel Gordis

Dr. Daniel Gordis is Senior Vice President and the Koret Distinguished Fellow at Shalem College in Jerusalem. He is a regular columnist for the *Jerusalem Post*, and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, in print and on-line. The author of numerous books on Jewish thought and currents in Israel, and a recent winner of the National Jewish Book Award, Dr. Gordis was the founding dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the University of Judaism, the first rabbinical college on the West Coast of the United States. Dr. Gordis joined Shalem in 2007 to help found Israel's first liberal arts college, after spending nine years as vice president of the Mandel Foundation in Israel and director of its Leadership Institute. His biography of Menachem Begin, entitled *Menachem Begin: The Battle for Israel's Soul*, and was published by Nextbook in early 2014.

Dean

Nathan Laufer

Nathan Laufer has been Director of Israel Programs for the Tikvah Fund since 2008. Prior to that, he served as President and CEO of the Wexner Heritage Foundation and Founding Director of the Partnership for Effective Learning and Innovative Education (PELIE). Rabbi Laufer received his Juris Doctor from Fordham University, Rabbinic Ordination from Yeshiva University and Leadership Educator certification from Harvard University. He is the author of *The Genesis of Leadership: What the Bible tells us about Vision, Values and Leading Change*, and *Leading the Passover Journey: The Seder's meaning Revealed, the Haggadah's Story Retold* (Jewish Lights Publishing).



THE TIKVAH FUND
165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

IV. Our Mutual Commitment

Our pledge to you is that the program will be excellent and that the teachers are, in every case, among the best people in the world teaching the subjects they are teaching. Your pledge to us is that you will invest yourselves in the texts and the seminars, and do the work to the fullest extent of your talents. You have put your everyday work on hold to join us, so we know you come to us with great interest and commitment. We will insist that you continue that commitment—a commitment to attending each and every session, a commitment to coming to class on time, a commitment to doing all the readings—throughout the duration of the Institute. If anyone fails to honor his or her commitment, he or she will be dismissed from the Institute.