

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE:

THE SIX DAY WAR AND JEWISH IDENTITY

by

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This is a chapter from a paper for a M.A. degree at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University.

The paper was based on analysis of the conversations of young kibbutz members, as recorded in 'Siach Lochamin' (translated into English under the title 'The Seventh Day', Penguin books).

*A. Affinity to the historical past of Eretz Israel*

On the question whether an affinity to the past exists, three different groups of answers are given:

1. An affinity to the historical places in Eretz Israel, strongly influenced by the Bible, exists, and justifies the conquest of these places.
2. Affinity to the past is accompanied by moral embarrassment about the conquest.
3. No affinity exists and no embarrassment about the conquest is felt. The latter is justified on security and political grounds.

Is the relationship to Eretz Israel a question of personal, direct knowledge and contact, or is it rather rooted in a feeling of historic continuity? There are two groups of answers:

1. Identification with *all* the historical sites. Our right to them is not doubted.
2. Identification only with places known from personal contact, without any connection with the past.

Many expressed their conviction that the Six Day War was not just another war, but that it had added a new chapter to the history of the Jewish People, comparable with the Maccabee wars.

*B. Affinity to the Jewish People and the Diaspora*

Is the young Israeli first of all a Jew who was born and lives in Israel, or is he an Israeli, who has nothing to do with the Jewish past in the diaspora and with the Jewish People? On these questions we receive five groups of answers:

\* in: Shdemot, Nr. 32, 1969, pp. 18-26. Original Hebrew title:

מלחמת ששת הימים והזהות היהודית.

1. In the wake of the Six Day War a strong feeling of identification with the Jewish People and of historical continuity arose. This identification is sometimes experienced as a "revelation".

2. An ambivalent approach : theoretically and ideologically the diaspora with its minority-spirit and its passivity is rejected, but at the same time a feeling of affinity and continuity exists.

3. A complete rejection of the diaspora and all it involves.

4. The Six Day War caused consciousness of the Jewish fate: a people that always had and always will have to fight for its existence.

5. A feeling of both continuity and renewal.

### *C. The Holocaust*

Many young Israelis did not want to hear about the Holocaust. To them it had been a period of humiliation and of shame. The Eichmann trial changed this. The Israeli began to understand why the Jews acted and suffered as they did.

In 'Siach Lochamim' the reactions of young Israelis to the Holocaust are also reflected. Some are of the opinion that the Holocaust was a result of an abnormal situation, the diaspora, which could not happen here in Israel among Jews living a normal life. Most of them emphasise that the only way to prevent a Holocaust is for Israel to be strong. For all of them the Holocaust is a source of identification with the Jewish people. The days before the Six Day War contributed much to the understanding of the Holocaust. A few participants in the conversations were reminded of the Holocaust during the Six Day War at the sight of Arab refugees.

Summary by Yochanan Eldad