

# **RABBI ISAAC JACOB REINES**

FOUNDER OF MIZRACHI

THE WORLD RELIGIOUS ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

by

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## A WORD TO OUR READERS

We are grateful to Rabbi Moshe Weiss for preparing this pamphlet about the life and work of RABBI ISAAC JACOB REINES, the founder of the World Mizrachi Movement. Rabbi Moshe Weiss is the cultural chairman for our national organization.

During the Mizrachi Hapoel Hamizrachi Convention of 1965 in Long Beach a great deal was said regarding Rabbi Reines. It is now one hundred twenty five years since the birth of this giant leader of the Mizrachi, and fifty years after his demise. A resolution was passed that the remains of Rabbi Reines be transferred from Lida, the city where he last lived, to Israel, the land for which he craved so much.

We are presenting this brochure to you, dear Chaver, with the hope that its contents will inspire you to work for the Mizrachi Hapoel Hamizrachi with greater spirit and zeal.

Rabbi Weiss' presentation represents great ideological ideas about our movement as expounded logically by our leader and mentor Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines.

The Presidium of Religious Zionists  
of America  
Rabbi Herschel Schacter, Chairman  
Dr. Maurice Sage  
Gabriel Feigenbaum



**RABBI ISAAC JACOB REINES**

הגאון האמיתי מאור הנורה, רביה דעמיה  
ומדברנא דאומתיה, ראשון לציון

הרב ר' יצחק יעקב ריינעס זצ"ל

The information about Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines is based on an article by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hachohen Maimon entitled "Zechor Zot L'Yaakov" which appears in the beginning of a book "Nod Shel Demaot" by Rabbi Reines, published in Jerusalem in 1934.

Rabbi Isaac Reines, an intellectual who excelled in the study of Halacha and Agadah, also concerned himself with the social and political problems affecting his people throughout the world. He was a man of high integrity who expounded his views and ideals with fervor, and who did not concern himself with the consequences which these verbal expressions of his principles would bring to him. He sought no special honors; nor did he fear dishonor. He was one who pursued very high ideals.

Rabbi Reines, commenting on the Agada which states that each generation has thirty six Tsadikim, explained that these Tsadikim are not necessarily recognized by all, but nevertheless exist. To further clarify his point he went on to say that a true Tsadik is one who seeks to implant his ideals into the hearts and minds of his people, without any regard for honor or personal acceptance. Since his views are not necessarily hailed as the most popular this man is not looked upon as a Tsadik by the public; nevertheless, as Rabbi Reines indicates, this man is a truly pious man.<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Reines, in his commentary, unknowingly described himself. He zealously fought for his beliefs not considering for a moment if they would be accepted, if they would bring him glory or dishonor.

One of his main ideals was to build and strengthen the Mizrachi organization. His intentions and preachings were generally misunderstood, and as a result, he was often criticized and disgraced. Today, however, he is looked upon with great reverence and respect and is regarded as a great pillar of strength in the building of the Jewish State of Israel.

The seeds of Rabbi Reines' love for Israel were implanted in his heart and mind by his father when he was a small child. His father, as a matter of fact, was amongst the first

1. Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines, Shnei Hameoroth, end of first part.

Ashkenazi immigrants to migrate to Israel in the nineteenth century.

In the city of Karlin, in the county of Minsk, Russia, resided a great Rabbi, well versed in Torah, who was also a merchant, Solomon Naphtali. Born in the year 1796, during the last year in the life of the Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Solomon was the son of Rabbi Chaim, who served as one of the Vilna Dayanim during the life of the Gaon. Rabbi Chaim was the son of the pious Rabbi Moshe, who was known as Rabbi "Mosheleh" Reines. The name Reines was attributed to him because of his eminent wife, Reineh, the daughter of Solomon Zalman, the chief Dayan in Mir. Solomon Zalman was one of the descendants of Saul Wohl, who was a direct descendent of Rashi whose forefather was Rabbi Yochanan Hasandler (the Tanna who lived in the fourth generation of Raban Gamliel the Elder), himself the grandson of Hillel Hazaken, a descendant of the House of David.<sup>2</sup>

During Shlomo Naphtali's youth there was an awakening amongst the students of the Vilna Gaon for a love for Israel, and a great desire to settle there grew in them. Thus many families of the devout Ashkanazi Jews migrated to Israel, led by two great Rabbis, who were themselves students of the Gaon of Vilna. They were the Rabbis of Shklov, Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Rabbi Israel. The immigrants settled in the upper Gallilee region in Safed and there established their center for the study of Torah. Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali, together with his famous father Rabbi Chaim, soon followed the first group to Israel and also settled in Safed. Acting upon the advice of Rabbi Israel, he purchased a large parcel of land and started a printing establishment for the publication of Hebrew books from which he derived his livelihood.

Their comparative peace and contentment was short lived. Moslems, mostly of Sefad, Arabs and the Druzes together, revolutionists and thieves, decided to rebel against the

2. Rabbi I. J. Reines - Nod Shel Demaot, at the end of book.

government. On the 8th day of Sivan 5594 (1834) they attacked homes, destroyed and robbed merchandise, and brought destruction upon everything else in sight. Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali's printing establishment and all equipment were also destroyed. Ebrahim Pasha, ruler of the land, was preoccupied with other matters, and therefore did not send an army to subdue this rebellion. The rebels did not wish the consulates of the countries where these Jews came from to become aware of the crucial situation facing the Jews. The rebels therefore placed watchmen on the highways so that Jewish messengers would not be able to publicize the urgency of the situation. By some devious means, however, a Beirut traveler managed to deliver letters from Rabbi Israel to the proper consulates in Beirut and other port cities, informing them of the Jewish plight. At the consulates' request, Ebrahim Pasha ordered Amir, the head of the Druzes of Lebanon, to intercede. Amir arrived with an army and was successful in establishing peace in Safed. The Jews who had been pillaged and robbed submitted a list of damages and losses to the consulates, hoping to be compensated. Shlomo Naphtali himself appeared before Ebrahim Pasha requesting reparations for the losses which he suffered during the revolution. Ebrahim Pasha promised that he would seek compensation for him from the rebels. However not even a tenth of these losses were returned. The Jews, as a result, remained destitute and penniless. Because of this situation, Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali, acting upon the approval of the head of the Rabbis, returned to the Diaspora as a Shaliach for the Ashkanazi Kollel. With tears in his eyes, Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali bid his family farewell, strangely perceiving that this would be the last time he would see them. He made his way to Russia and Poland.

The Jews of Gallilee were soon the victims of another catastrophe. On the 24th day in the month of Teveth, 1837, an earthquake shook many cities, the city of Safed suffering the severest consequences. Thousands of homes became

the graves of their inhabitants, and amongst the victims were, unfortunately, the family of Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali. His entire family perished including his father, his wife, his children and his sisters. Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali was in Warsaw discussing with Rabbi Chaim Davidson matters concerning Israel when the tragic news was revealed to him. Acting upon the advice of his friends, and despite his desire to return to Israel, Rabbi Shlomo Naphtali remained in the Diaspora. He settled in the city of Karlin, and after a year of sorrow, he married the honorable and energetic Mrs. Gella. She bore him a son on the 5th day of the week, the 9th day of the month Mar Cheshvan in the year 1840, who was named Yitzchak Yaakov.

At the proper age the boy was sent to Cheder. His father not only spoke to his son of the precepts and holiness of the Torah, but he also sought to instill within him a fervent love for the Holy Land. These teachings remained with the young boy throughout his lifetime. When he was a small child, it became apparent to his teachers that the boy was destined to become a great man. His love for learning, his patience and amazing grasp for all that which was taught him even as a child further emphasized the fact that he had the potential for greatness. At the age of ten he had already committed to memory several tractates from Seder Nashim, and also the tractate Hulin, and he further amazed his Rabbis with his brilliant questions. His parents sent him to study under Rabbi Yitzchak Yechiel Halevi, who afterwards became the Rabbi in Karlitz, and who was known for his outstanding learning ability. During their studies of the Talmud, Rashi and Tosfot, Yitzchak Yaakov asked many questions. After hearing one such question his Rabbi informed him that the answer could be found in the Shaagat Aryeh. The boy studied this book for two months until he almost knew it by heart. He was greatly influenced by the Shaagat Aryeh, and, at the age of 15, he started to record his own "Chidushim" (comments), continuing to revise them from time to time.



At the age of 16 he travelled to the Yeshiva Volozin, and from there on to Eishishok. Here he studied all day and all night, sleeping but two hours a night. He learned very thoroughly the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmud. When he was tested on the Rambam he was able to refer by heart to the source of the particular law in either the Babylonian or Jerusalem Talmud or the writings of the Gaonim. At the age of 16 Rabbi Reines had already more than 200 pages of commentaries and Pilpulim on Torah, many of these which were already suitable for publication. A year later he was engaged and his future father-in-law, the Great Gaon Rabbi Josef Reisen of Hordok, sent Rabbi Reines a treatise regarding "Peah Nochrith." His intention was to enlighten him about a subject which was not frequently discussed as a Pilpul. Rabbi Reines, however, immediately replied with a ten page discourse on this subject. His reply evoked great wonder and admiration among all who read it. Rabbi Reines retained this work as one of his prize possessions and hoped some day to publish it. His father-in-law however, included some of this Tshuva in his book.

When Rabbi Reines was 17 years old the Chevra Shas of his birth town completed the study of Shas. He was invited to deliver a Pilpul, a Hadran at which time he spoke for three full days to an attentive congregation. This discourse has taken its place as one of the best in the field of Pilpulim.<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Reines, referring to an important incident in his life, relates as follows: "When I was 15 years old, a man came to our town and entered the synagogue to study. This man was a mathematical wizard. He offered to teach me mathematics for one hour a day. I found this difficult to comprehend. The man therefore suggested that I study methods of logic. I was greatly impressed by this subject, so much so, that I began to employ its rules in the study of the Talmud and also in the study of Jewish law, which was understandably my main interest. As a result of this new system of study, I gained

3. See Shaarey Orah, pp. 79-80.

a greater and better insight into the understanding of the precepts and teachings of the Torah."<sup>4</sup>

Rabbi Reines received his ordination from Rabbi Samuel Avigdor, the author of Tana Tosfaa, and also from Rabbi Moshe Horowitz of Pinsk. In the year 5619 (1859) Rabbi Reines married the daughter of Rabbi Joseph Reisen of Telz. After his marriage his studies were continued with even greater zeal. At that time he arranged and prepared his comments on the Shulchan Aruch. At the age of 22 Rabbi Reines had already published 3 masterpieces, namely: Reshith Bikurim, comments on all four parts of the Shulchan Aruch; Shoel Umeishiv, practical questions and answers on Jewish law; and Shuta D'Yenuka, a collection of Chiddushim which he had written as a young boy. At that time he had also begun to write his book Beth Jacob, a book which contained more than 600 subjects from the Talmud. In the year 5622 (1861), his father-in-law was elected to the Rabbinate in the city of Telz. The young son-in-law, Rabbi Reines, known as a Talmudic genius in his own right, accompanied him to Telz. He attracted many scholars who sought him out for his wisdom and brilliance. Because of this he was unable to pursue his own studies and to further continue his writings. He therefore secluded himself in a private room on the outskirts of the city, where he devoted day and night to the study of Torah. At that time Rabbi Reines commenced his important literary works which contained all sayings of the Tanaim and Amoraim in Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, Safra, Sifri, Tosefta, Mechilta and Pesiktot, Medrash Raba and Pirke D'Rab Eliezer, Tana D'Bei Eliyahu, Zohar, and Tikuney Zohar. He commented on all quotations which logically refer to one another. In this manner he hoped to create a logical sequence in the entire oral Torah.

In 5627 (1866) Rabbi Reines accepted the pulpit in the town of Shukyan, where he displayed his great oratorical ability. His attentive audience was always impressed with

4. Ibid.

the logic of his sermons. In the same year Rabbi Reines was confronted with a very complex judicial matter. He recorded all details of the complicated trial and studied it very thoroughly. As a result of this Din Torah he published a book, Edut B'Yaakov, which discusses the laws governing witnesses, which was the essence of the problems of the case over which he presided. Rabbi Reines served in Shukyan until Elul of 5629 (1868), when he accepted the Rabbinate in Shvinciani.

In Shvinciani Rabbi Reines' popularity grew; he was known throughout the area, and his books continued to be outstanding. He was also known for his ability in communal work. In Shvinciani he started upon his huge six volume work of Derech Bayam. It was in this work that he introduced the study of Talmud according to the rules of logic. He proved his point by showing that the sermons and language of the authors of the Talmud were prepared according to very definite logical rules. This book, as well as many others which he wrote, pursued the method of analyzing every quotation of Halachah and Aggadah in accordance with logical principles. He further explained that the utterances of our sages of old were made according to logical rules, placing great emphasis upon the thoughts which would further illuminate the teachings of the Torah. This method was exemplified in his book Chotem Tochnit, the first volume of which was published in 5640 (1879), followed by a second volume published in the year 5641. He received many letters of praise and commendation from great scholars regarding this work. Many of these scholars published their reviews in numerous publications in Hebrew, Russian, German, French and Arabic. His book not only served to explain many of the Talmudic and Midrashic sayings logically, it also helped to impress the modern scholars of his day, by means of the various comments which he made, with a love and admiration for Talmudic literature. Indeed, the impression of his writing in the Talmudic world was so profound that Rabbi Bezalel Hakohen of Vilna, himself

known for his greatness in Torah and righteousness, issued a plea to the entire Russian Rabbinate to support and encourage Rabbi Reines so that he may continue to further publish his writings which so greatly enhance Talmudic literature.

Those days marked the beginning of a revival among Jews for resettlement in Palestine. This new trend was encouraged by the influence of great Geonim, such as Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Kalischer of Teheren and Rabbi Eliyhu Gutmacher of Greiditz; and it was through their untiring efforts that the organization Chevrath Yishuv Eretz Israel was formed, having its center in Frankfort on the Oder. Rabbi Reines, whose love for Palestine, through his father's influence, was part of him since his youth, rejoiced when he learned of this new awakening. He wrote to Rabbi Kalisher proposing extensive practical ways and means for the realization of these aims. Rabbi Kalisher, who had not met Rabbi Reines personally, perceived from his writing that he was a man possessed of great vision and understanding regarding this work for Palestine. The two men frequently exchanged letters in which they discussed in great detail the new movement. These letters (according to Rabbi Maimon) were unfortunately burned in 5652 (1891), during a great fire in Rabbi Reines' home, at which time many of his manuscripts were also destroyed. After that Rabbi Reines frequently expressed his regret for his loss of the letters between him and Rabbi Kalisher, which contained both material about the movement and practical plans for Yishuv Eretz Israel.

In 5642 (1881) the Russian government invited the Rabbis to Petersburg to participate in an extraordinary meeting for the purpose of discussing the problems of the Jewish people. Among the outstanding Rabbis present were Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spector of Kovna, Rabbi Josef Beir Solovetchick of Brisk and Rabbi Elyohu Chaim Meisel of Lodz. Among these elderly Rabbis, Rabbi Reines appeared to partake in this conference. Rabbi Reines, who was well acquainted with the

demands of the times, proposed the inclusion of the study of secular subjects as well as the study of the language of the land within the framework of the Yeshiva program. He reinforced his ideas by saying that this method would encourage youth to return to the study of the Torah which they had abandoned to attend secular schools which served to prepare for practical living. He felt confident that if the Yeshiva would also have a secular program, these youth would return and study these subjects within the Torah spirit and environment. However, the elders were unable to foresee the future as Rabbi Reines did and strenuously opposed his suggestion, removing it entirely from the agenda. Rabbi Reines, however, aware of the value of his suggestion and the great influence which it would have upon the younger generation decided to act on his own, and opened the historic Yeshiva in Shvenciani, a school for both Torah and general knowledge.

It would be too lengthy to relate all the difficult problems which Rabbi Reines encountered because of this enterprise. In his book, Shnai Hameoroth, he discusses some of the great difficulties he underwent because of this Yeshiva. He writes of the Zealots, who, driven by envy, and not for their love of God and Torah, embittered his life. When they realized that their attempts to destroy his Yeshiva were in vain, they turned to the government, denouncing Rabbi Reines and his Yeshiva before them. As a result of this, when Rabbi Reines was in Moscow in the month of Adar in the year 5643 (1882) he was taken as a political prisoner and remained in jail for two days. It was only through the efforts of many important citizens of this great city that he was released. Due to all these difficulties, he was finally compelled to close the Yeshiva after four years, having accrued many debts and suffered much humiliation.

At this time Rabbi Reines was asked to accept the position of rabbi by many communities, some outside Russia, and one in the United States. For his reputation as a rabbi, a

Gaon, and a great communal leader had come to the attention of many. The Jewish community in the United States had not yet established itself as an important factor in Jewish life. He therefore did not give any consideration to this offer. However, Manchester, England sent a special messenger, hoping to influence Rabbi Reines to accept a position there. It was only after thirteen other communities surrounding Manchester requested that he accept the position that he finally accepted it on a trial period. He remained there only three months, returning to the Russia which was for him the center of Judaism and Torah learning. This return to Russia was preceded by much thought and self-examination, for Manchester did not allow him to leave with ease, offering him much money and also agreeing to publish all his books. Rabbi Reines confessed that he was greatly tempted to accept the offer to publish his books, but financial remuneration meant little to him. After much thought he refused Manchester and hoped that in Russia he would find a larger area for his work for Torah, Jewish literature, and Jewish culture.

The city of Lida, which was popularized by the many great rabbis who had previously held positions there, asked Rabbi Reines to be its rabbi, and as a further inducement they offered to pay his debts. He finally yielded, and in the year 5644 (1883) he accepted the post of Rabbi of Lida.

After the Russian pogroms of 1880 there was a revival of the desire to settle in Palestine. Because of this the "Lovers of Zion" called a conference in the city of Katowitz, Prussia, inviting all organizations active in the work for "Yishuv Haaretz" to participate. It was the purpose of this conference to unite all "Lovers of Zion" of all countries. This gathering was held on the 18th day of Mar Cheshvon, 5645. Among its participants were Rabbi Shmuel Mohliver and Rabbi David Friedman. Rabbi Reines also set out to go to this conference in Katowitz; however, to their chagrin, he and several other

delegates were arrested by order of the Russian Government at the Russia-Prussia border. During their delay the conference was completed and Rabbi Reines was forced, much to his regret, to return home without having accomplished his mission. However, in 5647 Reines met with Rabbi Shmuel Mohliver, and presented an important suggestion regarding Palestine.

Rabbi Reines emphasized the importance of spreading the ideals of the "Lovers of Zion" among all the people of Israel. He further proposed an extensive program for establishing settlements in Israel, as well as the establishment of grade schools and higher schools of learning, which would be conducted in the spirit of Torah. These two plans, namely, Settlements and education, would serve to make Palestine the center for Jewish life and the citadel of the entire people of Israel. Although this suggestion was logically presented, Rabbi Mohliver regarded it as an impossible fantasy, particularly in the light of the current opposition to the movement.

Rabbi Reines suffered great disappointment, since his entire being was devoted to and wrapped up in the ideal of settlement in Palestine. On the 17th of Tamuz 5649, he wrote to a friend expressing his disillusionment. He speaks about his opponents, those who look upon the worker for Palestine as sinners and free thinkers. This thought is even offered today by many religious groups in order to discourage work for Zion. Rabbi Reines answers this accusation by showing that their motives are false, valueless, and that the accusers themselves know that the arguments are not valid. He writes:

It is a known fact that the Mitzvoth of the Torah are two main divisions, the first are the laws governing the relations between man and God, namely, Tefilin, Tzitzit, Mezuzot, observance of the Shabbath and Holidays, the eating of kosher food, etc. Failure

to adhere to these laws does not in any way injure or destroy any other human being, nor does compliance bring satisfaction or pleasure to others. These laws are for the purpose of fulfilling man's personal obligation to God which brings spiritual fulfillment and the preservation of man's soul. The other section of the commandments of the Torah deals with the laws governing the relations between man and man, such as the returning of a lost article, the giving of charity, the preservation of a person's life, the avoidance of dishonesty, etc. The observance or non-observance can either improve the life of one's fellow man or hinder and injure him. These Mitzvoth are categorized as logical Mitzvoth, since their effect is immediately obvious to the doer.

The necessity of fulfilling the laws between man and God, on the other hand, are not quite as obvious. These were laws which were given to us by God, and the true believer considers both these categories of commandments to be equally important . . .

Both these categories are therefore within the realm of God's commandments; one serves God spiritually because he was commanded to do so, and one is kind to his fellow man because it is also commanded by the laws of our Torah. Thus, in all his deeds, one should consider God's command as the rule, and govern himself by the warning of the Torah. And although one understands the necessity of the commandments between man and man (whereas it is otherwise with those between man and God), nevertheless he who truly fears the word of God should compel himself to observe the commandments without thinking about them; that is, he must simply do what is pleasing to God. All his possessions and



his desires he should sacrifice entirely on the altar of God - such is the lot of God's servants. Yet there are those who depart slightly from God's commandments, and permit themselves some leeway in the commandments between man and God because they do not understand them. They have reached this low level because of the deterioration of their faith, and serve their mind exclusively, acting as slaves to reason. They ignore all matters of faith which they cannot comprehend. Yet as for the commandments that seem reasonable, those between man and man, they partake of these and willingly obey them whenever the opportunity arises. Indeed, they fulfill these just as the perfect believers do, the only difference being that the first believers obey even these commandments in order to please God, which is always their chief objective; whereas the second group, the free thinkers, fulfill these commandments because they seem to them to be reasonable. Their souls ache when others are in trouble, and since man was not created for himself alone his conscience dictates unselfishness and regard for others. They therefore consider themselves obligated to help the unfortunates and to ease their sorrows whenever possible. This way of life is common in the Jewish communities of the world; we witness it in many of the communities in which the "moderns" are the leaders. Nevertheless, problems of charity and kindness assume a higher calibre. They have groups of honorable men who are delighted to tend to problems of charity, care for the sick and needy, provide sustenance for the elders, and lend money to the poor without interest. In spite of the fact that these "moderns" do this, not a word was heard from "some people" about simplifying these Mitzvoth which are between man and man only

because they are observed by the moderns. Although it is true that the Orthodox obey the Mitzvoth between man and man with their intentions directed to God and with thoughts dedicated to the Torah, and for the sake of the Mitzvah alone, nevertheless, basically they are both doing the identical thing. Would it not be a farce for one to imply that the good deeds which the moderns do are of no value and possess no merits? Can this be said only because the moderns are doing it also? It is natural that a mitzvah which is logical to the mind will be observed by some for that reason alone. On the contrary, the application of this mitzvah, for whatever reason it may be, can inspire the maker of the Mitzvah even more. Thus one can understand the merits of doing this Mitzvah even for reasons of logic; and because these Mitzvoths are observed by the moderns, would one in his right mind suggest that because of this there is something wrong with the Mitzvoth between man and man?

The work for Palestine is one of the greatest and most exalted Mitzvot, one with common sense, feeling and logical support. For the improvement of the majority is more important than the improvement of the individual conditions. Thus Palestine, which affects the majority, affords a greater opportunity in the fulfillment of this Mitzvah, since this deals with helping an entire nation and enlarges the scope of the Mitzvoth which deal between man and man. In view of all this, can there be anything wrong in helping in the work for Palestine because one's mind and conscience dictates that help?

I very much doubt therefore, the sincerity of the thoughts and words of the "complainers." I am sure

that those who criticize the efforts for this cause know well the emptiness of their arguments. These ideas were only perpetrated to influence those innocent and righteous people who, because of their simplicity and innocence, do not bother to investigate this problem further, and are themselves unable to recognize the truth. These righteous, but simple Jews are informed that the ideal of Palestine leads one away from the importance of faith in Torah, and as a result they avoid it and refuse to listen further. Those who criticize are very diligent in their work, and are wonderful craftsmen in this respect. They are constantly shooting deadly bullets which succeed in destroying "huge walls and forts." They use weapons of holiness and throw them at the proper targets.<sup>5</sup>

Such were the thoughts which Rabbi Reines wrote to his friend. Even in private discussions he never failed\* to attempt to prove logically to the listener the value of the Mitzvah of the rebuilding of Palestine. Despite his great love for the work of Zion, which constantly filled his heart and mind, he did not realize complete satisfaction until Dr. Herzl's political Zionist movement became a reality.

Rabbi Reines speaks of his work in the Zionist movement as follows: -"

In 5657, when the Zionist ideal became popular, and the first Zionist congress was held, there were many rabbis who participated in the Zionist movement. These Rabbis met prior to the first Congress in Warsaw. However, I did not participate in this meeting. I observed from afar, since my method has always been one of caution, never partaking in anything until I thoroughly investigated the matter. Even in this case, which I recognized as the most important

5. Printed in Sefer Netzach Yisroel by Rabbi Moshe Reines, son of Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, born in Lida 1870 and died on March 7, 1891. Reb Moshe was the author of Ruach Hazman, Netzach Yisrael, Achsanyut shel Torah, and Dor Va Hakamaw .

for the Jews and Judaism, I still followed my instincts. People who offer themselves to a new ideal or a new movement without thought and complete knowledge of what they are doing, very often give little. However, from those who offer their work after thorough investigation of the organization's aims and ideals, one can expect great accomplishments and very often they become the bannerbearers of the movement. For example: there are two types of stoves. One has thin walls and heats quickly, and the other has thicker walls and heats slowly. The thin stoves cool off as rapidly as they were heated, and the thicker stoves cool much more slowly. The longer it takes to acquire the heat, the longer it will take to cool off. So it is in the case of one's work for an ideal. The formation of a new movement, be it a world or national movement, will undoubtedly at first attract many listeners, despite the fact that some who partake may not find all to their liking. Those who join an organization because of their initial enthusiasm which warms and greatly inspires them often find that when their first enthusiasm has subsided they have lost interest, and they remove themselves from participation in the ideal. However, those who finally join a movement only after thorough investigation of all aspects of its aims remain steadfast in their work for the cause and very often become the leaders of the organization. These are the people who work with their entire being to further and strengthen the activities of the movement. This is the manner in which I have always conducted myself. I never partook in anything before first investigating and testing all details of the problem. Thus I did the same regarding the Zionist movement, and as a result it took me two years until I became close to the organiza-

tion. During the two years my mind did not rest. I thoroughly investigated its potential from the religious standpoint as well as from a logical viewpoint. I also studied the person who stood at the head of the movement to ascertain whether he is the person fit to head such a national movement. Only when the results of my investigation were favorable did I decide to join the movement not only in thought but also in action. I traveled to all Zionist meetings as well as to the Congresses. When it was known that I affiliated myself with the movement, the opposition came to me and requested that I withdraw my membership. They feared that my alliance with them would cause it to grow in strength and membership. They tried at great length to dissuade me, but their attempts only made me more loyal in my work for the Zionist cause. I realized how much they lack in knowledge and understanding of the Zionist problem. When they realized that their attempts were useless, an outstanding Rabbi of our land was sent to visit with me, and we discussed the issue for two hours. At first he argued from a religious point of view. After proving to him that his arguments have no validity, he attempted another approach. He tried to impress upon me that people have always turned to me for advice, and now that I have associated myself with a movement which has many critics, they will no longer seek me out, and this would be a loss for me. I made him aware of the fact that I expected to personally suffer in some way as a result of my decision. However, I could not possibly dissociate myself from the Zionist cause unless someone could prove to me logically that I was doing the wrong thing. I further emphasized that it was my opinion that it is the duty and obligation of every Jew to join its ranks. I also

emphasized that despite the fact that the Rabbi who spoke to me said that the Rabbis oppose the Zionist ideal, it is my contention that they are actually loyal to its principles but fear to say so openly. For the opposition knows well the technique of destroying a good activity by spreading the view that it is religiously questionable. The opposition knows well that those who hear of this will hardly investigate the problem, and by accepting their views completely will abstain from joining the movement. Most of the opposition is due to lack of knowledge, to their failure to delve deeply into the details of the problem, as one should properly do regarding a decision with such vast consequences.<sup>6</sup>

In his book Or Chadash Al Zion, Rabbi Reines discusses his thoughts and views about Zionism, and also the questions raised by the opposition. It is a thorough analysis of all questions regarding the Zionist ideal, and he finally attempts to prove in his conclusion that all opposing arguments have no validity, logically or religiously.

He fully discussed the argument often used against the movement, the fact that the movement was headed by non-religious people and therefore the Zionist movement has no roots within a holy cause. Rabbi Reines logically and clearly disputes this claim from its root, and concludes that

"One who decides and thinks that the Zionist ideal has any connection with free thinking, that person must be critically examined, for he is desecrating a holy thing. There is no greater desecration of a holy concept than to say that Zionism is affiliated with free thinking. For if there would be room for such an argument, one could be compelled to say one of two things -- either that the free thinker

6. Shnei Hameoroth, p. 22

engulfs Zionism, or that Zionism engulfs the free thinker within its ideals . . . Obviously the holiness of the land causes the free thinkers or the liberals to partake in the movement, and it is precisely that aspect which emphasizes the greatness of Zionism. It is the fact that the ideal has persuaded people of different thoughts to turn toward one ideal, that of saving a nation, which in itself is most praiseworthy."7

To further prove this Rabbi Reines quotes a Rabbinic quotation from the Midrash Rabbah: " 'It was evening, and it was morning, one day' "8 --- Our Rabbis comment: and 'it was evening': these are the deeds of the wicked; and 'it was morning': these are the deeds of the righteous, one day, which God gave them, namely Yom Kippur."9

"The value of Yom Kippur is so great because on that day the righteous as well as the wicked unite in prayer, and I am sure that one cannot object to the holiness of Yom Kippur because that day unites the righteous and the wicked. Would one want the sins of the wicked to be ignored and not forgiven? On the contrary, their participation in Yom Kippur serves to emphasize the holiness of that day, since the free thinking who removed themselves from religious life recognize the importance of that day and try to partake in it. Because they are brought closer to God on that day, we exalt Yom Kippur even more; and this is precisely the praise which one can give to Zionism."10

Rabbi Reines thus explains logically and from a Halachic and Agadic point of view that the work for Zionism is obligatory for every Jew, and the believer above all must not look for excuses to disregard this important task. Rabbi Reines practiced all and even more than he preached. He

7. Ibid, pp. 40.

8. Genesis 1. 5

9. Breshith Rabbah 3. 10

10. Or Chadash Al Tzion, Section 9 - Ch. 1. 3.

devoted his entire strength to Zionism, conscientiously attending meetings, conventions, congresses, and actively partaking in all committees. He constantly wrote about and organized activities in favor of the Zionist ideal. His greatest hope was to find a means of enticing the orthodox faction to the cause of Zionism. His dream was realized in the year 5662 (1902) on 25-26 Adar, when he was successful in assembling many outstanding rabbis of Vilna and Russia for the purpose of organizing a large movement of religious Jews who would work for the redemption of Zion. After two serious days of deliberation the Mizrachi organization was formed.

Rabbi Reines, the founder of Mizrachi, hoped this organization would fulfill and fortify the needs of religious Jewry and simultaneously eradicate the objections to Zionism which he encountered among the extreme Orthodox Jew. The Mizrachi succeeded in making the viewpoint of the Orthodox Jew, who joined its ranks, an integral part of the Zionist movement. Religion and its viewpoints were something very concrete within the Zionist organization. Unfortunately, many extreme religious factions not only did not align themselves with this movement, but attempted to hinder it by publishing books and articles with false accusations. Rabbi Reines said that "the Mizrachi was a testing ground, for those who sincerely felt the need of religion within the Zionist ranks and readily joined the movement, and those who persisted in their opposition did so from self-interest. Despite these objections, the Mizrachi grew in strength and rank." This success was very distasteful to the opposition, and Rabbi Reines, as a result, endured much suffering, particularly from those objectors who did all in their power to destroy Zionism. In his book Shnei Hameoroth Rabbi Reines related the following incident. After the formation of the Mizrachi he was invited to preach in the synagogue of Kovno for the purpose of spreading the word of the Mizrachi ideal. He was received with great honor by the Rabbi of



Kovno, Zvi Hirsh Rabinowitz (with whom he discussed Torah at length) and also by the community at large. Thousands of people gathered at the synagogue and many who were unable to enter remained outside. When Rabbi Reines walked up to the pulpit, much to his amazement, a member of the crowd immediately stopped him and with great effrontery ordered him to refrain from preaching. The entire assembly was greatly aroused, and in their anger would have harmed this rebel. Rabbi Reines patiently begged the man to walk off the pulpit, and he also suggested that the audience exercise control. However, much to the shock of all present, this rebellious individual grasped Rabbi Reines' long garment and tore it into pieces. Only the compassion of Rabbi Reines saved this man from the wrath of the crowd. Rabbi Reines always retained a piece of this garment as a remembrance, and even requested from Rabbi Yehuda Maimon that, after his death, he place this piece of torn garment into his grave. Despite these disturbances Rabbi Reines did not weaken, but continued to work with even greater zeal. His reputation as a great leader grew and he will never be forgotten.

Rabbi Reines possessed many outstanding qualities, some of which were modesty, sincerity, and a compassionate spirit, which all added up to the making of an outstanding personality. Rabbi Maimon referred to him not only as a man of the book but also a man who fully participated in life. Rabbi Maimon continued to say that of all the elders of that generation whose acquaintance he had made, he had not met a man who was not only a great Gaon but who also had the ability to mingle with people and who was as keenly interested in the work of the community as Rabbi Reines was. He possessed very special merits such as nobleness of spirit, cheerfulness, friendliness, a delicate and patient nature, and the ability to deeply understand his friends' and pupils' problems.

Rabbi Reines paved the way for the religious Jews to join the Zionist cause, and to work together with other groups of the Zionist movement for the revival of the Jews in Palestine. He fought with all his fervor and zeal, the objections of the liberals which could be interpreted as an expression of degradation for the honor and principles of our religion.

Rabbi Reines often said "The Zionists say that every Jew who is not a Zionist is not a Jew. I say that every Zionist who is not a Jew is not a Zionist."

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hakohen Fishman (of blessed memory) told the following story: "In the winter of 5665 (1905), after a decision was reached at the Zionist Congress regarding the establishment of Federations within the Zionist movement, Rabbi Reines suggested that the Mizrachi be changed from a faction to a Federation. He invited all members of the executive committee to a special meeting at his home. Present among them was an outstanding Polish rabbi, who later became one of the influential leaders of the Mizrachi movement in his own country. This rabbi, in his quest for peace, felt that changing the status of the Mizrachi from a faction to a Federation would in turn cause the Mizrachi to become a completely separate unit. He continued his remarks by quoting the famous words of our sages in Medrash Rabba regarding the "Four Minim of the Lulav." The Erog possesses a fine taste and pleasant odor which can be compared to people who possess Torah and good deeds. The Lulav has a taste but is odorless. This is representative of those people who have Torah but lack deeds. The Hadas, on the other hand, has a pleasant odor but not a pleasant taste. This can be compared to those people who have deeds but no Torah. The Arava is both tasteless and odorless. These are people who have no Torah, and are not inclined towards good deeds."<sup>11</sup> Yet God commanded that all four items be combined and tied together. Thus the rabbi empha-

11. Medrash Rabba, Vayikrah, 30.

sized the necessity that the Bnei Torah and those who possess good deeds should be united with all other types, as are the four elements of the Lulav, and, therefore, a federation of the Mizrachi which would become a separate entity, should not be formed. The rabbi's views were inspirational and yet perplexing. Rabbi Reines however, made one observation which somewhat changed the entire picture. Rabbi Reines mentioned that the Erog which represents the Torah people and those of good deeds, such as the Mizrachi is, is not in fact tied together with the others. It is true that the Erog is brought close to the other minim, but nevertheless the Erog remains completely separated from the others. It is an entity in itself.

Rabbi Reines experienced much in his work and very often he observed the shadows surrounding the "big and small" people. However he possessed great understanding and respect for all mankind. Although he could not see or understand those who opposed him, he spoke of them with great respect, and he felt great compassion for them when they failed to understand so vital a problem which stood before them which would ultimately affect their lives as well.

Rabbi Reines spoke Hebrew fluently. Although he did not speak many other languages, he possessed a powerful memory and was considered a "Baki" in Talmud. He was familiar with Kabbalah, and knew the Zohar practically by heart. He was a great Gaon and a preacher par excellence. He greatly inspired his listeners. Mr. Nachum Sokolov wrote about the lecture which Rabbi Reines delivered at the third Congress in Basel as follows: "Rabbi Reines spoke with fervor for peace and unity, and he inspired the assembly to remove from the ranks of Zionism all those problems which divide the groups. He quoted beautiful examples given by our sages. With a sincere voice, this man of vision stirred his audience with his beautiful Hebrew, and the feeling which prevailed throughout his talk were strong

enough to influence his listeners."<sup>12</sup>

Despite his almost complete absorption in Torah and in the work of Mizrachi, Rabbi Reines never abandoned his hope for the founding of a Yeshiva for Torah and Daath, a school for Torah and worldly knowledge. In the year 5665 (1905), when he felt that the Mizrachi was on firm ground, he realized his dream, and a Yeshiva for Torah and knowledge was established under his supervision in the city of Lida. His school attracted hundreds of students who flocked to him to learn Torah from this great scholar, and simultaneously reap the benefits of a secular education.

Our admiration for Rabbi Reines increases when we realize that a man occupied with so many varied activities, still found time to enrich our literature with outstanding books. Besides his published books close to 100 manuscripts were left behind unpublished. These manuscripts are constantly being prepared for publication by members of his family and other scholars.

Some of Rabbi Reines' books are: - Eduth B'Yakov, in two parts, on the laws of testimony --- Chosem Tochnith, on programs for schools --- Shaarey Orah, on Talmudical quotations --- Orim Gedolim on Halacha --- Shaarey Orah V'Simcha, on Israel, on Galuth and Emunah --- Or Shivat Hayamim, sermons and essays on holidays --- Orah V'Simcha, on Purim --- Nod Shel Demaath, eulogies --- Or Chadash al Zion, on Israel and Zion --- Or Laarbaa Asar, on Pessach --- Shnei Hameoroth in 2 parts and Sefer Hoerchim.

During his last years he very much desired to settle in Palestine. He exchanged letters with Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hakohen Fishman (Maimon) regarding the purchase of a piece of land in one of the colonies. In one of his letters

12. Sefer Hashana, Vol. I, page 30.

Rabbi Reines writes: "I would be delighted to see with my own eyes this great land to which I devoted my best years. However, I want to be sure that when I arrive there I will not be compelled to depend on others for support. Therefore, it is my wish to purchase a piece of land for myself with the intention of keeping the fruits and leaving the profits to an "institution in Israel." However, in the interim the First World War engulfed the world and the bond between Palestine and Europe was severed. Like Moses, Rabbi Reines never settled in Eretz Yisrael, the land which he craved for so deeply. He died on the 10th of Ellul in the year 5675 (1915). Since his death many kibbutzim have been named after him. He was survived by a large family of scholars and children of scholars.

Tehey Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hachaim.  
Zecher Tzadik Livracha.

## MIZRACHI SETTLEMENTS IN ISRAEL

### MOSHAVIM

Name	Year Founded	National Origin	Families	Children	Total
Achiezer	1950	Yemen	100	385	67
Ami	1949	Tripoli, Cochin	120	390	64
Aviezer	1958	Cochin	23	102	23
Azriel	1951	Yemen	70	172	45
Bareket	1953	Yemen	80	240	41
Ben Zakai	1950	Tripoli	90	227	48
Beit Gamliel	1951	Czechoslovakia, Hungary	100	267	48
Beit Hagadi	1953	Hungary	95	240	46
Beit Uziel	1957	Morocco, Algeria	60	150	41
Chadid	1951	Hungary, Yemen	60	158	27
Chemed	1953	Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia	100	270	41
Dalton	1953	Tunisia	80	223	42
Eitan	1955	Tunisia, Morocco	70	172	37
Gefen	1955	Yemen	65	160	32
Geulei Teiman	1946	Morocco	58	150	27
Givolim	1952	Kurdistan	60	165	25
Hazonim	1937	Hungary	50	110	27
Kerem Ben Zimra	1949	Romania, Morocco, Turkey	60	145	28
Kfar Abraham	1932	Poland, Czechoslovakia	65	170	36
Kfar Darom	1949	Germany	35	88	27
Kfar Haroeh	1934	Poland	110	272	42
Kfar Maimon	1959	Yemen	115	280	42
Kfar Pines	1933	Russia, Poland	70	160	36
Kfar Shamai	1950	Yemen, Hungary	60	160	27
Kfar Yavetz	1950	Romania, Yemen	70	172	42
Machseya	1950	Yemen, Morocco, Romania	35	90	21
Massuot Yitzchak	1949	Germany, Hungary	30	92	21
Melilot	1953	Persia, Kurdistan	60	179	32
Meron	1949	Hungary	60	190	32
Nacholim	1940	Germany	140	350	52
Nacham	1950	Yemen	50	150	31
Nechusha	1955	Tunisia	28	40	16
Nir Galim	1950	Kurdistan, Cochin	43	65	14
Noam	1955	Morocco	70	228	42
Rehov	1951	Morocco, Kurdistan	50	150	29
Parat	1951	Tripoli	100	330	62
Revacha	1953	Kurdistan	80	279	45
Revoya	1952	Morocco	60	170	29
Sdei Ilan	1940	Germany, Poland	40	110	22
Sdei Trumot	1953	Iraq, Kurdistan	50	210	37
Sdei Yaakov	1927	Poland, Russia	95	210	62
Shafir	1949	Hungary, Czechoslovakia	85	190	52
Shatva	1953	Tripoli, Tunisia	65	224	38
Sharsheret	1949	Tunisia	65	220	38
Shibolim	1952	Persia, Kurdistan	60	179	34
Shokanah	1957	Morocco	35	80	12
Shuvah	1950	Tripoli, Tunisia	70	223	38
Taaz	1950	Morocco	80	240	40
Tarum	1951	Tunisia	90	250	40
Tekuma	1947	Poland, Morocco	40	115	20
Tirah	1957	Tunisia, Persia	35	80	15
Tirat Yehudah	1950	Hungary, Yemen, Morocco	80	155	32
Tirosh	1955	Morocco	60	211	41
Tzafriya	1949	Czechoslovakia, Hungary	85	170	35
Uzah	1951	Tripoli	80	213	43
Yad Rambam	1956	Morocco	90	250	50
Yishai	1950	Tunisia, Cochin	90	185	40
Yoshivya	1950	Algeria	90	190	40
Zerachiah	1951	Persia, Morocco	65	211	41
Zerua	1953	Morocco	60	200	35
Zimrat	1951	Tunisia	60	130	28

### KIBBUTZIM

Name	Founded	Area in Dunams	Location	Population
Beerot Yitzchak	1948	2,890	Coastal Plains	259
Ein Hanatziv	1946	4,692	Bet Shaan	291
Ein Tzurim	1949	4,800	Darom	371
Lavi	1949	2,632	Lower Galilee	240
Moale Hagilboa	1963	2,650	Mount Gilboa	125
Saad	1952	4,200	Negev	269
Sde Eliahu	1939	3,500	Bet Shaan	254
Shlucht	1948	3,618	Bet Shaan	254
Tirat Tzvi	1936	4,600	Bet Shaan	367
Yavne	1940	3,689	Darom	550

#### TOTAL ASSETS OF THE KIBBUTZIM:

2270 Head of cattle—of which 768 are of the Dairy herd.	Financial—(in Israel Pounds)
99,400 chickens—producing 773 tons of chicken per annum.	11,924,483—investments for production and expansion
Land Area—68,600 Dunams of which:	5,311,943—investments for consumption
18,675—grain	15,912,646—gross general production
6,720—cotton and other industrial uses	1,908,721—from industrial production

# RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA MIZRACHI-HAPOEL HAMIZRACHI

## FACTS AND FIGURES

Mizrachi-Hapoel Hamizrachi has made significant contributions toward the upbuilding of a religious Israel.

### In Israel

- › 119 branches of Mizrachi-Hapoel Hamizrachi
- › 15,000 Yeshiva students supplied with free medical aid
- › 40 Youth Aliyah groups
- › 131 interest free loan agencies
- › 2 banks with 40 branches
- › Bar Ilan University
- › Mossad Harav Kook (publishing house)
- › Talmudical Encyclopedia
- › "Hatzofe"—a leading Israeli daily newspaper
- 82 agricultural settlements
- 35 consumer—producers cooperatives
- 60 housing developments of Mishkanot
- 250 cultural and educational institutions
- 594 kindergartens
- 25 recreational centers
- 24 vocational training schools
- 15 Yeshivot fully maintained
- Aid to Refugee Rabbis
- 48 Yeshivot supported

### IN THE UNITED STATES

- › 4 *Moshavot* summer camps for youth
- › A vigorous public relations program for religious principles and Zionist aims
- › *Vaad Hachinuch Hatorani*, The National Council for Torah Education
- › *Bnei Akiva* and *Mizrachi Hatzair*, youth movements
- *Sinai Fraternal Order*, benevolent society of the Movement
- *Tourist Department*
- *Vaad Lechizuk Hatorah*, Committee for strengthening Torah Judaism

### PUBLICATIONS

- › *The Jewish Horizon*—bi-monthly publication of Jewish interest
- › *Der Mizrachi Weg*—bi-monthly Yiddish magazine
- *Or Hamizrach*—scholarly periodical in Hebrew
- *Kolenu* and *Sabbath Voice*—weeklies published by New York and Chicago Councils respectively

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America!**

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