

The New Jewish Body – Jewish Power Resurrected

Compiled by Rabbi Mike Uram



<p>Bava Metzia 84a - One day R. Yochanan was bathing in the Jordan, when Resh Lakish saw him and leapt into the Jordan after him. Said he [R. Yochanan] to him, 'Your strength should be for the Torah.' — 'Your beauty,' he replied, 'should be for women.' 'If you will repent,' said he, 'I will give you my sister [in marriage], who is more beautiful than I.' He undertook [to repent]; then he wished to return and collect his weapons, but could not. Subsequently, [R. Yochanan] taught him Bible and Mishnah, and made him into a great man.</p>	<p>יומא חד הוה קא סחי ר' יוחנן בירדנא חזייה ריש לקיש ושוור לירדנא אבתריה אמר ליה חילך לאורייתא אמר ליה שופרך לנשי א"ל אי הדרת בך יהיבנא לך אחותי דשפירא מינאי קביל עליה בעי למיהדר לאתויי מאניה ולא מצי הדר . אקרייה ואתנייה ושוייה גברא רבא</p>
<p>Rashi on that text: His mere decision to turn to the study of the Torah had so weakened him that he lacked the strength to don his heavy equipment.</p>	<p>ולא מצי - לקפוץ כבראשונה דמשקבל עליו עול תורה תשש כוחו:</p>

Aaron David Gordon – New Jewish Body

Text #1 - And when, O Man, you will return to Nature—on that day your eyes will open, you will gaze straight into the eyes of Nature, and in its mirror you will see your own image. You will know that you have returned to yourself, that when you hid from Nature, you hid from yourself. When you return you will see that from you, from your hands and from your feet, from your body and from your soul, heavy, hard, oppressive fragments will fall and you will begin to stand erect. You will understand that these were fragments of the shell into which you had shrunk in the bewilderment of your heart and out of which you had finally emerged. On that day you will know that your former life did not befit you, that you must renew all things: your food and your drink, your dress and your home, your manner of work and your mode of study—everything!

A different life, a life not ready-made, a life to be experienced in preparation and creation—that life you did not know (The Zionist Idea, 371).

Text #2 - Only by making Labor, for its own sake, our national ideal shall we be able to cure ourselves of the plague that has affected us for many generations and mend the rent between ourselves and Nature. Labor is a great human ideal (The Zionist Idea, 374).

Text #3 - Our people can be brought to life only if each one of us recreates himself through labor and a life close to nature. Should he fall short of achieving this self-rehabilitation, the next generation, or the one thereafter, will complete the process.

On the other hand, if in Palestine we continue the life of the Galut, with its petty trading and all that goes with it, the coming generations will pursue the same road even more vigorously (The Zionist Idea, 377).

Text #4 - This demand embraces every detail of our individual lives. Every one of us is required to refashion himself so that the Galut Jew within him becomes a truly emancipated Jew; so that the unnatural, defective, splintered person within him may be changed into a natural wholesome human being who is true to himself; so that his Galut life, which has been fashioned by alien and extraneous influences, hampering his natural growth and self-realization, may give way to one that allows him to develop freely, to his fullest stature in all dimensions (The Zionist Idea, 377).

Optional Text: - We are a parasitic people. We have no roots in the soil, there is no ground beneath our feet. And we are parasites not only in an economic sense, but in spirit, in thought, in poetry, in literature, and in our virtues, our ideals, our higher human aspirations. Every alien movement sweeps us along, every wind in the world carries us. We in ourselves are almost non-existent, so of course we are nothing in the eyes of other people either (Sternhell, p. 48)