



**Israel was originally conceived of as a secular state.** It is instructive to think that the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was founded more than twenty years before the state itself. The idea of free, critical inquiry as a core value was announced both by the University and by Israel's declaration of independence.

But Ben-Gurion's historical compromise with the Orthodox parties has turned out to be a catastrophe. Israel, to this day, doesn't have a constitution; the Rabbinate is involved in the lives of countless people who don't want anything to do with it, and the Orthodox stream in Judaism (which is a minority in Jewry worldwide) has a monopoly that aggravates and alienates millions of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

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