



**TO RETURN
THE CROWN
TO ITS PLACE**

**Coalition
for
Jewish Values**



Our Platform

To Return the Crown to Its Place

Who We Are

The Coalition for Jewish Values (CJV), the largest Rabbinic Public Policy organization in America, articulates and advocates for public policy positions based upon traditional Jewish thought. We lead the fight against those who cloak their own secular, left-wing ideals in the mantle of “Judaism,” misrepresenting Judaism’s actual beliefs and values.

We know that Biblical values are the nurturing roots of first-world civilizations, and recognize the efforts of the American pioneers to give expression to those ideals in the founding documents of the United States. We promote these same values today, through education, advocacy, and mobilization of support within the Jewish conservative community, especially the rapidly-growing Orthodox segment.

The CJV is keenly sensitive to our people’s history. We understand that the scourge of anti-Semitism hides behind many facades, and recognize it in the contemporary anti-Israel movement. We appreciate the friendship displayed by pro-Israel conservative groups towards the Jewish People, rather than regarding it with unjustified suspicion.

Rabbinic Authority and Public Policy

Today, the West calls its bedrock values “Judeo-Christian ethics.” While often not laid out explicitly, it is understood that ideals such as valuing human life, peace, universal education, family, social responsibility and equal justice all find their earliest expression in the Jewish Bible.

This gives disproportionate authority to a Jewish voice in American public policy. Priests, imams, ministers and monks – as well as regular citizens and government officials – often give extra weight to the opinions of rabbis, even over those of their co-religionists. Thus it is especially unfortunate for all, not just for Jews, when the name of Judaism is employed to advocate for the abandonment of eternal Jewish values.

Furthermore, there is a disturbing trend today of leftists invalidating religious viewpoints as violating the separation of church and state – even (or especially) on issues of morality and ethics. This is the subtext behind efforts to pigeonhole traditional viewpoints as “Christian perspectives.” The CJV rebuts the false notion that core Biblical values are only appreciated by one segment of the US population.

Judaism Is Not Liberalism

Well over 80% of Reform Rabbis are registered Democrats, making Reform Judaism the most partisan religious denomination in America.¹ A prominent conservative member of a Reform Temple recently accused the movement of becoming a political organization masquerading as a religious denomination.

Conservative Judaism comes in fourth place on the same list, following the A.M.E. Church and Unitarians at just over 70% Democrats. Barely 4% of Reform Rabbis, and under 10% of Conservative, are registered Republicans.

¹ “Your Rabbi? Probably a Democrat. Your Baptist Pastor? Probably a Republican. Your Priest? Who Knows,” Kevin Quealy, The New York Times, June 12, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/12/upshot/the-politics-of-americas-religious-leaders.html>

Reform is barely 200 years old, devised as a conscious attempt to “modernize” Judaism by rejecting several of its core beliefs. The first Declaration of Principles of the Frankfort Society of the Friends of Reform proclaimed in 1843 that “we recognize the possibility of unlimited development in the Mosaic Religion” and that the Talmud, the collection of what traditional Jewry calls the Oral Law, has “no authority from either the doctrinal or the practical standpoint.”²

If the Holy Bible and its traditional Jewish interpretations are not the final arbiter of their morality, but merely a starting point for “unlimited development,” they then can (and do) place a “Jewish” imprimatur upon every new “progressive” idea. It need not even be truly new; thus they now call homosexuality, a routine practice in the pagan world of ancient times, a modern form of relationship that must be celebrated by tolerant, moral people. Unfortunately, this new Reform movement established early dominance here in America.

The Conservative movement, although founded to “conserve” traditional Judaism and resist its abandonment by the Reformers, in practice follows Reform’s lead in most every area, adopting its “innovations” several years later. Today, Conservative Rabbis who resist performing inter- or even same-sex marriages find themselves forced to choose between their principles and their positions.

While the Jews are a people, in that every child of a Jewish mother is automatically a Jew as well, it is manifest that not every belief expressed by a Jewish individual is necessarily “Jewish.” Liberal Jewish leaders are free to

² Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion, Ronald Johnstone, 2016, Routledge Press, p. 349.

promote their secular ideology, but it is painful and dishonest when they claim to do so under the banner of “Judaism.”

Given the lack of actual Jewish content in the liberal movements, congregants leave them to pursue leftist secularism more directly. Scholars within these groups concede that only 25% of American Jews today are members of Reform and Conservative synagogues.³ A large portion of those retain their memberships only long enough to enable their children to celebrate Bar or Bat Mitzvahs; the Pew Research Center reported that the vast majority of members attend synagogue only a few times each year.⁴

Most telling of all, Pew also determined that among the non-Orthodox, the birthrate is at sub-replacement levels while intermarriage now exceeds 70% of those who wed.⁵ As the majority of children of intermarriage do not identify with any Jewish denomination, the liberal Jewish movements are, at present, on the path to extinction. It is worth keeping this in mind when non-Orthodox leaders present themselves as the representatives of “American Jewry.”

³ “The Pew Survey Reanalyzed,” Jack Wertheimer and Steven M. Cohen, Mosaic Magazine, Nov. 2, 2014. The authors are professors at the (Conservative) Jewish Theological Seminary and the (Reform) Hebrew Union College, respectively.
<https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2014/11/the-pew-survey-reanalyzed/>

⁴ “A Portrait of Jewish Americans,” Pew Research Center, October 1, 2013.

<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/chapter-4-religious-beliefs-and-practices/>

⁵ Ibid. www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/chapter-2-intermarriage-and-other-demographics/ See also “Pew survey of U.S. Jews: soaring intermarriage, assimilation rates,” Uriel Heilman, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, October 1, 2013. <https://www.jta.org/2013/10/01/news-opinion/united-states/pew-survey-u-s-jewish-intermarriage-rate-rises-to-58-percent>

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The American Jewish Future

The same demographic surveys have in recent years begun to expose what we in the Orthodox community have known for decades: that our community is growing rapidly, and represents the Jewish future both in America and globally.

The Orthodox comprise but five percent of older American Jews, but are nearly fifteen percent of the middle-aged and more than a quarter of the youth (17 years and below).⁶ The Orthodox segment of the American Jewish population has more than *quadrupled* within two generations.⁷ Reflecting that new reality:

- Enrollment in Orthodox day schools grew over 80% between 1998 and 2013.⁸
- Baltimore, MD's Orthodox Jewish community increased by 50% between 1999 and 2010.⁹ Other established Orthodox communities in major cities have seen similarly remarkable growth.
- Entire new Orthodox communities have sprouted in recent years, in states such as California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Ohio and Texas, to name only a few.¹⁰

⁶ "Dramatic Orthodox Growth is Transforming the American Jewish Community, Steven M. Cohen, The Forward, Dec. 19, 2016.

<https://forward.com/opinion/357517/dramatic-orthodox-growth-is-transforming-the-american-jewish-community/>
⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "A Census of Jewish Day Schools in the United States," Marvin Schick, Avi Chai Foundation, 2014.

⁹ 2010 Baltimore Jewish Community Study, The Associated JCF of Baltimore, 2010.
<http://www.jewishdatabank.org/studies/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=2722>

¹⁰ "The Exodus," Serial in Ami Magazine, Spring-Summer 2017.

- Orthodox Jewish commerce has grown into the billions of dollars; the kosher food industry alone is now a \$12.5 billion industry in the US.¹¹

The Pew Survey contrasted the growing Orthodox population with the rest of American Jewry as follows:

The median age of Orthodox adults (40 years old) is fully a decade younger than the median age of other Jewish adults (52)... On average, the Orthodox get married younger and bear at least twice as many children as other Jews (4.1 vs. 1.7 children).¹²

It is already true that the majority of North American synagogues, and the vast majority of American rabbis, are Orthodox.¹³ This trend will only become more pronounced in the coming years. While the future of the non-Orthodox communities is uncertain, the Orthodox are ensuring a vibrant American Jewish community in the United States. And the Orthodox are committed to traditional Jewish values and ideals.

¹¹ Lubicom Marketing Consulting.
<http://www.lubicom.com/stats>

¹² "A Portrait of American Orthodox Jews," Pew Research Center.

¹³ See "Study finds Orthodox have most synagogues in U.S.," Jewish News of Northern California, August 16, 2002. <https://www.jweekly.com/2002/08/16/study-finds-orthodox-have-most-synagogues-in-u-s/> At that time, the plurality (40%) were Orthodox. Reform and Conservative synagogues have since consolidated, while Chabad centers have grown from nearly 350 at that time to nearly 1000, and other Orthodox synagogues have grown dramatically as well. Regarding rabbis, Beth Medrash Gavoha in Lakewood, NJ, has over 7000 enrolled students, meaning this one institution alone, the largest of many such schools, produces more rabbis than the aggregate of all non-Orthodox Jewish clergy in America.

The Need for a New, Independent Organization

Existing groups representing the observant Jewish population prioritize advocacy for our needs as a unique American community. This requires prudence: a liberal activist state assemblyman will likely give a more favorable hearing to organizations that do not advocate for traditional marriage in his news feed.

Yet this leaves a critical void that the Coalition for Jewish Values (CJV) aims to fill: to interpret and apply classic Jewish ethical and moral teachings, principles today acknowledged as prerequisite to first-world civilization, to current domestic and international affairs.

The CJV begins from the premise that something can be called an authentic Jewish value only if it is rooted in Biblical and Rabbinic teachings through millennia of Jewish history. Neither spurious references to “*Tikkun Olam*” (fixing the world) nor the use of Biblical verses plucked out of context transform personal views into Jewish tenets. The Rabbinic Board of the CJV provides the necessary knowledge and expertise to correct the record.

Individual rabbis have stepped forward in the past to promote conservative, Biblical values. Most of them are seen as iconoclasts, outside Orthodox convention, for reasons as diverse as the individuals themselves.

The officers of the CJV, by contrast, are mainstream Orthodox rabbis who have served the Jewish and greater American communities for decades as leaders, scholars and opinion makers. Our geographic and ideological diversity

ensures that when we reach consensus on an issue, our opinion is likely to be shared by the vast majority of American Orthodox Jews.

To Return the Crown to its Place

The Rabbinic leaders at the beginning of the Second Temple era were called “the Men of the Great Assembly.” The Talmud records that they were given this title because they restored recognition of God’s true attributes, “returned the crown to its place,” when others had clouded vision.¹⁴ At a time when many Americans, Jewish and not, have a distorted perception of Jewish views on basic questions of values, ethics and morality, we similarly hope to return the crown to its rightful place.

In practical terms, the CJV employs three methods to promote and share genuine Jewish values:

- Educating the general public via press releases, open letters, interviews, op-eds and other communications;
- Advocacy with government officials and the court system, through meetings, letters, *Amicus Curiae* briefs, and personal interaction;
- Mobilization within the rabbinate and Jewish community, encouraging citizens to support government policies that best accord with our values.

The CJV is able to function as a hybrid between a public policy and grassroots organization, as it expresses positions sourced in traditional Judaism and thus common to traditional Jews.

¹⁴ Tractate *Yoma* 69b.

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On The Issues

In accordance with its mission, the CJV limits itself to issues where Jewish values appear to mandate a particular perspective, refraining from taking an official position when we recognize that credible arguments from Rabbinic literature can be mustered in support of contrary views. This is not the case with regards to many issues debated actively today.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a global problem, found in both the political right and left wings. It is far too real and too dangerous to be wielded as a one-sided political cudgel.

We are thus alarmed by those who indiscriminately accuse conservative officials, legislators and public figures of harboring anti-Semitism, while ignoring blatant anti-Semitic bigotry from the left. This transpired repeatedly during the 2016 elections, and it continues today – as many who strongly condemned the President remain silent regarding lawmakers who associate with Louis Farrakhan.

We are also especially concerned with the environment on college campuses today, where Jews are prevented from speaking, denied elected or appointed office due to interest in Israel, and termed “Islamophobic” for opposing unmistakably anti-Semitic groups that glorify both terrorists and terrorism.

Israel and its Enemies

The People of Israel are permanently connected to the Land of Israel by the religion of Israel. No other people or creed is as bound to its

homeland as are the Jews, who pray towards and for Jerusalem thrice daily. Entire Jewish religious practices are reserved for those fortunate to live upon our Holy ground. We assert that a Jew should be able to live and practice his or her faith anywhere in the Jewish Homeland as a basic matter of civil rights.

“Palestine” is a Roman name, assigned to the land to dissociate it from native Jews being slaughtered and driven from their homes. Although every nation’s ancient holdings differ significantly from its modern borders, Arab maps of Palestine trace precisely that portion of the British mandate that is now Israel. This is no coincidence. The word “Palestine” cannot be pronounced in Arabic, and reflects no genuine national aspiration. As always, it is part of a campaign to remove Jews from their homeland.

The CJV represents multiple schools of thought with regards to modern political Zionism, yet unanimously recognizes recycled anti-Semitism. Those who claim to be “anti-Zionists” mean not the students of Herzl or Jabotinsky, but anyone who prays for “our eyes to behold Your return to Zion” – any Jew who subscribes to Judaism.

Boycotts of Israel are uniquely odious, as economic warfare was a classic, hateful tactic used against Jews throughout history. The Nazis’ first anti-Jewish campaign was a boycott, as always with the pretense of combating Jewish thievery – and Arabs have boycotted the Jews of Israel since 1945. So the boycott campaign is neither new nor original, but rooted in *Judenhass*. In essence, it claims that replicating an old Nazi tactic will convince Jews to compromise on the security of their children. This is obviously motivated by animus, not a desire for reconciliation or a fair and lasting peace.

U.S. Defense and Security

The Bible teaches us that evil is real, that it must be fought, and that violence must sometimes be countered with force. The United States uses, and must continue to use, its military to advance the spread of human rights and freedoms.

This commitment to freedom does not entail open immigration from conflict-ridden territories into the United States or other free countries. On the contrary, it is a poor use of limited resources to import refugees when far greater numbers could be given shelter closer to their homelands. This practice is still more objectionable – and frankly dangerous – when a refugee population has been indoctrinated to despise our values, hate our citizens, and support violent *Jihad*.

Religious Liberty

The most significant danger to the free exercise of religion today comes from those who would permit no religious exercise at all – e.g. those who would force business owners to facilitate same-sex weddings in violation of their religious beliefs. The CJV has made public statements and addresses, and participated in *Amicus Curae* briefs, in defense of equality and freedom for religious institutions and individuals of different denominations.

As Judaism is focused upon practice, we are uniquely threatened by efforts to require business owners and public servants to choose between their livelihood and their faith.

Marriage and Family

The Talmud records praise for the pagan world that “they do not write marriage documents for

men.” One of the foremost commentators explained nearly a millennium ago that although the behavior was common, and they even had specific, dedicated same-sex partners, they at least refrained from calling it “marriage.”¹⁵

The CJV perspective on acknowledgement of the separate creations called “man” and “woman,”¹⁶ and upon behaviors called abomination in our Bible,¹⁷ should need no elaboration. It should also be obvious that current advocacy for “transgender” athletes is disenfranchising biological women, denying them opportunities in sporting competitions provided decades ago.¹⁸ The CJV also argues that a woman’s desire for basic privacy is in no way inferior to the desire of a “transgender” male to feel included.

Life

The Jewish Bible elevates a human soul to something precious, created in the Divine Image. Preservation of life is thus one of the foremost Jewish values. Judaism opposes any form of euthanasia, and opposes termination of care in many circumstances where doctors might wish to do so. The CJV supports empowerment of families to make critical end-of-life decisions, ahead of doctors and hospitals.

Judaism similarly cherishes fetal life, yet prioritizes that of the mother in a tragic case of conflict. Jewish Law *requires* termination of pregnancy in order to save her life, even if the child cannot survive the procedure.

¹⁵ Tractate *Chulin* 92b; Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki *ad loc*

¹⁶ Genesis 1:27.

¹⁷ Leviticus 18:22.

¹⁸ “Kiwi transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard claims two silver medals at world championships,” Stuff Limited, Dec. 6, 2017. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/other-sports/99579324/kiwi-transgender-weightlifter-laurel-hubbard-leads-at-world-championships>

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We regard it as unfortunate that “Pro-Life” is often equated with complete opposition to abortion under all circumstances. To us, providing an exception when the mother’s life is endangered is not a political concession but a moral ideal. This, the Jewish position, remains sharply at odds with the view that abortion should be a “choice” or a last-ditch method of birth control.

Israel’s Religious Affairs

As an American public policy organization, the CJV’s position on Israel’s religious affairs is limited to countering what we consider to be Jewish colonialist intervention. Faced with declining interest at home, the American liberal movements are using change in Israel as a cause around which to rally their flagging troops.¹⁹

Few Israelis demonstrate interest in American liberal Jewish practice. As in America, the liberal Jewish movements ally themselves with secularists, many of whom are less interested in enabling alternate forms of observance than in

obstructing traditional ones. Leading agitators for “religious change” at the Western Wall admit that they would prevent all Jewish prayer at the site if given the option.²⁰ Many even have ties to anti-Israel groups;²¹ this is no surprise, as their efforts aid those who defame Israel as denying religious and other freedoms.

The CJV stands with and represents traditional Jews who, knowing the scene in America and the true nature of the liberal movements’ call to arms, are best able to help Israelis to reject the deceptive demands of liberal Jewish leaders.

¹⁹ “A Declining Reform Movement Wants to Reform Israel,” Yaakov Menken, Israel Natl. News, Mar. 22, 2016. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/18591>

²⁰ “Original Women of the Wall Call to End Prayer at the Wall,” Yaakov Menken, Hamodia, Jan. 3, 2017. <http://hamodia.com/2017/01/03/original-women-wall-call-end-prayer-wall>

²¹ “Women of the Wall Leadership Linked to Anti-Israel Groups,” Rachel Avraham, The Jewish Press, Nov. 10, 2013. <http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/women-of-the-wall-leadership-linked-to-anti-israel-groups/2013/11/10/>

Join the CJV

To support the CJV, one need not be observant or even Jewish, but only to recognize the value of the CJV and the importance of fighting the misuse of the mantle of Jewish values – which the CJV is uniquely positioned to accomplish.

To join our mailing list, fill out the form on our website, or send an email to:

cjv-news-subscribe@cjvalues.org
(be sure to respond to the confirmation email).

office@cjvalues.org

To donate, please visit our support page or send your tax-deductible gift to:

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Rabbis interested in the CJV Rabbinic Circle should please write to office@cjvalues.org.

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