

1. The art show is about the spiritual defense of Israel, but takes place in a generally neutral/apolitical atmosphere - what do you think of that?

Let me open with a few basic definitions of how I look at these matters.

The defense of Israel; this means for me the defense of the Jewish people, from any threat to their bodies and souls, that is; physical or spiritual threat; and in any place where Jews may be, whether in *Eretz Yisrael* or any other place in the world; and even to a single Jew, wherever he or she may be.

The **spiritual** defense of Israel. This means (for me): defense (as mentioned above) is through spiritual means alone; namely the *mitzvot* of the Torah which are “the weapons” of the Jewish People against all their enemies, without and within, at all times and in all situations. As it is written in several places: **אין לנו כח אלא בקול קול יעקב והידיים**. Our power is only in our mouths (Torah learning and prayer); and as it is written **יד די עשו**. The voice is the voice of *Ya'akov* and the hands are hands of *Esav* (*Bereshis* 27:22) and it is written of *Esav*: **ועל חרבך תחיה** and by the sword you shall live (ibid 27:40). Thus, even when the nations come against Israel with their strength, which is physical military prowess, nevertheless our principle resource is prayer and other spiritual “weapons”, for the strength of Israel is only *Hashem, Yisborach*. He fights all our wars. That which is upon us is to understand this, and to elicit His help through the means which He has provided for us, namely Torah and *Tefilla*.

Therefore, to answer this question: the spiritual defense of Israel is pertinent and important in every place where there are Jews who can be informed and aroused by such things as this art show, and is not especially important only in a politically charged atmosphere. Furthermore; for me, the defense of Israel is a universal concept and not particular to only when Jews are under military attack. There is a situation when the benevolence of the Nations towards the Jewish People is a more dangerous threat than their open hostility; because the essence of the Jewish Nation is their spiritual uniqueness...this is too large subject to approach in this format here.

2. What were your intentions in creating the art and participating in the show? Did you create your art for the show specifically?

These pieces in the show were created well before this show was thought of, and before the particular recent aggression against the Jewish Nation in *Eretz Yisrael*. My artwork is spiritual in nature and not at all political. I distance myself from politics in all matters as much as possible. My artworks are created with purpose of drawing myself and all those who I merit to reach closer to true spirituality; to Torah, and to *Hashem Yisborach*. They are very deep personal expressions of my relationship with my Creator, which in turn, I believe, and have seen, have the power to also connect others with the depths of themselves, their souls, and the Blessed Creator. In this sense these artworks are also “spiritual defenses” like the other *mitzvot* of the Torah and thus I thought that they would be most appropriate for this show (even though they have no connection to any political theme.)

3. is there such a thing as "apolitical" in regard to Israel?

For me there is certainly apolitical in regard to Israel; but this doesn't mean 'without concern' or 'without alignment'. This means, for me: not to be interested in political action, and to be involved with it to the least possible extent; mainly for the reason that I don't believe that politics serves almost any benefit. I do not believe in the State of Israel and though I am more philosophically aligned with the “zealots” who oppose the State of Israel, I do not align myself with their actions. I try my hardest to transcend political differences in all situations and try to look at every Jew as he is in essence, his soul.

For me, I believe in what the Torah teaches us, and that is to wait for and expect the *Mashiach* at all times; the *Mashiach* is the only 'political' solution, and all the worthy political goals such as peace and harmony can only be achieved by each individual attaching him- or herself to the Torah to the greatest of his or her ability; only the Torah can make peace and only the *Mashiach* can bring all the solutions to all the conflicts.

4. what does "spiritual defense" mean to you?

I basically answered this above. Every person has a holy right and responsibility to defend himself. When one will put to his mind and heart to defend himself in the fullest possible way he will certainly come to understand that his only recourse is “spiritual defense”, to seek refuge under the Holy One, Blessed is He. As it says: **אם ה' לא ישמר עיר שוה שקד שומר** If Hashem will not guard a city the watchman has watched in vain (*Psalms* 127:1).

5. what do you hope the art show will accomplish?

My hope for this show is the same as my hope for all my artwork in every place that it is seen; to arouse and encourage (particularly Jewish) people to grasp and utilize their true spiritual wealth; to attach themselves to *Hashem* and to the Torah which alone is good and beneficial and to turn themselves away from worthless and empty things with which most of mankind occupy themselves, and which only bring them disappointment and pain, in this world and for eternity.

6. how do you think spiritual defense of Israel applies to nonJews in the region?

It is brought in a *Midrash* that if the Nations would know how much benefit is brought to them by the Holy Temple (and by all the Divine service of the Jewish people) not only would they not destroy the Temple and degrade and subjugate and persecute the Jews, rather they would do everything in their power to enable the Jews to serve *Hashem*, *Yisborach* in the easiest and best possible way [as indeed will be the case when the *Mashiach* arrives and the truth is known in the world].

Spiritual defense of Israel (of the Jewish Nation, not the State of Israel, per se) is a great benefit for both non-Jews in the region and for non-Jews all over the world. All the blessing in the world, all the sustenance, physical and spiritual, is only brought to the world through the Divine service of individual Jews. (Prayer, learning of Torah, and all the other *mitzvot*.) And all the devastation in the world; poverty, famine, war, sickness, etc., etc. is only a result of the lack of Divine Service of the Jewish People.

7. How do you think this art show might be perceived by a non-Jewish or Palestinian audience? (my professors want me to ask these more challenging questions, as I am writing for a nonJewish audience who will surely ask me about the Palestinian, as well as Israeli perspective)

Unfortunately, there is vast gulf of lack of knowledge of all the matters I have explained above, which are the essence of this show, amongst secular Jews, and all the more so amongst non-Jews. If people understand what this show is about they would happily embrace it, as I explained above. Without this knowledge, there is nothing; people will only continue to live in darkness, in misunderstanding, in hatred and at war. Even though most people are very far from grasping the message of this show, I have hope (as there is always hope) based on the principle: that even a little bit of light has the power to dispel even a great amount of darkness.. My hope is that the light of truth that shines from this show will enter into at least a few hearts and make a change. Even if one person will be brought closer to the truth, to *Hashem*, through this show, it will have been worth it.

8. As an Israeli, living in *Beit Shemesh* what do you hope for the future of Israel?

As I said above, I wait for *Mashiach* to come every day. There is no other hope for Israel. Anyone who wants to not waste his life chasing vanities will grasp onto this and devote his life to trying to serve *Hashem* in fear and love as He desires. May He have great mercy and draw us close to His will, amen.