



Bar Kochba the ultimate muscular Jewish hero: from false messiah to Zionist icon

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Arthur Szyk (1894-1951) Bar Kochba (1927)¹

In his autobiography, John Cleese pondered the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade and the hacking to death of General Gordon. The British seem to admire their heroic failures. Perhaps the idea of “heroic failure” inspired the Monty-Python sketch of the black Knight with the “flesh wound”. Zionism venerates Masada and the Bar Kochba revolt. Those events were not heroic failures but mass suicides. The result of the Kochba revolt was nine hundred and eighty-five burnt villages and five hundred and eighty thousand dead Jewish fighters.² Jews were banned from Jerusalem and many were sold into slavery or prostitution.

The Kochba result was a pyrrhic “victory”. It was the second century version of the Samson Option.³ The freedom of Jerusalem only lasted three and a half years. The Temple was not rebuilt. Why then are the Zionist obsessed with Bar Kochba?

Muscle Jew or soy boy?

Kochba is admired for his stamina, physical strength and charisma. The story goes that he could pluck a cedar tree out of the ground from horseback. An exaggeration based on training his cavalry to uproot seedlings.⁴ He demanded proof of unwavering loyalty with followers cutting off their pinkie fingers.⁵ Many of his fighters were religious fanatics (Jihad) and prayed with tefillin wrapped around their arms and strapped to their foreheads.⁶ His followers were therefore easily identified by their hand (amputated finger) and by the mark that the tefillin imprinted on their foreheads.

Bar Kochba became the poster boy for the Zionist movement. Jews could no longer be weak “intellectuals” who got sand kicked in their face on the beach. No room for “girly men” or “sissies” only macho men need apply. The switch from victim mentality to *Übermensch* is the work of Max Nordau who coined the term muscular-Judaism (*Muskeljudentum*). Nordau called for the rise of muscle Jews at the Second Zionist Congress.

In 1897, Herzl convened the First Zionist congress, but he did not give the opening address – Nordau did. Netanyahu⁷ saw Nordau as one of the most important actors in the development of Zionism. Netanyahu calls him “*the greatest apostle of Zionism*” and Likens him to “*an ancient prophet*”. Rumours even appeared in the press that Nordau would become the first Prime Minister of Israel. And yet, after statehood was attained, he was largely marginalised in Zionist history. Why is that?

Nordau was the father of “racial Zionism”.⁸ He was obsessed with physicality, eugenics, race and the degeneracy of European culture. Twenty years later the Nazi’s were saying the same things about the Aryan race. Germans and Jews were both fixated on physicality and race. That probably explains why Nordau is marginalised in contemporary Zionism. However, the same cannot be said about Bar Kochba.

In 1898 **the Bar Kochba gymnastic club** was founded in Berlin. In the years that followed Jewish athletes won proportionately more Olympic medals for Austria than ethnic Austrians. That changed when Germany topped the Olympics table in 1936.

Burying the past or rewriting it?

Bar Kochba has been fetishized in some circles. Bar Kochba’s *ghost still walks*, even though his bones were buried by the Israeli **government in 1982**.⁹ The Bar Kochba rebellion has been mythologized by the Zionists. According to Dr. Harkabi¹⁰ the Jews were decimated by Kochba’s unrealistic policy.

"The problem is not how Bar Kochba erred," Dr. Harkabi wrote, "but how we came to admire his error and how this influences the manner of our national thinking. By admiring the Bar Kochba revolt, we are forced into the position of admiring our destruction and rejoicing over a deed amounting **to national suicide**. (my emphasis)"¹¹

Dr. Harkabi suggested that current Israeli policy was also unrealistic;

"The Bar Kokhba Rebellion, according to my analysis, stemmed from an unrealistic assessment of historical and political circumstances. This issue of realism is central to the formulation of all political and

strategical decisions; and the prescriptions of realism apply both to individuals and to political entities. Further, since the rebellion involved considerable risk, it is necessary to analyze the issues of risk-taking and speculation, and their limits. Policy always involves risk-taking, with one proviso: that the national existence not be placed in ultimate jeopardy. It was precisely this proviso that was contravened by the Bar Kokhba Rebellion".¹²

The Kochba revolt is commemorated on the festival of **Lag Ba'Omer**. The festival is celebrated by lighting bonfires which is ironic considering the pyrrhic nature of the victory. Early Zionists co-opted the religious celebration and emphasized the military aspect rather than the rabbinic nature of the memorial.¹³ The holiday was "re-interpreted" accentuating the heroic nature of the Bar Kochba revolt.¹⁴ In modern Israel, Lag Ba'Omer is "a symbol for the fighting Jewish spirit". The Palmach division (Strike Squadrons) were established on Lag Ba'Omer 1941, and the government order creating the Israel Defence Forces was issued on Lag Ba'Omer 1948.¹⁵ Beginning in 2004, the Israeli government designated Lag Ba'Omer as the day for saluting the IDF reserves.¹⁶ Benjamin Lau writes in Haaretz:

"This is how Lag Ba'omer became a part of the Israeli-Zionist psyche during the first years of Zionism and Israel. A clear distinction became evident between Jews and Israelis in the way the day was celebrated: The religious Jews lit torches in Rashbi's [Shimon bar Yochai's] honor and sang songs about him, while young Israelis, sitting around an alternative bonfire, sang about a hero "whom the entire nation loved" and focused on the image of a powerful hero who galloped on a lion in his charges against the Romans".¹⁷

Modern Israel and echoes of the past

The Bar Kochba revolt did not occur in a vacuum. The backdrop of the revolt were the Geopolitical struggles between Rome and Parthia. Trajan travelled up the Euphrates and conquered ancient Babylon. This shocked the Parthian Jews. Their lucrative trade was threatened. They traded as far as China using the silk route. The Jewish community of Parthia was over a million strong. They established law schools all over Babylonia. They were semi-autonomous and had their own leader called the Exilarch. This was their base and where they wrote the Babylonian Talmud.¹⁸

Jewish rebellions erupted all over the Roman Empire.¹⁹ In Cyprus 240,000 Greeks were massacred by the Jews. The rebels were secretly supported by the Jews of Parthia. Multiple

rebellions were put down in the Kitos war. At the end of the Kitos war Trajan attempted to conquer Parthia (the source of the problem). However, Rome never held Parthia. The Euphrates formed an effective border.

Bar Kochba attempted his own “Yinon Plan”.²⁰ After all, the Jews had been promised the land up to the Euphrates. In the time of Abraham ten Canaanite tribes were listed as occupiers.²¹ The first of the “shock troops” employed in the revolt were Torah students. Twenty-four thousand students had been recruited by chief rabbi Akiva who regularly travelled from Palestine to Parthia. Presumably these were “muscular” students and they beat the Romans to death with their Torah scrolls. Talmudic tradition has it that they fell out and were therefore struck down with a plague. Tradition also has it that many captured “students”²² were wrapped in Torah scrolls and set alight by the Romans.

The Bar Kochba rebellion shook the Roman Empire to its core. Hadrian employed ten legions to defeat the revolt. He recalled his general Julius Severus from Britain to suppress the revolt. He even downplayed the customary upbeat victory greeting sent to the senate. The victory had cost too many Roman lives and had been hard fought. Hadrian was not magnanimous in victory. He banned the Jews on pain of death from entering Jerusalem. He built a temple to Jupiter and renamed the city Aelia Capitolina. It was effectively the end of Judea and the troublesome Jews.

The war that Kochba fought was a religious war. There can be no doubt that commercial considerations and a wish for independence also played a role. However, at the root lay the desire for a regional empire controlled by a centralized government and temple. The chief Rabbi Akiva declared that Bar Kosibah was the messiah as predicted in the prophecy of Num 24.17 and he was renamed Bar Kochba or the “Son of a Star”. It is a coincidence (sic) that his epithet carries the gematria value of **666**.²³ On his coins Bar Kochba depicted “his star” ascending **above the temple**.²⁴ As he only held Jerusalem for three and a half years it is doubtful whether he built a temple structure. However, it is entirely feasible that he constructed a temporary structure (like king David did) and recommenced sacrifices. His coins are thought to depict the Ark of the Covenant, but close examination demonstrates that it is a Torah Ark where the law scrolls were kept.



His coins were manufactured by over striking Roman coins. Jewish-Christians refused to accept the messianic claims of Bar Kochba. They rejected the endorsement of the chief Rabbi Akiva. They opposed the re-commencement of sacrifice and refused to use the new coins to **buy and sell**²⁵ with. For this reason, many Jewish-Christians were put to death or fled. Jewish-Christianity had all but perished by the third century.

Mark Twain stated that, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes". The Zionist nation has chosen Bar Kochba as hero. Kochba was an arrogant and cruel man with a form of outward religiosity and law keeping. Even the rabbis admit that at one stage Kochba declared that God mind his own business as they could look after themselves. It is doubtful that Kochba wanted a temple for purely religious reasons, just as it is doubtful that current Zionists are willing to tolerate and encourage temple fanatics for religious reasons.²⁶ The temple exercised a unifying force on world Jewry. It was a place of pilgrimage and veneration. It collected vast monies from the diaspora. Under Herod it functioned as a central bank. In short it functioned as a money-making machine and a power hub. It would form the jewel in the crown of a new Jewish empire. And so, the pattern repeats. Repeating the same behaviour and expecting a different outcome is the definition of insanity.²⁷

The response of Jewish-Christianity

Jewish Christians renamed Bar Kochba as Bar Kozib or "**Son of a lie**".²⁸ They saw him as a messianic pretender and a troublemaker. They heeded the warning issued seventy-five years earlier and refused his confession and therefore they were put to death. The demise of Bar Kochba and his fortress are described by the rabbis in apocalyptic terms. The blood ran to the height of the horse's bridles.²⁹ They were crushed like the grape harvest and Hadrian stacked their dead bodies as stones to build a wall for his vineyard. The vineyard of Israel

had been decimated. Three and a half years of independence had been crushed. Jerusalem was given to the Gentiles³⁰ and the Jews were scattered. The emergence of the Babylonian supported beast and its false messiah had been condemned back to the abyss. However, the monster is re-emerging from the abyss trailing the **smoke of destruction**.³¹ This time the pattern will be broken once and for all.

¹ Arthur Szyk [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)]

² [69.14.1] "Fifty of their most important outposts and nine hundred and eighty-five of their most famous villages were razed to the ground. Five hundred and eighty thousand men were slain in the various raids and battles, and the number of those that perished by famine, disease and fire was past finding out". Cassius Dio, Roman History, published in Vol. VIII of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1925. Cassius Dio (164-c.235) was a Roman senator and ancient Roman historian. Sections 69.12-14 were translated by E. Cary. [retrieved Nov 2019] http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/69*.html#12

³ A zero-sum nuclear strategy named after the biblical hero Samson. He died when he collapsed a temple structure on himself and his enemies.

⁴ James J. Bloom, The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, A.D. 66–135: A Military Analysis, (McFarland & Company, Inc., 1939, reprint 2010), p.210 [retrieved Nov 2019] <http://www.biblaridion.info/html/resources.html>

⁵ *Ibid*, 210

⁶ "The [Bar Kochba] letters seem to confirm the image of the man either as a tyrannical fanatic or a strict disciplinarian, depending on one's modern political or religious sensibilities". (so, Bloom, *Ibid*, p.,209). Three hundred baskets of phylacteries (Hebrew: tefillin) were found at his fortress in Betar. Midrash Rabba (Lamentations Rabba 2:5).

⁷ The historian Bentzion Netanyahu father of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Max Nordau, Zionism: Causes of Failure and Conditions of Success, New Zionist Organization, (London 1943); Max Nordau to His people (New York 1944), Introduction by Ben-Zion Netanyahu p.50.

This was a volume containing Nordau's addresses to the first ten Zionist Congresses. It was edited by Bentzion Netanyahu otherwise spelt as Ben-Zion Netanyahu.

⁸ Umland, Joshua, "Max Nordau and the Making of Racial Zionism" (2013). Undergraduate Honors Theses. 505. https://scholar.colorado.edu/honr_theses/505

⁹ The bones are thought to belong to the families of Bar Kochba's soldiers. Little was known about Shimon Bar Kochba until 1960 when the bones and other material were found by the archaeologist Prof. Yigal Yadin in a cave near the Dead Sea. A total of 25 skeletons were found in different Dead Sea caves. The 1,850-year-old bones were buried with great pomp and ceremony. Begin, President Yitzhak Navon and Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Raphael Eitan were among the 200 dignitaries at the burial.

¹⁰ Harkabi is a former head of Israeli military intelligence. He is also an expert on Arab affairs and a professor of international relations.

¹¹ Yehoshafat Harkabi, The Bar Kochba Syndrome: Risk and Realism in International Politics, (Rossel Books, 1983), 58

¹² *Ibid*, 16

¹³ The religious festival commemorated Rabbi Akiva and his disciple Rabbi bar Yochai who authored the Zohar. Rabbi Akiva was the chief Rabbi from the Kochba era. Akiva supported the Bar Kochba revolt.

¹⁴ Zerubavel, Yael. "Bar Kochba's Image in Modern Israeli Culture", in The Bar Kochba War Reconsidered: New perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome, Peter Schäfer, ed. Mohr Siebeck, 2003, pp. 282–286

¹⁵ "Lag B'Omer". Ynetnews. May 13, 2008. Retrieved Nov 2019. <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3540212,00.html>

¹⁶ "Cabinet Communique". Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. May 6, 2007. Retrieved Nov 2019. <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2007/pages/cabinet%20communique%206-may-2007.aspx>

¹⁷ Lau, Benjamin (May 3, 2007). "Portion of the Week / The fires of Lag Ba'omer". <https://www.haaretz.com/1.4818850> Haaretz. Retrieved Nov 2019.

¹⁸ This was predicted by the Old Testament prophet; "And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its **base**." (Zech 5:11). The Hebrew word for **base** is the same root as the **base** of the brass temple pillars that were carted off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar for

smelting. The two pillars designated “established (Jachin) in strength (Boaz)” so their destruction symbolised the dismantling of the nation. The metaphorical woman that came to reside in Babylon was known as “lawlessness” or “wickedness”. Babylon was the place where the “law schools” were established that supported the Kochba rebellion. It is where the Babylonian Talmud was written. Is it coincidence (sic) that the same region gave birth to another “lawless” or “wicked” entity know as **Al-Qaeda** (the Base)?

¹⁹ See Bloom, Jewish Revolts, map of Diaspora Revolts (115--117CE), p.192

²⁰ The **Yinon Plan** refers to an article published in February 1982 in the Hebrew journal Kivunim ("Directions") entitled 'A Strategy for Israel in the 1980s'. [retrieved Nov 2019]

http://www.biblaridion.info/html/Last_Things.html#YINON

²¹ Gen 15:18-21. In the Apocalypse the ten kings who initially cede their power to the harlot turn against her and burn her (Rev 17.16).

²² This is reminiscent of the **Taliban**. The word **Taliban** comes from tālib, "**student**" in Arabic, as the group was started by Pakistani religious school students in the mid-1990s.

²³ See: P. Wyns, The Shema and Bar Kochba: the false messiah and 666, (Biblaridion Media, March 2018,1-9) <http://www.biblaridion.info/resources/kzb.pdf> [retrieved Nov 2019]

²⁴ Who opposes and exalts himself **above all that** is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thess 2:4).

²⁵ And that no man might **buy or sell**, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Rev 13:17). Christians refused his coin, refused his mark and refused his confession.

²⁶ **In Israel the Push to Destroy Jerusalem’s Iconic Al-Aqsa Mosque Goes Mainstream**. This ancient site that dates back to the year 705 C.E. is being targeted for destruction by extremist groups that seek to erase Jerusalem’s Muslim heritage in pursuit of colonial ambitions and the fulfillment of end-times prophecy by Whitney Webb <https://www.mintpressnews.com/israel-jerusalem-al-aqsa-third-temple/259926/> How the **Third Temple Movement in Israel Rebranded Theocracy as “Civil Rights”**. The Temple Activist movement is now more mainstream than ever before and its effort to destroy the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the third holiest site in Islam, has advanced with great rapidity since the year began and has picked up precipitously in recent weeks by Whitney Webb <https://www.mintpressnews.com/third-temple-activist-movement-israel-theocracy-civil-rights/260142/>

²⁷ "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' "And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. "Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and **the last state of that man is worse than the first**" (Luke 11:24-26). The reference here is to the Day of Atonement when the scapegoat (symbolising the sinful nation) was sent into “dry places” or the wilderness (sent into captivity). The nation had returned from captivity and found the “house” (temple) swept clean. Jesus had thrown out the money changers (bankers) just before Passover. It was traditional that at the feast of unleavened bread, Jews would “spring clean” their homes and remove any “leaven” (yeast) in preparation for the Passover. In the first century the priestly dynasty of Caiaphas (seven in total) captured and corrupted the priesthood (seven other wicked sprits). Suffice to say they refused the messiah and the nation went totally insane.

²⁸ And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe **the lie** (2 Thess 2:11). Bar Kochba was renamed **son of a lie**. The *causa sui* of human consciousness the original lie that man can be God. Represented by the false messiah Kochba and by the insane psychopaths who want to rule the world with their technocracy. Wanting to become “gods”, they seek omnipotence and omnipresence through technology and AI. “I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the Highest. But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes” (Ps. 82:6-7).

²⁹ The Jerusalem Talmud relates that the number of slain was so enormous, that the Romans "went on killing until their horses were submerged in blood to their nostrils," Ta'anit 4:5 (24a-b); also repeated in Midrash Rabba (Lamentations Rabba 2:5). Compare this with the Apocalypse: “And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, **even unto the horse bridles**, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs” (Rev 14:20). There are many other connections see [retrieved Nov 2019]: <http://www.biblaridion.info/html/ch14.html>

³⁰ "But leave out the court, which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot *for* forty-two months" (Rev 11:2). The first Jewish war lasted 3.5 years [42 months] as did the Kochba Revolt, this seems to presage another 3.5 years of turmoil. The First and Second temple as well as the Kochba fortress all fell on the 9th of Ab. **Repeat patterns**. Jerusalem became a Gentile city under Hadrian.

³¹ “And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit”. (Rev 9:2)

<https://www.businessinsider.com/haunting-photos-from-september-11th-attacks-2016-9?r=AU&IR=T>