

SOUL SEARCHING

Yom Kippur 5773 / 2012 | The New Israel Fund

הקן החדשה לישראל
New Israel Fund
الصندوق الجديد لإسرائيل



The nexus of the Yom Kippur liturgy is the "Confession" prayer recited by the entire congregation. People gather together to recite a litany of sins. "We have been guilty; We have betrayed; We have stolen; We have spoken badly . . ." In many synagogues, the congregation sings it together, and, strangely enough – to a lively tune. The juxtaposition of sins seared in memory with the satisfaction expressed by the tune stems from the notion that communal transgressions are never irrevocable. While an individual's mistakes may be fateful, an entire nation can change course and strive for a better future. It is for this reason that Yom Kippur is a festive day, a day also of rejoicing.

Confession rituals have assumed various

forms in Jewish tradition over the centuries. Upon the exile and dispersion of the Jews, as the synagogue replaced the Temple as their focal point, the confession ritual passed from the leadership to the Jewish people itself. Individuals gather together to seek out and enumerate their sins. Today's public confession ritual is enacted in various ways: in public speeches, articles, visual images, including works of art and films, all describing a reality which often is easier to ignore. We have collected here different public misdeeds, as presented by contributors with expertise in various fields. Once our errors have been acknowledged, we can move on and make amends, beginning with resolutions to improve our behavior in the future.

Our NIF International Council members have agreed to assist us to investigate what areas of our public life are in need of change. Their pieces merge into a mosaic of our social and political shortcomings and failures. The contributors discuss the country's borders and its character; the need to safeguard human rights in Israel; and the quest for unity of the Jewish people. They address scientific innovation and competitiveness,

which require democracy. The contributors also deal with Israel's harsh economic policy and the people we prefer to ignore.

The common ground of all the pieces in this collection is the desire to forge a democratic, liberal society, where human rights and dignity are upheld. All share the hope of creating a just, moral society, and their writings reflect their belief in the human spirit and in humankind's ability to succeed in its endeavors to bring about the sought-after change. This same belief in the human spirit was expressed so well by Shaul Tchernichovsky, in his poem *Creed*.

Freedom still my soul demands
Unbartered for a calf of gold
For still I do believe in man
And in his spirit, strong and bold.

That belief inspires optimism and instills ever-new content in the timeless greeting: Shana Tova! We wish you Chag Sameach, and hope you enjoy reading this collection.

Tzachi Mezuman

SOUL SEARCHING 5773

We Have Sinned and Have Been Disloyal: What Now? David Harel and Baruch Ovdia	p. 2
Jews of America, We Need You Talia Sasson	p. 3
"And Yet it Moves:" Thoughts on Freedom of Creation and Scientific Research Aaron Ciechanover.....	p. 4
Why Hawks Tend to Win Arguments With Doves: On Cognitive Bias and its Toll Daniel Kahneman	p. 5
Modifications: 22 Letters, 22 Required Changes Shaanan Streett	p. 6
"God of Awesome Feats" in the Ramle Prison Synagogue Ronny Someck.....	p. 10
"Transgressors Permitted:" On Jewish Transgressors in the Middle Ages and Israeli Suspects Today Eli Bareket	p. 11
"Arise Ye Left From Your Slumbers:" How to Resist Right-Wing Threats Yael Sternhell	p. 12
Tax is Not a Burden: The Price of Civil Participation Ishak Saporta	p. 13
"You Are Not a Master in this Matter:" Hannah's Lesson on Speaking the Truth in the Face of Authority Tova Hartman and Charlie Buckholtz	p. 14

Translated from the Hebrew by Sara Friedman and Yeela Cytrin | Editor: Tzachi Mezuman

We Have Sinned and Have Been Disloyal: What Now?

David Harel and Baruch Ovadia

Yom Kippur is a time for self-examination, which can lead to true repentance and the opportunity to wipe the slate and start anew. Each one of us does his or her own personal inner-soul-searching. But who will do this for the nation? Such a process must be transparent; it must be conducted publicly, openly and courageously by us citizens, because the responsibility for our country is ours, not just that of our leaders.

The term "Jewish State" appears five times in Israel's founding document, the Declaration of Independence. While "democracy" is not mentioned therein, the spirit of democracy remains ever-present in the Declaration, as it speaks of justice, peace, equality and freedom. The Declaration of Independence is not just a vision, but a decree that is meant to guide us. But do we in fact behave in accordance with it?

A look around us proves that we have sinned, by being disloyal to the underlying value that defines us, pulling out the rug, so to speak, from under its feet. In spite of the good, the comfort, and the joy that we find in the State of Israel, it also embodies deeply rooted flaws. The country does not subsist in accordance with Jewish values, as expected of it, and has not lived up to the democratic ideal.

Proper countries are defined by borders separating them from their neighbors – borders that are widely accepted by the citizens of the country and are the result of international agreement. Israel's Eastern border does not meet this requirement.

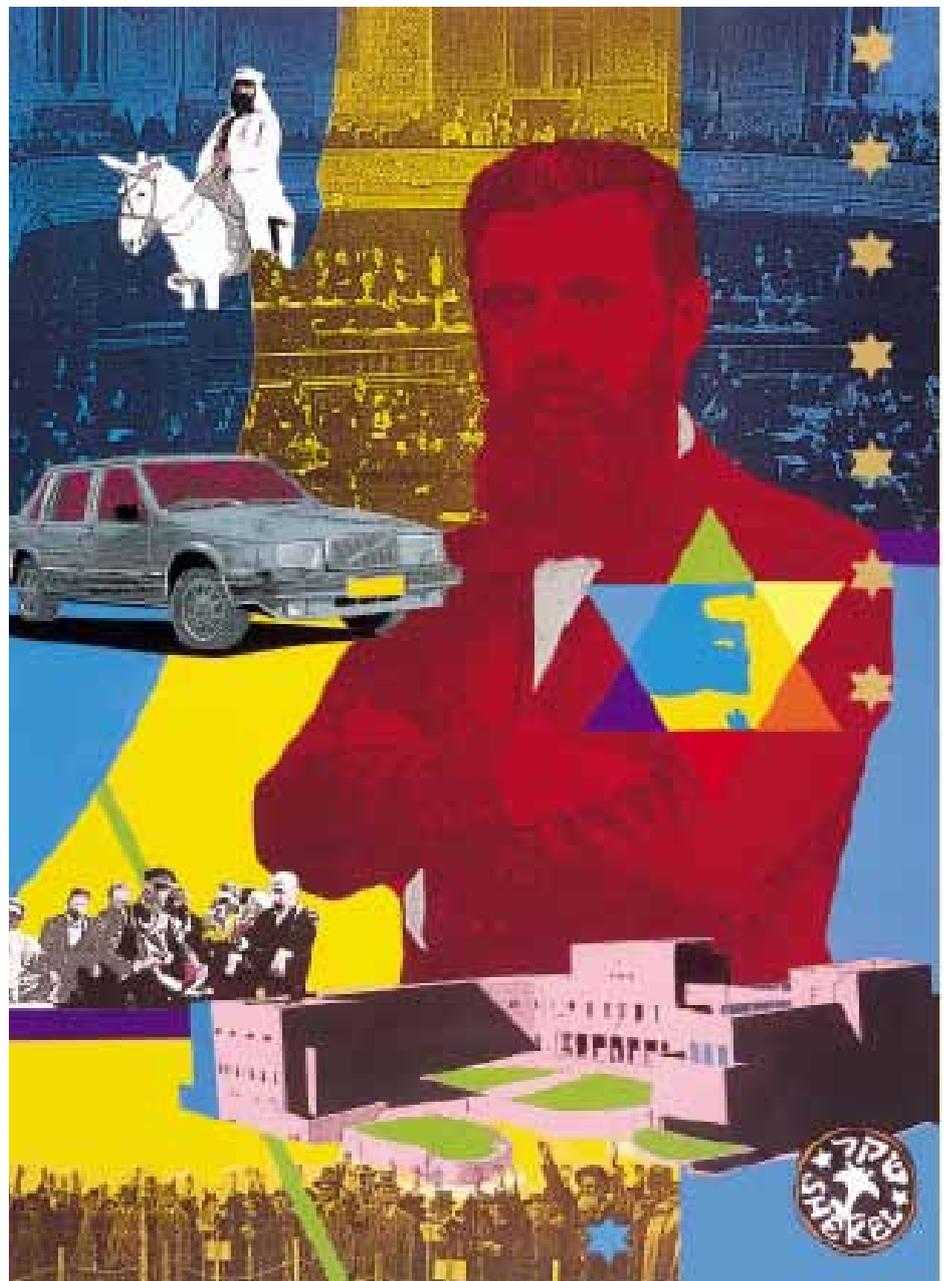
The democratic system of most Western countries is rooted in a constitution, which limits the possibility of constitutional violations of the fundamental principles of democracy. We do not have a constitution, and the fate of the Israeli democracy is thus subject to the whims of temporary and passing leaderships.

Is our country democratic? Well, on the one hand we occupy many, many people (2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank) - men, women and children who are not Jewish and do not accept us or our country. They live under military rule with no political rights and have no citizenship or sovereign state of their own, and no border separating them from us.

Can democracy tolerate collective exclusion on national and ethnic grounds, or does this constitute a fatal flaw in democracy? The answer is obvious. Looking inside the boundaries of the "Green Line" reveals what appears to be a democratic system. We have a legislative body and a government, courts and elections, a state comptroller and an ombudsman. But the essence of democracy entails equal rights, respect and dignity, and freedom for all people. In practice, we know all too well that these principles are far from being realized in our country. There

And lo and behold, the Jewish and democratic ideals are conversely intertwined: if we continue to control the territories beyond the Green Line, and for sure if we annex them, we will ultimately lose the Jewish people's nation-state, yet if we continue to rule over the Palestinians in the West Bank, we will lose democracy.

Continued on page 5 >>



David Tartakover, 1988

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Dr. Baruch Ovadia is a retired lecturer in the Department of Behavioral Sciences, the College of Management Academic Studies.

Jews of America, We Need You

Talia Sasson

I recall with a smile the Chinese tour guide's question regarding the close ties between American and Israeli Jews. How are American Jews related to the Jews in Israel, are they Israeli citizens? No? So what creates such a close bond with a country far across the ocean? There are Chinese in America, they do not express such concerns for their homeland.

It is all but impossible to explain such ties, which we Jews do not fully understand, to strangers; let alone a Chinese tour guide from Beijing. Is it religion? Is it national pride, sharing a common history? Is it our culture, tradition, holidays, the fact that we speak Hebrew or Yiddish? Is it the trauma of the Holocaust, which fortifies a sense of common destiny, a sense of persecution that lies somewhere out there? Is Israel seen as a sanctuary from existential threats which might come someday? All of the above? Maybe it is something else that is hard to pinpoint but exists nonetheless; an inherent feeling that cannot be explained. How does one define kinship on a national scale?

The common threads that bind the Jewish people evolved over the years. Thousands of years of exile created a common sense of longing and a religious – at time messianic - belief that one day the people would return to their homeland. The emergence of secular Zionism as a national movement and the founding of the State of Israel have created a secular, national center of gravity for these emotional ties. Today, this is the hub of the connection between the Diaspora and the Jews in Israel.

The Zionist vision was realized in a political framework based on democratic and liberal values. These ideas were anchored in the Declaration of Independence and in Israel's Basic Laws. Israel's democratic nature is the source of her affinity with the western world, and eases the emotional and political bond of American Jews with Israel.

However, there already exists a deep disappointment among American Jews and the advocates of democracy in Israel – due to the 45-year occupation of the West Bank, the military regime, the rule over a foreign nation and the taking over of lands by the settlements; due to the inadequate implementation of the principle of equality in matters relating to Israeli-Arab citizens; due to anti-democratic legislation and legislative attempts that violate the freedom of expression, Israeli-Arab citizens, human rights organizations, the Supreme Court, and the media; due to the oppression of protesters against government policy; due to the clear damage to journalists who do not sufficiently follow suit with the proper spirit, and others.

As Israel's democratic image gradually dimin-

As Israel's image of democracy gradually diminishes, the identification of American Jews with Israel suffers a similar fate. Disappointment in Israel yields estrangement, which eats away at the delicate tissue that connects the pieces of the Jewish nation.

ishes, the identification of American Jews with Israel suffers a similar fate. This feeling that Israel evokes catalyzes the processes that are already taking place, i.e. the assimilation of American Jews. This is especially obvious in the young generation, who "did not know Joseph," who did not experience the Holocaust, not even as a second generation to Holocaust survivors; a generation that takes for granted the existence of human and political rights.

Disappointment in Israel yields estrangement, which eats away at the delicate tissue that connects the pieces of the Jewish nation. The weakening of the bond carries a detrimental cost that is almost unendurable. Both sides of the Jewish nation, American and Israeli Jews, have a duty to conduct sincere self-examination in hopes of preventing this.

We should remember and never forget that the warmth and support of American Jewry greatly contributes to Israel's national strength. The influence of the American government and its clear-cut support of Israel are among the main reasons for the American public's unequivocal, massive, and total support of Israel. This support is expressed in Israel's military strength, its economic might, protection in the international sphere and our international status.

The Jews in Israel must understand that for the majority of American Jews, like the majority of the entire American population, their support is based on the belief that the two nations share

similar values. These are democratic values that include upholding basic human rights: liberty and freedom, minority rights and equality. The more Israel drifts away from it liberal and democratic image, so drift away her friends, until her brethren drift away, her own flesh and blood.

The Jews in Israel are obligated to return to the fundamental values of the country on which we have turned our backs. Readopting these values will re-instill hope and faith in our actions and Israel's legitimacy as the homeland of the Jewish people.

The Jews of America must understand that the continuation of the occupation in the West Bank and the "settlement enterprise" annuls Israel's existence as a Jewish homeland and a democratic state – the two pillars of the country. This is a direct and severe threat to the existence of Israel as established in 1948. This threat should concern every Jew, whether in the Diaspora or in Israel. America's Jewry will be evaluated by its actions and not by the intensity of the applause Netanyahu receives at AIPAC conventions. Every member of the Jewish nation is responsible for doing whatever they can to bring the occupation to an end, for the good of Israel and the good of the Jewish people, even if it seems like the Israeli government does not understand this.

Attorney Talia Sasson is Co-chair of the International Council of the New Israel Fund.

מדינת ישראל תהא פתוחה לעליה יהודית ולקיבוץ
גלויות; תשקוד על פיתוח הארץ לטובת כל תושביה;
תהא מושתתה על יסודות החירות, הצדק והשלום
לאור חוונם של נביאי ישראל; תקיים שוויון זכויות
חברתי ומדיני גמור לכל אזרחיה בלי הבדלי דת,
גזע ומין; תבטיח הופש דת, מצפון, לשון חינוך
ותרבות; תשמור על המקומות הקדושים של כל
הדתות; ותהנה נאמנה לעקרונותיה של מגילת
האומות המאוחדות.

David Tartakover, from the Israeli Declaration of Independence,

“And Yet it Moves:”

Thoughts on Freedom of Creation and Scientific Research

Aaron Ciechanover

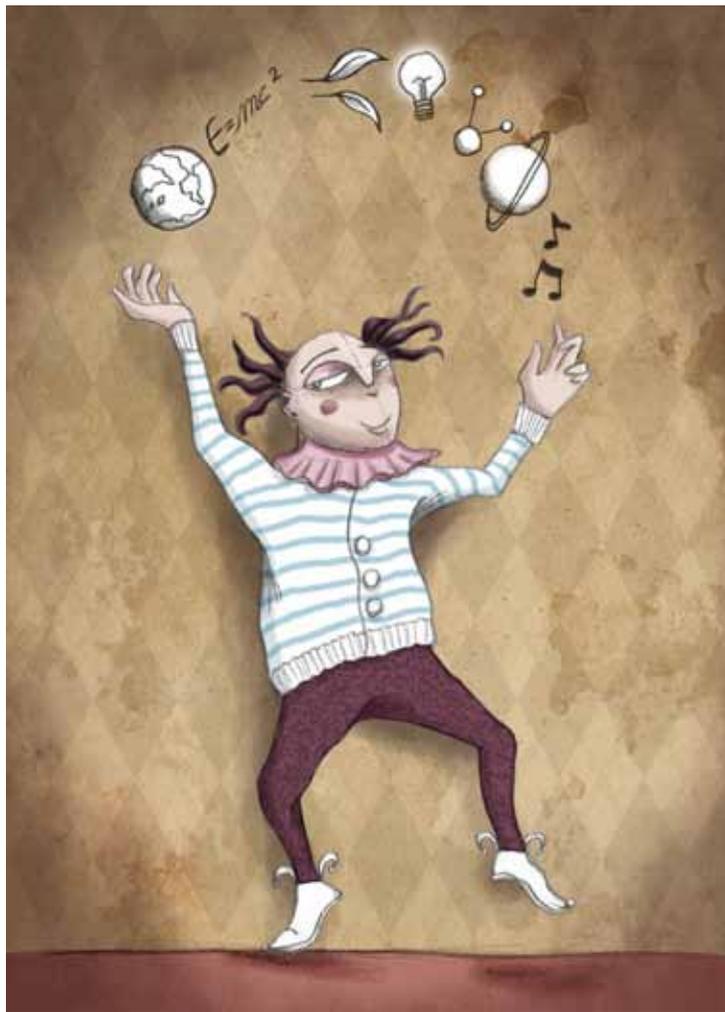
Human creativity is expressed in a diversity of fields. From the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture to composition and the performing arts, artwork winds through prose and poetry, and then passes through the study of history, with the help of archaeology. It studies the secrets of nature - physics, chemistry, and bio-medicine, a study that is paradoxically realized by abstract mathematics. Like a floating cloud, philosophy attempts to envelop the arts in a thin sheet of logic, weaving strings to connect the artistic fields.

The degree of religious and political freedom that the creator requires in his or her work remains a fascinating question. It seems that there is a division here between the natural sciences and other art forms. In the visual arts, writing, and music, there exists a plethora of religious and political-economic masterpieces that do not have to hide behind a cloak and are often displayed openly under the auspices of the king or pope. Consider the cathedrals and the extraordinary paintings of the Renaissance artists. Read religious scripture, rich in wisdom or listen to the intoxicating Masses. The problem with these works is the thin and often blurred line between the glorification of God's creation and the glorification of man's creation; the line between God and he who “appointed” himself as God's representative on earth or believes God has given him divine attributes. From this point, the distance to an ideologically-driven totalitarian regime is very short, overriding the individual - body, soul, and spirit. There is no need to go too far to the dungeons of the Inquisition, the Nazi death camps or the Gulags and Lubyanka prison to see how

ideologies - often supported by the work of intellectuals, artists and historians - have become machines of cruelty and evil. True, the writer and artist can also use their instruments to resist the regime and expose its evils. Pasternak and

Solzhenitsyn fought against the evil regime with their plumes. The trial of the “Pussy Riot” band members is the latest testimony of how art is used as a means of protest and the need to safeguard human freedoms.

The researchers of the natural sciences need to be protected from any influence because science does not differentiate between skin-tones, nor does it know about communism or socialism. Science hasn't heard about God. But it turns out that this isn't so, and the threat of the government intervention is imposed on these scientists, who are supposed to remain unprejudiced. Galileo Galilei defended the theory of the centrality of the sun and Giordano Bruno envisioned an infinite universe, but they were forced to succumb to the Church in favor of God's omnipotence. Galileo withdrew his correct theory and Bruno was burned at the stake. The fear of the Church also plagued Charles Darwin. He only published his theories regarding the origin of the species, which seemingly rejected any divine intervention in evolution, many years after he had proved them because he feared publication of competing theories. An opposite example is that of Trofim Lysenko, an agronomist-scientist, who wanted to please Stalin by improving grain yield in Russia. In order to achieve quick results, he rejected Gregor Mendel's theory of heredity (which turned out to be



Elad lifshitz, 2012

Is this discussion relevant at all to Israel? I'm afraid so. Recent experience has taught us that all levels of the education system in Israel are under constant political and religious pressure. Academia must be safeguarded and disconnected from any foreign influence or consideration.

Aaron Ciechanover is a doctor and researcher.

based on genetic material, DNA) and “adopted” Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s theory of adaptation. In this way, Lysenko claimed that dipping seeds of wheat in cold water and freezing them will cause immediate hereditary changes in the first generation of seeds, making crops more fruitful and able to withstand extreme cold. Of course the theory lacked any scientific basis and attempted to “bend” science in order to please the

government. It did not stand the test of time, not even in the short-term. In his endeavor, Lysenko eliminated a long line of scientists and shut down scientific institutions and university research departments that understood the problems with his theory; a tremendous blow to Russian science for years to come. He taught us once again that any attempt to force science to mobilize for the needs of religious or political

ideology, is disastrous to science, and therefore to the development and progress of humanity.

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Photo: Eyal Warshavsky

We Have Sinned and Have Been Disloyal: What Now? **Continued from page 2**

is no point in discussing the disastrous trend of anti-democratic legislation, about which many (including the undersigned) have written, yelled out, and warned against.

In the name of democracy, right-wing voices call for the annexation of the West Bank and the granting of political rights to all Palestinians living there. If we do this, in a short time there will no longer be a Jewish majority in Israel (about 6 million Palestinians: 2.6 million in the West Bank, 1.7 million citizens of Israel and another 1.7 million in the Gaza Strip; as opposed to 5.7 million Jews in Israel). But will these rights really be granted in practice? The Jewish people’s nation-state can only prosper, retaining its independence and sovereignty, where there is a Jewish majority.

And lo and behold, the Jewish and democratic ideals become conversely intertwined: if we continue to control the territories beyond the Green Line, and for sure if we annex them, we will ultimately lose the Jewish people’s nation-state, yet if we continue to rule over the Palestinians in the West Bank, we will lose democracy.

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As long as the “settlement enterprise” grows, the end of Israel, as it was envisioned upon its establishment, draws nearer. Filling the territories with more settlers will ruin the possibility of restoring what once had been, and Israel will become, willingly or not, a single country between the Jordan River and the sea: either democratic and non-Jewish, or Jewish in character but not democratic.

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Plato would have already proven that the adjectives “Jewish” and “democratic” cannot coexist

around here, if we continue to control and rule what we conquered in 1967. As long as this situation remains, the fate of our “state” also remains unclear, since the borders of the entity called “Israel” have not been fixed or agreed upon for some 45 years, despite the decisions of UN bodies. The opposition and animosity that this causes threatens the country’s very existence.

Our self-examination on the eve of Yom Kippur is thus clear: If we desire an Israel in its original format, we must do something before we lose the ability to change the course of history. Our recommendation is that each and every one of us firmly pledge, after thinking, pondering, debating and agonizing, to show up at the polls when the time comes and vote for a party of his/her choice, that will have the ability to uphold a Jewish and democratic Israel, and one that is substantial enough to play a role in forming our next leadership. There are enough level-headed citizens who by the simple act of showing up and voting, one of the fundamental rights of the individual, can bring about radical change in our nation’s situation. This is the most significant change that Yom Kippur can bring in its aftermath.

Why Hawks Tend to Win Arguments with Doves:

On Cognitive Bias and its Toll

Daniel Kahneman

Anyone who lives in Israel must have participated in arguments between hawks and doves, and must have noticed that hawks tend to win the argument. So, for many years, I have wondered: why do doves sound cowardly, naïve, and almost childish? Why do hawks sound like realistic adults who know a thing or two about the world?

I now believe that modern psychology provides an answer. I first encountered the problem many years ago. The year was 1973, and it was spring or early summer, a few months before the Yom Kippur War. Hawks and doves argued about the advantages and disadvantages of an arrangement that would include withdrawal from the Sinai, but both agreed on the crucial objective: to keep to a minimum the probability of a military disaster. I pointed out that this probability had two components:

1. The probability that there would be a war.
2. The probability of a disaster if there was a war.

I hope for a world in which leaders and the public acknowledge the psychological reality of the hawkish biases, and admit that, in some cases, a hawkish bias can lead to disaster, and make special effort to control it.

The doves focused on the idea that withdrawal would reduce the chance of war. The hawks stressed that if war did break out, it would obviously be an advantage for us to have the Sinai Peninsula. There was no obvious way to compute the probabilities at the time.

Both sides had a valid point. But somehow, the argument of the doves seemed much weaker. It involved the idea that concessions would reduce the probability of war. Yet the doves had

to concede to the hawkish argument that the Sinai would give a distinct military advantage to whomever held it, in case of war. This type of argument structure would recur frequently. Doves present "mere" probabilities, while hawks appear to be claiming certainties.

But this is a misleading impression. Amos Twersky and I called this term "pseudo-certainty." The bias is that pseudo-certainty confers a rhetorical advantage. Another reason for the hawks' upper hand lies in asymmetrical responsibility and blame. When the time of reckoning came in Israel after the war, there was enormous anger about the lack of preparedness. However, no one blamed the government for not responding to the peace overtures of the Egyptians before the war. Just imagine if Israel had conceded, then suffered 3,000 casualties following Egypt's betrayal. Israel's leaders would have looked like idiots for sure.



Photo: Eyal Warshavsky

When leaders have to make this kind of decision, they do not consider only – perhaps not even primarily – the probability of military disaster. They also weigh the chances of appearing stupid and naïve. This asymmetry gives a powerful advantage to the hawks. Trusting your adversary exposes you to the risk of being judged stupid – mistrust does not involve a similar risk.

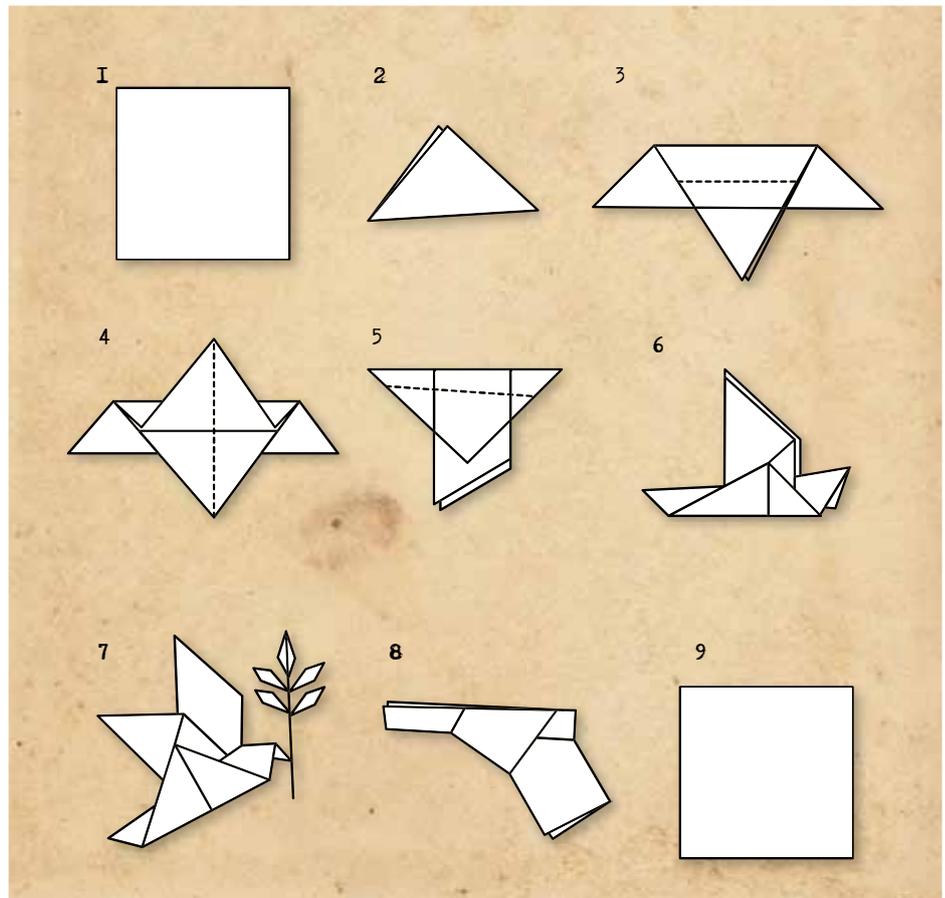
I do not mean to claim that trust is always justified, or that the doves are always right. Doves are in fact wrong quite often. My point is that there is a bias: hawks win arguments even when their reasoning is weaker.

But psychological analysis does not end here. The last forty years have yielded many discoveries of cognitive and emotional biases. Some years ago I drew up a list of biases. Surprisingly, it emerged that essentially all the biases favor the hawks. They tend to make the hawks more believable and convincing than they deserve. The list is long: a few examples will suffice.

Fundamental Attribution Error: the difference between the way we explain our own behavior and the behavior of others. The rule is simple: we think of ourselves as responding flexibly to different situations, whereas we attribute the behavior of others to their enduring disposition. This rule applies with special force to marital quarrels: "I see myself as reactive to the provocation of others; but find it difficult to see that the other is reacting to my provocation."

In the period leading up to the Yom Kippur War, the hawks believed that Egypt's desire for war expressed permanent hostility rather than a reaction to the insult of the occupation. The assumption that the other side's hostility is immutable is a common part of the hawkish world view, accompanied by a belief that the only language to use is force, which is purely an expression of intellectual laziness. In general, the FAE supports the belief that conciliatory moves are a waste of time. In fact, conciliation sometimes works. I am sure that most Israelis feel that trading the Sinai for 35 years without hostilities was a good bargain, even if the peace was never perfect and may not last forever.

Another manifestation of the FAE: Israelis regard European antagonism as anti-Semitism. I am not claiming that there is no anti-Semitism at all, but let me suggest that the question is whether the thought of Israel brings Jewishness to mind. This is not the case, at least in my experience. Israel evokes first of all – occupation. Which happens to be a dirty word in Europe, though not in the US. Notice the effect of labeling all critiques of Israel as anti-Semitism: if they are reacting to Israel as Jewish – there's nothing Israel can



Elad lifshitz, 2012

People often overestimate the chances of their actions actually achieving their goals. A study of small businesses, such as laundromats, restaurants, etc., showed that, statistically, only about 1/3 last for more than five years. But, obviously, someone starting a small business doesn't know the real odds.

do about it. But if they are reacting to something Israel is doing, perhaps that would change if Israel acted differently.

Optimism and confidence: the most important of all cognitive biases arises from a combination of optimism and an illusion of control. People often overestimate the chances of their actions actually achieving their goals. A study of small businesses, such as laundromats, restaurants, etc., showed that, statistically, only about one third last for more than five years. But, obviously, someone starting a small business doesn't

know the real odds. Much of risk-taking occurs because people exaggerate their chances of success. Those who make things happen in this world are optimists - and everyone loves an optimist. Leaders, in particular, are elected for their optimism. People who exaggerate their chances of success are more likely than others to take action. Think of the engine of capitalism.

However, in certain contexts, optimism is not particularly desirable. I do not want an optimist as my financial advisor or my surgeon. Or as leaders who start wars in which I am involved. It is fair to say that there has not been a war in which there were no optimistic generals at least on one side and sometimes on both.

I did not say that doves are always right. I did say that hawks win more arguments than they should. My recipe for a better future is a world in which generals and national leaders can overcome their optimism. More generally, I hope for a world in which leaders and the public acknowledge the psychological reality of the hawkish biases, and admit that, in some cases, a hawkish bias can lead to disaster, and make special effort to control it.

Prof. Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics in 2002, is an Israeli psychologist living in the U.S. His latest book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, will be published in Hebrew this year by Matar.

Modifications:

22 Letters, 22 Required Changes

Shaanan Streett

I confess this is not the first time that I have not followed instructions. I was asked to write one thing that needs fixing in our country and found myself writing about 22 such things. As Yom Kippur approaches, please find it in your hearts to forgive me. Thank you!

Islam (אסלאם) - א

As we all know, we live alongside a Muslim population. In fact, we are a drop of Jews in a sea of Muslims. But even though they constitute at least 99 percent of our neighborhood, we insist on knowing nothing about them. The average Jewish-Israeli knows a lot more about American Christianity than about Arab Islam. We are familiar with the traditions of Santa Claus coming down the chimney (which are almost nonexistent here), surrounded by snow (which almost never falls here) to put gifts under the Christmas tree (which does not grow here). But we know nothing about Ramadan or Eid al-Fitr, which is celebrated at its end. Actually, our situation is so pathetic that if a Muslim wishes us “happy holidays” in Arabic, we are likely to think that he is cursing at us.

Biometrics (ביומטריה) - ב

The Knesset approved the Biometric Database Law, which allows the state to collect our biometric information. This is very bad. It is bad for many reasons, but mainly because the collection of information is a violation of rights and of our privacy. We must fight against this law because it is fundamentally anti-democratic. Democracy is, among other things, the separation of powers. A biometric database is a euphemism for a Big Brother that knows everything about us.

Givat Sha'ul (גבעת שאול) - ג

A few years ago I had to bury a loved one in the Givat Sha'ul cemetery. She was from Jerusalem, and as we know, Jerusalemites are buried in Jerusalem for free – well not exactly. Apparently, if you want to bury your loved ones in the ground and not in above-ground burial structures as has become prevalent in cemeteries in Israel, you will have to pay as I did a few years ago. Eleven thousand shekels for Ashkenazim. It was a bit expensive for us, and the truth is, we were somewhat offended, so we went to the Sephardim. Fortu-

nately, the Sephardim offered a free plot for our loved one, but only under the condition that we buy a second plot. And the price of the second plot? Eleven thousand shekels.

Dimona (דימונה) - ד

I have no problem with the city. On the contrary, I have performed there several times and also held a Shekel Festival there, which was very successful. The problem is the nuclear plant, which is so close to the city. This seems very problematic to me. Especially after Chernobyl and especially - especially after Fukushima. How to say it? Nuclear plants and civilian populations should not be mixed. According to Wikipedia, there have already been two accidents in Dimona, one of which killed five people. But history teaches us that this is nothing and that a nuclear plant malfunction means tremendous disaster to the nearby (and not so nearby) population.

Memorial (הנצחה) - ה

Is there not something wrong with the uniform fashion in which we commemorate our fallen soldiers? The IDF soldiers, may their memories be blessed, who died in Israel's wars, in accidents and terrorist attacks, were people of all faiths, voted for different parties and loved all kinds of food, music and art. And yet, their commemoration is one-dimensional; almost political even. Yes, there has been a slight improvement in recent years. For example, the army now allows personalized engravings on tombstones, but this is not enough. Grieving belongs to the families who have lost their loved ones, but their memorial belongs to the entire country.

Confirming the Kill (וידוא הריגה) - ו

Occasionally, there is a collective outrage following a slogan written on the T-shirts of some elite unit that says something like “we will not rest until we confirm the kill,” or when criminal or terrorist entities adopt the practice of confirming the kill. But this is hypocrisy. Here is the truth: in our country, the army is society's moral compass. Thus, if you want to oppose the propagation of confirming the kill, as a concept, in civil society, the darts should be aimed at the army.

This is Our Country (זו ארצנו) - ז

Everybody knows that this is our country. But the problem with the concept “this is our coun-

try” is twofold. First, we don't exactly know the borders of “this” country, and second, we aren't exactly sure who “we” includes.

Constitution (חוקה) - ח

The issue with the constitution has to do with order. A constitution is an encompassing legal framework in which all other laws exist. Ordinary citizens, who are not lawyers or judges, do not know all the laws. But they do know the general legal framework quite well. As do the criminals. They know when they are just breaking a law and when their actions are anti-constitutional and (therefore) anti-Israeli. This is because the constitution is intended to make some order of all the chaos.

Terror, Jewish Terror

(טרוף, טרוף יהודי) - ט

Why is there even a difference? In my opinion, all killings motivated by blind hatred should be treated the same way. It doesn't matter if the victim is Jewish, Arab, or homosexual – the crime is a hate crime.

Jerusalem (ירושלים) - י

The main quality of our city since ancient times is that it forces its residents to observe one another, to mingle with each other. No one can ever feel like the whole city is theirs. This is the most unique, the most wonderful and inspirational quality that the city has to offer. But it is this quality that we run away from.

Soccer (כדורגל) - כ

The really frustrating thing with Israeli soccer is that its problems can be fixed. We did not invent hooliganism, there were problems with violence on the field in almost every European league, and these have been controlled. In fact, all we have to do is pick the right people, send them to England, Germany, Scotland, Italy or France to learn what had been done there, and then apply it here. But we are sure that our problems are unique and that anyone else will not understand us. Bullshit.

Driving Lessons (לימודי נהיגה) - ל

Many years ago I got an American driver's license. I thought that I was up against a never-ending nightmare, like in Israel. In reality, it was quite the opposite. All I had to do for the test was bring a friend's car that had insurance. I made a small

Shaanan Streett, resident of Jerusalem, husband, father, musician and writer.



Elad lifshitz, 2012

mistake in the middle of the test, but the examiner explained to me that it was no big deal: each mistake is worth five points and in order to pass the test, you need 75 points. I passed big time with 95 points. And here? Dozens of lessons, thousands of shekels, and if God-forbid you don't park in reverse on your first try or signal a little too much or don't hold the wheel at "ten and two," you fail and must take more lessons, spend thousands more and so on and so forth.

Value Added Tax (חט"ח) - נ

I have been registered as a business for about ten years. During this relatively short period of time, I paid value added tax at rates of 18%, 17%, 16.5%, 15.5%, 16.5% again, 16% in the past few years, and 17% since this September. Ten years, seven different rates, not to mention the reforms and changes in the income tax and social security. Under these conditions, how can a normal person, who is not an expert economist, budget himself?

Marriage (נישואים) - נ

This topic is beyond me. I do not understand how much more time must pass until civil marriage will be allowed in Israel. Interpersonal relationships are private as should be the ceremony that institutionalizes them. The current situation, which forces many couples to undergo a ceremony they do not feel a part of and often find objectionable, is wrong and distorted. In my opinion, this situation is destructive to everyone, including the religious institution itself, which is regarded as coercive rather than helpful.

Trafficking in Women (סחר בנשים) - ס

The average age of women trafficked for prostitution is 23. Only nine percent of women that were brought to Israel reported having worked in prostitution before. 29 percent were unemployed in their native countries. The price for a woman is between 4,000 and 10,000 dollars and is determined based on looks and experience. The women's passports are taken, preventing any

option of escape. They work for weeks on end, even while they menstruate, for an average of 13 hours a day. The traffickers charge between 100-600 shekels, of which the women only receive 20 shekels. Many women don't receive any pay at all. All this appears in Wikipedia under the entry "Human trafficking in Israel."

Non-Profit Organizations (עמותות) - ע

There are 43,000 registered non-profit organizations in Israel. Crazy huh?

Refugees (פליטים) - פ

The immigration policy in Israel must be consistent, non-discriminatory and free of economic considerations. Illegal immigration exists in all Western countries, but we are the only country in which it is labeled an "existential threat."

Modesty (צניעות) - צ

Have you noticed the metamorphosis that this word has undergone? From a good and almost noble quality it has become, among the religious, an essential quality that contradicts promiscuity. For the secular, it has become a characteristic of losers who are scared of what life has to offer. The original intention of modesty was much more confined, and all these new interpretations force unsuitable characteristics upon it.

Krayot (קריות) - ק

Every time I stop in the Krayot and take a breath, I smell it. The smell of something totally unhealthy. I am not an expert or anything, but I get the impression that at least one factory in that area is doing something very wrong.

Rabin's Assassination (רצח רבין) - ר

Do you think that we've learned a lesson from this tragic murder? The traffic jams we endure every time Bibi and his entourage drive in the city show that the Shin Bet has drawn conclusions. But at the public level, have we really internalized what led to the assassination and what must be done to prevent it from happening again? The real lesson, the one that has to do with real threats to our regime and its fundamental values, has not been learned.

Electoral System (שיטת הבחירות) - ש

Perhaps the fact that we are unable to achieve our goals as a society and as a country proves that our system isn't good enough? Maybe the fact that major decisions aren't made here and generations of people are born into the same exact dilemmas means that the system by which we elect our representatives is no longer good for us?

Shana Tova - ת (תהא שנה טובה)

If I have offended anyone, I am sorry.

“God of Awesome Feats” in the Ramle Prison Synagogue

Ronny Someck

1.

The synagogue was our festive white shirt and, equally, the brown cover of notebooks for writing out sentences. The sentenced. We didn't really know what we were supposed to write, and only Yefet's fist thumping his chest during “We have sinned, we have offended” punched question marks in them. We'd sit with the fathers and look over at the women's balcony where they were waiting for the Torah and the *shofar* to make an appearance.

Some of those praying had their regular solos: Mizrahi, the bank manager, always did “Hence, we sanctify You, O King.” Levy, a local rich type, would wait for “None is alike to our God.” Somehow all these solos interconnected to produce a chorus line that, all in all, warmed the prayer shawls and the cantor's baton. He

knew when prayer should sound like an anthem and when it was time for the lips to get closer to the tear glands.

On Yom Kippur, towards the end of the fast, “God of Awesome Feats” sounded like a battle cry, and even lines like “Forgive our sins / Before You shut the gate this night” leapt from his throat *con brio*. He had converted the blues to Judaism and knew how to close his eyes and feel the entire congregation doing likewise behind his back. And at the flourishes in the melody he resembled nothing so much as a strutting peacock. The greatest compliment in those days was for the Ashkenazi boys to steal a minute's prayer away from their home turf and come over to us, admitting that he was the best.

2.

A few years ago, I was invited again to speak before the inmates of Ramle Prison. After the reading, the prison's cultural officer proposed to take me around and show me what had changed since my last visit. He took me to a newly-built synagogue. I had to stifle a smile at its name: “Watchmen Upon Thy Walls.”

It was between Yom Kippur and Sukkot. As I entered the synagogue, I heard the humming of “God of Awesome Feats” that we had chanted in prayer three days earlier. Only then did I realize the powerful meaning of those lines in that place.

On Yom Kippur, when we pray “Repent our sins,” we are really asking for “forgiveness.” In Ramle Prison, “forgiveness,” *mehila*, also refers to escape tunnel. In synagogue, the worshipers speak about locking the gates, as in the gates of heaven. In prison, the praying men hear the rattle of keys outside the bars of their cells. I suddenly saw these lines as subversive, a call to freedom. The first law of the jungle is that there are no laws. Prison is a jungle with bars.

3.

That night at Ramle Prison, I wrote two poems:

Freedom

Freedom is a crest of grass in a patch of yard
By the administration building.
The prisoners know
That one day, even here, the mower will come.

The Prison Synagogue is Called: “Watchmen Upon Thy Walls”

God of Awesome Feats, shut
The eyes of the watchmen,
Let the stolen words be searched
On lips of coals,
Show us the right path*
And as the gates are locked, make the bars
Soft as the lashes you put on women's eyes
Beyond the wall.

* The word for ‘path’ used in the original Hebrew, “מחילה” (*mehila*), is a homonym for ‘forgiveness.’

Ronny someck is a poet.



Ronny Someck, “God of Awesome Feats,” 2011

“Transgressors Permitted:”

On Jewish Transgressors in the Middle Ages and Israeli Suspects Today

Eli Bareket

"In the tribunal of Heaven and the tribunal of Earth, by the permission of God — praised be He — and by the permission of this holy congregation, it is permitted to pray with the transgressors." (Kol Nidre)

The liturgy of the Day of Atonement starts off with the announcement that the gates of prayer are now open to transgressors (*avaryanim*; in modern Hebrew: “criminals”). As a boy, I’d envision the head of some crime family standing outside the synagogue, waiting for the cantor to announce that he could now come in to pray. I’d peek through the prayer shawl at the entrance thronged with people who had nowhere to sit, but no crime boss ever showed up. At most, I’d catch sight of a few local hoods, but that didn’t count because they attended synagogue on Saturdays, too.

As a boy, I was fascinated by that pronouncement, yet I never understood it. The linking of upper and lower tribunals (the latter consisting of us all, including myself); the tears streaming down Hacham Farjoun Dayan’s cheeks; and the awed congregation — all moving and inspiring. What was it all for? What was it actually about? Praying with criminals? Had anyone ever thought to stop a Jew from going to synagogue?!

Yes! The Ashkenazi version reads: “It is permitted to pray with the transgressors.” Those “transgressors” are not our modern-day criminals. The word was used in the thirteenth century to refer to members of the Jewish community who had flouted the religious authorities or had been excommunicated for their sins. In the absence of any power invested in them by the Christian sovereign, the sole sanction available to community leaders in Ashkenaz for enforcing their decisions concerning individual members of the community was excommunication and severing all ties with such individuals. But on the eve of the Day of Atonement, the day of forgiveness, the community would relent and permit the sinners to pray with the congregation, for “Any fast-day without Jews who have sinned is no fast-day at all.”

In our synagogue, it was quite clear that we were praying with sinners — on the Day of Atonement, on holidays, on Saturdays, at memorial

services — whenever. This was never in dispute, and anyone who needs to see it in writing, in a book with a brown binding that you can kiss when you finish reading, is invited to consult Maimonides’ *Epistle to the Jews of Yemen*: “...any sinner seeking to pray in the synagogue must be welcomed, not disgraced. We learn this from the words of Solomon, of blessed memory: ‘A thief is not held in contempt for stealing to appease his hunger’ (Prov. 6:30) — despise not a Jew who sins if he comes in stealth to steal mitzvot (i.e., comes to pray).”

The liturgy I grew up on, the Livorno Mahzor, reads: “It is permitted (*matirin*; also, ‘to release’) to pray with the transgressors” — i.e., we release them from being transgressors. Those who commit unlawful acts are fettered, and it is the community’s duty to unfetter them. The synagogue accepts you not as you are now but rather as your ideal self.

“It is permitted to pray with the transgressors.” It is interesting to reverse the Hebrew word-order, yielding: “To pray, we permit/release the transgressors.” Release them, literally — that is, we remove their handcuffs, as we read in the Haftarah portion of the Day of Atonement: “To untie the cords of the yoke (or: lawlessness), to let the oppressed go free, to break off every yoke ...” (Is. 58:6).

*

Unlike in the thirteenth century, here in Israel we have prisoners and inmates in our own prisons, which are run in accordance with the law governing our society, and to which society is answerable.

About a month ago, a female colleague of mine didn’t come to work for four days. She had been detained for questioning at Abu Kabir — we ourselves are to blame. She returned after four days, broken, innocent, yet her very soul was bleeding. She had been handcuffed on her hands and feet and put in a holding-cell, in stifling heat, to wait to see a judge, unable to contact anyone she knew. She was insulted, demeaned, treated with violence and harshness by the police. She was held in the lockup in conditions that were inhumane even for a criminal — and she wasn’t one.

Until that time when the protests of detention prisoners shall be heard and detention conditions improved, let us demand, in the spirit of the Day of Atonement, the release of the transgressors.

Had she been arrested on ideological grounds, either right- or left-wing, hordes of lawyers and public-relations teams would have raised a hue and cry. But she was just an ordinary inmate at the detention facility, one of thousands who get a taste of tyranny, denial of human rights, and inhumane conditions — for a few days.

Israel’s prisons are a far cry from *Midnight Express*, yet our detention conditions and procedures are inexcusable. Due to budget cuts, no doubt, no one is really interested in spending money on suspected criminals who will only be staying a couple of days. But at the moment, whenever a female suspect is remanded into custody in one of the Abu Kabir holding-cells, a violation of human rights is committed in Israel. Yes, I do understand: if a person is arrested, let them suffer. It’s part of the punishment. But most suspects who are detained for questioning are then released, while it is precisely those who are found guilty and sent to prison who enjoy much better living conditions than do inmates of detention facilities.

How cruel on the part of a police officer to remand a woman into custody as a means of exerting pressure on her to cooperate. How cruel, too, for a lawyer to file for extension of detention, or for a judge to agree, without having inspected the prisoner’s quarters. I once heard of a judge who refused to remand a suspect into custody, due to overcrowding in the holding-cell. An admirable example that others would do well to follow.

Until that time when the protests of detention prisoners shall be heard, and detention conditions improve, let us demand, in the spirit of the Day of Atonement, the release of the transgressors.

Eli Bareket is director of Beit Midrash “Mi-mizrah Shemesh” for social leadership.

“Arise Ye Left From Your Slumbers:”

How to Resist Right-Wing Threats

Yael Sternhell

There is no denying that the Israeli left is deep in crisis. A recent poll conducted by the progressive think tank *Molad* found that only 32 per cent of the public support the left and only 28 per cent believe that the left can provide solutions to Israel's security challenges. These figures prove that Israelis have lost faith in the left and do not see it as a legitimate candidate for the country's leadership. Nor can anyone deny that the Israeli right is taking advantage of its ideological rival's weakness to try and quash it altogether. The wave of anti-democratic legislation in the Knesset in recent years has been accompanied by an aggressive campaign on the part of organizations such as *Im Tirzu*, NGO Monitor, and Academia Monitor, whose intention is to silence the left completely by de-legitimizing figures and positions associated with that camp.

Right-wing assaults, both within the Knesset and outside it, contribute significantly to increasing public hostility toward all stripes of left-wing politics. Even worse, these attacks have had a substantial impact on the left-wing camp itself. In recent years, fear of right-wing organizations has spread through much of the Israeli left. Tenured university professors admit that concern over right-wing retribution prevents them from pointing out historical and political similarities between events studied in class and certain ominous processes taking place in Israel. In all areas of the media, journalists with moderate or left of center views, whose professional integrity impels them to leave some room for the left's viewpoints, have expressed anxiety that right-wing MKs and activists would exert pressure to get them fired. Similarly, public sector employees worry about voicing any kind of opposition to the government's official stance.

They all have good reason to be afraid: journalist Keren Neubach was hauled up before media authorities; Adar Cohen, supervisor of civic studies in the Ministry of Education - fired; faculty at Ben Gurion University's Political Science and Government Dept. - harassed. All this confirms that pressure exerted by rightist movements and politicians actually works.

But must we really be so helpless? Can't the left start its own political lobby, bring together all the creative work being done in our camp, and coordinate between the various organizations

Right-wing proponents exploit the fear they inspire in institutions that depend on wealthy donors and on public figures, of being labeled unpatriotic. In the same fashion, the left should convince the potential donors and public figures themselves not to betray liberal democratic values.

active on the ground? This would enable the left to counter with pressure of its own. The media is a good example: since the nineties, right-wing organizations have been influencing media coverage of politics and security issues. Their activists regularly contact hundreds of journalists, feeling free to call them up, launch a tirade or threaten them if they had dared to disagree with the right's opinions or criticize its actions. These tactics are responsible in large part for the drastic change in media coverage of the right in the past few decades. If the left would organize in a similar fashion, less aggressively but with the same spirit of enthusiasm and dedication, there would be obvious results. Journalists react to pressure immediately, making it necessary for us to employ the same means as the right; this goes for donors too, American and Israeli alike. Well-known writers, scholars and artists can be mobilized to exercise moral pressure on donors supporting universities and cultural institutions so as to balance right-wing rhetoric, and encourage them to uphold humanitarian and democratic values. Benefactors should be wary of getting on the wrong side of the left too, not just of the right. Right-wing proponents exploit the prevalent fear of being labeled unpatriotic. In the same fashion, the left should convince potential donors and public figures that betraying liberal democratic values would also take its toll. We must build up an energetic, effective system to monitor public discourse and fight for our beliefs. We need a well-organized, intelligent outreach program that will utilize traditional and new media and harness the enormous human capital available in our camp.

It is clear that a long-term political approach

is needed in order to figure out how to rouse the left, reach out again to those who have abandoned us, and re-position ourselves as an influential force in Israeli politics. Yet there is also much that we can do immediately, today, to withstand the incitement and the hate campaign being waged by the Israeli right. We have to shake off the fear and launch a counter-attack, to show the right and the rest of the world that Israel has an active, unified left-wing camp that is willing to fight for its beliefs. Spinelessness, defeatism and internal divisiveness are no less harmful to the cause of democracy than the enemy seeking to destroy its defenders.

Translated from the Hebrew by Sara Friedman



Nava Shoshani, Final Notice, 2009

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Tax is Not a Burden:

The Price of Civil Participation

Ishak Saporta

Israeli society is in bad shape: inequality is greater than in other countries. Poverty, mainly among children, reaches a level of 35 per cent; about one-fourth of the workers, mainly women, earn less than 3,500 shekels per month; the health system, which has been neglected for years, now receives too little too late. I could tire you with more numbers that represent the condition of too many residents in Israel, but these are quickly forgotten, for up until recently, government officials boasted about the uniqueness of their policy. The same policy that has brought us to this point. Neglect of the social situation, and perhaps the total evasion of the issue, is a product of a worldview that, wherever implemented, shows the short-term improvement of the economic situation, while society and individuals within it find themselves unable to sustain themselves with minimal dignity.

This is a strange phenomenon in which a problematic economic theory becomes an instrument of policy and its believers are unwilling to change their ways even when it is clear that it is backwards and hurts those marching to their beat. In order to understand this phenomenon, we must discuss the fundamental assumptions that underlie individual behavior, the behavior of businesses and entire economic systems, as well as the effects of this approach on globalization – a

difficult task within the framework of this article. However, there is one point that underlines the basic flaw of the system here, and it concerns social investment and its sources.

There is a structural inequality in a capitalist market that grows with time. Society must reduce the inequality with the help of state mechanisms, among other things. This can be done by investing resources in different systems, such as the education and health systems or social security pensions. In order to accomplish this, and in a proper way, taxes must be collected in a way that will reduce the inequality that has been built over time.

Two conceptual distortions make it difficult for us to approach the subject of taxation properly. The first being the language we use to talk about taxes. The terms “tax burden” and “decrees” belong to the libertarian approach which believes that the role of the state and its mechanisms should be reduced to a “night watchman.” The role of the state according to the libertarians is to prevent interference in the economic activity of the citizens and to uphold the rules of the free market; as opposed to entrusting the state with the responsibility of equally distributing society’s resources and thus providing fair and equal opportunities. Proponents of this approach argue that it is the only way to increase the public wel-

fare, but reality shows that this is not the way to ensure the welfare of many individuals.

The second conceptual distortion relates to the individuals acting in society. The free market theory claims that the egoistic activities of individuals are moral and must be done in order to increase the national product. This is part of the myth which claims that success depends solely on the individual, his talents and efforts. It must be noted that talent is an inherent feature that the individual did nothing to acquire. Therefore, this theory ignores one of the central aspects of human society – cooperation between individuals in the economic sphere and the inter-generational transfer not just of assets, but of systems that society have invested in (hence the inheritance tax for example).

A holistic look at reality leads to a different approach. Every individual enjoys the cooperation and past social investment in one way or another. For example, those who spend more years in the country’s education system receive more from society in return than do others. Not only individuals, but business corporations also enjoy these investments, in the skill of workers and in other social systems. The higher the individual’s salary and greater the corporation’s profits, the larger the portion of their income they ought to pay in order to sustain the system and contribute to future development.

According to this view, the individual, society, and the corporations within it, are in fact partners, and as partners, they must share the products of this partnership. We are not entitled to our gross salaries because it also belongs to our partners; tax is our part of the partnership. The profits of a corporation are not its own, a part of the profit also belongs to the partnership. Society does not steal from us, but participates in the investment with us, and as a partner, it is entitled to part of the products of this cooperation. This conceptual change will make the discussion on the limits of social investment more focused, and there will no longer be confusion between burden and cooperation when it comes to individuals and society.

Of course, all this contradicts the leading economic theory in our country. Our system leads to social relations that initially hinder the cooperation that is necessary in order to live in a just society; one with solidarity, in which all individuals can live in dignity and receive equal and fair opportunities. Such is the society we must seek to create.

Ishak Saporta, Haokets.org website.



Photo: Eyal Warshavsky

“You Are Not a Master in this Matter:” Hannah’s Lesson on Speaking the Truth in the Face of Authority

Tova Hartman and Charlie Buckholtz

Societal norms tend to judge unfavorably people who profess inconsistent opinions on the same subject. Such inconsistency is often seen as signs of either intellectual confusion, developmental immaturity, emotional instability, or weakness of character. If you say you are Orthodox, for example—how can you also claim to be a feminist, which everyone knows opposes core religious values! If you say you are a feminist—how can you participate in a chauvinistic religious tradition!

But according to postmodern identity theory – a field of psychology concerned with understanding what we mean when we talk about the “self” – such seeming contradictions should not necessarily be seen as symptoms of psychological instability. They do not make a person immature, ambivalent, or otherwise half-baked. Just the opposite: these “jagged edges” can be seen as fully realized expressions

of identity. They are part of what make me uniquely human, and ultimately, uniquely me. The fact is, people are more than just one thing.

It would be an understatement to say that this way of thinking has not yet seeped into the cultural bloodstream. In some circles, any sympathy for settlers makes you an enemy of the state; in others, sympathy for Palestinian suffering makes you a traitor to your people. What happens within this kind of national discourse when voices of complexity and nuance – the voices of creativity through which innovation and transformation are often catalyzed – are not merely drowned out, but actively marginalized? When are they derided as suspicious for their ideological impurity, translated into muddiness, confusion, cast as hypocrisy?

Those who feel compelled by multiple perspectives – who can empathize with more than one side of an issue – hold many insights that

are lost on those who require ideological discipline and group loyalty to define what they allow themselves to see. Thus, through this painful process of social silencing, we lose many of the voices we perhaps most need to hear.

*

As a society, recovering these critical voices requires creating a cultural space in which they are considered legitimate—that is, an embrace of multiplicity, both within each individual and within the different individuals who comprise our society.

Jewish tradition presents us with a figure whose voice fell outside the acceptable cultural boundaries of her time, and who was in turn ridiculed and classified as a deviant. On Rosh Hashanah, the story of the biblical Hannah

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From Hannah's personal religious experience, we learn something universal about the human condition. People and communities use classification and categorization as tools of maintaining their power, along with the status quo.

was read in synagogues across the world: frustrated and humiliated by her inability to conceive, misunderstood by her husband, Hannah makes her way to the ancient Temple where she erupts in an intensely personal, wordless plea to God.

To an observer whom she does not know is watching her – Eli, the High Priest – Hannah's unconventional prayer sounds like a crazed rant, and he instantly marks her with a stigmatizing accusation: "Drunkard, set down your drink!" Hannah, however –according to a midrash of the Talmudic Sages – does not merely bow her head in deferential obedience to his command. Instead, emboldened by the new voice she has discovered in prayer, she challenges the authority of the High Priest directly.

"You are not a master in this matter," she tells him in one version, summarily stripping him of the ability to diagnose, classify, and marginalize those whom he perceives as being "too different" – the very prerogative upon which so much of his power rests. Another version reports Hannah critiquing Eli with the proclamation, "You are not a man of God." I have an authentic religious voice, she tells him, even if you cannot hear it, because it does not fit into your preconceptions about what a religious voice is supposed to sound like.

On Rosh Hashanah, we are called to repentance by the wordless blasts of the shofar, echoed, perhaps, in Hannah's wordless prayer. And just as Hannah's prayer was her own fumbling attempt to express her deepest sense of self – no matter how that expression may have sounded according to current social conventions – the shofar's call is like the beginning of a sentence that only each individual listener can complete for him- or herself.

The call-to-self that is repentance also involves a summons to both individual and soci-



Nechama Golan, 2003

ety to step back and examine the lenses through which we view the world. It is a time to think about the systems we use to classify ourselves and each other. Have we created a society that enables people to remain alive and responsive to their subjective experience, the rich variety of their claims, commitments, contradictions, and conflicts?

Hannah rejects the premise that expressing her personal truth within the framework of the Temple – no matter how muddled or disturbing, or simply new that voice may sound to a Temple priest – is grounds for being reclassified as an "outsider." She insists that remaining a devoted religious person does not require accepting these definitions, even if they are backed by the coercive power of social stigma. Ultimately, she rejects the premise that the Temple can only ac-

commodate one kind of religious devotion, and in doing so embodies the principle that there are multiple paths to God—and multiple ways to walk in the world.

From Hannah's personal religious experience, we learn something universal about the human condition. People and communities use classification and categorization as tools of maintaining their power, along with the status quo. If we find that the religious and secular priests of our own day are too obsessively restrictive in the regimes of classification they attempt to impose on us, we can respond with the boldness of Hannah: "You are not a master in this matter...You are not a man of God."

And through this prayer of social criticism, we may find resources within ourselves, and those around us, that we never realized we had.

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