

May 16 2021

Dear Friends and Colleagues

For several days I have been thinking about whether to share my thoughts and feelings with you, as I did in 2009 and 2014 following the wars in Gaza. Today history is repeating itself and we have a new (same) war. The violence and wars will continue for as long as the international community stands by, watching the bloody confrontations without firm and decisive intervention to stop this nonsense. Israel Jews are unable to do so because their nationalistic and conflict oriented mind-set shared by its leaders and the majority of Israeli Jews.

Again I have crossed the threshold of being silent, feeling guilt and shame for the violence carried out by Israeli forces. I am proud to be a Jew but ashamed to be an Israeli. It is my responsibility to give a hand in the struggle of minority for the sanity, peace, morality and democracy,

Hamas and the Palestinians also share some responsibility for the violence and the stalemate in peace process. –but only to a small extent --as Israel is a superpower and has the super ability to start peace process, to carry negotiations and mobilize Palestinians and Arab states for peace. Think only about the still relevant Arab League proposal that Israel chooses to ignore, and thus refuses to solve the conflict, ever aspiring to annex the West Bank and control the Gaza Strip, and this is now happening gradually, in an informal way. The possibility of two state solution is waning and Israel will soon face the challenge of giving equal rights to millions Palestinians. However, a majority of Israeli Jews prefer the status quo of today, or annexation without giving rights to Palestinians, or complete conquest of the West Bank. Minority prefer peaceful solution.

I assume that a few of you know that the present round of violence has been instigated by Prime Minister Netanyahu, who stands on a trial being officially indicted for breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud. But he still serves as a Prime Minister and after fourth elections still was a tie between two blocks (rightist supporters of Netanyahu against a heterogeneous block that had one goal to oust Netanyahu). After failing to build a coalition and seeing that the other block is succeeding to build one, he decided to stir Palestinian disturbances to prevent a support of a small conservative Arab party in the alternative coalition. And indeed, the prime minister with his crony, the minister of police, along with the recently appointed police commissioner, instigated disturbances that blew up beyond their imagination. The rest has already been covered by the

newspapers and will be written in the history books. You probably see the asymmetrical war as were previous Gaza wars, where dozens of Palestinians are killed because of the Israeli bombardment and few Israelis are killed because of hundreds of rockets fired indiscriminately on civilians.

Unfortunately, the explosion, for which there were no small number of warnings, is taking place before our very eyes. (The monster has finally arrived.) This is no tsunami or the sudden impact of a meteor colliding with Israel, but rather an explosion resulting from progressive developments leading to a predetermined disaster.

It is a combination of: a. a psychopathological leader who had been trying, with all of his might, to flee from the conduct of a trial whose sentence might have him jailed; b. his desire to rule at any price, without the “red lines” of democratic and moral norms; c. a hive of sycophants and yeasayers, similar to those who may be found at the courts of dictators; d. senior office holders who have been chosen by the single criterion of loyalty to their leader; e. blind support by many of the nation’s citizens which calls to mind past historical conditions. All of these circumstances together have led the nation, a nation which knew how to use its intelligence to survive for thousands of years, to incomprehensible horror. It is strikingly here, in its own land, that the nation has lost its sharp senses, and has become deaf, blind and mute.

This situation necessarily leads to dystrophy, the disintegration of society and the breakdown of a democratic regime. In its place, a hybrid government has developed in which the authoritarian aspects intensify in relation to its democratic features. In the State of Israel, a regime now exists which is similar to those of Turkey, Russia or Poland.

But in addition, Israel is unique among these other states. It maintains a brutal occupation, and it rules another nation who has neither human nor civil rights and whose daily lives have been embittered for more than fifty years (half a century). Israel has also been a state with institutionalized, even legalized discrimination over the Arab-Palestinian minority of its own state citizens since its establishment.

Such a state knows very well how to “stick it to the enemy with everything it has developed”, but it is very difficult for it to evolve into an enlightened, democratic and humane society. At present, Human Right Watch has accused Israel of structuring an apartheid regime between the Jordan

River and the Mediterranean Sea, and the Office of the Prosecutor ("Office") of the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or the "Court") has announced an investigation examining the situation in Palestine since 2014.

And most importantly, from the beginning and through the years, a set of fraudulent assumptions has been constructed, supported by leaders, by the ministry of education and by the media. It holds that Arabs are always a violent and untrustworthy enemy; the state of Israel is a model democracy; there is no occupation; a Palestinian nation does not exist. The “wild west” activity taking place over the Green Line does not have to interest the Jewish public; the Israeli army is the most moral army in the world. (This mantra is especially difficult since our children are serving in this army and since when have our children been anything but moral). And it continues that the Israeli nation is living under a permanent existential threat and another Holocaust could take place at any moment with a different enemy and different circumstances (and this is how we are educating our children). The Israeli nation is a constant and eternal victim, and we will not allow any other nation to claim this status. Other nations, particularly those that criticize us, are antisemitic and thus, we will not consider the opinions of any nation when we determine how to behave. In conclusion, this is a summary of the attitudes held by 80% of the Jewish nation in Israel. It is a destructive worldview and it is being passed down to the next generation.

These attitudes are explosive and may be maintained under the surface for years, and perhaps even decades, but ultimately, they will bring about an explosion. Read the histories of other nations and especially Barbara Tuchman’s book, *The March of Folly*, and what she describes is exactly what is happening in Israel at present.

It is emotionally difficult for me to describe the destructive steps taken by the leadership, based on extreme nationalism and racism, which have been aimed primarily at preventing the possibility of the formation of an alternative government and which have led to the balloon finally bursting. The rapid deterioration of the situation delighted most of the media which, at their best, avoided explaining the events, or relating to the dozens of victims in Gaza, as they repeated the central points of the fraudulent view of events. Even the president, who for most of his term has maintained his sanity, lost it in a moment and joined the incensed mob, losing the status of statesman which he had so hard tried to achieve in this battered country. At present, almost all the Jewish leaders rally and support the war, dozens of ex generals give commentaries encouraging

“killing them more”, within state of Israel erupted violent confrontations between Jewish and Arab citizens and the West Bank’ Palestinians are bleeding again.

Leaders and institutions of many nations propagate functional narratives that have only a grain of truth. But few stand on the verge of an abyss as Israel does. I know that most Jews in Israel would not agree with my analysis. They live by the myths indoctrinated to them from an early age. As in states similar to Israel, such as Turkey, Trump’s United States which was so admired by Israeli Jews, Poland, Hungary, Belarus, or India, there must be people who are willing to stand up to pressure by a public which has been brainwashed since kindergarten, and shout: “But the emperor has no clothes...” I am not willing to censor myself, as the Minister of Education, General Major (res) Gallant, would prefer.

So I have decided not to be wise and not to think about which messages would be best accepted by the Jewish public in Israel, but rather to shout out in a loud voice and not to be fearful: Jews have lost their way and have deviated, choosing a path leading to an abyss, and the chasm is already gaping. One can already identify the destruction that the regime has carried out, count the bodies, estimate the hatred, view the rabble who are killing both Jews and Arabs, and the leaders who are stoking the fire, calculate the alarm sirens heard in Israeli cities, witness the Palestinian buildings collapsing with dozens of people living in them, the murders carried out by Israel with pride (as though the General Staff, the commanders, the military brigades, the battalions, have not been spreading destruction and terror in Gaza up to now). We have lost our respect for free thinking, our ability to judge events. It is extremely sad for me to hear the Pavlovian statement uttered by Joe Biden (who really is a great leader) unequivocally supporting Netanyahu by stating “Israel has a right to defend itself” from Hamas rockets. But he made no mention of the dozens of Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrikes in recent days. That can only mean that Palestinians do not have the right to security, as they remain occupied by a foreign power and are continuously and systemically harmed on a daily basis. He forgot the lesson learned from American history: What right did the American revolutionaries (called patriots) have to harm British? —I would like to hear a response!!!!!! Occupied nations have resisted occupation through the centuries and millennia— not just Algeria, Poland, Hungary or Serbia but, going back even farther to the Hellenistic period when Jews rebelled in 167-160 BCE against the Greek Seleucid empire or to Roman times when Jews rebelled against Roman in 63-73CE during the rule of Emperors Nero and Vespasian and

then again, in 132CE, against the Romans under Hadrian. These rebellions are still revered by Israeli Jews, as justified and are viewed as legitimate sacrifices against the occupation of foreign forces.

But I was especially dismayed and appalled when I heard that the German government, together with the Austrian chancellor Sebastian Kurz (a rightwing nationalist) issued unequivocal support for Israel as a reaction to the present situation. I must say that as a Jew whose many family members lie in Treblinka, I feel very strongly that neither Germans nor Austrians learned the needed lessons about the rise of ugly nationalism and racism, in relation to stopping Israeli Jews from following the nationalistic road. Like mindless sheep, Merkel and Kurz follow a very destructive line, supporting Israeli militarism, nationalism and racism, so well-known in their own history. I would like to see brave Germans opposing the encouragement of Israeli policies of self-destruction. But probably brave Merkel cannot stand up to the easy accusations by Israel that call any criticism of Israeli policies, even their brutality, as antisemitism. These leaders are frozen in fear. But they and many others should know that this argument is weak and immoral, aimed at extorting obedient reactions. Buying into this argument is detrimental to Israel, and those who care without understanding the situation or are afraid because of Israeli threats contribute to the disaster.

It is hard to look in the mirror. –

It has been very difficult for a person who grew up here and served in “the most moral army in the world”, to see for himself the injustices carried out by his brothers and to be aware of the lies fed to the nation through the years, which are still being disseminated. This is an unjust war, a war of choice, like almost all of the wars fought by Israel, including the Sinai Campaign, the Yom Kippur War, which could have been avoided, the War in Lebanon, and all of the wars in Gaza, including the present one. In all of these wars, people have been killed and wounded, and many have remained deeply scarred for the rest of their lives. The battles have also caused great destruction. And these events have provided fuel for the next war. I am not even referring to the huge costs in all aspects of life that are being paid by Israeli society and the Palestinian nation due to the continuation of the conflict. Only a person totally impervious to feeling would count only our own victims. Applauding the destruction that we are causing in Gaza is a badge of shame to our sense of morality as defined by Hillel the Sage, and the Jewish morality of Martin Buber and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heshel which once existed widely has been lost by most of the Jewish nation in

Israel. I would like you to know that there at least dozens thousands of Israeli Jews with moral position who even demonstrated yesterday across Israeli cities demanding the end of war, preaching brotherhood with Israeli Arabs and wishing peace.

I was a student of Professor Yishayahu Leibowitz in the autumn of 1967, just after my release from the Israeli Defense Forces. He taught Introduction to Physiological Psychology. But at every lesson, he took ten minutes to cry out like a raging prophet at the gate, about the prices Israeli society would pay for its injustices. Among his other predictions was the following:

Our real problem is not the territory but rather the population of about a million and a half Arabs who live in it and over whom we must rule. Inclusion of these Arabs (in addition to the half a million who are citizens of the state) in the area under our rule will affect the liquidation of the state of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and bring about catastrophe for the Jewish people as a whole; it will undermine the social structure that we have created in the state and cause the corruption of individuals, both Jew and Arab...The state will no longer be a Jewish state but will become a Canaanite state...All of the content of the monster called "Greater Israel" will be nothing but its governmental-administrative system. From a social standpoint ...a state ruling a hostile population of 1.5 to 2 million foreigners would necessarily become a secret-police state, with all that this implies for education, free speech, and democratic institutions. The corruption characteristic of every colonial regime would also prevail in the state of Israel. The administration would have to suppress Arab insurgency on the one hand and acquire Arab Quislings on the other. There is also good reason to fear that the Israel Defense Force, which has been until now a people's army, would, as a result of being transformed into an army of occupation, degenerate, and its commanders, who will have become military governors, resemble their colleagues in other nations. (Written by Leibowitz in April 1968, appearing in Yedioth Aharonoth daily newspaper)

And everything that he predicted has come to pass!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The book that we have written and which has recently been published in Hebrew, *Comfort Zone of a Society in Conflict*, is as relevant now as it was before these present events. It has been translated into English and we hope to publish it in many languages. But the "comfort zone" is gone and – I don't know whether it will be reconstructed – It seems as though that is the intention. But perhaps, with low probability, from today, we will face a new reality which will command a

part of the nation, those who understand what has happened and what is going on here, not to allow the professional political pyromaniacs to destroy what we bequeath to the next generation who are our children and grandchildren. What will we leave them?

Following my teacher, I undertake the role of prophet without fear (I always take into consideration that I may be stopped), in order to say what I understand and think. But the young must take the reins in order to extract a nation sinking into the mud of hopelessness. That is the role of the younger generation –

It is possible – It has been proven in Argentina, France, Greece and in other places.

That is a moral command for a nation which has suffered for hundreds of years, often revolting as an occupied nation. Thus, Israelis must understand the Palestinian nation and must apply the lessons they have learned not only with general morality and humane behavior, but also in order to survive and to endow the coming generations with a life of prosperity and peace.

I would be happy if this document went viral in order to open the eyes of many men and women. I know that the letter is overwhelming in information. Do not trust anything you read (!!), but check the details by yourselves, every piece of information.

I raise my eyes in the hope for better future for my children, grandchildren, Israelis, Palestinians, and all human beings in this world. I hope we can keep paving the path that was first started in 1948 with the “Declaration of Human Rights” after the unthinkable trauma of World War Two.

But first of all, we must stop the present unnecessary bloodshed immediately!!!!!!