

# **AUTOBIOSOPHY**

AUTOBIOSOPHY  
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Dedication

*I dedicate this book to you, Shoshanah – my spouse, life comrade, guide, and supervisor, you who did not believe that I was able to write it. I would never have had a better reason to complete my task than the ambition to prove you wrong.*

*I love you, Shoshanna.*

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# AUTOBIOSOPHY

## The thought of an Agnostic Jew

### INTRODUCTION

*The book's conception. Why a dog chases its tail. Reflections on Kibbutz. Bibliography. The writer.*

#### *The Book's Conception*

I am a Jew. Personally, this statement has no greater importance to me than the assertion that I have blue eyes. Ultimately, it would not have affected my life had it not been for an incident that I experienced on my first day at primary school. I was only seven years old. Some children waited for me on the corner and accused me of killing Jesus. I swore that I did not know what they were talking about and that I never killed anyone – all in vain... They beat me up and tore my new white shirt. I wonder how it was that children, whom had never met me before, knew things about me, since I did not even know myself that I was a Jew!

I was certainly the first Jew they had ever seen, since my family was the only Jewish one in town. When my parents emigrated from Poland in 1929 with my sister and me, they settled in a place far away in the hinterland of São Paulo, a state in Brazil. At home, we spoke Yiddish and every Friday evening my mother covered her head with a kerchief and blessed candles while murmuring strange words. I thought then that at home all children spoke Yiddish with their parents and that on Friday evenings all mothers cover their heads with a kerchief to bless candles, murmuring strange words. (Later I learned that she was reciting by heart prayers in Hebrew.)

The traumatic experience that revealed me my Jewish identity marks the exact moment when I began to 'write' this book: I asked then my first philosophic why. Even if my great-great-great-great-(and so on)-grandfather killed Jesus, why was I to blame? The persistent search for an answer to this question,

and others that arose in the meantime brought me to Israel and to the kibbutz. Even here, I met with human behavior that I tried to analyze and understand, but could not accept. This book sums up my confrontations with such conflicts, defines my attitudes, and attempts conclusions based on deep reflection or intuitive inspiration.

The book I allude to is really two books. Some time ago I completed the first one, *Children's Game?*, which tells the events that led me to my Jewishness, to my Zionism, to Israel and to the kibbutz. It relates historical events I participated in, or witnessed, until 1951. Being an autobiographical narration and testimony, it is of course personal, subjective. This present book, its natural continuation and completion<sup>1</sup>, is an approach to social problems and conflicts in my territory (my kibbutz, my country, and the world in which I live). However, this time I write as an extra actor, an observer. For this reason, in this book I attempted to be objective, 'scientific', and more impersonal.

*Force of the Written Word*

In 1977, I sent an article to Ha'shavua, the internal bulletin of our Kibbutz Federation. I complained in it that twenty years after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (1956), where Khrushchev had denounced Stalin's crimes, the leaders of Mapam, our party in Israel, had not yet expressed a single sentence of protest against the annihilation of Jewish culture in the USSR. The discussion whether or not to publish my article (one of these leaders vetoed it!) caused the collective resignation of the editorial board.

An ad hoc committee appointed to deal with this crisis suggested the abolition of censorship in our press. The principle was officially adopted and the bulletin reappeared after a one-month strike. The article that provoked this affair, the most effective thing I have ever written, was never published.

Later in the same year (1971), the same bulletin published another letter of mine protesting that some people occupied indeterminable jobs transforming them into little dictators in self-made kingdoms. I proposed rotation; a limitation on the

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<sup>1</sup> This book, a logical continuation of my previous book (*Child's Play?*) is also an autobiography, but of my thought instead of my life. Therefore I have called it *Autobiosophy*, a word compounded of *autos* (Greek 'self') and *bios* (Greek 'life') and *sophos* (Greek, 'skilled; wise, learned') that is intended to mean 'autobiography of thought'. All footnotes in this book are the author's observations.



terms that anyone could serve in any influential position. The word 'rotation' entered the daily lexicon in our Federation, and a general conference resolved to define the maximum period of terms a person might serve in a leadership capacity. Though immediately applied to all low and intermediate levels, the use of this principle at high levels has been much slower. I cannot guarantee that my letter caused this important change in our organization, but no doubt, it contributed to at least one word – 'rotation'.

These two articles show what articles can do. The movement's press and the local bulletin issued by my kibbutz have published dozens of articles of mine over last forty years (ref. 1990), ranging over several social matters. I am not able to determine if they directly influenced decision makers, but it might be interesting to examine their propositions over time. Two examples will serve this purpose.

The first one, certainly the funniest of my prophecies, was the first article I published in the kibbutz bulletin (ref. 1950). It expressed my opinion in a keen public discussion of how to build new houses on the kibbutz. I could not understand how in the fifties it was possible to build a home without a bathroom. I proposed that the design of a kibbutz family's home must reserve areas for refrigerator, telephone, television and other tools that would surely soon be in every house. Note that this argument was written when a typical kibbutz family lived in a single room.<sup>2</sup> The only furniture then was an iron bed, a wooden stool, a small square table, a shelf, and an improvised self-made wardrobe (with curtains instead of doors).

Israel introduced television five years after the publication of the article. The first telephone in the kibbutz (one phone served the whole settlement) appeared much later. Nowadays, every house in the kibbutz has at least two rooms, a bathroom, a complete kitchenette, telephone, television... It may also have a fridge, a dishwasher, a microwave oven, a food processor, a washing machine, an air conditioner, a stereo system, a VCR, a personal computer, and so on! I hope that soon there will be a car for every family. I hope to be present when this prophecy becomes a reality. 'Daring to dream' is the prophet's test.

The second example deals with politics. In 1948, Gromyko's Declaration gave Russian political legitimacy to Jewish aims.

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<sup>2</sup> Even today, we say in the kibbutz slang, '*I am going to my room.*' meaning '*I am going to my home (house).*'

The USSR was the first country to recognize the State of Israel de jure, and allowed Czechoslovakia to send weapons and ammunition for the Israeli Army to defend the country against the invasion of Arab armies; meanwhile the USA, England, France and other countries imposed an embargo. Then, at the peak of my admiration for Stalin, I wrote an evaluation of the Soviet Union's foreign policy regarding the Jewish national case. My conclusion was that Soviet foreign policy, strongly pragmatic and bound by narrow internal interests, had no moral and ethical scruples. The USSR's objective to neutralize the British imperialistic influence in the Middle East was the real reason for its support to the newborn Israel. I foresaw that Soviet policy would soon change to become exclusively pro-Arab, owing to the importance of Arab oil. When I wrote (in 1948) that 'Arab oil will weigh more in Soviet accounts than Jewish blood', nobody would have imagined then that the Kremlin would roll out the red carpet for an Arab sheik.

My private archive holds dozens of articles I have published that today appears to me to be realized prophecies. The impression that I for so many years 'spoke prose and did not know' stimulated me to compile my thoughts about social and human conflicts in book form. My publications in the past serve as credentials that qualify me now to write about the future. I cannot assert that this present work will yield true prophecies, as in the past (taking in account that many ideas I suggested since I began this book are not prophecies any more). They have in the meantime happened. When I began this book, I did not know if it would be published at all, but I had no doubt that, I would write it.

I believe that ordinary citizens, without being politicians or leaders, can influence events by raising questions, proposing answers, formulating attitudes, and expressing them!

*Why Does a Dogs Chase its Tail?*

Why does a dog, before lying down, turn around in circles? Why does he lick his master's hand? The ordinary explanation is that the dog inherited these behavior patterns from its wolf ancestors, who lived in the savanna and used to flatten the grass by turning around before sleeping. In addition, in the herds they lived in then, weaker animals licked the hair of stronger ones. Although 10,000 years have gone by since the domestic dog used to sleep on the savanna, dogs continue to turn around in

circles before lying down, and lick their master's hand to manifest submission.

Human beings emerged from tribal (herd) life and became urban and domesticated in Mesopotamia some 5,000 years ago. The process never evolved simultaneously for all humankind. The herd instinct and tribal organization have remained the basis of human relationships into the present time. Tribal laws and norms, deeply rooted, continue to survive, formally or informally. Many of these rules are anachronisms that are difficult for modern humankind to accept, but they refuse to disappear.

Take for instance the vendetta. The vendetta, or blood feud, is a continuing state of conflict between two groups within a society, characterized by violence, usually killings and counter-killings. It obliges relatives and friends of an injured group to avenge the murdered by killing members of the murderer's family. This custom of revenge relates to the epoch when every member of a group had a collective responsibility for the whole group (and vice-versa),<sup>3</sup> and every person was the judge and responsible for his justice.

Even in modern Israel, this primitive and savage code of honor prevails in certain Bedouin tribes, and Druse and Arab villages. The police are unable to prevent bloodshed. Even if the police keep the murderer in jail, his relatives often lose their homes through seeking refuge and protection in other villages. The exile may last months, or years, until mediators (important religious or civil leaders, politicians) obtain, through long and patient diplomacy, *sulcha* (pardon) between the two families.

Regardless of whether Jews were implicated or not in Jesus' crucifixion, nearly 2,000 years after this event Christians and Jews did not yet reached a true *sulcha*. The ecumenical steps of the Christian Church on behalf of reconciliation with Jewry in the last decades, and the colloquium between the Vatican's theological authorities and Jewish rabbis in the present are in themselves an indication that the conflict is not yet settled.

The assumption that some humans' instincts, customs and norms were justifiable in the tribal era, but are not in modern

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<sup>3</sup> 'All Israel [Jew] is responsible one to the other' is the Talmudic interpretation [*Sanhedrin* 37] of the sentence 'And they shall fail on upon another' (*Leviticus* 26:37). This is also Rashi's explanation (collective responsibility of every Jew for all Jews) of this passage. See Chapter 12 for the implications of this matter...

society, forms the leitmotif of this book. Particularly they are not justifiable in a democratic society. If we really aspire to a democratic, humanistic and modern world (I am not sure that this is everybody's aspiration, but this is definitely the general flow of history!), we must find a way to sublimate these norms (instincts?) and transform them into acceptable behavior.

Human consensus sublimated many animal instincts. They have not entirely disappeared. They have remained registered in our genes and they may explode in certain circumstances, like cannibalism in the face of starvation, and bestial violence in murder, torture, and ethnic conflicts.

We must define those human values, patterns of conduct and thoughts (philosophy), which are compatible with the society we wish to live in, and educate our children accordingly. We can succeed, even if it takes generations. The profound transformations that Hitler, Kemal Pasha, and Khomeini achieved in their people (respectively Germany, Turkey and Iran) are irrefutable demonstrations of how charismatic leaders are able to effect over a brief lapse of time extreme changes in the behavior and mentality in masses of millions. Japan's metamorphosis in the last fifty years (ref. 1995) is another indicator of what it is possible to achieve.

#### *Remote Island*

If someone went to a remote island, stayed there for years in an exotic tribe of unknown natives and told of his experiences in a book, there would be a reasonable chance that such a book (if written with some talent) would excite people's curiosity. Anthropologists spend years of their lives reporting their observations of different lifestyles, because people learn about general human conduct from particular events.

In my case, I have been living over fifty years (ref. 2,000) in a very exotic tribe, in a remote kibbutz in Israel located twenty minutes from Tel Aviv, among strange, exceptional people – Jews. I resolved to discuss my experiences in a book, which describes the exotic customs and rituals of this community and tries to explain (and understand) them. My literary talent? You, the reader, will judge.

A kibbutz is a communal settlement in Israel. The singularity of this structure is in its ideology and constitution. Most of the articles I have written in the past dealt with events and conflicts I met in kibbutz life. When I began to assemble the material about the kibbutz member vis-à-vis his community, I observed

that my conclusions matched the individual's behavior in all organized entities (from the intimate family unit to complex human organizations, up to the nation state and the whole of humankind). I found interesting parallel situations and attitudes at all levels. Therefore, instead of a strict monograph about the kibbutz, this book sums up the thoughts of a person who lives in a kibbutz, but breathes the world's common air. I hope that the reader will enjoy following my jumping from one theme to another. I am writing about life, and life is not a simple tool.

*Scrutinizing a point*

Question: If the kibbutz is a singular human phenomenon, what profit can we obtain from researching it? The same thing we gain from scrutinizing Papuans in New Guinea and pygmies in Equatorial Africa. The main difference between them is that instead of being a nostalgic reminiscence of primitive life, the kibbutz offers a fascinating experience for the future.

Particularities are important. Scientific development of theories starts with the accumulation of details, and their generalization. Darwin based his 'evolution of species' theory on observations made on the Galapagos Islands, a very special place, with a very unusual flora and fauna.

Galileo contrived his concept of gravity by observing the descent of a feather he threw off the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Newton conceived his Universal Gravitation Law from an apple that fell from a tree. These examples are of course allegorical anecdotes, but they evidence that wide knowledge and global theories began with particular and singular events and based upon them. Projection of a fact can occur far from its origin. A tooth from a dinosaur permits the restoration of the entire animal. A piece of flint reveals the presence of Neanderthal Man. The analysis of a ray of light from a galaxy that disappeared millions of light years ago explains the origin of the universe.

Theory is the generalization of a limited and finite number of elements. If a specimen does not fit the theory, then some steps are possible:

Exclude from the theory's area all elements that do not fit it. Euclidean geometry only considers geometrical entities within its limits.

Define subclasses of exceptions within the class that the theory supposes to explain. This is the ordinary method in grammar, economics, etc.

Create a new theory, a wider one that may include the rebel elements: the dream of the scientist!

*About Style*

My spouse maintains that I am an astronaut: 'Your head is always in the clouds, and your feet never on the ground.' I suppose she is right, because nobody knows me better than she does. I do not deny it: I like heights, wide spaces and freedom, and I dislike boundaries. Why confine things within the limits of reality and possibility? If curiosity and the adventurous spirit of our intrepid astronautic ancestors had not mastered their dread of the unknown, humans would now stand firm and well accommodated with their both feet high up in the branches of trees, like many of the apes.

A prosaic fact is that the span of sight diminishes as the eyes move closer to the earth. The nearer the head of an animal is to the soil, the smaller its sight. The mole's eyes, for instance, are rudimentary. He does not need them, because he lives underground! In compensation, he has a tough muzzle and strong forefeet. The mole is a very pragmatic, realistic and logical creature, whose world is not much greater than his body. He digs, eats, and does exactly what he needs to do. Certainly, he is no Thomas Moore: he does not spend his time and energy thinking about Utopia!

Serious historians are human moles. Because historians are forbidden to pay attention to rumors and impressions, sight, hearing and other senses are superfluous to them. What they need most is a good muzzle, to burrow among documents and to sniff out quotations. I admire their persistence and consistency and evaluate their contribution to human culture as positive. I am a loyal user of their products, but their way is not my way, and their style is not my style. I am an astronaut.

The condor hovers in the sky scanning plains and valleys below, covering many square miles, until he locates what interests him. I believe that the condor enjoys the sights that he sees, even when he does not find what he requires. A condor may be a poet, but not a scientist. He does not always stand with both feet on the ground.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Some words about analogies and parallels. Comparing the two sides of the equation  $2+2=4$ , we may say they are equivalent. Comparing two different objects by scales, we can indicate which of them weights more. No other conclusions are relevant. What can we learn from this experience about their cost or their taste? Nothing.

*Invitation to a Flight*

I assert again: this book is not a monograph, nor an essay, but an honest attempt to describe my thoughts about the individual and his surroundings.

In my judgment, every stone that composes the complex mosaic presented in this book is relevant, and necessary for its goal. The examples, fables, analogies and parallels are from a variety of sources. One may not fit exactly the other. More so, pearls may pass unperceived because of some wrong encrusting, while single stones may awake interest. Is the whole a fine picture? Does it express my formulated message? I have done my best; however, there is no need to agree with every detail. You may help yourself to this smorgasbord of ideas, examples and information according to your taste. I do not intend to convince; I want to talk.<sup>5</sup> I am not a teacher – I want to be a conversational friend.

Whenever I ask to my learned son a question – he is a mathematician and computer expert – he responds, ‘Dad, how can you not know such a trivial thing?’

In a certain way, he is right: everything is trivial to someone who knows it. The most trivial things I know, for instance, are,  $1+1=2$ ,  $\pi=3.1416$ ,  $e=2.14159265$ , and  $\sqrt{2}=1.41421356$ . These banalities are useful! Perhaps many of the examples I bring in this book will be hackneyed facts for you, but they do not lose their importance as stones in my building. By writing this book,

What can we deduce from the analogy that the nostril of a Jew is like to beak of a parrot? Nothing, more the pleasure of a funny sentence. Nazis used this parallel for sending people to the crematorium,

For practitioners in paleontology, anthropology, history, and several other branches of human knowledge, parallels are often the only method at their disposal, and they use them widely (I’m not saying abuse). Based upon the same data and findings dexterous researchers may deduce opposite conclusions.

I am conscious that analogies and parallels have a doubtful scientific validity, but you, the reader, may have noticed that I am an obsessive devotee of analogies, metaphors, semantics, fables and parallels. I love them, and love does not need justification. I put my confidence in the intelligence of my readers for the right use of my examples and parallels and I repeat again: this book has no scientific pretensions.

<sup>5</sup> Apropos expression, in Stalin’s time two dogs met at the frontier. ‘Why are you fleeing from Poland?’ asked one. ‘I am hungry – and you, why are you fleeing from the Soviet Union?’ The first replies ‘I want to bark!’ Me too.

I do not assume any undertaking to surprise the readers with innovations and new contrivances in every paragraph. This is not a work of fiction and it does not deal with imaginary creatures. I write about ordinary people, like you and me.

When I was a young student, Julius Caesar fascinated me. I tried to learn all I could about his life and actions. I looked for information in encyclopedias, books, and articles, even in Shakespeare's tragedies. I even learned his masterpiece, *De Bello Gallico*, in the original, in Latin. After all that I learned about Caesar, the only three phrases of his that I remember are 'Vini, vidi, vinci', 'Alea jacta est' and 'Et tu, Brute?'. If this is the end-product of the life's work of a historic giant like Caesar, what can I expect from mine? If only one of my ideas causes you to meditate, if you find one unique interesting phrase, if one of my examples makes you smile, I consider this marks the success of my work.

As opposed to specialists, who know everything about nothing, I know nothing about everything. I like to jump from one extreme to another. I am not able, and I do not want, to constrain my thoughts, they being the freest thing of mine, and perhaps unique.

While Earth is only one point in the universe, every point is a whole world. Everything has controversial and paradoxical elements, and everything relates one to the other in invisible links. My twisted style fits perfectly with my philosophy, and I hope it is readable and pleasant. Only in mathematics can you theoretically trace a straight segment of a line from one point to another. In reality, such a thing is impossible. Whether you are crossing continents, or taking just one step in your kitchen, you can never predict when you begin, what you will reach and what will happen along the way. Remember, this book began as a single article for a private bulletin.

Dear reader, I invite you to follow my flight. Be my guest. I hope we will have a good time.

Bon voyage.

*Why no Bibliography*

'Whosoever quotes a thing in the name of the person who said it brings deliverance into the world, as it is said, 'And Esther told the king thereof in name of Mordechai.' (Pirkei Avoth 6:6)

This commentary refers to an episode of the Bible's Book of Esther. Esther revealed to King Ahasuerus a plot to kill him, on



behalf of her uncle, Mordechai. The note that Mordechai was the person, who furnished the information that saved the King, would later frustrated Hamman's evil plot to kill all the Jews in the Persian Empire. This passage is perhaps the cause of the Talmud's style, 'Rabbi Simeon Ben-Lachish, in name of Rabbi Ianay, who received from Rabbi... (and so on) tells that...' <sup>6</sup> The Talmud holds the copyright on copyrights – it is no doubt the first academic work, because of its care in recording quotation.

I accept the importance of quotations. I would like to end this book with a rich parade of bibliographical references, but I cannot do so.

What do most researchers do when they resolve to write a monograph or a book? They choose a theme, take paper and pencil, and start collecting material – generally recording notes on well-organized cards, so they will have no problem composing a bibliography later. I, unlike to them, am not a researcher. I never chose in advance a specific theme, and only now, after some fifty years of absorbing material mentally, have I resolved to write this book. I have taken care in preserving copies of all my articles and letters, but I never annotated the sources of my ideas. The act of absorbing them was not always conscious and premeditated. My intellect machine has filtered during half a century much material deposited in my memory with no previous plan and set method; therefore, I am not able to indicate sources. I know exactly the results of my thoughts, but I am not able to specify the factors that performed them.

Now I find myself in a dilemma. I could gather from the library of Tel Aviv University, or from the Tel Aviv Municipal Library, a list of suitable references for this book, but this would be dishonest since obviously I have not read them. On the other hand, if I had to present a list of books that surely contributed to my intellectual Weltanschauung, it would include books such as Tarzan, Dr. Dolittle, Gulliver's Travels, The Jungle Book, and Winnie-the-Pook ... It would be quite funny.

I had no choice but to appear ridiculous, if I did not disregard the idea of a bibliography for this book...

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6 Talmud – huge collection of legal and moral debates, rulings, liturgy, biblical exegesis, and legends. Finally redacted at circa A.D.500, it may be considered the first Jews encyclopedia. See later footnotes.

*What an Elephant is*

I will finish this Introduction with the crucial question that my beloved spouse asked me: ‘you are not an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, scientist, nor an author – so who are you to write such a pretentious book?’ My best answer is that I wrote it!

By publishing only excellent books written by skilled academicians in their specific fields, what would humankind be today? Boring!

Please, do not conclude from this assertion that I do not appreciate the enormous work that scientists and researchers have invested in all spheres of human activity. The value of the millions of scientific publications is inestimable. Beyond doubt, they have contributed to the development of technology. Culture and modern civilization would not be possible without them. However, scholarly scientists are like the six blind Indians who want to understand what elephants look like. One touches the elephant's tail and declares it is a snake. Another Indian touches the leg and affirms it is a pillar, and so on, and so on... I do not need to touch the elephant about which I am writing, because I am the elephant!

# 1. EDEN WITHOUT ANGELS – THE MONEYLESS MILLIONAIRES

*What is a Kibbutz? A brief dissertation about its development. The Kibbutz's sine qua non factor.*

Kibbutz – a collective and cooperative settlement in Israel, agricultural based at its outset, but later developed into industry as well as other fields. The kibbutz basic tenets are partnership, equality (both in production and in consumption) and work.

This former paragraph is almost what an ordinary dictionary writes about the kibbutz. This definition fits the reality. For someone who knows kibbutz, it is more than sufficient.

*What a kangaroo is*

Another question is what we can learn from it – just as we can learn from statement ‘The kangaroo is an herbivorous marsupial mammal peculiar to Australia, having short fore legs and long leaping hind legs.’ Very accurate, but I doubt if someone who has never seen a kangaroo will be able to create a real image of a kangaroo from this sentence. If he looks at pictures and movies, his idea will be clearer, but it is not the same as to meet a kangaroo face to face, touching it and feeling it. Can a person who has never tasted an orange understand its flavor? Is it possible to explain to a blind person the color of a blue sky? All our senses together do not are enough to give a concrete and tangible idea about concepts.

Could a spatial creature that had never met a man know what it is from anatomy and physiology books about the human body? Only in theory is the whole the sum of its parts, not in reality: a machine is not the sum of its elements. In spite of those restrictions, notwithstanding we were never there, this is the way that we use to learn about jungle, igloos, and the moon and remote galaxies. We read about events that never happened to us...

The above ‘philosophical’ digression is important for viewing my intentions on how to present the kibbutz. A plenty

of books, articles and research works describe the kibbutz from all angles and points of view. The aim of the present chapter is to touch the essence of the kibbutz, its *sine qua non* factor. I will start my version by a brief dissertation on the history of the kibbutz.

*Arising up of Kibbutz*

At the end of the First World War, the collapse of three big empires (the Austro-Hungarian, the tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire) changed the political world map. Imperialistic Germany became a democratic republic. New national entities arouse up and new boundaries were established.

The revolution that began in St. Petersburg brought innovations to Oriental Europe, declaring equality of rights to all citizens – including Jews. For a short period, as individuals and as a people, Jews enjoyed full rights, which in other countries in Europe at that time were at dream stage. With these new hopes for a better future, the chaos of the Intervention and the Civil War against the Bolsheviks began. In the beginning, the Ukraine displayed a moderate policy towards the Jews, but very soon deep anti-Semitic feelings burst out. The first acts of the former Russian army's nationalistic troops were to kill Jews (the pogroms). Thousands of Jews fled to the Americas and to Palestine.

Jewish leaders in Western Europe and North America became intensively active in the Jewish question.

Even in 1917 (November 2), Arthur James Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, gave Chaim Weizman and Nahum Sokolov an important Declaration: '...the Kingdom recognizes the Jews' aims and promises to help the creation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine'.

Perhaps this was a premeditated step to guarantee Jewish support for the British Mandate in Palestine, which happened five years later when the League of Nations distributed parts of the former Ottoman territory. This paper became for the Zionist Movement the most important legitimization document for the Jewish demands.

Against this background, thousand of Jews migrated to Palestine, where 100,000 of them lived in thirty-four Jewish communities or in shared towns, within an Arab population of 600,000. They had fled from persecution and economical distress, steeped in social ideologies and aims about the

blooming fraternity and socialism at that time in Eastern and Western Europe.

In Palestine, living conditions were very difficult regarding employment. Jewish farmers preferred to employ Arabs; they were ‘better and cheaper workers’. The new immigrants fought for the ‘Conquest of Jewish Work’, for the ‘Conquest of the Hebrew Language’, for the revival of useless land. The ‘Redemption of Land’ slogan did not imply the plunder of Arab-populated soil, but the revival of malaria-infected swampland and arid ground, which Arab effendis sold for good money to Jewish institutions – a good bargain, in their opinion.

Many new ‘pioneers’ organized themselves into small groups of five to seven men and two to three women together. Those who managed to obtain work brought their incomes to a common saving account. They began mostly in Jewish villages, but soon obtained employment on paving roads for the English administration. They worked very hard, lived in tents, and in the evenings what could they do? Discuss and dream of a better tomorrow. Most of them could not stay in such conditions and dropped out, returning to their old homes in Europe or migrating to the Americas, Australia, South Africa, or any other remote place in the world.

In the beginning, the members of these groups were strictly unmarried and lived in crude tents, but later they settled in sites they received to colonize. The first families appeared, children were born, and they became a *kvutzah*. The founders’ ideology said the ideal dimension for a close collective unit formed by forty to eighty people. Many *kvutzot*<sup>1</sup> observed this theory and maintained this framework; others thought that the community must grow to explore more efficiently economic and cultural possibilities. They are the *kibbutz* (a big *kvutzah*), some of them reaching a population of 3000 people. To day (ref. 1990), there are 300 *kibbutzim* and *kvutzot* in Israel, with approximately 150,000 people, less than percent of the country’s population.<sup>2</sup>

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1 The masculine plural suffix in Hebrew is *im* and the feminine plural one is *ot*. One *kvutzah* – two *kvutzot*. One *libbutz* – two *kibbutzim*.

2 The numbers I referred to above give only a quick statistical glimpse and do not provide a real idea about the physical, social and intellectual weight of the *kibbutzim* in Israel’s true reality. It is not easy to evaluate their contribution and influence without sliding into apology, because there are not objective parameters to measure them. I intend to deal with this matter later and hope to paint a picture of reasonable proportions.

From the described stage in former paragraphs until the one that the kibbutzim are nowadays, constant modifications have occurred along a path full of crises and successes. Further chapters will refer to these events and analyze them.

The written in the meantime is enough to go on in our dissertation concerning the basic rhetorical question ‘why only during the thirties to until the sixties and only in Israel have kibbutzim developed?’

#### *Kibbutzian Pioneers*

The modern era has witness several mass migrations to remote places. Massive colonization took place in the Americas, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand and so on. Many groups among them (mostly religious) faced an array of adversities. Why did they not conceive the kibbutz form of life? In last the ten years (ref. 2000), 200,000 Jews and more have settled in very adverse surroundings of Samaria, Judea, Gaza and Hebron without establishing one single kibbutz! Why?

I have not a simple and blunt answer to such a question, but I will try to propose some conjectures. The most empirical and reasonable factor: the former pioneers in Israel (the *halutzim*) were swamped with the social ideas of the twenties (the October Revolution in Russia and the plethora of philosophical social ideas then circulating in Western Europe). They believed, apart from building of a new country and improving a new language, in the unique opportunity also for building a new society, based on fraternity, partnership, and equality. They revolted against the previous homeland, and dreamed of building a new home, where they would live together from their own work, without exploiting people.

Objective needs moved people to organize collective groups as means of existence, but very soon, they became a goal. Nevertheless, idealism and subsistence difficulties alone are not enough to explain collective formations. If in one hand, the inner impulse to ‘build the country and rebuild themselves’ (words of a popular song that the *halutzim* sung with an enthusiasm that reached mystical euphoria) was a preponderant factor, while in the other hand, the external support by the Zionist movement was a financial factor. Although in its

essence nationalistic<sup>3</sup> the aim to create a Jewish nation and not a socialist one moved the Zionist movement, it gave a strong moral and financial support to the *halutzim*. Being an instrument of colonization, the contribution of the *halutzim* to the Zionist goals was much greater than their ‘dangerous’ socialistic inclinations (I will return later to discuss this delicate theme in Chapter 13).

#### *Individualism and Egoism*

The most important skill for personal identification with the kibbutz way of life is ‘altruism’. Altruism is contrary to egoism, but not to privacy and individualism – legal facts in kibbutz life. I believe that there is no contradiction between privacy and individualism and the collective life. Particularity and personal aims are not egoistic instincts, but legitimate expressions of a free person. This topic (the particularity of the *individuum* within the collective life) is an important aspect, because the vulgar conception that the kibbutz members are robots. On the contrary, due to the absence of economical and social differentiation (all members receive the same budgets and enjoy the same social status), the personal skills and peculiarities are the only factors of differentiation. A kibbutz evaluates its

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**3** I feel trapped in a dilemma: *national* targets or *nationalistic* ones? The difference between the two adjectives is very subtle, but very precise: *we* and *our* relate always to “national”, *they* and *their* relate always to “nationalist”. *Halutzim* and Zionists always used “national” in order to qualify their goals and activities: National Home, National Fund, National Military Organization (Irgun Tzai Leumi – the terrorist organization), etc., and denominate “nationalistic” the adversary’s parallel goals. The Arabs and the Palestinians are always “nationalistic”, and we, the Jews, are always “national”. This differentiation is valid even within the Jewish people: the right wing call themselves and their aims “national”; the left wing call the right-wing targets “nationalistic”.

I intentionally used *nationalistic* to qualify the Zionist targets, because honestly, I cannot distinguish between the moral legitimacy of Jews and Arabs aims. The statement of being a Jew and a Zionist does not turn me into an angel and those who are in the opposite side into devils. The conflict exists because both sides ignore the peculiarity and the aims of the opposite side and scorn it. Jews and Arabs are actually antagonists in relation to the State of Israel. The first step in the arduous and difficult approach to living together in peace and in cooperation must involve *sincere mutual respect* (in the widest meaning of this word).

members by their minds and hearts, and not by their pockets and rank.

There is not between individualism and egoism an unavoidably linkage. Individualism (individuality), the assertion of one's own will and personality is the supreme expression of intellectual independence and freedom of mind. Egoism states that the self-interest (and not the communal welfare) is the legitimate and proper reason for all human behavior. Only someone who is able to discern the nuance between individualism and egoism will understand why an individualist (as am I) can live in a community like a kibbutz, while an egoist cannot.

There are many crucial differences between the *halutzim* (the Zionist pioneers that created the kibbutz) and the usual concept of 'pioneers'. No dreams of enrichment, 'gold rush' or searching after some El Dorado impelled the *halutzim*. The life in the kibbutz, especially in the first years, required a strong willingness to renounce many 'natural' things – learning, professional skills, and other personal aims – in exchange for low standard of living, physical hard work and frequent abstentions. A strong personality, and stronger belief, was indispensable to overcome those vicissitudes. Many did not succeed. I do not have the exact statistics to prove it, but empirically for every member that lives today in the kibbutzim at least another three, if not more, abandoned it... I know kibbutzim that during the last thirty years (ref. 1990) have replaced their population three times!

In sum: the first faculty for living in a kibbutz is willingness to share their income with the other members. At the ideological and philosophical level, we can translate this principle as the acceptance of the complete separation between contribution and consumption: there is not linkage (at present, ref 1990) in the kibbutz between what the member produces and what he receives! In my opinion, this is the 'sine qua non' condition for the existence of a kibbutz. While kibbutz people accept this principle – the kibbutz is kibbutz.

*Now we can examine*

Another important factor that drove the kibbutz in the past: the pioneer founders believed that they were building a Home for the whole Jewish people. Since the State of Israel has consolidated itself and has a strong army, the government



assumed most of the national tasks, which were in the past performed by the kibbutzim. Moreover, the actual government (ref 1990) composed of the extreme nationalistic and religious wings of the Israel parties opposes to the social and moral principles that the kibbutz represents. Their policy, based on the principle that Jews have the right to live anywhere within the Biblical limits of the Holy Land, strengthened by considerations about the State of Israel security's interests, has determined an intensive Jewish colonization of territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The new settlers are really fanatics in their obsession to expand the limits of Jewish-held territory in order to settle the whole of historical Eretz Israel land.

Both *halutzim* and actual settlers were and are political instruments for guaranteeing Jewish sovereignty upon territory through physical occupation of land. While the *halutzim* served the Zionist movement, the Zionist funds supported them. The new colonists serve the interests of the government and this 'benefactor' will support them as long as they serve his interests. From this point onwards, there is no more similarity between the *halutzim* and the new settlers.

The colonists do not renounce, as the *halutzim* did, personal interests in profit for the sake of the homeland. They have received high-standard houses at very low prices, and other economic advantages. They do not cultivate the soil (in the Gaza area colonists maintain market gardens and vegetables hothouses using cheap Arab work force, and since 1998 – foreign workers). Only a small percentage of them work in their residential area, at most in public affairs and religious services.

There cannot be a greater demagogy and deceit that calling them 'the modern *halutzim* (Zionist pioneers)': their outlook, their social behavior and their moral attitude (particularly regarding the Arab neighbors) are in a polar opposition to the kibbutz concept. This is a fine example of how to use correctly the Orwellian rule of syntax – white is black, black is white; true is false, false is true.

#### *Interrupt Transformations*

As I have already explained, it is difficult to state accurately the common denominator between the early *kvutzah* seventy years ago, and the *kibbutz* of today. The transformations and the mutations were huge! Who could imagine that the penniless group of tents with which my kibbutz began at 1951 would

develop into what it is today (ref. 1990)? Vast green lawns with trees, small but comfortable dwellings, public buildings, factories, a large farmyard for cattle and poultry, and extensive cultivated fields! A well-known anecdote tells how an important visitor concluded after a tour across the country, ‘I do not understand why a so poor country in parks as Israel has allowed the kibbutzim to build their houses in them’...

Indeed, in the past the kibbutz was like an oasis in the desert. Even now, when the country became highly urbanized, with plenty of highways in all directions, the kibbutzim continue to have wide pretty gardens. I would say that if the kibbutz members were angels, the kibbutz would be paradise.

Over the last ten years (ref. 1995), the kibbutz has sunk into a profound economic crisis. By the way, I do not remember a period when the kibbutz was not in some crisis – social, cultural, economic or other one. The kibbutz’s struggle for progress has been long lasting and wearisome, and obtained its achievements with sweat and tears.

The difficulties the kibbutzim confronted in the past were almost ideological. Their economic problems were those of poor people. The present economic problems are weighty, because they are the financial entanglements of ‘rich’ people: debts and interest running into millions of shekels.<sup>4</sup>

The kibbutz crisis is not an exclusive result of its inner structure, but an event closely bound up with occurrences in the country (and the world abroad). The economic crisis in Israel is firstly a result of the government’s policy, investment of billions of dollars on Jewish settlement in the East Bank (ref. 1990) – on especial roads to the new villages (bypassing Arab regions); and on luxurious buildings, ‘sold’ by very low prices to the settlers.

During the dominion of the right-wing parties leading up to 1992, the liberal ideology in economics encouraging investments in the Stock Exchange, rewarded speculation. High rates in monetary credit suffocated agriculture and industry. Even the banking system would have been ruined without the massive support of the government. Tens of factories bankrupted in a period without new important factories, dismissing tens of thousands of workers. Tens of thousands of new immigrants from Russia and elsewhere find employment scarcely.

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<sup>4</sup> Shekel – Israel’s currency.

This is a very sad picture! The Government's reaction to the Opposition's criticism was a classic one: chauvinistic demagogy and wild instigation against the Left, especially against the kibbutzim ('they are ready to deliver Jewish territory to the Arabs' or 'they approve Arab murderers and terrorists...'). The Israel 'national' (I would call them nationalistic) rulers do not understand that the real danger is not outside the boundaries, but the situation inside them.

#### *Collapse of Socialism*

The undermining of socialism in the world after the collapse of the Soviet communist regime, the impression that capitalism is the winner, and the consequent idealization of the private initiative, accomplished by the swarming after material advantages, encouraged waves of reforms and innovations in the kibbutzim. Inspired 'reformers' have proposed revolutionary programs and new models 'to save' the kibbutz economy. Improvements in efficiency are always possible and are a desirable target, but many of these 'new models' threaten the future of the kibbutz as 'kibbutz'. The present situation is similar to an accident with a seriously injured man in his legs. No doubt, the legs must be treated, but the doctor's immediate attention must be to save the life of the injured person. Economics are the legs that sustain the kibbutz body, but not its soul! It is possible to maintain an interesting and rich life even without legs – but what profit are good legs for a dead person?

Meanwhile it is impossible to stop the process and control it. It will be possible to coolly balance the account of what was uprooted, and lost, and what stood and survived only when the storm is over. For this reason, nobody can guarantee today if the kibbutz will exist for long in the new twenty-first century, or even in the next decade. Nobody can foresee today how the kibbutz will be in the future. The kibbutz may continue in a plurality of models, while it will observe the principle of 'together' and 'reciprocal help' and the altruist approach overlays the egoist one. Democracy and human rights must prevail. Reciprocal help and altruism are the heart and the soul of the kibbutz – its 'sine qua non' condition.

*Socialistic Experiences*

‘Bilu’ Streets in several Israeli cities are what have remained from the *Bilu*, the magnificent Zionist agricultural movement dating from the end of the nineteenth century. If the result of pragmatic economic ‘medicines’ will be tens or hundreds of ‘normal’ settlements in Israel, we may use the idiom, ‘the operation succeeded – the patient has died...’ Budget deficit is a serious problem, but not a catastrophe. Many countries flourish with deficits of billions – the State of Israel and the United States of America, for instance. Many big cities in the World are not running as profitable ‘businesses’, but nobody is proposing to liquidate them...

Martin Buber, the great modern Jewish philosopher, defined the Kibbutz as ‘a socialistic experience that has not yet failed’. The main contribution of the kibbutz to mankind is that human beings can live together in big ‘all for one and one for all’ communities (up to 3000 souls), in economic partnership, without using money in internal relations, without violence, without policy, without ‘payment’ for their personal contribution. I am sorry if this last sentence smacks an apology or a eulogy.

Chapters 3 and 4 present more information about the kibbutz, discussing some of its aspects. Even other chapters will include here and there some reflections regarding to the Kibbutz.

*Personal Declaration*

At this point, I feel that I must make it clear that I was never a communist and had never had any contact with the Communist Party. This is not an evasion of former positions. This is a truth!

At the end of the Second World War, I nourished a deep sympathy for the USSR, not only because of the fight against Nazism and the heroic defense of Stalingrad, but because of Russian’s behavior towards the Jews. While the United States and almost all the nations in the world closed their gates to the Jews who fled from the German hell, USSR gave a refuge to tens of thousands of Jews and evacuated them to safe places in the East.

My sympathy rose to a pinnacle with Gromyko’s Declaration in 1947 on the Jewish rights for a homeland in Palestine. The USSR was the first country to recognize *de jure*

the newborn State of Israel, and sent through Czechoslovakia weapons that saved it. Jewish people will remember these events for ever. The ship *Patria* loaded Jewish refugees whom the United States sent back to Europe, to death and annihilation, will remain a black mark in American history, sharing the blame with the English policy outlined in the White Paper, which closed Palestine to Jewish refugees.

My romance with the USSR was short. Their about-turn to a unilateral pro-Arab policy did not surprise me. I could understand their political pragmatic reasons, but never agreed with them. The trial against ‘Zionist traitors’ and the systematic extermination of Jewish culture, lead to a definitive rupture of my sympathy with the Soviet Union. In my point of view, the Kremlin became, after 1952, a dangerous opponent to Israel and a menace to democracy and humanism.

#### Defeat of Despotism

The collapse of the communist regime was not the victory of capitalism over socialism, but the defeat of bureaucracy, centralism (despotism) and the Party apparatus.<sup>5</sup> Dictatorship has failed – not socialism! Budgetary waste on army resources, nuclear and space developments made in order to gain power supremacy, and on maintenance of an enormous apparatus in order to dominate the population, caused the crash of USSR.

Will socialist achievements in the former communist countries (free health, free education and instruction, and right to work.) survive the earthquake? These principles remain central pillars in the kibbutz ideology and this book will dedicate areas in which to discuss them.

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<sup>5</sup> I have no means to prove this conjecture. The isolation of *what causes* is the most important challenge in formulating scientific laws. All theories in ‘sciences’ like economy, sociology, psychology and history will remain undemonstrated for ever. There is no way to set up experiments on historical events.



## 2. TRIBAL ROOTS ARE DEEP

*An ethno-anthropologic adventure: trivial information – without sensational revelations – about what a tribe is. Past – a key to understand the Present, and guess the Future*

*May people stagnate?*

Human groups in certain places of the world, like the natives in the Amazon forest, in New Zealand, in the Congo River area and in Australia, have remained at the most primitive stages of development. It is impossible to demonstrate that they stagnated for 10,000 years or more. In nature, nothing stays the same: everything changes. Perhaps living conditions caused them to regress; maybe their adaptation to surroundings was slower, but certainly, they are not exactly the same people that populated the World for hundreds of thousands of years. Nonetheless, we have few better methods of learning about life in early periods than simply observing the behavior of these primitives.

Later in this chapter, I will discuss some conjectures, but in the meantime, we have reached a point where we are able to observe some interesting statistical relationships. I reiterate that I do not intend to write an anthropologic essay: I neither have the professional competence for dealing with such a task, nor is my literary chutzpah adequate for such a venture. My aim now is to prepare the field for opportune propositions.

Therefore, although the present chapter is a review of known information, please, be patient: this digression is of cardinal importance to the development of ideas discussed later.

Some American Vietnam War veterans who could not return to normal society went to live alone in a forest or a desert. History tells us about refugees who retired to remote isolated places to escape from persecution, and of hermits who seclude themselves for religious meditation. Such people are rare and exceptional, but they have existed in every period. Essentially, humans are social beings.

*Humans are Social Creatures*

Without interfering in the scientific debate about the origin and ages of the several stages of human evolution, let us introduce two hypotheses. First, it is not an exaggeration to assume that human beings have existed for at least one million

years. Second, if we keep in mind that the primates, human's ancestors (according to Darwin and other scientists) lived in groups long ago, it seems reasonable that humans seldom lived alone. In the theological Genesis version, man did not come alone into the world: Adam, the first man, was banished from the Paradise together with Eve, his wife.

Advance from one stage to another, and consequent social changes, was never homogeneous and simultaneous for all humankind; they happened from time to time in different population groups. People in diverse stages of social and cultural development can live geographically in proximity to one another, or even one group within another. People of advanced social and intellectual level may live as neighbors with backward and illiterate people in the same town, even in the same quarter. Harlem in New York, the *favelas* besides the prestigious zones of Rio de Janeiro, and the slums in almost every big town are samples of antagonistic populations who live separately together. It is ascribed to the Zionist leader Chaim Weitzman that he reminded his English political associates that at the time when Prophets prophesied among the Jewish people, the ancestors of British parliamentarians had not yet come down the trees...

#### *From Tribe to Civilization*

The human 'herd', the tribe, developed as a means of surviving in harsh conditions. Prehistoric individuals could collect fruits and roots alone, but to protect themselves against big animals, and for hunting them, they need disciplined groups. From early painted scenes depicting the hunting of animals such as mammoths, we can conceive how old the tribal community is. The very first humans knew how to make weapons and used them effectively to kill for food. Compared to the extent of human existence, animal domestication is relatively a modern achievement (about 12,000 years ago). The cultivation of soil, began in Mesopotamia settlements about 10,000 years ago, marks the passage from nomad life to permanent one and, in a later stage, to urbanism. The etymology of the words 'civilization' (from Latin *civitas*, 'state') and 'urbanism' (from the Latin *urbs*, 'city') points out the correlation between these two concepts.

This scheme of human history is very rudimentary, but even if my statistics are largely inaccurate, if human species has lasted at least one million years, human beings have spent



ninety-nine per cent of their existence in tribal hunting organization! This primordial fact has decisive implications in human behavior up to present times, and gives a key for understanding attitudes, costumes, prejudices, etc. in modern society. I intend to use this key to decipher some basic social questions that have occupied my thoughts for a long time.

*Genetic is Slow*

Genetic process is slow. In a popular form we can define DNA of chromosomes chains as biological archives of the species' evolution, recording all the necessary information a being 'knows' in order to become what it is. Body mutilations caused by accidents are not transmitted to descendants. Experiments of cutting rats' tails and the practice of consecutive circumcision generation after generation are convincing illustrations that genes are conservative. Chromosomal changes occur (by mutation), but in a very random unexplainable way.

Genetic changes descend 'vertically', from parents to descendants, usually in a partial or latent form. They do not contaminate, as viruses do, 'horizontally', affecting brothers, friends, and neighbors. Therefore, genetic changes take many generations to spread over large populations. Complete incorporation of acquired attributes into the genetic code of humankind may require thousands of generations...

Genetic researchers succeeded in changing genetic attributes in cultivation of plants and breeds of animals, by selecting specimen, by grafts, by artificial insemination and by other mechanical means. Nazis tried to improve the Aryan race experimentally by selecting 'genuine' German women and men for the purpose of reproduction. This purpose is ethically an aberration. The only ethically acceptable genetic intervention in a human being would be the attempts to eliminate genetic diseases.

In comparison to the duration of the pre-civilization stage, the influence of civilization upon the genetics of human beings is negligible. Statistically, modern humans remain prehistoric beings, with a thin varnish of civilization.

In contrast to genetics, behavioral and environment factors are capable of generating speedily modifications on mental and physical attributes. One generation may be enough to produce extreme and radical changes. The differences between the physical and intellectual properties, as well as external appearance of my cousins born in Brazil and those of their

parents – immigrants from Western Europe – are enormous. The children are taller, stronger, and more intellectual. The parents – ‘merchants’ and small businesspersons; the children – skilled professionals, managers and politicians. Jewish troglodytes from North-African Atlas region have become in Israel up-to-day modern people.

New acquired attributes caused by geographic, economic, and educational factors are not genetic; therefore, they are not transferable by heredity.

#### *Children in Birthday Suit*

A child is born in birthday suit, but with a rich treasure of attributes and aptitudes. He knows how to breathe, how to cry and how to move arms. Grandma, especially a Jewish ‘babe’, discerns immediately the baby’s character (intelligent, clever, delicate, and so on) and recognizes to whom the child resembles – to the father, the mother or any other relative...

The baby inherits most faculties through the chromosome mixture, but already in the womb, he absorbs information and influence from the environment. He has potentially the faculty to walk, to talk every language, to eat every food, and do other interesting things, but he must learn how to do then. In fact, the child continues ‘learning’ during his entire lifetime. The multitude of communication means developed by humans to transmit cultural, intellectual and social capital to their descendants, are perhaps important advantage that distinguish them from all other animals.

Language, after the imitation (learning from personal example), is no doubt the primary way for transmission of experience and information. The evolution from uttering of sounds and grunts to the actual expressive modern speaking took hundreds of generations. Writing enabled the collation and conservation of knowledge. Later typography facilitated its wider dissemination. During the last decades, electronic devices, such as radio, television, computers, microfilms, and many other inventions have multiplied many times the volume of human knowledge previously stored in books.

We can assume that in the Stone Age, generations transmitted tribe knowledge (human experience) from to another orally and perhaps to some extent by cave paintings, as mentioned above. Perhaps there were then old persons who knew everything known at their time. Longevity was rare in the

past; therefore, old people were important and respected.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, what elderly men know is mostly obsolete...

In the present, the scope of human knowledge is so enormous that no specialist is able to encompass even his particular field. Since genetics does not transmit wisdom accumulated during generations, every newborn must practically learn everything for himself. Notwithstanding the variety of means at the disposal of a modern ‘pupil’ – infinitely greater than that available to his ancestors – the tutorial instruction to make him an adult takes years, and he snaps up only a small portion of the ‘pie’.

#### *Children are Open Books*

The child is an open book into which the surroundings and society constantly inscribe. The environment’s influence on the child during the first nine months of his embryonic life before his coming into the world, despite his being restricted to the mother’s womb, is conspicuous. After the birth, the area of influence upon the individual begins with the immediate kin and expands to the infinite. A modern baby looks at the television before he learns to talk and walk. A three-year-old child may know today things that an Oxford professor in the nineteenth century did not even dream about them. The television brings the whole world into our homes,<sup>2</sup> and when the child learns to read, he may be able to reach all the information he wants, from the world main daily newspapers to Plato’s *Dialogues*.

Although the events I described up to this point are not sensational news, they induce to the following conclusion: the civilized period influence on humans is enormous and decisive, but the contribution from the long pre-civilization is profounder. Our deeply embedded instincts from this remote period are always ready to burst out.

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<sup>1</sup> **Senate**, the highest deliberative and legislative instance in many governments (from the classic Roman Empire until the modern United States) means literally ‘assembly of old people’ (from Latin *senex*, old man). In Hebrew, the word *zaken* (old man) has connotations of many honorable functions, as ‘the notables of the town’, ‘the elders of the community’, ‘chief justice’, and ‘dean of the diplomatic staff’, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The Internet deserves a special chapter, but I cannot broaden this book so much.

*First Postulate*

My first postulate is ‘to become civilized one must learn (be educated)’; the attributes of a civilized person need to be acquired. To be violent, brutal and bestial – it is enough to free natural instincts that every one carries within him.

This does not mean that all our latent natural instincts are ‘bad’ or ‘good’; I am referring to psychological impulses that the civilization repels, because they do not fit in with social conviviality. Chapter 9, ‘What is nature in Nature’, expands my approach to the concept of ‘natural’.

Education and tradition (oral transmission) carry events, doctrines, and practices through generations. Superstitions, like those relating to a black cat and evil eye; customs as the Jewish aversion to pig's meat; and prejudices, such as anti-Semitism, are certainly non-genetic elements. Generation transmits them to generation by ‘indoctrination’, most of them going together with the mother’s-milk.

The distinction between genetic attributes and culturally acquired attributes is of capital importance. Justification of certain attributes as instincts belonging to the human nature is dangerous, with fatal consequences to humankind. The impulse of the strong to oppress the weak – is it a ‘natural’ one? The conquest of the American continent by Spaniards, Portuguese, French, and British – was it a ‘natural’ process? Had such great conquerors of the past, from Assurbanipal, Nebuchadrezzar, Xerxes, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Saladin, Napoleon Bonaparte (this is only a small random list) a better justification to invade countries and subdue populations than Hitler and Sadam-Husseini had?

*Emergence of Barbarian Hordes*

Hordes of Tartars and Mongols emerged in their thousands from Asia in the Middle Ages. Even the barbarians who attacked the Roman Empire were some thousands. The twelve Hebrew tribes that conquered Canaan in the biblical times numbered a few thousand. The savage tribes in America contained only hundreds of Indians. As they were more primitive and ancient, the size of the tribe population was smaller.

The prehistoric tribe numbered only dozens, or perhaps less. It was really a small and compact group – an enlarged family – engendered by the need for hunting larger game.

Group membership involves obligations and rites. When the existence of the individual depended strictly on the tribe, the obligation of the person to his group was total and absolute. Group interests and needs dictated his member's conduct; everyone did exactly what people expected from him. He had no choice, if he wanted to remain in the group. It was quite impossible to survive outside it.

In relation to insect societies (bees, ants and termites), the human tribe is a very recent formation. Anthills and beehives have existed for tens (or perhaps hundreds) of millions of years, which enabled the development of genetic faculties tending towards a big degree of social adaptation. Every member of the community is born physically adapted (with natural tools and weapons) to his destined function. Fantasy stories love to tell about control of birth in the future for creating workers, soldiers, and servants to serve their masters. Even though I know that these conjectures are imaginary, such stories make me shiver. Such a system smells the fascist regime model and is the dream of despots and dictators.

Prehistoric paintings show hunters capturing animals in cages or closed yards. They had no refrigerators, so the only way to preserve meat was to keep game alive, holding animals in cages and taming them. The transition from hunting to pasture was a matter of time and took thousands of years; it was stepwise, without special conflicts. We can say that pasture animals allowed acquisition of game without hunting.

#### *Cain and Abel*

The antagonism between agriculture and rearing, a rivalry without compromise, relates to Cain and Abel. In contrast to the transition from hunting to pasture, the transition from pasture to agriculture was dramatic, with plenty of conflicts, causing a profound changing in the behavior of people and society. In basic terms, agriculture overcame the tribal organization and advanced a new system – the urban.

For the tribe, territory (the area needed to guarantee fruit and game) is the prevailing factor for its subsistence. If fauna and flora are abundant, the territory may be small.<sup>3</sup> Defense of

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<sup>3</sup> *Hide* (a word from an Aryan base) denotes a measure of land, formally sufficient to support a family or household, and varying in extent from 60 to 100 acres. It may be that the *hide* is perhaps the source of the Nazi concept of the 'vital space' (*lebensraum*).

boundaries and fight against intruders were not a question of patriotism and national honor, but a single question of life and death. A tribe abandoned its territory only under special circumstances: if ecological or climatic factors diminish the sources of food, or if they had to flee from stronger invaders. The linkage between a tribe and its territory is not historical, national or traditional, nor does it rest on patriotic feelings, but the sustenance that this territory provides. Jehovah, the tribal God of the Hebrews, did not promise the Jewish people a 'nation' or a 'state' in modern meaning. He promised bring them 'unto a land flowing with milk and honey' (Exod.3:8), a region with such an abundance of food that they would be able to proliferate ('in multiplying thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea beach'. Gen, 22:17).

In pre-historical times, i.e. for the largest period of human's existence, the tribes in which humans lived were a pure consumer society. People made some cloth and improved certain tools, but did not produce food. One of the first products 'produced' by humans was meat, by keeping captive animals alive. Because they did not know how to cultivate food for their sheep and cattle, they had to move in search for natural pasture. Climatic conditions compelled them, in certain regions, to live a nomadic life, following the herd and wandering alternately from valleys to mountains.

The assurance of food was the main preoccupation of the tribe, when it barely nourished its members. The same men brought game, defended the tribe against enemies and animals, and dedicated free time to making tools for personal and family use. Paintings in the Altamira caves in Spain, and engravings in the desert Mountains of Arizona, are prehistoric witnesses of these practices. A good hunter was also a good warrior. In tribal society, hunt and war are two sides of the same coin. The difference between them is that in the first case, the fight is against animals (to eat), and the second, against invaders who lust after their territory or to gain territories from other tribes. In sum, the concern about daily food is the salient characteristic of the tribal society.<sup>4</sup>

Cultivation of grain, perhaps the earliest cultivation that enabled people to store a quantity of food for a long time, requires a prolonged settlement on the land. Planting of fruit

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<sup>4</sup> I read that American Indians did not use to keep food from one day to the next. An honorable warrior brought every day fresh food for his family.

trees, a relatively modern activity that began only a few thousand years ago, was the definitive step in rooting people to permanent place.

In a savage tribe, the value of an individual person depends on how a good fighter he is. Agricultural society evaluates the person according other abilities. People calculate in these how much grain one stores, exactly as in the present a capitalist society evaluates the individual according to how many millions of dollars he owns or how much his annual income is.

Where natural pasture is the food source for cattle and sheep, the conflict between shepherds and farmers is inevitable. Modern cattle and sheep are not more a menace to cultivated fields. Livestock animals kept with forage and bought fodder have transformed animals rearing in a specialized form of agricultural practice.

Ancient History is the tale of peoples' expansion to seek land for colonization (to settle land-workers) or to capture people for slaves (cheap 'instrument' of labor). The barbarians' invasions fitted these reasons.

#### *Soldiers Replace Warriors*

A 'strong' farmer did not necessarily need to be a valiant and intrepid warrior. The food and properties he possessed gave him the ability to engage fighters to protect him and his properties and sustain them. These fighters (soldiers) were the first 'proletariat'.<sup>5</sup>

Remuneration due for services rendered or work done is certainly an invention of the post-tribal society. Within the tribe people exchanged tools and objects, but did not 'buy' services or objects, and did not have to 'pay' for them. People obtained

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<sup>5</sup> A bit of etymology: *soldier*, comes from Latin *solidus* (a coin). He worked for *salary* (from the Latin word *salarium*, 'money paid to a soldier in lieu of his allowance of salt' – *sal* in Latin). We can say that literally a soldier is a professional that receives his pay in salt... It used to be said that the oldest profession is prostitution. *The Guinness's Book of Records* does not say what profession has that distinction. Let us agree that both careers are contemporaneous. This is not a formal compromise to avoid dispute, but a reasonable one: of them could exist neither before the introduction of payments for services or objects one wanted, instead of taking them by force. The word *pay* comes from the Latin *pacare*, that means to pacify, appease, satisfy, and bears a close relation to *pax* (peace), e.g. *payment is a pacific way to obtain things*.

their needs not by money (which did not yet exist then), but by other means. We can see in the communist principle of ‘from everyone in accordance to his capacity, to every one in accordance to his needs’ a clear longing for the ancient tribal organization. The modern kibbutz adopted this conception: the collective provides the needs of the individual not as a direct payment for his work and without any correlation to it. There is neither ‘salary’ nor money in the inner life of the kibbutz (these last lines about the kibbutz are a fleeting reference for later wider discussion on the subject).

One of the earliest ‘academic’ practitioners in the tribe, the medicine man (a person who cured diseases, exorcised evil spirits, using magical properties and other sophisticated crafts), did not receive payment for his services. He lived on gifts and spontaneous contributions from the community. This norm, still observed by his religious successors such as the Christian clergymen, Jewish rabbis’ etc., is supposed to be observed even by his other successors, the physicians. In the past physicians did not get ‘salary’ from their patients, but an honorarium’, a voluntary fee. Today, the modern doctor in his private clinics sells his ‘merchandise’ as the supermarket sells its goods: at a fixed price. No one who is not able to pay for the ‘bottle’ (the consultation) receives it (Hippocrates would not be very happy about this...).

#### *Defense of Cultivated Fields*

The early farmer kept slaves (captured or purchased) in order to cultivate his fields, but equipping them with weapons would be nonsense... Unlike the tribes’ warriors, soldiers employed for defense or offenses are not ‘productive’ elements that contribute to their sustenance and the sustenance of the collective, in the sense of bringing game or producing food. They were a separated class, usually lodged in casernes (barracks), or in quarters outdoors, and their only function was to protect and defend whoever employed them. Many of these soldiers were of foreign origin – mercenaries – who were supposed to be more loyal and efficient in tasks of repression among the local population. I will return to the subject of soldiers in the discussion about how army and police in modern society, and how democracy handles such institutions.

Primitive tribes often invaded the territories of ‘civilized’ people with a more advanced culture, well established in settlements protected by strong armies and fortifications, and



defeated them. In the Bible, we learn that Jewish tribes, who came from the desert, took towns and regions from a population at a higher stage of development. Primitive Romans defeated the more advanced Greek people. The Roman Empire collapsed under the invasion of barbarians. Throughout the Middle Ages, Europe suffered invasions of waves of Asian (Huns, Tartars...) and African tribes (Arabs and Moors). In order to resist the invasion of the Mongol tribes from the north, the Chinese people built the biggest human construction on earth – the Great Wall of China.

### *Concept of Territory*

The entire purpose of this Chapter is to estimate the role of the tribal regime in human evolution, and emphasize its vitality and influence until modern life. The tribal concept of territory as the land necessary to support its inhabitants reappeared in the twentieth century in the Nazi's theory about the 'vital space' or *Lebensraum* that the superior Aryan race needs. It supplied to Germany the motivation to attempt the conquest of the World (see footnote 2 in this chapter).

With the development of trade, 'territory' has lost, especially the international trade, the connotation of an area of flora and fauna needed for nourishment. In the modern era, the significance of 'territory' as an area that permits the survival of a country has received new meaning – not as a source of nourishment, but for military defense. Today, in an era of jets, projectiles, missiles and atomic bombs, even this last concept has become doubtful. At the Yalta Conference, the Big Three applied the 'rights of the powerful' when they divided the World into 'spheres of influence'. In name of 'the right to national defense', strong countries maintain occupation of other peoples' land. The original tribal concept of territory, properly transformed, adapted and modernized, is the political justification for the repression of Irish, Basques, Kurds, Palestinians and other minorities [ref. 1994].

Another outstanding inheritance from the tribal system is xenophobia, or hate towards strangers. Owing to the permanent hard struggle for survival, the tribe could not support intruders and expelled them.

*God Created Man in His Image*

The idea that all persons in humankind are similar, with the same basic rights, is relatively an ultra-modern philosophical concept. Monotheism decreed that ‘God created man in His image’, but for Christian missionaries aborigines and heretics were not human beings.<sup>6</sup> Even democratic America discriminated against Negroes (enslaving them) and Indians (closing them in reservations) without full citizens. If I am not mistaken, they were considered only as ‘two-thirds’. Extremist religious Jews feel the same towards *goim* (Gentiles, non-Jews), and even towards secular Jews. Arab merchants hunted, transported, and sold Africans as if they were wild animals (Islam reckons only with monotheist believers – pagans are despicable, without rights).

Since the ‘Bill of Human Rights’ of the United Nations Organization, the principle that all human beings – regardless of their color, race, belief and sex – have the same rights, has been formally accepted by most nations in the world. Many countries have engraved the principle of non-discrimination because of race, belief or sex in their constitution and laws. This is the first statement of Israel's Declaration of Independence. Formally, on this point there is an international consensus. I say ‘formally’, because meanwhile the idea that every human being is ‘like you’ is still as far from most people in the world as it was from the mammoth painter in the Altamira cave.

*Strangers in the Tribe*

The rule of not acceptance of strangers by the tribe, like all good rules, had exceptions. Marriage, for instance! Incest – sexual intercourse between next of kin – has been a banned practice (taboo) since remote times, perhaps even in the most primitive and earliest tribes. In small tribes, as they were in pre-history, a male often had to get his conjugal from another tribe, by abduction or by ‘negotiation’. Carrying of the bride into the home is a ritual that has remained from the practice of abducting

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<sup>6</sup> The learned Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, an increasingly important figure at Spanish court at the sixteenth century due to his *Democrates II* (‘Concerning the Just Cause of the War against the Indians’). He maintained, theoretically in accordance with Aristotelian principles that the Indians ‘are inferior to the Spaniards just as children are to adults, women to men, and, indeed, one might even say, as apes are to men’. The repercussion of this argument in 1551 was enormous.

women, as have happened with the Sabinas. The bride price custom observed in Asian and African communities is a reminiscent of the gifts offered to the woman and her family. Even amongst the Jews, the bridegroom's gives a ring to the bride, a basic act of the ceremonial. Ring wearing by engaged or married, as a symbol that they are a couple, is a relatively recent innovation.

Another instance of receiving a stranger into the tribe arises when he or she is a person seeking sanctuary because of persecution or traveling.

Asylum for the refugee is a very old institution, observed in the earliest tribes.<sup>7</sup> In the past, there were sanctuaries and other special places for this purpose. Today foreign embassies form the most respected shelter for refugees. The Bible tells us that the King of Gat sheltered David, when King Saul persecuted him. The meaning of the Arab expression *d'chilak*, used for requesting compassion, pity, consideration, is 'I am your *d'chil* (a protected refugee)' meaning, 'My life is in your hands'. It is a parallel form to 'I, your loyal slave,' used in Hebrew to denote readiness and attention.

Sheltering of refugees from persecution for political reasons, incorporated in international norms, is not relevant to people who migrate in a search for better conditions. The Vietnamese who fled in thousands in precarious boats led to a discussion about their 'legal status' – were they refugees from persecution or immigrants? The same question arises when a stowaway is discovered in a ship. If he does not succeed in convincing that he is escaping from political persecution, no country will agree to receive him, and he will be returned to the port he departed from, even if torture and death are awaiting him there. Why did enlightened countries such as Switzerland and the Americas close their boundaries before the Jews who fled from the Nazi persecution? Perhaps racist persecution is not for them political

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<sup>7</sup> Etymology: it is interesting to observe that the source of the word *hospitality* relates in Latin, Old Gothic and other Aryan ancient languages to roots meaning 'stranger'. These developed to a negative *host* (hostile), enemy, and positive *gast* (guest). These semantics show how the tribal organization related to a stranger: an enemy or a guest.

Among religious Jews in Eastern Europe, it was common for the wife's family to receive her newly married man in their home in *kest* (support for some years), in order to let him devote himself to religious studies.

persecution, and therefore it gives the victims no right to claim shelter...

By the way, American people, if not immigrants by themselves, are descendants of immigrants. The pioneers of the colonization of the American continent – to put in mildly – did not ask for permission of the local population to settle in their land. If the passengers on the famous ship, the *Mayflower* (who were fleeing from religious persecution in Europe) had needed to ask for permission from the native inhabitants to disembark, I suppose that their story would have ended like as the Jewish refugees on the ship *Patria*.

#### *Status of Individuals*

Another conspicuous aspect of the tribal system is the ‘organic hierarchy’ – the place where the individual stands within the tribe. It seems similar to the interaction and interdependence of an organ with the whole organism.<sup>8</sup> The individual, as a ‘member’, has a definite function in the community. The tribe depends on him, and on the other hand, he depends on all others. The status of every person results on the function that he or she performs. This hierarchy, based on the personal (and physical) natural attributes, is not the same as in the modern political sense, where money (wealth, heritage), trickery and maneuvers acquire the social position. Such a status may be similar to the situation within an army in war – the personal status of the warrior results from his conduct in battle.

In the early tribe, leadership did not pass by kinship, from father to son. The chieftain was not a monarch, but a prominent warrior and hunter. The modern hunter, with sophisticated weapons and telescopic sights, need not to be an athlete, but hunting was not a sport in prehistory – it was a question of subsistence for the whole tribe. All the weapons they had were their hands, and perhaps a stick. In order to catch large animals, or capture animals such as horses (preferably alive, to conserve the meat), the hunter had to be a strong, agile, crafty, shrewd, audacious and tenacious fighter. By the way, apart from human

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<sup>8</sup> The common roots of the words ‘organ’ and ‘organism’ is not a verbal coincidence. There is an intimate relationship between them. A member is a part of the body and in our case, the membership in a tribe implies an organic participation.

beings, only insects (ants, termites) capture similar beings (other insects) for rearing and ‘milking’ them.

In such circumstances, it is logical that the status of every person was a function of his capacity to contribute to the tribe's maintenance. Did leaders have personal advantages? Better food, garments, and dwelling? They certainly profited from their status, but not so substantially as in modern society. Young maidens in the tribe yearned for vigorous warriors as modern girls idolize millionaires, movies-stars and pop singers. Although most ordinary people in tribal society lived in monogamy, leaders had many women and concubines. Jewish Patriarchs, Judges and kings provide good examples.

The theory of the evolution of species by natural selection, proposed by Darwin, establishes that amongst herd of animals reproduction is a privilege of the stronger males. Antelope bucks, for instance, dispute the females in decisive battles. It makes sense that, in the strict biological aspect, the primitive warrior was a better ‘reproducer’ for improving the human race than the modern ‘champion’ is. In modern society, we observe a contrary process. Fertility is greater in weaker and lower classes, poorer people, and among minorities. This is perhaps a case of compensation: amongst fish, for instance, the smaller and weaker they are – the more prolific they are.

#### *Sexual Privileges*

Sexual privilege of the stronger males has been a common practice, observed with adjustments up to our times. The number of wives in the primitive tribe was an economic and social matter. In later times, it assumed a political function as a form of alliance between kings and peoples. King Solomon had 1,000 wives. The number of wives was an index of power and virility. Feudal farms introduced the sexual privilege of ‘right of the first night’.

An impressive masterpiece of the cinema without doubt is Sergei Eisenstein's old movie about a Mexican farm in the beginning of the twentieth century. At the end of a wedding celebration of a young couple of laborers, the master's *guaruras*<sup>9</sup> brought him the fresh bride, to be cruelly raped by him and his minions. All the peasants in the farm knew what happened in the *Casa Grande*, but none could have helped.

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<sup>9</sup> *Guarura* – Mexicano henchman.

The sexual privilege of the strongest is inadmissible in modern society, but has not yet disappeared at all. It may reveal itself even in the inner family life – the brutal treatment by husbands of their wives, and fathers of their children. It may take the form of sexual advances and abuses by one's boss. The feminist movement, that appeared in the nineteenth-century, militates against these occurrences. In recent times, public personalities involved in sexual scandals have finished their political careers; in the past, such scandals would have perhaps improved their popularity. Does this change indicate public's revulsion and objection against the sexual privilege of the strongest – a remnant of the earliest tribe – or only a reaction based on a puritan education? It is sufficient to scan the daily press in order to verify the high number of daily rapes and sexual violence that newspapers report (certainly not all cases). The attitude that stronger person can do what he wants, without the minimum of respect to the weaker (mostly a woman or a child) is deeply rooted even in the present time.

No day passes without sensational newspaper reports about rapes, sometimes involving young daughters and sisters. Newspapers give the impression that we have returned to Sodom and Gomorrah... This 'right' is not yet rooted out even in the mentality of notable personalities as judges, otherwise, how it is possible to explain the relative tolerance of the juridical system in these cases? I do not refer to regions where poverty and social retardation sink on prostitution, promiscuity and lasciviousness, but to 'advanced' countries, as my own country, Israel. It seems that tribunals prefer to punish the sexual victims. (See Chapter 16 for further discussion of sexual social problems).

#### *Rights of the Strongest*

Sexual privilege conferred on the stronger is only one aspect of the basic principles of the savage tribe system – the 'Right of the Strongest'! In prehistoric human groups' behavior, when the permanent battle for life or death was not so different from other animals, and the struggle for supremacy went in accordance with Darwin's theory,<sup>10</sup> maybe this principle had

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<sup>10</sup> In order to be more exact: Darwin recognized that within a local population, the individual with physical advantages might have a better chance to survive and reproduce than other individuals. He also recognized in the adaptability, rather than in the strength, a main advantage in this competition. The argument

some justification. The confrontation between the Neanderthal Man and the modern human beings had a decisive end: *we* are still here! What could we have known about the Neanderthal without archeology?

*'Catch-me-if-you-can' Law*

In the earliest periods, if one wanted something, he kept it – if he could. Possession of things was a question of physical strength and ability. Keeping things ‘if it is permitted’ is a civilized step, linked to the acceptance of the conception of property and ownership – the right someone has to enjoy and dispose of what belongs to him. In modern society, swiping an apple in the market is an immoral act – the judge will send the thief to jail... In certain countries, the punishment for such a crime could be amputation of a hand. However, an audacious assault on a bank or a train, and the theft of millions in money and gold, appeals to the public’s imagination and curiosity. People do not really condemn these acts; on contrary, they awake some admiration and respect, because they reveal strength and superiority. The Mafia is in reality a modern ‘savage tribe’ with a severe and terrible ‘catch-me-if-you-can’ law of the jungle at its core.

In spite of the fact that for thousands of years weaker people have rebelled against prerogatives of the stronger, it is only in present times that the principle of the rights of strongest, which has predominated for so long, is losing its vitality. Merchants and professionals were not as strong as the king was, but as a class, the middle class, they grew and strengthened enough to impose their demands. The British Magna Carta, extracted from King John II in 1215, is perhaps the first important document providing certain rights for ordinary people. It is the source of the modern English personal and political liberty.

The French Revolution marked an impressive victory of the ‘weak’, and the formal acceptance of the ‘quality of rights’ for everyone. The third milestone in this historical development

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that ‘in the evolution processes, the stronger survives’ (By the way, in human species this is not always right: cowards and no-combatants have better changes to survive in the war) is a vulgar interpretation of capitalistic theoreticians about Darwin’s concepts of selection, in order to justify the hegemony of the economical tycoons in the free market competition. The Church realized that the theory of evolution (random mutation) is inconsistent with a literal interpretation (the divine providence) of the book of Genesis.

was the American Bill of Rights. It took another two centuries until the United Nations Organization formulated the Declaration of Human Rights, defining the natural rights of every individual in the world, no matter what his sex, color, race or religion is. Almost all countries in the world ratified this document, and on this point, there formally exists an international consensus.

Another query is, how many generations will this new concept require in order replacing the tribal prejudices rooted in human mentality. Because the process does not depend of genetic changes, but it is a question of tradition, customs and education, maybe it will happen soon, historically speaking. Historical experience shows that, in spite of its deep conservatism, humanity slowly adapts itself to new objective circumstances. If the imposing of equality for black people will be consist, then also the terrible 'Ku-Klux-Klan' must change, and perhaps in a future generation this 'fraternity' will even incorporate black persons as members...

#### *Casus Belli*

I want to conclude this topic with a stimulating fact. Tribes, peoples and countries needed in past no *casus belli* to invade, conquer and despoil other tribes, peoples and countries. It was enough they felt themselves strong enough to do it. Since men have become civilized and have learned to write, the conquerors themselves, or their clerks have minutely reported these events. Pharaohs used to perpetuate their conquests in wall paintings and relieves. Julius Cesar wrote his classical commentary, *De Galia Bellum*, and earlier Thucydides wrote his *The History of Peloponnesian War*, a conflict in which he himself had been an important participant. In the last century, clerks, and later, historians, journalists, photographers and television team documented events. Recent conflicts have been 'de luxe' wars in the communication sense – everyone could follow them in real time by watching television.

The *casus belli* is an interesting, exclusive human development. It was an important barrier for restraining aggressiveness, but it has only a formal value. It was never a problem to find a *casus belli* or fabricate one. Not in the past, anyway.

Hitler and Sadam Hussein acted exactly in accordance with the classical tribe norms. They invaded, spoiled and killed. The rights of the stronger people celebrated – without any inhibition.



The Nazi sent millions to crematoriums and brought ‘slaves’ to work in their factories.<sup>11</sup>

*Columbus discovers America*

Five hundred years ago, Christopher Columbus discovered America. This event will be celebrated (I am writing this paragraph at 1991) pompously by Spain, and probably by North America. In Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and other American countries where the most part of their native population are descendants of the Inca, Aztecs, Navajo and other Indian populations who were ‘discovered’, this date represents for them the destruction of their countries and their hegemony. In accordance with present conceptions, Cortez and Pizarro, and other intrepid conquerors, a ‘Nuremberg Tribunal’ would judge them as war criminals. They invaded countries without any *casus belli*, killed, despoiled and destroyed a large innocent population incapable to defend themselves against superior war power. They were the biggest pirates and thieves in History.<sup>12</sup> The volume of gold they stole from the Incas was greater than all the gold existing then in Europe. I would not be surprised if the descendants of the American native people will one day recover their lost racial dignity and rewrite history from their point of view. I suppose that all the virile equestrian

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<sup>11</sup> United States invested months of endeavor for obtaining a public agreement about Iraq’s menace to the world (non-conventional weapons) for invading it in 2003. The fact that Saddam Hussein was a sanguineous dictator and an unscrupulous oppressor of minorities and dissidents is not yet a justification for an external intervention. They are mere inner matter of a sovereign country...

<sup>12</sup> Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566), an early Spanish historian and Dominican missionary in the Americas, was the first to expose the oppression of the Indians by the European and to call for the abolition of Indian slavery. A prolific writer, and in his later years an influential figure of the Spanish court, Las Casas nonetheless failed to stay the progressive enslavement of the indigenous races of Latin America. He wrote ‘The reason why the Christians have killed and destroyed such an infinite number of souls is that they have been moved by their wish for gold and their desire to enrich themselves in a very short time.’ (*Destrucción*, page 36).

Las Casas left written instructions that his work *Prólogo de la Historia de las Indias*, should be published only ‘after forty years have passed, so that, if God determines to destroy Spain, it may be seen that it is because of the destruction that we have wrought in the Indies and His just reason for it may be clearly evident.’

statues of Cortez in every square throughout Latin America will then have a fate similar to Stalin's statues in Eastern Europe. The genocide of the Indians in Brazil in the twentieth century was so systematic and effective that only few remnants survived, hidden in the Amazon forest, without much chance for the future.<sup>13</sup> In North America the Indians are become such a small minority that the White American dream will certainly assimilate them before they could develop any authentic self-identity.

Eighty per cent of Guatemala's populations (over ten million people) are poor and illiterate Indians, most of them living in miserable conditions. According to international institutions' calculation, during 30 years of civil revolution, 50,000 children became orphans, 150,000 people dead, and 50,000 disappeared are what's left the army's fight to dispossess the Indians from their land. One and half million people left Guatemala to neighboring countries (USA, Mexico, Venezuela and the Caribbean states). Nearly 40,000 Indian refugees live in Mexico in concentration camps, in very poor sanitary conditions. Rigoberta Mancho, who lost most of her family members brutally murdered by soldiers in her village, is one among the refugees.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Eskimos and Gypsies*

Television news (ref 1999) informs us that the Canadian government declared autonomy or an Eskimo territory greater than France. Only 20,000 Eskimos live there. The Eskimos or

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<sup>13</sup> In the beginning of the twentieth century, about fourth of the Brazilian population was savage Indians (circa 3,000,000). At the end of this century, official statistics put their number as 50,000 or less. It is plausible that some of them were 'civilized', but adventurers who lusted after their lands murdered most of them.

<sup>14</sup> . I did not know when I formulated this paragraph at 1991 how the descendants of the 'discovered' will commemorate in the next year the fifth centenary of Columbus' exploits. I supposed that not in the same enthusiastic atmosphere as Spain did. The awarded Nobel Prize of 1992 to Rigoberta Mancho, the thirty-seven-years-old Guatemalan fighter for the Indians in Central America, is it recognition of the rights of the Indians as normal human beings? On the other hand, is it only an accidental curious act? May we expect in the future the conferring of Nobel prizes on an Australian aborigine, a Gypsy, and other 'oddities'?

Inuit are a people dispersed along the Arctic Circle, across the North of Alaska, Canada, Greenland (where some years ago they received some autonomy), Scandinavia and Siberia – a range of 5,000 kilometers in length. I am not sufficiently familiar with the Canadian policy to account for such a benevolent gesture – conferring national rights on a primitive minority, without the bloodshed of a revolution. Perhaps these arid glacial regions have no other use. Certainly, no rich deposits of uranium, gold, diamonds, gas, oil or coal were found there. Their principal natural wealth – animal skin – is very limited. Bears, seals and other animals of these cold regions are close to annihilation. They are now protected animals, and hunting them is forbidden.

The Gypsies do not have such a promising future. Despite the fact that they are perhaps 3.5 millions, having dispersed from the Iberian Peninsula and France to Romania and Hungary, and despite of being in a majority in some regions such as Transylvania, they have no chance of obtaining, in the densely populated Europe, an autonomous territory for themselves. Unlike the Jews, who throughout 2,000 years exile and wandering never lost the memory of their ‘Promised Land’, the Gypsies have no sentimental or historical linkage to any place in the world. They have no notion of nationality, and in a certain sense, the level of their social development is as primitive as the Eskimos. Like the earliest tribes in humanity, territory for them is still a region that provides their means of maintenance. Because of their reluctance to accept the customs and behavior of the environment they live in, and because the ‘strangeness’ of their traditions and demeanor, their neighbors are afraid of them, hate them and consider them as subhuman beings. Some people think that the best thing to do for them is to kill them. The Nazi persecuted and killed them as well as Jews and other minorities.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hinisha tribe Gypsies arrived to Switzerland from Greece or India. In 1850, Switzerland registers Gypsies as Swiss citizens and then confers passports. In order to move them from nomad life, German-speaking cantons developed over fifty years (from 1926 to 1973) policy ‘in behalf of roads children’ (*kinder der landsstrasse*). This involved the systematic abduction of young children from their parents in order to intern them in ‘Pro-Juventute’ institutions financed by governmental funding. From 40,000 Gypsies, only 8,000 remained nowadays ref. 1990 (nearly 2,000 are still nomads). Concerning Switzerland’s approach to Jews, please see chapter 10.

In view of the Gypsies' lack of a homeland, and their intransigent refusal to integrate into the way of life of the areas they inhabit, it is unlikely that there will be a solution to their problem in the present political climate.

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The kidnapping of children for 'bettering' their social conditions assimilating them into the predominant people, class or groups is not a Swiss innovation. This conducts steams from prehistoric times. Almost all ancient (and no so ancient) conquerors used to do it. It was a standard way to recruit soldiers (a brother of my grandmother, a young boy kidnapped by Cossacks, became a Cossack officer. He contacted his family only once, thirty years later). Missioners also did it; a legend tells about the kidnapping of a famous rabbi's son who became a Pope.

Nazis kidnapped young children with 'Aryan attributes' (pale skin, blond hear, and blue eyes) and brought them to German families and boarding schools to educate them as Germans.

I sow yesterday in television (ref. 1997) a report about kidnapping of Aborigine children during the last forty years by Australian missioners and government clerks in order to be adopted by Australian families or educated in boarding schools, to rescue them from primitive life and give them civilization. Most of them never realized their Aborigine roots, and those was succeeded in doing so could not meet their biological parents. Maybe the intention was a very good one: some of these children reached high positions in the society, as academicians and so on. Nobody doubts that kidnapping of a single child is an abominable crime, so what can we say about organized kidnapping of thousands (officially, more than 100,000) of Aborigine children, cut them off from the parents and people and surrounding? This is a form of genocide – a cultural genocide.

After the last paragraph, I would not be correct if ignored a similar scandal that happened in Israel. With the arrival of the State of Israel, 600,000 people absorbed during a short space of time one million of Jewish immigrants and refugees from Europe and Arab countries. Improvised encampments lodged them in very hard conditions. Almost all the Jews from Yemen, families with many children, reached to Israel. Harsh winter of uncommon floods and snow led to the evacuation of young children to hospitals and some of them never returned to their parents, who could not find them or were informed that the child was dead. It is reasonable to suppose that some of them really died, but an unknown number of them disappeared. During thirty years, several official commissions have investigated the event revealing nothing. Some evidences hint that Jewish families in Israel and even overseas have adopted in a mysterious way Teiman children (Jews from Yemen). A new government commission in 1997 is investigating the problem, but the Teiman children's fate continues an enigma.

*Jews Kept their Identity*

Although deport, oppression, and spoiling during two millenniums, the Jewish people have kept their special identity. In the time of Jesus Christ, Jewish population numbered three million people, nearly as many as the Chinese in the same period. In the interim, when the Chinese population has grown to more than one billion people, the Jewish people today number only three times more that it was then, and not because they were less proliferous then the Chinese. Jews were persecuted, killed physically or 'killed' by coerced or voluntarily assimilation. The vitality of this people to keep its identity for such a long period (thousands of years) does not have an easy explanation.

It was not only the pressure of the Arabs alone, caused so many countries to support the UNO resolution that the Zionism is racism. I suppose that the acceptance of the idea of Zionism, popular movement of Jewry to return to its historical homeland, is not simple. According with the tribal concept even now in vogue, a 'conquered' people had no right to their land lost in the past! When comparing with the inability of so many minorities to obtain the legitimate right to control their own lives, to speak their own language, and to practice their traditions, what chances could there be for a people dispersed during 2,000 years throughout the whole world, frequently in an adverse atmosphere of hate? The Jewish people did it twice: the exodus from Egypt under Moses' leadership, after 200 years oh exile; and the return from the Babylon exile, after fifty to sixty years. In fact, Jews longed at all times for the Holy Land and tried to return there, but only small sporadic groups succeeded in doing so.

Singular events that coincidentally happened at the end of the Second World War contributed to the establishment of the State of Israel. The fall of the British Empire, the creation of many new emancipated countries, the pressure applied by the survivors of the Jewish Holocaust, all contributed, and especially the guilty conscience of countries because their indifference while Hitler fulfilled his anti-Semitic program. What would Emile Zola write about the conduct of these European countries towards thousands and indeed millions of their Jewish citizens, if he were able to write his *J'accuse* in defense of only one man, Alfred Dreyfus? All these reasons together created a unique political favorable climate, which permitted Zionist to realize its dream.

*Deep-rooted Tribal Tradition*

When the Allies won in 1945, the Soviets acted in accordance with deep-rooted tribal tradition. In Berlin, the Red Army unbridled rapaciousness and revenge instincts ran riot for many days. The soldiers could do what they pleased – and they did; they killed, spoiled and raped. The Soviet Union confiscated factories, art treasures and properties to the USSR, and adapted to their interests the economy of the countries that fell in their sphere of influence. The Soviet Republics incorporated the Baltic Republics and territories from Poland, Romania, and Hungary, all according to the traditional ‘rights of the victor’. As a reprisal to the Nazi’s evil behavior in the Russian territory, Soviet soldiers raped two million German women (according to official statistics). Even if this is an exaggerated number, does a real one of ten per cent or only one per cent reduce the felony? The rape of one woman is a big deal for the daily press – but hundreds, thousands and millions. Our mind cannot grasp such proportions. Alexander Solzhenitzyn, the famous Russian writer and Nobel Prizewinner, who served as an officer in Western Prussia reported that all soldiers knew very well that they could rape German girls and even shoot them afterwards. Solzhenitzyn observes that this practice became like a battle distinction.

When Milloban Djillas, the Yugoslavian communist leader, protested against the rape of Yugoslavian girls by Russian soldiers, Stalin answered ‘Can you not understand a soldier who crossed thousands of kilometers of blood, fire and death delighting himself a little with a woman?’

*US Marshal Plan*

The United States, on the other hand, developed the Marshal Plan<sup>16</sup> for European recovery, so that in a relatively short time Germany became once again a strong economic power. The same happened with Japan, where the Mikado’s integrity was respected. This new approach never happened in the past! Perhaps regarding Germany it may be explained by the fact that the Germans did not directly injure the USA, and racially and religiously, they are ‘relatives’; but such an approach towards Japan is really a wonder. The attack on Pearl Harbor was a

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<sup>16</sup> About the Marshal Plain and the economical recuperation of Germany, see Chapter 12.

traumatic shock, and the struggle against the Japanese was very bitter. The first instinctive reaction of the US government against the Japanese, the internment of American citizens of Japanese origin under hard conditions in concentration camps located in deserts, may serve as a measure of the damage. People of German and Italian descent were not touched. The desire to finish the war faster is not sufficient to explain the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The national distress was huge. Considering it all, and taking in account the fact that Japanese are 'yellow people' and not Christians, the way the Americans treated their defeated foes is an innovation in international relations – it is truly a new page in human history!

For the first time in history, the victors helped a defeated enemy instead of annihilating him. Lately, the United States, Western Europe and Japan spent billions of dollars to help the Third World (the employing of this money and to whose hands reached is another story). In the past, victors only explored and exploited... The humanitarian aid to other countries is a conceptual innovation in the human mind, but the 'days of the Messiah' have not yet arrived.

The revelation of such an innovation in human relations (no-revenge of defeated enemies and generous Marshal Plan of help recuperation instead of heavy demands of indemnification) dazzled my senses. Later reflections, without reducing the importance of the event, make the new policy appear not exactly a moral evolution; it looks like a result of economical and global political – if you like, cynical interests. America at the end of the Second World War is not the same as the isolationist America at the First World War. The US attitude towards the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and China regimes gave Germany in Europe and Japan in Asia important roles in the new developing cold war. Enemies of yesterday became new allies, and former allies – enemies.

#### *Iraq invades Kuwait*

Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 like a savage tribe of barbarians. Iraqis raped, despoiled and displaced. Their retreat in the Gulf War was even more vandalistic – they destroyed everything they could, spilt millions of petrol barrels in the Gulf and set fire to thousands of oil derricks, causing enormous ecological damage. The armies that defeated the Iraqis did not respond in the same way. The Arab allies were not interested in destroying the Iraqi Republic, and on the other hand, the

Americans did not want to increase the risk of fundamentalism and Iranian influence. In brief, the victors did not slaughter the vanquished!

When Israel conquered Gaza and Western Bank at 1967, Israel acted neither like the Russians did in Berlin nor did the Iraqis in Kuwait, but Israel had not learn enough from the American policy in Germany and Japan. Nevertheless, Israel tried to treat the population in the occupied territory humanly and improve their economic conditions by providing them with employment in Israel. Their policy was not wise enough. Compared with the previous Jordanian administration, the amelioration of the living standards in several sectors (economic, social, health etc.) was an evident advantage, but Israel could not satisfy the population's political aspirations for full autonomy (independence!). The local population resigned to the dictates of the Jordanian Kingdom, because both are Arabs and Muslims, but they could not tolerate the interference of a people whose religion and nationality they despised. The situation worsened with the growth of a new generation who did not know about the former situation (the Jordanian administration) and learned in Israel (where they worked) about personal rights and opportunities.

#### *Israel Creates the Palestinians*

Palestinians are a nation 'created' by Israel. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, such a nationality did not exist at all. In the former Palestine (under the British Mandate, and the Ottoman Empire before), Arabs, Jews, Druze and other groups lived in the area, but none of them claimed for themselves the status of, and did not define themselves as, 'Palestinians'. Twenty years without any political advance on one hand, and the impact of the settlement of Jews within the occupied territories on the other, produced a sure formula for popular uprising, and this was exactly what happened with the Intifada (civilian Palestinian revolt against Israel occupation).

Harsh battles for the colonization of densely populated territories, a widespread event during the era of mass migrations in the past, ended with the enslaving, banishing and murdering of the defeated peoples. It was an effective policy applied widely from the time of Assurbanipal to Stalin, by Greeks, Romans, Portuguese, Spaniards, French, British, Russians, and others in order to control conquered countries, but it does not have a chance in the present climate (so we hope!). The



Americas, Australia, New Zealand are all examples of well succeed colonization, because these territories were either scarcely populated or the native inhabitants were too primitive and weak to resist, or because the invaders succeeded to make pacts with local rulers. In sum, they managed to ‘neutralize’ the native population. Turkey transferred the Greek population from the country after 2500 years of living in prosperous cities. None of the big empires of the previous centuries remained. In 1999, China recovered Hong-Kong, after almost 170 years of British occupation, and Macau, a Portuguese colony since 1553. The future of South Africa is an enigma (ref. 1994).

An old Chinese proverb says ‘do not hold enemies – exterminate them or turn them into friends’. In end the Second World War, the Americans understood that they could not exterminate the people of Germany and Japan and preferred transform them to allies (the cold war against the Soviet Union was a decisive factor in this policy). The State of Israel did not understand this after its extraordinary Six-Days War victory in 1967 and, by ignoring the Palestinians’ aims for autonomy; Israel lost an excellent opportunity to placate the Middle East. I will extend the criticism of colonialism in the discussion about Zionism in chapter 13.

#### *Code of Hammurabi*

In the eighteenth century BC, the Babylonian King Hammurabi declared in the prologue of the Code of Hammurabi that the gods called him ‘to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak...’ These words, written by an Oriental despot nearly 4000 years ago, are perhaps the best-known ancient statement that threw doubt upon the primordial ‘rights of the strongest’, and is an interesting mark in the slow process of humanization, which began with civilization. Kings and leaders did not observe them: usual and ‘legitimate’ means of rulers to impose authority and supremacy have often involved the use of violence, murder and destruction.

The beginning of this Chapter evidenced the linkage between civilization and urbanism, and mentioned ‘city’ as opposite to ‘tribe’; city is a settlement of citizens, independent one from another; while a tribe is an extended family. Commerce, which began to develop along with civilization, introduced a new class – the merchants – who became more and more dominant in the society’s economy, and rulers were interested in their activities. Hammurabi’s Code intended to

improve trade: it covers commercial relations, regulates loans and contracts, buying and selling, adoptions and bequests, and rules of litigation. Hammurabi elaborated a system of penalties to guarantee property and stability in his administrative area, perhaps more brutal than those used to impose authority did. They may be summed up in the Mosaic formula 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' – a principle that reappears in the Roman *lex talionis* (the law of equivalent retaliation), which lurks behind most legal punishments even into our own times.

#### *Non-belligerent Populations*

I do not see any moral difference between bombing a village or a town by an airplane or by artillery, and the cold-blooded murdering of old men, women and children. In the beginning, the cannon was used directly against the enemy in the battlefield, as a bigger gun or as a battery ram for destroying fortifications. Since the First World War, cannons grew to the dimensions of the 'Big Bertha', and even bigger, and have caused damages to non-belligerent population and civilian properties. A similar process has happened to the air forces. The first airplanes dropped bombs upon fortifications, trenches and other specific military targets. However, modern warfare has been so sophisticated that it is difficult to determine exactly what a military target is. For instance, headquarters, weapons and munitions factories located in crowded civilian populated regions – are they strategic targets or not?

A high point of this discussion is the query: did the atomic bombardment of Nagasaki and Hiroshima have any strategic justification? An objective answer to this question is impossible in our time.

Iraqis hid aircraft, munitions and other weapons in historical sites. They knew that the Americans would not damage these places, remains of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian cultures. For Muslim fanatics these places had no significance. All 'winners' in the past – especially religious groups – destroyed everything that they could not adapt to their own use in order to wipe out all traces of their predecessors. Assyria, ruled by Sennacherib destroyed and burned Babylon, and killed nearly all its inhabitants. 200 years later, the Babylonians under Nabopolassar, united with Medes under Cyaxares and hordes of Scythians from Caucasus destroyed Assyrian Niniveh. The Persians destroyed Babylon, which after Nebuchadrezzar was the biggest and most opulent city in the antiquity; Romans

demolished the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The Arabs converted Christian churches to mosques (as they do with Aya Sofia in Constantinople/Istanbul); the Christians did the contrary in Spain. Christians even destroyed systematically the traces of the Inca and Aztec culture in Latin America. The Nazis destroyed Jewish synagogues in Europe, and intended to leave only the Altneu-Shul Synagogue in Prague as an anthropologic museum of the 'extinguished' Jewish race.

To be unbiased I must stress that even the present day Jewish fanatically religious elements in Israel are no better. Their procedure is exactly as in the 'classical' approach – what does not belong to Jewish culture may (*must!*) be destroyed. A serious obstacle to the progress of archeology in Israel is the opposition of these circles to excavations in sites where Jews have *perhaps* been buried. The discovery of one human bone is sufficient for them to declare the place as a Jewish cemetery, and mobilize tens and hundreds of zealots to pray there and obstruct the excavation work. Only if the researchers succeed in demonstrating that the bones are not of Jewish origin may the work continue. The same people who worry so much about one little Jewish bone have not the least scruple about demolishing prehistoric sites, and Phoenician, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, or other ruins, wells and tombs. On the contrary, they will do it with the enthusiastic uplift of fulfilling a big duty.

#### *"Humanistic" Way of Dying*

For dead people the way they died makes no difference, but as for those who killed them – they have a deep moral significance. Moral controversies endure about the death penalty. In the past, all society recognized as legal and moral the execution of a criminal who acted against the society's integrity (treachery, rebellion, murder, etc.). Even religions used to condemn to death heretics and non-observers of divine commandments. The way of carrying out verdicts differs according to the people, countries, religions, and the crime. The death penalty is another peculiarity of human beings; I do not believe that another creature has the ability to judge and condemn.

Animals kill for eating, or for defense. They do not have the sense of vengeance of ethnical adversity, other exclusive human faculty. I am not aware of other creatures, apart from human beings, who torture in order to inflict deliberately severe

physical and mental pain. Use of torture to obtain information may be explained (personally I cannot justify any sort of torture), but how can you classify torture, which its only objective is to cause victims to suffer and die in extreme pain? Civilized countries have tried to ‘humanize’ the death penalty, as if such a thing was possible. For a more ‘humanitarian’ killing, the French Revolution adopted a machine named guillotine in honor of its inventor, the physician Guillotine (a popular legend tells that he himself had the opportunity to verify the efficiency of his creation). The use of a handkerchief to blind the eyes of the victim who stands in front of a firing squad is other attempt at ‘humanity’...

The impact of ‘humanization’ (= to make ‘human’, i.e., benevolent, gentle, refined, tolerant...) on human conduct, despite zigzags and regressions, is a categorical permanent process in history that affects even such an activity as war. Rules of fair play developed in the jousts between knights in Middle Ages have influenced sport and effected even in conduct of war between countries. A series of international conventions tried to humanize and codify the conduct of armies in war, deciding what is ‘legal’ and what is ‘criminal’ even in war, such as the use of gas, biological weapons and so on. The Geneva Convention established the code of conduct towards prisoners. A decisive step on war humanization was the institution of the Red Cross, adopted with local variations by all countries in the world. Amnesty, a voluntary international society with branches in most countries, began to act in twentieth century, investigating – and annually reporting on – infractions of human rights, trying to intervene by the mobilization of world public opinion, a very important factor, with doubtful efficiency.

No war can be ‘human’, even if a war that is a ‘just’ war for those who started it; it certainly will not be ‘just’ for those who defend themselves. As already remarked, Hitler fabricated an incident in the Polish border in order to give a formal legitimization for the invasion on Poland,<sup>17</sup> because the war rules in relation to neighbor countries (not always observed) are rooted in the public’s mind.

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<sup>17</sup> See references to *causus belli* in former paragraphs in this chapter.

*Rules of Internal Conflicts*

Internal conflicts have no rules at all. Rebels are not 'enemies' for the official government, but 'criminals'. None of the belligerents observes any rules. Everything is permissible. The struggle between different ethnic or religious groups may reach incredible levels of cruelty and mutual hate. Several countries intervened with massive forces in the Russian Revolutions and the Spanish Civil War, but usually external countries do not interfere directly in civil wars. Thus, one side may freely massacre the other, and vice versa. In the ending of Gulf War, the American President Bush called on the Iraqi people to rise against Saddam Hussein's regime. Two groups (the Kurds in the north and the Shia sect in the south) accepted the invitation and rebelled. The repression of Saddam Hussein in both regions was immediate and with a brutality without precedent. More than one million Kurds have to flee to the mountains, where a hard winter awaited them. No one supported the rebels, even not Turkey and Iran, countries with ethnical relations to the rebels. Only when the pain of these people shocked public opinion across the world, due to its impact in televised news, did the Red Cross and the United Nations sent help – medicines, food and garments, but they gave them no military means to defense themselves. They respected Iraq's 'internal problem'.

Since 'internal problems' belong to the country's sovereignty, every country is free to do what it wants with its minorities. In South Africa, the black minority is the population's majority. Nations declared (ref. 1994) an external economical embargo in order to pressure South Africa to change its apartheid policy, but did not intervene and did not give direct support to the black peoples' movements. Since every country has problems with its own minorities, there are not many chances that they will agree to an international convention for codifying minorities' rights, and define legal and democratic ways to realize their specific aims and change their political status. This impasse drove minorities to terrorism, as the only way to obtain autonomy and independence. A terrorist act as a fighter for his people, a hero, but for the authorities he is a criminal, and the treatment he receives goes according to this status. Hardly any international accord protects him. Terrorists have no moral restrictions but although they have perhaps practiced terrible murders, when they are in prison

Amnesty acts to avoid 'inhuman' treatment and the Red Cross tries to ameliorate their physical conditions.

As an Israeli, I am not in a favorable position to discuss the problem of Palestinian terrorism, bearing in mind that many members of our present Government (ref. 1990), like the Prime Minister himself, Mr. Itzhak Shamir, belonged to former terrorist groups. They are still deeply convinced that their terrorism expelled the English Mandate from Palestine and created the State of Israel. I do not agree to them, just as I do not agree with the Palestinian terrorists' methods of obtaining their 'legitimate rights'. Here and now is not the correct place to discuss this matter.

#### *Rights of Winner*

The 'winner's rights', a variation of the 'rights of the powerful', a deeply rooted notion, in modern life has reached in sport its highest glorification. I do not refer to sport activities designed to improve personal physical fitness, but to the professional sporting competitions such as football, baseball, tennis, horse races etc., which inflame and grip vast crowds. As in the Olympic games in the past, people venerate their 'champions'. 'Victory' inspires their enthusiasm until they achieve sensory inebriation; 'defeat' desolates them like mourning...

In a conversation with an American friend about life, winning, and succeeding, I quoted the Chinese philosopher Lin-Yu-Tang, saying, 'Moral victory is important – but not enough'. 'My dear', observed my friend, 'victory is not *an* important thing: victory is *the only* important one!'

The tribal 'rights of the powerful' received a modern legitimacy in the doctrine of the free market – non-intervention in the market price. This system – freedom to sell and buy by means of supply and demand – has his origin from the idea that free competition will establish a real price. In reality, as in all competitions, the strong party wins. As it happens among fish, the larger eats the smaller and at least the leviathans remain the only patrons of the market. In the market, not the strongest *physically*. Admiration and respect for the winner is at the hearth of the American dream. Notwithstanding, even in capitalistic America, where the free market is a fundamental conception, the state has recoiled before the last step and legislated a series of laws against cartels and monopolies to soften complete domination by the strongest firms.

*Modern Collective Instincts*

The tribal influence upon the modern individual flows into two main channels: individual instincts (like the ‘rights of the powerful’ discussed in the former paragraphs) and the collective instincts, which will be discussed subsequently.

The basis of the collective instincts is commitment to the tribe. In modern society, where tribal glue amongst people disappeared, nation and ethnic affiliations have taken its place. Patriotism presupposes love and devotion to the homeland, and a readiness to defend it. If you look carefully, you will see this definition fits the relation of the primitive human being to his tribe (the readiness to defend it), with the addition of ‘love’. Love is a modern contribution, because the tribe did not demand it. The tribe was a precise concept with not doubts about its physical parameters, so the mutual relation between the tribe and its members was sharp and clear. Homeland – is it so precise?

*Patriotism*

What links American born in Texas to the one born in Alaska, Philadelphia or Harlem? The same homeland, although they have different ethnics, religion, birth place and so on. The modern concept of homeland is something hazy: a common flag and a common hymn. In brief: myths, national myths.

While patriotism expresses love for the fields, for the valleys, and for the mountains of the land, it is poetic and romantic. It is even sublime and fits with the finest human feelings. The problems begin with the tribal aspect of the patriotism, the ‘devotion’, and the readiness to defend (the country, the homeland?). Defend it against whom? The thousands of American soldiers who fought and dead in Vietnam were certainly patriots, but Vietnam never threatened the existence of United States. Have soldiers who exposed their life in the Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia and other areas of conflict in the world did it for patriotism?

The step from humanistic and pretty values of patriotism to the ugly, brutal and chauvinist ones is closer than the span between life and death. Nobody is able to precise exactly where the limit between them lies.

Racism is the extreme form of ugly patriotism, where race takes the place of homeland and country. The devotion to the race does not even need any background of menace. All other races are perilous enemies, and a racist is on permanent alert to

fight against them. In the level of ethnic conflicts, rationalism and logic have no place; compromise is impossible. Brutality and bestiality may reach incomprehensible proportions.

#### *Sexual Elements in Racism*

Psychologists have found sexual elements in racism (as they do it in everything). This is quite reasonable, because improvement of a race implicates reproduction. The supremacy of a species (race) depends ultimately of its widespread development on the one hand, and the prevention of the propagation of the other races on the other hand. In biological terms: how do you spread your race's spermatozoa, and at the same time protect your race from strange spermatozoa. I read arguments that the Negro slavery regime in the United States persisted for so many years not only because of economical factors, but also because of the white man's dread of the black macho male. The same white man, who perfectly understands his sexual right to rape black slave girls, and beget them children, could not support the idea that a black man might fertilize a white woman. It is not coincidence that eight out of ten Negroes killed by lynching were accused of touching white women. In the same period, no white man was judged for raping black girls, a very common 'natural' practice. The psychological explanation: the white man has to spread his superior race and keep it from contamination by the black man.

In past times, soldiers brought as a trophy from their military expeditions enslaved wives and concubines. I have not psychological knowledge enough to analyze how the American population received wives and children brought by American soldiers from Vietnam. If American white women would bring back Vietnamese husbands, would they be received with the same complacency? I am not sure...

#### *Miscegenation*

Miscegenation (free mixed marriages of different races, naturalization or religion) may occur with naturalness only where reciprocal respect prevails on both sides, especially if they belong to the same economical and social range. A mixed marriage may well succeed where the environment is ripe for such an event and accept it as perfectly normal. The pioneers of integration in a complex population are on one hand the very



poor and simple people, and on the other the intellectual ones. In the middle, the process is slower.

In Israel, marriage between pairs of different Jewish origins is improving constantly, as soon as both sites reach a similar economical and social level. The Zionist ideology encourages mixing and integrating the Jewish population. The future is encouraging, but the actuality is far from being satisfactory.

Marriage between Jews and Arabs are rare. Sometimes Jewish women of humble origin fall in love with Arabs workers; they break the relationship with the family, adopt Islam, and go away to live with the husband's family in an Arab village. During the twentieth century, some fifty and more Jewish women did this. I do not know about Arab girls who married Jewish men. Perhaps this will happen in the future, because just recently Arab girls have come from their villages to study in Israeli universities or to work in Israeli firms, so some closer contact between Arab girls and Jewish boys is now possible. Lately, thanks the high number of foreign workers in Israel from Asia, Africa, and Western Europe, mixed marriage with Jewish women is increasing. Personally, I am not an enthusiastic adept of miscegenation; but if we are honest, we cannot stop nature. In the Diaspora, the social and economical situation of Jews is being more and more amalgamated with the non-Jewish environment. The same will certainly happen in Israel when the Arab minority will free itself from prejudices on one hand, and progress towards the same socio-economical level as the Jewish population on the other. The intellectual, professional and economical gap between both populations in Israel – Jews and Arabs – is becoming smaller. The process is slow but sure.

#### *Remained Tribal Norms*

I am not able to enumerate all the tribal norms that have remained until today. The cases I pointed out in this chapter are only a few examples of their deep influence. In next chapters I will point out unacceptable tribal behaviors and prejudices in modern life. 'Human' is the reverse of 'animal'; 'to be more humanitarian' implicates care for other beings' feelings. Ever since our primitive savage stage, humankind has been in a permanent process of 'humanization' (or so I think!). Is it possible to improve our human nature? I will dare to discuss some conjectures about this.

Unfortunately, violence accompanies this book from its introductory paragraphs until the last chapter like a shadow, exhibiting the dark side of human nature. Maybe the emphasis I have put on to this aspect distorts the reality, presenting a picture as parabolic and hyperbolic mirrors do – a thin high image, or a thick large one. Mirrors may distort the image of pictures, but always reflects an existing reality.

Personally, I can affirm that in all the time I have lived in Israel – over half a century – I have never been involved in, nor have I witnessed any act of physical violence. The kibbutz condemns the use of physical violence so strongly that it is quite impossible to conceive such occurrence in the kibbutz. Since the kibbutz appeared almost a century ago, in all kibbutzim together less than ten homicides have occurred. There is no police within the kibbutz.

For more than ten years, when I went to work in Tel-Aviv, I was never witness of any act of violence. Moreover, during my military service, although I took part in four wars as a combatant soldier, I never participated in a battle and never shot one single bullet at a human target. The absence of physical violence is the salient characteristic I have with my family, my friends, and the society in which I live. I have encountered conflicts, stress, verbal debates, anger, anxiety, but never physical violence. If this is my personal experience, why does violence have such a representative role in my thoughts about human beings in this book? This fact needs an explanation.

Looking back in time, my kibbutz at its first years looked like a fool's paradise. We started with a tented camp, without electricity. We had to bring drinking water in barrels from a neighboring kibbutz. We had nothing besides our dreams for the future. We worked hard and debated constantly about the new society we would build. In this period, our problems engaged us so strong that we were not alert enough to what was happening around us. After the Second World War, the world started the steps to the 'New World'. At the fifties, the State of Israel began an intensive program of building and development. We lived in an atmosphere of creating a better society, and did not have a precise picture of what really was happening in the outside world. The emergence of Europe and Far East from ruins, the economical development of Western Europe and Japan were hopeful and encouraging. What we knew about the occurrences in Eastern Europe was more guesswork than objective information. In fact, at this period our sources of

information were not developed. We had only a few radios in the entire kibbutz, and the four-page newspaper we received was a serious and solid journal. It reported then about criminal events, accidents and sports at less than the minimum. As I said, we lived in a fool's poor paradise, but we were happy...

*Our Standards Grew*

Step by step standards in kibbutz grew: every one has now a good radio, stereo, television, computer, and receives daily 60 colored pages of newspaper (on Friday and holidays, twice as much), bursting with full detailed reports about every sensational crime, assault and accident in the world. The television brings into our homes, in full color and in real time, every atrocity and abomination happening in everywhere. As a counterbalance for the ugliness, there is also a world of pleasure, luxury, wonderful villas, yachts, millionaires, stars, playboys and celebrities. The press reveals the 'very good' and the 'very bad' people, the extreme groups who are a small portion of humankind; what happens to the large masses of ordinary people has no public interest...

This overflow of information causes two main effects in the people's mind. On one hand, there is a loss of proportion. The world we live in seems to be 'Sodom and Gomorra', or alternatively a huge orgy. We became apathetic. The killing of thirty-six Jews in the pogrom in Kishiniev (Russia) in 1903 changed Jewish history and become a landmark for Jewry, owing to the traumatic shock that it caused. Zionism was born there. What repercussion do the present reports about hundreds of thousands of tragedies in Africa, Asia and Europe have? We react to terrible scenes of famine, suffering and bloodshed affecting whole populations with the same indifference we give to Western gunfights and gangster movies' gun battles. We allow ourselves to look on television as if we were observing an oil painting in an art exhibition. We have acquired immunity.

Why do we laugh when a person falls down? The usual explanation is because it has not happened to us! Perhaps the satisfaction that the horror is not happening to us motivates our interest in it, and our interest in the *dolce vita* is a secret hope that it might happen to us... Modern means of communication distort our feelings, both of indifference and passion.

In the kibbutz, the present management thirty to forty-years-old generation, born in the television era, is far from the 'ideals for a better society' aspirations of their parents. They are

pragmatic, efficient, less concerned for the destiny of their fellow creatures, and free from sentimentalism (regarding what does not concern their own private family). Even in the 'protected' and closed greenhouse of the kibbutz, the power of electronic communication has infiltrated its poison drop by drop.

#### *Tribal and Ethnic Conflicts*

Meanwhile, here are some partial conclusions about the tribe. In mathematical terms, I would resume the tribal behavior thus: two tribes + one territory = violence.

In the tribal formation, every tribe is an ethnic unit. There is no possibility of compromise between tribes. There may be a coalition of several tribes against common enemies, while one tribe respects their others' territories. Where the walls of tribalism fall, people of different ethnic origins can cohabit within the same place, no matter if it is a country, a town, a quarter, or a single house. Where traces of tribal instincts have remained, brutal violence will explode. This situation reminds me of a cat and a dog living together in a house who are used to drinking milk from the same dish. Such an idyllic picture is only possible if the dog and the cat lose their 'tribal-ethnic' instincts.

Only strict control (police, army) can maintain peace in areas of 'tribal' and ethnic conflicts. This assertion is true of Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, London and Berlin, just as like as it was within whole empires like the British and the Ottoman. The famous *Pax Romana* is another good example. If this control weakens, brutal violence may explode. We are now (ref. 1990-95) witnesses of the terrible ethnical conflicts that exploded with the collapse of URSS and Yugoslavia dictatorial regimes. The mighty USA and the UNO are not capable of stemming the ethnic bloodshed in Bosnia and Rwanda (ref. 1995).

Israel is a melting pot of Jewish groups of a diversity of origins and traditions: Ashkenazim (Central Europe origin), Sepharadim (descendents of the Jews of Spain), Yemenite, and Moroccan, Iraqi, Persian, Falashi (Ethiopia), Bnai-Brith (India), Gruzini (Caucase), and more; and within every one of these groups are sub-groups. Among the Ashkenazi, for instance, the gap between Polish, Ukrainian, German, Romanian, Latvian and Hungarian Jews is enormous.

Jews are perhaps the most heterogeneous ethnic people in the world. The conviviality of so many 'ethnic tribes' in one so

a little territory, Israel, is not an easy task. The rate of the Jewish population in Israel is of primary importance for the subsistence of the Jewish nation. Zionism encourages eagerness to absorb more and more Jewish immigrants from all the Diaspora and education for *kibbutz galuot* (gathering of the exiles); but this is not so easy in close residential vicinity...<sup>18</sup>

The integration of new immigrants within established population is a complex problem, even if the veterans are people of the same origin who arrived only 10 years before. In order to introduce new immigrants in new dwellings, the government has sometimes to use pressure and even offer police protection. New immigrants have to confront the same obstructions in schools and kindergarten. Tribal instincts are strong, even in a modern, enlightened, and democratic society such as Israel is today.

The Israeli army is almost a positive exception. This is no surprise: traditionally, the armies were always conglomerates of soldiers and mercenaries of the most diverse origins. Serving and fighting together brings them, especially in the combat units, to interdependence and cooperation as comrades-in-arms. The suicide of some Jews of Ethiopian origin during their military service suggests that even in the Israeli army integration is sometimes problematic.

Israel is not only a conglomerate of Jews. There are also minorities of Arabs (Muslims and Christians of all sects), Druze, Czerkaze, Bedouin, and others. Formally, they are equal citizens in the country, with full right to keep their home language and traditions, and educate their children according to them. Arabic is the second official language in the country. Apart from matters concerning the army<sup>19</sup> and the national security, no official or political restrictions limits minorities – they can study in all universities and perform all tasks, including membership in the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), the Supreme Tribunal and all governmental departments, excluding those concerning to security and defense of the country. In theory, even through a really good relationship and

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<sup>18</sup> A current joke: the Israeli yearns for *aliya* (Jews immigration), but repudiates the *olim* (Jews immigrants).

<sup>19</sup> Constitutional discrimination regarding to military service does not exist in Israel. All citizens have exactly the same duties and rights. The army does not yet convoke Arab minorities, but mobilizes anyone who voluntarily presents himself.

respect towards all minorities exists in Israel, only in Jerusalem, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Nazaret, Lydda, and Ramle, do Jews and Arabs live in the same town, and then not together, but in separated areas. It is still too early for an Israeli Arab citizen to buy a house in a Jewish prestige residential area in Tel Aviv or build a villa in Cesarea (the Israeli Beverly Hills). This will be happen in the future.<sup>20</sup> Even in the democratic USA Jews and other minorities, themselves millionaires and famous personalities, have not integrated easily to elite zones.

Violence and tribal instincts will continue to be object for discussions in the following chapters.

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<sup>20</sup> This prophecy, written in 1995, is beginning to happen: in February 2000 the Supreme Court confirm the 'right of every Israeli citizen to reside where he wants', forcing a Jewish municipality to allow an Arab Israeli to buy a dwelling in the village. Extremist Jews, vehement fighters against this right in the past, are now using this precedent to justify and legalize their own efforts to buy places and establish Jews in genuine Arab zones in Jerusalem, Hebron and the West Bank. A two edged sword!

The right wing in the Knesset has succeeded in 2002 to pass a law prohibiting the selling of Jewish national land to non-Jews. Will the Supreme Tribunal react?

### 3. ORGANIZATION SCHEME OF THE KIBBUTZ

*Dichotomic Kibbutz apparatus. How does the Kibbutz function? A discussion upon the individual's involvement with the whole community, and the eternal conflict hierarchy vs. democracy.*

#### *Exhaustive Dissertation*

A complete, extensive and exhaustive dissertation about the kibbutz organization requires a monograph that would be greater than the whole book we intend to write. It would analyze the development of the kibbutz administration from its beginning (circa 1920), then follow along its steep and winding path, in order to cover and explain the changes. No doubt, it would be a fascinating trip to someone with such an interest, but in the present chapter, we must content ourselves with a much more modest purpose. The first chapter has already told how, owing to financial difficulties and fast transformations in the national economy unforeseen and unexpected changes are happening these days in the kibbutz life (ref. 1990). In contrast to normal times, when the kibbutz constantly moved forward in a predetermined direction, we are now going through a phase of uncontrollable structural mutations. Therefore, it is impossible to infer, even by recording how we have reached the current situation, how tomorrow will be. What now is 'the last word' will shortly be an anachronism.

I confess I have debated with myself on how best to approach the subject, and at last decided to choose the simplest and safest way: I will try to describe my own kibbutz, which I know the best, *in its last stable situation* – let us say, the 1995 model. The scheme is more or less similar for all kibbutzim, and at least it's a truthful one.

The first evident characteristic of the kibbutz administration is its division into two spheres: one concerns the farm (which includes factories and all work areas); and the other relates to all additional activities. There is, obviously, a permanent contact and interaction between both spheres, but each one is an autonomous 'kingdom' with its own 'kings' and 'courts'.

#### *Economical Sphere*

We will begin with the economical sphere, a pyramid in reality, which has the *Rakaz Ha'meshek* (the Farm Controller, the Administrator) in its vertex. His election is for a two years

period, but the terms generally expand to three, or four years at the most. He is chosen among the 'directors' of the several economical sectors of the whole farm, and is someone who succeeded in his job and displayed high managerial qualities. Before taking over his new duties, it is usual to send him for a one-year instruction at the Kibbutz Administrator's Seminary. His functions are setting out the budget for the coming year and a pilot program for the following years; the follow-through of the program's execution by the several economic branches; the determination of the economical policy and the managing of the Economics Committee; the input and output control of the kibbutz, and so on. In one sentence I would define his job by saying that all thing in the kibbutz, which ultimately relates to money relates to him'.

Following the Administrator in the economical hierarchy comes the *Guizbar* (Treasurer), usually elected for a two years period. This person in the past was kind of a Foreign Office Administrator for all activities outside the kibbutz, from the representation of the kibbutz's interests in the national and the Zionist institutions to the acquisition of all products that the kibbutz might need, down to hiring of the movie film to be screened on Friday evenings... Today we can say he became a financier, which a job that is concentrated exclusively in obtaining credit and money from banks and other institutions, in order to finance the kibbutz's activities. Other people carry out the other tasks. The high specialization required by this job is acquired in a six-month special seminar on Theoretical Finance for Kibbutzim.

The third person in this hierarchy is the *Rakaz-Ha'Avodah* (Manpower Controller), responsible for all working aspects in kibbutz. He directs the Staff Committee, a team of five or more persons entrusted with several tasks. The daily *Sidur-Ha'Avodah* (work schedule, where every member is designated to a certain work) is in the responsibility of the *Sadran-Ha'Avodah* (Work Manager), which changes every three or four months. The work in the educational sector is very complex and needs many people for all tasks. If someone is absent, another must replace him. For this reason, a special person controls the daily work force in this sector. In fact, every branch and sector in the kibbutz appoints one of its members as being responsible for the internal work schedule, and he collaborates with the overall Work Manager. When there are volunteers or other



temporary groups in the kibbutz, one of them is assigned as their 'agent' before the *sadran*.<sup>1</sup>

Most people rest on Saturday (the day of rest in Israel) and holidays, but work that must be done on these days – such as work with the cattle, poultry, the communal restaurant, etc. – is performed in rotation, and another member of the Committee is responsible for this agenda.

The Administrator, the Treasurer and the Manpower Controller are the triumvirate who manage the economic life of the kibbutz. They must act in close cooperation in order to succeed. In addition to the Staff Committee, there may be a Farm Committee, with ten or more members, composed by representatives of the main economic sectors and branches of the kibbutz, plus the kibbutz Secretary. The Farm Committee is supposed to be the economic powerhouse of the kibbutz, but is not. Instead of being the supreme economic institution in kibbutz, which denominates the Administrator, inspect and instruct him, in fact what happens is the opposite. The Administrator, elected by the General Assembly of the kibbutz, is the one who proposes the members who constitute the Committee, which acts upon his direction. We may compare the authority of the Administrator to that of the General Electric president, with one outstanding difference: above the GEC president, there is a board, which appoints him and instruct and inspects his activities; above the Kibbutz Administrator there is no such thing.<sup>2</sup> Discussion about the problem of inspection and criticism in the kibbutz – later.

In certain circumstances there may be formed an ad hoc economical committee for special eventualities. For instance, when the water quota is limited, and cannot satisfy all requirements for irrigation, a Water Committee will determine the water distribution.

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<sup>1</sup> All in this paragraph has completely changed meantime (ref. 2002)! Every member in the kibbutz is now theoretically responsible for his work place and any *sadran* is not more; most members work nowadays outside the kibbutz. Instead, the former Staff Committee, which worried to find workplaces for the members, a new Manpower Committee selects people for the jobs demanded by the diverse sectors in the kibbutz.

<sup>2</sup> Most kibbutzim have repaired this anomaly. Nowadays (ref. 2002), almost the kibbutz elects a directory, which is above de *Rakaz Hameshek* and fulfils the functions of the former Farm Committee.

All functions that do not belong to the economical sphere are included in a wide parallel pyramid of Committees and Subcommittees, in which the *Mazkir* (Secretary) figures at the top. In our kibbutz, and in many others, the Secretary is in fact two Secretaries who act together in cooperation and divide the tasks between them. In general, the kibbutz tries to elect a young person besides an older one, a man and a woman. Mostly they are elected for a two years period, and every year one of them is replaced.

The Secretaries supervise the kibbutz life. They are the last and highest personal tribunal for the members' solicitations in every field. The only higher authority is the *Mazkirut* (Secretariat), and above all, the General Assembly.

The Secretary convokes the General Assembly once a week and every member have the right to partake (actively or passively) on these meetings. They may freely express opinions, put forward propositions, and defend their positions. In the past, a show of hands decided all questions, but since the introduction of secret vote, ballots resolve most questions. Besides functioning as a parliament of debates, the General Assembly is the supreme court of the kibbutz, which determines the inner regulations of the kibbutz, accepts new members, and elects yearly all the committees and sub-committees to cover all facets of the kibbutz. Let us briefly investigate the main committees.

The Social Committee supervises the distribution of the Social Maintenance Budget. In the past, this Committee had a very important role in the kibbutz, as it was the trustee of the whole budget for its members' personal needs and allocated all the items (garments, shoes, furniture, domestic tools, etc.) for distribution among the members. When the Committee resolved to supply refrigerators, every family received one. This process took several years to be completed, and until it ended, they did not start making distribution of other items – watches, curtains, ovens, televisions, telephones and so on. When the Committee resolved to provide an item and the budget was not enough for a complete distribution, it was effected in accordance with the criterion of *vetek* (seniority). In a later paragraph, I will reveal what *vetek* is.

This Committee appoints its members for several jobs. For instance, persons in charge of watches, tickets (the kibbutz covers train and bus transportation expenses) and other services. An important task is the one that organizes trips abroad – the expenses in this sector are very high, and the kibbutz could not

at all times agree to everyone's demands. A sophisticated formula considering several parameters (age, former travels, etc.), fixed the member's turn to travel. The privatization of the personal budgets in 2000 brought about the dispersion this Committee, since the member began to decide by himself what to do with his money.

The Personal Committee handles personal requests and problems, and discusses fundamental social and ideological questions (to formulate regulations or change them). The way the Committee acts may vary considerably. For confidential questions, such as a private personal problem, an ad hoc subcommittee composed by one member of the Committee (usually its chief) plus one of the kibbutz Secretaries will be enough. For important questions, the Committee may organize all members into small debate forums, giving to everyone the opportunity to hear the question and express his opinion. Many persons prefer to partake actively in intimate circles; they do not dare to speak in the General Assembly, in spite of their full right to do so.

#### Educational Net

The Educational Committee controls all aspects of children's lives, from their birth until they reach eighteen years old or complete secondary school. It sets up several subcommittees, in order to cover all aspects of educational rearing of children in the kibbutz. The main subcommittees are the Pedagogic Committee and the special committees for each age range (babies, kindergarten, primary and secondary school). The kibbutz gives twelve years of learning to all its children. Children who are not able to achieve the standard learning levels receive individual support or learn in daily appropriate external schools. For the first seven years, the children learn (usually) in a primary school in the kibbutz. Due to economical convenience, kibbutzim formed neighborhood partnerships to run a jointly managed primary school. The secondary studies, requiring a big staff of teachers and broader learning conditions, led kibbutzim from the same region to found a common college, which functioned as a boarding school the past, but recently a section of the pupils return in the afternoon to their kibbutz.

In general, the Educational Committee has the following subcommittees:

The Tender-age Committee treats children's affairs before kindergarten. A skilled person runs this committee for this age, in close contact with the children's physician.

Primary School Directory administers the Primary School, from the first grade to the sixth. Besides the regular learning program, the children may receive courses of personal 'enrichment' as music, dancing (folk dances, ballet) and sport (karate, judo, basketball, athletics...). Exceptionally talented children may participate on special courses held for such children in universities, often during vacations.

The Pedagogic Committee is responsible for the educational aspects of the Primary School, including the teaching, the learning programs and the follow-up of the children's progress.

The Special Education Committee is concerned with the problematic child, who is not able to learn within the regular learning framework and needs special school; or pupils who receive support with extra lessons from private teachers. Whenever possible, the kibbutz prefers to send children who require special schools to daily ones, so they continue to live socially together with all other children in kibbutz. This committee acts in close cooperation with children psychologists.

The Secondary Committee is responsible for the children who are attending the Secondary School. Since the Secondary School is generally an autonomic regional consortium of several kibbutzim, all educational aspects are under the administration of the school. This Committee represents the kibbutz and the concerns of its pupils.

The Advanced Studies Committee is the address for all members who want to learn beyond school. The range of demands and aspirations is wide, but the budget and means are limited. The kibbutz enables advanced studies for a percentage of its members (which in a year can reach in rich kibbutzim up to ten per cent of the members). Once a year, the Committee selects a list of the candidates and the General Assembly resolves by voting to compound the list of students. They are exempt from working and devote all their time to learn on the kibbutz's expense, for one, two or more years. In the past, there was an evident preference for professional studies, which contributed directly to the kibbutz, such as teachers, nurses, technicians, etc. Nowadays, the test for a direct benefit to the kibbutz is no longer a decisive one; the student's personal inclinations lead his study. Today a member may learn Archeology, Philosophy, Medicine, Alternative Medicine, Economy, Astrology, Astronomy, Photography, Musical Composition, Japanese Literature, Sanskrit Language, and anything else someone can think of. If the kibbutz public

opinion recognizes a member's competence and vocation, he has a good chance to study in his field of interest.<sup>3</sup>

The Kibbutz Movement established several educational institutions for advanced studies, including Seminars, High Schools and Colleges. Formerly intended for kibbutz members, they grew, developed, and absorbed many non-kibbutz students, who eventually became the majority of students. Some of these institutions hold small university units authorized to confer academic degrees.

Apart from these institutions, many Popular Regional Universities also function in the form of evening classes, offers a range of subjects to improve hobbies or intellectual interest: macramé, ikebana, sewing, needlework, ceramics, vitreous enamel, glassware, and other crafts; literature, including Hebrew, Arab, English and other languages; social, economic and other sciences. Generally, the classes are held during the winter season, once or twice a week, and the rate of participants may reach twenty percent.

Many students prefer to learn in a common university or other high institute. The University of Haifa maintains an 'Institute for Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea'.

Recently a new scheme allows every kibbutz child who completes his or her military service to have a higher education in addition to the regular student quota. The present path for young people is more or less the following: three years of military service (extending up to four or five years, if he or her is an officer, and more if he or she is an aviator), two or more years of globetrotting (to the United-States, South-America, or East Asia), one year of work in the kibbutz (in order to re-establish the links to the kibbutz life) and three-four years of high studies.

This 'path' means that most kibbutz children begin to live in the kibbutz as effective members at the age of thirty years, after a disconnection of ten years and more. Their contact with the kibbutz during the five years period prior to the military service was weak, because they studying in external school (the Regional College). The explanation by this way the high rate of kibbutz children who leave the kibbutz will be a shallow

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<sup>3</sup> This was the approach until 1995. With the privatization of the members' budgets, most of the items passed to the private account of the member and his personal control. The kibbutz adopted new policies for members' high learning. See information about special arrangements for young people.

argumentation, but the long absence from home precisely during the most important period of personality building is certainly not a positive factor for linking youth to the kibbutz.

#### Cultural Enterprises

In the past, the Culture Committee was one of the most important and active institutions in the kibbutz. It was one of the biggest committees, with eight, ten and more people; now the collective cultural activities are in a state of 'hibernation'. It is not very easy to explain why, because the complexity of the factors. Perhaps the ideological weakening has caused certain apathy. Perhaps because the little children sleep now in the houses of the parents', who must stay with them at the evenings? Perhaps because of the television and the Internet. Perhaps... I do not know exactly what happened, but the cultural activities have considerably weakened.

Every kibbutz tries to arrange cultural enterprises such as choirs, folk dances and theater ensembles, performing in the kibbutz at commemorations and cultural evenings. Some groups succeed in maintaining a tradition of continuous activities covering dozens of years, even reaching professional status. Individual singers, dancers and artists participate on national ensembles organized by the Kibbutz Movement. The kibbutzim theaters generally present avant-garde plays in kibbutzim, public halls and regional theaters. The orchestra, choir and dance ensembles of Kibbutz Federation mount good concerts and performances throughout the country and even abroad.

Important expressions of the cultural potential of the kibbutz are the artistic activities of individual members (musicians, composers, painters, writers, poets, photographers, artisans, etc.). Most of them are amateurs who dedicate every free moment to their hobby, with admirable perseverance (I dedicated 10 years to write this book in my free time). Some even achieve a high artistic level, with good chances of becoming full-time professionals in their field. Many kibbutz members who began their career as a hobby became lecturers in seminaries and universities.

The kibbutz encourages and supports hobbies as a useful occupation. One of the main functions of the Cultural Committee is to provide budgets and free-days for supporting hobbies and individual cultural activities. In my kibbutz, an old shed, a former hen house, was adapted into an 'Artistic Crafts Center' with personal ateliers for members who paint, sculpt, etc. I have given an accurate activities' outline of artists, artisans, sportsmen and exceptional individuals in the kibbutz,

and the support they can receive; the picture is a truthful one, but it's not ideal. The way people express themselves is a *via dolorosa* all over the world, and the kibbutz is not an exception. Every step forwards requires obstinacy and exhaustive struggle; in this sector nothing is obvious. My kibbutz is very proud with our Arts Center, one of the first attractions for guests and tourists, but the nice rooms do not reveal how much sweat and tears have been poured into them.

#### Sport Activities

The Sport Committee encourages sporting activities in the kibbutz. We may define sport as a 'physical work for pleasure...' (This does not include the professional sportsmen; they may enjoy their work, as I enjoy mine, but what they do is 'work' and not 'sport').

It is reasonable to suppose that the public, who have ennobled the idea of work as a supreme target for human activities (the so called 'religion of work') will find an interest on sports, but this has not happened. Sport was not attractive for founders and the early builders of the kibbutzim. The first pioneers were perhaps too tired, and bigger worries than sporting activities occupied their minds. Only with the second and third generations has the interest in sports penetrated the kibbutz. The Kibbutz Movement has reached great achievements in volleyball and basketball, perhaps because these sports need smaller teams and do not require expensive sports grounds, at the beginning, at least. There were also good achievements in chess (a mind-sport...). Recently, many kibbutzim have built excellent swimming pools and sport halls (mostly for basket-ball and athletics), but sports practice is still a hobby for a few individuals, rather like painting and sculpture ... Where swimming pools exist, children swim like fish.

In the meantime, sport is a hobby for 'crazy' aficionados; we can find karate and judo teams, volleyball, basketball, football, driving, surfing, other similar sports, but only a few people practice high-level sport. We can find good but solitary athletes in the kibbutzim. At this point I want to underline with some pride that in my kibbutz, one of our 'children', with paralysis in both lower legs, is a distinguish athlete who obtained throughout twenty years *eight* gold medals for heavy weightlifting in Paralympics.

#### Health and Politics

Health is the sector in which the kibbutz revealed its best human solidarity. The concern of the kibbutz for its members' health and the assistance it affords them are of the highest level.

All members are assured in the main medical fund in the country. It maintains in the kibbutz a modern clinic with nurses and physicians (working part-time), and provides all necessary medical treatments in its hospitals and skilled clinics. Kibbutz members who have learned alternative medicine, cosmetics, pedicure, physiotherapy, etc. attend on interested members.

As for politics, the political activity in the kibbutz is not constant and uniform. During some periods (election times or other important political events), members are strongly enveloped in politics, and they spread political views in the neighborhood, and take part in political demonstrations. In the 'hot' political seasons, the Political Committee becomes very active in the organization of the members for various party activities.

Wahoo..., I did it!

Wahoo! I did it! I have sketched here, in a few strokes, an outline scheme of the kibbutz organization. The discussion about the Regulations of the Kibbutz in the Chapter 9 (What is natural in nature?) completes the description what a kibbutz is. The above list of committees does not cover all the possibilities. According to the specific needs of each individual kibbutz, there may be a variety of other committees, sub-committees and sub-sub-committees. Theoretically, the number of the committees' members may be greater than the number of the members of the kibbutz...

Even though it is supposed to be as objective and as precise as I could do it, the knowledge of this scheme does not yet confer on someone the title of 'Doctor on kibbutz organization'. However, it is comprehensive enough to enable a brief discussion about its operations, and provokes some musing for proceeding towards this book's target. I reiterate that the kibbutz is not the focus of this book, but only a test tube – the environment where I live and which I know the best. It serves me as an observation post for testing my suppositions and summing up my thoughts.

We know from books, pictures, movies and television that a variety of people, with a diversity of languages, colors, clothing, customs, dances and music populate the world. Equally well known is the mental diversity of these people and the variety of their social and psychological profiles.

We accept differences of external appearance, but inwardly we have the tendency to think that our ideas are the only admissible ones. The kibbutz, being a very specific society, with a different approach to almost every aspect of social life,



presents alternatives and substantiates – ‘natural’ for us, the kibbutz members – what may be unusual for other people. Originality gives me some advantages.

#### *The Vetek Parameter*

Let us begin, as promised, with some lines about the *vetek*.

*Vetek* (seniority), if not a kibbutz invention, it is at least a genuine kibbutz instrument. The composition of the *vetek*, package of the ‘points’ conferred to every member, differs from one kibbutz to another. The *vetek* of a member in our kibbutz, for instance, it is sum of points calculated by the following way: two points for every membership year in the kibbutz, plus the person’s age minus eighteen.<sup>4</sup> This sophisticated procedure is a secure tool for releasing intricate situations.

The *vetek* is an excellent bureaucratic (in the positive sense of this word!) mechanical technique for ranking every kibbutz member in a ‘line’ to receive in his turn articles and profits that the kibbutz cannot distribute all at once, from electric tools to dwellings and trips abroad. In accepting such a criterion, the community adopts an objective mathematical method, against which nobody complains. Everyone knows exactly before and after whom he will receive a set item. This system is very practical, especially for persons in charge of the distribution, because it avoids personal conflicts.

Nevertheless, as all good coins, the *vetek* has a second side. It rejects the kibbutz basic principle of ‘giving every one in accordance with his needs’! My present argumentation is only rhetoric, because I have no better alternative to propose. In any event, excluding a few very particular and specific cases, this method is acceptable as the least of all evils. In most of the areas where the *vetek* system applies, I do not see any inconvenience in it – what difference does it make if John receives a coat two months before Jimmy, or vice-versa? The question gets complicated if John, who is a bachelor studying outside the kibbutz, and spending only the weekend in the kibbutz, receives a more comfortable house one or two years before Jimmy, with a family of four children, just because he is one day older than him... This example is an extreme one, but

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<sup>4</sup> A member 56 years old who is 30 years a member in Kibbutz has 98 points *vetek*.

$[(30 \times 2) + (56 - 18)] = 98$

it's illustrative. The greatest advantages of the *vetek* are impartiality and lack of sentiment.

In the beginning, when the kibbutz was a 'commune of penurious' there were no problems about dividing equally among everyone the little there was. When there is nothing to divide, the system of division has no importance. Even underwear in those days was not private — any member that needed any clothes chose in the 'commune' (the communal deposit of washed garments) something that fitted him. The marking of personal clothing with numbers (a specific number for any family) represents to the kibbutz history what the invention of the wheel represents to human history... The introducing of a single electric kettle as a private appliance in a member's room (the member's home has then at best a single room!) provoked a big ideological discussion during the fifties. It was necessary to call for a General Conference of the Kibbutzim Federation to approve such a revolutionary step.

#### *Parity and Budgets*

I cannot avoid smiling when I recall our past, but the preoccupation with preserving parity in our communal society can be well understandably. In these early stages, people used to interpret partnership as uniformity and mechanical equality. Any deviation then seemed to be 'the beginning of the end' and the destruction of the collectivity. Many dozens of years will be necessary for basing the idea that 'collectivism' is a philosophical, conceptual and mental approach to social life, a question of relationships amongst people, mutual obligations and responsibilities, and not a mechanical organization. Within certain limits, it is possible to observe formal parity of personal goods, but not guarantee the collective integrity. Parity is a *result* of collectivism, and not its source. This book tries to demonstrate that the 'to be or not to be' query in social behavior is not mere formality and external sign, but a mental act, the faculty to discern between essential and secondary — according to this book's terminology, between primitive tribal preconceptions and modern humanitarian achievement.

Demand for greater freedom to choose led in the sixties of the former century to the system of coupons in the kibbutz. When the turn of a member to receive shoes, coats, shirts, furniture pieces, etc. arrived, he received a coupon to buy the specific object in a list of shops in which the kibbutz had a previous arrangement. The chronological details attempt to

illustrate how delayed and harsh was the passage from one phase to the other.

The next step was the budgeting of a global sum for a range of items (furniture, garments, kitchen appliances, etc.), without particularizing them. This step was not so simple and speedy as it may seem to be. Zealous 'fundamentalists' stated that every privatization undermines the kibbutz parity principle... Perhaps they were right: when a dam is bursting, who can foresee the end? Another question is if the dam is necessary at all.

'Appetite comes with eating' – the demand for a global sum budgeted for all items, without determining on how to spend it, was a logical immediate progression. Finally, the birth of the 'Personal Budget' closed the cycle. It includes the most kibbutz items designed for the maintenance of a family unit, but excluded education, health and public activities, which remain (for the time being...<sup>5</sup>) within the kibbutz's exclusive competence.

The annual sum that members received before 1990 for personal needs was ridiculous in comparison with the present one – it was barely enough for small gifts and expenses. Nowadays a member plans how to employ the budget in his disposal – better clothes, better furniture, a stereo system, an enhanced computer or a tour abroad. Control of parity in the kibbutz becomes more and more difficult as soon as the members' monetary resources increase. In practice, it is an impossible task. Although members are able to accumulate enough money to buy a car, most kibbutzim strictly forbid private motor vehicles and carriages (meantime...). The kibbutz resolves the delicate problem of members' locomotion by two ways: payment of all train and bus expenses and internal car rental at subsidized prices.

Concerning items as shirts, shoes, furniture, electric appliances, tours, etc., nobody knows his preferences better than the person himself does. The right and means to manage personal and familiar microcosms is a positive kibbutz development, as long as it does not affect health assistance, education, culture and other basic needs of all its members.

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<sup>5</sup> At 2003, the most advanced "new" kibbutzim have privatized to the personal budget also health and education.

Before proceeding the discussion about specific aspects and the dissertation about the kibbutz organization, how can we define the regime of the kibbutz: monarchy, oligarchy, monarchy, autocracy, democracy, mobocracy, ochlocracy, ergatocracy, bureaucracy, statocracy, gynocracy, plutocracy, technocracy? This is only a little list of '-archies' and '-cracies' appearing in the thesaurus... I am sorry, but none of them seems to fit the kibbutz. What do people (especially children) do when they have no exact word to express their thinking? They create it! That is exactly what I will do now. From 'dichotomy', used to introduce this Chapter, I propose 'dichotomicracy'.<sup>6</sup>

Two rulers governing an entity is not a kibbutz innovation: in the ancient Rome, there were duumvirates, and even triumvirates. But the kibbutz's two rulers are not like Rome's duumvirate. The duumvirate was a council of two persons that ruled together one unit (the Roman Empire), i.e. two heads for one body.

The kibbutz organizational apparatus is similar to a pair of inseparable Siamese twins: two bodies (each one with its own head) organically linked. Each 'head', the *Mazkir* (the Secretary) and the *Rakaz Ha'meshek* (the Administrator) rules his 'body'; every one is an independent function, but linked to the other one at several points by an organic relationship. They are inseparable. Obviously, these two bodies are not symmetrical – they differ in power and influence. There are kibbutzim whose economic body (agriculture and industry) prevail and are determinant; in other ones, the social factor is more important. The interaction between the social and economic aspects creates the kibbutz's physiognomy.

The relationship between the 'heads' takes place in a variety of ways. The main concourse is, of course, the dialogue, the personal conversation in private meetings, to clarify points and coordinate positions. The 'heads' have many other opportunities for confrontation and adaptation of their positions. In general, both participate in the main committees of the kibbutz: the *Mazkirut* (the secretariat), the *Vaadat Ha'Meshek* (Economics

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<sup>6</sup> Early geographers could not apply any known geometrical form to the Earth. They invented the "geode" (from Greek "geodes" = earth). So if we say, 'The Earth has a form of a geode,' this sentence means in plain English 'The Earth has the shape that the Earth has'. A pure tautology. I could do likewise and define the kibbutz as a "kibbutzcracy", but I prefer dichotomicracy – a nice word with a scientific sound.

Management Committee), and the factory's Board of Directors, etc. Another element that contributes to the cooperation between the two 'heads' is the *Guizbar* (the Treasurer) – a third 'head', but one without its own independent 'body' – which operates in close coordination with both the two main 'heads'.

I am unable to examine the process that brought about the development of our 'dichotomicracy', either because of a formal, calculated ideology, or a natural spontaneous evolution due to special historic conditions. As it is often the case, the truth is somewhere in middle of these two suppositions. Because of its uniqueness, the understanding of this process may be of sociological importance. In my opinion the system prevents what happened with almost all the duumvirates and triumvirates in classical Rome – the possibility that one of the 'heads' will eliminate the other, becoming the only 'dictator'. This comparison is of course allegoric. A situation in which one single person achieves a position allowing him to dictate his will and overrule anyone who interferes with him is not admissible in the kibbutz culture. Not as long as the kibbutz is a kibbutz.

In Rome, one 'body' being simultaneously lead by several 'heads' contradicts nature: one head is sufficient to one body. The kibbutz's organization is composed of two different 'bodies' of functions, indeed linked and integrated, but practically autonomous. The possibility that one 'head' could manage both 'bodies' is hypothetical but not a practical one. Since the creation of the Kibbutz Movement on the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been no awareness of such a case. If one of the heads absents itself, perhaps the other fulfills provisionally his function, but usually a third person will do it.

The balance between both organizational aspects of the kibbutz is the best guarantee for maintaining democracy. This contention may explain events now occurring in many kibbutzim.

#### 'Social Head' Factor

Although the 'social head' may be the predominant factor, it has seldom demonstrated any tendency to dominate the kibbutz. All its functions are concentrated on attending to members appeals and improving the social committees' activities. Their aim is to improve the standard of material and spiritual life in the kibbutz.

Whoever holds a key concentrates some power in his hands. However, in the kibbutz, the institutionalized system of distribution prevents this power from turning to a decisive

personal advantage. I am not aware of cases where people occupied with social aspects of the kibbutz have achieved personal advantages in exchange for their performance. Another important characteristic of the 'social' functions is their humanitarian aspect, and the fact that these activities are mostly voluntary. Social functions as 'a job' (a daily occupation), such as those undertaken by teachers, nurses, cooks, and other public servants, are respected and often honored, but seldom provide a drive to dominate.

Painters, poets, authors, artists, photographers, and many others in liberal professions in the kibbutz are in such a continuous struggle to justify their existence that they do not dream of dominating anything... All they aspire to is the possibility to dedicating themselves to their task.

After such a dramatic description of the 'social body', you probably expect that the 'economic body' is the diametrical opposite. I am sorry to disappoint you: the picture in this sector is not very different. Most divisions of the economic sector employ people in physical work.<sup>7</sup> Factories, cattle, poultry, planting, irrigation, cultivation, and harvesting occupy most of their time. Small teams operate the agricultural sections, two to ten people at most, who must work together in full cooperation in order to succeed in their task.<sup>8</sup> 'One for all and all for one' is not just a slogan in these sections, but an objective necessity, as it is the case with an airplane crew. The psychological environment in such sections is naturally one of cooperation, mutual consideration and a deep awareness of partnership.

#### Agricultural and Industrial Sections

An additional aspect of the 'classic' agriculture sections in the kibbutz is the decisive importance of efficiency and technological investment in determining profitability. Weather conditions (rain, winds etc.) have a weight; the harvest and the market price are always uncertain, but the effort, capability and dedication of the crew are decisive profitability factors. This fact gives the team motivation.

Concerning industry, the picture is different. The agriculture sector sends its produce to central regional (or national) cooperatives for sorting, packing, storing, transporting,

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<sup>7</sup> Money's nature led some managers who deal with it to steal it. A very rare event in the kibbutz, but such cases has happened.

<sup>8</sup> With the introduction of salaried people this idyll ended and the relations between managers and employed became 'normal'.

marketing, distributing, exporting and so on. The producer is not directly concerned with all the intermediary steps to the marketplace. Very often, these cooperatives or other institutional sources supply all materials and elements the producer needs (seed, fertilizers, feed, tools, machines). Therefore most farmer's energy and initiative are employed in the direct problems of production – what to do, when, where, and how to do it. The farmer worries with how many tons of grain and meat, how many millions of eggs, how many liters of milk, and so on, he produces yearly. Marketing interest him only in what concern prices and the final income.

In industry, labor is a very important factor, but not the only one, and often not the decisive. Marketing is probably more influential and troublesome. The profitability of industry is not exclusively a result of production; production increase does not implicate an automatic growth in profits, regardless of price. Industrial success depends primarily on marketing. The industrialist thinks in terms of monthly sales income and not of production volumes. While in agriculture cooperatives provide at most the purchase of raw materials and equipment, in industry this activity occupies a staff of skilled buyers. Buying parts of a product is often more economic than manufacturing them. Other very important factors in industry are debt collection (this, unlike agriculture, involves directly the producer with the consumers), research and development. In agriculture, government institutions perform this; in industry, private enterprises do it for secret security and may exceed ten percent of the budget.

In conclusion: one can say that in industry management is of more significance and relevance than direct work on the product. In agriculture, success depends on weather and dedication in working. In industry, it rests on skill in management and marketing. This differentiation has profound psychological implications, particularly in the kibbutz regarding big factories

A participant in the process of production, the worker, is a link in the chain of production and depends on the previous and the next links. The partnership in these functions induces a two-way bond, which leads to the approach that 'perhaps what I do is more important than what you do, but without your contribution I cannot complete my task!' At the management level, the target is the largest final profit – not production (work): the board has no feelings with regard to production or workers, even those who have been working twenty or thirty

years in the factory. Merely for considerations of profit, the board will stop production, close the factory, and fire all the workers, in order to import ready-made products, or transfer the factory to other regions or countries, where production is cheaper. The director-manager-owner thinks in terms of money. Products, workers, unemployment, the nation, etc. are all factors that they think about as means of making more money.

In the beginning, the factory in the kibbutz might act more or less like all other branches. However, if it wants to survive with a good measure of profit, its performance changes very soon. Big deficits force the kibbutz to choose: either close the factory or find some means to increase the profits. Capitalistic economic conceptions rather than classic kibbutz approaches mostly determinate these means.

One of the kibbutz's most entrenched concepts in the past was the principle of self-sufficiency, in the sense that the members themselves work, produce, and manage the entire needs of the kibbutz. The kibbutz refused to employ paid workers even when there was in the kibbutz a pressing lack of work force and it could obtain cheap outside workers, owing to the great waves of unemployment in the country. While the kibbutz was in a satisfactory economic situation, it religiously observed its ideological principles.

#### Six Years Later

Now, do you know what a kibbutz is? I am sorry to disappoint you, but from my concise and accurate description up to this point of writing (ref. 1990), I have given an overview of the kibbutz at this time. Now, six years later, many things have changed, but I have resolved not to alter the former text because of its fidelity to its time. I will try to add information about what is happening nowadays. I do not say 'update' because the continuous transformations have now (ref. 1997) reached 'boiling' point and nobody can forecast the end of the present metamorphosis. Deep social and economic variations will forcibly affect ideology. What the kibbutz will be like in 2000 and in 2010?

The deep economical crises have affected the authority of the traditional leadership. 'Alternative' doctrines are springing up like mushrooms after the rain. A despaired sick person and is ready to try every sort of medicament and even to appeal to witch doctors. The way that most kibbutzim are going to save their collapsed factories in the countrywide economical crisis tends to involve the adoption of capitalist doctrines of management as an overall solution. For the first time in its



history, a kibbutz may transfer the control of its industry to the hands of professional managers and advisers, who are not members of the kibbutz and have no obligation to the kibbutz concept. Even in the past, the kibbutz has used the services of professional instructors (particularly in the agriculture sections), but only as skilled advisers, while the authority to decide was an exclusive prerogative of the kibbutz members. At this time, the estrangement from the kibbutz ideology has deeply affected some leaders of the economic sectors of kibbutzim, and the improvement of income and profits (and not the preservation of the kibbutz idea) has become for them the sole concern.

We can sum up the revolutionary 'alternative' ways that the new quack reformers propose in one word – payment. 'Payment' – 'differential salary', it their new terminology – is the magic key that will resolve all problems, just as castor oil and enemas cured all diseases during the First World War. The kibbutz will pay its members for their contribution, and the members will pay the kibbutz for all services received from it. This sort of payment is not an original invention, but the most widespread norm in the world! However, it tears off the kibbutz's 'seventh veil' and leaves it completely stripped of its sacred classical principles!

'Differential salary' means that the kibbutz member will receive payment for his work according to criteria of the outside market. The manager of the factory will receive a salary ten to fifteen times greater than a gardener receives, for instance. This system will immediately transform the kibbutz in a 'normal' society of rich and poor. Diverse economic levels eventually lead to diverse social classes. Even if the kibbutz can guarantee an 'honorable' standard of living for all members by adding budgets to low incomes, this policy transforms a part of the population into inferior members and concentrates a large part of the benefits into the pockets of a managerial elite, who very provably will not be members of the kibbutz.

With the introduction of payment, the kibbutz will remain a pastoral village, but without the social characteristics that set it apart from any 'normal' neighborhood. Earlier passages of this book have stated the most outstanding difference between the kibbutz and non-kibbutz: the observation of separation between what its members receive from the kibbutz and their contribution to it.

The restriction in the former paragraph does not negate all reforms happening in the kibbutz. There is a consensus in whole Kibbutz Movement about the need of deep reforms in order to

adapt the kibbutz to the new reality in the country. The present ideological conflict is not about changing or not, but what and how to change. The kibbutz was always a very dynamic society, in permanent development – meaning changes!

#### *Most Relevant Modifications*

Let us scan the most relevant modifications in the last years.

##### 1. Personal Budgets

Personal budgets previously consisted of pocket money for personal expenses in the city. In the past, committees annually elected controlled funds to finance all the needs of the members. This system permitted consideration for especial needs, but the member was entirely dependent on bureaucracy and had no control over the use of funds. Since the ‘privatization’ (passage to the personal budget) of the provision of shoes, most of other items are also systematically passing to the personal control, and the relevant committees disappear. Nowadays a member can decide to go barefooted and use the money for shoes for other purposes, such as electronic tools, hobbies, or pastimes. On the other hand, he may spend most money of all items on shoes... Everyone is the sole boss of his budget and everybody is very pleased.

##### 2. Food Budget

The food budget, contrary the other items that passed to the personal budgets without discussions, awaked a large public debate. The refectory house has been the principal public building in a kibbutz; the dinning hall was also the place of the principal member’s public activities and meetings. It was the restaurant, the ‘parliament’, the movies hall, the theater, dancing room, and the place for celebrations. Nowadays the refectory has been reduced in importance.

Special new buildings were built for specific activities. The sports hall is the host venue for most celebrations. Since the introduction of the video and voting by ballot box, most members prefer to follow the general assembly in their rooms via television. The general assembly is now in reality an assembly of random personally interested people in the items of the agenda – twenty to thirty people instead of 120 to 200 participants in the past. Therefore, people prefer to meet (if at all...) in the social club, which is more intimate and agreeable. Today the refectory became a ‘normal’ restaurant, with a cash register, and everyone has to pay for his or her meal. The magnetic card is today as indispensable a tool as the house key.

The food budget passed to the personal control, which has grown to meet the new situation. The new system was necessary in order to enable a better financial control of the food expenses, in consequence of the large numbers of no-members who now eat in the refectory. The economic saving, thanks the increased efficiency, has helped to improve the menu. The modification is only psychological (the member has to use a magnetic cart to pay the meal) and he receives in his personal budget the sum that was previously allocated to the refectory directly. Nobody complains, but more and more confront prices and conclude that it is cheaper to prepare the meal at home. Since 2000, many kibbutzim closed their refectories or transformed them to outside commercial restaurants.

### 3. Educational and Health Budgets

Even in this sector, most items of maintaining budgets are passing from the committees to the personal budgets of the members, i.e. to their control. It seems (but it is not sure) that two items will remain as collective funds, the educational and the health budgets.

While the educational budget is not personal, but a fund for all children in the kibbutz, it cannot be used it for other purposes. This system enables providing the best educational services to all children, according to individual needs.

The fund for health budget is virtually a collective health insurance for the members in the kibbutz: the healthy support the ill. Dividing the health budget to the personal budgets, the young and healthy members would perhaps use the money to travel or buy domestic tools, but the ill persons would not be able to pay their treatment. Nobody would be able to pay an emergency surgical intervention, or geriatric services. The health sector is unquestionably the strongest redoubt of the kibbutz society. I hope it remains so. Young and health people, whom the distant future is not a worry, think the opposite. People worry for health when they fall ill.

Lately the kibbutz is adopting new methods of external health insurance to improve health services. This includes, for instance, ambulance and doctor's services that the member can call directly in case of emergency, no matter from where he is in the country.

### 4. Salaried Work

As already said, one of the main principles of the former kibbutz was the avoiding of employing salaried workers in its production sections. The kibbutz always had to buy the services of professional skilled workers, but in its production, sections

employed only its members. As long as the kibbutz maintained itself from agriculture and small factories, it could observe this principle. In order to resolve problems of treatment, sorting, packaging, storing, marketing, and exporting of their agricultural production, kibbutzim organized regional cooperatives managed by members of the associated kibbutzim and all workers were salaried. It was an elegant way to keep paid work out of the kibbutz. These regional cooperatives become true autonomous economical empires.

The passage to industry and the introducing of big factories within the kibbutz brought about through the employ of teams of outside salaried workers, who have now become in many factories the majority of the workers. This change has had deep psychological influences. While in the agricultural teams the number of the permanent workers is low, mostly less than ten and rarely more, all workers have similar position, responsibility and job status. The manager of the team is a *primus inter pares*. In the industry, such an idyll is not possible. Industry is a hierarchical structure par excellence, and the high administration has no personal contact with the production level. Industry works as an army, with an upper grade that command and lower one who execute. The big industries in the kibbutz have becoming sophisticated. The process of production passes from the designing of the first model until the production of the finished product through a complexity of departments, branches, storage, etc. Most of them have internal managing and works as independent sub-factories.

Industry in the kibbutz, and its ideological influences, is a theme that justifies a special book, but the limits of this Chapter cannot cover it.

#### 5. Family Housing

In the beginning, children in the kibbutz lived in special children houses, separated from their parents. When members lived in tents and primitive wooden huts, without sanitary installations and other elementary commodities (sometimes even more than a family to a room), the keeping of children in a better house (often the only proper building in the kibbutz) is very understandable. This special situation, with all kibbutz children living together separated from their parents, gave the educators an opportunity to develop new educational systems and theories, and create a new educational conception called 'communal education'.

The communal education was in the past the diamond in the crown of the kibbutz. The first 'attraction' that members

showed to a visitor was the children houses, every one adapted to the needs of the age of the children who lived there. 'Communal education' was the pride of the kibbutz; educators from many countries come to investigate and learn the system and they have written many books and monographs about it.

In the eighties, however, parents began a campaign to lodge the children at night in their own houses. There were many reasons. The members' houses were now nice residences, often more advanced than the children's houses. Second, the return of the children to their children houses was a complicated logistic enterprise for families with three or more children. The decisive factor was the desire of mothers that their children will sleep near them, in part owing to the security concerns because of terrorist attacks and war. During the Gulf War and the attacks of the Iraqi missiles, all children were with their parents day and night. When the war finished, most parents continue to lodge the children in their houses, an act that caused de facto the finishing of the communal sleeping of children in the children houses. The situation became insupportable. The parents' houses were comfortable, but without facilities to lodge children. On the other hand, the economic crisis hardly affected most kibbutzim, which could not finance additional rooms for the children in their parents' houses. One of the solutions was the building of provisory gypsum rooms that simply postponed the adding of one and two conventional rooms to most houses in the kibbutz. The very high expenses here contributed to worsening the financial situation of the kibbutz.

#### 6. The Loss of Ideology

The ideology loss was the strongest blow that affected the kibbutz. The changes were so quick and radical that the leadership did not succeed in adjusting the ideology to the new situation. The leadership lost the reins and authority. The kibbutz movement found itself like a lost ship in a storm, without a compass and with a confused crew. In such critical situation, most people do not worry about the ship, but how saving their necks.

The best method to rescue a vehicle from sinking is to mobilize all people to push it out in the same direction, and this is only possible when there is an agreement about the direction. Meantime a wide variety of opinions is causing an ideological struggle about what direction to push the kibbutz in. Most kibbutzim are examining the various alternative ways with caution, and are advancing step by step. Small but strongly motivated leader groups have moved some of the kibbutzim to

act precipitously, and probably they will not remain as kibbutz. Nobody can forecast (ref.2000) what the Kibbutz Movement will be in the next ten years. I believe (without making a scientific assertion) in the kibbutz's vitality and hope that it will deliver itself from the present confused situation. I suppose that every kibbutz will achieve its own solution, therefore, the new kibbutz ideology will necessarily be pluralist and flexible.

*Post Scriptum*

*Post scriptum:* before the publication of this book I had just now, in February 2000, reread the current chapter, which I started writing in 1990 and finished in 1995. What would I now add or rewrite? Nothing!

The actual picture of the kibbutz is obscure and unclear. Its future is an enigma, even for me who modestly consider me as a professional seer - as an architect my job is to conceive and design buildings, which yet do not exist.

In the past, charismatic leaders equipped with ideologies and overbearing self-confidence always 'knew' what to do and led the Kibbutz Movement with authority. Nowadays, each individual kibbutz confronts its own situation alone and looks for solutions with the help of outside fanatical, organizational and social advisers. They are more or less pragmatic freelancer experts without any feelings for the kibbutz ideal.

What will happen? One thing is certain: what was will not be again! The clock of reality does not move in reverse.

2003. So many changes have happen... A new chapter would not be enough to describe them, but I have not new answers.

## 4. KIBBUTZ – DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY LTD.

*Eight random criteria for Democracy applied to the Kibbutz*

### *Eight Parameters*

If a creature from another planet landed on Earth to verify if the kibbutz is a democratic community, he would have to take two approaches: first, he would have to clarify what democracy is and define its characteristics; secondly, he would have to investigate if the Kibbutz movement fulfils these conditions.

#### *1. A sense of humor.*

One of the outstanding characteristics that differentiate democracy from totalitarianism is the sense of humor. A negative approach will explain this point better: a dictatorial regime has no humor! Humor belongs essentially to free people; jokes existed also in concentration camps; humor is the last weapon of the oppressed, but only free people are not afraid to mock loud, in public.

There is a story about a dialogue between a Russian and an American. Each one extols the virtues of his country. The American says he can stand in front of the White House and yell, 'Truman is crazy!' 'Me too', replies the Russian, 'I can stand in front of the Kremlin and yell, "Truman is mad"...'

If we check our Kibbutz Movement's press, from the early thirties' monthly *Hashomer-Hatzair* to the today's *Al-Hamishmar* newspaper,<sup>1</sup> we shall find many caricatures. Who does not appear in them? Even His Honor the President of our State of Israel is not safe from criticism's stings. However, please try to find one moderate caricature of one of our 'historical leaders' ... In vain!

#### *2. Humans are free*

Is the person who lives in kibbutz free? Yes – and no. I would say he is free in a limited sense. Within a certain field he is. By saying this, we still have not said much, because every community puts its limits on individual freedom. Even the most democratic society does not allow a vehicle to cross the road through red lights. This limitation, and endless other ones, based on the law or on social norms, are essential for the existence of

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<sup>1</sup> "Al Hamishmar", the daily newspaper mouthpiece of the Zionist left wing, and vanguard of intellectuality in Israel for up to fifty years, expired in 1995, because of economical difficulties.

society. The question is not one of limitations, but of their purpose. Are they on behalf of the individual (the driver that crosses a red signal may cause an accident), or on behalf of a superior power (God, homeland, the society, the party...)?

### 3. Priority to the individual

A dictatorship gives priority to God, to the homeland, to the party, to the leader, to the regime, to socialism. The individual is a 'subject'; his *raison d'être* is to live 'for' something. His right is serving a supreme and holy idea. In a democracy, the person is the principal; he is a 'citizen', a person with rights based on the law, and the authorities' duty is to preserve and guarantee them – his 'human rights'.

Exalted purposes performed the most awful crimes in history. In name of Jesus and the Church, the Crusaders set off to liberate Jerusalem, and on the way murdered, raped and destroyed. In name of Allah and Mohammed, the Muslims stated the *jihad* that slaughtered thousands. The Inquisition burnt heretics to save their souls... On behalf of the Aryan racial purity, the Nazis sent millions of people to crematoriums. For the sake of Socialism, Stalin deported millions to *gulags* in Siberia, to death. Where the aim stands above all, there is no wonders that there 'the objective justifies the means'.

### 4. Open society

An 'open society', as I define, is the opposite situation to the totalitarian regime, which by nature is a 'closed society', a blocked one, a society in siege, in permanent defense against external and internal enemies.

How strong are the 'siege feelings' in kibbutz? Criticism, even reasonable, profoundly touches the kibbutz. The 'truths' that Bet-Sha'an and Kiriati-Shmonah<sup>2</sup> thought concerning the kibbutz performed a psychological service to the Movement, regardless of whether they were right or not. It was a shock treatment, which would perhaps help us to examine ourselves. Is the kibbutz-man really an arrogant one? Does he really look down upon his neighbors patronizingly? Is it possible to ignore their complaints against the kibbutz-owned regional enterprises, about the exploitation of hundreds of employees from local settlements? Most people do not make an unprejudiced examination of accusations to reach conclusions concerning

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<sup>2</sup> Bet-Sha'an and Kiriati-Shmonah are cities whose many of the inhabitants are from "oriental" origin (almost Moroccan). This population lives generally in a low economic situation, feeling social discrimination.



these accusations, so that they can deal with them. Instead, they take refuge in ideological arguments, entrench themselves and sever all contacts: the kibbutz is being attacked – that means it is in danger!

In the elections of 1982 and 1986, the local branches of the Likud Party in Bet-Sh'aan and Kiriath-Sh'monah went out with an unscrupulous campaign propaganda against the kibbutz. They attacked with fierce caricatures the 'arrogant kibbutz man' enjoying life by his pool while his regional factories exploited the workers of the surrounding country... and other 'stars'. They created such a malevolent atmosphere against the kibbutz that the kibbutz members who once used to visit these cities for social and cultural activities, avoided going there. They promised to dissolve the Kibbutz Movement and distribute its properties... In a certain way, they accomplished the 'promise': the Likud's economical policy caused a profound agricultural crisis and bankruptcy in the agricultural sector. The Kibbutz Movement is suffering now (ref. 1985) suffering from a terrible financial disease (the same happens to the banking and industrial sectors). The kibbutz, instead of counter-attacking, felt offended and retreated backwards within its castle walls.

Once, after a discussion at a general meeting at my kibbutz, one good friend of mine told me how much he was impressed by my arguments; they were so precise and very convincing... 'If so, why did you vote against my proposition?' I asked him. 'Because you offended the kibbutz'. Defense of the kibbutz proceeds even Justice.

##### *5. Individual self-reliance*

Does the kibbutz member have sovereign control over his fate? Yes and no. Adhering to a kibbutz is a voluntary act: living in the kibbutz is not compulsory – anyone is free to leave whenever he wishes. This telling statement requires a close analysis. Even if we accept the saying that the member in the kibbutz fulfills his duties by his free own will: is he a free person? The answer is complicated, because even in most democratic societies no person receives whatever he wants; but his efforts to achieve his own private aims are legitimate and acceptable. In the last few years, there has been a significant change regarding this subject, with the acknowledgment of 'self-realization' and 'regard for the member'; but we are still far from the consensus that 'self-expression is honorable'. The idea that we must guard 'equality, partnership and communal interest' over all is often a cloak for jealousy and lack of sensitivity.

It is true that the kibbutz has justified economical restrictions. I never said that ‘do what you want’ is the prime target in life. However, the time has come to look at the kibbutz as a mature person, able to decide for himself about his needs. The community should give support, without interfering.

The reality is an implausible dependence of the member on rigid procedures and committees, whose goal is to uphold norms. The aphorism ‘to each one according to his needs; from each one according to his capabilities’ has no equal in emptiness and meaningless in the kibbutz. The only sector that keeps to this maxim is health; the kibbutz endeavors to supply the help the sick members need. In all other sectors the rule is ‘to everyone – what he deserves’. That means, in according with ‘seniority’, ‘points’, the budget, or any other criteria – not personal needs. Only each person by himself knows what he needs, and this elementary assumption opposes the kibbutz basic tenet that the ‘kibbutz’ is the one who decides.

Moreover, even the second part of the affirmation – ‘from any one according to his capabilities’ – is a doubtful statement. Senior members complain the insufficient exploitation of their potential. For young members (they are not so young: because of military service, ‘tour around the world’ and other particular reasons, kibbutz’ children do not really integrate before they are thirty years old...) everything is open to them: jobs, studies, and activities... ‘Just take!’. The potential of senior members, and the not so senior, particularly the professionally well succeeded, is an obstacle: for the kibbutz’s purposes, unskilled members are more suitable.

According to my conception, the ultimate achievement of a person is the fulfillment of his capability. If the Kibbutz Movement wants to be able to face the future, it must fulfill its enormous human potential, an affair that requires deep change of outlook and conventions.<sup>3</sup> Besides social insurance (that characterize the kibbutz as well), the Japanese system takes care to provide satisfaction at work and offers a program of permanent advance, by periodical changing the worker’s activities (changing = promotion). Such a scheme might fit the kibbutz.

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<sup>3</sup> This ‘prophecy’, which I wrote in 1990, is happening in 2003. The kibbutz is now using outside employees for single works, because they are cheaper than are members. Members have now to be high skilled to obtain good remunerable external jobs.

6. *Separation of Powers*

One of democracy's evident characteristics is the separation of the powers of the state: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. In the kibbutz, judicial entity does not exist at all. There is a Court and Criticism's Committee in the Federation level, but in the individual kibbutz, such instances do not exist. The reasoning: the kibbutz is an extended family that takes care of all its members: a member with any problem should address the Secretariat (the executive entity) or the General Assembly (the legislative entity). So what? Can statistics console the 0.01% of membership that feels themselves victims of injustice, when what happened to them does not happen to 99.9% of the rest of the people?

The confrontation of a powerless and helpless member against the kibbutz is not fair: if he feels prejudiced, there should be a way to attend to an impartial arbitration. If an external tribunal is the only alternative, he has the right to receive judicial support, even if the kibbutz thinks he is wrong. Nobody will admit that the General Assembly, or the Health Committee, will decide whatever a fellow will undergo surgery or not. No doubt, this is a physician's matter. Why, if the disease is a social one, could anyone scrutinize it? The Social Committee is a band of excellent people, but they have not professional competence to make judicial decisions.

Hand amputation for theft is a cruel and barbarous penalty. What should we say about a kibbutz meeting that, on similar malfeasance, decides by show of hands the 'amputation' of the whole family, like as it resolves whether to buy a tractor or not? A respectable court in a democratic country would disqualify the judge or any member of a jury who has some friendship, animosity or relationship to the defendant.

7. *Freedom to elect and be elected*

It seems that this is what happens in the kibbutz. The general meeting elects by majority, and everyone has the right to vote. At the Federation level, every kibbutz sends delegates to the conference, where they elect the main officers. A more meticulous examination will reveal that the procedure does not observe exactly the democratic criteria. It is not the 'citizen' he who chooses its candidates, but an electoral 'college', committed by the Secretariat, selects them. The general meeting, where usually only a minority of members takes a part in, is at most a 'rubber stamp'. However, surprises can happen... At the Federation's level, elections are fictitious. Since 1996, the kibbutzim have introduced the democratic secret vote. The

Federation of Kibbutzim elects now its Secretary (the main leader) in personal campaign such as the one to elect the President of the United States. The main institutional appointments are a truly sophisticated craft: ‘a prize for one, a prize for another’, in an attempt to please everyone. In the particular kibbutz level, nobody is elected because of the program he presents (he does not present programs!), or because the changes he suggests. Nobody makes any commitment. Nobody promises anything. According to the ‘rules of the game’, he refuses the job, but at last he accepts the majority decision and adjusts himself to the task. If he becomes the treasurer, he will speak ‘treasurish’, no matter if yesterday he has been the Educational Manager and then spoke ‘educationish’. When he completes the job, he will perhaps receive another one, or return to obscurity. Nobody will demand a report about his performance; he did not promise anything! He has a chance (no matter whether he succeeded or not, because there is not any criterion for objective evaluation of his accomplishments) to receive a job in the Federation: here, the game repeats, on a higher scale.

The kibbutz expects its office holders to safeguard its regulations and norms. We can say the official is the bureaucrat who interprets the codex of the field in his responsibility. Tomorrow, after finishing his term, the current almighty will return to his previous status, as a ‘beggar’ before his successor. Jobs in the kibbutz are not a challenge to initiative and innovation. Therefore, the candidates are sparse. On each occasion, ‘names’ in fashion are passing from one job to another. The community welcomes them. This procedure converts the kibbutz into a herd.

When I was a child, the organization of termites, bees and other swarms astonished me. Now, the comparison of kibbutz to a beehive frightens me. In my mind, nothing could be more terrible than a place where everybody does what he has to do and what the community expects from him. This is exactly the dream of totalitarianism...

#### *8. Democracy's watchdog*

Ability to choose requires knowledge. Without information – there is no democracy! In a small community, as the kibbutz used to be in the beginning, everybody knew everything about everybody and everything, and he was able to relate to any issue on the kibbutz’s life. In today’s kibbutz, a fellow is unlikely to know what is happening at his own workplace. At an industrial plant, the ‘management team’ makes decisions and the other

people ‘receive reports’, perhaps. In any case, crumbs drop out to the periphery, but as to the Federation’s level, what can the kibbutz member know about what is cooking there. There is not any possibility of ascertaining, for instance, the truth upon the billions the Movement lost in speculative adventures.

The Federation’s press has gone a long way; even ‘Ha’shavua’, the internal magazine, brings sometimes out real news, reveals, and blames. The publishing of a critical article such as this present one reveals positive changes...<sup>4</sup>

*Conclusion.* Every democracy in the past and in the present time is a ‘Limited Company’. In the best democracy of the past, classic Athens, five thousand male *eupatrids* (free citizens, Greek *eu* = well, good + *pater* = father) enjoyed all privileges of direct democracy, based on the shoulders of tens of thousands of *hilotes* deprived of rights, and who knows how many slaves. Contemporaneous censuses did not enroll them; according to the prominent philosopher, Aristotle, the slave is merely a tool. At this very time, the biggest democracy in the world, the United States of America, does not export its democracy beyond its boundaries, and even supports dictatorial regimes in Central America, South America and all over the world.

#### *Limited Companies*

Being all democracies ‘Limited Companies’, what is wrong with the kibbutz’s democracy?

The point is that while our life is running in accordance to the way we choose to live (and we do not impose it on anybody) it is our particular concern. However, the moment we set out to defend democracy and to preach morality, we have to check ourselves. ‘People who live in glass houses should not throw stones,’ says the proverb.

Our excellent democracy (I really mean it) needs an overhaul!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> My gladness was premature. Exactly three years after I wrote these optimistic lines, when *Ha'Shavua* became a real bearer of ordinary members' ideas, publishing many expressive letters regarding genuine questions about Kibbutz life, the issue of the bulletin stopped (see Footnote 1).

<sup>5</sup> Up to this point, at 1986 the cultural periodical *Hedim* published this chapter as an article, later included in the *Anthology of Text Understanding and Knowledge Enhancement*, published by *Akademon*, the publishing house of the Student's Organization of the University of Jerusalem.

Some final notes – At this point, the article referred to at the beginning of this chapter ends. The framework of the article in which I exposed my ideas, destined for a magazine, called for concise style and somewhat humorous mode. The title, ‘Kibbutz – Democratic Society Ltd.’, is obviously a provocative one, because (as I already stated) all democratic societies are limited.

In chapter 14, I will return the theme of democracy for a more accurate further discussion.

The addition  $2+2=4$  – is it moral, is it just? Describing a mathematical procedure and the way we perform it, we can employ plenty of adjectives, as ‘true’, ‘correct’, ‘elegant’, ‘trivial’, ‘difficult’, but nothing related to morality and justice. Morality concerns only humans – judgments of right and wrong pertains to personal behavior; they are not applicable to acts, means, systems, and techniques. To kill – is it moral or not? If a snake or a virus or stone kills an animal or a human being – is it a moral or not? Such an act may be a lamentable event, and deplorable accident, but has no connection to morality. We may apply moral evaluation only to human behavior, and only then does the question whether is moral or not to kill become relevant. In certain circumstances, it may be moral to kill. There is a consensus, for example, that it is moral to kill enemies in battle. There may be a discussion as to whether capital punishment is moral or immoral, but the act of execution has nothing to do with morality. An expert in this matter may assess the work of the executioner as good or bad, or every other technical aspect, but nothing related to morality. One system cannot be more or less moral than another is (hanging on a gallows is not more or less moral than electric chair). Justice relates strictly to morality, so what cannot be moral or immoral cannot be just or unjust.

Conscience and morality have a decisive influence in the decisions of a person, but the result of his resolution is an object lacking moral attributes. Morality and Justice exist only within conscience of human being. The same happens with beauty (esthetics) and other faculties of the human mind.

Democracy, a system of government based in the rule of the majority, does not relate to morality and justice. Democracy is a mechanism for making decisions according to the principle of one person – one vote. In other words, the personality and position of a person in society does not influence his

participation in suffrage;<sup>6</sup> his vote has the same weight as all other votes. Therefore, the vote of the president of the nation and the vote of a common citizen has the same value in the national elections. This is the essence of Democracy, and is necessary and sufficient to define it; all additions to this statement are supplementary interpretations.

The common meaning of democracy (Greek: *demos* = people, *kratos* = power, rule) is popular government; and the intention... the rule... by the ruled! Democracy supports the idea that all individuals evolved in a decision are equal partners in the making of this decision.

#### *American Democracy*

Even the American democracy may be qualified as limited in these terms. Democratic system of vote is a way to influence in the final collective decision, but not every person in United States participates in the elections. Firstly, children and youth people, instead they may be the most interested parties. Notwithstanding the results of the suffrage may hit the future of the children the hardest, they do not participate at all. Only citizen with the right to vote goes to the polling booth. Nevertheless, the system – within its limits – is democratic. In the not so distant past, Negro slaves and Indians did not vote, but the system was perfectly democratic, in its limited way.

There is not one existing absolute democracy; every democracy works within a limited area and relates to a determined population. The white population in the defunct apartheid system of South Africa (ref. 1988) enjoyed a democratic system. A military junta governing a country with a despotic dictatorial regimen may be by itself a democratic unit, if the military officers who compose this council are equally free to expose their opinions and participate equally in the resolutions.

In being democracy a technique of making decisions, a group of people may use it or not at will. Executives in organizations may resolve that in a certain item every member of the executive vote in accordance with the rule, one person – one vote. In this case, the participants decide democratically. In other areas, the same executive may resolve in accordance of the system that the voice of every member weights in proportion

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<sup>6</sup> Criminals and insane people do not generally participate in elections, but where they do it their vote has exactly the same weight of all other votes.

to his shares in the company, or to every other criterion. This case, the method is not democratic.

The examples in the previous paragraph shed light on the performance of democracy. The ideological interpretation of such a performance: no matter the personality, attributes and properties of the persons, the value of every one is one person in being. In democracy the value of a person is being a human being – no more, no less. This address the individual as a human being, whose value is independent of his origin, position and properties, is the highest degree of humanity in philosophical thought. This idea is a not modern invention; it took a shape in the statement ‘Man was created God’s likenesses. If God is only one, even his likenesses are unique, and everyone is neither more nor less than the other is. Almost all religions advocate this idea, but only democracy translated it to reality, with certain restrictions. Even in the United States, where the democratic feeling and the respect to the honor to the individual are deeply rooted in the conscience of the people, social position and economical means confer power and privileges. However, as long as all individuals have the same a legal right, democracy is democracy.

*Sleeping under Bridges*

I read somewhere Winston Churchill is saying, ‘Democracy is the right of everyone to sleep under the bridge’. I am not sure that he really said it, but this is a nice and interesting definition. Democracy assures equality of rights, but it is indifferent to all other equalities. Democracy gives to all the same right to sleep under the bridge, but does not take cure about equalizing conditions: on a cold night who have a worm sleeping bag will enjoy themselves/ Those who have not ...will democratically freeze.

To sum what I think about the kibbutz, I will cite a metaphor employed in the first chapter: ‘If the members of the kibbutz were all angels, the kibbutz would be a Paradise’. They are not! They are very normal and ordinary human creatures.



## 5. WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO?

*Saladology (a fine mixture of bits of sociology, anthropology, psychology, etymology, etc.) to confront the work problem. Why work?*

*Searching for Asses*

A Bible tale tells how Saul went searching for asses and found a kingdom. I am not so pretentious as to say the same happened to me, but it is a fact that all I intended in this chapter was to discuss work in the kibbutz and all of a sudden, I found myself implicated in a big 'saladology'. I am not complaining – I like salads.

Since Newton formulated his First Law of Nature – Inertia – the fundamental property of matter is remaining at rest or in motion, without change of speed or direction of movement, unless affected by some force. Applying this principle to the object of this book – the human being – we could translate it thus: every living body wants to remain alive.<sup>1</sup> When we say *body*, we mean all possible levels, from the individual person, across the family unit, community (kibbutz, for instance), country, people, and all organizations and combinations (party, religion, etc.), throughout humankind.

We will now prepare a small saladology of what an individual person must do in order to remain (survive). The conclusions for the other levels are immediate corollaries.

*All Things Want Remain*

The equilibrium of the inner molecular and atomic forces in an inorganic element is sufficient for remaining it in its present situation. An organic body, if wants to remain alive, it must receive the nutritive substances required by the metabolic process for the maintenance and normal functioning of the individual cells and the whole organism.

We may classify the activities for providing the necessary substances into two groups: the unconscious, performed by a mechanism operated by genetic instructions (the vegetative life of the body), and the conscious, that depends upon one's will. The biological (or more exactly – physiological) mechanism of the organism, though fascinating, is

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<sup>1</sup> By the way: in spite of our affirmation that *the will to live* is the basic instinct of every creature, there may be cases of suicide, the deliberate taking of one's own life. This conduct may be motivated by the *will of the tribe for life* instinct, seen in the animals, in order to defend cubs, do not flee from larger enemies, or soldiers (bees, termites, or humans), but run against invaders to fight them. Neither personal physiological impulse nor pain compels the kamikaze, but by a fanatic conviction (instinct? ethos?) of *defending the tribe*. Other people commit suicide (escaping from life) to avoid pain, even mental or unreal ones. Despair or depressing situations may bring about such extreme acts.

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presented in this chapter very superficially, only to the extent its social and political implications are relevant to this book's objectives. They are here only metaphors used for explaining the human mental and ideological mechanism. The conscious and unconscious groups represent the two sides of the same coin and the correlation between them is so perfect that it is sometimes difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins.

Concerning the first group – called the vegetative – this chapter will not say much. In this section, everything happens within a direct genetic mechanism, without any rational motivation. By our own will we can perhaps intensify, or disturb, the process – breathing more deeply or ceasing to do so, but its normal operation does not depend on us. The materials we breathe, for instance, do not involve social and political consequences – all the time we are in a fresh-air environment and our respiratory apparatus is okay. However, this function, breathing, which we generally do not ponder about at all, will weigh heavily in our consideration if pollution and other ecological situations (such as bad air in the mines) suffocate us. Smoking may become a social factor, when the lungs are affected. Such circumstances we must concern us, if we want to survive.

On the other hand, the normalcy of the second section depends entirely on our decisions and our activities for supplying the required matter, just as the normal action of a car depends on fuel (and other necessary elements). Human history is the sum total of humans' activities in supplying their needs.

Trees cannot move freely in order to obtain their needs. Their only movement is very slow growth and the result of wind influence. The photosynthesis process, vital for tree's life, depends on the enlarging of the foliage's surface in order to capture more sunrays, and deepening of roots to suck up more moisture of the soil. Animals move about to seek what they need. Now we have reached the question: how do we know what we need? As we shall see later, we do not really know.

### *Coconuts Picking*

I have recently read an interesting report about training of monkeys in Thailand to pick coconuts, wherever the height of the trees makes the human work uneconomical and dangerous. People trap in the jungle wild young macaques and keep them tied without any attempt to domesticate them until their third year, when they are grown but not yet adults (it is impossible to teach adult monkeys). Then their training begins. The trainer forces the monkey to do several activities, using repeated punishment. Hard punishments accomplish all steps of learning, especially if the monkey tries to escape or bite. Two or three years of tutorial efforts are necessary to gain control over the monkey,

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who in the meantime becomes strong enough to work. The monkey trainer will never display any compassion. His expression is at all times severe. The monkey never receives any reward if it does what is expected of him, but it will be cruelly punished if it does not. The monkey learns what to do in order not to be beaten. The only motivation the monkey has, in order to do hard work by climbing twenty-five-meter trees to bring down coconuts (only those of a certain size!) is the prevention of pain.

This efficient method – training by pain, suffering, and punishment – does not fit in with the modern idea of teaching. However, this is the Mother Nature's way for motivating us to satisfy our needs. When the organism of our body needs 'materials', we suffer – hunger, thirst, cold, stuffiness, and other afflictions. Nature coaches us to do what it wants us to do, using the primordial rule of education: if you want to avoid suffering, let you do what I tell you! Pain is for nature as the whip for the animal tamer. Prevention of pain is perhaps the strongest instrument for motivating behavior. Among animals, it is certainly the prevalent factor; the most dangerous animal is the hungry one. Among human beings, ideological motivations may be stronger.

'Nature' conjures up a pastoral scene of the world – quiet, beautiful, and amiable. Whenever nature forces are in equilibrium, this picture is true. However, nature may be very violent and destructive with storms, typhoons, floods, earthquakes, volcanic, and cataclysmic activities. In human nature – instincts may have similar violence.

The avoidance of pain is nature's instrument for forcing creatures to survive at the individual level. At the level of the species' survival, nature employs more sophisticated and modern means – propaganda. To insure reproduction, nature uses colors, smells, adornments, and an infinite variety of other means, including promise of pleasure, to convince individuals to practice sexual intercourse. The forces that act in order to guarantee individual existence are compulsive (pain), and those that act to guarantee species are attractive (pleasure). This division is of course schematic.

### *Merciless Nature*

Nature is unfeeling, without benevolence, complacency, pity, clemency, or consideration.

Suppose you decide to commit suicide. You climb to the top of a high tower and jump, but instantly, you regret it. Saying 'Excuse me, I changed my mind' will not change anything. You are lost irremediably and will hit the ground as a missile, unless you have a parachute and succeed in opening it in time.

This is an extreme illustration of the irrevocability, finality and relentlessness of nature. Better examples are smoking, alcohol

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consumption, and drug use. If, in a moment of perspicacity, you realize the problems that they cause and resolve to stop, perhaps you do stop, but you cannot go back, repair what was damaged to restore everything to its previous state. What's done is done. Nature does not condone or pardon, and never confers (never!) indulgence... On nature's gate, we could write Dante's '*Lasciati ogni speranza voi ch'entrate*'.<sup>2</sup> Our children should learn and absorb this primary principle: we can successfully cheat, swindle, and deceive everyone (include ourselves) and every human institution, but not nature. Nature exacts a full punishment for the smallest fault.

Amongst human creatures, natural laws are almost never relevant. It is impossible to codify the reaction of society to any specific personal act. You may enjoy an immoral life on the one hand and you may suffer when acting with the best intentions on the other hand. All religions have a serious problem in explaining why sinner may succeed and profit while righteous man suffers. Most religions have resolved this paradox by postponing its solution until after death, when during the Last Judgment, sinners will be sent to Hell and the pious will enter Heaven. Hell, purgatory and heaven are theological inventions motivated by the will to rationalize injustices in society and God's non-intervention in favor of those who observe His commandments. From earliest times, people tried to find a more direct and immediate social solution of this conflict by codifying laws and adopting norms. Those who neglect duties or commits crimes (sinners or criminals) are judged and condemned (if they are caught...). However, conscience remains the final personal court of justice. The main aim of moral education in all periods was the discernment between 'good' and 'bad', how to adopt good behavior (conduct) and avoid doing wrong.

Yom Kippur – the Jewish Day of Atonement, when Jews fast and pray for forgiveness, has an interesting aspect: there is no absolution for injuries to individuals. Praying cannot absolve you from such sins – only he who was offended can forgive you! God should forgive only for injures against Him. I think this conception demonstrates a deep philosophical accomplishment – the relationship among people is so sophisticated and complex that even God does not settle the score. Men must settle their problems by themselves and find a way to coexist. In comparison with the interaction between the individual and human society, the confrontation between human person and nature is relatively simple and unsurprising: if you touch fire, you get burn.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here', warning on Hell's gate.

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*Errare humanum est*

I read recently about the pain and suffering of babies who were born dependent on hard drugs, because their mothers took drugs during pregnancy. The sins of the parents visit upon the children.

In my opinion it is not a compliment to have one's conduct characterized as 'natural', since the meaning of 'natural' is 'pertaining to nature'. The characteristics of humanity are the faculty to change one's mind; to persuade and be convinced; to excuse; to accept a contention (or at least ponder and consider); to judge; to decide; and, above all, to be mistaken. *Errare humanum est*, says the Latin proverb. Nature does not *solve* anything. It acts always according to Hoyle, and never makes mistakes.

'To err is human, to forgive divine' (Pope). Nature is not human (Nature does not err), and certainly not divine (nature does not forgive). In order to change anything in nature, external forces must be applied; human conduct, on contrary, mainly depends on individual decisions. In a semantic sense, we can say that to be natural means not to be human, in other words, to be inhuman.

Education and pedagogy are coercive; they are natural means to change. We can say that we achieve the ultimate degree of humanity (anti-naturalness) when we are able to decide our conduct for ourselves. Such a phase of comprehension and self-determination – creation of an own conception of life and morality – demands years of experience, deep thought and contemplation. Most people in the world never achieve such a level of independent thinking. They swim with the tide and naturally do exactly what the environment expects of them.

Individuals who have dared to think independently, without keeping norms accepted as natural, have always paid a heavy price for such a confidence; at times with their own lives. They were persecuted, jailed, excommunicated, tortured, burned, and crucified... However, without them humankind would remain natural, as animals are.

Non-acceptance of external dictates is a human faculty. Even a baby refuses to do what he does not want to do, defending himself by crying and kicking as best he can. Sometimes an annoyance or antagonism common to many people cause spontaneous or organized movement of rebellion. History tells rebellions of slaves and oppressed peoples. During the last millennium, most rebellions were caused by religious factors. *Lysistrata*, a Greek classical play by Aristophanes, describes a rebellion of wives against husbands.

In modern times, in more or less democratic societies, workers who do not accede to their condition express their demands by striking. Strikes became, in many countries, a legitimate way of fighting for requests.

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It is an established fact that at a certain stage of growth, youth revolts against dictates and authority of the parents. This is certainly a very normal event, but only in the present century (ref. twentieth) has it attained proportions of broad mass movements. The kibbutz (the sort of community I live in) is a result of such an historical event. During the First World War Zionist, youth created the kibbutz cooperatives that arose as a revolt against Jewish life in the European Diaspora.

In the last thirty years (ref 1990), history witnessed important youth rebellions: the hippies in North America and the rebellion of students in Germany and France at 1968. Hippies moved by an ideology summarized by 'make love, not war' adopted new norms of behavior and dress. They wanted innovate family and communal associations, but did not attain the social, economical, and organizational achievements that the kibbutz movement did. The enthusiasm of the European students was impressive, but they returned with the same suddenness back to normality. It is not so easy to evaluate the contribution of these important events with regard to the humanization of humankind. The influence was perhaps deeper and stronger than it seems at first; it especially influenced to modern sexual permissiveness. I am not able to evaluate the parallel results of the Chinese students' failed protest in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

### *Charming young girls*

A newborn baby has vegetative activities. When shortages cause him pain, he is not yet able to obtain and provide for himself what he needs. The only thing he can do is cry and shriek. Adults must feed him, teach him what is edible (he tries to eat everything), and teach him table manners. This is a very complex learning process and much time passes by for the development of his teeth and appetite before a child appreciates a tasty steak. The only food that nature furnishes especially for baby's nourishment is maternal milk. All other foods are men's contribution, result of a variety of factors (custom, tradition, preconceptions), and what it is possible to obtain. Our menu's components are not exactly the specific material that the organism demands. It is said that the Crusaders inquired of the Pope Innocent III before attacking the Albigensians (Catharist sect of 12th-13th-century southern France) how to identify who were heretics and who the faithful; 'May you send all them to Heaven,' he instructed, 'the Almighty will differentiate...'

This is the common employed recipe: we eat everything we can, or want, and our digestive system selects what the body needs. In this way, in order to provide the basic materials, we devour a food volume that is tens, hundreds and even thousands of times greater than the materials that the body needs. Nevertheless, vital elements may be missing.

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My visit to the United States was an astonishing trip of surprises and discoveries. Something that disturbed me - and I could not understand it - were the charming and pleasant young girls who seemed to weigh as much as hippopotamuses. My rhetorical question: is Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor's shape not preferable? Burdening oneself with dozens of pounds of fat - is that what our body aims for? Perhaps for the Inuit at the North Pole it has some justification, but on warm climate? Like I said, we do not know exactly what we truly need, and our 'civilized' instincts are not sufficiently precise to help us decide.

Gastronomic saladology is not the subject of this chapter, but the analogies deductible from them. As we do not know what and how much to feed our children, we do not know what may be the best spiritual nourishment for them. We supply them with plenty of spiritual nourishment that is beyond their ability to absorb. What a volume of wisdom the colleges stuff us in order to conferring a single diploma! Grammar, integral and differential mathematics, names of rivers and mountains, dates of battles and other historical events, texts of classical poetry and prose, and so many other important things.

We trust that the brain and life experience will filter and select from this deluge of information what we really need. Even this book does the same. I hope that the patient reader will succeed in fishing out from this sea of words an interesting sentence, a constructive thought. Sometimes we dig up a whole mountain and do not find gold or diamonds, but if we do not dig - we will never find. We have no alternative way to build our mentality and personality.

Social, racial, irrational and other prejudices hinder our minds from the first day we breathe. As we observed earlier, most obesity (the customs and concepts kept since our earliest tribal formation) gives us an ugly appearance. Without a severe diet to eliminate (or sublimate, at least) these superfluous reminders, humanity will languish.

We will add the discussion about education, prejudices, information, and related themes in Chapter 7, 'Preparing for the Future'.

### *Work and Sweat*

Meanwhile, it was spoken only of what we receive from 'outside'. Children grow and then must obtain and provide their needs for themselves. In other words, they must work. Work, in the broadest meaning, as we learn from every dictionary, is 'physical and intellectual activities engaged in for the purpose of accomplishing a desired end'. A machine 'works' to manufacture or create things, the heart 'works' to pump blood, the brain 'works' to think, and the entire body 'works' to produce or obtain its needs. Man works from the moment when 'God drove Adam from the Garden of Eden' and commanded him 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'.

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Work has forever been strongly correlated with sweat. In figurative speech, to sweat means to work.

My habitual etymological curiosity led me to investigate from where the sense of work has originated. The word work proper relates to Old English *woerc* (building, fortification), Middle English *werc*, *worc*, Old-Saxon *werk*, Old High German *werach*, and is cognate with Greek *ergon*, *organon* (instrument), or activity with instruments for building.

*Labor* (parallel to Italian *labore*, to Portuguese *labor*, *labutar*, to Russian *rabota*, to German *arbeiten*) comes from the Latin *labor(em)* — hardship, fatigue — connected with Latin *labare* — to totter, be ready to fall, waver. The primitive meaning of this word is slipping, tottering, under a burden. In Portuguese *lavoura* means land cultivation, *lavração* — mines exploration (hard work?).

*Travail* (parallel to Portuguese *trabalho*, Spanish *trabajo* and other Latin languages, meaning *work*) is perhaps from Latin *trepalium*, an instrument of torture.

*Work* in Hebrew is *avodah*, which correlates with *eved* (slave), and reasonably was what slaves did.

My polyglottism is not vast enough to exhaust the matter by exploring other languages, but the few etymological instances in the preceding paragraphs are enough to support the notion that in its source 'work' relates to pain, physical effort, i.e. a toil executed by compulsion of external forces (human or natural). *Arbeit macht dos leibn ziss* (in Yiddish) and *Arbeit macht das Lebn züss* (in German) mean "Work makes life sweet". The Nazis made a cynical use of this phrase when they inscribed '*Arbeit macht frei*' ('Work makes you free') on the gate of Auschwitz extermination camp. In the past, work had a correlation with physical obligation or moral duty, never pleasure.

I am not able to pinpoint the exact circumstances and social factors that ennobled the value of work. In the Jewish Talmud, we find the theme that God blesses handiwork — he who works and creates by himself, with his own hands. 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise' (Proverbia 6,7). Several Talmudic idioms remark that handicraft dignifies, but from these quotations, we cannot yet learn that the ancient Jews loved to work, and that physical work was their aspiration.

From a usual name of God in Hebrew (*Adonai* — my Master), we can deduce the importance of the expression 'work-to-God'. According to Jewish faith, we are as slaves, whose greatest virtue and first goal is 'work' (serving) God.<sup>3</sup>

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Abbot 1:2: 'By three things is the word sustained: by the Law, the work and deeds of loving-kindness' dignifies the value of work, but here work means *divine service* (specially in the Temple), *liturgy*, and has no correlation to the



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This conception is especially profound in strict Orthodox circles, where the most important (and for the time being the only!) work they accept is praying and learning the Sacred Scriptures. Tens of thousands of such religious people spend their whole life devoted to his 'work', supported by government budgets, and the income from their wives traditional-type jobs. It reminds me of the very early tribes: the men occupied themselves with important tasks, like hunting and going to war, and left the physically inferior tasks to the women. The religious service supersedes all other services, national or social; it is obvious that they (the extremely religious) do not serve in the army, although military service in Israel is compulsory. Their strongest weapon in defending the country during wartime is to recite the Psalms at a machine-gun rate. This is not funny: a considerable share of the national budget in the modern State of Israel directs to supporting a community of religious zealots and their unnumbered institutions (social assistance, schools, and theological seminars). The government finances a minority whose entire contribution to the country is an uninterrupted pressure to install a clerical regime and to coerce secular Jews, the majority of population, to observe their fundamentalist rules and diktats. The Ministry of Religion and the Rabbinate (both governmental institutions), with are involved in births, marriages and deaths for all Jews in Israel, even the secular ones, is a measure of what they strive to settle in the country – a modern Jewish Inquisition regime.

### *Dazzling senses*

The picture I painted in the last paragraphs is not enough to reflect the enmeshed background on which the modern Zionist movement has become, but it gives some idea of the proportions of the changes in this movement. The creation of the State of Israel was a true miracle, a dream that became a reality. The word miracle here is merely a literary license; I should have written 'exceptional event', because I do not believe in miracles. So great and impressive was this event, the creation of a Jewish State in Israel, that it dazzled the senses of many nationalistic leaders, who focus all their ideals on statehood. They demoted all other values of Zionism to a lower rank on their preferences scale. Next chapters will discuss the contribution of Zionism to the cultural, social and philosophical levels of Jewry. At present, I want to

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human activity for livelihood. The Bible glorifies *sacred work* (in service to God), and not the vulgar productive work reserved for slaves and craftsmen and manual workers.

It is also interesting to observe that in Hebrew *amanut* (arts), *omanut* (handicraft) have a common root with *emunah* (faith), an additional evidence of the linkage of all dignified activities of men to divinity.

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stress only one exceptional contribution (in my opinion) of the Zionism revolution to Jewry and mankind: a new conceptual approach to work!

### *Religion of Labor*

From 1909 onwards, Aaron David Gordon<sup>4</sup> published articles calling Jewish workers to a just and productive society, through a life of labor. Gordon, influenced by Tolstoy's ideas about the return to nature, emphasized the value of physical work as an activity that dignifies. His outlook on labor, Zionism and Jewish destiny (widely known as 'the religion of labor') had a profound influence on the Jewish labor circles the world over. In the first half of the twentieth century his ideas found in Eretz Israel (Palestine) a fertile soil to absorb them. The Zionist pioneers (*halutzim*) who reached the new land found here a desert, in the physical and economical sense. They had to compete with the entire population of Arab workers for every job, even in the orange plantations of Jewish landholders. They accepted all accessible work, holding the idea that every physical work is noble and dignifies man matched with the reality. Gordon's personal example upon them had a deep effect, and his philosophy fitted the social justice ideals as integral part of the Zionist effort to resettle the land.

The rise of the State of Israel, the intensive economical development and demographical modifications changed the socio-economical shape of the country. Most Arab population abandoned the country, and in their place reached a stream of immigrants of Jewish refugees from European and Arab countries, twice as large as the old population. Like the former *halutzim*, most of these immigrants arrived without any property and economic means, but they did not cherish social ideals and aims.

Older settlers, knowing Hebrew and having good relations snatched the jobs in the new administration, and become clerks, officers, managers, losing their former manual jobs over to the recent immigrants. This transition was not only a social one, but caused a deep conceptual change: manual work became no so honorable 'black' work; certainly, it was not what Jewish mothers dreamed for their children.

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4

Aaron David Gordon (1856-1922), Hebrew writer, philosopher and mentor of the Zionist labor wing. He went to Eretz Israel with his family at 1904, and at the age of forty-eight, without any previous experience in physical work, executed his ideas about the settlement of the land. He worked as a manual laborer in vineyards and orange groves, and like other pioneers suffered malaria, unemployment and hunger. Gordon believed that the salvation of the Jewish people would come about only through the efforts of individual change for change and become a productive element.

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The Arab minority was the first source of work force for this manual work. The Six Days War opened for Israel a new worker market– Gaza and Samaria. Almost 150,000 Palestinians went daily to Israel to work in construction, agriculture, restaurants and factories. Terrorism and the Intifada (the Palestinian popular revolt against the Israeli occupation) brought to a drastic limitation of Palestinian workers in Israel, and led to the introduction of thousands of foreign workers from other countries (Philippines, Vietnam, Portugal, Rumania, etc.). Nowadays [ref. 1996] there are 75,000 stranger workers in Israel. Official statistics assume that illegal workers overflow 100,000 (300,000 ref. 2004). From Gaza some 40,000 (ref. 2004) arrive daily, but every terrorist attack causes the cessation of their entrance in Israel and a pressure to bring more non-Palestinian foreign workers. This is happening in a country with 150,000 unemployed people (ref. 1997),<sup>5</sup> who prefer rather spend hours in the employment offices in order to receive unemployment compensation than accept 'black' work job. They've certainly never heard about Gordon's 'religion'.

If you will ask a student in a university what he knows about Gordon, I expect he will answer 'It's a street name in Tel Aviv'.

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In the beginning of year 2000 the number of unemployed people oversteps 300,000, and the number of foreign workers is much greater. They come also from Philippines, India, China and Latin America. Much of them are employed to assist old and crippled people (they have the advantage of being ready to reside in the patient home).

Contrary to the Palestinian workers, who return every evening to their homes, the other foreign workers remain in Israel for several months, and a part of them establish here for years, marry Jewish wives and bring children, and create a 'Harlem' region in Tel Aviv; they have no chance to receive Israeli citizenship, and may be suddenly expelled from the country with their children; new foreign workers will be 'imported' in their place ...

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## 6. MEN & ANIMALS, TABOO & MORALITY

*A pseudo-anthropological discussion on social organization of men and animals. Entrance into a jungle, which an ignored exit.*

### *Literal Meanings*

If we look up the etymology of the word 'animal', we will find 'Lat. *animal*: a living being'.<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of animal is 'a creature with a soul'. If we pursue our interest, we will receive more explanations and interpretations: an animal is a living creature possessing the power of voluntary motion, as distinguished from, and in contrast with, plants.

Despite the fact that zoology classifies Man as a mammal, we usually classify Man as a creature apart, the *human being*, distinguished from all other animals. Only in a derisive sense do we denominate Man as an animal, when we refer to him as a very low type, with a brutish, sensual and carnal character. We associate with animalism (animality would be a better word) a lower nature of physical appetites and savage sensuality. On the other hand, we find the attributes of 'human' included in a list of the finest qualities of nature: tending to refine, soften and ennoble; to be compassionate, merciful, tender, sympathetic...

The 'human' being seeks to promote the welfare of humanity, chiefly by attempting to reduce pain and suffering. Therefore, humanity disapproves of severe punishments,

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<sup>1</sup> When I retrospectively read what I already succeeded to write, including this present Chapter, I feel all quoted events as known facts, and we may call them trivial. No single character in this book is an innovation; Shakespeare used already all these letters 400 years ago, and other English writers – several centuries before him. However, this procedure is normal: all innovations are composed of known elements. The raw material is not the issue, but what result from it. From the same carbon, nature creates coal ...and diamonds. All sciences create new from old. The use of a known fact has a big advantage: the means for proof. Consensus about the events related and quotations tends to lead the reader towards the conclusions we want to extract from them. If this book intends, as was previously declared, to sum up thoughts and experience, any other way is inadmissible. Offer a cake recipe to two persons and give them exactly the same products; their cakes will not necessarily be the same. The taste and appearance of a cake depends on the baker's personal ability, talent, experience ...and luck! Therefore, even if I have used known material for preparing this book, it is my cake. It is original and supposes to be different from all books written before.

especially those that inflict pain, even upon the most degraded criminals. Very nice...

Out of modesty, we place the human below the divine, but certainly above the animal.

*Problem of Antonyms*

I have a problem. I do not find an antonym to animalism, as human is supposed to be the opposite of animal. Words such as humanity, humanism, and humanitarianism denote only a partial and much defined meaning of the abstract conception that I intend to express. The word 'humanism', the natural candidate as an antonym to animalism to express the human character and human nature, relates the intellectual movement of the transition from the medieval to the modern period, that is, the Renaissance. It denotes the return to the study of the classical poets and philosophers of Ancient Greece and Rome. Humanism indicates an attitude of mind, a system of thought, which concentrates upon human interests and the mind of man, rather than upon the external world of nature, or upon religious ideals.

Because of its very particular connotation as a phase of the history and a philosophical approach, the word humanism is not appropriate for use as the abstraction of 'all human beings' nature.

In the other hand, 'humanitarianism' is a way of thinking that holds pain and suffering as the worst ills to befall humanity. Therefore, the humanitarianism seeks to assuage them.

Perhaps 'humanity' fits the best; this word, relating to human as 'animality' does to animal, maybe a good suggestion. By the way, Hebrew language has an exact noun for this concept: *enoshiut*, the quality of being *enosh* – human.

*Story of a cheetah*

Anyone in the past who wants to learn about a specific animal – a gorilla for instance – would have to go to Africa, to a region where gorillas live, and spend twenty years or more there scrutinizing their behavior... It was not necessary to do it personally: if some other person did it and related their experience in books, we could have read them and learned by this way. Today it is possible to observe rare facts about animals and exotic peoples in excellent TV movies. During programs lasting five to ten minutes, we can see rare facts, which may require years of recording to film them. Because this book has

no scientific pretensions, we allow ourselves to use TV films instead of the reading of fastidious scientific monographs and reports. It is illustrative, truthful and more agreeable.

This week, when I meditated about men and animals concerning the current chapter, I saw two interest geographical documentary movies: one about a cheetah, and the other about elephants.

The first was about a female cheetah with three cubs. The camera, with wonderful close-ups, followed them during three days on their obstinate fight for meat. The cheetah is the fastest sprinter on earth, but its high speed has a price – the cheetah is very thin and light related to its size. For this reason, the cheetah cannot confront big and heavy animals, and it attacks only small ones. It pursues a herd of zebras and antelopes seeking a suitable prize, and when it finally meets a young antelope alone, without the protection of big and strong adults, it shouts out like an arrow after it. The antelope is fast and agile, but has no chance of escaping... The cheetah spans the gulf with giant rhythmic strides, reaches the poor victim, seizes its neck and breaks it. The killing of a 'Bambi', such a charming and lovely being, is a shocking scene; but rationally you accept that the cheetah must do it. It is a natural and legitimate act for survival. The cheetah's effort in the chase is so strong, and the energy it spends so high, that it must lye down and rests before it is able to eat. Then a band of hyenas suddenly rushes up, drives the cheetah away and takes its nourishment...

Until the cheetah and its cubs mange to eat some meat, this drama may repeat twice or more times. Meanwhile the cubs suck the mother's milk, even when the mother is hungry and has not eaten for three days or more... When the mother runs after its quarry, it leaves the cups without any protection, and they are in danger that other animals may capture them. The existence of the cheetah and all other animals, constantly jeopardized by unexpected dangers, is an interrupted search for food and fight against adversities.

By the way, I am in general afraid of animals, all animals. I never understood how people might love animals like snakes, for instance. Only when my children, true animal lovers, played with dogs and cats, and brought them home, did I become accustomed to them. My children's dogs, at least, I am now able to cherish. I have a personal dislike of proximity of animals, especially of the carnivores (I would not like to meet a cheetah in my way!). Notwithstanding, I believe that all animals have full right to live on the Earth's surface in their natural habitats,

where the ecological and biologic equilibrium will permit the conservation of the species. I do not like zoos, which keep animals in jails. A jail is a prison, and animals are not criminals.<sup>2</sup> Without animals, nature would become poor and boring.

*Hunting Elephants*

The second film I saw was about elephants in Kenya. Painted and adorned men of the Masai tribe, armed with shields and spears, danced an exciting ritual: they prepared themselves for the hunting of elephants... We saw how they discovered a group of elephants, succeeded in isolating, surrounding and killing a pachyderm, exactly (we may suppose!) as prehistoric men did it. The hunters now had meat to their village's population for many days.

There is a close analogy between the chase of antelope by the cheetah and the chase of the elephant by the Masai: the legitimate rights conferred by nature for survival. While this hunt occurs in a 'natural' way, the nature preserves the existence of cheetahs, hyenas, antelopes, elephants and men.

Animals 'observe' the nature's laws, humans not. Humans, especially the modern ones, invented tools that gave them a supernatural power that violates nature's equilibrium, and may even change the surface of the Earth.

Following the hunt of elephants by the Masai tribesmen, the television showed an illegal group of hunters who kill elephants to take their tusks. At the beginning of the twentieth century, millions of elephants lived in Central Africa; only tens of thousands remained today. Before the Kenyan government resolved to protect the wild animals and control hunting, statistics estimated a killing of 100,000 elephants a year (if not more) with the only objective to obtain their tusks (the ivory is mainly a raw material for producing piano keys and small sculptures). In the film, a Somali deserter captured by the Kenyan game reserve's guards confessed that in three month he killed 900 elephants for ivory hunters... Elephants in Africa are now in a serious danger of annihilation.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Hapsburg Empire, famous because his assassination in Sarajevo at 1914

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<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, zoos remained nowadays the last redoubts for many species of animals. Rhinoceros, for instance, subsist actually in Africa (ref. 1997) only some thousands, from more than two million in 1970.



was the reason to the outbreak the First World War, was an avid hunter. At his museum of medieval weapon and embalmed animals in his castle in Konopitce, Czechoslovakia, I learned that before he was shot, Francis Ferdinand had himself shot 300,000 big game animals in hunting expeditions to Africa and Asia: a distinguished sportsman.

Elephants are not the only victims of man's greediness. How can we justify the trade in luxurious furs? One single fur coat needs skins of tens or hundreds of foxes, minks, chinchillas, and other animals, fattened in cruel and painful conditions.

I have a deep respect for vegetarians, people who abstain themselves from animal food because it involves the taking of animal life, but according to my principles, meat is a legitimate food for man, because he is a carnivorous (or, more exactly, omnivorous) being. The primitive savage who killed animals to eat their meat and use other parts of the carcass for various purposes (skin for tents and clothes, bones for tools, etc.) operated within universal and natural norms. Did the elegant lady who exhibits her expensive fur coats eat these animals to survive?

#### *Humanitarian Slaughter*

The meat we eat, as I accept, is obtained from cattle, sheep, poultry and fish, within 'humanitarian' conditions (to avoid pain and suffering). Amongst Jews, 'shchitah' (animal slaughtering for meat according to religious directives) is an important practice of Jewish rituals, involving sophisticated canonical laws about how, when and what it is permitted or forbidden. The Halakah, the part of the Talmud dedicated to the rules and laws explains and interprets every reference consecrated by the Bible to this matter. Great Jewish moralists, philosophers, theologians and religious leaders, dedicated their attention to, and thought deeply upon, this theme.

A religious Jew will not eat meat when he is not sure it derives from a *kasher* slaughter, e.g. according to the *kashrut* rules, and within the control of a legitimated *kashrut* official (*kasher* = permitted, in accord with the rules. *Kashrut* = condition of the *kasher* things). He will only accept lactic products, vegetables, fruits, nuts, bread, but never meat.

One single rule in the Bible – 'you should you not eat a calf's meat with its mother milk' – has acted upon the Jewish ritual as a snowball. The implications from this imperative have reached such vast proportion that an voluminous and sophisticated codification has been created for observing the absolute

separation of lactic food from meat, in order to avoid every hypothetical contact between meat of a calf with its mother's milk. A religious Jew will not eat meat together with any lactic product; he must wait an interval of determined hours between them. Furthermore, he will use different tools (plates, forks, knife etc.) for meat and lactic products. They will be of different models and colors, to avoid every possibility of confusion between them and taking (God forbid!) one in place of another. The religious Jew observes a rigorous separation of them until maintaining two separated kitchens: one for preparing lactic meals, one for meat.

Jewish philosophy and tradition contain a plenty of humanistic and humanitarian aspects, but I cannot affirm categorically that the rituals of the Jewish religion, like the rituals of all other religions, have originated from these values. It is more plausible to seek their sources in earliest taboos and mystic beliefs,<sup>3</sup> some of them originated from prehistoric ages. Their moral justification is a very recent event, relatively 'modern'. At what stage of civilization did the present concepts of humanity and humanitarianism begun? In a relatively modern one, in comparison to the time human beings exist. Religious people strive to justify rituals and concepts, although they have no need to justify anything. Theologians often shoot a bullet (religious rituals and precepts) first and then draw a moral bull's-eye around it (moral and hygienic explanations). This point is important because religion, in short, is the belief in a supernatural power, which controls the universe and directs humans' destiny, and ultimately does not need to report on his resolutions.

#### *Disappearing of Species*

Man has erased from the world innumerable animals and plants, especially in the last 300 years. The dodo, for instance, a bird, somewhat larger than a swan, short-legged and clumsy, with rudimentary wings, which formerly lived in Mauritius, disappeared 150 years ago. We can only see it in stamps and in books about extinct animals... Its sin: it had beautiful plumage, could not fly, and was too heavy to flee. Scientist chronicles attest that the dodo was a very 'stupid' bird, which had not understood the danger and permitted men to get near to it.

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<sup>3</sup>

Mystical (and mysticism) is a concept that deserves a special reference. I will deal with it later.

However, even some 'wise' animals could not escape from their sad destiny, because the humans destroyed their habitat, as it had happened (and is still is happening) in the Amazon and Tibet regions. The cutting down of hundred of thousands square kilometers of forest caused the disappearance of many animal and plant species

This destruction was not motivated by hunger, or because an imperative need to survive. It had in view easy monetary gain or strategic military advantages, without any worry or consideration to the harm it caused.

How would you denominate bandits that destroy a bridge, causing the overturning of a train and the deaths of several thousands of travelers, just for extracting gold teeth from their corpses...? This is what elephant and rhino hunters do. This appalling example is not an exaggeration: newspapers daily report similar acts. Ethnic animosity enables people to bomb harmless cities, killing innocent men, women and children and destroying houses, monuments and artistic treasures, irrecoverable patrimony of humanity. In civil wars, millions of people may fly from their countries. Thousands of migrants from poor countries in Asia and Africa who immigrate to Eastern Europe looking for better economical conditions meet a wall of adversity of local nationalist groups. In Germany, neo-Nazi groups set fire to foreign people's houses, burning woman and children alive.

How do you classify them? I hope your reaction will not be the exclamation 'Animals!' This would be a very unjust insult and harsh offense against the true animals.

#### *Ecological Injuries*

The previous item referred to human damage to Nature because of war, lust for profit and destruction instinct. However, the greatest injuries Man has done to nature are the ecological ones (pollution of the atmosphere, of the rivers and oceans, etc.), even if they do not result from premeditated acts.

The TV exhibited choking scenes of quivering birds covered on black oil taken from the Persian Gulf during the 'Gulf War'. The television did not show what happened to the algae on the water's surface. The oxygen that algae provide to the atmosphere is greater than that of all forests together. Because of their bulk (microscopic, or nearly), the rate of oxygen that algae expel, in comparison with the oxygen they consume for maintenance and grow is much greater than that of the trees.

A layer of micrometers of oil on the surface of the water is enough to kill the algae. One oil-tanker shipwreck can spill on the ocean tens of thousands tons of oil. A ship, which wrecked off Scotland at 1992, lost 85,000 ton of crude oil. Water streams and winds dispersed the oil over a vast area covering tens of thousands square-kilometers. Theoretically it may create an impermeable oil layer which would have killed all living creatures on the water's surface; but fortunately, the storm was so strong, the sea so agitated and the diffusion of the oil was so effective, that the damages was not so heavy. High index of oil traces was founded in Arctic and Antarctic oceans, thousands kilometers away from the nearest sunken oil tanker. The damage that such an event causes may be larger, in sum, than the cutting-down of enormous forests. Besides as their importance as oxygen supplier, the algae are food for little fish, which are food for big fish. Therefore, the sinking of an oil tanker is a true calamity – and it happens...

Another crucial problem is the residues that poison the rivers in the industrial countries. These rivers flow into the oceans. Many big lakes, rich in fauna and flora in the past, have become sewers. The Mediterranean Sea is suffering a slow process of deterioration; it is in danger to become a new Dead Sea. The biggest problem amongst all residues concerns those from atomic activities. There is no known means for annulling their destructive action. Scientists even pondered the possibility of sending them into the space, far away from planet Earth...

Ecological problems are a challenge that actual humankind inherits for the posterity.

#### *Fire for Evolution*

By the way, when we speak about food as a vital factor in the maintenance of life, we must stress the role of fire in human evolution. Man, as all animals, knows the existence of fire since they saw wood, and other organic material, burning. Only the human being learned to utilize fire (other possible definition for humans: 'animals who know to use fire' – pyroanthropos?). It is reasonable to suppose that he began 50,000 years ago to use fire keeping burning pieces of woods for lightening dwellings at night or warming their caves. Later, he discovered a way to light fire. The use of fire for cooking was a decisive step on the evolution of humankind. From the analysis of prehistoric human jaws, anthropologists conclude that the primordial Man was a vegetarian who ate at-most fruits, roots, and nuts. Vegetarian animals need a large volume of food in order to obtain the

elements they need. They dedicate much time to chewing, crushing and kneading the pulp, because of the difficulty on extract nutritive juice from vegetal cells. Ruminants and birds have even an adding 'stomach' in order to help the digestion. The cooking brakes down the indigestible cellulose and starch of raw plants, transforming them into tasty food. Cooked vegetables and cereals took more and more place on human menu, saving time on chewing. The same happened with meat. The decay of teeth, because food has become more and more soft, is a hallmark of civilization.

An inestimable contribution of fire for humankind was its use for smelting metals. How this began may be a question of conjectures and speculations, but humans have used copper and bronze (alloy of copper and tin) for about 20,000 years. With the smelting of iron (5000 years ago?), humans performed their triumphant entry in the era of civilization.

Animals need rest and sleep for restoring the energy expended in their everyday activities. We can imagine that before cooking, Man was always famine, spending most of his time in searching for something to eat and later in vigorous chewing. No enough time remained for other activities.

Cereals could be stored for a long period; therefore, agriculture permitted the accumulation of big volumes of grains. Cooked food produces more energy from smaller volumes of food and requires less mastication and digestion, supplying additional free time for other activities: arts and crafts. Another neat way of defining humans is 'cookanthropos' (a man who cookies). Civilization is a permanent process of liberating us from worrying about food. A civilized society can maintain more and more people who do not share in the direct obtaining and producing of food (hunting, rearing, fishing, agriculture). The amount of people dedicated to other activities grows constantly, and in an advanced modern society, this rate is very high.

In the United States, and in Israel, for example, the number of persons employed in direct getting food (fishing, rearing, agricultural cultivation, and in direct produce of foodstuffs – sugar, chocolate, etc.) does not reach 5% of the adult population. The treatment of these products (packing, transport, storage, trade and commerce) occupies a greater rate. The decisive majority of the humankind does not directly participate at all in the production of material for survival. The President, the governmental administration, the army, the policy, banks, universities, judges, physicians, engineers, artists, philosophers,

managers, pilots, merchants and so on are only consumers; they do not produce with their own hands anything that they and other people consume. Even people that produce food, do not eat their own production, but have to buy provision in the market. Therefore, we may also define the modern Man as 'buyanthropos' (a man who buys).

Modern society evaluates a task (and respectively remunerates it) inversely to its proximity to the production line. The profit of the person who plants and picks the fruit is smaller than that of the person who manages the work, but does not plant and picks himself. This is smaller than the profit of those who market the produce. And so on in every sector and in all spheres: he who does profits less than he who rules, advises, and trades. Modern society sustains a growing mass of unemployed and 'unproductive' (in sense of producing food) people, who contribute nothing (food) in exchange of the monthly high remuneration that they receive.

#### *Exploitation of Resources*

Chapter 5 talked about the characteristics of the primordial human tribe and pointed out the instinct for guarding and defending the needed territory to survive. This instinct explains the impetus that motivated peoples in the ancient times to go out for conquering other territories, for submitting people, in order to spoil houses and temples, imposes heavy tributes and takes slaves. Empires, from the medieval to the modern times, have had the same purpose. During the colonial phase, territory became the area for exploitation resources, initially in plantations and later in mines.

The discovery of America opened unlimited possibilities for the greedy Europeans. The plunder was huge, without comparison with any other conquest at all times. The harm and destruction went beyond everything done in the past. I have heard about researchers who calculate that when Columbus reached America, one hundred million people lived there (twenty per cent of humankind in the fifteenth century!). During two centuries, their number diminished over eighty per cent.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>4</sup>

Extermination of Indian population in South America was not always a result of physical killing by the conquistadors, but of plagues caused by bacteria and viruses that they carried. Europeans had some natural immunization against smallpox (variola), Indians had not, and masses of them died. Half of Mexico's populations died at that time.

compensation, slave merchants captured Negroes in Africa and sold them to colonists in America for working in cotton plantations. The hunt of Negroes razed villages, countries and whole civilizations in the African continent. Who can calculate how many people died in the way, before reaching the American coast?

It was not only the Indians and Negroes who paid for the rise of the new America in modern history. Tens of millions of bison, which rushed around the open vastness, disappeared too.

Are all these tales from the past? Modern humankind has begun to be conscious of the calamity that humans are causing for the future. Rio de Janeiro hosted at 1992 the greatest and more representative world conference in order to discuss ecological damage done to nature by Man. Based on newspapers, my impression is that the delegates went back to the famous Babylon experience of building a tower to reach Heaven, an interesting enterprise that miscarried because people began to speak in different languages, and one man did not understand another. In the meantime, peoples and nations continue energetically damaging nature, just like the elephant hunters.

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Ecology is the revenge of nature against humankind.

*Concentration of populations*

What was once 'territory' – amount of land that its population needed for physical existence – has become in modern times the amount of land under jurisdiction of a single ruler or government.

At the tribal level, territory comprises the area needed to obtain fruits, nuts, game, water etc. The existence of the tribal

In 1789, the variola reaches Australia, perhaps on English ships, and killed most of the native population, but did not affect the white colonists with natural immunization.

The contrary also happened. Diseases that natives had immunization and the conquerors did not have reversed the picture: yellow fever did not affect Indians. The first recorded outbreak of this disease in the sixteenth century in central and coastal South America, after the Spanish conquest, became for the next 300 years one of the great plagues of the world.

Sailors and soldiers were in the past excellent carriers of diseases. In fourteenth century, a plague called the Black Death, originated in China and Inner Asia, killed twenty-five million people in Europe. A third of the population (in some regions – over half!) died.

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We have no chance: ecology will return in this book again and again.

population depended then of its capability in holding the territory and defends its boundaries. Nowadays, only a few savage human populations (in remote regions of Amazon jungles, Africa and Polynesia) fit this definition, which is also true for all animals that live free in nature.

The second definition fits better to the civilized man, who has changed the balance of nature by introducing agriculture, sheep herding, cattle breeding of cattle and other means of improving food and providing tools. Humans became able to increase and concentrate large population in a small piece of land, making possible the rise of cities. A large number of people could then live without producing the food they consumed: soldiers, servants, merchants, and later, a broad class (the middle-class) of professionals, artists, teachers, merchants... The increase of consumers, who do not produce food, drove strong peoples towards conquest and building the big empires of the ancient times. Primitive tribes, attacking other tribes for booty or for taking its territory, acted like the hyenas that grab the game from the cheetah. Civilized conquerors did even more: they subjugated the 'cheetah' and obliged it to hunt for them. Certain societies of insects (as ants and termites) capture other insects for milking them, but they do not conquer territories from other insects in order to enslave them and impose upon them tributes. I do not know creatures in nature that forces other creatures to work for them. This conduct is peculiarly a human faculty.

#### *Zoos and Towns*

A family of lions is composed, at most, of two to three lions, ten to twenty lionesses and their cubs. Such a unit holds a territory of around hundred square kilometers. The lion reaches the peak of his strength and virility at four to six years old. A male cub at two years old has to go far away from the group and lives mostly alone, as a bachelor. If he succeeds in surviving and reach the age of four, he becomes strong enough to expel an old lion from a group (not necessary his former group) and take its place as the leader. Banished lion will live alone as a bachelor, until stronger animals will devour it. It is very rare to find a free lion older than ten years.

In the zoo, the lion's curriculum vita is different. Its territory may be a jail, or (if it is keep in 'natural conditions') an open space. A 'territory' of only hundreds square meters is enough, because the lion in the zoo does not hunt – it receives its necessary portion of meat without any effort. No danger



threatens its life. All it has to do is to couch on the grass, to move around in the guarded area, and to be observed by visitors. In such 'ideal' conditions, the lion lives often for twenty to twenty five years.

In modern society, especially in the big cities, men live in zoo-conditions. The residential area of the New York's territory divided by the number of citizens allots statistically to every New Yorker the area of a little jail. The density in Hong-Kong is higher. How can people survive in such conditions? They do so because, as in the zoo, they receive the food from outside and do not have to hunt their provisions. Humans are able to obtain products and purchase goods in exchange of money. Lions are not. The best definition for humans is then 'moneyanthropos'.

To survive in a town you do not need to plant, to cultivate or to hunt – you need only money. To obtain money – many possibilities are available: working, trading, serving, stealing, and receiving allowances, and so on.

Conclusion: territory in modern human society lost its two former main components: it is no longer the area that feeds its population and no longer an area to exploitation of raw material or people. It has remained an area of sovereignty, as defined in the beginning of this dissertation: 'Territory is the amount of land under jurisdiction of a single ruler or government'.

#### *Town is a Train*

Money is the most important tool in the present-day society. After the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age, we live now in the Silver (money) Age. With money, you can obtain everything. If you have enough money, you can create in a desert or in a jungle a microcosm with all you may desire. Money has existed for some thousands of years, but only in the last centuries obtained the power it has today. Economic conditions and modern technology in our time make possible for a single man, without being a king with armies, to concentrate in his hands a property greater than millions of other people have together. Without using exact statistics, at the present ninety per cent of all wealth that humankind possesses belongs to ten per cent of it. In reality, the contrast may be sharper.

By changing nature, humans change also their own nature. The urban man (the citizen) abandoned many attributes of the tribal man (or lost them, depending on how you relate to them: as positive or negative qualities). Dependence between the individual and the collective continues, but with a different

content. In a town, a person may have a home and live there with his family, but he is not responsible for his neighbors or other citizens. He must, of course, observe certain rules (for instance, not smoking in designated places); he must pay taxes; he must give services (for instance, military service, which in Israel is compulsory), but in compensation, he enjoys rights (to vote, for instance). That is all. Concerning to the tribe case, the obligation of the tribal man to his tribe, and the interdependence between them, are absolute.

To sharpen the contrast between the tribal man and the city man, I would suggest some analogies: the tribal man is like a member of an organism, as a head, a hand or a leg. A permanent interaction and interdependence with its members characterize the organism. The city-man in his city is more like to a traveler a train; if he pays the ticket and observes the rules of conduct in a train, he has the full right to enjoy the ride; he has no responsibility for the train or for the other passengers.

Tribe is a body, town – a train.

Tribe is an extended family; town – a residence and occupation place.

#### *Countries are Mismatches*

Modern countries, especially in the advanced ones, are losing tribal characteristics (collectivism) and enhancing individualism. The following chapters discuss the implications of this process in the development of democracy and the assertion of personal rights – ‘I paid for the ticket, therefore I have the right to be transported’.

While tribal qualities become weaker, national characteristics strengthen. Formerly countries were, in a broad sense, big tribes. If more than one group lived in the same territory, one of them was predominant and dominated the others. Ancient history looks like as an opera performance: one after the other, a soloist sings an aria, and the other singers remain in the background. Chaldeans, Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Mongols, Ottomans..., each of them acted as big tribes that dominated territories and other peoples, establishing countries and empires. Certain groups were more benevolent towards the peoples they oppressed, exacting heavy tributes, but permitting them to observe their customs and languages. Others enslaved the defeated peoples, annulled their rights, and exiled a part of the population to other territories. Some conquerors imposed their language and creed, while others absorbed elements of language and culture of the

defected peoples. In sum there was always between both, winner and loser, a certain interaction.

The modern nation or state, however, tends to be different. No longer is it a territory where one people dominate the others, but a political entity delimited by boundaries, with a central government. Maybe there is one race or more, one language or more, one religion or more, and coexistence of a majority with minorities. Generally, the country proclaims only one language and one religion as official, but formally, one group does not oppress and exploit the others. The predominant class may be composed by people of different origins. This is the new picture being created in the American continent, in Western Europe and partially in Africa. In most new African countries, the tribal element plays a decisive role. Dozens of countries, composed of a mixture of several tribes with different languages and origins, which came up in Africa since the Second World War, have adopted in the beginning the modern model of a state. However, in general, the ruler turns himself a dictator, supported by his tribe. Only a true democracy that respects the diversity of cultures and costumes would be able to mobilize the efforts of all citizens to advance their common interest. Most people in the world are not yet mature enough to enjoy freedom.

*Unity of Sovereignty*

*State* (from Latin *status* = place, position) is supposed to be a body of inhabitants in an area, or country, with limits or boundaries, organized as a political unit, under one supreme government.

'*Nation*' has a similar meaning, but with a broader significance. A nation is a large group of human beings forming an independent political unit, occupying a clearly defined geographical area and subject to one single supreme central government. A community of races, customs, and traditions may form a nation, while the inhabitants feel unity of identity. A nation may comprise one unique state or many states (like the United States nation, the Canadian nation, and the Brazilian nation). A nation may be also a community united by links of races, costumes and traditions without a complete political independence of their geographical area (the Navajo nation, for example).

From the definition of modern nation and state, we learn again that the modern conception of territory denotes a unity of sovereignty. 'Territory' now becomes an area limited by political considerations: a unique central government.

The facility with which a proprietor in a democratic country may transfer his factory to another country, where work force is cheaper, evidences just how far our new society has gone from the former tribe. The commitment of the individual towards the other members in his society disappeared! The businessperson does not worry about if thousands of employees will remain without livelihood, because he has no obligation to them. The only consideration in his mind is his personal profit. This reflection, inadmissible in a tribal society, is rightfully in the capitalistic society, which improves the nationalism (the sense of the national unity) and patriotism (the readiness to defend the integrity of one's territory), but can ignore the population's welfare.

*Party's Despotism*

A former section of this chapter, about states and nations, quoted Western Europe. What happens in Eastern Europe? Above seventy years (from the twenties of the twentieth century), there was in Eastern Europe and North Asia a vast society that in spite of being composed by different ethnical and linguist groups, it presented tribal characteristics: xenophobia, a general mobilization of all resources in order to guard the territory, pointing the tribal integrity and interests as its main target. A superficial analysis of the former Soviet Union is enough to find wide similarity with the most despotic empires of the Ancient times, with the main difference that in place of the king stood the Party Secretary. Contrary to the modern conception of states and nations, permitting the existence of parties, the Soviet-Union permitted only one single party – the Communist Party.

USSR had a huge territory, rich in resources. If, despite all anachronism and deficiencies of its no-democratic system, the USSR had committed its energy to the main aim of the primitive tribe – the care of their members –, its economy would have probably not collapsed so quickly. However, the expansionist doctrine and lust to conquest the whole world led it to concentrate the economy on the development of military power on one side, and on the maintenance of an enormous political apparatus to impose discipline on the other. The indoctrination that the 'capitalist imperialism' threatened the integrity of the Soviet territory was the strongest motivation to mobilize the population, while the propaganda also succeeded in concealing from the people the failure of its economic and military policies. The defeat in the Afghanistan war and the shortage of consumer

products, besides the impossibility to hermetically closing off the land from true information about the economic success of the 'decadent countries' outside, caused the collapse of the Soviet regime. Most Russians never knew about personal rights their constitution guaranteed; they had always lived in despotic regimes, and the democratic principles were alien to their mentality and conceptions. Therefore, the crumbling of the giant tribal empire could not lead to democratic alternatives, but to disintegration in smaller tribal units, with every one more stuck to the instincts of xenophobia and tribal territorial concepts. After decades of aggressive militant policy of Russification (although the Soviet Legislation vouched for the preservation of the minorities' culture and nationality), it is no surprise that the ethnic reaction set loose a devastating power.

If ethnic conflicts awake in men the cruelest instincts, even worse than the religious ones, what may we expect from conflicts that are both ethnical *and* religious? It is enough to open a newspaper and read what is happening now (ref. 1992) in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and in new Siberian Republics.

The mass migration of millions of refugees to Germany, Italy and France awoke in these countries hidden tribal instincts. The use of the word 'nationalist' to denominate the neo-fascist and neo-Nazi movements that emerged in Western European countries is not correct. A nationalist is a person who supports the spirit and the interest of his nation or state. As already said, although a nation may proclaim one language (or more than one) and one religion as official (in most modern countries the religion does not have national status), the modern nation is no more a tribe of one 'family', one people, one race. Usually the population is pluralistic, from several origins, and the main group has not legal advantages upon the minorities. Formally, at least, the modern nation observes equality of rights and duties for all its citizens.

*Minorities in Democracy*

Minorities live in most countries of the world. Democracy and the passage to the modern concept of nation and nationality confer equality of rights to all inhabitants. The modern nation is clearly an anti-tribal concept, but it may contain formations and institutions organized on tribal rules. The most important of those are the army and the police. In addition, most of the politic parties act as tribes: by definition, a party is a group of persons that hold the same opinions and common interests and purposes unite them. It is possible to say that the party is a

political tribe. There is some inherent antagonism between party and pluralism of ideas. A party can support personal conflicts for leadership, while conflicts of ideas will bring about a split. Although a party may adopt democratic procedures (voting, free debate in assemblies, etc.) it will remain in its essence a tribal entity. The same happens in numerous other institutions and organizations.

India, the largest democracy in the World (nearly twenty per cent from all humankind), despite its economical backwardness and exotic composition, may serve as an excellent example for a modern nation – an independent political unit, delimited by a geographical area, under a central sovereignty. The most population understands none of its myriad different dialects, so they must use a non-Indian language, English, as the official mean of communication. In India, there are a great variety of human types, and a very complex mixing of races. Beside the major Hinduism religion, there are ‘minorities’ of millions of Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and many sects. What unifies all these peoples is the acceptance of a unique central government, and being inside the defined limits of India. At the national level, there are not many signals of tribal characteristics in India’s rulership (the British Government left a very well organized local administration and the passage to political independence was without complications, so that the new India nation could begin a modern democracy). Although India is a democracy, where casts were officially abolished, most India’s population is divided into casts,<sup>6</sup> the casts into sub-casts, and sub-casts into sub-sub-cast, and so on, being every one of these units a true primitive tribe.

Democracy and tribalism are in most senses contrary, but they may coexist, one inside or besides the other. Democratic formations may content tribal ones, and tribal formations may adopt democratic features. This interaction is not censurable. Tribalism belongs to the past, but it has deep roots in human behavior; the conservation of some of its positive aspects may be desirable.

*Israel, a miniature of India*

In the sense of its population composition, Israel is an India in miniature. Besides the Jewish majority, in Israel live several

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See ‘caste’ in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a very interesting article about the hereditary social groups and classes in India.

ethnic groups: Arabs, Bedouins, Druze, Czerkaze, Armenians and Copts.

Even other people are in Israel: more than 1 million tourists per year and thousands of foreign workers (Portuguese, Italians, Kenyans, Filipinos, Koreans and more). There are also Palestinians from Gaza and Samaria. For obvious political reasons Israel does not close its boundaries to them.

Many Israelis accept and employ Palestinians without humiliating or discriminating against them, despite the fact that amongst them there maybe terrorists or fanatics with knives, who try to cause damage to the Jewish population. After violent events, revulsion and instinct of revenge arise and provoke attempts at acts of terror acts against Palestinians. This has happened in the past. The government and the police try to avoid the escalation of the conflict. There is a national consensus and awareness that the police's task is to catch the guilty persons, punish them, and avoids plotting against innocent people. This policy is not simple, but necessary in such a complex and difficult conflict as the one between Israel and the Palestinians. Subsequent chapters will return to this conflict; meanwhile let us remark that thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and Samaria come daily to work in Israel.<sup>7</sup>

About religions – the variety is remarkable: Jewish, Muslim and Christian. Christians are a small minority with a wide variety of churches: Catholic, Greek-Armenian, Protestant, Greek-Orthodox, Coptic, Ethiopic... and Mormons. We can find also followers of several sects: Hare Krishna, Satan Servers, Transcendental Meditation, and so on.

In addition, the religious Jews themselves are not a homogenous group. The predominant group is the Orthodox, which rules the majority of the Jewish institutions in the country and tries to impose its norms upon the Jewish life in Israel. Two other minor groups — the Conservative and the Reform – fight for the legitimization of practicing their cults. In the USA,

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Unfortunately, every terrorist attempt against Israel involves the closing of boundaries for weeks and even months, preventing the entry of Palestinian workers to Israel. Even if this is a comprehensible and inevitable reaction against the Palestinians acts, this is a very heavy collective punishment, which works as a boomerang against Israel. While the 100,000 Palestinians workers return home daily, imported workers from Western Europe and Western Asia, far from their families, live in new 'slums' that have sprung up in Tel Aviv, creating socio-economical problems whose scale and consequences nobody can foresee.

where the greatest Jewish community outside of Israel lives, the division is opposite – the Orthodox branch is there the minority.

The Orthodox people by themselves are a very heterogeneous group. 'N'turei-Kartha' are extremist anti-Zionist and anti-Israel (they do not accept the 'legality' of the State of Israel, because in accordance to their view only when the Messiah comes, will He establish a true Jewish country). There are also moderate and liberal religious Jews, who observe religious commandments and rituals, but refrain from religious militant activities. Between the two extremes, there are several religious groups, parties and organizations opposed to one other, in a permanent competition for supremacy.

Israel is a state, a nation, modern and democratic, with a parliament (the Knesset) and many parties with all colors and nuances, from extreme Right to extreme Left.

#### *Land of Immigrants*

Israel is a land of immigrants. Theodore Herzl, a famous publicist, conceived the idea of the State of Israel and founded in 1897 the Zionist Movement, at the First Zionist Conference at Basel in Switzerland. The main objective of Zionism consisted in building in Palestine ('Zion') a Homeland for the Jewish People.<sup>8</sup> It is not a wonder that after the Independence Declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, one of its first laws was the Chok Ha'Svut (Return Law), which confers to every Jew in the world the right to immigrate to Israel and receive automatic naturalization. Since then, to 1992, the Jewish population has grown from 600,000 to 5,000,000, mostly thanks to Jewish immigration from the outside world. The highest numbers came from Russia, Poland, Bulgaria, Iraq, and Morocco. In fact, immigrants came to Israel from all countries and regions in the world: from the five continents, inclusive from the remote Cochin in China.

The small Israel cannot compete with India on the variety of spoken languages and dialects. First, Israel's population is smaller than a single town in India (Bombay, for instance). Secondly, the dialect that every one speaks in India is certainly

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When Herzl began his political career on behalf the Jewish people and published *The Jewish State* (1896), he was a 'territorialist', e.g., he had not determined where to establish the Jewish sovereign country that he proposed. Only when Herzl became a popular leader and contacted the Jewish masses he understood that only Eretz Israel (The Land of Israel) in Palestine has a place in Jewish hearts and able to attract the Jewish multitudes to his plan.



the only fluent language he has used in the past, and will use it in the future. The use of the diverse languages that the Jewish immigrants brought will continue at most in other one generation, because the Israelis use only Hebrew in their daily conversation. The Israel-born Jews may understand the original language of their parents, but cannot usually speak it.

The Jews in the world at large speak in general the language of the country that they live in. I said 'in general' because in the past, there were places where Jews at-home used a special patois. In Eastern Europe, the Jews spoke Yiddish, a form of old German spiced with Hebrew words and expressions, plus some from other languages, which unfolded into a juicy dialect, with an abundance of newspapers and rich literature. The Sephardim, descendants of the Jews who were expelled from Spain in the fifteenth century, have conserved the Ladino, an old Spanish language, to this day in their communities in Turkey, Palestine, Bulgaria, Greece and other countries. The Zionist Movement took a very decisive and courageous decision by resolving that Hebrew, the 'dead' language of the Bible and the Holy Scriptures used in liturgical rituals, would be the language of the future homeland. The revival of the ancient language besides the ancient country avoided internecine between Yiddish and Ladino speakers. This resolution seemed then to be a complete fantasy, just as if the Congress of India had resolved in 1947 that the Sanskrit should be the current language in the future independent India nation...

By the way, Arab language is also an official language in Israel, besides Hebrew, and formally usable in all official documents and governmental instances.

About the physical types of the Jewish inhabitants in Israel, may be said that there are plenty of races, because all Jews (and Arabs too) are been supposed to be Semitic, but the diversity of types is enormous. From clear white skin, blond hair with blue eyes of the Central European Jews to the black Falashi who arrived from Ethiopia, there exist human types common from almost Europe, North Africa and Western Asia. The anti-Semites call the Jews as 'cosmopolitan'; well, concerning to their physical attributes in Israel, they are right – the diversity is total.

It is impossible to describe in this book all anthropologic, cultural and social details about the Jews and the other inhabitants of Israel. This book is not destined to be a Jewish encyclopedia, but only a rostrum to discuss at a very popular

level the mutual relations and interaction between the individual and his environment, especially in the Kibbutz situation.

*Vanished Dream*

In spite the existence of many socialistic structures, such as the kibbutz, the moshav (an agricultural cooperative village of private settlers) and several cooperative organizations like the *Eged* and *Dan*, which run most public buses in the country, the State of Israel is surely a capitalistic democratic society.

In the twenties of the twentieth century, leaders of the young workers of the Zionist movement in Palestine dreamt about an all-communal Jewish society in the country. The dream vanished very quickly, but the aspiration for partnership and mutual-assistance remained very strong. The Histadrut Ha'klalit, the main worker organization, aimed to embrace the care for all economical, social and cultural interests of the workers in the land, and besides the organization of cooperatives and founding of factories and industries, it promoted enterprises in all cultural and social sectors. *Kupat-Cholim ha'Klalit*, the Histadrut health institution, with its large hospitals and neat local clinics, provide a broad medical assistance to three-quarters of the whole population.

The Histadrut also maintains a large network of sports clubs, and other cultural and economical enterprises.

It is curious today to observe that the Histadrut supported until the fifties the idea that the number of children one of the components of the salary of the employees; a worker with many children could receive a higher monthly payment than his manager (if the later was a bachelor) received. This was an approach accepted as legitimated criterion. The gap between the income of a simple worker in the factory and the main Director was then small, perhaps twice or triple. Today the income of a main director can be hundred times greater and more than that of the single worker.

The Likud's Government (ref. 1977-1992), oriented by economic conceptions of liberalization, free market and free imports changed the economic structure of the country. Financial speculations enriched many people and impoverished many more. The official policy stimulated the private consumption and the investment in Stock Exchange. With economical vicissitudes in the international market, inflation grew (400 per cent a year!). A deep economical crisis damaged almost every sector of the economy, causing bankrupt of factories and industries. Govern intervention saved the banking

system; while in theory the Govern encouraged privatization, in fact it took control of virtually all banks, especially the big ones.

Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, was (as he expressed so well in his books and speeches) a liberal according to the advanced liberal thought of the nineteenth century. He dreamt about a humanistic and democratic state with a wide social legislation. The Zionist immigration in the twenties (in the twentieth century) intended, as already said, to build the land as an large cooperative of all workers; in part they realized this ideal with the moshav and kibbutz settlements, the Histadrut and Kupat Cholim, and dozens of cooperatives in almost all branches of social, educational and cultural activities. The model for the new generation of nationalistic leaders (they call themselves Zionist, but their social targets do not exactly fit with Herzl's conceptions) is Hong-Kong, private initiatives, extreme liberal free-market competition, non-intervention of the government, and privatization of all national resources. In sum – 'catch-as-you-can'. They are succeeding. Besides the national social insurance, national health security, and national education, there is a fast-growing private parallel health and educational apparatus for well heeled. Israel is progressing in all directions: the rich become richer, the poor poorer.

Even the Histadrut enterprises, institutions and organizations could not escape from the crises, and many of its factories were bankrupted. The gigantic Histadrut was hardly injured, and had to sell much of its real states and close many its enterprises to pay its debts (for instance, *Davar*, its daily newspaper for over 70 years).



## 7. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

*Education – an attempt of the past to tame the present.  
Is a person really able to become himself?*

In the past, when a man died, the world he left was not so different from that into which he was born.

### *Dizzying Changes*

In the present time, the situation is very different. Everything changes now with dizzying rapidity. A whole lifetime is not enough for adapting to the changes. When I was a child, my grandfather used to tell about the first airplanes and me about the first automobiles. My parents told me about the unforgettable moment when they saw their first ‘talking’ movie, but now they do not dare touch our stereo, a prosaic everyday item for our young grandchildren. When I was a child, we could encounter television, space travel and jet planes only in *Flash Gordon* comics and movies (I hope that my readers have heard of Flash Gordon). For my grandchildren these tools are trivial and they learned to use them before the use of knife, fork and spoon.

Not only inventions and innovations have contributed to changing our environment. It may be that ninety-five per cent of the Earth's surface is the same as it was 5,000 years ago, but the immediate environment we live in is in permanent and turbulent change. A personal example: I was born in Poland and at the age of three moved to Brazil, to a completely different environment of different people, a different climate, and a different language. In the beginning, we lived in a small town of primitive wooden dwellings, without electricity and running water. Three years later, we moved again. This time we went to São Paulo, an industrial center with tall buildings, the greatest city of South America, with half a million inhabitants (twelve million in 1995). In 1948, when I reached Israel, I found a country with one million inhabitants and from my home to Tel-Aviv, which seemed like a big village, there was then only a poor narrow road. Today (ref. 2000) the State of Israel has a population of over five million; Tel-Aviv is a modern metropolis and a wide six-lane highway with two local service roads at the sides reach to my home. We begin our kibbutz as a tented encampment in a desolate sandy place with no vegetation. Now our kibbutz is a village of pretty houses set in the middle of a wide green park.

The changes that have taken place in our surroundings and our social environment during a single generation are dazzling. If human changes happened at the tempo at which the chameleon changes the color of its skin, humans would not be able to survive, since modern life requires a much greater speed of adjustment to the surroundings. We are unconsciously changing every moment.

#### *Human Capacity*

As an example of the human capacity for adaptation to new situations, I would like to describe an interesting and curious experience of mine as a volunteer in an experiment about 'sleeping disturbances'. We had to perform the following: to lie for seven minutes in a bed (in a dark room) connected by electrodes and wires to a polygraph computer. Afterwards, with the illumination of the room, we had to get up immediately and remain awake for the next thirteen minutes in order to answer a complex questionnaire, have our temperature taken, pulse and pressure measured, eat, drink, etc. and return to the bed and the darkness. We had to repeat this procedure like robots non-stop for twenty-four hours, exactly seventy-two cycles without a break. It sounds funny; but it was not an easy routine. However, we did it, and after some hours, it came automatically to us.

Other example: in Nazi extermination camps some people survived, despite of hunger, humiliation, torture and suffering, and horrible conditions. They become living skeletons, but survived! Survivors of a plane crash in the frozen Andes Mountains became cannibals, but survived. I read about a man who during an earthquake in Egypt remained buried for seven days under a collapsed house. He drank his own urine. His wife and children were with him, but refused to do it and died due to dehydration. He survived. These examples, even though they are extreme ones, show how broad the limits of human adaptation can be. Every moment of our life is a continuous process of overcoming and dealing with new situations and challenges.

#### *Preparing Children for Reality*

All I intended to achieve in the previous paragraphs about the permanent need to confront and overcome situations is to demonstrate that education (the preparation of our children for the reality that they will confront in their maturity) is a difficult

and burdensome task in modern times. Parents and educators cannot foresee the reality for which they have to educate; they have firmly fixed their ideas many years ago and the most revolutionary types institutionalize ideas at a certain stage of development and then became conservative... People, sure that what they think is right, entrench themselves in fixed positions, operating (and teaching) them accordingly.

The psychological process is similar to the motion of a train. The locomotive invests much energy and 'revolutionary' effort to increase its speed to the desired level, and then it enters into a stage of 'conservatism' (inertia). Every change requires huge efforts. Our mind is a wonderful machine for developing concepts, but at a certain stage of maturity it becomes 'conservative', and does not want to change what it has. An army that halts an offensive to fortify its static positions should become 'conservative' and may lose the impetus to advance. The less we are conceptually and ideologically ready to advance, the more enthusiastically we defend former positions and avoid innovations. Biologically, people are able to develop their minds indefinitely and increase the sum of knowledge until advanced age, but only extraordinary and exceptional individuals change direction.

Most adults stabilize their intellectual formation at an early stage of life, generally before their thirties. People over forty and fifty years aged control the education of young people based on ideological and philosophical concepts consolidated twenty to thirty years earlier, at least. Therefore, the reality of the future world twenty years hence remains forty years away from the actual teaching. The gap between the reality that our youth will confront and the epoch in which the textbook authors formed their ideas is greater. Conclusion: our children will inevitably face a world very different from that which they were educated for. Young people do not have the experience and the knowledge of adults, but exactly for this reason they are more malleable and flexible, and consequently better equipped to react and adapt themselves to new situations. This factor is one of the main reasons of the conflict between generations.

*Bridged Island*

The conflict in the kibbutz is even greater than in the surrounding society, because the radical ideological and structural transformations in kibbutz during the last decades, besides the influence of the dynamic outside world.

The kibbutz is an small island, not isolated at all in an vast ocean, but a fluvial one (an island in a river), that, although surrounded by water, remains in the middle of a continent, close to and linked to it by several bridges. The kibbutz is not detached from the outside world. On the contrary, economic, cultural, technical and innumerable other ties link it is strongly it to its surrounding.

The youth in the kibbutz is living through great changes at home and, at the same time, is highly responsive to external influences, without being adequately equipped to confront this situation. The education that they receive from childhood onward does not fit the present reality. We must also keep in mind that the kibbutz youth is, like all the youth of the modern world, determined to achieve its own dreams and aspirations, which are not exactly what the parents and the kibbutz expect.

Objectively, birth in kibbutz does not assure suitability to kibbutz life. Affiliation to the kibbutz (membership) is a free, voluntary act and other options beckon from outside. Many of the children born in the kibbutz do not stay in it. However, it is not easy to explain the high percentage of young people who have left the kibbutz. The analysis I proposed about the development of concepts, and the resultant educational systems, is only a partial explanation, but a valid one.

Continuity of generations is vital to every society. In a healthy and normal society, children take direct care of their aging parents. Because membership in kibbutz is personal and the kibbutz is responsible for life, security and guaranty of every member (irrespective of whether he has descendants in the kibbutz or not), old members have full rights to enjoy the fruits of their work, even if their children have abandoned the kibbutz. Notwithstanding this accepted convention, someone who lives in a kibbutz together with a large family feels better and enjoys a better old age.

#### *Kibbutz Ideologies*

The kibbutz ideology began at the end of First World War with the *halutzim* (Zionist Youth Pioneer) movements, strongly influenced by contemporary European youth movements as the *Wanderwögel* in Germany, the *Narodnya Volia* in Russia, and the Boy Scout movement of Baden-Powell. The youth movements' activities promoted empirical doctrines of education. Education played an important role in Zionist youth movements. Zionist youth groups were often organized on the initiative of Zionist teachers of the Hebrew language.



Documents from this period underline the concerns about how to prepare young people for the future Jewish homeland in Palestine

The physical conditions in Palestine were harsh and adverse – deserts, swamps, unemployment, etc. Zionism did not only preach migration to Palestine, but aspired to change the mentality of Jewish masses, improving Hebrew language instead of Yiddish jargon spoken by most Jews in Europe and favoring handicrafts and agriculture over small-scale commerce and non-productive occupations. In order to reach such a ambitious target – altering the image of a whole people –, highly developed and advanced educational and indoctrination methods was needed..

Educational doctrines were not strange to the first kibbutzians (in the youth movement they have handled with them), but I am not sure that they had much idea how to educate the first children. The education system in the kibbutz ('communal education') was not a predetermined doctrine. It developed along with the growth of the first children.

In the very beginning, pregnant women could not remain in the communal group or *kvutzah* because the lack of means for raising children. Also, with the amelioration of the general conditions when children played in the courtyard of the kibbutz, the decision to have more children was not a private matter for the parents. How many children should be in a family and what was the desired age interval between them depended on the collective consensus. In the fifties, the usual norm was two children, with an interval of four and more years between them. Only few families had three children. The prosperity and speedy development in the sixties naturally influenced the number of children in kibbutz families: four and five children became less rare, and the interval between them became shorter. Couples married younger and did not wait very long for the first child, as in the past. In the present day (ref. 1990), new couples are inclined to have three children in the ten first years of marriage, and perhaps one more later. On the last times (ref. 2,000), the tendency is of marrying at an older age.

#### *Endless Debates*

On the first steps of the kibbutz, endless debates and discussions about every event in daily and future life, covering every imaginable topic, were habitual. Members of the collective spent evenings and nights talking about everyone and everything. At that time, the direct democracy reached its peak.

Lacking a source to learn from (because they were the pioneers of a new unknown way of life), they had to provide immediate answers for every unexpected situation. On the other hand, they had no alternative occupation or recreation: no television, no radio, no Internet and almost no electricity... They were young, and not too tired, because they were not always working; and so they sat together and talked, and talked...<sup>1</sup>

*Unfinished Chapter*

As stated in the introduction to this book, I do not intend to present a detailed and consumed scholastic research about the social events referred in the discussions. They remain a challenge for professional sociologists and scientists. I limit myself to revealing thoughts based on empirical observation.

I feel that the current chapter is not properly finished. I have not explored the theme of education sufficiently. It is too wide for this book. I will only add some lines about general education and universities.

Israel introduced twelve years of obligatory and free learning. A closer investigation will reveal that the learning is not so obligatory and is certainly not free at all. In poor and underprivileged sectors (mostly in the Arab areas), the dropout of children from school is incomparably greater than in 'better' regions. Elite schools use a very selective policy for accepting children, which practically prevent the possibility that children from lower classes will learn then despite the official orientation towards 'integration of social sectors'. Theoretically, the learning is free, but in the reality, it's not. The fees for diverse extra activities are a heavy burden for poorer families with many children. In richer sectors, the parents finance special courses (music, arts, dancing, and karate) in which poorer children have no possibilities for participating. The picture is a speedy polarization of intellectual levels in the different sectors of the population.<sup>2</sup> There is some perpetuation of the situation,

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<sup>1</sup> In the Fifties, we lived in tents and in wooden shacks. Heat water boiling on the "primus" (a small gas stove) to prepare coffee was enough to fill immediately the room with neighbors and friends, who sat on the bed or on the floor (the room had then only one chair) and the "parliament" began its session with energetic discussions about all the problems of the kibbutz and the whole world.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Education invested privileged resources in "weak" schools in some "weak" regions of the country and the result of the experiment was

because only the better pupils (from the better sector) who succeed in entering the universities have a chance to get better jobs, will live in better regions and in better houses, and provide better education to their children. The gap between rich and poor classes in Israel is becoming greater and greater. The number of unemployed reaches seven to nine percent and grows permanently (ref. 1999).

#### *Twelve Years of Education*

There is a consensus that twelve years of education are not enough to prepare one to the modern world. Three to four years of learning in a university is an objective necessity. Israel has good universities, high schools and colleges, but they are expensive and there are too few. Not every person interested in studying in a university can do it, because of the very rigid selection of candidates to an insufficient number of places. Many students have to learn in foreign countries. Some rich parents prefer to send their children to prestigious universities in other countries.

Another story is what happens within the universities and what prospects students have to advance in the academic career. The 'Law of the Jungle' that is affecting all sectors in Israel does not bypass the universities.

Israel sets out to be a democratic country. Differentiation among social castes is a real menace to democracy. Education is the strongest weapon for improving social equality and the respect for individual rights in the community – the essence of democracy. This last sentence is a suitable key for closing this chapter.

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surprising: the percentage of students who succeeded in the university admission exams equaled those from the best schools in Tel Aviv. What is the conclusion?



## 8. TO BE OR NOT TO BE A JEW?

*Jew – a privilege, a curse, or a problem?*

The statement 'I am a Jew' which opens the Introduction of this book is not accidental.<sup>1</sup> When I was a child, the 'philosophical' questions that occupied my mind were. 'Why don't stars fall from the sky?', 'how I was born and what I was before?' and other similar perplexities of this life. Since I became conscious that I am a Jew, the meditating about what it means to be a Jew and its implications has relegated all other problems to a secondary level.

*Jewish Obsession*

Do non-Jews, of any religious or national affiliation, have a similar worry? Is there a more 'natural' thing for a Buddhist than to be a Buddhist, for instance? To be a Basque for a Basque or a Papuan for a Papuan? Perhaps they have political, economical, or social problems, but their condition of being what they are is for them not a philosophical question.

For Jews, being a Jew involves innumerable questions, because Jews are not a normal people. I have observed that in Israel the Jews who were born in this country after its independence are more 'normal': the being a Jew does not really raise any special problems for them. Only for the fanatically religious Jews is it a worry, and sometimes more – it is an obsession.

*Do Jews exist?*

A curious point to shed light on here is the substantial discussion about the *existence* of Jews... I am not joking: wise and erudite authorities have developed arguments negating Judaism and the Jews. They accept that once upon a time (2,000 years ago), according to the Holy Bible, there was a Jewish kingdom in Jerusalem and surroundings, but all this disappeared. Stalin, in his famous 'scientific' work about minorities and their rights to self-determination, 'demonstrated' that the Jews in Russia are not Jews, but Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, and so on. Stalin tried in the thirties to erase every

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<sup>1</sup>

Nearly all the quotations in this chapter are trivialities for people who have a minimum knowledge of the theme. This is not by chance. Rather than sensationalize, I intend to base my personal ideological constructions upon secure foundations (common, known and deep-rooted facts).

manifestation of Jewish (Yiddish) culture (Hebrew had died out in the USSR long before). If Stalin had lived longer, perhaps he would have finished the job and actually proved his theory of no-existence of Jews in Soviet Union. After all, he had precedents...<sup>2</sup>

In any case, I do not intend to prove that Jews exist (or not). This question does not engage my attention, just as it did not disturb the Inquisition to burn people on bonfires and the Nazis to send people to crematories, because they were Jews.<sup>3</sup>

*Ocean of Judaism*

Before jumping into the ocean of Jewry in order to locate my private position, I could like to ponder about religion and related items. My thoughts and feelings about Jewry are incomprehensive when disconnected from the meditations running around in my mind about religions and human behavior in general. I hope that this digression will help to clarify my standpoint.

Let us begin with the distinction between *knowing* a religion and *believing* in it. There is no obligatory linkage between them. A person can be erudite about a certain religion without believing in it, such as a professor of theology, for instance, who dedicates his life to studying and investigating an established religion that is not his own. Even the contrary is admissible. Most people believe piously in their religion without knowing much about it.

Belief and knowledge are two different mental activities. Knowledge results from directly personal experience perceiving via the senses or indirectly through the mind, learning from the experience of other people. In the last instance, knowledge is based on facts or events acquired experimentally; therefore, it is a rational activity. Belief, on the other hand, being emotive and a priori, does not need evidence. I *know* that the sky is blue because I have seen it, and that  $2+2=4$  because I have learned it. However, I *believe* that it is preferable to make decisions on

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<sup>2</sup> Since King Edward I expelled the Jews from England in 1290 until 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were not Jews in this country. In Spain, after the expulsion by Fernando and Isabella in 1492, Jews were not there for several centuries.

<sup>3</sup> Nazi is a member of German political party or an adherent of the policies of Nazism. Is used to say actually that Nazis sent Jews to crematories, in order not to accuse all German people; nevertheless, the Second World War was a war of the Allied against Germany, and not specific against Nazis.

Tuesday rather than on Monday. The impossibility to prove this last statement is not a reason not to believe in it.

Often it is difficult to determine if a thought constitutes belief or knowledge, because of the imperceptible border between them. I have never been in Tibet, but I know it exists, because I have learned about it in books and in school. People were there, and have told and written about it. I know that dinosaurs existed in the past; nevertheless, no human being has seen them alive. Why? Because I believe in the paleontologists' suppositions about their investigations into fossilized remains. The belief in the sources of our information is the basis of most of our knowledge. Belief in the truth of information is in fact the basis of all sciences.

It is very reasonable that what the primordial humans knew depended mostly on personal experience.<sup>4</sup> They did not have much to learn from parents and older people (in comparison to a modern child). Imagination, this extraordinary power of the human mind that enables someone to conceive original own ideas of unreal and absent things, supplied everlasting explanations for unelucidated events. The fertile human imagination created an entire supernatural world of superstitions, myths, and mystics.

#### *Supernatural Forces*

Magic, which claims the use of supernatural forces to control events in nature, is certainly a primordial stage of religion. The medicine man (the magician of the ancient tribe), certainly the first skilled professional, preceded not only the physician, but even the priest and the social worker as well. Before he established the Jewish religion with the revelation of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, Moses carried out a series of magic deeds (miracles, if you prefer): the conversion of his rod to a serpent, the ten plagues of Egypt, the division of the sea and others. Therefore, Moses-the-magician preceded Moses-the-legislator. Even Jesus worked a series of miracles. It is reasonable that all religions had in their origin links to supernatural power and events.

Confronting human thought with the nature of things, if magic is the basis of religion, philosophy (logical reasoning) is the opposite extreme. The next step in human mental activity was science. Magic, religion, philosophy and science are not

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<sup>4</sup>

Experience is the backbone of science, but Benjamin Franklin once said 'Experience is a dear school, yet fools will learn in no other'.

different stations, which humankind passed through like a train going from one to other. A better metaphor would be comparing them to the layers of an onion; one grows upon the other and all subsist together. During human development, the advance from one stage to the next did not imply abandonment of the former stage. Pagan and magic practices are deeply rooted in popular lore. When religions do not succeed in uprooting them, they try to adapt them to their own rituals.<sup>5</sup>

While magic and religion deal with believing, philosophy and science are supposed to be concerned with knowledge. I said 'supposed', because even philosophy and science are not purely rational.<sup>6</sup> They have religious and magical elements: axioms, primary bases of all theories. Axioms in science and philosophy, like dogmas in religion, are indemonstrable statements. Therefore, even the strictest scientist, since he builds his knowledge and theories starting from axioms, is himself a *believer*. Otherwise, a magician executing a trick acts as a scientist; he *knows* from experience what he is doing.

Scientists purport to accept only experimentally demonstrated facts. But things not demonstrated things in laboratory, do they not exist?

#### *Emissaries of Divinity*

Persons endowed with supernatural gifts, and those who allege that divinities elected them, have always appeared in all societies in all ages. When it is impossible to demonstrate that they are impostors and charlatans, all we can do is to believe them or not. In the field of religion, we may distinguish between two types of practitioners: those whose main activity is the service (worship) of the divinity, and those who act as

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Veneration of amulets is a classic pagan practice, which no religion is able to uproot entirely. Jews reverence and kiss objects (mezuzah, Torah scrolls) and push notes with requests and supplications into cracks in the Wailing Wall and sacred tombs. I myself, sincerely, do not believe in superstitions or mystical and supernatural forces at all. My custom of beginning journeys with the right leg is only a question of precaution...

Concerning worship of images, see later footnotes.

6

The main difference between science and religion is that while religion forbids any doubt about its tenets, the scientist truth is an eternal object of scrutiny. A scientist is firstly an investigator whose personal dream is to find a contradiction to an accepted theory and create a new theory that overcomes the fault. Religion does not admit faults. Anyone who points out faults in a religious truth may expect a little bit of Hell in this world, and not exactly to a Nobel Prize.



emissaries of a divinity. One person may even perform both missions.

About the first group, people devoted to worship of God: sacramental services may belong mainly to one specific class of the population, like the Brahmans (members of the highest caste of the Hinduism) in India and the Cohanim (members of the Levite tribe who served in the Temple of Jerusalem). In order to help people to carry out sacrifices and other ceremonies in sanctuaries and temples, they receive especial preparation over several years. A common characteristic of this structure is its strict hierarchy, similar to the army: the obedience of the subordinate to his superior, and differentiation from common population by appurtenances, special clothes and symbolic adornments. At the top of the hierarchical pyramid stands the High Priest (in the former Jewish Temple in Jerusalem), the Pope (the head of the Roman Catholic Church), the Buddhist Dalai Lama, and so on. Nowadays Jews have no High Priest, because of the Diaspora of over 2000 years and the divergence amongst the different sects and factions. The Rabbinate in Israel, the highest legal (governmental) religious institution, is far from being the supreme religious authority of Jewry.

In Antiquity, the ruler (the King) was often even the supreme religious authority and the main priest as well as being the main judge. He would preside at the outstanding religious ceremonies and at the commemoration of the religious holidays in the main temple. This happened among the Hebrews in the biblical times, when the political rulers were strong enough to preempt even the religious leadership. Where the priesthood was strong, it maintained a separated independent organization, sometimes stronger than the secular government, as happened in the Middle Ages in Europe. A despotic monarch often considers himself elected by divinities, if not a divinities by himself (as the Pharaohs in Egypt).

#### *Fighting for God*

The second group includes who manifest supernatural powers but not institutionalized. We do not refer to prestidigitators who perform in theaters and circus, but to people who claim to act under divine guidance. The Bible tells about prophets who acted as delegates of God. Their outstanding characteristic was their ability to foresee the future. Many of them had also the gift of deciphering dreams, and other

supernatural aptitudes. The prophets declared God directs them to interpret His will and announce His judgments to the people.<sup>7</sup>

In the biblical times, Jews always had contact to non-Jews neighbors, and even had been under foreign domain, and therefore, they met different religious customs. Several Jewish kings took non-Jewish spouses and concubines, permitting them to keep their gods and rituals. Prophets fought impetuously against the influence of foreign deities and the practice of pagan rituals, often colliding with the rulers. Some of them had to flee to the desert in order to evade severe punishment. In the earlier phases of the religion, the prophets concentrated their activities towards God and the observance of rituals while the later ones tended towards social, moral and human affairs, which became the center of their activities. Among pagan peoples, when they reached a higher degree of evolution, there appeared sages who dedicated their thought to philosophical and social questions, rather than on sacrifices and the practice of rituals. Interpreted historically, Israel in the present time in regression – the main concern of the religious leaders today is the establishment and observation of rituals.

Every religion is a coin with two interdependent faces: the divinity and the people. Which component is more important is a very arguable question. No religion can subsist without people who believe in it. Most duties in Moses' Ten Commandments (like, for instance, honoring one's parents, not killing, not committing adultery, not stealing, not bearing false witness against one's neighbors, not coveting) refer to the relations of the individual with other individuals. Duties toward God, we find in the prohibition to adore and serve other gods,<sup>8</sup>

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Prophets were more than interpreters of God's will – God spoke by their mediation. They often fell in ecstasy and spoke as if the words in their mouth came from a superior force. The word 'prophet' means 'spokesman' and attempts to translate the Hebrew word *navih* (announcer).

8

Thou shalt have no other gods before me'.

The prohibition to adore *other gods* implies the idea of the existence of other gods or the admittance of such a possibility. The plural form of God's earliest denominations in the Bible – *Elohim* – suggests perhaps a plurality of deities. In this period, *Elohim* was exclusively the God of the Jews, while other people had other gods. The idea of universality and uniqueness of God, for all people in the world, became consolidated during the Second Temple in Jerusalem and later. Only at this stage, symbolized by the advent of Jehovah (a singular-form name of God), did Judaism really become a monotheist religion.

grave images,<sup>9</sup> and to use His name in vain. The prohibition to work in Sabbath is the only direct allusion about the duty of practicing any ritual (if we interpret the abstaining of working in this day homage to God – He created the universe in six days and rested in the seventh). In all cases, rest of one day a week is a big revolutionary social innovation, one of the greatest contributions of Judaism to humankind.

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9

‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.’

Idolatry (worship of material images, the abodes of superhuman personalities) was a common practice among primitive peoples. Great ancient civilizations as the Chaldean, Egyptian, Ancient Hindi, Greek, and Roman all practiced it. Even worship of dead (and graves and statues supposed to contain their souls) relates to idolatry.

Hebrew prophets enforced the total abandonment of idols. Pictures of animals such as lions and deer in synagogues are ornaments and not objects to adoration. They appear also in roof’s mosaics and people tread on them.

Islam also repudiates idolatry. Muslims developed Arab art (arabesques) to obviate the forbidden representation of living things. Muslims authorities never approved officially the veneration of Mohammed and Muslim religious relics preserved in Mecca and Medina. The reverence for the black stone at the Ka’aba shrine in Mecca undoubtedly goes back to old pagan sources.

The worship of images has provoked a deep controversy in Christianity. While the iconoclastic movement (eighth century) condemned it as idolatry, the defenders of the cult of images linked it to a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith – the doctrine of incarnation. The Second Council of Nicaea (A.D. 787) defined the reverence of images as addressing the divine personality that they represent, not to be confused with or leading to idolatry. Christians also venerate relics (the remains of bodies of saints and martyrs, and objects connected with the life of Jesus Christ). Orthodox Church sanctioned this practice by the Constantinople Council in 1081. The theologian St. Thomas Aquinas (thirteenth century) contended that bodies of saints are vessels of the Holy Spirit. After the Protestants reject the veneration of relics, the Council of Trent reaffirmed it.

In addition, secular people preserve with religious zealously relics of historical personages and thousands of visitors flow to contemplate them. Israel preserves residences of important personalities as museums (Chaim Weizman’s in Rechovot, David Ben Gurion’s in Sdeh Boker and Tel Aviv, Chaim Nachman Bialik’s in Tel Aviv, and other prominent leaders, writers, poets, painters, and so on). Israel also restores work offices of prominent Jewish personalities of the Diaspora as Benjamin Theodore Herzl (in the Herzl’s Cemetery in Jerusalem) and Baron of Rotschild (in the mausoleum of Ganei a’Natziv in Zichron Yacob). Worldwide museums and special pompous buildings (the Dead Sea scrolls in the Jerusalem’s Shrine of the Book, Jefferson Memorial, and Lincoln’s Monument) expose documents that attract unnumbered ‘peregrines’.

*Philosophy & Voodooism*

Only a few religious people go deep into the philosophy (in the sense of essence) of their religion. For most people, religion means visiting a church (synagogue or mosque), a cult of mystic rituals, worship of sacred objects, blind observance of rules, and the use of amulets. Their religiosity does not intend bettering of human behavior, but to better their particular destiny. Therefore, they pay attention to the practice of 'magic' acts, rather than giving any attention to moral and social thoughts.

Most people accept the reality within they live as a natural normal situation. They do not argue 'why?', as little curious children tend to asks continuously. Curiosity is not necessarily their main concern, not in religious matters at least. An adult will perhaps ask 'why?' concerning different fields of knowledge (science), but not about belief. If you ask a religious Jew 'why?' about some rule or dictate he will deliver a series of quotations of sages' opinions, or will answer 'because God ordered so,' or something similar. Do not expect from him an explanation based on his own thinking and judgment. Clergy and religious students learning from the Midrashim concentrate most of their attention to the *Halakah*,<sup>10</sup> interpretation of laws and rules concerning to the duties of everybody, what is permitted, what is prohibited, and how to practice them. The investigation of fundamental questions of existence (divine and human) was always the prerogative of individual sages and curious people, who jeopardized themselves to excommunication (as happened with Baruch Espinoza). The curiosity about the unknown and the anxiety to control the future, led to the Kabbalah, the Jewish mysticism which flourished in Spain from the thirteenth century A.D. Similar impulses created in the Medieval Ages alchemy and astrology, and other mystical 'sciences'. People have always had an interest in magic and supernatural powers in order to employ them for their own sakes. What we can say about telepathy, telekinesis, and even hypnosis (nowadays practiced by physicians and psychologists)? Voodooism is not exclusive of primitive people.

*About Mysticism*

Here is perhaps the proper place to some words about mysticism. Mysticism aims to direct union and communication

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Halakah – the legal part of Talmudic literature. Interpretation of the laws at the Biblical Scriptures.

with ultimate reality or God, through deep meditation and trance-like contemplation. All religions are monopolistic and have despotic apparatus to control their believers. In all religions and in all times, persons have revolted against religious authorities and control of 'mediators' to contact with God, and seek in mysticism a way to avoid them. Organized religions have always fought furiously for supremacy. Therefore, when they could not neutralize and isolate dissidence, they do all they could to annihilate them. Any history of religions relates the bloodthirsty fight for religious domination. Religion does not allow any independence of mind – they demand absolute obedience. An absurd paradox: even democracy cannot be entirely democratic. To subsist, democracy has to combat who negate it.

The theme of Religion-Democracy-Mysticism is so diverting that it does not fit inside this book.

*Fear of the unknown*

Fear of the unknown is common. People have invented all sorts of means and devices to overcome fear, which are more or less effective against animals and enemies, but inefficient against supernatural forces. Against them, people are in need for more sophisticated means, as for instance amulets, charms, spells, prayers, blessings, conjuration, curses, exorcism, enchantment, witchcraft, sorcery, and so on. Even modern people are not free of them: Good morning, Good luck, God bless you, Have a good day, *Bon appetite*, *Bon voyage*, and all the other common greetings, are not only a question of etiquette, but also a prayer for moral support and help.

Ancients Greek thought that 'Nature abhors a vacuum'. If ordinary people are not able to make contact with supernatural powers, we cannot be surprised at the appearance of individuals (mediums, medicine men, sorcerers, etc.) claiming that they are able to do so. Prophets, priests, rabbis, imams, ayatollahs, and others declare themselves as delegates and servants of such supernatural forces. They had no formal credentials to certify their authority. People accept them and believe in them, or they do not. The influence of exceptional individuals such as Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, and many others endures even today.

People claiming election for divine missions have also appeared in modern times. Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church, was elected in a dream. Joan of Arc received her mission in dream. Even Constantine, the first Christian

Emperor of Rome, received by dream the revelation that converted him to Christianity.

Dreaming is a source of inspiration and revelations. Rulers in the past employed in their courts persons to decipher and interpret dreams, and other signals for forecasting the future. They did not make decisions (especially in wartime) without consulting oracles, soothsayers, astrologers, and other skilled officers to foretell events. Modern rulers prefer the opinion of advisers who base their previsions on intelligence service, statistics, and analysis of bytes of information, generally through a computer program. Even ordinary people like to consult advisers about the future when they want to invest money. Like magic, the ultimate goal of science is the same: the ability of controlling the future. Magicians execute tricks that other people believe they are supernatural, because they cannot explain them. For the magician who *knows* how to do the tricks they are not supernatural. Despite all I learned about the Apollo space probe sent to investigate distant planets, the microcosm of atoms, electrons, and quarks, and many other scientific concepts, they seem to me like a box of magic tricks. I *believe* that scientists' explanations are true. I have no chance, because my knowledge is not deep enough, to understand exactly by myself what is happening. What scientists foretells does not always fit the reality, but their actual theories purport to be the best explanation, until new scientists come along with better explanations, formulate new theories, and win Nobel Prizes.<sup>11</sup>

*Mental Creativity*

Even in pagan societies in the past, where magic, myth and prejudices dominated the mind of people, outstanding thinkers tried to investigate the nature of things in order to find a rational explanation. Because the starting point of their beliefs was that nature is perfect and eternal, they assumed the possibility to

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The list of Nobel Prizes is a good authorized documentation about the development of science.

The history of science is a fascinating romance about human imagination's attempts to adapt theories to the elusive reality: a dramatic chase. The human mind elaborates a net to catch nature's events. Some little exceptions always escape, forcing scientists, enriched by experience and superior knowledge, to invent constantly new tools, methods and theories. Human technology constantly adapts to the human use plants, domestic animals, and all that we eat and consume, our clothes, our houses, and the paths we walk on, our means of transport and communications – even the air we breathe. Everything! Humans are creating a new private world.

reach all truths by pure ratiocination. Philosophy, the inquiry into the nature of things based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods, preceded the science or knowledge gained by experience. Philosophy is a fruit of pure mental creativity (imagination), without material tools. Aristotle did not need microscopes, telescopes, radar, and modern electronic instruments to conceive his extraordinary philosophical system, which dominated the Western thought until the Renaissance, and later.

Science permitted humankind to build a world of knowledge besides the former world of belief. The aim of investigating and deciphering the nature of things experimentally promoted the development of tools to improve our senses (for instance, lens to see better). These tools amplified knowledge and greater knowledge permitted the building of better tools.<sup>12</sup> Progress in knowledge and means of investigation reveals sometimes discrepancies in established theories. New theories created for overcoming these discrepancies advances the corpus of knowledge, which in turn leads to the improvement of better tools for investigation. More sophisticated tools reveals new discrepancies, and engender new improved theories, and so on and so on.

The development of astrophysics adds something to astronomy contributing enhanced means for understanding cosmology better and helps us understand the origin of the universe and its structure. Actually, we 'know' that our globe is a planet in the solar system, which is a minuscule part of our Via Lactea galaxy, a detail in a universe of millions of galaxies. Our universe is possibly only a mere point in infinity of universes. Thanks to Albert Einstein, we even know that our universe beats like a heart, enlarging and contracting in a rhythm of millions of light-years per throb.

Four elements (earth, air, water and fire) were enough for Aristotle to compose the matter of the whole universe. Dalton split them into atoms, ordered by Mendeleëv into his famous table, which reached a wide audience. Thomson took electrons from the atoms, and contemporary scientists added other particles (neutrons, etc.). In the sixties of the twentieth century, scientists dismantled these particles into quarks numbering a few numbers of flavors. Therefore, the last scientific fashion

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<sup>12</sup>

As an atom is thousands of times smaller than the smallest wave of light, we cannot see them at all. Scientists succeeded in investigating and measuring atoms and their particles indirectly, by means of highly evolved instruments.

returns to the Aristotle's classic model that only some fundamental elements compose the matter of the whole universe.

Nowadays human knowledge seems more fantastic than our primitive ancestors' most extravagant myths.<sup>13</sup> I am curious to know what scientists in the next millenniums will say about our present knowledge... In all probability, they will relate to our actual knowledge as we do about the Greek mythology.

*Our Scientific Adventures*

What can we learn from our scientific adventure? That human knowledge is a constant self-fertilizer. While one theory overcomes the other, both – the known and the unknown – grow proportionally. The progress of science allowed the improvement of our living standards, the creation of many useful tools and processes in all sorts of human activities. The use of such tools and processes do not require scientific knowledge. Australian native throw boomerangs with great precision knowing nothing about ballistics. People nicknamed one of the foremost inventors in modern times, Thomas Edison, the 'Wizard of Menlo Park', because he created a speaking box, an illuminating bubble and other fetishes. Most people use modern inventions that will always remain magic fetishes. You press a button and the radio speaks, the television shows pictures, and so on. It is not necessary to know everything about something to use it. Therefore, even people mentally at a low level may enjoy the most advanced technological achievements. Our mind deals with myths and superstitions rather than with knowledge. Doubts are a privilege of people who want to know and understand. Most people prefer to believe.

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13

The investigation about the nature of matter extends from the smallest parts of the atom to the most distant galaxy, involving a great variety of theories. The target and the greatest challenge of the actual science is a new theory that will connect together the theory of quantum physics, the expended theory of relativity, and all we know presently. Generally, very sophisticated experiences demonstrate the new propositions, even the virtual resultants of pure ratiocination. It is quite impossible to discern the limits between imagination and reality. Scientists in these fields of investigation belong to a very exclusive club of privileged researchers in prestigious universities with expensive laboratories and enormous budgets. Only they, the modern high priests, enter the secret rooms of the holy scientific temples to seek the divine truth. All other mortals stay, as in the Temple of Karnack, on the patio outside. The public hears mysterious sounds emerging from the depths, and believes in revelations (for instance, about the existence of antiparticles and antimatter) without understand them correctly.



The aim of the present digression about belief, philosophy and science is an attempt to clarify how the human mind reacts when facing reality. My impression (I am not confident enough to say 'conclusion') is that the mind is an automatic photographic camera that films and a recorder that constantly tapes the environment and all information that it meets with. The analogy is only partially correct. Unlike to camera, the mind has discernment and imagination; but let us remember that all what we have in our mind are only images – poor images – of reality; information and conjectures about it, and not the reality itself, which may be different.

Discernment is the faculty of distinguishing sharply what is important, secondary, and unimportant and detecting within the constant flood of information the elements of real interest. Imagination is the extraordinary power to form new images, concepts, and theories based in former images, concepts, and theories, without any correlation to the external reality. All we think, all we know and all we believe are mental activities – images. These concepts and theories, despite their use by humans to resolve problems, decipher nature enigmas, and do everything they do, relating to reality, as we said it the former paragraph, are like a photograph to the photographed event. They are not identical. Belief, philosophy and science are pure human mental activities rather than independent reality.<sup>14</sup>

While science handles with existent realities, religion, being a question of belief, has no existence out of the mind. Therefore, the religion that everyone believes is forcedly different from what all other people believe.

*Freedom to Think*

Freedom of expression, the right to express what one thinks, is in my opinion the greatest political triumph of modern humankind. The same may be said about freedom of belief. Belief is a normal mental activity the mind of confidence in people and things, related to subjective acceptance of truth and reality. Religious belief, mostly irrational, begins of notions absorbed with the maternal milk. Although our mind classifies

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<sup>14</sup>

Religion, philosophy and science are three phases of human knowledge with a common basis – intuitive truth (dogmas, axioms), something we 'know' without demonstration. Philosophy and science purport to be logical, while nobody expects logical reasoning in religion. Lately, science has begun to be 'religious', because since the introduction of the quantum and chaos theories, scientists have to confront events that confound our logical reasoning. It is increasingly more difficult to discern between reality and absurdity.

the 'input' in order to retain what interests us (just like our digestive system filters the absorbed materials, distillates from them what it needs and expels the superfluous), permanent indoctrination of the environment often blur the limits between belief and thought. Freedom of thought, rather than being a question of declarations or legislation, depends of us.

Therefore, thinking with one's mind depends of experience and knowledge, and how much one is free from prejudices; on how much he is able to overcome external influences, and above all – if one wants to do so.

Freedom to think does not imply freedom to *do* what one thinks. Earlier paragraphs have pointed out that societies live in a regime of large conceptual obedience. This assertion does not refer to the execution of orders in army and in other institutions, where discipline, acquiescence and submission are prime conditions. No sensible person will agree that every worker will do in the factory whatever occurs to his mind; no society can coexist with anarchy. The efficiency of every organism depends on the cooperation and coordination of its components.

The expression 'regime of conceptual obedience' refers to blind acceptance of concepts and ideologies, without criticism. Descartes stretched the point, declaring '*Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I exist) – a process known as Cartesian doubt. Doubt and self-judgment are the summit of intellectual independence. We permanently ingest and assimilate concepts, meanly during our childhood, so that we can barely liberate ourselves from them. The more entrenched concepts are those that we never suspected were wrong.

In sum, freedom of thought is a very nice phrase seldom realizable, because only a few individuals reach an intellectual level that permits them really to think with their own mind.

Relating to belief, we have to differentiate between two aspects:

Freedom to believe in what one wants to believe.

Liberty to practice religious rituals.

The two do not always coincide.

#### *Beliefs and Rituals*

Because I do not believe in rituals at all, when I profess the right to freedom of belief, I support the first version, the right to belief in what one wants to believe. I am ready to accept some rituals as an expression of tradition, nice manners, or historical and familiar commemorations (I love and enjoy holidays and

national commemorations), but never as a means to appease divinities or beg them for good luck!

When religious people speak about freedom of belief they have in mind the practice of rituals. In Israel, they impose them even to secular, agnostic and atheist persons, because according to religious Jews God elected *all* Jewish people when He gave them the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai! Therefore, all Jews have commitment to the Law, whatever their will or not. For zealots their religion is not a personal belief, nor an individual prerogative, but a collective divine imposition.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Religion and Genetics*

The digression about the general approach to religion now reaches its end. Let us now return to the focus of this chapter: ‘To be or not to be a Jew?’ The question does not exist for Jews who believe categorically that Judaism is a divine inevitability, independent of human will. I used a question mark because I believe that religion is not a genetic quality, but one acquired by tradition, education, or choice.<sup>16</sup>

I do not think that my mother was the prettiest and most intelligent woman in the world, but I loved her as the best

<sup>15</sup>

‘All Israel (Jews) are guarantors for one other’ (see Footnote 8 in Chapter 9). Fanatical Jews interpret this statement to mean that every Jew is personally responsible for what all other Jews do. If I drive a car on the Sabbath, all Jews are sinning; therefore, they must stop me to doing it! The murder of Itzhak Rabin is a sample of what fanatical believers are able to do because of the ‘mutual’ commitment (Rabin’s police was for them a sin).

<sup>16</sup>

In my opinion, religion is ultimately a personal choice, because even the most zealous adherent may change his mind and convert into another religion. Many factors do not depend on the will, such as for instance one’s biological parents and genetically structure. We normally accepted events such as language, citizenship, and religion as natural ones, even if it is possible to change them. Because we have the theoretical option to change them, by maintaining them we indirectly choose them. In my case, I feel that I chose my Judaism conscientiously.

The influence of education and environment upon persons is powerful, sometimes quite impossible to overcome. Dressing, eating, and many other attributes belong intrinsically to specific groups’ behavior. In certain regions of China and Vietnam, people eat chats, dogs and snakes. Other people would not be able to do it. In extreme situations, some people are able to eat everything in order to survive, inclusive rats. There are reports about shipwrecked people and survivors of airplane accidents who eat flesh of their dead companions. Anyone unable to do it dead, and was eaten.

The will to survive and the ambition to advance in social position have always been a strong impetus, and can modify the most ingrained habits – even leading to change of religion and citizenship.

mother because she was my mother and not because her beauty or intelligence. I could say the same about my Jewishness, but although I am a Jew by birth, I consider myself a Jew by choice. As the opening of the Introduction tells, I spent my childhood in a town where my family was the only Jewish one, and I did not even know that I was a Jew. I did not then know anything about Jews and Judaism. My real connecting to Judaism is a result of an enormous personal effort of investigation and self-learning after realizing that I was a Jew.

The history of the Jews, and the philosophy and morality of Judaism that I found in my researches, appealed to my imagination and sense of identity. My family and antecedents certainly had a decisive influence in the formation of my identity, but they alone were not enough. What I learned and deduced for myself had a greater impact on my personality – or so I think!

*Authorizations to Change*

To change citizenship, a person must obtain the authorization of the country whose citizenship he wants to adopt. He must fulfill all procedures determined by the laws of naturalization of that country. However, he does not always have to abandon his former citizenship, because many countries permit plurality of citizenship. The change of religion is a pure question of conscience, depending uniquely on an inner personal decision. It is possible to hold passports of two different countries, but it is impossible to believe in two different religions.

A converted who wants to adhere to a community (or every other sort of organization), must of course be accepted by this community; but nobody can prevent anyone to believe in what he wants. Nobody needs authorization or approval to believe in what he wants to believe. There are many Jewish 'communities' – Orthodox, Conservative, Reformed, and other groups and sub-groups. The question is if one needs to be affiliated to one of these groups (I do not want to say 'sects') if one is to be a Jew. In Israel, the Orthodox factions (only a minority of the Jews in the world are Orthodox) dominate and want to impose authority upon all the Jews in the country, even upon those who do not belong to their group.

It is possible to convert to a religion by force, as happened during the Inquisition in the Iberian Peninsula and during the expansion of the Islam in North Africa and the Middle East. Perhaps the new converted observed rituals formally, but the true belief in the heart and the mind is another matter. Jews

forced to convert to Christianity in Spain and Portugal (called 'new-Christians' and *marraños*) secretly kept their belief in Judaism. Many generations were necessary to complete the assimilation of their descendants into Christianity. The emergence of the State of Israel encouraged communities that had managed to keep the memory of their Jewish origins to return to Judaism, and even immigrate to Israel, as happened to some groups in North of Portugal and Majorca. There is an assumption that thousands of Christians who still acknowledge their Jewish origins are living there today. All Jewish community of Mashaad in Persia compelled to become Muslim in 1838, live today as free Jews in Israel. In Ethiopia, thousands of Flashmura who converted to Christianity over the last dozens of years want to join their Falashi sisters, brothers, and relatives, who arrived to Israel since 1990. There are estimates that at least five million no-Jewish people in the world consciously preserve some living Jewish ties.

The mass conversion of peoples and whole countries often fails to eradicate former national character and traditions, which will probably find a path to create a special fraction.<sup>17</sup> Christianity split at the beginning of its expansion into Eastern (Slavic Orthodox) and Western (Roman Church) branches, continuing later to split into Protestantism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, Evangelicalism, etc. Historians explain these divisions to social and political events. No doubt, they are partly right, but deeply ingrained traditions certainly contributed to the differentiation. The same phenomenon may be observed in Islam,<sup>18</sup> which split into Sunna, Shia, Ismailia, Ahmadiya,

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Former traditions and customs are often adopted (with suitable adaptations) by new religions. Most pagan commemorations found their way into the monotheistic religions, as for instance the carnival. Many elements of Jewish holidays, especially in their agricultural aspect, go back to ancient Sumer. Christianity adopted Roman-Hellenistic and Barbarian customs, such as processions, worship of idols, etc. The influence of ancient dances and magical acts (exorcism) feature in all religions. Islam adopted Jewish and Christian elements (both the Old and New Testament are sacred books, and Mohammed is considered the last of a line of prophets, after Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus) and elements of the beliefs of primitive pagan Arabic tribes, and later, of other converted populations and tribes (*jinni* = little demons). By the way, in the Jewish version of the Bible there are not references to demons.

18

Mohammed destroyed local idols and places of ritual, but adopted Allah, the god of the pagan Kuraish tribes, as the Supreme Being in his new creed, as a part of the peace pact he signed with the rich rulers of Mecca, which he conquered in A.D. 634. Another compromise brought him closer to the former enemies of the Islam – the obligation of every believer to journey (hadj) at least once in his life

Kharijiya, and many other sects and smaller local fractions. The Druze and Syrian Allahwi are no longer Muslims, and along with Karaite, a sect originated at the 8<sup>th</sup> century that rejects the oral law, Samaritans (*Shomronim*) are not Jews for the same reason.

#### *Proselytism*

Proselytism was never an aim of Judaism, although individual adherence to Judaism happened in all times and circumstances. Christianity – through the Apostles – by contrast aimed from the beginning to baptize the entire world. The Islam tried to do the same by the sword. Consequently, the act of conversion to these two religions is simple. In order to become a Moslem is sufficient to declare ‘There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Apostle’. By contrast, the laws for conversion to Judaism are severe. The candidate to be a *ger*<sup>19</sup> must demonstrate a deep conviction and inner resolution. He is told about the difficulties of being a Jew.<sup>20</sup> He will have to accept certain humiliations, such as being denied functions exclusively reserved to Jews by birth. These discriminations did not impede *gerim* to reach high ranks of dignity and respect in Judaism. Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Akiba, Shemaiah, Avtallion, and other great *gerim* who come to be famous personalities in Judaism, were even descendants of such wicked men as Sisera, Senacherib, Haman and Nero (Gittin 57b, 56a; Sanhedrin 96). This explains, perhaps, why the attitude towards *gerim* is usually positive, despite the quote from the Midrash ‘*Gerim* are as bad to Israel as a sore in the skin’ (Kiddushim 20b).

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to Mecca to kiss the locally venerated black stone Ka’aba, declared the main sanctuary of Islam.

<sup>19</sup>

*Ger* (pl. *gerim*; paronym to *gar*, resident) meant in Biblical times ‘stranger, alien, he who resides permanently in the country’, while *nochri* was ‘an occasional foreign visitor.’ The Hebrew people were *gerim in Egypt*. The biblical laws regard *gerim* as normal citizens of the country, conferring them protection, and almost the same rights as the Jewish population. A *ger* was in former Biblical times ‘a foreigner with a green card’. Since the Second Temple, the word *ger* became a synonym for ‘Jewish proselyte’.

<sup>20</sup>

In our days, when a proselyte comes to be converted, “we say the postulant ‘What is your objective? Do you not know that today the people of Israel are wretched, driven about, exiled, and in constant suffering?’ If he says ‘I know of this and I do not have the merit’, we accept him immediately and inform him of some of the lighter precepts and some of the severer ones.” (Yev. 47a, formulated at the third century A.D.)

At its political and ideological apogee, during the last centuries of the Second Temple for instance, Judaism exercised a strong attraction, especially among pagan elites. Around the Roman Empire, many notables converted to Judaism, and many Roman senators revealed great curiosity, interest and respect to the principles of Judaism. Widespread proselytism among ordinary people indicates that the movement was not confined to the upper classes. Even when the massacre, exile and enslaving of the large part of the population in Judea after the destruction of the Second Temple and loss of independence, led Judaism at its lowest level. During these hard circumstances of depression and the struggle to subsist, Talmudic scholars debated and codified the laws of conversion that have remained standard in Orthodox Judaism until today.

Although Judaism is not inclined to proselytism, it is not against it. Hillel and Shammai responses to the request about the principles of Judaism by a potential proselyte (Sabbath. 31a) represent the two opposite approaches, and reflect the ambivalence concerning this question.<sup>21</sup>

Josephus Flavius tell us about contemporaneous proselytes, inhabitants of both Barbarian and Greek origin, who kept to Judaism zealously. On the other hand, there are evidences that in times of war and revolt, some proselytes and their offspring often slandered and denounced the Jewish community and its leaders to the foreign rulers.<sup>22</sup> These bitter experiences, especially regarding the confrontation with Christianity (the most aggressive adversaries of Judaism amongst the first

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<sup>21</sup>

Hillel, the Elder, doubtless the most eminent Jewish sage of the Second Temple period, replied to a heathen who came to him to be converted on condition that he teach him the entire Torah 'while standing in one foot', 'What is hateful to you, do not unto your neighbor: this is the entire Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and study it'.

Hillel (ca. 30 B.C – A.D. 9) was active during Herod's reign, and the solid situation of the Judaism in his time may explain his moderate position. The Temple of Jerusalem was then in the apex of its splendor. Herod's good political relations with Rome contributed to influence within Roman higher circles.

<sup>22</sup>

Delation against Jews was a terrible menace and the need to eliminate such a danger sometimes turned the killing of delators into a question of survival for the community. Without the possibility after the loss of independence of defending the integrity of the community by legal means, through condemnation by tribunal, the declaration of somebody as a 'delator' was an invitation to kill him' Fanatic Jewish student killed the Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, because extremist rabbis declared him as a 'delator'

Christians were usually converted Jewish proselytes) generated amongst many Jewish scholars a sharp negative attitude against proselytism.

Even when the Christian Church had a strong hold over Europe and Christian canons forbade and fiercely opposed Jewish proselytism, many Christians – even prominent members of the clergy – adopted Judaism by conviction. They often had to flee to other countries, even Muslim ones, in order to save their souls.

*Who is Jew?*

‘Who is Jew?’

According to the Orthodox interpretation ‘Jew is who was born to a Jewish mother, or has been converted to Jewry by the Halakhah’s ritual’ (For Orthodox Jews only the conversion by an Orthodox rabbi is valid. Orthodox Jews do not accept as a Jew a converted to Jewry by a Conservative or Reformer rabbi).

This definition implies that are two ways to become a Jew: by birth or by choice. I say ‘choice’ because the only known report of forced conversion to Judaism was the mass conversion of the Edomite people by Jochanan Hyrcanus in 130 B.C.<sup>23</sup> Later Jewish religious scholars considered this historical episode to be a negative one.

The only voluntary mass conversion to Judaism that I know is the one of the Khazars, a Turkic-speaking people in Central Eurasia converted to Judaism in circa 740. The Khazar Empire crushed four centuries later; the Kuzarim (Khazar Jews) who continued holding Judaism emigrated and joined Jewish communities (especially in Poland).

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23

Tight politic policy, and not religious considerations, motivated this action. Judea was then in a wearisome struggle for survival, after a period of subjugation and constant threat from Syria. Edom, occupying a close territory to Jerusalem, was a thorn in the flesh. The strategic consideration to consolidate the kingdom by ‘rounding’ the limits of the country caused Hyrcanus to invade Edom. Because the ethnic affinity to the Jews (Edomite were Semitic), they were not massacred or exiled, according to the contemporaneous norms, but forced to converted to Judaism and annexed to the Hebrew people. It seems they did not oppose this. Ordinary people did not accept the Edomite proselytes as really Jews. Talmudic interpreters considered this annexation a historic mistake. Some Edomite descendants reached high positions in the army and in government. Herod became the King of Judea and the founder of a new dynasty, the last that ruled Judea. Herod, called ‘The Great’ because his imposing building and fortifications in Jerusalem and other places, improved political ties with Rome and stimulated the influence of Hellenism, what turned the simple folk against him.



Many pagan people adhered to Christian creed in the past thanks the work of missionaries and other less elegant means of persuasion. Other people did it moved by miraculous revelation (in dream and other mysterious ways). The list of pagans who suddenly revealed the truth and even became saints is wide.

The acceptance of Judaism by the Hebrews, according to a popular Midrash, was a result of deliberation and free choice. This Midrash (Sifrei, Brachah 343) is based on Deut. 23:2: 'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten of thousands of saints...'.<sup>24</sup> From this passage, sages deduced that before coming to the Hebrews God proposed his commandments to other peoples, who refused to accept them. Only the Hebrew people accept them, voluntarily.<sup>25</sup>

*Official Custody of Judaism*

'Who is Jew?' This is one of the inextricable problems of Israel. The Orthodox religious wing, official custodian of the Jewish religion in Israel, presses the government with every means to pass a law defining who is a Jew in accordance to their interpretation. Such a step would give them the complete dominance over the private life of all Jews in Israel. If we bear in mind that most Jews in the world outside are not Orthodox, but Conservative and Reformed, such a step will cause a schism

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Midrash (pl. Midrashim) is a homiletic interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures Jewish commentaries (mostly written between A.D. 400 and 1200). The Midrash explains passages of the Bible, in strictly observance to ancient texts. We can find about the same item different Midrashim, and even with opposite argumentation. The Midrash is an excellent guide to understand historical events and their developments. There are two sorts of Midrashim: the Haggadah (legend, a tale about a Biblical passage) and the Halakhah (the legal interpretation of the Scriptures). Midrash is not an official dictate like a bull of a Pope. It remains an *opinion* whose authority is a function of the prestige of the scholar who formulated it. Midrashim have become fundamental laws of the Judaism.

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The voluntary acceptance of God's commandments by the Jews, who could refuse them as other people do, awakes an interesting thought: If God knew the answer beforehand, why did He ask? Since Adam ate the prohibited fruit and became able to tell good from bad, 'All is foreseen, but freedom of choice is given (Abbot 3:15)'. *Elohim, Elohei Israel* (The God of Israel) is a democrat! God does not impose. God proposes! If God is neither a puppeteer, nor a ventriloquist who asks on one voice and answer on another, the logical conclusion is that Hebrews chose God, and not God did elect the Hebrews. This nuance did not escape the attention of formerly Talmudic scholars, and we may find Midrashim arguing *who elected whom*.

in Jewry and serious tribulations to non-religious Jews, the majority of the Jewish population in Israel. Moreover, the Orthodox themselves are not a monolithic group; they are divided in several antagonistic factions. In certain aspects, the religious parties have succeeded up to now in introducing an inquisitorial regime. They hold, for instance, a hidden list of Jewish habitants of Israel who are prohibited from making a Jewish marriage, because according to rules established 2000 years ago they are *mamzer* (bastard) regarding birth.

I cannot imagine the State of Israel becoming a fundamentalist theocracy, but in the unstable political situation in Israel, everything is possible. None of the big parties is able to rule without coalition with religious small parties, or their support, at least. Lust for power can compel one of the big parties to capitulate over the religious demands. The consequences nobody can foresee.

#### *Scourges of God'*

The 'elected people of God' – how could the destroying of the Second Temple and the loss of independence happen to them? How could *Elohei Israel* (the God of Israel, the Jewish people) violate His Pact with Abraham? Such questions emerge among religious Jews when a calamity occurs to the Jewish people.

If every event is God's will, there must be an explanation! God does not act without a reason or an intention. The dispersion of the Jews by the Romans? To glorify the name of God among all people of the world.<sup>26</sup>

It is interesting to observe that even Christianity used to justify calamities (for instance, the medieval Bubonic Plague) as a punishment of God because of people's sin. Attila, King of the Huns, who invaded and devastated Europe in the fifth century, was nicknamed the 'Scourge of God'.

#### *Jews and Christians*

Jews and Christians, two monotheistic religious groups that believe in the same God and embrace the same Sacred Scriptures, and were supposed to cooperate in confrontation

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'The Holy, Blessed be He, exiled Israel among the nations only in order to increase the number of proselytes' (Pesachim. 87b, Midrash from the third century A.D., when Judaism was in a desperate situation and in confrontation with a growing and aggressive Christianity, which at this time disconnected itself completely from Judaism).

against paganism, become strong opponents of one another. Christians interpreted the Jews' tragedy as a divine indication that they had lost their status as an 'elected people,' and Christianity had taken their place and have tried to fulfill this adjudication.

While the Twelve Apostles who preached the gospel were Jews, the new generations of enthusiastic propagators, composed mostly of former pagans converted to Christianity, had no linkage and sensitivity to Jewry. They promoted the new teachings with fervor and impetuosity, and without any inhibition preached hatred of Jews and encourage actions against them. In spite of being then persecuted and tormented by the pagans, the Christians attacked the Jews with accusations that Jews did not accept Jesus and had betrayed and killed God's son, and thus sowed the seeds of anti-Semitism.

The competition between Christianity and Judaism became more and more acute. Christianity became especially aggressive after Constantine adopted it in the fourth century.<sup>27</sup>

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At 1995, the Pope declared officially the Christian Church's regrets for the persecution and injustices caused to the Jews. The President of Spain preceded him. At the commemoration of the fifth centenary of the Discovery of America at 1942 – the same year of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, he apologized the Jews for what they suffered in the Inquisition. Lech Valesa, President of Poland, and the President of the Ukraine also expressed official regrets. Jacques Chirac, President of France, assumed the responsibility of France for the deportations of Jews in the Second World War by the Vichy government. Germany officially assumed blame for the crimes of the Nazis against the Jews and paid indemnities. Not all these events were a direct action of the Christian Church against the Jews, but there is no doubt anti-Semitism is a result of nearly two millennia of incitement and libels against Jews (such as the killing of Jesus and use of Christian children's blood to bake *matzoth*, the unleavened bread eaten during Passover).

The former paragraph compels me to add two observations. a) The Diaspora House in Jerusalem collected a list of thousands of Christians (even in Germany proper) who risked their lives for saving Jews. b) Regrets and apologies for crimes and injustices committed in the past seem to be an innovation in the relations between peoples. Japan apologized because the use of native girls in occupied zones by Japanese as prostitutes for their soldiers. Fifty years after atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a moral scar in American conscience (if it really was a just action), Japan has never demonstrated sorrow for the attack on Pearl Harbor that caused this tragedy. Turkey has not yet regretted the massacres of Armenians. No remorse has ever been revealed by people and nations who enslaved and annihilated whole tribes of Indians and Africans (ref. 1997)... let alone Gypsies.

*Fall of Ghetto's Walls*

The ghetto, persecutions and discriminations consolidated the Jews.<sup>28</sup> Jewish children, becoming from the youngest age conscious of their condition, act as attacked porcupines, which shrink themselves pointing out their spines. Jewish populations were in the past compelled to convert to Christianity and Islam. Many individuals preferred to die, sometimes after terrible tortures, but the majority capitulated. They saved their lives, but even if they tried to hold on the Judaism in secret, their descendants became lost to Judaism after some generations.

The fall of the physical and spiritual walls that isolated the Jews from neighboring people simply intensified the assimilation of the Jews amongst them. When Jews had the possibility of free choice, many preferred the advantages of losing Judaism. Here is not the place to analyze and discuss all aspect of the voluntary alienation from Judaism, but only to state that where Jews were not secluded, a part of them adapted themselves to their surrounding. This process happened even within strictly religious families. Famous samples: Felix Mendelson, Heine, Karl Marx (n Germani), Disraeli (in England).

I remember that when I was a child, mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jew were rare. Such an event was a tragedy and source of shame for the whole family, causing excommunication from the community. Nowadays, mixed marriages in the Diaspora, and even in Israel, become a 'normal' event. Over half of the Jewish marriages in the Americas and in Europe are mixed. Are their descendants Jews or non-Jews?

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28

A ghetto was formerly a street, or quarter, of a city set apart as a legally enforced residence area for Jews (one of the earliest forced segregations of Jews was in Muslim Morocco when, in 1280, they were transferred to segregated quarters called mullah). The first use of the name 'ghetto' (probably derived from an iron foundry or *getto* in the neighborhood) was in Venice in 1516, when an area for Jewish settlement was set aside, shut off from the rest of the city, and provided with Christian watchmen.

Western Europe abolished the ghettos in the course of the nineteenth century. In Russia, the Pale of Settlement, a restrictive area on the western provinces of the Tsarist Empire, lasted until the 1917 Revolution. Ghettos continued in some Islamic countries, such as Yemen, until the large-scale emigration to Israel in 1948. The ghettos revived by the Nazis during World War II were merely overcrowded holding places that served as first steps to extermination.

Regarding the children of mixed marriages, it is impossible to establish rules.<sup>29</sup> Many factors influence: for instance, who of the parents is more closely linked to his origin. For Jewish Orthodox, whatever their education and personal convictions, the children of a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father are Jews and those of a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father are not. This division, an anachronism that does not fit the present reality, causes serious problems of identification and many insolubly tragedies, especially in Orthodox-dominated Israel.

*Law of Return*

Zionism aimed to create a homeland for all Jews dispersed through the world. Honoring this conception, one of the first laws legislated by the new State of Israel was the 'Law of the Return' (repatriation), which confers to every Jew and his family the right to immigrate to Israel and receive automatically Israeli citizenship. The definition of who has the right to enjoy this law is very liberal and includes even the grandson of a Jew. There is not sex distinction regarding the ancestry, so even a descendent of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother has the same right of return than a descendent of a non-Jewish father and a Jewish mother. Owing to this regulation, perhaps more than fifty per cent of Jewish immigration from Western Europe in 1996-1997 are not 'Jews' according to the strict Orthodox parameters.<sup>30</sup>

The Israeli Law of Return, passed when most members of the legislative arm were Zionist leaders and activists born and educated in the Diaspora. Such a law would not have any chance of being passed nowadays, on the one hand, because the

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According to recent researches and statistics, more than half of mixed parents educate their children as Jews. It is interesting to observe that in places where the Jewish communities are small and weak, the preference inclines to Christianity. There are in my family many mixed couples, and the non-Jewish consorts voluntarily converted to being religious Jews. Mixed families are not always a loss for Jewry.

<sup>30</sup>

In Israel, individuals can be married as Jews only if they can prove that they are descended from a Jewish mother or if they have undergone Orthodox conversion.

An estimated 150,000 Soviet and Ethiopian immigrants (ref. 1997) who cannot provide such proof, as well as 'Jews by choice' who found their way to Judaism through conversion performed by non-Orthodox rabbis, are denied access to marriage to another Jew in Israel. Since there is no civil marriage in Israel, they must undergo unwanted Orthodox conversion or leave the country to be married civilly.

current influence of the Orthodox faction, and on the other hand, because the classic Zionist liberal conceptions are not so deeply rooted among today's young, pragmatic Israelis.

*Rights and Doubts of Proselytes*

The rights and doubts of proselytes in the Halakhah are complex and complicated.<sup>31</sup> Many details are inconsistent, and one Talmudic or rabbinical authority may permit what another prohibits. This chapter does not intend to penetrate deeply into the complexity of conversion to Judaism. We will be satisfied with some observations.

As you may see, the history of proselytism and conversions to and from Judaism is very intricate. What is certain is that voluntary conversion has been a normal and legitimate procedure in all times, places, and circumstances. In accord with the modern approach to human rights, every person really convicted and moved by free voluntary decision has the full right to adopt every religion he wants. I state again my opinion: rituals and formal procedures are perhaps necessary for bureaucracy and community registration, but in essence, they are not relevant. Belief, being a question of personal inner conviction, is not a genetic particularity like the color of the eyes; even legal conditions as citizenship are not genetic events.

Speaking about genetics, I could like to air some theoretical conjectures. Logically there are two opposing ways to improve a species: by purification or by mixing. According to Mendel's laws, the near both parents are in ethnic qualities (the same tribe, the same family), greater is statistically the possibility in the meeting of two similar genes, dominant as well as recessive ones. Therefore, the possibility of degenerate descendants and better ones in the next generations is near the same. The elimination of undesirable elements and using only the better ones for reproduction is an efficient and speedy method of obtaining better specimens. This method, purification of the race, is very useful for agriculture and animals, but impracticable to human persons. Sparta, a state that killed deformed children, and the Nazis, who predicated for the pure Aryan race, employed this idea, but no clever and sane modern

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<sup>31</sup>

A fundamental factor of the Islam social ethic is egalitarianism. All believers are equal, irrespective of race, color and social and economical states. Discrimination based in these elements seems to be weaker in Islam than in other religions and may explain the high religious solidarity that binds Muslims, despite the wide diversity of nations, peoples and cultures.

person will support such an aberration. In the 1930s, up to 50,000 of crazy, sick and 'non-sociable' people were sterilized and castrated in Scandinavia in order to prevent them from having children.

On the other hand, mixture of races may bring slower results, but the possibility of improving the genetic structure is much greater than the danger of degenerating, due to the reduced chance of two parents of different origins having equal recessive genes.

### *Three Monotheist Religions*

It is interesting to consider the relationship between the three monotheist religions and the secular government. Because Christianity became a multi-national religion, or because countries that adopted Christianity as official religion had a former deep tradition of political independence, even where the Church had dominion over the country, religiosity and nationality were not identical. The Islam, at least at the beginning of its growth, created a strong identification between country (nation) and religion. They succeeded to implant the Arab language and dress in most conquered countries. The Arabization of North Africa and many Asian countries, far as India was quite complete. In the present era, a series of Muslim countries have obtained political independence and non-Arab ones, such as Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, etc. are endeavoring to separate religion from civil government. The Muslim religious establishment does not enthusiastically conform to such situation. Khomeini succeeded in turning a secular state, Iran, into a fundamentalist Muslim one. Zealous Muslim factions (especially the well-known Muslim Brotherhood parties) are fighting to establish the complete domain of the Islam in Egypt, Turkey, Algeria and other countries. In Tunisia and in the north of Sudan they have succeeded.

Even among the Jews, religion and nationality were identical in the beginning. Who converted to Jewish religion became even a Jew in nationality.<sup>32</sup> The situation (identification between country and religion) became somewhat confused with the division of the Jewish kingdom after Solomon's death into two opposed countries, Israel (Samaria) and Jehudah (Judea). For more than fifty years, a strong antagonism griped them and they

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<sup>32</sup>

Herod, a king of Edomite ancestry, established a Jewish dynasty, and not an Edomite one.

fought cruelly against each other. If Jewish history would have developed similar to Christianity and Islam, and would become a religion of different countries,<sup>33</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that Jewish religion would have become differentiated from the nationalities of the people who believed in it. This is the situation in the Diaspora, where the Jewish religion has no predominance in the country. People who believe in Jewish religion hold a national status of Americans, Poles, French, etc. In the Diaspora, there is no identification between religion and nationality. Even the acceptance of the Jewish religion by some countries (people) at the Middle Age, for instance by the Khazar people in southeast Europe,<sup>34</sup> did not alter the identification, because the event was a very marginal and sporadic episode. Therefore, for almost 2000 years the Jews were a people with a religion and without their own country (nationality). Where they did not succeed in maintaining their identity as Jews, they assimilated themselves within the population of the host country.

The establishment of the State of Israel, which, according to the Zionist concept is the return of the Jewish people to their former homeland and restoration of the Jewish country, provoked serious theological questions. Religious Jewry was not ready to such an innovation. They were confused and perplexed. On one hand, millions of innocent pious religious and innocent children died in the holocaust, and God did not intervene in their sake (a clear infraction of God's pact with Abraham). On the other hand, the rise of the State of Israel contradicted the conviction that only the arrival of Messiah (the Redeemer) at the End of the Days will restore the Jewish Land, followed by the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the

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Judea and Samaria had in the beginning quite a homogeneous population: a mixing of Hebrews, Canaanites, and other smaller groups (the Hittites were an Aryan group). Samaria became ethnically different from Judea after the transfer of populations effectuated by Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch who defeated Samaria in the seventh century BC. Therefore, the antagonism between the two countries was not only political, but also ethnic.

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See the item 'Khuzar' in the Encyclopedia Britannica and 'Kuzari' in the English version of the Encyclopedia Judaica. The interesting and relatively unknown Turkish-speaking tribe of Tatar (Mongol?) origin established a commercial empire between the Volga River and the Caspian Sea in the sixth century and converted to Judaism in the eighth century. In thirteenth century, a Slav prince defeated the Khuzars and most of them migrated east and mixed with local Jewish communities. Some groups joined the Caraites in the Crimean Peninsula; others converted to Christianity and created a Sabbatian sect.



resuscitation of all dead Jews. Except a small religious section (the Misrachi Zionist religious party), most of the Jewish religious establishments denied and combated the Zionism. Even at the present time, many religious sections do not yet accept the 'legality' of Israel and continue to deny it. The extraordinary success of the Six-Day War in conquering most of the Biblical Jewish land, especially Old Jerusalem with the Wailing Wall, provoked a euphoric wave of religious fanaticism. 'God is with us' they asserted, and regained aggressive zeal for imposing their norms and inhabiting recent conquered places of the Holy Land.

Not all Jews in the world have taken advantages of the Law of Return that gives them the right to return to Israel and automatically receive Israeli citizenship. After nearly half a century, less than twenty per cent used it, while during this same period half a million Israeli Jews have left Israel. Two-third of all Jews lives out of Israel and most of them do not intend to joint it.

The number of Jews in the world is not growing, because of a low birth rate and high rate of assimilation amongst Gentiles. There are no categorical statistics about the number of Jews in the world, but the commonly accepted amount in 1999 was fourteen million, five million of them in Israel. According to criteria of the Orthodox Jews, the number will diminish to ten million, or even less. Israel lies in the middle of over twenty Arab countries with about 200 million people in an area populated continuously by more than one billion Muslims, with an enormous rate of increase. Moreover, a quarter of Israel's population is not Jews. Bearing in mind these simple demographic facts, every intelligent person will conclude that the future of Israel depends on the neutralization of the religious factor in the politics of the Middle East. Religious fundamentalism (both, Jewish and Muslim) is the greatest threat for Israel, a little Jewish island in an Islamic sea. The main condition to the conviviality of people with different religions and nationalities is a mutual respect for personal convictions. This condition implicates the concept that religion as a private matter for the individual and that every one has the full right to believe in what he wants, without extern intervention (of the state or any other influence).

Concerning the relations among the three monotheist religions it must be point out that since the Christians separated definitely from Judaism, the rivalry between them increased and became intransigent. Christianity, claiming to be the true inheritor of the Judaism, tried to efface the Jews by conversion

or annihilation. Anti-Semitism is a fruit of this antagonism. In the past, in sporadic cases, economical or other interests have moved Christian countries to accept Jews allowing them religious autonomy. This happened when Polish kings sheltered Jewish refugees from Middle Europe into their Kingdom in about 1000 DC, and when Holland received expelled Jews from Spain (Protestant Holland was then fighting against Catholics). Crusaders, in their expeditions to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims and combat heresy, damaged and even destroyed Jewish communities by their way. The attitude of the Christian world towards Jews began to change – very slowly – since the French Revolution espoused the equality of all people, and Napoleon granted to Jews religious autonomy. The State of Israel has had a capital influence in changing the status of the Jews. Several Christian countries have forged political and economical relations with Israel. American support is a prime factor in the peace process in the Middle East and in Israel's prosperity. For the first time since quite 2000 years, Jews and Christians are allies.

In the beginning, the Muslims annihilated the Jews in Arab peninsula who did not join the Islam, but with the spread of the Islam, it became more tolerant towards Jews minorities. Many Jewish communities flourished within the Islamic areas. The Jews in Spain received the Moor invaders as liberators and cooperated with them. The period of cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Spain is 'The Golden Age' in Jewish history. The common enemy (the Christians) unified them.

The present conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is not about religious doctrines, but about territorial sovereignty. The land's holiness has introduced a religious slant on the conflict. Extremist elements of both sides complicate the situation and hinder the efforts for a political solution.

It is an irony of fate that Christians are now helping to bridge the space between Jews and Muslims!

#### *Certificates of Rabbis*

Does a person, who sincerely identifies himself with Judaism, need a certificate of a Rabbi (or similar authority) to be a Jew? The Patriarchs, Moses, the Hebrews who received the commandments of God at the Mount Sinai, and all Jews during the First and Second Temple, did not!<sup>35</sup>

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Circumcision was evidently a condition for a male to be a Jew, but I never find in the Bible or other scriptures any reference that the conversion to Judaism needs the legal

What is the role of the rabbi in the Jewish religion? In the beginning, 2000 years ago, 'Rabbi' (which means 'my master') was a title of honor to a sage, like 'Your Excellency'. Only much later, after the loss of the national independence and the destroying of the Temple of Jerusalem, a 'rabbi' became an employment, a profession. Among the Jews in Babylon, 'Rabbi' became the title of the Jewish communities' leaders. Where Jews enjoyed some autonomy, the government had interest in supporting a Jewish authority in every Jewish center, as an effective and practical way to collect taxes, imposts, and the especial charges imposed upon Jews. The meticulous registration of births, marriages and deaths of Jews by the rabbi in his area certainly satisfied this goal.<sup>36</sup>

In Babylon, and later in Western Europe, new rabbis received rabbinical ordination from the rabbi who taught them, and the graduation's validity depended on the reputation of the rabbi who conferred it, as many modern academicians take pride in their universities' reputation. In smaller communities, the rabbi fulfilled besides his main job as religious teacher and adviser other religious functions. He was the *chazan* (liturgical cantor), *mohel* (circumciser), *shochet* (ritual slaughterer), and dealt with initiation of thirteen-year-old boys to bar-mitzvah (adult status, responsible for his moral and religious duties), weddings, burials and other practices and ceremonies, that in large communities were executed by skilled professionals. Rabbis lived off the honoraria received from the community, or

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confirmation of any authority or instance (religious or not); not even the sanction of religious ceremonies or some other official acts. Ruth declared to her mother-in-law, Naomi, 'For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God' (Ruth 1,16). It was enough.

Even in the reports about the Edomite people forced to convert to Judaism during the Hasmonean dynasty, there is no information about the formal realization of the conversion act. There is no historic evidence about official ceremonies of conversion or that any religious authority registered the conversation and provided some document in the ancient times.

Hillel sent in his famous answer to the question 'what is Judaism?' (See footnote 20) the candidate learn the principles of the Judaism, but there is no evidence that who wanted to convert to Judaism was examined to see if he really knew the religious rules; not even not that he swears (or undertakes in any other way) to observe all religious rituals and commandments.

The Jewish religion has prayers, blessings, and sayings for almost all possible situations that a person can be in or aspires to. Although people have converted to Judaism in all times and circumstances, I have never met any formal declaration that someone had to say to become a Jew; according to my investigations in the Sacred Scriptures, no formality was necessary.

<sup>36</sup>

Even the Nazis observed this tradition and recognized the chief Jewish local committee (the *Judenrat*) as the official representative of all Jews in the ghetto. By this means, they succeeded in increasing control until they imposed upon the *Judenraat* the execution of the policy of extermination.

a salary from the government that endorsed them. Maimonides disapproved of the use of religion ‘as a spade (ax) to dig with (exploit)’ – meaning payment for rabbi’s services.

*Authority of Rabbinate*

Many kings used to nominate an official Great Rabbi for the reign, as happened in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (ordinary people were not usually happy with these nominations). In the nineteenth century, England introduced a Great Rabbi for the whole of the British Empire, and consequently the British Mandate in Palestine created a Rabbinate with two Great Rabbis (the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi: *Divide et impera*). Jews religious factions did not accept the authority of the Rabbinate, even when it became an official institution in the State of Israel. Israel has even installed a Ministry of Religion to provide religious assistance to the diverse populations of the country (besides the Jews, there are Muslims, Christians and other recognized religions and sects), but it is no surprise that its main preoccupation is imposing the Jewish Orthodoxy upon the Jewish inhabitants.

Rabbinical authority reached a strong position in some countries, but since the last two centuries, secular opponents (intellectuals, socialist parties, and even the main Zionist factions) have striven to neutralize its influence. The status of being the official religion of the State of Israel encourages the clericalism of the Orthodox parties. Israel is not yet a theocratic country, but in the army and in all official institutions observes by law religious norms (kosher, prohibition against work and travel on Saturday, etc). Even non-Orthodox Jews, as the Conservative, Reformed, as well as agnostic and atheist, depend on Orthodox apparatus for legalizing birth, death, and marital relationships. How long will the Supreme Court intervene in rabbis’ sentences (based in the Halakhah) that are in evident conflict to the Civil Law of Israel? Meanwhile the Orthodoxy has not succeeded in implanting the Halakhah as the sole law in Israel, but they aim to do it, and in order to further this objective will not reject any means.

*Religions and Good Restaurants*

I find some analogy between religions and good restaurants.<sup>37</sup> The menu of restaurants differs; every one has its own specialties. Most religious zealots will certainly choose in Jewry the observance of Halakhah's rules about eating, blessings and prayers. My preferences begin with Hillel's response and expand to the humanist field through the vast Talmudic, Cabbalistic and rabbinical literature about peace, confraternity, consideration, and respect for humans. These values are not exclusive to my restaurant and I have never pretended that my predilections are preferable. Just as what other people eat is not my business, I do not agree that somebody should impose his own menu on me. Appetite and faith are personal questions.<sup>38</sup>

Anyone who agrees with the asseveration that belief is a question of inner personal conviction understands that nobody needs intervention of mediators and the practice of rituals in order to believe in what he wants to believe. In fact, the belief is a free prerogative of every person who is able to think. Every one believes in what he believes. Final point!

If for instance someone believes in communism, this is his problem, but if he wants to join the Communist Party, this is another story, as Kipling would say. He has to be accepted by the Party and fulfill its requirements. The same goes for someone who believes in democracy, as I do. I have to give satisfaction to nobody for this fact, but if I want to be a member in the Democratic Party, I have to perform some bureaucratic procedure. I may believe in Christ, Freud, Einstein, Kant, Spinoza, Elvis Presley, Houdini, or in who knows what.

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Comparing religions to restaurants is rather vulgar, if not grotesque. I am sorry, but I have not found a better analogy for religions: both provide food (one, material – the other, spiritual).

38

Appetite and faith are personal questions. This is my assumption. Religious fanatic will not agree. For them, both appetite and faith are God's deeds. People are God's puppets. All they do and think is God's will. Scholars interpret the 'Just by his faith shall live' (Free translation of the famous sentence from Hababuk 2:4) that the righteous lives in accordance to his conscience. This interpretation is paralleled to the widely King James' version 'the just shall live by his faith'. Orthodox Jews, who do not allow any deviation from their beliefs, interpret 'his faith' as God's faith, so *only* the 'just who believes in God (according the Orthodox faith) will live'; and the others...

I want to emphasize again and again: I respect all religions when they are free 'belief and reverence for a supernatural power recognized as the creator and governor of the universe'. I deny any administration that imposes religion.

Nobody can limit my will and believes. If I want to ingress an established Elvis Presley's institution (group, club, party or every other existing organization) I have to pay an ingress ticket, fill out a subscription form, submit myself to admission examinations, or carry out some requests. Just for believing, I need do nothing.

What are the principles of Judaism? You may accept the famous referred answer of Hillel. You may search for answers in the Bible, in the Talmud, in the vast inexhaustible literature of Jewish scholars written over the last 2000 years (Philo of Alexandria, Rashi, Maimonides, the Cabbala, rabbinical judgments, and so on and so forth). Thousand years of studying about Judaism will not be sufficient to reach a final and absolute conclusion. I do not know if it is possible to find even two rabbis who agree on what Judaism is. Which rabbi is right? The Orthodox, the Conservative, or the Reformed? What Rabbinat: the Ashkenazi or the Sepharadi? The Supreme Tribunal of what sect? Is it the *kais* (Falashi rabbi)... or the *babhah* (Moroccan rabbi)? Two Jew = three opinions' (a popular sayng). Then what test must a candidate for Judaism undertake in order to receive a 'diploma'?

In order to join one of the diverse Jewish formations or sects, the candidate must conform to the demands in its regulations. In order to believe in Judaism, without any formal affiliation to a specific structure, it is enough to believe. Nevertheless, the law in Israeli confers on Orthodoxy the exclusive power to state on the identify card who can register as a Jew. The Supreme Court in Israel has not yet revoked this protectionism and discrimination.<sup>39</sup>

My credo: everybody has the full right to believe in and what he wants, while he does not force his thoughts and beliefs upon other people. What a wonderful choir the humankind would be if everyone sang in harmony with everyone else, each person in his own voice!

My definition of Jew? Okay: a Jew is someone who sincerely considers himself and wants to be a Jew. If you can find a better definition for the Jews of the whole world, I am ready to adopt it.

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<sup>39</sup> According to the actual legal situation in Israel in 2005, the government recognizes conversions, marriages, etc. realized by official Conservative and Reformed institutions overseas, but conversion within the country only the Orthodox faction has authority to do.

## 9. WHAT IS NATURAL IN NATURE?

Rights and duties. Laws, rules and regulations. Why human is not natural, and natural not human? Nature – a perfectly organized anarchy. Humanity, a confused disorganized humanarchy.

Hold a stone in your hand, and open it. The stone will fall. Let us disregard the physics involved and ask a moral, logical and psychological question: in accordance with law, is the stone's falling just or unjust, a good or bad thing?

### *Justice of stones*

I contend that the stone's falling has no relevance to justice, morality, logic or any other construct of human thought. If a stone falls on someone's head, this person is an unfortunate one, but the stone is not guilty or innocent, good nor bad. These attributes are inapplicable qualities to a stone, unless we believe, as our animistic ancestors did, that a spirit dwells in the stone and moves it. Even in such a situation, we cannot judge the stone, but its spirit. It is nonsense to apply human faculties to inanimate objects, which do not think or make decisions. Even the most accomplished computers or robots are only tools performing what humans have programmed for them; they are not responsible for their behavior. Will we condemn to death or to jail a stone that fell on a person, and killed him?<sup>1</sup>

In order to focus the image I am trying to portray, let us define the main difference between a car and its driver. The car can move and perform intricate maneuvers, but it cannot choose what to do! The driver is not as capable as the car, but he has the ability to decide by himself what to do and how to drive the car. Therefore, the driver is a live being while the car is an inanimate object.

### *What life is*

Some comments concerning life: statistically, life is an insignificant incident in nature. The mass of all living matter on Earth is smaller than the smallest ocean's volume. The mass of

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<sup>1</sup> I often use *stone* as the opposite of *living creature*. The stone is an inanimate entity, but not the unique one and even not an antonym of living creature; however, it is a nice symbol and convenient example.

all the water on Earth is a minuscule part of the Earth's crust. What is the whole Earth as compared to our little galaxy? And what is our galaxy...?

It may be difficult to decide whether a microelement is alive or inanimate, but when we observe an animal or man, we have no problem. I do not intend to delve into medicinal, psychological and theological appraisals about the limits of life, and determine the exact moment or conditions of death. For our purposes we can be satisfied with the common definition that 'life' is that which preserves organic matter and which enables animals and plants to transform food into energy, to grow, to adapt themselves to their environment, and to propagate their kind. This definition is a combination of definitions of 'life' in several dictionaries: complex and verbose. Who said that life is simple?

From a brief analysis of this 'comprehensive' definition, we learn: a) Life is an exclusive attribute of organic matter. b) A living being has the faculty of metabolism; he creates energy (from food and oxygen) in order to change its physical status (size, position, posture). c) A live being has the ability to propagate its kind (reproduction).

Even stones may 'grow', but only by accumulation and addition of external materials. Live material grows as consequence of the division of cells, thanks to the energy that they create from absorbing external energy. Even cars, ships, and airplanes have motors, which are able to create energy from external materials (combustion of combustibles) in order to move, but they are not living beings: a) They are not organic matter, b) They are not able to use the energy they create with the absorbed 'food' to renovate themselves, c) They do not reproduce their kind.

Of these three conditions defining life, the third (propagation of the kind) is a characteristic belonging to the species; each of its individuals does not necessarily perform it personally. The first condition (organic material) is necessary, but not sufficient. Not every piece of organic matter is alive. Thus, by elimination, the second condition remains the essential indicator of life. In order to be living matter, organic matter 'eats' food, 'breathes' air, and derives from them the energy for growing and survival. Animals, as opposed to plants, are able to use this energy for self-motion.

Clouds, machines and icebergs move; leaves drop from trees and fall to the ground, but they are not animals. Their



movements are not a result of their decision or will! They are not a result of their own choice. A machine for classifying eggs may select them by weigh, bigness and color, but it does not do it by its own initiative. Only animals make decisions.

*Yellow Submarine*

The Beetles' movie, *Yellow Submarine*, depicts a charming scene – a strange creature sucks everything it touches with its trunk. When he remains entirely alone, he sucks himself up and disappears, leaving an empty white space on the screen. What a wonderful image! This is exactly what life is like: a symphony of sucking. Living creatures are obsessive, non-stop devourers. Pain prevents creatures from devouring themselves. But for pain, babies would eat the fingers they suck. Chapter 5 discussed the theme of preventing pain.

Life is an endless chain of devouring. The bigger and stronger beings devour the smaller and weaker. In their turn, the smallest and weakest beings – the worms, bacteria, and all kinds of parasites – devour the biggest and the strongest.

A tube, opposite to the strange creature referred to, may represent the living being, whether talking about men, animals, plants, or every other living creature: a tube that absorbs food through one extremity, extracts and digests the needed elements, and expels the residues from the other side. This unit of activity comprises an organism. Mono-cellular organic life may be identical to one unique organism. A body (the physical limits of an individual) is a bundle of organisms acting simultaneously, one independent from the other and one in interaction with the other, and other elements like as fat (food's reserve) and bones. Organism also names the complex of all organisms in the body.

*What machines are*

It is important to observe that machines that men build are in some way replications and developments of living activities, or more accurately, tools that do things for a person instead of him. A machine is a mechanical organism defined schematically as a tube that ...and so on. What are the differences between them, the living body and its mechanical copy?

1. The machine is usually built of non-organic materials whose molecules need not food to conserve them.
2. Machines do not decide what to do. Modern machines

provided with computers classify or check the quality of products, eggs for example; estimate every unit and decide what to do with it. This thinking is only an illusion, because even the advanced computer ‘thinks’ only what its designer programmed. On the other hand, humans are able to think only what the nature (genes, DNA) and their personal and ethical experiences permit them. Machine is a robot built by man. Man is a robot build by nature.

3. Machines and living bodies take in much more than they need. The function of the organism, or more precisely, the task of all organisms in the body, is to collaborate in the vital mission of desegregating absorbed materials, extracting from them what the body needs, and expelling the residues. Up to this point, there are not in principle many differences in the actions of machines and living things. The main difference between them is the excrement. While the excrements of living beings are usually organic material, which returns to nature materials that improve living conditions (fertilizers, oxygen, urea, etc.); the machines expel damaging elements (smoke, poisons, etc.). Life creates more energy that it consumes: with machines, the contrary is true. Therefore, Man, the paramount creation of nature (in mankind’s opinion, at least), by building and activating machines, is the main enemy and destroyer of nature! The ecological damage resulted from Man’s conduct is now reaching such proportions that informed thinkers maintain that only two living creatures will soon remain on earth: the human being and the cockroach. Is this a fiction?

*What Death is*

When a living being stops living, it ‘dies’. The usual definition in dictionaries of ‘life’ is ‘the period between the birth and the death of a being’.

Life is a constant struggle to postpone death. This saying provides a backdrop to life’s drama. ‘Postpone’ and not ‘against’ or ‘avoid’, because of the corollary ‘death is the end of life’ means life has an end!

*Does Nature Obey Laws?*

Regarding to the interrelationship of nature, animals and humans, there are a number of points to consider. Does Nature obey the Laws of Newton, Keppler, Einstein and others? The statement 'Nature obeys laws' is nonsense...

Newton, Keppler, Einstein and all other scientists observed nature, measured, weighed calculated, analyzed events in nature in order to create theories and formulate laws. Nature did what it does before these honorable men, and certainly, it will eternally continue to do so, in spite of them. Nature cannot 'obey', or 'disobey', since nature lacks the faculty of deciding! Physical laws are a result of observations of events and not the cause for their happening. Nature does not think. Nature exists and happens, no more and no less.

Nature does not obey laws, just as laws do not obey nature. When a discrepancy occurs between them, laws and not nature have to be changed.

Laws are a product of human mind. Humans created them, and only humans obey or disregard them. Chapter 5 pointed that nature, contrary to humanity, is irrevocable and infallible. Romans said '*Errare humanus est*'; error is a human quality; a result of human decisions and thought. Can an animal err? An anecdote tells: Apelles, the Greek famous classic painter painted a grape-cluster with such accuracy that birds tried to eat them... Did the birds *think* that the painting was real? Did they *err*? Even insects use camouflage for covering up and deceiving their enemies. May we conclude from these events that the mistaken beings really thought and decided? In any case, an inert element is impossible to deceive: a stone will never err. Nature is never wrong.

Man, being a thinking being able to decide his actions, is in this sense human, and not natural.<sup>2</sup> The history of humankind is

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<sup>2</sup> This pun is not exactly true; for humans all things what they do are naturally 'natural'. The attributes common to humans and animals are a good object of investigation for many sciences (such as anatomy, physiology, psychology, and so on), but does not fit this chapter. We are now focusing the attributes and behavior that differ in humans from all other beings, relating specifically to *morality*, the judgment of right and wrong, good and bad. Animals and insects choose from alternatives (which direction to move in, attack or flee, etc.), but without any moral scale. Choice may be a result of experience, custom or instinct, but moral and ideological norms are peculiar to humans (at least – this is what we, the humans, think!). In sum, human beings diverge from animality, and come near to humanity, inasmuch as their actions are moral. According to the Biblical account of the Original Sin, Adam, the first man, became a human

the narration of the passage from natural behavior (one million or more years ago) to more human behavior nowadays. The process of humanization, yet incomplete, occurs zigzagging in all human groups and societies the world over, but not simultaneously, nor with the same intensity and rhythm.

Laws exist for the humans' exclusive use: nature does not need them. However, the knowledge of the physical laws formulated by scientists is indispensable for engineers and technicians to make tools, machines, buildings, bridges, etc. Without them humans would not construct their societies. The progress of humanity is a direct function of technology, the application of physical 'human' laws. Negligence in the application of laws, or the use of an incorrect law, may mean disaster: machines will not work and bridges will collapse.

#### *Creation of Laws*

Laws created by humans in the social sphere are different from physical laws. They are not an effort to understand and subject nature, but serve to regulate human behavior. For example, what is more natural for a hungry person than taking food, even from another person? The law that guarantees private property prevents this. Humans create Laws to be obeyed, but as the popular saying goes, laws (and rules) exist to be infringed. In order to enforce their observation, humans use very 'natural' powers – police, jail, penalties, etc.

The most ancient institution limiting and regulating certain 'natural' activities of humans, and thanks to it humans began to behave differently from animals, is the taboo. Taboo is the setting apart certain objects or persons as sacred or cursed, proscribing such objects and persons (a custom still observed by primitive Polynesian tribes). They may not be touched, and their names not uttered. The taboo is the probable source of our present system of prohibitions and restrictions.

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being when he ate an apple of the forbidden tree that gave him the faculty to discern between good and bad. By admitting this statement, we take a big step towards defining a parameter, which differentiates humans from animals: a big step that leaves us in the beginning. What is good? What is bad? As long as people do not agree about what is good and what is bad, humankind has not yet reached the highest degree of humanity.

*Free and sincere agreement among people* is the key to humanity and morality. Perhaps a nice example is the sexual act. When it happens through mutual agreement of both sides, it is moral (they are 'making love'); without agreement, the same act is rape (a crime).

I am not qualified to explain how it happened that humans accepted limitations in the use of power, or to say precisely when this process began, but this event indicates when the savage man started to be different from animals. Perhaps this phase (the savage) is even anterior to the existence of the *Homo Sapiens*, who always lived in-groups. Collective life is only possible in groups where members can renounce of using natural power.

The only restriction for a solitary animal of using its power to obtain what it wants is the confrontation with a stronger animal. Animals groups (herds) observe hierarchy for eating, for sexual union, and for the position, which every member has in the group. This hierarchy is a direct function of the individual physical power of the animal, and changes with the age. It is dynamic.

The lower ranks in a strict hierarchy demonstrate submission to the upper ones: wolves use to lick their masters; monkeys pick their lice. Your dog expresses submission licking your hand. The kissing a bishop's or a King's ring, and the polite kissing the hand of a woman by gentlemen, relate to this practice.

The instinct of maternity that acts on the females to protect their young cubs disappears when the cubs grow and become independent. There are not sentimental family ties among animals. Certain animals (birds, for instance) maintain conjugal fidelity forever (monogamy), but there is no family ties between parents and their descendants, and between brothers. Man is the only being who observes and preserves family biological ties for several generations. Insects, and other community's creatures, do not live together because of family's ties. In any case, only bigger creatures know some family linkage beyond the first degree for a limited time (male-female couple, and mother-children).

By the way, certain insects (ants, bees, etc.) develop advanced societies with division of work and tasks. In these societies, the individuals are destined to their work or tasks before they are born, so their status does not depend on physical or other qualities, as it happens in animal societies.

We may suppose that it was not a democratic debate in a parliament that introduced restrictions on use of power within the primitive human society (the tribe), but inherited norms from remote previous animal stage. Preventing of pain plays a main role in the creation of norms and laws.

*About lions and exile*

As referred to previously, a banished young male lion lives alone, or with other young males. It comes back to a pride of lions (not necessary the group it left) when it becomes strong enough to banish the leading lion (perhaps his father) and take his place in the 'family'. He does not kill the old lion; he banishes it. The result may be the same, because the old lion is not able to defend itself (See in Chapter 6: lions can live for twenty-five years in zoo, whereas the wild ones who roam freely in nature rarely reach the age of ten).

It is very reasonable to suppose that the norms in the primordial tribes were similar: the leader was the strongest man, unless the pretender was a son of the present leader and he respected his father. Therefore, an old man could remain the leader of the tribes even if his sons became physically stronger, which happened with the Patriarchs in the Jewish Bible.

Earliest regulations in the tribes had a taboo format – prohibitions and restrictions. Unlike certain animal groups (e.g. lions), where adolescent males are banished in order to avoid them maintaining sexual contact with the females, human primordial groups, interested in keeping all males, introduced the prohibition of incest. Therefore, the origin of this 'taboo' lies, not in moral or genetic considerations, but is a means for permitting the 'chief' to keep his wives without banishing other males. A new chief in primordial societies used to include the former chief's wives in his harem, as a legitimating for his authority. This norm remained even in more advanced societies, and in antiquity it was a common practice that invaders took for themselves women from the defeated enemy (his wife or daughter), in order to legitimate his conquest. Alexander of Macedonia and Roxana, Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, Herodes and Miriam are examples of this. The Pentateuch tells about as victors in the war killed the men and take as booty the women, the children, the cattle and every thing in the town.<sup>3</sup> Even in the Koran, put together much later, there exist similar commandments. Even in the present, we hear about this practice, in Kuwait and Bosnia (ref. 1992-93).

In order to normalize the area under their government, rulers of large empires (cruel despots by themselves) moderated the

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<sup>3</sup> 'And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe' [Joshua 11,14].

use of power by their subalterns. They introduced regulations 'to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak' (Code of Hammurabi), as quoted in Chapter 1.

Most of the ancient regulations deal with prohibitions and punishments. The Ten Commandments of Moses also contains positive commandments, as the duty to respect one's parents.

*Fable by Aesop*

One of Aesop's fables tells about an iron pot and a clay pot: when the iron pot hits a clay one, the clay pot will be broken; and when the clay pot hits an iron one... the clay one will be broken! This is what happens in nature: the clay pot will naturally always be broken in a collision with an iron one. The strong always overcomes the weak: the wolf always devours the lamb.

Human beings are perhaps the only exception: in the famous duel between David and Goliath, David defeated the heavily armed Philistine giant. The social status of the individual in the earliest human groups and the primitive savage tribes was perhaps similar to the situation occurring in animal groups: it depended only on physical attributes (strength, age). 'Perhaps', because it is very reasonable that in the human society additional criteria have always existed, as for instance family ties (amongst animals they exist only between the female and its young cubs). Other elements include mental faculties such as wisdom, craft, experience and cunning. Later stages, when men became 'civilized', added other elements: propriety, politics, and personal qualities (talent, and professional qualifications). As examples of personal talent, aptitudes and qualifications: Elvis Presley, The Beatles, Diego Maradona, Madonna, Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Marcuse and other persons that reached high social position thanks to their special faculties in singing, sport or inventions. Politics is a par-excellence modern way to reach important positions: Mao Tze-tung, Lenin, Stalin and Churchill.

Finally, money became a substitute for physic power. A nice definition for money: 'Money is an ersatz (synthetic substitute) for physical power'. As swallowing a little pill may be equivalent to eating a complete lunch, accumulating money is equivalent to obtaining the power of an army of slaves and soldiers. In order to take things from other animal, an animal needs power (to be stronger or more agile). In modern human society, in order to take (buy) from another person a thing you

want, you need money.

In human society, the physical strength of the individual lost the importance in determining his social position (except, of course, for persons dedicated to sports such as boxing or jiu-jitsu). Human society is perhaps the only one where physically weak individuals may reach predominant positions, including overall leadership.

Man is not the only being that utilizes another being to obtain what he needs. Parasites and beings that live in symbioses do it. Man is the only creature that applies physical power (which is slowly and irrevocably being displaced by money) to use the services of his fellow-creatures. With the abolition of slavery, war remained the only way of ‘taking’ things by force. Please excuse me: it takes place of course by thieving, by assault, by piracy, by the Mafia – but these methods are ‘criminal’, not legal, and society tries to impede them. How? This is a truly complicated question! The taboo was certainly the earliest step taken by the human beings in order to avoid the use of physical power (violence) against each other. The next step was the introduction of punishment (‘an eye for an eye...’). Society uses violence to combat violence. Society later began to ‘humanize’ punishments, substituting penalties with ‘equivalent’ money fines.

#### *Dealing with infractions*

Primordial tribes did not have an especial institution to deal with crimes and infractions. The whole tribe, or a part of them – the old people (as even observed, the word ‘senate’ relates to the Latin *senes*, old) – resolved how to punish criminals. It is very likely that the most severe penalty was the exile, because it is plausible that killing a man bellowing to the tribe was one of most sacred taboos in a primitive society. In conflicts between animals of the some kind, the winner obtains the ‘trophy’ (the game, the female, leadership), but mostly he does not kill the defeated opponent. Killing of enemies (from other tribes or clans) was a permitted practice. It is very interesting to observe some episodes in the Bible referring to the earliest epochs. Because of their original sin, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, and not killed! Cain was not punished by death for murdering Abel. The result of the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac ended with Ishmael's exile. Joseph's brothers did not kill him in order to send him away, but sold him to merchants.



As previously observed, in the classical Athens, the eupatrides (the Athenian free citizens) oppressed thousands of helots and slaves, but they themselves lived in a 'democratic' society that observed, in many respects, customs of the Ionian tribes they came from. One of them was 'ostracism', temporary banishing for ten years by popular vote (through ballots in *ostrakon* = a shell or potsherd) of citizens considered dangerous to the state.

Murdering in order to usurp the throne, or some other position, is a more 'advanced' step. The Bible refers to such events in the later phase during the kingdom. In Roman Empire, and other political organizations, it became a common practice, especially by poisoning. The origin of touching cups before drinking wine is the mixing of their contents in order to avoid poisoning. Poisoning became a skilled art during the Renaissance.

#### *Arise of Institutions*

With the enlargement of the tribes and the connection of several tribes under the leadership of one chieftain, he then became the primordial authority for all inner events. Civil and military magistrates of the Hebrew tribes in the Bible before the time of the kings were named 'Judge', because they decided in all sectors what was just.

When the ruler could not personally handle all the problems in his domain, a series of institutions were developed for replacing him (tribunals, jails, and police). Nevertheless, the king, or the modern president, always preserved in his hand the supreme and last appeal of judgment. We learn in the Bible how the great King Solomon found time to judge questions like as to whom a child belonged, when two women claimed to be his mother. In the State of Israel, the President is a representative role, with no more authority than the Queen of England has in her kingdom. His most important power consists in reducing punishments, and he has the exclusive power to grant an amnesty.

Expansion of the area governed and the growth of populations stressed the need of imposing norms for establishing order in the society. Military force is not always the best way to guarantee the observation of rules by the people; therefore, even strongest rulers in the past coated their commandments with a divine or an ideological seal. Hammurabi, Moses, Mohammed, and nearly all great reformers

acted in the name of deities or God whom they declared to represent personally. Some rulers of incontestable authority upon their people (kings, dictators and despots, as the Inca leaders, the Pharaohs of the ancient Egypt and modern Pharaohs in our own times: Stalin, Hitler, and Mao Tze-tung) preferred to elevate themselves to a level of divinity.

Even modern and secular legislation institutions and parliaments, including the ONU, pass their resolutions 'in the name of God' or another transcendental authority ('natural justice?'). The British legislative developed the practice of following precedents to support and justify verdicts of the courts. Rabbis also base their opinions on former opinions of respected rabbis and on quotations from the Bible, the Talmud, etc.

In the complex codification of laws elaborated in our times, every law is based on principles established in previous laws and juridical precedents, with go back to earlier concepts, and so on, to the primordial tribes in the prehistoric ages. The Modern laws in the State of Israel, formulated since the Independence Declaration of 1948, are supported on the vast ocean of Talmud's speculations ,the Mandate's Codes (from the British Empire, as applied in the former Palestine), and the Ottoman Codes, where they are nor yet replaced. Their roots are linked to the *Lex Romana*, Mosaic Law, and Hammurabi's Codes and so on... *ad infinitum*.

#### *Civil Legislation*

The foregoing paragraphs told about commandments and regulations imposed by decisions of a ruler (the king), or by God through an intermediary or 'personal surrogate' (the king or a prophet). Civil laws and rules of behavior in society formulated by a special legislative body, where the king or other main ruler endorses the document, but officially does not formulate it, are recent innovation. Beginning when certain classes in the population (aristocracy, and later the middle class), the people obtained such a power that could limit the absolute authority of the kings.

The growth of civil legislation marks the decrease of the intervention of state rulers in the legislative institutions. The interpretation of divine commandments in the Bible and the enormous discussions about them, and their Talmudic codification, take place in the exile in Babylon and after the destruction of the Jewish Kingdom by Rome, when the Jews

had no state authority. American Constitution confers autonomy on the Legislative Assembly, and modern democratic regimes have copied this model. The autonomy and independence of the courts is the barometric indicator for the rise or fall of democracy.

*Accident in Nature*

Now let us penetrate in a complex, fascinating and paradoxical area: origins and development of human activities and behavior. I must reiterate again and again: I am not a scientist and my writings are pure personal estimates, conjectures and speculations. However, their verity are not smaller than the affirmation of a skilled paleontologist that a certain piece of a fossil is a tooth of an *Alamosaurus* dinosaur, a sixty-nine-foot reptile that walked on the Earth 300 million years ago. Nevertheless, this book is not supposed to be a work of fiction, and even if my suppositions are not absolutely correct (no theory is), they may help (as all theories do) in drawing conclusions (which I intend to do...).

As even observed, living creatures are an 'accident' in nature, and humans are an 'accident' amongst all living beings. For instance, Man is the only being able to communicate with its peers by speech, writing and other means, not only at a current moment, but also with the past and the future (letters, books, microfilms, electronic means...). A parrot is able to say words, but not to talk with other parrots. It is possible that other beings are able to 'transmit' messages: bees communicate the finding of nectar; whales send noises underwater; dogs mark trees with urine to proclaim 'here is my boundary'; females of certain mammal species can communicate over a radius of kilometers when they are on heat. Humans are the only beings who transmit thoughts (so they think...).

There are many things, which the most advanced living beings, including humans, must do in order to maintain life: breathe, eat, drink, sleep, urinate, and empty the bowels... Life is the most precious property and the instinct of living is certainly the strongest, but animals are able to resolve stop breathing, eating, etc. Such a 'resolution' will end their life, but contrary to inert nature, where every thing does what it must do without having an alternative, animals may even disobey the strongest imperative of nature – to live... I recall this fact (suicide) to show how strong the opposition of animals (humans in particular) against external impositions may be.

Do animals in a group ‘consciously’ accept social impositions in order to maintain their society? Physical strength has influence on the conduct of animals within the group, but is interesting to observe that starving hyenas permit cubs to eat the prey first...

#### *Taboos*

In human societies, even in the earliest, a number of impositions and prohibitions were always in vogue. For instance, taboos prevented members from touching prohibited things. Chieftains imposed commandments in name of divinities in order to further the stability and coherence of the society. What is a ‘commandment’? A direction not to do what one is physically able to do. Commandments involve in the renunciation of capacities. ‘Do not kill’, possibly one of the earliest commandments in human society (the tribe), means ‘you are able to kill, but do not do it’.<sup>4</sup> A commandment like as ‘do not load an elephant in your shoulder’ is not relevant, because nobody is able to do it... In accordance with this limitation, the Talmud avoids imposing commandments that the public has difficulty on accomplishing (like excessively high taxes).<sup>5</sup>

A problem troubles me here: all the time I am speaking about commandments, impositions, and obligations. What about the rights? In the area of our concern here, dictionaries define ‘right’ as an accurate thing, in accordance with facts’. So ‘claiming a right’ is claiming a thing as justly due. Historically speaking, the awareness that people have ‘rights’ is modern, a matter of only a few centuries. The French Revolution and the American Constitution may be nominated as the pioneers in the development of this concept. However, ‘rights’ are implicit in

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Do not kill’ is not the correct translation of the Hebrew Bible’s third commandment; ‘Do not murder’ would be better. The Bible prohibits ‘murdering’, but not to killing. There is no prohibition against killing enemies on battles or (slaughter) animals to food. ‘Kill early who comes to kill you.’ [Brachot, 58:71]. The prohibition of ‘murdering’ (*unlawful killing of human beings*) is very strong in the Jewish ideology; Talmudic sages explain that Moses did not reach the Promised Land because he killed an Egyptian soldier. The endeavor of the Sanhedrin not to carry out death penalty may be explained by the suspicion of murder therein.

<sup>5</sup> ‘No edict should be imposed upon the community unless the majority can endure it’ (Bavli, Babah Kama 89:2).

the duty commandments.

The immediately implication of the commandment ‘Do not kill’ is that people have the *right* not to be killed. ‘Do not thief’, people have the *right* to keep their property, and so on. Rights are the shadows of duties. Not every duty creates a right. An object in darkness does not project shadows.

Declaring a right is the same as imposing a prohibition commandment. The right of property includes the prohibition of taken a property that belongs to another person without authorization. Observation of one person's right implies the surrender by all other persons to use of some of their power. A single person who does not control his conduct is enough to affect the rights of other people. As every law, commandments and rights are an invitation to infringe them in order to be effective, they usually impose punishment for transgressing. Nevertheless harsh penalties are in order to deter bad conduct, they are not enough to eliminate infractions; somebody will always chance his luck.

Religions mobilized in the past (and mobilize until the present day) the idea of Hell for punishment after death, as well as Heaven to compensate for good deeds. Heaven and Hell are almost their answers to bewilder questions like ‘wicked yet well off’ and to calamities of innocent people. Judgment Day is supposed to redress all earthly injustices.

As said in former chapter, religious people like to explain unexplainable disasters as divine punishments. Genghis-Khan, who caused so much suffering to large populations, was named ‘Scourge of God’, i.e. God had sent him to punish sinners. In 1992, a religious Minister in the Israel administration declared in the ‘Knesset’ (The Israel Parliament) that thirty children had died in a bus accident because impure ‘*mezuzot*’ (plural of ‘*mezuzah*’ – a parchment scroll in a container attached to the doorway of Jewish religious houses).

#### *Animals Observing Laws*

Even animals may observe human laws, if they learn to ‘understand’ them. We may translate the law ‘do not piss within the house’ in a polite form as follow ‘My dear friend Mr. Dog; if you piss within the house, I will slap you!’ A clever dog will ponder prudently, which pain is preferable: restraint or slaps...

Sometimes it seems that people are not clever as dogs: they smoke, take alcoholic drinks and drugs, in spite of the knowledge of future pain. People even risks breaking laws, in

spite of the possible punishment, because they hope to escape it. Avoiding suffering is a strong instinct, but humans can ignore them.

*Falling of Stones*

Scientists who observed and analyzed the falling of the stone mentioned at the opening of this chapter, translated their findings in mathematical formula such as  $e=gt$ ,  $v=et$ , for example. These equations, useful in estimating how much time the stone takes to reach the soil and other curious facts, enable us also to calculate the trajectory of a projectile going from Baghdad to Riyadh or Tel-Aviv... The laws of ballistics allow the launching of a space rocket that will reach Saturn after flying for seven years, even though the physical theories are not absolutely true and irrefutable. All these facts, relevant to inert Nature, are the result of scientific investigation about the conduct of inert objects. The movement of a stone does not depend on its will and decision. A stone is not able to influence its future; the human being can, although theories relating to human being are guesses, conjectures and speculations.

Because of the flexibility of human will and behavior, authorities or society establish laws to enforce people's conduct. Astronomical laws enable us to forecast accurately an eclipse of the sun that will occur in next the century, but social, economical, psychological theory or law cannot forecast what a person will do or what will happen in any society in the next day. In this area, economics, politics and other social theories are less precise than divination by cards or by hands (chiromancy); crystal-gazing; inspecting the entrails of sacrificed animals (hieroscopy, common amongst ancient Romans); horoscope, and astrology, and the enigmas of the Delphic Oracle. Future has always caught the curiosity of people, who are ready to try every way to achieve hints about what will happen. People are even inclined to explain (and justify) events by interpretation of Nostradamus's predictions, Biblical passages and prophecies, or 'divine providence'.

In sum: laws concerning inert beings result from the observation and learning about what happens to them (what and how they do); laws about living beings tend to prescribe what, when, and how they are permitted to do and what they are forbidden to do.

*Coins have two sides*

A coin has two sides. I would say that every law has three sides: the duty, the punishment, and the right. The sides are not in random order. Chronologically, the first side was determining the duty, commandment what you must do (positive commandment). It is logical that the negative commandment, the duty about what not to do (the taboo or prohibition) is an earlier phase, notwithstanding the fact that in Moses' Ten Commandments the positive commandments come before the negative ones.

Punishment was forever a close companion of duties. Morally, the pangs of conscience may be the harshest of all pains, but even ancient and primitive legislators knew that without punishment no duty is effective.

Let us expand on some opinions about punishment. The first law mentioned in Genesis (1,15) 'But from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'. The duty (a negative, of course) is 'do not eat...', the punishment – 'you will die', and the explicit right is 'you may eat from the other trees'. Adam and Eve ate from the prohibited tree and their punishment – expulsion from the Garden of Eden (the turning them into mortals carries out the maximal 'official' penalty – death).

*Lex Talionis*

The earliest punishment in the tribe (as happened in the Bible) was reasonably the banishment, which in several cases was understandably to death sentence. A next step of punishment was *eye for eye* (*lex talionis* – the law of retaliation), substituted later by fine, money indemnification. In modern society, the 'banishment' has turned to be the most common punishment for a serious breach of law: prison is the modern form to banish a person (from society). Nowadays, defining the purpose of prisons is controversial: are they places where people will 'suffer' their punishment, or places for recuperation (re-education and so on...). The conditions in the prison and the attitude towards the prisoners depend on the stance adopted by the society about pernicious and dangerous people. The isolation of people from the society have not always happened because they infringed laws and damaged proprieties. In the past, the society used to banish persons who fell in certain diseases: lepers, tubercular patients, the insane, etc. Anomalous persons, persons who are different from what

the society consider 'normal', have always constituted a nuisance.

*Anomaly of Survival*

One very interest anomaly of the legislation of the Jews (the Hebrew legislation) is its survival. When empires and nations decayed, their legislation generally froze, also many or some of the laws continued in vogue. Hebrew legislation flourished despite the lost of the national sovereignty, and especially when the Jews where in exile.

The Bible tells us that Moses conferred the Torah (The Five Books of the Law – the Ten Commandments) on the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, in the desert, where the Jews on their way to the Promised Land had wandered for forty years without a own country. Jews completed the Babylon Talmud, the core and the basis of Jewish traditional legislation, in exile in Mesopotamia. The Jerusalem Talmud was for the most part composed after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans, following the loss of the Jewish national independence. For over 1,000 years, the Jewish legal code flourished in North Africa, Spain, Eastern and Western Europe, Italy, Turkey, and other places, including their former country. Rabbinical pronouncements and judgments in the Diaspora became an enormous and complex legislative code, functioning up to this time.

Hebrew Legislation was a key element (perhaps the strongest one) in the conservation of the Jewish people through above 3000 years of existence.

Upon the Declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) initiated a new phase of Jewish legislation, which set out to be secular and modern, in accordance with the most advanced juridical concepts. This last statement, a truly pretentious one, is an impossible mission in the present political reality of Israel, because of the religious sector's opposition, a serious obstacle to every tentative step towards secularization. The weight of religion in the Israeli politics is a very complex question. First of all, due to the variety and diversity of religious sects. At one extreme, lies the fanatical fundamentalist sector, which denies the legitimacy of the State of Israel as a Jewish sovereign state, because the expected Messiah, God's emissary, did not create it. They believe that the resumption of Jewish reign in Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) can only happen with the coming of Messiah and the



resurrection of the dead. I am not qualified to expound their doctrine about this topic, but I think my explanation is more or less correct. I regret if my presentation sounds a somewhat sarcastic. It is unintentional: I have a great respect for personal feelings, including of those of the religious people.

In the other extreme exist a large number of people with a vague sentimental yearning (nostalgia?) for the traditional religious habits from their parents' home, which they themselves do not observe at all. Even fervent atheists may observe the practice of circumcision of male children, the marriage and the burial in accordance with the traditional rituals. Between these extremes of religiosity, we find a broad spectrum of types, groups and sects.

Secondly, the classical Hebrew law consists of an effort to furnish answers to real personal and collective problems. Both versions of the Talmud, the Babylonian and the one from Jerusalem, are 'stenographic' records of endless debates among Jewish scholars about how to resolve complicated situations and conflicts, among people or between the individual and the Creator. An illuminating example of this practice is the rabbinical pronouncement that a child born as result of rape is a legitimate Jewish child, despite the Biblical command that a child born to a married woman by a strange man is a bastard. We can assess the social and psychological importance of this sentence if we keep in mind the pogroms and other tribulations the Jewish people have suffered.

#### *Pragmatism in Past*

In contrast to with 3,000 years of a pragmatic approach from the religious leadership, who provided answers to changing realities, the present fundamentalist sector want to impose upon the state the observation of the most primitive and obscure religious rituals of the past. Their greatest hypocrisy is the refusal to accept in Israel a norm they observe in other places: '*Din d'malchuta – din*' (State law is a law), i.e., the laws of the country must be observed, even when they contradict religions commandments. Jesus formulated this principle in the famous dictum '*To God what belongs to God; to Caesar – what belongs to Caesar*'. This rule was an accepted throughout past Jewish history.

With a few exceptions, the king's orders had to be observed. The explanation is simply: *pikuach-nefesh* (saving endangering life). The saving of life is one of the strongest duties in the

Jewish religion; it overrides even the laws of *Sabbath* (Saturday), the sacred rest day, cornerstone of Judaism. Disobedience of the king's commandment may cause death, and in order to save life people must obey. 'Die – and do not transgress' refers to special prohibitions (incest, murdering and heresy), and even in these severe cases theological speculations, interpretations, and discussions accepts the precedence of preserving life (especially your own life!). *Kiddush ha'Shem* (martyrdom, death for sanctification of the Holy Name) is justified only for avoiding *public* infractions of basic commandments.

A further example of these contradictions: Jewish Orthodoxy, an indefatigable fighter for the separation of religion from the state in USA, is the main obstacle to this separation in Israel. Most modern countries, even Catholic countries like Italy and Brazil, led separation of religion from state. The Vatican has observed this principle (regarding to Italy) since the Concordat with Mussolini at 1929.

Additional oddity: In Israel, all religious political parties together comprise less than twenty per cent of the votes for the Knesset, but their influence upon the legislation is far greater than their numerical percentage. This happens for two reasons: firstly, the unusual political situation that neither of the two greater parties (the labor party, Avodah, and its opposition, the 'Likud') is able to obtain the majority to govern without a political coalition with includes religious parties; secondly, religious 'nostalgia' in the hearths of secular people. Even the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, a strongly convinced atheist and powerful anti-clericalist inclined to Classical humanism and interested in Buddhist philosophy, supported the religious seal on the State of Israel.

Future chapters will return to examine some touchy religious topics in more detail.

#### *Secular Document*

Israel's 'Magna Carta', the Declaration of Independence formulated in 1948, is a secular document, intended to be modern and democratic. It begins, based upon ideas of French Revolution, the American Constitution and the United Nations Organization, by proclaiming the equality of all inhabitants of Israel, without discrimination of origin, color, race, belief and sex.

Theodore Herzl, the founder of the Zionist Movement, was

essentially a humanist, whose Jewishness had a nationalistic, non-religious slant. The formulators of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel identified themselves with Herzl and Zionism, and not with rabbis. Therefore, this document, by its content, style and literary composition, is a humanistic proclamation, and not a religious oration. In the present Knesset (Israel Parliament), this document would not have a minimum chance of ratification. The religious parties would prevent such a possibility.

Many basic laws concerning human rights debated during the last fifty years in the Knesset have doubtful chance of approbation in the next generations. In the present political constellation, it seems to be more than probable that the Declaration of Independence will be replaced by an prayer like 'Praised be You, our Lord, our God, the King of the World, Who Created a State for His Folk (the Jews)'... By the way, the religious parties have an extraordinary ability on exploiting every opportunity in behalf of their own aims, dressing every event with their 'clothes'.

*Mastery of Orthodoxy*

Even a non-religious Jew in Israel remains virtually subject to the exclusive mastery of Orthodox rabbinical courts in many aspects of his personal life. Please note: 'Orthodox', despite the fact that the Orthodox branch of Jewry, the sponsor of the Jewish religion in Israel, is a minority in the Jewish World. The Orthodox sector of all Jews in the world is much smaller than the Conservative and the Reform ones in USA alone.

Notwithstanding the obstruction by the religious sector, some fundamental secular laws have been passed since 1948 by the 'Knesset', the Israeli Parliament, but very slowly and very few in number.

The Supreme Court is the bulwark of the humanistic spirit in Israel in the meantime. 'Meantime', in order to be careful with assertions), The Supreme Court has no immunity against obscure religious fundamentalism.<sup>6</sup> The delegates in Knesset, elected through factional lists, have commitment to their party's

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<sup>6</sup> In November 1996, the Supreme Tribunal, under pressure of the religious parties, restored the prohibition against the import pig meat, despite this resolution being an obvious infraction on the right of free trade passed out by the Knesset.

discipline; judges, appointed according to personal qualifications, formally commit themselves only to their conscience. The members of the Supreme Court are nominated among eminent judges after long and distinguished careers. While judges with humanistic record graduated in secular Faculties of Law are majority in the Supreme Court, it will be a barrier against fundamentalism.

#### *Zealots as Ministers*

In a democratic country like Israel, where religious zealots may be appointed even as Ministers in the government, the possibility that fundamentalist judges will one day form the majority of the Supreme Court is not hypothetical. Due to the growing influence of the religious parties and political conjectures, anything may happen.

The Orthodox monopoly on the control of personal life (marriage, death, religious affiliation) of the Jewish population, according as it does to anachronistic norms, creates insoluble situations, causing suffering and pain to thousands of families. Description of such deplorable situations requires the talent of a Franz Kafka. The Israeli submarine 'Dakar' sunk in the Mediterranean Sea at 1968 and disappeared leaving no trace. According to the Orthodox interpretation of the Hebrew Law, more than on hundred widows could never marry again because the impossibility of proving that their husbands had died (their corpses were never found!). If a husband lost his spouse in similar circumstances, he could obtain a permission to 'take a second wife', due to his commitment to the command to 'be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28). A woman cannot 'take a second man'. She cannot marry again before receiving divorce or proving that her husband died. Tanks to the pressure of the army, public opinion, and the intervention of the Supreme Court, a legal outlet enabled these women to marry again, after years of painful and exhausting struggle against the religious establishment.

Since civil marriage is not an official practice in Israel, many conscientious objectors to religious ritual prefer a civil marriage in another country, or a matrimonial contract drawn up by a

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Israel prisons contain 'divorce objectors' (men who object to giving their wives divorce, even though the Rabbinical Court decided that they have to do it). They spend years in jail. Meanwhile the wives cannot marry again.

lawyer. However, thousands of couples have abandoned any hope for overcoming the Orthodox norms that prevent their marrying live together without marrying. This fact created in the Jewish population in Israel, besides the 'normal' families married in Orthodox ceremony, a new growing category of people: unmarried couples. The number of over 150,000 of such couples, ten per cent and more of the Jewish families in Israel (ref. 1992) compelled the Knesset to pass several laws for defining legal rights of the members of such families in reference to the children, alimony, common property, inheritance etc. These laws confer on two persons 'known by the public as an economical and sexual family unit' the same statutory rights and obligations that a 'normal' married couple have. An unusual precedent introduced by the Supreme Court in 1993, granting a homosexual partner the bonus for an overseas trip that the Israel National Airlines, El-AL, confers to its employees and their married partners. The significance of such a statement: even a homosexual couple, 'married' by contract or recognized by the public as 'an economical and sexual family unit', has legal matrimonial status! Obviously, Israeli law guarantees the right of every child for financial supporting by his biological parents, even if he was born outside of formal marriage.

Certain vital, personal problems were resolved by Knesset 'by-pass' legislation, or by verdicts of the Supreme Court, but as long as the Orthodox sector remains the trustee of matters concerning personal relationships, innumerable private difficulties will remain insoluble, at a standstill, 'until Elijah the Prophet can solve such puzzles and problems...'<sup>8</sup>

#### *Right and Duty of Living*

As remarked in the beginning of this chapter, certain components are of decisive importance in determining the viability of social laws, rights and duties. The first one of all is human life. Life is both a right and a duty, and surely the most 'natural', in all senses. Rights, duties and laws ultimately relate to life; they have no significance for dead. Laws relates to living human beings: it makes no sense to pass laws for trees, animals or dead persons saying what they are permitted or prohibited from doing. What can we do to a stone that transgresses a law? Fine it? Put it in a jail? When an accident occurs in traffics

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<sup>8</sup>

In daily use, the acrostic of this Talmudic dictum (*teiko*) means 'dead heat'.

caused by a mechanical failure, will the car be punished?

Laws may be about everything in the world, but they have a restrictive significance only for human beings. We may have 'laws' in a figurative sense for domesticated animals, if we can teach them to 'understand' what they may or may not do in order to avoid punishment. Laws are intended for beings able to discern and decide for themselves. Consequently, modern societies do not judge (and punish) children and persons who are unable to understand the significance of their actions.

#### *Self-determination*

Self-determination, ability to discern and decide, is the second component. The third one will be abstinence. Without the readiness of most people to abstain from doing things they have the ability to do, the maintenance of laws would be analogous to the taming of wild animals: violent and brutal.

Self-determination is both a great right and duty. At every waking moment in our life, we are discerning and deciding our behavior and movements. Self-determination is such a vital right (and duty) that man has even the right to decide to renounce it! Therefore, unlike a *duty*, which must be fulfilled (in order to avoid penalty), every *right* is an option that man may utilize or reject. A typical example: driving through a red light is illegal and makes the driver liable to a penalty. The green light indicates the right to travel, but the driver who did not exercise his right will not be punished.

The only right, which no one has the right to renounce, is the right to life (suicide is repudiated in most societies and religions). Life is not only basic right – it also a basic duty. The religious logical reason is clear: life does not belong to Man; it is God's property, and only He has the right to give it and take it back ('God gives – God takes away' is a basic sentence in funeral ceremonies pray). Man does not have the right to take person's life, not even from himself. The duty of 'preserving life' is so strong in Jewry, that Talmudic scholars have searched every crack and chink to avoid carrying out death execution, even if it fulfilled a divine rule. The duty of saving life overrides the Sabbath laws and is a capital principle in Judaism.

Since the founding of the State of Israel the only execution I remember was Adolph Eichman's; he was the Nazi responsible for the transport of millions into extermination camps.

*Abortion and Euthanasia*

Two complex instances of the taking of life have preoccupied moralists, philosophers, theologians and jurists: abortion and euthanasia. The feminist movement's fight about 'the right of the women to decide about her body' has intensified the discussion about abortion. When abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother, the answer is clear: the abortion may be done, because it 'saves a life'.<sup>9</sup> In every other case (defective embryos, chance pregnancy, rape, etc.) the question defies consensus. A similar controversy exists about the right to shorten the life of a suffering and incurably ill patient. In this question exist a precedent in Israel: the Supreme Court decided in 1993 to respect the wish of a patient (if expressed when he was clearly conscious of his situation) not to prolong his life artificially. The verdict condemned every deliberate killing (euthanasia), but permitted the disconnection of the machinery used for keeping the patient artificially alive, in order to allow his natural death.

With this one exception, man has the full right of self-determination: he may renounce every right he has, and he can affirm every contract. The most absurd and abnormal contract is legal and viable as long it is freely agreed to by both sides and does not contradict an existing law. In accordance with the present legislation in Israel, a person may renounce all his rights in favor of another person and become practically his slave. There is a prohibition to buy or hold a slave by force, but nothing prevents a person of being a voluntary slave. The Talmud devoted meticulous attention to slavery, a common institution in the past.

*Rights and Duties of Masters*

The Bible and the Talmud define several kinds of slavery, with particular attention to the rights and duties of the master, regarding his slaves. Certain kinds of slaves could marry a free partner, and even be an equal partner with his master in a common business.

A hypothetical query: is it possible in the present Israel that a

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<sup>9</sup>

Talmudic scholars have discussed whether it is moral to cause the death of one person in order to save another. In the famous passage 'Two went to the desert', about two persons who lost their way and the water they have was enough only to one person. If they divide the water, both will die. What to do? Most sages tend to justify the right of everyone to save firstly his own life.

man turned into a slave by a free contract become a member of the Knesset, a Minister, or the President of the State? The formal answer – ‘yes’! The Declaration of Independence forbids every sort of discrimination and anyone may be nominated to any post in the Government administration, unless there is a legal barrier. There is no law in Israel that prevents a slave from being President. I do not know if American law allows a man that receives instructions from the Mafia or a fanatical fundamentalist ayatollah, to be President, but in Israel, it is not only possible, this happens.... Only ‘shaming’ activities (e.g., not every criminal ones) may impede a person of performing governmental functions. A court cannot judge a minister or a deputy as long as the Knesset does not revoke his parliamentary immunity. This situation is not a hypothetical one – precedents are not rare. Religious members of the Knesset, even a Minister, openly declare they are not free to make basic decisions without the guidance from their personal Rabbi or Rabbinical Tribunal (every religious group has its rabbis and its special Tribunal).<sup>10</sup> Religious are ‘voluntary slaves’, not only of the Lord, but also of their rabbis.

The Talmud disqualifies cripples to priesthood; in the modern Israel, there is not such a limitation. A person like Franklin.D.Roosevelt could no serve as a priest in the Temple, but a President in Israel he might be.

The Bible writes 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge' (Jeremiah 31:29). This phrase is not a commandment; it describes an event, which may occur: children may suffer, not as a punishment for their behavior, but in consequence of their parents' actions. This is a moral warning to parents.

#### *Prohibition of Vengeances*

The Talmud determines that only guilty persons maybe punished; this principle is still a cornerstone of modern criminal codes. It includes the prohibition of vengeance towards persons related to the criminal. The State of Israel observes religiously this principle, but not in the occupied territories: in the fight against terrorism, the army often uses (ref. 1996) collective

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To be honest, similar situation may happen even to non-religious people. Often members of the Knesset vote in accordance with their party's discipline and not their conscience.



punishment, including curfews imposed on whole regions for extended periods, and the punishment of the terrorist's family by demolition of their houses.<sup>11</sup>

The law puts all citizens under obligations and gives them rights. Everybody must observe the law, even if he ignores it. No court accepts 'I did not know' as an excuse. Ordinary citizens are not familiar with the labyrinth of rules and exceptions of laws controlling life. Therefore, modern countries guarantees accused people to receive the assistance of a lawyer supposed to be cognizant of the laws.

The examples presented in the current chapter are only fragments of an enormous surrealist picture that only Salvatore Dali could perhaps equal. This book does not intend to be a treatise on jurisprudence: it have only examined some aspects of human behavior in order to continue my thoughts.

#### *Membership in Organizations*

As already mentioned, membership in an organization confers rights in this organization, but imposes obligations on it (even the contrary is true) that may occasionally cause the renunciation of rights. Someone who enters a monastery that observes silence surrenders a fundamental right in the democratic society – the right to speak.

Such a restraint, necessary in every kind of organization, may be voluntary or imposed. Even the most democratic society imposes duties, that in one hand involve rights, and on the other hand – self-denial. The taxes that every citizen must pay are a part of his property, which he has to surrender.

In a figurative sense, every person is a 'partial slave' of the organization he is associated. Theoretically, only a person who belongs to no society at all is free to do what he wants to do: a hermit alone in a desert or a forest, without any contact with other people, for example.

A person joining the army surrenders the right of self-determination: he must obey his superiors. The relationship of a soldier to his superior is similar to that of a slave to his master. This comparison is shocking, but essentially true. If a soldier joins the army voluntarily, he cannot complain: it was his free

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<sup>11</sup> During the fight against Bin Laden's terrorism in Afghanistan (ref. 2002) innumerable innocent people died in the bombing of terrorist entrenchments. What is permitted to lions is forbidden to cubs...

choice. Soldiers who want to serve in voluntary special units are ready for all the humiliation and suffering, which await them during training. When military service is a duty, as in Israel, it may cause ethical problems: what can a person, physically and mentally apt for military services do if he does not want to mobilize? In fact he has three possibilities: a) to leave the area where conscription is in force (i.e. emigrate from the country), b) to obtain exemption from military service, or c) to go to prison.

There are some countries where a person may obtain exemption from military service because of pacifistic principles or other ideological motivations. In Israel, only women who declare themselves Orthodoxy followers and men who are studying full-time in Orthodox religious institutions receive such exemptions. Conscientious objectors can find themselves in jail.

#### *Refusing Orders*

The refusal of a soldier to carry out an order is a complex question, due to his duty to execute his superior's orders in on one hand, and his personal responsibility for his actions, even when he carries out an order, on the other. A soldier who 'refuses' (disobeys) an evidently unreasonable order will be sent to prison: only if a military tribunal decides that the order was illegal or a mistake will clear him. For obeying an unreasonable order a soldier will not go to prison, but may be later accused of committing a crime and sent then to prison...

The picture of laws, rights and duties is surrealistic.

#### *Kibbutz in this Picture*

How does the kibbutz fit into this picture? At the beginning, in the twenties) twentieth century), people who formed the first collective groups, which became kibbutzim, used to debate and discuss about all aspects of communal life – 'direct democracy' – and tried to design the future. Every member felt himself a representative of a new society in creation. The discussions were idealistic and philosophic; they built a utopian model as an ideal to turn into reality. However, they did not live in the clouds; daily problems of existence required immediate and practical answers. They developed systematically a sophisticated structure of norms and rules that codified all aspects of behavior. These idealistic and intelligent people, who

invested so much intellectual and social energy in their creation, were not especially interested in the judicial aspects of the kibbutzim (or perhaps they were not conscious of them).

The fact that strangers, the British Mandate, ruled the country with an authority that they had to accept but could not identify with, contributed to this situation. The Jewish community, attempting to avoid the British administration and be self-sufficient in all areas, organized itself and worried about its needs by creating own institutions: schools, university, theaters, hospitals, sports organizations ,etc. The British administration permitted this development, which suited them .

The kibbutz movement grew without being concerned with a formal legal basis, satisfied with minimal administrative arrangements for fulfilling essential economic, social and other needs.

With the establishment of the State of Israel, the Knesset began to elaborate a legal, modern and unified codification of the law, to replace the confusion of laws simultaneously then in effect: the traditional Hebrew code (the 'Halachah'), the Ottoman and the laws of the British Mandate.

#### *Kibbutz Regulations*

The kibbutz movement also felt the need to provide a formalized legal basis for its organization, and improved the *Kibbutz Regulations*. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the complexity of the Israeli Legislation to evaluate the exact judicial situation of the kibbutz and its members.<sup>12</sup> The description in sequence is a limited outline of the situation as I see it.

### **Limited Liability Cooperative Association**

Here are some data about the Kibbutz Artzi Hashomer-Hatzair, the establishment of my kibbutz. Founded as a federation in 1927 and registered as a Limited Liability Cooperative Association ,it is the second of the tree big kibbutz<sup>13</sup> corporations, with eighty-six kibbutzim (in 1992) and a population of 43,000, 13,000 of them children studying in forty kibbutz schools.

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<sup>12</sup> In 2,000, the Knesset nominated a committee to codify the legal status of the kibbutz and the moshav.

According to its Regulations, the kibbutz is a ...free association of people for settlement, absorption of immigrants, maintenance of a collective society based upon principles of communal ownership of property, members' work, equality and partnership in all aspects of production, consumption and education. The kibbutz considers itself an integral part of the worker's movement in Israel and aims to build a socialist society in Israel, based on economic and social equality' ('Foundations', Chapter B).

The aim of the kibbutz is 'Establishment and maintenance of a community based on agriculture, industry, and other activities, intended to be a community and permanent residence for members of the kibbutz'. This section – 'The aims' – holds a large list of aims: some are idealistic, such as 'improve friendship and brotherhood amongst the members of the kibbutz'; 'advance female members to genuine equality', 'improve the member's personality, personal and collective abilities...'; others are economic: '...to develop economic enterprises, in order to provide workplaces for the kibbutz members...'. Others are national: 'to absorb new immigrants', 'educate immigrant and extern youth (in kibbutz institutions)', cooperation amongst the kibbutzim and so on.

### **'Authorities'**

The chapter called 'Authorities' details the authority of the kibbutz to be active in trade, business, and all economic fields connected with managing factories, enterprises, and providing services for them and every resident in the kibbutz (members, and other persons living in the kibbutz.). The kibbutz has the authority to execute every financial transaction, sign contracts, etc. The kibbutz act as 'the representative, in name and in place of every member, of the member's properties, includes every activity related to the member's properties'.

### **'Membership'**

The Chapter C, 'Membership', defines the conditions and the procedure for joining and leaving the kibbutz. In five sets of circumstances membership in a kibbutz ends: a) by death, b) the change of permanent address to one outside the kibbutz, without the kibbutz's permission, c) a member may inform the kibbutz that he intends to terminate his membership, d) by expulsion from the kibbutz, e) by being declared bankrupt.

Joining a kibbutz is a procedure that includes several steps and preconditions, such as a period of candidacy for mutual acquaintance, and a minimum percentage of favorable votes of members.

This Chapter, which discusses the conditions for leaving the kibbutz, is of special significance. The ease of leaving a kibbutz (it is enough to notify the Secretary that you have decided to leave the kibbutz!) gives a voluntary dimension to the membership in a kibbutz. A member on the kibbutz has the full right to leave the kibbutz at any moment he decides to, without any explanation about his motives.

### **'Expulsion of Members'**

Regarding expulsion of a member by the kibbutz, the first reason for such an extreme action is obviously a criminal act that a member commits against the kibbutz. I said 'against the kibbutz' because if the criminal act in which the member is involved was not practiced against the kibbutz, there may be situations where the kibbutz will support and help him. An example: a member who caused the death of a person in a traffic accident will certainly receive judicial support.

Another reason for expulsion may be the violation of the kibbutz's regulations. Expulsion from the kibbutz is problematic and complex. The necessity for equipping the kibbutz with means for expelling undesired elements was the prime motive for instituting the severe judicial regulations in the kibbutz. The formulators of the *Regulations* did not worry to guaranteeing of the personal rights of the members in the kibbutz. This supposition, the starting-point in my criticism of these regulations, is my personal feeling.

After detailing the violations that justify expulsion of a member from the kibbutz (and the procedure to enable this event), the regulations define in the fifth item the 'Member's Duties and Rights'. In my opinion, the listing of 'duties' preceding the 'rights' is a significant symptomatic clue, which contributed to the feeling I have about the atmosphere responsible for giving precedence to the community over the individual.

### **'The Kibbutz's Capital'**

'Chapter D', 'The Kibbutz's Capital', declares that the kibbutz has no capital shares. A member of the kibbutz has no right or claim on the capital of the kibbutz, but on the other

hand, he is not personally responsible for the kibbutz's debts. Kibbutz property and debts are not divisibly among the members.

The aim of this topic is to protect the financial integrity of the kibbutz and avoid the possibility that individuals, or groups of members, would manipulate or devise a way of taking capital or property from the kibbutz. The kibbutz' goods will be remain intact even if all members abandon it (such an event happened in the past).

Amongst the duties that the members must observe are all norms in operation in the kibbutz. They must accept the decisions of the General Assembly, including those regarding the education of their children. A member has the right of free expression, but cannot participate in organizations or in activities contrary to the principles of the kibbutz. He may participate, with proper permission, in a party or in organizations that have no connection with the kibbutz. A member must submit all his property to the kibbutz and empower the kibbutz to act on his behalf and in his place in all transactions concerning these properties. Additional rules guarantee and protect the integrality of the economical interests of the kibbutz. When a member dies, the kibbutz is his sole heir.

### **Symmetry to Duties**

It is understandable that the rights of the kibbutz member are symmetry to the duties. On one hand, he renounces all his property on behalf of the kibbutz and agrees to devote all of his abilities to the kibbutz; on the other hand, the kibbutz must provide all of his material, social and cultural needs, in keeping with the economic capacities of the kibbutz. The diversity of members' rights covers all aspects of life, in a genuine effort to provide a solution for every personal problem and conflict within the kibbutz.

The list of rights includes, naturally, the rights of a member that leaves the kibbutz: what goods he may take with him (contents of his home, furniture, clothes, etc.), and the compensation he will receive according to the period that he have spent in the kibbutz.

The last two chapters (sixth and seventh) define the organizational structure of the kibbutz (the General Assembly, the Secretariat, their functions, and procedures), discussed points in the Chapter 2 of this book.

Finally, in closing, the *Regulations* deal with miscellany,

including procedures for appeal against decisions, modification of regulations, the powers of the kibbutz, and the possibility of its eventual break-up.

I have already commented upon the complexity of the world of laws, rights and duties. I am a nonprofessional in these matters, and in most other matters in this book, but I am aware of their existence, power and influence upon our life. I have often considered, debated and discussed these matters. I have forever been concerned about what happens in my environment, and have often reacted (mostly by writing). Is it reserved for professionals alone to react and express their thoughts? This book is a modest example how a layman tries to do it.

*Defending the kibbutz*

When I read the *Kibbutz Regulations* for the first time,<sup>13</sup> my impression was that the 'legislators' who drew them up had in mind the aim to defend the kibbutz against its members. The *Regulations* list many rights intending to cover the personal needs of kibbutz members, but 'if's or 'but's, with restrictions, limitations and new implicit duties, follow almost every 'right'.

I understand perfectly, and to some extent even agree with, the fact that the first preoccupation of every organism is to guarantee its existence and integrity ('the universal natural instinct of survival').

My first observation refers to the item 'The Kibbutz Foundations' in 'Chapter B'. The inclusion of so many aims and declarations in one item creates a melting pot that confuses the distinction between important and subsidiary points, and does not stress the main point. After this hotchpotch, who knows what a kibbutz is? An integral part of the labor movement, a socialistic society, or what?

In my opinion, a kibbutz is 'a partnership of people who freely decided to live together in a collective community'. The basic point of the kibbutz is the full and free partnership amongst the members – in one word, the 'together'. This proposition is the axiom, which acceptance infers all other principles as natural consequences (corollary).

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<sup>13</sup>

In the current chapter, I am discussing the Regulations as they were in 1990. Many items have been changed since. Since then, radical and structural modifications are happening, but not simultaneously and not similarly in all the kibbutzim.

We must keep in mind that the kibbutz is, in all circumstances, a free partnership of living people, and not an apparatus for determining the life of the members. A person who joins a kibbutz is not a slave who has renounced all his rights on behalf of a master who becomes his proprietor. It is not correct to say, 'person X belongs to the kibbutz Y': on contrary, the kibbutz Y belongs to X and all his partners. As we will see later, even this assessment is not quite correct.

### **Pool of Rights**

Kibbutz is a pool of the member's rights (of property, responsibility for the children education, etc.) serving the common interest of all partners. A kibbutz member does not renounce his right of self-determination; he only compromises himself by undertaking to use this right in concordance with, and in behalf of, all his partners. In cases of divergence, he will accept the resolution of the majority. In the modern democracy, the acceptance of the decision of the majority is a norm that enables the common life in most societies, and does not imply the lost of the right to 'self-determination' of every citizen, who may hold his private position and try on changing the majority's resolution. All procedures are legitimate (appeal, propaganda, etc.), as long as they do not violate decisions in force. The only activities that the democracy cannot allow are the activities intending to destroy the democracy and its principles.

The prime target of the kibbutz (formally at least) is the happiness, the comfort and the advancement of its members. The essence of kibbutz character lies in one word: partnership. The essence of the kibbutz aim – the members! In my opinion, the kibbutz is at best a tool that a group of persons agreed to establish and employ to achieve their collective interests. At the pinnacle, Man remains the goal and not an instrument.

#### *Jefferson's Memorial*

When I was in Washington, I visited Jefferson's Memorial. The inscriptions on the walls and the documents in the showcases impressed me greatly, because of the connotations of all that I had learned about the American democracy. The Amendments to the Bill of Rights sounded to me as a sublime poem and not like dry laws.

I would like the 'Law of the Kibbutz' to be formulated by a Jefferson or a Rambam (Maimonides), and not by pragmatic



lawyers, learned in intricate laws. Only inspired humanist and humanitarian lawmakers are able to compose sentences that become idioms and catchphrases in daily use, like Moses' Commandments and so many passages in the Talmud have become.

The basic legal document of the kibbutz should be a social contract between free human beings, which radiates humanity, solidarity, mutuality and partnership. What we have, for the time being, is a commercial agreement.

It may be that my approach to this matter is bombastic, a result of excessive enthusiasm and optimism, on one hand, and ignorance about the legal professional language on the other. Perhaps I am wrong, but my intuition says that besides its dry juridical functions, the 'Law of the Kibbutz' must be a compass and beacon in storming and troubled times.

*In Perpetual Crisis*

Crisis has been a permanent and loyal companion of the kibbutz from the beginning. I do not remember, during over half a century, the kibbutz being without some 'little' crisis. It is enough to examine the agendas of the Congresses of the federations of the kibbutzim and the agendas of the General Meetings of every kibbutz to be convinced about the constant struggle in overcoming problems and crises. Crisis has always been a flag in the hands of leaders to mobilize soldiers, unite people, demand sacrifices, and demand a march forward... The kibbutz could paraphrase Descartes 'I have a crisis – ergo sum ('therefore, I exist')'.

The real present problem of the kibbutz (ref. 1992) is not the crisis, but the loss of orientation. In the past, a consolidated leadership and a strong ideology were the means of overcoming obstacles. Weak abandoned, the remainders went on.<sup>14</sup> By this selective process, the kibbutz that began as a camp of tents, without any property, become a garden with family residences, public buildings, agricultural, and industrial enterprises.

What happened in the eighties (of the twentieth century)? An economic upheaval shook the financial stability of the monetary

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<sup>14</sup> 'Weak' in this context is an allusion to 'he who' abandons' and no to a physically weak person. By the way, I have no statistical data, but for every member who remained on the Kibbutz Movement three have left. Therefore, according to my calculations, until 1990 kibbutzim have lost over 300,000 people.

system, the Stock Exchange, the banks, industry and agriculture over the whole country. The damage of the Kibbutz Movement was catastrophic. Whoever had borrowed money for investments in production could not return it, because the loan could not yield enough to meet the exorbitant increase in the interest rate and the wild rate of inflation. So, the debt grew enormously.

The earthquake occurred when the kibbutz was in a phase of intensive building and development, and enjoying a rising standard of living based on lending and not on real income. Before the economic leadership understood that they were caught in a whirlpool and took steps to deal with it, the debt of the Kibbutz Movement reach a fabulous number of dollars with nine digits. If we divided the debt by the number of members of the Kibbutz Movement, every member in a kibbutz owes (ref. 1992) statistically more than \$200,000 dollars...

The reaction to this disastrous situation took the form of drastic measures. The first step was an immediate decrease in the living standards and a freeze on expenses. There was a standstill in building and other investments. Then came a demand to change norms and systems. The leadership of the Movement lost moral authority. The efforts to recover from the distress lead towards alternative foreign economical theories of managing and organization, most of them in clear contradiction to the traditional approach. A drowning man clutches at a straw.

#### *Money-Maker Business*

The kibbutz was never a business for making money, but a partnership of people that provides several 'business' units in order to finance the community's existence. Suddenly everyone's attention was concentrated exclusively on money. The principal goal was now to obtain more money. All other values, human and moral ones, became secondary.

The true danger to the existence of the kibbutz is not the economical crisis into which it has sunk, but the ideological confusion. What is a flag? A piece of clothe attached to one edge of a rope or a stick. Sometimes a flag is necessary in order to mobilize all efforts to achieve the same goal. The lack of a flag and a target is now critical; unfortunately, the law of the

kibbutz does not provide these elements.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> In 1999, one of the outstanding leaders of the kibbutzim observed that nowadays a new flag and mission must take place in the kibbutz ideology: the defense of democracy against the forces of religious fanaticism. Despite being a minority in the population, zealots impose step by step their domain upon citizen's lives in the country. A strong army defends the land against outside enemies (and Arabs are afraid that Israel has atomic bombs ,(but there are no means of defense in Israel against religious fanaticism. In the name of God, Jewish religious fanatics are able to accomplish – without scruples, without restraints and without consideration – the same atrocities that the crusaders did in the name of God.

The secular population, majority in the country, is impotent and unarmed against them. Israel is slowly being transformed into a fundamentalist theocracy. The Temple of Jerusalem was twice destroyed because of fanaticism. Religious fanaticism led the Jewry to captivity in Babylon and to the dispersion of the Jewish population by the Romans. Will the kibbutz Movement, the strongest and more organized secular organization in the country, be able to lead the defense of democracy and respect of human civil rights in Israel? This is a big challenge.



## 10. GOD AND MY GRANDMA'S WHEELS

*Is the future rememberable?*

At school, religions impressed me more than any other subject in the 'History of Mankind'. Amon-Ra, Isis and Osiris, Baal, Ishtar/Astarte/Ashtoreth, Tammuz, Jehovah, Zeus/Jupiter, Brahma, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, Gilgamesh, Zarathustra – a small list of protagonists in a wonderful, fascinating, astonishing, dramatic world... I liked it!

*Dangerous Matter*

The matter is truly interesting, but dangerous. But for the single reason that I mentioned our Jehovah together with other gods, I find myself in a very delicate situation: this is an unforgivable heresy.<sup>1</sup> Dealing with religion is an intellectual challenge, a challenge that no one with philosophical inclinations can refuse. However, it is dangerous. Such an adventure requires more courage (or foolishness) than a matador in a bullfight, since the philosopher has to face not one single bull, but a stamping herd of fanatic wild bulls...

Yes, I am afraid. I have not the chutzpah to compare this book with Salman Rashid's *The Satanic Verses*. I do not intend to achieve the depth or the breadth of his criticism, but I know my people – fanatic religious Jews are no less subtle than the Iranian ayatollahs are... Jews zealots are expert stone throwers (perhaps David felling Goliath inspired them). In the use of stones as weapons, the religious Jews preceded the Arabs' *Intifada* (I doubt that stoning will satisfy them, Jews and Arabs together, for long.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' [Exodus 20,3] implicates logically the existence of other gods. When this commandment was formulated, Jews were a tribe wandering in the desert and their God was a tribal god. The idea that the God of the Jews is the universal god of all people in the world (Judaism as a monotheistic religion) began circa 1000 years later, in the Babylon captivity. The actual fundamentalist Jewish religion has returned to His status in the primitive tribal conception: their god is an exclusive God of Jews. By the way, I have a serious problem: when to write 'God' (uppercase 'G') and when to write 'god' (lowercase 'g'). I apologize for the inconvenience.

<sup>2</sup> When I wrote this sentence, I could not have known how right I was. Fanatic religions have begun to use fire-guns. In February 1994, a zealot shot hundreds of bullets on praying Muslims in Machpelah's Cave in Hebron, killing near 40 and wounding over then 100. At Saturday October 4, 1995, a religious fanatic Jew murdered the Israel Prime Minister, Yitzchak Rabin, during a popular mass

I have no choice: having resolved to sum up my thoughts on the relationship between the individual and his surroundings, I cannot ignore religion, one of the most emotional components of human life, especially in Israel, the crossroads of the three main monotheistic religions. The control of the Jewish religious establishment upon the private civil life of Jewish citizens of the State of Israel during all phases of life, from birth to death, especially those regarding marital status (weddings, divorce, and widowhood) is suffocating. I would add, insupportable. The State of Israel is a strange demo-theocracy (or theo-democracy, if you prefer). The majority of its population is secular and democratic, but a religious minority imposes its religious norms upon the whole population. Even the Kibbutz, a secular independent community, is not able to free itself from the religious net.

#### *Crucial Question*

The crucial question related to religion that I asked myself as a child was, 'Does God exist?' I never saw Him, I never heard Him; how could I know that He exists?

At the end of the Second World War, Brazil (where I lived then) authorized the activities of the Communist Party. The Party improved intensive indoctrination activities, attracting many people to their lines. A funny contemporaneous joke went as follows: 'Are you an atheist?' a journalist asked an uneducated peasant, a new communist supporter. 'Yes, thank God!' was the answer.

Today, half a century later, it seems to me that I have<sup>3</sup> become like the peasant: I consider myself a convinced atheist, though I do not completely deny God – a paradox that needs a detailed explanation.

If I say *Whoogksxztness*<sup>4</sup> to express something important for me, nobody will understand this word, which phonetically may have a charming sound. If I say 'God', everybody

manifestation on behalf of peace policy in the Middle East. Since 2000, Palestinians use bombs. Does precognition cause things to happen?

3

**Atheist** is not the exact description of my position, because I do believe in human dignity, justice, freedom, and other ideals whose definition and existence are as problematic as the definition and existence of God are. Therefore, I prefer to define myself as *agnostic*. Why not give God a chance?

4

I am very proud of this word. It is one of my lexical innovations in this book, perhaps the nicest. I will not be surprised if one day an honorable dictionary will define *Whoogksxztness* – a word that does not mean anything.

understands what I mean. 'God' is a living concept for billions of persons. The simplest dictionary contains this word. We may question the significance of the concept of God, but we cannot ignore the influence of God upon individuals and God's role in the history of humankind. The viability of the concept is not the relevant question, but its contents and influence.

Systematic study and inquiries of theology have not yet succeeded to solve thus great enigma. God has occupied the thoughts of people since humanity has existed, disturbing the tranquility even of those who have no philosophical pretensions.

Whoever believes in God a priori, without doubts, without queries, resolved his problem by adopting a philosophical attitude about His nature and His attributes – God is an entity whose nature and attributes cannot be questioned. Very simple!

I find myself in a treacherous minefield, because I belong to people who do ask questions about God. I am not alone – innumerable persons occupy themselves with this dangerous task. Innumerable people have paid with their own lives for having the audacity to inquire about God.

#### *Agnostic Dealing with God*

So, being an agnostic, why am I dealing with God?

My answer (paraphrasing the known phrase 'war is much too serious a business to be left in hand of generals'): 'God is much too serious a business to be left in hands of the religious'. Creed inhibits a priori religious believers from investigating God. Adore, pray, serve, work, devote, sacrifice, dedicate, believe, etc. are a random selection of verbs that express religious relations towards God. Religious are definitively forbidden to investigate, examine, doubt, and even think about God. Only non-religious may do all these things. Only non-religious people can objective and subjectively handle the object of God freely, without restrictions and moral prohibitions and inhibitions.

#### *What God is*

What is God? I do not know! I suppose that your response is similar.

What God *is not* is an easier question to appreciate.<sup>5</sup> Full consensus may be available about what God is not even among

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<sup>5</sup>

'We can know what God is not, but we cannot know what he is.' [Saint Augustine, *Sermons*].

people who do not believe in God. For instance, no person would allege that God is a human being alive on earth. God is not an animal either, nor a plant. People may accept God in a human, animal or a plant shape, but not that God is a human, an animal or a plant.

If life is the period between birth and death, life has a beginning and an end. According to believers, God is the Beginning and the End, but has no beginning and no end. Therefore, according to the usual definition of life, God is not a living being, because if God did not born and will not die, he does not live either.

A parallel sample: notwithstanding a point in geometry have no dimension, no beginning and no end (physically it has nothing), the span between two consecutive points has an infinite number of points. How can empty points, without dimensions, without beginning and without end, compose a segment of a line (a measurable entity)? *Allah'bie'alem*.<sup>6</sup> The concept of God is much more paradoxical: God is greater than all things together and at the same time is within every point.

Human beings have never flinched from paradoxes and puzzles. Although points and lines are indefinable things, people have used them to design with extraordinary precision the trajectory of the Apollo spacecraft across millions of miles in the interplanetary space. With the same ability, human beings utilize God with no lesser degree of success.

#### *Relevance of God*

The existence, or not, of God has no relevance in discussions about God. Why? Because my grandmother's wheels. Let me explain this bizarre argumentation.

The phrase about my grandma and her wheels is not a slip of the tongue, nor a phrase of a fool or a crazy person (or so I hope). 'If my grandma had wheels, she would be a bicycle' is a popular saying in Brazil. I do not intend to develop a wide philosophical discussion in order to analyze the logic of this funny phrase. It could be an interesting mental exercise, but the limits of this book cannot contain it. In any case, this phrase has a landmark importance in this chapter about God, because plenty of people daily use this linguistic coin.

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<sup>6</sup> *Allah'bie'alem* (= Allah knows). When an Arab does not know the answer to a question he does not answer 'Excuse me, I don't know.' He replies instead 'Allah knows'. See discussion on fanaticism on next chapter.



'If my grandma had wheels, she would be a bicycle'. Only human beings, of all living creatures, are able to think up such a preposterous idea.<sup>7</sup> Now, please consider what more human beings are able to think about, besides the wheels of my grandma. About everything, including God!

Humans are specialists in thinking about absurd and impossible things, that they have never seen, never met, and have never believed in them: fairies and demons, Heaven and Hell, purgatory and paradise, never-never land, Shangri-La...

Architects design no-existent houses, bridges, and other creations of their mind. Engineers calculate their statics (mechanical equilibrium) even though they do not yet exist. Humans use with skill things that do not exist, like zero and imaginary numbers. Is it a wonder that they deal with God, even though His existence is not demonstrable? Why not?

Thinking about God, I also cogitate about the universe. Please, do not ask me what the universe is. You will not receive a clearer answer than what God is. In spite of all our modern scientific investigations, we can only conjecture about the quality and limits of the universe. Truly, we know about the universe what we know about God: nothing.

Scientists deal with stars that do not more exist, while they cannot know millions of existing stars whose rays have not yet reached the lens of their telescopes. The conjectures about the Big Bang and black holes are charming and dazzling hypotheses, exciting the imagination and competing with the piquancy of my grandma's wheels.

Anyone who describes the modern theories about the universe, with scientific authority and a slow fatherly intonation needs a creative imagination sharper than the ancients, who believed in the theory that an elephant upon a turtle supported the world. In any case, personally, I am very optimistic about the story of the universe's expansion, until it will begin to concentrate itself into a point. Accepting Saint Thomas' maxim 'seeing is believing', the verification of this theory is only a question of patience.

Investigation of the universe and meditation on God amount to the same opera in two voices (scientists and theologians).

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7

This last proposition is a guess. I am not able to prove it, because I do not know whether other creatures think.

*Curious Interpretation*

Returning to the 'beginning', I would like to point a curious interpretation of the Bible. God Himself gave the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai; nothing in the Torah can be by chance or random. Therefore, ancient Hebrews and their Jewish successors conferred a mystic significance on every letter and sign in the Torah (the Bible). One of the occupations (and preoccupation) of Jewish sages was the search for allusions and hidden messages in the Bible, in order to decipher them and reveal their intentions. Jews used *Guimatria*, sum of the numeric value of the letters words, to find occult linkages between words having the same value.<sup>8</sup>

The first word in the Hebrew Torah (the Pentateuch) is *B'reshit* (Genesis). Why does the Torah begin with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *beit* (Greek beta), and not with an *aleph* (Greek alpha) – the first letter? Biblical cosmogony begins with the statement that 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. Chaos (the state of unformed matter and infinitive space prior the creation) and God are evidences that the Bible refers to them as known facts a priori, without any allusion to their origin and nature, or to the when, the how and the where of their being. A hypothetical unknown lost paragraph that begins with the first letter – aleph – perhaps holds the information...

*What God is not*

Since we have no empirical information about what God is, let us carry on the inquiry about what God is not. God is certainly not a material thing, since the identification of God with any finite entity contradicts the basic axiom that God has no limits. The contradiction remains even if we admit that God is an infinite matter. Matter, contrary to spirit, is something physical, connected to nature, something that can be felt, touched, measured, and analyzed. God cannot be. God is, by elimination, not a material substance.

The Bible gives to God only adjectives and attributes. omnipotent, benevolent, jealous, the commander of all armies, etc. All attributes (adjectives) may be used to refer to God, but none noun (substantive).

'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain' (Deuteronomy 5, 11) suggests that God has a name, but it is

8

The numerology of letters goes back to Babylon. The Hebrews, like the Greeks and other people of antiquity, conferred numeric value on letters.

forbidden to 'take' it. Due to this commandment, religious Jews refer to God as 'The Name'. Instead of 'Thank God' a religious Jew will say '*Baruch ha'Shem*', literally 'Blessed is the Name'. The simple mentioning of God's a name is a terrible sin.

Jews revealed geniality not only in science, music, and literature, but also in dealing with religious commandments. In order to avoid mentioning the name of God, they use alternatives such as *Adonai* ('My Lord'). In order not to write His name, they use special abbreviations (In English, a religious Jew might write G-d). Jews invented clever tricks for every situation. Here are some examples:

'Ye shall kindle no fire ...upon the Sabbath day' (Ex 35, 3). Jews invented the *tsholent*, a meat stew in an oven that keeps food warm from Friday until Saturday evening.<sup>9</sup>

Modern life presents serious challenges to zealous Jews. What will a pious Jew who resides on the twentieth floor do on Sabbath when he wants to go to synagogue? How will he use the elevator in this day? 'Whoever doeth work there-in shall be put to death' [Deuteronomy 35:2]. It is forbidden to press the button of the elevator (clearly physical work). No problem: he installs a sophisticated electronic tool that operates the elevator automatically on Saturdays and holidays, moving it upwards and downwards, pausing for a while at every floor. The religious does not press buttons but waits patiently until the elevator comes. Afterwards he patiently waits until the elevator will stop at the desirable floor. A religious person does not hurry on Saturdays and holidays.

#### *Worry about God*

Turning to God, I could fill several pages with speculations, conjectures and arguments. They would be curious and entertaining, but I do not believe they will enrich our wisdom about the theme.

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9

Baal-Shem-Tov (the nickname of Rabbi Israel Ben Eliezer of Medzibozh, the founder of the Hassidic movement in Judaism) demonstrates, in my opinion, a greater genius than Albert Einstein does. On Saturday, it is forbidden to cross the boundaries of settlements. What does a Jew, who finds himself in the middle of a forest on Sabbath eve, do? Baal-Shem-Tov uses some supernatural hocus-pocus and worked a miracle: on his right and on his left was Sabbath, but in the middle remained a path of Friday and through this path he continued going towards the nearest village. My grandfather told me this story when I was a child.

Personally, I do not worry about God. In case that God exists, I would surely accommodate myself with Him. My problem is how to get along with His terrestrial subalterns...

*Mathematical God*

Mathematics, the science concerning to numbers, quantities and forms, is rich in strange and paradoxical concepts that stimulate the imagination. For instance, zero, the absence of value, has many curious and specific attributes. In the series of integer numbers, it is the only one equal to its negative. The division of every significant number by itself is 1, e.g., every number contains itself exactly one time; but the division of zero by itself is *indeterminable*, i.e., the zero may contain no one, some or an infinity of zeroes. The zero may be considered an emptiness full of an infinite emptiness of empty emptiness.

Let us continue our mathematical divagation. How much is 1 and 1? If you do not know, you are in a trouble, but if a mathematician does not know, he has no problem. To resolve the question 'how much is 1+1?' he will formulate  $x=1+1$ , and by this way he give us an exact answer,  $x$ . What is  $x$ ? Very simple:  $x$  is an unknown (something you do not know its value; the unknown has no own value, but may have every value). The unknown's value is exactly the value that you want to know and does not. The calculation of the numerical value of the unknown in an equation is only a question of techniques. Perhaps we do not have at the present means to calculate it, but theoretically, the problem is resolved, because the mysterious unknown has by definition the exact required value. If by some way you do succeed in calculating the equation and find the value of  $x$  (2 in the sample of  $x=1+1$ ), putting this value in place of  $x$  in the equation, the equation is no longer an equation, but an identity ( $1+1=2$ ). After the wheel, mathematics is certainly the greatest invention of the human genius.

Using unknowns for resolving problems is not exclusive to mathematics. Humans have always created equations to solve questions without answer! They formulate the question in one term of the equation and put the unknown in the other. In this way, the problem is now perfectly resolved. For instance, the equation  $x = \text{he who created the world}$ . Anyone who accepts that God is the desired unknown 'x' in the above equation has solved the problem 'who created the world?'. Nobody knows 'who' and 'what' God is (an irrelevant detail anyway); the only decisive point is if you accept or not that 'God' is the unknown 'x' who 'created the world'. If you accept that God is the

required unknown  $x$  then *God = who created the world* is a perfect identity.<sup>10</sup>

*Wheels of my Grandma*

This last argument draws on the same logic found in my grandmother's wheels. It is not my fault. This is a normal human brainwork.

Cleverer people than I am have tried (and continue to try) to codify the human thinking – logic. Immanuel Kant is one of the greatest among them. When I was seventeen years old, I went to the city's municipal library, and took out his *Critique of Pure Reason*. I confess, shamefully, that I could not get past the third page. I blamed the translation, but perhaps I was too young. I never tried again; I came out with Kant's ideas but without his books, even if what I know and think about them may be not exactly what he wrote. This procedure is a legitimate human one. Who has read the original sources of all he knows? We snatch from the air most of the things that we know. Modern powerful means of communication (press, radio, and television) bombard us day and night.<sup>11</sup>

Is what you read authentic and what you heard not? Animals like horses can hear much better than they see. Humans receive aurally, and not visually, the strongest indoctrination in their life. Education begins with mother's tales and continues with teachers' tales. I am unable to guess the books that contribute to the formation of the character and mentality of common

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<sup>10</sup>

A lottery may be a good illustration of the use of this mathematical technique by religious people. Millions of people buy lottery tickets, but only some Mr. John Smith gains the first price, 10 million dollars.

Why Mr. John Smith? A mathematician can statistically calculate the rate of possibilities every ticket has of winning the price, but why exactly Mr. John Smith? The greatest scientist is not able to explain something that the simplest religious person will do without hesitation, by saying 'God chose him!' In mathematical language, the religious man will formulate this as follows: *God = He who designed Mr. John Smith's ticket to win the big price of 10 million dollars.*

<sup>11</sup>

About means of communication as source of knowledge, see Chapter 11. Radio and television are more effective as sources of knowledge than books. The use of books needs a minimum skill for reading (a vast portion of human beings are analphabets!). Radio only requires the ability to ear and understand the language. To absorb television is enough no to be blind. Even a little child who does not yet speak is able to appreciate television.

The principal vantage of books is the possibility of choosing from a vast limitless stock. Radio and television programs, besides determined beforehand, have less diversity. Internet is becoming an immeasurable source of knowledge.

persons. The number of literate people is growing, but nowadays the number of books that everyone reads is not very large. Even scientist and university professors hear about books more than they read them.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Wonderful Imagination*

Man's imagination is wonderful. How can we explain our mental engine? It converts poor knowledge in so magnificent ideas like my grandmother's wheels on the one hand and God on the other. Why poor? Because of all we know is superficial, partial, and do not exactly fit reality. Our imagination, on the contrary, is transcendental, going beyond reality. Humans are able to conceive things that exist only in mind, and utilize them successfully in the reality: mathematical and logical entities, for instance. Inventions and designs that humans plan become existent only when executed. Even this book may serve as a modest example of the fruits of human imagination.

Three main sources may explain intelligence. First, the most ancient and common – the divine: we are what God made us and we have what God gave us. Anyone who accepts this conception needs nothing more. For him all additional explanations are superfluous.

The second source is obviously heritage, i.e. when our parents conceive us, they provide us with a package of provisions like the basket of sandwiches that a mother prepares for her child setting out on a picnic. Today, it is accepted that this package is the genetic DNA chains. In the future, scientists will certainly reveal other sophisticated means. What is probably sure: physically we are born naked, but genetically –  
<sup>13</sup> not.

The third source, the most important in my opinion, because it is the only one dependent solely on us, is personal experience. Every moment in our life, we absorb information about what is happening around us. Life experiences (and will!) enable people to create their own ideologies and to consolidate an independent mental identity (besides the eventual born qualities). This ability, in my opinion the highest level of human capacity,

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<sup>12</sup>

A good idea for a scientific research: a survey about the amount of books in every household nobody has ever read. Most books in public and particular libraries are surely 'virgin'. People, especially important ones, love adorning themselves with books.

<sup>13</sup>

What is genetic in our mentality? Nationality, religion, ideology and political positions almost certainly are not.

demands maturity. The revolts of young people against parents and society do not always free them from prejudices and anachronisms. Youth's inclination towards new streams and new fashions often indicates lack of restraint and escape from the reality without premeditated alternatives (like what happens with hallucinations from drugs). Independence of mind demands investigation, learning, cogitation, meditation, ambition, and perseverance, i.e. investment of high levels of mental energy, and often involves one in swimming against the stream.

For this reason, political parties and movements are not a fitting place for very youth people. Youth is useful in politics for potting out posters, distributing propaganda, and forming noise cliques in political meetings, but they are not ideologically mature enough to be leaders. Youth should dedicate their energy to developing personality and arranging themselves before they start arranging the world. Chapter 7 ('Preparing for the future') discussed why the present systems of education, from kindergarten to university, do not prepare young people correctly for the future. The accumulation of knowledge is very important, but not the important aim in life. People with fabulous knowledge, real walking encyclopedias, may intellectually be slaves to fixed ideas. Independence of mind requires not only wide knowledge, but also much more. I cannot offer prescriptions. Another question is whether people really want to think with their own minds. Humans are social creatures; they feel secure in flock and incline to trust in shepherds (God, leaders, and ideologies).

#### *Abstractions of the Brain*

I wrote in the former section about external sources of our memory/knowledge.<sup>14</sup> I want to take an additional step forward, discussing inner sources. Our brain (or something else that I do not know how to define) has two important capacities: generalization and abstraction. I will try to explain my meaning through two examples.

What a table is, is something every one knows. I am not original by using a table as a sample: every honorable philosopher has used tables for didactic epistemological explanations. You certainly know that a table is 'a piece of

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<sup>14</sup>

*Memory and knowledge* is not the same thing. We may have deep in our mind a store of things we do not consciously know them, because we do not recall them.

furniture consisting of flat top set horizontally on legs', according to all the dictionaries that I have consulted (with minor nuances in the definitions). A very neat definition, despite the fact that a table may be without legs at all, being supported by a wall, or hanging on the roof. It may not even be flat. A table may be rectangle, square, circular, ellipse, etc. A real table is among all existing possibilities a very particular one, with determined shape, colors, materials, and attributes. It is exactly what it is, an entirely individual and specific exemplar. When we say 'table' (without article), this word represents all possible table that exist, existed, or will exist – without being any one of them. The word 'table' is an abstract concept, a general idea or understanding; an abstraction resulting of a mental operation that extracts the common denominators of all real and imaginable tables (in general, the only one denominator common to all elements of the assembly is the word that define them). May be that when we use (or think about) the word 'table', we have in mind a certain particular real table, but the word 'table' by itself is only a concept, without any material or physical existence.<sup>15</sup>

The second example: there are no two identical persons. Even twins are different. Two identical persons never were and never will be (so I hope).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it is impossible to know what a real person is. He himself does not know. Every person is an extremely complex creature, permanently in change. You are not now what you were yesterday and not what you will be tomorrow. Notwithstanding all this confusion, when we say 'person' every body knows what we mean, although the word 'person' is a concept and generalization of all possible persons, without being any of them.

Abstraction is a mental operation for separating qualities and proprieties from objects or concepts. 'White', 'good', 'true', are words that represent qualities or characteristics. They are not independent existent physic entities in the real world; they exist

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15

Scientists have managed to teach certain monkeys and other animals a 'language'. Languages of signals, body movements, and face expressions that enable to maintain a single 'conversation' with them. Some creatures (bees, dolphins) have the faculty to communicating with their own species. Some birds are even able to pronounce words. Meanwhile, there are no evidences that these signals and sounds are similar to human 'words' – concepts and abstractions.

16

Even though still a fiction, theoretically it is possible to duplicate the prime cell of a living creature, but every part will develop differently, because the different experiences they absorb.



only in our mind, as a result of the impressions experimented by our senses, or induction of our imagination. These concepts may generalize new universal concepts, as whiteness, goodness, truth, etc.

I intuitively used in the past to compare memory to an archive of knowledge, where all we know is classified, ready to be drawn out for use when necessary. This analogy is misleading. If it were possible to assess all what we have in our mind, we would realize that most data is a partial and imprecise arrangement. Today, I would rather compare our mind to a museum. Most articles in a museum are pieces and fragments of pieces filling up the basement and underground deposits, where one rarely reaches them. Museums display only selected articles of current interest for the visitors: repaired parts, the reconstructed skeletons of dinosaurs, and other remains of disappeared things. Most of the elements that visitors meet in the museums are glass cases, pictures, explanation tables, and not the genuine historical pieces that museums suppose to exhibit. I repeat: our memory is a museum exhibits. Our knowledge is the result of what our museum permits us to visit.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Admirable Abilities*

I would like to add something about experience as a source of knowledge.

Our mind works like a police investigator in case of a crime. He collects all piece of information about what happened, interviews people who saw or know something about the event, and tries to build with these data the profile of the unknown murderer. The obtained picture, even if approximate, is usually not enough to catch the criminals.

The pictures that our senses photograph work similarly. Our sight, for instance, takes a distorted perspective image. Parallel lines seem to converge to a far focus. Objects seem larger when nearer. Even colors and brightness depend on our particular eyes and viewpoints. Generally, we discern width, height and depth. Einstein added a fourth dimension - time. Other

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<sup>17</sup>

If I had to point to at least one personal profit gained from this book, I would underline that, thanks the task I assumed in writing it, I dug up all I could reach in my memory and gleaned many lost grains. I feel that I understand myself now better than before (auto-psychoanalysis?). The overhaul in my mind refreshed many concepts and ideas and the mental process of thinking put some order in my thoughts. I become calmer, more meditative, prudent and optimistic. Confucius, who asserted, 'May you know yourself', would be proud of me.

dimensions that we ignore may exist, but the pictures our eyes see have only two dimensions. Our senses are accomplished tools, but everyone catches only a restricted aspect of reality. The information we capture is always obsolete, because the reality changes before our brain succeeds in deciphering the data it receives. The fidelity of the portrait that our brain constructs with the pieces of information that our senses capture from reality is no better than a polycial indentikit. For this reason our knowledge is poor. In compensation, we have a rich imagination. It is amazing what man does with <sup>18</sup> such poor material.

The most admirable ability of man is, I repeat, his imagination. Imagination has no limits, flows out from personal experience, and no matter whether consciously or not, man builds with it fantastic ideas. <sup>19</sup>

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18

My mother, a Yiddisher Mamma (if you are not familiar with this expression, no matter), was not particularly religious but believed in God and used to say 'God writes straight with crooked letters'. Humans do the opposite. Maybe they use 'straight letters' (the reality that they imbibe), but nothing they 'write' is perfect. Humans are not culpable. The imperfection of their creations is inevitable due to the limitations of human senses. Did humans 'write' anything that can last for ever? Not the pyramids in Egypt, not the Great Wall in China, not even human theories.

19

Some examples of the technique the human mind uses to create new original images and ideas: take the upper parts of a woman and join them to a tail of a fish – you get a mermaid. The upper part of a man's body with legs of a horse gets a centaur. Mixing the head and the wings of an eagle with the body of a lion, you have a fabulous beast – a griffin. Pan, the mythological god of wood, fields, and flocks, has a human torso with goat's legs, horns, and ears. The ancient Egyptian god of the sun, Horus, has the head of a hawk. The monotheist Jews forbid drawing human images, because of the similarity to God; in the Middle Ages, Jewish book illustrations represented human figures with birds' heads. Put long sharp long teeth in Dr. Jekyll's mouth, add some make-up, enlarge his nails, and he will be transformed into Mr. Hyde. The creating of Dracula and other monsters is a popular game, like dressing dolls. You may try combining elements by yourself; if you obtain an interesting image, you might sell it to Walt Disney Studio.

Children's books composed of three independent parts (the upper part presenting a diversity of faces, the middle part being a collection of bodies dressed in diverse clothes and the bottom containing legs with a variety of shoes, shirts and trousers) provide a means to obtain different funny figures. This is exactly how our minds work, but in a faster speed a computer deals with records and data preserved in its memory.

Humans utilize with admirable ability their creative imagination, even with non-existent elements. They are even able to make something of nothing. If humans would be able to create *all things* from *nothing* they would be God.

Most elements that man has in his memory belong to the past, therefore what he creates (even if he is a genius) is immediate anachronistic. In the future, nearer or distant, new geniuses, having new tools and knowing new facts, will enhance existent theories and imagine new ones. I say enhance, and not improve, because theories when formulated give good answers to questions they dealt with. As long as experience does not reveal contradictions, theories are considered true. Some theories are true within certain limits or regarding determined areas. Dalton's atomic theory was a good and useful theory while atoms were unbroken. However, within certain scientific fields, it works well even today.

#### *Visions and Previsions*

Often when an event occurs, we feel I 'knew' it should happen. There are people who affirm they are able to read signs of the future in people's palms, charts, stars, crystal globes, teacups, etc. A careful analysis of visions and previsions, from the Jewish prophets to Nostradamus, shows that every seer reflects known elements in their time. Even the fantasies of Jules Verne, and the modern comics are arrangements of elements known by their creators. Humans are able to remember only the past and the present (about this assertion, I will present in the next chapter some crazy philosophical speculations). The future is something they may only imagine. Nevertheless, it is possible to forecast some events, just as for instance, to calculate the next solar eclipse and what day of the week 1 January 12976 will be (if the world will exist until then).

For religious people, God created the world and appointed all what has happened, is happening, and will happen. What has not yet happened is not a secret to God, because all happenings are the pure fulfilling of God's will. Therefore, anyone who accepts the first item I quoted – the divine – as the source of man's knowledge, assumes that all what everybody knows is exactly what God decreed him to know. The portion every one receives is, of course, not the same (the diverse status of humans in the world indicates that God supports capitalism). Why can't some information about future be included within some of the packages that God provides? Admitting that remembrance is an act of recalling the mind, in other words a mechanical activity of compiling existing information in the mind, if future events are registered somewhere there, theoretically a person who is able to access them is being 'remembering' the future. This is what prophets allege they do

in their visions. A prosaic sample of such a possibility: if today is Friday, I am able to remember that tomorrow will be Saturday. Another sample: I remember accurately what day in the next year will be my birthday.

Even the past is not so simple to remember, because things not in use remain in the attic, in the basement, or deeper underground storage, and often so blocked up with trash, that the access to them is quite impossible. This is what happens when we know that we know, but we do not remember what. Psychoanalysts help us to remember what we have forgotten, i.e., they guide us to hidden cubbyholes in our brain (memory). When we sleep and lose voluntary control on our mind, we dream dreams – puzzles of random details drawn from the memory's deposits. Hypnosis purports to induce a person into an artificial sleep-like state, which enables him to remember forgotten events.

*Genius like Hunters*

The first person who asked ‘why?’ was the first philosopher, because then he began to conjecture, rationalize, weigh possibilities and research the nature of things. For instance, from the query ‘why rain rains?’ he may deduce from his experience of pouring water from a bucket that some unknown superior entity pours water from the sky. Can you imagine how big he must be? Or the one who blows the wind? Primitive people imagined giant mysterious spirits. Clever people advanced later to mythological human-like gods, and monotheism arrived to the unique omnipotent God.

When man acquired knowledge about electric currents, the mutual attractions of masses, gravitation, and other physical properties, he could explain rains in terms of a twentieth-century meteorologist. In a next millennium, with the added experience humans will acquire, and the knowledge they will accumulate, they will perhaps find a better explanation.

Humans are always sure of their truth. Are they right? ‘True’ truth, if such a thing is possible, is irrelevant and unnecessary. As long as what we think about something does not contradict other things we know, and serves to improve our interests, it is sufficiently right, and true. Many facts held as true in the past became untrue today. Many things hold today as true, future  
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Einsteins and Galileos will prove to be untrue. Why did a

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The key difference between scientists and religious people is their approach to knowledge. A true scientist is obsessively greedy for innovations and dreams

genius like Galileo not invent the theory of relativity? One certain factor is information. Galileo did not have at his disposal the tools that Einstein used, and was ignorant of things that children know today. It may be that children in a next century will laugh at Einstein's theories.

A genius is like a hunter. The chances of catching a prey depend on not only dexterity, professional knowledge and equipment. All these elements are necessary, but not enough. He needs an opportunity. The best hunter with the best equipment will not catch a Bengali tiger in Amazon forest. Even in Bengal jungles, where Bengali tigers walk around, the hunter needs some luck in order to succeed. The situation of scientists and philosophers is no better.

What is luck? Religious will explain luck as God's will. All that we cannot explain may be related with a great degree of precision to luck. God and luck are different sides of the same coin – what we do not know.

#### *Eggs or Chickens?*

The question ‘what did man find first, the circle or the wheel?’ may be as emotive as ‘what preceded what, the eggs or the chickens?’ However, is irrelevant to the theme of this chapter. What interests us is the fact that the circle deeply impressed people. The circle is a symbol of perfection (it is symmetric in all its diameters), and a symbol of eternity (it has no starting point, nor end point). A sphere is composed of infinity of equal circles with a common center. It is not by a chance that persons thought about circles and spheres when seeking answer to the question ‘what is the shape of the world?’ Many indicators evidence the meaningful role of geometrical forms when people abstracted images from nature. The sky seems to be the inner side of a big hemisphere, where the stars hang. The horizon seems to be an enormous circle. The sun and the moon are round. Night and day comes one after the other, in a cycle. The same happens with the cyclical changing of the seasons of the year.

All cosmogony models are linked on one mode or another to curved shapes and movements, from the globe supported by the elephant on the turtle, to Ptolemy, Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and so on up to the present time. It does not matter if the circle was compressed (or extended, if you prefer) to an ellipse, or

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to formulate new theories. The scientist has no scruples about throwing away old concepts. Religious is the opposite.

other more sophisticated variations, in order to adjust the theory to calculus obtained by observation. All theories are true while they serve human needs, and do not negate other theories and conceptions, and especially not the experience. Experience is hard to discuss; but within the realm of concepts, people choose according to their inclinations. What cannot be proven experimentally (as true or false) remains a free prerogative of the mind.

This is not the place to analyze all proposed models of the world. I only want to say about the modern scientific universe that if we compare tools, knowledge, and experience of ancient scholars with those of modern scientists, it is clear that the creators of the globe+elephant+turtle model had a greater degree of imagination.

#### *Energy in Emptiness*

An elephant as a galaxy of infinitesimally small stars, suns, planets and moons, a vertiginously moving electronic world of atoms, electrons, protons, and other strange particles. The total sum of these material elements, the volumes of all the individual atoms together in a body is relatively insignificant in comparison to the volume of the body. Regarding to what we know about the microcosms and the macrocosms volumes, the account of material mass is quite nothing. Since Einstein formulated his equation  $E=mc^2$ , material is not mere material, but frozen energy. Now I am confused. What is space and what is the universe? Space is supposed to be the geometrical extension that contents everything what exists, including the universe; all sorts of energy raging in emptiness. If the brain of a human being can think about my grandma with wheels as a bicycle, why can it not imagine the universe as a hole in the space?<sup>21</sup>

I have always considered myself an intrinsically amateurish philosopher. A professional philosopher I will never be, because he must be serious, solemn, and grave. These qualities are not my strongest ones; I consider myself an ordinary serious person who loves to joke and smile. My mind is perhaps not yet developed enough to understand all philosophic arguments. For

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In the nineteenth century, science hold the cosmic space is an all-pervading infinitely elastic massless medium (*ether*), a mysterious fluid that until today nobody defined. Einstein denied it. Twentieth-century science is sure that space is emptiness with electromagnetic and other waves. What will science think about space in the thirtieth century, with the new ideas about anti-mater and black holes? Curious people have no chance – they must wait in order to know.

instance, if somebody serves me a good steak with a fresh salad and a glass of dry red wine, I will predictably eat them with appetite and enjoy them, even if the greatest philosophers in the world were to convince me that they are a virtual illusion.

*Remembering the Future*

I hope that the present chapter's title 'God and My Grandma's Wheels' has been justified.

Did this chapter elucidate something about God? Honestly, I doubt it,<sup>22</sup> but I am sure that it has dealt with a bewitching theme.

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<sup>22</sup> I talked, talked, talked and forgot to define *religion*. You may consult a dictionary, or if you prefer, you may agree with my private definition: *Religion is the biggest, most sophisticate and most profitable business that human mind ever invented.*





## 11. DETERMINISM AND RESPONSABILITY

*Who is guilty? If my mother could design cakes, why can't we design world peace? Can we remember the future? To whom does destiny belong?*

The idea that every one is born a free person has become a cornerstone of human thought since the French encyclopedists in the eighteenth century. It is said that the venerable Winston Churchill complained of his increasing age, 'I do not understand why youth was given to young people.' Paraphrasing Churchill, I would say, 'I do not understand why freedom was given to newborns.' What can a person do with his freedom when he is born? Nothing. He cannot walk, he cannot speak, and I do not know what he is capable of thinking. He is completely dependent on other people: his parents, his nurses. Left alone with his freedom, he will die.

### Right of Self-Determination

Immediately after birth, the newborn loses part of his freedom: he automatically belongs to his parents, to a nation, to a religion. No one asks his opinion, no one asks for his consent. The parents and other persons resolve what the baby needs and 'wants'; all what the baby can achieve is crying and kicking.

The discussion of rights in Chapter 9 verifies the role of self-determination. Without this right, all other rights have no significance. One who cannot decide is not responsible for his acts! The right of self-determination is so basic, that a person even has the right to renounce his rights, including the right of self-determination, and he may confer them on another person. Modern society respects the right of a person who decides to become a voluntary 'slave'.

Besides the case of a slave or a bonded servant divested of freedom and personal rights, every one is a partial slave to certain norms he must comply with, willingly or not.<sup>1</sup>

Parental authority (property) on children is not absolute; modern society has adopted several laws in order to protect the child. The good of the child has the top priority in judgments involving children. This slavery (if we admit that the child is, in

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<sup>1</sup> The soldier who serves in army, the monk in the monastery, and even delegates who belong to parties, and everyone who commits himself to obedience towards other factors than his own conscience and will, renounces a primordial personal right – the freedom to decide by himself what to do.

a figurative sense, a slave of his parents) is an inverse relationship to the child's age, and it may soon reverse: the parents become 'slaves' of their children. After adolescence, sometimes later, sometimes earlier, the 'child' becomes an 'adult' independent of his parents. Parent's authority upon an adult is a function of what the adult 'child' is ready to accept from his parents.

Obligation to the nation is another story. A citizen is not subject to his national laws while is outside his country. An Englishman in the USA will drive on the right-hand side of the road, and not in the left, as he must do in his own country. Returning to England, he will drive on the left-hand side, even if in the meantime he has changed his nationality to American. Some countries do not allow their citizens by birth to renounce their nationality.

In the past, if one did not agree with the laws of the country, he could move to a new inhabited place, where no laws were in effect, and establish his own laws. This happened with the Protestants who migrated to America, the Mormons who went to Utah, and the *Bounty's* mutineers who at 1789 settled Pitcairn, a remote island in the Pacific Ocean. Nowadays, there is not one unique square centimeter in the entire world that does not belong to some country – not even in glacial Antarctica. Nobody can free himself from national yoke. I am merely affirming a fact.

A third 'slavery' imposed on the newborn (after his family and his country) is religion. The constitutions of modern countries guarantee freedom of religion; but parents impose a religious creed upon the child while he is not yet mature enough to discern and choose by himself. The Christian Church christens the child by baptism while he is still a baby. Jews, in order to introduce the male baby to the Pact of Jewry, circumcise him at eight days of age.<sup>2</sup> I am not an expert on all religions, but I suppose that no one of them waits until the child matures in order to ask him if he accepts his parent's religion.

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<sup>2</sup>

There is no ritual ceremony for initiating females to Judaism, in spite of the woman being the people who determine *who is a Jew* (in accordance with Jewish religion only a person born to a Jewish woman is automatically a Jew).

By the way: most rituals to introduce a novice into a religion and other social formations consist in an oath-taking ceremony or physical 'injury' (head shaving in colleges, the army and monasteries, bloodletting in Mafia and other secret organizations, body mutilation, such as circumcision). Even baptism is a pseudo-drowning in water. These practices aim at implanting a traumatic memory to the event.

The kibbutz invests in children more than eighteen years of care and education. The interest of the kibbutz to keep them in its framework is as strong as the same interest of nations and religions. However, the kibbutz grants them full freedom to adhere or not (both the kibbutz and children who have reached maturity have to agree about the affiliation). Religions and nations do not show such generosity and respect for individual self-determination.

Special rituals reiterate and emphasize the relationship to the religion at the adolescence age, when the child is old enough to understand this act: the Christian rite of confirmation (Eucharist communions), the Jewish bar mitzvah ceremony (when a boy at thirteen formally assumes the obligation to execute the religious commandments and take full responsibility for his acts). Even secular institutions observe formal procedures in official ceremonies to fix commitment to truth and reiterate fidelity to the nation, like taking an oath in governmental appointments, or in the courts on testifying, and at the recruitment ceremony of soldiers.

Nationality, a status of membership acquired by birth or by naturalization, inherently links the person to a particular nation. In any case, within the country's boundaries everyone must observe the country's laws. On the other hand, the interest of a person in the nationality of the country he lives in is justifiable, since he wants to enjoy citizens' rights (the nation's protection, right to vote, work, etc.). Some countries reduce privileges to residents with foreign nationalities, and others do the opposite. Diplomats enjoy advantages linked to their foreign nationality...

#### Responsibility of God

Not laws alone restrict people. Physically, nobody can do everything he wants to do, even though other people may be able to it. I knew a boy who was able to jump quite two meters high. Modestly, I would consider a jump of sixty centimeters quite a feat. I do not refer only to physical performances. I would like to travel around the world. This goal is not impossible for those who have the resources to finance such a project. Objective conditions limit our possibilities. People, like a train, must remain on the rails. Are humans free to choose their rails, or does someone or something predetermine their movement?

Chapter 10, dedicated to godliness, asserts that people who believe in God accept that every event is God's will; they realize their destiny.

Is it possible to remember the future? As it was already said in former places, the memory of a person is the capacity for recalling to the mind information stored somewhere (in the brain?). If all things are predetermined and what will happen is registered somewhere, the human mind is perhaps able to reach the information and bring it into active memory. Storing information about future events into memory means possibility to recalling (remember) the future! People, who believe in astrology, cartomancy, etc., accept such a possibility.

Religious people maintain that God has created the world and is responsible for all that happened, happens, and will happen. Every event is a mere realization of His will. In accordance to Jewish tradition, before a person is born, God chooses his *zivug* (his coupling). If so, why do people divorce? Why do so many people never meet their mate? Do not worry. There must be some explanation. We don't know it, but God does.

On this point, about predestination, the Jewish religion has a liberal and elegant solution. 'All is foreseen, but freedom of choice is given' (Aboth 3:15). What I do not understand is this: how can a person be sure that even his free choice was not predetermined? Moslems are more consistent: if Allah determines everything; then He is the only responsible for everything. If you ask, for instance, a Muslim who killed his spouse why he did it, his answer will be 'It was the will of Allah.' Therefore, a murderer is not personally guilty. On the contrary, he is a faithful person, because he executed Allah's will. Fatalism, the doctrine that destiny predetermines all events and human beings cannot change them, is a rooted belief in many people. Anyone who accepts providence, predetermination, fate, surrenders his responsibility.

Breaking a cup inadvertently is not the same as doing it intentionally. The prosecution in a modern trial must prove that

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How interpret this paradox? Let us think about a railway system: all paths and stations are predetermined, but every one may choice the station and takes the train that he wants. A good sample here is the computer. It is possible to do with it any task that the programmer has set up. Humans are free to choose in the supermarket every thing that is there (free choice amongst predetermined alternatives). *All is foreseen* on one hand and *the right to choose* on the other is a paradox: if *all* is foreseen, the choice is also.

Freedom of choice levies to people the responsibility for their acts, and gives all religions the basist of their moral teaching – reward and punishment.

the accused person acted with premeditation in order to find him or her guilty. The judge may attenuate the culpability of a culprit if strong outside circumstances compelled him to do as he did. Where people are responsible for their acts, the level of their responsibility is a direct function of their degree of deliberation.

#### Past, Present & Future

The past, present and future – an exciting theme! The past has happened, the future will happen, and what is happening now is the present. Being the present the passage from past to future, in practice it does not exist; or the contrary – it is the *only* time that really exists; because at every moment of our life we already exited the past and not yet gone into the future. We can never reach the future, but we are always in contact with it, moving towards it without leaving the present, where we stay forever. Present is a permanent transformation of the past into the future. We are always in the present, interminably busy with the future and tied to the past. We do not constantly think about it, and often we are not conscious of it, but the future, what is being to be, is our greatest preoccupation. We may remember the past, which has certainly influence on our present and future, but it does not worry us so much since we cannot change it. If we believe that we are able to decide what we do, the future concerns us interminably

The current chapter handles the future as a pure philosophical item. The future is something that does not (yet) exist, but we believe it will exist sometime. We are now discussing if what it will be is an implication (a consequence or rational continuation) of what is now, and speculating the measure we can intervene and influence future happenings. By the way, philosophy is the science of absurdity and paradoxicality.

Philosophy deals with the investigation into the true nature of reality, using systems of demonstrations based on experience and reasoning. Experience is the knowledge of particular events, while reasoning handles general concepts. During our lives, we meet tables<sup>4</sup>, and know them by our senses, but we are far from having knowledge of all individual tables in the world

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<sup>4</sup> I have already mentioned these metaphoric tables in Chapter 9. They seem to me such a successful sample that I can't find a convincing reason not to use them again.

in the present, past and future. When we refer to the table in our kitchen, we think about a specific and determinate table that we know by experience. It is a unique exemplar in the world, because no other table in the whole world is the table in our kitchen. When we are reasoning about table in a general sense, we do not relate to any existing real table – the thing we think about does not physically exist at all. It has how many legs? Is it square, rectangular or round? Wooden, metal, or plastic? What is its color? All we know about a table in general is that it is a table! The conception of table, being the generalization (abstraction) of all tables, is no single one of them. At the same time, the conception of table contains all tables in the world. How something that is nothing can be at the same time all things and everything? Is this an absurdity or a paradox? Neither of them: it is just a single philosophy.

Nobody knows if any other creature besides human beings thinks such extravagant things. We believe that none do. We, the humans, are sure that we are the only creatures who cogitate, because we have no means of verifying if a donkey, an ant, a butterfly, or a stone spend their precious time on philosophy. If we are right, we can define human being, in addition to *Homo sapiens*, as *Homo philosophicus*.

#### Empiricism & Rationalism

In the match between Empiricism and Rationalism, every philosopher plays in one of the two rival teams.

Empiricism states that experience is the source of knowledge. All we know derives from practical experience and observation of particular events, whose generalization creates the idea (conception) of the whole, by a logical process, called induction. The more examples that confirm our assertions, the nearer we are to the truth. As our own personal experience relatively insignificant, we utilize the cumulative experience of other people. A classic example is the mortality of humans. Experience over thousands of years teaches us that human beings die; so, the conclusion that humans are mortal is one of the most ancient philosophical and scientific thoughts of humankind. Nevertheless, this truth was never scientifically demonstrated, because billions of individuals are alive and have not yet died. As long as a single living individual remains in the world, the fact that all individuals before him died is not yet a completed scientific demonstration that *all* people die. Perhaps one of these people living today will never die. Therefore, while

I am alive, I can declare, with plain scientific and philosophical accuracy, that I am immortal. Notwithstanding I suppose that there is a good probability that some day I will die, nobody in the world can demonstrate while I am living that I am not immortal. Only when I will die – if this will really happen – will my assertion ‘I am immortal’ be refuted; but nobody will then be able to prove me wrong and give me the opportunity to apologize for my mistake.

This humorous example shows the deficiency of induction, a cornerstone of science and philosophy, widely employed in mathematics and logic. Induction starts from definitely known events of the past and the present in order to preview new events in the future, but has no immediate capability (generally) to demonstrate experimentally its prevision. Only when the predicted future becomes present or past, the prediction can be verified.

In the other hand, decisive flaws restrict empiricism. The only way to acknowledge facts experimentally is by means of our senses, and they are not perfect (you certainly remember the discussion about our senses in the earlier chapters). The ‘images’ captured by our senses are not exact. In all the cases, they are only images and not the reality that they photograph. Two different persons will never perceive identically the same event or object. With certain events, none of our senses is able to catch them at all. Our senses are very flexible and every change influences them. In different circumstances of time, point of view, or state of mind, a person will perceive differently even the same object. Moreover, if we were unable to experience certain events, this does not mean they did not happen, or do not exist. A blind person does not see stars; he knows about them only from the information of other people. Scientists are blind people who base most of their knowledge upon experience of others (scientists). Scientific quotation is the cornerstone of science, and scientists observe quotations with fervor, parallel the belief that zealous religious people quote from their Holy Scriptures (Bible, the New Testament or the Koran).

A quotation, even from someone with a solid reputation, is no more than a quotation. A respected professor of a prestigious faculty of anthropology, returning from an expedition to Tibet, issues a detailed report about a yeti, which he affirms that he saw. Does such a report provide evidence that the Abominable Snowman exists? Much scientific information from the past was

false. What can we conclude from photographs of UFOs (unidentified flying objects)?

The weakest point of empiricism is its process for generalizing – induction. There are no means to prove that this system is right, because it is not permissible to use the inductive system to prove the viability of the inductive system. Scientists accept induction as a logical truth and on this point they are rationalists.

Rationalism (the other philosophical team) holds that reason is the prime source of knowledge and spiritual truth. Reason is the intellectual capacity for rational thought, the inference of one truth from a previous truth. Every new truth is a part of a former one or a logical consequence of it (an implication). How the first truth is true?

The problems in justifying rationalism are parallel to those that deal with empiricism. What is true? What is not untrue! What is false? What is not non-false! No place for mistakes is permissible. If we know that something is true, the contrary (or its negation) will be false, because for rationalists everything *is* or *is not* and nothing can simultaneously *to be* and *not to be*. These facts are evidences a priori, truths that every person knows from birth. Experience is not necessary to reach such reasoning. In any case, how do we know if something is true? Truth must fit reality and conform to facts, so we can verify it experimentally. Rationalism assists empiricism, just as empiricism assists rationalism. They are two adversaries, who cannot exist without each other.

Rationalism uses logic, the system of reasoning by deduction, inference from the general to the specific. Its weak point is the a priori, the premise without demonstration. In mathematics, we call such a proposition ‘axiom’. Axioms, rather like religious tenets (dogmas), are indemonstrable. They are considered self-evident. If you accept that ‘through a point beyond a line passes just one parallel to this line’, you find yourself in the world of Euclidean geometry. If you are able to imagine that there is infinity of different parallels to the line passing by this point, you enter into Lobachevski’s geometrical world. Pursuing the consequences of this last assumption, mathematicians have developed without much trouble a non-Euclidean geometry, which did not hit upon contradictions. Both geometries work well, each one within its field.

Not only in mathematics is it possible to admit different axioms in order to build different worlds based on them. Orwell, in his novel *1984*, built a world where true is false and false is



true. This is a world of fiction, but how can we prove that our real world is the only existing world? Billions of people piously believe that when we die our souls pass over to another world, an all-good world. This truth, with some minor differences, is a premise of all religions.

Jews believe that there was chaos, God appeared and created our world. Christians believe in God, his son Jesus, and the Holy Ghost. Moslems declare that Allah is God, and Mohammed his prophet. Similar evidences may be related to Buddha, Jupiter, and Oraxá<sup>5</sup>. The common denominator among them and other gods in all religions (and the mathematical axioms) is the fact that they are a priori revelations; they do not need demonstration<sup>6</sup>. There is likewise no possibility to demonstrate the contrary.

#### Science meets Religion

Scientists (the secular ones, at least) do not accept evidences documented by the sacred books (as Heaven and Hell, Moses' conversations with God, and other events). In the same way, religious people do not accept many scientific theories (Darwin's assertion of man's origin from monkeys, modern cosmogony models, etc.). Who is right? I would answer like the well-known Jewish rabbi who served as arbitrator in a controversy. He agreed with the plaintiff, and later with the opponent. His spouse observed 'if one side is right, how can the other side, alleging exactly the contrary, also be right?' 'You too are right,' concludes the rabbi.

More complicated to understand is how a religious person can be a scientist, or a scientist, religious. In the philosophical conflict between scientists on one side, religious people on the other side, where do religious scientists stand? Paraphrasing the rabbi, I agree that all sides are right in some way (and I too am right). In science, religion and philosophy all is possible. Scientists and religious are human beings, and as already affirmed, human imagination has no limits.

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<sup>5</sup> Oraxá – main deity in voodoo cult in northeastern Brazil, originating in Africa.

<sup>6</sup> By the way, contemplating good (and bad, its negation) we reach morality (ethics), where the confusion is still greater, because what is good, or bad, is more arbitrary than what is true and false. We have no means to verify experimentally what is good or bad, pretty or ugly (the target of aesthetics), and other acrobatic abstractions of human reasoning.

I, being an independent amateur philosopher, an unskilled freelancer who does not play on any team, occupy a comfortable bench in the intellectual stadium and enjoy the play of all teams. I have no fixed philosophical position and commitments. The philosophy of philosophy is very confusing and paradoxical, but I like it. It is for me a source of intellectual pleasure and enjoyment, and never a battlefield. From the moral standpoint, everybody has the right to think in philosophy and ideology what he wants, if he observes the same right for others. Philosophy is an intellectual occupation that everyone can practice without any sort of license and examinations. All what is necessary is a mind for thinking with.

All a priori knowledge is a product of the human imagination, and does not really (physically) exist. It is a result of hundreds and thousands of generations of self-suggestion. The difference between a rational concept and a prejudice is a question of common sense and thoughtfulness. I, for instance, do not believe in prayers, premises, amulets, and benedictions, but I hold a serious suspicion of the evil eye (touch a wood!).

The existence or not of a priori concepts, no matter if they are scientific, philosophical, religious, or simple prejudices, does not affect their use. People cannot live without them. A great difficulty, a moral and intellectual dilemma of every individual, is the distinguishing between whose concepts bring us near to humanity and those return us to animality. With the kind permission of Mr. Hamlet, this is the question.

#### World of Ideas

Ideas are resultants of the induction of experiences, a creation of imagination, or products of reasoning. Ideas may have a definition, some definitions, or none. A priori ideas as God, good, just, the point, the unit (number 1), the colors, and all attributes, have no definition. They have no dimensions, no taste, and no shape. They do not exist in reality in our material world, but in some other world, the world of ideas, that is a world different from our ordinary real world. Besides the fact that it contains ideas, we know nothing more about this other world: neither its location, nor its dimensions (perhaps it has no dimensions at all), nor its mechanism. Perhaps it exists only in the mind; but how can we explain that different people may have the same ideas? Everyone has certainly his own world of ideas, but logically the existence of a world of ideas independent of all particular personal worlds of ideas is probable, because most of our ideas existed before our birth. A

word may express one or more ideas. An interesting discussion is if we are able to think without words, the way we have to express ideas<sup>7</sup>.

A dictionary, in listing words, purports to list ideas. Every item in the dictionary is a word containing one or more ideas, which the dictionary tries to define, explain, and illustrate their use by employing other words. Dictionaries often present synonyms, homonyms, antonyms, and examples of similar and related ideas. A customary way to enrich one's own particular world of ideas is learning words from dictionaries and encyclopedias, absorbing through them new ideas. Being autodidactic, I like to browse through dictionaries and encyclopedias. Besides books, newspapers, conversations, and

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Some words about words. A word is not only a combination of sounds or letters, or a grammatical unit to communicate an idea. Since a word is born until it dies (words may die – disappear of use), it actualizes like an independent entity that breathes and grows, adopt new meanings and changes significance. Humans created the words, but they are independent and acquire a great power of influence, like a cake that someone bakes. A cake may enjoy, feed, cause diseases, and even kill...

Word in Hebrew is *davar*, which has many meanings, and has something of mystical significance. Besides of 'word', *davar* is 'anything, something', every material and spiritual thing, object, event. At the same time it may be 'nothing'. *Davar* is one word, but may be a sentence and a whole speech. *Davar* has often a divine value ('the speech of God'), but may signify 'pagan work'. The word *davar* evokes creation, doing, therefore it means 'command'. The root of *davar* ('D', 'B', 'R' — most Hebrew roots have three letters) has given *diber* (command) and *hadbarah* (disinfection, submission, destruction and extermination), *midbar* (desert).

What is my intention with this semantic digression? To states that the word 'word' in Hebrew (*davar*) has very paradoxical and contradictory meanings. This is not by chance. A word is a weapon that can be used to defend and attack, create and destroy. Therefore, when you picks up a sentence from a speech, you cannot be sure that you understood exactly what the speaker intended to say. Another question is what someone really thinks when he says what he says.

General Itzhack Rabin, winner of the Nobel Prize of Peace, and indubitably a master builder of the appeasement between Israel and Arab world, said at the beginning of the *Intifada* rebellion, 'We will break the legs and the arms of those who through stones'. Soldiers who took what he said literally broke arms of Palestinians. Rabin immediately explained that he used a metaphor; his meaning was 'we will overcome the throwing of stones'. The interpretation of words is not a simple task; often listeners do not understand what speakers intended to say.

Democracy need to have a very musical and sensitive ear to words, and tell when they risk the integrity of the society. Words are as dangerous as actions are. The passage from words to actions is easy and unpredictable. 'Sages, be careful with your words' (Mishnah, Aboth Aleph, 11).

other means of communication, they are my beloved source of knowledge. There is something fascinating and exciting in the scrutiny of random items — the discovery of unexpected new things. Faculties, universities, and other formal institutions of teaching do not always meet one's individual needs. Often, people do not learn there what they want to know, but just the necessary to obtain the diploma.

Every particular (personal) world of ideas contains only a small part of the world of all ideas. There is no possibility that the worlds of ideas of two different persons will be identical. Anyone who conceives a new idea enhances his particular world of ideas, enlarging simultaneously the sum of all worlds of ideas. Therefore, the world of all ideas is growing constantly. How can ideas from the general 'stock' (the sum of all worlds of ideas) be divulged into a particular world of ideas? By the common media of communication

If I were not sure that this book contains original ideas conceived by my thought and imagination, I would not have written it. I have no intention of copying from other books, or rehashing old ideas, or platitudinizing. I hope that readers of this book will become acquainted with original ideas and no matter if they (the ideas, of course!) are brilliant or stupid, some of them will integrate into the readers' private world of ideas. After they will be stored, they may be removed to a remote place and immediately forgotten, or placed in a position suitable for use. This book (I do not know what craziness impelled me write it!) is due an irresistible inner impulse to reveal my thoughts (extroversion?). Am I exaggerating its value?

#### Science Based on Quotations

One of the main rules of the game in science is the quotation, the precise indication of the argumentation's sources. A scientific work without quotations is a building without foundation. In life, the situation is different, because only few persons are able to quote some rare sources of their knowledge. No doubt the minds of modern people is full to the brim with ideas taken from Plato, Aristotle, Moses, Jesus, Voltaire, Spinoza, Kant, and other innovators (the names are quoted at random; I will allow you to organize a better team of innovators). How did their ideas become a common property to the particular world of ideas of everyone? Almost all people use ideas of Zaratustra, Stuart Mill, Maimonides and others; notwithstanding near all of them have never read a single line of their books. Even most emeritus professors in universities have

not always read the original works of the theories they teach. I have heard of literature critics who never read the books of authors about whom they write criticism and never see shows for writing reviews... This is the case with almost everything we know and think. The propagation of ideas is more sophisticated, complex, and efficient than the propagation of viruses. Who is able to quote when and how his body absorbed each virus he carries?

#### Experimental Rectifications

An idea (in the meaning of concept) is always a 'general' knowledge, while an experience is a particular one. In order to prove a general concept it is often enough to prove one single exemplar, since it contains all particular cases. The truth may be stated by negative means, showing that no exceptions are possible. If the general proposition is true, the particular cases may be concluded by deduction. Let us think about a group of all elements having a certain property; if a particular object belongs to this group, it has the referred property. A classic example is *humans are mortal; therefore, if Socrates is human, he is mortal*. What can be said about such a simple thought? In the case of the famous philosopher Socrates of Athens, we have no problems. He really died (by the way, in a very melodramatic form), and this fact rectifies experimentally the proposition. If we are referring to another Socrates, a person who is still alive, by logic deduction, he is mortal, but experimentally this proposition has not yet been proven (about half of all human beings who were born in the last 100,000 years are now living!).

#### Mr. Droppy flows on the Stream

Why does a certain drop of water (let us call it Mr. Droppy) flow on the upper, lower, right, left, or middle side of the river's stream? Who decides such things? It itself, or someone else? Perhaps it fought against other drops to get ahead. Perhaps it is a question of ambition, like sport competitions? Perhaps a god of the drops decides their path before their birth. Can a drop change its destiny? By fasting on Yom Kippur, confessing to a priest, or promising an offering to Allah, will Mr. Drop obtain any advantages? These questions have no answer, because we have no means of verifying what drops think. We also do not know if drops think at all. We believe not, but this is an arrogant presumption. Moreover, we do not know exactly how and

where we think. The Romans believed that our thinking machine was somewhere within the liver; other people were sure it resided in the heart, and today scientists locate it in the brain. The history of humankind is not yet finished; what hypotheses will humans hold in the next millennium (if humans are still here)?

Good bye, Mr. Droppy. Thank you for your kind cooperation; even if you have helped us only partially. With humans, our position is somewhat better. We purport to know human being's thought. Can a human being decide his fate, or every thing about his future life has been written down in a divine book?

From personal experience, I am able to decide (I think so!) where I want to eat. I can go to a restaurant, take the menu and freely order what I prefer – beefsteak, shrimps, or pizza – if they are in the menu, of course. I will not ask what is not on the menu, because the restaurant probably does not have it (first objective restriction to my will: I cannot obtain what does not exist). Now, what will happen if I resolve to eat, not in Tel Aviv, but in Bermuda's Hilton Hotel, or on the moon, or in another galaxy? Let us examine these options. If there is a Hilton Hotel in Bermuda, there is no problem in reaching it, if I have a passport, a visa and enough money to buy a ticket to travel (second restriction: I am not able to obtain all that is possible). Dinner on the moon, since Armstrong walked there, is a realizable possibility, but such a thing is too expensive to be plausible in our generation. Perhaps a day will come when dining on the moon will become a popular social event. Regarding other galaxies, we can only imagine, but so many fantasies eventually become realities! Who can predict what surprises the future holds? (Third restriction: what is impossible now may become possible at another time, and the contrary.) These restrictions are not the only restrictions, and they may change.

Within the objective restrictions and our physical limitations, we theoretically have the possibility (but not always the ability) of realizing our will. In reality, many other factors apply. Customs, morality, human laws (See Chapter 9) have a heavy bearing on our behavior, notwithstanding our ability to ignore them.

This chapter deals predetermination. Is what we decide to do a result of our free resolution or is even our will determined by an external element (no matter what)?

One year has approximately 365.25 days, a day 24 hours, and an hour 3600 seconds. How many instants have a second? An infinity! Is it plausible that every instant of every creature's life in the world had been inscribed in his book of life before his birth? The whole universe would not be enough to contain the library of all such books.

Reasonable predetermined events are the ones programmed into the genetic code. DNA code registers that human creatures will have two hands, two legs, 5 fingers in every one of them, and plenty of other odd particularities (I feel no responsibility for them). We are able to change some events, others not. For instance, I did not decide when and where I was born. I was born in Poland; my parents migrated to Brazil, and took me with them – all this happened without any consultation with me! –, but I am the one who decided to live in Israel (and I am able to change my mind). I succeeded in realizing this decision; although it was then a dream (I had to travel in a frail out of date ship, running the English navy's blockade that banned Jews from entering to the country). Many things are impossible to change – as for instance, one's biologic parents.

A human are cleverer than drops of water. Only humans think and have inner wills (I observe again: this assertion is a particular human's opinion). They are able to build human-like machines that execute things, but which do not think, cogitate, doubt or determinate. The most sophisticated robot or computer only 'does' what the designer programmed it to do (which includes 'deciding' among various possibilities). They are no more than a stick that humans use to reach something that his hand cannot reach. This minuscule drop, the human being, has achieved extraordinary things. He has built towns, cities, roads, bridges, railways, and airplanes. He has built canals, planted immense fields of cereals, fruits and vegetables. Human beings have changed the surface of the world. However, all that they have achieved is insignificant in comparison to the billions of tons of coal and petrol that dinosaurs created, although their 'contribution' was not a result of creative intellectual activity. Dinosaurs were born, grow, live and die for several millions of years, producing geological layers with their corpses and accumulation of vegetable detritus. They were no more than factories of organic material that humans use now profusely. On the other hand, we must consider that traces of the human activities upon the surface of our planet began only 5000 years ago. Relative to dinosaurs, the human creature is only beginning to play his role in the Earth's scene.

## Philosophy of philosophies

After our digression about the philosophy of philosophy, let us return to our starting point: human beings – what are they and what they do? Are we pawns of destiny, as drops of water flowing from springs to the ocean or rational beings that resolve and control their actions? Even a drop of water that begins from a spring and reaches the ocean, may ‘swim’ through infinity of paths. It may even stand in some place for ever, permeate to the depths of the soil, or evaporate among the clouds in the sky. Who decides its steps? The drop itself or some superior providence?

Despite his wisdom, capability, imagination, creditability, and the extraordinary tools he created, humankind is an insignificant drop in the whole universe. A human life flows from birth to death; along a narrow path, limited by objective physical restrictions on one hand, and subjective restrictions (moral, legal, and psychological) on the other. His imagination is fabulous, his creative abilities enormous, but he himself is relatively weak, fragile and ephemeral. Its life is said to be a cycle and not straight, because the development of life uses more curve movements than direct lines. We begin as feeble babies, develop into active children, become clever and stronger adults, and return to be weaker until death. Mental and physical development is not parallel with all people. Privileged persons continue to increase intellectual faculties, and indeed their bodies become weaker and their movement slower; but in most people, the intellect follows or precedes the physical decay.

## Philosophy of Future

If philosophy is the science of the absurd, science is the philosophy of the future. Let explain this statement by a sample. Science says ‘Hold a stone and let it go, and the stone will fall’. Therefore, if I take up the stone mentioned in Chapter 9 and open my hand again, if the stone falls again, science predicts the future one more time! Moreover, as already observed, science is able to calculate with a high accuracy the stone’s acceleration and velocity, and the path that the stone will take. So, science allows previewing the future.<sup>8</sup> Anyone who can master all the

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<sup>8</sup> We constantly use scientific instincts to meet the future. We have, like a good chess player, to foresee at every moment what is going to happen. In order to cross a road we had to evaluate the distance and the speed of the vehicles and weigh up very well all possibilities in a glimpse, if we really want not to be crushed.



variants, the formulae and physical laws and is able to calculate things that will happen may be considered a skilled scientist and prophet.

My mother was an excellent scientist, although she never learned mathematics, physics or chemistry. She mixed flour, water, eggs, sugar and other components, put the batter in the oven, set the temperature and the timer, and succeeded in baking tasty cakes. I always wondered how she controlled the combination of ingredients and thermodynamics in order obtaining invariably good results. A true scientist prophetess!

There are two sort of professional foreseers: seers and prophets. Both suppose to foreseen the future, but there is a difference between them. When a meteorologist tells us that tomorrow will rain, he means that meteorological observations and calculations indicate that tomorrow will rain. He assumes no responsibility for what will happen tomorrow. If it will not rain, nobody will complain that he is a liar. Meteorologists do not lie; they only miss the mark.

If a bridge collapses, the engineer that designed it will be in a trouble, because the engineer has a personal responsibility for his previsions (calculations). The meteorologist is a seer, the engineer – a prophet. A seer deals with probabilities, a prophet with visions (previsions). Therefore, there may be false prophets, but not false seers. How we may discern between a true prophet and a false one? Oh, it is very simple: a false prophet is a true prophet who failed and a true prophet is a false prophet who succeeded.

Now let us fix the difference between scientists and artists. If a scientist alleges that a free stone falls, we can hold a stone in our hand and open the hand to verify if the stone really falls in order to decide if the scientist was right or wrong. I in order to a scientist be a prophet, is not enough that a he announces what will happen, but must be a way to prove or refute his proposition. What about artists? There are no means to verify the viability of what a painter purports to express in a picture. We can either like his work or not, but there is no means to assessing whether he is right or wrong, true or false. Therefore, while a scientist aims to be a prophet, a painter (an artist) is always a seer.

Everybody is both a scientist (a prophet) and an artist (a seer). An individual is an artist when dealing with feelings and a scientist when dealing with actions. We are prophesying during every moment in our life, even if we are not conscious of this. Bringing a spun from a dish on the table to the lips requires the

same calculus as plotting the path of a spacecraft to another planet. If we make a mistake, we may pour the soup into the ear. An acrobat is a prophet who calculates the exact position where the trapeze to which he wants to jump will be; he is simultaneously a scientist that may mistake only once.

#### Flowing of Life in Routine

We do not consciously decide every moment what we do. An unconscious automatic mechanism, independent of our will, controls most of our activities and our vegetative life. We act during our life like a driver on the road, who has to decide what path to choose only when he reaches a junction. Anyone who knows the way beforehand has fewer troubles to make decisions, even in intricate crossings. The speed of a vehicle is not always a result of the driver's conscious decision, but of his instinctive reactions to external factors (such as traffic conditions), his own mood, or something else. An abnormal happening, like a cow standing in middle of the road, will wake the driver from his 'lethargy' and force him to make quick decisions.

Life flows like a traveler going down the road. Most people in the world complete their journey from the first station (birth) to the last one (death) along a routine path, without surprises and exceptional events. Their only significant decision is perhaps marriage. All other events, such as profession, children, dwelling, etc., happen as links of a chain, one following automatically upon the other, without mental struggle or conscious intervention. Life flows through an unyielding stream. Statistically, it is possible to trace the routine life of most people according their sources. Tell me from where you come, and I will tell you where you are going. This sentence smacks of fatalism, but it is not (I do not believe in destiny and predetermination!). It only contends that origin, family, customs, and other given uncontrollable circumstances, draw most people along. They can change, if they desire and make an effort, but most people prefer routine.

A few number persons choose scenic roads, but only rare people venture in opening new paths, which may transform in a future into highways for the whole the humankind.

Not every person is a general who makes crucial decisions during a battle that may change the path of a war, and consequently, of history. Most people do not even manage their own history. Perhaps they never have had an opportunity (or were not alert enough to take it) to make any noteworthy

decisions. In any case, opportunity is only an opportunity, and not an insurance policy that guarantees success.

Every American child has the possibility of becoming the President of the United States (one of the greatest American myths), but only theoretically, since children do not really have the same opportunities and capacity. A child who grows in a high social stratum has a better chance of being healthy than a lower-class child does. He has greater probability of going to a better college, of becoming a physician, an advocate, or a manager. His vocabulary is probably larger and his language richer. In order to reach a position in society, he needs only to go with his stream. People from the lower classes of society must invest much energy, resoluteness and perseverance in order to reach goals naturally obtained by the rich. Above all, they had to believe that destiny is not predetermined.

Why do immigrants often succeed better than natives do? The life of local population flows generally with the stream: what is what will be... no surprises, no changes. There is conformity with destiny. Immigrants cut off their commitments to the past. They take their destiny into their hands and face the unknown, resolute on building a better future.

Despite all the particular objective and subjective restrictions, the field of possibilities remains wide open. The exploration of these possibilities and their achievement depends on will, decision, and the determination to realize it. Ambition is an extraordinary source of energy and a powerful spur. People who plan their steps realistically and keep on in their effort to reach their goals have a good chance of success. He who tries may not succeed, but he who does not try has no chance.

#### Flowing Automatically

Our behavior and activities flow mostly automatically. We do not continuously think about them. Most time we navigate on life with an automatic pilot, or in other words, according to a routine. Like the mail carrier who walks daily the same course and distributes most of the letters automatically (he knows by heart most addresses), we have ready-made 'subroutines' for most of the situations we meet in our life. However, events do not repeat themselves, even in routine life. Greek philosophers stated that nobody could bathe twice in the same river. We are constantly facing new situations (even when we act unconsciously) and we often think and meditate, but not exactly to plan our future. Our habitual resolutions, even though important, do not compel us to leave the routine

Anyone who believes in destiny, providence, and predetermination does not have to do anything, because it is not necessary and will not help. If someone who does not believe in the possibility of changing, why should he be eager to change his status? Why should he desire to become something he is not and obtain something he does not have? Why change the existing situation? I could list endless similar perplexing queries.

After all, many people never conform to what they are and have. They strive to achieve more and more, and advance still further. History is the story of these people.

Not everyone takes advantages of what he is able to do, even within the limited field of his opportunities. In democratic countries, a citizen has the opportunity to influence his country, by voting in the elections. This influence is minuscule, although each voter is one among millions. The vote of senator in Senate and the vote of a minister in the government cabinet have a greater weight, but I have never renounced my right to vote. I never understood how people (sometimes most of the population) do not exercise their right to use their vote. Every person, being responsible for himself and his behavior, is by philosophical extension responsible for his country and all humankind.<sup>9</sup> Is this reflection a hollow pretension? May be, but it is my conviction.

I am not a missionary. I do not preach what people have to do and think. One person may collect matches and build model of a pirate galley, another person may dedicate his life to a career, or write a book, or do nothing special at all. Every person has his own conscience and his wishes are his personal matter. All that anyone does is legitimate, if he acts according to his free will and do not damage other people. This statement is ultimately the basis of democracy.

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<sup>9</sup> My philosophy: the individual is not an atom in a vacuum. Every person is an integral part of his family, his country, the world and the whole universe. There is a mutual dependence between every individual and all surrounds him. The degree of humanity (as opposed to animality) in every individual is a direct function of his commitment to other people and nature. I am not a fan of 'love one another'. Love is a spontaneous feeling that cannot be imposed, even not demanded. I prefer 'respect (observe) people's right to an honorable life'.

## 12. TRAGEDY AND DEATH AS EDUCATIONAL SOURCES<sup>1</sup>

*Death factor in life. Veneration of the past.*

The Holocaust<sup>2</sup> – the loss of a third of the Jewish people, murdered by the Nazis during the Second World War – was a calamity of incomparable proportions. The spiritual loss was greater than the numerical: at that time, a large intellectual and cultural human potential thrived within the Jewish population in Eastern Europe.

*Closed Gates*

How could such a tragedy happen in modern Europe, in the twentieth century? Hitler never concealed his evil intentions: his book *Mein Kampf* (finished at 1927) exposed them clearly. Persecution, humiliation, and maltreatment of the Jews raged in Germany from 1933 on, and no country protested or reacted. Most countries in the world, including the United States and the humanistic Switzerland,<sup>3</sup> closed their gates to the Jewish refugees. Only a few succeeded in being saved! The world was apathetic, not only to the suffering of the Jews, but also even to

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<sup>1</sup> I began writing this Chapter as a digression about the Holocaust being an introduction to the discussion of Zionism (now the next chapter). The subject intrigued me and grew into a separate chapter (it could take an entire book). I have no regrets. This chapter presented me the opportunity to clarify many points in my own mind. The subject is a delicate one and I have attempted to deal with it honorably.

<sup>2</sup> Holocaust = sacrifice entirely consumed by fire. The parallel used Hebrew word *Shoah* means destruction, cataclysm, catastrophe, but never *sacrifice*.

<sup>3</sup> Only in the last few years (ref. 1995-1998) have researchers revealed Switzerland's true role in the Second World War. Hitler did not invade Switzerland, not because he respected its classical neutrality, but because it served his designs: Swiss banks held gold and art treasures that the Nazis stole, helping them in exchange to obtain ammunition. It turns out that this essentially neutral country was the greatest concealed ally of Nazi Germany! When the war finished, the United States received a part of the gold, which became a main economical resource of the Marshall Plan. As an irony of fate: stolen Jewish wealth not only financed the German army through Switzerland, but also helped Germany to recuperate. Another story concerns the money that Jews deposited in Swiss banks. The Swiss government declared circa 1998 their readiness to return sums of money to Jewish institutions, and simultaneously made laws allowing banks to destroy registry documentation after 50 years... Switzerland is a symbol of humanitarianism and loneliness, but business is business.

the invasion of Abyssinia by Mussolini's troops. If England had prevented the Italian fleet from passing through the Suez Canal, the Second World War would perhaps never have taken place. Hitler's invasion of Austria and Czechoslovakia passed almost without significant world reaction. I was then a young boy in Brazil, but I still remember how my Christian friends at school laughed and enjoyed the newspaper pictures showing Germans pulling Jews by the beard. 'We hope that Hitler will have time to come here...' my friends taunted. The Holocaust could happen because anti-Semitism was a 'ripe fruit' in the mentality of the Christian people. Individuals helped Jews, at the risk of their own lives and those of their families, but these extraordinary people were proportionally so few....

Six million Jews did not perish in battle or as war victims; they were murdered in cold blood solely because they were Jews.

*Saints after Death*

In my youth, when I learned about religion, the number of saints in Christianity astonished me. Later, I observed that Jews canonize every dead Jew: 'after death – saints'. This is a popular phrase, composed by joining the names of three consecutive sections in Leviticus: *After Death* (19), *Saints* (20) and *Say* (21). The loss of a relative is ever painful for people with strong family ties. Jews recall the memory of the deceased on Yom Kippur Day and on every anniversary of her or his passing, through prayers and lighting of memorial candles.

In Chapter 8, concerning religion, I discussed death and revival. This present chapter deals the Jewish attitude towards death. The veneration of martyrs is an understandable practice in a country such as the State of Israel: since the Declaration of Independence in 1948, Israelis have endured a constant state of war and danger that threatened the existence of the country.

Memorial monuments spontaneously appeared anywhere Jews fell victims to Arab attacks.<sup>4</sup> Every town and region builds museums and monuments and establishes institutions in memory of battles, army divisions, battalions, and individual

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During a visit to Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Czechoslovakia, I met in every town and village a memorial column to the victims of the bubonic plague of the Middle Age. The impulse to perpetuate the remembering of events goes back to the prehistoric caves pictures (painted perhaps by the first historians of humankind) and dolmens (the first memorial monument, perhaps).

soldiers. The army glorifies its dead by burying them in military cemeteries, engraving their names on memorial tablets, and publishing albums and books about them. On National Memorial Day, the army observes military ceremonies in all military cemeteries. Grief for the loss of relatives and friends is a normal human reaction; the perpetuation of the memory of the dead is a common norm in modern countries, but the proportions of the 'death industry' in a little country such as Israel is depressing.

The holocaust's has a huge impact on Israel's national conscience. Numerous institutions have appeared to research what happened there and perpetuate the memory of the deceased. The foremost representatives are Yad va'Shem in Jerusalem and Beit ha'Tfutzot (Diaspora's House) in Tel-Aviv University. 'Beit ha'Tfutzot' documents the obliterated Jewish communities in the Diaspora and exhibits reduced replicas of synagogues, many of which no longer exist. 'Yad va'Shem' is a memorial center complex with a sanctuary – an obligatory calling place for every official foreign visitor, instead of the courtesy visit to the Unknown Soldier's Tomb. There are there also monuments, museum, research institutes and the Righteous of the Nations Boulevard.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Imagination of Historians*

A historian needs a greater imagination than a paleontologist, who from a piece of fossil can restore a dinosaur that disappeared millions of years ago. From bits of information (maybe a piece of paper or a truncated note), the historian epitomizes events, complete periods and vast epochs. Are such elements typical representatives of a whole? A dinosaur tooth is a real representative of all animals of the same species. However, what scientific representations are memorandums of a meeting, a letter from a ruler, the testimony of another historian, or any other documents human beings have written? Such documents are always what their authors thought or knew about what really happened. The more the historian cloaks his blunt argumentations with an 'objective' mantle, the farther he is from the truth. Human history has not objective means of evaluation, like the meteorological registration of raindrops and

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Israel expresses the gratitude of the Jewry to righteous gentiles who saved Jews during the Second World War inviting them to plant a tree in the boulevard. Close to every tree is a sign with the benefactor's name.

wind velocity and the astronomical reports of planets' positions in the sky.

History tells of characters such as Assurbanipal, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and Hitler; peoples such as Assyrians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, French, and Germans; battles and significant dates: in sum – stereotypes. An historian is like a field marshal playing at war by moving banners on a sand table or tracing the action with a red pencil on a map. It seems that the goal of historical research is to legitimate (perhaps not conscientiously) previous views. The intellectual and professional formation of the historian and his tendencies influence his interpretations. History is a product of historians...

There is an interesting interaction between the individual and history. On one hand, we see pictures through our own frame of reference (our mental conception); on the other hand, this frame is a result of the pictures that we have already seen: a true vicious circle. The stories that we take with the mother's milk and the sagas we absorb in school make up the 'genes' of our tribal and national DNA (see Chapter 2 for tribal and national considerations).

Every thing we do, as an individual or as an entity, has a reason, even if unconscious. The foremost concern of history is to preserve the experience of the past. The knowledge of 'why we are what we are' is an imperative need for every country and its people, and even for every individual. The past is a bridge to the future.

Every person is himself a complete universe and yet only an atom. Experience inherited from the past (historical memory) is a decisive link, in addition to common racial attributes, of the chain that joins human individuals to make a people. Every country uses history in order to consolidate its national identity. Countries always nurture and cultivate their history to unite the citizens under the same banner to direct them toward national goals.

#### *Two triggering factors*

Two factors trigger most efforts to propagate the knowledge of the Holocaust in monuments, civic memorial ceremonies, museums, artistic work and books. On the one hand are the pain, tragedy, helplessness, and humility. On the other hand, Jewish bravery and heroism. Janosh Korchak accompanying his children to death and Mordechai Anielewicz commanding the uprising in Warsaw ghetto are the paramount archetypes of these two aspects. Personally, as a Jew, I find the Jewish pain



chocks me deeply, while the bravery boosts my pride.<sup>6</sup> Tendentious use of the pain and bravery Holocaust, even for justifiable national or religious reasons, belittles the magnitude of the events. Anyone who focuses his attention (and consequently, his research) on particular aspects to serve specific purposes dwarfs the picture and loses the universal proportions of the tragedy. He does not see the wood for the trees.

Why as Jews do we not remember the tragedy of the Gypsies (who shared the Jews' fate in the Holocaust)? Our outcry against bestiality and inhumane behavior will be stronger and obtain greater repercussions if it carries the voices of *all* victims in *all* times and in *all* places. The most impressive prophecies of the Jewish prophets are those with a universal message, as Isaiah's vision of peace at the end of days (Isaiah 2:4).

#### *Ignored Jewish Heroism*

Speaking of Jewish heroism, this is the time to remind a detail of the Second World War: more than one million Jewish soldiers participated in the war! What is the importance of this

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My emotional and rational position regarding the genocide of one third of the Jewish people is not comfortable at all. As a Jew, I feel a victim; but as an 'impartial' intellectual, I am interested in the universal context of our particular tragedy. Between these two approaches lies a deep chasm. I suspect that it is impossible to overcome the dilemma and connect the extremities. Instinctively I tune in to suffering and desolation. On the other hand, I identify myself with the surgeon who, instead of deploring the death of a patient (as the relatives do), performs an autopsy to reveal the cause of the death in order to improve the results of future operations. The antagonism between both approaches is difficult especially for the Jews, because of the sanctity of the body. What a heresy the autopsy of six millions involves!

I do not deny respect for a past memory, but my main preoccupation is the possibility that similar calamities can happen again, even to other people. Lamentations, monuments, public ceremonies, sanctuaries, will not help. We must investigate and understand how it happened, in order to prevent similar nightmares in future. What is the task of the historian: to analyze the past as a pathologist researches the nature of a disease or is he a troubadour disguised as a scientist?

It is superfluous to list the genocide of minorities that are taking place in the world at present. Has a country sovereignty to do everything within its limits? Is genocide and obliteration of human rights only an *internal* question? How can the enlightened world intervene in such infractions? At the individual level: has a person the right to be cruel to his son, his wife, and his animals? What should we do when we hear cries for help from a neighbor's house? Paraphrasing Hamlet for the second time, I would conclude: *that is the question!*

fact? The image of the Jew. For centuries, people visualized the Jew as an avaricious merchant, greedy for money and guilty of exorbitant usury. Shakespeare, who created in his pieces hundreds of personages with unquestionable talent, how did he present the Jewish prototype? As Shylock, the merchant of Venice.<sup>7</sup>

Even amongst the sabra (people born in Israeli), who have a very high self-esteem, the image of Jews on the *Galut* (Diaspora) is not much more flattering. The idea that even outside Israel Jews fought bravely (when they had the opportunity to fight!) is not a prevalent one.

In the Second World War Jews fought in the Allied Forces. Only at the end of the war, the Jewish Agency obtained from the British Mandate in Palestine the permission to create a Jewish Brigade. For this reason (only in the ghettos' uprising Jews fought under a Jewish flag!) the number of Jewish combatants in the Second World War is unknown and their contribution to the victory against the Axis ignored.

One of the books that impressed me was *The Forgotten Ally* of Pierre Van Paasen. I read it in 1944, and it stimulated my pride in being a Jew. For the first time, I learned about the extraordinary contribution of Jews to the Allied forces. According to Van Paasen, the number of Jews among the soldiers who distinguished themselves was perhaps the largest of all ethnical groups.

More than 1,400,000 Jews combatants participated actively in the Soviet, English, Polish, French, Australian and American militaries; perhaps the highest rate of participation amongst all peoples who fought against the Nazis! The rebellions in the ghettos of Warsaw, Bialistock, Vilno, in concentration camps, and the fight of Jewish partisans, add to the pride and the honor: Jews can be combatants and heroes! It is perhaps interesting to note that amongst over 2,000,000 Polish, French, British, and Soviet soldiers and officers imprisoned in German concentration camps, only some individuals fled, but there is no information about serious rebellions.

I regret the absence of a suitable commemoration in Zionist and Israeli civic enterprises of this important Jewish historical fact – the massive and relevant participation of Jews in the worldwide conflict.

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7

It is reasonable that Shakespeare did never personally meet a Jew. There were no Jews in England in his time.

Over million Jewish soldiers in the Second World War remain a ‘forgotten ally’ – forgotten even by the State of Israel. Perhaps because this event does not serve particular national goals...

*Educational Paradigms*

Chapters 5 and 7 discussed education as a means of indoctrination and brainwashing. No one asks a little child, or a pupil in school, if he wants the education imposed on him. Governments, society, teachers and parents determine the aims of education. As long as the nature of this education is democratic, humane, and respects the honor of others... it is admissible, okay.

I do not agree that ends justify means! My intention in the above paragraph is not to justify every means applied to reach a goal, but to allow the use of sagas, legends, myths,<sup>8</sup> anecdotes

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<sup>8</sup>

How does a myth become born? Holland enjoys a high degree of esteem in Israel; the Dutch are always welcome visitors and considered as saviors and protectors of Jews in the Second World War. The celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of victory and the defeat of Germany led newspapers, radio and television discuss the theme of Nazism, and many questions emerged.

A dry statistical fact: 135,000 Jews lived in Holland before Germany invaded it. When the war ended, only 30,000 remained, 16,000 of them thank Dutch people who hid them and saved them from sure death. This is a fantastic figure; so many Dutch risked their lives to save Jews. Most of the survivors immigrated to Israel and expanded their gratefulness from their saviors to the entire Dutch nation. If the other 105,000 Jews could tell what happened with them, they would related how Dutch policemen rounded them up, Dutch clerks delivered them to Nazis, and Dutch trams transported them. Dutch people were not anti-Semitic; they did not hate Jews, but their concern was how to avoid worsening their situation. Dutch bureaucracy collaborated with the German authorities. The Dutchman is accustomed on executing orders of authorities. Receiving order to hand over the Jews, they obeyed as one. It was not a question of discrimination against Jews; it was a question of discipline. Moreover, researchers who examined the memoranda of the exiled Dutch government in London, where the Queen and all her Ministers fled and established a government in exile, have observed that not even once did they discuss the situation of the Jewish population in the occupied Holland.

Nevertheless, the number of Jews saved by the Dutch is impressive. The Jewish community is partly descendent from Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal during the time of the Inquisition. The Dutch then fought for their independence from Spain. ‘The enemies of my enemy are my friends’: Jews were welcome to Holland, and they established themselves mainly in Amsterdam, which became an important Jewish center. The Jewish community contributed greatly to the economy of the country, and in the higher Jewish classes, rich tradesmen developed direct relations with the court. Most survivors of the World War II were Jews of these wellborn

and other more-or-less-historical material as educational elements to promote positive and humanistic goals. They are so legitimate educational tools, just as Bible and classic mythology, and fables of Aesop, La Fontaine, and Krilov are. Every nation builds its own pantheon of heroes and exemplary personalities in order to consolidate patriotism and improve civic identification with the nation. Did Trumpeldor really say 'It is good to die on behalf of homeland' when he fell in defense of Tel Hai (1920)?<sup>9</sup> This motto, which educated generations of Jewish children, is an example of the use of a legend. Joseph Trumpeldor was a variegated personality by his ideas and activities, but his death is the point used as an educational paradigm. I do not belittle the importance of defending one's country, but I do not accept that heroes are those who die. There is no formula to determine who will be shot in battle, and who not.

Jewish youth in Israel often strive to serve in army elite units, which require immense physical and moral efforts. They voluntarily expose themselves to extremely dangerous situations in defense of the homeland and are ready to confront death. How can one explain the fact that a considerable number of these wonderful Israeli youth have no scruples about later leaving the country for a foreign land...<sup>10</sup> Surely, 'It's good to live in our country' would be a preferable education slogan.

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groups, who had social or commercial links with non-Jews families, and had the means to pay for heir protection. Most Jews in Holland were single workers, from Eastern Europe, without economical means to pay for their protection. They had no chance of escaping. The Dutch help was selective. This truth destroys a beautiful myth of human solidarity. *What a pity!*

9

Attribution of sayings to persons is not a rare practice. The most frequently quoted remark of Abraham Lincoln ('you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time') was never found in his writings and there is no evidence that he ever said it.

10

In 'Yom Kippur War', when the existence of Israel was in danger, hundreds of Israelis who lived overseas came home to fight in defense of their country. This exciting demonstration of patriotism only underlines my argumentation that the indoctrination for 'dying for the country as a hero' is perhaps more effective than the education for 'heroic living in the country'. I said *perhaps* because nobody knows how many Israelis who live outside the country felt a true commitment for its existence. In my opinion, true patriotism consists of remaining in the country and contributing to its economical and cultural progress, in spite of the difficulties in advancing personally. The Zionist pioneer who dried the swamps in Emek Yisreel in the twenties in order to settle agricultural colonies there is no less a hero,

*Promoting National Aims*

The use of history as a lever for promoting national aims is an often practice. Schools tailor the teaching of history in order to meet these goals, even by including events of doubtful authenticity. History and tradition are such powerful educational means of achieving common goals that societies and countries will never renounce their use.

In the next lines, I am exposing my neck to a razor. One of the main motifs of patriotically education in Israel is the saga of Masada, a fortress that occupied the entire top of a great mesa near the south-west coast of the Dead Sea. A sect of Jewish zealots that staunchly opposed domination by Rome, took it by surprise in A.D. 66. Following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the Masada garrison – the last remnant of Jewish rule in Palestine – refused to surrender and the Roman legion, the *X Fretensis*, besieged it. It took the Roman force of almost 15,000 men almost two years to subdue the fortress, defended by of less than 1,000 people, including women and children,

The besiegers built a sloping ramp to attack the stronghold, which fell only after the Romans fired the defenders' wooden walls. The zealots, however, preferred death to enslavement, and the conquerors found that the defenders had taken their own lives (April 15, A.D. 73). Only seven women and children, who had hidden in a water conduit, survived to tell the tale (About Masada, see the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the English version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* and Flavius Josephus's *History of the War of the Jews*).

A touching saga. The event of people who preferred death to enslavement had a deep influence on me. It's no surprise that Masada became in the twentieth century a symbol of Jewish national standing: 'Masada will not fall again!' What teachers do not emphasize is who these zealots were: fanatics, terrorists and murderers. Their extremism was indubitably a major factor on the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman Empire and loss of the Jewish existence in Palestine.

There are many samples of fanatic sects and criminals who preferred death... and did *not* become symbols of heroism of their own countries.<sup>11</sup>

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thought it was not bullets that stung him, but the anopheles mosquito (which carries the malaria's parasite).

<sup>11</sup>

In Jonestown, in northwestern Guyana, near the Venezuelan border, a commune of religious cult group, The People's Temple (a San Francisco-based evangelist group), ended in 1978 when the cult's founder and leader

'Freedom or Death', 'Independence or Death', and similar slogans have driven pupils for generations in many countries. I do not like them.

Tales of King Arthur's knights influenced English character, as Biblical tales influenced Jewish character, just as life of saints influenced Christian character. Every people cultivate legends that fit national interests.

The Christian catechism has indoctrinated for generations its followers that Jews crucified Jesus. I am not sure of the existence of any evident proofs for this statement, which provoked centuries of hate, persecution and plotting against Jews; but certainly not all Jews in all eras are responsible for such an accusation. The tsarist regime propagated the *Protocols of the Sages of Zion* (a document set out in 1905) as a clear evidence of a Jewish plot to dominate the world. This document incited anti-Semitism, pogroms and harassment of Jews. The decision of the Tribunal of Basel (Switzerland) in 1933 that this document is a falsification, but only sixty years later, in 1993, the Russian government officially denounced the falsification, what does not impede anti-Semitic groups of continuing to publish and divulgate this document.

#### *Exposes Sores*

Quite by coincidence, I am writing these lines on Holocaust Memorial Day week, when the radio, television, newspapers and movies all discharge intermittently a staggering amount of documentation, dramatic narratives, emotional interviews, and songs on the subject. Pictures showing discarded shoes, valises, human hair, remains from crematoriums... The narrators speak in a deep and somber voice, survivors tell what happened to them, while in background solemn music, or rhythmic undefined noises further set the mood. My conscience tells me to look and listen, because we must remember and never forget what happened; however, I must confess that I feel suffocated. My mind is unable to absorb any more. Next week will be different: spring will arrive and people will fill again the streets, stores and restaurants. Everything will return to routine, but the

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Jim Jones led his followers into a mass suicide. The number of the people who 'preferred' to die (913, including 276 children) was quite the same of those in Massada. Can somebody imagine the Jonestown massacre becoming a national symbol of heroism?

The group that murdered in 1969 the Hollywood actress Sharon Tate, Roman Polanski's wife, also preferred collective suicide instead of bars... Do they symbol national heroism?

'machine' did its work: it drives like a compressor the message into the mind. Six millions dead Jews unify the living Jews in the whole world. Death in the service of life. I am not cynical in my evaluation – this is the truth: people fighting to survive, and needing strong motivation to subsist, have the full right to exploit even their own tragedies.

Nevertheless, I feel like a beggar who exposes his sores...

*Achievement of Zionist Aims*

The Holocaust, a decisive factor in the achievement of the Zionist aim – the State of Israel – was a hard blow for other Jewish movements. The religious Jews may claim that the Holocaust was the consequence of people's sins, as the clergy justified the Great Plague during the Middle Ages.<sup>12</sup> Other antagonists of Zionism (such the *Bund* and the *Jewsectia*, see Chapter 13) have nothing to say; they have all but disappeared.

The Bible tells how God pitied the righteous Noah and saved him and his family from the Great Flood. Furthermore, He promised Noah not to use again a collective punishment of this type again. Three righteous Jews would have sufficed to prevent the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra, and when they were not found, the Lord saved the just Lot and his family. In 1940, millions of Noahs and Lots lived in Europe! How did the Lord permit the slaughter of millions of innocent children, zealous rabbis, and devoted followers? This trouble led many religious survivors (including rabbis) who could not reconcile themselves to the Lord's punishment, left Him and became atheists, or retaliated against Him by converting to a different religion. The Jewish religious establishment will surely find in the future a 'logical' explanation for the Holocaust (and even for the establishment of the State of Israel), based on a web of retributions and miracles, as they did with all other former historical events and seasonal commemorations. Religious people are virtuosi in this matter.<sup>13</sup> Accurate scientific

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<sup>12</sup>

As already remarked, the Christians named Genghis Khan 'The Scourge of God', explaining that the invasion of the Mongol hords from Asia into Europe was a punishment for peoples' sins.

<sup>13</sup>

Religious people narrate the rebellion of the Jewish slaves in Egypt and their flight to the desert (the Exodus) by stories of miracles and personal intervention by God on behalf of the Jews. They consecrate the return of spring, celebrated day on the vernal equinox by all ancient people, as Pesach (Passover), the day on which the Lord led the Jews out of Egypt. The return of summer, celebrated on the vernal equinox by all ancient peoples as' the

investigation of miracles will reveal their origins – historic events, mystic legends, or pagan rituals.

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feast of harvest 'and' the festival of the first fruits', became *Shavuot* (Pentecost), associated with God's revelation of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. Even Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the most sacred of the Jewish religious holidays, which has no evident connection with historic events, may be an adaptation of pagan rituals. Purim, the Jewish commemoration parallel to carnival, commemorates the 'miracle' of the Jew's salvation in Babylon, despite the fact that *The Book of Ester*, which relates this event, is a book in the Old Testament in which *God is not mentioned once*.

According to the religious interpretation, the destruction of the First and the Second Temples in Jerusalem was God's punishment. The fall of Babylon at the hands of Cyrus and consequent return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple were God's miracles. This last miracle was so great and significant, that the former private *Lord of the Jews* and the *Lord of Hosts* in the Pentateuch became the unique God of the whole universe. The Babylonian Jews thus conceived the monotheism. A curiosity that evidences the extraordinary talent of the religious leaders on adapting facts to previous convictions is the words *Azkenaz* and *Sepharad*. In accord of the Jewish creed, when God conferred the *Torah* (Bible) on Moses, He foresaw all that will be in all days and on all places.

Therefore, what does a pious Jew do when he meets countries that are not existent in the accurate maps depicted in the Bible? No problem: there must have been a misunderstanding in interpretation. For instance, when Jews reached to the region of today's Germany, where are this region mentioned in the Bible? The Jewish genius was mobilized to investigate the question, and found in the Table of People (Genesis 10,1 and other passages), where every name represents a people, or a country, the names of *Gomer* and his son *Askenaz*. *Gomer* sounds similar to 'German' and 'Germany', 'Askenaz' sounds somewhat as 'Saxon' and 'Scania' (old name of Scandinavia, from where the Teutonic tribes came). Conclusion — this region is 'Askenaz' and until today, the supposed descendants of Jewish settlers in this area at the time of the Roman Empire are *Azkenazim*.

Scientific investigations affirm that *Askenaz* in the Bible refers to the area of modern Armenia. In their literature, the Armenians term themselves as 'the Askenazi nation'. The word connotes perhaps the Scythian people (who fought against Assyria), whose certain tribes Herodotus named as *Ashkuz*.

A similar process happened with the Jews who reached the Iberian Peninsula. A supposition supported by several inscriptions found in excavations identifies the name *Sepharad* mentioned in Obadiah 1:20 is as Sardis, the capital of Lydia in Asia Minor. The connection of *Sepharad* with *Hispania*, the Latin name of Spain, is a result from a fanciful and erroneous similarity. Since the eighth century, *Sepharad* has become the usual Hebrew appellation for the Iberian Peninsula, and *Sefaradim* (singular: *Sefaradi*) for the descendants of Jews originated from Spain. Whoever has an interest in a more detailed explanation about the development of these names, see the correspondent items in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.



*Historians Write History*

Whether history is a science or not, may tend to be an academician discussion. Historians try to act as a scientist, by employing scientific tools in their work. A scientist investigates macrocosms with telescopes and microcosms with microscopes. In other words, he focuses his attention on a specific point, because the impossibility to analyze simultaneously the all whole (analysis = resolution of the whole by examining its parts). Moreover, historians use filters and special lens to isolate better the details they want to observe. Despite of the fact that history deals with men, and each individual is a whole universe, the historian has no choice – he must concentrate on documents (at times pseudo-documents). Documents are all sources of information – sometimes a fragment of piece of paper or broken clay pottery. Historic researches and books do not present the whole reality; they do not reflect even all collected material, but only a result of subjective selection – a picture as the historian sees and interprets it.

In a last resort we can define history as ‘what historians write’.

*Catastrophic Hit*

During a visit to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, I photographed the breathtaking view. All documentation and reports about the Holocaust convey a poorer idea of what really happened than the realistic way pictures record the real Grand Canyon scenery (Historians, please forgive me if this metaphor disappoints you). Moreover, what will be written in the future about the Holocaust will not be less slanted. As it is, time goes by and may not help to expand our knowledge of the events. Any addition of new documentation to those, which already exist, is uncertain. The physical evidences of the Holocaust are slowly disappearing; people who were there become fewer and fewer. Soon they will not be at all. The conservation of concentration camps is very problematic; they are collapsing. Although eyewitness accounts and physical evidence still exist, some ‘historians’ have already rewritten history, crediting the Jewish imagination with the fantasy of the Holocaust.

Survivors, who had never spoken about experiences in the past (they tried to forget, in an attempt to live a normal life), have resolved suddenly, after fifty years and more, to write their memoirs. Their testimony contents important and veritable documentation, but is slanted and fragmented, since after so

many years the author tells what he is able to remember and what he wants to remember... Survivors also express their feeling by painting and lecturing in schools, but the resonance of their activities is weak.

Judaism sustained a great blow from the Holocaust. The religious establishment suffered a great catastrophic. The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, himself an inveterate atheist, concerned about by the future of Judaism. He promoted religious enterprises, strengthened political religious parties and influence, and exempted from military service religious youth who learned the Torah (students who devoted themselves to studying the Law, the Bible and the Sacred Books, in theological seminars). Their number, growing from 1,000 in 1950 to over 50,000 in 1990, continues to grow in a geometrical rate.

Religious youth does not base their reluctance to serve in military on pacifistic convictions. Nor does it stem from an irresistible need to continue their constant learning of the Torah (the Law and the Bible), but arises from their conviction that God alone is able to protect and defend His people (the Jews)', and not the Jewish army, a human creation.<sup>14</sup>

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This last paragraph requires some clarification, because it may paint in the mind of readers who are not familiar with Jew's mentality a false picture about the role of the Jewish religious. By saying 'religious', we do not really define much. It used to be said, 'Two Jews = three opinions'. I do not believe it is possible to find two Jews of same mind! This assertion fits even to two members of the same political or religious group or party. Only a convict anti-Semitic talk about a Jewish prototype; in reality such a thing is not viable, because of the variety of types, ideas, opinions, ideologies, etc. among the Jews... The only common denominator to all Jews is that they are Jews (Chapter 8 talked this Jews).

The kaleidoscope of religious hues is impressive. The variety of hats in the market is not enough to differentiate them (the different models of hats and *yarmulkes* used by the religions groups may identify to what religions ramifications and sects they belong).

A *yarmulke* is a skullcap worn by male Jews, especially those adhering to the Orthodox or Conservative tradition. It is a Yiddish word from Polish or Ukraine, possibly connected to the Turkish *yagmurluk* = raincoat.

The degree of religiosity of the Jews in Israel may range from a person like me – a complete agnostic who sincerely respects those who observe the religious dues – up to a God-fearing fanatic for whom even the Supreme Rabbi in Israel is a heretic.

Even if we define religious people as those who at least observe the two main dues of the Jewish religions — Sabbath and kosher (food prepared according with the Jewish dietary laws) — they are a minority in the Jewish population. Those whom do not serve in military are again a minority within this minority. The army observes kosher (under the supervision of a special

Ben-Gurion's policy in this sector (support to Jewish religious institutions and fundamentalist factions) stimulated the worst enemy of Zionist – religious fanaticism. Please, observe that I said religious fanaticism, and not religion. There is not identity between them. Fanatics are noise and dangerous but diminutive fraction of all religious people in Israel.

Religious Jews incorporated the Zionist movement since its initial steps. Prominent Zionist leaders and Ministers in the Israel Government are religious. The Rabbinate is in Israel an official governmental department, like an ordinary ministry. I do not know how many countries have religious institutions with similar official authority.

It is not only Arabs have rejected any reconciliation with the State of Israel – some Jewish orthodox sects do as well.<sup>15</sup> The Israeli State created by Zionists does not sit easily in their mind. During the Gulf War, when Iraq scuds threatened Israeli civilians, hundreds of religious youth fled Israel with their rabbis' blessing: the defense of their lives and dedication to 'learning of the Torah' took precedence over the defense of Israel. Peace between Palestinians and Arabs is more viable than overcoming the discrepancy between fundamentalist and secular Jews.

Religious authorities in Israel have stated that religious people are not obliged to observe the 'national ways' (standing at attention, minutes of silence, nose-gays, etc.) to consecrate the

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military religious apparatus); moreover, there is an arrangement to provide especial conditions for religious conscripts, combining their military training with military *yeshiva* (institute for learning Torah and Talmud). Many religious choose this alternative, but the most religious types who serve in army prefer the ordinary service.

The religious question is complex and complicated, impossible to portray with monochromatic paints. The conflict between seculars and religious, and among the religious themselves, is a problematic one, perhaps more than the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, because there is no chance to solve them by negotiations. The question is not the discrepancy between the percentage of the religious in the population and their influence in the country's life, but the fact that they want to coerce all the Jewish people to observe their religious norms, and impose upon them anachronistic religious laws. See Chapters 8 about the religious efforts to dominate every event in the Jewish civil life and their aim to impose theocracy in the country. The next chapter, Chapter 13, presents a more detailed discussion on Judaism and Zionism.

15

Since I wrote this sentence (at 1990) a number of Arab and Muslim countries have established diplomatic relations with Israel. At 1996, Egypt and Jordan began full diplomatic relations, and many others, such as Morocco, partial ones.

Holocaust, because these customs are Gentile (non-Jewish) and do not fit Jewish manners (prays, fast, reciting of psalms, learning the Torah, studying the Talmud, etc.) The State of Israel introduced sirens alarm to proclaim the communal silence in memory of Holocaust victims and those who fell in Israel's wars. On designated occasions, sirens around the country sound simultaneously for two minutes. All movement and traffic stops, everyone stands at attention in silence for two minutes, no matter where they are or what they are doing. Extremist religious Jews ignore this demonstration of solidarity. These sirens had no special meaning for them.<sup>16</sup>

*Euphoria of Victory*

The extraordinary victory in the Six Days War gave religious great euphoria. They saw in the conquest of Jerusalem's Old City, Judea and Samaria (including sacred sites as the Wailing Wall, Rachel's thumb, and the Cave of Machpelah<sup>17</sup>) a miracle, a clear sight of divine intention signaling the Kingdom of David at the gates. Despite the prohibition against anticipating Messiah, hundreds and thousands of religious Jews, allied with ultra-nationalist groups, went with a fanatic fervor to the

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<sup>16</sup>

I accept the right of every individual to believe in what he believes! The meaning of a siren may be different for different individuals. May these statements allow a person to act how he understands them? For instance, although color holds no special ideological significance for me, I stop my car when the traffic signal shows red. I am used to driving on the right side of the road, but in England. I would drive on the left side. Even the most fanatic zealot religious Jew would behave on the road in the same way, despite the fact that there is no mention of such things in the Bible and the Talmud. The question is not if one believes or not in the siren, but the observance of a national norm.

Zealots are ready, because a little piece of a petrified bone ('honor of the sanctity of a *Jewish* corpse'), to fight like a lioness for her cubs. How can they slight the memory of thousands of contemporaneous Jews whose relatives lament their loss? I italicized the word 'Jewish' to emphasize the saintliness of what corpses they respect...

If they do not accept Israel laws and do not stay when the sirens sound, well, so be it. Instead of observing the siren signal staying silent, they could recite a psalm. By the way, in the synagogue or any other place, while reciting *Kaddish* ('consecration', liturgical hymn in Aramaic recited by mourners after the death of a close relative (people stands. II do not understand, and no logical person will understand, because no matter the reason, the behavior of a fanatic is irrational.

<sup>17</sup>

Cave of Machpelah — the burial place of the patriarchs and their wives in Hebron.

regions of Judea, Samaria and Gaza's regions (Israel's occupied lands) in order to settle the Holy Land. However, the economic possibility of buying a comfortable home in a pleasant location rather than ideological fanaticism impelled many other settlers. Thanks the financial facilities and support, they received a virtually free house, when comparing to the prices in Israel. Most of the settlers could never have purchased comparable houses within the Israel's boundaries. The administration under the nationalist Likud party (1978-1993) invested a massive budget in building houses and roads within the occupied territories, often at the expense of developing the country proper, and ultimately contributing to increase inflation and economic crisis.

Victory is sweet, but may be as pernicious as military defeat, if it dazzles the senses.

*Looking for More Light*

A drunkard kneels under a lamp, bending down to the ground.

– ‘What are you looking for?’

– ‘My key.’

– ‘Where did you lose it?’

– ‘On the other side of the street.’

– ‘Why are you looking for it here?’

– ‘Because there is more light over here...’

I remembered this joke while waiting the inauguration ceremony of the Holocaust Museum in Washington to appear on television.

Holocaust museums in Poland, Germany, Russia, Denmark, and other places where the Nazis struck, are reasonable. Memorials in Israel are comprehensible (Israel is the Jewish homeland and mostly of the Jewish survivors from the concentration camps were absorbed here). But why in the United States?

Judging from the television show, the Museum in Washington is impressive by its emotive presentation of the Holocaust documentary. Though its dimensions are big<sup>18</sup>, I guess that the museum does not reveal two fateful episodes regarding American events relevant to the Holocaust:

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<sup>18</sup>

The American Museum has five stores with 25,000 square-meters, a 20,000-titles' archive and library, conferences rooms, computerized center, etc. – the largest Holocaust museum in the world.

1. The closing of American ports to Jewish refugees (ships as the *St. Louis* and *Patria* were sent back to Europe, and their passengers to certain death).
2. The refuse of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the request of two most distinguished American Jewish leaders, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Rabbi Stephen Wise, to bomb the crematoriums at Auschwitz and other extermination camps.

Let us try to avoid pettiness. How do these two little incidents compare with the extraordinary role of the United States in overcoming the Third Reich? Could the Soviet Union have launched the successful counter-offensive, from Stalingrad to Berlin, without the massive support of America? American forces freed concentration camp prisoners and saved so many people's lives... America's 'Marshal Plan' restored the European economy. The United States sponsored the newborn State of Israel. What more should a Jew wish?<sup>19</sup>

President Clinton stated that the function of Holocaust Museum in Washington is to remind us of the world's darkest moment, to show what happened and what must not happen again. If this message will truly radiate from the new museum and convince people that genocide is a practice contrary to humanity and must be prevented at all costs, the millions of dollars spent to build it are justified. The events in Bosnia and many other places in the world indicate that in 1993 the message is still a distant appeal.

Millions of people from around the world visit annually the Washington's Civic Center. The Holocaust Museum is located there among America's principal museums and memorials. For this only reason, seeking the key where the lighting is better is perhaps right!

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<sup>19</sup>

Although the Jews exiled to Babylon developed there a brilliant spiritual center of Jewish culture, wisdom and philosophy in the antiquity (perhaps more abundant than the Jewish center in the Land of Israel proper), they rebuilt in Jerusalem the Temple. This move was a very plausible one, since the Temple held significance only for Jews; the association of the Jewish God with a conception of universality (monotheism) took place later. The Jewish Holocaust, on the contrary, has an international meaning: Jews (and others) were the victims, but the tragedy involved the whole of humankind, as passive spectators at the least. At the act of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for his activities, the writer Eli Weisel, a Rumanian Jewish survivor, denounced the silence of the Allied governments: '...the Pentagon knew, the Foreign Office knew, the White House knew, all governments knew. Only the future victims did not know! Why weren't they warned and assisted while they still could have fled?'

*What History Is*

Do you want an example of what history is? Then please look up the item 'Chmielnicki' in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. You will there find that Bohdan Chmielnicki lived from 1595 to 1657, that he was a hetman (chieftain) of the Zopoozhian Cossacks, that he rebelled against Polish rule within Ukraine, and that he his *the national hero of Ukraine*. You will also find particularities about his personality (such as his skill as diplomat and military leader: that he was an immoderate and anarchistic person, but unable to sustain industry and even sometimes indecisive at critical moments... and many other details about the man and his life), but no one reference regarding the pogroms against the Jews.

Now please look up the same item in the English version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. You will find there the same biographical information, but most of the article deals with the pogroms of his Cossacks against the Jews.

My mother often told me about the pogroms of the Cossacks of 'Chmiel the Wicked' (as the Jews nicknamed him) with such emotion and realism that I was sure that they had happened in her neighborhood. What a surprise it was for me to learn later that Chmielnicki died three centuries before my mother's birth.

What would an English person say if the *Encyclopedia Judaica* reported a detailed story of the Second World War without any mention at all of the bombing of London?

The honorable and serious *Encyclopedia Britannica* mentions in Chmielnicki's entry nothing about the seventeenth-century 'Butcher of the Jews'. No wonder. Historians cannot divulge without any discrimination all they unearth thought their investigations; therefore, they employ 'scientific' methods in order to conclude their pragmatic, impartial and objective conclusions. Historians are very selective and divulge only what they understand as historically relevant. History is only history, and not *the truth, not whole the truth and nothing but the truth*.

Ukrainians regard Chmielnicki as a national hero and immortalize him on majestic equestrian statues. Ukraine was one of the most concentrated cultural centers of Jewish population during the last five centuries. I wonder if Ukrainians tell their children what the word 'pogrom' means and teach them about the Jews who once lived there.

Post-war Germany has taken steps in a serious attempt to re-enter the community of democratic and humanitarian nations. Its efforts toward reconciliation with the Jewish people by paying indemnifications to Israel and survivors and the heirs of Jewish victims boosted the Israeli economy and preceded

normal relations with Israel.<sup>20</sup> German leaders came to Israel and apologized for what had happened, assuming a commitment that the new Germany carries a moral responsibility for the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Hundreds of German youth, including sons of Nazis, arrived in Israel as volunteers in humanistic enterprises, motivated by a sincere feeling of atonement.

Similar events did not take place in former centers of Jewish population such as Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Austria and France, though they themselves were victims of Nazi occupation and oppression. They have not expressed any real regret for racial discrimination in the past and never declared intention to indemnify the Jewish people for their lost properties; nevertheless these countries set up political ties with the State of Israel. Slav leaders expressed willing to reconciliation with the Jewish people, but anti-Semitism still thrives in their countries, notwithstanding there are only a few Jews left to hate there.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Nations Write their Histories*

It is not fair to criticize the historical approach to Jews displayed in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and by the Ukrainians, without adding that since people write, and throughout all ages, nations have written their own history with the same objectivity than someone writes his autobiography.<sup>22</sup> I

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<sup>20</sup>

The support that the German Republic pays the widows and children of deceased German soldiers of the Gestapo and other Nazi troops is higher than the indemnification paid to the heirs of the Jews whom they murdered.

<sup>21</sup>

This sentence refers to 1990. Meantime the Polish President Lech Walesa and the President of Ukraine expressed during their visits in Israel regrets about the past and begged in name of their countries the Jewish people forgiveness. Jacques Chirac, President of France, assumed the responsibility of France for the deportations of Jews at the Second World War by the Vichy government. A meeting of all bishops of France (1996) begs the pardon of the Jewish people, not only for the Catholic Church's indifference to deportation at the Vichy's government, but also for the Christian persecutions during all eras. The Vatican did not yet take the same attitude, certainly because of political (not religious and moral) reasons: the importance of showing impartiality towards the actual conflict between the Jewry and Islam (see the Introduction about *sulcha*).

<sup>22</sup>

This chapter is a splendid example of the method used by historians in their work. I selected from encyclopedias some sentences that support my case, ignoring all the other facts compiled in dozens of giant volumes. I often



dare say that this rule has no exceptions, even in Israel. Even the Bible and other sacred books fall in this category.

In Israel, innumerable memorials, statues, museums, books, street names, and other tools, cultivate the heroes' pantheon of the Jewish people and the Israeli nation. Among them even Jewish terrorists who fighting against the English Mandate in Palestine threw bombs that killed even innocent people. Some of them, executed by a verdict of a British tribunal, receive the name *Olei a'Gardom* (literal translation: gallows' ascenders). The word *oleh* means 'he who ascends' and relates to the offering entirely burned during the sacrificial ritual at the Temple in Jerusalem; thus, this name confers upon them a religious halo of sanctity. This does not suit my outlook, but it is a very common and natural practice: a criminal to some people may be a hero and a saint to others. Arab terrorists who stabbed innocent Jews, man, women and children, considered heinous criminals in Israel, are in Arab countries heroic fighters for Palestinians' freedom.<sup>23</sup> An independent Palestinian State will undoubtedly promote national enterprises to venerate their memory, and young people will be educated upon their examples, exactly as Israel does. The tomb of Baruch Goldstein, who killed in Hebron forty Arab innocent prayers and injured another hundred, has become a site of peregrination and devotion for Jews who approve of his act and consider him a hero and a martyr.

consult thick dictionaries to select the definition of the one unique word I seek, omitting all the other 400,000 lovely items.

As already said, how would an Englishman react if the entry 'Adolph Hitler' in a *Encyclopedia* would not mention the bombing of London? Each historian employs his selective judgment in documenting episodes, deeming them important or irrelevant.

Selection is not just an exclusive criterion for scientific research; it is the way of nature. Even life itself is a result of selection. Only one spermatozoon amongst the millions of male gannets in the ejaculation of sperm fecundates the unique of the 280,000 ova in the female ovary (the numbers may be not exact; they are only indicators of proportion).

Even the fate of this book is a question of selection, no matter the literary, philosophical or other intrinsic values that it has (or does not have). Will it be lucky and meet one editor, among the thousands in the world, who will decide that the manuscript fits his professional criteria?

23

Stabbing has deep roots in Arab tradition. 'Assassin' (Arab *hashishi* = eaters of hashish') was a sect of fanatics in Palestine in the thirteenth century, whose chief goal was to stab Crusaders. 'Assassin' in the Christian world means 'a murderer who kills by violence and cruelty', which illustrates that Christians do not consider them heroes.

Yesterday (ref. 1994) I listened to the ambassador from Turkey in a television broadcast made about eighty years after of the Armenian holocaust in Anatolia, solemnized by the Armenian community in Israel. He was astonished that such an event has repercussions in the Israel, precisely when the political relations between Israel and Turkey are at a positive development stage (notwithstanding 'the positive development' with Germany, Israel will never forget what Germans did to the Jewish people in the past). The ambassador's second observation referred to the misrepresentation of the facts. He explained that according to the Ottoman administration there were only 1.5 million Armenians in the country, and if one million remained alive, it was not possible that one million died in the war, but only half a million... He said 'died in the war', explaining that the Armenian population rebelled against the Empire and 'in a war victims fall'. There was not one unique word about the cold and cruel massacre of children, women, and civilian people. Is the murder of 500,000 people more justifiable than 1 million? Although the honorable ambassador was not yet born when the massacre happened, and he personally has no responsibility for the event, I did not discern any sorrow in his argumentation. Under the modern suit and the veneer of a handsome gentleman spoke a heartless Ottoman warrior. Even the Japan, a very proper people, apologized officially (ref. 1994) for crimes they committed while occupying China half a century ago. Why Turkey does not apologize to Armenian people for what happened eighty years ago? Perhaps because of political considerations regarding their Kurdish minority... I allow me able to reveal my true feelings, because, thank goodness, I am not an Israeli diplomat!

*Massacre of Minorities*

I took a two-week trip to Turkey for a holiday and traveled in a 5000-kilometer circle around the western bank. The vastness and richness of the land greatly impressed me. I remain astounded at the ruins of the former Greek inhabitants: Western Anatolia was the cradle of Hellenistic civilization. Greeks lived there for 2,500 years, until Turkey deported The Greek minority in 1922. I admire Kemal Ataturk's efforts to modernize and improve the consolidation of Turkey, but couldn't the realization of national aims not be obtained without trampling on minority populations? How would Turkey react if Israel were committing such an act? Turkey, the Soviet Union, and Third World countries broke their political ties with Israel without a flicker

of an eyelid, because it occupied Palestinian lands in the Six Days War. No country broke off relations with the Soviet Union when they sent army into Afghanistan.

The massacre of minorities and other assorted foes was a legitimated practice in the past. Even the Bible refers to this: 'Smite with the edge of the sword' is a repeated sentence in many passages. The root of the word 'sword' in Hebrew (*cherev*) is also the root of words meaning 'devastation, destruction, desolation, ruins, and aridity'. This coincidence hints that the sword was the tool that caused them. 'Smite with the edge of the sword' - cold massacre - is a repeated sentence in many passages. God by Himself ordered it on whole populations.

Even the present days are witnesses to massacres. Many modern dictators are guilty of similar practice to a greater or lesser extent. This chapter begins asserting that the murder of six million Jews was possible because of the world maintained silence. 'Who is silent is in accord' says a popular proverb. South Africa is a convincing proves of this assertion. This month (ref. May 1994), a true metamorphosis has occurred there: the end of the apartheid policy and the rise to power of the black majority at the head of a democratic nation. Not all this did happen because the white minority suddenly woke up and changed their mind. The pressure of the United Nations and the international economic boycott forced the transformation in South Africa. If the world would be silent, the white minority might have resolved the situation in different ways – by continuing the apartheid and even massacring sections of the black population

The international conscience celebrates a moral victory in South Africa. At the same time (ref. 1994-1995), an ongoing massacre of racial and tribal groups is occurring in Africa and some Asian countries. Nobody will ever know the true account of eliminated Zairian and Rwandan villages along with the inhabitants. In 2004, the Sudanese Islamic government is leading a cruel cold bloodshed of Negro populations on the south in the country. Statistics tells about two millions of murdered...

The world remains silent and and the selling of weapons and munitions continues to governments that do not use them to defend their countries against foreign enemies. Business is business. Manufacturers want to sell their wares, including weapons. The United States, the bulwark of democracy, is the leader of the weapons manufacture in the world. Unfortunately, democracy is not such an attractive product as weapons are;

therefore the United States export weapons, and not democracy. Is it a coincidence that American foreign policy has sponsored during the last fifty years (ref. 2001) the most abominable dictators and rulers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa?

*Export of Munitions*

Even Israel exports weapons. In order to provide the Israeli Army with weapons and munitions, Israel has developed a sophisticated military industry. This was a clever move; a country like Israel, in permanent state of war with neighbors, must guarantee its defense and cannot be entirely dependent on other countries for its armament. On the other hand, this industry employs thousands of skilled workers who have few alternative job possibilities. Nevertheless, the developing this industry for exportation is not morally justifiable. To whom can Israel sell weapons? Generally, to countries that cannot buy from other suppliers. Israel sold armament to Idi Amin in Uganda, one of the cruelest rulers in Africa, and to other not-so-sympathetic regimens.

Munitions are not the ideal merchandise for Israel to trade. The statement 'for out of Zion shall go forth the law' (Isaiah 2:3), meaning Zion (the Jewish Nation) will irradiate wisdom, played an important role in my Zionist education, but how can we link the idea of wisdom to the wisdom of killing... The State of Israel, in its realization of the Zionist Movement's task of providing a homeland for Jewish people who suffer of racial and religious discrimination, by forgetting the experience of the past and ignoring what is happening in the world loss its moral basis of existence. A small country like Israel cannot compete with the United States for the role of the conscience of the world; its physical and economical means are limited, practically nil, but its moral voice could and would be strong. Israel has not used enough of its moral potential to support oppressed and discriminated people.

Political considerations impose restrictions, particularly on a country such as Israel, which cannot permit defeat and depends for support in the international arena. Politics is the science of the possible, but an active, courageous and consequent humanistic attitude in international forums, especially in the UN, should improve strength to Israel's standing.

*Processes of Emancipation*

Since the process of 'emancipation' (conferring equality of civilian rights to the Jews) began in Western Europe at end of

the eighteenth century, the Jewish people flowed in three streams.

1. Assimilation, the complete identification with the national aims of the adopted country leading the complete loss of Jewishness (Benjamin Disraeli, Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx may serve as examples in this category).
2. Promotion of the Judaism, in the countries where the Jews live. The flourishing of the Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe during the period between the two world wars (in part thanks to the intensive activity of the 'Jewish Bund' and the 'Jewish Communist Section') exemplifies this stream.
3. Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement has had as its goal the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine. Israel is its realization.

A common characteristic of the three streams was the readiness to contribute and participate in the amelioration of the world, and the belief that a better world will be better for the Jews. We find in the past two centuries Jews in prominent positions, in a higher proportion to their numeric weight in the population, in almost every social, cultural and political movement, including revolutions. It is not the task of this book to make even a modest list of Jewish leaders in the fight for democracy, justice, national freedom, socialism, communism, human rights, feminism, vanguard culture, protection of animals, and civic movements. The number of Jewish volunteers to the Republican side in the Spanish Revolution is impressive. The same can be said about the communist revolutions in Eastern Europe. Jews were prominent leaders in the Communist Party, becoming later the principal victims of the regime. Stalin destroyed the Jewish culture in the country by killing the most noteworthy Jewish intellectuals, Jewish leaders in the party and high commandants in the Red Army.

As a Zionist, I never approved of the abandonment of Jewishness in order to fight on behalf of humanistic ideals, because humanistic ideals are in accordance with my beliefs and evaluation the summit of Jewish philosophy. The performance of many assimilated Jews, to which I just referred in the first mentioned stream, proves the depth of this statement; Jews abandoned Judaism, but retained its essence.

My painful criticism of the present Israel is the slow, but persistent corrosion of the Jewish and Zionist ideals (as I perceive them – humanism), which are being replaced by an irrational nationalism. David Ben Gurion, the founder and first

prime Minister, a scholarly idealist and true humanist, was the progenitor of this metamorphosis via the introduction of statehood as the supreme value in Israel. He considered the Zionism the scaffolding for creating the State of Israel, now superfluous. Ben Gurion neglected the fact that the most of the Jews live outside the country; the main target of Zionism is not yet fulfilled.

I have complained in the past of the absence of the Israeli flag. In the present we see masses of national banners waving on demonstrations against compromise with the Palestinians. Even religious fanatics, who do not identify themselves with the State of Israel and its laws, grasp national banners to provoke the fighters for peace and land compromise with the Palestinians. Chapter 13 discusses Zionism, who is a true Zionist, and why the fanatical nationalists do not fall in this category. Nowadays pragmatism and 'statehoodism' have depleted the mind of humanistic values; the present generation in Israel does not dream of world improvement, but of money. The ideal for most Israelis is how to make the most money in the least time. The American dream attracts thousands of Israelis to the US (and Canada, Germany, South Africa, etc.) Their lure is not democracy and human rights, but quick cash.

#### *Investigations of the Holocaust*

The investigation of the Holocaust has a crucial importance regarding human nature and behavior.

During the World War II, millions of people suffered and perished in concentration camps. Millions of people died in battles, during air raids, from hunger and cold. The final balance: fifty million deceased. The Jewish victims were 'only' six million, but their case has a particular aspect – the Nazis planned their complete annihilation (and of the Gypsies) as they were not human beings, but 'vermin'. They executed their plan with scientific accuracy. The world knew, and maintained silence. In a world of indifference, passive and even active collaboration with the Nazis, the evacuation of the Denmark's Jews on fishing' boats represents an extraordinary humanitarian action.

The Nazis concentrated the Jews within ghettos, to prepare them for death: men, women, children and the elderly suffered insupportable density, bad hygiene and famine. Professors, rabbis, artists, merchants, intellectuals and workers (75% of the Jewish adults in Poland were workers, mostly in

manufacturing ;(!they were people among the intellectual and productive elite of the whole of Europe, if not the whole world.

How could they exist in such conditions? How could they maintain intensive cultural activities in the Warsaw ghetto until the bitter end – theaters, popular universities, libraries, and musical concerts? How did the leadership – those whom the Germans formally recognized as the Jew's representatives and the natural leadership of the political parties, assistance institutions, and youth movements – act? What role did the Jewish Police, organized by the Germans, play? How did Jews collaborate, voluntarily or not, with the Germans? How children, the old, weak and sick people survived in the ghetto?

The questions are endless and the answers painful. Questions regarding the other side are no less dramatic. How could the Germans do what they did?<sup>24</sup> How could the Polish people – who saw, heard, and smelt – support them? Poles, who took the houses and the properties left by three million Polish Jews, have never expressed remorse or the desire to pay reparations. Former Polish soldiers and bandits murdered in pogroms 800 Jewish survivors when they returned from the concentration camps and the Soviet Union. How could all this happen?

So many inquiries, but the historical investigations of the Holocaust in Israel are concentrated mostly on two opposite focus: upon the suffering, humiliation, and helplessness of the multitudes on one hand, and the heroic revelations of individuals on the other, relegating the endless additional questions to a inferior level. As time goes by, the possibility to investigate them becomes more and more difficult.

#### *Grandiose Commemorations*

The Prime Minister of Israel Itzchak Rabin, heading a large representation of Israeli personalities and youth delegations, participated in 1993 the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. For the first time, Poland officially celebrated the rebellion as a Jewish event. The Polish government prepared a truly grandiose ceremony. Does this attitude indicate a changing of Polish hearts toward the Jews? Personally, I am skeptic. I also do not believe in the repetition of a similar ceremony in the next future.

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Recently (ref 2002) I have read about 10,000 Germans who refused to serve in the *Wehrmacht* army. The Nazis killed most of them.

The gathering was emotional: the pomp, the *mise-en-scène*, the lighting, the Natan Rappoport's *Ghetto Warsaw's Rebellion* monument in the background, the Yiddish songs by the Polish Army Chorus, all was so magnificent – a really festival of sound, light and color ...and emotion. I presume that the ceremony impressed all those who were present, but why, while watching it on television, did it remind me of the Olympic Games? Perhaps it is impossible to bring such an event to the screen.

In the past Temple in Jerusalem, the people stayed outside and could not see the ritual of the Supreme High Priest in the hinder sanctuary, the Holy of Holiest. I visited the gigantic Temple of Karnac in Egypt; the guide showed us the inner room, where the priest practiced. Even there the people stood outside on the patio and could only hear strange sounds. Our ancestors used mysterious effects to impress the multitude; official speeches, even by charismatic leaders with rhetorical aptitudes, do not obtain the same effect. The imagination is stronger than reality.<sup>25</sup>

I have aversion to speeches during commemorations. Most of them are artificial and hackneyed; everyone knows exactly their content beforehand. There are, of course, historical speeches, but they are rare. At most only one sentence or some words from them may remain in people's remembrance (Winston Churchill's 'blood, toil, tears and sweat', Julius Caesar's '*Alea jacta est*', Cato's '*Carthagenem esse delendam*'). History records some exceptional speeches, as Stalin's dramatic appeal to the people when Germany invaded the Soviet Union and David Ben-Gurion's Declaration of the State of Israel. '*Noanua*' (move!), General Motty Gur's order to the tank corps to occupy the Old City of Jerusalem in the Six Days War echoes in the memory of the Israeli people. However, most official speeches are high-flown languages.

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25

Some creations occasionally succeed beyond their creators' aims and become a symbol. The Eiffel Tower, designed as an attraction for the Paris Exposition of 1889, became the symbol of Paris. The three pyramids of Gizeh, built for the Pharaohs' tombs, became the symbol of Egypt. Songs may represent a country more than the national anthem, like '*La Cumparsita*' for Argentina, although the composer of this tango was not an Argentine... The Statue of Liberty in Manhattan, a gift from France to the United States, has become the symbol of New York and the entire nation. However, in many equestrian monuments the horses impress more than the riders do. Artists often mold human figures as supermen and brawny warriors – how the hero would be like and not what he really was. Museums, monuments, and memorials are supposed to expose the truth...



*What Sacrifice Is*

I do not like the term 'Holocaust' in describing the slaughter of the six million Jews by the Nazis. 'Holocaust' is a very impressive, mystical, and respectable word, and as a gimmick it was a good choice. A short examination of the word reveals that it does not express the truth of what took place (in continuation I will try to explain why). I would prefer 'Genocide', or more precisely 'Genocide of Jews' (Jewicide?)<sup>26</sup>.

The usual definition of holocaust is 'a sacrificial offering that is consumed entirely by flames, burned whole'. The crematoriums really burned completely the victims and in a figurative meaning the European Jewry was 'entirely consumed by fire', having no relation to 'sacrifice' and 'offering'. What's more, these terms distort the picture. The death of the Jews was not an act of sacrifice, or an offering for propitiation, but a crude, brutal and unjustifiable killing of Jews because they were Jews. Every attempt to alter this single, abhorrent fact, or describe it in terms of sanctification and sacrifice, dwarfs the truth.

I am dealing with a very sensitive point, but I must address also controversial subjects, and not just the pleasant ones.

What is a sacrifice or offering? The basic meaning of sacrifice, in accordance the word's etymology (Latin. *sacrificium* – *sacer* = sacred + *facere* = to make) is an offering of the life of a person or animal, or an object, as a propitiation or homage to a deity. Sacrifice is an authentic religious ritual practiced by religions, a way to express veneration and submission to the deity. In antiquity, the enormity of veneration and submission sometimes required the sacrifice of the best and the most important – the life of a son, a daughter, and even one's own life. The patriarch Abraham was ready to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac; Judge Iftach and King Agamemnon sacrificed their daughters. The Druids (Celtic priests) used to sacrifice children and some ancient civilization sacrificed children on the cornerstones of buildings

Just like the good cowboy in the very last scene in a classical Western movie, an angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham and 'stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son' (Gen. 20,19), offering up a ram instead of the boy. The substitution of human life by the life of an animal was a big

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<sup>26</sup> Even the Hebrew denomination does not sound correct. 'Shoah' means catastrophe, cataclysm, or disaster. What happened was not an earthquake or a deplorable accident, but a cold brutal planned massacre, a crime. Shoah, expressing tragedy ignores the genocide.

advance in the humanization of religions. Their substitution by objects was an additional step. Candles and oil lamps are sacrificial objects instead of animals and humans.

Jews still sacrifice animals: cocks and hens on Yom Kippur, and sheep during the festivities of Lag B'Omer on Mount Miron. Moslems sacrifice tens of thousands of sheep during the Ramadan. Christian liturgy celebrates in the Mass and the service of the Eucharist a sacrifice, offering of Christ upon the cross as a propitiation for the sins of humankind,

Sacrifice in modern times has received a new figurative meaning: the act of giving up something precious or valuable, surrendering, or forgoing, in order to benefit a person or a cause.

Human sacrifice has two associates: the one who sacrifices and the sacrificed. They may be the same people, as in the case of kamikaze (Japanese suicide pilots during the Second World War) and in the case of suicide terrorists. We can perfectly employ the saying 'is ready to sacrifice his own life for the sake of...' for a soldier who does not flee from a battle.

#### *Crucial Points*

Now we have reached the crucial point of this discussion. I assert that the use of the word 'sacrifice' is correct only in the original religious meaning (an offering of something for propitiating a deity), or in the later secular meaning (giving up of something highly valued for the sake of a recognized claim).

The nurse in a kindergarten proposed a toy campaign to benefit poor children. A little girl brought a broken doll and said, 'You can take it, I don't need it any more.' Is this the intended educational sacrifice by the nurse?

By killing Jews, Nazis sacrificed nothing. Jews were not valuable things to the Nazis. On the contrary, they were a racial disturbance. Nazis compared Jews to rats; they had to be exterminated, in order to purify the air. They called their action *Sanitätzia* (sanitation, removing of perniciousness). Someone who eliminates pernicious elements does not sacrifice. A Nazi who did not execute an order to kill Jews perhaps sacrificed himself (if he had to pay with his own life for non-compliance with the order), but by killing his victims he sacrificed nothing.

#### *The Jewish side*

Now, from the Jews' side, what did they sacrifice?

During the Inquisition on the Iberian Peninsula, some Jews preferred the stake-fire rather than convert to Christianity.

Anyone who could save his or her life and chose death for *Kiddush Ha'Shem* (sanctification of the Lord's Name) sacrificed his life in the truly religious sense...

Can we say the same about Jews killed by Nazis? They had no choice! Even those who knew the bitter truth could not flee. Only a very few managed to save themselves. Those who could escape but preferred to remain with their families, and Gentiles (no-Jews) who paid with their lives because they helped Jews, are examples of true sacrifices. What is their number compared with those who died without a choice?

The acceptance of all Jewish dead as *kdoshim* (saints) is a purely religious perception. The adoption of this procedure denies...<sup>27</sup> The linkage of death with sacrifice implies a justification for death: the death was a sacrifice. Such reasoning would be correct for persons who had the option to remaining alive. Saying 'Holocaust' about the murder of the Jews implies their death had some purpose: propitiation for God, or some national (or other) interest.<sup>28</sup> The death of the Jews killed by the Nazis did not serve any purpose or claim. A person attacked and devoured by an animal, had he 'sacrificed' his life, and should be now become a saint?<sup>29</sup>

Only a fatalist will say it was God's will in the event of such a death. By giving a divine reason for death, the fatalists justify it. I am able to correlate the loss of six millions Jews to

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27

Chapter 2 contains an explanation why and how zealots justify tragedies that happened to their people. They used two ways to do it: as sacrifice to propitiate God or a God's punishment for their sins. Some rabbis accused the Zionism for the genocide of the six millions Jews by the Nazis, because the aim to restore the Jewish homeland in Palestine without waiting the return of Messiah, an unpardonable sin according Talmudic prohibition.

28

I met a dilemma, because of the suspicion that my ideas about the remembrance of the Holocaust may shock people's feelings.

I never intended to offend; all what I intend is to use by myself what I defend for other: *the right to express what one thinks*. I am resolved not to write this book using the conventions written by other persons before me, obviously with a greater aptitude than mine. Even if I cannot be sure that all my assertions are right, I do not want to renounce my opinion. Let the reader decide what he accepts and what he does not. I prefer to be perhaps wrong, but honest.

29

I apologize for this sentence. It may give the impression that I am comparing Nazis to animals, and this is not fair to animals. Carnivorous animals kill to devour the natural food that they need to survive. Animals do not kill for ideological and ethnical reasons.

genocide, murder, cruelty, bestiality, inhumanity, despicableness, and similar words. Sacrifice? Never!

I cannot find any justification and any consolation for people who were victims of the Nazis' crimes.

#### *Dread of Death*

Death is a very complicated matter. People have always been afraid of death. They cannot explain death and fail to address it. Since people cannot escape from death, they will always seek a way to soften its inevitability. All religions have rituals and conceptions about death. Most religions believe that only the body dies, and the soul does not (it goes to Heaven, Hell, or is reincarnated in another body). Discussion about the soul deserves another book. According to Jewish religion, all the Jewish dead will resurrect with the coming of the Messiah.

Owing to the sensitivity of this issue, it is very difficult to discuss it. Jewish religion resolves the question in an elegant way: all Jewish dead are *kdoshim* (sacred); Judaism does not differentiate among the Jewish dead. The way of burying is the same for all people: depositing the body in a simple sheet seven *amah* (cubits) deep in the soil. Tombstones on the graves may vary, but under the ground, every body has the same destiny. A very neat concept... Many people maintain that the tombs of certain famous rabbis have thaumaturgic powers, and believers go there (and to other sacred places, such as the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem) to pray for favors, shove notes (wishes) in fissures, and light candles.

If religion deals with saints, secularism does it with heroes. A nation needs heroes who sacrificed their lives in its defense, in order to serve as prototypes to imitate. Veneration of heroes and glorification of heroism is the foundation of most civic education. This system works: most of the youth in Israel dream of serving in the army's elite units. Israelis are highly motivated towards heroism.

Every soldier who dies becomes a national hero. In the scale of moral evaluation, a hero is higher than a saint. Most of the families of soldiers who have died not in battle still wish them buried in a military cemetery, with full military honors. If this act comforts the family, why do not respect their feelings? In generally, I have no objection to military ceremony for burial, it being a noble and honorable ceremony.

The funerals of soldiers and victims of terrorist attacks attract crowds of people. I deplore the presence of people not personally linked to the dead and his family at such a delicate

and emotive familiar event. The transformation of a burial into a public spectacle with television and press reduces sensitivity and specificity. I consider a single card of condolence by post a more respectable demonstration of solidarity and grief than a vulgar mass invasion in the cemetery.

I respect the custom to remembering the dead. Remembering my good friends and relatives is very dear to my heart. I miss my parents, and often feel their presence (I am unable to explain this feeling). My grandsons bear their names, in their honor. Their lives are an educational tool for my family and me. I love them, I remember them, and yearn for them, but I do not venerate them! My deceased parents are neither saints nor heroes. Their pictures and some their personal objects that I keep, are for me cherished things, but not for veneration. Their gravestones are only an indication of their burial place, no more.

*Jewish Kamikaze*

Chapter 8 discussed the respect for dead and the importance of life in the Jewish religion. The philosophical spirit in these subjects is fine. For religious Jewish zealots, the sanctity of life and death only applies to Jews; this selective and non-universal approach revolts me! Religious Jews in Jerusalem impeded the building of an important main road because during the excavations were found bones that could perhaps be of Jews, and therefore the place was sacred. Thousands of excited religious Jews demonstrated daily at the site with a kamikaze-like devotion, until the government changed the road's route (in some cases, elevated the road upon pillars). The same exalted people will destroy without scruple and with enthusiastic devotion non-Jewish graves, even sheik's tombs and other sacred sites to other religions.

The concern for the bones of the Jewish dead and their resuscitation upon the coming of the Messiah has enabled the development of a flourishing cemetery and burial business. Every time I visit a cemetery in Israel, the sharpest impression I receive is its growing vastness; every time I visit a cemetery I find it became larger and larger in an incredible pace. I calculate that in the next century, the area to be added to the present cemeteries will cover at least an area of 4,000,000 (the Jewish population in 1993) multiplied by 2.5 square-meter = 10,000,000 square meters, or ten square kilometers, the area of a large town. It is superfluous to observe that cemeteries are not in remote deserts, but near populated centers in the relative few

habitable regions in the country. With the vertiginous growth of road and streets, I do not know where people will then live...

The last macabre note is, I think, a fitting close for this chapter.

### 13. ZIONISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

*A preliminary discussion for preparing the field. Conquests and reconquests – in the past, in present, and in the future. Zionism – a racist movement? Why only Judaism has a Zionism? Zionism and its Siamese brother, the Messianism.*

Most of the previous chapters have often touched upon the theme of territory: migration, settlement, conquests, colonization, exiles, banishment, on so on. This is not by chance, nor is it a surprise. When we deal with the basic problems of human beings – the individual and his relations to his society and surroundings (the leitmotif of this book) – we cannot ignore or skip their links with the land they live in.

This chapter handles with facts and thoughts referred to before, intending now to a more systematic exposition, in order to prepare for a discussion of the Zionist question. A painter often steps back from his painting in order to observe it from diverse angles, shutting one eye to sharpen the sight. He analyzes all parts of the picture and verifies how they balance up in order to decide what to change and what to complete. This chapter proposes to imitate the painter. We need at times to back off, in order to go forward. Therefore, the repetition of an idea, an image, and an example, is not necessarily marking time. It may be a good didactic aid for making great progress in conveying former passages into a new stream.

Dear reader, do not recoil from the abundance of digressions and by-the-way observations. They are necessary. When my wife bakes a cake, I often do not understand why she prepares so many things before kneading the mixture. When the cooking is done and I tasted it, I do understand.

#### *Winding Trip into History*

I would like to invite you now to risk a winding trip into history and nature in the footsteps of migratory of peoples on the one hand, and to investigate links to territory on the other. The examination of these topics will afford good position to confront Zionism, a truly exceptional concept, as I intend to reveal in this chapter.

Are humans ‘a spirit hovering over the face of the waters?’ It would be more precise to say, ‘for the tree of the field is man's life’ (Deuteronomium. 20:19). Humans depend on earth as trees

do. It is not an exaggeration to assert that the human being is a tree that moves, thinks, and speaks... The image of human people as resembling trees is ancient; it appears even in the earliest parables and stories. In Hebrew, and in other Semitic languages, the word *etz* (tree) most surely come from the same root as *etzm* (bone).

Etymology evidences clearly the intimate linkage of 'man' to 'earth, soil': in Hebrew '*adam*' (human person) and '*adamah*' (earth, soil) have exactly the same root. '*Adamah*' is the feminine genre of '*adam*'. We find similar connections in other languages: the adjective 'human' steams from Latin '*homo*' (man), cognate to *humus* (hearth), from an Aryan base '*ghzem*', also Sanskrit '*ksaman*', Greek '*khaton*', and so on. I guess, with a great change of being right, that the same happens in all languages, or at least in most of them.

The name 'Adam', the first man in the Bible, molded from earth dust (Genesis 2:7), is a clear hint about the sort of earth (*hdom*, red), and perhaps it is even an allusion that he was red-haired or a red-skinned... The first wife was molded from Adam's a rib, a bone, a reminder of 'tree'. We find a further important reference to the connection between man and earth in the prayer that Jews say upon burying the dead '...you come from the earth; you return to the earth'.

These semantic-etymological acrobatics intend to underline the conceptual ties binding humans and earth since the primordial stages of humankind. Earlier chapters exposed the idea of territory as 'the area that the tribe needs for maintenance (feeding)'. Please observe that even *territory* derives from a word for 'earth' (Lat. *terra*). This geographical-economical-zoological conception relates to tribal formation and some later societies. With the development of international trade and the improvement of communication and transportation means, territory continues to be a unit for possible survival, but the element of providing food lost its former importance. Today it is perfectly possible for a country to subsist by importing foods, and even most of the materials that its industry needs for production. Even such a vital element as drinking water is importable via pipelines. There is even an interesting project to tow icebergs from the poles to arid regions.

For a person who lives in a city like New York, the use of soil for producing food is not on his agenda; the only correlation he may have to earth is the high price of every piece of land for building. In such a world of concrete and iron one must travel to the oasis of Central Park in order to see earth and nature.



*Territories and Nations*

The modern meaning of territory is 'the area under the administration of a central government'; its minimal limits depend on the needs for dwelling, livelihood, and the possibility of independent cultural and national existence. In Hong-Kong, six million people live on 1,034 square kilometers (ref. 2,000). Territory became a geopolitical concept. Economic independence and the function of effecting religious, cultural, and traditional aspirations have replaced the requirement of providing direct feeding. I did not include the adjective 'national' in the list of aspirations because nowadays the word 'nation' has two different main meanings:

A group of people which presents distinguishing racial and other characters, as religion, language, traditions, customs, etc., as for instance: the Jewish, Scottish, Navajo, Basque, and other nations. 'Nation' is here quite similar to 'people, folk', and it has no rigidly defined geographical boundaries. A nation in this sense may be scattered throughout the world (like the Jews) or live on a region stretching over several countries, without any independent political unity (The Druze live in Lebanon, Israel, and Syria, the Basques in both France and Spain).

An independent political unity within a defined geographical boundary and subject to a central government. Groups of different nations (in the first meaning) may live together in such a nation (in the second meaning), which often admits officially different languages and cultures. In Israel, minorities from several nations (Arabs, Druze, and Czerkaze) live besides the Jewish majority. The Arabic language has an official status in the country. In Canada, the Quebec Province is a French area of culture and language. India is a Nation with a prodigious diversity of nations, religions, and languages; their only common language is English, which is not specifically the language of any Indian people.

Migration is not particular to birds and fish. These migrating animals move seasonally from one region to another because of climatic conditions for living (especially temperature). Nomadic people, who are fewer today than they were in past, act exactly the same way. In the summer they migrate to the mountains, and return in the winter to the warmer plains. This custom survives today in families who have the economic possibilities for spending vacation periods in favorable climatic conditions. I was in Italy at the beginning of the canicula (hot temperature and dry climate) in August; trucks and heavy vehicles were prohibited for several days for traveling on the highways to allow free movement for the endless cars full people fleeing to

the cooler north. In winter, the movement is the opposite direction; in the USA, many people move to the south for their winter vacations.

When we speak about migration of peoples, we do not refer to nomadism (seasonal moving), but to the move of groups (tribes and hordes of people) who do not intend to return to their former habitat. Violence and harsh battles followed this sort of migration, because it involved the invasion and conquest of territories occupied by other tribes and nations.

We know from archeological research that in prehistory the migration of one group involved in the expulsion or annihilation of other groups. The actual human being, originally from Central Africa, moved to the north, to West Europe and to the Far East, and on the way he lived on proximity with and then displaced Neanderthal Man. *Homo sapiens* was cleverer and stronger, and therefore he won and survived, exactly in accordance with Darwin's concept. During this phase, human beings did not yet produced food. In order to survive, they hunted animals and picked fruits and nuts. Food was scarce, and humans acted as goats, eating everything and transforming gardens into desert. Therefore, they constantly had to search for new territories. Even climatic modifications were foremost factors for mass migration. No matter the reasons, it is an established fact that at all times humans have moved.

#### Phase of Intensive Migration

The Indians in Western South America were in a phase of intensive migration during the epoch of the Portuguese discoveries in the fifteenth century. With the utmost brevity: the Tupy-Guarani moved from the Mar-de-Plata region (they are up to now a high percentage of Paraguay's population) to the north and arrived in the Rio de Janeiro region. On the way, they attacked the Tapuyas, who fled from the coast towards the hinterland, expelling in their turn the local Nu-Aruak Indians to the north. When this tribes crossed the Amazon and reached Guyana, most of the wives and children died during the painful march. They assaulted local tribes, killed the men and took the wives. Catholic missionaries were astonished by the great difference between masculine and feminine speech. Men and women spoke different languages!

The proceeding paragraph is a good illustration of the behavior of the earliest humans. The Brazilian Indians (even those who remained today in the Amazon forests) belong to Stone Age phase. They knew how to make fire, but they did not

know about the wheel, and the use of iron and other metals. They did not know how to cultivate food and lived by picking fruits and nuts, extracting comestible roots, fishing and hunting birds and small animals (there were no big animals). They were simply consumers, who did not produce anything, except primitive weapons, canoes, clay and brushwood cottages, and other very simple objects. 'Territory' to them meant an area for providing food. Therefore, in the fight among tribes for the same territory the result of the battle was clear: the winner keeps the territory and the defeated side had to flee or die.

Chapter 6 expands on development of agriculture and the important part that cooking played in the progress of humankind.

Agriculture and cooking gave rise to civilization. Cooking had such an important effect on the development of the human being, which (in my opinion) the best definition for human being is an animal who cooks (cookanthropus?). He is the unique creature that does it.

*Civilization begun at the Deltas*

Civilization began 5,000 years ago at the deltas of the big rivers – the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia and the Nile in Egypt. The annual inundation deposited rich organic detritus over vast areas along the banks, especially in the deltas, transforming desert soil into fertile farmlands. The grain crop was enough to enable the concentration of hundreds of thousands of persons in relatively small area. Everyone who learned something about Ancient Egypt has certainly heard about Herodotus's phrase 'Egypt is a gift of the Nile.' In Mesopotamia, the building of irrigation canals permitted the same effect of inundation over enormous plains, with the advantage of control. The need for a workforce to dig irrigation canals and work the soil generated slavery, being the main reason for the large empires born in these areas.

Agriculture changed the purport of the capture and retention of territories: territory was still an area to provide food, but in an enhanced sense. Territory is no longer a defined area for picking and hunting for daily meal; the need to capture slaves amplified its limits.

The busy regions of the Nile Delta, Mesopotamia, and along the banks of the Ganges, Yang-tse and other big Asian rivers, exercised a permanent allure to people in need of subsistence. The world became a scenario for two kinds of crowd movements:

1. Hordes of savage tribes hunting for prey (a new territory, in the primitive sense). A voluntary migration of men, women and children, with all their patrimony and belongings: cattle, domestic animals and movable properties. The fighters in this group of migrants are warriors, and not soldiers.
2. Military expeditions hunting for prey (additional territories, in the second sense: soil for cultivation and a source of slaves). Armies of soldiers, professional mercenaries, and men recruited from subordinate people moved without their families and properties, but escorted by a large procession of servants, slaves, prostitutes, and merchants.

Participation in spoil and rape of women was a no-formal component of the soldier's salary, the suitable tip they expected. Whole populations were moved from one region to another, not as free migrants, but as slaves or forced colonists displaced to other regions.

The history of civilization is in essence the account of both kinds of movements, and consequently, the register of wars and battles. All other events (cultural, technological, economical, etc.) are supplementary commentaries, consequences of conflicts – not their motive. Physical hunger in the primitive stages of human evolution, and appetite (in its widest meaning) in the later stages are the chief motors of humankind's progress. 'An army marches on its stomach' is a famous saying attributed to Napoleon. The whole of humankind goes the same. In fact, this is the way of all living creatures.

*Epic Invasions and Conquests*

If history were the subject of this book, we would have to detail all the fascinating epic stories of invasions and conquests. While I was a young boy, I was never satisfied with reading about the military expeditions of Assurbanipal, Ramses, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Ghengis Khan, Saladin, Napoleon and other great conquerors. Akkad, Sumer, Assyria, Elam, Mede, Phoenicia, Philistia: who conquered whom, who invaded where. Romans defeat Etruria, Greece and Carthage, the barbarians invaded Rome, the Normans invaded England, and Europeans conquered the Americas. The Mayas, Aztecs, Incas, Mongols, Moors, Ottomans. And so on. One needs an entire life of reading and learning, in order to understand something of what happened in the mismatch of peoples, countries and empires in the recent

brief span of 5,000 years. It is quite impossible to follow, within the limited time of the present, all the ethnic and political conflicts affecting hundreds of countries in worldwide.

Can we point out the salient characteristics in the human history, define a general process, and derive some rules? I do not think so. The events progress in such complex and random zigzag movements that it is impossible to determine their tendency. Any direction we may adduce will be only an opinion, a guess, a desire, but never an evident scientific conclusion. Karl Marx and his associate, Frederick Engels, attempted to do it by a sophisticated philosophic-economical method (historic and dialectical materialism), but their foresight was not half as good as Jules Verne's.

Prior sections in this book stated that in the tribal era of the primeval ages every contention for territory was a fight for life or death, in the literal meaning. The winner remained the exclusive resident in the territory. The defeated fled or died. With the arrival of civilization, the fighting for territory no longer involved the complete annihilation of the defeated. A part of the enemy's force was indeed killed (as an act of revenge or a ritual in the victory commemoration), but the most were enslaved or subordinated. The conduct of the winner depended on the strength of the resistance against the conquest: if the defeated site capitulated without fighting, they could expect a more human treatment: they have to pay taxes, provide young men as soldiers, and their country simply annexed to the winner's dominion. The extreme cruelty towards stubborn enemies had an important psychological function in warfare, as a message for the next conquest targets

Germany of the Thirties of the twentieth century carried out a systematic physical annihilation of certain peoples (Jews and Gypsies), almost without resistance. The Gypsies did not even have their own territories; moreover, they did not have worthwhile property for booty. By practicing genocide in the most bestial manner, the Nazis regressed to the Paleolithic era. In addition, how can we explain in expressions of modern thought the present ethnic slaughter in Bosnia, India, Africa and other places in the world (ref. 1993)?

In the Soviet Union of the twenties and thirties, in Cambodia and in Indonesia of the fifties millions of people were coldly killed in political (not religious!) purges by their own people.

In antiquity, it was a common practice that the usurper murdered the former ruler, his children, near relatives, friends, and commanders, and took the wives (in order to legitimate his

power). Populations accepted the winner's right to rule, as long as they did not hurt religious feelings. People could revolt against religious oppression and adversity, but revolt against the monarch was not a common occurrence. The French Revolution, a popular revolt that broke out with no reference to religion and implanted a new political regime, was a historical innovation.

Everything in his book until now about the struggle for national and religious subsistence touches only superficially upon the matter, but is enough to paint the scenery for the Zionistic spectacle, which it intends to discuss.

#### Portable Homeland of Jews

It was once said that the Bible is the Jew's portable homeland.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the Talmud was it.<sup>2</sup> As long as Jews preserve their Jewish identity, they long for Jerusalem and 'Eretz Israel' (the Land of Israel). The intention behind the Jewish prayer 'Next year in Jerusalem' is not peregrination to Jerusalem, as the hadj precept in Islam (a requirement to walk at least once to the Kaaba in Mecca). It expresses the dream of coming to Jerusalem in order to live (or die) there. It is no surprise that the modern movement for a Jewish national emancipation securing the return to the Land of Israel was called Zionism. Mount Zion is a hill in Jerusalem, and 'Zion' is a poetical noun for Jerusalem, for the Land of Israel, and for the Jewish people.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Country' and 'homeland' are concepts of settled peoples who work the soil. Nomads have not permanent affinity to a determined place. The item *unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates* in the Pact of the Lord with Abraham, is (in my interpretation) the area delimitation of the Lord's commitment to protecting sheep rearing. Abraham was a rich proprietor of flocks and herds, and we may suppose that his worry was certainly land for rearing, and not in becoming an emperor. When there was a famine in the land (Gen 12,10), Abraham went down to Egypt to sojourn there; he had no inhibitions in leaving Canaan to gain pastureland, even at the price that the Pharaoh invited his pretty and beloved wife, Sarah. Tribal society has a linkage to the land yielding food, while the agriculturists are tied to the land they cultivate, and the shepherds to the pastureland. The linkage to a land as a country and a homeland is a post-tribal conception. It denotes the political evolution of man to the civilization phase.

<sup>2</sup> **Talmud** – the whole collection of Jewish civil and canonical law, commentary and legends thereupon, apart from those in the Pentateuch.

Zionism (in the wide sense) was perhaps born with the first Hebrew who left the Land of Israel. I say perhaps, because there are not indications that the Hebrews in Goshen (region of the fertile Nile delta) longed for the Land of Israel, as we know the exiled Hebrews in Babylon did. What is sure is they did not long for Jerusalem, because Jerusalem did not yet exist. Only when King David conquered the Jebus fortress and built there his capital city, the City of David, later Jerusalem, did it become the center of Jewish spiritual elation.

The love of and the longing for Jerusalem and the veneration of the Sabbath<sup>3</sup> are the cornerstones of Jewry. We can say that the longing for Zion is a latent aim of every Jew in the world; the severing of the emotional bounds for Zion is the first step in assimilation, the withdrawal from Jewry.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the deep roots of longing for Zion in the Jewish hearth and mind, only few Diaspora Jews realized such a dream throughout history. The true object of Jewish yearning was mostly the celestial 'Jerusalem on the summit' and not the tangible Jerusalem located in the Judean Mountains. In the past, rich and devout Jews tried to come to the Holy Land in their old age or made sure the transport of their coffins (sarcophagus) for burial there. Only a small portion of the Jewish community in Babylonian captivity returned to the Holy Land when they received permission to do it. The majority remained 2,000 years more 'by the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, and we wept, when we remembered Zion' (Psalms 137:1). Even during the centuries when the Jews had an independent kingdom (from the reconstruction of the Second Temple until its destruction by the Romans), many important and large Jewish communities prospered in foreign countries, as Palmyra in Syria, Alexandria in Egypt, and several cities in Babylon. Alexandria was the second Jewish New York of Antiquity (Babylon being the first...).

The great majority of Jews (about 100,000) who left the Iberian Peninsula in the fifteenth century, upon their expulsion by the Catholic Kings of Spain, went to Morocco. A smaller section went north and reached Holland; a lesser part went to

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<sup>3</sup> **Sabbath** - Saturday, the seventh day in the Jewish week, the day on which the fourth Commandment enjoins abstention from work of all kind.

<sup>4</sup> I avoid using Zionism in the sense of emotional longing for Zion, because the word Zionism denotes today a determined modern political movement, the final subject of this chapter.

the East, to Italy, the Balkans, and Greece. A group of merchants led by Doña Gracia Mendez, a rich banker, accepted the invitation of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, to come to Istanbul. Don José Hanes reached a high position in the Ottoman diplomacy (he became the Duke of Naksos, an island in the Aegean Sea) and obtained a concession to rebuild Tiberias (Tiberiades). He tried to start a Jewish community there.

From 1900 to 1914, more than one million Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe to the United States, while only circa 85,000 immigrated to Palestine. With Adolph Hitler's ascension to the government of Germany at 1933, a larger wave of Jews (circa 100,000) from Germany and Poland arrived to Palestine during a period of three years.

When Libya, Algeria, and Morocco become independent after the Second World War, the majority of rich and intellectual Jews who left these countries preferred to settle in Europe (in particular France) rather than Israel. On the other hand, most of the Jews, who since 1948 left Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Greece migrated to Israel.

The Jews who left Cuba with the arrival of Fiddle Castro preferred to settle in Miami, in spite of the airplanes that the State of Israel sent to bring them to Israel. Many that came to Israel did not remain; they left for other countries.

#### Eternal Wandering Jews

After the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel in 1948, a population of 600,000 Jews (mostly immigrants themselves) absorbed during the three first years of independence more than one million immigrants. To conceive an idea of the proportion of these numbers, let us imagine the United States receiving during three years 300,000,000 immigrants, England 150,000,00, China 2,500,000,000 – dramatic, eh!? Of all the wonders of the young State of Israel, this event is the most impressive... worthy to the *Guinness Book of Records*.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a large stream of Jews left the country. Many of them went to the United States, Germany, and other Western countries (in accordance with the earlier examples, Jews do not always go to Israel...). In this case, the phenomenon is clearly explainable: the Soviet Union developed an aggressive anti-Zionist indoctrination during the last seventy years of its existence, extinguishing systematically



every manifestation of Jewish culture (cultural genocide). Soviet propaganda presented terrible pictures of Israel as an imperialistic and colonialist force. The economical reality in Israel and its political situation in the Middle East were not very attractive. I am not astonished that so many Russian Jews did not want to migrate to Israel. Rather; I would classify as a miracle (if I would believe in the existence of such a thing) that in 1993 almost three-quarters of a million Jews from the former Soviet Union came to Israel, despite seventy years of detachment from Jewish tradition and all in the face of objective difficulties. More than one million additional Jews have registered themselves to migrate to Israel. Moreover, during 1992-93, Israel absorbed, 50,000 Falashim, a remote tribe of black Jews from Ethiopia. I do not find adequate words to express my admiration. Israel is the only country in the world that brought black people from Africa to freedom and not to slavery.

Please, excuse my Zionist enthusiasm. I honestly do try to maintain equilibrium. This is not too difficult, since Zionism has no unilateral aspect. Presently (ref. 1993), after forty-five years of Israel independent State, perhaps fifteen per cent of all Israeli citizens live abroad. Continuing our illustrative statistical comparisons, this rate is proportional to 25,000,000 Americans living outside the USA, 15,000,000 Japanese outside Japan, and 250,000,000 Chinese outside China.<sup>5</sup> New York and Los Angeles are today amongst the biggest Israeli cities in the world. This balance is disheartening to a fervent Zionist like myself, but it is a fact. (By the way, have I already told that being a Jew is a paradox?) Perhaps the myth of the wandering Jew is not such a myth after all.

#### *Restored Countries*

It is well known that some oppressed peoples who regained independence or reconquered (restored) their countries. Babylon freed itself from 200 years of harsh Assyrian domination. Spaniards ruled by the Catholic Queen Isabella and King

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When I dealt astronomical statistics, I felt happy that I am not a professional scholar writing a scientific monograph! A serious and honorable academician would never permit himself to do what I am doing here with such pleasure – drawing numbers like a magician drawing colored handkerchiefs from his sleeve and rabbits from his black top hat. But please, do not worry, they are not sums for which income tax must be paid; they are only inoffensive and curious reference scales for illustrating proportions.

Ferdinand reconquered territories in the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors, who had occupied them for centuries. After the Second World War, with the end of the big colonialist empires (Germany, Belgium, France and Britain), people in Asia and Africa threw off the yoke after centuries of foreign domination.

All these quoted cases relate to oppressed people in their own countries, or those who were concentrated in the vicinity. I think that the Jews furnish the only example in history of the return of people to their original land after 2,000 years scattering throughout the world. A Jewish return to the Holy Land has already happened once. They did just that when Cyrus, King of Persia, freed the Hebrews in Babylon from 50 years of captivity and allowed them return to Canaan. There was also, of course, the Exodus of Moses' people from Egypt related in the Bible, but this episode invites a special discussion, which will appear later. In the Middle Ages there were indeed efforts by European Jewish communities to march into the Holy Land ruled by Messianic leaders, with very tragic consequences.

The vitality of the Jewish people in conserving a particular identity for 2,000 years (3,000, if we consider the exodus of Egypt and the return from Babylon), in spite of the scattering, oppression, persecutions, and other calamities, is really an exceptional occurrence. I hope not being dragged by streams of enthusiasm and patriotic impulses.

#### *Coming Back to Jerusalem*

In the ninth century B.C., there appeared on the stage of history the Assyrians, people of an aggressive military nature. They set out to dominate the entire world and they moved during more than hundred years towards the Nile, subordinating all countries on the way. They imposed an iron rule and crushed all resistance with cruelty. At this time, the former Hebrew Kingdom was divided into two separated countries: Israel (Samaria) in the north and Judah (Judea) in the south.

The Kingdom of Israel, as opposed to Judea, which preferred to pay high homage, did not accept the Assyrian oppression, and in direct collision with other countries (such as Syria) tried to free itself. The reaction was immediate and violent: Tiglath-Pileser II subordinated Samaria into the condition of a vassal country, and heightened the oppression. The next revolt had worse results: Sargon II, who led his troops in person, was not satisfied with the military victory. He scattered a large part of the Galilee's population to the far eastern regions of his empire, and settled in their place people from there. This transfer (722

BC) caused to the banished people (the famous lost Ten Tribes)<sup>6</sup> the loss of the Jewish identity and confused the Jewish identity of the remainder who mixed with the new foreign colonists.

Judea, which escaped such a fate, snatched the opportunity of the collapse of the Assyrian Empire to strengthen its independence, but could not face Babylon, who defeated and took over Assyria. Nebuchadnezzar attacked and conquered Jerusalem (586 BC) for a second time. He pillaged and destroyed the Temple, and took the King of Judea, his family, court, the nobility and the elite of the population captive. He settled them in Babylon, allowing them a religious and national autonomy. Thanks to the favorable conditions, the Jews succeeded in keeping feelings towards their homeland. They also kept contact with those who remained there. The concentration of the exiles in a few urban centers enabled an intensive economical and cultural prosperity.

It was a de luxe captivity. Therefore, it is no wonder that only a minority of the Jews in Babylon used King Cyrus's permission to come back to Jerusalem. The enriched and effervescent Jewish community in Babylon was becoming an important spiritual and cultural center for Jewry, competing with Jerusalem. The returnees arrived in Judea it in three main waves of massive migration, over a period of twenty years.

The first wave, lead by Sheshbazzar, nominated the Prince of Judea, went to Jerusalem immediately with Cyrus's permission, bringing with them the treasury of the Jerusalem Temple (the golden tools). Cyrus had given back the booty pillaged by Nebuchadnezzar.

The second wave, 50,000 people, led by Zerubabel (Jerubbabel), son of Shaltiel and grandson of King Johakin. The Persian Kingdom, and the Jewish community in Babylon, even supplied economical support to rebuild the Temple and restore the country, which was in a desperate situation. Most of the local population was a mix of former Hebrews with other ethnic groups who settled the land in the meantime. The Hebrew language was quite forgotten. The new immigrants settled in Jerusalem and her environs, their main goal being to restore the Temple and religious rites.

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<sup>6</sup> According to the legend, the lost Ten Tribes were supposed to have been transported beyond the 'eternally resting in Sabbath' mythical Sambatyon river. Uncorroborated conjectures suppose actual remote Jewish communities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (like as the B'nai Brith) are their descendants.

The third wave, of about 150,000 people, arrived to Jerusalem twenty years later lead by Ezra, designed governor by the Persian king. Ezra, a Hebrew scribe and priest, and a rigorous religious, engaged in a bitter conflict with the Samaritans (Galilee people who were not accepted as true Jews, because of mixed marriages). The aim of this wave was the consolidation of the Jewish identity of the country.

Nehemiah, a leader related to the Jewish nobility, minister of the Persian king and his friend (as children they grew and were educated together) visited later Jerusalem twice, empowered with enhanced political authority. He restored and fortified the Jerusalem walls, fought against neighboring enemies and declared the remission of the poor people's debts.

The building of the Second Temple in Jerusalem was finally finished, seventy years after the destruction of the First Temple. 2,000 years later, David Ben-Gurion succeeded in what Zerubavel, Ezra and Nehemiah did not: to end the golden captivity. The Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel made the situation of the Jewish communities in the Moslem countries very difficult. Most Jews of Iraq, the modern country where ancient Babylon Jewish communities once stood, fled to Israel.

#### Analogous Aspects

I find many analogous aspects (and no less differences) between ancient Zionism (if we can so denote the return of the Babylonian Jews to Jerusalem) and Liberia. Liberia, a country founded on the western coast of Africa in 1847 (a full century before Israel) by the initiative and support of the United States, was intended as an independent homeland for freed American Negro slaves. However, like the Hebrews in Babylon, only a few freed slaves exercised this right. Cyrus, and later Persian Kings, helped and supported the new colonization) in modern terminology we should say that Persia had a commitment for the security of the Jewish country). Perhaps this was due to political considerations (Judah was a strategic asset for Persia against Egypt), or perhaps because of the influence of the Hebrew lobby (Ezra, and especially Nehemiah, had prominent positions in the Persian Court.)

Both settlers, the Hebrews in Judea and the America Negroes in Liberia (and the Jews in the modern Israel), found a backward land with a poor population and became the predominant class, because of their cultural advantages and the

support of their strong sponsors. Friction and harsh conflicts grew up between the new immigrants and the local population.

We can find many other parallels, but there is much dissimilarity as well. Maybe the American-freed Negro slaves born in Africa felt some longing for their birthplace, but Liberia was not their former country. Liberia did not have the same emotional meaning to them as Jerusalem to the Jews. Moreover, the Negroes in America were not then in a cultural or economical situation to assist and support a 'Liberianist' movement (such a movement never existed. I am concocting this expression for contrasting it with the Zionist movement), as the Babylonian Jews did for the returnees from the captivity in the past and the world Jewry does at the present for the State of Israel. The Jewish communities in Susa, Nehardea, and other Babylonian cities, were rich spiritual and economical centers. Among their contributions, the Babylonian Talmud (completed circa 500 AD) is indubitably a great asset of the Judaism.

The Afro-American population in the United States arrived in the present an economical and spiritual potential, but they do not have in relation to Liberia the same feelings and commitments as the Jews have to Zion. Zion is for the Jews not merely a physical country, Israel. Zion is for them something transcendental, which affects the Jews as the North Pole does the needle in a nautical compass. Wherever the Jew stays, an invisible magnetic force attracts him toward Zion.

#### *Explanation to Readers*

Before I continue assessing and reaching the target issue, I owe an explanation to you, the reader. Not being religious, why do I quote so much from the Bible? This is due to two reasons:

Firstly, for me the Bible is not a prayer book nor a divine creation, but a literature achievement no less important than *The Veda*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and other great classic epics. Even if we accept it as a historical romance, what an excellent romance it is! What realism, sensibility and quality! The Pentateuch is an authentic and valuable document for learning about people, customs, and life during the human tribal phase. The portrayals of images such as Abraham and Moses, no matter if are photographs of real national heroes or merely prototypes modeled on the exceptional local personalities in small nomadic tribes, their portrayal is impressive. Biblical tales teach us more about the Biblical times than we can learn from the memoirs of Julius Caesar, Winston

Churchill, Charles De Gaule and David Ben-Gurion about their times.

Secondly, as faith is irrational, a polemic with religious people is quite a useless exercise. Quotations of the sacred literature are the only logics that religions understand. Even this strategy is doubtful.

*Conjectures and Speculations*

At this point, some conjectures regarding the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt seem to be in order. Conjectures, because despite the accurate and dramatic report of this march in the Bible and the Hebrew settlement in Canaan, many questions remain unresolved. The task of proving that the Hebrew tribes who wandered from the Sinai Desert and conquered the Land of Canaan are descendants of former residents in the Land of Canaan is not so simple. It is more plausible to assume that during a span of 1,000 years Semitic nomad tribes from several regions crossed the east bank of the Jordan River into the Land of Canaan. The people of Abraham had come from Ur in Sumer (Mesopotamia) circa 2200 B.C., while the people of Moses reached at 1200 B.C. Different people (include of no-Semitic origin) densely populated the Land of Canaan: Canaanites, Hittites, Philistines and so on.

The root of 'Hebrew' is *hvr* (cross over, traverse side, other side), and may indicate the Orient. A literal interpretation of 'Hebrew' would be 'one who crossed over (the Jordan River) from the Orient'.

A useful tool here is found in the language and semantics (historic changes and meaning of words and linguistic forms). Hebraic, the Semitic language of the ancient Hebrew people, has undergone many modifications in vocabulary and syntax during the 3,000 years of its existence. New words, phrases, and grammatical forms, answering a need of the time or because of foreign influence were created or imported from other languages. Words changed meanings and added new ones.

When I began to speak Hebrew fifty years ago, I learned that the Hebrews spoke at first the Mikrait Hebraic dialect, the language used in the Mikrah (Pentateuch, the first five first of the Old Testament). I also learned that upon influence of the Aramaic (the Semitic language spoken from Mesopotamia to Ancient Syria) this language evolved into the Mishnait, the language used in the Misnah (later oral laws, which form the basis of the Talmud), This is the usual information mostly found in reference books and dictionaries.

A more in-depth investigation reveals that the Mikrait was the language spoken by the tribes that originated in the South (the Sinai Peninsula);, while the tribes<sup>7</sup> arrived from the east many centuries before spoke Aramaic<sup>7</sup>, being the Mishnait a later mixture of the two. Both these versions are similar, but not identical. The evolution of the Hebrew is not a story of a people who spoke in the beginning a pure Hebraic language (the Mikrait), which became Mishnait because of the influence of Aramaic spoken by neighbors. It is more reasonable that every one of the Semitic tribes that arrived to the Land of Canaan, from the south or the east, spoke one of the two languages, in accord of their origin (from the south or the east). When these two affluent streams meet, after they *crossed the Jordan River*, the mixing of the two languages took place and a new language was born, the Mishnait Hebraic. According to this version, if Abraham (who came from Ur, Mesopotamia, symbolizing the eastern tribes) really preceded chronologically Moses and Joshua (who symbolize the southern tribes), the first Hebrews spoke Aramaic, and not a Mikrait Hebrew dialect.

The southern tribes, referred to in Leviticus, invaded the Land of Canaan circa 1000 year after the first eastern tribes arrived. The southern tribes spoke a language lacking special words for abstractions and used to express feelings figurative forms, which correlate them to faculties attributed to parts of the human body. Some examples among the endless expressions based on the body's parts for expressing feelings and relations in Mikrait language:

Literal translation:	Meaning:
put our heart (or eye)	pay attention
<i>the head of</i>	the leader
<i>from hand</i>	quickly
on the hand of	besides
<i>at the foot of</i>	by the occasion of
with a hard hand	brutally
<i>in bone</i>	in fact
<i>in his bone</i>	personally
long nostril	patient
high nostril	arrogant
to the face	towards

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Aramaic, Semitic language of the Northern Central, or Northwestern, originally spoken by the ancient Middle Eastern people known as Aramaeans, and closely related to Hebrew, Syriac, and Phoenician.

<i>in face</i>	inner
God's finger a miracle	
from mouth to ear	secrete speech
<i>full belly</i>	pregnancy
<i>belly fruit</i>	children
<i>Hand and Name</i> Memorial (Yad va'Shem)	

By the way, even English and other languages have similar linguistic images: have a free hand, cold blood, head of a country, play by ear, etc. A very interesting Hebrew practice is the use of idiomatic expressions compounded by synonyms, one of Mishnait origin and the other of Mikrait. In poetry sometimes occur pairs of verses, one in Mikrait and Mishnait translation in the next. It seems that while both languages were not yet completely blended, the speakers needed to translate terms from one language to the other. For instance, in popular expressions as *teikef u'miad* (immediately), both words, the Mishnait *teikef* and the Mikrait *miad*, have exactly the same meaning. Contrary to most languages, which avoids pleonasm, in Hebrew this form may be 'elegant'. A similar mixing of languages has happened in English: there exist synonyms of Latin origin for most Anglo-Saxon words (great and large, main and principal, first and prime, strength and force, etc.)

The purpose of these linguistic speculations regarding Hebrew is to support the thesis that the Hebrew people in Canaan resulted from the melding of two main waves of Semitic tribes, who probably were not the same people or at least did not speak the same language. There are indications that the first migrants, originated from the east (Mesopotamia), were pacific nomads, who received permission, or paid, for pasture and dwelling rights. The later tribes of the south (the Sinai Desert?) attacked and occupied large areas of land, killing and subordinating the inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> Because of their aggressiveness and strength, they imposed step-by-step their domination, customs, and religious conceptions. Predominant tribes constituted the nobility of the country. Most clerics originated from the tribe of Levi. Over the centuries, despising the

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The Hebrew invaders acted like the Assyrians and other conquerors at the time, killing and destroying without pity. Joshua destroyed Ai, a town, with all inhabitants (*Joshua 8:26*). Gideon slew 120,000 men (*Judges 8:10*). In order to possess the Promised Land the Hebrew were told (according with God's order) 'Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew merci unto them' (*Deuteronomium 7:2*).



consolidation of these tribes into one Jewish entity, it is impossible to point out a period when the Jewish people were the exclusive population in the area that they lived.<sup>9</sup> Jews always lived with other peoples, even in their Promised Land. Jews might learn from this truth, because the same situation seems likely to continue in the future.

#### *Mixed Marriages*

Only when David conquered Jebus and founded there its capital city, the City of David (later Jerusalem), did he established there the center of his political and religious reign. The Jewish religion then obtained a national status (300 years after Moses, 1,300? years after Abraham). Even at the height of Hebrew power, Canaanites and other former pagan cults were not uprooted completely, especially in the Galilee region. Religious conflicts continued through all Hebrew kingdoms. Pious monarchs imposed a strict observation of the Moses laws, but other transgressed them.

Over the centuries of this melting pot, mixed marriages were commonplace. Moses, the legislator and first consolidator of the Jewish religion, married Zipora, a Midianite (the Midianites violently fought the Hebrews at the time of the Judges, until they were definitely defeated by Gideon). Samson, famous for his physical strength, married Delilah, a Philistine wife. David, the most venerated Jewish king, was by himself a descendent of Ruth, a Moabite (Moab was a kingdom lying east and south of the Dead Sea, a traditional enemy of Israel from the exodus until King David's time). A reasonable thesis supports that the *Book of Ruth* was written during Ezra's time to avoid the expulsion of foreign spouses, a policy advocated by zealous religious leaders. Solomon, the famous sage-king and the builder of the First Temple, was the son of Bathsheba, a wife whom David took from Uriah, a Hittite who served in his army. The Bible explains this by saying that her beauty conquered the heart of the king. This is a plausible if romantic reason, but perhaps an additional explanation may be the antique practice of taking women of the defeated people in order to legitimize control over them. Within the land conquered by the Hebrews also lived Hittite people, subordinated by the Hebrews and even

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The respect for non-Jewish inhabitants' rights goes back to the oldest commandments in the Bible. The concern for 'the stranger who sojourn among you' and 'the stranger within thee' occurs in several Biblical and Talmudic passages.

mobilized as soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Uriah was a prince, or some sort of nobleman, judging by his high status in David's army. There is no evidence that Bathsheba was a Jew – the contemporary Rabbinate in Israel would not accept her son, King Solomon, the builder of the First Temple, as a Jew. Possibly, amongst Solomon's 1,000 spouses, the Jewish ones were not in the majority. The Queen of Saba was not a Jew and that are not evidence that she underwent the Orthodox conversion ritual.<sup>11</sup>

It seems that mixed marriage was not so rare in Bible times, and the influence of foreign spouses on the observance of liturgical practices often prevailed. We can learn about these occurrences from the intermittent fights of fanatical prophets against it. The Samaritans were not accepted as Jews because they were descendants of the mixing of Jews who remained in the land (when Sargon II deported most Galilee's population)

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<sup>10</sup> Hittites - Ancient people of Asia Minor and Syria, possibly of Aryan origin.

<sup>11</sup> In a primordial society, birth, puberty, marriage and death – the cardinal stations of the life cycle – were wrapped in clouds of mystery and magic ritual (to exorcise demons). Sexual activities were always viewed as forbidden fruit, and all the taboos and punishments were not enough to avoiding infractions in the search for sexual pleasure — incest, promiscuity, relations with animals, raping, fornication and prostitution.

Besides matrimony, perhaps the first social institution destined to create family and legal heirs there were other kinds of arrangements, such as political marriages for legitimate usurp, conquest, and pact, and may be even a step for bettering the social status. Most marriages were arranged by negotiation between the parents. *Hatunah* (marriage) includes the sense of linkage between parents. In Hebrew the man *nosseh* ('carries') the wife – perhaps an allusion to a primeval custom. The wife was often obtained by negotiation and the husband is the *baal* (master, proprietor, in both senses: exclusivity and possession).

At those times, a Jew *took or bought* a wife, and *sent her away*. Probably there was some ritual for official matrimony, but certainly no like the actual traditional *Yiddisher hatunah* (Jewish marriage). It was not a merry wedding with a *chupah* (canopy), an rabbi, the breaking of a glass in memory of the Temple in Jerusalem, followed by cries of '*Mazal-tov*' ('good look'), and a *freilich* (cheerful Yiddish melody) by the *klezmer* (popular band), and the enthusiastic *sherele* dances. For obtaining divorce, it was not necessary the procedure of painful trial in the Rabbinate of Tel-Aviv.

Bigamy was prohibited only in the tenth century (by Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah), but this did not prohibit a husband marrying a second wife in life of the first wife, if she is sterile or insane. However, a wife cannot marry a second man in the life of first husband, even if he is a sexual impotent, and completely crazy. Wives have no religious obligations. The command 'be fruitful and multiply on the earth' (Gen 8:17) is not their duty. Women are only objects to enable the man fulfill this obligation.

with colonists brought from distant places. Ezra, the governor of the country, the zealous Jewish leader of the returnees from Babylon captivity, took strong steps against mixed marriages and imposed a segregation policy that could compare in severity to the Afrikaners' apartheid regime in South Africa – not in the racial sense, but in the religious one.

Moses consolidated Hebrew tribes onto a nation, and gave them a specific character via the laws he imposed. Moses laid the foundations of Judaism; the Babylon Jews built its walls. They transformed Judaism from a tribal creed into the universal monotheist religion that it is today. Orthodox Jewish religious are closer to the 'Babylon' face of the Judaism than to the 'Mosaic' face. The Zionists, seeking ways to restore the national identity of the Jewish people, have rediscovered the Pentateuch, especially the book of *Leviticus*, which tells of the march to Canaan and the crystallization of Jewish nationality. Joshua, the conqueror of Canaan, and not Moses, the prophet of God, was Ben Gurion's hero (More about the conflict between religious Jews and secular Jews, see Chapter 8).

#### *Exiles and Deportations*

Sixty years after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans, Simeon Bar Kochba commanded a revolt. He mobilized half a million combatants and succeeded in conquering Jerusalem and most of the country. The reaction of the Romans was more brutal than the acts of Sargon II. Severus crushed the revolt and devastated Judea, killing a large part of the population and deporting other part to Europe as slaves. The religious convictions and national identity of the exiles were more deeply rooted than convictions and identity of the people deported by Sargon (the Ten Lost Tribes). Despite assimilation and loss of national identity, some people succeeded in keeping their convictions and established congregations in several places in the Roman Empire, beginning 1900 years of Jewish tribulations. Economic and cultural achievements on one hand, persecutions and calamities on the other, replaced each other in turn.

In the Middle Ages, important Jewish centers flourished from the Iberian Peninsula to the Eastern Europe. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Jews settled in Poland and Russia, which became a Jewish center for 1,000 years. Prosperous Jewish communities even existed in North Africa and Central Asia. Palestine, the former Jewish homeland, continued as a battlefield for all respectable occasional conquerors: Byzantine, Arabs, Crusaders, Moors,

Ottomans, and Englanders... Jerusalem, the Jewish Holy City, was practically *Judenrein* during hundreds of years.<sup>12</sup> The Jewish population in the land was sparse. By the meanwhile, respectable and prolific Jewish communities developed intermittently in several other regions of the world, including India, Mongolia, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and of course the Americas, where more than a third of all Jews live today (ref. 1993).

*Longing for Zion*

Finally, we arrived at modern political Zionism (as already explained, emotional Zionism, the longing for Zion, one of the main characteristics of Judaism, is as old as Judaism itself).

Let us begin with some data. Unfortunately, traumatic events in modern Jewish history point out the landmarks of Zionism. Its embryonic phases were the pogroms in tsarist Russia during the nineteenth century. Leon Pinsker, a Jewish physician who served in the Crimea War (1856) and was then a supporter of the cultural assimilation of Jews into the countries in which they lived. He became a newspaper journalist and editor. The brutal pogroms against Russian Jews in 1881 changed his mind. Pinsker visited influential Jewish leaders in Europe and proposed (without success) plans to resolve the Jewish query. In 1882, he resumed his ideas in an anonymous pamphlet 'Auto-Emancipation' (published in Germany), which had a wide influence upon Jews, mainly in Russia. In accordance to Dr. Pinsker diagnosis, anti-Semitism is a disease caused by atavistic aversion to and the fear of the wandering homeless Jew. The only way to heal this anomaly (the lack of a homeland) was to gather the Jews in their own country. At 1884 he assembled in Katowitz the First Congress of Lovers of Zion, a movement that preceded the political Zionism and aimed to rebuild the Land of Israel. Pinsker died in Odessa (1891).

A traumatic anti-Semitic trial happened at 1893, the Dreyfus Affair, which involved politicians, militarists, and intellectuals in emotional discussions lasting several years. Alfred Dreyfus, an assimilated Jew and a French army officer, was convicted of treason and imprisoned. A later investigation showed him to be a victim of anti-Semitism and conspiracy. Emile Zola published his famous *J'accuse* (I accuse) denouncing the plot and

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Judenrein - Cleansed of Jews (a literal translation of German). A Nazi expression that express their aim to 'cleanse' the population of the Jews who 'infected and dirtied' it.

injustice. Dreyfus was finally released and his rank restored. Theodore Herzl, an Austrian journalist and playwright who followed the trial, deeply shocked by the fact that such an event could happen in a country such as France, arrived at similar conclusions as Pinsker, regarding to the Jews question.

In 1897, Herzl assembled in Basel (Switzerland) the First Zionist Congress. He noted in his diary, 'in Basel I founded the State of the Jews; perhaps so long as five years, or in fifty years at most, everybody will recognize it'. At the Sixth Zionist Congress, he was ready to support the proposition to create a Jewish settlement in Uganda, because of the hard conditions the Jews in the Eastern Europe were enduring. Fifty-one years after the First Zionist Congress, and only one year of delay according to Herzl's prophecy, the State of Israel upraises as an independent Jewish country.

In these three paragraphs, I summarized the whole of Zionist history. The matter is vast, but this is all the space that this book can allot for it. What can I do? Smile. The history of Zionism is not the subject of this book.

The present dissertation fixes the importance of Herzl's contribution: the conception that the Jewish problem is a political case, and only a Jewish independent state can resolve it. Herzl converts the traditional longing for Zion into the political notion of Zionism, a movement that dealt with international diplomacy. The Zionist organization, a state in the making, founded a series of organizational ,cultural, educational, economical and other' national' parallel institutions to government ministries, creating objective condition for a country to be born.

*Fruit of a disaster*

The restoration of a Jewish State in 1948 as an independent nation, after an interval of 1900 years, is really an exceptional event without comparison in history. People have regained independence from foreign domination after one, two or three hundred years, but always in the circumstance of being politically subdued on their own soil or in the immediate vicinity. Liberation from subjugation happened in all times: Egypt succeeded to expel the Hyksos invaders after 200 years of domination. Babylon liberated itself from the Assyrians after 200 years of heavy oppression. Catholic Spaniards expelled the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula and restored the former kingdom. Britons invaded Ireland in twelve century and only 800 years a part of Ireland recuperated independence. However,

only Jews came back to their former land from worldwide dispersion of two millenniums! I do not believe that it is possible within the limits of this book to explain this phenomenon (if such an explanation is possible at all). Please do not expect me to reveal the secret of longevity. Stating the fact satisfies me.

Disasters have always beset Zionism. In essence, Zionism is the fruit of a disaster – the loss of homeland.

*History is not a chess game*

Three millions Jews lived in Poland in 1939. When the war ended in 1944, hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees and survivors did not have a place to return to. Jews from concentration camps and the Soviet Union went back to Poland in order to seek relatives who perhaps had survived. Poles murdered 800 of them in pogroms and individual assaults, to avoid the restitution of Jewish houses and properties.

History is not a chess game. We cannot analyze the past moves, locate where we failed, and conclude what chessmen we should have moved in order to win. Historians try to discover and learn what, when, why, and how the event occurred, but nobody is able to say what would have happened if... Despite the fact that every conjecture is an unjustified and purposeless speculation, sometime I ask myself, 'What would have hypothetically happened if the Jewish survivors would have been well received by their former countries, their wealth returned and found propitious conditions for reconstructing their lives? Would the State of Israel have emerged without the extraordinary pressure of the multitude of Jewish survivors towards Palestine, on the one hand, and the might of the Jewish Holocaust tragedy, on the other?'<sup>13</sup>

No answer is possible for such questions. No doubt, these two events, in addition to the very special political circumstances in world policy (the fall of the European empires, for instance), were decisive factors in the establishment of the State of Israel.

Dozens of new independent countries were born since the Second World War in consequence of the failure of colonization as a policy and the liberation of people from foreign domination. The State of Israel is the only one that resulted

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<sup>13</sup>

About the name "Holocaust", see chapter 12.

from the return of scattered people to their former ancient homeland after 2000 years of exile!

As it was already stated, one of the peculiarities of this new country is the Law of Return (Repatriation), a basic element in the Constitution (Israel does not yet have a complete Constitution). In accordance to this Law, every Jew worldwide (irrespective to age, color, sex or ideology) has the full right to immigrate to the State of Israel and receive automatic naturalization as an Israeli citizen. There is no selection or discrimination. I think that the only restriction here relates to criminals. I do not know if exists a similar law in other countries. Repatriation for minorities (Greeks from Turkey, Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia, Poles from URSS, French from Algeria, Belgians from the Congo, British citizens from India, etc.) has occurred, but due to special agreement at a specific time between countries for a particular population. It is not a certain thing that descendants of Italians, Japanese, Portuguese and other emigrants will be automatically received by their ancestors' country.

*Answer to Anomaly*

Zionism is supposed to be the answer to the anomaly of the Jewish people, homeless people who obstinately refused to disappear. I could never understand the secret of this vitality. The price was high. I once read that at Jesus' time the number of Jews and Chinese in the world was almost equal. The actual numerical gulf between them is not due any index of reproductive capacity. Chinese lived in relative security and were isolated (Pacific Ocean in east, the Himalayas to the south, the Gobi desert to the west, and the Great Wall of China to the north), while Jewish communities have always lived upon active volcanoes.

Zionism is not the only answer that Jews have found. Another answer, just as old as Zionism, is the belief in Messiah, the anointed of the Lord, destined to redeem all Jews and turn them to Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Even the dead Jews will then resurrect.

Hallucinations, usually the product of mental disorder or a response to a drug, may be even induced by despair. The thirsty

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<sup>14</sup>

Jews are still awaiting the coming of Messiah, son of David. While Christians believe that Jesus, is, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, the Son of God, the Messiah who came to redeem humankind. This conceptual disagreement is the main cause of the conflict and rivalry between the two monotheist religions.

man in the desert sees *fata morgana* mirages. In what extreme situation of hopelessness and deep distress did the Jewish people have to be, in order to dream of the resuscitation of the dead and their mystical return to Zion (the Vision of the Dry Bones in Ezekiel 37)?

Visions, outlet of distress, are often linked to spiritual or physical efforts. Founders of religions and prophets (Buddha, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and other innovators), were entirely alone, in a desert, a mountain or a forest when they made contact with God. Even composers, poets, writers, inventors and creators in other fields often close themselves off in their inner world, in a complete mental severance, in order to generate their new ideas and creations. The result may be something realizable (such as a bridge that can be built) or a utopia which will remain a dream for ever. Both can be imagined.

Zionism and the religious concept the Last Days Prophecy are twin conceptions from the same cradle – the Diaspora, the Dispersion of Jews. Both conceptions have the same source – the longing for Jerusalem and David's kingdom. Nevertheless, an abyss separates them. Political Zionism aims for the restoration of a Jewish State, concentrating there most Jews of the world. It predicated a political battle and practical activities (that is, the acquisition of lands, colonization, improvement of cultural, social, and economical enterprises, etc.). The religious conception contradicts all this and prohibits human intervention (except prayings) for anticipating redemption before the coming of the Messiah. Forcing the issue is a terrible sin. This is perhaps the explanation to the behavior of most representative personality on the modern messianic stream of the Jewish fanaticism, the Lubavitch Rabbi, who lived in New York and died in 1994. He never visited Israel and Jerusalem, despite the fact that hundreds of his followers live here (in his mission!), and have built in the State of Israel an exclusive village with several religious institutions, including an exact replica of the Rabbi's house in New York.

Here is a suitable point to refer to additional kinds of Messianism, not a religious, but not less anti-Zionist: the belief that the Jewish problem is an intrinsic part of all humankind's problems. According to this approach, the redemption of humankind obviously includes the solution for the Jews. This sort of people's liberation belief attracted several Jewish ideological movements and parties into socialism, social democracy, and communism. Identification with this way



caused deliberated assimilation (renunciation of Jewry). Alternative ways were the incorporating to Jewish parties and movements like the Jewsectia (Jewish Department of the Communist Party), the *Bund*,<sup>15</sup> or the support to Jewish philanthropic organizations (Joint, Hias, Alliance Israelienne, etc.). Most of these organizations were formerly extreme anti-Zionist, but worked for humanitarian causes as well as in Palestine. They achieved agreement with the Israeli Government regarding cooperation in certain sectors, such as support for new immigrants, professional instruction, the advancement of Yiddish culture, etc.

Jews are very paradoxical and oxymoron people. Despite the inner contradiction between religious conception and the Zionism, small groups of religious Jews found a way to embrace Zionism, and distinguished rabbis and religious personalities even participated in the First Zionist Congress. Zionist religious entities (the former Mizrachi Party and other new parties, and youth movements as B'nai-Akiba) were small, but very active and influential. They were a minority in the religious sector, as Zionists were a minority among the Jews.

*Is Zionism Racist?*

If we discuss Zionism, we cannot slip away from the question: is Zionism racist? A Jew often answers a question with another question: I ask rhetorically, are the South African Blacks who fight against the White apartheid regime racist? Are the peoples in India, in Algeria, the Mao-Mao in Kenya, the Basques, the Irish, the Kurds, and other peoples who fought and fight for independence – racist? Palestinian terrorists, are they racist? Are those who want freedoms are racist? Eventually some of them may be, but not necessarily. I do not justify unconditionally all means of fighting for freedom (I never approved any sort of terrorism!). The end does not justify always the means. A fighter for freedom may be a criminal terrorist, but not definitely a racist.

Anyone who tacks racism on Zionism does not understands the meaning of these terms. Racism is a program or practice of racial discrimination, segregation and persecution. Zionism aims to concentrate most of the world's Jews in the Jewish State. Various people populated meantime Palestine, the place

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<sup>15</sup>

The Bund (Union of the Yiddish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia). The first Jewish socialist party (founded in 1897).

destined by historical reasons to be the Jewish State, but Zionism never intended to discriminate, segregate, or persecute other peoples.<sup>16</sup> The Jewish colonization provoked conflicts with the no-Jewish population, a tragic and lamentable event, but does not yet qualify Zionism as racist. When did diverse people not populate the area named Palestine?

From the beginning, Zionism and racism are inherently have been inherently linked, in the sense that Zionism resulted from the practice of racial discrimination and persecutions, but Jews were the victims of these actions, not the executors. Not who suffers discriminations, segregation in ghettos and persecutions is the racist. A racist is someone who discriminates, segregates, and persecutes people of different national and ethnic groups, usually those who are not able to defend themselves.

Whenever and wherever Jews have enjoyed freedom and partial autonomy, they established flourishing communities, as in Hellenistic Alexandria in Egypt, Persian Babylon, Moorish Spain in the past, and presently in France, England, and the United States. A people who expect tolerance do not advocate racism.

Assimilation, or adoption of the norms of the country's majority, acquired strong impetus among Jews with Napoleon's regulations conferring equality of citizenship and rights on Jews. The fall of the ghetto walls opened up for Jews large possibilities, and assimilation helped them to reach them. While some of them kept away from Jewry completely, others maintained Jewry partially, as a private religion. Herzl, Pinsker, and others Zionist leaders were originally assimilated Jews; they arrived to the Zionist ideology because of anti-Semitism and discriminations against Jews, which blocked their efforts at integration. They came to the conclusion that the 'Jewish problem' lay in the Jews' anomaly of being 'country-homeless'. One of Herzl's justifications for his program was that a Jewish State would transform the Jews into 'normal' people – people with their own country. The normalization would allow Jews who chose to assimilate to do so. A person who admit the right to assimilate (integrate with other people) cannot be accused of racism! The increase of mixing marriages between Jews and no-Jews since the State of Israel has exists shows how much Herzl

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<sup>16</sup>

Herzl searching for an empty territory pondered about Argentina, Cyprus, Sinai, Uganda, and other propositions. He never intended to displace other people. When Herzl visited Palestine in 1898, he found a desolate land with a sparse population without national claims.

was right. In many countries, as in the United States, more than half of the Jew's marriages are mixed ones.

*Oppressed becoming Oppressors*

People liberated from oppression may become oppressors. History relays plenty of such vicissitudes: often, the liberation of one group may imply by the oppression of others. In all times, most peoples who obtained their independence tried to defeat, expel, and dispossess their former oppressors. This is what happened in Zimbabwe (former Rhodesia), Congo (former Zaire), Kenya, Algeria, and almost all emancipated African countries. Nobody can predict the result of the fight of the Blacks population in South Africa (ref. 1993).

Even the Slaves Rebellion lead by Spartacus aimed only at their liberation, and not the abolishment of slavery: if they had succeeded, would they have become rulers and enslaved their former masters. The Bolsheviks, who fought 20 years against the oppression of the tsar, implanted a regime of absolute oppression.

What I touched upon in the previous paragraphs is not an attempt to justify or to condemn the policy of the State of Israel towards the Palestinians (ref. 1993). The State of Israel is a result of Zionism, but is not identical to it, as a son is not identical to his parents. Zionism gave birth to the State of Israel in 1948 and the midwife's first governmental act was cutting the umbilical cord: David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, was convinced that, with the birth of the State, Zionism became superfluous scaffolding. Ben-Gurion sustained that the new government had to take upon its responsibility all Zionist functions. Formally, and even practically, the Zionist organization has neither responsibility in, nor influence on, the policy of the state. Only ideological and cultural activities in the Diaspora, and the care of Jewish immigrants to Israel in their first steps of adaptation remained in Zionist partial control. Can Zionism be accused of being a racial discriminator because its targets are exclusively Jewish? At least on one point all liberation movements are identical: not one is altruist. Each movement takes care of its own interests.

*Progenitor of Palestinian people*

By the way, Zionism did not only produce the State of Israel. Zionism is also the progenitor of the Palestinian people.<sup>17</sup> When Herzl visited Palestine in 1898, he had the opportunity to learn that Palestine was not empty, but a desolate land sparsely populated by people without any special national attributes or political affiliation. Some of the inhabitants were immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the Arab regions of the vicinity. Many of them were nomads. There were also descendants of immigrants from the Balkans, Caucasia, Africa, and other places. Since the Romans massacred and exiled the Jewish population in 70 and 135 A.D., until the British Mandate, Byzantines, Persians, Umayyad, Muslims of Damascus, Egyptian Fatamids, Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, Egyptian Mamelukes and Ottoman Turks have occupied the land and left there their traces.

The first Zionist immigrants were not received with animosity; they bought desolated lands and settled in Jewish colonies that promoted friendly relationships with their Arab neighbors. They learned Arabic and adopted local customs. The improvement of the land due to the Jewish activities attracted Arab from the vicinity in numbers similar to the Jewish ones. It is a complicated task to tell exactly how, when, and why the conflict between the Jewish and the non-Jewish population began. It is not so correct to call them Palestinians, because then, during the Ottoman domination, the local population had not yet a specific national character. Disagreements and friction encouraged an aggressive Jewish policy for autonomy in the country, especially when the British Empire received the mandate upon Palestine. The Balfour Declaration (November 1917), the document that favored the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine legitimized Zionist aims. A national home, not a national country, and not a state. When Herzl believed that there was a possibility of obtaining a concession from the Ottoman Sultanate for a Jewish colonization in Palestine, and the aims of the Zionism, owing to its realism, were modest. The Jewish state then imagined would be an autonomous Jewish area within the Ottoman Empire.

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17

As Abraham fathered Ishmael (the ancestor of the Arabs) before he fathered Isaac (Israel the progenitor of the Jews). Zionism created the Palestinian identity before the Israeli, which began with the proclamation of the State of Israel.

The Jewish national aspirations incited strong reactions by the other local populations, with organized group assault on Jews and Jewish settlements. To protect them was organized in 1909 the Hashomer, an organization of Jewish professional guards. Later, in 1920, the Haganah, the self-defense organization of the Jews, become the nucleus of the future Israel Defense Force. The deepening conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine strengthened the Jewish national conscience and their political organization. Conversely, it did the same for the other side. During this phase, the Jewish antagonist was Arab. The State of Israel gave birth to the Israeli entity, and his twin – the Palestinian.<sup>18</sup> The Palestinian nation is therefore a child of Zionism – not planned, involuntary – but it is not difficult to prove the ‘paternity’. Without Zionism, Palestinian national identity would not exist; perhaps neither would the Jordanian.

If the Arab population would have accepted ONU resolution in 1948 to divide Palestine into two countries and an Arab State has then been founded beside the Jewish one, would both countries coexist in peace? What would happen if Israel had reached an official accord with King Abdallah?<sup>19</sup> These are

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In the Six Days War (1967) Israel took the Gaza Bank from Egypt, the East Bank from Jordan, and the Golan from Syria. There never was an independent *Palestinian* country.

The word ‘Palestine’ derives from ‘Philistia’, the name given by Greek writers to the land of the Philistines, who in the twentieth century B.C. occupied a small pocket of land on the southern coast, between modern Tel Aviv-Jaffa and Gaza. Philistines were not Semites at all, but Aryans.

As an attempt to erase any remembering of the Jews, the Roman revived the name ‘Palestina’ and changed the name of Jerusalem to ‘Aelia Capitolina’. The land became waste with sparse population. The majority of the actual inhabitants from the sea littoral to the Jordan River are descendents of people who emigrated here since circa 1800.

About the statement, that Jerusalem is the thirteenth holiest city in Islam: Mecca is mentioned more than 1.500 times in the Koran and Medina more than 500, while Jerusalem does not appear one single time. In Islamic tradition Buraq (‘a white animal, half-mule, and half-donkey, with wings on its sides’) transported Mohammed in one night (‘isra’) from Mecca to Jerusalem and carried him to the heaven (mi’raj) from the place where the Dome of the Rock was later built. There is no historical evidence that Mohammed has been in Jerusalem at all, but myths and miracles make possible the impossible.

19

By the way, Abdallah, the Hashemite King of Transjordan, a creation of the British imperialist policy, was a son of Hussein, Emir (prince) of Mecca, a descendent of Mohammed’s tribe. Abdallah dreamed about Greater Syria, which would include Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, and have Palestine in his crown. He was a loyal ally of the British, who supported his aims. Abdallah,

hypothetical questions without answers, but it was something for the Palestinian delegation that negotiates with Israel in the peace conferences (ref. 1993) to think about. The greatest enemy of the peace is the convictions of both sides that postpone accord give them advantages.

I will stop here with my imaginative exercises; I do not intend to write a book of fiction.

*Idea of Return of Peoples*

What brought the UN decision that Zionism is racist? Chapter 2 reveals the opinion that the political pressure exerted by the Arab countries is not enough to explain the resolution. I proposed the version that most of the countries in the world are not yet mature enough to accept the idea of the return of defeated and exiled people to their former homeland; certainly not after 1900 years. In war, the winner is the person who is right, and the defeated party loses. Even the State of Israel itself does not recognize the right of the Arabs who fled from Israel during the 1948 War of Independence to return. Tens of thousands of them have returned, thanks to ‘humanitarian gestures’ of Israel (uniting of families), but not as an accepted legitimate right. Since the tribal times, the rules of the game in this matter are as clear: as those in chess – you touched it, you play it and if you made a bad move – you lost! If this rule – that defeated people exiled from their land have no right to return – works for people for whom expulsion only happened one generation ago (or even one year ago), why is it not applicable to people who were expelled 1,900 years ago?

Most people in the world live nowadays in countries conquered from other people who lived there before them (this is the reason I began this chapter with a long digression about migration of peoples). This hypothesis is perhaps correct

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interested in support of the Jews to his plan, *wanted to confer on them an autonomic region* under his rule; he held secret conversations with the Zionist leaders, and met Golda Meir in May 1948, on the eve of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. He was nominated Commander-in-Chief of the forces of all seven Arab countries that attacked Israel, but the Jordanian Legion occupied (without any resistance) only areas destined to the Arabs in accordance of the division of Palestine by the UNO resolution of November 1947. In Jerusalem they fought only for the conquest of the Old City, which in accordance of the UNO's resolution would enjoy a special international status. Abdallah's Arab rivals accused him of having a secret accord with the Zionists. In fact, the contact between the King and the Israeli never stopped, until he was murdered in Jerusalem by a Palestinian terrorist (1951).

regarding even the Japanese. Jews never claimed they were the first habitants of Palestine. Religious Jews declare that God gave the land 'from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates' to Patriarch Abraham, 'unto thy seed', i.e. the Jews. God's covenant, registered in the Bible in Genesis book, chapter 15, item 18, is for them a quite clear and sufficient certificate of ownership. Secular Zionists are rational, and therefore they have a problem of conscience regarding this matter. They cannot accept divine commitments; therefore, they speak of historical and emotional ties that really exist. As already underlined, Theodore Herzl (the founder of political Zionism) imagined the Jewish state as a neutral area.

For these reasons, because they themselves occupy lands of other people, respectable countries worldwide instinctively refute the idea of 'this land was mine; I was here before you, and therefore I want to rebuild here my country'.

Suppose that the descendants of the Greeks deported in 1922 from Anatolia start an Aegeanist Movement to return to their former historical homeland and rebuild Ephesus, Pergamum, Miletus, Troy and other cities where Greeks lived during thousand years before the first Turk ever arrived to Turkey. A really confusing situation!

Let us compare the last paragraph to other hypothetical situation. Suppose that descendants of the Incas in Peru, or the Aztecs in Mexico, or the Guaranis in Paraguay would revolt and take the control of the country, imposing their language and rule. The world would accept this, as it happened in Algeria, India, Uganda, Cambodia, and other places in the twenties century. The case of Zionists is confusing because it does not fit the normal situation of fight for freedom. Zionism is not a revolt of natives for independence. Zionism did not deal with natives at all; Zionism dealt with a homeland-less people. Zionism did not fight against national oppression; Zionism fights against anti-Semitism.

I was already said that Herzl, Pinsker, and the other Zionist leaders, who wanted to install a Jewish country in Palestine, were not impelled by religious fanaticism, as the Crusaders in the Middle Ages. They were intellectuals and humanists, many of them with assimilated background, who before their Zionist phase sincerely believed in the full cultural integration into the country in which they lived. They never had in mind violence, oppression, alienation, or extortion. One of the first practical steps of the Zionist movement was the establishing of the Jewish Colonial Trust, a bank, registered in London in 1899,

which mobilized its capital by selling shares to thousands of enthusiastic simple Jewish folk in Europe. Other economic enterprises were the Keren Kaiemet L'Israel and Keren Hayessod L'Israel, two financial Zionist Funds to raise money for redeeming soil in Palestine by purchase, not by takeover.

The goal of Jewish military troops in the First World War and the Jewish Brigade in the Second was the defense of Jewish populations and participation in the war against Nazism, and not an attempt to conquer Palestine by force. All voluntary Jewish military organizations, from the Hashomer to the Haganah, emerged as a reaction against the assaults of Arab groups, because the local administration, the Ottomans, and later the British one, were not able to protect the Jews and guarantee their lives. They all were self-defense units, and did not plan the military conquest of the country (at least until today, 1993, no historian revealed any evidence of such).

IZL (Irgun Zvai Leumi) and Lechi (Abraham Stern's group), two dissident terrorist groups, did not accept the rule of the Zionist leadership. They acted against the British Mandate and executed reprisal raids against Arabs. IZL advocated a policy of violent retaliation against the Arab population. I am not an expert on their ideology regarding the status of the Arab in the State they dreamt. With the independence of the State of Israel, they dissolved their organizations and their members individually joined the new Israeli Defense Force.

In the actual Israeli Parliament, some representatives of right-wing parties hold the idea of transferring the Arabs from the occupied areas to the Arab countries. Even they, at least in accordance of their public declarations, do not advocate the use of violence and coercion. They believe that the transfer is realizable by agreement with Arab countries making a suitable indemnification. In a world of ethnic violence such as happened in Bosnia and Rwanda, a proposition of this sort seems generous. After what I have written in this chapter, I have nothing what to add about such a generosity.

In 1942, a special Zionist Conference in New York analyzed the Jewish situation in the world in consequence of the war in Europe. The Conference elaborated the Baltimore Program (so called after the Hotel where the meeting took place); this made a clear predication for the establishment of a Jewish State (not more a 'homeland' place) in Palestine, in the framework of the democratic new world, which would arise after the war. Despite the opposition of many Zionist leaders, the program was officially adopted. One of the most interesting aspects of this



program is the special attention dedicated to the Arab population in the future country. Their religious, civil, national, and cultural interests were to be respected and not tampered with.

Moreover, the Declaration of the State of Israel, the Magna Carta and fundamental constitutional bill of the newborn nation, finishes the enumeration of its principles with an endorsement of the Baltimore's Program commitments for the Arab population. The Declaration includes a dramatic appeal addressed to the whole Arab world for peace, understanding, and cooperation.

The Declaration of the Independence of the United States guarantees the equality of rights for all citizens, but I am not sure it contains any explicit statement for the two most problematic minorities in the new Nation (the Indians and the blacks). I do not know when the Indians freed themselves from the status of protected rare specimens and became full American citizens, but I know that 100 years after the Fourth Amendment to the American Constitution, Black persons were still segregated to second category citizens in many southern states.

The Israeli government must increase the investment of resources for bringing the social, cultural, and economical situation of the Arab and other minorities closer to the average level in the Jewish sector. Unfortunately, observing what has ultimately happened with the minorities in England, Germany and other European countries, I do not know who can teach Israel how to relate to its minorities.

*Stereotypes from Holocaust*

Two aspects of the Holocaust that interests Zionism<sup>20</sup> and the State of Israel: first, that six million of unprotected and helpless

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I have devoted this chapter to Zionism, but uncontrollable winds blowing from all directions rocked my ship through many digressions. I am not sure I have navigated on the best course.

If my purpose was to teach Zionism, I could easily put forward a chronological exposition of data and personalities. I will not do it. For anyone who is interested in learning about the history and events of the Zionist Movement, there is no lack of good books about it. My intention was to cogitate about Zionism as an uncommon phenomenon, penetrating to hidden roots for links. I have not based this on any specific Zionist documentation. I tried to scan my feelings and thoughts as a Jew, and examined my knowledge in order to compare, discern, and understand. People who understand Zionism may conceive the Jew as a person imbued with humanism and Judaism (in the philosophical sense), free of prejudices. True Zionist lives in Israel *for building and being rebuilt* (words of a popular

Jews were brutally killed ('Jews were led to slaughter as lambs'); second, the fight by Jewish partisans in the forests and the rebellion in the ghettos. Apparently, there is a contradiction between these two aspects (the Jewish inability to defend themselves on one hand and the Jewish heroism on the other hand). However, both serve the same purpose of demonstrating the righteousness of the Zionism and the necessity of a Jewish country.

Most efforts regarding Holocaust (monuments, civic memory ceremonies, museums, the core of historical research, and memorial books) are directed toward the two aspects: pain, tragedy, helplessness, humility on the one hand, heroism and glory on the other. Both extremes display stereotypes: Janosh Korchack accompanying his children to death and Mordechai Anielewicz commanding the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. Chapter 12 discusses even my reservations about the usual handling of the subject.

*Redemption of People*

Other important aspect of Zionism was its influence on youth. Zionism aroused in youth Jewish people strong expectations and excited their imagination. Zionism gave them, to each one personally, the challenge to realize the redemption of the people.

The American pioneer dreamt for gold mines, cattle farms, plantations, freedom, and better life for him and his family. The same can be said about the *halutz*<sup>21</sup>, with one main difference: the *halutz* intended to better his situation and that of his future family, but his main goal was much wider. He wanted to build a home for the Jewish people.

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song, which express the essence of the Zionism). Unfortunately, many Jews in Israel are more and more similar to anti-Semitic caricatures of the ghetto Jews. Unlike the classical Zionists who saw the Israel State a way of delivering Jews from the Diaspora, they want to bring the Diaspora to Israel.

On the discussion between Zionists and no-Zionists, the Zionists are winning for the time being. The Jewish State (Israel) has been materialized and became a fact. In the international politics, the process of pacification of the area and the normalization of the relations amongst Israel and his Arab neighbors is zigzagging. There are many good reasons for optimism on the future, but manifestations of obscurantism, fanaticism, and social polarization of diverse sectors of the population are serious reasons to worry.

21

Halutz (pl. halutzim) - pioneer, the Zionist pioneer in Israel. *He'Halutz*, Zionist was the movement of youth preparing themselves to immigrate to Palestine, founded in Russia by Joseph Trumpeldor at 1917.

The American pioneer had to confront an unknown continent and fight against Indians. The Zionist pioneer, before to confronting his unknown continent, had to cross seven circles of Hell to reach the beach. Palestine was then for them more distant, more arid and more hostile than the Far West was for the American pioneers. From the first wave of the Jewish colonists who went to Palestine in 1982, the Bilu<sup>22</sup>, from more than 500 who led the way, only 16 remain.

The *halutzim* had not Indians to fight against them. He had to fight against malaria. Land for cultivation was problematic. The land that the Arabs sold to Zionist Funds was not their better ground, but those they could not cultivate, because of malaria or swamp. Thousands of Zionist youth strove to realize the Zionist dream. They learned Hebrew language, acquired professional skills in handicraft and agriculture, and spent years of expectation in *hachshara* (preparatory farms) in Europe, because of the policy of the British Mandate providing only a limited number of certificates for coming into the country. When the Second World War began in 1939, the Jews population in Palestine was 600,000 souls, and more than 100,000 *halutzim* were then waiting in Europe for migrating to Palestine.

American pioneers determined the first borders of the United States and wars enlarged them. The same happened to Israel. Zionist *halutzim* settled in as remote places as possible and in this way painted the map of the future country. Some important differences may be noted between the two forms of colonization. The American pioneer acted individually and transplanted to the wide territory he tamed the style of living he was accustomed in his former place. Zionist pioneers, organized in political movements (or parties) and moved by ideological programs, created new ways of living. Zionists did not look for an El Dorado in Palestine. Zionism wanted to create an El Dorado. Zionism revolted against the Diaspora, proposing an alternative to the Diaspora way of life.

Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, set out in his book *Altneuland* (The New Old land) the model of the ideal country he had in mind (justifiably inspired by the utopias of Thomas More and Plato rather than by the Jewish ghettos and wretched villages in Eastern Europe). Herzl called for the use of science

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<sup>22</sup>

Bilu, an acrostic of *Beit Jacob L'chu V'nelcha* ('Let us arise and go, oh house of Jacob', Isaiah 2,5) was an acronym of this organization of Russian Jews who immigrated to Palestine.

and technology in the development of Eretz Israel. Herzl prayed for tolerance in all spheres, including in the relations between Jews and Arabs. Herzl designed the new society in Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) on a cooperative basis (mutualism). Herzl was not a socialist, in the sense of being a militant of socialism as a political ideology, and even not an emotional fanatic Jew constrained by religious rituals – Herzl was above all a humanistic and liberal intellectual. His ties to Judaism were rational, conscious, and meditated. Some contemporaneous Zionist leaders criticized and even laughed his Judaism (he did not speak Hebrew), but as a Jewish prototype Herzl is clearly closer to me than the Lubawitch rabbi is.

Theodore (Benyamin Zeev) Herzl, 1860-1904, was born in Budapest and educated in the spirit of the German-Jewish Enlightenment of the period. He moved with his family to Vienna, where he frequented the faculty of law. A journalist and writer, he published several books and plays which enjoyed successful runs.

Herzl published in Germany (1896) *Judenstaat*, (The Jews' State), which appeared in the same year in Hebrew, English, French, Russian and Rumanian. In this book, translated to many languages and issued in more than 80 editions, Herzl exposes his thoughts about the anti-Semitism and the will of the Jews to survive. Only a country of their own for the Jews could break the impasse between these two tendencies. Consistent with his conclusions, Herzl sought a place for this projected country. Argentina and Uganda were addresses he examined, but finally his personal preference was clearly inclined toward Eretz Israel.

*Altneuland* (Old New Land), the novel which motto 'If you will it, it is not a fairy tale' became the watchword of the entire Zionist movement, was published at 1902.

Zionism offered Jewish youth an escape from the spiritual ghetto in the Diaspora without falling into assimilation. Zionist youth breathed the revolutionary social winds that were than blowing in Western Europe and wanted to apply the new ideas by their own way. Even the religious youth that joined the Zionist Movement and continued to observe their faith, poured their beliefs in new molds, more compatible to modern society. They were a minority. Most Jewish youth took the revolt against the Diaspora to the area of religion, becoming atheist and even anti-religious.

So, is Zionism a racist movement? Individual Jews may be racist (and such individuals exist), but Zionism by its origin and

essence is humanistic and anti-racist. A true Zionist *never was and never will be racist.*

#### *Collective Groups*

Perhaps more than ideology, the harsh conditions in the land and lack of working places compelled haluzim to organize themselves in collective groups. They had no problems sharing all their goods alike, by the simple reason that they owned nothing. More than an ideal, the commune was an objective need. When the desirable meets the possible, they work well together. The fruit of this symbiosis was a variety of collective settlements, from the moshav to the kibbutz. This book is not the place to analyze all their nuances. The kibbutz is the model in which the collectivism and partnership reach the maximum, including the ideological (political) aspect (all member of a kibbutz may belong to the same party and hold common political ideas)<sup>23</sup>. In the moshav (cooperative of smallholders' settlements), the partnership is more limited.

*Gdud Ha'Avoda* (Work Battalion), the first countrywide commune of Jewish workers in Palestine, was founded by 80 workers in 1926, quickly grew to 300, and at its zenith reached to 800 members. Over 2,000 pioneers passed through its ranks. The *Gdud* aimed to encompass all Jewish workers in the land.

The *Gdud* directed working groups in several places, and was very active in many other sectors, like as the publishing of pamphlets and periodicals. Being non-monolithic and heterogeneous, inner ideological conflicts weakened it. A minority group attempted to turn the *Gdud* into a political pro-Communist party, causing an inevitable split in 1926. Some prominent left wing leaders went to the Soviet Union and founded in Crimea a communal farm (disbanded in 1931).

Members of the *Gdud* established same kibbutzim as Kfar Geladi (the *Gedud* standard-bearer), Tel Yossef, Ein-Harod and Ramat Rachel, but the *Gdud* dissipated, leaving an influential ideological legacy to the workers and the *halutz* movement.

#### *Fifty Years of Incubation*

The State of Israel is the realization of the political Zionist goal. Fifty years of incubation anticipated its birth. Zionism developed an intermittent effort of high diplomacy from its pertinacious leaders and a laborious enterprise including

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<sup>23</sup> Actually, members of the Kibbutz may support different parties.

thousands of ordinary people, who collected money to the National Fund for buying land Eretz Israel and yearned to settle it. Many realized this ideal. Zionist youth organizations sustained the idea of self-realization, the duty every member had to fulfill personally the tasks of the Zionism. Historical events, like the pogroms, the First and the Second War World, political changes in the Middle East, the Holocaust, UN decisions, etc. were decisive factors on the State of Israel's emergence in 1948. However, without the concentration of a significant Jewish population in Israel (600,000 souls) and the preparation of a wide social, cultural, economical and political background, such an event could not have happened. The Declaration of Independence legitimated an existing situation.

Thanks to this background activity, the infant who was born was ready to stand on his feet immediately and fight for his life. Six well-armed Arab countries simultaneously attacked the newborn from all sides and wounded him, but were unable to defeat him. Israel State became an accomplished reality, whose acceptance by the Arab world was only a question of sober reflection and time.

Zionist pioneers, the *halutzim*, carried out the Zionist tasks of settling Eretz Israel and creating a homeland for the Jews. Their settlements grew onto moshavim and kibbutzim, villages, towns and cities. The patient reader will find plenty of information and discussions upon different aspects and approaches about kibbutzim in the relevant chapters of this book. What I can now state is that, if Zionism is the crown of Judaism, the kibbutz is the diamond in this crown.

## 14. SOCIALISM vs. CAPITALISM = NONSENSE

*Is banana the contrary of guitar? Why democracy married capitalism, and not socialism? Communism – the highest, or the lowest stage of humanity?*

Ever since I remember, two main questions have occupied my 'philosophical' thoughts :Jewry and socialism. Although I was born a Jew, I confess that I never was able to define definitely the precise significance of this statement. The essence of Judaism – and what it means to be a Jew – was always an unsolved enigma to me. I never felt that Judaism was just a religion, in spite of the fact that most Jews relate in one way or another to the monotheistic religion whose principles the Bible, the Talmud and the later rabbinical tradition embody. Most Jews in the present day are not religious and do not strictly observe religious commandments. They are 'traditional', i.e., they have a sentimental linkage to the tradition they remember from the parents 'home. Many Jews are not religious at all; they are atheists, and even actively anti-religious. I am at least an agnostic. For what I think about Judaism – see Chapters 8 and 9.

Regarding socialism, my situation is no clearer: I find myself still with the same conflicts and perplexity...

### *Socialism of my Mother*

In a figurative way, I can say that I was also born a socialist. My mother, a simple woman without any formal education, but with a broad common sense, was a devoted socialist, in spite of the fact that she had never read one single line of a book or pamphlet about socialistic ideology and had no scientific base for any socialistic doctrine. Her socialism had a sense of regard for the feelings of others, care for the poor, and commitment to humankind. My mother's entire socialism is epitomized in fraternity, humanity, humanism, benevolence and all classical attributes of a' good 'human being.

Socialism was for my mother a question of human solidarity, respect, responsibility and sorrow for all the

others, because she saw all humans as being similar. She believed in her socialism, and educated me in its spirit. A living testimony of my mother's regard to people was the fact that her housemaid sat at our table in all our meals, even on solemn occasions, and even if we had the most important guests.

My parents never behaved with superiority and arrogance towards other people, even not of an inferior social condition, and certainly not towards persons whom they employed. My parents' home was a micro-kibbutz, not because of any ideological principles, but owing to their natural behavior. I never noticed any constraint or haughtiness in their contact with other people, no matter what their social status and ethnic origin (Jews or Gentiles, Black, European or Asian people). My parents' home was my training school for kibbutz life.

I devoured dozens of classic books about socialism (from Fourier, Owen and Proudhon to Karl Marx, Lenin and Stalin...), I read hundreds of articles by contemporary socialist thinkers, and I have participated in innumerable debates about the matter. After half a century and more of great efforts to understand and elucidate the essence of socialism, the only interpretation I retain nowadays, and identify myself with, is my mother's primitive version. I am still a socialist – I believe in my mother's socialism.

#### *Uncompromising Antagonism?*

During my youth, when I inquired into socialism, one notion at least was indubitable to me – the uncompromising antagonism between socialism and capitalism. I was sure then that capitalism is the opposite and the main enemy of socialism, and vice-versa: one is the contradiction and negation of the other. Today my position on this question became shaky – I am not now so sure that the existence of one of them implies the destruction of the other. To test this topic, we have to define firstly what socialism and capitalism are.

Let us start with capitalism. In order to formulate a competent definition of capitalism I have browsed through all my dictionaries (in English, Hebrew and Portuguese), the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. I found



a variety of explanations, but there are two components (with minor nuances), which are common to most of these. First, capitalism is an *economic system*. Second, capitalism is concerned with *the accumulation of wealth (capital) and the means of production*.

The word 'capitalism' denotes the system in the modern economically advanced countries, since the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. In this narrow sense, capitalism is a very modern system in history, but if we adopt its intrinsic significance (accumulation of capital), capitalism is found to be thriving since the beginning of civilization. Moreover, civilization is a fruit of the capitalism. Let us elaborate this point.

The passage from tribal stage towards civilization was a chain-reaction process of interdependent factors: the emergence of agriculture enabled production of food in a greater quantity than the producers' personal needs. Grain may be stored. The new technology permitted societies to sustain not employed people in the direct production of food (soldiers, artisans, and artists). The enlargement of agricultural area afforded the concentration of a relative small area (the city) of a large population that does not work in agriculture.

Agriculture crops depend on fertile soil and on water, and both of them exist in abundance near the banks of large rivers. Owing to geographical conditions, the regions of the Nile and Mesopotamia became the cradles of civilization.

Digging canals to divert water and ensure irrigation of greater areas of fertile soil demanded large workforce, which instigated the institution of slavery on one hand, and soldiers to catch slaves and guard them on the other. Civilization had its inner dynamics: the increasing harvests attracted foreign people who coveted them, and on the other hand, it permitted the maintenance of troops of soldiers to keep invaders away. More and more soldiers were needed to strengthen the army for protecting the property. More soldiers involved greater means of livelihood, which demanded more agriculture. More agriculture required more slaves for digging canals and other works. More slaves required more soldiers for catching and guarding them... This vicious circle gave

birth to large cities and mighty empires in antiquity, or in other words – civilization.

Without the intensive accumulation of means of production, particularly the increase of agriculture, civilization would not be possible. Capitalism, in its broadest meaning, is exactly this accumulation of means of production (soil and workers – usually slaves). A deeper and more precise explanation of the rise of civilization and its linkage to capitalism demands a detailed approach that this book does not intend to offer. All I intended to establish is that capitalism is an alter ego of civilization.

*Etymology of Capitalism*

Before proceeding with a discussion of socialism/capitalism dichotomy, here are some miscellaneous comments about the word ‘capitalism’. The etymology of this word is the Latin *capital*, (pertaining to the head, from *caput* that means head). In other languages, this root relates to words in both meanings of ‘head’ and ‘principal’, perhaps owing to the perception that the head is the top of the human body.

It is interesting to observe that a head of an ox represents the first letter of the alphabet, the Latin ‘A’, or alpha in Aramaic and Greek,<sup>1</sup> aliph in Arabic, aleph in Hebrew. Just about all modern alphabets originated from the Phoenician one accepted this symbol as the first letter. The Latin ‘A’ (a triangle with two horns) is an image of the head of an ox turned upside down, and alpha itself is a pictogram (a laying ox head).

All letters of the Phoenician alphabet symbolize vital elements in the daily life of the ancients (a house, a camel, a door, a hand, an eye, a fish, water, etc.). The choice of ‘the head of an ox’ for the first letter may perhaps be an allusion to its importance. This thought is of course only a guess, but it has a strong support in many facts. In the Bible, we can often find the expression ‘heads of’ (cattle, sheep) for evaluating wealth.

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<sup>1</sup> Alpha means ‘head’, that denotes also ‘the top’, ‘the important’, and ‘the first’.

To express how much the patriarch Abraham was mighty and rich, the Bible tells that he had a 'big flock', evaluated by the number of 'heads' of sheep, so we can assume that in economical terms the patriarch Abraham was a 'capitalist'. He owned many 'heads'...

*Etymology of Socialism*

What about socialism? In order to formulate a competent definition of socialism, I repeated what I did with capitalism (a comparison of definitions from various dictionaries). The result? First, socialism is a *system of ownership*. Second, socialism is a *system of distribution of the goods to the people*.

An analysis of these definitions will lead to the conclusion that capitalism and socialism are not antonyms and that there is no conflict between the two – they can coexist simultaneously in the same society! A society with a capitalist *economic system of accumulation of wealth (capital) and means of production* and a socialist *system of ownership and distribution of the goods to the people* is perfectly viable. The kibbutz is a good example of it.

In accordance with the vulgar communist doctrine, any society will reach the hypothetical stage of communism when the production of goods in the socialist society will be so great as to permit realization of the aphorism 'from each according to his ability, to each according to need'. The Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin's rule adopted the version 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work', as a middle stage towards to the final goal – the communism.

What I quoted about capitalism, socialism and communism complies in a very compressed mode with the summary of my previous stereotypic conceptions about the economic systems of societies. Maybe it is also relevant to what most people think about this topic. In a figurative language, I could sketch the screenplay of this 'conception' in a few dramatic brush strokes.

In the beginning (genesis) was chaos. The tribe. Slavery. The Industrial Revolution introduced the free market, the free competition and the free exploitation of masses of free-workers, which concentrated enormous capital in

hands of few owners (the capitalists). The aspiration to redress the balance of society led to socialism, a reaction against the capitalist process. Socialism transfers ownership of all wealth to the state, in order that the state will distribute the profits to the population in accordance with the principle of equality. Socialism will reach the highest step – communism – when the production develops to a level able to provide for the needs of all.

*Reality*

The model schematized in the former paragraph is very neat in its simplicity and fits the sense of justice of millions of people. It fascinated them. There is only one fundamental fault – it is not true! Reality (in historic terms) rebuts the argument that capitalism, socialism and communism are contiguous stages of development in a society, one following the other, being one a sequence of the other.

First, communism as an economic system is not exactly the final step in the society's development: it was the first! Primitive society (the tribe) was nearer to communism than to any other regime. Prehistoric humans performed 'each according to his ability and took according to his need'. Food and some personal tools were then the essential needs for survival. Primitive humans could take everything existing in the surrounding, the physical ability to do it being the only restriction.

The family, the first economical unit of society that we can imagine, has always been a communist cell: 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. At this point, it is necessary to observe that the word *need* is unfortunately a very imprecise parameter. 'Need' – what is it? Who determines it? Nobody knows by himself what he really needs... Who is the arbitrator that decides what needs are? Even personal ability is not that simple to define.

In accordance of the socialistic system, everyone receives according to a parameter that is independent to his personal contribution. The main idea of socialism is that every one contributes to the society according to his ability, without linkage to his true needs, and receives goods without proportion to his contribution. For this reason, the parameter 'to each according to his work',

which was adopted by the former Soviet Union is clearly anti-socialist. Remunerations ‘according to his work (contribution)’ are exactly the main parameter of the modern capitalistic system.

Capitalism is a free-market of merchandise. Workers sell work, free-professionals sell services, and with the payment that they receive in exchange, they buy what they want (if they possess, or are able to obtain, money enough to pay the price).

The socialistic doctrine aspires exactly at breaking this commercial linkage and creates a situation of ‘you give what you give – you receive what you receive’, without any direct correlation between these two acts!

*Lost Paradise*

The passage from the tribal step onto the civilization was simultaneous with the passage from primitive communism to primitive capitalism. Many people enjoyed this transformation, and it is very understandable that many other people – slaves who were taken from their tribes against their will, and free people who found that the new regime did not favor their living conditions – cherished strong longing to the former communal system. The past in our remembrance is always prettier than it really was. My mother’s tales about her old home in Poland was full of nostalgia. If it was there so nice and pretty, why did she migrate to Brazil? The yearning of slaves and oppressed workers for their former ‘placid’ tribe life evolved through successive generations into the myth of ‘Lost Paradise’.<sup>2</sup> ‘Whatever is unknown is magnified’ (Tacitus).

People in stress and fear instinctively shrink their body. One psychological explanation suggests it is a way of defense – diminishing of the body’s volume exposed to danger. A frequent explanation is that adopting the position of an embryo we unconsciously want to take

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<sup>2</sup> Paradise (the Garden of Eden), Shangri-La, El\_Dorado and other ideal places of happiness and delight evoke images of *abundance without working*.

refuge in our mother's womb, which protected and nourished us.

Modern socialism, in the origin at least, is a yearning for returning to the womb.

*Socialistic Approach*

My intention until this point was to establish categorically the difference between a socialistic approach and a non-socialistic approach. Socialism, as stated in the former paragraphs, is in essence a social system characterized by the absence of correlation between what you give and what you receive. Please, observe the use of 'non-socialistic' as the antonym of 'socialistic'; I hope to explain later why.

It is plausible that the socialist system preceded every form of non-socialist one. This statement becomes trivial if we admit that the family is the oldest form of social organization. Family is, even today, a socialistic cell, because of the complete absence of any causal correlation between what a member of the family receives with what he contributes. A baby, for instance, is a source of joy and happiness, but physically he is simply a consumer who does not contribute any material things. Nevertheless, he may be the most important object of worry, attention and interest in the family, who devote themselves to satisfying his needs. The approach to the baby is a pure 'communist' one.

Now, as to the explanation of the term 'non-socialist': I do not know a better antonym for 'socialist'. We repeat: Capitalism is not the opposite of socialism. Capitalism does not contradict socialism – they may coexist in the same society. Family remains a socialist cell even within the capitalistic surrounding.

*What Preceded What?*

Chronologically, socialism preceded capitalism, which could not exist before humans were able to produce or collect things they could accumulate. Perhaps the most primitive means of 'mass' production was the rearing of sheep, goats, and cattle (a practical way to 'conserve' fresh meat!) It is plausible that in the beginning flocks belonged to the whole tribe, and only in later stage individuals become owners of herds of 'heads' of sheep, goats, other domestic animals, and of slaves. Let us

remember again the patriarch Abraham as a good sample of an ancient capitalist. The development of agriculture and the greater human enterprises (irrigation by canals) at the dawn of the civilization placed big 'magnates' on the stage of history. The mighty empires of antiquity, although not yet based on the free market of workers, but on slavery and dominion of peoples, were very capitalistic events. They concentrated large means of production and large properties in the hands of few individuals (kings and other rulers). Even in the most extreme despotic regimes, where all means of production in the country were under the absolute control of the king (a 'capitalist' system, according to the nominal definition), socialist models of behavior worked simultaneously in large sectors. Slavery and army are two examples.

*Communist Aphorism*

Slaves live in 'socialist' conditions: they receive no payment for their work; there is no correlation between what they produce and what they receive. In a certain sense, we can say that slavery observes the communist aphorism *'from each according to his ability to each according to need'*, because the slave owners who decide what the slave is able to do and what he needs (a piece of bread and a cup of poor soup): a truly communist system of remuneration! Just the same can be said about the army: the rank determines the needs (food, clothes and residence) that the soldier receives in exchange of his services ('abilities?').

Salary was not in the past the dominant factor in a soldier's income. The bonuses that armies (even in the present) confer after battles – the plunder and rape of the defeated people – are not proportional to the individual contribution to victory (often the greatest contributors to a military victory receive nothing, because they have died as heroes).

Throughout history, beside these large groups of people (soldiers, slaves and the family cell), other small groups have lived according to socialist and communist models: religious communities (monasteries) and sects, guilds (medieval associations of merchants and artisans), etc.

Another sector of individuals who lived by the referred communist slogan quoted above is the privileged rank of aristocratic nobility, who inherited titles and proprieties. Their major occupation was a permanent search for pleasure (their main ‘ability’), and they obtained all they needed.

*Multimillionaire Socialists*

In the capitalistic world there exists a class of people, that in the United States may reach ten per cent of the population, who live on a level even higher than the communist aspiration: not only ‘to each in accord with his needs’, but ‘in accord with his wishes!’. Multimillionaires (persons with high level of remuneration in management, industry, sports, and show business, etc., or persons that inherited big fortunes) may reach such a wealth that they are able to satisfy all their material desires. The keenest adversaries of the communist doctrines, the capitalist magnates, are exactly the people who personally realize the highest aspiration of the communist model of behavior. Is this not funny and ironic? What would say Senator McCarthy, the famous persecutor of communists, with the knowledge that Henry Ford fulfilled in his private life the communist doctrine? This argumentation is consistent with logical reasoning:

Premise 1: Communism advocates the norm ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to need.’

Premise 2: The capitalist magnate invests his abilities in his businesses and satisfies all his needs.

Conclusion: The capitalist magnate realizes the paramount target of communism.

Therefore, logically the capitalist who is rich enough to satisfy his needs (even the most capricious) is the true socialist, as well as people without abilities who need nothing.

Life and reality are forever paradoxical.



*Machines Replace Workers*

The preceding paragraphs led us to the following conclusions: socialism has always existed. Monasteries, religious sects, armies, slave's communities, the closed family unit, tribes in the earliest stages of humankind, and the kibbutz in present day, are socialist formations of behavior. In all these examples there is no correlation between what the member contributes and what he receives (the characteristic feature of socialism); therefore if we accept the interpretation that the society determines the needs of the individual, then all these institutions realize the socialist scheme, and even the communist one. On the contrary, if we define need as something more than the necessary to guarantee physical and social survival, but something that includes personal desires and aspirations, then only those who have enormous resources at their disposal are able to maintain the communist norm.

Non-socialistic structures and the free market regime on society have, since the Industrial Revolution, extended poverty, exploitation and distress. Intensive improvements of the means of production (capital) and its accumulation in the hands of a minority of the population have caused a sharp polarization of classes.

Machines are more effective than workers are and are able to substitute dozens of them. Sophisticated machines require skilled crews with high degree of motivation and ability, qualities that cannot be found in a slave. Slaves became uneconomical in the capitalistic industrial society. You may entrust a coach and horses to the care of a slave, but not a limousine and certainly not an airplane. The new economical system, expecting maximum profit from the means of production, prefers to employ those who are able to provide it. Physical strength has lost its importance. The introduction of advanced machinery, automation and robotics has increased the importance of skilled professionals, making redundant those workers whose tasks can be done by machines.

In the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, machinery led to new workplaces: mines to extract coal and ore, and factories to fabricate from them machines whose improved efficiency and replaced human labor. Workers migrated from agriculture, where they became superfluous, to industry that needed them. Nevertheless, the speedy

industrial development in Great Britain, United States, France and Germany got rid of more workers (especially from agriculture) than industry could absorb. However, unemployment and poverty were always propitious factors for reducing salaries and obtaining cheap workers.

Modern industrial capitalism introduced, as we have observed several times, an extreme polarization of classes, enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor.

'Socialism' often does not refer to the model analyzed in the beginning of this chapter, but to specific social doctrines formulated over the last two centuries by writers emotionally stirred by the plight of unfortunate majority of the population.

*Revenge of Nature*

How could it happen that socialism became associated with dictatorship (dictatorship of the proletariat), and capitalism with democracy and liberalism? Yet it's a fact; it happened.

Modern capitalism and liberalism grew together in consequence of the Industrial Revolution. As revealed in the former paragraphs, the introduction of machinery as a means of production increased the demand of skilled workers and dispensed with the need for masses of unskilled ones.

Freedom to choice (in employing and firing workers) and freedom of marketing are the cornerstones of modern capitalism; therefore, it is not surprise that modern capitalism is the defender of democracy by excellence. Industrial England conducted the fight for the abolition of slavery. Socialism in Eastern Europe and in Asia contradicts democracy as long the State (and not the citizens) decides what the citizens need and what they need to do. In this aspect, socialism is close to slavery. Democracy supposes the individual to be the master.

In the end of the twentieth century, modern industry improved a great variety of workplaces in a large range of new occupations and activities, especially in business sector, in management, communications, technology, recreations and social assistance. Permanent process of a mighty sweeping up of 'brains' (experts) into well-

remunerated jobs contrasts with harsh dismissal of 'hands' (workers) into unemployment and distress.

A new sort of Darwinism celebrates absolute victory for the capitalist system: there is a 'natural' selection without reverence to physical and biological advantages, but according to the ability to make money or the quality to have it. Humans have succeeded in bypassing the nature principles of selection. Nature takes its revenge with poverty, overpopulation and ecological calamities.

*Equality of Opportunities*

Formally (by law), democracy gives the same opportunities and equal rights to all. The modern free-market regime purports to be the realization of freedom of choice, but rich families can apportion to their children a better education and preparation for the economical competition. Rich children do not enter into the free market with empty pockets.

Theoretically, a child of Kennedy's family and a child of a Harlem's Smith family have the same right to become president of the United States, but not the same probability.

Intellectually gifted people can appear in the lower social classes in the society. Some of them have even succeed in becoming capitalists. Movies explore very well the theme of poor children who started with nothing and became multimillionaire artists, executives, industrialists, Mafia-leaders, etc. In reality, these stories (Cinderella's myth) are not the rule, but notable rare events.

*Meaning of Words*

The main function of the mind is dealing with ideas. When we think, we employ words to express ideas. So, there is an intrinsic correlation between thought and language. Do we use languages to express our thought, or do we use languages to think? Probably both simultaneously. Is every word associated a set thought and vice-versa? No! Words may have different signification (even controversial) and demagogues exploit their malleability to mislead the minds of the people.

Although usually there is some consensus about the meaning of words, we often use the same words to express very different things. The socialism of Adolph Hitler's National Socialism, the socialism of Karl Marx, and the socialism of the different Social Democrat' parties and the socialism of my mother are not the same. They do not have very much in common with one another.

In the sense that we use the word 'capitalism' in this chapter (a system of individual ownership of capital and wealth, and the accumulation of means of production), capitalism at the end of the twentieth century reached its apogee in the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> The greatest volume of the means of production that one single entity (in this case, the state) managed to control was happened in that country. Perhaps only communist China can compete to this title. The greatest American capitalist organization concentrated lesser wealth and means of production than the capitalistic Soviet state. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union declared itself as a socialist regime (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

If we examine through the lens of the definitions adopted in this chapter the reality in the former Soviet Union, we may also find there several traces of real socialism. The State provided free education, health, and other services to all people, 'in accord of their needs' (being the State the exclusive definer of what 'their needs' were). Nevertheless, since the salary of the worker was matched to his production and the remuneration of the manager depending on his position in the hierarchy, the method of payment in the URSS was definitely capitalistic.

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<sup>3</sup> This paragraph was written before the Soviet Union's collapse. This event does not affect the example. Even the capitalism collapsed in USA at 1929. So what?

Since I began to write this book at 1978, many things changed. I like to date my expositions (by 'ref.')

I preferred to add my new approach and analysis, in order to provide to my intelligent readers with a dynamic time scale for the events.

*Kibbutz – Socialist or Capitalist?*

What is the Kibbutz, socialist or capitalist?

The Kibbutz embodies simultaneously in the highest labels of both socialism and capitalism. Therefore, a kibbutz is the best example of coexistence of socialism and capitalism. All means of production in the kibbutz (soil, factories, houses, machines, merchandises, and equipments) and public buildings belong to the kibbutz. Theoretically, according to the regulations of the kibbutz, the kibbutz belongs to its members and they are the authorities to decide by majority everything about their kibbutz/ Theoretically, because kibbutz members cannot usufruct their personal portion of the kibbutz's wealth. All the members together own in common the whole kibbutz, but the individual member owns nothing of the kibbutz. There is no wealth sharing in a kibbutz. No member can negotiate, lease or sell his part in the kibbutz, by the simple reason that no specific part of the kibbutz belongs to him. Rather than the kibbutz belongs to its members, the members belong to the kibbutz... I cannot imagine a greater degree of capitalism than the capitalism of the kibbutz !

On the other hand, apart from the nuclear family, the kibbutz also has the greater degree of socialism that I know.

*Ten Years Later Thought*

This was the point I finished the present chapter in 1990. This was the point at which I finished the present chapter in .1990 Today (ref. 1999) I would write the last sentence of the preceding paragraph, 'the kibbutz has in the *meantime* the greater degree of socialism that I can imagine.'

The *meantime* in italic letters invites an explanation.

In the last ten years (I am adding the present lines in 1999), significant changes have been happening in the kibbutz. 'Have been happening', because the changing process has not yet reached its peak and nobody can forecast its end. I have already touched the subject in former chapters, but the references to socialism in this chapter justify a return to the subject from this angle. I have already written about the influence of the

European socialistic ideas of the twenties upon the immigrants who reached Palestine. It was not the collective settlement alone that was impregnated with socialistic influences, but also the institutions that they created, as the Histadrut (the labor federation), the Kupat Cholim (health insurance scheme and medical assistance institution), and a plenty of cooperative enterprises (building, road making, transport, etc.). Since the fifties, the picture has been constantly changing. The influence of American norms has replaced the European ones and predominates today in all sectors, affecting even the Kibbutz. With some reservations, I do not deplore it. Being a democrat, I welcome personal freedom of choosing and decisions. The present tendency in the kibbutzim to free the members from the dependence on apparatus is an undeniable positive event. Most of the budgets that were in the past upon the control of committees have passed to the direct domain of the members, who alone resolve how to use them. Privatizing the budget advances the realization of personal wishes, a desirable development in my opinion.

What about 'reservations'? The worry that immoderate individualism may affect the essence of the Kibbutz: the partnership.

Individualism is not necessarily a fault. I myself am an individualist, in the sense of being someone who wants to think by his mind and resolve by his own wishes. The kibbutz partnership is not a business and commercial contract, but a social one. True partnership involves worry for the other partners. The kibbutz is a model of collective life and commitment for mutual help. As long as individualism and specialization in Kibbutz do not smother these two topics, they are okay.

*Decrease of Socialist Tendency*

The decrease of the European socialist tendency and improve of the American standards in Israel have caused an excessive social polarization.<sup>4</sup> On one hand, the life

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<sup>4</sup> Between the writing of this sentence and the present time (ref. 2,000) socialist parties of different models have been elected in the UK, Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries and other democracies. Europe is becoming a conglomerate of countries under socialist control.

standard average in the country is increasing constantly, but at the same time, the gulf between the extremes is also growing. The average income of the higher classes in the population may reach hundreds of times of those of the lower classes. The monthly salary of a manager may be greater than three years of a worker's income. Twenty percent of the population enjoys eighty percent of the country's income, and the inequality is becoming always greater.

Another symptom of the modern changes in Israel is the flight from manual work and low-remunerable jobs. In the past, when a physician and a skilled building worker earned roughly the same and both could enjoy a reasonable standard of living and honorable social status; building jobs were attractive. Nowadays young people prefer unemployment to building works. In 1996, low-paid foreigner 200,000 workers form ten per cent of all breadwinners in the country, and their number is growing constantly.

The number of employees in Israel grows in step with the number of foreign workers. Persons from Asia and Eastern Europe arrive in Israel as tourists and remain as illegal workers. They form a marginal underground, disorganized and socially unprotected, which do not pay taxes and do not enjoy national services. It is developing in the country like a cancer. These foreigners earn low salary, but much than the salaries that they would get in their countries; therefore, neither employers not employees want to denounce the illegality.

A new 'industry' is developing in the country – geriatric assistance: 5,000 Filipinos (perhaps more, ref. 1996) assist infirm, aged and incapacitated people in wealthy families. Another new flourishing 'industry' is found in contractors' offices – to import foreign workers ...and prostitutes. Modern slave traffickers.

*Democracy 'marries' Capitalism*

Why did democracy 'marry' capitalism and not socialism?<sup>5</sup> A good question!

Democracy, as already defined in precious paragraphs, is a government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives. The common meaning of democracy is people's government, and the intention – *the rule by the ruled!* Democracy supports the idea that all individuals evolved in a decision are equal partners in making of this decision.

Democracy has being practiced since the primordial tribal society, but usually in a restricted social context. It first achieved fame in Athens, where an elitist democracy involved only a small part of the population.<sup>6</sup> Can totalitarian regimes be democratic? Formally, in the former 'people's democracies' the governments used to be elected by an impressive majority near on hundred percent. In dictatorial regimes, opposition does not exist. The Politburo in Soviet Union was a very 'democratic' institution – every member could freely expose his opinions and all resolutions were made by a show of hands (at most, unanimously). I do not know if any Politburo comrade succeeded in voting twice against Stalin's position. In feudal Middle Ages, notions of nobility and chivalry included some democratic features, such as King Arthur's Round Table. The Sejm in Poland even elected the king.

*Equality of Citizens*

Modern democracy regards all individuals as equal citizens. It begun in the eighteenth century and wearisome social struggles enlarged its limits step by step. The Declaration of Independence by the United States (1776) and the Declaration of Human Rights in French Revolution (1789) *formally* legalized the principles of democracy. The italics word 'formally' emphasizes that

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<sup>5</sup> I already touched this theme in former paragraphs in the current chapter. I am trying here to amplify the discussion.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 4, p.###.



all declarations about the universality of rights in democratic regimes are in the meantime formal. Absolute democracy does not exist. All democracies in the world limit the extension of rights both in terms of deep and scope regarding the inhabitants of their countries.

I observed in Chapter 4 that even the American democracy is a limited one. Not every person in the United States votes (the way one expresses in democracy one's wish to influence in the final collective decision). First, children and youth, although they may be the parties most interested in and affected by the results of the suffrage, do not participate at all. Only citizens with a right to vote go to pooling booth. In the not so long past, Negro slaves and Indians did not vote. The individual's honor is deeply rooted in United States, but social and economical status bestows power and advantages there.

The white population in the apartheid regime in South Africa enjoyed a true democratic system, but it was not extended to the whole population of the country (ref. 1994). A dictatorial military junta may be by itself a democratic unit, if the military officers who compose this council are equally free to expose their opinions and participate equally in the resolutions.

Half of human beings – women – only obtained the right to vote in the twentieth century, and this applies in most but not yet all countries in the world.<sup>7</sup> Prisoners do not enjoy freedom, but democratic countries are granting them some rights, that are becoming more and more ample.

Democracy is a technique to making decisions. The board of an organization may resolve that in a certain situations the delegates vote on the basis of one person one vote. In this case, the board is deciding democratically. In other situations, the delegates vote proportionally to their shares in the company. In this case, the method is not a democratic one. In a democratic parliament, every deputy

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<sup>7</sup> The United States' Constitution (the Twentieth Amendment) only extended to women the right to vote in 1920 after seventy years of hard struggle by the suffragists. In Switzerland, this happened in 1971, but not in all cantons. Chapter 15 deals with the status of women.

has only one voice, notwithstanding the number of the people who elect him.

The examples in the former paragraph shed light on the performance of a democracy. The ideological interpretation of democracy is, therefore, not matter what someone's personality, lineage, titles, and possessions are, the value of a person is one person, a human being, no more and no less. The approach to individuals as human beings, whose value is independent of qualifying factors, is in my opinion the highest degree of humanitarianism in philosophical thought. This idea is a not modern invention; it took a shape in the statement that humans were created in image to God. If God is only one, all his likenesses are unique, and everyone is neither more nor less than the others are. Almost all religions advocate this idea, but only democracy strives to realize it.

*Moralistic Digressions*

Concerning justice, it is commonly said that justice is blind, to denote that justice is impartial. The required impartiality of justice is a debatable question, but there is not doubt that a blind man does not see. Blindness is not the only deficiency of justice. It seems in the meantime that justice is also a deaf mute.

Morality and justice exist only within the human conscience. The same happens with beauty (esthetics) and other abstract concepts of the human mind, taking into account that decisions associate with conscience, senses of morality, justice, and beauty have an influence upon the person making decisions. In contrast, the concrete outcome of the resolutions is set apart from conscience and does not have moral attributes. The distinction between making a resolution and the result of a resolution is subtle, but it exists.

Democracy being a system, a method and a technique of government based in the rule of the majority bears no relation to morality, justice, and beauty. By the way, there is no guarantee that the majority decides always rightly, justly, morally, and nicely. Democracy is a mechanism for making decisions according to the principle of one person, one vote. In other words, the participation of a person in a democratic suffrage is not related to his personality and position in society; his vote has the same weight as all other votes. Therefore, the votes of the president of the nation and of a common citizen have exactly the same weight. This is the essence of democracy, and is

necessary and sufficient to define it; all additions to this statement are mere comments.

Choice and vote are the external expressions of democracy, but the condition to true democracy is that the choice is a real choice and the vote is really the result of a free choice. The true democratic choice is the results of a conscious weighting of a mass of information about alternatives. Therefore, democracy depends on the freedom of information, freedom of expression, and a series of other freedoms. True democracy implicates that people are free to use their rights, free from prejudices and free from dictates. The democratic vote is strictly secret to allow a truly free and considered expression of opinion, without pressure from external factors; when a person puts the ballots form into the box, he is alone with his conscience, even if he belongs to a party, a religion, a gang, or any other sort of affiliation.

The press, the radio, the television, and other means of communication and sources of information, influence the nature of country's democracy. The level of democracy is a direct function of the level of information.

*Returning to the Query*

Returning to the query why did democracy marry capitalism and not socialism, the answer is not difficult. Both capitalism and socialism use democracy by their own way to further their aims.

Socialism advocates 'for every one according to his needs', a very attractive motto. The only problematic question is who determines the needs. The formal answer to this question appears very simple – the people, through their elected representatives. Socialistic governments, guided by the Soviet Union, succeeded in establishing totalitarian regimes 'democratically' elected, using two effective methods: seclusion or elimination of all possible opposition on one hand and employing all means of indoctrination on the other hand. Instead of information, the people received propaganda and misinformation. The rulers decide what the people need and use sophisticated means to convince them. Anyone who does not agree, is

eliminated – a very practical method of bringing about consensus.

*Human and Democratic Socialism*

The kibbutz is essentially a socialist society, but most humane and democratic (see Chapter 3). The consensus in the kibbutz is the outcome of majority resolutions achieved after endless free debates. Anybody has the option to leave and people have left the Kibbutz for various reasons. Therefore, the Kibbutz is what it is, owing the choice of its members. The same can be said about the structural changes that are happening in the present, when many classical norms of the Kibbutz are being altered.

Kibbutz is a living example of how democracy and socialism can coexist.

*Sheep ruling Shepherds*

Capitalism found in democracy an excellent instrument for its purposes. Individual freedom fitted the interests of the new classes of merchants and industrialists who wanted to produce and market their goods. Slaves are not fitting workers for factories, and even worse customers of their products. Machinery requires technology, skills, and responsibility that only free people with motivation to work can offer. The new industry was also involved in liberating people from dependence on farms and in allowing for supply and demand in workforce. The increase in the body of labor helped reduce the levels of pay. Mechanization drove people from agriculture to industry, from farms to cities and to mines (which provided coal and raw materials to the factories).

The growing and strengthening middle class inspired the peasants to struggle for freedom, but their intentions were not the same ones. The capitalists fought against the privileges of aristocrats and feudal rulers, but the freedom that they wanted was the freedom to make easy profits and improve their capital.

During the three last centuries, the democracy has changed faces and dresses, and gone through ups and

downs. In a global sense, democracy is spreading and deepening (especially at the international level, thanks the activities of the United Nations Organization), but the local realization of the principles of democracy is uncertain and complex. Every country has to pave its own way to democracy – a very hard task! The greatest obstacle to democracy is the people’s unawareness.

Sheep follow the shepherd. Democracy means that sheep will rule the shepherd – this is not a natural behavior. So that people can instruct their rulers (which democracy supposed to bring about), some conditions are indispensable: the possibility to do it and the will to do it. The existence of democratic apparatus (parliament, parties, vote, etc.) is not enough to operate a true democracy. Making decisions honestly depend on knowledge and information. Even in the most democratic countries, ordinary people have no access to important data about the government’s activities, which are kept as national secrets by restricted groups, People know about security and foreign policy only what the rulers tell them. People don’t even have the means to inspect the reports officially given. Therefore, democracy acts through parties and representatives, but a party is a mini-government. The same problems that democracy regarding to the government are relevant regarding to the parties. It is a vicious circle. It is not a simple task for sheep to rule shepherds.

Nevertheless, as somebody said, democracy is the lesser of the evils among all regimes.

#### *American Democracy*

I have already expressed my admiration for American democracy. Two months of traveling in USA and Canada confirmed this feeling. I am convinced that USA is the most democratic land in the world, with two critical observations:

1. In American foreign policy, democracy is not an item for export. Despite American pressure in recent times upon China, Russia and other countries to improve their respect to human rights, democracy is not yet a key factor in American foreign policy.

2. In my opinion, the Amendments to the American Constitution lack a very important one: the Amendment” about the ‘Right to Live’. The existing Amendments guarantee almost all rights for US citizens, but not the specific right to the minimum requirements for a decent way of life, such as a dwelling, food and health assistance. I am sorry if such an Amendment smells of socialism.

*Ideal Regime Cocktail*

How should I finish the current chapter about capitalism, socialism and democracy? In spite of our human prodigious enterprises, the creations of humanity are never perfect.

In order to prepare a cocktail for the ideal regime, clever people have to take advantage of a profitable combination of capitalism, socialism and democracy.

## 15. TELL ME WHERE YOU RESIDE – I WILL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE

*My house – my fortress or my jail?*

*Military Barracks*

Chapter 2 dealt with the oldest profession in the world. I found I could not choose between prostitution and soldiering; probably they began together. I also observed that soldiers lived in special military barracks (casernes<sup>1</sup>), separated from the rest of the population. In the past, the barracks were often within the fortifications' walls.

The structure of a barracks recalls the designs of a tribal village: an enclosed and guarded dwelling area.<sup>2</sup> This similarity is external only. Both may have the same contents, the concentration of a group of people in a closed and protected place, but with opposed goals. High fences and walls defended the tribal settlement against attacks of enemies and wild animals, providing security to the population. While walls for the tribe prevented the entry of alien elements, the purpose of the walls in barracks (besides protection) was to prevent the escape of its residents. They permitted effective control over the occupants by imposing discipline, authority and proficiency.

If compare the tribe to a fortress, it would be more correct to compare the barracks to a pen for sheep. Both are enclosures of land, but while the tribe was an environment of parents, children, relatives, and domestic animals, full of life and a center of freedom, productive activities and familiar life, the barracks are a soldiers' 'ware-store' to keep them under control in order to make them active when necessary. They are a 'fire-station' against enemies (foreign and internal).

We must remember that in the past, and even in the present, the recruiting of soldiers was not always a result of his inclination and ambition. There were always persons who chose the military profession because of personal vocation, but most men joined the army and navy by coercion. In a broad sense, we can say they are 'foreign', because they are often far from their families, and often far away from their

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1

Caserne – a military barracks, from French *caserne*, in Italian *caserna*, probably from Latin *quaterna* (for four, meaning a small guardhouse for four soldiers). Quater; a place allotted to soldiers for lodging (other word related to the number four).

2

I am going to discuss in this chapter dwellings and buildings. The focus is not the architectural aspect, but on the social and psychological impact a habitation has on the individual, and vice-versa.

homeland.<sup>3</sup> This is fate: the common soldier is not a local worrier ready to defend his tribe, his spouse and children. This task is better suited to a police officer. Soldiers are virtually tools in the hand of the ruler, who employs them to defend his interests, his throne and his properties. They are often instruments of oppression of the population rather than a means of its defense. Elements of the typical barracks of the past survive in many modern democratic countries, even in the Military Academy at West Point.

#### *Arising of Cities*

It is worth noting that the military barracks is perhaps the most ancient planned urban center. Primordial tribes elaborated through generations how a settlement should be build, hence people knew how and what to do when they needed a new tribal village, as bees know how to build a honeycomb. The plan and the inner layout of their villages did not change much. The regional possibilities limited the size of the population. The previous notion of how much land the new village needs permitted them to begin a new village with the building of the external walls or fences.

With the breakdown of the tribal formation and rise of the city, all former conceptions collapsed. The size of the population became dynamic. Instead of building a settlement from the walls inwards, the new cities begun from the 'center' in the highest place, the ruler's house (often a fortress), and grew outwards without any pre-set design. The Arab settlements in Israel are living examples of this development. Since 1948, group of huts developed into a conglomerate of modern houses, without any previous urban planning.

A bolt characteristic of the civilization is the existence of dwellings outside the fences. Jerusalem, Quebec, Verona, and Moscow are good random samples of old cities built within walls according to tribal conceptions, which later overflowed outside and became modern towns.

#### *People in Modern Cities*

The passage from the tribal formation to modern civilized town breached the walls of the village, introduced more freedom and diversity, and provided more possibilities for activities and production; but at the same time there developed enclosed camps. I am referring not only to barracks, but also to stockades for slaves (in the slavery

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<sup>3</sup> It is common for soldiers of empires (and not only empires!) to be not related to the population of the places where they serve. Rulers always prefer to employ soldiers from another region in order to dominate countries. "*Divisa et impera*".



times), prisons, boarding schools, factories, administration departments, and other internment buildings, designed to keep people under control, separated from their families. The same may be said about churches, hospitals, schools, and factories. People are there not free to do what they want: precise regulations control their conduct there. They are islands where individuals live under dictates by someone else.

In big modern cities people lose their individuality, their personality, and seems as leaves on a river. They have a certain degree of liberty to move to the sides, but the stream carries them. I felt that Manhattan is a giant barracks. Millions of people move all time under invisible control. From a distance, the multitude reminds an enormous beehive where every one does exactly what he has to do. Even I myself, a single tourist moved by the instinct of curiosity, acted as a robot exploring systematically museums or marching within human streams along the avenues, seeking for bargains.

*Mirror of Personality*

The house is virtually a cloth we live in, as the cloth – a house we dress. There are animals that carry their houses (turtles, mollusks). Some beings build houses (private, as nests of birds, and collective, as bees and ants), but only human beings know to build houses in a variety of styles and designs to fit individual needs and caprices. Peculiarities of dressing and housing have arrived to such a degree of development that cloth and house reflect like a mirror the personalities of those who wear them and live in them. They also denote social status and economic possibilities.

In the primitive tribe, social and economical differentiation was insignificant; therefore, habitations and clothing were similar. External circumstances (climate, topography, and geopolitics) influenced then more than personal taste and possibilities. Civilization, and consequent urbanization, was the main factors to the individualization of the dwelling and dressing. Rulers have greater opportunities to build larger houses and fortresses. Residential conditions became an indicator of social status, economic position, and power, just as the shapes of the cell in the beehive determine what sort of bee will be born.

Not only is the architecture of the house important, even its location is. Social and economic advancement encourages people to change their home (the house and the environment).

*Arising of Megalopolises*

Since prehistory, people have lived together motivated by social and psychological reasons, but protection against animals and enemies was

certainly the main factor. Caves and subterranean buildings have also climatic advantages.

Psychological considerations, such as the respect for other people's rights, were indispensable in order to live together in groups. Without the will to share with neighbors, villages and towns would not exist. Limitation and control of instincts and acceptance of regulations, no matter if done by free will or by coercion, are intrinsic psychological conditions for participating in societies and every communal organization, no matter if done free will or by coercion.

A supply of water and agricultural food are obvious for existence of greater centers of nonagricultural populations involving the development of transportation and building technology. Such centers concentrate a large number of skilled workers and services of all professional areas and provide the means to train them (schools and factories). They also provide large cultural and recreation establishments: theaters, churches, universities, hospitals, etc.. Large urban centers grew as long ago as 3000 B.C. along rivers: the Nile in Egypt, Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, Yellow River in China, and Ganges in India. The Romans built long aqueducts to provide water for a large population even in places where water was not plentiful (Akko and Cesarea received water from distant sources by means of stone aqueducts). Ancient centers of population used also to excavate tunnels (usually secret ones) to sources of water, as in many fortresses (the Shiloh tunnel in Old Jerusalem City). Big and important towns received status of cities and became centers of administration and power. Alexandria in Egypt at the beginning of the Christian era and Cordoba in Spain, the greatest Islamic city of the Medieval Age, exceeded at the peak of its prosperity 500,000 habitants. In the nineteenth century dozens of cities reached 100,000 habitants and more. The twentieth century marks the development of cities containing millions, ending with several cities of over ten millions, and some even over twenty million.

Most towns in the past grew spontaneously, without any prior planning. In order to concentrate maximum people in minimum space, streets were narrow, permitting pedestrian and donkey traffic only. In ancient times, Greek and Romans introduced urban planning and constructed towns according to set schemes (previous paragraphs referred to the military barracks, which were built according to precise architectural rules throughout the Roman Empire). However, most modern metropolises have had to demolish innumerable houses to open main roads and avenues. Urban planning, as an independent branch of architecture, is relative modern, invoking many social and technological challenges. The efficient management of a megalopolis is a very complex task, requiring the best human minds and the

cooperation of thousands of partners. It is perhaps more complex and weighty than the administration of a whole country.

Many 'modernized' towns and cities have been rebuilt several times, due to wars (Warsaw, London, Berlin), nature calamities (San Francisco's earthquake), urban needs (Rio de Janeiro), and economical reasons. The value of the ground in central locations has led the demolition of entire zones in Tel-Aviv, including some houses of historic value and interesting styles, to make way for skyscrapers for hotels, offices, stores, and dwellings.

Industrial capitalism had a growing need to bring armies of office workers together where they could conveniently interact with one other, under their bosses supervise. Skyscrapers have provided an answer to this need, just as the ancient barracks full of soldiers served the interest of the landowners. Modern efficient telecommunications have diminished the importance of centrality. Computers perform for the industry and modern administration the same role that the combine harvesters played in the agriculture, replacing thousands of slaves in wheat and cotton fields. Computers make it possible for persons of different places (even different countries) to cooperate and work simultaneously on a common project. Many commercial activities may be undertaken from widespread locales, with the consultation and negotiations by telephone, television, or computer conferencing. It is nowadays possible to research, clarify and demand by Internet almost everything. The progress of high technology and the giant supermarkets concentrating at one covered area a commercial, cultural and 'gastronomical' mini-city center outside urban centers, have freed people from the need to go downtown for business and shopping. New suburban conditions stimulated the dispersion of population and led to an improved quality of life.

Warm and arid zones once meant that dwelling had to concentrate and grow upwards in order to facilitate locomotion of people in adverse climate. Morocco and Yemen built multi-floors clay houses.

African termites developed similar constructions, building up to nine meters high, with a network of channels to expel used air, hold humidity and provide ventilation. Relative to their height, such termite buildings are equivalent to a hypothetical 1,500-meter skyscraper built by humans.

#### *Waste of Human Resources*

Every coin is a Janus with two opposite faces. The progress of modern society, as seen in the nonstop minimizing of more and more efficient elements in the computer-world, has offered a good quality life to some people with well-paid jobs, but at the same time has thrown masses of people out of work. For nearly two centuries,

industry absorbed as workers of the people outside by the new machines. While slavery took cheap workers to labor in the fields, in order to mobilize cheap workers to industrial plants, industry abolished slavery. Therefore, while classical industry contributed for widespread growth in welfare, modern hi-tech progress has turned humanity in a comet - concentrating privileged employees in a bright nucleus, which that drags a growing fuzzy tail of unemployed people in its wake. Such a 'comet' does not make a healthy society, but us a source of frustration and crimes. A terrible waste of human resources!

#### *Rebuilding Towns*

Over the centuries, towns were successively built one on top of the other. Many mounds are remainders, now covered, of destroyed towns. Some excavations by archeologists have revealed traces of seven and more towns one upon other, the deepest one being from the Bronze Age, if not earlier. The reasons of rebuilding a town upon an older one are clear - they're the same reasons that justified the choice of the place by the former settlers: military, political and commercial strategic importance; climactic and physical vantages (especially proximity to water sources); and even historical and religious feelings. Generally, all these reasons went together.

Brasilia is a nice sample of an original city planned on a new site purely because geopolitical considerations. In the eighteenth century, Brazilian governments first adopted and later reiterated the idea of locating the federal capital near the geographical center of the country, but only in middle the current twentieth century did this project become a reality. The seat of government, the ministries and foreign embassies are now all located there, and the population will certainly reach its first million in the beginning of the new century.

Similar geo-economics considerations induced Israel to build the naval port cities of Ashdot in the south of Mediterranean coast near the site of the ancient Philistine port of the same name, and Eilat on the Red Sea. Thanks to the massive immigration that enlarged all existing towns, the Israel government could initiate new settlements (Jewish Nazareth and satellite villages and towns around Jerusalem), Also possible was the reconstruction of towns abandoned in the 1948's Independence War (Jaffa, Beer-Sheba, Ramle, Lydda, Bet-Shaan, Ashkelon and others), and the founding of completely new locations as Carmiel. Since the seventieth, a big modern settlement destined to be a residential and industrial hi-tech city - Modiin - is in construction between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

*What do giraffes think?*

On the front cover of a magazine, I once saw a zoo, some giraffes, some bars and visitors. From the photographer's point of view, the giraffes looked like free animals observing visitors behind grille. I remembered this picture (published in the former American magazine , 'Colliers' (during my tour around these residences of famous artists in Los Angeles. High walls around these properties confer them the air of penitentiaries. People live there in a paradise of gardens, swimming pools ,and impressive palaces with servants, luxury cars, and every imaginable comfort. A golden cage, but a cage. Residents in these palaces certainly feel, as the giraffes do, that people outside the wall are in cage. Conclusion: freedom is a question of perspective.

The strongest wall is not the Great Wall of China, even walls of stone ,steel, concrete, and other physical materials are not either. The most impenetrable walls are invisible - the social, national, ethnical, and religious ones. Large social walls are frequent in big cities, but ethnical and religious ones are the highest walls and deepest moats among most people.

Ethnic and religious walls are the last and strongest barriers to overcome in order to reach peace and tranquility in the world, and possibly gain the cooperation of all people for the benefit of the whole humankind. Ethnical differences will never disappear and religions must not disappear. The solution of this complication is not to eliminate human discrepancies, but how to live together in spite of them. Chapter 17 will continue this discussion.

Despite the vertiginous progress of technology and the capacity of human mind, and perhaps precisely because of them, people continue to raise their walls, making them stronger and stronger each time. In order to protect themselves against animals and enemies, prehistoric man built lake dwelling upon wooden platforms based on piles. Modern people say, 'My home is my castle ,'and try to transform their home in a golden cage.

*Locked Housing*

When I reached to Israel at 1948, the most impressive thing I met was that my relative's houses had no keys. It was not the custom to lock doors with keys, therefore nobody need keys. The same happened in the Kibbutz. Through many years I did not locked the door of my home (which was only one room then), even if we left the kibbutz for several days. We did not have keys at all. We didn't think that anyone would steal something, perhaps because we have no valuables. Today we have .Nowadays everything is carefully locked. I will not leave my house for a moment without verifying that all doors are locked. I will not leave my bicycle for a moment without tying it to a tree. I now

have a bunch of keys of all sorts and sizes, besides a magnetic card for use in several circumstances in the kibbutz (the magnetic card is necessary, for instance, to drive any car that belongs to the kibbutz and which I have the right to use). I think that the keys that I carry always with me weight more than Saint Peter's keys.

Among the ancient tribes (and in the kibbutz twenty years ago) walls like a fortress protected the settlement, but the private residences had no doors at all. Modern cities no longer have external walls, but the private residences are locked. The limits of personal security in the tribe were the whole tribe - the limits of the modern individual are his private home, which is not very secure at all.

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In hospitals, it is not used to lock the doors of patients' rooms. All hospitalized people are in similar conditions and do not fear one other. The same in monasteries and other institutions, where all members live in the same circumstances. Every one feels well in an ambient of similarity. We generally fear what is 'abnormal 'and' different'. In a community of inequality, fear reigns. People put up walls exactly where equality ends. Therefore within the family there is not wall while the members are 'equal' ('equal' here means similar status and without a conflict of interests). If a member of the family changes his or her status (economically or due to another aspect), walls immediately grow within the family

*Alienation within Multitudes*

Alienation is a common disease in big cities. People feel isolated and alone among the crowds of people. Humans are social beings. They need contact to other people and friendship. People who work together with others may develop friendly ties, which satisfy their psychological need for human social contact ;but earning living activities is not the sum of all human activities. People need social contact too during leisure time. They generally seek friendship in social clubs, religious congregations and political parties. It is more and more customary now to meet friends outside the home. We make our best friends in youth, in schools and colleges, where people spend many years together. In Israel, three years of army service are often a source of strong friendship. Time is a factor that can consolidate and keep friendship alive, while acquiring new friends is not very easy. Therefore, modern people become more and more alienated.

Dwelling and friendship are fascinating themes. I apologize for stopping here.





## 16. WOMEN VS. MEN, OR WOMEN & MEN

*Sex, a conflict or a bridge? Homus feminis lupus.  
Which sex is the strong one? Has the difference a  
solution?*

Nature is a big Noah's ark. Living creatures exist in couples, male and female. This metaphor is not quite precise, but it is a very fitting opening for this chapter.

### *My First Sexual Lesson*

The first question regarding males and females is, being both the same sorts, what is the difference between them? Regarding external form, the answer is in many cases easy. The rooster has a cockscomb. The male lion has a mane. The peacock has a crested head, brilliant blue or green feathers, and long tail feathers marked with eyelike iridescent spots, with opens like a beautiful fan. Such naive remarks will provoke a smile, because everyone knows that the real difference between male and female is the sex.

Sex has always been engulfed in mystery and taboos. Children have a deep curiosity about sex, but because it is not deemed correct to answer their questions, they quickly learn that sex is not a subject for family conversations. Lately, the importance of sex education for children has reached a consensus. People speak about it, but nobody knows how to teach it. Pupils learn about the birds and bees.

I confess that I do not remember any occasion when sex was a subject of conversation my family. Anyway, I never spoke about it with my parents. This is perhaps why I did not feel free to talk about sex with my children. Nevertheless, because I am, in any case, a modern person, the first book I bought for my daughter when she began to read was '*A Baby Comes into the World*'.

Once day I took my daughter to the city. She took the book with her. During the bus drive, she explained to me, naturally and freely, the content of the book, describing in detail every picture. It was my first lesson in sex education, which I should have received from my parents. People near us listened astonished. An old woman sitting beside us on the bus asked my six-year-old daughter about what she was talking. My daughter whispered softly into my ear 'Papa, this lady knows nothing about it.'

*"Vive la Diference"*

If you, my dear reader, expect a discussion about sex in this chapter, I am sorry to disappoint you. The sex is not the topic of this chapter, but the sexual conflict. Anyway, sexology is not my specialty. Let us continue.

Even a little child can point that a man has a salient member that a woman has not. Freud maintained that women feel a jealous resentment because of what they do not have, while men are permanently anxious about losing what they do have (castration complex).

Geneticists affirm that the couples of chromosomes, the woman's XX and the man's XY, are (or cause) the difference between them. No doubt, besides external and chromosomal shapes, other real indicators differentiate between the sexes and are responsible for different behaviors and functions in society.

*Equality of the Sexes*

What do people mean when they speak of 'equality of the sexes'? Females and males are not equal; moreover, they do not intend to become so. Sexual equality of human beings would be theoretically possible only if humans would become hermaphrodite. Men and women will remain different forever. At least, I hope so.

'Equality of the sexes' people means that both sexes have the same value. The definition of value in the current context is complex, if not confusing.

The popular masculine prototype presents a man as straight, hard, aggressive, and always ready to move directly to his goal. Women, on the contrary, are supposed to be soft, round, cyclical and passive. Are the sex symbols images of the sexual members? While the masculine emblem is a dynamic arrow, the feminine one is a static cross. The geometrical idea of the sexes associates the woman to a circle (the periodicity of the menstruation and round shape of her sexual characteristics) and the man with an arrow (the movement of the spermatozooids and his sexual characteristics).

I have observed that pictures in encyclopedias and museums illustrating primitive people often represent men standing, holding weapons, and ready to attack, while women squat, suckle a child, or do domestic work. This characterizes the common attitude towards the role of men and women even in modern society. In most societies and religions, the woman fills a secondary and submissive position.

*Weaker sex – Stronger Sex*

When God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, He said to Adam, ‘...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;’ and to Eve, ‘In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee’ (Genesis 3, 16-17). Here is a clear division of functions between the sexes: the man will work and rule, the woman bear and rear children.

This characterization expresses the common approach to the role of man and woman, even in modern society, but how much is it just?

I know men who are soft, delicate, romantic, and women who are rigid, severe, and harsh. The average man maybe physically stronger than the average woman is, but this does not prove that a man is the stronger sex and woman the weaker one. According to statistics I met recently in newspapers, men were born in greater number than women, but their proportion at higher ages is smaller.<sup>1</sup> The average woman lives longer than the average men do. In many respects, the weak sex is the stronger one

Even the idea that the man is the ruler is not always correct. In many cultures, the man is the master and even owns his wife (or wives). In Hebrew, the word used for husband (*ba'al*) means<sup>2</sup> ‘proprietor.’ Many Israeli wives, because of feminist influences, used to call their husband *ishih* (my man), but this norm is not generalized. In the high positions of the country’s administration, in parliament, and certainly in the army, men predominate. Within the family, the picture may be different. At least, my family is a matriarchy; my mother, my wife, and my

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1

In India, the number of men is sixteen percent more than number of women, because the killing of newborn girls (ref. 2000).

2

The feminist struggle for the full rights of the woman includes a series of demands. Equality of rights (vote, opportunities, election, jobs); rights over the body (sexual life, abortion). They are also against machismo and the use of sexual insinuations for propaganda and advertising.

An important sector of the feminist struggle, perhaps the hardest, is the one for changing language expressions that discriminate against women. They require *Ms.* instead *Mrs.*, and avoid of masculine words to denote both genders. They prefer *humans, persons, human beings* instead of *men*, when referring also to women. I try to observe this line.

Feminists are even active partners in the demands of homosexual people.

daughter are powerful figures without opposition.<sup>3</sup> In my opinion, justifiable so – women are more practical, thoughtful, and reasonable.

*Predominant Sex*

It is commonly accepted that the male is the predominant and stronger sex. This notion is questionable. Among lions, the king of the jungle has a parallel position to the queen of England. The lioness is the true ruler. Some female insects (like black-widow spider) eat the male during copulation.

Man has been the dominant sex for at least the last 5000 years. Powerful women ruled peoples in the past, like as the famous Cleopatra in the Ancient Egypt, and Athalia in old Judea, but these are sporadic examples. Even in modern times, there are examples: Indira Gandhi, Ana Pauker, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and others. Yet, women who ruled with great authority did not influence in the status of women class in their countries. It seems that women have not gender great solidarity. They tend to nominate men (and not women) to subordinate functions (a good subject for a psychological research). A male minister may choose a woman as his assistant or deputy, but I do not know a unique example of a female minister who did it. Not in Israel, at least.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, when a woman directs a government, the rate of feminine representation in the upper ranks in the country's administration may fall.

There are some indications that masculine predominance was not always de facto. Many anthropologists hold that matriarchy preceded patriarchy. Within the family unit, even if the head has absolute dominance, sometimes the spouse or the mother's influence may be dominant. In most cases, a son is never free from his mother's authority. Not even the real macho man. A popular Israeli joke goes like this: In domestic quarrels, the husband always says the last word: 'yes'.

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3

I have always respected and admired feminine qualities. Within my family, women have always held positions of advantage and predominance. I have never felt that man is superior to woman; I also never thought the opposite. I may admire, or repudiate, personal gifts, but they are not my criteria for evaluating the true person. From my point of view, conduct and acts determinate the value of a person, and not sex, beauty, wisdom, lineage, strength, wealth, or other attributes.

4

Not exact. A woman Minister in actual government in Israel (ref. 1999) nominated a woman as her sub-Minister. A rarity!

In the primordial society, when people lived from picking fruits and gathering roots, the role of the mother, who bore children and was their main support, was dominant. Sharp changing of temperature 10,000 years ago caused natural vegetation became sparse, subsistence depended upon hunting, and the subsequent enhancing of the man's role. Posterior introduction of agriculture ('artificial' vegetation produced by soil cultivation) followed by slavery and oppression, strengthened and improved the advantage of men. This is a hypothesis, but it's very plausible. In many societies, male absolutism reached extreme dimensions and the wife's status descended to being a sexual object and a machine to having babies; then the respect for one's own mother was the last reminder of female influence. In the old Chinese and Ottoman former empires, where the despotism of the Emperor and the Sultan reached to the pinnacle of absolutism, often their mother was the real ruler of the empire.

*Rewriting History*

Rewriting history is not the prerogative of Stalinism. Not just the Soviet Union alone expunged unwanted elements in documents, paintings and photographs. Time and erosion did not damage the wonderful tombs' paintings in the Dead Valley in Egypt (ancient Egyptians knew the secret of preparing colors that survive up to the present time). Rulers ordered to scrap them off. The eyes and faces of the saints in wall paintings in Christian churches in Cappadocia (Turkey) were mutilated after the deportation of the Greeks from the country. This vandalism (mutilation of pictures) occurred in the twentieth century. The Muslims, who conquered Constantinople not only changed its name to Istanbul, but also tried to change or destroy every remembrance of the previous inhabitants' culture. The overpainting in certain places in the mosque that was the former Haghia Sofia Church was lastly removed to reveal the former paintings underneath (a miracle of enlightened tourist policy).

The practice of erasing traces of anterior rulers and cultures has deep roots in human behavior. New rulers exert their best efforts to annul reminders of their predecessors, especially if they obtained their authority by usurpation or by force. Where possible, winners tend to destroy all remains of their defeated foes. The Assyrians destroyed Babylon; the Persian destroyed Nineveh. In order to consolidate his rule, Abimelech 'slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal (Gideon, his father), being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone.' (Judicum 9:5)

Romans started the counting of the years of the calendar again with every new ruler. They used to say, for instance, 'at the fifth year of Caligula's reign'. Other peoples performed similar practices. The three main monotheist religions did the same. Jews count the time from the moment that their ruler created the world: before this there was *tow\_va'vow* (chaos), something confusing and imprecise, perhaps even unimportant. Christianity begins its calendar with Jesus' birth, and Muslims with the *Hegira*.

Why did I relate these stories about erasing the past in this chapter about men and women? Because this is exactly what patriarchy (male hegemony) did when it replaced matriarchy (female hegemony). The removal of every trace of former system was indispensable to justify male primacy as a natural event. Men being predominant by nature, women have no choice but to submit. Religion has been the most efficacious instrument for perpetuating this situation.

I will not scan religions to show their contribution to the oppressing of woman. I propose to let my readers examine their own religion, if they have one. I can affirm without hesitation that the Orthodox Jewish religion, in modern times at least, is ultra-macho. You will not see women among the black mass of hats and mantles in mass meeting of religious people, except in political demonstrations of fanatic colonists, where women are inflamed participants. The reason of this 'progress' may be the strategic advantage to send women and children to confront police in political demonstrations.

An illustrative example of the religious establishment's efforts to minimize the status of women: Beit Ha'Tfutzot (Diaspora's House) in Tel Aviv, one of the most important museums in Israel, founded in order to document worldwide Jews and Jewry, exhibits a famous Maurycy Gotlieb's (1856-1879) painting showing Jews praying in a synagogue at Yom Kippur. In the synagogue's balcony seats some women. Due to the pressure of religious Jews, the museum erased the women's figures from the picture. An evil executed by a cultural institution in the modern Israel at the nineties of the twentieth century. Unbelievable!

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5

*Hegira* – Mohammed's flight from Mecca in A.D. 662. marks the beginning of the belief in Allah. Before *Hegira* was *G'hilya*, ignorance, stupidity.

*Hegemony of Males*

I will return to the former question: the hegemony of the male in human society is it a consummated and natural fact? Has such a situation been for ever and will it be for ever? Only a true prophet can know the answer, and I certainly have no ambition to be something I do not believe in. Knowledge about the remote past is no clear. Who can remember what happened 10,000, 100,000, or a million years ago? Radioactive examinations of a fossil's tooth may prove that humans existed then, and a paleontologist may even conclude from their shape whether they were vegetarian or carnivorous, but what can we learn from such scientific evidences about their social behavior and thoughts? Archeologists have never found vestiges of communication cables in excavations of Ancient Rome. Conclusion: they used only wireless telegraph

I have read plenty of conjectures about traces and signals found in languages, customs, and excavations, implying that matriarchy preceded patriarchy. I confess that I love this theme, and read with fervor articles and books about such speculations. I think that enjoying comics is justifiable, while remembering they are fiction. Enjoying Dostoevsky's *Karamazoff Brothers* is reasonable, if you know it is a novel. I know that all interpretations and conjectures are interpretations and conjectures therefore I may enjoy them. Let us examine some examples.

- The moon has always been related to feminism, because the periodicity of the lunar phases is parallel to the woman's menstrual period. When the males went to hunt, they used the lunar month to count the days. Observing the moon's phases, they could calculate when sexual relations were propitious, in order to know when coming back home.
- The passage from lunar calendar to the solar marks the passage from female to male primacy in society. The lunar calendar preceded the solar one. Agriculture introduced the solar calendar and improved the male predominance (as asserted in a former paragraph). If you want, you may adopt this version.
- The number of months in solar calendar, twelve (the basis of the Babylon numerical system – dozen is a unit of measure used even the present day), because Babylon stood in Mesopotamia, the birthplace of agriculture. An instance of discrediting femininity is the number 13, number of months in the lunar calendar, which became a number for bad luck.

*Matriarchal Traces*

Not all traces of the matriarchal period have been completely lost. The week of seven days, a quarter of the lunar month, remained (the French revolutionaries were unsuccessful in their attempt to change the week to ten days, to go with the decimal system they adopted). Certain Bible commentators have found indications to the former feminine primacy. Some investigators suspect that ‘Shaddai’, one of God’s oldest names, represents a female deity.<sup>6</sup>

The mezuzah, a small wooden or metal case with a parchment scroll with scriptural passages fixed to the doorpost, contains the letters *XDI* (*Shaddai*) and not *YHWH* (*Yahweh* = Jehovah).<sup>7</sup> The same happens with the *tefillin*.

The name Shaddai appears in Genesis 17:1 (I am God Shaddai). By the way, it is interesting to observe that the oldest names for God in the Bible are words in plural form, as *Eloym*, which literally means The Gods, and *Adonay* (My Lords, a plural form). The saying *Kol amon, kol Saddai* (the voice of people is the voice of God) is a very ancient one. It seems that Shaddai (a goddess?) remained closer to the ordinary people, who preferred it as protection against evil and demons (the *mezuzah* and the *tefillin* are clear pagan amulets), and employed it in everyday sayings. It seems that in the area of prejudice and superstition, people prefer maternal protection.

In the classical mythology, the main god Zeus (Jupiter) is a male god, and all goddesses are on an inferior plain of importance. In ancient Egyptian religion, which is more antique, the pantheon begin with Hathor, goddess of the sky, fertility and love (Greeks identified her with Aphrodite). The moon was the

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The interpretation of the word ‘Shaddai’ is obscure. The traditional English rendering is ‘Almighty’, from the Septuagint translation which means All-powerful, omnipotent, perhaps based on an ancient rabbinical interpretation *He who is self-sufficient* (*sha* = he, *dai* = enough). A plausible philological approach relates the word ‘Shaddai’ to Akkadian *sadu* (mountain, hill), which relates to the Hebrew *shad* (breast), or to Hebrew *sadeh* (open field). Anyway, all these possibilities hint at links with fecundity and femininity. It is interesting to observe that the word ‘Shaddai’ occurs in the Bible as God’s name in ancient oracles and poetic passages. Even pregnancy in Hebrew, *heraion*, cognates to *har* (mountain), so it is very plausible that mountain had really been associated in the past to the feminine silhouette. Was Shadai a goddess? All other names for God are decisively masculine.

7

*Tefillin* — phylacteries, black leather boxes bound by black leather strips to the left hand and on the head, worn for morning services during all days of the year, except Saturdays and holy days. What is certain is that this name is very old.



oldest worshipped god (the cult of Hathor dates from the pre-dynasty age, circa 4,000 B.C.), while Ra, the sun, become the greatest of the gods much later, at the Fourth Dynasty (2,500 BC).

How much can we learn from mythologies about relations between men and women, and the role they performed in society? Many things, but with an important reservation: it is reasonable to suppose that not the earliest versions of most mythologies have reached us. They mainly reflect the historical phase when the supremacy of the male was already a fact.

#### *Submissive Position*

In most societies and religions, women fulfill a secondary and submissive position, in spite of their central role on the conservation of the species. Nevertheless, even in countries where machismo and domination of women are common norms of behavior, women have reached high positions, even becoming rulers. Indira Gandhi became one of the strongest leaders in a country where even in current time parents are killing thousands of girls upon their birth, because a girl is inconvenient and expensive to marry off. The same happens in Muslim Pakistan, Turkey, Philippine and Bangladesh, and in other Asian countries, where women's rights are virtually non-existent.

Even where individual women ruled, the situation of the women in the country did not improve. Queen Victoria, Queen Catharine the Great of Russia, Ana Pauker, Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, and other powerful feminine rulers in history did not care to advance women's issues. Discrimination of women in society will not disappear simply if individual women will reach highly powerful positions, because the problem it is not a question of power, but of mentality. Feminists do not understand this premise. The feminist movement invests energy in the fight to equalize the rights of women in politics (the right to elect and be elected) and in work (same salary for same work, and equal opportunity for jobs), and does not attempt to change thinking. Why do women, as mothers and teachers, not succeed in educating their young children and pupils in the spirit of equal value of men and women? They have a golden opportunity and possibility to avoid the stigma of woman's inferiority.

My mother used to say, 'You know, my son, what a bull could do if he knew its strength?' The reduced condition of the

women in society is a consequence of the fact that they are not conscious of their strength.

*Sex discriminations*

Conjectures about the place in the past of men and women in society form an interesting mental exercise. They may provide explanations to the current situation, but are not relevant in defining ideological position regarding the question. Sex discrimination persists even in countries where law forbids every sort of discrimination. Men and women are not only different by the reproductive organs, but also because of many other physical, mental, and biological functions. The meaning of equality of sexes is not an easy task to define.

*Zionist Female Pioneers*

*Halutzim* (Zionist pioneers) have always held equality of the sexes as a morale principle. At the beginning of the Zionist colonization of Palestine, women worked picking orange, making roads and any jobs they could obtain. Women broke and carried stones. They worked like men. At the beginning of the kibbutz movement, which sincerely aimed to equalize the conditions of members of both sexes, the result of such an ideology was that women had to work like men. I believe that no sensible person will accept such equality as an indicator of women's emancipation and advancement. This equality is a disguised form of oppression, an injustice.

Equality of women and men cannot consist of forcing women to behave as men. This is just as inequitable as the contrary is. True equality consists in having the same rights and conditions to be free and the same possibility of fulfilling one's personal potential.

I have already stated my opinion, based on my family experience, that women are more practical and realistic. Their approach to things is more tangible, substantial. Is it a surprise that *materia*, *matter* and *material* are cognate to *mater* (mother in Latin)?

I observed that in the kibbutz, where there is no discrimination in the education of children, girls are not inferior to boys in all areas. In their early years, not even in sports activities. On the contrary, girls are generally physically more developed and stronger. In their studies, they do not lag behind the boys.

Girls are also distinguished pupils in all faculties in the universities. The accomplishments of girls and boys in learning are parallel. The motivation to learn and choices of career do not always depend on personal vocation, but often of societal expectations and influence.

*Differentiation of Status*

The differentiation of status and opportunities between men and women starts when formal learning ends and the confrontation with the job market begins. The picture is clear across all sectors. A woman must be professionally superior in order to receive the same job and payment, and even then, this does not always happen.

The armed forces, police and the religious establishment are strong redoubts of machismo. The Israel Army mobilizes both girls and boys for service, but nobody expects girls to be in combat. Most of girls serve in office jobs. Only a small number of females take on more jobs sophisticated. The army does not profit enough the women's potential. No doubt, that there are plenty of non-combatant jobs in the army that woman could perform successfully. The absence of women in high positions in the army and police is not a mark the women's trustworthiness, but of the administration's policy.

Very early on, the girls pay attention to their particular advantages in the society, just as a boy wants to make the most of his advantages. She wants to be beautiful, attractive, and dreams of her future family life. He wants to be strong and worries about his professional career. I think this is normal and correct; what is not correct is that the current educational system does not provide answers to the particular needs of every individual. Moreover, despite making up approximately half the number of the students, women are only tolerated guests as in some universities. Universities are not only the instruments for teaching wisdom and skilled professions, but also the main instruments for establishing outlook. It is there that sex discrimination is determined.

Not every mother is personally able to use her opportunities for influencing her children's outlook. Usually their educational ability is limited to indoctrinating prejudices and received norms. Most women in the world have no preparation for anything else. Intellectually inclined women able to implant higher humanistic values in their children are now mainly occupied with promoting their careers. They leave the children in the care of other women, who may be dutiful and dedicated,

but intellectually inferior (in the past, they were even ordinary slaves). Such a behavior is a substantial factor in the perpetuation of male predominance.

Instruction and intellectual development are important goals in life. They are also means (but not sufficient in themselves, and even not exclusive!) to obtain better jobs and earnings. For women whom have no ambitions for career and prefer to build their family, enlightenment may be for them a way for better marriage. Moreover, it may guarantee the woman's status of intellectual equality within the family. Every woman has the legitimate right to decide her life. She may decide to devote her life to a career, to her family, or a combination of both. Within certain conditions, modern society allows all these solutions, because the time dedicated to work is getting smaller (theoretically, at least). Work now takes up thirty to forty hours a week, and even less, instead of eighty to one hundred in the nineteenth century.

#### *Conditions for Feminine potential*

The kibbutz is an ideal environment for providing good conditions for fulfilling feminine potential. Much has been done, but the exploration of all possibilities is still far off.

Formally, the woman's status in the Kibbutz is the same as the man's. On this point, there is no doubt. The examination of this assertion in actual reality is complicated, because it depends on what parameters you choose and what point of view you take. There is no premeditated discrimination or limitation in the kibbutz towards women. Theoretically and even practically, women can reach every function that men fulfill. In the Kibbutz Movement is possible to find women in all existing administrative functions, both in public and local service.

Sociologists have a wide field for research into the question why few women in Kibbutz take leading jobs, despite all possibilities and opportunities that the Kibbutz offers. Women in kibbutz are practically free from domestic affairs<sup>8</sup> (cooking meat, washing clothes and taking care of the children).

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This was the situation until 1995. Nowadays, with the privatization of budgets and the fact that children sleep in their parents' house, many norms of behavior are changing.

*Sex appeal*

In former chapters, I developed the idea that nature uses a carrot-and-stick policy to obtain its aims among animals. Stick — the use of pain. The enjoyment of eating and drinking is a strong carrot, but avoiding pain remains the chief factor for forcing animals to survive.

In order to assure survive of species, nature prefers carrots (the promise of sexual enjoyment). There are certainly other instincts that impel males to spread their sperms, but they are not the predominant ones. The search for pleasure is stronger. Nature use pain to goad individuals and propaganda to ensure species (*see* Chapter 5, ‘Why we do what we do’).

Sex appeal is not similar in all creatures. Among many animals, the male is the one who adorns himself to be attractive; among humans, it is the women who take care about being attractive.

Reproduction is obviously the objective of sex in nature. The purposes of people and of nature are not always the same. People look in eating and drinking (gluttony and gastronomy) for enjoyment beyond their basic physical needs; and in the practice of sex, the pleasure precedes ever the reproductive function. We do not know what animals look for in the sexual act. We think that instincts move all what they do. Ever since humans have understood the connection between the sexual act and the birth of children, they have tried to separate them. People show an interest in the sexual act even when they do not want to bear children.

The appetite and anxiety for sexual pleasure (libido) have moved people in two directions: searches for means to practice the sexual act without incurring pregnancy and practice of sexual intercourse without marriage

The first concern, finding means for avoiding pregnancy, is a very ancient one. Religions, which for the most part condemn abortion, have a serious conflict in the treatment of this question. The Jewish religion established when intercourse is permissible (during the menstruation period, the wife is ‘impure’ and it is prohibited), and limited the ‘secure days’ when the wife will not conceive a child. Later, people invented several methods of contra-conception, from condoms to amputation of sexual organs. Certain Middle Eastern and

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Gluttony, an excess of eating and drinking, is not a natural practice but an aberration. Gastronomy, the art of good eating and drinking, is not exactly an end of nature, but a genuine human “contribution”.

Oriental countries used to castrate men in order to employ them as harem attendants (eunuchs) and court functionaries. Overpopulated countries try to diminish the natural increase by legal regulations, as limiting the number of permitted children and forcing abortions (China), or encouraging voluntary sexual sterilizing (India).

Overpopulation due to the high birth rate among backward and poor folk is a serious problem of countries as China, India, Brazil, Mexico, and most Muslim countries. In certain countries like Brazil and Mexico, the number of homeless children reaches millions.

Birth of undesirable children is a serious challenge for the society, but not the greatest problem caused by the sexual instincts. An unknown number of women and children (certainly greater than all divulged statistics) are the victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. The capture and trafficking of girls for prostitution are as ancient as slavery is. Even in the present day, young girls in some poor countries are forced to prostitution. In Vietnam, parents sell young daughters, or put them by themselves to prostitution.

The spreading of the AIDS plague has increased the search for young girls (and boys) to sexual exploitation. There is a new sort of modern tourism – sexual tourism. Travel companies offer charter flights to Brazil, Vietnam and other places to spend a weekend in hotels, which provide very young girls and boys.<sup>10</sup>

In Brazil, thousands of young girls from the enormous reservoir of homeless children are kidnapped to hundreds of *garimpo*<sup>10</sup> villages in the Amazon forests for satiating the desires of the gold-searchers. At the age of 18-19 they become old and sick, and are abandoned to an early death: a tragedy.

Prostitution is not the worst aberration of the sexual impulse. It is enough just to open a newspaper to receive a gloomy picture of daily events in a country as Israel, which certainly is not among the backward countries in the world. You see rapes of women and children (that sometimes end with the murdering of the victims), even by fathers and brothers. The violence against little babies is incredible (fractures in the legs and the head, and terrible burns caused by electric iron). So much sadism!

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Just as good-looking girls in Israel dream about becoming fashion models, girls of poor origin in north-east Brazil surround hotels and offer their services hopping to meet a rich tourist who will take them to Europe. Mothers in both cases are often enthusiastic supporters of their daughters.

I feel that I have painted a depressing picture, but even if the real proportion is smaller than my description, the events are terrible enough. I suspect that the reality is worse.

*Violence against Women and Children*

Is violence against women and children a peculiarity of our new modern society? Surely not! In the past, what happened within the family was an internal matter of the family and people outside did not know about it. In the recent years, the press divulges profuse events with relish and exaggeration, but these cases are only the tip of the iceberg. Most cases go on hidden and unknown. Victims do not rush to denounce violence to policy, because of fear, shame and weakness. It is not so very agreeable for a young girl to reveal that she was deflowered (especially if it was by her father). Children tend not to complain against their parents. The police, the justice system, and the religious institutions are dens of machismo, which in the name of 'the integrity of the family' and 'domestic peace' have a tendency to overlook and underestimate such incidents. Only in very recent years, have the public become to be conscious and articulate about the problem and begun campaign for solutions. Social assistance is developing and becoming effective, but meantime almost voluntarily workers maintain financed institutions by donations. Physicians and teachers are becoming more watchful for signs of violence and report them to the police. Lastly, sheltered housing for battered wives has appeared in some towns, but it falls short of satisfying the demand. Women have become bolder in asserting their rights.

Women's struggle for emancipation goes back a long way. Brave women have always revolted against their inferior situation, but reports about this are not very abundant in history. Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, a classical Greek drama that deals with a revolt of women, is a rarity in the world literature.

The hundred years' struggle of the suffragists (since the middle of the nineteenth century) to extend the right of political vote to women is as dramatic as the fight for abolition of slavery. In many steps, they were dovetailed. Suffragists, both white and black, were among the pioneers in the fight for abolition. The suffragist movement does not have in history the status it deserves.

Since the French Revolution, women have been active in warfare on behalf of equality of rights for all citizens. In the nineteenth century, the middle class was strengthened and enriched. In the United States, there appeared a new nobility of

financial, steel and railway magnates, bankers, and other capitalist, who soon dominated the political and economical life of the country. These new plutocrats, often of humble origin, lived a life of opulence and ease. Their wives did not have much to do but squander money in dresses, jewels, social parties, and do charity works. The involvement with charity put some of the aristocratic, pampered and well-educated women in touch with people from lower social classes and their problems. Many fighters for social and civil causes started from these circles. Women struggled against poverty, alcoholism, and slavery, and campaigned to improve of prisons, hospitals, and orphanages.

In 1917, North Dakota permitted women to vote in the presidential election. In 1918, the American Congress resolved to extend the right to vote to include women, but only in 1920 did it approved the Twentieth Amendment, which guarantees this. Fifty years more were necessary for women to obtain the same right in Switzerland (in 1971), one of the most deep-seated democracies in Europe.

#### *Status of the Jewish Women*

The status of the Jewish woman is complex. In some sectors they have the advantage over men, in others, they are equal to them, but in the main, they are held inferior.

The greatest advantage of the woman in Jewry is of course her faculty to give birth to children. A Hebrew expression calls human creature *ilud ishah* (born of woman), stating that all humans are originated from women. The man is the responsible for observing of the command 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 1:28), but birth belongs to the woman. In the Jewish religion, the woman is who determines that the child is a Jew, because, according to the *Halakhah*, a Jew is someone who has a Jewish mother (or has converted to Judaism). In this matter, the father's status is not relevant at all. I do not know if the Jewish woman has other important advantages over the man. If exemption from the obligation to learn Torah is an advantage, this is another advantage for women in the Orthodox Jewish religion.

In the Bible (the Pentateuch), many passages deal equally with men and women. Both were present together at the Stand of Sinai, when God conferred the Ten Commandments on the Jews. Within the Covenant, women have the same moral responsibility as men, and both have the same duties concerning the regulations for food (one of the cornerstones of the Jews



religion). The Law demands equal respect to the father and mother (Deuteronomium 5:16, Ezekiel 20:12).

Even most punishments do not differentiate between men and women. In the case of adultery (Leviticus 20:10) or incest (Leviticus 20:11, 17:18), both are equally condemned to death (this penalty is obsolete and not observed). The penalty for injuring a woman is the same as that for a man, in contrast with the legislation of other religions. In the Koran, for instance, the penalty for injuring a woman is half the penalty for same injury to a man.

Women and men attended together to the Sanctuary (Samuel I 1:1-19).

Prophets compared the love of God for Israel with the love of a husband for his wife. This figurative image expresses the respect for women in the Jewish society. Even the Bible is often related to God as a wife to her husband.

On other hand, some passages in the Bible connote inferiority of women in comparison with men. The woman was created to serve man as a suitable helper (Genesis 2:23-24). Formed from a rib taken from the first man, the woman is a part of him (therefore belongs to him!)... The essence of a wife is the function of being a dutiful companion to her husband.

The man can divorce the wife, but she cannot divorce him (Deuteronomium 24:1-4). Many other instances of discrimination, especially in matters regarding to marriage and divorce, allocate women in inferior legal position relatively to men.

'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hast not made me a woman' recited by men every day, expresses the rabbinical attitude toward women. Some interpreters tried to diminish the ugliness of this sentence by explaining that it thanks God for the opportunity to learn the Torah and observing all the commandments (women are exempted from this).

#### *Oriental Influence*

The Babylonian captivity brought the Jews into the greatest metropolis of the antiquity, exposing them to contact with other peoples and religions. An earlier chapter has already claimed that the Jewish tribal creed received the form of a universal monotheist religion in Babylon. Babylon was famous by its luxurious and lascivious life. Jews were 'puritans' (especially in the meaning of zealotry for the family's purity) and tried to protect their wives from the influence of the Babylonian permissiveness. From this time, new prohibitions were imposed

on women, as for instance the prohibition against singing and dancing in public, and injunctions to avoid unfamiliar males.<sup>11</sup>

There is evidence that the humiliating attitude towards women developed through the influence of Oriental people, who related to woman as inferior creatures. In this way, Islam's norms (the harem, polygamy) affected the Jews who lived in their vicinity. Maimonides's<sup>12</sup> opinions regarding women reflect a closer approach to the Islamic norms than his contemporary European rabbis. Orthodox Jews adopted later most of his attitudes in this area, especially what refer to the exclusion of women from male company and the imposition of domestic functions to the woman.

Woman received a demonic image as temptresses and the provokers of lascivious thoughts. Apart from his wife, the religious Jew is forbidden to touch women, and certainly not admire or even pay attention to them. A religious Jew respects and loves his mother, his wife and his daughters, but ignores all other women. He will not shake a woman's hand. Women sit in a separate hidden gallery in the synagogue, in order to avoid men seeing them. In the ancient Temple in Jerusalem people stayed outside and there is no information about separation of women from men there.

Chapter 14 told that the State of Israel was founded thanks the Zionist movement, composed in the main of secular people. Most of the Zionist leaders respected religion by tradition, but were secular, and many of them were even atheists. The Declaration of Independence, the Carta Magna of Israel, begins by stating that the new country will not discriminate between color, sex, and religion. By this declaration, Israel accepts the principle of equality regarding to the status of man and woman, and the equality of the status of all religions – two fundamental assumptions that Orthodox Jews do not agree with them. If the Declaration of Independence of Israel had to be confirmed nowadays by the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), there is no chance it would pass. For over fifty years (ref. 2004), religious have impeded the acceptance of laws about objects discussed in

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11

The passage 'And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took a timbrel in her hand; and all women went out after her with timbrels and dances' (Exodus 15,20) tells about dances of women in public in earlier times.

12

Maimonides (1135-1204) – Jewish philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, physician, and the greatest religious authority of Sephardic origin, born in Cordoba (Spain), lived in Morocco and Egypt.

the Halakah (see footnote 8 in Chap. 14). The Knesset has not succeeded since 1948 (ref. 1996) to add to the constitution of the country any laws improving equality of rights regarding to sex, religion and race.

Laws like the Equal Pay for Equal Work Law, an important contribution for the women's equality, were legislated, but nothing relating to marriage and divorce, which are matters for the exclusive juridical competence of the religious courts (there is no civil marriage or divorce in Israel). It is superfluous to observe that women not nominate to sit in religious courts, while the participation of women in the civil courts is increasing constantly.<sup>13</sup> Women have reached even to the Supreme Court.

The *yeshiva* (Talmudic college) is an exclusive male institution. Especial schools for girls maintained by the Orthodoxy establishment indoctrinate the functions reserved for the woman in the family: bearing children, domestic chores, and serving the husband (inclusive the 'right' to work for supporting the home, while the husband learns in the *yeshiva*). Nevertheless, the number of religious women who learn in universities and become economically independent is increasing. Some of them abandon their religious environment to advance their careers.

There are notices about women who played in the past important roles in the society. The Bible tells us about authoritative queens and prophetesses (Deborah, Hulda). The Talmud refers to female scholars (Bruria). The *Hassidut*<sup>14</sup> in the past had many famous female rabbis. The same is happening in the Reform faction of the modern Jewry, demographically the greatest Jewish faction outside of Israel. Even in Israel, the Reformed Jews nominated female rabbis. Orthodox Jewry does not acknowledge the Reformed faction at all.

According the Bible, the first human creature who rebelled was Eve, the first woman. Whether it was because of curiosity or some other reason, she infringed God's prohibition and

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Despite the strong opposition of the religious establishment, governmental commissions dealing with religious affairs, such as budgets for religious institutions and nomination for official religious jobs, have elected women as members.

<sup>14</sup>

Hassidut - a sect founded in the eighteenth century by Baal-Shem-Tov (nickname of rabbi Israel ben Eliezer) in Poland. A popular and influent religious movement inspired by the mysticism of the Kabbalah, it observes complete devotion to the rabbi (every group has its rabbi, a leadership that usually passes from father to son).

convinced Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thanks to Eve, humans do not remain in the Garden of Eden, walking about naked here and there, in a state of boring ignorance and idleness.

For how much longer will the Orthodox religious wives conform to their status? I believe that Eve's combative qualities, revealed in Joan of Arc in a later era (Jewish history is overflowing with brave women in all areas), have not disappeared from the Jewish religious women.

The emancipation of the Jewish religious woman is a challenge of democracy in Israel.

## 17. SHARING A CAVE WITH A TIGER

*Why cheese don't love me. Who are my friends? Loneliness in multitude. Fellowship, Friendship, and Community.*

### *Individualism & Extroversion*

I am an inveterate extroverted individualist. Such an assertion invites two questions. How can an extrovert be an individualist (and the contrary), and how can an individualist live on a kibbutz, an ultra-collective society?

Apparently, there is a contradiction here, because an individualist advocates personal independence, while an extrovert is more interested in what goes on around him. On the other hand, being a closed framework the kibbutz limits personal freedom.

Nobody is free of influences of other people and their prejudices. The modern media deluges the mind night and day, without interruption. It is quite impossible to keep your head above water and see what is happening really. Who can truly orient himself in such a complex and dynamic world such as ours? Nevertheless, my individualism consists of an obsessive ambition to think for myself.

And my extroversion? It consists of my inability to keep secrets. I could never serve in an intelligence service, but could perhaps be a very good agent in the field of propaganda. I feel an irresistible impulse to divulge what I know. I suppose that if I were to discover or create something important, I would run about naked like Archimedes and shout 'Eureka' spreading the news to everyone. The last thing I would remember to do is to copyright my idea. Therefore, I have no chance of becoming rich like as Billy Gates.

Now have you understood how an individualist can be an extrovert? This book is a sample, and a result, of such an amalgamation.

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom, the absence of constraint, has always been one of the strongest aims of the individual. Everybody wants to be free to do what he wants, but absolute freedom is impossible. Firstly, the body limits every person, besides his natural physical, biological and psychological limitations. When we speak about human freedom, we refer in general to the field in which the society allows the individual to act. In this sense (freedom of social restrictions), the maximum degree of freedom is possible for persons who live entirely alone. 'Possible', because even a hermit who lives alone in a desert or a forest may assume voluntarily restrictions, in addition to the objective ones.

*Egocentric Autobiography*

Reading again what I have written up to now, I detect a certain egocentricity and egotism. So I ask, is it possible to write a non-egocentric autobiography? Anyone who writes an autobiography has no choice – he must write about himself. This book handles my thoughts as an individual in society and being my philosophical autobiography, it tells the reader about me (what I think); therefore, it is necessarily egocentric (that means I am the center of it). In order to avoid this disagreeable impression (egocentricity), many writers create fictive personages, who express their thoughts, philosophy, and ideology. Plato did it by means of dialogues. Voltaire wrote *Candide* to expose his philosophy. *Gullivers' Travels* expresses Jonathan Swift's criticism of the king and the parliament. I did not feel talented enough to build such literary creations. Even being conscious that it might radiate egocentricity, I say what I want to say in my own way. I would interpret this attitude, rather than egoism, as the courage to say what one thinks without hiding behind camouflage (literary images). More than courage, I prefer to call it honesty. I hope that the readers will see the wood for the trees and forgive the inconvenience.

*Individualism in Kibbutz*

How does individualism link to the kibbutz? Oh, a suitable question for a moot hearing! The best answer I can draw from my mind is the fact that I consider myself an individualist who lives over half a century in a kibbutz, and never felt any embarrassment. In order to live in a collective society like a kibbutz, one must renounce things and limit one's freedom. These conditions are not exceptional: every society imposes renunciation of some things and a restriction of freedom. The integration of a person in the kibbutz depends on his scale of values. Someone for whom the ownership of properties is of decisive importance will be unable to live in a kibbutz, because in the kibbutz there is no particular capital.<sup>2</sup> The only personal property of a kibbutz member is the tools in his house. In compensation, the kibbutz offers conveniences in other aspects of life. The kibbutz does not restrict initiative and spiritual independence more than non-kibbutzian society.

Individualists, persons who do not flow with the stream, will be in conflict with every environment. People are conservative,

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<sup>2</sup> Every member in Kibbutz holds some money in his account, but it will be ridiculous to call these sums 'capital'.

addicted to norms, and accept new ideas and innovations with difficulty. The kibbutz, being in a certain way an enlarged family, offers acceptance to its members. Everyone knows everyone, and within certain limits, the kibbutz tolerates eccentricity and advocates equality of people in rights and in human values, despite physical and mental diversity. This is the point.

I would mark two observations here:

First, about acceptance of its members/ When we speak about members of the kibbutz we refer to people fully integrated in the kibbutz, a process that may take three, four and more years after arrival to the formal status of membership. Meanwhile, the candidate and the new member are under a close observation and strict criticism. When my partners accept me who I am and what I think, I can allow me to be an individualist; I don't have to hide my ideas.

Second, about equality of people. A strong pressure is now building up to introduce differential salaries in the kibbutz: everyone will receive in accord of his 'contribution'. Just how much more a manager 'contributes' than a worker in the production line, this is an unqualifiedly notion. This concept, commonly accepted in capitalistic world, shakes the ideological foundations of the kibbutz, a society without layers of poor and wealthy people. The kibbutz that adopts such a system, ceases to be a kibbutz in the current meaning of the word (see Chapter 2 and others).

#### *Conservatism facing Developments*

'Man is a social animal' is an old saying that does not say very much. All we can learn from it is that humans in general live in society. Let us examine what this sociability means. What glue links people together?

Human society has passed many stages of development inasmuch as the tribe village up to the present metropolis. The sociability of the individual in his immediate environment changes clothes in several ways. An ambient where people live together, this is the common characteristic to all sorts of populations, tribe, village, city, metropolis; but the relations among people (the 'togetherness') and the conduct of the individual within the community change continuously.

It is very plausible that the primeval tribe was virtually a family. Every member knew all other members. Personal and mutual commitment linked them. The individual was absolutely dependent on the collective, and behaved like an actor who

knows his role in the play well. Everyone did what the community expected from him, and the freedom of initiative was thus limited. Such a model of society is evidently conservative. It has no propensity to change. The transition from the primeval tribal stage (let us say, in the Stone Age) up to the stage of town settlements took many thousands of centuries. Since the appearance of the first towns some 5000 years ago, social changes have become more intensive and dynamic. At present, the speed is so quick that an adult person lives in a world very different from the world in which he was born. Personal adaptation to these transformations is very hard. Ordinary individuals are extremely conservative. They do not like to change habits and are mostly unable to follow the rush of modern technology. Most elderly people in advanced countries are disconnected from their own environment.

The introduction of the computer provides a good example of human adaptive process in the face of changes. The computer required more than one generation in order to become a popular tool. Moses understood that the passage from slavery to freedom requires a profound process of adaptation (it is not the same as lightening a dark room by clicking a switch). Therefore, he wandered with the Jews in the desert for forty years, until a new free generation, which deserved the Land of Plenty, came of age.

The discrepancy between the deep-rooted conservatism of people and the dizzy developments of society is perhaps the main factor in the psychological conflicts of modern times. It may perhaps explain why in a world embarking on the twenty-first century, people rush stupidly back into the tenth (as it is happening with the fundamentalist outburst, specifically in the Islamic world). The only modernism they are interested to absorb is the military weapons, as atom bombs and missiles

*Individual & Collective*

In the prehistoric tribe, individual and collective interests were compatible. They were identical. The interests of the individual did not run beyond the limits of the community's interests. Individualism (in the sense used at the beginning of this chapter, that is, personal independence) is a by-product of humankind's progress towards civilization. Reciprocally, individualism has contributed to civilization's progress. Thinking in a different way has always been the main cause of inventions, innovations, and scientific advancement. The progress of humankind (if we accept human development from



prehistory to today as progress) was due to two complementary factors: individual changes of collectively accepted thoughts, and a subsequent collective acceptance of these individual changes. Human history seems like a peristaltic movement of the muscles, which through continuous contractions and dilatation impels humankind forward. The collective, being by nature conservative, contracts. Individualism, seeking new ways and ideas, enlarges the possibilities. Collectiveness and conservatism tend to stagnation. A prevalence of individualism incites anarchy. Only the cooperation and successful interaction of both opposite forces, the symbiosis of the individual with the collective, promotes progress.

*Identification with the Collective*

The tribe, society, community, town, city – no matter what sort of human group – is always a gathering of individuals. A survey of history indicates, despite the ups and downs, a general improvement of freedom of the individual and his personal rights. Democracy, a modern phase of this process, has not evolved simultaneous in all regions of the world. The process is not regular and consistent, but it happens. The knowledge (please, note that I am not using the word “belief”) that humankind is moving towards betterment of individual conditions is necessary in order to push the process forwards. Not anyone who does not identify himself with this premise will collaborate with others to realize it. I will later discuss the importance of the identification of the individual with the goals of the collective.

Some words about emotional relations of a person to his environment. Let us follow someone walking along Broadway Avenue in New York and observe his reactions to the people he meets on his way. Thousands of people pass on his right and left side. What is his reaction towards them? Mostly – indifference. Probably he simply does not see them, or does not pay them any attention. If he meets a stumbling drunkard, it is quite sure he will try to get far away from him, showing some disgust. If he meets a little child who smiles at him, perhaps he might stop for a moment to return the child’s smile and give him or her a friendly wave of the hand.

The picture drawn in the previous paragraph about the attitude of a person to other people in the street reflects on all other possible situations. We can sum up the matter by saying that the individual person is almost indifferent to all other

people in the world, though we feel sympathy or antipathy towards certain people. A person who lives in an apartment house almost invariably ignores most of the neighbors in his building. With some of the neighbors, he maintains a level of friendship. The others, he ignores.

A more enhanced discussion about the theme – how the individual person relates to other people – in later paragraphs.

*Solidarity Glues People*

Let us return to the query at the beginning of the chapter: what glues people together? The main factor – they have no choice. Only the very eccentric persons, even among people that are free to do it, prefer to lead a hermit's life in a forest or a desert. We are far too 'domesticated' to return to savage living. The more we are civilized, the more we depend on other people, but beyond lack of choice there must be some glue for keeping people together. Among free people, the glue is solidarity. For slaves or captives who cannot flee, 'no choice' remains the only reason.

Solidarity is the union of interests, purposes, and feelings of all individuals of a group.<sup>3</sup> In sum, it of the store of elements they have in common. The more and stronger these elements are, the closer the members of the group will be to one another. The Mayor of New York and the Harlem's homeless live in the same city, but the solidarity between them is not the same as the solidarity between married couples. It is reasonable that both the mayor and the homeless have the same interests that a meteor will not fall upon the city and destroy it. From this ridiculous example, we can learn how volatile solidarity is in intensity and value, according to circumstances.

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<sup>33</sup> Every manifestation of solidarity implicates in the manifestation of non-solidarity (or anti-solidarity). Animosity is not the antonym of solidarity, but it is the best word I found to define the situation contrary to the situation we called in this chapter "solidarity". Every concept, or definition, is a collection of one or more elements (attributes, thoughts), therefore not all other possible elements (they are unlimited and infinite) belongs to it. There cannot be something **A** without another something **B** that is not **A**.

In order that something can be *large*, there must be the possibility of *small*. *Tall* is not conceivable without *short*, *full* without *empty*, and so on. Therefore, if there is a God, *He is not everything*, because in order to be everything there must be at least one thing that is not God. The existence of such a thing (Not-God) contradicts the premise that God is everything. Humankind would not exist without the existence of beings that are not humans. When we consider a group, we automatically admit an infinity of elements that does not belong to it. I will return to this property later.

A society, community, town or any other human group is not a crystal (a structure constituted of similar molecules identically arranged), but an amorphous conglomerate of different individuals. Every element of feeling, purpose, or identification common to two or more persons may become a solidarity link for them. Religion, ethnicity, ideology, language, skin color, sex, profession, family, sports, hobbies, and so on are all elements of solidarity.

The minimum solidarity's common denominator of all members of a group is just belonging to it. For humankind, the broadest human group, the unique solidarity element that is surely common to all its members is of course that all they are human beings.

The greater the number of members in a group, the fewer the possible elements of solidarity among them. On the other hand, the more elements of solidarity there are common to the members of a group, the stronger the cohesion of the group is. Because of this, every group wants to enlarge its solidarity components in order to increase its survival prospect. Big formations create artificial elements of solidarity in order to amplify cohesion among the members: symbols (standards, hymns, signals, seals, slogans, and uniforms), rituals (matrimony, sacraments, baptism, oath ceremonies, and parades) and myths (heroes, saints). Symbols, rituals and myths are simple, practical and secure elements with which to glue heterogeneous populations. It is easy to provide them equally to all members, rich or poor, young or old, clever or ignorant, strong or weak. Countries, religions, armies, parties, sport clubs, and other sorts of groups use them profusely.

It is worth underlining the importance of signs which have a mystical and magic influence upon people. The Jewish six-pointed star seal of David, the cross of Christ, the Nazi swastika, the Red Cross, the Communist hammer and sickle and the 'V' for victory are samples of powerful signs. Industries and commercial firms widely employ signs and slogans; they are good propaganda tools for publicizing products. War cries, as ancient as humans are, have always mobilized people. They act upon crowd like the whistle that starts a sport competition.

Patriotism is a manifestation of solidarity, which all countries encourage. Sport clubs, colleges, the army, elitist units instill the esprit de corps – 'one for all, all for one'. Passwords and common secrets held in common are effective tools for promoting comradeship.

There are many interesting solidarity elements.<sup>4</sup> Let us begin with language.

I could not obtain in 1990 any information in Charles De Gaulle airport (I understand written French perfectly, but I do not speak that language). In this public place, that serves millions of people from all over the world, none of the clerks or police officers answered me when I spoke to them in English. They looked at me with a strange frozen expression as if they could not see me, or with a bemused expression, as if I arrived from another planet. I supposed that people who work in such an international place must know at least one language other than French, but they spoke only French.<sup>5</sup> The same thing happened in Quebec Province, despite English being an official language there. France clings to the French language like a shipwrecked person hangs on to a piece of wood. The French language seems to be the main solidarity element of the Quebecois people.<sup>6</sup>

A very similar event occurred in Palestine before Israel's independence, and during the first years of the young state. If someone spoke Yiddish in public, somebody would remind him 'you are in Eretz Israel – speak Hebrew!' Hebrew was (and is still) a central element of solidarity of the nation. People who then occupied public positions, or went overseas for national missions, had to adopt Hebrew (or Hebrew-sounding) surnames. All members of the first sports teams that went to Europe to international competitions Hebraized their surnames. As Israel becomes surer of herself, the Hebrew zealotry weakens. People do not worry as much about the purity of the Hebrew language and the use of American expressions have become very 'in'.

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<sup>4</sup> Former chapters have already aired some ideas and examples that will reappear with different forms and emphasis in next paragraphs. Because of their importance and relevancy to the object of the current chapter, I do not see any harm in repeating them. Repetition is a common didactic method, very effective for memorizing things (and for brainwashing purposes...).

<sup>5</sup> In 2004, I visit Paris again. A wonder: everybody speaks English...

<sup>6</sup> The French government always provides a massive support to Francophone (French speakers) people in conflict with Anglophones (English speakers). This support often includes weapons and direct military assistance (instructors). In the last years of the 1990's, the efforts to further French culture in Africa have contributed to ethnic bloodshed there. In Rwanda alone, the number of dead and refugees reach to millions. Even the tens of millions of dead and wounded in Europe at Second World War were the result of the fight of the Nazis on behalf a 'superior' culture, the Aryan culture.

Hotels and stores prefer English and other language names. Dizengoff Center, and not Merkhaz Dizengoff, is the name people go for.

The damage that the realization of the Zionist goal, the creation of a Jewish state, caused to Yiddish language is irreparable.<sup>7</sup> Yiddish was the vernacular of eastern European Jewry and of the Jewish emigrants of these communities throughout the world. I say 'was', because Yiddish is today a dim shadow of what it was before the Second World War. Twelve million Jews spoke Yiddish then. Yiddish was for them the main and sometimes exclusive tongue, certainly their strongest solidarity glue.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Yiddish literature flourished both in quantity and in quality. The Nobel Prize for Literature conferred on Isaac Bashevis-Singer may be considered the requiem for Yiddish. Present-day descendants of Jewish immigrants whose vernacular was Yiddish, hardly understand the language and are unable to speak it. Israel absorbed the greatest number of European Jewish survivors, but drove out their language.

The young State of Israel could not renounce primacy of the Hebrew language as the solidarity glue for grafting the new Israeli identity on to its new and culturally diverse citizens. Yiddish paid the price for the consolidation of the new Jewish people in Israel. The same can be said of Ladino, the Romance language with Hebrew idioms, spoken by Sephardic Jews.

Today, Israeli Universities maintain departments of Yiddish and Ladino learning and research, beside Latin, classic Greek, Sanskrit, and other dead languages. In recent years, there has been an increased awareness about the wasting of the enormous Jewish cultural legacy of the Diaspora. National and international funds have risen in an effort to compile songs, folklore, dances, and customs. 'Yimbal', a Yemenite-Jewish dance troupe that has been performing for roughly half a century, is a true source of Israeli cultural pride.

The Maimona Festivity of the Moroccan Jews becomes a national festival, and Jews of other regions and cultures are imitating them in developing their own traditions. Even the "Day of Land," a manifestation of the Arab minority in Israel against the government policy, is slowly becoming a national

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<sup>7</sup> Yiddish, a High German dialect enriched with Hebrew and Slavic words written in Hebrew characters, is a fluent language rich in humor without parallel for expressiveness. Its canning idioms are quite impossible to translate.

tradition. A known technique for improving the unit's solidarity, if it is impossible to eliminate exceptional elements of a part of the group, is to adopt the exception as a rule for the whole group. All religions have done this.

*Pluralism is Democracy*

'One country, one people, one language',<sup>9</sup> the slogan that is supposed to denote the essence of Zionism, is now sharing its primacy with a more pluralistic approach. Nostalgia to traditions from Diaspora is no longer shameful. Nowadays, Israeli restaurants offer besides exotic 'kosher' dishes from the Far East (Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Filipino, etc.), plenty of popular traditional menus from all Jewish sources.

Sympathy towards pluralism may become a stronger factor of solidarity than the old monolithic madness. Acceptance of a pluralistic approach as an element of solidarity is a question of philosophical decision and education. Pluralism, the respect for other people and customs different of yours, is an antithesis of fascism.

Pluralism is finest face of democracy.

*Solidarity & Animosity*

Every word in the dictionary may represent an element of solidarity, or on contrary, of animosity. Solidarity and animosity are not exactly adverse. One is not strictly the opposite of the other. Two persons from different solidarity groups may not necessarily have animosity between them. Perhaps the one had never been noticed or formed any sort of relationship to the other. On other the hand, animosity is quite possible between two persons who belong to the same solidarity circle. Solidarity and animosity may interweave. How can we explain the animosity explosions that occur within the family, normally a high solidarity entity, perhaps the oldest solidarity cell? Two brothers may hate one another. Violence within the family can

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<sup>8</sup> In the Jewish religion, there are many visible pagan traces: the names of months, holiday motifs, some rituals and prejudices. It was easier to adopt (and adapt) them than eliminate them. The other monotheist religions did the same.

<sup>9</sup> This motto, which excited me when I was young, smacks of fascism to my present taste. Nowadays I advocate pluralism. I do not sense a contradiction between loyalty to a country with a diversity of languages and people. Nowadays, it is admissible in Israel to hold extra passport, additional to the Israeli one.

reach an extreme intensity. Newspapers are full of reports of alienation, abuse and even murder against wives and children.

Rivalry is a common element of animosity between persons of the same solidarity group. The success of a football team depends on cooperation amongst the players, but every player has a personal interest of distinguishing himself. The player's dilemma about passing the ball to his comrade or trying to score the goal himself represents a permanent conflict between the individual and the collective interest. When the interests of the individual and the interests of the collective move in the same direction, or at least reach equilibrium, they become a strong factor for the success of both in unison.

People may admire and even idolize successful movie stars, football players and party leaders, without belonging to their solidarity group. At the same time, success of some people may awaken unkind feelings amongst their near friends and associates. Therefore, animosity can exist within solidarity, while good will and sympathy may prevail amongst different and even adverse groups. Apparently, these paradoxical facts shake my theories about solidarity as glue for people. Humans are so complex and unpredictable that no scientific formulae can forecast their conduct. We can at best try to explain their behavior after they have acted (such explanations are the psychologists' specialty). Water will forever evaporate at the boiling point; what a human will do, nobody knows! Even the proper person often cannot forecast his own behavior.

Solidarity and animosity may change because of external circumstances and relationships. After the October Revolution in tsarist Russia, and especially when the USSR signed the Ribbentrop-Molotov Nazi-Soviet Pact with Germany (1939), there prevailed a strong animosity between the capitalist countries and USSR. When Germany invaded the USSR, it became an ally of the Western countries, and the United States sent Russia massive support in weapons and provisions ('the enemy of my enemy is my friend'). After the victory over Germany, the old animosity returned (the cold war) until the collapse of the Soviet regime) in 1994. Solidarity overcame the historical animosity again (for the present, at least. Ref. 2003).

Immigrants cultivate many ties of solidarity. Their common confrontation with the new environment forges links among them. Even nostalgia for the former country plays an important role of sentimental solidarity. Many immigrants reside together in exclusive neighborhoods, at least in the first stages of adaptation to the new country. They organize communities and

other social, cultural and economic enterprises, based on their former countries. City's names such as New York, New Jersey and New Orleans are references to such sentimental linkages.

Jewish immigrants in the American continent created innumerable organizations, based on their not only common religion or country of birth, but also on the town and village from which they came. A curious social solidarity entity is the 'brotherhood-on-ship'. Jewish immigrants until the Second World War reached the new continent after a long journey by ship (sometimes even a month), which created among them a very special relationship. Notwithstanding, everyone developed different social and economic status in the new homeland, a *shifsbridder* (brother-on-ship in Yiddish) remains a *shifsbridder* for ever. People from extremely different situations in life maintain friendly relations, and even support one another, only because they have reached the country on the same ship.

#### *Solidarity in Humankind*

As an example of how an incidental meeting may 'glue' (solidarity) for a long time, I want to use my own personal experience. I meet my future wife (who then lived in a city 4,000 kilometers away from my home) only once (one unique day!) at a national meeting of the Zionist Youth Movement that we both belonged to. Three months later, we were married and we have now been together for over half a century. A glance may be enough for lifetime solidarity (or animosity)!

We have already observed that on the level of the largest group of human beings, the whole of humankind, the elements of solidarity are minimal. As already stated, perhaps the only common factor to all members of this group is belonging to it. Throughout history, there have been people who thought deeply about closer human ties, but the results so far are not good. Rulers have dreamed of conquering the whole world for creating one single empire of all humankind. How would we be if someone of them succeeded in this? I seriously doubt that for all the people in the world to be under one unique ruler is a good idea, but my expectation is that solidarity elements will increase in humankind. The moral commitment of the humanistic philosophy towards all humans – as well as the ambition of religions and conquerors to dominate the world – aims to unit all humankind. This philosophy, mixed with the will to improve understanding among people and avoid war and violence, is the ideological basis of the United Nations Organization.



I am not skilled enough to evaluate the UN's achievements, and do not intend to expound on its activities. There are many controversial aspects about what it does and does not do. Nevertheless, the UN is the widest forum of communication among people from all over the world.

*Tiger in a Cave*

I cannot remember when I heard the story about the man who lost during a stormy weather his way in a forest and found a cave. It was a cold and dark night. Wet and tired, he fell fast asleep. In the morning, the hot rays of the sun woke him and he sensed that somebody else was in the cave. A big tiger came up, looked at him, and left. I do not know if such an event is real, but its message is neat. Participating in difficult and dramatic situations may create solidarity, even with a tiger.

Philanthropy, humanitarianism, altruism, and all other positive feelings for improving our general human welfare are important elements of human solidarity, and in the past, they were the only ones. In the present century a new factor appeared – ecology.

What salad am I mixing here, with tigers, ecology and solidarity?

Well, now is the exact moment to introduce our tiger into the discussion. Because of the wild stormy weather raging outdoors, this fierce and voracious feline in our fable spent a peaceful night in a cave with a human. Common adversity may create ties of solidarity (as we said in a former paragraph, the enemy of my enemy is my friend). Ecological troubles caused by human activities are the main menace to the future of humankind and most living creatures on our planet. Never in the past has been a factor that threatened us on such a universal scale. Only the cooperation of all the people in the world can attenuate the effects of the ecological disturbances.

Ecology evokes the picture of people dining and dancing in the *Titanic's* luxurious rooms while the ship sunk. This worn metaphor makes me smile, because personally I am not worried about an eventual ecological catastrophe ending the world. Such a calamity seems to be very far away – but how can a person living today write about humankind and ignore ecology?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I have traveled a bit around the world and have seen how many untouched areas of oceans and continents still exist for humans to dirty, destroy, and devastate. It is not likely that the volume of the ecological damage in the next

The rubbish created by human activities really is a menace to the future. Smoke and chemical residues pollute the air, rivers and oceans, causing serious damage to fauna and flora. The biggest construction in Tel Aviv is the town's garbage pile (it is also the highest hill). Radioactive waste is still a problem without solution.

In Chapter 9 discussed the differences between the residues of nature's activities and those of the human activities. While the nature's 'industry' expels excrements, sweat, urine, CO<sub>2</sub> (from respiration), and O<sub>2</sub> (from chlorophyll process) – materials which nature recycles in order to permit life –, human industry yields garbage, litter, and junk, of which only a small part is recycled for further use. Most of it, such as plastic utensils, does not deteriorate so quickly, and it is very difficult to get rid of it. The pouring of poisonous materials into rivers killing fish and other aquatic creatures causes an outstanding ecological problem. Drinking water is becoming serious issue in populated centers.

Rivers flow to sea, and so do the poisons. Over 500 million tons of residues reach annually the Mediterranean Sea (ref. 2000). About one hundred million people populate the area from where the material came; i.e. every person 'produces' annually 5 tons of industrial garbage. It is obvious that this average is not exact: African band does not 'produce' as much as Southern Europe does.

The damage to seas is not yet the end. Smoke and gazes damage the atmosphere... Who hasn't yet heard about the hole in the ozone layer? Not every one understands it, but this is a very serious problem. What can I add about radioactive

few generations will reach the dimensions of a world calamity. Therefore, I am not in danger, but my personally situation is not the question.

A Talmudic tale tells of an old man who planted a carob. People asked him "Will you live seventy years to eat its fruit?" He replies, "I found a world with carobs. Like my ancestors who planted trees for me, I am planting for my children".

This chapter opens with my confessing that I am an individualist, and by observing that I can detect some traces of egocentricity and egotism in my writing. Perhaps it is possible to add other faults, but definitely not that I am an egoist. I think I was born in a wonderful world and have had the fortune to witness extraordinary human achievements in all fields, such as the first step on the moon (unfortunately, I have also witnessed terrible wars and tragedies). We have a moral commitment to our descendants to transmit them a world that will be no worse than the world we received from our forebears. A pathetic phrase, I agree, but it embodies the highest moral expression of humanity.

residues, that scientists plan to send into space and to other planets?

Previous Chapters have already referred to the devastation of forests, irresponsible hunting, and annihilation of thousands of species of flora and fauna the human activity caused in the world. There is no doubt that the Man is greatest destroyer, next to natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, deluges, typhoons, epidemics, and meteorites.<sup>11</sup>

The ecological injury is not the same for all people. Industrial zones and rich consumers are the greatest ‘contributors’. In a *grosso modo*, ten percent of humankind produces ninety percent of the ecological damage in the world. Elephants’ killers and whale hunters, diamonds and gold seekers, road builders and forests devastators are only tools of destruction. They are not the consumers of their activities. They do it because industries and people pay them.

Human beings are damaging their habitat – the world. – and they do not know it.

Ecological damage is not a question of morality, but a matter of objective interest of all people. To plant awareness of this truth into the mind of every person, in order to improve human solidarity on facing the ecological challenge, demands a broad international educational action: a fitting mission for the United Nations Organization.

#### *Consolidating Solidarities*

An earlier paragraph stated that every solidarity group tries to exclude beings that do not belong to it. While members of a group have no special consideration regarding those who do not belong to it, it is very understandable if they have some animosity to them. Common animosity against someone or something may be a strong element of solidarity, and the

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<sup>11</sup> According to estimates of planetary scientists, statistically every 300,000 years a one-kilometer meteorite strikes Earth. The last one 250,000 years ago dug an enormous holes, the Barringer Crater near Winslow, Arizona. Therefore, we have to wait 50,000 years until the next one.

Sixty-five million years ago an asteroid ten kilometers in diameter crashed in Earth in the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico forming the Chicxulub Crater, the largest known impact basin made on Earth in the past billion years, and killing off more than half of the world’s species, including the dinosaurs. For similar events, humans have no rain checks.

contrary it is even true: solidarity may cause strong animosity against those people who do not belong to the group. Here are some examples:

White people's disdain for black people was the solidarity element that gave rise to the Ku Klux Klan, causing a turn to wild animosity against the black population. Solidarity and animosity interact in a repeating cycle, with one element strengthening the other.

In order to ensure the solidarity of the German people for political purposes, the Nazis designated an object of animosity — the Jews. They were not satisfied with excluding the Jews from their solidarity element, the Aryan race. Their propaganda portrayed the Jews as rats; i.e. the Nazis excluded the Jews from the group of human beings. They called the action against Jews 'sanitätzia' (sanitation), insinuating that killing of Jews aims to protect public health. This is not a question of semantics, but a deep psychological step: removing the farther a person from a solidarity group, the more the animosity of this group against him is possible, and vice-versa.

This technique is not an invention of the Nazis. They only carried out the task. Enemy at all times was always painted in deprecatory colors. The distortion of the enemy's human shape to stir up animosity against him has always paved the way for motivation to fight against him. I suppose that all armies have slogans in their military lexicon for this purpose. In Israel, for instance, instead of *destroy* or *defeat* the enemy, we used to say 'Mow the enemy down,' because it is easier to mow grass than to kill a human being.

If every person regarded all other people as humans like himself, solidarity would increase, animosity would decrease, and war would be impossible.

#### *Role of Distance in Solidarity*

Distance plays an important role in solidarity. People are inclined to identify themselves with what is close to them, and reject (or be afraid of) what is far away. Your people and country are closer to you than other people are. A human is closer than an animal. A mammal is closer than a reptile. A reptile is closer than an insect. This statement is of course very general. Maybe you have a dog you love more than... (You may end the sentence). The last example does not annul distance as a factor of solidarity; solidarity depends on a complexity of things. A person sensitive to the beauty of nature may love flowers, trees, and scenic views. A person who handles snakes,

frogs, or insects may feel affection for them. Our interest in things is a result of environment, tradition, and education.

We want the survival of what interests us, and the removal of what does not interest us: a very normal attitude. We do everything we can to avoid pain and remove disturbances. We try to destroy or nullify without compassion diseases viruses, bacteria, bugs and pests). Only scientists who investigate them will bother to conserve them, in order to learn how to destroy them.

Mice cause a lot of damage, but I have a serious problem about eliminating these repugnant beings if they appear in my house. On other hand, I have no scruples about killing mosquitoes that disturb me, neither to pour boiling water on ants' nests in my garden. These acts would certainly horrify an Indian fakir, who examines carefully where he treads on and sits, not to trample a single living thing. What I said; one's approach to things depends on one's mentality.

By the way, with reference to ants, I once saw an interesting animation movie about ants. It portrayed a fictional world where ants were large, civilized, handsomely dressed and acted like humans; the humans were very small, naked and acted like ants. The 'human' ants fought against the 'ant' humans exactly as we, the humans, combat ants – with pulverizations and other tools. Despite that the 'human' ants are presented with human attributes and behavior, and the humans are the pernicious 'insects', no doubt all the spectators in the cinema identified themselves with the 'ant' humans, because their shape was like ours. I suppose that if an anopheles mosquito would write this chapter, it would present it differently: the most ethical ideal would be the transmission of malaria.

#### *Kibbutz & Utopia*

The kibbutz, as a collective community settlement, is a *par excellence* solidarity entity. Formally, the kibbutz acts as an enlarged family. The second chapter was an attempt to describe the kibbutz, its structure, organization, and performances. It was not a simple task, because the kibbutz is a dynamic organism with an ongoing development. Especially now, at the end of the twentieth century, the transformations are so intense and unexpected that nobody can predict what the kibbutz will be in the next decade. Some chapters discussed this topic, which is not completely exhausted.

The kibbutz is not a utopia and is far from being a paradise on Earth. In order to be a paradise its members would have to be

angels, and they are not. The kibbutz members are normal human beings, like all human beings in the world, with the same qualities, advantages and disadvantages. In contrast to other people, kibbutz members resolved freely and voluntarily to live in such a sort of special community of partnership and mutual assistance.

The kibbutz, despite problems and inner conflicts, remains in 2000 a high manifestation of social human solidarity. I have dated the last sentence because nobody can foretell how much longer this situation will continue. I am not a pessimist at all – I am only trying to be realistic.

## 18. MY SYMPHONY

*What can I say that I did not say until now?*

*Grapes in a Vineyard*

Ten full years have passed since I resolved in 1974 to summarize in a book my thoughts about the individual and his relation to society. At the time I could not have imagined the years it would take to complete my task. The material was ready in my mind (in a *grosso modo*). My ideas were waiting grouped in clusters like juicy grapes in an abundant vineyard. All I needed to do was to pick them.

Now I know the reasons why it took so long. I am not a professional writer, for whom writing is his job. On the scale of my personal preferences, this book stood at the top, but I could not put off my other commitments. The main reason is that we often cannot eat immediately the fruit we've picked it. Fruits need to ripen, to become sweeter. The translation of ideas in the mind onto paper requires delicate treatment. I knew exactly what I wanted to say, but I often felt awkward about writing. The mind needs no bottles to contain its ideas, but to transmit them to others we must pour them into words, and make them up with sentences. Creating something neat, pleasant and attractive, which expresses what you want, is not such a simple task.

*Beethoven and this Book*

On rereading what I have written, I get the impression that I could reduce the whole book into two words. Beethoven took four sounds, arranged them in a series of variations, using combinations of musical instruments, and created a masterpiece, the *Fifth Symphony*.

It is pretentious to compare this book, my 'little symphony, with Beethoven's symphonies, but I modestly confess that I thought of Beethoven while conceiving the content of these chapters.<sup>1</sup> In one sense, I imitated his technique by repeating the

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<sup>1</sup> Ever since man has investigated nature and tried to decipher its secrets, he has stood astonished at what he called 'the harmony of the universe'. Philosophers, scientists and theologians of all times, from the Greeks to Albert Einstein, saw in this harmony evidence of the existence of a superior power. Music was always associated with this conception. Songs, dances, music playing in religious rituals bring man closer to God.

central motif in many guises and aspects. Maybe because of my eagerness to approach every issue from several angles and viewpoints, the connection between passages and the main idea of the chapter is not always immediately visible. I suppose that the result is a caricature of a symphony, because ultimately, there are differences between Beethoven and me. The greatest of them, he is dead and I am still alive.

*Reread to Understand*

Every attempt to sum up the ideas I have set out in this book might itself involve in a more voluminous book than the current one. A commentary on a fourteen-line sonnet may end in a book of 500 pages. I will not do it. I prefer to recommend a second reading. When you have a global knowledge of the whole, it is easier to delve into the parts and understand the purpose of the details. Nothing in this book is casual.

The central point beyond my examples and expositions is that human being is a creature still in evolution – becoming more human. If we compare human beings from different periods for attributes and qualities defined as specifically human, we may conclude that the modern human is more human than the human being was one million and even 10,000 years ago. The direction of the process is clear. A curious notion would be the possibilities of calculating the rate of humanity in human being, by counting in his DNA how many elements belong exclusively to him, and how many of them are similar to those of the chimpanzee. In any case, despite the digressions, and unsynchronized nature of the process in all humankind, history shows a permanent and definitive development towards more humanity, and not towards more baboonery. Stupid fanatics can murder Giovanni Bruno, Thomas Moore, Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, John Kennedy, Anuar Sadhat, Itzhak Rabin and other dreamers of peace, freedom, and dignity; but they cannot stop history. *Ep pur si muove*. All what I want to say is – do not trust nature. Nature's ways are cruel, dolorous, and painful. Let humankind take its destiny in its own hands, and soften the birth pangs of what must be born. Man can do it.

The human being developed tools and became so powerful that he is the only creature able to disturb the ecological equilibrium of the Earth. Statistics can predict the world population in the next ten, twenty and hundred years. Coexistence in the face of such a population is a crucial question; the answer depends on every individual. Will he



devour his fellow man in order to survive, or cooperate in finding a mutual solution? Extinction of hundreds (and thousands) of specimens of the world's flora and fauna parallels the vertiginous growing of the human population on our planet. This well-known fact, which does not perturb the sleep of many people, may serve as a red light for those who are aware.

In his microenvironment, a person may be an egoist and care only for his particular interests improving his personal ownership (in the widest meaning of this word: cultural, intellectual, material, etc.), but in the macro-world such an exclusive procedure may bring catastrophe to all.

I am not speaking about Utopia, idealism, or fantasies. I am speaking about practice and reality: technology in modern man's domain is like fire; humanity can use it to warm and cook, or burn and destroy. Man must decide how to use his power. You and I are equal partners in this decision.

As an inveterate individualist who believes in the strength of the individual, I am conscious of my will, my rights, my ambitions, and my dreams. Therefore, I understand and respect the will, rights, ambitions, and dreams of all other people. All people are like me. Nobody is superior to me. Nobody is inferior.

I do not believe in the promises of religions, sects, parties, or any other organizations about redemption of the world in the future. Nevertheless, because I do not accept any sort of violence, I strive for spontaneous and voluntary consensus of tolerance, peace, cooperation, and mutual respect. Leaders rule people, but people may become a stream that no pilot can ignore.

*Humankind as Passenger*

At least one interest must be common to all humanity's passengers – those who enjoy first class, and those who sleep on deck – to prevent the ships from sinking. Do they know it? The extraordinary means of modern communication enable the swift propagation of this truth (see the next paragraph about Nixon) by exclaiming again and again 'People of the world, instead of destroying one other, let us unite on the behalf of all'.<sup>2</sup> It sounds

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, forgive me. I have corrupted your famous 'Workers of the world, unite...' Your pathetic appeal is now obsolete and does not fit the modern sophisticated and high-tech society. In your time, with the upsurge of industry, your proletariat was a growing mass of people who began to play a central role in the stage of history. You could not foresee the

pathetic, but I believe in propaganda. Coca-Cola uses it with evident success.

*Because of Nixon*

'You are not too stupid: how can you be so optimistic after what you have written in the previous chapters?'

'Because of Richard Nixon!'

This answer requires some explanation. In my opinion, after the former President of United States of America, Richard Nixon, humanity is not the same as before. This statement does not concern to Nixon's role in the Vietnam War, nor America's reconciliation with China, nor his commitment and massive support of the State of Israel. I am referring to a more prosaic event – his resignation. For the first time in history, public opinion, awakened by two ordinary journalists, without resorting to violence or murder, forced the powerful leader of a superpower to leave office voluntarily, remaining alive and free.

Nixon's resignation is an historical cornerstone – democracy's most impressive accomplishment in the twentieth century. It showed that public opinion can change history, and ordinary men can influence public opinion. Brazil, Japan, and Italy all followed this example. Nixon's resignation conferred value on the common people.

Modern means of communication have diminished world's distances. In order to transmit a message, another Phidippides does not have to run until he dies of exhaustion. Television, radio, and other electronic means propagate the day's news and ideas more quickly than the chain reaction of an atomic bomb. The same means that Hitler and other dictators used to implant fascism, racism, animosity, hate, and violence are now able to move people on to a more humanistic path. Nowadays humans have better instruments to guide humankind than the way a sailor steers his boat. The question is, towards what direction they will take.

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development of technology, robotics, automatics, computing and all new means of communication. Today the proletariat is not the vehicle of progress, but only its attendants. The destiny of humanity depends not on those who work with machines, but on those who design and create them; not on those who create with their hands, but on those who create with their brains.

Marx misunderstood people. The pilots of modern society are the managers, administrators, marketing specialists, brokers, mediators, and other people who do not physically produce things with their own hands, but deal with them.

*Impossible May Be Possible*

What seems to be impossible yesterday may tomorrow be possible. Even after Pearl Harbor, Okinawa and Hiroshima, the United States and Japan can collaborate. England, France and Germany participate in a common European market, after over 1,000 years of conflicts, antagonism and belligerence. Israel's Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin shakes Yasser Arafat's hand. Nelson Mandela has become the president of South Africa. In the ocean of insecurity and violence in the world, these events are drops of hope. Humankind is a long way from living harmoniously, but there is evident advancement, through a pronounced zigzag with regressions and falls, but advancement nonetheless. Paraphrasing Armstrong's saying when he walked on the moon, 'It's a small step in changing humankind to being more human'.

How can we remain pessimistic after Pangloss' revelation that we live in the best of all worlds?

*Rudyard Kipling's Poem*

If I would have to choose a refrain for this book, I would take Rudyard Kipling's poem 'If'. I do not remember the words by heart (I learned this poem in school over fifty years ago), but I remember the content perfectly. It fits wonderfully the message that this book supposes to present. This poem exposes the conditions (Ifs) that he who fulfills them (or a part of them), is a Man. In other words, in order to be human, it is not enough to be born a human being. Some moral parameters are needed.

The symphonic metaphor forming the epilogue of this book it is not here by chance. Many musical instruments participate in a symphony. They are of all sorts and shapes. The more, the better. Each plays its own melody, but if they play together in harmony, what wonderful music they can create. I would like to live in a symphonic world, where everyone plays his own melody in harmony with everyone else. What is feasible in an orchestra of one hundred players is more complicated in an orchestra of billions, and may be almost impossible; but it is a great challenge... perhaps the only chance for humankind.

This message is not a revelation. It only expresses the credo of a simple stubborn person, who is not a leader, nor a prophet, but obstinately thinks with his own mind and likes to express what he thinks.

What have I learned by writing this book? Now I know: I am not able to change *the* world, but I am able to change *a* world – I myself – and I’m trying to do it.

Most great musical creations end with an enthusiastic crescendo of all instruments, an ecstasy of drumming, and a final colossal clash of cymbals. I will end my modest sinfonietta with its motto (the two words I referred to in the beginning of this chapter), in a soft whispered undertone:

*Be human!*