

## **It is better to learn one thing from Abbas's speech, its conclusion**

Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, May 7, 2018

Jewish messianism, redemption by heaven, served as an excuse to explain the Jewish people's failure to take responsibility for their fate and as a justification for their inability to transform their status from a collection of dispersed and largely devoid communities to a sovereign people in their homeland. The belief was that with the coming of the messiah all the problems of the Jewish people, and the entire world, will come to their solution and the kingdom of Shadi will have to take its place on earth. Very comforting, very liberating, but impractical as a solution. Modern Zionism - Herzl, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky and others - against the background of the dramatic changes in the world, especially in Europe and the Middle East, mainly the growth of national movements and the formulation of the new world order after the First World War based on the principle of self-determination, pushed back against the excuses, and gave birth to the State of Israel. It was not deterred by a tremendous, stubborn, sophisticated effort that exacted a heavy toll on it until its success. Zionist leaders generally read the political, security, settlement, demographic and social maps and adapted the path to achieving the goal - the establishment of a democratic state with a Jewish majority, even at the cost of giving up part of the Land of Israel.

Similarly to the messianic vision for the future, where the 'wolf lives with the lamb', so to, many of the advocates of the two-state solution have recently sought to establish the one state in which Jews, Arabs and others will live in equality. In their distressed messianic dream of the one state - a federation, a confederation, a state of all its citizens, and so forth - they seek to remove from themselves the sense of responsibility and commitment to achieving the only possible solution by agreement. To justify their new position, they do not place the universal value of the human being above the national and religious value, but relay on practical grounds. They adopt the mantra of the opponents of compromise, partition and separation, which holds that the demographic and spatial reality in the West Bank is irreversible, or that 20 percent of Israelis living

beyond the Green Line cannot be evacuated, and sometimes they will argue that at this stage there is no Palestinian and / or Israeli partner for the two states solution.

There is no need to repeat the entire factual argument, based on the parties' proposals in negotiations, which shows that the lie has no legs and indicates that there is full feasibility for a two-state solution based on the known parameters. Allowing Israel to maintain four of five Israelis living beyond the Green Line in a territorial swap of only 4 percent, to improve Israel's security situation, to make most of Jerusalem its recognized capital by the entire world, to resolve the issue of the Palestinian refugees without returning to Israel, to declare an end to demands and the end of the conflict, to sign a peace agreements with the Arab world, and to create a new coalition of alliances to curb the influence of the Shiite axis led by Iran and the strengthening radical jihadist organizations. The infeasibility of reaching a final status agreement today stems from the lack of political readiness and capacity in Israel, much more than on the Palestinian side, and from the strengthening of the ethos of the conflict on both sides at the expense of the ethos of peace.

In other words, the new one-state messengers have despaired of achieving the possible not because of the political and social impossibility of solving their preferred two-state solution, but because of the baseless claims about its physical-spatial feasibility. Instead of continuing to maintain the great effort for the necessary change in the political system and in Israeli society, they prefer to succumb to the imaginary reality that the anti-two states solutionists have planted in their minds, to sink into helplessness and passivity while presenting a utopian goal that lacks any practical feasibility. The new messianists, like the old ones, ignore in their proposal four main factors that make their dream impossible: the lessons of 100 years of history of the conflict, the social rifts in Israel and the ethos of the conflict, fueled by Netanyahu and his government, the processes of post-territorial nationalism and the growing religiosity of Jews and Arabs.

History is fraught with insights into the cultural differences between the peoples and especially their opposite national aspirations. In 1919, Ben-Gurion stated that "there is a national question here: we want the land to be ours ... The Arabs want the land to be theirs." Later, in his testimony to the Peel Commission in 1936, the Mufti Husseini argued that "it is impossible to bring two peoples so different from each other to live in one country, and every attempt will be declared a failure." In January 1937, Lord Phil concluded his report with the words "A conflict that is impossible to suppress had erupted between two national communities ... There is nothing in common between them. They differ in religion and language. Their cultural and social lives. Their ways of thinking and their way of life are as far from each other as their national aspirations ...".

This was also agreed upon in the partition report of 1947: "Today there are about 650,000 Jews in Palestine and about 1,200,000 Arabs, different in their way of life and in their political interests." These aspirations were translated into two national narratives that contradict each other and negate the right of the other to self-determination in Palestine / Land of Israel. For example, Abbas referred to the Balfour Declaration in his address to the United Nations General Assembly last year: "... 100 years have passed since the infamous Balfour Declaration. If this were not enough, the British Mandate turned its decision into policy and measures that contributed to the most severe crimes inflicted upon a peace-seeking people in their country".

More blatant, sharper, and more determined is Musa Abu Marzuq of Hamas who wrote in 2007: "Why should anyone recognize Israel's "right" to exist when it never recognized the basic crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing as the means by which it took control of our towns and villages, farms and orchards, and turned us into a nation of refugees? Why should the Palestinians "recognize" the monstrous crime committed by the founders of Israel, which continues to exist through its distorted and modern state of apartheid ...". On the other side is Netanyahu, who rejected the Oslo Accords in 1993, claiming that "this is not what the Jewish people have been fighting for, this piece of land, for three thousand years. That is not why Zionism was founded, in order to establish a state for Yasser Arafat and his cronies, in the cradle of our

homeland", he added in an interview in 2015: "Under the conditions they want now, a Palestinian state is out of the question". The national narratives are neither inclined to complete each other, nor conciliatory to form the common basis for the establishment of one political framework of any kind.

The Peel Commission was the first to point out the disillusionment required from the one-state idea because it was "a struggle between two national movements whose demands are valid and can not be reconciled with each other ... except division ...". On the same insight, the 1947 Partition Commission repeated that: "the basic assumption behind the partition proposal is that the claims on Palestine, both of the Arabs and of the Jews, are both valid and can not be reconciled with each other". That is, the solution can not be just, because each side has its own justice. It must be practical and fair in which each side remains with half of his glass empty.

The partition resolution determined a political division but economic unity in all areas of the economy, infrastructure and development, similar to some of the proposals today. Paul Mohan, the deputy representative of the Swedish delegation to the Partition Committee, who was in charge on the maps, explains the rationale for the division of the two countries into three regions: "I tried to unify two irreconcilable ideas: hope for Jewish-Arab cooperation and fear of Jewish-Arab hostility ... if the sides would have wanted to live in peace, it could have been realized with my partition plan ... ". But it did not happen. Fear and hostility overcame hope and the War of Independence broke out. The fear and hostility of today, which are constantly being nurtured, surpass those of the time, because of the remnants of the War of Independence and its ramifications to this day. "... Our refusal to abandon the victims of 1948 and their descendants is not a rejection of its sake," Abu Marzuq wrote. Hope and desire for cooperation are much lower than those of 1947 because of Israel's economic superiority and its lack of dependence on Palestinians in every area.

Since its establishment, Israel has been accompanied by various social rifts, but its leaders, even if they have sometimes exploited them for their own benefit, have generally sought to contain them in order to achieve the solidarity

and cohesion of a "mobilized society" required to realize the goals and challenges of Zionism in the areas of security, economy and settlement. This equation reversed itself during Netanyahu's governments. The prime minister, more than his ministers, does not reject any means or any rift to deepen and exploit in his favor, at the appropriate political moment, through lies and incitement. Netanyahu, who adopted Arthur Finkelstein's distinction regarding the political significance of the difference between "Jewish" (right) and "Israeli" (left), is not resting for a moment from deepening the secular-religious rift. In 1997 he whispered to the Kabbalist Rabbi Kaduri that "the left has forgotten what it is to be Jews"; In October 2014 he overthrew the Conversion Law; In March, he attacked the artist Yair Garbuz and said, "I heard someone talking about the mezuzah kissers with some contempt." And in September 2017 he told of the Reform movement that "they wanted to get recognition through the back door."

The Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide, Netanyahu usually leaves for Miri Regev who excels at it. He knows how to take advantage of the rift, as he admitted to MK Moshe Kahlon in 2016: "You will never get the Mizrahi voters, I only know how to bring them in. I know who they hate: they hate the Arabs, and I know how to bring them the goods". Above all, Netanyahu likes to incite the Jews against Israel's Arabs. In December 2003, at the Herzliya Conference, Netanyahu (who was then finance minister) claimed that there was no demographic danger from the Palestinian but from the Arabs in Israel. In March 2015, on election day, he stated "The right wing government is in danger, the Arab voters are moving in droves to the ballot box, the leftist organizations are bringing them on buses ...". Recently, in April 2018, he spread a lie according to which that local Arab fans (of Bnei Sakhnin soccer team) were booing at the moment of silence in memory of the flood victims in Tzafit stream.

The deepening of these divisions has divided Israeli society into camps and disintegrates its ability to deal with sectarian challenges such as the conflict with the Palestinians. In addition, the camps that benefit today from the division of power and sectoral resources as Netanyahu steers them will not want to introduce another sector, the Palestinians, who will compete through

demographics over the distribution of resources, and will easily be able to join forces with their brethren in the State of Israel. The tense tensions between the camps require a constant investment of resources in order to maintain their place, leaving no room or ability to contain any emotional or physical change, such as reconciliation and coexistence with the Palestinians. Netanyahu mobilizes all means of hegemony, primarily the media, in order to preserve the ethos of the conflict that ensures the preservation of his throne.

Danny Bar-Tal presents the minimal conditions required to start a peace process and argues that the Israeli leadership is working to prevent their achievement. An examination of Netanyahu's statements reinforces this claim. The first necessary condition is recognition of the enemy's legitimacy. Netanyahu consistently presents the opposite, which is expressed in statements such as: "If I get elected, there will not be a Palestinian state in my term." A second condition is recognition of the enemy's humanity. Here, too, Netanyahu's statements are far from it: "A deep wide moral abyss separates us from our enemies, they sanctify death - we sanctify life, they sanctify cruelty - and we sanctify mercy." A third condition is the recognition that the adversary has needs perceived as legitimate by the majority of the opposing group and the international community, and that if the conflict is not answered, it will not be resolved. The Prime Minister of Israel said in this context: "Under the conditions they want at the moment, a Palestinian state is out of the question"; According to Netanyahu, the sides must understand that "the autonomy plan under Israeli control is the only alternative to preventing these dangers, which are hidden in the 'peace' plan of the Oslo agreement." A fourth condition is that the parties must recognize that they must separate from some of their goals, which must be compromised. On one such target, the Israeli prime minister said, "We will forever preserve a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty."

In recent years, the Palestinian leadership has also manifested itself in a way that is not aimed at creating an atmosphere of peace. For example, in August 2014, Jibril Rajoub said: "There is nothing to prevent the slaughter of settlements ... Any resistance is allowed to bring an end to the occupation." Saeb Erekat, compared in December 2015 between ISIS and Israel: "In fact,

there is no difference between what ISIS is doing in Syria and Iraq and the killing and burning of children by the settlers in the West Bank." In an interview with Palestinian TV, he said: "The Israeli prime minister is like the leader of ISIS Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ". Abu Mazen stated in 2016: "Israel has turned our country into an open air prison... Israel's actions encourage the terrorists ... They give them all the reasons to act." In a different speech he continued: "Palestine and the Palestinian people experience a mass murder on a historic scale and unmatched attacks under the eyes and ears of the international community". In a speech to the European Parliament in June 2016, Abu Mazen said: "They [the Israelis] say 'The Palestinians are inciting, the Palestinians are inciting' ... Only a week ago a number of rabbis rose up in Israel and issued a clear declaration demanding that the government poison the water to kill Palestinians. Is this not clear incitement to collective murder of the Palestinian people? ".

The one-state proposers must address at least four challenges posed by the idea of a single democratic state in relation to the Zionist vision: Is it possible to avoid the annexation of the Gaza Strip in addition to the West Bank?, what will the IDF and other security bodies look like and what goals will be designated for them? How will the absorption of the Palestinian Authority, which has the characteristics of a third world country, be carried out into the social economic mechanisms of the State of Israel? How will the one state cope with the absorption of the refugees who return to its territory? Finally, one state will bring the process of post-territorial nationalism to which Yoram Peri refers, to its highs. The struggle to define the "I" versus the "other" in the new society, which lacks physical, legal and territorial separation, will necessarily focus on the cultural characteristics and will lead to a radicalization of the differences between them. We can expect an intensifying and worsening of the processes of religiosity of the two peoples, in which both sides will be able to use violence in the name of religion. This process and the above challenges are certainly a recipe not only for the disappearance of the Zionist vision, but also for a constant and cruel civil war.

It would be better for the one-state dreamers, as well as the leadership in Israel, to learn one thing from Abbas's speech to the National Council, which was steeped in historical fabrications and anti-Semitic statements, which is its conclusion: "We say: we will live together with them on a two-state basis." Achieving this solution will require an Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and international effort by all those who understand that in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the right solution is the simplest and most difficult to achieve, because it is the only possible and practical one.