

WEEKEND

In praise of coercion

They may not be conscious of it, but Israelis are just waiting for the world to step in save them from themselves

Eran Rolnik

World statesmen are wrong to wait for the Israeli voter to have his say before they decide whether to recognize a Palestinian state and impose sanctions that will spur Israel to reach a political settlement with the Palestinians. Equally misguided are Israeli opposition leaders who fear that had the United States not cast its traditional veto in the United Nations it would have driven Israel's voters to greater extremity.

It's precisely in the run-up to an election that Israeli voters need a wake-up call from the outside about the implications of the results of the voting for Israel's international standing. For the past 47 years, Israel has been longing for a slap in the face from the international community, but in vain.

In March 1973, on the first anniversary of the death of the rabbi, jurist and diplomat Yaacov Herzog, the historian Jacob Talmon lauded Herzog's view that despite the unassailable fact that history is controlled by the force of neuroses of leaders and nations, all of these small, perplexed and bewildered individuals embody notions and ideas that are immeasurably larger than each of them separately and than all of them together.

Herzog understood well that cutting off Jewry from Western culture would reduce Israel to a peculiar, arrogant and bothersome tribe to which the world owes nothing: neither a debt of gratitude nor a debt of atonement. He was fearful that the Jewish national revival would be overtaken by messianic revolutionism driven by militant nationalism, on the one hand, and Jewish death wishes, on the other.

Just before the apprehensions of Herzog, of Talmon and of many other intellectuals are about to be realized in full, it is worth reexamining the fear harbored by Israel that the international community will recognize Palestine and set a date for the end of the occupation.

Those who are concerned about intervention in the "internal affairs" of a democratic country, and warn against a political settlement being forced on Israel are invited to read an item from the realm of mental health that appeared recently in Haaretz. A study conducted by Israeli researchers found that the involuntary hospitalization of patients suffering from severe anorexia nervosa does not adversely affect the recovery process, and achieved positive results comparable to those attained with patients who were hospitalized voluntarily.

Patently, "involuntary treatment" raises weighty questions in the realms of ethics, civil law and Jewish religious law. However, therapists and patients who have experience with involuntary treatment – on the administering or receiving end, respectively – know that an individual's will, whether that individual is healthy or ill, is not monolithic and does not reflect the whole range of his personality, needs and longings.

Making it possible to feed anorexic patients who are starving themselves to death is not the only goal of forced treatment. Primarily, it sends a message to the patient's feeble, life-wishing and helpless self that he is "not alone."

The psychotherapist, by positioning himself unambiguously on the side of the healthy and sane parts of the patient's psyche, and by agreeing to endure the patients' contempt and fury, assists in extracting the sane parts of the patient's self

that were taken captive by primordial anxieties, manic defenses and death impulses.

It's not only the individual will that is caught in a constant conflict between contradictory inner wishes and yearnings: Collective political wishes and national yearnings are also compromise results of unconscious conflicts between life impulses and death impulses, between a preference for omnipotence and messianism, or coming to terms with reality, recognition of dependence and acceptance of the "other."

This is the only way to understand why public opinion polls in Israel show consistently overwhelming support for the two-state solution and the evacuation of the settlements, while in practice few Israelis give expression to this when they cast their ballots.

What this shows is that the Israeli voter needs firm support from the outside in order to extract his sane parts from the shelter in which he's been hiding them for the past half-century or so. Only intervention by the international community can undo the balance of terror that Israelis maintain inside themselves, between knowing what's good and doing what's bad.

Only "involuntary treatment" of Israeli rejectionism, executed with sincere concern for the country's fate, would demonstrate to its citizens that there is no correct way to live an incorrect life, enable them to forgo their megalomania and help them release their sanity from its hiding place.

"He is forced until he says 'I want to,'" the Gemara says, recognizing the duality of the will and the fact that coercion sometimes helps a person in his struggle against inner factors that otherwise prevent him from realizing his true will.

Those who have Israel's welfare at heart, and the Jewish lobbies abroad, need to stop listening only to the will of official Israel, which is unrelated to the Israelis' true will.

Official Israel might stamp its feet and cry "anti-Semites!" or, "by what right?" – but the nation in Israel, whose right hand doesn't know what its left is doing, is only waiting for genuine help from the outside. Help that will enable us to be healed of the curse of ruling the Palestinian people. Israel is not Russia and it is not Iran, and its citizens will not accept pariah status indefinitely.

Apply a small diplomatic squeeze, such as symbolic cultural and economic sanctions, and the healthy narcissism of Israelis will leap to life and show them and their elected representatives the way to end the occupation and bring the settlers home, to within Israel's recognized international boundaries.

No war of Gog and Magog will erupt here, nor a "war of brothers." As we see in psychic therapies that begin with coercion and end with gratitude, when the sane and healthy self is convinced the outside world is not writing it off, it stops cooperating with the destructive elements that took hold of it.

Gradually the screaming and kicking subside, and so do the terrible delight of omnipotence and destruction to which it became addicted. Israel, not unlike so many patients, is longing to be committed by its friends and they will be held responsible for its demise should they refrain from helping it out of its current political and historical impasse.

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Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu. What lessons have their words and actions been teaching us over the last six years? Avi Ohayon/GPO

Israel's negligent parents

What's Bibi and Sara's model? Starve the Palestinians. Let the Gazans drown in sewage. Let Kibbutz Nirim defend itself. This is our home

Bradley Burston

What if parents raised their kids the way Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu run their country?

What would it be like to live nearby, hear the screaming arguments, wonder about what actually goes on in there, speculate about how long this can continue without their whole house going up in smoke?

It's hard to know for sure, but the hints and the hollering suggest a few guesses.

In terms of child rearing, there is the old adage about kids learning from what they see at home. So what behaviors have Dad and Mom been modeling – what lessons have their words and actions been teaching us over the last six years, and, for that matter, the last six days?

A. Play favorites. Make sure everyone in the family knows where they stand – who's a favorite child, who's unwanted, which ones are treated as a real part of this family and which ones, for all that the parents could care, can go hang.

How does this work in practice? First, some of the kids in the family get anything and everything they want, no matter what they do, no matter how naughty or bullying or manipulative or destructive or insulting they are in and around the house.

A lot of them have already moved out, camping out on land belonging to cousins, then getting Dad to fix it so that they can stay, no matter what. Or getting Dad to pay for them to move into new houses across the street. [See footnote No. 1, below] Even, in some places, if some of the kids throw rocks at the cousins who used to live there. Even if the kids rip up trees, which provide for their cousins' livelihood, and uproot rows and rows of saplings their cousins just planted. Even if the kids throw rocks at cars that belong to Grandpa in America, who foots the bills for a lot of the family's expenses. (2)

The message from Dad and Mom: We'll spoil you rotten. Then we'll spoil you some more. (3)

What about the other kids in the family home? Some of them simply don't matter to Dad and Mom. If they're in

trouble, if they're in danger, the parents make nice noises, and promise them things, but in practice, Dad and Mom have other, more important kids on their minds. (4)

Some of the kids who don't matter, some of the second-class citizens, are grown and gone, raising families of their own. But it's been tough to be a working person where they are – nowhere near the favorite kids – and Dad's brother, Uncle Bennett, who's supposed to be the cool one, and is in a direct position to help them, won't even answer their phone calls. (5)

And then there are the cousins who live in the family home, who've lived there forever, but come out third-class citizens. Dad and Mom treat them like they treat the neighbors. (6)

B. When in doubt, blame the neighbors. There will be no negative consequences. For you.

C. When in doubt, starve the neighbors. (7)

D. In any event, never apologize.

E. Never talk when you can blame.

F. Never bring a family together when you can

scapegoat and deride and belittle and foster division and hatred.

E. Always believe that there will be no consequences. If there are – and there always are (see B, above).

The message to the favored kids: You can do whatever you want to whenever you wish, and if something bad results, it is never your fault.

So how does this all work in practice? It has a lot to do with who these neighbors are.

It just so happens that the next-door neighbors are also our cousins. They are the family whom Dad and Mom do their best to deny, but they look like us, and they've lived here forever, and, to complete the Gordian knot, Dad and Mom are their landlords.

Yes, the neighbors are our cousins. And yes, this is their land as much as it is ours. But that – the parents are telling us in word and deed – is all the more reason that we, as responsible adults, must assert ourselves, never back down, never compromise, and disdain all of the neighbors as bad seeds who cannot be reasoned with, and whose

true wish is to do harm to our family and drive us from our home.

One other thing. Dad holds a bank account for the neighbors. It's the neighbors' money. But when the neighbors do something to anger Dad, he refuses to give them their own money. And the favored kids smile.

Are the neighbors hungry? Many are. Many are thirsty as well. Do we have enough water? Miraculously, we now do. Do the neighbors? Not at all. Some of the neighbors also have grave sewage problems. And that's only the beginning of a very long list.

What message is Dad modeling the members of his household? Let them starve. Let them drown in sewage. Let our unwanted children defend themselves. Let our favored children throw rocks at our friends. This is our home. No consequences for us.

Whoa. So what can a person do? After all, aren't we all stuck with the parents whom life has stuck us with?

Yes. At least until March 17.

Footnotes:
1. Last week, the prime

minister approved the allocation of NIS 70 million (nearly \$18 million) to relocate a West Bank army base, so that settlers evacuated from an illegal outpost could move into some of the 300 homes to be built at the former base. The sum is intended to compensate the settlers for having agreed to move without mounting physical resistance.

2. Last Thursday, Palestinians from the West Bank village of Turmus Ayya complained to American consular officials that settlers had uprooted 5,000 of the villagers' olive saplings. One of the landowners in the village is an American citizen, Israel Radio reported. On Friday, when a U.S. Consulate convoy arrived at the area to examine the complaints, settlers threw stones at the vehicles.

3. With Samaria (northern West Bank) Regional Council Head Gershon Mesika sidelined by bribery and corruption suspicions, his acting replacement, Yossi Dagan demanded that Likud Interior Minister Gilad Erdan immediately deport the U.S. Consulate staff members whose convoy the settlers had attacked. "This event could have descended easily into bloodshed and only as a result of the settlers' responsible behavior was [a scenario like that] prevented," the settlement movement's Arutz 7 website quoted Dagan as saying.

The State Department said the U.S. was "deeply concerned" about the incident. There has been no comment from the prime minister.

4. This week, the army abruptly withdrew its troops guarding the kibbutz and moshavim bordering the Gaza Strip, despite residents' fears of rocket, mortar and tunnel attacks akin to those during the devastating summer war in Gaza. IDF troops guarding illegal outposts in the West Bank remained in place.

5. This week, the Pri Hagalil produce-canning factory, the sole large employer of the northern town of Hazor Gilit, was shut down, as factory workers intensively sought the intervention and aid of Economy Minister Naftali Bennett. Bennett had helped secure hundreds of millions of shekels in recent funding for West Bank settlement projects. When the Pri Hagalil workers phoned him on Sunday, he did not return their call.

6. See the prime minister's Jewish Nation-State Law.

7. See the prime minister's freeze of the transfer of Palestinian tax revenues last Thursday, a move strongly opposed by Washington and by President Reuven Rivlin, who said the step harmed Israel's own interests.

Fellows

Continued from page 5

compete under fair conditions. Because if Mofaz or Yadin is on the ticket, Bar-Lev might no longer be needed.

There is plenty of bad blood between Mofaz and Livni from their time in Kadima. But Livni told Herzog she would not intervene in this matter, and that if a meeting is needed between her and Mofaz to clear the air, she will be there. Mofaz has also agreed to this.

As for Yadin, he's told Herzog he doesn't want to be an MK and be given the 11th slot on the slate. People who know him say this has nothing to do with modesty; on the contrary, he's a person who knows his worth – and how. It's beneath his dignity to be an MK, one of 120. He's angling for defense minister. Period. Well, after all, he's a pilot.

If Yadin wants to be a minister who is not an MK, Herzog could place the economist Manuel Trajtenberg, who joined Labor and is Zionist Camp's candidate for finance minister, in the top 10 on the ticket, as Trajtenberg thinks is only fitting. Herzog could give

Trajtenberg the seventh slot and move the Labor's secretary general, MK Hilik Bar, to 11th place, for the benefit of the party and the people.

In the meantime, Herzog is trying to create order in the campaign headquarters, where, according to people in the know, chaos reigns because of the duality caused by the entry of Livni's people: Every appointment needs the approval of both her and Herzog. People who meet in the corridors of campaign headquarters in Tel Aviv ask each other, "Are you from the bride's side or the groom's?"

The Herzog-Livni partnership has done wonders for Labor at the public level. But the party machinery, which should be running like a well-oiled machine by now, is still sputtering. Labor can only take consolation from the fact that things aren't much better in Likud.

Looking for a lift

"It's time to get one's head above water," former naval commando unit commander Maj. Gen. (res.) Yoav Galant wrote on his Facebook page on Tuesday – a day before Moshe Kahlon planned to present him at a press conference as a candidate on his party's slate. Ironically, abundant water from the



Amos Yadlin. Angling for defense minister.

Motti Milrod

heavens forced postponement of that event. Kahlon didn't want the reports about his most glittering acquisition, however bruised and stigmatized he may be, to be shunted to the end of the newscasts after the storm reports.

Galant's coming in from the cold will kick off public debate over his moral fitness to be appointed a cabinet minister, as promised him by Kahlon. Four years ago, the attorney general noted that appointing him chief of staff would entail "significant legal difficulties," because he apparently seized public land for personal

purposes. And isn't Kahlon, who is perceived as being the cleanest of the party leaders, and promised his slate would have only people of immaculate behavior, renege on that promise?

One thing is clear: If Galant doesn't use his debut as politician to admit his mistake and express contrition, without beating around the bush, he will instantly become a burden to Kulanu, Kahlon's party, which is already having difficulties taking off. No one knows better than Galant himself that he needs to apologize: It's all there, in the state comptroller's report and in

the attorney general's opinion. A clear mea culpa is his entry ticket to the premier league of elected officials. Without it, he can forget about a political career.

Some will say that even that isn't enough, but the public likes to see its elected officials admitting mistakes, as long as the admission rings with authenticity. And reasonable folk will agree that Galant paid heavily for that episode: He lost the appointment as chief of staff, which was already his, not to mention the public embarrassment he endured. Nor does anyone dispute his security record or expertise in military matters. (In any event, he should find a way to get rid of the appalling and megalomaniacal four-turreted castle in which he lives. It looks like something kids would be afraid to walk past in the dark.)

Galant's presence on the slate is meant to revivify the secret, incomprehensible and stumbling campaign of Kulanu. This week's Haaretz poll showed the new party consistently losing ground. Kahlon was dubbed a "present absentee" in these pages, and he's actually more absent than present. He hasn't given a single interview, not even when the social-welfare agenda was in the headlines.

No wonder Kahlon's fading, while Yair Lapid, who is in radio and TV studios every day, is gaining strength, and is again becoming a kind of promise or hope for those who want change and haven't yet despaired. He has almost literally come back from the dead, as Menachem Begin said of himself in the 1981 election campaign.

Kahlon's people admit that he made a mistake by not leaping into the arena as soon as the Knesset was dissolved. "But we built a party, established infrastructures, opened branches, looked for candidates and tried to raise money," they say. "We're a new party. All the others are organized and flooded with money."

Next week Kahlon plans to present the top 10 in the party ticket and officially launch the campaign. He's not perturbed by the negative turn in the polls; he doesn't think its fatal.

Together, Kulanu and Yesh Atid look set to garner around 22 seats. When Lapid was polling 8-9 seats, early in the campaign, Kahlon was showing 11-12. Now the wheel has turned. Kahlon is convinced that it will turn again as soon as they enter the arena. Sixty days is a long time, and what went up can also come down.

WEEKEND

Under the naked sky

On New Year's Day, the Civil Administration demolished the homes of shepherds in the Jordan Valley. Dozens were left destitute, at the mercy of the elements

The Twilight Zone
Gideon Levy and Alex Levac

Here's how 2015 began for residents of the shepherds' compound at Ain al-Hilweh, in the northern Jordan Valley: at the mercy of the cold and rain, under the naked sky, their homes reduced to rubble, utterly destitute. Heaps of ruins are all that remain, the wreckage of tents and shacks, with remnants of their meager belongings strewn around.

Happy New Year to the 80 members of the Kaabana family, now homeless. Happy New Year to their neighbor, Khader Ibrahim, a shepherd, who lost a leg as a child when he stepped on an Israeli army landmine or unexploded shell, and is now sitting abjectly where his tents stood last week.

Happy New Year to his eight children, who are now scampering among the ruins, their teeth chattering from the cold. Happy New Year to the dozens of newborn lambs and kids, the first litters of 2015, whose pens were also razed, leaving them exposed to the winter weather, as a result of which some died.

Happy New Year, too, to the Israeli Civil Administration and the Border Police, who enforce the apartheid laws in the territories, and who last week raided this forlorn community of shepherds and destroyed all their property, ignoring the anguished outcries of women and the silent weeping of children; ignoring the fact that they left dozens of people exposed to biting cold in the Jordan Rift Valley; ignoring the gross injustice and inequality of the authorities' attitude toward these wretched of the earth, in stark contrast to the attitude toward the settlers in the area.

After all, someone has to do the dirty and repellent work of the slow, persistent, systematic ethnic cleansing of this valley.

Ain al-Hilweh is situated just past the settlement of Maskiyot, along the road that climbs from the Jordan Valley eastward toward the small town of Tayasir. Not far off is the community of Halat Makhoul, which has been demolished time after time and is now rebuilt.

The Kaabanas have nowhere to go with their flocks – their only source of livelihood – and no force will move them from their land. Mahmoud Kaabana is a 44-year-old shepherd, married and the father of 10 children. Together with the families of his six siblings, and their parents, there are about 80 souls in this pastoral community. He says he and his father were born on this land, which was leased to them by its owner, the Catholic Church in Jerusalem.

The Civil Administration has now demolished their tiny habitation, which consists solely of tents and tin shacks, three times: in June 2011, in January 2014 and on January 1, 2015. The first demolition took place in the early summer, but the previous one, last January, left people and animals exposed to the rain, and Israel blocked outside attempts to assist them. About 30 sheep died. In the early days, the refugees took shelter under a small bridge, and then neighbors and other good people brought them plastic sheeting, clothing and tents. The scene repeated itself last Thursday, as the new year was ushered in.

"Happy New Year," Kaabana says with a bitter smile, "this is how a new year starts."

The raiding party – around 20 jeeps and two bulldozers – swooped in at about 9 A.M. All the people and animals were evacuated, and the demolition began. The 10 minutes the inhabitants were given to come to grips with the situation and collect their

property were obviously not sufficient. An argument broke out between the Civil Administration people and the Border Police, Kaabana relates. The latter did not want to allow residents even to gather up their property.

"I'm in charge here," a police officer declared. "You're the guard," a Civil Administration official shot back.

The results are scattered all around: crushed household utensils, torn clothes, slashed up rugs – all of it under steel tent pegs, which thrust skyward like a mute monument.

This time, Kaabana says, Civil Administration personnel used utility knives and pruning shears to tear apart whatever the bulldozers missed. All 30 structures of the compound were destroyed. Nothing remains, other than a refrigerator and an iron bed that were salvaged.

The International Red Cross provided the residents with a few tents, but not enough, Kaabana says. At night the family huddles in one big tent supplied by neighbors.

Most of the sheep are outside. This is the birthing season, and the condition of the newborn animals is worrisome. Fatma, Kaabana's wife, is pregnant, too, in her seventh month. When she burst into tears during the assault, Border Policemen ejected her from the site, to the other side of the wadi.

Kaabana says he received no warning of the demolition. Nor did the wreckers tell him why their homes were being destroyed, other than to say, "You are not allowed to be here."

After each demolition, Kaabana rebuilds a few meters away from the previous site, so that the new structures will not be immediately razed. As we talk, a Civil Administration vehicle is parked on the main road, its occupants observing us. The sight fills Kaabana with trepidation.

"Does this bother [Prime Minister] Netanyahu?" he asks, pointing to the ruins of his property. And again, "Does this bother Netanyahu?"

"There was a children's tent here, and this is where we slept," he says, giving us a tour of the debris. "The kitchen was here and the animal pen was there. This was the home of the lambs, and that was for the older sheep."

Nothing remains. Even the vegetable patch he planted near his home – eggplants, cucumbers, onions and peppers for domestic use – was trampled brutally.

The animals are out to pasture on the hill, but when they return toward evening, there will be no place to shelter them against the oncoming chill of the desert night.

In his despair, Kaabana asks for assistance: "Maybe people will bring us plastic sheeting to cover the sheep, and clothes for the children? I am asking for help. No one is helping us. I am asking people all over the world to help us. We are left with nothing."

His little daughter Thaima, a year and seven months old, clings to his leg. Her teeth are chattering from the cold. She is dressed in rags, like her sister, seven-year-old Sarah.

Not far away, about one kilometer to the west, a heavy-set man is climbing the hill, breathing hard, staggering, leaning on a stick, barely moving, until he finally comes to a halt. Heaps of ruins lie about. This was where his home stood.

Khader Ibrahim, who's about 45 or 50, he has no idea, is a father of eight. Now he hobbles around on an artificial limb. After the wreckers finished leveling the hamlet of the Kaabana family, they

moved on to his compound. Five structures – tents to live in and animal pens – are now gone.

A threadbare checkered wool blanket lays on the bare ground. Ibrahim stretches himself out on it. His sonorous voice rumbles across the expanse. He and the others spent the first night in the open, he says. Then the neighbors brought them a tent and some plastic sheeting for shelter. "What will I do? There is nothing for me

to do," he laments.

A spokesperson for the Civil Administration stated: "These are illegal structures that were erected, and were demolished at the beginning of the month for the second time, because they were built without a permit in a firing zone in the Jordan Valley region. It should be noted that being present in a firing zone used regularly by the IDF for training using live ammunition is dangerous and against the law."

"In regard to this case, a petition was submitted to the Supreme Court, which was stricken from the record, with the petitioners undertaking to take action to regularize the construction within 45 days. As the petitioners did not do so in the course of four months after the petition was stricken, the structures were demolished."

Dafna Banai, an activist from Machsom Watch-Women Against the Occupation and for Human Rights,



Khader Ibrahim. After the Kaabanas' hamlet was razed, the wreckers moved to his compound.

wrote, "This evening I had a call from Mohammed, a shepherd, with whom we've been in touch from boyhood ... He was crying. He's young, he'll get over it, but his el-

derly parents – his father is disabled from an Israeli land mine and is sick.

"What will happen to them? How will they survive the freezing nights of the

Jordan Rift? What will happen when it rains? I asked if there was anything special they needed, and there was silence. What would he ask for? They have nothing."

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