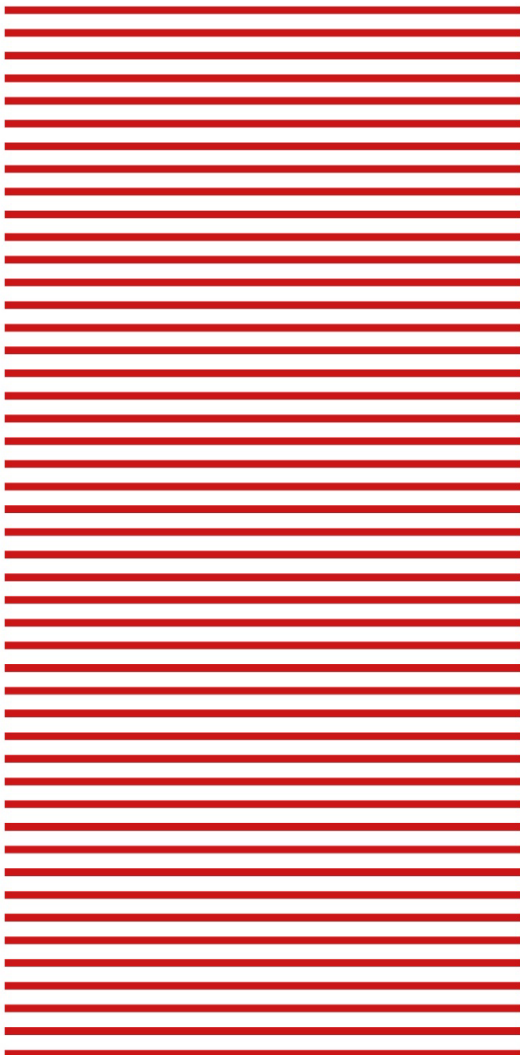


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Another Perspective on the Challenges Posed by the New Antisemitism

A short introduction to
Ilan Gur-Ze'ev's writings

Eli Vinokur

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Abstract

This paper will present in broad strokes the professional lifespan and philosophical doctrine of Israeli educational philosopher Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (1955-2012). Major attention will be devoted to his articulation of the concept of "new antisemitism," which seeks to capture the uniqueness of the contemporary form of antisemitism. Compared to "older" forms of antisemitism, which situated the Jews in opposition to western civilization, as its ultimate "other," contemporary progressive thinkers identify "Jewishness" and Jewish ideas such as "chosenness," "elitism" and "uniqueness," as the innate evil embedded deep within the "suppressing, white, colonial patriarchy" of the Judo-Christian civilization. Thus, the redemption of the soul of the new progressive thinker from the historical sins of western civilization, involves cleansing it from its "Jewishness." It also involves an attack on the physical representation of everything that is wrong in western civilization – the Jewish state.

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Another Perspective on the Challenges Posed by the New Antisemitism

A short introduction to Ilan Gur Ze'ev's writings

By Eli Vinokur

I still remember the first time I met Professor Ilan Gur-Ze'ev. We had made an appointment but I came early. As I sat near his office door and patiently waited my turn, a young lady suddenly rushed out of his office with a bitter smile on her face and a broken look in her eyes. She thanked Gur-Ze'ev for his time and went her way.

I was next in line. When I walked in, Gur-Ze'ev looked at me and said, "You must be wondering about the reason for her expression." Then he continued, "In fact, she was the only student, out of approximately 300, who properly understood the message in my course about Critical Theory, and it is precisely this understanding that caused her such dejection. When we understand the challenges awaiting human society, in general, and those that await the Israeli society, in particular," he paused for a moment, "it is hard to remain optimistic. The purpose of our meeting was to help her alleviate, somewhat, that feeling of helplessness," he concluded with a bitter smile.

There was a short silence in the room before Gur-Ze'ev continued. "In terms of my concepts, Eli, I am very much alone. However," he continued, "the email you wrote about new antisemitism has given me new hope. This is also why I have agreed to meet you."

As fate would have it, our acquaintance was short-lived. That meeting ended with a friendly hug and led to extensive collaboration. Regrettably, however, six months later, Gur-Ze'ev was diagnosed with cancer and succumbed to his illness in 2012.

Nevertheless, his academic eros, his critical spirit and keen perceptions have left a deep impression on me, which I carry with me to this day. In this short introduction, I will attempt to present some of the key concepts of Ilan Gur-Ze'ev to the

German reader, as I believe that his writings offer intellectual innovations and depth that can help us grasp one of the most fascinating, yet perilous challenges from a historic, as well as contemporary perspective. Gur-Ze'ev referred to that challenge as "new antisemitism".

However, first, I would like to provide some information about Gur-Ze'ev's personal background.

Personal Background

Ilan Gur-Ze'ev was born in Haifa in 1955, in a neighbourhood where Arabs used to live until they were driven out during Israel's War of Independence. The Arabs were replaced by survivors of the Holocaust from eastern Europe. In one of his essays, Gur-Ze'ev described the cries and hollers that bellowed out his neighbours' windows. The memories of the atrocities that Europe's Jews experienced came back to haunt them in their sleep (Gur-Ze'ev, 2010b, 2012).

Gur-Ze'ev's family was also affected by the Holocaust. His father was among a handful of people who returned from a mass-grave pit in the Mauthausen concentration camp. He was shot by German soldiers and their allies, and his "body" was thrown in the pit alongside hundreds of other Jews. Miraculously, he survived his wounds and even managed to crawl out. In this environment, which was also mixed with Zionism and a sense of universal vocation, Gur-Ze'ev grew up in a vibrant cultural setting that incorporated the scars of the past with hopes for the future (ibid.).

Gur-Ze'ev was an enthusiast of fine culture and good books. However, he was not as appreciative of Israel's education system. At the age of six or seven, he left school and educated himself,

reading one to two books each day. At age sixteen, he Hebraized his last name from Vichik into Gur-Ze'ev, in large part because of his enthusiasm with Wladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionism (ibid.).

When Gur-Ze'ev was seventeen, he left Israel and began to travel and work around the world. Among other endeavors, he traded diamonds in South America. At twenty-three, he returned to Israel and was accepted into a special program for a Bachelor degree at Haifa University, although he had no formal education (Kizel, 2015a, in: Guilherme, 2020).

He completed his PhD at the Institute of Sciences and Ideas in Tel-Aviv University, the stronghold of Critical Theory in Israel. In his work, Gur-Ze'ev studied the Frankfurt School and the history of pessimism. His research was published in a book on that topic (Gur-Ze'ev, 1996, 1997).

After completing his studies, he became a lecturer for a year at Ben-Gurion University, after which he made Haifa University his intellectual home (Guilherme, 2020). Gur-Ze'ev's writing dealt with the Frankfurt School and the Critical Theory, under the influence of the post-modernistic discourse concerning education and processes of intellectual conquest unfolding throughout the global and Israeli societies. He developed the criticism of the use of education as a mechanism of violence and oppression against individuals and disadvantaged populations. At that time, Gur-Ze'ev sided with the views of the prominent figures in critical discourse in Israel, and even wrote with some of them, albeit with some reservations (Kizel, 2015a, in: Guilherme, 2020).

Among the people with whom he co-wrote at that time were such scholars as Ilan Pappé and Moshe Zuckerman, and his essays were featured in magazines affiliated with the Critical Theory, such as *Theory and Criticism*, and were translated into multiple languages, such as Portuguese, Serbian, Arabic, and Polish, in view of the critical line that arose from the texts (Gur-Ze'ev, 2003, 2004, 2005, among others).

Over time, Gur-Ze'ev became increasingly critical toward both sides of the political aisle. A good example of this is his book, *Diasporic Philosophy and Counter-Education* (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004), where he kept his distance from the sweet yearning for a home and suggested instead to establish a new, anti-collectivist space where our children will be "trained" toward an organized exile from both the Zionist and the Palestinian experiences, as well as from the fleeting fashions and customs of a world where capitalistic, post-modernistic, and neo-neo-Marxist trends wrestle with each other. In his writing, Gur-Ze'ev did not spare the whip from both Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, and criticized their normalizing and violent functions in the Israeli/Palestinian reality.

Over time, Gur-Ze'ev became increasingly critical of progressive and post-modernistic mindsets. In part, it was due to what he saw as a move that contained within it new antisemitism – a new perception of the Jewish idea, and consequently, of the Jewish state, not as a foreign element in western culture, but as an inherent part of it, which is the root of the evil in it – and should therefore be opposed as a way for redemption from the crimes of western culture. As part of this trend, he detected intense hatred at the core of the writings of most of his academic milieu, and even in his own writing. In one of his essays, he even noted that one of the things that caused him to rethink his ideas was the intense hatred toward the State of Israel and its Jewish residents, specifically among his best students, which was in stark contrast to the love for humanity that he had hoped to find in them, in light of their education according to the principles of Critical Theory (Gur-Ze'ev, 2009, 2011a).

Here we should note one of Gur-Ze'ev's most fascinating traits: his ability to criticize both the Critical Theory, as well as himself, and detect in these writings, destructive trends of criticism for the sake of criticism, and of what will later become known as "new antisemitism." (Gur-Ze'ev & McLaren, 2011).

It is precisely Gur-Ze'ev's love of man, of the Israeli people, and of the Jewish people's moral

vocation, of Palestine, and of all of humanity, that caused him to detect the danger lurking in today's intellectual discourse, and to become increasingly critical of the intellectual school within which he worked and from which he came. Although this criticism often cost him the loss of his popularity, and even aversion on the part of many of his former colleagues, to him, the heavy personal price was nothing compared to his insistence on being true to himself and sincere with his students, and to offer a critical, profound, and uncompromising view on the challenges of his time.

New Antisemitism

Gur-Ze'ev's dealing with the new antisemitism relied on a broad perspective of the challenges of human society, in general, and of the Jewish people, in particular. As he delved into the philosophical, sociological, and anthropological research in the global arena over the past two decades, he arrived at the conclusion that we are facing an unprecedented situation, something that has never happened throughout human history (Gur-Ze'ev, 2009, 2011a). Why was this so?

Invasive globalization is accelerating its expansion, and no realm of human existence escapes it. Immigration, environment, society, economy, communication, and education are all its direct and indirect objects. While there is no consensus on the question of the centrality of globalization, or on how new it is, it is evident that researchers across the board point – with support or criticism – to globalization as a phenomenon that is changing reality in unprecedented ways (Roth & Gur-Ze'ev, 2007). For his part, Gur-Ze'ev was pessimistic about it.

In pre-modern times, changes were fewer and slower to happen. In modern times, they accelerated. Thus, for him, the immense centrifugal forces that operate in the cyber-space, consumerism, and globalist capitalism, are changing the makeup of reality quickly, and unrecognizably (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, 2010a, 2011b). For example, the ability to move people, merchandise, and services from place to place at the push of a but-

ton has opened countless possibilities before us, but also exposed human society to countless risks. Globalization engendered, among other things, social gaps between individuals and between countries, economic crises, ecological disasters, and growing and spreading networks of terrorism. It turned knowledge into superficial information, "McDonald'sized" culture in the face of pre-modern phenomena such as jihad as a violent political-educational reaction, and eroded the fruits of enlightenment – beginning with the nation-state, through the national collective consciousness, and to the humanistic education in its classic form, among others (Gur-Ze'ev, 2010a, 2011b).

However, in Gur-Ze'ev's eyes, not only the harms of globalization, evident to the sociological-anthropological eye, are placing humanity in an unprecedented situation, and especially today's education. Post-modern trends, characterized by dissolution of every vocation and cause, nihilism of values, the culture industry, glorification of the self, and thrashing of the concept of social accountability, or responsibility for anything, as well as by constant pursuit of the latest fad, with self-indulgence, and refusal to face the question of the meaning of this situation itself, all these shifted, as per Gur-Ze'ev, the Socratic question about a life worth living from the philosophical realm into the existential realm (Gur-Ze'ev, 2009, 2011a, 2012).

Gur-Ze'ev felt deep in his heart that by wanting to realize the utopian aspiration concerning humanity's material prosperity, we have created a reality where our very lives are perpetually at risk. In that sense, this presents us with a new situation in humanity, one that behooves us to examine how we are to continue going forward, as individuals and as a society (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, 2009).

As Gur-Ze'ev points out, currently, there are very few possible answers to this question. The most famous one among them is the reaction of jihadists, in all their familiar forms as fundamentalist spirituality. The purpose of jihad and its post-colonialist and post-structuralist compan-

ions is one: to destroy, as quickly as possible, the forces of life, and the gospel of Judeo-Christianism, which is the vital spirit (alongside the Greek-Hellenistic aspect) of the western world and its various fruits (Gur-Ze'ev, 2009). The power of this reaction lies with the clear enemy that it positions before its protégés – the Jewish spirit and the State of Israel combined into a single entity whose very existence must be revoked.

Another way to meet the challenges of today's reality is new progressivism. There are two completely different branches in it: a post-modernistic branch, which derives from the post-structuralist philosophy, and a neo-neo-Marxist branch (ibid.).

The first branch celebrates the post-modernistic reality, which places a great emphasis on emotional, mental, and spiritual openness toward the "other." Emotionally, advocates of new progressivism cannot accept hierarchy or an argument of exclusivity, or, alternatively, hunting of blue whales, exploiting the inhabitants of Equatorial Guinea, or of any other "victim" of western society.

No rational arguments, which are defined as imperialist or colonialist, or western, will be accepted against this emotional argument. Instead, we will be offered alternative spirituality in the form of dwelling in obsessive consumerism and production, relinquishment of self-awareness, and the humanistic and social struggles of the kind that the old progressivism could have offered. Instead, identity politics, multiculturalism, and post-colonialism portend to take their place (ibid.). In the discourse that these arouse, the client on the one hand, and the victim of western culture on the other hand, they have absolute entitlement. This branch of new progressivism is therefore a mental momentum, spiritual and political, a luring invitation with which both we and our children were not trained to handle.

The second branch, the neo-neo-Marxist branch – whose advocates, according to Gur-Ze'ev, were such figures as Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou, and in Israel, Azmi Bishara, Yehouda Shenhav,

and others – feels obligated to overcome the invitation and join the post-modernistic celebration (Ibid). This branch refuses to relinquish justifying waking up the next morning, although life in a world where meaning, yearning for the sublime, and the divergence from the drive to be "something," yet seek to be someone, a human being, can barely be validated today.

In such a reality, hatred of the spirit of Judaism becomes a pseudo religious ecstasy for adherents of both branches, offering an alternative to the post-modernistic pleasure-machine, in the form of boarding the new Marmara. This, and none other, is the reason of proponents of post-modernism and neo-neo-Marxism to get up in the morning. In this way, under the guise of immersion in the progressive reality, on the one hand, or deflection from the post-modernistic reality, on the other hand, overcoming the Jewish foundation becomes the perfect expression of returning to the null (Gur-Ze'ev, 2009, 2011a).

Why is this so? First, it is due to Israel being an exhibit of false universality and cosmopolitanism. A nation state that has committed itself to Jewish particularistic exclusivity as being "the chosen people," seems to have no place in a just and equal cosmopolitan world. At a time when radical democracy and multi-culturalism are disintegrating any hierarchy and attempt to overcome a policy of exclusion and discrimination, the State of Israel presents an exhibit of justification of racism, discrimination, and degradation of the other, or of the "third world." From the perspective of those supporting these views, the only solution is extinction of the Jewish state. This is indeed what they suggest, in the form of a state of all its citizens, en route to dealing with the remnants of white hegemony that will still survive here (in the form of economic, cultural, or other form of asymmetry) until the Jewish settlement is chased away and Edward Said's prophecy, "History will forget you were ever here," comes true (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004).

This is the heart of Gur-Ze'ev's argument: In the age of disappearance of the truth and absence of a polishing instance, how can a westerner be

cleansed from the oppressive, racial, colonialist essence? The answer is by creating a new, progressive meta-narrative, an altar on which estrangement of the projection and sacrificing of the fundament that is essential to the west will be made possible. This is the role of the "Jew" at this time, or at least, the role of the Jewish state (Gur-Ze'ev 2009, 2011a). For this reason, we are not discussing mere criticism or even resistance. Rather we are talking about worship through activism, an obsession that cannot be overcome, and which will intensify increasingly until the self-decolonization – in the absence of a possibility of transcendentalism – is completed.

Thus, as paradoxical as it may sound, in light of the growing power of the new progressive meta-narrative, the people of Israel is once again becoming the chosen people, in the sense that it is the expression of the ultimate evil on the face of the earth, the new "Jew among the nations." At the same time, the people of Israel was chosen specifically at this indigent historic moment – a time of the exile of holiness – also because of the mission incumbent upon it. Whether it wants to or not, the only response it should offer to the pseudo-spiritual delegitimization it is experiencing is a spiritual response. In this place, under these circumstances, asserts Gur-Ze'ev, Israeli society must pay more and more with a currency of worthy existence for life itself (Ibid).

Precisely on the backdrop of such an exegetic viewpoint on the challenges of Jewish existence, it is evident to see the chasm between the desirable state that Gur-Ze'ev had described, and the existing situation in the State of Israel. In the end, what is currently unfolding in Israeli society? In a reality where we are faced with an existential duty to carry out a brave, spiritual resurrection, the citizens of the Jewish state are captive in the hands of beastliness, corruption, self-righteousness, and self-hatred, or alternatively, mindless immersion in the post-modernistic pleasure machine. Such a state, according to Gur-Ze'ev, can only lead us to ruin. On the other hand, the very peril of the ruin of the Israeli society in particular, and humanity in general, brings hope that, despite the immense difficulty of it, despite the superhuman sacrifice that overcoming our present

image will demand of us, we will ultimately be able to offer our children an alternative to being sucked into the pleasure machine, or, alternatively, to boarding the next Marmara. We are required to respond with education for responsibility and love, and present a worthy alternative to a particularistic society that is at the same time cosmopolitan (Gur-Ze'ev, 2012, Vinokur, 2018).

Responsibility toward the other as a Response to Contemporary Challenges

At one of the times when Gur-Ze'ev dropped me off at the train station in Haifa, he suddenly said to me, "Despite everything I've written so far, I feel that I have only just begun to develop my social thinking in light of the new antisemitism." He never got to finish that thought, but to my understanding, it is actually the fascinating combination between globalization – which connects people negatively and leads to intensification of economic, ecological, and social crises – and humanity's existential need for meaning, that is an invitation for a new synthesis, whose buds could be detected in Gur-Ze'ev's writing: a Jewish-cosmopolitan society whose vocation is insistence on meaning.

A new cosmopolitanism of this kind could answer, in my view, the great educational challenge of our generation: a new definition of vocation and positive human collective responsibility that transcends borders, religions, and economic and political agendas. This would not only be a response to ecological and social transformations, but also a possible answer to the challenge of securing life on Earth itself, and particularly in the State of Israel.

In a sense, once the wheels of globalization have been set in motion, humanity is impelled to work toward finding a deeper meaning to our common existence, not only because this is the right thing to do, but also because there is no alternative (Bauman, 2000). The challenges that capitalistic globalization, post-modernism, and neo-Marxism bring with them, each in its own way, require new thinking about the purpose of human life.

Today, virtual and physical connectedness, diversity, perpetual changes, the meeting of, and the ceaseless struggle with the "other," can inflict doom on humanity, or, alternatively, become a fertile ground for education that will foster the growth and renewed flourishing concepts such as "love," "joy," "authenticity," "friendship," "humaneness," "the common good," and "responsibility" (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004).

In this process, the Israeli society bears a moral responsibility. Here, too, it is not necessarily a matter of choice, but perhaps it is actually for lack of choice. In light of the concrete existential threat to the continuation of life itself in the State of Israel – from without, in the form of new anti-semitism, and from within, in the form of social disintegration and division – choosing such an educational procedure will be, so it seems, a necessary reaction in order to guarantee the very continuation of the country (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, 2009). Yet, what are the conditions to facilitate such a reaction?

As of now, the term "Israeli society" is devoid of meaning. It would be truer to say that in Israel, many societies live side by side as closed enclaves, hostile toward each other, devoid of cultural depth, vocation, or responsibility connected to a civil communal life. Examining the "Israeli" reality reveals that it defines the "we" only in negative terms. Only the threat from Iran, a military threat or a national tragedy can engender short-term solidarity. A painful example to this was the aftermath of the national catastrophe of the "Black Saturday" on October 7th, 2023. In the course of a few hours, Hamas and other terrorist organizations, as well as Palestinian civilians, brutally slaughtered, burned alive, raped, and beheaded more than 1,144 Jewish man, woman, children and elderly people, kidnaping 250 additional man, woman, children and elderly people in the process. In the days that followed these

tragic events, the Israeli society united in mutual solidarity like never before. Acts of self-sacrifice and volunteering were seen everywhere. The unique remedy of Israeli solidarity transcended all the conflicts that preceded the massacre of October 7th, including the fierce disputes between left and right wing supports about the juridical reform. Israeli society as whole embraced and comforted the families of the murdered and wounded. More than 300,000 citizens volunteered for reserves, willing to endanger their lives for the safety of their fellow citizens.

Alas, as time went by, little by little, social and political disputes began to tear the social fabric once more. When writing these lines, the unity is still greater than the divide, and many people wish to say "never again" to self-centeredness and egotism, but beneath the surface political strategists are already setting the stage for the next social divide. In other words, unity motivated out of the sole purpose of surviving, cannot be a foundation for human existence, much less a worthy Jewish life. In the words of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (2000), a covenant of fate is not sufficient to secure the future of the Jewish nation. There is a need to forge a covenant of destiny: the Israeli society, must engage in a challenging discussion, focusing on the attempt to provide a positive answer to the question "what binds us together as a nation."

In light of the escalating threats, and particularly in light of the non-existent educational response to it, it is no longer possible to ignore the need for a new definition of the purposes of education in Israel, so that they better serve the "common good."¹ At first glance, such an act is not only meaningless, it is also impractical in the absence of real change in the social power-relations, in the access to resources and to key positions in designing educational policies. This is what Gur-Ze'ev writes about it:

¹ It is beyond the scope of this essay to properly relate to the topic of the purposes of education in Israel, but only as a suggestion for a single, common ground that should be addressed while determining educational policies. A more elaborate discussion will require addressing the country's "Education Act" in its various versions, as well as conflicting points of reference such as the vision statements of the Palestinian leadership in Israel, the Haredi educational agenda, and pertinent texts to its definition and justification, the new progressive educational agenda, and others.

"This is the vicious circle in which we are trapped – a reality where, for example, there are more symmetrical relations between members of the different groups, and there is agreement regarding the "common good," is a requisite for the next move, which will establish consent regarding the new or updated goals of education in Israel, while the very possibility of such a reality, and the very forming of a pacified agreement concerning the "common good" in Israel, are preconditioned on the existence of this very kind of education, which will enable them or generate them, since such normalizing education is still nonexistent." (Gur-Ze'ev, 2004, p. 191)

On the other hand, as said above, the threats to Israel, from within and from without, leave us no alternative. Therefore, those who feel the sword placed on their necks, who seek meaning in a meaningless world, who are willing to relinquish personal interests for a higher social goal, must unite into socio-educational communities in order to try to influence the public discourse in Israel. Today, more than ever, we are required to rebuild a vocation and a purpose in the nation, whose wounds of division are currently growing deeper, and not allow it to fall prey to instigation of the conflicts that threaten to dismantle it from the inside.

To achieve this, we must ask tough, yet vital questions regarding the appropriate life on this piece of land, and place them at the top of public discourse. The discussion should bear the characteristics of a deliberative, family discussion: What is the purpose of our common life in the country? How can we create a common life here, if we can at all? Who is included in the definition of the Israeli "we"? And what is the "common good" from which we derive the interests and rewards, on the one hand, and that we, as a public, aspire, or should aspire for, on the other hand? (Gur Ze'ev, 2004).

We must try to answer these questions as soon as possible since not only the threat from without, but also the one from within – the oppressive aspiration of the Haredi, Palestinians, those on the Right, and those on the Left – can annihilate the cinder of the delicate social fabric that is still left in our midst. Perhaps precisely on this

backdrop, we should examine the possibility to channel the predicted struggle from hatred for this or that class or sector, into hatred for the dividing cause between man and man – the egoism that generates violent protectionism on our personal opinions, as well as the attempt to obliterate the rival camp at all cost.

However, first, just as in order to survive, one must tend to one's physical necessities, the State of Israel must, through fundamental national love, which is not ethnocentric, although deeply embedded in the roots of its origins as a Jewish and democratic state, allow for bold self-criticism. Therefore, the precondition for any operation on the social realm is to learn to love the positive universal message of love of others, which we can find in the writings of many intellectuals on all sides of the debate. Such discourse is mandatory, and must evolve concurrently within every sector, with the ambition to gradually foster true and sincere willingness for a cross-sector discourse around the way in which all of us, without exception, can lead a life of proper commonness on this land.

The purpose of the new counter education that should be established in Israel must be dedicated to nurturing love for any person in any sector in general, but within the country in particular, out of the aspiration to establish a basis for a common discourse that will override the victim, or oppressor consciousness, which transcends narrow political and social considerations in the face of a vocation that is greater than any of them. This vocation, in the words of Gur-Ze'ev, is enveloped in the name "love," in the sense of love as a choice, love as chosenness, and love as a door to a sublime, humane life (Gur-Ze'ev, 2012).

From the perspective of the Jewish public within the State of Israel and abroad, Gur-Ze'ev's vision of the exile can be interpreted as both a vision of a return to the meta-vocation that has accompanied the Jewish people from its inception – the sublimation of the connection between man and man into a Divine degree. However, that "return" does not contain calmness, but rather constant transformations and improvisations.

Accepting the awareness of the global mission contained in love of others as the supreme value will begin to germinate here seeds of an avant-garde society, which is not ethnocentric but rather cosmopolitan in its aspirations. This is a painful alternative, as it behooves incessant overcoming of the oh-so-enticing temptation to be sucked into the streams of life as always, on the one hand, and the temptation to be absorbed into the cleansing metaphysical "nothing" that the post-modernistic celebration offers, on the other hand. However, in light of the challenges before us, it is so very vital today.

With this insight in mind, we return to Gur-Ze'ev's analysis and the challenges that new antisemitism poses before us. At the conclusion of his discussion on the topic, in Issue No. 55 of *Eretz Acheret* [Another Land], Gur-Ze'ev defines the only possibility, in his opinion, for an appropriate response to it:

"We must know how to reply to ourselves, and then to others, in light of the assaults on Judaism, both as an expression of intolerable particularism, as well as a representative of false universal foreignness. Today, it is our fate to cope with the responsibility for a Jewish revival. Today, a spiritual Jewish revival is a requisite for the very existence of worthy Jewish existence in general, and in the State of Israel in particular. Israel will not be able to survive based on high-tech industry or military deterrence, unless it makes education the prime interest and preference of Israeli existence as a universal model for a worthy-life. We must toil for a new language, qualify ourselves for the summoning of sanctity, and despite the circumstances, educate toward courage in the spirit of the commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Gur-Ze'ev, 2010c, p. 30)

It is thus not easy to summarize Gur-Ze'ev's approach to the state of Israeli, to Zionism and to Judaism. His intellectual endeavor can be divided in two: the diasporic philosophy of the "early" Gur-Ze'ev, which was anti-Zionist in its essence, depicting the Israeli state as "Sparta of the wicked" (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998); and the diasporic philosophy of the latter Gur-Ze'ev, which was pro-Zionist but not utterly Zionist, which sought to protect the state of Israel from the jaws of the

new-progressives, exposing their hidden antisemitic aspirations behind the pseudo-humanistic rhetoric of "global peace," "equality" and "social justice". What is certain is that his work on new antisemitism was a work in progress which was never completed.

Contemplating on it today, in the face of a deepening chasm in the post-modern reality, as well as in the middle east, manifesting, among other representations, in a growing tendency towards the delegitimization of the state of Israel and antisemitism, there seems to be a pressing need to strengthen the legitimacy for a Jewish sovereign state, not only as a sole shelter for the Jewish people, but also as an ideological response. One might claim that today the conditions are ripe to once again contemplate the purpose of Jewish existence, and from it, to self-reflect, develop a consciousness of universal responsibility, and as a result, to divert from our inner devils on the one hand, and the gallop toward the nothing, on the other hand, not only as a vocation worth pursuing, but also as an existential necessity without which Jewish life on this planet might not be possible. In such circumstances, the reemergence of the Jewish positive vision of the worthy social and moral life – an ideological revival that was not possible in times when man had more egotistical choices – can present a courageous educational response to the challenges of the current reality in Israel and around the world.

In conclusion, the existential urgency, the unique fabric of life in Israel, which forms a sort of microcosmos of processes of struggle between the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern, as well as the moral-ethical-cultural self-perception of residents who still aspire to rear into a different kind of life in our country, allow, in my understanding, the hope for a consideration of the proposed agenda towards the resurrection of the idea of "Israel as a model society," precisely in our midst.

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