

Obedience, embracing, normalcy and failure /

Four comments on the situation

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Contempt for obedience: I take pride in the fact that when the sirens go off, I demonstratively refrain from heading to a protected space. It's not because I'm courageous. I have my fears. But rationality is not necessarily a dirty word. The chance of being injured by the "flying pipes" in Gush Dan are immeasurably lower than the chances of being hurt on the sidewalks of Tel Aviv during times of calm, not to speak of the risk of catching a fatal virus when entering a hospital. The chances are so low that the fact that Israelis are responding en masse to the directives of the Home Front Command does not reflect a reasonable means of protection; rather, it is primarily an expression of participation in a national carnival. All blind conformity to directives from above, from any authority, is contemptible in my view. Even if this behavior saves a tiny number of injuries, I flinch from the joy in which the masses of Israelis submit to the directives that mainly fabricate a dubious "togetherness."

Everyone embraces everyone: The battle front embraces the home front, the home front embraces the battle front. The media channels manufacture drama when there is drama, and primarily when there is no drama. In my neighborhood, they were collecting food for IDF soldiers until midnight yesterday. I hope that the food finds its way to the elderly, including Holocaust survivors, whose cupboards are not cornucopias and whom, of course, we all embrace, always. One journalist, who was formerly a member of a Jewish terrorist organization, writes: "The summer of 5774 is becoming a summer of sobriety and unity ... in the face of mournful tidings and missile barrages, a huge and quiet demonstration has assembled here of millions of determined Jews, arm in arm from all of the camps." In fact, the durability of this unity is about as strong as the solidarity at the airport counters in Athens, where the embracers pummeled each other to get a seat on a flight back to Israel. This is a fake unity that is not really being tested now. This is not the War of Independence or the Yom Kippur War. For most of those who are embracing (though not everyone, of course), this war is exhilarating at the danger level of a roller coaster at an amusement park. These are deluxe conditions in which to embrace and exhilarate. No one should think that Israel's next wars (and it's reasonable to expect there will be such wars since we are stuck in the throat of a hostile world) will look like this "war." Those who don't understand what a real war looks and feels like should ask his parents and grandparents.

Normalcy: The embracing Israeli also feels like a victim. One of the statements I can't bear is that our children deserve a more normal life. To those bemoaning the lack of normalcy: Please note that for most human beings, over the course of most of human history, the proximity of death has been a routine experience. Abnormal life is actually that of Norway and New Zealand. Our children have a pretty good life, all in all. Most of them will remember the sirens as a warm and exciting event. They generally do not see the pictures of the children in Gaza.

Failure: Some are speaking about our failure in allowing Hamas to develop mighty offensive capabilities. Hamas and Israel have an interest in aggrandizing the strength of Hamas. Netanyahu is not ashamed to mention in the same breath the firing of rockets and the blitz on London in World War II. True, it is not reasonable to allow continuous shooting on Sderot, and puffs of smoke in the skies of Tel Aviv are also unacceptable. On the other hand, a bit of proportion in regard to the relative strength of Hamas would not hurt. Little David is the king of high-tech, the world champion in defense industries and holds the patent on the Jewish genius. The Philistine Goliath uses tunnels and catapults, technologies that were also known in biblical times. And perhaps our real failure is that for many years we read about the blockade on the population in Gaza and turned the next page. Today too we know that in the name of security and the right to the land we will continue to expand settlements and hold millions of Palestinians under occupation and siege, and we do not internalize the fact that we are also partners in nurturing the next generations of haters and avengers.