

The Slippery Slope Leading a Sense of justice to a Civil war

Material for the Day of Rabin's Assassination

The Place Where We are Right / Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
There will never grow
Flowers in Spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.

Yet doubts and loves make
the world as loose
as a mole, as ploughed earth.

And you shall hear a whisper in the place
where the house had been –
that was destroyed.

Bavli, Tractate Shabbat, Page 119, Side 2

Rabbi Hanina said: Jerusalem would not have been destroyed had people reprimanded one another as it is written – "Her princes were like deer that find no pasture" (Lamentations 5) Just as in a herd of deer one's head is near another's tail, so Israel in that generations 'buried their face in the ground' and refrained from reprimanding one another.

"Civil War," in: Alma Dee / Ari Elon (Shadmot Notebook, Vol. 114, 1990)

There are 3 major fronts of the internal Jewish cultural war between the rabbis and the people in power:

- A. The front of the Israeli people.
- B. The front of the Land of Israel.
- C. The front of the Torah of Israel.

On the front of the "People of Israel", important battles were waged and will be waged concerning the question of "Who is a Jew?"



On the front of the Land of Israel, battles are fought concerning two main questions:

1. What will the final borders of this country be? And will they be safe or secured?
2. What will be the social and moral character of the Jewish state within the determined boundaries? Will it be democratic and sovereign or a rabbinic halachic state?

The 'Torah of Israel' front is the most worrisome one. There are hardly any battles about this. The silent majority of the Jewish people feel that the rabbis have exclusive monopoly over the cultural origins and traditions of the Jewish people ... As long as the Torah of Israel continues to be the exclusive domain of the rabbis, they will continue to lead the Jewish people as they wish, while waving the Torah as a threatening doctrine. On the day that the sovereign leadership will expropriate the Torah of Israel from the rabbis, every single Jew will know that the Torah entails seventy modes of authorized and acceptable interpretation, aside of the law... Only on this day will he begin to be a free people in his country.

Lesson Plan

Introduction:

A reminder of what had happened following of the murder – a dialogue, a reconciliation order, verbal violence, incitement. That is, the belief that a direct chain connects the spoken word to an act of violence. At the same time, what is happening in Western culture with the advent of the 'politically correct' culture – how do you now call 'negros' 'dwarfs'? Establishment of classes for studies of Hispanics, Jews, Afro-Americans, etc.

Amichai

Does Amichai here mark the boundaries of conversation and debate, or is this his principle conclusion – removal of justice from our lives?

Is this the beginning or conclusion of the discussion? Should we engage in debate and a political struggle while this is the axiom – the removal of the idea of justice in order to protect ourselves? To make sure we come out safely?

Unconsciously, Amichai marks not only the manner in which the conversation is conducted, but also the issue that makes us feel so right and thereby, so dangerous – 'the place' – both in the sense of the Land of Israel and in the sense of G-d. These are the two reasons we kill each other on the altar of justice.

Amichai responds to the Israeli dialogue of the 1960s, which was saturated with pathos of ideology and moral rigidity, accompanied by a clear sense of "the justice of our path."

Is it still relevant today?

Does Rabin's murder happen in the same type of discourse?



Bavli

How is the choice of the opening explained?

What is the assumption regarding the connection between the cause (rebuke) and the effect (destruction)?

The metaphor – refers to leadership. It has a role. According to it, we actually understand what the alternative to reproof is – burying one's face in the ground. Being indifferent, disregarding.

Discussion:

What is the other dialogue that is not admonishment?

In which era of dialogue do we exist? Does this predict destruction?

Alma Dee

Draw attention to the date the pamphlet was written (1990) – 18 years ago.

Clarify concepts in the article – 'rabbis' versus 'those in power'.

War' – with the Arabs, the solution is external to us – territories.

with the religious people, the solution is internal, in the deep sense – concerning culture, history and values. There is no decisive victory or agreement between governments, but it is conducted in the present, especially in the field of education and cultural production. Ari Alon calls for a cultural civil war. 'Cultural' – not in the sense of form – being pleasant and maintaining rules, but in the sense of content – we refrain from waging war on the contents and values of the country and society. The wars are mostly waged about the boundaries and generally, they are transferred to the judiciary and legislative domains.

There are three scenarios:

1. In attempt to Refrain from arguments and reproofs – withdrawal to the community and the tribe. In other words, a de facto recognition of the Zionist attempt to build a society here, not a tribe or a Shtetl of the Diaspora.
2. From silence in the cultural field to violence in the political field – leading to the emergence of forces like Yigal Amir and increasing hatred of the leftists.
3. The optimistic – shifting the discussion to the visible and proven field of culture. Declaration of a cultural war to avoid a civil war.

