**It All Starts With Education**

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In 2011, Bezalel Smotrich published an article in the magazine ―B‘Sheva‖ entitled ―We Deserve More,‖ in which he wrote that ―The state should invest more in religious Zionist education. Why? Because its sons have been assigned the task – to lead the nation of Israel.‖ Many simply dismissed this declaration as irrelevant nonsense, calling it racist, delusional, and impossible. The report published in Lior Detel‘s article (The Marker, 17.8) shows that Smotrich‘s heart is truly where his mouth is. Naftali Bennett and his party members truly believe in it, and when given the power they have no inhibitions to implement their doctrine.

It should be noted this assertion – the task of leading the state – does not relate to the democratic process, but rather to the privilege that they attribute to themselves on behalf of their religion is based on Kookism – the teachings of the Rabbis Kook, the founders of religious Zionism. They believe that political reality carries messianic omens, and their unquestioning faith gives them the ability to decipher the will of God and the secret that decodes the course of history. Therefore, it is very important to nurture religious Zionism and to do so in a clear preference over others.

It turns out that Gideon Saar and Shai Piron also share this agenda. According to data from the Ministry of Education, between 2012 and 2016, the Ministry increased the budget for religious high school students more than any other demographic – reaching a peak of 33,000 NIS per student per year. This amount is 22% higher than the budget allocated to secular Jewish high school students, and 67% higher than the budget allocated to Arab high school students.

A study by the Macro Institute reveals that the preference for this sector over others is also evident in other areas. The budget for 2017-2018 gives a clear preference to those living in the West Bank: residents of Judea and Samaria receive benefits and tax grants that are higher in 24% of the Negev residents, 19% more than in the Galilee and 5 times the average Israeli living west of the Green Line.

A study by the Adva Institute reveals that government participation in the budgets of non-Haredi communities in the territories – not including balancing grants – stood at nearly 3,000 NIS in 2015, almost 50% more than in the development towns, where per capita participation is only 2,000 NIS. The balancing grants to the nonultra-Orthodox settlements were close to NIS 1,000 per capita, about 50 percent more than the balancing grants to the development towns. But among the settlers, too, the distribution takes place in a clear order of preference. Per capita participation in the national council‘s budget is only 1,415 NIS in the ultra-Orthodox settlements, which are not identified with Gush Emunim‘s ideology over the years, whereas in others the participation is 2,953 NIS per capita.

The shaping of the political position of the youth will affect the political system, the character and the regime of the State of Israel in the coming years. This insight is not hidden from those who wish to settle in people‘s hearts and promote nationalistic messianic ideas.

If these trends are not halted and the process does not reverse, Israel will move closer to the realization of Lord Nathaniel Rothschild‘s warning in his letter to Herzl in 1903: ―I should view with horror the establishment of a Jewish Colony pure and simple; such a Colony would be Imperium Imperio; it would be a Ghetto with the prejudices of the Ghetto; it would be a small petty Jewish State, orthodox and illiberal, excluding the Gentile and the Christian.

The war on the character, identity and future of the State of Israel must be returned to the field of education, which was abandoned many years ago by the ruling parties, granted as an unholy fee for the establishment of a government. This is a long process, but for the minority that still believes in the possibility of a different Israel, there is nothing left to do but to start rebuilding it.