**Shaul Arieli**

**Rehavam Ze'evi, your prophecy will soon come true**

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In the coming weeks, Rechavam Ze'evi ("Gandhi") is expected to win the status of prophet or at least the fortune teller of the new Jerusalem. The prospective candidates to reward him this prize are ministers Naftali Bennett and Zeev Elkin. They managed to hold a lengthy debate in the Knesset before the final approval of the law, which would allow the separation of the Palestinian neighborhoods beyond the separation barrier from the Jerusalem municipality and their transfer into a new Israeli local authority.

Ze'evi, a central figure on the committee that was appointed immediately after the Six-Day War by the Eshkol government to determine the new borders of Jerusalem, was asked by Justice Minister Yaakov Shapira what logic is behind his new proposed boundaries. Ze'evi's reply is about to become prophetic: these were aimed at "maximizing the area added to Jerusalem, allowing it to become a large metropolis," but added: "If it becomes clear in the future that we have gone too far in including territories and population, then Jerusalem proper could be separated from the outlying areas, which would receive the status of a regional council. "

This answer, which was given exactly 50 years ago, naturally raises the memory of another, truly important "prophecy" - the decision to establish the State of Israel, exactly 50 years after Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl envisioned it. But with the dimension of time the similarity between the two ends.

Ze'evi's original proposal was to expand Jerusalem by no less than 200 square kilometers, a vast area east of the city that extends to Wadi Kelt. This decision would have led to the loss of the precious Jewish majority in Jerusalem that had been created there for the first time since 1870. This was a such a messianic proposal that even Ze'evi himself doubted. At the cabinet meeting, it was Defense Minister Moshe Dayan who knew how to block the destructive idea: "I know the Jewish appetite, if you add the airport and Ein Prat, rather than annexing the other half of Jerusalem, we would be dividing the West Bank in half and I am against it. "

It turns out that the government's decision to be content with the annexation of "only" 70 square kilometers did not render Ze'evi's prophecy irrelevant. We still went too far by annexing 11 times the area of Jordanian East Jerusalem, which covered only 6 square kilometers. We went too far by turning 70,000 Palestinians into Israeli permanent residents, who constituted 26 percent of the united city's population and have now grown to almost 40 percent. We went too far by coveting the territories while ignoring their Arab residents for 50 years, as the mayor and former prime minister, Ehud Olmert, admitted in an interview in 2012: "No Israeli government since 1967 has done anything to unify the city ... Although we invested in Jerusalem, we consciously invested mainly in the western part of the city and in the new neighborhoods like Har Homa, Pisgat Ze'ev, Ramot and Gilo, and we did not invest in the areas that in my opinion will not be under Israeli sovereignty in the future. "

We went too far by making "united" Jerusalem into a city characterized by negative security, economic and social trends that harm all its residents and threaten to turn the capital of Israel into a poor, terror-stricken city with a weak Jewish majority. We went too far by creating a situation that causes an average of 8,000 Jews to leave the city each year.

50 years before the decision to establish the Jewish state, Herzl concluded the First Zionist Congress thus: "Zionism aspires to establish a home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, which will be guaranteed by public law." In other words, the Jewish state will be built on the basis of international recognition, both political and legal, of the justice of its demand to establish a national home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Therefore, it was Ben Gurion who insisted on adding the following sentence to the Declaration of Independence: "On the basis of the resolution of the United Nations Assembly." On the other hand, recognition of the annexation of East Jerusalem and other areas of the West Bank was then and now denied by the entire international community. Even Trump's last statement does not relate to the current boundaries of Jerusalem.

While the Zionist movement was certain of the justice of its claim and morality, the Israeli government tried at the time to conceal the act of annexation with all sorts of pretexts. As Foreign Ministry official wrote to Prime Minister Eshkol's chief of staff: "I suggested to Dr. Herzog (the governor of the West Bank) that immediately after the adoption of the law for the unification of municipal areas, a number of villages would be annexed to Nablus or Bethlehem, for the sake of 'administrative efficiency', in order to camouflage the main intention. "

The Zionist movement saw the state as being democratic and liberal, but Ze'evi and his current heirs regard the Palestinians as stateless and underprivileged people, whose sole purpose is to disappear from the Promised Land. After all, there is no municipal logic in establishing an authority consisting of two refugee camps, neighborhoods and villages that are miles apart. The messianic and racist ideology of these thinkers prevents them from considering transferring these neighborhoods to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority under a fair, ongoing program of rehabilitation, development and compensation program. There is but one logic: "let them go to hell" and not influence our municipal elections.

The lesson of Dayan's "Jewish appetite" has apparently not been learned. Evidence of this was given to us this week when about 1,500 members of the Likud Central Committee voted in favor of a resolution requiring the party to support the application of Israeli sovereignty in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley. The political, demographic, economic, social, and moral realities are transparent and have no effect on these voters. All warnings of the forced annexation of millions of Palestinians with national aspirations recognized by the international community fall on deaf ears. Not even half a prophet is needed to understand that if this move is adopted, it is the end of the State of Israel we know and want to raise our children and their children in.