**Israel will simply collapse**

**Shaul Arieli, Haaretz, June 13, 2019** [**https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.7365865**](https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.7365865?fbclid=IwAR2m3mELLxjB5GSuSFkCeTl9hRo_sTStBQVcndZjN2k-kSj3TzZmOoKVhEQ)

The dispersal of the 21st Knesset and the declaration of re-election are nothing but a ritual for the ultra-Orthodox parties. This requires them with organizational effort, but does not threaten them. The trend is clear: their political power is intensifying, and with it the ability to appoint prime ministers. Today they might support one prime minister or another in return for their budgetary demands and recognition of their separatism. Tomorrow they might appoint themselves a "puppet" who will do their bidding.

This trend expresses the realization of the first condition in the warning of the Book of Proverbs: "For three things the earth is perturbed, for four it cannot bear up. For a servant when he reigns". The warning refers to the rise of the power of a person who was of inferior status, and after his rise he behaves cruelly and rudely. Similarly to the behavior of the Jewish immigrants towards the Arabs of the land, which Ahad Ha'am condemned in his 1891 essay, Truth from the Land of Israel: "What do our brethren do in the Land of Israel? They were slaves in the land of their exile, and suddenly they find themselves in unlimited freedom ... as always happens to a servant when he reigns, they walk with the Arabs with hostility and cruelty. Shamefully beat them with no good reason… and no one will stand in the breach and stop this nasty and dangerous tendency".

More important is the warning against the rise to power of those who have not learned the ways of managing a "kingdom". To this we must add that what the author of the book of Proverbs wrote seems to be taken for granted: the need that those who rise to power, identify with the police and the character of the kingdom.

Are the ultra-Orthodox in Israel preparing themselves and their leadership for the enormous task of preserving and managing a developed and militarily powerful country like Israel, or will the trends that characterize them deteriorate Israel into the dark and poor state of Third World countries?

The path of the Haredi population to power, as long as democratic elections are held in Israel, is paved by its high natural increase (4.4% per year). According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) forecast, its share is expected to rise from 12% of the total population to 20% in 2040, and to 32% in 2065. Of the total Jewish population in Israel it's expected to rise to 24% in 2040, and to 40% in 2065. In 50 years, the proportion of Jewish children from among all Israeli children will increase to 84%, with 49% of them ultra-Orthodox. This is despite the fact that in recent years there has been a decline in the fertility rate among ultra-Orthodox families, which is now 6.9 children per woman (in 2002-2005 it was 7.5).

The good news are that the rate of Haredi participation in the labor market rose from 59.4% in 2000 to 63.9% in 2018. The main change stems from an increase in the participation rate of ultra-Orthodox women. According to the CBS forecast, while in 2015 the share of Jews in the labor market was 81.2%, of which 7.5% were Haredim, at the end of the projection period (2065), the share of the Haredim is expected to rise sharply to 26%.

Reuven Gal, head of the "Integration of Haredim" project at the Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research, frequently presents the great gaps between Haredi society and the rest of the public, and the trends in reducing them in various areas. In 2016, 54% of the ultra-Orthodox reported using the computer, compared to 44% in 2007. The gap with the non-ultra-Orthodox population is large (70% and 80%, respectively). More ultra-Orthodox women (58%) than men (49%) use computers. The change stems mainly from the increase in the rate of employment and entrance to academic studies among ultra-Orthodox in general, and ultra-Orthodox women in particular. The rate of those holding a driving license in 2015-2016 was 42%. This is much lower than the non-Haredi population (81%). Only 29% of ultra-Orthodox women hold a license, compared with 56% of men (and 72% and 90% of the general population, respectively). The rate of private car ownership is 41%, much lower than among the non-Haredi population (79%). Gal's conclusion is that 30% of Haredi society is open and undergoing changes.

Thus, Haredi society gives only a partial answer to Ze'ev Jabotinsky, who, in 1919, demanded in an article in the newspaper Hadashot Ha'aretz: "To establish an order that distances the non-productive element (the old haredi yeshuv) from any interference in national building matters. This is what they would undoubtedly have done in any European country, had there been an element that publicly rejected the very notion of civilian life - especially labor".

Only one out of every 10 ultra-Orthodox is entitled to a matriculation certificate. The average salary among the ultra-Orthodox is almost 50% lower than the average salary in Israel, and most of the ultra-Orthodox are ranked at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder (cluster 1-2), this without taking into account the "black market", the popular interest-free loans and the reparations from Germany.

Haredi participation in public systems, such as security, law, and the economy in the business sector, is negligible. According to Knesset reports, there has been a decrease in the number of exemptions from military service and the postponement of service given to the ultra-Orthodox between 2014 (42,004) and 2017 (30,286), and between 2013 and 2016 there was a 45% increase in the number of Haredi recruits from 1,972 to 2,850.

At the same time, there was a decline in the proportion of Haredim who enlisted relative to their annual enlistment targets, and the number of Haredim who enlisted in national-civil service in the years 2014-2016 dropped from 744 to 571. Most importantly, 80% of the Haredi recruits, serve in designated frameworks, and do not climb the chain of command.

Although there are thousands of ultra-Orthodox lawyers in the Israeli market, their representation in the Israel Bar Association, the Judicial Appointments Committee, and judicial positions on almost all levels are negligible. It is also hard to point out ultra-Orthodox tycoons in Israel, and as it was published on the website "Behadrei Haredim", it is also known that 50 wealthy Jewish families from around the world hold the Israeli world of yeshivas, Hasidic organizations and charities.

The rate of Haredim among the settler population is approaching 40%, and is expected to reach 50% within a decade. Although according to all proposals for territorial exchanges presented in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, a decisive majority of the ultra-Orthodox are supposed to remain under Israeli sovereignty, surveys conducted by Prof. Tamar Hermann of the Israel Democracy Institute show that their support for the two-state solution is lower than in any other sector of Jewish society, and reached a low of 11% in 2018. This explains why the ultra-Orthodox parties support those who oppose a political agreement with the Palestinians.

The most serious thing is that the democracy that serves Haredi society is not at the top of its agenda. In his book "Haredim of the People's rule," Prof. Benjamin Brown describes the claims made by ultra-Orthodox speakers against the democratic regime in general and Israeli democracy in particular: "In their opinion, there is no legitimacy for a regime that is not according to the Torah. For among the people of Israel the creator is the sovereign, not the people. According to the ultra-Orthodox view, the basic values ​​of democracy, which are in fact the basic values ​​of Western culture in general, are unacceptable to Judaism, and most of all, the value of freedom is unacceptable. Man, and especially the masses, are not worthy of in their opinion of trust, and they call to entrust the decision to the great Torah scholars. But beyond all these fundamental principles, the ultra-Orthodox attack those who are perceived as the living representatives of democracy - the judicial system and the enforcement of the law, particularly the Supreme Court, the media and the secular left. In the ultra-Orthodox press, the argument is frequently maid that Israeli democracy is merely an instrument in the hands of these forces; That is, the principles of democracy are an instrument to them, and they bend them to their will". Brown believes that the Haredim's claims are "more of an intellectual challenge than a real political threat". Is it? When we see their attitude toward granting immunity to Netanyahu, who stood at the center of the failed negotiations to form a government, in return for a bribe and the acceptance of their coalition demands that are expected to impose darkness on 88% of Israeli society?

President Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and one of the Founding Fathers of the American Nation, argued that democracy and the sanctification of the past are incompatible. The core of democracy is the promotion and nurturing of the present and the future. Therefore, those who seek to impose on society the values ​​of the past are undermining democracy. In this field, Haredi society did not meet the challenge presented by Jabotinsky in the article mentioned above, in which he wrote: "There are those who are in the camp and those outside the camp ... Why should we miss such partners, what is the use of their participation, as long as there is no common language, and there is no common ideal, and what need do we have for such burden on our tiny boat?" But it must be remembered that the situation has turned on its head, and the ultra-Orthodox are mow the camp that will grow stronger as the liberal democratic camp is becoming a minority.

People behave in accordance with the reward given to them, and therefore the budgets that the Netanyahu government recently granted the ultra-Orthodox, strengthen their separatist tendencies and prevent the development of positive trends which have not yet been translated into a substantive change. The current Netanyahu government is one of the most favorable governments to Haredi society. An analysis published by the journalist Adrian Filot in Calcalist (March 5, 2008) shows that the total value of the demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties that the government agreed to - whether intended solely for the benefit of the ultra-Orthodox sector or those intended to benefit the general public - is 19.7 billion NIS.

Since its formation in 2015, the government, headed by the Finance Ministry led by Moshe Kahlon, has agreed to budget demands of the ultra-Orthodox parties culminating to 4.2 billion NIS, to the benefit of the ultra-Orthodox public only: from the subsidy budget of ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, reaching a record of 1.3 billion NIS, to 2.2 billion NIS to ultra-Orthodox education networks, and 107 million NIS to the budget of Agudat Israel's independent education network, which is expected to reach 1.4 billion NIS; Shas' Ma'ayan Torah Education network will receive an additional 104 million NIS, and its budget will reach 800 million NIS. During its term of office, the government raised the yeshiva budget three times, and in 2019 it is expected to reach an all-time high of 1.27 billion NIS. To this must be added the fact that the ultra-Orthodox managed to curb the struggle to reduce the use of cash in the economy, which costs the state about 500 million NIS a year in loss of income. They also blocked the cuts in child allowances, which in effect gives them a budget increase of 1.5 billion NIS.

If Israeli governments continue to ignore the long-term trends, and Haredi society will continue to adhere to the values ​​and approach that characterize it today towards Zionism, Labor, the IDF, women, minorities, democracy and the rule of law, the State of Israel "cannot bear up" as is written in the book of Proverbs. It will collapse, and will become a fundamentally different state in its assesse and purpose from what was the vision of the founding fathers of Zionism. Israel's challenge today is to connect ultra-Orthodox society to the state. Poverty figures prove that the policy of the ultra-Orthodox ghetto is collapsing. It is beneficial only for the yeshivas and politicians - who hold the channels of power, status, influence and money - but not for the Haredi public and the future of the state. Israeli governments should stop granting the ultra-Orthodox the budgets that strengthen their separatism and instead transfer budgets to projects that will integrate them into society as a productive and contributing factor. For 71 years this was not done. It's time to start.