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**Loyalty and Critical Perspective:
The Dilemma of the Israeli Society**

Dilemma that many human beings face especially if they cherish moral values, democratic values, support human rights values.

The dilemma is between loyalty and critical reflection.

Loyalty

Loyalty is in this case related to a group, nation, ethnic group, religion,

It is related to patriotism

It is related to care, concern, love, attachment to the group and often to the country, state,

Critical thinking refers to evaluation of a situation, seeing hidden lines, ability to see flaws, to detect wrong doings, mistakes, violations, to finding better solutions, innovative approaches.

Critical thinking is essential in any group for progress, for change, for improving, for guarding adherence to moral values, justice, adherence to human rights. Critical thinking by its nature causes often inconvenience and dissonance to the group and many group members experience distress because it questions the conventions, it shows deficiencies, wrong doings of the group and causes to disagreements.

Loyalty, care ----Patriotism is also essential for the existence of every group

Without loyalty and care groups cannot exist. But also without critical thinking a group cannot exist.

So how do we combine the two crucial values—one the one hand loyalty and on the other hand critical reflections.

This is complicated because we do revere patriots who care for their nations, who are loyal. Everyone knows who is Washington, Garibaldi, Kosciuszko, Trumpeldor. They endangered their life for the cause of the group. These cases are relatively easy because they are unequivocal

But what about Patrick Daniel "Pat" Tillman who was an [American football](#) player who left his professional career and enlisted in the [United States Army](#) in June 2002 to fight a patriotic war and was killed in April 2004 in the mountains of Afghanistan.

What about those patriotic soldiers who went to fight to Iraq in March 2003.

But we also revere those who were critical of their society, nations. Take for example Martin Luther King who exposed a deep practiced institutionalized discrimination

Also how do we judge these two values—Ill help you –let's take an example where these two values may collide –in the eyes of some people.

So let's look at other nations == Let's look at Emile Zola as the seminal example .

Zola was born in [Paris](#) in 1840. His father, François Zola (originally Francesco Zolla), was an [Italian](#) engineer. With his French wife, Émilie Aurélie Aubert, the family moved to [Aix-en-Provence](#), in the southeast, when he was three years old. Four years later, in 1847, his father died, leaving his mother on a meager pension. In 1858, the Zolas moved to Paris. He became a leading writer and intellectual

In 1894—when Zola was a revered person --Captain Alfred Dreyfus a Jewish artillery officer in the French army was found guilty of giving the German embassy military

secrets. Anti-semitism seems to have caused senior officers to suspect Dreyfus, though there was no direct evidence of any wrongdoing. Dreyfus was court-martialled, convicted of treason and sent to [Devil's Island](#) in [French Guiana](#). In spite of the fact that Lt. Col. [Georges Picquart](#), brought evidence that implicated another officer, [Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy](#), and informed his superiors. Rather than move to clear Dreyfus, the decision was made to protect Esterhazy and ensure the original verdict was not overturned. Documents were forged that made it seem that Dreyfus was guilty and then had Picquart assigned duty in Africa. Before leaving, Picquart told some of Dreyfus's supporters what he knew. The government refused new evidence to be allowed and Esterhazy was tried and acquitted. Picquart was then sentenced to 60 days in prison.

Émile Zola risked his career and even his life ---on 13 January 1898, when his "*J'accuse*", was published on the front page of the Paris daily, [L'Aurore](#). In this statement Émile Zola's "*J'Accuse*" accused [President of France Félix Faure](#), and accused the [government](#) of [anti-Semitism](#) and the [unlawful jailing](#) of [Alfred Dreyfus](#). Zola pointed out judicial errors and lack of serious evidence. He thus accused the highest levels of the French Army of obstruction of justice and [antisemitism](#) by having wrongfully convicted Alfred Dreyfus to life imprisonment on Devil's Island.

I want you to think for a moment what does it mean—

The context of continuous tension because of the conflictive relations with Germany – the war with Prussia ended in 1871 –with the defeat not France

Zola is smearing, darkening own country

Shows deeply institutionalized Anti-Semitism in the French society that is very proud of its achievements

Zola was brought to trial for criminal libel on 7 February 1898, and was convicted on 23 February, sentenced, and removed from the [Legion of Honor](#). Rather than go to jail, Zola fled to [England](#). Without even having had the time to pack a few clothes, he arrived at [Victoria Station](#) on 19 July. After his brief and unhappy residence in [London](#), from October 1898 to June 1899, he was allowed to return in time to see the government fall.

The government offered Dreyfus a pardon (rather than exoneration), which he could accept and go free and so effectively admit that he was guilty, or face a re-trial in which he was sure to be convicted again. Although he was clearly not guilty, he chose to accept the pardon. Emile Zola said, "The truth is on the march, and nothing shall stop it." In 1906, Dreyfus was completely exonerated by the Supreme Court.

SO how would you evaluate the act of Emile Zola. He darkened –put blame, on his homeland –a country that at that time lived under continuous German threat the Prussian -French war was just over and the new war was approaching.

Was Emil Zola a patriot???

And what about

Peace laureate

[LIU XIAOBO](#) got Nobel Prize for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.—2010—In essence he is exposing human rights violations of China ---his homeland

[Aung San Suu Kyi](#) who got Nobel Prize "for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights" is a [Burmese](#) opposition [politician](#) and a former General Secretary of the [National League for Democracy](#). Primarily in response to her detention, Aung San Suu Kyi received the [Rafto Prize](#) and the [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#) in 1990 and the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1991.

Shirin Ebadi is an [Iranian lawyer](#), a former [judge](#) and [human rights](#) activist and founder of [Centre for the Defence of Human Rights](#) in [Iran](#). In 2003, Ebadi was awarded the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) for her significant and pioneering efforts for democracy and human rights, especially women's, children's, and refugee rights.

But all of them in some way shed very negative light on their state in light of their values.

So why do we revere them?

What about Louis Brandeis

As you may know he was a person of critical reflection and also a patriot

He was critical of the socio-economic order exposing corruption, monopolies , exploitations—showing the ugly side of United States his homeland .

When in 1916, President [Woodrow Wilson](#) nominated Brandeis to become a member of the U.S. Supreme Court, his nomination was bitterly contested, partly because, as [Justice William O. Douglas](#) wrote, "Brandeis was a militant crusader for social justice whoever his opponent might be. He was dangerous not only because of his brilliance, his arithmetic, his courage. He was dangerous because he was incorruptible. . . [and] the fears of the Establishment were greater because Brandeis was the first Jew to be named to the Court."

So maybe we have to differentiate between blind patriotism and constructive patriotism

Blind patriotism refers to a rigid and inflexible attachment to the country, characterized by a loyalty without any criticism —and this regardless of the policy, behavior, acts, that the leaders of the group take or the group approves.

Constructive patriotism refers to a “critical loyalty” which promotes continuous evaluation, judgment about the way the society goes in order to keep it on the right track because of the care and love.

Thus blind patriots and constructive patriots both love their country, are loyal, but differently see their role.

Carl Shurz, Union Army General, later US Senator of Missouri and still later, US Secretary of the Interior said at the end of 19th century :

My country, right or wrong;

This became a kind important point of view

what does it mean?

But the continuation of the sentence was conspicuously lost because he said

My country, right or wrong;----if right, to be kept right; and if wrong, to be set right."

What is needed to carry constructive patriotism?

Values

Analytical thinking,

Opened mind

Courage,

And why constructive patriots are not liked

Because of fear to look at the mirror,

Conservatism

Monopolization of patriotism

In Israel the situation is similar

Israel has a history of 63 years ---the establishment of the state is probably master event in the history of Jewish people after 2000 years of exile after centuries of persecutions --after Holocaust --a genocide --

This is a miracle -- a redemption...

Israel thus became a symbol of Jewish survival. -- a very precious and dearest state for many Jews on this globe.

It has unbelievable achievements in these 63 years of existence

There is a lot to tell about the half full glass.

But the question that plagues me is what about the half empty glass.

Should we put this part under the carpet???

Admire other critical thinkers –but when it touches to my symbol I would close my eyes , ears and be speechless.

This is the dilemma for many of the Jews in Israel and also in USA.

It is unfortunately that the half empty glass is full with wrong doings, violation of human rights, occupation, institutionalized discrimination, antidemocratic practices, wide scope corruption, rising fundamentalism.

I want to give you a number of examples especially referring to the lasting ugly occupation

First on a general level

Israel is continuously violating the 4th Geneva Convention because it settles Jews in the occupied West Bank. According to B'tselem, Israel has expropriated 50% of all West Bank territories, mostly by declaring and registering lands as State lands (B'Tselem, *Taking control of the land in the West Bank*, 2010) and building Jewish settlements on them (B'Tselem, 1997a). Moreover, according to a report by the Israeli Civil Administration, over one-third of all West Bank settlements have for decades been constructed on private Palestinian lands expropriated for “security needs” via temporary military injunctions (Rapoport, 2008). By March 2010, there were over 120 settlements in the territories (excluding East Jerusalem), and about 100 outposts,¹ officially unrecognized by the authorities, containing 283 permanent homes and 1,865 caravans (Arieli, 2010).

East Jerusalem was annexed. About 24 km² of the annexed area, which is mostly privately owned by Arabs was later expropriated by the State of Israel. By the end of 2001, 46,978 housing units had been constructed on the lands expropriated in East Jerusalem for the city's Jewish population, while not a single had been built for Palestinians, who constitute about 33% of the city's residents (B'Tselem, *Revocation of Residency in East Jerusalem*, 2010).

According to data compiled by the B'Tselem, between the years 1989-2009 Israeli security forces killed 7,398 Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories, of whom at least 1,537 were minors² (Yahav, 2009).

¹An **outpost** ("a stronghold") refers to a community built within the [West Bank](#) (excluding [Jerusalem](#)) that was constructed without the authorization of the [Israeli](#) government but very often with its help. Some of these are illegal because they are built on privately owned Palestinian land.

² Additional detailed information indicates that from December 1987 to the end of February 1999, the Israeli security forces killed 1,472 Palestinians in the territories, 1,341 of whom were civilians and 18 of whom were members of the Palestinian security forces. 113 Palestinians were killed

An estimated 700,000 Palestinians were imprisoned in Israel between 1967 and 2007 (Dugard, 2008), and many thousands of were tried by the Israeli military courts. Between the years 1990-2006, for example, over 150,000 Palestinians were tried in the military courts (Yesh Din, 2007).

Various interrogation and torture methods are used against some of the detainees. According to Physicians for Human Rights, ca. 1,000-1,500 Palestinians are interrogated by the Shin Bet (security service) annually, and 85% of these are subjected to methods that fall under the definition of torture (Physicians for Human Rights, 2000). According to B'Tselem (1996), ca. 23,000 Palestinians were interrogated by the Shin Bet between the years 1987-1994.

In April 2010 there were 504 movement obstacles (65 checkpoints, 22 partial checkpoints, 107 road gates, 68 road blocks, 168 earth mounds, 10 trenches, 44 road barriers and 20 earthen walls). Two years earlier there had been 607 movement obstacles.

Specific examples –

Headlines of Haaretz.

Examples of effects of occupation

Haaretz

August 19, 2007

Israel Land Administration rented to Jews Palestinian land that does not own -
-being a private land

January 4, 2007

The major street Shade in Hebron is illegally closed for the use by
Palestinians, already six years

January 29, 2007

In spite of the orders to stop construction of illegal outposts, the construction
work continues.

January 19, 2007

A girl 10 years old died after being shot by border police in Jerusalem

October 12, 2004

A girl 13 years old was killed by soldiers in Rafa

October 12, 2004

Settlers are disturbing picking olives. One Palestinian is seriously injured.

October 29, 2004

A 7years old girl was killed by soldiers in Han Yunes.

by Israeli civilians, mostly Jewish settlers. Of those killed, 302 were children under the age of 17 (B'Tselem 1999).

According to the Israel Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), Israel has demolished over 24,100 Palestinian houses between 1967 and April 7, 2009, leaving ca. 70,000 Palestinians homeless (ICAHD, *Campaign Against House Demolitions*, 2010).

August 19, 2004

The chief prosecutor of the army said “the check points violate human rights”

July 1, 2004

The Israeli supreme court order a removal of 30km of the security fence because it harms disproportionately Palestinians and violates international law.

September 29, 2004

Officers in a letter to chief of staff: Destruction of houses in Gaza is immoral.

October 21, 2001

Report on outposts indicate that they are illegal but the government helped to build them and the army ignored the violation.

Don't say we did not know #234

For years settlers from Havat Gilad have been attacking their Palestinian neighbours, whose land they covet.

About a year ago settlers from Havat Gilad put a mobile housing unit on agricultural land belonging to Palestinians from Fur'ata and Tell. At the beginning of October this year the settlers stole olives from the village groves, and laid foundations for two buildings inside the area of the groves. On Friday, 15 October, settlers burned some 500 dunums (dunum = 1000 sq.m) of olive trees, while IDF soldiers accompanied the arsonists and did nothing to stop them. Police who came to the site carried out no arrests, either. The soldiers prevented the land owners from coming to put out the fire and denied access for an hour to the Palestinian fire brigade as well. The army limited access to the media at the site.

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Don't say we did not know #235

On Saturday, 9th October, 2010, Palestinian farmers, residents of Palestinian Sussya, accompanied by Israeli human rights activists, went to plough their fields in 'Atariyya (located south of the access road to the outpost Mitzpe Yair). The activity was co-ordinated with the Civil Administration (IDF). Settlers who came from Sussya started to attack. The IDF soldiers declared the area a closed military area and drove the farmers and accompanying group out, instead of kicking out the attackers.

When the Israeli activists returned to their vehicle (Ezra Nawi's car) they were attacked by three settlers with covered faces. The settlers smashed the front window and hurt one of the activists. Soldiers and policemen who were only 120m away did nothing to stop the attack or detain the attackers. The soldiers even mocked the activists...

For years now Israel has been trying to build a settlement on the E-1 area, that would connect Jerusalem and the settlement Ma'ale Adumim. The plan led to strong American disapproval. On Wednesday, 27th October, 2010, IFD forces

accompanied by bulldozers entered the land on E-1 belonging to Palestinian farmers who are residents of 'Issawiya. They uprooted about 600 fruit trees, demolished fences and eight storage sheds.

I know that it is extremely uncomfortable to hear this information. We all prefer to hear about the half full glass –to hear about the achievements, the only democracy in the Middle East and about the moral Israeli army.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 987 people were killed in Israel in Palestinian terrorist attacks between the years 1967-1999 (Israel Foreign Office, *Terrorism deaths in Israel 1920-1999*). More specifically, between the years 1990-1999, 344 people were killed in such attacks (Shin Bet Security Service, 2010). According to B'Tselem, between 1989 and 2009 Palestinians killed 1,483 Israelis, among them 139 minors. 488 of those killed were security personnel and 995 were civilians (Yahav, 2009). Data provided by B'Tselem, the Yesha Settlements Council, the Shuvi organization, the "Organization of Families Victims", the IDF, and *Haaretz*, 230 reveal that Israelis were killed in the Gaza Strip between the years 1967-2005 (Regular and Gottlieb, 2005).

Reports by the Shin Bet and the IICC provide detailed information on Palestinian terrorism in the 21st century. According to Shin Bet data, between September 29, 2000 and December 31, 2009, 1,178 people were killed as a result of Palestinian terrorism, including 790 Israeli civilians, 328 security personnel and 60 foreign nationals. In total, 146 suicide attacks took place within this timeframe (Shin Bet [Security Service], 2010). According to IICC data, 24,247 attacks were carried out between September 28, 2000 and February 8, 2005: 0.54% of these were suicide attacks that were responsible for 49% of all Israeli fatalities (502 killed). Also in this period, 3,528 long-range fire incidents took place, comprising 3,096 mortar attacks and 432 rocket attacks (IICC, 2005).

One of the most common attack methods of violence in the region in the last decade has been rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. This began in 2001 and throughout the conflict has gradually become one of the central threats posed by Palestinians. In total, 2,383 rockets and 2,543 mortars landed in the western Negev between the years 2001-2007 (as of the end of November 2007) with the town of Sderot, as a prime target, absorbing 45% of all rockets landing in residential areas. As a result of this rocket fire, ten civilians were killed, with ten others (including 8 civilians) having died as a result of mortar shelling. These experiences and previous ones clearly cause severe psychological damage, expressed in post-traumatic stress disorder and other effects (see for example Bleich, Gelkopf, & Solomon, 2003; IICC, 2007).

Why do I bother to come to you

Because you adhere to humanistic values

Because on this assumption you should care what kind of symbol, what kind of state you envision as desirable

I do not have any qualm with those who do not find any flaws in the present way of the state of Israel.

I do not have any expectations from those who do not hold the humanistic values and accept whatever direction the state of Israel takes.

But those who publicly announce their values cannot be paralyzed and silenced

Because I believe that you have a responsibility, if you treat Israel as your spiritual homeland, symbolic place related to your identity.

Do you want to practice blind attachment of right or wrong without implementing the other part of the sentence?

I can give two major reasons why you need to voice your concerns, criticism.

Because you should want that Israel will be a better state..

Because you want a symbol that has moral qualities,

Because the road that Israel is taking contradicts your openly cherished values.

Because critical thinking is part of your important way

Because you care about Israel