“Home” and “Revelation” - Metaphors in the Space of Conflict over the Constitution in Israel’s Early Years

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The language we use reflects our consciousness and our perception of reality, while at the same time constructing that perception. The language used by parties to a particular conflict, by parties to a negotiation, or by participants in a process within an organization can tell us about their consciousness and the way they perceive the process or the conflict. It can therefore also provide tools for a more precise analysis of the conflict and allow greater flexibility in managing it or in intervention by a third party. This article examines one example of the use of language in a situation of disagreement: the metaphors used by members of the Knesset in the debate over the framing of a constitution in the state’s early years. As I shall try to show, these metaphors reveal a space in which the perspectives of the two sides to the dispute actually converge, pointing to a basic agreement, a shared longing, and a common cultural foundation among the parties to the conflict.

Different Perspectives

In research on the language of negotiation, scholars identify four perspectives from which to examine the relationship between “negotiation” and “language”: psychological, interactional, discursive, and symbolic (Wilson, Paulson, and Putnam, 2001, p. 303).

The psychological approach emphasizes that the language used by a negotiator reflects the negotiator’s subjective state and can tell us about their attitude toward the negotiation at a particular point in time. From this perspective, the use of language can help convey essential information to the other party and, through learning and self-awareness, can also serve as a tool for improving negotiating ability. The prevailing psychological approach to negotiation focused on the individual negotiator, viewing that individual as someone seeking to maximize gains, achieve satisfaction, or obtain a desired advantage on their own terms.

The interactional approach to language starts from the premise that language use develops and changes over the course of a negotiation. The typical object of study in this approach is the pair of negotiators, rather than either one of them. This approach emphasizes reciprocity between the parties, focusing on the element of time, on their relationship throughout the negotiation, and on the pattern that emerges from their encounter.

The discursive approach focuses on the language that parties to a negotiation use to describe themselves and others. It analyzes the formulation of each party’s position, both in that party’s own language and in the language of the other side, as well as the ways in which the two parties subsequently reformulate their own positions. This approach points to a connection between the substance of a negotiation and the way the parties articulate their relationship to it. Its focus, however, is on units of language rather than on the parties themselves. This approach gave rise, for example, to studies explaining how language serves “face work” within a particular cultural context: how this consideration leads to ambiguous formulations, whereas negotiators who are not concerned about “honor” are less guarded in their phrasing.

The symbolic approach to negotiation regards language as the means by which the parties create a shared reality. Negotiation is understood as an organizational ritual that constructs social reality. This approach sees negotiation as part of an extensive ritual system laden with meanings. Negotiations over rights between management and employees, for example, are analyzed as a ritual with defined stages. The symbolic approach focuses on patterns in negotiation that are not wholly dependent on particular content or interests, seeking to analyze negotiation as a symbol of a broader social process.

None of the approaches described above offers a comprehensive description and explanation of behavior in negotiation. A comprehensive analysis of language use in negotiation or conflict therefore requires a combination of approaches. These approaches give us some initial tools for analyzing metaphors in negotiation. A metaphor can tell us about the psychological state of the person using it, about their attitude toward the other side, and about how they perceive the negotiation. Changes in metaphors over the course of a negotiation may also indicate a change of position. Finally, the negotiation process itself should be viewed as a metaphor, prompting us to ask about the symbolic meaning of structuring the negotiation in this particular way.

The field of organizational behavior borders on the study of negotiation and conflict. In that field, the use of metaphors in organizations has already been studied from several perspectives: a "managerial and consulting approach," a "critical approach to power," and an "ethnographic and interpretive approach" (Parush, 2000, pp. 42–52).

The managerial and consulting approach is oriented toward improving the organization. Its basic assumption is that the metaphors employees and managers use to describe the organization and their feelings within it have the power to construct their reality, and that the use of metaphors therefore affects the organization's activity. This approach proposes limiting the use of metaphors that construct a negative reality and adopting metaphors that can contribute to organizational processes and improve the way employees and managers feel.

The critical approach to power also sees metaphors as an important tool in constructing employees' reality within the organization. At its core, however, is a neo-Marxist political orientation, which starts from the premise that the construction of employees' reality, through metaphors among other means, reflects a hierarchy of power. Metaphors may, for example, express an existing distinction between managers and employees in an organization; they may also obscure that distinction. In other words, metaphors can both reflect the structure of social power and construct it.

The ethnographic and interpretive approach does not address a particular politicization of the field, whether capitalist or neo-Marxist. Instead, it views the organization as reflecting an entire culture with many varied aspects. Studying such a culture requires observation that examines the organization "from within," and the use of thick description aimed at uncovering the interpretation of cultural behavior (Geertz, 1990, p. 15). In studying the use of metaphors in an orchestra, Parush chose to adopt a combined approach that was empirical, ethnographic and interpretive, and critical in its attention to power. As with the relationship between language and negotiation, here too the combined approach seems to have been chosen because of the many layers involved in language use. Language is both nature and culture; it both reflects reality and constructs it.

What Is a Metaphor?

The question "What is a metaphor?" seems trivial, yet it has occupied philosophers and cultural figures since the dawn of history. In his poem "An Early Spring Day," the poet Yaakov Steinberg wrote:

> And a bleak evening comes, and in its murky vapors / it wallows outside like a terrible gigantic sponge, / like a sponge from the days of Creation, dripping black bile, / endlessly oozing the filth of all creatures.

Steinberg likened the bleak ending of an early spring day to a "terrible gigantic sponge." Instead of simply saying that the lightness and joy of the spring day had given way to heavy, oppressive weather, Steinberg used the image of the evening as a "gigantic sponge." Yet even this assumption is not so simple. The phrases "the lightness and joy of the spring day" and "heavy weather" themselves exemplify the use of metaphors. Nonmetaphorical sentences would be: "The spring weather produced a good mood" and "The winter weather produced a bad mood and depression." This makes clear how deeply metaphors pervade thought and speech. More importantly, Steinberg's metaphor raises many questions: What added value did the poet achieve through the metaphor? What thought process led him to create it? What does its use reveal to the reader about Steinberg's world? And what takes place in the encounter between the metaphor, as a highly personal creation of the poet's mind, and the reader? As noted, such questions have occupied philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and literary scholars from the days of Plato and Aristotle to our own. Even today, after many years of research, scholars find it difficult to determine precisely how a metaphor affects us. Clearly, metaphor adds a great deal to a simple factual description: it invests the description with associations, making it at once more vivid and more powerful. In Steinberg's poem, the evening is not merely a wintry evening but one endowed with dark magical powers, threatening, in the form of a "terrible gigantic sponge," to wipe away the entire universe with a single sweep of a mythological hand.

In their book on metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson explain that metaphor drew their attention because it brings together objective, rational elements and elements belonging to the realm of imagination and subjectivity: in their words, "imaginative rationality" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 193). Conflict and negotiation, like every human interaction, and perhaps to a particularly great extent, likewise combine rationality and emotion, objectivity and subjectivity. As Lakoff and Johnson showed, language helps us separate the subjective element from the objective one and emphasize the rational or emotional component as appropriate. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the words, texts, and discourse of conflict or negotiation.

Discussion of metaphor as a subject in its own right began at the very inception of Western culture. In the *Republic*, Plato has Socrates say:

> There has always been an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry. Verses such as "a yelping bitch barking at her mistress," "great in the empty talk of fools," "the multitude of overwise heads," and "the subtle thinkers who are poor nonetheless," and countless other verses, bear witness to their long-standing quarrel. Nevertheless, let it be said to poetry that gives pleasure and to the art of representation ("mimesis," my addition, Y.E.) that, if it can offer a reasonable argument for its place in a properly ordered state, we shall gladly welcome it back ... But surely it would be wrong to betray what appears to you to be true.
>
> (Plato, *Republic*, Book X, p. 557.)

Plato was troubled by the improper use of metaphor: a use that does not describe reality as it is and may adversely affect those who hear it. Aristotle, by contrast, held the use of metaphor in the highest regard. In the *Poetics*, he extolled figurative language:

> It is important to make appropriate use of each of the linguistic devices mentioned above, such as compound words and unusual words, but most important of all is metaphorical language, for this alone cannot be borrowed from another and is evidence of natural talent.
>
> (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459a, p. 47.)

In other words, if a metaphor clarifies reality, if its use sharpens our perception of reality, Aristotle accepts and even embraces it. If figurative language blurs the distinction between nature and imagination, however, Aristotle too has reservations. This approach formed the basis for Thomas Hobbes's and John Locke's rational and scientific reservations about figurative language. These two philosophers regard metaphor as an inferior element that may blur reality and thus lead to a mistaken perception founded on prejudice. Hobbes maintains that the "use of metaphors, tropes, and other rhetorical figures in place of proper words" causes people to hold errors and prejudices (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Chapter 5, p. 41). Locke, too, devoted a chapter at the end of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* to the "abuse of words," noting that figurative language is one of the causes of mistaken thought:

> Since wit and fancy find easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, figurative speeches and allusion in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it ... [they serve] to insinuate wrong ideas ... and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats.
>
> (Locke, 1927, Book III, Chapter 10, §34.)

The logical empiricists of the twentieth century, also known as logical positivists, adopted Hobbes's and Locke's basic assumption that figurative speech does not correspond to reality and is therefore unacceptable. The central element of their doctrine was the "verification principle," according to which every statement must be tested against sensory experience. From their perspective, ethical, metaphysical, religious, and metaphorical assertions therefore cannot be considered admissible. Just as Aristotle and Plato brought about a distinction between logical, scientific language and poetic language, logical positivism tied its fate to a rigid scientific empiricism that guides the examination of reality and from which alone, supposedly, philosophical conclusions should be drawn. After the Second World War, philosophy's fascination with science diminished, and the power of logical positivism declined alongside it. This process prepared the ground for the study of metaphors and generated particular interest in the field. Already in the 1930s, however, Richards (1936) had

discussed metaphor in his book *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Richards argued that metaphor penetrates to the roots of human language and is in fact present in every aspect of it: "We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it" (Richards, 1936, p. 92).

Richards was the first to analyze metaphor conceptually. Until his time, the distinction between the "original idea" and the "borrowed idea" had prevailed. He, however, pointed to an interaction between two concepts: the tenor and the vehicle. For example, in his poem "The Streets Take Off Slowly," David Avidan wrote that "the calm, opaque and hard, will be sliced like challah" (Avidan, 2001). In Richards's analysis, the tenor in this poem is the calm, while the vehicle is the challah. Consider, for example, the image from the Book of Proverbs that Maimonides used in his introduction to *The Guide of the Perplexed*: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). Maimonides discussed the tenor, the philosophical truths, by means of the vehicle: an apple made of gold enclosed in a silver lattice. (The modern Hebrew expression *tapuah zahav*, "golden apple," also denotes an orange.)

Black (1962) showed that this interaction is not merely description or comparison. It consists in applying the system of the secondary subject, the metaphor, to the system of the principal subject, that to which the metaphor refers, in a way that highlights and reorganizes the principal subject's system:

> The effect, then, of (metaphorically) calling a man a "wolf" is to evoke the wolf-system of related commonplaces. If the man is a wolf, he preys upon other animals, is fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle, a scavenger, and so on. ... The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasises others—in short, organizes our view of man.
>
> (Black, 1962, p. 41.)

Nelson Goodman, one of the early opponents of logical positivism, also developed this premise. Among other things, he described metaphor as follows: "A whole set of alternative labels, a whole apparatus of organization, takes over new territory. What occurs is a transfer of a schema, a migration of concepts, an alienation of categories" (Goodman, 1976, p. 73). A rejection of Aristotle's and the positivists' assumptions is evident at the beginning of Lakoff and Johnson's book: "The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson showed how metaphors construct and organize our reality. Likening "argument" to "war," for example, makes us think about "argument" in terms of "war," as reflected in a range of expressions: "attack an argument," "adopt an argumentative strategy," "win an argument," "claims can be defended," and "an argument that hits the target." Johnson and Lakoff believe this shows that "competition" is a central concept in American culture. Their assumption is that, in a less competitive society, such an extensive conceptual system connecting "war" with "argument" would not have developed. As Johnson and Lakoff themselves attest, theirs is a moderate constructionist approach. They hold that our perception of reality is mediated by cultural or social concepts present in the consciousness and culture of a society's members. In other words, we cannot perceive reality objectively because we view it through a particular prism. Yet this prism is not entirely personal, and therefore idiosyncratic; it is a social or cultural product, perhaps even the product of a very large human group. According to Johnson and Lakoff, the metaphors people use demonstrate that our perception of reality is mediated by our conceptual system, and that our consciousness is broader and

more fundamental than a mere "highly personal feeling." "The social construction of reality" is a term associated with Berger and Luckmann, who hold that "the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for 'knowledge' in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such 'knowledge'. ... all human 'knowledge' is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations ... the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 3). Like Johnson and Lakoff, Parush also adopts a moderate constructionist view according to which the "metaphorical construction" of reality "is not personal but social" (Parush, 2000, p. 15).

That is to say, it is indeed a human creation and, as such, is not objective; nevertheless, it has a connection to reality. Metaphor expresses cultural assumptions shared by a particular society, religious assumptions, or prevailing conventions. In other words, metaphor is not idiosyncratic, not because it reflects reality, but because it reflects reality from the perspective of the members of a particular society or culture. Here it is worth noting the radical philosophical constructionist position, according to which language constitutes the subject, rather than the other way around. Richard Rorty connects this claim with Foucault:

> Whereas Descartes and Locke and Kant and the positivists and the phenomenologists have assumed that the job of signs was to represent pre-existent reality ... I [that is, Foucault, Y.E.] will show you a new way to look at what people say. From this new perspective, you will not see words as linked to things by relations like "impression" or "symbolization" or "synthesis" or "reference" or "truth". Instead you will see them as nodes in a network of texts, and this network as making up "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak".
>
> (Rorty, 1986, p. 42.)

In other words, unlike Descartes, who saw the "I" as constituting itself ("I think, therefore I am"), Foucault held that the subject is historical and has nothing of its own. No author can therefore sign a work with their own name, for the author is the sum of all the forces that have acted upon them over the course of their life: political, cultural, and discursive forces. In our context, Foucault's words make clear that metaphor works in two directions at once. On the one hand, a metaphor reveals its users' worldview and consciousness, and this worldview usually reflects social or cultural consciousness. On the other hand, as the metaphor is used more widely and its users internalize the worldview embodied in it, reality itself will change.

The Debate over Framing a Constitution

I shall now discuss an example of deliberation within a political organization, an example whose public dimension is well documented, in an attempt to influence the decision-making process. The organization is founded on differences, dialogue, and negotiation among representatives of subgroups, all belonging to the Jewish majority.

I now turn to an analysis of the metaphors used by members of the Knesset in the debate over framing a constitution in the state's early years. A brief historical introduction is needed first. The desire of the state's leaders in its early years to frame a constitution stemmed from their wish to establish Israel as a modern nation-state and to align its constitutional foundations with the framework laid down by

the United Nations in the Partition Resolution. On November 29, 1947, the UN adopted a resolution partitioning Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. The resolution required the constituent assemblies of the Jewish state and the Arab state to draw up democratic constitutions, but limited their authority regarding the constitutions' content by requiring the inclusion of certain provisions (Medzini, 1981, p. 55). It required general elections by secret ballot and proportional representation; governmental accountability to the legislature; the peaceful settlement of international disputes; abstention from threats and the use of force; equal rights in civil, political, economic, and religious matters; and guarantees of human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of religion, language, education, assembly, and association. Accordingly, Israel's Declaration of Independence, issued on the fifth of Iyar, 5708, May 14, 1948, stated the following concerning constitutional continuity:

> With effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate ... until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel."

Indeed, even before the declaration establishing the State of Israel, the Jewish National Council had appointed a constitutional affairs committee, chaired by Zerach Warhaftig, to prepare the constitutional ground for the state-to-be. Immediately after the UN resolution of November 29, 1947, Dr. Yehuda Pinhas Cohen began preparing a proposal for the state's constitution. About two months after the Declaration, the Provisional Council of State appointed a constitutional committee, also chaired by Warhaftig, to examine constitutional questions and assemble the material needed to draft a proposed constitution. Four proposals were submitted to the committee, and Cohen's proposal served as the basis for its deliberations. The committee considered the appropriate constitutional arrangements, hearing proposed amendments from representatives across the political spectrum. On January 25, 1949, the Constituent Assembly was elected and subsequently became the First Knesset. The Knesset entrusted the drafting of the constitution to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, elected in April 1949. At this point, however, as Freudenheim described it, the trend was arrested:

> At this point, the course of the deliberations took a surprising and complete turn. Whereas the committee of the Provisional Council of State had debated substantive constitutional questions on their merits, the preliminary question now arose with full force in the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the First Knesset: whether a single constitution should be enacted at all, or whether, for the time being, it would be preferable to make do with a number of Basic Laws, each regulating only a particular field in accordance with the needs of practical life.
>
> (Freudenheim, 1953, p. 13.)

The committee discussed this issue over several meetings and brought it before the Knesset for a decision. At the conclusion of heated debates, held intermittently between February 1 and June 13, 1950, the Knesset plenum adopted the proposal of Knesset member Yizhar Harari, which stated:

> The First Knesset charges the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee with preparing a draft constitution for the state. The constitution shall be composed of separate chapters, each of which shall constitute a Basic Law in its own right. The chapters shall be brought before the Knesset as the committee completes its work, and all the chapters together shall be incorporated into the constitution of the state.
>
> (*Divrei HaKnesset*, vol. 5, pp. 1722, 1743.)

In these debates, members of the Knesset discussed the fundamental question of whether to enact a constitution, thus giving expression to their principal disagreement about the character and identity of the State of Israel. The reasons for refraining from framing a constitution, as stated by members of the Knesset, were as follows: (1) an unwillingness to bind the state to a rigid constitution, out of a preference for flexibility under the prevailing security and economic conditions; (2) an unwillingness to give the judiciary the power to frustrate governmental policies by invalidating laws; (3) opposition by the religious parties, which feared that a constitution would obstruct the shaping of the state as a Jewish state; and (4) concern about framing a constitution when only a small part of the Jewish people lived in Israel (Gavison, 1998, p. 57).

The debate over framing a constitution was a political conflict. It encompassed all the clashes of interest among the political groups of the time: religion and state, socialism and capitalism, minority and majority, revolution and tradition. As such, it certainly contained diametrically opposed worldviews and incompatible values held by the parties to the conflict. The metaphors Knesset members used to define the debate over framing a constitution were "war" ("We shall fight for fundamental legislation for the State of Israel," Menachem Begin, *The Constitution of the State*, p. 26) and a "bill of divorce" ("We shall regard a secular constitution as an attempt to issue a bill of divorce to our holy Torah ...," Meir David Loewenstein, ibid., p. 29). Both are metaphors of a "zero-sum game." Many Knesset members used an equally stark term: "a culture war, a Kulturkampf."

We shall now examine two metaphors that recurred in the discussions among a variety of speakers, thereby giving expression to a shared culture among the parties to the dispute. One metaphor is physical and emotional, "home"; the other is profoundly spiritual, "revelation."

The Metaphor of Home

Forty members of the Knesset, from almost every parliamentary faction, participated in the debate. About a third of them, from different factions, used metaphors in their remarks. The first metaphor used by Knesset members was that of "home." Moshe Aram of Mapam saw the constitution as the foundations of the "home":

> They seek to persuade us to make do with Basic Laws, to be issued as flying scrolls whenever needed. What is this like? It is like someone building a house, erecting a building according to the plans of generations, but with one "small" defect: no concern for the foundation on which the building is to stand, a disregard for pouring that foundation. No engineer would agree to approve a building plan without first determining the load and its distribution that the building will bear. A form of construction currently common in the Land of Israel is the building supported on columns. Some approve of the columns on aesthetic grounds; others have their doubts. Yet no one disputes that the columns are not there merely as ornament: they support the building. This is how we regard the fundamental constitution: its short, concentrated provisions serve as the supporting pillars of the entire system of laws and jurisprudence in the state.
>
> (*The Constitution of the State*, pp. 84–85.)

The constitution is the pouring of the foundation for the house, whereas Basic Laws are regarded as "flying scrolls." Moshe Aram saw the constitution as the state's stable foundation, and the state as his home. He sharply attacked the Religious Front, which wished to postpone the framing of a constitution. "Do not frighten us," he told them, rejecting the need to wait for inspiration, since we have already "hastened the end. We inform you that the appropriate spirit already rests upon us" (ibid., p. 84). (The expression "hasten the end" refers to seeking to bring about messianic redemption through human action.) He welcomed the frankness of the religious members, who rejected a constitution because it would preclude the establishment of a halakhic state in Israel. At the same time, he spoke of a culture war in which it was the religious side that engaged in "stealing children" (ibid.). He described Mapai members who wished to postpone the constitution as seeking to put a "bit and bridle" on the opposition. For his part, he saw the constitution as a means of turning Israel into a socialist state.

Ben-Zion Dinaburg (Dinur) of Mapai also saw the constitution as the foundations of the home:

> For two thousand years we bore no responsibility for a state and a government. Now we are gathering here ... people from different countries, of different cultures and different educations, holding opposing views; nevertheless, we want to build a home shared by us all, a home of peace, a home in which each of us will wish to live.
>
> (Ibid., p. 26.)

Dinur went on to develop the metaphor of "home":

> Is it not the first duty of immigrant integration that every citizen and every immigrant arriving in the Land of Israel should learn the state's constitution, their rights and their duties? Even if they cannot learn all the laws, they can learn the foundations of the house and its plans, and thereby come to feel themselves citizens.
>
> (Ibid., p. 27.)

And later:

> We must sit down and talk things through. We want one shared government and a home in which every citizen will feel at home. We want all the laws to be just, wise, good, and built according to a plan ... I am decidedly in favor of the inductive method as a method of explanation in teaching, but I oppose an inductive method in construction. I would not want to live in a house built by the inductive method. First I assess my needs, and in accordance with those needs I draw up the plan and build the house.
>
> (Ibid., p. 28.)

Like Aram, Dinur sharply attacked the religious members for their vision of "declaring the Torah of Israel to be a constitution," telling them to "beware." Yet Dinur's use of the metaphor of "home" was inclusive: the home is a shared place that unites and brings together those who live in it, despite their considerable differences. Moreover, for Dinur, the home was a place in which familiarity with its foundations and parts creates a bond for the new residents who have only just arrived.

Yisrael Bar-Yehuda of Mapam also used a construction metaphor associated with the view of the state as a "home" or a "building." He asked:

> In this matter we must hasten the end. When do you propose to lay the foundations of the building of our state? Do you want to begin making repairs after years of failures and of causing others to fail? Why not determine the way the state is to be built from the very beginning of our work?
>
> (Ibid., p. 22.)

Bar-Yehuda's vision was socialist, and he believed there was broad consensus on issues such as the right to work (ibid., p. 21). As for the tension between religion and state, Bar-Yehuda held that the solution lay in freedom from religion and freedom of religion.

Ephraim Taburi, a member of Dinur's party, took the opposite position. He believed that a constitution would generate a dangerous culture war that would threaten Israel's existence. He too used the metaphor of "home." For him, it was Basic Laws, rather than a constitution, that provided the form for building the house, a form to be filled with content like a mold used for casting:

> I see before us the possibility of taking the high road: enacting Basic Laws for ourselves as needed, because Basic Laws are an instrument for building the country, rather than an accumulation of more or less fine phrases in a comprehensive constitution. Basic Laws are a framework, and someone must fill that framework with living content, content arising from the process of construction itself, from the very process of consolidating the state and absorbing immigration ... Our duty is only to fashion the pillars of orientation, the regulatory framework called Basic Laws.
>
> (Ibid., pp. 38–39.)

For Taburi, Basic Laws provided the proper framework for casting a solid foundation for the national home. In his view, Basic Laws would supply the relevant, present-day content of the home's foundations, whereas a constitution would be a hollow and abstract agreement. Moreover, Taburi argued emphatically that a constitution would require the choice of a particular historical narrative. He made clear that competition among the different narratives of the history that had led to the

establishment of the state also expressed profound disagreements about the state's character. He even believed that narratives such as Mapam's could have led to a situation in which Israel would not have existed at all. The material used to stabilize the home's foundations must therefore be chosen from components of the "here" and "now," rather than according to what might exist in the future or had existed in the past.

David-Zvi Pinkas of the United Religious Front also used the metaphor of "home," to make clear that framing a constitution was undesirable:

> One might say that the approach favoring Basic Laws wishes to build this house from its foundation to its rafters, whereas the approach that determines in advance that there must be a constitution whose essence lies in its preamble wishes to build the roof first of all.
>
> (Ibid., p. 81.)

In other words, Pinkas believed that there was no need to frame a constitution; moreover, doing so at that time was impossible and would be like "building a roof before building the frame of the house." Pinkas did not conceal his desire to incorporate the halakhic system into the state's system of laws: "This work of continuous legislation, of bringing our system of laws into Judaism, is a prolonged task requiring a process of many years" (ibid., p. 81). Pinkas also pointed to the problem posed by a constitutional preamble detailing the historical sequence that had led to the establishment of the state, asking: "Were the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and of the Gaon, and others who came to the Land, not pioneers like today's pioneers?" (ibid., p. 82). He held that it was ultra-Orthodox Judaism that was enlightened, whereas "those who preach progress" were "dwellers in darkness" (ibid., p. 82). For Pinkas, framing a constitution would mean using a legal system foreign to Jewish law, an imitation of other nations unsuited to the Jewish people.

David Bar-Rav-Hai of Mapai likewise supported the adoption of Basic Laws rather than a constitution, emphasizing the importance of building the home gradually: "To build brick upon brick, course upon course ... and behind this scaffolding we saw the ready foundations of a state" (ibid., p. 15). Bar-Rav-Hai was not concerned that each side could interpret the ambiguous words of a constitutional preamble in its own way. Rather, he believed that a constitution is framed at the end of a revolution. Israel's revolution, he argued, was the ingathering of the exiles; therefore, "in this state of flux" (ibid., p. 13), it was impossible to frame a constitution.

Members of the Knesset on both sides of the divide, those advocating a constitution and those advocating a system of Basic Laws, used the metaphor of "home." According to this metaphor, the state is a home and framing a constitution is connected to the process of building that home. "Home" as a metaphor evokes something deeply personal, something to which one is attached, and also something very physical. Yet it is a metaphor that had already been used in a collective and national context. Each side in the debate used the metaphor of "home," drawing on the metaphor coined by Max Nordau, the "national home," for its own rhetorical purposes. Knesset members who used the metaphor of "home" belonged to rival parties that disagreed on almost every issue of consequence in Israel. Through the metaphor, the state takes on the characteristics of a protected, coherent space, a place where one can "go to sleep in peace." As Gaston Bachelard wrote: "A house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (Bachelard, 1969, p. 17). At the practical and declarative levels, the conflict among Knesset members was profound. Religious and

secular members disagreed about the state's Jewish character; members of the left and of the economic right disagreed about its social character; and different members were deeply divided over the respective powers of the government and the Knesset within Israel's parliamentary system. Despite these conflicts, their use of the metaphor of "home" reveals their fundamental attitude toward Israel as a place of refuge, a place in which one can feel safe and at peace. In other words, their shared use of the metaphor of "home" reveals the strength of Zionist ideology in their consciousness in general, and of the metaphor of the "national home" in particular. In this sense, the use of the metaphor of "home" across party lines can clarify an important point: while the constitutional debate itself is heated and charged with emotions arising from disagreement, the metaphor of "home" reveals a potential for connection and belonging. Ultimately, the metaphor reveals the common foundation shared by members of the Knesset.

Moreover, the use of the metaphor of "home" and the borrowing of images from housebuilding do more than indicate a certain basic agreement. They also bring into the debate Knesset members' insecurity about the very existence of the newborn state. As noted, Bachelard showed how images of home, such as a hearth burning in the middle of the room, impart a sense of stability or an illusion of stability. In this sense, the metaphor of "home" and its construction also brings into the debate an entire system of images associated with fear of the home's destruction and collapse, fear of invasion, and fear of a takeover by hostile outside forces. These feelings, too, form a unifying foundation. The use of the metaphor of "home" shows that Pinkas, who wished to enact Basic Laws that would provide a stable basis for a home and whose vision for Israel was a halakhic state, and Aram, who saw the constitution itself as the home's supporting pillar, were both sustained by similar fears and longings.

The Metaphor of Revelation

The second prominent metaphor used by Knesset members in these debates was the metaphor of "revelation." According to this metaphor, adopting a constitution is likened to the revelation of God, the event at Mount Sinai, and the reception of the Torah from heaven. Zerach Warhaftig of the United Religious Front was the first to use it:

> Even our Torah was not given all at once. Our Torah was given scroll by scroll over forty years. Forty years passed before we received the Torah from the Almighty. And if you adopt a constitution in great haste, I am deeply concerned about a constitution adopted in such a manner and with such an approach.
>
> (Ibid., p. 19.)

Warhaftig held that it was impossible to frame a constitution for the following reason: "I do not yet feel the beating of the wings of the Divine Presence among us. What is the spark of eternity that people wish to put into the constitution? A constitution is received amid thunder, lightning, and torches, not with such superficiality" (ibid., p. 114).

The metaphor of "revelation" contains a declaration that adopting a constitution is a substantive, solemn matter, with a profound effect on a people's identity and on the shaping of that identity. Warhaftig believed that the generation was not ready for such a revelation, that is, for the creation of a fixed identity for the State of Israel. The metaphor of "revelation" also contains fear of revelation

and recoil from it. As reflected in Warhaftig's analogy with the event at Mount Sinai, the phrase "thunder, lightning, and torches" also pointed to the Israelites' fear of revelation (Exodus 20:18–19).

Like Zerach Warhaftig, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion also rejected the framing of a constitution. He argued that a constitution does not create liberties but merely declares them. Israel is a state in which liberties are self-evident; it is the citizen's duties that need to be declared. In making this argument, Ben-Gurion too used the metaphor of "revelation." He maintained that the Bible laid down the arrangements of government and law before the revelation at Mount Sinai, rather than after it. He too stressed the element of inspiration required for framing a constitution:

> In this important debate about the constitution, I have heard, or rather read, a great deal of thunder and lightning. Yet with all the great respect I have for the speakers, I must say that I have not heard the voice of God speaking out of the fire. The event at Mount Sinai does not take place every day. We had a great, historic occasion twenty-two months ago; in a history of four thousand years, we have not had many occasions of that kind.
>
> (Ibid., pp. 69–70.)

Ben-Gurion quoted specifically from the description of the revelation at Mount Sinai in Deuteronomy (4:33). The verse to which he alluded at the beginning of his remarks is: "Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" (4:33). Here too there is a recoil from revelation, exposure to which, according to the verse, is exceedingly dangerous.

Eliyahu Hacarmeli of Mapai followed Ben-Gurion's lead. He believed that framing a constitution does not change human nature; education and specific laws do that. He too used the metaphor of "revelation":

> It is not a dry constitution, with its clauses and subclauses, that educates a nation. Rather, "we will do" precedes "we will hear." Let the matter be tested in practice and only then heard, although what comes last in action comes first in thought ... Those who speak of genuine democracy rather than a counterfeit should begin with the ancient Jewish prohibition: "You shall not make yourself a graven image or any molten idol." As is well known, the molten image by its very nature sheds one form and assumes another; its likeness is not necessarily religious, and people may bow down to it even in an entirely atheistic state.
>
> (Ibid., p. 89.)

Hacarmeli adopted two elements from the event at Mount Sinai and incorporated them into the debate over framing a constitution. He transferred the Israelites' putting "we will do" before "we will hear" to the realm of practical life, which precedes abstract declarations; and he applied the prohibition "You shall not make yourself a graven image" to the constitution: it is like an idol, a molten image before which everyone bows down.

Yitzhak Ben-Zvi of Mapai argued that, unless the principal aim of framing a constitution, namely the unification and unity of the people, were achieved, there would be no reason to frame one, and Basic Laws would suffice:

> Gentlemen, I do not know what happened at the giving of the Torah, whether there was an elected Knesset there to adopt the laws. Legend tells us that they were received with the mountain held over them like a vat. Yet there are also laws and ordinances laid down as a foundation, and an entire passage in the Torah describes how, for example, laws on the appointment of officers and on judicial procedure were adopted on Jethro's advice ... Nor do I know whether these Basic Laws were adopted in a single stroke or one after another ... In other countries too, for example Soviet Russia, where there was no event at Mount Sinai and certainly no constituent assembly that established the foundations of the laws, they did not hold a referendum after the revolution.
>
> (Ibid., pp. 91–92.)

Ben-Zvi used the metaphor of "revelation" while simultaneously undermining it. He believed that revelation does not remove the need to legislate laws regulating the lives of the community's members. Through the midrash that God "held the mountain over them like a vat" (threatening to bury the people beneath it if they refused to accept the Torah; Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88a), he also suggested that revelation itself contains a coercive and unilateral element. Ben-Zvi contrasted the position of the elected Knesset with that of the people of Israel: this Knesset is free to adopt any law and need not receive anything from Sinai. For Ben-Zvi, revelation served to clarify the difficulty a constitution poses in terms of the Knesset's surrender of its authority: a constitution subordinates the Knesset to itself and, in many cases, gives the court the final say in interpreting the constitution and the laws.

Chaim Ben-Asher of Mapai believed that a constitution should be framed to express the principles of the system of government and the duties of the citizen in Israel, to accord with the spirit of Zionism, and to provide a basis for resolving the many dilemmas that arise in conducting the affairs of the state. Ben-Asher held that a culture war was foreign to the Jewish people and that the potential for revelation existed among the state's founding generation as well: "I do not accept the view that the event at Mount Sinai is represented in only one small part of this house. I believe there is a thread leading from the event at Mount Sinai to the event in the Jordan Valley" (ibid., p. 80).

As noted, Moshe Aram of Mapam believed that a constitution should be framed to provide a firm foundation for building the state. He too suggested that the state's establishment constituted a revelation:

> I am no authority on halakha, on whether the Jewish people's renewed political independence has something of the event at Mount Sinai about it. But if a small, scattered nation, a minority among all nations, oppressed and harried, burned and slaughtered, has won its political freedom and thrown off foreign rule through blood and fire, through spiritual courage and the labor of generations of pioneers, dreamers and fighters, builders and creators, if this is not a national revolution, what is one to call this transformation in the life of the people? Precisely because we stand at the very heart of the immense process of the ingathering of exiles, which brings to the Land a varied and strange "mixed multitude," diverse in its past, its way of life, its development, we must know, Knesset member Bar-Rav-Hai, "Where are you galloping, my horse, my horse, and where will you bring down your hooves?" To translate Pushkin freely.
>
> (Ibid., p. 85.)

For Aram and Ben-Asher, the metaphor of "revelation" served to encourage the framing of a constitution. Unlike Warhaftig, both saw the framing of a constitution as an inseparable part of the establishment of the state, which was itself a modern event of revelation. Warhaftig and Ben-Gurion used the metaphor of "revelation" but separated the establishment of the state from the framing of a constitution. Warhaftig did not feel able to make definitive pronouncements about the people's identity, whereas Ben-Gurion believed that the mechanism of Basic Laws was precisely suited to Israel's present condition.

Yizhar Harari of the Progressive Party supported the framing of a constitution and challenged the religious parties' reservations, which also contained a fear of change and development:

> Has the people of Israel ever had an occasion more revolutionary than the event at Mount Sinai? ... I can say that the first written constitution of the people of Israel was given at Mount Sinai, and I do not understand why a religious approach should oppose a written constitution.
>
> (Ibid., p. 40.)

Natan Yellin-Mor of the Fighters' Party argued for framing a constitution in order to limit the sovereign's powers and ensure that dictatorial rule would not take hold of the state. Yellin-Mor argued that, despite its cultural distinctiveness and its spiritual and moral resources, the people of Israel still had to provide for "the life of the national flesh and blood," that is, enact a constitution:

> Who is greater among us than Moses, the father of the prophets, who, according to tradition, spoke to God and lived? Yet only when he was on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights did he divest himself of his corporeality, eating no bread and drinking no water. When he was on the earth, among his people, however, he ate and drank, married a woman and fathered sons, like any other person. Can we live as a spiritual people, going about disembodied for the sake of the spirit? ... Even for the sake of the spirit, we must live the life of the national flesh and blood.

Here revelation was described as the opposite of a constitution. Unlike revelation, a constitution is a human concern, made by human hands and for human beings. Thus, although the Jewish people possess cultural and spiritual treasures, when they are on the ground, establishing a state, they must live a practical life, expressed in the framing of a constitution.

Knesset member Klibanov of the General Zionists argued for framing a constitution both because the constitutional mandate given to the Constituent Assembly in the Declaration of Independence had important legal significance, and because, without a constitution, citizens' fundamental rights have no permanence and the state's system of government has no firm foundation. Klibanov did not hesitate to bind future generations and new immigrants to a constitution. He likened the constitution to the divine spirit, drawing a parallel with the spirit of God in the first chapter of Genesis:

> If the members of this generation, the last of bondage and the first of redemption, those who guided the people in the work of building and creating, in the struggle for political independence, if we who sit here as representatives of the people in our generation are not qualified and worthy to shape the character of the state and create its constitution, who is qualified and worthy to do so? ... A fundamental constitution is a kind of divine spirit in the life of states, a divine spirit hovering over everything, a kind of hill toward which all mouths turn.
>
> (Ibid., pp. 75–76.)

Here the constitution acquired an element of revelation in the most direct sense: it was compared to God himself or to the very word of God. (The image of a hill toward which all mouths turn evokes the Temple as the shared focus of prayer; Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 30a.) Klibanov referred to the description of the spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), also alluding to the chaos that prevailed in the world before light was separated from darkness (Genesis 1:2–4).

Each Knesset member used the metaphor of "revelation" differently. Warhaftig and David Ben-Gurion used it to deter: revelation, or the framing of a constitution, is a unique occasion that cannot be discussed lightly. One must prepare for it and also fear it. Yitzhak Ben-Zvi used the metaphor of "revelation" to point to its coercive element: the constitution can severely restrict the activity of the elected Knesset. Chaim Ben-Asher, Moshe Aram, and Yaakov Klibanov opposed this recoil from revelation: framing a constitution at the initiative of the state's founding generation is a worthy act; the establishment of the state resembles a modern event at Mount Sinai, and the constitution is likened to the divine spirit. In the remarks of Yellin-Mor, who also supported the framing of a constitution, revelation was the opposite of the constitution: whereas revelation is spiritual and divine, framing a constitution is material, practical, and human, necessary for conducting the practical life of a people living in its own state. Each Knesset member envisaged a different parliamentary regime. The arrangements of government and law that Ben-Gurion had in mind differed fundamentally from those envisaged by Yaakov Klibanov, and even contradicted them.

Yet the use of the metaphor of "revelation" reveals that the participants in the debate, from almost every faction, shared a common foundation in consciousness. First, the use of the metaphor of "revelation" by Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Eliyahu Hacarmeli, and Zerach Warhaftig drew on a thorough familiarity with the biblical text that had already become part of their consciousness. This foundation enables a high level of communication, both direct and symbolic. Second, the use of the metaphor of "revelation" by members on both sides of the political divide suggests more than a common cultural and linguistic foundation. The use of revelation as a point of reference for the establishment of the state, whether positively or negatively, shows the strength of this historical event in the consciousness of those who participated in it, and its power to connect them at a fundamental and profound level. Through the metaphor of "revelation," Knesset members introduced new elements into the debate over framing a constitution. Some emphasized the singularity of "revelation" and the accompanying awareness that the event was of great magnitude. Others emphasized revelation's negative, constraining aspect: revelation is imposed upon the people of Israel and also contains an element that deters, frightens, and endangers.

The metaphor of "revelation" also draws into the debate the sense of historical responsibility that accompanied the discussion of framing a constitution in the 1950s. It makes clear that Knesset

members were aware of the significance of their deliberations and knew that the results would have a long-term effect on the state's character. Thus the use of the metaphor of "revelation," like that of "home," reveals a common cultural and psychological foundation among the Knesset members taking part in the debate, in contrast to the sharp dispute over values that expresses total disagreement.

Conclusion

As noted above, metaphor does more than tell us about its user's consciousness and perception of reality. The textual analysis of metaphor also involves reading the process itself as a metaphorical text. As noted, the Harari Resolution was eventually adopted, stating:

> The First Knesset charges the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee with preparing a draft constitution for the state. The constitution shall be composed of separate chapters, each of which shall constitute a Basic Law in its own right. The chapters shall be brought before the Knesset as the committee completes its work, and all the chapters together shall be incorporated into the constitution of the state.

The Harari Resolution dissipated the tension inherent in framing a constitution, and its influence on Israel's "constitutional temperament" remains evident to this day. Even today, after the Supreme Court has given the Basic Laws constitutional status, they are not regarded as a systematically organized constitution. The Knesset's own Rules of Procedure, which regulate legislative proceedings, have a formal status inferior to that of an ordinary law, and almost no orderly plan for framing a constitution is being implemented in Israel. Examining the process itself, the debates over framing a constitution in the First Knesset, reveals that the pattern of the debates, the way the constitutional conflict was managed in the state's early years, reflects what emerged as an avoidance of preparing a constitution for Israel. The debates in the Knesset plenum continued for half a year. Eight sittings were devoted to the matter, with between four and eleven Knesset members speaking at each. The duration of this process may have allowed a public debate on the issue, but it seems that it was too long, neutralizing the tension inherent in the various questions and slowly dissipating it. By the time the Knesset came to vote on the matter, the Harari Resolution, to write the constitution chapter by chapter without a time limit, seemed entirely natural: after all, it reflected the way the constitutional conflict had been managed in the Knesset plenum.

Parties to a conflict or negotiation use language and texts in managing the conflict. This language reflects their perception of the conflict and their attitude toward the other side. As a basic element of language, metaphor can tell us a great deal about the parties' state of mind. It reflects a particular psychological state and state of consciousness; moreover, it imports into the conflict an additional system of images that gives us further tools for understanding the course of the conflict. Words can construct the "reality of the conflict," to paraphrase Berger and Luckmann, while metaphors can evoke feelings and "import" images from different worlds.

As I have tried to show, the use of the metaphors of "home" and "revelation" in the constitutional conflict in the state's early years reveals a considerable measure of agreement, shared longings and fears, and a common cultural foundation among parties who disagree on almost every question of values and politics.

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