

Hope: Overview and the Story of A People

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Introduction and Definition:

Before beginning our discussion, it is important that we define the term “hope”. When I look to understand words, I go back to Hebrew. Hebrew is my childhood language but I grew to rediscover and re-appreciate it as an adult living 8000 miles away from where it is largely spoken. The uniqueness of Hebrew is its (usually) three-letter root system which helps shed light on the core meaning of each word.

The word for hope is *tikvah*. The root letters are K.V.H. The core meaning is to gather to act; strive to particular goal. We find the same root elsewhere in the following instances such as the mentioning of the water gathering under the heavens in the story of creation (Genesis 1:9); striving to walk in G-d’s way (Psalms 25:3, 39:8); yearning of the soul (Psalms 25:5); and line, measuring line (Psalms 19:5), which remained the same in Modern Hebrew and the word for line is *kav*.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary’s definition says that hope (*noun*) is the feeling of wanting something to happen and thinking that it could happen; a feeling that something good will happen or be true; the chance that something good will happen; someone or something that may be able to provide help; someone or something that gives you a reason for hoping. The verb means to cherish a desire with anticipation; to desire with expectation of obtainment; to expect with confidence.

The word “hope” doesn’t appear in the first five books of the Bible, only later in the Prophets and in Writings. It is important to note that both the Biblical hope and the modern definition refer to something that is never static or passive. It is dynamic, active, directive and life sustaining, so “hope” is not an escape from reality or from problems. It doesn’t leave us idle, drifting or just rocking on the front porch. It is directly related to action and will put us in gear. This will be important as we proceed.

There are numerous quotes about hope, as we all are trying to grasp it. For example, 19th century American poet Emily Dickinson says that “hope is a thing with feathers that

perches on the soul – and sings the tunes without the words – and never stops at all...” Martin Luther King Jr said that “we must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope” and Aristotle said that “hope is the dream of a waking man”.

Social psychologist Barbara Lee Fredrickson, professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, conducts research in emotions and positive psychology. She argues that hope comes into its own when crisis looms, opening us to new creative possibilities. I would like to argue that hope is like a muscle we have to train all the time or we won't have it to use when crisis looms. For people to survive months, years, decades and at times, centuries, away from their dream, hope has to remain a constant, and even be transmitted through the generations. This might be evident from our case study later.

Others say that hopeful people are "like the little engine that could, [because] they keep telling themselves "I think I can, I think I can". Such positive thinking bears fruit when based on a realistic sense of optimism, not on a naive "false hope". Again, our case study shows that the line between reality and non-reality is very thin, and shouldn't be dismissed as obvious.

The Psychology of Hope:

Snyder, Irving & Anderson (1991, as cited in Snyder, 2000, p.8) define hope as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)”.

Hope theory can be subdivided into four categories: goals, pathway thoughts, agency thoughts and barriers. Goals that are valuable and uncertain are described by Snyder (1994, as cited in Snyder, 2000, p.9) as the anchors of hope theory as they provide direction and an endpoint for hopeful thinking. Pathway thoughts refer to the routes we take to achieve our desired goals and the individual's perceived ability to produce these routes (Snyder, 2000). Agency thoughts refer to the motivation we have to undertake the routes towards our goals. Barriers block the attainment of our goals and in the event of a barrier we can either give up or we can use our pathway thoughts to create new routes.

If hope can be defined, it follows that it can also be measured. Snyder developed a scale which I have attached to this paper.

There are several criticisms of hope theory and its measurement that can be applied to all of the questionnaires assessed so far primarily the fact that it is culturally subjective and not related to the rest of the world, but I still find it very interesting because those criticism are related to the how of the scale and not the “if” such a scale can be created and the usefulness of it as a tool in assessing, caring and healing people and maybe even societies.

Hope Therapy:

A growing body of research suggests that hope therapy is a potent way to fight symptoms of depression. It makes sense that the presence of hope is consistently associated with fewer symptoms of depression, but the good news is that hope is something that can be taught and can be developed in many of the people who need it. Psychologist Jennifer Cheavens measured hope in people using a 12-item questionnaire developed by her mentor, the late C.R. Snyder of the University of Kansas. In this measure, hope has two components: a map or pathway to get what you want, and the motivation and strength to follow that path.

As mentioned earlier, it is important to distinguish hope from optimism, which is a generalized expectancy that good things will happen. Hope involves having goals, along with the desire and plan to achieve them. Cheavens (and Dreer) examined 97 adults, most over age 60, who had been diagnosed with macular degeneration or other conditions that would cause them to lose their sight.

The researchers looked at measures of hope and depression in these people with low vision, along with their caregivers. As expected, the researchers found that, in general, caregivers were more likely to have significant depressive symptoms if the patients themselves had symptoms of depression. But caregivers who scored higher on measures of hope showed fewer depressive symptoms, even if the people they care for were depressed. Higher-hope caregivers also showed higher satisfaction with life, and felt

less of a sense of burden. The researchers also noted that the good news is that hope is something that can be developed in people.

In a study published in the journal *Social Indicators Research*, Cheavens and her colleagues tested a hope therapy treatment with a sample of 32 people recruited through newspaper ads and flyers. The ads asked for participants willing to attend weekly group meetings designed to increase participants' abilities to reach goals. The researchers specifically looked for people who were not diagnosed with depression or other mental illnesses, but who felt dissatisfied with where they were in life. The assumption was that since that which we focus on, tends to grow, if we focus on the negative and what is wrong, we will cause that to increase but if we focus on the positive potential, we can grow that. Hope therapy borrows from standard cognitive therapy but it includes new twists. Unlike usual therapy which focuses on what went wrong, it tends to focus on what goes right, in the client and in other people.

In this study, about half the participants took part in eight, two-hour group sessions led by trained leaders. As part of these sessions, they were taught new hope-related skills, including identifying goals, ways to achieve them, and how to motivate themselves.

Results showed that those who participated in the hope therapy had reduced depressive symptoms compared to the control group that did not participate. The group therapy participants had significant change in measures of self-esteem, life meaning, and anxiety than those not in the group therapy. There was a decrease in depression symptoms, but it didn't reach statistical significance. The therapy group was taught skills that researchers believe are related to hope, and hopeful people have goals, the inspiration to go after those goals, and the skills to make them happen.

People with high hope, according to researchers writing in background information published with the results, possess these "components of hope":

- Goals: They have long- and short-term meaningful goals.
- Ways to reach those goals: A plan or pathway to get there and the ability to seek alternative routes, if needed.
- Positive self-talk like "I think I can."

Researchers add that these three traits are related to each other and can be taught. For instance, you set a goal that can create motivation to follow through, which can ignite inspiration and action to take the steps to get moving. It is still hard to determine how to teach people not to backslide into self-destructive behaviors after completing the hope “workshops” and training, but there is hope.

These kinds of studies can shed light further, for example on future care for trauma patients on one hand and during therapy on the other. People use the word “hope” very loosely and if we listen to it, we can find the little moments of hopefulness, then help catch those moments and amplify them, supporting others in developing the hope into realistic goals and a constant in life.

The issue of hope might be especially interesting when we explore not only individuals but also groups and nations. Can the study of hope be applied to areas in political psychology? How do traits we think of as belonging to individuals appear – or vice versa, are lacking - in the national arena? Is hope a trait of an individual or can it also be a trait of a nation?

Hope and the Story of A People

Theodore (Ze’ev Binyamin) Hertzl was born in Budapest, in 1860. It is told that as a child, he attended services with his parents “quite regularly” at the local liberal synagogue primarily as part of the great respect he showed for his parents whom he also asked for a blessing before he undertook major projects. He did not grow up in a totally assimilated home, however, in his early years, Judaism and the Jewish people were peripheral issues in his life. Many years later, historians would compare him to Moses of the Book of Exodus since both grew up in a totally different environment from their followers, those whom they lead.

By the early 1890’s – he was then a little over thirty – he achieved a reputation throughout Europe as a brilliant journalist. His strength lay in writing the “blogs” of those days, known as *feuilletons*, brief, witty essays that captured a mood or scene.

He died young, only about ten years later, when he was 44 years old, and long before he could see what became of his life's dream – which in the 1890's he didn't even know yet, just as he didn't know people would call him the "Visionary of the (future) Jewish State". What made Theodor *Benyamin Ze'ev* Hertzl change his mind?

During the 1890's he wrote about numerous current issues. As far as Jewish matters, the only issue that seemed to concern him, and that too mostly peripherally, was antisemitism. At one point, he advocated having Europe's most prominent Jews publicly convert to Catholicism in the belief that this would inaugurate a mass conversion of the rest of Jewry, and thus peace of earth would come. An end to the Jewish people, he reasoned, not unlike many of the Jews' enemies, would also end antisemitism. It took a major event to make Hertzl realize that this "euthanasia" of Judaism and its people was neither practical nor moral.

In 1894 Alfred Dreyfus, a young Jewish artillery captain in the French Army, was accused of spying for Germany. Disinterested investigators quickly discovered that the charges against Dreyfus were false. There was indeed a high level French spy working for the Germans, but the evidence clearly pointed at a Colonel named Esterhazy as the guilty party. Nonetheless, the French Army, in cooperation with the right-wing government's leaders, conspired to quash all evidence pointing to Dreyfus's innocence.

Antisemites began to claim that this provided additional proof of "Jewish treachery". Both the Right and Left had their "reasons" to blame the Jews, if for the latter's wealth and class or their own deep tradition for Jew-hatred. The propaganda, abandoning its social nature, was transformed into patriotic incitement and attacks on the ideals of the French Revolution. The Minister of War hesitated at first, but later decided to bring Dreyfus to trial before a court martial. By means of forgery and political pressure, Dreyfus was found guilty and sentenced to exile on Devil's Island for the rest of his life. The socialist leader, Jaurès, who later came to Dreyfus' defense, claimed at the time in the National Assembly that the "light sentence resulted from the influence of the Jewish bourgeoisie".

As irregularities at the original Dreyfus trial became increasingly evident, the government was finally forced to order a new trial; it arranged, however, to have Dreyfus convicted again. Finally, the case was resolved twelve years later, in 1906, as Dreyfus was exonerated and returned as a free man from his prison cell on Devil's Island.

Before being exiled to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, Alfred Dreyfus was publicly humiliated at a ceremony in Paris. His sword was broken, and his military medals ripped off his uniform. The frenzied French mob present there, cried not only for Dreyfus's death but for the death of all Jews.

A young journalist at the time, Theodor *Benyamin Ze'ev* Hertzl, was in the crowd, and the whole ordeal, the trial and the ceremony had a profound effect on his life. A new understanding dawned on him. No longer interested in the idea of capitulating for a mass conversion, he concluded that as long as Jews lived in non-Jewish societies they would be collectively blamed and hated for the wrongful action of any one of them. If "Death to the Jews!" was the reaction in liberal France, which was the first European country to grant the Jews equal rights, then the Jews were not safe anywhere. Hertzl reasoned that the only place which might offer safety to the Jews is a land of their own. He thus became obsessed with the vision of a renewed Jewish state. He tried to solicit the help of wealthy French Jews such as the Rothschilds and Baron de-Hirsch's family but to no avail. In a burst of creativity he wrote *Der Judenstaat*, - the Jewish State - a sixty three page pamphlet. In it he outlined a plan for creating a Jewish state and explained why doing so was entirely feasible. On the book's final page, he wrote: "Let me repeat once more: The Jews who wish for a state will have it".

As mentioned earlier, between Dreyfus's humiliation and Hertzl's death passed only ten years. Indeed, Dreyfus himself was not yet absolved of his crime when Hertzl died. However, in that decade Hertzl was able to lay the foundation of all the major structures of the Zionist movement. In 1897, he convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. This city, which never had a Jewish population of more than a few

thousands, became one of the most famous sites in Jewish history. Later, Hertzels will write in his journal: "In Basel I founded the Jewish State."

Each year thereafter, the congresses grew in size. More and more Jews (and non-Jews) came to see the new movement titled "Zionism" as the one political movement that could actually address the Jewish People's needs and the Jews' problems, rather than a fantasy. Indeed, there were proposals suggesting various sites for Jewish homeland including "empty" lands in Argentina, Ukraine and Uganda, but the Land of Israel spoke to the heart of the Jews the world over and they responded to the dream with action. It turned out, that the seed of the hope for the return to the little land plot in the eastern Mediterranean area, expressed in prayers and poems for hundreds of years, just lay dormant but never disappeared. Now, with Hertzels and others it was reawakened.

Hertzels was both practical and insightful, and he didn't just write about dreams and fantasy. He went to build processes and procedures to make the vision materialize. During his first years of Zionist activity, he tried to get the support of Turkey's sultan since Turkey was then in control of the Land of Israel. He also tried to get help from the Sultan's major supporter in Europe, the German Kaiser. There were several years of raised hopes, then fruitless negotiations. Finally, in what might be perceived as an 'out of the blue' prophetic step, Hertzels's efforts shifted to England. Indeed, in 1917, thirteen years after Hertzels died, England, supported by Jews in Palestine, sized the area from Turkey and began its mandate in the land of Israel. England then issued the Balfour Declaration, announcing that the British government "views with favor the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine" which paved the way for the future State of Israel. What began as a mere "hope" has transformed into a real, living, vibrant endeavor.

Transmitting Hope:

In the Jewish tradition where transmission is viewed as crucial, it is taught that one can affect the future generations in either one of two ways: via one's children or via one's teachings, that is – in a physical manner or in an intellectual-spiritual manner. These two methods are exemplified by the two Biblical brothers and leaders, Moses and Aaron: Aaron's progeny turned into the priestly family, and while we know little about Moses' offspring, his teachings have outlived that of anyone else (in Hebrew he is called "our teacher").

As mentioned earlier, Hertzl was often compared to Moses. The obvious reason is his leadership at a time when the Jews needed to be taken out of "slavery" in "narrow place" (which is the meaning of the Hebrew name for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*). They both grew up away from the "masses" and remained somewhat aloof. And sadly, Hertzl and Moses share the fact that we do not know much about either's future generations. Perhaps like Moses too, Hertzl and his family paid a heavy personal price for the latter's Zionist involvement. When Julie Naschauer married him in 1889 she had no idea that his life's passion would take over, and he would be so obsessed with his dream of reviving the Jewish state and caring for the Jews' future that he would have little time for his own family. The fate of Hertzl's children was tragic: his older daughter, Pauline, died of drug addiction, and his son, Hans, committed suicide on the day of her funeral. The younger daughter, Trude, spent much of her life in and out of hospitals before dying in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt. Trude had only one child, but he committed suicide in 1946, and so today there are no living heirs of Hertzl. But instead, Hertzl left many ideological heirs, inspired by his extensive work.

Can hope create that which is hoped for??

112 years ago, Hertzl published his book: *Altneuland*, An Old-New Land. At the time it was viewed as "entertaining science fiction" but by 1960, a hundred years after Hertzl's birth, the book appeared already in at least 12 different languages.

The book describes an imaginary journey of two friends (interestingly, a European Jew and an American non-Jew) who travel to The Holy Land in the early 1900's, make a stop-

over and continue on, returning through the same area twenty five years later. In a vivid and rich account Hertzl describes the beautiful land with its lively cities and blooming orchards interspersed with its natural beauty as well as advanced science research and teaching methods, international openness and even the reinstatement of the biblical *shekel* as the national currency. He talks about modern markets, housing projects, factories, trains and cultural events along with archeological digs that generate respect and information regarding the place's ancient history.

The book so closely matches the reality of life in Israel that one must wonder: Did the hope create its own reality? Or did the reality come about independently? Is that the power of active, well-focused "hope"?

Hertzl signed his books with his famous line: *im tirtzu, ein zu agada*: "If you will it, it is no fairy tale". He further states: "and if you won't, well then, all I told you here is nothing but a fable, and will continue to be so. I set out to compose a story which has its own moral. 'Tis more a story than a moral', some might say; 'more a moral than a story' will say others. For now, after three years of labor, it is time for us to part our ways, and now, my dear book, has come the time for your sufferings. Your path will go through hatred and castrations, as if you'd be walking through a dark forest. But if you chance upon the company of pleasant people, please give regards from your father. He thinks that the dream is a nice way to fill the days we must do on this earth. Dream and action are not so different as some might think, for all human deed are founded in dream and will return to dream too".

Hertzl understood the Jews' need for their own state, for their own freedom in it. Lengthy debates circled around the question of whether this should be a State of Judaism or a State for Jews. Both needs were pressing, and one could not come without the other. The answer came out of reality: The Jews were the carriers of Judaism, and they required a home, away from constant persecution, threats, educational & economical limitations, instability and insecurity.

Trends in Jewish immigration, already during Hertzl's lifetime, may serve as a lens to exemplify the uniqueness of the Jewish experience and needs. For example, one of the

characteristics of most Jewish migration was the migration of whole families. The percentage of children among Jewish immigrants was double the average, a fact which demonstrates that the uprooting was permanent. And in fact, in the last few years before the First World War, only 5.75% of Jewish immigrants returned to their countries of origin, while among other immigrants about one third went back. Nearly half of the Jewish immigrants had no defined occupation, i.e. no permanent source of livelihood, as against some 25% of the other immigrants, but of the other half, about two thirds were skilled artisans (mainly tailors) as against only one fifth of the general immigrant population.

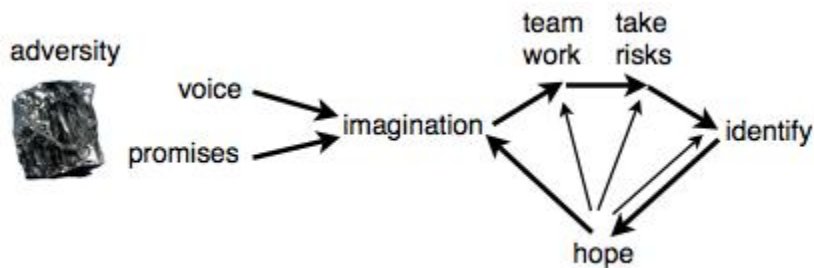
A further distinguishing feature of Jewish migration, particularly to the Land of Israel but even to California, was that from the outset it displayed clearly ideological tendencies. A considerable number of the younger immigrants, members of the intelligentsia, were motivated not only by the desire to find a new refuge or a place in which there were greater chances of success; their departure constituted a protest against the discrimination and injustice they had suffered in their old homes and reflected their ardent desire for a place in which they could live independent and free.

From the beginning, controversy existed between the Zionists who believed that independent existence of the people was only possible in their ancient homeland, and the "Americans" who claimed that the "land of the Free" was the most suited to the free development of the Jews. Ultimately, it was not the ideological argument but the conditions of absorption that determined the direction of migration for the great majority of those forced to flee from their countries of residence. In my own family, my paternal grandparents left Germany in 1933 to France, waiting for a visa for either the US or "Palestine", whichever will arrive first. My maternal grandfather on the other hand was always a devout Zionist. He bought land between Haifa and Tel Aviv in 1932, and made his commitment to settle there as soon as he could. Both sides ended up in Israel, actively supporting the building of this dream, making the hopes of old come true.

Hertzel's dream was so powerful, easily accepted and potentially successful because he didn't invent much new. He spoke out what many felt. For thousands of years the return to the Land of Israel was a daily part of every Jew's life. The Bible and the *Siddur*, the Jewish prayer book, express such sentiments as "next year in Jerusalem" and "if I forget thee, Jerusalem, may my right hand wither..." Journals and poems share countless impressions from those who journeyed over throughout the centuries, visiting the holy sites as well as supporting the small Jewish population that maintained their residence in the Land. Yehuda Halevi of 11th century Spain was just one such writer, expressing many sentiments when he wrote that his "heart is in the East while (he) is at the end of the West". Non-Jewish travelers to the "Holy Land" in the 19th century, like Mark Twain and others, were surprised to find the land of "milk and honey" a land of waste, swamps, danger and sickness. Some compared the land to a woman who sits in mourning, waiting for her mate to return, not giving in to any other suitor. They speculated that it will be with the return of the Jewish people that the land will bloom again; the woman will rise, put on her make-up on and dawn her beauty for her man. It will be then that the "old-land" will come to life and become the "old-new-land", as described in Hertzel's book and as has happened in the past century. Hertzel therefore was not a "visionary" or a surprising modern prophet of some sort. The dreams and hope he verbalized was not his; rather it belongs to the Jewish people, and will likely remain so. They will also change it, mold it and reshape it to match their needs going forward. This probably can be compared to other leaders of such magnitude, like Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela who expressed the hope of a people and thus helped bring it to life.

Robert Mattox, social activist and futurist, has proposed a social-change theory based on the hope phenomenon in relation to leadership. Larry Stout postulates that certain conditions must exist before even the most talented leaders can lead change (can we analyze the 2008 elections in the U.S.?). Given such conditions, Mattox proposes a change management theory around hope, suggesting that a leader can lead change and

shape culture within his community or organization by creating a "hope-scape" and harnessing the hope system.



In the case of the Jewish State, these feelings were taken a step further. Written by the Hebrew poet Naphtali Hertz Imber, originally in 1877 and slightly edited later on, the Israeli national anthem comes closer than any other poem to being the song of the entire Jewish people. The poem's name alludes to the eternity of the dream: *Hatikva*, which means "the hope", says:

As long as in the innermost chambers of the heart
A Jewish soul is yearning,
We turn to the East, forward
Our eye - watchful over Zion.
Our hope is not yet lost
The hope of two thousand years
To be a free people in our own land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

On a personal (hopeful) note

I was raised amidst the tension between the dream and its reality. Growing up, I took great pride in my country, its uniqueness, achievements and beauty, but the dream also came knocking on my generation's door, demanding payment, with the Lebanon war in 1982. The daily gnawing of 'is this really worth it' was not a theoretical question.

Israel is being challenged daily from within and without. Doubts regarding the need for a Jewish State come up constantly. Should there be an independent state for the Jews in the Land of Israel? How will such a state, Israel, survive, asks the Newsweek of April 1, 2002, Maybe it is all futile: Why do the Jews need their own state? Other religions don't! And must it be where it is? Now that we have "progressed" and are living in a "modern world" is there still room for Hertzels dreams and hopes? And what exactly is "Hertzels hope" a hundred years later?

Perhaps the fact the discussion around this issue is so animated and globally widespread is proof enough to the aliveness of the dream as Jews and non-Jews, Israelis and expats continue to figure out how to execute it, especially with changing dynamics in the immediate region.

But one thing is for sure: while we often think of hope as a personal quality, we can see here that it can become a joint aspiration going beyond a specific event (*"we" hope we'll win the Monde'al!!*) to change the course of a people's history. It would be thus interesting to further explore if other elements can be learned from this parallel, for example, when working to resolve and heal various national and regional conflicts. It seems that not only an individual but a people's hope and by default, hopelessness, might be a significant if not decisive component in reaching long-term solutions, not only personally, but nationally as well.

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