



Letters to the Editor

Yehezkel Dror, *Steering Human Evolution: Eighteen Theses on Homo Sapiens Metamorphosis* (London: Routledge, 2020)

Review by Bob Krone, PhD, President, Kepler Space Institute

Yehezkel Dror identifies seven unsolved challenges to humanity that current global political leadership is unable to address. Each is a looming threat to humanity (up to and including extinction), and each requires action now.

Steering Human Evolution, Dror's 15th book, will be a classic. See the Summer 2018 special issue of the *Journal of Space Philosophy* (www.keplerspaceinstitute.com/jsp) for his foundational work on the policy sciences, public policy, and his legacy of six decades of remarkable academic excellence.

Living, self-improvement, and survival are the top priorities for most individuals, groups, organizations, schools, societies, and international organizations. The current approaches to the social global crises of COVID-19, as well as ongoing racial and cultural inequality, reflect these priorities. If humanity fails to address these developing challenges wisely, they will eventually be widely destructive, irreversible, even leading to human extinction.

Dror describes his book as dealing with novel challenges that are critical for the future of the human species, but are inherently intractable, and therefore require apparently heretical responses. He provides three examples to clarify the quandary: The first is the requirement to make choices impacting an unknowable future, which therefore involve perilous, but unavoidable, fuzzy gambling for very high stakes. The second is the necessity to act on behalf of future generations without any plausible right to do so. The third consists of global measures overriding state sovereignty, which are essential, but which are opposed by the main powers and not welcome to most of humanity.

The underlying reason for the emergence of such challenges, cited by Dror, is a macro-historic metamorphosis into which humanity is cascading, without adequate understanding and completely unprepared. Therefore, main ideas, values, institutions, and habits of humankind, which have evolved since deep history, must be reassessed and in part deliberately reengineered to meet the survival and thriving requirements of humanity as a multigenerational population and a civilizational species.

Dror's book aims at more than stimulating thinkers and decision makers to ponder the need for high-quality evolution steering to cope with the fateful issues increasingly challenging humanity, however essential. It also tries to stimulate action. Humans must be agents. The availability of neogenesis technologies often stimulates their use, for evil and benefit. However, they and their uses are the result of human choices and actions. The technologies are not to be blamed or blessed for the consequences of being used, but the humans who developed and utilize them have the responsibility to ensure that their use is not destructive to humans or to humanity,

Yehezkel Dror is not optimistic about global political leadership making the necessary choices to avoid or reduce future catastrophes. He advises public policy schools increasingly to focus on preparing evolution—steering professionals and science faculties to alert students to their moral responsibilities and preparing them to influence politics. He challenges the mass media to convey to the public some understanding of what is to be expected and what needs to be done. He particularly challenges political leaders to accept responsibility for the fate of future generations and to work hard to acquire the moral, intellectual, and volitional virtues essential for doing so.

Dror's previous writings have consistently identified the incapacity of political leadership to understand or resolve problems adequately. This book recognizes the historical failures to do so, but it especially provides leadership with a new urgency produced by the combination of nature's threats and potential threats from uncontrolled technology rapidly advancing in the 21st century. He sees current treatments as suffering from tunnel vision and lacking a holistic or systems view of the emerging challenges that are interacting and mutually reinforcing each other. He cites as examples autonomous weapons, human cloning, cyborgs, geoengineering, human enhancement, life creation, nanotechnologies, population size, reality exit, and robotics.

Many of Dror's prescriptions in this book have low, or no, political feasibility in the world of 2020. He advocates that a novel *humanity-craft* be developed, that main ideologies and institutions need redesign, and that national sovereignty must be limited with the creation of a decisive global regime. He states that some reevaluation of widely accepted norms will be essential, and that a novel type of political leader, based on merit in addition to public support, is urgently needed. Dror concludes that "it may well be that only catastrophes will teach humanity to metamorphose into a novel epoch without too high transition costs. But initial steps, such as United Nation reforms, are urgent in order to contain calamities and may soon become feasible—with the global corona pandemic being just a foretaste of fateful challenges sure to face the human species."

I have been a professional colleague of Yehezkel Dror since 1968. He has spent his whole career, beginning in the 1960s, in analyzing and improving public policy making, by consulting with heads of state and those who counsel them in several languages. His signature block is "Yehezkel Dror, Contemplative Policy Scientist, Professor Emeritus of

Political Science and Wolfson Chair of Public Administration, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.”

I coedited the Special Issue of the *Journal of Space Philosophy* in Summer 2018, dedicated exclusively to the works and legacy of Yehezkel Dror. There is a well-validated fact about his life’s works that causes me to make a strong recommendation to global leadership. That fact is that Yehezkel Dror has for six decades identified political and social problems long before they became reality. For that reason alone, I urge the world’s serious attention to his *Steering Human Evolution*.

Bob Krone, PhD, President, Kepler Space Institute (KSI)

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A Tribute to Yitzhaq Hayut-man

By Ayal Hayut-man

Dr. Yitzhaq Hayut-man, whose article on “Augmenting Jerusalem Sacred Space” appears in this issue of the *Journal of Space Philosophy*, passed away in March at the age of 78, after a struggle with pancreatic cancer. In what follows, I would like to share some facts about his life and his interests and designs regarding space in its various meanings.

Dr. Hayut-man was born in Haifa, Israel, in 1943. He developed an interest in space and design early on, and he studied in the Architectural Association in London and later at UC Berkley, where he received his BA in Architecture in 1969. In 1972, he received an MA in Urban Planning at the Technion–Israel Institute of Technology. During the 1970s, he worked as a professor of Urban Planning in Recife, Brazil, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Later that decade, he expanded his scope from physical to interpersonal space and completed a PhD in Cybernetics at Brunel University, working under Prof. Gordon Pask.

During the 1980s, Dr. Hayut-man successfully led a campaign for urban preservation at Neve Tzedek, Tel Aviv—a unique neighborhood that was planned for demolition; nowadays, Neve Tzedek is considered among the most unique and lucrative areas in Tel Aviv. He also worked at the Ben Gurion University Institute for Desert Research, where he was involved in plans for employing solar power in Israel’s Negev desert.

In 1989, Dr. Hayut-man moved with his family to Jerusalem, where he embarked upon his most ambitious project, to which he dedicated much of his life: redesigning Jerusalem’s sacred space. He believed that this space, which was the source of centuries of conflict, could serve as a gateway for interreligious cooperation and peace.

The Old City of Jerusalem is sacred to the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. During the 19th century, a conflict over the holy places ignited the Crimean war; more recently, conflicting claims and visions regarding the Temple Mount are considered one of the major impasses in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an impasse

that has sparked multiple rounds of violence across the years. These conflicts were all based on a view of the city's sacred space as a zero-sum game, in which one side's gain necessarily comes at the expense of the other's loss. Dr. Hayut-man proposed several ways to break this deadlock and to promote a notion of joint space in which people of different faiths can not only coexist, but also learn and benefit from each other's presence. Some possible ways to achieve this goal are summarized below.

1. Virtual/Augmented Space—this idea is developed more fully in the article in the present issue. In essence, tools of virtual and augmented reality allow for a limited space to be populated simultaneously by multiple images and visions. For a Jew, the Temple Mount could be the site of the third temple; for a Muslim, it could be the site of the Dome of the Rock or even of the Kaaba, as proposed by some Islamic traditions about the end of days; for an atheist, it could be neither.
2. The Dome of the Rock as the Jerusalem Temple—Dr. Hayut-man dedicated years to studying the history, architecture, and symbology of the Dome of the Rock. He proposed that this site, built by the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik in the late 7th century AD, was originally designed not as a place of prayer (unlike the nearby Al-Aqsa Mosque), but as a space for inter-religious dialogue and spiritual speculation and elevation. Dr. Hayut-man proposed that the Dome of the Rock can in fact be considered by Jews as a Third Temple—a new and improved version, from both an architectural and a spiritual perspective. Under such a notion, again, the religious aspirations of Jews and Muslims should not be seen as mutually exclusive, but rather as mutually reinforcing.
3. The Jerusalem Games—Dr. Hayut-man was in the process of designing a series of games that could be conducted either online from afar or physically, through the use of augmented reality tools. Each participant selects an avatar from one of the multiple faiths, nationalities, and historical eras of Jerusalem and undergoes a series of challenges, the end goal of which is first personal and finally universal transformation—the construction of the Heavenly Jerusalem. These games employ the unique space of the city of Jerusalem, as well as its historical and cultural heritage, to create an intellectual and spiritual process towards self-awareness, learning, and cooperation.
4. The Twelve Tribes of Israel—among many ideas that may be considered extraordinary, this one is the most ambitious. According to the Biblical

story, the People of Israel was originally composed of twelve tribes—the tribe of Judah being only one among them. Based on this template, Dr. Hayut-man proposed to adopt a much wider configuration of the People of Israel—one that could include the Children of Ishmael (Islam) and of Esau (Christianity), and possibly others as well, according to a joint narrative shared by the three religions. Again, due to its central place among the Abrahamic religions, the space of Jerusalem was seen as the focal point for this religious transformation, fusing three into one while maintaining their uniqueness.

These were some of the visionary ideas developed and proposed by Dr. Hayut-man. They were not realized during his life, but they may still serve to inspire others—either directly or by formulating new and innovative ideas for solving a deeply rooted conflict of global significance.

At his request, Yizhaq Hayut-man was buried on the Mount of Olives, overlooking his beloved city of Jerusalem. May his memory be a blessing.

Sincerely,

Ayal Hayut-man
Jerusalem, Israel

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The Desensitization of Younger Generations to Rocket Launches From Pavit Hooda

Teens born circa 2004 are coming of age at a time when rocket launches are becoming commonplace. This is leading to the desensitization of younger generations to rocket launches. However, the efforts of the newer private space companies like SpaceX and Blue Origin to create more innovative rocket launches, designs, and recovery, are keeping the topic exciting for them. For example, I personally still get emotional when SpaceX lands a booster.

Pavit Hooda (Age 17)

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