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The Isaiah of the 20th century – Korczak's utopia of all men solidarity**

Summary

Korczak scholars deal mainly with his pedagogy, extensive writings, the legacy of his two children's homes, and the tragic end of Korczak and his Jewish children in the Holocaust. Less attention is given to his humanistic worldview. Korczak, who claimed that the child is a human being here and now, not a man in the making, developed a philosophy that places the child, as any other human being, in his broad understanding of Humanity. This study aims to explore Korczak's utopian idea of one united Humanity. As a Jew, Korczak knew the price people pay for these historical divisions. This study shows that, like other Jewish intellectuals of modernity, Korczak envisioned a reality of all men's unity and solidarity. Korczak was not blind to the political, cultural, and social realities of the 20th century. Antisemitic ideas were present in interwar Poland, as in other European countries, yet, he hoped that the world of men is mendable. One day, all people of the world will unite around the cause of the child. A renewed reading of Korczak's texts, including his exchange of letters with his friends in Palestine, the Land of Israel, the Holy Land of the Christians, and his impressions from his two visits to Palestine showed his broad universal view. A renewed reading of his classic novel, *King Matt the First*, would reveal, besides the idea of a children's kingdom, the idea that Europeans, Africans and Asians, boys and girls, rich and street people, can live together in peace. It is possible if they would go beyond political rivalries, greediness for power and money, admiration of military might, and social prejudices. The Kingdom of Matt failed. Society is not ready for such a worldview. Korczak's words like the Biblical prophecies of Isaiah, remained unfulfilled, but we, living in a troubling era, must hope that one day, "at the end of days," they will become a reality.

Keywords: a reality of all men's unity and solidarity, perspective of one infinite Stoic cosmos, Biblical prophecies of Isaiah, a troubling era, Korczak

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Going beyond Korczak pedagogy

Korczak scholars deal mainly with Janusz Korczak's pedagogy, his extensive writings, the legacy of his two children's homes, and the tragic end of Korczak and his Jewish children in the Holocaust. Less attention is given to his humanistic worldview. Korczak, who claimed that the child is a human being here and now, not a man in the making, developed a philosophy that places the child, as any other human being, in his broad understanding of Humanity. In previous writings, I showed that Korczak had, despite his aphoristic writings, a philosophy that places all men, including children, in a broad perspective of one infinite Stoic cosmos (Shner, 2012; 2021). The idea of one cosmic reality and one Humanity also has social and political implications (Freeman, 2020; Shner, 2021).

In my Korczak courses, when I discuss Korczak's pedagogical work and writings, my students challenge me with the claim that Korczak, inspiring as he may be, belongs to a different reality. He is a heroic persona because of his total dedication to his children in the Warsaw Jewish ghetto, but he does not add anything meaningful to a 21st-century education. The reality of children has improved much since Korczak's time; our pedagogy is already focused on the child. To a limited extent, I agree with the students' claim that in Western societies, the reality of children has improved much since Korczak's time. Charles Dickens's nineteenth-century novel ***Oliver*** (1837–1839) brought a new awareness of children's unprotected status and started a movement toward the emancipation of children. Indeed, the reality of children has improved much in recent two centuries.

In 1924, the League of Nations adopted the ***Declaration of the Rights of the Child***; It was the first international declaration of its kind. Yet, it had no real enforcement power (Van Bueren, 1998). Korczak, whose work probably inspired the discourse about this declaration, recognized its weak advisory nature, "The Geneva lawgivers have confused duties with rights. The tone of the declaration is not insistence but persuasion: an appeal to goodwill, a plea for kindness" (Korczak, 1967, p. 368). Weak as this charter was, it was an essential step in the long road to children's emancipation. In 1948, the newborn United Nations passed its ***Declaration of Universal Human Rights***, which referred to all human beings but not to children specifically. In 1959, it approved an extended version of the League of Nations Declaration of Children's Rights. Finally, in 1989, the General Assembly passed its robust declaration, ***The Convention on the Right of the Child***; it came into force in September 1990 (Van Bueren, 1998). So, by the twenty-first century, it is widely recognized that children deserve rights.

Nonetheless, my answer to my students' claim is that even if children's reality has fundamentally changed in modernized societies, children's rights are still

violated worldwide (Shner, 2018a; 2018b). Children are still weak, dependent, and unprotected during childhood and are often used by adults. Despite these international declarations, conventions, and state legislation, children are still abused in various parts of the world. Their fundamental human rights are still being violated: *War crimes*, *Poverty, Hard labor*, *No education – especially for girls, Sexual abuse*, *Improper welfare conditions and lack of primary medical care, violence in the family and the community, Bullying, insecurity of Refugee children* (Sigad et al., 2015).

Despite the work of the UN agencies, state governments, and civic organizations to tackle these abuses of children's rights, there remains a troubling gap between the promises of international declarations and Conventions and the reality of children all over the world. It is an all-men enterprise. The mission of all men to protect children's rights is bound to the universal message in Korczak's prolific heritage: the utopia of all men's solidarity. The reality of children everywhere is an all-men moral obligation (Eichsteller, 2009). In Korczak's worldview, children's rights are bound to the reality of all Humanity; as he wrote in his early diary, *The Fly of the Butterfly*, "changing the world and changing education are inseparable." Only such a recognition of all-men unity establishes the ground for international efforts toward the cause of the child.

This study aims to explore Korczak's utopian vision of one united Humanity. Humanity is still fragmented and divided culturally, economically, and politically. Religious fanaticism is still spreading hate among people instead of love and compassion. Wars and poverty still push millions to the roads in search of haven, children still suffer, and men still need Korczak's all-men vision as a lighthouse to show Humanity its way.

The most popular dream of modernized Jews

As we all know, Janusz Korczak was a Pole, a Jew, or maybe none of both, a citizen of a universal reality that does not exist yet. The question of Korczak's identity occupies scholars who wish to understand his work's context and define his place in the history of education. Sharshevsky claims that Korczak belongs to both Polish nationality and Jewish identity (Sharshevsky, 1990). Others may argue that Korczak's identity was fundamentally shaped by his not fully belonging to any nationality and his tragic failure to feel at home in any national milieu.

This sense of homelessness is the thread that runs through the different stages of Janusz Korczak–Henryk Goldszmit's life. Like many modernized Jews, it defined his Jewish identity and motivated his educational pathos. Korczak was a tragic hero not because of his death but because of his life as a persona torn between different identities, belonging to none (Shner, 1996). Korczak is the typical modernized Jew

who searched for a home and identity that would end generations of isolation and persecution. It was not Zionism but the vision of one Humanity that would accept every human being, including the Jews, as respected members of the all-men community. His inspiring dream remained unfulfilled.

George Steiner, a contemporary thinker and literary scholar, describes modern Jewish identity as based on detachment and homelessness (Steiner, 1977). It is the fate of the modern Jew to be the lonely stranger: this is what defines his-her identity. The destiny of the Jew, as tricky as it is, is to be the eternal guest. Only trees, not people, grow roots, according to Steiner. He turns Jewish homelessness into a moral challenge and mission to make the world a better place for Humanity:

> Trees have roots, and men and women have legs. To traverse the barbed-wire idiocy of frontiers, with which to visit, to dwell among the rest of mankind as guests (Steiner, 1997, p. 61).

The Jew should struggle against nationalism in all its forms and facets. Worship of land or a state is idolatry; only human dignity deserves our full attention. Korczak was an excellent example of the homeless Jew who searched for redemption in an all-men reality.

This modern Jewish dream is ancient, a Biblical vision and **the essence of Monotheism: one God, one world, one Humanity, and one Justice**. All men are created in God's image and follow one universal world order and one morality. The ideal unity of Humanity was broken because of human hubris – so tells us in its mythic way the story of the Babylonian tower (Genesis, 11, 1-9) – and Humanity had been shattered into different peoples and faiths. History reveals a broken reality of hatred among men, violence, and injustice; the Biblical prophet Isaiah promises his audience an inspiring vision. One day, all the nations will come together in Zion to follow the word of God. Peace will prevail among all men, and aggression will disappear from nature

> 2. And it shall come to pass at the end of days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
>
> 3. And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
>
> 4. And He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isaiah, 2:1-4; 11:1-10).

Even secular people recite these inspiring words of hope that one day the world will achieve its redemption.

The ancient universal dream returned to modern Jewish thought in many forms. It inspired Jews to be part of a new society of all men's solidarity in secular Monotheism or even secular Messianism (Steiner, 1977). Jews celebrated New Age ethical monotheism, according to which there is one God, even if people worship Him in different cultural styles, one rationality, one rational faith, and one rational ethics. They praised Kant's Critical Philosophies as it pointed to the principal possibility of such Humanity.

Various modern interpretations were given to this Messianic hope: Karl Marks spoke about one history, which encompasses all; naive Jews enthusiastically joined the universal promise of Socialism. Sigmund Freud advocated one psyche – all men share the same psyche and the same road of Psychoanalysis to mental health – and Jews celebrated his discovery. Jews in all scientific fields hoped to find their home in a universal scientific endeavor. Science has a messianic appeal. In the leading German university of Heidelberg, 40% of the professors in 1933 were Jews. For the Nazis, it was intolerable. Ludwig Zamenhof, now just a name of a Warsaw street, hoped that all men would share the same language, Esperanto. One common language would reverse the mythical Biblical curse of the Babylonian Tower and foster all-men's unity. It was Janusz Korczak, torn between his identities, who hoped that all men would come together around the cause of the child.

In the pre-emancipation period, the world of Rabbinic tradition was a kind of mobile home for the Jewish person. The Jewish person knew where he came from, where he was going, how to live in this world, and to whom the Jewish person is accountable (Mishna, Avot 3:1). This 'being at home' collapsed in modernity. Jewish emancipation in modern Europe was built on the dream of integrating into the surrounding European society. Among liberal Jewish circles, there was an ideology of assimilation into a universal family of humankind, which rationalized the abandonment of what remained of the traditional Jewish world.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, this struggle for equality and integration reached an impasse as European society rejected the efforts of modernized Jews to be part of the new Europe. Rising waves of nationalism and spirits of anti-Semitism closed the doors of social integration. The modernized Jew was left displaced and alienated from his previous being and the Gentile-like image he tried to wear. Decades of secularization and emancipation in European society left Jews' identities fractured and insecure.

Korczak's life epitomized this tragic reality of a generation of Jewish intellectuals caught in no man's land, hanged between sky and earth, like in Marc Chagall's drawings. The nucleus of their being was torn and bereft of any illusion of emancipation, yet they felt distanced and alienated from the Jewish world. Jean Amery, another twentieth-century Jewish intellectual who deeply felt this

loneliness, worded the paradox of modern Jewish identity: "I cannot be a Jew but have no choice" (Amery, 1990, pp. 82–101). Jewish identity became an exterritorial border zone that Jews could not leave if they wanted to remain loyal to themselves. Amery argued that this was the experience of an entire generation of Jews, probably "numbering into millions" (Amery, 1990, p. 94). Korczak was one of those Jews.

Korczak, caught between two cultures – his identity was shaped by intense feelings of not belonging to either: he felt his homelessness was an insult as he wanted to be accepted as Polish but refused. In the Thirties, Polish society rejected him as being a no genuine Pole. The Polish society that embraced Korczak in the twenty-first century pushed him away in the early decades of the previous century. Nonetheless, when he looked towards the Jewish side, he understood that this national milieu was not his home either. Both Poland and Palestine were exile. Korczak admitted the impasse at which he had arrived. In Poland, in those last years of Polish independence, he bitterly described himself as an object devoid of value; in Palestine, he saw himself as impotent and lacking any importance.

Korczak hoped all his life that his work on behalf of children would be the longed-for bridge between Jews and non-Jews. His efforts to create an ideal home for children can be seen as an attempt to bridge this divide: his radical vision of a children's democracy would overcome the traditional boundaries of European society. His life's work, entirely dedicated to children, was a creative attempt to build a world in which he, the Jew, could be a wholly accepted, complete citizen.

The tragic and heroic story of Korczak reflects the crumbling of this naïve vision in the middle of the twentieth century. Korczak spoke about education and children's rights in universal terms. He hoped that the cause of children would bring all men together; however, his two children's houses, one for Polish Jewish children and one for Polish Christian children, remained separate until the end. The Jewish children and the Christian children had different fates.

Like Esperanto for Ludwig Zamenhof, psychoanalysis for Sigmund Freud, the economy for Karl Marx, humanism for George Steiner, and art and music for many modern Jewish artists, the world of children was for Korczak. This milieu would end, he hoped, the long history of Jewish loneliness and humiliation. However, history developed differently, and his legacy ended in Treblinka; his fate shadows any post-Holocaust discussion of universal ideals and global understanding.

Universal worlview in Korczak's heritage

Korczak's universal vision is expressed in several fundamental points in his legacy and in practice and philosophical and literal means. His humanistic vision in "How to Love a Child" (1919) started with the Stoic idea of Infinity in time and

space. "The baby is not yours," he surprised the mother who came to ask for his advice as a pediatrician. Of course, the mother gave birth to the child and, therefore, has ultimate responsibility, but a broad, cosmic perspective tells us that all children belong to one infinite reality. The baby is part of the infinite universe and the endless chain of human generations. Infinity does not know any value distinction between the young and the old, the small in size and the big, genders, social class, race, faith, and nationality. The baby is not Polish, Jewish, European, rich or poor, a boy or a girl – he or she is an ultimate part of the infinite nature and has utmost, unmeasurable worth. This metaphysical statement is the ground for his demand for the rights of all children (Shner, 2021).

Throughout his life, despite the political reality in Poland, Korczak repeatedly stated that Jewish and Christian children have equal worth to him. In a letter to his friend Moshe Zilbertal in Palestine in 1937, Korczak wrote, "The children, the "Yosekim" [the Jewish children] and the "Yashekim" [the Polish children] are dear to me all the same. Here and there, so many manifestations of human kindness and nobility were trampled in the mud" (Korczak, 1978, p. 208).

In another text, he said that "The problem of 'Man,' his past and future on earth, somehow overshadows the problem 'Jew'" (Korczak, 1978, p. 177). Even in the worst reality of the Ghetto, Korczak did not abandon his belief that human suffering is universal (Korczak, 1980).

Korczak's universal pluralistic vision is shown in his classic novel *King Matt the First* (1924). Matt's kingdom, the kingdom of children, has no name or geographic location – it is an all-children place.[1] The child king, the representative of Korczak's naïve vision of one Humanity, tries to bring together children from the West, Africa, and Asia, boys and girls, rich and poor. Only the adults fail him (Shner, 2021).

Matt, the child king, makes the street child Felek, his best friend. The idea of friendship is explored throughout the book, but class differences are not the main factor of reliable friendship.

One girl – the African princess Klu Klu – does have a significant presence in the novel. She has no inferiority complex in her interactions with the boys around her; she is confident in her physical abilities and has a strong personality and wise character. Korczak is troubled by women's rights and status in society. Klu Klu represents the feminist persona who fights for women's equality, which Korczak supported: "In my country, in Africa, the girls are as good as the boys in everything" (Korczak, 2005, p. 253).

[1] In 1958, a full-length movie was created, based on the novel. It speaks Polish and has Polish artistic character, but still Matt's kingdom has no name and no geographic location (Jakubowska, 1958).

However, when Klu Klu falls in love with Matt, he ignores her feelings: like Korczak, he is too busy with his duties (Korczak, 2005). In a noble act, Matt saves Klu Ku from a wolf's sharp teeth (Korczak, 2005), but this act does not lead to a romantic ending. Matt, like Korczak, rejects the possibility of intimate relationships.

Klu Klu is an idealistic figure who fights for men's and women's equality. She is brave, powerful, and critical of the traditional conventions of society. One can discern in her character both the idealism of Korczak and the images of the two strong women who ran Korczak's two orphanages. The feminist Movement of the twentieth century did not develop until after World War II, but this novel, years before, already had a strong feminist message.

Klu Klue, the principal female character in King Matt, is from Africa; it conveys another important message to Korczak: the equality of all races and inter-race partnership. Although his description of her homeland as a country of cannibals reflected European stereotypes of Africa in the early twentieth century, the actions and character of Klu Klu prove that she is not inferior to white children.

The novel *King Matt* was written when the major European countries ruled colonies in Africa and when their leaders despised the people of those colonies. The kings in the book proclaim, "We are civilized kings, and we do not wish to sit at the same table with cannibals" (Korczak, 2005, p. 177). Korczak was critical of this pervasive westernized view as he portrayed King Matt's tireless efforts to overcome racist attitudes and promote the possibility of good inter-race relationships. The plot suggests that children can bridge their racial differences, but adults cannot.

Korczak did not adopt a relativist approach to culture, nor did he hide the differences between different cultures: he believed that the African peoples had a lot to learn from Western countries and could benefit from exposure to Western culture. All men, regardless of their skin color, can progress through education. Klu Klu represents the modern-era naïve idea that education can bring progress to undeveloped societies. "The sooner more children start studying, the sooner we can build a new Africa" (Korczak, 2005, p. 276).

Korczak believed in education's ability to change society. This Socratic and platonic idea – that rational thinking can change human behavior for the better – appears many times in Korczak's writings and guides his pedagogical practice. Matt explains to King Bum Drum, Klu Klu's father, why he must stop engaging in cannibalism, and the story suggests that there is a real chance that he will listen to Matt. The adults in both cultures, representing each society's traditions and prejudices, try to ruin this equal, mutually beneficial relationship, but the children can sustain it. Korczak trusts the possible solidarity between all peoples, including natives of distant countries, cannibals from islands near Australia, and residents of 'civilized' European societies (Korczak, 1980).

In the book, the kingdom of Matt is styled as a Polish kingdom and even more so in the film of 1958, but it is a 'no-place' kingdom with no name that only exists in Korczak's utopian mind. The same is true of the home country of Klu Klu and her father, King Bum Drum, which represents all the non-European peoples. Klu Klu is, until the end of the book, the most staunch and effective supporter of Matt-Korczak. King Matt, free from that prejudice that infects adults, has no problem having Klu Klu or Asian people at his side. The story thus realizes the idea of all human solidarity. Through the characters of Matt and Klu Klu, Korczak expresses his hope that one day the solidarity between races will become a reality and move beyond fiction. Years later, Korczak added another layer to his utopia when he suggested that this ideal human solidarity should be realized in the 'land of Hope': the Land of Israel.

All human dreams are directed to the Land of Hope

Korczak visited Palestine, the Land of Israel, the Christian Holyland, in 1934 and 1936. He was not a member of the Zionist Movement, and the Jewish settlements in this desert land attracted him as a humanistic enterprise, a new effort to revive human relations. For him, the young Zionist communities – the Kibbutz – were unique human laboratories in which the settlers experimented, as he wrote, with new possibilities of social life in their own life and the lives of their children (Shner, 2008).

The Kibbutz social phenomena, the life of its members and their children, was an aspect of Korczak's universal lesson from his observation of the Land of Israel. The settlements inspire him, not as a national project but as a human experiment, a living laboratory. It is a world research institute that would develop the vaccination that will prevent.

> Children exploitation, in particular, and oppression, in general, found throughout Europe:
>
> Life is hard, and its wonders go beyond the child and the adult, [even] before they grow into it. I can confirm with full responsibility to my words that they seek in honesty and in totality to solve the fundamental problem of joint work and common life of people that are different by race, faith, culture, gender, temper, knowledge, talents, qualities, and ambitions.
>
> They seek – it is important not to hide, to evade lies, but to solve the problem. More than that, they try in their life and their children's life – seek, adapt, suffer, change, and accept. In this 'game,' they involve with full trust – I repeat – all their lives and the lives of their children (Korczak, 1978, pp. 119–120, my translation).

Korczak looked with wonder at the efforts of the young pioneers to mold a new type of individual and to create a new society built on new types of human relationships. "Life is not a game", Korczak told his young friends in Eretz Yisrael,

"one must have the courage to admit the seriousness of life" (Korczak, 1978, p. 106). The young pioneers were taking upon themselves the challenge of opening up old social conventions. Their goal was a new society with different human relations.

1936 was extremely violent as the local Arabs revolted against the British and the Jewish settlements. It was a bloody year, yet Korczak never left his universal worldview. In his writings, he expressed interest in the Jews, settling in their old-new land, Palestinians, the centers of Christianity, and even the Bahai Movement. For him, the Land of Israel was "the Land of Hope" for all Humanity.

During Korczak's second visit to Israel, he faced the realities of the Jewish-Arab conflict; the Arab uprising against the British (1936–1939) and bloody Arab-Jewish clashes had occurred earlier in 1936. Yet Korczak's observations remained unemotional and objective; he did not adopt wholesale the Jewish perspective of reality in the Land of Israel. He recognized that both Arabs and Jews were engaged in the human struggle for a better life; he looked at the Arabs as humans who had just started to organize to achieve their destiny. He showed empathy for their poor living conditions and understood that their first attempts to promote a national revival paralleled those of the Jews:

> The Jews are being deported from Europe because they are needed at another front in the war for humankind's tomorrow. They carried out their duties well and quickly, amazingly quickly. The Arabs already know not only how to shoot and throw bombs – that is a marginal detail in their new 'daily' journal. They opened their sleepy eyes, saw their poverty and misery, and sensed that they were responsible for this. The plowing is also a meter deep, and many rocks are strewn on the field (Korczak, 1978, p. 93).

Korczak showed great sensitivity to the Arab children who grew up in poverty close to the kibbutzim and Jewish settlements (Korczak, 1978, p. 108). As an external observer, he looked with wonder and hope at the Jewish and Arab children who examined each other through the kibbutz fence. In both the Arab and Jewish communities, children were trying to find their way in life, and they deserved the same rights. He gave no voice to the fear of a national Arab-Jewish confrontation, even though he was writing soon after the beginning of the bloody Arab uprising of 1936.

Korczak was also very interested in Nazareth, Bethlehem, and other sites holy to Christians. He saw Jesus as an individual who sought to improve the welfare and conditions of humankind, as one in a line of dedicated individuals who struggled for a better human existence. He had a similar view of the Bahai movement, whose world centers are in Haifa and Akko:

When I looked at Nazareth from above, I don't know why, but I asked myself a great question: who was Achad Ha'am, and what did he write?

Secondly, I remember standing in a garden on the Carmel, in front of the Persian Ali Muhammad Bab mausoleum, or Hussein Baha-Ullah: 20,000 of his followers were tortured to death; the cult is one hundred years old and has half a million believers. (The children of Ein-Harod visited its settlement beside the Jordan on a school trip several years ago). And here is this cult's program: The unity of the human race – and to forget prejudices; belief must unite; independent search for truth; belief and knowledge and intelligence fitting each other; an international language taught in all the schools in the world, art, science and work for all, not a competition but working together; a comprehensive peace (Korczak, 1978, p. 138).

The Bahai-s are part of a long line of dreamers and people of vision who have been attracted to the land of Israel, especially to Galilee, throughout human history.

It is fascinating to see how positively Korczak wrote about the Bahai faith and its vision that universal peace and the fusion of all world faiths would be realized in the Land of Israel. Korczak even mentioned a field trip he took with the children of Kibbutz Ein-Harod to a Bahai village across the Jordan River (Korczak, 1978, p. 138). He saw the Land of Israel not as an arena of conflict between peoples who each claimed ownership of it but as the meeting place of all the world's great cultures that would bring about the revival of Humanity. It would be a place where a moral and just society would again come into being.

Palestine has a spiritual dimension that speaks to all men. Korczak expressed his deep impressions of this desert land in a religious language. In the Land of Israel, the heavens are higher and more profound; the stars are brighter, hiding a secret that puts a spell on human souls:

Even the beautiful night – its stars are the largest – and most respectful. They speak a foreign language. They speak in a very important language, in the language of the Bible, about eternal, secret matters. The stars of the land of Israel demanded an effort of emotions and thought and did not leave a moment of rest. I tried to examine my impression, my subjective one, in my conversations. I even had the theory – perhaps that is why people run away from the voices of the stars and silence them, a little here and a little there, in pleasures of the flesh.

One day, psychologists will deal with the danger of evening in the land of Israel when people refuse to listen to the eternal truths of the stars and their categorical commands. The pure words emitting from them, they will attempt to drown in a muddy wave of red blood (Korczak, 1978, p. 89).

All the ancient prayers of men are directed to this land: "All yearning, not Jewish but human, is directed to the Land of Israel" (Korczak, 1978, p. 176). A new Bible may be written (Korczak, 1978, p. 211), following the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament, a trilogy (Korczak, 1978, p. 83).

The Land of Israel, the cradle of the great spiritual traditions, attracted Korczak as if he were under its magic spell. He conceived religion not as a historical phenomenon but as a great adventure of the human mind that seeks the secret of human existence. Korczak did not affiliate with any established religion, but he recognized the holiness and spirituality that were immanently present in this land because of its history. Being neither fully Jewish nor thoroughly Polish, Korczak was open to the spirituality of the Land of Israel; one just had to listen to its message and open one's eyes to see.

People relate to the Land of Israel as a value concept, the aim of their dreams, and the space of holy traditions. Those who come to this land must struggle stubbornly, physically and spiritually, to understand what it tells. It demands the truth: "The Land of Israel is allowed not to be afraid of the truth, not of peeling off the Bronze from it […] it is worthy not to be treated as a wunderkind" (Korczak, 1978, p. 114).

In this land, loaded with secrets, one has the right to be excited. It demands human efforts of observation, listening, and learning. One must learn to know the land, mountains, and stones. Each mountain has its character and its secret.

Korczak was not an observant person. He did not attend synagogues or churches' sermons and prayers, but he recognized the place of religious sentiments in people's minds. Religiosity is an authentic part of Humanity. In their prayers, people express their most intimate feelings and hopes for salvation, individual and collective. The Land of Israel is the main historical stage for these all-men sentiments.

The Land of Israel, the Holyland, has a mission and a responsibility to human history. In a letter to Yuzek, Yosef Arnon, on May 1933, Korczak wrote: "The world does not need new work and more oranges but rather a new belief. And this belief in future life must be bonded to the child as the source of hope" (Korczak, 1978, p. 179). Here, the future of children and the future of all Humanity merge. Like Isaiah's prophesies of all-men unity at the End of Days, Korczak drew his utopia anchored in the place that this country got in the epochs of so many people (Korczak, 1978).

The Land of Israel, the birthplace of Humanity's most significant spiritual traditions, does not belong to one nation or one community of faith but speaks to all men and reminds all of the messianic vision of justice and solidarity: it is "a country searching for God" (Korczak, 1978, p. 203). One day, he envisioned, a second League of Nations would be established in Jerusalem to deal with Human relations and children's rights (Korczak, 1978).

Korczak invited us to return to this utopian meaning of the Land of Israel. And though this inspiring utopia still waits for its fulfillment, Korczak brought horizons of hope into our education and public discourse.

Final words of Hope

We are not naïve dreamers. When one reads Korczak's words, he or she may feel somewhat confused or may have a cynical response as Humanity is far from Korczak's ideal reality. The "Land of Hope" is an arena of national conflicts, and Jerusalem is a place of intolerance, zealotry, and hatred among men of rival faiths. In Europe, even today, decades after WWII, an ugly senseless war is waged in Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainian refugees entered Poland and other European countries. In Africa and the middle east, Millions of others, including children, are on the roads, trying to reach a haven.

Facing reality with open eyes, Korczak was a realistic dreamer. In *King Matt the First*, the kingdom of children had failed. Korczak, a tragic spokesman of all men's ancient hopes, acknowledged his failure. The world was not ready to go beyond the old wars among different peoples. A few years later, his life led him not to a new Jerusalem but to Treblinka. However, we are also far from Isaiah's *End of Days* ***and*** still embrace his ancient prophetic words. We need Isaiah and Korczak, today as in yesterday, to hold our hope for a better future for Humanity. Hope must overcome despair. Even if we cannot redeem the world now, we can add our little efforts in that direction. As Korczak told us, "We should not leave the world as it is" (Korczak, 1978, p. 213).

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