ARAB-ISLAMIC POLITICAL CULTURE:
A KEY SOURCE TO UNDERSTANDING ARAB POLITICS
AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

DAVID BUKAY

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by DAVID BUKAY

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Introduction: Globalization and Civilization

The chronicles of human history are mainly the struggle between despotic, oppressive governments, on the one hand, and freedom from tyranny and the aspiration to achieve civil rights, on the other; between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and liberal democracy. In the words of Fukuyama, the twentieth century witnessed the world attacked by convulsions of ideological violence in the struggle of democratic liberalism, first against the remains of absolutism, and afterwards against Bolshevism and fascism, which threatened to bring about the apocalypse of atomic war. But the end of the century witnessed the victory of Western liberal democracy. The world had not only reached “the end of ideology”, but also “the end of history”, the victory of economic and political liberalism.¹

Thus, Marshall McLuhan’s vision, as early as 1964, regarding “the global village”, took on form and content with its outstanding expression being the tremendous spread of the internet and electronic mail; the hegemony of communications and news networks, chiefly CNN, through which we receive, in real time and with the speed of the events themselves, news of occurrences throughout the world; the widespread audience of young people for MTV; the vast quantity of television networks and the huge variety of broadcasting channels at the disposal of the viewers; and the spread of Coca Cola and McDonalds the world over, as a cultural phenomenon. Moreover, the gaps between “high politics” – which deals with war, peace, and world politics – and “low politics” which deals with social-economic issues and human welfare, are being progressively narrowed. Finally, complex human problems, such as ecology, the atmosphere, the environment; diseases and epidemics; crime, violence, terrorism; the lack of security as to food; financial crises and economic collapse – have become worldwide threats that require the intervention of all mankind. Hence, there exists a claim about global interactions that they create a qualitative possibility for cultural uniformity. This is the basis for the argument that the cultural borders between human societies have been blurred, and local cultures are now subject to the profound influence of the global culture.
Globalization is characterized by two crucial dimensions: first, the shortening of distances in the world – which have stopped acting as barriers to humans – and this has brought about deep, intensive mutual involvement of people of all races and cultures; second, the vast expansion of communications between people, which has influenced their cooperative cohesion and their uniformity. Globalization purports to shape the future through seeing the world as one whole. Above all, globalization was meant to sing the praises of the world in the age after the violent twentieth century and to bury the old world, out of faith that international cooperation would diminish social and economic misfortune, would overcome the threat of terrorism, and would bring about a better world.

Imperialism collapsed, perhaps never to return. The Soviet Union, the last symbol of world empires, disappeared. There is no longer a need for a phenomenon of this kind, not for the sake of economic welfare; not to raise the prestige and status of governments; and not for military defense. Globalization emerged after the bipolar struggle in the shadow of the nuclear threat. It was perceived as an important change for the sake of the future, and was defined as an irreversible revolution, as a consequence of the lightning speed with which information, communications, persons, and goods move from place to place, and as a result of the accelerated spread of technological innovations throughout the world. From this point of view, the world has become uniform and operates broadly as one, even culturally.

However, is this the real situation? If we put on clothes with fashionable labels, perfume ourselves with the same scents, and if most of us speak the same language, are our cultures similar? If so, why is there still a First World, a Second World, a Third and even a Fourth World? Indeed, the economic markets influence each other mutually, but why is the division between the North and the South in effect and even more intense? And why are the rich becoming richer, and the poor becoming poorer? And if “the end of history” has arrived, and democracy is victorious, why are there still so many wars between states, and so many tyrants threatening to bring about the destruction of humankind? And if the cultural borders between human societies have become blurred, why is there an increase in fanatic nationalism? And why have ethnic conflicts and separatist uprisings multiplied? And if the democratic ideal is peace-loving and victorious, then why are wars not gone from the world? And if the democracies really work in favor of peace, and there are no military conflicts among them, then why are they involved in so many wars against other, non-democratic states? Is it only for the sake of justice and liberty? And if the English language is victorious, and everyone uses it, why are there still deep economic and social gaps between states and peoples? And why is Huntington so right in his analysis that in every
place where Islam and Arabs are found, violence as well as internal and external
wars are likewise found.²

Indeed, the world reality is far from the optimistic, globalization vision, and it is doubtful whether cultural boundaries have been blurred. It even seems that they have widened. Hostility, rancor, violence, and global dangers have not vanished. National and state interests have not only converged but have partly moved further apart. Huntington counted several distinct civilizations: Western civilization, Japanese civilization, Confucian civilization, Hindu civilization, the Slavic-Orthodox civilization, Latin American civilization, Islamic civilization, perhaps even African civilization. They are all today in a very sharp confrontation with Islam and the Arabs,³ whose culture is interwoven and intertwined together, and whose boundaries are borders of blood.⁴

The end-of-history approach and the globalization that came at its heels and is integrated with it, are based on two perceptions that are not necessarily accurate: first, has the state really become obsolete as a central focus of reference, as the outstanding player in the international system, and is it losing its power and its sovereign control? The rise of new states in place of the collapsed Soviet empire, and the many national struggles, refute this claim. Even its functions and activity today do not exactly demonstrate the signs of a crisis. Secondly, has the growth in importance of cross-border economic forces and transnational players really diminished the significance of conflicts between states over territory? Has geo-economics replaced geo-politics? The violence existing at a high level of intensity throughout the planet, especially in Third World states and the states of the former Soviet Union, and the terrorist activity of fundamentalist Islam against most civilizations, are proof that the reality of globalization is still a vision for the time being. Indeed, whoever is in the throes of revolutionary change, perceives only seldom its importance and scope. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century is more stable and quieter. It will not necessarily manage to exist without the violence of wars and terrorism.

Throughout the twentieth century, there were many waves of scientific opinion which estimated that the state was losing its role, on account of the total
nuclear threat,⁵ on account of the rise of influential transnational players, and now, as a result of globalization.⁶ However, in practice, the state was and has remained the most meaningful framework, and it is very doubtful whether a force will emerge that will remove it from its central place and take its place in the international system. Indeed, most states are multi-national societies where loyalty to the ethnic community takes precedence over loyalty to the state. But
even in these cases, it is doubtful whether these states will crumble into small units without the capacity to protect their sovereignty. The state will continue to exist, also because the international system reinforces the territorial status quo, and fears structural changes that might cause anarchy and disintegration. The state acts to advance national interests, for the welfare and security of its citizens, and is concerned to defend them from external aggression, while preserving cultural and social values. It is quite doubtful whether a real alternative will emerge, and the state will continue to be the central factor in the international system for good and for ill.

The interesting phenomenon is that there is a broad consensus that there is a distinct Japanese culture, a distinct Chinese culture, and there are many traits of a Hindu culture, and, as we shall prove, an Arab-Islamic culture of great power and influence. We even teach these characteristics as a variegated cultural difference on the anthropological level, chiefly to businessmen for the purpose of commercial-economic activity. However, at one and the same time, we deny the cultural difference on the political level and disavow its importance on the level of behavioral insight. We believe that international reality and the widespread use of the English language constitute an apparatus for common political conceptualizing, and that everyone understands what goes on in like manner. Nevertheless, if a businessman gives a watch as a gift to his Chinese guest, or if he puts the chopsticks on the rice platter in Japan, in both instances – in Japan and China – the meaning is death and no business deal will be made. Personal contact that violates the private physical space of a person, determining a chain of interpersonal authority, contact with the left hand, “the dirty hand”, as well as personality and religious aspects, are influential in various cultures. Even in Western culture there are many gaps that require trust, personal ties and friendship, in order to create business partnerships. But in our understanding, the gaps between Western and Middle Eastern culture – Arab-Islamic culture – are deep and qualitative. Therefore, if we say that the goal is achieving peace, for example, the parameters of this peace are apparently perceived as similar by everyone, and the purpose is correct and just and proper for all parties. Nevertheless, reality can be drastically different on account of unique circumstances and specific differences of ambiance. The world may have turned into a small village, but culture – which is also influenced by differences of religion – dictates gaps in behavior and creates political differences, which are difficult to bridge over.

An outstanding phenomenon is Japanese society, which has evolved into a developed industrial super-society, while still functioning as a traditional patriarchal collectivity. The same Japanese man, who is armed with ultra-
modern technological sophistication, lives a traditional family and social life, in accord with age-old Japanese values. Indeed, the widespread use of modernization and technology does not necessarily blur the behavioral boundaries and certainly not the cultural ones. Such is the case of Saudi Arabia. The tremendous petro-dollar riches it has accumulated have not changed the traits of the traditional anarchistic tribal society as a fanatic medieval community, which suppresses cultural values. Its capacity to purchase every technological innovation and the good life by using splendid, state of the art Western means has not at all changed Saudi society from the standpoint of way of life and family structure. In the West, those who do not understand this cultural phenomenon are astounded and full of wonder at how Saudi Arabia demands aid for Islamic organizations throughout the world to perpetuate their traditional way of life, and at one and the same time, prevents Westerners from leading their regular way of life while they are within its territory. It demands from them consideration for its values and a change in their behavior patterns while in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, it totally denies the legitimacy of their values.

A no less severe phenomenon is that Saudi Arabia has invested billions of dollars in buying many research institutions throughout the world, and finances universities and researchers in the West, just in order to glorify its own position or at least to prevent negative publications against the Saudis and against Islam. It finances publications throughout the Western world, such as newspapers, weeklies, and journals of high quality in English and Arabic, which are meant to uphold its own anachronistic values and the features of traditional Islam, and it has worked to prevent antagonism against itself, as a society hostile to Western culture.

Above all, Saudi Arabia is Enemy Number One of the modern, democratic international system. It finances, aids, supports, and consolidates most of the fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organizations throughout the world: from the Balkans through Asian states, in Chechnya and South America, and of course maintains close ties with bin Laden. It supports most of the terrorist organizations in the Middle East, from the Hamas to Arafat. It supports Islamic organizations in most Western, democratic states and thereby endangers the regimes in those countries. Mainly, Saudi Arabia aspires to restore the Islamic past to the future of modern, human society. Modern life and the Western technology that it uses have not changed Saudi society. The cultural structure has remained congealed in tribal anarchy; hence, the Western conception of change and transition to modernity has no chance either of flourishing or of even becoming established.
The Concept of Culture: Its Traits and Its Place in the System

The central argument which we are expounding, is that there are wide gaps between various cultures, which are expressed in profound differences in ways of life and social structure, chiefly between Western culture and Arab-Islamic culture, and this influences patterns of political activity. These gaps constitute a basis for flaws of thinking, distorted perceptions, and failures of policy. These factors, which are shaped and fostered in the various cultures, bring about strategic surprises and mental blindness (visual agnosia). We may diagnose the phenomenon with the concept of “mirror image”. This expresses a personality system, which causes one to perceive an adversary’s thinking as matching one’s own. You look at your adversary and see his conceptions and mental images as matching your own set of values and beliefs. But in practice, you see yourself reflected in the mirror, and you attach to your adversary operational evaluations and defining positions that are exactly the same as your own:

First, issues of war and peace. You estimate that your conceptions, strategic definitions, and certainly your operational means, are your adversary’s as well. You and he aspire to peace, and you and he strive in the same direction and in the same trends by means of peace. And you are sure that you and he understand peace in the same parameters, and all that is needed is good will on both sides. It is clear to you that your good will expresses the same boundaries as your adversary’s good will. Therefore, matters are absolutely understood by both sides, and the way to ending wars and establishing peace leads down the same path.

Second, you estimate that the political circumstances and the historical conclusions lead both you and your adversary to the same operational evaluations: There is no way out, you and your adversary have arrived at the same situation after having tried everything, hence you both have the firm opinion that the shared aim in sitting down together for talks and discussions is to arrive at successful political arrangements, which you both understand according to the very same parameters. And why is this absolutely clear and taken for granted? Because you and your adversary both understand that both of you have paid a high economic and human price, that you are both ripe for negotiations and political arrangements that will bring about peace and coexistence.

However, do both sides really aspire to peace in like manner? Do they both define the longed for peace in a symmetrical manner? Are they ready for an arrangement as a consequence of the same operational conclusions? We are not getting into the issue of whether both sides are sincere in their going to
negotiations, since, after all, deception and misleading are accepted and understood rules. Nor are we dealing with the question of whether going to diplomatic negotiations does not constitute a continuation of war by other means. Our intention is to stress that “the mirror image” distorts the perception of reality, and muddles positions. From here the way is short to strategic surprises and shameful failures, which might bring states to the verge of extinction.

The cultural approach is a sensitive filter for understanding the deep gaps between the positions and conceptions of the parties. To make matters clear, we may provide several examples. At an election rally in January 2001, Shimon Peres stated that, “Arafat has no choice. He tried his strength at terrorism for thirty years and did not get anywhere. Whoever looks at the problem with open eyes, knows that there is no alternative. Therefore, he has an interest in peace.” Every word in these sentences is laden with flaws of thinking and cultural distortions of perception. Peres claims that Arafat has no alternative. And Peres emphasizes that it necessarily follows from this that Arafat has an interest in peace. And Peres believes that Arafat’s peace is exactly the same as his peace. Peres’ open eyes see exactly the same conclusions as Arafat has reached. And Peres has attained the absolute insight that there is no alternative. Hence, it is clear that Arafat also has reached exactly the same conclusions. Therefore, if Peres has an interest in peace, Arafat does too. And Arafat comprehends the components of peace exactly as Peres does. And they are both men of good will, and this leads to honest, definitive diplomatic arrangements, which will end the age of war between Israel and the Palestinians.

Likewise, Peres made many similar statements during the period January-April 2002, one and a half years after the eruption of the intifadat al-Aqsa, in which both sides understood that bloodshed between them was in vain. Both sides were being worn down, and they understood that there was no way to avoid going to a diplomatic arrangement at the end of which peace would be established. If this were the situation, why did Arafat’s terrorism continue at unprecedented intensity? And were these really the circumstances and reality on the ground? The answer to all these cultural flaws in thinking is absolutely negative. Everybody understands the situation differently; defines peace by totally different parameters; and acts to attain mutually opposed goals. Only those who fail because of their distorted thinking, and those who are busy with their “mirror image”, continue in the march of folly of denying reality.

In order to demonstrate that Peres’ march of folly has not ended – despite the terrorism that Israel is undergoing, which is unmatched anywhere in the world –
and that he has not changed, we have Peres’ interview for Bergman’s investigation in the middle of 2002, as proof. In the interview, Peres stated that the Oslo Accords had brought about several historic changes: Arafat had agreed to base peace on 22% of historic Palestine, that is, on the 1967 frontiers; this was the first time that a terrorist organization had announced that it was abandoning terrorism and had actually done so. Arafat had recognized the State of Israel and committed himself to conducting all dialogue with Israel through negotiations alone; Arafat did not plan the intifada, but was dragged along by an existing reality; Arafat does not actively support terrorism, all the attention to the fine details (of the documents captured by the Israeli army) seeming to him superfluous and petty; the responsibility for what is happening in the territories is not Arafat’s; the terrorism and violence are performed by the enemies of peace. There are 12 armed organizations in the territories which are not under Arafat’s sway, and one small group is enough to disrupt the peace process.8

   Indeed, throughout the age of terrorism, which Arafat has led brilliantly, since September 2000, Peres has continued to claim that the responsibility is not Arafat’s and that the terrorism and violence were the work of “enemies of peace”. He also gave out apocalyptic forecasts that if Arafat were expelled, the Hamas and Islamic Jihad would take his place, and even went much further; “If Arafat were liquidated, it would be like a strike against the mosques on the Temple Mount.”9 Peres refuses, of course to internalize that Arafat is the embodiment of terrorism. He is the father and mother of international terrorism. His is the operative arm of the fingers of terrorism, all of which are orchestrated, coordinated and operated definitely by him. During the period when Arafat was carrying out the most inhuman terrorism in history, it was pathetic, embarrassing, and elicited gloomy thoughts concerning the human mind, to call on him, to ask him to act to prevent terrorism, and/or to fight terrorism. After all, it was exactly one thing and its opposite. Arafat is the complete terrorist; therefore the demand that he fight terrorism means that he should act against himself. A phenomenon of this kind is known in medicine as “the Munchausen syndrome”. But to the best of our knowledge, Arafat is not ill with this disease. The only disease that he is ill with – and it is incurable and more fatal than any other – is that he is the greatest arch-terrorist of all, an incorrigible liar, and the man who most resembles Saddam Hussein.

   Peres’ flaws of thinking and deep distortions of perception did not begin in the twenty-first century. As early as the beginnings of diplomatic arrangements with Arafat, Peres proved that he was deeply infected with these syndromes. Such was his ridiculous and detached-from-reality statement about “a New Middle East” which existed in fact only in the galaxies far from the planet Earth,
and likewise was his consistent support for the murderous Oslo Accords, despite the fact that from the beginning it was clear that they were an utter failure, a sure recipe to bring the State of Israel to the brink of disaster. For instance, the former head of military intelligence, Uri Saguy, indicated as early as 1996: “When I used to present my evaluations to him, Peres would get angry at me. When I said that in Gaza there were characteristics of Lebanonization, Peres got angry at me and said, ‘You are destroying my peace.’”¹⁰ Many times Peres angrily rejected the forecasts of military intelligence, which showed the reality of developing terrorism, with two embarrassing arguments: first, the intelligence services had failed many times, hence, “You give me raw intelligence, and I will make the evaluations.” Second, “Stop frightening the people and making them gloomy and pessimistic.”¹¹ Many times, he came back to the mantra, which expressed profound contempt for the work of intelligence gathering. “Ali and Muhammad talk on the telephone. Yossi listens to them. And here we have an intelligence evaluation.” Indeed, Peres’ elevated self-evaluation is exactly proportional to his political foolishness.

In the past, Peres firmly stated:

If a Palestinian state arises, it will be armed from head to toe...even demilitarization of the [West] Bank seems like a dubious remedy, since the number of agreements that the Arabs have violated is no less than the number of agreements that they have signed.¹²

But this realistic approach was replaced by the deceptive dreams of Oslo, and if this were not enough, Peres stated that the world was taking off its uniforms and that,

An accord with Syria would be an agreement of the Middle East with itself... [that] requires saving itself. It needs to pass from the military track to the civilian track, from the war economy to the growth economy... [thus will arise] a Middle Eastern island resembling Europe.¹³

As he was deeply implanted in Europe, it was Peres’ dream to attach Israel to the European Union. But is this the reality in regard to the Middle East too? We shall deal at length below with these aspects, with economics and with perceptions of peace.

However, it must be categorically stated – both in the case of the Islamic religion, as well as in the case of Arab culture – these words are totally detached from reality. Moreover, from the viewpoint of Islamic conceptions and Arab practice, it is permitted to violate peace accords with unbelievers or non-Arab aliens. Such accords are viewed as temporary non-binding cease-fire agreements. Even agreements and understandings between Arab states have no
binding validity. They serve as a sieve for filtering the hostile, estranged relations among themselves. These are not peaceful relations, nor even harmonious relations, but in the best case, a cold, estranged detente. This reality causes them deep shame, which is relieved by aggressive externalization against Israel. They perform all the acrobatic maneuvers at Arab conclaves and summit conferences, in order to finish the discussions in peace without shameful wounds. The Arab foreign ministers meet before the conclaves and formulate the agenda, the character of the discussions, and even the concluding decisions. Only if there is consensus do the heads of state come together for a summit conference.

Another example of the cultural flaw is the affair of General Eli Ze’ira, the head of Military Intelligence during the period that led to the disgraceful failure of the 1973 war. From the beginning of 1972 and thereafter, in every statement, at every discussion of the military and governmental establishments, in every document published on behalf of the intelligence branch, the head of Military Intelligence stated that Sadat’s logic dictated cautious behavior, and that Sadat was behaving rationally, and Sadat understood that his healthy logic was that it would be a great mistake to go to war with Israel when he knew that Israel was stronger. But this was Ze’ira’s logic, his perception of reality, which he projected through “mirror imaging” onto President Sadat. The logic, the perceptions, the positions, and the beliefs of Sadat were, of course, totally different. There was no connection between Ze’ira’s logic and Sadat’s logic. But Ze’ira continued to insist in his absolute foolishness, with his closed mind, and his flaws of thinking, that brought Israel to defeat in war. The surprise in the 1973 war was not a surprise of course. Nevertheless, what did happen in inexhaustible quantities was a profound cultural flaw.

A similar flaw occurred at the conclusion of talks between Israeli representatives and men of the Palestinian Authority in January 2001, in a pathetic attempt to reach a diplomatic agreement, in order to continue feeding illusions to the confused Israelis, and to win the elections. When this did not work then came the contradictory definitions that expressed the cultural flaws more than anything else. Foreign Minister Ben-Ami spoke in sorrow that “quality political time” was lacking. But the response of his negotiating partner, Dahlan, was very apropos. He treated the whole episode with the expression, “chartah bartah”. That is, a mess of foolishness, things without any hold on reality. And whoever thought that this was only a passing episode, should examine the issue from the many stances taken by the messianic Wise Men of Oslo who continue to claim to this day that it is necessary to continue diplomatic
negotiations despite the terrorism and violence, and that Arafat is the only partner.

Another phenomenon illuminating the flaws and the lack of cultural insight is the remarks of the journalist Doron Rosenblum, who related to the throwing of stones from Lebanon toward Israel and to the appearance of Prof. Edward Said,

Perhaps the most famous, most honored intellectual in the world...to join the latest trend, in which masses from all the Arab states stream to the Lebanon-Israel border in order to spit, to curse, and to throw stones at Israel?... Why do the Arab masses really stream precisely to the place from where we withdrew to the last centimeter; precisely to the point where there is no occupation and no territorial claims; precisely to the place where we raised our hands; precisely there they stream to express their bottomless hatred [which has] no end or purpose; precisely to there of all places?... And in true astonishment one may ask, what are your intentions? Is it because of the past or because of the future? Or is it just because of hatred and inertia?15

Doron Rosenblum, innocent and lacking in insight as to the meanings of the cultural gaps, did not at all understand that precisely in the place where Israel had definitively withdrawn, it was transmitting a message of great weakness, and the reaction was total hostility and lack of inhibition by the Arab masses, intellectuals, and politicians. He did not understand that in Arab culture, political weakness means political oblivion, hence also the immediate copying by Arafat’s inhuman terrorism.16 In the Middle East, everything is right and acceptable but weakness and failure. And Rosenblum did not understand that the stone expresses the cultural dimension in its ancient usage, stoning to death.

Likewise, a program was broadcast on television to mark the first anniversary of the panicky, embarrassing flight from Lebanon. The program described the reality that had developed. It was saturated with deep astonishment, like Doron Rosenblum’s article. Where did the profound hatred and the utter hostility come from? Instead of Arab moderation, since Israel had, after all, definitively withdrawn to the international boundary, now why should there be any claims on Israel?17 But they did not want to understand that the issue of the 1967 border in the case of Lebanon, and surely the issue of the territories among the Palestinians, do not play any role in shaping their national goals, and particularly in the ideology that totally rejects Israel’s very existence. When they say “ending the occupation”, they are broadcasting what Israelis want to hear and particularly what Israelis infer from this statement, that is, the 1967 borders. But this is definitely not what the Palestinians intend and are working towards. Their intention is to end a wholly different occupation, as we shall explain below.
The meaningful differences that exist to this day, which are the critical test for thinking flaws and distorted perceptions, are treated by the cultural approach. The accepted working definition of culture that will serve us is: a system of behaviors and beliefs, including symbols, norms, and values, which characterize a certain society, and are only understood by its members. Culture is a product of dynamic, accumulating processes involving the group's behaviors and its activities, through socialization and assimilation over the generations.\textsuperscript{18} Culture includes values, norms, and symbols that create an environment of symbolic activity, giving man meaning, and interpreting the patterns of his behavior. As we shall prove, the cultural approach is the critical variable for understanding the complexity and depth of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and culture is probably what prevents possibilities of ending it by lasting diplomatic arrangements; and in particular, it is what leads to surprises, failures, and lack of ability to contend with Arab states and the Palestinians.

How is the cultural phenomenon expressed? Why is it so elusive, despite its being known to everyone, and superficially, even being understood by everyone? The researcher Dixon examined the psychology of failing leaderships. He directed attention to the phenomenon that the leadership invests its resources in two activities: first, in denying objective reality, and in the attempt to force what it desires. That is, it operates mechanisms in an attempt to avoid contending with threats, and from here the way is short to distortions of perception. Secondly, in rationalizing its own behavior. When reality proves the leaders wrong and their actions are proven mistaken, a process of rationalizing begins. Justifications are floated as to the decisions having been correct and having only needed minor adjustments. Hence, it is definitely necessary to continue in the same direction, and one must not stop. They deny the occurrence of phenomena, and when a negative reality comes to pass despite everything, they offer justifications and explanations why the phenomenon that was denied became real nevertheless.\textsuperscript{19}

This is likened to a man’s reaction to threatening information that contradicts his conceptions and values, or that fundamentally contradicts his policy. The immediate reaction is refusal by way of disbelief that the threat will be realized, a phenomenon that leads to being unprepared. The problem is if we are all infected with this syndrome. Leaders are supposed to think in terms of the nation as a whole, and their responsibility is higher and more concrete. Leaders with a great deal of self-confidence will display more indifference to risks, and will not deploy to face threats and dangers. This might lead to war. Those whose self-confidence and experience are low might sharpen crises and again be drawn into
war as a result of failure to make proper responses. In any event, inaction on the part of leaders, or superfluous action, is a recipe for national disasters.

Part of the explanation for this phenomenon is “cognitive dissonance”. That is, unreadiness to accept what may contradict one’s values, conceptions, positions, and beliefs. Instead of checking his own values and actions, a person’s mind is closed to any unacceptable development, and he refuses to admit his mistakes or his failed evaluations. Barbara Tuchman referred to this, pointing out that throughout history governments have taken positions opposed to the interests of their peoples. A leadership’s capacity to perform is extremely poor, and precisely those leaderships had an existential influence on the fate of peoples and states. Wars break out not necessarily because of failure to perceive a developing reality, but as failures of leadership, and their inability to analyze ongoing phenomena because of their aspiration to force their will on reality. What characterizes political leadership is folly, closed minds, and stubborn blindness, which are a source of self-deception that does not learn from experience, as they continue to evaluate their own political path as correct, and practice a mistaken policy. Moreover, leaders aspire to invent the wheel anew, rather than basing themselves on orderly thinking, systematic policy, and long-range plans, preferring self-deception and conceptions determined in advance. Lastly, they totally disregard contrary signs and signals, and are incapable of pausing to examine the policy in effect in light of developing reality, out of the estimate that there is no alternative to their policy.

Various scientific disciplines deal with national perceptions and how beliefs and values influence activity and leaders’ reactions. The concept of belief systems includes terms such as the “image”, the “operational code”, and the “cognitive map”, that link between the leader’s psychological and operational environments. These are a set of lenses through which information is perceived. The literature concerning misperception focuses on the psychological accounts of why individuals interpret the world in the way they do, while the belief systems focus on how the individuals see the world.

When we discuss the issue of culture, the political leadership has decisive influence. The manner of its behavior and conduct is not necessarily understood. The leaders, like society in general, do not act in accord with “logical”, defined parameters. This stands out particularly on the issue of contending with matters that are important to deal with as against urgent matters. Leaders are busy, first of all, with “the politics of oblivion”, which means not dealing with controversial, problematic matters, which resemble booby traps from the standpoint of the potential problems they enfold; second, when these problems
reach their desks nonetheless, they seek to postpone dealing with them by a “policy of delay”. Third, when the problems pop up again, and dealing with them cannot be put off any longer, leaders adopt a “policy of committees”. They set up an investigating commission to examine the situation in the hope that the situation will change before it has concluded its work. Fourth, when the investigating commission finishes its work and presents its recommendations, the leaders practice a “policy of file away and do nothing”, or set up a commission to implement the recommendations, which buries the matter. In any event, time is a variable of critical importance, and a major trait of their activity.

An outstanding trait of Israeli society, which was shaped by the Palmach culture before the rise of the state, are the expressions: “Be trusting,” “It’ll be OK,” and “So he said.” The most important one is. “Yihiyeh Beseder” (“It’ll be OK”). Thus they wait for the crisis to be solved without applying remedies. This is an expression of irresponsibility. Afterwards, comes the expression which shows contempt for, and avoidance of, the adversary’s statements and threats: “So he said.” Meaning, “Must we get upset by his statements? Of course not!” And finally, we come to the remark that shuts people up: “Be trusting.” This also expresses the dominant phenomenon of avoidance and denial. However, in practice, these leaders and people are sailing on “a ship of fools”. And when the boastful culture of “Be trusting” collapses and the disaster occurs, the low feeling comes and then the question expressing Jewish despair arises: “What will be?” And afterwards comes the flight.

Why do we deal with these aspects? Because leaders continue not to learn, and stubbornly persist in not drawing lessons, even when strategic failure cannot be ignored and proves them wrong. Hence, also, their inability to mold another policy, based on national interests and taking into account their own responsibility. The outstanding example is the declarations of the leader of the Labor Party, Amram Mitzna, on the issue of negotiating with the Palestinians. He indicated that despite everything, he would hold negotiations with Arafat, and if within a year no agreement had been reached, he would act for unilateral separation in the territories. Here is folly, a closed mind, and blind stubbornness in their purest, most unalloyed form. To conduct negotiations with Arafat, as if nothing had happened since 1993, particularly since September 2000, is criminal irresponsibility. Not to have learned from the embarrassing flight from Lebanon, and the conclusions derived from it in the intolerable reality of the Lebanese border, in Arafat’s criminal terrorism, in the Hizbullah’s influence on the Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians – amounts to adding insult to injury. The Oslo Accords and the panicky flight from Lebanon are great failures in Israel’s political history since independence, side-by-side with the failure in the 1973
war. Every leader, every man, every thinking person, would have stopped, internalized, drawn lessons, and made a total change of direction. So what did Mitzna learn and internalize? He continues the march of folly, which might deepen the disaster in which Israel is now caught up. And what was the reaction in Israel to this distorted political conception? Yes, Mitzna became a candidate for Prime Minister of Israel.

Tuchman quotes the historian of Philip II, king of Spain, who was “more closed minded than all the kings”, but no failure of his policy could challenge his absolute faith that his policy was excellent. Indeed, unlike accidents, it must be understood that national disasters do not develop overnight, but as a consequence of a series of faults and mistakes in political assumptions. This involves events that are cognitively dissonant, that are ignored or the existence of which is denied; flaws of processing information or correctly dealing with it; and incapacity to control events. So what then have the Wise Men of Oslo and their heirs learned from the murderous reality that has been created by Arafat?

The first duty of leaders is to examine whether it is possible to attain goals, and whether they are realistic. The more that they are not realistic the more leaders mislead the people and present it with “surprises” and failures. What is not realistic will not be realized, no matter how splendid it is, and no matter how much it is defined as a historical breakthrough. What is important is to stay with reality, with the possible, and with what can be achieved, after deeply probing study and research, deliberation, and obtaining reliable intelligence. Anything that is not based on these foundations might end up as a national disaster. The most responsible attitude for leadership is to know when to stop, to examine issues frankly, and to admit mistakes. Flimsy foundations of a policy will not stand in place, even if they are mended with splendid patches. What cannot be mended will collapse in disaster.

On the other hand, leaders very much love to make reforms, and to declare a new national policy, or a revolutionary strategy that they have drawn up. The problem is that it is not enough to show that a certain situation is bad. It is necessary to be sure that the problem has been properly described, and that the solution proposed will lead to improvement, and that it will certainly not lead to a worse situation. For that reason, common sense, judgment, and the evasion of comprehensive solutions that have not been properly checked must all be avoided, and always there must be a willingness to stop and examine the situation anew. Successful leaders are those who act responsibly, but who also admit failure. A major reason why leaders become irresponsible is because they
become confused between the unreasonable and the impossible to achieve. What they perceive as unreasonable is not taken seriously in shaping policy.

Indeed, the most dangerous mental defects are laziness of thought, which means lack of readiness to contend with complex, unknown reality, and lack of operational patience, which leads to infatuation with theories that apparently explain everything, instead of practicing political judgment and taking national responsibility. The most important expression of this in the words of our ancient sages is, “Think first before you act.” There is nothing more important nor a lesson more instructive for political leadership than this maxim. Indeed, intelligent, considered policy is expressed by “Think first before you act.” (Literally: “the end of an act begins with a thought”) Another insight is in the statement “Noah built the ark before the flood.” Before the flood, always before the flood. Disasters have to be dealt with before they occur, not after they have taken place. Several examples will clarify this important issue:

First, at the beginning of June 1981, Israel bombed and destroyed the Iraqi atomic reactor, Osirak. The Iraqi nuclear option took a heavy blow. Nevertheless, Israel was condemned almost unanimously by the international community and by world public opinion. Nine years later, when the full intensity of Saddam Hussein’s aggressiveness and the violence of his regime that endangered world peace were revealed, the policy changed, and everyone hailed Israel for its intelligent decision. This is the way the state must act, before the flood, before the danger appears, otherwise the price will be much higher. This policy which was formerly called “the Begin Doctrine”, stipulated that Israel would not allow any Arab state to obtain nuclear strength that would threaten Israel’s existence.

Second, Israel’s existence is assured by military superiority, which has been expressed in reliable, effective deterrent power. This is also one of the outstanding reasons which brought about a change in the Arab states, and the beginning of diplomatic negotiations. However, much water has flowed down the Jordan since then, and Israel has ceased practicing a resolute, active deterrent policy against accumulating aggression. This was exposed in Iraq in the Gulf War, and on the issue of biological and chemical weapons; likewise with Iran on the issue of the nuclear reactor; and likewise on the issue of diversion of the Wazzani River by the Hizbullah. The reality of Israel facing the Hizbullah is indicative of the failure of Israel’s deterrence confronting transnational actors in low intensity warfare. Precisely the Hizbullah succeeded in exercising effective deterrence against Israel. An expression of this difficult situation was the demonstration of Israel’s weakness in preventing diversion of the Wazzani’s
waters. Where Israel had avoided definitively stopping diversion through a 2 cm. capacity pipe, after a few months the pipe was enlarged to 24 cm. And where Israel had disregarded diversion by a 24 cm. pipe, there is now talk in Lebanon of drawing from and diverting other sources of the upper Jordan. If Israel does not react to this, there will be other diversions, and the blows to Israel’s deterrence will continue. If Israel does react, and it will be forced to do so, the risks and the price, militarily and diplomatically, will be much higher than if Israel had reacted against the diversion by the 2 cm. capacity pipe. Indeed, Israel must not act in that fashion. Israel must not wait for the flood to come. Israel should have acted on the first day of laying the two centimeter pipe, and shown its determination, because red lines must not be crossed.

Third, at the end of 1990, US President George Bush set up the greatest, most impressive international coalition in history, in order to fight Iraq which had conquered Kuwait in August 1990. The war that was conducted from the middle of January 1991 was a failure, since it treated the symptom, not the problem. Kuwait was not the main job, rather that was toppling Saddam Hussein’s evil regime. The United States evaded ending the crisis by liquidating Saddam Hussein and his regime. Eleven years later, the president of the United States, Bush Junior, has had to go to war against Iraq at a much higher price and with meager international assent. This is an example of how a state must not act. A state must not reach a situation where the flood is already rising. President Bush Junior’s attempt to correct the mistakes of Bush Senior has not won proper international understanding. The world’s hedonism is greater, and countries do not understand that tomorrow might be too late and much more dangerous, if the Saddam Hussein regime maintains its sway. When one impartially looks at the situation in Europe, at the anti-war demonstrations, which occur without condemning Saddam Hussein, it is easier to begin to understand the reasons why Hitler was not eliminated before he took his aggressive moves and started the Second World War.

Even today, many voices are heard in Israel that are infected with the folly that President Bush is going to war as a private family vendetta, and that there is no real reason to go to war. This is additional proof of closed mindedness, of the hedonistic foolishness that has spread and spoiled what was good about Israel. What will they do when he obtains an effective nuclear weapon? What will they do when the biological and chemical weapons become usable in a mobile fashion? Will the faithful believers in waiting then arise and cry out to go to war, or will they flee to the Left Bank of the Seine, and only those who remain will eat the rotten fruit of their criminal blind stubbornness? The United States had to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and eliminate him and his sons, with the
whole clan originating from the Takrit region. It must erase Takrit, just as Hitler’s Berlin bunkers were destroyed at the end of the Second World War. Any concession, any compromise, will bring about an unprecedentedly harsh war in the future, and at a higher price.

Fourth, the policy towards North Korea. A part of the mistaken policy of US President Clinton was to buy quiet. And when North Korea, one of the states on the American list of terrorist states, began to develop a nuclear program aiming at an atomic bomb, Clinton decided to appease North Korea and entice it with substantial economic aid, in exchange for giving up development of the nuclear option. That was in 1994, and Clinton believed that the appeasement policy toward aggressors had proven itself. In the last months of 2002, North Korea began to make forceful declarations and real threats, that its nuclear program was ready, and that it would not tolerate intervention in its internal affairs. Another state, known for its aggressive nature and violence in the international system, is about to join the nuclear club, and the world’s situation is becoming much graver. This additional example of cultural flaw is the notion that one can buy off aggression with appeasement. Instead of overthrowing the benighted regime that oppresses its own people, and leaves them in poverty, want, and backwardness (for the sake of comparison, consider the tremendous progress in South Korea), instead of working by the rule “Think first before you act” – the Western cultural flaw brings its leaders to repeated failures.

Fifth, the most prominent phenomenon, the very worst example in recent generations of failed policy, was the appeasement of Hitler in the 1938 Munich agreement. The British Prime Minister, in unequalled foolish thinking, but in accordance with the pacifist atmosphere in Europe, with an absolutely closed mind, believed that one could appease aggression. He announced, after the agreement, that he had brought peace not only for his time, but for generations to come. The result is well known and inscribed on the bloody pages of human history. It was necessary to eliminate the evil Nazi regime as soon as it rose to power. But the leaders of states, public opinion, and intellectuals in Europe were busy with the trauma of the First World War, and did not perceive the approaching disaster.22

This is the time to raise the question of who is an extremist. Was it Chamberlain, who promised peace, or Churchill, who promised blood and tears? Was it Clinton, who appeased North Korea, or Begin, who bombed the Iraqi atomic reactor? He who sells dictatorship of utopia and peace now, or he who shouts loudly that the enemy is here and we must fight? He who cried out in the 1930s that the Jews must eliminate the Diaspora before the Diaspora eliminates
them, or those who did not believe that the holocaust could occur? Was it Huntington, who offered “the clash of civilizations”, or those who accused him of not understanding Islam?

Leadership is not ready to admit the problematic nature of its “mirror imaging”, and works to avoid cognitive dissonance. This means that it has closed its mind to any trend or development that is not acceptable to it, and refuses to believe that the problems created originate from its own values and policy. From its point of view, even if the existing reality does not portend good tidings, the leaders work by the approach “minor changes to the midway point”. That is, in the last analysis, the situation is OK, and the problems that have burst into the open are small and soluble. The main thing is to continue with the policy and not to stop. But the critical question that must be asked of citizens who look at a failing policy and at the conduct of their leaders, is: If the state were a business enterprise, whom would you appoint or choose to run it? And what would you do as chairman of the board of directors of the company, when you realize that the management has failed and is covering up? Would you allow it to continue with the disastrous policy? Now, here we are only dealing with a business. What happens when the failure might bring the state to the brink, and even more, endanger the existence of peoples?

This is the situation with the Oslo Accords. It was clear from the beginning that they involved a dangerous adventure on the part of leaders, and a murderous reality for the inhabitants of Israel. However, even if we accept the premise that a failing diplomatic process had been carried out, it is necessary to check and investigate what happened. This is extremely important, and the lessons must be a guide for the leaders in all their activities. This is the reason why a state investigating commission was set up after the 1973 war, and for the 1982 war. And if state investigating commissions were set up for these events – harsh as they may have been – why is it that so far no investigating commission has been set up to study the failures, irresponsible actions, and embarrassing policy of the Wise Men of Oslo? How is it that no upright leader has yet stood up to shout every morning that the most vital act for Israel’s survival is to establish a state investigating commission to study the lessons of the Oslo Accords?

In reaction to these critical remarks, about the “mirror image” that expresses flaws of leadership, the retort came: Don’t the leaders know this? Aren’t they aware of these phenomena? Don’t they have this information? The answer is clear. They know and see everything, and the information at their disposal is good and much more plentiful than would allow them to overlook key features. But they are politicians, and the most outstanding traits of this breed are their
closed minds, evasiveness, and refusal to admit failure. No one is ready to admit, even to himself, that his policy, his set of values and his conceptions are a total failure. Have you ever seen a gambler losing almost everything get up from the table? No. He will risk what is left, out of the hope that he will regain what he has lost. This picture very much fits political leadership. Politicians’ egoism, their conceptual misdoings, their distorted perceptions are deep and complex. They will not admit failure in public. They will certainly not retreat from the line of policy that they have shaped. This is the reason why Member of Knesset Motta Gur burst out in panic, after a discussion with representatives of the Palestinian Authority in early 1995:

The Palestinians are not talking about the house in Hebron, nor about Tamar Hill [in Efrat]. They are talking about the hill of the university in Tel Aviv. If I had recorded the discussions, and played them for my friends in my party [Labor], not for the Opposition, 90% would have categorically stated, “Stop the talks immediately.”

But this did not prevent Uri Savir from declaring after his resignation from the Knesset in March 2001, and even after a year of Arafat’s inhuman terrorism, in September 2001, that the Oslo Accords were still a success, and they were the only way to peace. In this way, the Wise Men of Oslo determined that it was necessary to continue negotiations despite Arafat’s terrorism, by declaring he is the only partner.

The clearest example, just like the Munich Pact, of a lack of “Think first before you act,” and a lack of understanding that “Noah built the ark before the Flood,” was the Oslo Accords. The cases of bungling were so many and so profound that there is no room to analyze them here. Therefore, we will focus on one aspect: the failure to understand the psychopathological personality of Arafat. This will serve as an important focus for understanding Arab-Islamic culture, characteristic patterns of leadership, and who makes decisions and how, in Arab states:

First, processes for a diplomatic arrangement that were conducted by utopian messianists with Arafat, after he was close to total collapse in the wake of his expulsion from Lebanon, ultimately, by Israel, and his pan-Arab and international isolation after his support for Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War: According to all intelligence evaluations, the effective political life expectancy of the PLO and Arafat was estimated in 1992 as up to one year, and the leadership would then pass to local personalities in the territories. Then came the Wise Men of Oslo who saved Arafat. Even if this evaluation was not accurate, considering Arafat’s famous ability to survive, there is no doubt that the Wise
Men of Oslo thought – not without paternalistic political hubris – that in these circumstances, it would be easier for them to control Arafat, and he would become their collaborator. In order to control the territories, he would need their help and the security that they would provide him. From here, they were also led to their senior partnership and full responsibility in Arafat’s corruption. But they did not learn that Arafat was a serial liar and compulsive violator of agreements. He signed dozens of agreements with the Jordanian regime, which he immediately violated, in order to sign yet more agreements, until he made the bitter cup overflow. Then, in September 1970, the Jordanian regime performed a slaughter of his men, and Arafat was forced to leave Jordan together with his headquarters, in July 1971, and go to Lebanon. There too he went back to his old ways, with the familiar maneuvers of signing and violating agreements. Syria’s response was sharp, and after a slaughter in refugee camps in Lebanon, first in Tel al-Za’atar in 1976, and afterwards in Burj al-Barajnah in May 1983, and in Tripoli in November 1983, Syria declared that Arafat was persona non grata. Syria then had him driven out to Tunis, via Israel’s Lebanon war, while his headquarter units were scattered among the Arab states. A helpful account was provided by the Syrian Defense Minister, Mustafa Tlas:

We know this son of 60 bitches. In the morning we agreed to Arafat’s request and signed a cease-fire agreement with him. In the afternoon he violated the agreement, and in the evening he came back to us, pleading to sign a new agreement with him. He promised to keep this one. Again we signed a new agreement with him, in the morning, and again in the afternoon he violated it. Since then we have learned who Arafat is, we refused to receive him, and even to speak with him.

And what did the Wise Men of Oslo learn from these events? If, with the Arab states, in regard to simple issues, Arafat is a serial violator of agreements, what guarantees did they get from him that he would keep the agreements that he signed with them? They had all the proof they needed for understanding Arafat’s personality, and they did not try. In every discussion, on the simplest business level, people obtain information about their business counterpart, his personality, his reliability, and his and their cost-benefit policy, before even beginning to discuss signing agreements. What did the Wise Men of Oslo learn about Arafat’s personality? Did they carry out simple intelligence research about him, and concerning the policy that he implements? What did they learn from his known past? And why did they sign these murderous agreements with him?
Second, their faith that Arafat acts in terms of profit and loss. In their Western cultural logic, they believed that he would keep agreements since he would have something to lose. He had the power of the weak at his disposal when he did not have a territory, and therefore he had nothing to lose. Hence, if he received responsibility, he would have something to lose, and he would be forced even to be moderate and open to compromise. The opinion was formed that it would be better to have Arafat in control of territory in the country than Arafat going wild outside the country. And it would be possible to make deals with him on account of both his political leadership and his weakness. Above all, since they had not studied his personality and its psychopathology, they estimated that in the last analysis, his logic (according to their Western logic, of course) would dictate a reasonable policy to him. If he received a state, he would behave responsibly and with considered deliberation in order to protect what he had, since after all, the alternative would be that he would have nothing (please note the blatant racism in this notion; they would bestow a state on him and he would be responsible and would thank them for their generosity).

The Wise Men of Oslo did not learn that Arafat would not mind at all setting the whole Middle East on fire, after he had destroyed Arab capitals in Jordan and Lebanon, and brought bereavement and orphanhood to tens of thousands of Jordanians, Lebanese, and of course Palestinians. They did not internalize the meanings of the phenomenon that Arafat never took off his uniform, and his pistol was on his hip. They did not understand that Arafat was the ultimate manufacturer of death, that he resembles Saddam Hussein in his belligerent personality and his aspiration to set fire to the Middle East, and had served as a guide for bin Laden in his inhuman terrorism. From his standpoint, the higher the flames that he had kindled, the better it would be for the Palestinian cause. Above all, the messianic Wise Men of Oslo had not studied the positions of Sadat and Mubarak in Egypt; King Hussein and his son, Abdallah, in Jordan; Hafez al Assad and his son, Bashar, in Syria. They did not internalize that these leaders, like many others, loathed Arafat’s conduct, hated him, and despised him for his behavior, and at one and the same time, feared his violent aggressiveness. They knew that he rides a winning tiger in the pan-Arab system – the demand for the solution to the “Palestinian Problem”. This matter is of critical importance, and no Arab leader can ignore it. Arafat knows that they know it. And he exploits the issue fully in order to attain his purposes, to prevent the “flight” of Arab states in the name of support for the Palestinians. The most important focus of the intra-Arab system, next to Arab unity, is “a solution to the Palestinian problem”. This is a motif that no Arab leader can ignore, and must pay lip service to it, and also monetary bribes. Here Arafat’s manipulative ability yields its full power.
And what did the messianic Wise Men of Oslo learn from all this? To this
day, they do not understand Arafat’s personality, particularly his goals for his
people, or the tactics that he employs for attaining these goals. Their mental
blindness and the cultural ethnocentrism in which they are caught up do not
allow them to climb out of the swamp of their positions and conceptions, or to
try to study his conceptions. They are so busy with themselves and their career
advancement, perhaps with winning a Nobel Peace Prize that they have no time
or capacity to contend with Palestinian goals. They still believe that they can
force their “peace concepts”, and no failure of their policy disturbs their sleep.
Principally, they have not internalized that Arafat does not want a state in the
form that they would grant him, that is, in the pre-1967 armistice lines, not as a
final goal, without additional claims. He does not want his to be the seal that
prevented realization of the Palestinian dream of return. Arafat dedicated all of
his personal life to the cause; he has nothing but the Palestinian problem; and he
functions without any private life. To expect that after committing himself for
more than forty years to liberating Palestine, just to agree at the end of the
process to be “the Mukhtar of Jiftlik”, in his words, is not naivety; it is
foolishness and total lack of understanding. Arafat bases his policy on the
continuation of Israeli withdrawals and concessions “for the sake of peace”. He
takes into account the awakening of the Israeli Arabs in regard to the internal
“right of return” and as to obtaining cultural-political autonomy from Israel. His
analysis of Middle Eastern realities and players is more realistic and insightful
than theirs in everything having to do with strategic management and use of
tactics.

Third, the messianic Wise Men of Oslo have not learned Arafat’s method of
strategic action with his four masks. Arafat has many times declared that the
Palestinians have at their disposal the stone, the rifle, and diplomatic
negotiations, and the PLO will use each one as it wishes, in accord with
circumstances. Arafat, a player with astonishing abilities, uses all these means in
the form of masks. The first mask, parallel to the stone, is the shabab, the masses
who riot at command, and are led like sheep to the slaughter in the sight of the
world’s television cameras. They are raw material that he can squander. From
his point of view, the more often that many of them are killed by Israel, the more
that Palestinian demands will meet with understanding and support. The second
mask, parallel to the rifle, is comprised of Arafat’s men of terror from the
Palestinian organizations both within and without the PLO, under various and
sundry names. He has pacts, agreements, and understandings as to their
activities, in accord with his instructions and his desires, and needs. In the
Western Wall Tunnel affair, as today, army men, his Praetorian Guard, were the
main means of his direct terrorist combat against Israel. The third mask, parallel to diplomatic negotiations, are his spokesmen in the international system and towards Israel, such as: Saeb 'Erikat, Abu Mazen, Abu-‘Alaa, and others. They speak excellent English with smiles from ear to ear. Their role is to speak only about peace and brotherhood, and partnership. They must not stop smiling, and they must not stop radiating optimism. They are the ones who negotiate. They are the ones who make commitments to exciting diplomatic plans, and they are the ones who calm the doubts and the fears. Nevertheless, beyond smiles and peace plans on paper, they have no authority, or decision-making power. Nothing.

Beyond these three masks, Arafat excels at the “politics of the pitiful”: the weary grandfather whose lips shake, with wretched, wide-open eyes that plead for protection and defense from his enemy. And all he wants for the Palestinians is a small state in the district of Filastin. They overlook the fact that his quivering lips are meant to arouse pity, whereas in Arabic, his speech is fluent and firm, without quaking. How is the politics of the pitiful expressed? It is the strategy of a hunted man, whom everyone wants to liquidate, and his fate is like the bitter fate of the Palestinians, a people of refuge, driven out and unfortunate. His eyes roll around, he cannot look into others’ eyes, and he displays gestures and hand motions that radiate distress and misfortune. He broadcasts a weak leader, a hunted grandfather, surrounded by predatory wolves, and he proves that only with him is it possible to reach diplomatic arrangements. Since it is so, we must consider him, his situation, and his weakness – and accede to his demands.

But this is a superficial impression. When Peres was attacked for his support for Arafat, he replied that he is not interested in Arafat’s words, but only in his deeds. Indeed, we must not accept Peres’ position here, because we must study and grasp the underlying meanings of what is said in Arab culture. However, even if we accept his position, what did Arafat prove by his deeds? That he is a combination of Gandhi and Martin Luther King? That he really wants peace? That he sticks to agreements with every fiber of his being? And when it was proven even to loyalists of the march of folly that Arafat is a tireless terrorist and a serial liar, Peres’ answer was: “What is the alternative? Let us assume that we expel Arafat, then what will be? The Palestinians will disappear?” Obviously, this is an interesting argument. But we need to say immediately: First, any alternative, really any one, any alternative would be better than Arafat. Expelling him would notify the Palestinians that they must take responsibility for their fate, and take from among themselves a leader who is thoughtful and serious, who is aware of this responsibility, and ready for realistic diplomatic arrangements. Arafat knows that everyone hates him, within the inter-Arab system perhaps
more than anywhere else, but he is riding a winning tiger in the pan-Arab setup, a fact that Arab states cannot disregard. This tiger serves as a battering ram in struggles among themselves. Arafat exploits this in his favor, and is ready to set fire to the Middle East.

Secondly, expelling him and his henchmen from the Palestinian Authority, and from the fundamentalist organizations which have banded together with Iran and al-Qa`idah, would cause a change toward cautious moderation in Palestinian society, would bring about normalization of the pan-Arab system, and above all, it would broadcast to the international system that the Palestinians will act with national and diplomatic responsibility, if they want to attain something. Even if these processes of political ripening stretch on for many years more, and indeed, this is the situation – and we must not imagine that the change will occur tomorrow – the way to an arrangement begins with expelling Arafat. This conclusion should have been implemented twenty years ago. Since then, the damage that Arafat has caused is almost irreversible. Nevertheless, there is still a severe defect in cultural understanding – that Arafat must be eliminated – among the Wise Men of Oslo in Israel, and in their wake, in the international system.

Third, Peres and the messianic Wise Men of Oslo, out of contempt or political hubris, have not internalized that Arafat is a leader with immense abilities, who advances his purposes through creating violent crises, and conducting negotiations during these crises. This is his characteristic behavior pattern. He has signed political accords, then deliberately and cruelly violated them almost immediately, only to haggle once again, by making his original commitments anew, by signing additional agreements. Arafat was always in the role of receiving, and receiving once again, and never giving. When he was asked to give for the first time at Camp David, in August 2000, he went wild and started an unprecedented attack of institutional criminal terrorism, from the end of September 2000. In the course of his activity he demonstrated total lack of feeling towards the dead, even of his own people – and in regard to places, even to Arab capitals. His personality profile reveals an astonishing resemblance to Saddam Hussein and bin Laden, in his processes of indoctrination; in his radical conception of politics and achieving goals; and in his lack of feeling about the massive, unselective use of violence. The expulsion of Arafat is the first meter in running the exhausting marathon to attain a diplomatic arrangement.

This cultural flaw was emphasized in its full intensity in the words of the greatest Orientalist, Bernard Lewis, in an interview which he gave:

Israel made a mistake in choosing him a partner for the diplomatic process. The idea of bringing Arafat from Tunis was mistaken. The recent retreat from
Lebanon, as it was carried out, without an agreement, abandoning friends and weapons, was interpreted by the Palestinians and other Arabs as a sign of weakness. They deduced from the experience of the Hizbullah that the Israelis were soft and pampered, and if they were struck – they would surrender. This was said explicitly by the Palestinians. The retreat from Lebanon had a great influence on the Palestinians’ decision to renew the armed struggle. Muslim culture takes pride in the manners of victors. The victor does not rub the vanquished’s face into the dust, but the results of the struggle must be clear to both sides. A struggle that ends open to interpretation as to the winner is an invitation to trouble. If the powerful party does not fully use his power to bring victory, his conduct is interpreted as cowardice.28

On the surface, Arafat’s conduct in the internal Palestinian system has proven itself to be politically moderate. He applied his moderation in three strategies: A) national unity (al-wahdah al-wataniyyah) within the PLO, as an organizational compulsion which compels preserving the organization’s unity, and preventing rifts and splits, even at the price of compromise; B) exclusivity of representation (wahdatiyyat al-tamthil) of the Palestinian people and eliminating alternative Palestinian foci of power, as a territorial and political compulsion; and C) independence of decision-making (istiqlal al-qarar), operational autonomy against Israel from the territory of the bordering Arab states, while preventing constraints and dictates from them. Nevertheless, the attitude was totally different towards Israel. Arafat proved his great shrewdness in managing the politics of war through an emissary. He did not deviate from his practice of not leaving fingerprints on the rifle trigger or the Palestinian bomb. It is difficult to catch him in direct responsibility for giving orders for acts of terrorism and murder. He left this to his loyal subordinates and emissaries, from Abu Iyyad and Abu Jihad to Rajoub, Dahlan, Tirawi, Barghouti and others. When he gives a green light, he does it through indirect language: verbal hints, body language, ambiguous wording, known Islamic symbols, sending trusted emissaries, and personal strategic ties. Nonetheless, Arafat has signed checks for terrorist operations, and directly incited terrorist actions (jihad, hudaibiyyah, shuhadaa). But above all, people of Western culture must internalize that, since he is a patrimonial leader, Arafat is responsible for everything, and knows everything, like the rest of the leaders in the Middle East. Indeed, he never let go of control of the flames, the height of the flames, the power and intensity of the flames. Exactly like the rest of the leaders of Arab states, of authoritarian, military, or monarchical regimes.
And what did the messianic Wise Men of Oslo learn from all this? They proposed to the people of Israel a new disastrous terminology, bypassing logical reality, and contradicting basic political realism. The murdered victims of criminal terrorism were called “victims of peace”. They spread the slogan that “You make peace with enemies.” It is very interesting. Then with whom do you make war? With friends? When diplomatic accords are signed, the assumption is that the enemies who signed them are no longer enemies, and do not commit continued terrorism and violence. Otherwise, why were agreements signed? If so, why is there a need for victims of peace? What would they do if any Arab state sent out such criminal terrorists? Wouldn’t they demand action against the state that financed, gave protection and dispatched them from its territory? Arafat is a patrimonial leader in an authoritarian regime, just like the rest of the Arab rulers. Why is he more immune than others from Israeli retaliation? And does anyone really believe that terrorist groups perform terrorist acts against his will? Or that he could not stop them if he wanted to? In particular, they overlook that he is not only an active peace partner, but a coordinator and chief operator of terrorism in all its forms. This is embodied in a slogan that he has often repeated: “Millions of shuhadaa [suicide murderers] are marching on Jerusalem.”

Arafat is the very embodiment of terrorism and everything (terrorist operations) is done in operational cooperation and intelligence coordination with him. Arafat ought to have been seen as deserving death twenty years ago, and the harm that he has caused since then is so horrendous, so unspeakable, that it is almost irreversible. Israel will finally do what is necessary, apparently only after a catastrophe. Instead of doing it after he was driven out of Beirut, or together with the liquidation of Abu Jihad, or at any other opportunity, it brought him into the territories, making the lives of all inhabitants of the region unbearable. It should have done the deed in October 2000, when the number of losses was low. Nevertheless, the closed minds and stubborn blindness of leaders brought them to continue the march of folly, and nothing will convince them to change direction. The most important phenomenon, that has absolutely not been internalized, is that the Arab fear of Israeli military superiority has given way, since Oslo, to a spirit of dread of its cultural hegemony. From the Arab standpoint in general, and that of the Palestinians in particular, there is profound awareness that peace with Israel means fully admitting the failure of the great Arab dream, something that is impossible for them to do, from their standpoint.29
The First Cultural Flaw in Thinking: The Arab Personality

Arab society is tribal-nomadic, with its outstanding trait being clan loyalty and the anarchy of the desert. Most of its values were shaped in the *jahiliyah* age before Islam. The important values in Arab conceptions and behavior reflect the pre-Islamic ideals. In the *jahiliyah* age, “The Arabs did not know Allah and his Messenger and the rules of the religion.”

Therefore, it is defined as “the period of ignorance”. But since the researcher Goldziher, it has been agreed that the *jahiliyah* was a period of wildness, tribal fanaticism, and idol worship. The tribe made up the exclusive social-cultural unit. It was in constant conflict with other tribes over sources of subsistence. The political struggle principally embodied the scarcity of resources against the many demands to obtain them. This was a society of, “His hand shall be against all men,” as God said of Ishmael. The head of the tribe was the *sayid*, who was chosen by the elders, and was first among equals in status. The inner social structure included the clan and the extended family. Among the tribes was the *haram* area, a place of agreed upon neutral holiness. It was a place for clarifications and intertribal agreements. From this, the Arabs accumulated immense experience in conducting negotiations. Thus, structures developed for obtaining mediation and compromise that were institutionalized. These were called “mechanisms of *wustah* or *wasat*”.

Despite their desert character, the city was the Arabs’ focus of change and political activity. Mecca was a center of trade and pilgrimage, since it was on the caravan routes. Religion had secondary importance in *jahili* society. Religious customs were observed out of tradition and feelings of respect for forefathers, but religion was fetishist, and values were fatalistic, out of absolute faith in the decrees of fate. Secular values took a central place, and were expressed in the concept of manliness (*muruwwah*), which meant the whole set of traits of a perfect Bedouin. The most important framework was preserving tribal solidarity (*'asabiyyah*). The tribe was the foundation for personal and group existence.

The critical phenomenon in its importance to Arab-Islamic society is honor. A man’s honor is *sharaf*. It is flexible, dynamic, and subject to change in accord with his deeds. A woman’s honor is *ird* (also meaning her pelvis). In contrast to a man’s honor, this is firm and permanent. The woman grows up with her honor, and her most important role is to preserve it. The moment that a woman’s honor is lost, it cannot be restored, and a man’s honor is severely wounded. Indeed, Muslim society is based on the virginity of its daughters. Honor is the most important supreme value in Arab life, more important than life itself. A man
without honor is considered dead. Hence the saying, “It is better to die with honor than live with humiliation.” A man’s place in the tribe, as well as the tribe’s place among the tribes, was according to the measure of his and its honor. When honor was harmed, shame was caused which originated in public exposure, overt to everyone, a phenomenon which severely humiliated a man. Indeed, the Arab individual is caught up throughout his whole life in intensive activity to avoid shame and advance his honor. The central means for this was vengeance. Honor is restored only when vengeance has been carried out in public and is known to all.

The other means to promote honor were giving shelter to a stranger; honorable – that is, generous – hospitality, after all, there is nothing more contemptible than stinginess; and a man’s prestige deriving from his family and clan origin, his lineage. Tribal tradition and clan loyalty had dominant influence in society. Likewise significant were blood ties within the extended family or the tribe, which determined group loyalties and identifications. Most of these social traits exist to this day, and influence the functioning of Arab society as a primordial system in which symbolic values are more important and esteemed than concrete values and the overall, holistic system of beliefs. This is “a shame society”, in which everyone must behave according to the accepted norms and internalize his own feelings in the system of group behavior.

A significant phenomenon that typifies the Arab is a basic lack of trust, indeed, suspicion, and hostility toward the “other”, even if he is a neighbor and member of the same clan. This is a central phenomenon in social life, which goes to an extreme of course when non-Muslim foreigners are involved. All the mechanisms of receptions and the intensive activity of welcoming and hospitality are meant to create a defensive barrier, to soften the threatening interpersonal encounter. For this purpose, the political system has proven itself so very flexible and deeply adaptable. Life in such a hostile environment, and with resources so hard to get, has created a society of adaptability that comes to terms with reality. Political conformism is required as well as acceptance of rules of behavior, which define the society’s goals in religious terms.

This reality expressed too the collective’s superiority over the individual. In contrast to modern societies which promote the individual’s interests, and in which the ethos is what the individual takes and receives from the generality, in Arab society, the ethos is what the individual does for the collective. There is a communal consensus in contrast to an individual’s opinion. Islam does not encourage individualism, rather favoring organized, orderly authority. The individual does not exist by his own right, and he and his opinions are
unimportant, except through his belonging to a group framework. This is based on the hadith attributed to the Prophet: “The opinion of the many cannot be mistaken.” There is nothing more contemptible than individualism, which is viewed as factionalism and as harming the achievement of goals. This is also the basis for the attitude towards political opposition, which is not accepted in principle. Therefore, one may analyze the Arab personality as moving along a continuum in accordance with the following criteria:

a) The syndrome of honor – shame – vengeance: The gap between the desire to promote personal and collective Arab honor, and the fear of shame and humiliation (‘ib) which will be caused, if the dishonor is exposed in public. This is the important test, the openness of shame, the damage to honor. These cause the Arab personality to act with unrestrained cruelty and violence in the pursuit of blood vengeance. Indeed, the means for preserving honor and even reinforcing it is revenge. In the reality of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel is guilty and deserves to suffer vengeance due to its very existence as a Jewish state, when there is no Jewish people; due to its location as a state in the heart of the Middle East, when it divides the Arabs, preventing them from reaching their goals; and due to its activity as a violent, imperialist state, expanding to obtain additional Arab territories. Can a solution be reached in these circumstances? The answer touches more on the balance of forces and Israel’s effective deterrence than on issues of honor, since in the last analysis, national interests are what decide. Nevertheless, the issue weighs heavily on attaining legitimacy and assent (if only resigned and reluctant) for Israel’s existence.

b) Internalized personality in contrast to externalized personality: Jews and Christians internalize the guilt. The Jews extend one cheek in the sense of, “We have sinned, we have transgressed, we have committed crimes,” while Christians extend the second cheek, in the sense of “mea culpa”. In contrast, the Arabs externalize guilt: “Do I have a problem? – You are guilty!” Among them, there is no attempt to compromise. They have no tolerance for the justice and rights of the other. From their vantage point, justice and rights are totally on their side, and nothing will divert them from their total, one-sided position. Among Arabs, you will not find the phenomenon so typical of Judeo-Christian culture: doubts, a sense of guilt, the self-tormenting approach, “Maybe we were not entirely OK,” or “Maybe we need to act or react differently.” These phenomena are totally unknown in Arab-Islamic society, towards outsiders. They have no doubts about their positions or the justice of their side. They have no sense of
guilt that they may have erred. They have no twinges of conscience nor any regret that they may have done wrong to anyone else. From their viewpoint, they have no problem concerning unbelievers, and no difficulty accusing or acting against those who do not live in *dar al-harb*. The phenomenon of the murderers by suicide, sometimes called suicide bombers, is an absolute indication. There is no condemnation, no regret, no problem of conscience among Arabs and Muslims, anywhere, in any social stratum, of any social position. For the most part, there is total support without reservations. And if there are doubts, they have to do with the effectiveness of the phenomenon, not with condemnation of it. The argument is made that Israel deserves it, since Israel has been totally dehumanized. From their viewpoint, just as in the Nazi conception, the Jews are not human beings. Rather there is a total commitment to destroying the State of Israel – politicide, and liquidating the Jewish people – genocide.

c) Factionalism vs. Unity. The Arab personality oscillates in the space between the anarchic Arab character, separatist and violent, and the need to act jointly to achieve goals. This is the syndrome of polar reversals between factionalism and unity, between competitiveness and cooperation, between the aspiration for tribal freedom, the free spirit of the desert, and accepting authority and submitting to government. This is the syndrome between the stormy, violent personality, and the demands of society and the environment for conformity and submission. This is the syndrome between clan loyalty and tribal separatism, on one hand, and accepting tyrannical, authoritarian rule submissively, without challenge, on the other. In this anarchic and violent society, the fear of social breakdown and disorientation is paramount, and dictates passive patterns of behavior. Above all, the most important continuum for understanding the Arab personality is that between submission to and fawning over those with perceived power, at one end, and cruel, violent, anarchic, unrestrained wildness, at the other.

Hostility and suspicion are dominant characteristics in the Arab personality. This is expressed by the saying: I and my brothers against my cousins’ sons; I and my cousins’ sons against the neighbor; I and the neighbors against the members of the other clan; I and the members of the other clan against outsiders. On one hand, flattering welcomes and gestures of politeness, but at one and the same time, continuing suspicion of the other and his intentions. The custom of hospitality, which is so famous an Arab social phenomenon, can be seen in the context of
obtaining honor and externalizing it towards the environment; while the
dancing around the guest derives more from fear that the latter might take
up with the host’s wife and daughters. The mechanisms of reception and
the polite welcomes in Arab society are meant to soften the interpersonal
encounter which is so oppressive and threatening, to create a defense
barrier.

d) The Collective Culture of Stubborn Social Limits. Characterizing the Arab
personality are various taboos and prohibitions of social and class
hierarchy, in a constant attempt to be “OK” and to protect the accepted
rules, to avoid failure in a matter that is likely to embarrass or to shame
your rival in public. This refers to a puritanical society of firm
prohibitions, which is based on its daughters’ virginity. This is a culture of
hierarchy and discipline, of stiff homogeneity, contrasting with the
pluralism and competition which indicate flexible heterogeneity in
Western culture.

This is a culture wherein rumors are an integral part of social activity, and
they quickly become absolute truth which cannot be challenged. It has to
do with exaggerations, flights of fancy, and especially, in a society that
believes in conspiracies, a society wherein every date is important, that
remembers everything and forgives nothing. This is a society wherein the
lie is an essential component of behavior patterns, and lying is endorsed
by religious sages. The famous Muslim theologian, al-Ghazzali, claimed
that the lie is not wrong in itself. If the lie is the way to achieve good
results, then it is permissible. It is necessary to lie when the truth might
lead to unpleasant or undesired results. This is a society in which looking
someone straight in the eye is forbidden, since it constitutes a challenge;
there is also, for example, the prohibition to use the left hand, “the dirty
hand”. Body language, like the manner of walking and the way of sitting,
is very prominent. Indeed, the Arab personality is very diffuse from the
structural and stratification standpoint.

Two additional factors influence the traits of the Arab personality, its
behavior, and its functioning:

1. The language as a cultural phenomenon, which makes it possible to
understand the social environment and communicate with it:

Language is critical in importance in Arab culture. The Arabs are
motivated by admiration for the Arabic language and wide use of
witticisms, sayings, fables, and allegories, as a filter of high importance
for preventing shame, and consequently, for evading frictions and conflict.
These bring the Arab personality to pathos and bellicose rhetoric, and from here to exaggerating reality, to overemphasis, to overstatement. In all forms of interpersonal communications there are several phenomena: exaggeration in describing events (*mubalaghah*), personal boasting of one’s deeds (*mufakharah*), and repeated stressing of words (*tawqid*). Even Peres took pride – explaining his usual failures – and asserted that the role of the word in the Arab world is totally different from that in the West. “Among us, a word is a commitment, and among them a word is a decoration.” As proof, he cited a passage from the Syrian poet Kabbani to the effect that the Arabs have been subject to 1,500 years of imperialist occupation by poetry.\(^{30}\)

This contrasts with Western conventional speech habits in the area of under-emphasis and understatement. Here is the cultural problem at full intensity, which has implications not only for public opinion, but also for explaining situations and determining policy. What happens in the cultural encounter between the overstatement approach of Arab culture and the understatement approach of Western culture? This is one of the main factors in Israel’s difficulties in the international system. Despite Israel’s being existentially threatened, and suffering inhuman terrorism, it is condemned in the West as if it were the violent aggressor. Indeed, the influence of the Arab language on the behavior of the Arab personality is astonishing. Not only are they convinced that it is the most beautiful of all languages, but also that it proves their superiority and the superiority of Arab culture. The Arab linguist al-Tha’alibi stated, whoever loves the Prophet, loves the Arabs. And whoever loves the Arabs, loves the Arabic language. The Prophet Muhammad is the most excellent of all prophets; the Arabs are the best, most admirable people of the world; and the Arabic language is the most excellent of all tongues.

2. The Phenomenon of Time:

This too is a cultural matter totally different from its counterpart in Western culture. There are three kinds of time: physical-atomic time, which is accepted throughout the world, and is represented by our clocks; experiential time which is personal, and expresses a man’s emotions and concepts; and periodic-emotional time, which is expressed by tiredness/alertness of man and beast, in regard to sleep. Western culture sanctifies the “here and now”. It wants “to make time”, to arrive much more quickly anywhere. For that purpose, it builds modern vessels, craft and instruments (missiles, airplanes, automobiles, computers) that enable
it to advance quickly in time. The reason for this is that it is infected with impatience, and the time at its disposal is not enough to finish all its tasks. In contrast, in Arab culture, there is time in abundance. It can be wasted indefinitely. After all, it is not necessary to do everything here and now. This is one of the prominent cultural phenomena of what is humorously defined as an IBM culture: insaAllah (if God wills it), buqra (tomorrow), Ma’lish (it is nothing). This is the reason for the totally different approach to negotiations among the Arabs, for the lack of speed in agreeing to accords, and for the tendency to postpone till tomorrow dealing with complex problems. In Western culture, everything is viewed as a “window of opportunity”, in an admired and attractive expression. Time is valuable and should be quickly and efficiently exploited. Meanwhile, in Arab culture, the belief is that one should not hurry, since haste is the work of Satan (al-ajalah min al-shaitan), and one should not hurry, not even for blood vengeance.

The most striking phenomenon for understanding the matter of time is in regard to the refugees. Even today, 55 years later, they are not ready to give up the dream of return, and they do not at all want “to take the key off” the child’s neck, the key to the house in Palestine as a symbol of “going home”. While Israel shaped a supreme goal of obtaining tranquility and hedonistic pleasure at almost any price, in the wake of mental weariness and being morally worn down, Palestinian society formed a policy focused on patience in obtaining its goals and standing fast and firmly on the ground (sumud). The Hamas added to this the jahili expression: rubat, which appears in the Qur’an five times and refers to the characteristics of tribal warfare, to the preparations required for victory in war. Today, it serves Palestinian society as a means for exciting and agitating the masses with religious slogans, and an ideology of Islamic warriors.

The phenomenon of patience and capacity to suffer (sabr) and steadfastness on the ground (sumud) is embodied in another cultural gap: the Jews were a wandering, persecuted people who lived with the mentality of a minority in a cultural enclave. The main thing was to save one’s life, to flee before the flood. The notion of being a victim is in their genes, and is represented by lobbying the powerful and by appeasing. The Jews in Israel are much more concerned with what the world will say about them than with what is required and must be done for their own interests. The Jews are prisoners of their past, and lack capacity for national suffering and loyalty to the soil, while possessed by fears and high emotion over existential threats. In the nexus between man and soil, they always prefer man.
The Arabs, in contrast, are characterized by the mentality of a conquering majority (“Islam is righteous because it is victorious, Islam is victorious because it is righteous”), despite their many failures in the last two hundred years. Muslims steadfastly hold their ground, despite the oppression by their rulers; and are ready to kill and be killed for the sake of Islam and the soil. They too are prisoners of their past, in notions of superiority and victory, and in the confidence that their future will be like their glorious past. The Christian Crusader unbelievers failed and likewise will be the fate of the infidel Jews. Israel will not long exist, since after all, the Jews are not a nation. Conversely, in the quandary between man and soil, the Arabs always prefer soil. An apt summary of the matter was written by the famous Egyptian journalist, Muhammad Hassanayn Haykal, former editor of the daily, al-Ahram:

Arab logic tends to retreat in the direction of the instinct. Our thoughts are dust while our emotions are fire. We were and still are tribes, raging at one moment and quiescent at another. We hold our weapons in front of one another, and later we clasp each other’s hand and embrace as if nothing had happened.\textsuperscript{31}

Ajami proves that the kind of Western modernity that the Arabs imported gave birth to a monstrous, arid world, a false image of modernity, since they have no spirit of curiosity, nor hunger to know by totally changing values nor openness to absorb and process other matters. Therefore, the Western “modernity” of the Arab world will always be a “rented” form of modernity, which was imported by stratagems and with outside ingredients. The way to avoid this is sincere effort and full commitment to advancing Western and universal values in order that they become a focus of Arab society.\textsuperscript{32} Otherwise, the same hybrid creature of destructive neo-patriarchy will be created, that creature that combines the negative features of both cultural worlds.\textsuperscript{33} Islam of course totally rejects, without hesitation, modernity and sovereignty, as we shall see below.
The Second Cultural Flaw in Thinking: 
The Influence of Islam on Political Conceptions and Positions

Islam forms a universal world outlook, a civilization that determines for the believer commandments of what to do and what not to do. It is the only religion the name of which appears in the Qur’an eight times. It means “exclusive, total submission to the will of Allah”. In Islam, there is no separation between the dominion of Allah and the dominion of the earthly ruler, between religion and state, and its goal is building a political community (ummah) which fits the Islamic ideal. Unlike Judaism, which is a religion closed to outsiders and makes it very difficult to convert, and takes a missionary approach to those within the fold (‘All Israel are responsible for one another”), in Islam there is sometimes great tolerance within, and radical militancy directed outwards. For Islam, it is easy to become a Muslim. A man need only say the shahadah three times, out of sincere intention (niyah), in front of witnesses or a qadi, and he becomes a Muslim. From then on, no one fusses about his actions. Islam is a missionary religion that aspires to transform everyone in the world into Muslims. Therefore, it makes it easy to join. This is also the main reason for its astonishing success in Third World countries, in the twentieth century. Facing outwards, Islam distinguishes between dar al-Islam and dar al-harb. It sees the world in dynamic terms of constant expansion, and demands political conquest and religious coercion in the context of jihad (those who fall in jihad are shuhadaa). Between these two worlds, there is dar al-sulh, with which Islam is in a state of armistice, or cease-fire until it becomes stronger.

Muhammad succeeded in laying the political, intellectual, and emotional foundation for the Islamic social system, and tried to build a new society made up of the Islamic community (ummah), instead of the tribal-clan structure. However, reality was different and frustrating from his standpoint. The tribes joined Islam on the basis of the existing customary solidarity, and swore allegiance (mubay’ah) to him personally, since it was viewed as winning and therefore righteous. This is one of the outstanding phenomena in Arab-Islamic culture: Islam is victorious, therefore it is just. Islam is righteous hence it is clear that it is victorious. Yet, when Muhammad realized that jahili values were deeply rooted, he absorbed them into an Islamic configuration, in the sense of going in the path of God’s commandments (fi sabil Allah).

Most values of the Islamic religion originate in the jahiliyyah period. The name Allah is jahili. He was considered the Supreme God, and he had three daughter goddesses: al-Lat, al-Manat, and al-’Uzzah. Stone worship was one of
the most important forms of worship in jahili society, with the Black Stone of Kaaba standing out. The pilgrimage custom, the Islamic hajj, was a full transfer of the custom of pilgrimage to the holy places in Mecca, during the jahili period. The month of fasting, Ramadan, also originated in this period. In the violent jahili society, it was customary to stop warfare for four non-consecutive months throughout the year for the purpose of business and trade. One month was holy and during it the Arabs performed the rajab fast. The Islamic fast was fixed in the month of Ramadan when the Qur’an began to be revealed (on the 27th of the month, called laylat al-qadr), and at the end, a holiday for ending the fast (‘id al-fitr). Likewise, in regard to giving charity (zakat), which was one of the traits of the perfect Bedouin, it became in Islam a regular, defined tax.

Nevertheless, the greatest influence came from Judaism. Several researchers even argue that Islam grew out of Jewish messianism. Muhammad became an orphan at an early age, and went to the home of his uncle, Abu-Talib, who was a well-known merchant, most of whose business was with Jews. Muhammad accompanied him, and took in the stories of the Torah, the patriarchs, and the Children of Israel. He began to prophesy at age 40, and called on Judaism to attest to the validity of his prophesying (Sura 26, v. 197; Sura 10, v. 43). Meanwhile, his opponents accused him that, “Those were the deeds of the Children of Israel.” The reality was that the people of Mecca ostracized him, whereas the Jews saw him as a false prophet. The hijrah (migration) in 622 transformed Muhammad from the prophet of a small, persecuted community of believers, into the leader of a religious grouping, and Islam changed from being religious “good news” to being a conquering, victorious political institution.

Muhammad sought to adopt the Jews as a basis of support for his religious ideas. Thus, regarding prayer, he ordered the believers to pray, like the Jews, three times a day. And when the Jews rejected him, he announced that Islam was better, and the believers would pray five times a day. Likewise, in regard to the direction of prayer, it was originally Jerusalem. And after the separation from the Jews he ordered that prayer be in the direction of Mecca; likewise, in regard to the fast. At the beginning, he directed that there be a fast on the tenth, the ‘Ashura, just as Yom Kippur comes on the tenth. However, after the conflict with the Jews, he went back to the jahili month of fasting.

Above all, the issue of Jerusalem stands out. Jerusalem is not at all mentioned in the Qur’an, but in the commentary on the dream of the Prophet Muhammad, concerning the isra wa-mi’raj (the night journey to Heaven), on the steed al-buraq (compare the Aramaic phrase, susa bargayah, the white horse). This dream was modeled on the ascent of the Prophet Elijah on a horse-drawn chariot
of fire to Heaven. The interpretation of *al-aqsa* as referring to Jerusalem is very problematic. The meaning of *al-aqsa* in Arabic is the farthest, and it apparently referred to the end of the world, to the place of Islam’s aspirations. Jerusalem was conquered in 638, and until then no Arab eye had viewed it. Yet, its importance has grown since then, as a consequence of the Muslim practice of fixing the status of sites by building mosques over the holy places of Jews and Christians. The Prophet Muhammad himself determined the importance of the Land of Israel and its centrality to the people of Israel, in the *Qur’anic* verses: *Sura* 5, v. 24; *Sura* 7, v. 133; and *Sura* 17, v. 196. Moreover, in *Sura* 17, v. 124, he speaks of the supremacy of the Jews in the Land of Israel, and in other places in the *Qur’an*, he turned to the Jews and told them that their place is in their land, the Land of Israel, and therefore they must leave the Hijaz area.

The central focus in Islam’s conquering activity was dynamically becoming efficient for the purpose of expansion, for an aggressive foreign policy, for conquest for the sake of Allah. Islam supplied economic and social needs for conquest, and set up an Islamic Arab empire with two tendencies: Islamization and Arabization of the conquered territories. Thus, from nomadic inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs became leaders of one of the greatest empires in history. Nevertheless, Islam was conservative in its political conceptions. The supreme goal was achieving an Islamic order and political stability, while preserving the unity of the community. Therefore, any government was preferable to a lack of government. And there was a capacity to accept any ruler, since he was preferable to anarchy. This was a closed political system that caused a leaning toward political cynicism, to apathy and suspicion; and that hallowed submission and passivity. A tradition ascribed to the Prophet states: “The worst of things are the modern things. Every innovation is a mistake. And every mistake leads to hellfire.” Only the consensus of the Muslim community (*ijma*) can decide whether an innovation will be accepted. However, this consensus, totally unlike the situation in the West, also prevents the growth of individualism and a critical attitude, since everything has already been decided.

The conception of the Islamic state is theocratic: Allah is the only focus of faith in the state, and religious worship is the symbol of collective identity. The word *dawlah*, meaning dynasty, now means state. Its original meaning was to turn or replace (*Sura* 3, vv. 134-140; *Sura* 79, v. 7). Any criticism is interpreted as disbelief. Therefore, any challenge to the existing political order is translated as religious deviation. Therefore, any opposition to the existing political order is considered disbelief in Allah. Despite this, Islam has not succeeded in firmly establishing a concept of legitimate, authoritative rule, since the conception that the state is a creation of a social contract is foreign to it. In Islam, the state, like
any phenomenon, reflects and embodies the will of Allah. If so, how do we explain the paradoxical phenomenon that, while Islam is conservative and conformist, and any opposition – certainly political rebelliousness – is a challenge and disobedience to the will of Allah, yet reality demonstrates that there have been revolts, putsches, and political murders on a large scale? The answer is fascinating: legitimacy and sovereignty do not belong to the people, but rather to Allah. Everything occurs in accord with the will of Allah. From the moment that a government has been replaced, the new government becomes acceptable and assented to. After all, this is the will of Allah. If the rebels won and liquidated the ruler, this is the will of Allah. And if the ruler succeeded in suppressing the revolt and in liquidating the rebel, this too is the will of Allah.

Hence, we also come to the principle that the ruler has full, comprehensive responsibility, and if there is a problem, he is guilty and must be driven out, even by violence. The theologian, al-Jahiz, rejected unconditional obedience, and stated that there was a duty to resist a ruler devoid of fear of Heaven, who neglected his duties. He must be replaced by another. This is supported by two traditions of the Prophet: “There is no obedience to sin,” and, “Do not obey a creature to the extent that he disobey the command of his Creator.” This is the ideological basis for violence in Islam. Everything is permitted, since everything was done in the name and for the sake of Allah, and expresses his will. Political violence, aggression by force, and cruel takeover are inherent in Islam, not only outwardly, toward unbelievers in the dar al-harb, but even against internal elements within dar al-Islam. This is the reason for the political murders, the violent changes of regime, and the unselective slaughter that are so typical of Islam and among the Arabs. And if this is the situation within, we more easily understand the fanatic approach and extreme beliefs towards the West and the infidels.

Indeed, Islam represents a tribal society with a political method. In no other tribal society have values and methods of government been employed through a thorough going religion which rules over all political life and gives incentives for conquest and domination. What do these phenomena mean from the vantage point of understanding Arab-Islamic culture? The great Orientalist, Bernard Lewis, has affirmed that Islam is still the strongest, most influential battle cry. And men are ready to kill and be killed for the sake of Islam, more than for any other goal. Even when religious faith is dead, the loyalty to Allah remains. And if the loyalty to Allah weakens, there remains the basic Arab-Islamic identity beneath the wrapping of secular values and ideologies. Despite modern reality, the religion is still relevant, as a fanatic, political, ideological system.
On April 25, 1967, the Syrian military newspaper, *Jaish al-Sha’ab*, published an article by an officer named Ibrahim Khallas. He claimed that the only way to build an Arab society was to create a new Arab socialist man, who believed that Allah and religion, and all the values that had prevailed in Arab society, were no more than mummies in history’s museum. There was one single value: absolute faith in man, who shaped his own fate, who relied on himself, and on his contribution to mankind. Lewis pointed out that the result was astonishing: All Syria rose up and riots broke out, huge in their scope. An attack on Allah and religion, in an official publication, crossed the bounds of consensus. In view of the violence, the Syrian government was forced to make known in the newspaper *al-Thawra* the respect that the regime felt for religion, and that the article had been planted by the CIA. On May 11, the newspaper’s editor and the article’s author were sentenced to life in prison.

This, of course, was not a unique event. Salman Rushdie is still moving about in the world under an assumed identity, and is still living under a death sentence. In Pakistan, a newspaper editor was sentenced to death, after an article that he allowed to be published which imitated the Prophet Muhammad. In Tunisia, a local woman singer indicated the difficulties of a Muslim woman’s life, which were similar to those of the Prophet Muhammad at the beginning of his career. She was forced to flee from her country after a Muslim religious decree (*fatwah*), which sentenced her to death. In Nigeria, a local woman journalist wrote in November 2002 about a planned contest to choose a world beauty queen (Miss Universe), that the Prophet Muhammad would have enjoyed escorting these beautiful women. Following her remarks, bloody riots broke out in Nigeria, and she was forced to flee her country, as a consequence of a religious legal ruling which sentenced her to death. In November 2002, an Iranian journalist, Dr Hashim Aghajari, declared that Islam was still awaiting its Protestantism. He was sentenced to death.

These phenomena are not understood in the West. People do not understand Muslim fanaticism and its meaning. They do not understand that the most secular Arab, even if he were a Marxist in his thinking, would use religious terms and would not be totally cut off from religious values. In the West, it is not understood what the physiological and behavioral changes are that Arabs and Muslims undergo when they chant with pathos, *Allahu Akbar* (Allah the greatest), or when he hear the voice calling: *Ayyuha al-’Arab* (Woe the Arabs). They cannot internalize how an amorphous group of men, of strangers, can become all at once a stormy, violent mob with unlimited fanaticism, because of the ardor of Islamic expressions. They cannot take in the phenomenon of suicide murderers, the mass enthusiasm for *jihad*, and the feeling of exaltation for being
shuhadaa. And they cannot understand the decisive influences of religion on political activity, such as how the mosque can become a base for organizing and going off to violent and terrorist activities. Thus, the da‘awah (the call, the religious propaganda) constitutes a central tool for political recruiting, and reflects the manipulation of ideas by exploiting the estrangement between the oppressed masses who are not partners in the political process and a distant, elitist regime.

The da‘awah is a structural (mosques) and spiritual message (sermons and prayers, literature and tape cassettes); it is an educationally uplifting and wide-ranging social activity (soup kitchens, clinics). It is the principal weapon in a holding action by aggressive Islam against the thinking fostered by Western cultural imperialism. Religion and the methods of education that it controlled had negative influences on Arab learning ability and personality development. In his study on Egypt, Safran found that the stress on learning the Qur’an orally created a personality lacking in abstract thinking and theoretical analysis. This delayed the ability to take in modern education. The old methods of learning cannot meet the needs of modern society.

The problem is that Islamic culture is based on hatred, hostility, violence, and conflict. These concepts are actually endemic in Islamic and Arab culture. Even those who were educated in the West disregard the violent and bloody character of Islamic history. Some go down to cheap propaganda and point out the tolerance and love of peace of Islam. However, in practice this situation never existed, even within Islamic society. These spokesmen, if they are not lying, and this too is an endemic cultural practice, live in a world made up of dreams that has been poisoned by their own illusions. This is a society of the lynch mob, not only against outsiders, as occurs among the suicide murderers, but even against its own. Thus, 11 Palestinian prisoners were taken out of the jail in Hebron and were lynched in front of a stormy, belligerent mob, without any intervention by Arafat’s police. Likewise, when three Palestinians were sentenced for murdering a Palestinian officer, and sentenced to 15 years in prison, a mob took them out of jail, murdered them with astounding cruelty, then presented their cut up corpses to the cheering mob.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon most difficult for the Western mind’s comprehension – which is not understood culturally – is the issue of the transition to democracy. There are various approaches and typologies for defining democracy. But in all of them, the most important element is the centrality of political institutions and the intensity of their influence on the system of checks and balances. From our viewpoint, there is a contradiction in
the very definition itself. Religion, any religion, is opposed to the values and concepts of democracy. In this sense, any discussion of the link between the two is artificial and leads to a dead end. The theologians in Islam, more than any other religion, deal with this phenomenon at length, claiming that all the democratic values are found in Islam. For instance, they point to *shurah*, the duty to consult, as if it functioned as in Western parliamentary government; *ijma*, community consensus, as if social and political pluralism existed in decision-making on a majority basis; *ijtihad*, innovative interpretation, as if there were a readiness to accept new values and positions; *hakmiyyah*, sovereignty, as if it represented political pluralism in Islam.\(^{42}\)

However, analysis of these concepts leads us to a completely different conclusion. Even in the perceptions of Islamic thinkers, they are meaningless, in the sense of participation in political processes or political bargaining that includes representation of pressure and interest groups, certainly not competition or conflict management. There is no reference to the population and its positions, consensus was never a basis for expression of the general public’s will, and there is no readiness to absorb the basic values of democracy. The people were never sovereign, and was never asked its opinion on political issues. Therefore, legitimacy never belonged to it or originated from it. Political participation as a framework for demands on the authorities; the legal and practical capacity to replace the administration; accountability to the sovereign people; pluralism and political mobility; organization of pressure and interest groups; and the whole package of citizenship, the rights and liberties of the individual; political equality and an equal right to participate; all these were not able to exist, and cannot exist, in Islam, which is a hostile environment alien to democratic values.

Nevertheless, Western scholars, apparently under the influence of the odor of oil wafting from Saudi money, have claimed that the main stream of Islam “has come to accept crucial elements of political democracy: pluralism, political participation, government accountability, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights.” In their opinion, democracy is of the essence of Islam, and precisely the Islamic movements have internalized democratic values. The West really fears the penetration of democracy into Islamic states, and prefers authoritarian rule as a basis for continuing its presence. In their definition, the mistaken interpretation that exists in the West, and the stereotyped fears of Islam, are inflated by the communications media. For that reason, the image of Islam has become irrational, extremist, and threatening. Moreover, they also have suggestions for decision-makers in the West. In order to supply processes of democratization to Islamic countries, the West must rise above the narrow
ethnocentric conception of democracy. It must recognize the authentic roots of Islamic democracy. A more open conception would make possible closer ties between the West and Islam.43

However, the reaction to these ridiculous, groundless arguments comes precisely from the leaders of the Islamic movements themselves: Islam is the most exalted, most perfect culture. It contains everything, without exception, and there is no need for outside additives. The shari‘ah supplies, regulates, and orders the whole way of life of the believer, in all areas of life. The community of believers, the ummah, will achieve its goals, if only the believers walk in the path of Allah, Who is the only and exclusive sovereign. In places where the religion issues rulings, there is no need for democracy. Accepting the values of Western culture is absolutely forbidden, and is tantamount to unbelief. Individual freedom means a blow struck at the collective security of Islam. Shura is not identical in any way to democracy; it is indeed the antithesis of democracy. In Islam, the people do not rule on its own with the help of laws that it legislates. Rather it is governed by laws imposed on it by Allah. And no one has the authority to challenge them or to judge their purpose. Thus, even the concept of majority rule cannot exist together with the Islamic system of government. Indeed, it is clear from the words of Islamic religious sages that Islamic ideology leads to a religious totalitarian dictatorship. After all, in Islam, the source of authority and the rule of law and everything done on the face of the earth is from Allah. Islam and democracy are totally incompatible.

The researcher Daniel Pipes referred to this, noting that according to any measure, Islamic culture will be found with a negative assessment, on the way down: political stability, economic development, military power, profound political corruption, absence of basic human rights, life expectancy, education against ignorance, and even on the list of recipients of the Nobel Prize. There is no difference between Shi‘ites and Sunnis, between traditionalists and reformists, between fundamentalists and secularists. Even the concept of jihad is of the essence of Islam.44

If we summarize these two traits that we have analyzed, concerning the Western cultural gaps in regard to the Arab personality, and to the influences of Islam as a political system, we note that these two are tightly bound together. Islam grew among the Arabs, despite its tremendous expansion throughout the world, comprising one-fifth of the world population, and 56 states being defined as Islamic states. Islam crystallizes the Arab cultural personality more than anything else, and gives it a configuration of action; and the Arab personality is reinforced and expresses in the most striking form, the conceptions and values of
Islam. This is the savage kinship that is ruled by a religion that stripped the Arabs of the humane values of tolerance and moderation, and strengthened while institutionalizing their violent tendencies. The Arabs are prisoners of traditional society, deeply loathing the Western enemy. The abovementioned cultural values grew in similar surroundings, in parallel frameworks of influence. This combination between the two is dangerous and deadly, when it involves their violent aggression against the infidels. This is a culture of hatred, which begets social and economic backwardness; uneducated, submissive masses; and fanatic, violent politics.  

This is a culture of hatred not only towards Israel and the West, but towards any human phenomenon which does not believe in the Qur’an, certainly against secularism and modernity which place man and the rule of reason in the center. This is a culture of hatred very deep, wide and ardent towards anything linked to the West. But let us not overlook this; even love and affection never prevailed even among the Arabs themselves. There is a cold war among the Arab states, which often becomes quite a hot war.

The most murderous, radical movements grew under the combined umbrella of Arabism and Islam, and it would be quite mistaken to say that only a small minority are involved. In every Arab state, in every Islamic state, as well in the West, there are growing ideological Islamic groups that are ready to act under the slogan: Islam is the solution, and the struggle must be by jihad against the infidels who live in dar al-harb. The movement today, throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, is not towards moderation and coexistence. In many countries, there is a strong trend of women going back to wear the veil, and a return to Islamic practice is taking an extremely large place in Muslim and Arab social life. If you consider the opinion of most of the Arabs, they would undoubtedly by and large, prefer a religious state under the Islamic shari‘ah, and not the democracy of the West. Thus, here is the warning to the United States not to arouse expectations about the Iraqi regime after Saddam Hussein. We would like to warn the United-States that Iraq will not be easy to conquer, not because of Saddam Hussein’s grip, but because the people not only hate and abhor the West, as well as Saddam Hussein, but because they do not want Western democracy.

In the West and in Israel, people will continue to overlook this clear tendency toward religious politics and fanaticism. When they wake up to act, and finally they will have no choice, the struggle will be harsh and complex and at a much higher price. Tuchman, who proved how governments acted against the vital interests of their own peoples, will again be right in her assertions about their folly, blind stubbornness, and closed minds. The Jewish sages stated the excellent rule: “Think first before you act.” It will be proven once again how right they were.
The Third Cultural Flaw in Thinking: Arab-Islamic Anti-Semitism

We are analyzing this phenomenon as an obvious flaw of thinking, on account of the tendency to minimize the importance and dangers of Arab-Islamic Judeophobia. The minimizing arises from a narrow view of its operational trends and destructive influences on positions and political behavior towards Israel and Jews. As said, the attitude toward Jews derives from the Islamic religious conception in the Qur’an: God’s curse against the Jews (Sura 2, v. 58), since they are the greatest, most dangerous enemies of the Muslims (Sura 5, v. 85). Hence, the conclusion that the Jews deserve to be killed, and the Muslim is a commanded to destroy them. Perlmann proves that the collective Jewish stereotype in Arabic and Islamic literature is very similar to Christian anti-Semitic literature in Europe. Indeed, most of the elements were drawn from Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Nevertheless, in the Arab-Muslim world these trends were reinforced and stressed in the sense of the pupil who outdoes his teacher. One example is the Arabic translation of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and its huge distribution in the Arab world. Nonetheless, a prominent trait is that Christian anti-Semitism grew from the people and was fostered by rulers, whereas in Arab countries, it was fostered from above by the ruling elite and the media. In contrast to Christian anti-Semitism, the position of the Muslims was not one of hatred or fear but of contempt and hatred to the other. Thus, the accepted nicknames for Jews were apes and pigs, based on the text in the Qur’an (Sura 2, v. 65). Perlmann explained that the Islamic polemic against the Jews grew from early Christian sources, but Muslims too soon took part, such as Ibn Hazm (994-1064), and even Ibn Khaldun (1336-1406).

After the “Palestine Question” took shape, and especially after the rise of the State of Israel, the Arab view of the Jews and Israel became clearly Anti-Semitic. The first one to deal with this was Harkabi, who proved that shaping the Arab ideology and publicizing it were done by the society’s center, the ruling elite, the intellectuals, and the people in communications. The goal of Arab anti-Semitism was destroying the state (genocide), and destroying the people (genocide), for which they were providing detailed justifications. Nonetheless, despite Harkabi being considered one of the great researchers of the Arab-Israeli conflict, this is the place to refute several of his central positions on this issue. In his opinion, the Arabs are not hostile to Israel, and for that reason, seek to destroy it. Rather, they seek to set up an Arab Palestine instead of Israel; hence they demand the elimination of Israel. Arab anti-Semitism was not the reason for
the conflict; rather it resulted from the conflict. However, since the conflict exists and anti-Semitism has been created, it constitutes one of the factors that give the conflict its special character. From his viewpoint, the hostility to Israel is secondary, and derives from rejection of its existence. In our understanding, Arab anti-Semitism today is of such scope, intensity, and characteristics of total rejection, that it is impossible to continue to hold his position. The Arab hostility toward Israel is absolute and it is what pushes for destruction, and deepening popular support for destruction.

Subsequently, Harkabi indicated that the conflict was political, not between individuals, but rather between political groups. Even this opinion was not necessarily accurate. Israel has peace accords with Egypt and Jordan, but on the popular level, the hostility and Judeophobia have only intensified. The Palestinian Authority transformed its society into an automatic machine of abysmal hatred, by processes of socialization that will last for several generations, after the Palestinian infants have been incorrigibly poisoned. However, these trends, with insubstantial differences of intensity, we also find in Arab society in Egypt and Jordan, where there has not been war with Israel for several decades now. According to Harkabi’s interpretation, the popular attitude should be totally different in those countries. Yet, the reality, as said above, is different and dangerous. Perhaps it is not surprising that the phenomenon is prominent in countries that signed peace accords with Israel, no less than in other countries. Arab Judeophobia has stopped being a means for tactical use by governments, and has become a central feature among the popular strata.

Finally, Harkabi repeatedly indicated that there were doubts among the Arabs as to the practicality of eliminating Israel. Yet, in practice, they hoped to destroy Israel. This, in our understanding, is a mistaken approach. The Arabs are so sure of their position that they do not hesitate overtly to state it, without embellishment, extremely clearly and frankly. And they express the position in favor of liquidation in as extremely loathsome a manner as humans are capable of: suicide murderers acting in concentrations of civilian population, seeking out children and youths, while defending themselves from Israeli reactions by use of children as human shields. This issue takes on dimensions of unprecedented support in all Arab countries, and among most professional publics, such as the Society of Arab Physicians, diplomats, thinkers, and intellectuals. They no longer bother to justify their open aim to liquidate Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict, in contrast to Harkabi’s claims, has ceased being realistic, political, reasonable. Today it is cultural and total. Perhaps at the beginning of the conflict, Arab anti-Semitism was a means for reinforcing the Arab position. However, it is very doubtful whether this was the situation at the beginning of
the 1990s. Judeophobia is a central part of Arab politics and it has profound Nazi elements of dehumanizing Israel.

Osama al-Baz, the political advisor to the Egyptian president, wrote a series of articles in the newspaper *al-Ahram* that was meant to refute the anti-Semitic arguments, by claiming that Zionism was the source of the conflict with the Arabs. He defined the pressures against the publications of this literature in Egypt as “intellectual terrorism”. In these articles, al-Baz claimed that anti-Semitism originated in Europe, evidenced by such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and the blood libel. The Arabs and Muslims never were anti-Semites. And what does he recommend to Israel? That it immediately agree to being defined as a state of all its citizens instead of a Jewish state (that is, to nullify its nationalism, and then it would not exist as the Zionist State of Israel). If this is not a demand for politicide, for liquidating a state, what then is it? And what will he do with the Jews in the State of Israel? Lack of reference to these matters does not express moderation. Rather, it hints that clear anti-Semitism is going on. Well, let us suggest that perhaps he ought to first call on Egypt or another Arab state to become “a state of all its citizens”, or to abolish their Arab nationalism.

This is the place to examine the profound link between Islam and Nazism. Arieh Stav quotes the statement by Haj Amin el-Husseini that, “There are also considerable similarities between Islamic principles and those of National-Socialism.” This statement was not groundless. The history of the twentieth century shows two overriding movements striving to bring down Western democracy, Nazism and Communism. These two major movements have failed. These deviations, Stav indicates, grew from within Western civilization. Hence the certain failure of these ideologies. On the other hand, Islam expresses a sharp threat in its essence to the West, especially given the cultural flaws and lack of insight concerning its nature and characteristics. *Jihad* is one of the central foci of Muslim political thought, and a critical means for spreading Islam. It is forbidden by Islamic law to give up *jihad*, unless the intention is for a cease-fire in war, in light of the enemy’s superiority. War is the basis of relations between Muslims and unbelievers, and it is permissible to violate agreements, “for the sake of Allah”. Hence, Muslims are commanded not to hesitate to make war and not to plead for peace, since they will have the upper hand (*Sura* 45, v. 47); after all, Islam is the victorious religion and therefore it is also the righteous religion; it is righteous and therefore also victorious. The religion of God’s people means Islam (*Sura* 3, v. 19), and the Muslims are duty bound to go to war against whoever is not a believer, even if they belong to the Peoples of the Book,
until they agree of their own will to pay the *jizya* (head tax imposed on non-Muslims) and recognize their status as the vanquished (*Sura* 9, v. 29).

Bat Yeor proves that the *dhimmi* syndrome is expressed by extinction of the history, the geography, the culture and the political existence of the *dhimmi*, through theft of his past by the conquering group, the exclusive, legal heir. The PLO’s propaganda is aimed at replacing the Jews by the Palestinians, and transferring to them Israel’s historical rights, which were obtained through 4,000 years of existence.\(^{52}\) In this sense, all the Palestinian slogans, such as “the occupied Palestinian homeland”, “the occupied territories”, “the soil of Palestine”, “the refugees’ right of return”, “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people”, are not relevant to the conflict, but are tools in an Arab-Islamic *jihad* against Israel and the Jews.

Yossef Bodansky, one of the important experts in researching Arab-Islamic anti-Semitism, points out that it is becoming more acute as a virulent anti-Jewish, anti-Israel policy. Arab-Islamic Judeophobic hostility sees Israel as a Crusader society, a society that must be destroyed, that cannot be accepted under any circumstances. Just as Muhammad destroyed the Jews, as a basis for the unprecedented success and expansion of Islam, so the destruction of the State of Israel will be the critical spur for a new resurgence of Islam. Israel is a political, cultural, social, and economic insult to the Arabs and Islam. Therefore, coming to terms with Western infidel superiority led by the Jews would bring about the elimination of Islam. Hence, the Arab-Islamic concept requires uncompromising war against Israel and Western superiority, in order for Islam to rule over the world. The Jews are determined to ruin world order and culture, and to set up tyrannical Jewish hegemony that will take over the world’s resources. The Jews are responsible for all the wars, for all the world’s troubles, and Zionism is a constant danger for all of humanity.\(^{53}\)

Stav’s studies have created awareness of Arab anti-Semitic caricatures, and emphasize the unique combination of theological, moral, racial, social, and political negation, that is aimed at the Jewish people as a whole and as a target for physical extermination. In this sense, the Arab-Islamic approach wondrously resembles and reinforces the Nazi approach. Arab anti-Semitic caricatures are in no way humor or satire embodying rational thinking, but rather total negation of Israel and the Jews. They are aimed at destroying a people and a state. Israel became a satanic menace to the whole Middle Eastern region. The Israeli became a monster armed from head to toe, and the swastika was the everyday trademark of the State of Israel in the Arab media. The Judeo-Nazi motif is a focus of Arab propaganda. The processes of demonizing Israel were never so
blatant, while Israel is identified with beasts that arouse disgust and fear, and pests that are to be exterminated. Israel is the epitome of evil in the world.\textsuperscript{54}

Palestinian-Arab anti-Semitism is shared by most of the population and society, and the Arab-Muslim world is flooded with anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist literature. Israel is viewed as a forward outpost of international Jewry and Zionism. Most events taking place throughout the world are no more than a Jewish plot that reflects the Jews’ intention to take over the world. The Jews’ crimes are unique and without parallel in human history, and are worse than the Nazis’ acts. The Jewish people sows moral corruption and causes all diseases and disasters out of a deliberate drive to take over world capital in all the nations of the world, as a preparation for the coming of their messiah. Since the beginning of their history in Palestine, the Jews have worked for ethnic cleansing, and they are doing it today by biologically destroying the Arabs. Israel castrates the Palestinians and destroys their fertility.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion has been a best seller for a hundred years. As primitive, as groundless and bogus as it is, it has gained wide distribution and been published in innumerable editions in all Arab countries, edited by writers, intellectuals, and senior politicians, and disseminated in tens of millions of copies. The most recent edition was published in the Palestinian Authority in 2001. In a society that envisions conspiracy as a central phenomenon in its life, it is no wonder that Nazi anti-Semitic literature provides best sellers, and in the lead is Hitler’s book, Mein Kampf. Hitler himself is described as one of the great personalities in human history, one of the few who tried to stop the course of history and change the trend of Jewish takeover. Hitler is an Arab-Islamic culture hero. He is the man who proved that it is possible to succeed against the schemes of world Zionism.

Indeed, Wistrich points out, the Qur’an and not Mein Kampf is the holy book of the Muslims. Yet, their mental structures and the view of the world behind their actions clearly and closely resemble those of the Nazis. The Muslims, like the Nazis, enthusiastically oppose the anonymous forces of globalization, and the Western plutocracy, in the name of the oppressed, deprived Arab masses, exploited by international capitalism, led by the Jews. International Jewry stands in the lead of the worldwide forces of darkness, and at the top of the heap is Israel, a multi-armed giant, acting to destroy Islam, and undermine the Arabs’ cultural identity.

In this sense, Islamic fundamentalism resembles Nazism in its totalitarian, pseudo-messianic aspiration, to attain world hegemony, through overt rhetoric in favor of genocide.\textsuperscript{55} Anti-Semitism, through anti-Zionism, serves as a built-in
part of the murderous Islamic nihilistic mood.\textsuperscript{56} Fundamentalist Islam expresses a dangerous fanatic absolute ideological mixture and deeply rooted illogical hatred for Jews and the West. However, it should be noted that Nazism, even in its blackest, most damned hours, spoke and avowed about its actions in euphemistic language, indirectly, as proper to Western culture. It spoke of a “final solution”, of “labor camps”, and of “disinfecting showers”. In contrast, Arab-Islamic anti-Semitism formulates its goals and acts openly, without disguise, about destroying the Jews and Israel. It has no moral or human restraints as to attaining its criminal purposes of destroying a people and a state. In this sense, Arab-Islamic anti-Semitism is the greatest disaster to befall mankind in the twenty-first century.

The operative meaning of these trends in Arab-Islamic policy is that the Prophet Muhammad was indeed right in his actions against the Jews, when he proved that it was impossible to eliminate the Jews except through \textit{jihad} for the sake of Allah. The Prophet’s words have been perfectly proven in the modern age, when the Jews conquered Palestine, despite its belonging to the Palestinians alone, despite its being Islamic holy soil that no one has a right to, except the Muslims. The habitation by Jews of any part of Palestine, as small as any part may be, is a crime against the whole Arab and Islamic nation. It must not continue.

Moreover, the Jews who have taken over Palestine are not at all related to the Jews of the historic past. They come from a hundred countries, from various races and ethnic groups. They have no link to the original Jews. The Jews, the Zionists of today, are really continuing in the path of the imperialists and colonialists of the West, those who were planted in the region to continue aggression against the Arabs, to split and divide them. They are the infidel West in religious dress. One of the approaches used to justify the Palestinian position that the State of Israel and Zionism must be totally destroyed is Canaanism. The claim is that today’s Arabs are descendants of the Canaanites and Phoenicians who ruled throughout Palestine. And when the Hebrews came to the Land of Canaan, they destroyed the Canaanites. Thus, the crimes of the Zionists today constitute the second historical stage against the Arabs. The original Hebrews have long since disappeared, and there is no more a distinct Jewish race with special ethnological traits. The Jews who are left are not a people, but merely a religious community.\textsuperscript{57}
The Fourth Cultural Flaw in Thinking: Civil-Democratic Society

The concept “civil society” is Western in its sources and references. There are many approaches to defining civil society. They all comprise organized participation in the space between state activity and the citizens. This is an area of activity in which civil society is made up of non-state actors and non-governmental organizations that are active in the community. It develops through interest groups and socio-political mobility, and it is institutionalized through individual rights and social differentiation. What typifies it is political and governmental tolerance, and institutional and legal limitations against arbitrary intervention by the state. The measure of intensity of civil society is the function of its autonomy. And it comprises political and civil rights, resources that can be obtained, and access to the authorities.\(^{58}\)

While the highest loyalty of the citizen is to the state and the nation, secondary loyalties are in accord with private interests: social status, professional occupation, and place of residence. The activity to achieve and advance them is through parties, trade unions, and social clubs. National identification and personal loyalty are based on concrete, specific interests as a basis for political participation. Therefore, the presence or absence of civil society is a critical condition for advancing or delaying processes of democratization. Moreover, democratization is a necessary condition for obtaining and maintaining genuine, binding peace.\(^ {59}\) In the West, the phenomenon is built in and functions well, whereas in the Arab political system, it is very far from implementation despite several reservations.\(^ {60}\)

Arab-Muslim society may be classified as a primordial society, based on blood kinship, a tribal framework, and a clan, communal and/or religious structure. Its “logic” is not politics for the sake of politics. Hence, civil society does not exist. Arab-Islamic political culture culturally and politically rejects Western norms, and reinforces local identity and clan cleavages. There is no desire to change approaches and positions, while there is a strengthening of traditional conceptions. The Arab-Islamic component constitutes a cultural reaction against the West. The problem is not whether frameworks exist which can be interpreted as fitting the existence of civil society. Rather it is that all examination of their essential functioning will clearly show that the transition to civil society and democratization is very limited. Even if there are parties, trade unions, and citizens, the question is the extent of their influence on the governmental system and processes of decision-making. The parties mainly work on behalf of the regime, as mass organizations for political mobilization,
and their influence is extremely limited. A multi-party system is beginning to sprout in various Arab states, but the parties – like the parliaments – have no influence on shaping policy or setting the political agenda. Political competition does not exist, and is not understood. Everything is done in accordance with the regime’s will and on its behalf, while the opposition is viewed as a negative, disruptive factor. Therefore, it is extra-parliamentary for the most part.

Arab leadership, both in Islam and in politics, was always an activity limited to the level of the ruling elite, and was distinguished as a personal system, without fixed political structures, and without mechanisms of institutionalization. Most of the population is in no way involved in political activity. There was always a low rate of political participation, which was anyway expressed in support for the government and definitely not in demands on the government. The leadership was always the most important factor in Arab political history, a kind of existential duty (wajib). Four kinds are known: consensus, the pre-Islamic custom of choosing the head of the tribe by consensus of the tribal elders; dynastic legitimacy, an Islamic tradition based on blood ties to the Qureish and Sahabah; Muslim theocracy, faith in those who continue on the path of the Prophet in accord with the laws of shari‘ah; the technobureaucratic leadership of military officers. We may judge the absence of civil society in the Middle East by the following aspects:

1. The Character of the Regimes and Patterns of Leadership:

The Arab regimes are authoritarian, and the leadership is patrimonial according to two patterns: military or royal. Neither of these enables the growth of true civil society with functional capability, because of the absolute identity between the leader’s personality and the state, and limited patterns of political activity. The population are subjects rather than citizens. The leader’s will is an absolute will to which everyone is subordinate. The inhabitants, deprived of basic political rights and individual freedoms, act in accord with the will of the leader and the regime, in the sense of supporting them, certainly not making demands on them. If the meaning of democracy is: “the rule of the people, by the people, for the people”, these three principles stand in contradiction to the values of Arab-Islamic society, to authoritarian rule which was consolidated and won legitimacy in the Islamic conception, and became its character of leadership.

The people are not sovereign, and it is neither asked about nor decides the patterns of government or the image of the leader. Most inhabitants do not take part in political processes, and have no influence on shaping policy.
In the Arab-Islamic political system, constitutional, representative, pluralistic government cannot develop. Democratic civil society is based on pluralism, bargaining, and lack of uniformity. In contrast, the Arab-Islamic political tradition fears anarchy, disorder, and breakdown of society into its component parts, the tribe and the clan. These phenomena were perceived in the hadith among the Khawarij sect. Any government is preferable to no government, even if it is led by a black slave whose head is like a watermelon. There is also a hadith attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: Forty years of tyranny are preferable to the lack of government. Indeed, no authoritarian regime, certainly not a patrimonial leadership, makes possible the existence of free social and political interactions without tight control.

2. Social Values:

Political culture means the values and conceptions of individuals and groups in society in regard to the political system. They are expressed in patterns of political inclinations, in approaches, and in various outlooks towards the political system, the institutions, and the government. There are three kinds of political culture: participatory, in which the citizen knows his rights and duties, and in particular, knows how to realize his rights; subject (native), in which the citizen knows his rights and duties, but does not know how to realize his rights; and parochial, in which the population mainly knows only its duties. In the Western system, political culture is chiefly participatory, but Arab-Muslim political culture is, in the best case, native in the center and parochial at the periphery. Most of society is cut off from politics, viewing it as “a great evil” (sharr), that one must live with. Its values and patterns of activity make it difficult to adopt Western-democratic concepts and positions. Most values are tribal-primordial. At their center is honor, externalization, suspicion, the aggressive attitude of “you are guilty,” lack of tolerance, and operational collectivity. Anything different is viewed as threatening, defined as intolerable and requiring elimination. All these values are in essential contradiction to the development of civil society. The values of Arab political culture place more stress on ends and less on means. Normative values indicate the definition of a good society, the proper community, and from them are derived the roles of religion as a binding political system. The whole system of beliefs relates to the collectivity and the individual is part of it, dependent on it, and is in no way important in his own right. The Middle East remains culturally recalcitrant toward Western norms, and opposed to them in its values and concepts.
3. Western Influences:

Like other Western concepts, the concept of civil society has been totally rejected by Arab-Islamic society, if only because its source and origin is the West. This is a purely Western concept, and the Arab leaders are very sensitive to the dangers of penetration by Western ideas, principally concepts of political democracy and social liberalism. The West is identified with imperialism, political conquest, economic domination, and in particular, destructive cultural penetration. These views cause a negative, very suspicious attitude towards the civil society concept due to its very definition. Indeed, there is a readiness to accept Western technology, but not at the price of an open regime and political process. The Arab regimes apply a policy of limited economic openness, without political liberties. They have begun to foster economic organizations, with limited economic liberalism, subject to tight supervision, and provided that they do not impinge on governmental interests. In other areas, the political leadership can act without restraint to enforce its will arbitrarily. The inhabitants, social associations, and political institutions, must act within the parameters set by the state. The primordial links are the most influential, and the interactions are set on an ascriptive basis. In the last analysis, the clan and the tribe are still the critical variables of social loyalty, and political liberalization is still a survival tactic for regimes.

4. Basic Outlooks:

The outlook is rational, political, because the state’s legitimacy is rooted and institutionalized. However, in the Middle East, the state is a weak social institution, and the security of the leaders is paramount. The inclination is toward conformism in thought and operational collectivism, which represent ascriptive loyalty. The primary ties obtain for the individual his identity, his security, and his sense of belonging. Collectivism is always superior to individualism. This is so in Arab society, and is more emphasized in Islam, since only Allah is the source of everything, and the individual is required to submit and give absolute devotion to Allah; this contrasts with the humanistic outlook which promotes personal freedom, rebellion against state coercion, faith in personal mobility in accord with one’s talents.

Bernard Lewis points to four aspects: world anti-Semitism was always against the Jews; the basic Arab conception is clearly racist; there is definite opposition to minorities in the Middle East, whose situation is severe up to the point of annihilation; the Jews can be in a status of tolerated minority, but not as
a national, political entity. Anti-Semitism literature was first imported from Europe by Christian Arabs, but has become a real factor in strengthening Muslim positions.61

Meanwhile, the Middle East is characterized by state tyranny and social fatalism, without a critical approach. Complaining about the government is rebellion and unbelief, which are to be suppressed massively by the state. All opposition is viewed as illegitimate and illegal; the Western outlook as to social interaction and political corporativism constitute an important foundation for development of the political system. However, in the Middle East, social suspicion is the dominant characteristic, and it is difficult to conceive of teamwork or corporativism, on account of the reinforcement of primordial-ascriptive traits. The politicization of areas of society intensifies the weaknesses of social interactions, and prevents mobility and political participation.

Civil society, however it is defined, does not exist in any Arab state. This is a process still far away from the Arab states. In the pluralistic, democratic, Western state, there is a political order that respects political and civil rights. Political rationality is necessary for state legitimacy, and claims superiority for the national security of the citizens over the security of the regime. Underlying modern society is the individualistic outlook, which places the individual, his rights, and his freedom in the center, as well as his right to be different.62 None of these exists in the Middle East, which is typified by an inclination to conformism and collectivism. The Arab regimes work in two ways in order to ensure their political survival: creating organizations working on their behalf in order to institutionalize their influence; and employing means of coercion and violence against their opposition. Both ways prevent development of a stable civil society.

There is no need to say that the civil society phenomenon is totally lacking and opposed to Islamic values,63 since it is characterized by the extent of its autonomy from the political system. In reality there is precisely a return to traditionalism, which further prevents the chance, small in any case, of a growth of civil society in the Middle East. The best summary of this reality was given precisely by the Egyptian researcher, al-Sayyid: True civil society does not exist in any Arab state, and no Arab state even approaches it.64

A phenomenon critical in its importance, which has huge implications for scientific research in the Western political system, is the public opinion poll, as well as studies that examine the population’s political positions. These have become central tools of research in various disciplines of the social sciences, and are based on quantitative data, which is stored and classified by statistics. We
focus on this matter, since polls constitute a source for research on civil society and political behavior. The problem that we are trying to raise, in its full gravity, is that these studies, since they are clearly a Western cultural tool, are suitable for a participatory political culture. In Western society, where the people who vote are sovereign, knowing their rights and duties, and knowing how to fulfill their rights, polls of positions are a suitable, valuable tool. However, is this also true in societies with a subject political culture, in the best case, that are parochial for the most part, as we find in the Middle East? This is a critically important question and we will focus on it in order to determine that public opinion studies in Arab-Islamic political culture are devoid of scientific value, from the viewpoint of validity of data. Therefore, use of them, which is becoming more and more common, absolutely misses the mark, and might cause severe statistical deviations in understanding Arab politics and society.

We have spoken at length about the Arab political system in which regimes are authoritarian, political leadership is patrimonial, and the people who vote are not sovereign, that is, citizenship is weak and limited. The population is not viewed as a political factor that must be taken into account. Further, in the main, it does not see itself as relevant to governmental affairs, as influencing decision-making, or as shaping the political agenda. Moreover, since there are almost no socio-political subsystems or pressure and interest groups in the Arab system, there is no possibility of influencing the regime’s concepts or its policy, and leaders act in accord with their personal interests for the purpose of their survival in power. In these circumstances, the population will not try to change their “fate”, and will not act to influence changes in policy, not only because this would not stand a chance, but also because of their lack of faith in their ability to make change. After all, from a historical standpoint, “the people” never had an important role in the political process.

Consequently, surveys of the public’s positions and opinions are politically meaningless in the Arab-Islamic political system. If the Arab-Islamic man is not viewed by the powers that be as a meaningful factor, and if he does not see himself as a part of the political system, then why should his opinions or positions have any importance at all? Since his opinion is not relevant, it is not susceptible to free expression, also because such never was acceptable in collective, puritanical Arab-Muslim society. The principal immediate question that every respondent in an opinion survey must ask himself is, why, all of a sudden are they asking my opinion? What is the relevance of the opinions that I might express about the government? After all, I cannot, even if I wanted to, change the government or influence its positions, why do they see me as an important factor in this matter? And especially, why must I respond to political
questions that might endanger me, with regard to possible reactions by the state? If Arab-Islamic politics is viewed as exploitative and oppressive, my opinion of the government is not only not important and not influential, but I have to fear the government’s reaction, if I openly express my opinions. Even today the Arab regimes suppress freedoms. To expect the people to express their opinions openly without fear, and to give frank answers about their positions and conceptions, is faulty wishful thinking.

One of the outstanding traits in Arab-Muslim society is the suspicion and hostility towards the outsider and those who are different. Suspicion is critical and developed because of tyrannical rule and profound clan-tribal estrangement. If so, how reasonable is it that the respondent will answer questionnaires and opinion surveys, openly or anonymously, when he is not familiar with those conducting the poll, or know who they are or their purpose? This is a risk that no Arab who has learned from the historical experience of exploitative, oppressive government will take. Since he is polite, and cannot sneak away, it is very likely that the answers that he gives will never be his true positions or conceptions. Thus, it turns out that there are studies conducted according to all the scientific rules that yet are far from reflecting the positions and opinions of the “people”.

Moreover, the Arab-Islamic political conception is atomistic, not integrative as in the West. The notion of causality is lacking in Islam. After all, everything comes from Allah, and everything reflects Allah’s will on earth. This outlook not only expresses the lack of expectations concerning the character of the government, since it is after all, Allah’s will, but also expresses political cynicism. After all, how will it help improve the government even if I openly state my views? Everything comes from Allah. Now, researchers will come and try to persuade the respondents that their opinions are important for the quality of government, for improving the activities of the political system, for influencing decision-making and molding a leadership that cares for its citizens, and in particular, their opinions will make possible study of the political behavior of these societies.

In addition, Arab-Islamic society expresses collective rather than individual conceptions. Both Arab culture, on account of the clan-tribal structure, and the Muslim religion that asserts that Allah is the focus of everything, and rejects the centrality of man – since after all, what is important is submission and absolute devotion to Allah – are both characterized by rejection of the opinion of the individual man. His opinions and conceptions are of no importance whatsoever. Only the opinion of the group, by the *ijma* approach, is important, since the public as a whole cannot make a mistake. This leads to tribal-communal
conformism in thought, and confirms the lack of utility in scientific opinion surveys. Therefore, anthropologists say, when an Arab or Muslim begins his remarks with the expression *wallahi* – which is often used – he apparently intends to lie. The outcome is that the respondent’s replies are very sophisticated; he responds in accord with what he estimates or understands that the researcher wants to hear. Thus, the reply is not his own opinion but his estimate of what the pollster wants or expects to hear.

Hence, we believe that polls of public opinion and positions are not of much use, and are certainly not reliable scientific information. Indeed, all the tools and procedures typical of scientific research may be deployed, but it is highly reasonable that the findings will be of low, non-scientific validity. We would like to stress that we have no doubt, nor dispute as to the scientific quality of research methods and samples. Nor do we dispute that the data were scientifically gathered and processed. The problem, from our standpoint, has one focus. This is the quality of the respondents’ replies, whether they represent true attitudes. The voters as the sovereign does not exist in Arab-Islamic societies. Therefore, it is recommended that the scientific validity of public opinion studies be examined with extra suspicion. If, in scientific studies in the West, a sampling error of a few percent is acceptable, we argue that in Arab-Islamic societies, people do not openly express their true opinion. This is for various cultural, social, and regime reasons, and also due to the absence of citizenship. Therefore, even if scientific research in these societies is performed according to all the scientific rules, and even with extreme caution, it has no scientific validity. It is tantamount to wasting resources and knowledge.

In short, studies of this kind are suitable for a participatory political culture, for an open Western culture of people who vote, whereas they seem to fail when they are applied to other societies and different cultures. Taking a means that typifies one culture, and applying it to a different culture, is necessarily doomed to fail. We have no doubt that most researchers who deal with this research area are aware of the issues raised here. Why do they continue with their research studies, despite the low validity? It is not our role to explain and detail. However, it is important that there be insight into what this means. Statistical studies are performed in Arab society, including Palestinian society of course. They are not valid scientifically, and whoever uses them in the name of science, in the end distorts science, and surely does not succeed in learning about Arab (including Palestinian) politics and society.

The meanings of civil society, as an accepted phenomenon in a Western participatory political culture, are understood in the West. But it is not at all
understood in the West that the “civil society” notion cannot be applied to non-Western societies. Two examples will aid us in understanding this cultural flaw in thinking. One, is the mistake of US President Bush, after the first Gulf War, when he appealed to “the Iraqi people” to replace the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein. President Bush did this several times, out of an obvious flaw in thinking. He had not internalized that there is no sovereign Iraqi people, and that the question of the government, the choice of a leader, removing him, and making demands on him, were in no way in the hands of “the Iraqi people”. It was not sovereign, it had not brought Saddam Hussein to power, and it would not bring him down. If someone wants to overthrow the regime, he must appeal to the army, and seek there the elements that would make it possible to topple him. The regime in Iraq was a military regime, which regime form is defined as follows: seizing power by force of the weapons at the army’s disposal, rather than by accepted parliamentary means; most governmental positions are held by army officers; and most decision-making processes are controlled by army officers. This was the situation in Iraq as well. Therefore, as long as the army supported the rule of Saddam Hussein, no “Iraqi people” could change this reality. This is true in all Arab states, whether they are military regimes in which the army is in power, or whether they are monarchies where the army serves as the main prop of power. Take away the army’s support, and the regime collapses. The case of Iran proves this (Iran being a Muslim, non-Arab state). Only when the army proclaimed its neutrality in the struggle between the Shah and the fundamentalist Islamist forces led by Khumayni, was it clear that the dice had been thrown and the Shah’s regime had lost. The patrimonial leaders in the authoritarian Arab regimes, whether military or monarchic, were never chosen, and there is no parliamentary representation on the basic level. The appeal to the people to decide its own fate was not at all relevant in such circumstances.

The second example of the cultural gap is in understanding civil society. After the seizure of Israeli Nahal soldiers by Ahmed Jibril’s men, in Lebanon, the mother of one of them, Miriam Grof, decided that she wanted her son returned home, without any connection to the political price. She totally upset the political agenda in Israel and stated that, as far as she was concerned, the government could even give back Jerusalem. Just let her son come home. She succeeded in her mission, but at the intolerable price for the State of Israel – the Jibril Deal. Israel released 1,150 terrorist-murderers of the worst kind, in exchange for the kidnapped men. This example shows how the system functions in a civil society with a participatory political culture.
In contrast, consider Palestinian society in the years 1997-2000, defined as a time of economic flourishing in the territories. Ramallah was described as a “thriving city”. Restaurants and discotheques sprang up. When Arafat’s terrorism began in September 2000, it all collapsed and was destroyed. As an analogy to citizen Miriam Grof, one might have expected that citizens would rise up, a discotheque owner, a restaurant owner, etc., who had seen their businesses boom, and would now pressure the political leadership to continue the economic blooming, without connection to the struggle with Israel. From their standpoint, what should have been important was that their businesses continue to flourish. Of course, no one rose up, not only because of fear of governmental suppression, but also because the people themselves do not understand what a pressure or interest group is. Nor what civil society is, and who is sovereign. In a place where there is no citizen awareness, people cannot act as Western society would expect them to.

The existence of processes of democratization and civil society in the Arab world is about nil. When people today speak of democratizing the Palestinian Authority, or replacing Saddam Hussein’s regime with a civilian democratic regime, a measure of modesty and a pinch of seriousness are necessary at the least. The West went through many processes and profound crises over long years, until it reached these goals. There are no short cuts, and there is no possible way to command, “Be a democracy” – and a democracy will pop up; “Be a civil society” – and it will emerge. It is simply a dangerous pretension. In the Middle East, “Haste is the devil’s work.” For the Palestinian society, it is necessary to rear the kindergarten teacher and the elementary school teacher in a totally different educational system, in the values of moderation rather than those of murder, which exist today; and they, in turn, will raise and educate the children in the values of pluralism, peace, and coexistence. When will this happen? Maybe in another thirty years, and only after close assistance from an outside mandatory power.66
**The Fifth Cultural Flaw in Thinking: The Issues of Economic Well Being and Education**

In the Western approach, economics is the essence of everything. International relations in recent decades have been characterized mainly as economic relations. Globalization is aimed at economic goals. The various aspects of the economy have decisive influence on political behavior in Western culture, and in our judgment, economic well-being makes up the true reason for the lack of wars among democracies. The issue is so central in the Western political system that the Western “mirror image” cannot internalize that this reality is totally nonexistent in Arab-Islamic culture. Anthropologists call such gaps: “systemic misunderstanding”. The attitude is so different that it is not enough to give information in order to correct it, and most positions do not change, on account of cognitive dissonance.

The issue under consideration is not whether the population in the Arab-Islamic political system does not want economic well-being or does not aspire to a better life. It definitely wants and aspires and looks forward to it. Yet, its conception of its role and ability to attain these goals is totally different from that in the West. The inhabitants of the United States did not hesitate to remove President Bush from power, although he was the hero of the first Gulf War – the world’s “sheriff”, in the November 1992 elections. This was because he had not succeeded in convincing them that he had effective economic solutions for the American people. Indeed, this was a sovereign voting people. It knew its role and its power, and it acted to advance its well-being. Does a situation like this exist in any Arab state? Are the rulers chosen by “the people”? Is “the people” a sovereign that knows its own role and power to influence and change the political order? Is the political system “parliamentary” and do the parties have the power to influence the molding of the political agenda? Do the existing parliaments have any influence in decision-making processes? The answer to all these questions is, of course, definitely negative. Therefore, everything that is viewed as natural and logical in Western political culture, is far from being that in the Arab-Islamic political system. And this has led to Western cultural misunderstanding.

This is extremely important, since the Arab regimes not only are not committed to socio-economic progress, but they do their best to only make small changes and reforms. The deeper and more meaningful the economic change is, the more it threatens the regime. Processes of democratization are required for economic development, but both former and latter mean cutting off the branch
that the regime is sitting on. No leader wants to commit political suicide. The principal fear of the Arab-Islamic regimes is the doors of modernization opening wide. After all, that would threaten the very existence of the regime. Everybody remembers, and many recall out loud, the meanings of modernization in the Shah’s Iran, in Ceaucescu’s Romania, and in Gorbachev’s Soviet Union.

Historically, the Arab collective memory of the colonial regimes was two-sided: economic control and military domination. This developed into a trauma of hostility toward Western imperialism, and makes up one of the reasons for the Arabs’ total opposition to Israel, and for the aspiration to destroy Israel as a people (genocide), and as a state (politicide). According to them, when they had succeeded in getting rid of Western imperialism, the imperialists decided to implant Israel so that it would be an aggressive barrier preventing fulfillment of Arab goals – by virtue of its existence as a Jewish state, when there is no Jewish people; by virtue of its location in the Middle East. In its vocation to separate and divide the Arabs, and thereby prevent them from reaching their goals, first among them, Arab unity; and by virtue of its imperialist-expansionist activity, taking over additional Arab territories, Israel strives to attain supremacy and hegemony over the Middle East. It began by military conquest of Arab land and aspires to continue by taking over the Arab states economically. This is the reason why the Arab regimes are so afraid of Israel’s economic plans, such as “the New Middle East”.

The issue of economic well-being and education is important no less for understanding and dealing with international terrorism and fundamentalist Islam. Here, flaws of thinking and distorted perceptions in Western culture reach their height, while cognitive dissonance actually prevents any correct insight into reality. The prevailing assumption in the West is that economic well-being and higher education mean political moderation and rational political behavior. Take away the poverty and the hunger and give the population a broad education, and a large part of the problems will be solved. This is exactly the “mirror image” that reflects Western reality, but in no way shows Arab-Islamic reality. Studies in the fields of social science and behavior refute the claim that poverty and social wretchedness lead to terrorism. They generally lead to crime. Ideological and religious fanaticism is the motive for terrorism, not the lack of economic well-being or education (both of which, when present in the West, do indeed lead to political moderation and diplomatic realism). In the Middle East, economic and educational explanations are not significant for understanding sources and causes of terrorism.
Psychological theories of motivation point out that motives of security and group belongingness are more relevant than even hunger and poverty. Sociologists and researchers on violence emphasize that violence in society has no essential link to economics. It derives more from social-cultural factors. The first one to direct attention to the phenomenon was de Tocqueville. He claimed that the violence of political revolutions broke out precisely with the arrival of economic improvement. The national flag waves precisely when there is bread, hence there is leisure time for action, and there is education that helps formulate and shape the goals. Yet, in Western culture today there is still profound ignorance about this matter, as well as refusal to contend with the real problems. Several examples will clarify this attitude.

In mid April 2001, the journalist Sever Plutzker, analyzed the relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority seven years after the Paris accords. He lamented that all that had been achieved was destroyed at the start of Arafat’s violence. Merchandise and services to the order of 50 million New Israeli Shekels (NIS) were being exchanged every day. The wages that Palestinians received in Israel were estimated at four billion NIS per year. The damages to the Palestinian and Israeli economies were in the billions. With the lack of insight inherent in Western culture, Plutzker still does not understand Arab-Islamic culture. He stated that every time that the economic situation in the territories improved, Arafat and the terrorist organizations worked to light a fire. Mr. Stef Wertheimer, an industrialist, asserted that while the greats of the world were breaking their heads over what to do with the Middle East, the proper solution was economic support by the West for the states of the region, like the Marshall Plan. If there is money, there is no terrorism (emphasis added). Thus, the philosopher Yirmiyahu Yovel daydreamed about

the European Option: In exchange for Israeli agreement to the Saudi Initiative, Israel would be brought into the European Common Market and NATO. The Palestinians would gain a state in the 1967 boundaries, Israel would gain security, diplomatic, and economic backing, and the Europeans would come back to the Middle East as peacemakers, rather than as preachers of morality.

With the same tendency, Daniel Doron claimed, “International conflicts continued in Europe for hundreds of years, until economic factors came along and moderated and eliminated them. This can occur in the Middle East too.” Outstanding in this trend is the “research study” of the prominent post-Zionist, Ilan Pappe. He asserted without hesitation, without awareness of his ignorance, that Palestinian violence derived from social-economic distress, and that the profile of the Palestinian knife wielder was an outcome of poverty. Get rid of the refugee camps and give the Palestinians employment and education, and the
violence will vanish. 73 Indeed, these remarks exemplify the lack of cultural insight so profoundly inherent in Western culture. Even now, nothing of the reality happening in front of their eyes will convince them of the basic mistakes of their conceptions. In this context, we may properly quote Freud, “When it comes to self-deception, human beings are geniuses.”

The story of Ali Hamoud, the franchisee of the English chain, Sainsbury, in Cairo, indicates a different cultural reality. After receiving the franchise, he acted to close all the branches of the chain in Egypt, claiming that it was more important to combat the ingredients of economic occupation. When he was asked about his livelihood — after all he was hurting himself — Hamoud argued that it was in the hands of Allah alone. 74 A survey of Arab economic reality strikingly displays this difference. Some of the Arab states are among the richest in the world, while others are among the poorest. Nevertheless, do the rich Arab states ever think of helping the poor ones? Saudi Arabia is striking proof of a fanatical, radical state, a known supporter and helper of fundamentalist Islamist terrorism and extremist Islamist movements throughout the world. Saudi Arabia is the most important state for the maintenance and flourishing of international fundamentalist Islamist terrorism. It is more dangerous than Iran, and deserves a regime change no less than Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Despite its immense wealth and the political menace against it — hence its payment of “protection” money — Saudi Arabia endangers the peace of the Western world, in that it advances its Wahabi-Islamist ideological interests.

A flourishing economy and investments worth billions are no substitute for national claims. The issues are not economic, but cultural-national, and so too are the solutions. The question is not whether the population wants a booming economy. Of course it does. But the problem is its capacity to influence and make changes. The right question is: What is the status and location of the economy compared with national issues, in the eyes of the leadership? What is the population’s influence on the conduct of the national leadership when there is no public opinion or pressure and interest groups? Professor Kedourie’s study about post-colonial reality in Asia and Africa clearly shows that the leaders preferred the values of national freedom and goals of independence over economic well-being. The leaders, who rebelled against the West and hated the West, were those who had received a full Western education, and spent time in the colonialisit Western countries as a part of their educational and cultural upbringing. And precisely they were the ones who revolted against the West. This tendency was expressed in the famous definition: It is better for us to live in the trees as free men, rather than economically enslaved under the rule of Western colonialism. 75
The leaders of the terrorist organizations throughout the world have come from the middle class, some even from the upper class. Most of them had a full university education, and those with doctoral degrees were in greater proportion than in other groups. Many of them were physicians or engineers. The leaders of the terrorist organizations, including bin Laden, never proclaimed that the reasons for their activity were poverty or ignorance or the hunger of the Arab and Islamic masses. They speak about Western Crusaders, whom they seek to drive away from Muslim soil; they speak of Israeli aggression, which they work to destroy as a national entity in the Middle East; they speak of secular Arab regimes which aspire to overthrow, setting up an Islamic state functioning in conformity with the shari’ah. They have no plans for social progress or well being, for improving health and broadening education. They have no intention of providing honorable employment to the masses. It is so difficult for the West to internalize that such matters are of no interest to them whatsoever, since they view themselves as an elite, a vanguard, the pioneer who goes ahead of the camp, for the sake of fulfilling fanatical ideologies.

The West is busy looking at a mirror image of itself, and does not recognize that the masses interest bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Yasser Arafat about as much as the snow of yesteryear. The masses are raw material, which can be expended in large amounts without consideration. With all the many billions that Arafat received from the West, did any improvement take place in social well-being, education, health, or employment in Palestinian society? Above all, how many refugee families were economically rehabilitated, and left the refugee camps? Did the Palestinians complain about Arafat or seek to topple him? Are there protest movements arising against the background of the socio-economic situation, which is catastrophic by all measures? And what does Arafat do to deal with the situation? Nothing. Nothing at all. These matters did not interest him on the day that he arrived in July 1994, and do not interest him now. His mind is totally closed to the social and economic distress of the population. He sees everything through the prism of liberating Palestine in toto.

Several statistical data: the 19 suicide-murderers in the September 11 terrorist attack lived in the West, had higher education, and enjoyed economic well being even in Western terms. What motivated them was not poverty, economic exploitation, or social wretchedness. Rather they were possessed by abysmal hatred and loathing of all that Western culture represents; its permissiveness and secularism. This is what happened to Sayyid Qubb while he spent a sabbatical leave in the United States. Instead of going back to Egypt marveling over the freedom and progress, he returned full of immeasurable rancor, hostility, and disgust. From his viewpoint, the West’s great sin was that it placed man at the
center, instead of Allah, with the rule of reason as the focus, instead of submitting and absolutely devoting themselves to Allah.76

The Palestinian suicide murderers in Israel prove this state of affairs. Between September 2001 and September 2002, there were 124 suicide murderers. Of them, 88% had high school and university education; 65% had full university education. About 50% came from al-Najjah College in Shechem (Nablus). Their terrorist activity did not derive from despair, hunger and frustration, but from a fanatic ideology embodying abysmal hatred and loathing for the West and Israel. It was part of an ethos characterizing Islamic society and values.

Whoever wants to learn about Arafat’s responsibility for the suicide murderers, should study the following statistics: this atrocious terrorism began only after the Oslo accords and his arrival in the territories; in his time the Islamic Jihad organization was rebuilt becoming the leading organization in terrorist warfare, while the Hamas organization gathered military strength, specializing in firing rockets, suicide-bombers; and in hostage-taking and kidnapping. From Oslo, in September 1993, until the end of September 2000, there were 63 suicide murder attacks, and from September 2000 until September 2002, 124 suicide murderers were counted.

However, the mirror images in Israel and in the West do not make it possible to internalize the true dimensions of the problem. It is still measured in economic and educational terms, as if Western society were under consideration. On this account, we can also explain the proven failure to deal successfully with (so-called) fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. Until it is well understood that fundamentalism, suicide murderers, and fanatical politics, do not arise from wretchedness or poverty, but precisely pertain to the educated urban middle class – well-fed men with a murderous ideology – the failure will continue. Contending with the problem must be different and resolute. It must include activity against these elites, the urban educated belonging to the economic elite. Until then, the failure will go on camping on the doorstep of the leaders and policy makers in the West.
The Sixth Cultural Flaw in Thinking: Suicide Terrorism and Political Arrangements

One of the most difficult phenomena for Western cultural comprehension is to comprehend the suicide terrorism. A clear example was the remarks of the Israeli journalist, Yael Gvirtz. She was not capable of grasping the phenomenon of suicide murderers. It is wildly picking up speed among the Palestinians. It is something astonishing, not comprehended or capable of being digested. You don’t succeed in getting into the terrified logic of human beings how a nation produces such a vast supply of suicide bombers... Parents bless the death of their children and the slaughter that they have sown; the official Palestinian voice glorifies the suicide bombers and exalts them to the level of saints; the Islamic extremists prepare the phenomenon cynically, and it is oiled by money...a nation that released this genie from the bottle is burying not only its sons but its future.77

The word jihad means investing an effort in achieving goals; to withstand suffering and difficulties by an effort. In dictionaries, in all languages, the definition will be found: a holy war against unbelievers, a holy war that is rewarded with paradise. It symbolizes a situation in which an action is performed by a believer for the sake of Allah. In the Qur’an and the hadith, the term jihad appears only in the verbal form: make an effort, exert yourself. The four schools of Muslim law: hanafi, hanbali, shafi’i, maliki, and most of the doctors of Muslim jurisprudence, the fiqaha, treat jihad with the meaning of war against infidels for the sake of Allah to expand the rule of Islam in the military terms of a holy war. In the hadith collection of al-Bukhari, there are 199 references to jihad. They all have the meaning of “holy war”. Over the years, five expressions of jihad were seen: in speech and writing, the ability to achieve the goals of Islam by persuasion; body and soul, adhering to the values of the religion and doing justice; the financial, contributing monetarily to fulfilling the values of Islam; against Satan, a struggle against the temptation of reality and liquidating those who harm morality; the political, the need to defend the values of Islam, particularly Islamic soil.

Throughout Arab-Islamic history, two meanings crystallized: first, the spiritual meaning (al-jihad al-akbar, the biggest jihad), the ability to adhere to the commands of Allah and behave according to the principles of Muslim morality, and to struggle against the passions of the soul; second, the material meaning (al-jihad al-saghir, a small jihad), the readiness for sacrifice, a war for the sake of Allah and his messenger, as a war by commandment against infidels,
rewarded by paradise. What is the difference between these two concepts? The situation is absolutely clear from the juridical and political standpoints. As long as there is a division between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-Harb*, that is, as long as there are infidels in the world, and dominion is not exclusively in Muslim hands, there is only *al-jihad al-saghir* in the meaning of holy war for the sake of Allah. Only when the whole world is subject to Islamic rule will there be no need for *al-jihad al-saghir*. Then, all Muslims will worship Allah in terms of *al-jihad al-akbar* alone. Since the Muslims are in constant struggle against the unbelievers, they need *jihad* for the sake of Allah, to achieve their goals.

Moreover, the reference to *jihad* was as an optional commandment (*fard kafayah*). But what happens if the infidels attack Muslims and threaten their soil? And what happens when infidels conquer Arab-Islamic land? Then *jihad* becomes an obligatory commandment (*fard `ayn*), which is imposed upon all Muslims as such, without reservations. This is the case of the struggle in Palestine against Israel, that the *Hamas* views as *waqf* land. The struggle against Zionism and Israel is cultural; it is a struggle between the true religion, Islam, which possesses the pure truth (*al-haq*), and the false religion, the wayward and nullified faith (*al-batil*), Judaism. How, then, can we explain the Jews’ being “people of the Book” and “protected people”? The answer is: as long as they are subordinate to Islamic rule, inhabitants without self-government on Islamic soil, they are protected people, provided that they pay the *jeziya*. But the moment that they act as a nation and seek to set up their state on Arab land, their sin is greater than that of infidels in *dar al-Harb*. After all, they are ruling over land in *dar al-Islam*.

Those who fall in a holy war are holy slain. They are assured the delights of Paradise. The concept *shahid*, in the sense of someone slain in a holy war for the sake of Allah, developed under Christian influence (*shahid = witness = martyr*). The root means to see, to be an eyewitness, that is, the *shahid* gives witness for his faith and for the justice of Allah’s way (*shuhadaa fi sabil Allah*). This is the most exalted expression of faith. The *istash’had*, the action of self-sacrifice on the battlefield for the sake of Allah, originated at the beginning of Islam, out of a desire to increase the warriors’ motivation and to bring about Islamic rule. It is considered the greatest commandment. The holy slain inherit paradise forever, and also atone for their families’ sins. On the other hand, Muslim theologians, following Judaism, totally rejected *intihar*, suicide because of distress, something considered a grave crime and inexpiable.
In scientific research, several explanations of suicide are accepted: anomic (isolation from the social environment); egoistic (personal distress); fatalistic (lack of control of one’s life, dictated by outside forces); and altruistic (against an ideological background, social, religious, or cultural identification). The council of religious sages of al-Azhar promulgated a legal decision (fatwah), that Palestine was holy land, and those who fell in battle for it were the best of all Islam. Therefore, their action was not intihar, suicide, but istash’had. This is the position of Shaykh Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the theologian with the greatest influence over the suicide phenomenon; Shaykh Dr. Yusuf Tantawi, the chief Mufti of al-Azhar; Shaykh Hamid al-Baytawi, Mufti of the religious sages of Palestine; and Shaykh Akramah Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem. In contrast, the chief Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Abd al-Aziz ben Abdallah; and Shaykh Abdullah Nimr Darwish, of the Islamic Movement in Israel, have invalidated the phenomenon. They stated that it is not istash’had, but intihar. Specifically, every fundamentalist Islamic movement chose a spiritual leader for itself, whose legal judgments were acceptable to it. And he has served as the decision-maker for actions of suicide murder. But the important task is to show that terrorism is infectious, and the more that it succeeds the more infectious it is. Thus now, secular movements and even Marxist movements, use terrorism by suicide murderers.

The goal of the suicide murder phenomenon is maximal media exposure; enhancing the image of power; striking at Israel’s deterrence and the national morale of its people; disrupting civilian life; and causing direct and indirect damage to the economy. Nevertheless, the most important cultural phenomenon is — and here comes what is extremely difficult to understand in Western culture — that anyone, women, the elderly, even children, can be a suicide murderer. The grounds for this are not economic distress, but that Arab-Islamic political culture is a lynch culture, a fanatic sect that hallows death, a contagious plague that might set the whole world on fire, and in contrast to hedonism, particularly prevalent in Europe, no one is immune to it.78

The other pole of the suicide murder phenomenon is the concept of peace in Arab-Islamic society, as a unique cultural phenomenon. Conjecturally, we find two aspects for understanding the phenomenon: a situation of peace, that is, mere lack of war; and peaceful relations, that is, a situation of diplomatic, political, economic, tourism relations between states. The significant problem is that there can be a situation of peace even if peaceful relations do not exist. Researchers have examined the concepts of peace in various cultures. Peace in Greek (eirene) is static in character and emphasizes order and oneness. Peace in Latin (pax) indicates a political order and lack of war. The concept of peace in
Asian cultures (India, China, and Japan) symbolizes inner mental calm, harmony, and concord. In contrast, in Europe, peace in the Middle Ages was strictly an internal matter, since the wars were limited, and in practice, peace did not exist. In modern times, a dramatic development took place because the nature of war had essentially changed. Beyond philosophical conceptions, such as that of Kant, the notion took shape that world peace would not be achieved, on account of the balance of power and of varied attitudes to peace suited to various cultures.

The word salam originates from Islam, and points to inner redemption, confidence in the life of the Islamic community. That is, peace is an internal phenomenon only among Muslims. Hence, the Arab-Islamic blessing is Peace Upon You and God’s Mercy and His Blessing, al-salamu ‘alaykum wa-rahmat allahu wa-barakathu. The blessing obliges every believer and is rewarded by Allah with ten good deeds that are registered in the believer’s favor every time that he says the blessing. This is the proof of how much internal peace is important to the Muslims, in order to prevent anarchy and disorientation. On the other hand, there is no permanent salam with any factor that is not Islamic. External peace is a situation of merely temporary non-belligerency. War against the unbelievers is the natural state of affairs. Islamic peace means a situation of lack of violence, merely a cease-fire. Nothing about it can express life out of coming to terms with those outside of Islam. In all the Muslim theological literature, both classic and modern, the term peace is not found in the sense of harmonious relations between peoples, but only hudna, in the sense of cease fire, separation of forces, or a time out from combat. Everything is temporary and subject to change, in accord with estimates of power by the Arabs.

The attitude to the State of Israel reflects the problematic nature of Arab peace. Policy towards Israel is cultural: There is no Jewish people, and there cannot be a Jewish state, certainly not on the soil of Palestine. Opposition to Israel derives from its very existence, as a Jewish state becoming consolidated; on account of its regional location, separating the Arab East from the Arab West; and becoming stronger because of its aggressive-expansionist activity against Arab states. The status of the Jews in Islam was ahl al-dhimma, protected people who lived at the mercy of the Muslims. When the Jews set up a national state, they were deviating from their status over the centuries. After all, Zionism reflects a racist, secular Jewish society, like the Crusaders. These are many of the causes of the wild dehumanization of Israel and the Arab anti-Semitism that is reflected in slaughter of its citizens by unprecedented terrorism.
The Palestinian leadership still see the problem as controlling all of Palestine. Arafat went over to a strategy of stages at the Palestinian National Council of June 12, 1974. The PLO was ready to accept any Palestinian territory that would be liberated and establish a national authority there (article 2); and would continue the struggle for completing the liberation of all Palestinian soil (article 8). The 13th Palestinian National Council, in March 1977, decided that the goal was “realizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” (article 11), the right of return (General Assembly resolution 194); the right to self-determination; and the right to establish its independent state on its national soil.

These strategic aims are still in place today in the declarations of the Palestinian leadership and in the decisions of the Palestinian National Council. There are no differences among the various Palestinian groups, the PLO, Hamas, or the Islamic Jihad, except in operational tactics. From the vantage point of all the groups, there is no symmetry in the conflict. One side is guilty and the other side the victim. The victim’s war against the guilty party must aim at his destruction, and it is legitimate. Israel is an occupying entity over the whole territory of Palestine. The territories Israel has administered since 1967 have no relevance to the Palestinian cause. In order for peace to prevail, Israel must give up its state and its Zionist identity.

Despite all of these openly proclaimed positions, the Israeli political and social elite is aloof and closed-minded. This sealed off ideological sect, well entrenched in government, fanatically defends its fancies, while being protected by one-sided, unfair communications media. The political elite searches for rational behavior according to its mirror image, entrenches itself in its flawed positions, and refuses to accept that there is no peaceful solution with the Palestinians. Rather, there are only limited, temporary arrangements. In the Western mentality prevailing in Israel, people have a difficult time believing that the leaders are working for themselves alone, in accord with their personal frustrations and managerial needs. Most people believe that leaders have good intentions, and that they know what must be done, and act to protect the national interests. Reality does not exactly conform to these images.

It is proper to stress that in the Arab states, principally Egypt, the issue of normalization of relations with Israel comes up in its full intensity. The Arabic term for the concept is tatbi`, originally meaning training. This is a new term, which refers to the formal framework of relations and agreements between states that bears mutual benefit. It does not necessarily mean a balance of interests, but a formal system of relations, that is reflected in mutual respect for each other’s territorial sovereignty. The first one to grant scientific expression to this
approach was Boutrus Boutrus Ghali, in an article that he published in January 1974, in which he analyzed future scenarios after the 1973 war. His conclusion was clear: Even if peace prevails from a military standpoint, the ideological war will continue to be hot. It will only end when the Jewish state has been liberated from the Zionist ideology that has distorted the principles of the Jewish religion. The Arabs will not come to terms with the existence of the Zionist entity in the heart of the Arab fatherland, and the way to attain victory is to isolate Israel in the international system, to intensify the economic pressures on it, thereby preventing Jewish immigration to Israel, and encouraging Jews to leave. The struggle to liquidate the Zionist entity will take on another form, in such a way that the cultural-civilizational and social-diplomatic weapon will take the place of the military weapon.\textsuperscript{84}

In practice, this has meant a frozen peace, actually a cease-fire as long as Israel continues to retain its aggressive, Zionist identity, its cultural imperiousness, and particularly its maintenance of nuclear superiority in the Middle East. On the other hand, on the popular and intellectual level, the opposition to Israel is total, and on the model of \textit{tatbi‘}, they speak of \textit{tatwi‘}, subjugation, constraint, that is, Israel’s attempts to impose the Zionist program on the Arab world. Peace arrangements are a temporary measure that were forced on the Arabs, because of the gap in the balance of power in favor of Israel. The position that has taken shape is that peace with Israel will bring it to a situation of assimilation and absorption in the region. The new world order (\textit{al-wad‘ al-‘alami al-jadid}) and globalization (\textit{al-‘ulmah}) required the Arabs to rethink their forms of struggle against Israel. This does not mean on the battlefield where Israel has proven its ability, but principally through diplomatic and international means. However, the Egyptian reality in recent years, and its weapon accumulation must arouse Israel’s attention and profound concern.

Egypt’s turn to a diplomatic arrangement with Israel did not derive from devotion to peace as a value, nor as an ideological transformation favoring the role of peace over war, and certainly not on account of changes in how Israel was perceived. Even after the peace accord, Sadat often declared that there was no Jewish people, and that Palestine belonged to the Palestinians alone. The change he had undergone was on the level of awareness of Israel’s power, which was an accomplished fact, even though it was unjust. The change derived purely from Egyptian national interests. Fuad Ajami defined this very well. Egypt remains within the zones of operational expediency. It has not taken upon itself the intellectual struggle for peace.\textsuperscript{85} The Egyptian tendency is to reduce Israel to “its natural dimensions” and to dispossess it of its strategic assets. This is beyond the fact that Egypt does not observe the clauses of the treaty that it
signed – in diplomatic declarations, in murderous anti-Semitic propaganda, in hostile votes at the UN, and in support for the Palestinian nationalist terrorist movement (smuggling weapons from Rafiah to Gaza, the affair of the ship Karine A, support for Arafat’s rejectionism and encouragement in practice for his criminal acts of terrorism).

Egypt is the most stubborn, most violent opponent to shaping joint economic arrangements in the Middle East, to creating a “common market”, as well as to integrating Israel into regional arrangements. Egypt still sees Israel as a looming danger that threatens the future of the Arab nation, both on account of its possession of nuclear weapons, and in particular, because of the cultural menace and of its penetration into the political, social, and economic system of the Arab states. Egypt sees itself as the focus and leadership of the pan-Arab system, as long as Israel is threatened and isolated in the Middle East. In Egypt, the gap between the leftist Arab intellectuals and their counterparts in the West is quite striking. Whereas the former extremely noisily oppose peace arrangements and normalization with Israel, calling for a belligerent policy against Israel’s existence, the latter advocate change, supporting universal peace and human rights.

Egypt has acquired, since the peace accords with Israel, modern, state of the art weapons, in unprecedented quantities, worth tens of billions of dollars. Instead of bringing about social and economic improvement with the funds received from the West, Egypt devotes them to armaments. Since it has no other enemies on its borders, it is obvious that these weapons will be available for war against Israel when Egypt’s leaders believe that their national interests require them to make war. Likewise, the Egyptian military establishment supports the struggle against Israel, while the Egyptian minister of defense and military industries, Tantawi, proclaims Egypt’s constant need to be deployed for war against Israel. The treaty with Israel does not mean detente. Any threat against an Arab state or African state means a threat to Egypt’s national security.86

In these circumstances, is it surprising to discover that the most murderous anti-Semitism, aside from that in the Palestinian Authority, is found in Egypt? The Anti-Defamation League in the United States published an anthology about the anti-Semitic images in the Egyptian media only for the period January 2000-February 2001. According to any criterion, this is Nazi-Goebbelsian propaganda of the worst kind.87 Comparing Israel to the Nazis, Hitler proclaimed as the most important hero, and benighted medieval blood libels, are daily fare in Egypt in the official media.88
Internalization of the danger from suicide murder terrorism should have been expressed in implementing a strategy of war on terrorism, while molding several insights, and preventing mistakes in treating reality. The first grave mistake is to regard terrorism as a criminal phenomenon which can be solved by social benefits and economic improvement. The second grave mistake is to think that there should be policy combining fighting terrorism with finding a “political horizon”. The war against terrorism must be total, and the aim must be to eliminate it without concessions. The third grave mistake – a pervasive one – is to feel despair that this war cannot be won, and that it will continue to be a painful part of modern life. Yet, it can be won – with determination, decisiveness, and operational resilience. The fourth grave mistake is to make a moral equivalence between terrorist perpetrators, who are totally evil, and the counter-terrorist measures of governments, as legitimate steps to defend their right to exist. The fifth grave mistake is to deal with terrorism with ordinary judicial procedures. Terrorist cases should be tried only in special military courts, employing special judicial procedures (requiring emergency legislation).

The most important rule is that terrorism, like guerrilla warfare, must be fought with its own tactics. That is: Not by armies, not by police, but rather by special units engaging in special offensive tactics, not bound by hesitations or limitations. In this context, liquidating leaders of terrorist organizations comes first of all. No targets are more important or more worthwhile than these. Leaders of terrorist organizations are critical for keeping organizations together and functioning. If the policy is continuous, they will eventually collapse. Next in importance is preventing funds from flowing to the terrorist organizations, as well as financial donations to families of suicide murderers. These are the conclusions of the respected researcher, J. Adams, who analyzed the financial structures of the PLO and the IRA.\textsuperscript{89} Third in importance is international isolation and condemnation of terrorism-supporting and sponsoring states. Five out of seven states so defined by the American administration are Arab and Muslim states in the Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Libya, the Sudan, and Syria. To this list, we should add three more Muslim states, Saudi Arabia of course, Afghanistan – the “university of jihad”, and Somalia. The latter plus the Sudan are becoming the next universities of terrorism. Yet, the most significant state factor in terrorism is Saudi Arabia, which must be stopped, by force if need be. So much for states. However, 21 out of 41 terrorist organizations listed by the United States are Middle Eastern. Most of them fit the Islamic fundamentalist model.

In practice, because of the absence of cultural understanding, there is no adequate procedure for contending with terrorism. The United States and Israel
know a great deal about terrorism, but they do not know how they must act against it. Here too, the practice of “Think first before you act” and “Noah built the ark before the flood” is critical. It is wrong to wait until a catastrophe happens before reacting with full intensity against anarchistic Islamist terrorist groups. For instance, Israel waits for a “mega terrorist attack” before beginning to act against Arafat. The question is whether the 700 victims murdered by terrorism, ten times more, relative to the size of population, than the United States suffered in the attacks of September 11, 2001, did not require energetic action. If the USA went to war to wipe out bin Laden’s terrorism, when will Israel act honestly, seriously, and with its full power against Arafat’s inhuman terrorism? Is not Israel’s waiting for a mega-terrorist attack a kind of excuse for lack of action, for impotent response, and in fact, for neglecting the first responsibility of every democratic government: preserving the security and welfare of the population? Meanwhile, the political echelon are wearing down the army mercilessly, and endangering the soldiers in difficult, dangerous operations, that are partly ineffective.

It is necessary to act with continuing strategic initiative from the beginning, in order to avoid the disaster that will surely occur. It must be clearly stated: The weakest state can contend with the strongest, most violent terrorist organization. This is provided that the state is determined to act, and committed to winning. The slogans spread about as if it were impossible to defeat terrorism are groundless and unfounded. Terrorism has been defeated everywhere that a resolute government, with a will to exist, stood in its way. The power of terrorism lies in its menacing publicity, made by the terrorist’s best friend – the communications media, and not in real military power.

Most terrorist organizations in the world have been wiped out after the state showed determination, and internalized that any policy of appeasement would only increase the terrorist threats. In Europe, in Japan, and in South America, many terrorist organizations have been destroyed. Britain succeeded in suppressing the terrorism of the Palestinian movements in the 1930s, led by Haj Amin el-Husseini, and in Malaya in the 1950s. However, the most impressive achievement in suppressing a national movement was Turkey’s against the Kurdish PKK. Ocalan’s capture at the end of 1998, his sentencing, and the resolution that the Turkish government displayed, have since led to silencing the PKK’s terrorism. Indeed, the lesson is clear: Leadership is most important, and action against terrorism must come from the leadership echelon to the operational echelon, and not in the other direction, as is commonly done by Israel.
The Seventh Cultural Flaw in Thinking:  
Perceptual Mantras and Operational Paradoxes

Conflicts break out when there is no fit between the goals of the two parties, and when their interests express a mutual demand for exclusivity. The less and the weaker the fit, the greater the probability that the actors will choose violent conflict, and an escalating cycle is formed of action and reaction. This is the reason for development of super-conflicts that go far beyond the original conflict: persistent stereotypes take shape, as the capacity dwindles for empathizing with and understanding the other side’s motives. These factors encourage thinking in terms of a zero-sum game. The enemy becomes more demonic, as do the mutual accusations as to which party is guilty. Everything becomes distorted and more complex. And the parties develop different histories of the sources and stages of development of the conflict. The phenomenon worsens when there are deep cultural gaps in the mutual perceptions of the parties, aspects that reflect on the parties’ conduct:

The Diplomatic Mantra

It is necessary to achieve peace. This is the correct reality, the natural existence of mankind. Hence, it is proper to work for peace. Further, the definition of the sought after peace is clear and acceptable in accord with the Western formula, and it includes political and economic relations, as well as diplomatic ties.

But in fact there are many kinds of peace. There are various and sundry alternative kinds of relations and situations of peace. Therefore, it is sometimes preferable to find limited diplomatic arrangements. There may be a situation of peace without relations of peace, that is, merely the absence of war and violence. Moreover, it is difficult for people of Western culture to internalize that peace is not necessarily the cherished, desired goal in other cultures too. There are no peaceful relations among the Arab states. Their relationships are far from being harmonious. What does exist is a cold, hostile, and estranged detente. In order to erase the shame of this state of relations, they take extreme positions toward Israel. How, in these circumstances, can we expect peace to be established, according to the Western conception, between the Arab states and Israel?

This approach also touches on the issue of the search for roots. It proposes seeking the roots and sources of the conflict, out of an estimate that thereby a great step forward toward a solution would be made. Understanding the problems that make up the conflict would make successful treatment possible. However, this is a conventional mistake the sources of which lie in medicine.
Knowledge of the cause (diagnosis) makes it possible to offer solutions (remedies). However, international conflicts are dynamic, and their solutions, in most cases, do not fit their origins. We know well what the root of the Arab-Israeli conflict is – the four Palestinian issues: The Arab citizens of the State of Israel; the Palestinian residents of the territories; the Palestinian residents of Jordan; and the Palestinians living in the refugee camps outside of historic Palestine. Yet, did this influence offering solutions or make possible the achievement of arrangements? The mentality in Israel is one of post-peace, of the prophets’ vision: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid… And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. But reality is different and very far away. This is indubitably the case when Arab culture is involved.

In Israel, people seek the bottom line. The approach is directed toward solutions. What is your solution? What alternatives do you propose? Everything is instant, while creating a golden calf for each issue. In this manner, the Oslo Accords were defined as arriving at utopia, as ending the bitter conflict with the Palestinians. From now on there would be no more orphans nor any bereavement. In this way, the panicky flight from Lebanon was defined as a major success. And there will not be any more problems with the Hizbullah. And so a separation fence is viewed as a solution to terrorism. We here, they there, and everything will work out. In contrast, the Arab position is realistic, their feet firmly on the ground. The Arabs do not live in utopia, precisely because reality is harsh and there are not necessarily any solutions. The Palestinian leadership is only concerned with itself, and the fixed reality is one where the conflict is institutionalized. In Israel, on the other hand, the crisis has deepened, because going in the alternative direction to Oslo was said to mean war: The prosperity of Oslo or the graveyard. The Israeli people were not given the opportunity to choose and make a realistic evaluation. Peace is already here! A peace of prosperity that Peres depicted in his unique way: Israel would become Singapore, and Gaza would become Hong Kong!

Strategy is a means for attaining goals. The more that it offers alternative ways, the better, the more successful it is. The Israeli people were presented with a total, messianic alternative, in the style of the false prophet Sabbetai Zevi. But between war and peace there is a wide expanse of alternatives, which are precisely what must be stressed and focused upon. In the circumstances of the Middle East, achieving something concrete such as postponing war to the future is preferable to perpetual peace that is impossible. Being satisfied with modest yet practical goals is preferable to building fantasy castles in Spain in an impossibly perfect world. It is precisely the Oslo Accords that are bringing
Israel’s end closer than ever. They planted in the Palestinians the feeling that Israel was disintegrating, and that all that was required to bring about its collapse was determination and patience.

The ugly reality of Oslo was sold to the Israeli people by lies from the beginning. The agreements were signed only with the Fatah organization, all the other groups belonging to the PLO stayed away from the accords, and sharply opposed them. The agreements were authorized by the Revolutionary Council of Fatah, not by the Palestinian National Council. Moreover, any study would have discovered that Arafat’s avowed goals were very far from Israel’s definitions of “an end to the conflict”. However, above all, it was precisely the Israeli experience in discussions with Egypt and Syria that can serve as an indication of correct action. No territorial change took place on the Egypt-Israel border after Sadat came to Jerusalem, nor after Begin arrived in Ismailia, nor after the talks at Leeds Castle, nor the Blair House talks, nor even after the Camp David Accords in September 1978. Only when the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty was signed on March 26, 1979, which set the stages and modes of withdrawal, while preserving reciprocity, over a three-year spread.

Something similar took place with Syria. Since the Madrid Conference in October 1991, several rounds of talks have taken place between Israel and Syria. But at no stage did Israel withdraw territorially on the Golan Heights. It was clear that a peace agreement had to be signed first, which would define stages and modes spread over several years. Why was this not done with Arafat? Let us assume that his personality and psychopathology were not studied. Let us assume that certain people insisted on bringing in Arafat specifically – why not sign a full agreement that would define the peace and the territorial boundaries, goals and means, and determine stages of withdrawal, spaces of caution and reciprocity? Where did the vast accumulation of closed minds and foolishness of the Wise Men of Oslo come from?91 The argument usually uttered in this context is that if such a demand had arisen, the Palestinians would not have signed. Now, if that is so, then it would have been even more wrong for Israel to sign. After all, what is the meaning of “would not have signed”? If their intention was peace, why would they not sign? And if their intention was to violate the agreements, and act in accord with the Doctrine of Stages, proclaimed in 1974, why sign anything with them? Indeed, here profound foolishness worked hand in hand with terrible evil to the detriment of the basic national interests of the Israeli people. Hence, it is clear why it was necessary years ago to set up a state investigating commission into the mistakes (were they merely mistakes?) made in the context of the Oslo accords. If state investigating commissions were set up after the 1973 war and the 1982 war, what were those in comparison to the ugly reality that the Oslo Accords have created for the State of Israel?
A no less grave phenomenon has been the repeated recognition by Israel in all the agreements signed with Arafat, of “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people” to Palestine, whereas not even once is there reference to “the legitimate rights of the Jewish people” in the State of Israel. However, the graver problem is: When they signed this recognition, did they know what they were signing? In all the decisions and meetings of the “Palestine National Council”, since it was decided at the 13th assembly in March 1977 in Cairo, that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people were three: the right of return (this originates in UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, concerning the return of Arab refugees to their homes in the territory of the State of Israel within the 1948 frontiers); the right to self-determination; and the right to establish their independent homeland on the national soil (that refers to many articles of the “Palestinian National Covenant” from 1968, and states the exclusive right of the Palestinian people to ownership of all Palestine). Did the messianic Wise Men of Oslo know the meaning of this recognition? What did they do to prevent the liquidation of the State of Israel, as implied by “the right of return”, and by the right to set up an independent homeland on the national soil? Were they conscious when they signed, if only concerning this particular article?

The Communications Mantra

Many academic fields refer to communications between parties as an aspect of primary importance, as an important foundation for arrangements on the personal, organizational, and diplomatic level. Deriving from this is the implication so often uttered, that: There’s no alternative, we have to talk, as a way of reaching a solution to problems.

But those who advocate this approach, are apparently inclined to forget that speech, communications, and negotiations, are means and not ends. They are aimed at reaching a goal, diplomatic arrangements. Hence, questions arise: Do the actors really want to talk? Is there someone to talk to? And especially, is there something to talk about? Is there a common denominator among the actors, and can the gaps be bridged? Are they coming to negotiations in order to succeed and achieve results or in order to make the negotiations – and even mediation efforts – fail? Are they sincere in their approach and their policy, or are they being forced to come in order to avoid antagonism from a significant third party? And which results are they hoping to achieve?

Absorbing and internalizing the information occurs in line with the perceptions and motivations of the players, rather than conforming to a desire to understand the other side’s problems. Hence, there is a totally different view not
only of the structure and characteristics of the conflict, but also of the possible ways of solving it. Each party sees its justice and its rights, and the dimension of reciprocity becomes problematic and complex. There is a rejection of all dissonant information, while avoiding it, and a lack of desire to contend with it. Hence, each side sees itself as reliable, and the other side as not; its promises as valid, and those of the other side as worthless; the sincerity of its desire to end the conflict against the insincerity of the other party. Political reality and cultural gaps cause recoiling from harmful situations, as does the feeling that the wheel will turn. This leads to adhering to basic goals, in the hope that the next bet will win. The changes are incremental: indeed there are difficulties, but it is possible to overcome them. The outcome is a dangerous gamble, which leads to a poor strategy of decision-making and to escalation of relations leading up to war.

Here arises the wonder/the retort that Israel has in fact done everything. And what more can be done? But the question is not relevant. It expresses in large measure a terribly closed mind. Israel has no policy, certainly not an overall strategy, regarding its objectives. Its policy has to do with reacting and putting out fires. Further, having a policy of reacting, of contending with problems, is not a consistent or long-term policy. It is certainly not profound. The dominant characteristic is quick transition to another experiment/reaction/initiative. Israel has indeed tried everything, but impatiently, impulsively, in a wrong-headed quest for instant solutions “now”. However, it has done nothing in the way of a planned, initiated policy. And when the crisis intensified, and no quick solution appeared on the horizon, the policy of flight emerged. It must be stated that a state that does not have the will to kill and be killed, will not exist. This is what has sustained states, preserved their power, and enabled them to exist in a stormy, violent world. The “killer instinct” is praised in business, so why not in national policy? This was Israel’s weapon in the 1950s and 1960s. It proved itself to be a crucial factor which produced effective, resolute deterrence of the Arab states – until the dizzy, hedonistic Left came on the scene, and left behind scorched earth.

This phenomenon reveals an intolerable face of society and politics in Israel. The air of bitter accusations and evasion among the Jews remains a scandal, while everyone seeks to prove his cleverness and generosity in making peace proposals and exciting plans for arrangements, while Israel’s enemies look on astonished at a phenomenon absolutely unknown to them. They wait quietly for more Israeli concessions without giving anything in return. Yet, the main problem touching on the cultural level is the ignorance on the part of most Israeli political players of the Arab-Islamic reality, of the features of the political system in the Middle East, as well as their judgments based on the “mirror
image” of their Western, cultural flaws. Their perceptions are illusory. Yet, they have become the basis for brainless, fateful decisions, and for a failure to relate to the cultural-religious world of Arab-Islamic society. On that basis they have decided that one can “do business” precisely with Arafat and his gang. The crowd with pink fingernails and round spectacles prefer to listen only to themselves, and worst of all, they are not ready to learn from bitter experience. They continue in their foolish ways with the cultural flaws in their thinking.

Another aspect that shows not only their lack of profound cultural insight, but real ignorance, refers to the hudnah phenomenon as a basis for a political arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians. In Israel’s political discourse, it has picked up amazing speed, and involved the President of the State, the military establishment, and the United States ambassador in Israel. However, it was one of those storms that spread clouds over everything. Not only do they not bring rain but they leave everything parched and dry. The researcher Moshe Sharon referred to this with acute criticism: Arafat speaks in a code known to his listeners and reflects their cultural world. Therefore, the Israeli imagination saw the peace of the Prophet Isaiah, whereas Arafat saw the hudnah of the prophet Muhammad. Hudnah is merely one side of the coin of jihad. It means a temporary truce when the enemy is too strong and cannot be defeated. It is a cease-fire meant to provide a time out to weaken the adversary. Arafat’s peace is merely a hudnah, and he signed it many times over, at Oslo, Cairo, Washington, Wye, Tabah, and Sharm e-Sheikh. And he violated his signed accord whenever it seemed useful to him to do so, at his timing, since every hudnah agreement must explicitly indicate its term, otherwise the Muslim side could terminate it without even a pretext.

We must recall that hudnah refers mainly to inter-tribal social conflicts, and does not necessarily deal with political and national conflicts. Moreover, the weak party in a conflict seeks a hudnah through a mediator, and he pays compensation to the strong side, the victor, in accord with the mediator’s determination. But above all, both parties must agree to an arbitrator and accept his decision. That is, an agreed agenda, as well as agreed solutions. There were indeed cases of arrangements with outsiders, but these only worked when the Muslim side agreed, and the arrangements were acceptable to it and preserved their interests. Hence, it is clear that this mode cannot be applied in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, unless Israel surrenders and gives up its rights.

The Social Mantra

The Western concept is that modern man is a rational, social creature. Therefore, conflict is an abnormal situation in human society. If the parties
really want, and try to work together, there will be a solution even to the Israel-Arab conflict.

However, these opinions are far from being accurate, certainly not in Arab-Islamic political culture. In Arab society, conflict is a natural state of affairs. Hence, the concept of solution is not at all clear or understood. There is no doubt that every player wants it very much. But does the desire of the parties mean that one party is approaching the other? Besides, are the definitions of the parties concerning issues on the agenda matching and mutually agreed? The whole Israeli system of thought is aimed at solutions. It aspires to instant solutions. Everything now. Everything immediately. But there are not necessarily solutions to conflicts, Nor are there magic formulas. Arab society realistically accepts that everything is temporary, of course including solutions. The central issue, therefore, is how one lives over time in such an entangled reality, conflictual and complex.

Joining this attitude is the position that tries to see common ground in the form of living together. Its main motto is that there is no alternative and that it is necessary to live together. Geographic reality requires it, and perhaps even the Minister of History asserted that they must live together. Yet, is that the problem? We fear that this is not the question. Rather it is, do they want to live together? What is the practical meaning of living together? In what sort of regime? Under whose rule? An enlightening example of “living together” is Lebanon. They have been slaughtering each other there for three centuries. They don’t want to live together, and the mutual hatred is reflected in major violence. Yet, Lebanon is a molehill compared to the mountain of the Arab-Israeli conflict. So what is the operative meaning of the phrase “living together?”

Lebanon is the best proof that Christian Arabs and Phoenicians cannot live in peace with Sunni Muslim Arabs, nor can either live with Druze or Shiite Muslim Arabs (nor even among themselves). Hence, it is clear that living in peace with Jews in a Jewish state that sits on Arab soil seems a wild dream. The Arab states do not live in peace – certainly not in harmony – one with the other. Where does the faith come from that they will be ready to live at peace with Israel? Hence, the operational paradox that in the Land of Israel/Palestine two peoples will live and reach compromises. In the past this notion was expressed in declarations that the great powers were responsible for creating and perpetuating the conflict, and if they would leave the two parties alone – they would work things out among themselves. But this is a naive dream. They do not want to work things out. Today there is more insight that outside factors have an important role in processes of making diplomatic arrangements. Nevertheless, gaps still stand out
between the cherished goals of the parties. While the Jews, despite their power, have been ready to divide up territory and make compromises since the beginning of Zionism, the Palestinians, despite their weakness, not only do not agree to any division of Palestine, but do not recognize the Zionist ideology of the Jewish people—the Jewish state—the Land of Israel.

The most dramatic, most meaningful change in the Palestinian position did not take place in Oslo in 1993, as the Wise Men of Oslo announced. Rather it occurred at the 12th Palestinian National Council in June 1974, in Cairo: the policy of “never” (abadan) and “it is all mine” – Palestine belongs to the Palestinians alone – vanished from Arafat’s terminology. From then on – it was decided – the shibboleth would be, all the territory that will be liberated from Israeli hands will be accepted by the PLO, but without giving up the claim to all of Palestine. Arafat learned that he must not say, No at any price. It was more important from his standpoint that the right way to get Israel to retreat was to wear down its morale; that way did not lead through the battlefield but through low intensity warfare: violence of various sorts, terrorism and guerrilla warfare, according to the Hizbullah model. Still, this change, dramatic as it may have been, was on the tactical level. There has been no strategic change in regard to Israel, while processes of dehumanization of the Jewish people, and the ambition to destroy the Jewish-Zionist state have not only remained as they were, but have been terrifyingly accelerated.

**The Territorial Mantra**

The concept in Israel is that “occupied territories” are the source of all problems and the main reason for perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. If Israel would withdraw from the territories, reality would fundamentally change. The Palestinians would become responsible, because they would have something to lose.

This one-sided, one-dimensional position has several aspects. It sees its own positions in the conflict and its own perceptions of it, and does not at all try to internalize the Palestinian stance that perceives the issues totally differently. It believes that “the Palestinian problem” is really limited to liberating “the territories” and does not understand that there are additional Palestinian problems more difficult and more complex. It does not want to learn from the history of the PLO and its objectives that are expressed in “the Doctrine of Stages”. It is possible to reach arrangements with the Arab states based on territorial compromise since they focus on what is theirs territorially speaking. The situation is totally different with the Palestinians. They persist in their demands for “the right of return” and “the partition plan”. Arafat has long been
proclaiming that there is already a Palestinian state, that he is its president. The 1967 frontiers are not necessarily the goal that Arafat wants to achieve in the final stage. Rather they are interim boundaries. Those who believe that he will have no alternative, and that he will be forced to compromise will find concealed precisely here – at full intensity – a flaw of culture and consciousness.

The Palestinians still need a long period of “political maturing” and internalizing that Israel is an existing fact, a period that Egypt passed through, and other Arab states are beginning to internalize. With Egypt, as we have analyzed above, and even with Jordan, the problems are complex and complicated, and a situation of peace certainly does not exist. But the gravest issue is with the Palestinians. Those in Israel who are devout in their faith in peace are still convinced that what Arafat wants is “to come home in peace”, to a state in the 1967 frontiers, and then everything can be settled. They do not want to internalize the PLO’s demographic structure, with most leaders of organizations in the PLO originating from and having been born in the territory of the State of Israel within the pre-1967 frontiers. It requires much naïveté and lack of basic understanding, or simply foolishness, to think that they have struggled for a generation just to give up the dream of return. It requires more than naïveté, unquestionably foolishness, to estimate that the refugees will give up their dream, that they will agree to remove the key to the house that they left in Palestine from the neck of the child who lives in the refugee camp. Indeed, all the characteristics of the dizzy, utopian Israelis match the theory of cognitive dissonance.

These gaps will be clarified in an analysis of the minimal positions of the Zionist Left in Israel, compared to the minimal claims of the Palestinians. The former speak of Israel’s total withdrawal to the 1967 frontiers, as a magic solution, and afterwards, peace will bloom. Meanwhile, the latter speak of realizing “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people”. At the 12th “Palestinian National Council” in June 1974, Arafat succeeded in canceling the outward signs of radical ideology. It was decided that the PLO would accept any territory that would be liberated from Israel, but without giving up the final objective of liberating all Palestine. The PLO would set up a national authority (salata wataniyya) but not a state, until the liberation of all the fatherland was completed. At the 13th PNC, March 1977, in Cairo, the strategic goal was defined as realization of “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people”: The right of return (haq al-`awdah); the right to self-determination; and the right to establish its independent state in the national fatherland, in accordance with its will and choice. “The right of return” expressed in General Assembly Resolution 194 of 11 December 1948, is of utmost importance. It states that refugees who
want to return to their homes should be allowed to do so as early as is practical and possible, provided that they are ready to live in peace with their neighbors. Compensation for property will be paid to those refugees who do not wish to return. It is important to understand that almost all the 1948 refugees fled or were expelled from the coastal plain, and they do not want to return to the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Their demand is to return to their homes within the territory of the State of Israel within the 1967 frontiers. Moreover, in contrast to the UN resolution which speaks of the return of individuals who want to live in peace, the PLO demands a collective return of all refugees. From the PLO vantage point, there is no disputing the “right of return”, no bargaining, and no concession. It is believed to derive from natural law, and from the national and civil rights conferred on the Palestinians, and no man or group can alter this.

One of the first decisions of the PLO in 1964 was not to use the word “refugees”, but only “returnees” (‘aaidun); and that nothing would be done to rehabilitate them until “the stolen homeland” was liberated. Many studies carried out by researchers have come up with the same findings: the refugees in the territories and the Arab states are not inclined to improve their dwellings, nor to make arrangements that would imply a readiness for a permanent situation. From their viewpoint, the reason for their flight is not relevant. What is determining is their exclusive, unchallengeable right to return. Indeed, on the issue of the absolute demand for “the right of return” not even Arafat has a mandate or ability to force a change in Palestinian society.

The second right is “the right to self-determination”. This is demanded without any territorial demarcation of Palestine. Further, it refers to the whole Palestinian Diaspora as such. The principle of self-determination is based on the cultural dimension which distinguishes one national group from another; and the political dimension that translates the cultural uniqueness into sovereignty and national independence in the framework of a territory. Therefore, the Palestinian attitude touches on the absolute link between the Palestinian people and the whole territory of Palestine. The right of self-determination is an absolute legitimate right, and in the PLO’s eyes, it is the basis for establishing a state as an interim goal towards recovering all of Palestine. In contrast to Israel’s policy of evasion and the closed mind, the PLO emphasizes the Partition Plan at every opportunity. Even the Declaration of Independence of November 15, 1988 refers to the Partition Plan as a basis for attaining the PLO’s objectives. The goal is the Partition Plan, General Assembly Resolution 181. This, in the view of the PLO, is the only legitimate territory that the international system recognized for Israel.
This is accompanied by the issue of recognizing Israel. Whoever reads the Oslo Accords will note that there is no recognition of the State of Israel, nor of the Jewish people as a national group. This was one of the many mistakes of the Wise Men of Oslo, who took this aspect for granted. They recognized the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people”, including “the right of return” as a primary right, but were not wise enough to obtain recognition of legitimacy by the Palestinians in return. Whoever believed that this matter was of no importance and that Israel exists without their recognition, will kindly read all the peace agreements signed throughout the world, even those with Egypt and Jordan. He will discover how criminally neglected this matter was and how important it is. Throughout history, the PLO refused to recognize Israel, claiming that it was keeping recognition as a bargaining chip for the final stage of diplomatic arrangements. Non-recognition of Israel and the notion that Israel must disappear, are not merely a tactic, but the central axis in the PLO’s world outlook. Therefore, the change in this matter must be qualitative. No negotiations in history began with non-recognition of the people and its state. It is necessary to read what the Palestinians say, write, and proclaim; it is necessary to internalize the meaning of processes of education and indoctrination, in order to comprehend the character of actions and intentions.

The third right is the right to set up its independent state in its national homeland, which is, according to Article 2 of the “Palestine National Covenant”, Palestine in its boundaries during the mandate. Hence, their rejection in Article 20 of the Balfour Declaration and the British mandate and everything that has been based on them. Moreover, the decisions of the Palestine National Council determine that Jordan and Palestine are a single unit from the ethnic and territorial aspects.

Since international reality required the PLO to conduct a policy of constructive declarations, Arafat – having found that declarations of a commitment to destroy Israel totally produced tremendous damage throughout the world to the cause – resorted to the new slogan, “a democratic, secular Palestinian state” where Muslims, Christians, and Jews would live together in one egalitarian state. However, in discussions that were conducted it was stated: The state will be Arab. Its national, political, and social symbols will be Arab. It will form part of the pan-Arab federation that will arise; it will not be a multi-national state. The nationality of the Jews will be Arab and they will be given cultural-religious autonomy. Their nationality will be Arab and they will be distinguished only by their religion; the democratic, secular Palestinian state will arise only after destruction of the Zionist state, and will take its place.
All PLO spokesmen have repeatedly emphasized that there are stages in the Palestinians’ return to Palestine. First, to the 1967 frontiers; second, to the Partition Plan boundaries; and third comes the secular, democratic state of Palestine. These stages are based on a situation of phased peace (salam marhali), and a situation of permanent peace (salam daami). Permanent peace will be established after the building of the Palestinian state in which the Jews will give up their national rights and their state, and will be merely a religious minority. Arafat has often declared that any Palestinian who agrees to the setting up of a “statelet” (dawila) in the territories, will be beheaded, since he supports the Zionist plot to subdue the Palestinian revolution. As to himself, he stated: “I didn’t become the leader of the greatest revolution in the world in order to be appointed mukhtar of Jiflik.” Indeed, contrary to the recycled “territorial mantra” in Israel, the 1967 frontiers were never the framework for a diplomatic arrangement, but merely part of the Doctrine of Stages.

The Mantra of Justice and Rights

One of the prominent problems is the struggle between two national movements, each of which has its justice and its truth. For that reason, the partition or the country and/or separation: “We here, they there,” seems so attractive, as an operational, implementable and winning slogan.

Whoever does not know the subject well, may very easily be misled. It is very easy to distort the data and blur facts. Most questions derive from ignorance and from recycling slogans. The problem is not who is right or how much the other side is vile, but, Is there a basis for a diplomatic arrangement, and what are the chances for achieving one? Most issues are subjective, relative concepts that cannot be measured. The attitude to the moral aspect is complex and complicated, and even profound familiarity with the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict does not make possible a judgment based on morality and values. Even the classic Talmudic argument, “Two men hold one talit; one says, ‘It is all mine’; and the other says, ‘It is all mine’,” cannot help here, also because the basis for dividing the object does not exist. What are they to divide and how? Is there agreement, even something close to one, about what they are talking about? When people say, “It is necessary to support realization of ‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people’”, they are expressing generosity and moderation. However, orderly study of the Palestinian goals will lead clearly to the conclusion that the goal is destroying the State of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state. If so, how will the justice and rights of each party be expressed?

This is also true regarding the slogan “a secular, democratic Palestinian state”, which means a Palestinian-Arab national state, with a Jewish non-
national, religious minority, which lives within the state as a “protected people” 
(ahl al-dhimma). When they say “an end to the conflict”, they are referring to an absolutely different reality from that understood by Israel. The same applies to “the end of the occupation” and particularly with regard to “peace”. The Palestinian leadership has often declared, even in English, that an end to the conflict means fulfilling the Palestinians’ demands to their satisfaction; fulfilling all the demands of the Arab states; and in particular, Israel giving up its Zionist identity as a Jewish national state. When the Palestinians say an end to the occupation, this is not the occupation of the 1967 war, but of the 1948 war as well. And when they say “peace”, they mean peace as we have explained above, that reflects the Arab concept of truce arrangements and temporary separations of forces.

In fact, what remains is the search for justice, which should be done and seen to be done, while preserving honor, more than searching for a status quo. In the absence of a feeling that justice has been done, any agreement will have a short life span, on account of the inclination to continue to try to correct a wrong. The sense of justice is rooted in the legitimacy of demands, hence the questions: Who is guilty of the outbreak and perpetuation of the conflict? Who suffered more? Who missed opportunities more? What are the implications of the past for the future? What do we do in the future? Yet, here is a paradox: the struggle is not between justice and justice, or between the right to existence and the right to existence. It is viewed and defined as national justice for the Palestinians, and national existence for Israel. Here too there is no matching: Palestinian justice is all of Palestine. Therefore, it does not allow for national existence for the State of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state. Jewish existence, in the Palestinian conception, does not enable the Palestinians to have national existence.

Even the attempts to pose national justice for the Jews against national justice for the Palestinians, and the right of existence for the Jews against the right of existence for the Palestinians, have not done well, since the parties define in a different and mutually contradictory manner their national justice and national existence. Israel’s readiness for compromise does not match the Palestinian aspiration to obtain Palestine, not less than all of it, unless Israel stops being Israel – a Jewish-Zionist state.
The Eighth Cultural Flaw in Thinking: Negotiation Management

The literature concerning negotiations is immense in scope.\textsuperscript{94} Entering into negotiations means that the parties want and are ready to conduct a policy of compromise and concession. They agree as to the costs and risks of making an accord and are ready to compromise. They recognize the need for mutual concessions, for establishing rules of reciprocity without ruin or surrender; they define their purposes in realistic, attainable terms; and they demonstrate diplomatic realism by institutionalizing rules of effective communications between the parties, including the use of mediators, arbitrators, and conciliators.

Several obligatory rules of action will clarify the issue. Negotiations mean making difficult decisions, and vision must be long term in national terms. The Nobel Prize is not important, nor do achievements for the time being determine future well-being, but rather the national interest does so. An accord does not exist for its own sake. The test is in its influence on future reality. Indeed, it is necessary to estimate what is worthwhile from a long-term outlook, rather than according to foolish, messianic slogans. The adversary is very different. In particular, he is different on the cultural aspect. Therefore, we must avoid seeing a “mirror image”. We should not judge him by our interests and concepts. Rather, we should put on his shoes, and wear his hat. Negotiations mean going slowly and gradually.

One must not gamble, nor run to obtain everything. Patience is the key word. The glory can be left for the coming generations. We must learn and well internalize the lessons drawn from previous negotiating processes: accumulated experience, the insight into the cultural dimension plus negotiation management strategies. We must not reinvent the wheel over and over again. We must build operational models of the actors in negotiations: a psychological personality profile (beliefs, values, culture) of the actors; ways of acting for their strategic and tactical goals; and responses as to the form of rules of behavior, bargaining, and evaluation of alternatives. Finally, we must determine “red lines” and evaluate the items on which each side is ready to fight to the death rather than concede.

We propose two main dimensions that can ensure the potential success of negotiating processes. First, “a strategic stalemate is mutually painful.” This state of affairs places both parties before difficult choices; they are caught between the hammer, that is, the push to reach goals under uncertain conditions, and the anvil, that is, mutual fear and distrust. The outcome is that they need negotiation management in order to succeed, to survive, and to advance their
objectives. Second, “A mutually shaping opportunity” expresses the power of expectations of success. When both parties come to negotiations out of a sense and desire that success is necessary, and that any alternative might be worse, then there is a great chance that negotiations will succeed. Moreover, “political ripeness” must also develop,\(^9\) that is, maturity in the ability to define realistic goals that can be achieved; the insight that the other side too has legitimate goals, and the right way is mutual compromise and concessions. If both sides have similar perceptions, their positions will be expressed in a realistic approach, which is ready to accept the other side and compromise with him.

These principles require an attitude that the goal is an approach to solving problems according to the “win-win” model, which is opposite to the “zero sum game” model. In practice, what are involved are the following operational frameworks: understanding the adversary’s culture, that is, developing a common language of agreed upon terms; agreed definitions of – and criteria applying to – issues, and the absence of publicity, particularly the communications media; setting a scale of truly important interests, while being considerate and flexible concerning the other’s interests, and creativity and originality in seeking new ideas; identifying common goals and dealing with soluble problems, but always determining what are the difficult problems, and by no means may they be left without consideration; and the involvement of mediators is vital.

The issues might worsen because of a “distorted attitude” which causes a downward spiral of distrust. One side offers a series of proposals that are perceived in its own eyes as representing good will, and it evaluates that they will be sympathetically accepted by the other side. When they are rejected, the first side expresses disappointment and frustration. The second side believes that the disappointment and frustration are not real, since the first side was not in good faith. Hence, the spiral of misunderstanding and mistrust continues. The negative image of the adversary perpetuates itself. A fascinating phenomenon develops in the negotiating process. When one of the parties makes positive steps, they are interpreted as a reaction to circumstances rather than a real change in position. Why does this happen? One possibility is that it is a change in priorities – the proposal was attractive as long as it was not proposed. From the moment that it is proposed, it will be perceived as less attractive, and obviously not meaningful. The one who rejects the proposal asks himself the question: Why was it proposed? Isn’t it possible to obtain more? In many cases, the question is: Tell me who made the proposal and I will tell you what the response to it will be.
The important phenomenon as to negotiation management is the cultural gap. Only a few states have the same range of values and most sides do not understand the other’s intentions. Even speaking the same language definitely does not mean a guarantee that one understands the other’s goals. On this account, the potential for misunderstanding is very great, as is the investment in time. Hence, the probability of failure grows. This problematic situation was analyzed by the Israeli intelligence expert, Ben-Porat: “And what about cultural gaps? Even those who know Arabic, even fluently, do they really understand Arabs too?”

The first issue, perhaps the most important of all, is that the Arabs are experts in negotiations. They “invented” and perfected negotiations to the level of a true art, as a consequence of inter-tribal bargaining, and mechanisms of mediation and compromise among themselves (wasat, wustah). In contrast, Jewish society has no historic experience in negotiations, on account of being an “enclave society” in exile, and of the meager opportunities for negotiations on the level of high politics. This issue should have been at the top of concerns of the Israeli leadership. However, since they are not ready to admit the issue’s importance, their failure is repeated and striking. Instead of taking this as an important learning project, they evade it – and fail.

The meaning of these differences is that those steps that seem vital for Israel’s security are perceived by the Arabs as humiliation and a blow to their honor. Obviously, this issue is a tough nut to crack. In fact, the main problem is that Israel sees the results of negotiations in utopian terms. Peace will mean flourishing and prosperity. No less. Meanwhile, the Arabs want to achieve a just peace with honor. Justice and honor are always relative in the eye of the beholder. Nevertheless, despite the deep gaps, Israel must insist on written commitments, precise in juridical language, despite the Arabs precisely preferring lack of clarity, general definitions and informal understandings.

Studying the patterns of leadership and negotiating techniques of Asad and Arafat – as a Middle Eastern patrimonial model – and Barak – as an aloof Western model – will clarify these complex issues. Asad’s negotiating techniques can be described as “the politics of attrition”. From his vantage point, negotiating is an art, which is mainly managing a policy of walking on the edge. He customarily sat parallel to his discussion partner, without eye contact, and obviously without looking at him directly in the eyes. This created a constant effort on the part of the interlocutor and wore down his power of resistance. Asad customarily drew out the discussions for hours on end, without pause, and on side issues that seemed purposeless and hopeless. Often the discussions were
diverted to mere polite phrases and philosophical quibbling aimed at mockery and distraction.

From Asad’s viewpoint, the purpose of the discussions with Israel was obtaining “a just peace with honor”. This meant adhering to the uncompromising position of return of the Golan Heights as a condition for opening negotiations. It had to be made clear to everyone that there was to be no negotiating over the Golan Heights. That was a given. When he would be assured in advance that the whole Golan Heights would be returned, then discussions could begin, but not over the Golan Heights. Thus, Asad proved the strength of continuity and the weakness of change in Syrian policy, by creating constructive blurredness. However, for him, the diplomatic process of negotiation was more important than the results.

In contrast, Arafat’s technique of negotiation management – also fitting the Middle Eastern patrimonial model – can be defined as “the politics of being pathetic”. Arafat specialized in negotiation management through producing an acute crisis. Yet, he definitely did not walk on the edge. In this process he crystallized and used every sign of weakness for a strategic attack, yet he backed down when necessary, and expressed readiness for an additional arrangement. In the intra-Arab system, Arafat was “self-effacing” before other Arab leaders, including flattery. After the Black September slaughter in 1970, he swore that he would take revenge on King Hussein, when he met him. But when this occurred in July 1979, he kissed him on his brow as a sign of submission to the king. Despite the heavy blows that he had taken from Asad, who expressed rancor and hostility toward him from the middle of the 1960s, despite the massacres at Tel al-Za‘atar in 1976 and at Burj al-Barajneh and Tripoli in 1983, Arafat repeatedly sought a close relationship with Asad. However, the latter stayed with his position of total rejection of Arafat until his dying day, stating that Arafat did not represent the Palestinians and was persona non grata in Syria. This was likewise the position of Egyptian leaders, including Mubarak. They all loathe him and are ready to choke him, but, for lack of an alternative and while gnashing their teeth, they help him.

Nevertheless, the most important item in Arafat’s strategy was a successful combination of harsh violence on the ground and simultaneous diplomatic negotiations. He learned, from the middle of the 1970s, that using the diplomatic method proved itself, even if he held with all his strength to three overall strategies that he had designed: national unity (al-wahda al-wataniyyah); independence of decision-making (istiqlal al-qarar); exclusivity of representation (wahdaniyat al-tamthil). His eyes race about while expressing
panic, his astonishing miming, the shows for the media, the many masks of his face, have quite successfully combined with the phased nature of his demands, and the recycling repeated over and over of his commitments. Arafat has remained utterly extreme. He wonderfully resembles Saddam Hussein and bin Laden in his operational tactics of unselective terrorism, extreme violence, and stubbornness in realizing his goals.

In contrast to these Arab leaders, Israel’s negotiating technique, like the Western model, expressed “the politics of avoidance and the closed mind”. The refusal to learn from accumulated experience, even that gathered by Israel itself; always reinventing the wheel and dangerous serial gambling; reckless proposals expressing readiness for concession and compromise, in order to buy quiet and continue its social-economic hedonism; short-sightedness regarding issues and lack of thinking and planning as a basis for any policy. A striking expression of this was the proposals of Prime Minister Barak. He applied the same strategy to Syria, the Palestinians, and Lebanon, and in all three cases, his policy blew up with a loud blast of utter failure. He offered Syria a plan that seemed brilliant to him, with the approval of President Clinton (another example of Western cultural failure). The main part was full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in favor of Syria, and in exchange Syrian agreement to Israeli sovereignty over all the Sea of Galilee. Asad received the plan, looked it over, politely rejected it, and wrote down another Israeli concession on the Golan Heights, on the way to its full concession in the next stage of negotiations.

Every one should learn from Barak’s agonizing failure, and internalize that negotiations with Arabs mean understanding Arab-Islamic culture. Yet, Barak is bigger than life, in his own eyes. He learned nothing, and decided to turn to Arafat, and offered him very high percentages of the territories, including dividing Jerusalem. Here too he won the blessing of President Clinton, and here too he expected that this would express his sincere desire for a diplomatic arrangement, and would lead Arafat to agreement with him. But Arafat, like Asad, received the plan, registered its details, and announced with a loud trumpet blast of terrorism embodying his total rejection.

A second failure should have led even a man lacking understanding to internalize the factors in his failure, and to try to learn. But not Barak. Now he turned to discuss Lebanon. He decided on an embarrassing and shameful unilateral withdrawal, abandoning values and friends. He accompanied the retreat with threats of Israeli military activism in response to any violation. But nothing has remained since then, and the activism has become defeatism, weak like a spider’s web. Meanwhile, Lebanon was not cut off from its surroundings.
Arafat saw what happened, and immediately opened an age of the most inhuman terrorism in history. Since then, Israel’s situation has become acute. A tangled web of relations of negotiation management and failure in negotiations, expressed by the Palestinian terrorist belligerency since September 2000, as opposed to Israel’s quest for quiet and pleasure-seeking, at any price. Indeed, there are two different realities: One is Palestinian violence against Israel, and attempts to bring about the involvement and intervention of the pan-Arab and international systems, and on the issue of Jerusalem, Islamic involvement. The avowed goal is to wear down Israel mentally and to strike at its national morale, following the pattern of combat and attrition that Hizbullah used in Lebanon. On the other hand, the second reality is the perception of the desirable in the policy of the Wise Men of Oslo. None of the attempts to show the atrociousness of Palestinian violence have succeeded in penetrating into their consciousness. Except for a few who have sobered up, most of the group have continued in their march of folly, their minds closed and estranged from reality, aloof in blind obstinacy.

Yet the messianic Wise Men of Oslo, closely aided by the media, recycle their explanations, rather than retracting them in the sense of admitting their mistake and returning to reason. First, the greater part of them still claim, that the Oslo Process was working well. Here are Ron Pundak’s words: “If there were a political horizon, the Tanzim itself would dismantle its own violent factions.”98 Chamberlain spoke in like terms after the Munich Pact with Hitler, saying he had brought peace not only for his time, but also for coming generations. Shulamit Aloni stated, after visiting Arafat in his government compound (mugata'ah) in January 2002, that she believed more in Arafat than in the Israeli prime minister and his army commander. Arafat, she claimed without blushing, had invested two billion NIS in developing infrastructure. He did not want to start the intifada. As to the weapons ship, Karin-A, Arafat claimed that he was not involved in the matter. And she believed him.99 She uttered this while Bashar Asad’s statement was being published that Arafat was a liar, and that Syria had had no confidence in him since the 1970s. Like statements could have been made by Hussein or Sadat or the rest of the Middle Eastern leaders.100

But Mrs. Aloni believed Arafat, despite the United States accusing him of making unprecedented assertions: In the words of President Bush (the second),

[I am] Very disappointed with Arafat... I went towards him and stated support for a Palestinian state, and in exchange Arafat increased terrorism, and he lies insolently. ...If Arafat does not demonstrate a serious fight against terrorism, the United States will impose sanctions on him, up to breaking relations. ...We are disgusted with Arafat...give him an ultimatum.101 Arafat acts like a terrorist.102
Vice President Chaney stated: “We don’t believe Arafat... Arafat is a lost cause, and contact with him should be broken off immediately.”

Secretary of State Powell has declared, “Violence and terrorism have destroyed all of Arafat’s credibility.” Senior officials in the Administration and the White House condemn Arafat severely. He is “mentally unstable”, “a liar”, and they are “disgusted with him”. It’s a waste of time, you don’t need to talk to Arafat.”

The US envoy, Zinni, said, Arafat “is an incorrigible liar. He lied to me insolently. This is a totally unreliable person. Arafat is not mentally lucid.” “Arafat is the head of a mafia.”

The former head of the CIA, Wolsey, said, “Arafat must undergo a total change of heart and mind.”

But Pundak affirmed in his mental blindness that Arafat

is the man with whom you have to talk, and it is possible to reach an arrangement with the Palestinians on one hundred percent of the territory plus one more meter... and Israel will absorb a quota of several tens of thousands of Palestinians.

Beilin, financed by secret European funds, interviewed by the Israeli media with astonishing frequency and in unprecedented scope, set new, unbreakable records for insolence and impudence by claiming that only Oslo was the way and the path, and that only Sharon was responsible for the outbreak of the Intifadat al-Aqsa and the continuing terrorism. According to Akiva Eldar, Pundak’s representative in the communications media, there is a symmetry between the Palestinian “right of return” and the Israeli “law of return”. Yoel Marcus elaborated on this: “There will be no agreement with Arafat if we do not withdraw to the 1967 borders, including Jerusalem and agree to the right of return.”

Another assertion was that the discussions at Camp David were a brilliant “spin” and act of deception by Barak. Hence, Arafat was the victim, not a rejectionist. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to read Abu Mazen’s words. He took part at Camp David:

East Jerusalem must return to us, and Western Jerusalem must be an open city... We will not agree that you will have a presence at the Western Wall...(except for) religious ceremonies... There are four million refugees, all of whom left the soil of historic Palestine and have the right to go back to their homes.
Hassan Asfour, who was a member of the Palestinian delegation at Camp David: “From our viewpoint, there is no option of giving up the absolute, sweeping right of return.”\textsuperscript{116}

The last assertion was that the withdrawal from Lebanon was successful, and was not connected to the terrorism conducted by Arafat. Then what if the Palestinian spokesmen affirmed this explicitly, and for example, Ahmed Jibril, when he met in Lebanon with Hashim Mahamid, a member of Knesset for the Hadash Party.\textsuperscript{117} Then what if Bernard Lewis analyzed the issue differently in an interview with Yaron London? Lewis stated:

I think that Israel was right when it went into Lebanon... The recent withdrawal, as it was carried out, without an agreement, abandoning friends and weapons, was interpreted by the Palestinians as a sign of weakness. They deduced from the Hizbullah’s experience that the Israelis were soft, spoiled, and if they were hit – they would surrender. These things were said by Palestinians explicitly... The withdrawal from Lebanon had great influence on the Palestinians’ decision to renew the armed struggle.\textsuperscript{118}

Then what if the United States State Department indicated that the continuing softening of Barak’s positions poisoned the negotiations, since Arafat was having difficulty deciding where the concessions ended, and he was trying to squeeze out more and more? Then what if Dennis Ross was convinced that Arafat cannot sign an overall peace agreement, and he will always be a rejectionist? Nothing will convince the Wise Men of Oslo and their flock.

Nasrallah became a Palestinian culture hero and action hero. For the first time, the enemy had defeated Israel, including sophisticated use of the Israeli communications media. It became clear that Israel’s capability to stand fast had been eroded beyond recognition, and the trial was not yet over.\textsuperscript{119} Israel was bending under the pressure of public opinion, and had fled from Lebanon in embarrassing panic without an agreement. On the diplomatic and intelligence level, the Hizbullah created strong ties with the Palestinian Authority; it serves as a connecting element with Iran; developed an apparatus of recruitment and activity among the Israeli Arabs; and gave sponsorship and support to the actions of the Islamic Jihad. Nasrallah was right when he asserted that, “Israel is as weak as a spider’s web.” It had fled Lebanon in dishonor, betraying allies, and brought upon itself Arafat’s inhuman terrorism.

The Wise Men of Oslo wanted to make a “new order” in Palestine. They had sorely scolded those who tried to make a “new order” in Lebanon in 1982, but they had the right to make a new order. For the gang of gamblers without borders, those messianic hedonists, Oslo was not a diplomatic process, but a
spirtual state of dreamers and merchants of illusions, who were helped by an oligarchic group in the media, who did not allow any public discussion, mocked those who did not see the vision of redemption, and prevented them from showing how murderous Oslo was. The problem equaled a lethal combination of “the Order of the Wise Men of Oslo” with a devoted communications media. A “mutual admiration society” developed. The Wise Men of Oslo gave scoops of dreams to the media, an empty show of peace, and the media transformed them into experts whose army of peace was worthy of joining. Indeed, Bernard Lewis remarked, with British understatement, that the idea of bringing Arafat from Tunis was a mistake. Arafat never hid his intention to realize “the right of return” to all Palestine, and he wants Jordan too.

Basic insight into Arab-Islamic political culture would have enabled them to take another attitude. From Arafat’s vantage point, he has “solid proof” why he should continue terrorism and violence:

a) Because they have proven themselves. Israel understands only force, and retreated after the implementation of violence and terrorism;
b) Violence is important as a tool for politically socializing and indoctrinating for the purpose of building a Palestinian national consciousness, as a basis for a myth of achieving independence;
c) Arafat well knows that the Palestinians will not allow any leader to give up the dream of the right of return. From their vantage point, this tune cannot be stopped. It is an absolute taboo until Judgment Day or until return is achieved.
Conclusion

In this study, we have dealt with profound cultural gaps as a cause for the many failures in the confrontation between the State of Israel and the Arab states, gaps that are striking causes for the absence of insight and lack of ability to understand Arab politics. Aristotle claimed that a people without walls are a people without a choice. In order to build defensive walls, it is necessary to understand cultural traits and national concepts. A similar attitude is found in the Jewish tradition: Whoever wants peace must prepare for war. For that reason, what is required is commitment, credibility, and determination in employing power.

The central question is whether it is possible to stop conflicts between cultures. Mack and Snyder affirmed as early as 1957 that conflicts between cultures are the most violent, since they contain all the other kinds of conflicts: national, territorial, political, economic. As proof, they mentioned the primordial society in Lebanon. The Balkan lands too can serve as an example of the harsh reality of conflicts between cultures, notwithstanding the fact that they had lived together in one state of Yugoslavia under Tito. Indeed, minorities are still subject to the danger of extermination everywhere in the world, even today, certainly those that show weakness, lack of determination, and faint heart.

The best explanation was given by Bernard Lewis: Muslim culture takes pride in the generosity of the victors. A struggle that ends ambiguously is an invitation to trouble. Two distinct civilizations are involved. This cultural phenomenon may not be everlasting, but it has deeper roots than many people are eager or desire to think.

Understanding the other side, the gestures of its leaders, processes of decision-making; and system of considerations, are critical for understanding the Arab political system and contending with it. The Israeli academic system produces comprehensive research on the Arabs, but few studies deal with cultural issues, with decision-makers, or with intra-organizational considerations, particularly because of the “mirror image”. The difficulty in understanding structural and cultural differences, the Arab personality structure, and patrimonial leadership in authoritarian regimes, does not enable correct, successful analysis of political processes. Hence, the multiplication of surprises and failures. The basis of all these phenomena is the belief that the other side too thinks, evaluates, and acts, according to the same criteria as oneself. Hence, the difficulty in understanding the foundations of their behavior. As we stressed at the beginning of the study, a person’s expert fluency in English, his Western
education, and even his Western dress, do not permit us to conclude that his way of thinking and acting are Western.\textsuperscript{124}

If we sum up the meanings of these realities, we may argue that in view of the wide cultural gaps, in the age of “politically correct”, cultural fallacies, and the Arab petrodollar, Western decision-makers and intellectuals refuse to believe that Islamic fundamentalism and Arab fanaticism constitute a worldwide strategic threat. Both are a plague that may set the whole world on fire. Islamic fundamentalism represents a cult of death that rides on the lynch-favoring Arab society.

This is a lethal combination. In the age of “politically correct”, cultural fallacies, and the Arab petrodollar, Western public opinion and the media refuse to internalize what they clearly perceive: the struggle is one between modernity, liberalism, and civil rights, as against totalitarianism of thought, tribal traditionalism, and religious fanaticism. Islamic fundamentalism and Arab fanatics really want to bring their glorious distant past into the modern future of mankind.

In the age of “politically correct”, cultural fallacies, and the Arab petrodollar, the Western mind refuses to comprehend that Islamic fundamentalism is deeply rooted in the hearts of Arabs and Muslims. It is a norm of social behavior, a cultural reflection of society, encouraged by political leadership through the media and education. It is not an escape from frustration or poverty. Rather, it indicates, a “mentally healthy society”.

In the age of “politically correct”, cultural fallacies, and the Arab petrodollar, Western decision-makers do not understand that the Islamic fundamentalist groups and the Arab fanatics do not play by the rules. They do not play by the democratic rules of the game; they do not play by the Western cultural rules of the game; they do not play by the rules of Judeo-Christian morality; and above all, they are different culturally and are totally devoted to forcing the fanatic Muslim religion on the Western infidels. They truly prove God’s prediction about Ishmael: “His hand shall be against all men.” Indeed, aggression against others has characterized Islam and the Arabs for most of their history.
Endnotes

3. Ibid.
16. See the penetrating interview conducted by Yaron London, with the most important Arabist, Bernard Lewis: *Yediot Aharonot*, January 11, 2002.
17 The cable TV science channel, Channel 8: “The Retreat from Lebanon”, (Heb.), May 24, 2001.
21 Ibid.
27 We will explain this trend at length in: D. Bukay, *Arafat, the Palestinian National Movement, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Politics of the Masks*, op. cit.
30 *Yedio’t Aharonot*, September 2, 1994.
40 *Ma’ariv*, April 2, 2002; *Yedio’t Aharonot*, April 2, 2002.
41 Yediot Aharonot, February 6, 2002.
49 For example, Y. Harkabi, Elements of the Israel-Arab Conflict, Tel Aviv: Ma’arqbot, (Heb.), 1971.
50 According to MEMRI, <www.memri.org>, January 3, 2001; Al-Ahram, August 1, 2002; December 23, 2002; December 24, 2002; December 25, 2002.
51 A. Stav, “There Is a Clear Resemblance Between the Nazis and Islam”, Nativ, Vol. 6 (83), (Heb.), November 2001, pp. 3-4. Also see Joseph Schechman, The Mufti and the Fuehrer, New York, 1965; pp. 139-140; and J. Lebel, Haj Amin and Berlin, Tel Aviv, (Heb.), 1996.
52 Bat Ye’or, Islam and Dhimmitude, op. cit.
53 Y. Bodansky, Islamic Anti-Semitism as a Political instrument, Tel-Aviv: Tammuz and ACPR Publishers, (Heb.), 2000.
57 A. Rushdi, al-Sahyuniyyah waRabibatuh – Isra’il, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Masriyyah, 1965; S. Al-Majid, Nihayat Isra’il, Cairo: al-Sharikah al-Arabiyyah


65 There is an opinion that claims that this approach does not derive necessarily from cultural flaws, but from the interests of the Western regimes, and they have enough knowledge and insight about aspects of Arab politics, including the cultural dimensions.


70 Stef Wertheimer, Ma’ariv, June 7, 2002. Wertheimer’s statement is modeled on a Hebrew saying: “If there is no flour, there is no Torah.”

71 Yirmiyahu Yovel, Yedioth Aharonot, April 5, 2002.

72 Daniel Doron, Ma’ariv, July 1, 2001.


Yediot Aharonot, March 31, 2002.

Parents of suicide murderers, The Union of Arab Physicians, and statesmen in the Arab world – all refer to the phenomenon postively and sympathetically. This is not a deviant phenomenon, but an essential part of Arab-Islamic society. Hence the cultural aspect. About this phenomenon of suicide murderers, see at length: D. Bukay, Total Terrorism in the Name of Allah, op. cit., pp. 101-110.


On the other hand, Jewish peace (shalom) derives from the word shalem and expresses wholeness, totality, and an actually utopian aspiration to harmony and tranquillity.

Bat Ye’or, Islam and Dhimmitude, op. cit.


For example, Ha’aretz, November 11, 1999.


In consequence of the screening of the anti-Semitic series “Horsemanship without a Horse”, and the massive American pressure, President Mubarak denied that anti-Semitism existed in Egypt. His political aide, Osama el-Baz, claimed in a long speech that anti-Semitism had originated in Europe, and explained that Zionism was the root of the Arab-Jewish conflict. See MEMRI, <www.memri.org/>, January 3, 2003.


91 We shall deal at length with all the excuses that have been given or that might be given, in the book: D. Bukay, *Arafat, the Palestinian National Movement, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Politics of the Masks*, op. cit.


96 Yoel Ben-Porat, “Intelligence Assessments: Why Do They Fail”, in Zvi Ofer, and Avi Kober, eds., *National Security*, Tel Aviv: Ma’arkhot, 1987; (Heb.), p. 231.

97 We do not intend to analyze the negotiations that took place in the 1990s between Israel and Syria, or between Israel and the Palestinians. This is not the function of this work. The aim is to mention rules of action in order to clarify the issue of cultural gaps in negotiating processes.

98 *Yediot Aharonot*, March 26, 2002.


100 Clinton attested to this on his last visit to the Middle East. Mubarak had told him that,“Arafat was an insufferable character.” Abdullah, king of Jordan, said that “Arafat is responsible for the tragedy of the Palestinian people,” *Yediot Aharonot*, January 25, 2002.


104 *Yediot Aharonot*, February 8, 2002.


107 *Ma’ariv*, February 8, 2002.


111 Yediot Aharonot, December 21, 2001; and in an interview with Dan Shilon, Ma’ariv, January 18, 2002: Arafat is a pragmatic man. Barak caused great damage to peace. Y. Beilin, Shabbat supplement, Ma’ariv, February 8, 2002.


113 Ha’aretz, January 25, 2002.

114 For example, Doron Rosenblum, Ha’aretz, July 13, 2001; Akiva Eldar, Ha’aretz, July 16, 2001; B. Mikhail, Yediot Aharonot, July 13, 2001; Miron Benvenisti, Ha’aretz, August 2, 2001; B. Kimmerling, Ha’aretz, July 12, 2001


117 Israel Television, Channel One, February 17, 2002.

118 Yediot Aharonot, January 11, 2002.


120 Yediot Aharonot, January 11, 2002.

121 Remarks of General Amos Gil’ad, Yediot Aharonot, December 26, 2001. Referring to these comments by Gil’ad, Peres said that Gil’ad was turning Arafat into a genius. Ma’ariv, December 28, 2001; and the Director General of the Foreign Ministry, Avi Gil, said, “He is leading the struggle against militarization of national evaluation,” Ma’ariv, January 4, 2002.


Glossary of Islamic Terms

A

`adah – Custom
`ahd – Covenant

Ahl al-dhimma – People of the covenant, protected status
Ahl al-kitab – People of the book: Jews and Christians
`alim (pl. `ulama’) – Religious scholar
Allahoo akbar – Allah is the greatest
Amir al-mu’minin – Commander of the faithful
Ansar – The followers of the prophet in Medina
`aql – Reason
Arkan al-islam – The five pillars of Islam
`asabiyah – Arab tribal solidarity
`ashura – The “tenth”, the Jewish Yom Kippur; Day of mourning in Shi’ite tradition
`asriyun – Modernists

B

Baiy`ah / mubaya`ah – Oath of allegiance to the ruler
Bid`ah – Apostasy, heresy; innovation practice

D

Dar al-harb – Abode of war, the world outside Islam
Dar al-Islam – Abode of Islam, Muslim land
Dar al-sulh – Regions considered at temporally peace with Islam (by contract)
Da`wah – Religious propaganda, propagation of the Islamic faith
Dawlah – State
Din – Faith, religion
Dunia – World

F

Fard `ayn – Obligatory duty
Fard kifaya – Voluntary duty
Fatwah (pl. Fatawat) – Authoritative religious ruling
Fiqh – Jurisprudence
G
Ghulat – Exaggerators
H
Hadith (pl. Ahadith) – Narration, traditions of the Prophet
Hajj – Pilgrimage to Mecca
Hakmiyah – Sovereignty
Haq (pl. Huquq) – Right
Haram – Unlawful, forbidden, sacred territory, sanctuary
Hijrah – The Prophet’s migration on July 16, 622 CE
Hizbullah – Party of Allah
Hukm – Authority, rule
Hurriyah – Freedom
I
`ibadah – Worship
`id – Festival
`id al-adh`a – The feast of sacrifice
`id al-fitr – The feast of breaking the Ramadan fast
Ijma` – Consensus of Muslim community
Ijtihad – Innovative thinking, interpretation of Islamic law
`ilm – Knowledge, science
`ilmaniyyah – Secularism
Imam – Religious and prayer leader
Iman – Faith
`ird – Woman honor
Islah – Reform
J
Jahiliyah – The times of pre-Islamic Arabia, sinful society
Jama`ah – Association or society
Jihad – Holy war
Jihad al-Aqbar – Striving for the path of Allah when the whole world is Muslim
Jihad al-saghir – The holy war against the enemies of Islam
**Jizyah** – An exemption tax

**K**

**Kafir** (pl. Kuffar) – Disbeliever, infidel

**Khali`** – One who deported from his tribe

**Khawarij** – Islamic radical sect

**Khutbah** (pl. Khutab) – Sermon, preaching

**M**

**Madhhab** (pl. Madhahib) – School of legal thought or jurisprudence

**Majlis al-shura** – Consultative assembly

**Mawla** (pl. Mawali) – Non-Arab Muslim convert in early Islamic history

**Mu`min** (pl. Mu`minun) – Believer or faithful

**Mufi** – Muslim religious scholar

**Murtad** – Who rejects Islam, an apostate

**Muruwah** – Tribal manhood

**Mushrik** (pl. Mushrikun) – Polytheist, idolater

**N**

**Nahdah** – Resistance

**Niyah** – Intention

**Nizam islami** – Islamic system

**Q**

**Qadi** – Islamic judge

**Qawm** – Nation, race

**Qiblah** – Direction of pray

**Qur`an** – The holy book of Islam

**Qureish** – The prophet’s tribe

**Qias** – Reasoning by analogy

**R**

**Rak`ah** – Bowing during prayer

**Ray** – Opinion, personal speculation

**S**

**Sabr** – Endurance and steadfastness

**Sadaqah** – Charitable donation
**Sahabah** – Companions of the Prophet

**Salafiyah** – Movement of Islamic revival

**Salat** – Prayer

**Shahada** – There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah

**Shahid** – (pl. *Shuhada*) Martyr

**Shari‘ah** – The path, the Islamic law according to the *Qur’an* and hadith

**Sufism** – Islamic mysticism and asceticism

**Shi’a** – Party, faction, the adherents of ‘ali

**Sunnah** – The practices of the prophet

**Shura** – Consultation

**T**

**Ta`awun** – Solidarity, cooperation

**Ta`ifiyah** – Sectarianism

**Tali‘ah** – Vanguard

**Taqiyyah** – Dissimulation about one’s religious identity

**Taqlid** – Imitation

**Tariqah** – Religious order

**Tashmis** – Deportation, banishment

**Tabi`** – Normalization

**Tatwi`** – Subjugation

**U**

`ulmah – Globalization

**Ummah** – The Islamic community

**Usuliyyah** – Roots, fundamentalism

**Urf** – Local custom

**W**

*al-Wad` al-alami al-jadid* – New world order

**Watan** – Homeland, fatherland

**Z**

**Zakat** – Voluntary charity