Contrasting Martyrdom
and the Politicization of Religion in the al-Aqsa Intifada

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Contrasting Martyrdom and the Politicization of Religion in the al-Aqsa Intifada

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Abstract

The assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent shockwaves through the Jewish community worldwide. The seeming impossibility of a Jew killing another Jew, as Leah Rabin described, cemented a sobering truth about the peace process: that there were religious fundamentalists – on both sides – eager to derail it.

This derailment has culminated in the al-Aqsa Intifada, the pre-meditated violent upsurge against the Israeli occupation to liberate Palestine, which has plagued the region and its peoples since September 2000. This paper identifies major tributaries (trends that strengthen and renew a cult of martyrdom) in Palestinian society. Specifically historical/religious tradition, indoctrination of children and the masses by the Palestinian Authority, economic disparity, reinforcement of violence based on popular support, and the nature of military occupation are explored. Special attention is also given to the role international media and other states play in preventing an organic development and solution of the conflict.

When a Palestinian suicide bomber detonates him/herself, Israeli society interprets this as irrational and maniacal. However, the underlings of Palestinian martyrdom - its infusion of nationalist goals with religious tenets - distinguishes the Palestinian suicide bomber as a new political reality of the Intifada. The dire situation in the Middle East has developed a uniqueness because the political conflict is substantiated on a religious concept of martyrdom. The use of suicide bombing by both Islamists (ie Hamas, Islamic Jihad) and nationalists (ie Fatah) illustrates this transformed, synthesized identity. Thus, dissonance between Palestinian and Israeli camps is difficult to mend because the identity underlining martyrdom is so powerful, and different.

Conflicting interpretations of the meaning and employment of martyrdom in Jewish and Islamic tradition can cause a misinterpretation of the other parties intention. An understanding of Palestinian martyrdom can only be understood by Jews, in order to bridge the ideological impasse, after a critical self-examination of their own brand of fundamentalism, primarily following the Oslo Accords and typified by Baruch Goldstein.

A misunderstanding of the motives for Palestinian martyrdom, as well as the culture perpetually glorifying death, is the first and central barrier in bridging the gap between the sides. It is in understanding the contrasting nature of Islamic and Jewish martyrdom, as well as forces which perpetuate the cult of martyrdom in Palestinian society, which may be the quickest bridge to a cessation of violence, commencing dialogue, and one day, a realization of Rabin’s dream.
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1. Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, where conventional barriers no longer divide us from political theater, one is forced to confront the “others” in our personal worldview. For most Westerners, this threshold was crossed on September 11, 2001. The comfort formerly enjoyed was shattered and we were forced to confront our new situation in a new global reality.

Since Americans were, by and large, insular, defining our character by our own needs and wants and not in contrast to an “other” or an enemy, September 11th exposed our hermetic identity to oxygen, and we were forced to adapt. In seeking to understand the motivation behind such a massive horror, Westerners soon reached an impasse. Can two unlike cultures understand one another at all, especially with a seemingly amoral “aggressor”? In turn, we realize it is not amoralism, or even irrationality, which drives a terrorist to plow down buildings, it is his fervent and unbending devotion to morals which causes such terror. And because we as Americans don’t share or understand these morals, we delegitimize the “Others”’ position, subordinating their ideology to a level lower than ours. That is not to be said that if we understood al-Qaeda’s motivation then their act would be forgivable. There are no attempts to whitewash the political realities of 9/11, rather to prevent further atrocities.

Instinctively, there is the tendency to retaliate, which was manifested in America’s War on Terror. But it is only through the understanding that innocent civilians will be saved and future devastation prevented. Understanding the nature of these ideological gaps forces us to confront our own historical blemishes and frailties of self. It
is through confronting our own demons that we can understand ourselves, and therefore the lenses through which we view and evaluate others. This is difficult. There seems little incentive to be self-critical in order to understand an aggressor, and furthermore we don’t want the terrorist to think they have penetrated our psyche or forced us to reconsider our morality and behavior.

*An Understanding of the Other through Recognition of self: A Case for Israeli Jews*

Jewish self-identity is often not associated with fundamentalism. Due to the large Diaspora of the Jewish people, secularization and assimilation are more commonly associated terms of modern Judaism. In a time when Jews are still coming to terms with their post-Holocaust memory and identity, the original purpose of a State of Israel – unifying the Jewish people – has become lost in a new, polarized landscape. The violence in Israel has reorganized Jewish communities along political lines – proving to be an overwhelmingly divisive factor between religious denominations.

For Israelis to understand the nature of religiously motivated violence perpetrated against them by Palestinians, they need not look further than their own past. To transform the Jewish image from Victim to Warrior, modern Jewish terrorism really begins with the ideological extremism and muscular Judaism of Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky, whose *Lechi* group (“Lohamei Herut Israel” – “Fighters for the Freedom of Israel”), also referred to as the Stern Gang, was responsible for political terrorism, including the bombing of the King David Hotel and the assassination of Swedish envoy, Count Folke Bernadotte, in the 1940s.
Israel was founded as a Jewish state, but on secular principles. David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizman were both non-religious. It wasn’t until the victory of the Six Day War where we begin to see a real Jewish character introduced into Israeli politics. 

_Haredim_ (God fearing, ultra-religious) and Orthodox Jews began to move to Israel, viewing the military success attributed in 1967 to God empowering the Jews to reclaim the biblical land – _Eretz Yisrael_. It was the beginning stages of a messianic era, and this enthused Jewish fundamentalists. Segmentation of Jewry began at this point and its byproduct is the intra-Israeli rivalries that political scientists umbrella as “signs of a healthy democracy.” There are violent and irreparable schisms among Jews in Israel.

It wasn’t until the 1970s when an emblematic figure would breath new life into Jewish fundamentalism of the same potency as Ze’ev Jabotinsky. Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League, and glorified as the namesake of the Jewish terrorist group, Kahane Chai (“Kahane Lives”) would be the new voice inspiring Jewish terrorism in the name of God. He was a clear influence for Baruch Goldstein, perhaps the most infamous of modern Jewish martyrs for the 1995 Hebron Massacre. While examples of Jewish terrorism are few and far between, there is a familiar sinew connecting Jewish violence to their Palestinian counterpart. Both are predicated on a unbending religious pre-eminence, influencing a fundamentalist _realpolitik_.

It was in this context that the religious Yigal Amir felt justified to assassinate the secular, dovish Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. After speaking at a pro-peace rally in Tel Aviv on November 4, 1995, leading the crowd in a rendition of “Shir LaShalom” (Song for Peace), and then descending the back stairwell of the plaza, Rabin was shot by Amir
from close range. Rabin died that evening, along with the peace process. Leah Rabin, his wife, would later comment that they never imagined a Jew could kill another Jew. Few could. The Oslo Accords, and the notion of peace for Israel, would not be the same without him, and in this framework, Amir as a Jewish terrorist had achieved his desired end. “Rabin’s murder was an impersonal crime, meant not so much to snuff out a life as to stop the peace process in its tracks.” His concession of land for peace was unacceptable to a fundamentalist theology, he was considered a betrayer of God. And Amir, by his religious contemporaries, would become a martyr.

*Martyrdom in Palestinian Culture:*

As the central topic of this paper, an understanding of Palestinian martyrdom, and its fruition in the form of suicide bombing, can only be understood by Jews after a critical self-examination of their own brand of fundamentalism. Similarly, Palestinians must seek to understand their own Intifada in terms of its religious groundings. The Palestinian nationalist movement merged with an Islamic theology as a result of intra-Palestinian politics of the 1980s. Competition for popular support forced nationalists and Islamists to adopt symbols of the other, such as flags and Qu’ranic verse. These borrowed symbols were useful in establishing a Palestinian nationalism, which increasingly meshes religious identity with secular nationalism. If borrowed symbols are the most innocent meshing of ideologies, the most dangerous has been the recent adoption of suicide bombing by both parties as a legitimate means to political and religious ends.
The politicization of religiosity and the adoption of nationalism into theology has made the Palestinian national identity a unique force to understand and define. This makes the myth and cult of martyrdom a truly unmatchable force. Even unlike Islamic fundamentalism worldwide, the repeated use of suicide bombing in Israel is a violent expression of political desires as much as a desired religious goal.

Why has radical Islam in the Territories chosen to adopt suicide bombing, glorified as martyrdom, to attract attention to the cause and achieve momentum in their political struggle? It is seemingly contradictory for Islam to espouse suicide operations when the Qu’ran explicitly condemns suicide. However, the purposeful indoctrination of the Palestinian people by the Palestinian Authority, clerics, and the press perpetuate an image of martyrdom as a legitimate response to Israeli aggression.

How can Israelis and the greater Jewish community begin to understand the cult of martyrdom? This is where an examination of Jewish martyrdom is useful. Dismissing Palestinian terrorism as nothing more than fanaticism will never reverse the renewing culture of hatred, nor will it produce any real, lasting peace.

The dire situation in the Middle East has developed a uniqueness because the political conflict is substantiated on a religious concept of martyrdom. The dissonance between Palestinian and Israeli camps is difficult to mend because the former identity is so powerful and different from conventional Islamic terrorism.

The concept of Islamic martyrdom and its invocation is dissimilar to the Jewish model, thus complicating the other via self-recognition. The religious motivation for Jewish terrorism is not an attainment for Paradise. Though these religions have similar
roots, the Jewish tradition is one which focuses on this life rather than the life to come. One reaches the World to Come not through sacrifice to expedite one’s travel, but on fulfilling positive commandments and obligations. Only as a secondary, ultimately apocalyptic goal, is Jewish radicalism motivated by the return of the Messiah and rebuilding of the Temple.

Jewish terrorism is influenced, primarily, by a refusal to divorce the Jewish people from the historic land of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). The preservation of biblical Israel is the foremost concern for Jewish fundamentalists, and anyone attempting to redraw the religious boundaries is an apostate. The vigorous defense over land and drawing of borders was a relatively unheard concept in Islam or Arabism until the surge of nationalism in the 20th century, and in a modern context, the Gordian knot of religious and national demands, inextricably tied in the core of the Palestinian people.

Chapter two will explore the religious interpretation and textual basis for Islamic martyrdom. A careful understanding of jihad is critical, because it is in this political-religious arena where the shaheed (martyr) is exalted. Historical antecedents to the current al-Aqsa Intifada will be considered, including the development of fundamental ideology in Islam, the strategic precedent set by Hizbullah, and the perfection of the suicide machine by Hamas.

Jewish martyrdom, its historical and religious framework, is the subject matter of chapter three. It is interesting, for comparative purposes, to note the seeming

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1 Ibn Khaldun, in The Muqaddimah (translation by Franz Rozenthal), presents a formative argument for the preference of “desert living” over being sedentary. “Sedentary life constitutes the last stage of civilization and the point where it begins to decay. (94)” In other words, nomadic living, unconfined by borders but bound by group feelings, is more characteristic of Arab people.
incompatibility of a similar concept. For various reasons to be explored, Jewish martyrdom is not predicated on similar values as Islam. This chapter is critical for two reasons: first, it is from the Jewish definition of martyrdom that they view the Palestinian martyr. Second, because of this perspective, Jews as a majority do not choose to employ suicide bombing and martyrdom operations. The fringe which do purport violent means for messianic ends are marginalized because of their unpopular fundamental outlook. The terror attack of Baruch Goldstein is presented as an example.

Chapter four, “The Palestinian Cult of Martyrdom,” examines how the notions of jihad and martyrdom of chapter one get infused into a nationalist agenda. This is where politics and religion meet. A look at the current intifada sets the backdrop for the factors which renew the cult of martyrdom in Palestinian society. These include, in addition to religious/historical roots, the deliberate indoctrination of children and the masses by the PA and its press, the politicization of the conflict, and the overwhelming influence popular support has on maintaining a militarized agenda. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion exploring the concept of humility and humanity in the Palestinian identity. This underlines the human aspect of Occupation and Intifada which cannot be overlooked.

Finally, to step outside the realm of the major players, chapter five explores the external factors and global responses to the Palestinian martyr culture. An extensive treatment of international press is included, as well as reactions from Arab leaders, world Jewry, and Europe with regards to the recent escalation of anti-Jewish activity.
Suicide is clearly forbidden in Islam, the Palestinian model infuses both political aspirations and religious tenants, thereby representing a politicization of religion which allows suicide in the form of bombing as a political strategy. Whether as nationalist fervor or a sign of political legitimacy, the act of suicide bombing as seen in the current Intifada is not an expression of Islam. It is an expression of the metamorphosed Palestinian identity, dominating the cult of martyrdom, which purports religious and nationalist goals.

While it is unlikely that Jewish terrorist groups would employ a new strategy of suicide martyrdom in the second Intifada, it is important to note both their perspective and reaction to its perpetual use by the Palestinians. The contrasting dearth of Jewish terrorists to the overwhelming, exhaustive list of Palestinian suicide bombers illustrates the very nature of this difficult, seemingly insolvable conflict. Two different sides, each imbued with their own strengths, but lacking the defense to negate the other’s offense and the ability to bridge a gap of understanding.

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3 Kati Marton, p. vii.
2. Islamic Martyrdom

The metamorphosis that the concept of martyrdom has undergone, from its Judeo-Christian nature of a defensive adherence in faith to its modern employment as an offensive war tactic, is nothing short of radical and political. It is in the last century where death has transformed into myth, and subsequently, commemoration into propaganda. The cult of martyrdom which reigns in select Islamic societies is perpetuated and strengthened because of these myths. This paper will focus specifically on the Palestinian communities which employ and support suicide bombing as an expression of and means to martyrdom. As we will see, the cult of martyrdom has superseded even professional and educational aspirations of the younger Palestinian generation.

The imagery surrounding the shahid (Arabic, meaning “martyr” or, literally, “witness”) has become the script of Palestinian youth. Through the discourse of charismatic religious leaders and the precedent of violence against Israel, suicide bombing has become a direct path towards Paradise for a devout, Palestinian nationalist. Unique to the Palestinian cause, martyrdom has assumed a political dimension with the entry of Chairman Yassir Arafat’s Fatah party (an acronym for the Palestinian Liberation Movement, meaning “victory”) into the business of suicide bombing.¹ These political tributaries of martyrdom in the Palestinian territories will be discussed later. Imperative in understanding the current psychological tone of the Palestinians in the al-Aqsa

¹ The Fatah faction supports suicide bombing against Israeli military and civilian targets through sponsorship of Tanzim, Fatah’s armed militia, Force 17, Arafat’s presidential guard, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, a paramilitary wing. They are also notorious for a dubious history of terrorism, dating back to Black September in 1970.
Intifada\textsuperscript{2} is a comprehension of the history of Islamic martyrdom as a theory and religious tool. Integral to the notion of martyrdom is an understanding of jihad.

This chapter will explore the precedents for the current cult of martyrdom. This includes Qu’ranic verse and, more importantly in its modern context, the interpretation of these Revelations. Additionally, a treatment of terminology is necessary to understand how these fundamentally religious concepts fit into a political setting. A historical look at lauded martyrs, from Imam Husayn (the first martyr who died at the Battle of Karbala) to Mohammad al-Dura (the first Palestinian child who died in the latest Intifada), is also central to appreciate the concerted effort of religious and political leaders, through organizational structures, to imbed martyrdom into the center of the Palestinian ethos.

When Abdel-Basset Odeh, a Hamas activist, walked into a Passover seder in a Netanya hotel and detonated himself on March 27, 2002, his community congratulated and envied his ascendancy to Paradise. In his death, he took twenty-nine Israeli civilians. How can one side perceive a suicide bombing as a nationalist act of martyrdom and another as a violent act of hate? In understanding the nature of Islamic martyrdom, and then placing it into the current conflict, we can seek to understand the motivation behind young men and women, willing to give their lives for their faith, for their people, and for their homeland.

Jihad:

\textsuperscript{2} Al-Aqṣa Intifada is the label this paper will employ to refer to the second Intifada between the Palestinians and the State of Israel. According to the Sharm al-Sheikh Fact Finding Commission, headed by former Senator George Mitchell, the al-Aqṣa Intifada commenced in September 2000 and, as of publication date, has not concluded, nor have peace negotiations begun.
The bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11th, the assault against the USS Cole, embassy bombings, in addition to the perpetual cycle of violence in Israel, has solidified jihad as a “holy war” in the minds of the fearful. While Islam is not violent by nature as a religion, jihad certainly carries militant aspects which tend to be glossed over in post-9/11 discussions.

Jihad has many interpretations, but most typically is translated as “to strive” or “struggle.” The “holy war,” as it is so often translated as, is only one of many aspects of jihad. The nebulous nature of one’s understanding of this central tenet of Islam arises from its interpretative principle. John Esposito provides an eloquent and readable description of the contradiction of jihad in his book, *Unholy War*.

The two broad meanings of jihad, nonviolent and violent, are contrasted in a well-known prophetic tradition. It is said that when Muhammad returned from battle he told his followers, “We return from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.” The greater jihad is the more difficult and more important struggle against one’s ego, selfishness, greed, and evil.\(^1\)

It is the prioritization of values of a believer or an organization which contributes to the distorted image of jihad. For some, jihad is the personal struggle to lead a good and peaceful life. For others it would be the driving force to liberate Palestine and free the Arab world from Western imperialism.\(^2\)

Since one’s fulfillment of jihad is entirely dependent on their interpretation, alternative readings of Qu’ranic verses are in abundance. There are several Qu’ranic references to personal struggle and armed resistance. Famously, the “Sword verse” has typified the argument that jihad is aggressive and combative. “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them.”\(^3\) However, a
scholarly reading must examine each surra in context. Esposito points to the conclusion of the verse which prohibits murder if the other party repents and pays zakat (alms). With each Qu’ranic verse, a literal translation or an interpretive reading is often the difference between virulent radicalism, as propagated by Sayyid Qutb, the father of radical Islam, or a placable creed, as upheld by more modernist Islams.

If the obligation of jihad isn’t confusing enough, discourse additionally swells around the direction of its intent. Malise Ruthven contends in his book, *A Fury for God*, that “anyone who understand Islam will know that jihad is not a ‘defensive movement’ in the narrow sense of what is technically called a ‘defensive war.’” However, many contend that jihad was defensive only until Sayyid Qutb changed the interpretation to an offensive struggle against a modern-day jahiliyya (“age of ignorance”), which perverts Islamic adherents.

The innumerable references in Islam (meaning “submission”) to Allah’s mercifulness and kindness clearly underline it as a peaceful religion. However, though peace may be its goal, it is clear that some espouse non-peaceful means to achieving that world. To realize *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam), one must triumph over *dar al-harb* (abode of war). One does this through jihad.

Jihad has been a vehicle for reaching religious and political goals since the Revelation. Whether it fits in the context of Just War theory is as ambiguous as every other aspect of this frustratingly vague doctrine. While terrorism, for obvious reasons,

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3 “Whoever transgresses against you, respond in kind” (2:294) is a classic verse emblematic of Islam’s defensive nature.
4 This term appears in the Qu’ran in reference to the world before the Revelation, implying that before Mohammad received the Revelation the world was filled with ignorance and barbarity.
does not fit in the context of *Jus ad Bellum*, it has been asserted that defense of territory, revolution against tyranny, and (as Qutb asserts) the establishment of the *shari’ah* (Islamic law) are appropriate motives to employ jihad.

While jihad carries an extensive historical burden of terrorism, including the infamous Shiite Assassins, the focus of this discussion will now turn exclusively on the path of jihad through martyrdom.

*Martyrdom:*

Martyrdom employed during jihad is the highest of honors and strongest demonstration of faith. Shahid (martyr, literally “witness”) is of the same root as *shahada*, the profession of faith. As in Christianity, the reward given to martyrs is paradise. While one may complete the Five Pillars of Islam to ascend to paradise, martyrdom is the most direct and guaranteed path to paradise. “In most cases martyrdom is regarded not only as a testimony to the degree of one’s commitment, but also as a performance of a religious act, specifically an act of self-sacrifice.”

Before Islamist resurgence, the Christian context of martyrdom was the most familiar to Western audiences. However, martyrdom holds a special place in both Jewish and Islamic histories.5

The cult of martyrdom is more prevalent in Shi’i communities than Sunni, particularly because a central figure in the former, Imam Hussein, was martyred on behalf of his sect. His death in the Battle of Karbala “became a defining symbol…of the profound injustice in the world.”6 Hizbollah (“Party of God”), a Shiite terrorist group in

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5 The Jewish tradition of martyrdom, *Kiddush HaShem* (“Sanctification of the Name”) will be discussed in the next chapter.
southern Lebanon, would use the imagery of Hussein in their suicide attacks against the US and Israel in the 1980s. And their affinity for Hussein, in no small part, is built upon their affections for Ayatollah Khomeini, who has used Hussein as a paradigm for sacrifice against an oppressive regime. The importance and staying power of symbols in Islam can not be emphasized enough.

If Imam Husayn was the first Muslim _shahid_⁶, he wouldn’t be the last. Relevant to this discussion, the next martyr to set the pace for modern Islamists is the death of Sayyid Qutb. Mentioned early, this architect of radical Islam, in addition to the Muslim Brotherhood Organization founder Hassan al-Banna, was sentenced to death for his influential advocacy of militant Islam, particularly against the government of Egypt in the 1960s. Both are considered martyrs of Islamic revivalism. With his controversial opinions and disdain for most things Western, he radicalized Muslims through underground work with the Muslim Brotherhood and, primarily, his writing, _Ma‘alim fi’l-tariq_ (“Signposts on the Road”).

In the scale of God, the true weight is the weight of faith; in God's market the only commodity in demand is the commodity of faith. The highest form of triumph is the victory of soul over matter, the victory of belief over pain, and the victory of faith over persecution.⁸

Palestinian society, today, is abundantly full of martyrs. With hundreds of suicide bombers and willing recruits, there is no shortage of symbolism reinforcing the cult of martyrdom. By being labeled _istishhadi_, meaning “self-chosen martyrdom,” a majority of

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⁶ Islam accepts earlier martyrs into their history, like the Jewish martyrs at Masada and Jesus Christ, because the Qu’ran includes both religions in their text. Muhammad is said to be the final prophet, a belief inclusive of previous figures in both faiths.
suicide bombers are recruited, but take an active decision to give their lives to the Islamic and/or political cause. Conversely, one who incidentally dies, not by choice but in conflict, is also considered to be “martyred.” Two powerful examples include Mohammad al-Dura and Imam Hijjo, children caught in Israeli and Palestinian crossfire.

The parameters for martyrdom are very indistinct, but the avenue is easy: if a suicide bomber is successful, he is a martyr and even if he fails, and is killed by Israeli soldiers, he still dies a “martyred” hero. Any Palestinian who dies is considered to have given their life to the cause. Therefore, because “martyr is defined in terms of the eye of the beholder,” every Palestinian is a shahid. And, while the glorified image of “self-chosen martyrdom” attempts to paint the suicide bomber as one who has exercised free choice on behalf of his faith and nation, there are more factors debunking this image. No terrorist acts alone. There are structures which train and financially support, indoctrinate and deploy these “self-chosen martyrs.”

While reasons and temptations for martyrdom are many, the reward is one. The conclusion of the fiftieth surra provides a glorious and lush destiny for the shahid. “The Fruit of the Gardens will be Near (and easy of reach)...In them will be (Maidens), Chaste restraining their glances, Whom no man or Jinn before them has touched.” There will be dark-green carpets, abundant water, and eternal dwelling in Paradise. This is the promise of every shahid, but notably, not the sole incentive.

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7 Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, founder of Hamas, describes suicide bombers as “self-chosen” (quoted in Juergensmeyer, p. 171) to underline a self-determination in the act of martyrdom. In actuality, the operation is supported and orchestrated by the organization deploying the bomber.

8 This verse (50:54-56) has been interpreted, infamously, to promised the shahid 72 virgins with lips and skin “like unto rubies and coral,” respectively. (50:58)
Islamic Martyrdom in Political Contexts:

“[It is] an interesting idea – that the approval of force for the defense of Islam can be expanded to include struggles against political and social injustice – and it is a relatively new one.” This poignant observation by Mark Juergensmeyer, in *Terror in the Mind of God*, highlights the uniqueness of using martyrdom as a political tool. Martyrdom, with clear philosophical support in Islam, has been attached to political agendas for over twenty years. It is interesting to mark the historical events which married the notion of martyrdom with politics, and furthermore with the offensive strategy of suicide.

Islam is clear in its admonishment of suicide (4:29); it is believed that if one commits suicide, he will repeatedly kill himself of the same device in Hell eternal. To resurrect a point made earlier in this chapter, everything depends on interpretation. In order to substantiate an otherwise illegitimate act requires only clerical interpretation, precedent, motivation and volunteers.

*Hamas,* (meaning “zeal”) an Islamic terrorist movement in the Palestinian Territories has been a popular employer of suicide bombing. According to Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, one of its founders, their religious legitimacy for suicide acts of martyrdom came from a *fatwa* (religious edict) issued by a mufti in the Gulf States. Fatwas are helpful because, beyond providing religious legitimacy, they substantiate the suicide act as

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9 Juergensmeyer gathered this assertion after interviewing one of Hamas’ founders, Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi, and the movement’s spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmad Yassin. One of Yassin’s colleagues, Sheik ‘Abd al-Aziz ‘Odeh, differentiated between the Islamic intifada and that secular intifada in that the Islamic intifada was “a moral struggle as well as a political one, stemming from religious commitment (p. 81).”

10 Hamas is also an acronym for its Arabic name, *Harakat al-Muqâqama al-Islamiya*, or “Islamic Resistance Movement.”
something political or noble, and the actor as considered and devout. Suicide acts are not committed “idiosyncratically or thoughtlessly,” and suicide bombers are not irrational.

Within the Islamic context, violence in the form of suicide to strive for political gains could never have been conceivable without the rise of Radical Islam. The ideological pace set by Qutb, al-Banna, and Mawilana Maududi (leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, the radical Islam movement in Pakistan) would be integral to later jihads. It was the political climate of the 1980s, however, which set the tone for the physical character of today’s violence. In understanding suicide, it is important to preface the “overriding preoccupation with [the] afterlife” which exists in religious and fundamental circles. It is this obsession with the World to Come which contributed to the popularity of the cult of martyrdom during the Iran-Iraq War. Iranian teenagers, by the thousands, would serve as human minefield sweepers. They would bear keys around their necks, a symbolic promise of access to the gate of paradise.

But it was Hizbollah, (“Party of God”), above all, which has been the flag bearer of martyrdom in Lebanon and the greater Muslim world. Invoking the sacrifice of Imam Hussein as a legitimization that suicide is not contrary to Islam, the party’s resistance and remarkable successes against Israeli occupation, and American interference, in southern Lebanon is demonstrative to aspiring martyrs. The success of Ahmad Qasir, Hizbollah’s first suicide bomber, by taking the lives of over 90 Israeli soldiers and military personnel in 1982, has earned him the distinction of Amir al-Shuhada (“the Prince of all Martyrs.”) An annual holiday to commemorate martyrs falls on the day of his “achievement.”
Hizbollah, through deployment of suicide missions, established that the lack of military prowess and capabilities was not a hindrance in achieving military success. It is the production of body bags which can sway foreign policy. This policy dominated the Hizbollah strategy until 1985. The retreat of the Multinational Force (MNF), consisting of predominately American troops, and Israel’s redeployment from the Biqa Valley (a largely Shiite community) and areas of Beirut are seen as the successful end to a violent mean.

Of course, martyrdom is a means in of itself. While there are concentric circles of victory in warfare, the center to the istishhad (“martyrdom”) is access to Paradise. While Muhammaed Husayn Fadlallah, spiritual leader of Hizbollah, has never issued a fatwa sanctioning suicide missions, the “spectacular bombings suggested that…Hizballah commanded a kind of devotion from its adherents that no other militia could claim.”

This devotion is hinged upon the will to die, which consequently, distinguishes the Islamic martyr from their Jewish enemy. While the latter may possess weaponry, his “point of departure is the preservation of life.” Conversely, the point of departure for the martyr is “preservation of principle and sacrifice.”

Hizbollah set the pace for today’s suicide martyrs to achieve a political end. It was the violent attacks perpetrated by suicide bombers that forced the Israeli troops to leave southern Lebanon in May 2000. Having achieved its goal, Hizbollah today no longer employs suicide as a strategy. Rather, the procurement of weaponry, most notably

11 As Martin Kramer points out in his essay, “The moral logic of Hizbollah,” the suicide bombing against Israeli forces in 1988 “signaled that the method had been abandoned for tactical rather than moral reasons.”
Kaytusha rockets from the Islamic Republic of Iran, shows a preference of strategy closely resembling conventional warfare.\(^{12}\)

Today’s observer marks gross incidents of suicide missions. Even outside of the al-Aqsa Intifada, the awesome destruction produced by these virulently religious young men, from the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001 to the Bali nightclub on October 12, 2002 illustrates the potency of this strategy. Its strength has not dwindled as a tool in the political realm, but strengthened because of the successes of Hizbollah and later Hamas. By Hamas being the most visible inheritor of this strategy, and utilizing it famously in the mid-1990s during a string of bus bombings, the infusion of the cult of martyrdom through suicide missions with a call for defensive jihad has become the strategy of choice among radical Islamic circles. In identifying the character of Islamic martyrdom, its Qur’anic foundation, and historical relevance, a richer understanding can be developed as to the function of martyrdom through suicide generally and specifically in the context of the current Intifada.

\(^{3}\) Holy Qur’an, 9:5.
\(^{4}\) Esposito, *Unholy War*, p. 35.
\(^{6}\) Ruthven, p. 48.
\(^{9}\) Esposito, *Unholy War*, p. 37.
\(^{10}\) Mehi Abedi and Gary Legenhausen, ed., p. 27.

\(^{12}\) Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, in *Hizbu’llah: Politics & Religion*, speculates the abandonment of suicide missions and the preference of weapons procurement highlights a “preservation of life” as a goal, contrary to the spin which surrounded suicide bombing of the 1980s.
xi Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 139.


xiii Juergensmeyer, p. 72.


xv *Holy Qur’an*, 50: 54-56.

xvi Juergensmeyer, p. 81.


xviii Juergensmeyer, p. 77.


xliii Saad-Ghorayeb, p. 128.
3. Jewish Martyrdom

Theology and religious symbols are clearly galvanizing forces in the Intifada. While a familiarity of Islam has been demonstratively integral in understanding the Palestinian perspective, very little has been proffered to suggest that an understanding of Judaism is integral to contextualize the Israeli perspective. This is due, in part, to the accepted status of Israel as a legitimate state by most countries. While very much a Jewish state, it is characterized by a secular government operating under democratic institutions. And to even reference a “Jewish nature” of Israel is largely contentious. Dominated by cleavages, from religious versus secular, Sephardim (Oriental-descent Jews) versus Ashkenazi (European-descent Jews) and even veteran Israelis versus olim (new immigrants), there is no general political culture which dominates Israeli politics. The consensual style of democracy, characterized by executive power sharing in the form of parliamentary coalitions and proportional representation, reflects the lack of homogeneity in Israeli society.

The establishment of the political environment is integral at the outset because it is through this variegated society which Jewish fundamentalism operates as a fringe group. While groups such as Kach (Hebrew meaning “Thus!”) and Gush Emunim (“Bloc of the Faithful”) use Jewish theology as the backbone of their political behavior, they do not enjoy popular support from Jews worldwide, though they subscribe to similar, even Orthodox, religious values. Like Islamic fundamentalism, Jewish extremists have taken religiosity to acute interpretation and have been met unenthusiastically.
Jewish terrorism, dominated by characters like Rabbi Meir Kahane and Dr. Baruch Goldstein, has been an unsuccessful and unpopular mechanism for retaliation and political momentum in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is partially because it is so widely condemned by Jewish mainstream, in and outside of Israel. But, also, terrorism similar to that employed by Palestinian counterparts, appears to be intrinsically counter to Jewish ethos. And, conversely, the motivation behind Jewish fundamentalism, that is the preservation of the biblical land of Israel, is a concept unfamiliar to the Islamic ethos, which historically has placed little emphasis on land and borders. It is simple to see how impasses are so easily encountered when contrasting Jewish and Islamic perspectives on martyrdom and devotion to land are illuminated.

**Jewish Martyrdom and the Preservation of Life:**

One, among many, reasons why Jews have difficulty in understanding the employment of suicide bombing as a manifestation of religious or political martyrdom is because the Jewish concept of martyrdom is strikingly different. First, imperative to understanding the Jewish perspective is a definition of *pikuach nefesh* – “preservation of life.” This Jewish law commands the obligation to save a life even when doing so would require breaking other commandments.¹ Nefesh, a Hebrew word in this context meaning life, is popularly translated to mean soul. The soul and the body are one. While the soul is a temporary guest in the bodily home, they function harmoniously off one another.

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¹ There is a very similar notion regarding sanctity of life in Islam. From the Qu’ran (5:32): “If anyone killed a person, unless in lieu of murder or spreading mischief on earth, it would be as if he killed all of mankind. And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the lives of all of mankind.”
Finally, Jewish authority does not assert that the demise of a body is necessary to liberate the soul.¹

In fact, texts overwhelming assert the preservation of life above all laws. With only limited exception – that of idolatry, murder and forbidden sexual relations (i.e. incest)² – when God “sets before you life and death…choose life.”³ Aside from these notable exceptions, it is impossible to mistake Jewish law as anything other than outright condemnation of suicide. However, religious martyrdom is historically achieved through suicide, be it “the ending of one’s own life for the sanctification for the name of God and allowing oneself to be killed in times of religious persecution rather than transgress biblical commandments.”⁴

The Hebrew term for martyrdom is Kidush Ha’Shem – “sanctification of the Name.” An examination of the sources reveals a wealth of examples establishing the lionized role of martyrs in Judaic history. Martyrdom, like in Judaism’s sister religions, reserves for the devout a place in the World to Come. But, there isn’t an emphasis of understanding the World to Come in Judaism like there is of Paradise in Islam. In fact, the entire Mishnah³ makes no mention of the Messiah or the Messianic age. To even study the mysticism surrounding death, found in the Zohar (“Kabbalah” – Jewish mysticism), one has to reach the age of forty. Judaism emphasizes this world, and the

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¹ These are the first three of the seven Noachide Laws. The world is divided into two groups: Children of Israel, who follow the Torah and are bound to its 613 positive and negative commandments. The Children of Noah are Gentiles, who are bound to the Noachide Laws.

² These are the first three of the seven Noachide Laws. The world is divided into two groups: Children of Israel, who follow the Torah and are bound to its 613 positive and negative commandments. The Children of Noah are Gentiles, who are bound to the Noachide Laws.

³ The Mishnah, a Hebrew noun derivative of the verb shanah, meaning (in post-biblical Hebrew) “to teach or learn orally,” is a compilation of Jewish oral tradition, and the basis for the Talmud (oral law), codified by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi in 200 C.E.
deeds one can accomplish now. “This world is like a portico before the world to come. Prepare yourself in the portico so that you may enter into the banquet hall (Avot 4).”

Condemnation of suicide is predicated on the Torah passage: “Thou shall not commit murder.” Since preservation of life (in other words, sanctification of the body) is privileged above most rabbinic interpretation and biblical commandments, suicide is viewed as murdering oneself. And, since sins are atoned for at the time of death, your cause of death cannot be a sin itself. Those who commit suicide are not granted traditional funeral rites, although the Mourners Kaddish (prayer for the dead) is recited. This denial of funeral rites is a strong deterrent for suicide.

There are notable, historical exceptions to this otherwise blanket rule against suicide. These are those who die to sanctify God’s name – martyrs. Famously, these exceptions to central Jewish theology include biblical figures like Samson (Judges 12:23-32) and Saul (I Samuel 31:1-7), Talmudic figures like Rabbi Hanina ben Taradyon, one of ten rabbinic martyrs (Avodah Zarah 18a), and countless martyrs, including the seven sons of Hannah, discussed in the Second Book of the Maccabees (see also the Apocrypha).

Outside of canonical Judaism, The Jewish War by Flavius Josephus depicts the most symbolic and mythical example of suicidal martyrdom – the last stand by the Sicarii

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4 The death of Rabbi Hanina ben Taradyon’s is exalted in the Talmud as demonstrating not only that one should preference death over Hillul Ha’Shem – desecration of the Name – but that it is forbidden also to expedite one’s death. The Rabbi, wrapped in a Torah scroll and set afire, refused to open his mouth to let the toxins quicken his death. Additionally, the executioner placed cooled wool over his heart to retard his death. The executioner asked to be taken with the Rabbi to the World to Come if he removed the wool and strengthened the flame. After the rabbis death, the executioner jumped into the flame. A Kol, voice, from Heaven, announced that both the Rabbi and the executioner have been placed in the World to Come. (Rosner, p. 71).
Jews against the Romans atop Masada in 73 C.E. If any example has infused modern Zionism with a historical image and precedent of the “resistant, strong Jew,” it is the account of the mass suicide at Masada.

Masada marked the conclusion of the Jewish War (or “Jewish Revolt”) against Roman legions in the Holy Land. Three years prior, Roman troops, led by Titus, destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem as well as captured Flavius Josephus, a Jew who rejected suicide with his compatriots in the Galilee and acquiesced to Roman service. He would become the integral biographer of the last stand of Masada.

Josephus recounts the last speech Eleazar, the community head, made to the families atop Masada. Ten men were selected by lots to commit the murders, and then one remaining would set fire to Masada and kill himself. It is worth quoting Josephus’ recounting of Eleazar’s last appeal at length, emphasizing their choice of sanctifying God’s name as opposed to capitulation to the idolatrous Romans.

“Let us die before we become slaves under our enemies, and lets us go out of the world, together with our children and our wives, in a state of freedom. This it is that our laws command us to do; this it is that our wives and children crave at our hands; nay, God himself hath brought this necessity upon us; while the Romans desire the contrary, and are afraid lest any man should die before we are taken. Let us therefore make haste…, let us leave them an example which shall at once cause their astonishment at our death, and their admiration of our hardiness therein.”

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5 Dr. Kalman Kaplan and Dr. Matthew B. Schwartz refer to Josephus’ account as the “anomaly of Masada.” Because of Josephus’ detestation of the Sicarii zealots, as well as his exposed world-view of Greco-Roman concepts of suicide, it is believed that the speech Josephus presents as being Eleazar’s may not be accurate. “Ben Yair (“Eleazar”) is portrayed as using examples from clearly non-Jewish philosophy to support his argument for suicide…[only at the end] is Ben Yair speaking in a Jewish idiom – love for homeland and family.” (p. 18).

6 The story was transmitted to Josephus by “an ancient woman, and another who was of kin to Eleazar…with five children, who had concealed themselves in caverns underground.” (Josephus, quoted in Yigal Yadin, *Masada* (New York: Random House, 1966) p. 237.)
The martyred zealots of Masada, in addition to the ten rabbinic martyrs recalled during the concluding prayer of Yom Kippur services (The Day of Atonement), are only selected examples of Jewish martyrdom from the Second Temple Period. The imagery of martyrdom, and the vocabulary, however, continued past the squashed rebellion of Shimon Bar-Kochba (“Son of Stars”) and his messianic zealotry. Throughout the Crusades, medieval Jewry would support many martyrs in the face of religious persecution and conversion pressure. Finally, martyrdom has been honored to victims of the Holocaust, such as those of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising or those who perished in concentration camps.

_Jewish Religious symbolism in Political Contexts:_

The 20th century has merely provided a new environment for an old concept. The political gains of religious martyrdom were as much a concern of the zealots in the Jewish Revolt as they are of fundamental Jewish extremists in the settlements. While the physicality of martyrdom does not transcend to the modern era, with the notable exception of Dr. Baruch Goldstein and Yigal Amir, the application of “Zealot ideology” as a catalyst for radical behavior is certainly a familiar strain when seeking to find an ideological parallel between Jewish and Islamic extremists.

Religious extremism is continually employed to achieve political gains. That is the nature of the impact of religious fundamentalism – its political implications. Radical,

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7 This prayer, *Eleh Ezkera*, begins “These shall I recall (referring to the ten martyrs) and I pour out my soul within me, for wanton people have devoured me as if I were an unturned cake.” (Rabbi Nosson Scherman, trans. *Artscroll Machzor Yom Kippur* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 2000), p. 587.
unchangeable, ideology and an unparalleled “superiority of doctrine” is certainly the impetus for both Islamic and Jewish terrorist behavior. However, each invokes a distinctly different facet of religious representation. Whereas the incentive of Paradise is clearly the highest motivation for devout Muslim martyrs, the preservation and restoration of Eretz Yisrael (“The Land of Israel” – biblical borders of Israel including Judea and Samaria, Israel proper, and Jordan) is the highest motivation for Jewish extremists. It is in returning Jews from the Diaspora to the biblical land of Israel which will expedite the coming of the Messiah.

Understanding Jewish fundamentalism in the modern political arena is complicated by several factors. The nature of fundamentalism is a lack of pragmatism we often associate with diplomacy and compromise. This is perpetuated by unbendable imperatives pulled directly from a literal interpretation of text. And yet, the most popular of Jewish fundamental groups, where characters like Baruch Goldstein emerged from, Gush Emunim operates with fluidity in the Israeli political system. While membership is somewhat synonymous with settlement population, an alliance with the Likud party has garnered sympathies for the settlements.

Jewish fundamentalism is predicated on direct biblical interpretation. While many passages are applicable, as the notion of God keeping the Children of Israel as well as vocabulary associated with Eretz Yisrael are abundant throughout the Torah, the earliest definition of Eretz Yisrael, and its designation by God for the Jewish people, occurs in the Book of Genesis. The Torah portion, Lech Lecha, (literally meaning “go unto yourself”) states, in chapter 15:18, “On that day God made a covenant with Abraham,
saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the
great river, the Euphrates.’

The centrality of this promise cannot be mistaken, and it is
the direct adherence to this portion of Genesis which underlines ultra-Orthodox and
Jewish fundamentalist devotion to Eretz Yisrael.

It would be a false analogy to compare Jewish and Islamic martyrdom in the
current Intifada in any context beyond their the motivating force of a fundamental
ideology. Though means to achieving their cosmic end are, in magnitude and method,
different (for reasons we will examine in the next chapter), a comparison does serve to
illustrate the political use of religious symbols in the Intifada. While martyrdom is
privileged above other sentiments by an Islamic devout, the redemptive fate of God’s
promise to the Jewish people is the motivating force for contemporary Jewish terror. This
redemptive fate includes the restoration of the “entirety” of Eretz Yisrael (sealed by
God’s covenant), legal dominance is halacha (Jewish law), the rebuilding of the Holy
Temple, and ultimately, the coming of the Messiah.

Baruch Goldstein – the “Martyr”

It was the night before Purim, and Jews were gathered to hear the reading of the
Megillah (Scroll of Esther). This book celebrates the foiling of a genocidal plot against
the Jews of Persia. Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a resident of the settlement Kiryat Arba,\(^8\) was
listening at the Cave of Machpelah (where Abraham, Isaac and Sarah are said to be
buried) when a gang of Arab youth yell itbah al-yahud: “slaughter the Jews.”

\(^{\text{x}}\) This

\(^{\text{x}}\) A settlement mostly filled with religious Jews who want to live near the ancient city of Hebron, it was
founded by Rabbi Moshe Levinger – an enduring figure for Jewish fundamentalists.
humiliation, compounded with increased violence against settlers, angered Goldstein and moved him to a fateful decision. The next morning, February 24, 1994, he walked into the mosque above the Cave, dressed as an army officer, and indiscriminately began to shoot Muslim worshippers as they were kneeling upon the carpeted floor. It wasn’t until his Galil rifle jammed that he was subdued and killed. This insidious act of terrorism killed 29 Muslims and injured over a hundred worshippers.

Like his Muslim counterparts, Goldstein’s terrorism was anything but the manifestation of a madman. Hoping to derail the peace process manifesting in the Oslo Accords, signed September 13, 1993, Goldstein was a fundamentalist settler fixed to a dogmatic retention of settlements. Professor Ian S. Lustick asserts, controversially, that it is the uncompromising fundamentalist attitude of the settlers which has “emerged as the greatest obstacle to meaningful negotiations towards a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.” Settlements strive to establish “facts in the field,” and it is for Goldstein’s attempt to “preserve the Jewish presence in Hebron” which catapulted him to martyrdom by his fellow settlers and ideological contemporaries.

Additionally, like Muslim suicide bombers, Baruch Goldstein did not act alone. He was the product of an undeviating belief system ingrained by following a charismatic leader. This enigmatic leader was Rabbi Meir Kahane – a man whose reputation, like Sheikh Yassin (spiritual leader of Hamas) or Ayatollah Fadlallah (spiritual leader of Hizbollah), precedes him.

Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League (JDL), has been emblematic of aggressive and offensive Judaism since the League’s inception in 1968.
With its symbol being a Star of David with a fist through it, and its motto “Never Again,” Kahane has slowly crept into the consciousness of Jewish fundamentalism in the settlements as well as the United States. After a number of electoral defeats, his political party, Kach finally entered the Knesset in 1984. While later outlawed, even to this date, the Jewish Defense League and Kach still enjoy a minority following. And while their agenda and means have altered according to the political climate (Kahane gained infamy for civil disobedience against the Soviet Union during the 1970s to protest oppression of Soviet Jewry), Kach, Kahane Chai and JDL have been idiosyncratically aggressive.

Prefaced on the culture of “catastrophic messianism,” as Ehud Sprinzak describes, Kahane asserts that the Messiah will come when Jews triumph in protecting God’s name. This is his notion of Kiddush HaShem. Kahane saw the secular state as a precursor to a religious state, and determined Jewish aggression would only expedite this transition. “Every Jew who is killed has two killers, the Arab who killed him and the government who let it happen.” These images and values were shared by Baruch Goldstein, as well as Yigal Amir.

While Amir is not implicated with Kach but with Eyal, another extremist group, he claims to have acted only under the direction of God. “According to the Halacha, you can kill the enemy. My whole life, I learned Halacha. When you kill in war, it is an act that is allowed.” His justification to assassinate Yitzhak Rabin, clearly using religious justification in a political context, was to create a fissure in the Oslo Process, because

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9 Meaning “Kahane Lives,” this offshoot extremist group of Kach was founded by Kahane’s son, Binyamin. Kahane Chai, along with Kach, were both declared terrorist organizations by the Israeli government in 1994.
Oslo was equated (in the Jewish fundamentalist mind) as a degradation of the sanctity and integrity of biblical Israel. Meir Kahane, his son Binyamin, (both murdered by Islamic fundamentalists), Yigal Amir, and Baruch Goldstein are perversely (in this authors opinion) considered martyrs. This cult of martyrdom enjoys much success in Jewish extremist circles to this day.

Of course, it is important to note that settlements – their politics and geography – do not enjoy popular support by Israelis. In the most recent poll to date, 69% of Israelis are in favor of freezing the settlements to continue US aid.\textsuperscript{xviii} In comparing previous polls since the commencement of the Intifada, support for evacuation of settlements has increased or decreased marginally, according to the level of violence at the time of polling. Nearly one year ago, in a poll taken prior to the Passover Massacre\textsuperscript{10}, 66% of Israelis supported withdrawal from settlements in Gaza Strip, 70% of areas of heavy Arab concentration.\textsuperscript{xix} Following the Passover Massacre, while IDF troops were conducting their incursion in the Jenin refugee camp, a majority of the sample, 57%, still supported “unilateral withdrawal from 80% of the territories, erecting a fence, disbanding settlements and annexing 80% of the settlers.”\textsuperscript{xx}

I am equating support for settlements with support of settler ideology. These numbers and polls are imperative to interpret the nature of Jewish terrorism. It is

\textsuperscript{10} On March 27, 2002, a Hamas activist walked into the Park Hotel in Netanya and detonated himself during the traditional Passover dinner (seder), killing 19 and injuring over 100. The attack coincided with the Arab Summit in Beirut, and was purported to have been orchestrated to send a message that the Palestinian struggle was still actively being waged.
unsupported by the popular majority. It has often been the fringe Yesha Council\textsuperscript{11} and the Committee for Safety of the Roads which has offered extremist political views and have been traced to Arab attacks.\textsuperscript{xxi} And while Prime Minster Ariel Sharon envisions the settlements as a part of Israel’s future by stating, “The fate of Netzarim is the fate of Tel Aviv,” the majority of Israeli, while supporting the Right does not support this idea. The next chapter will illustrate how popular support is integral to a militant activity’s success or failure in determining political momentum.

Baruch Goldstein represents the product when potent dynamics of Jewish identity are mixed. These include, first, the concept of Jewish martyrdom when placed in a context of threatening one’s religious freedom. Second, the connection to the land is such a strong, central concept to the Torah and, therefore Haredi Judaism, that any force impinging on this claim is met with hostility. Finally, the transition of Jewish behavior and identity from pre-Holocaust passivity to post-Holocaust physicality underline that a Jew knows not just to study, but to fight.\textsuperscript{12} These three factors, in brief, make Goldstein a martyr to hardliner rightist politicians, select religious Jewish communities worldwide, and settlers.

Finally, it is important to note that, while there have been examples of Jewish martyrdom to retain the integrity and borders of Eretz Yisrael, there have been no

\textsuperscript{11} “Yesha” is an acronym for “Yehuda, Shamron v’Aza,” the Hebrew for Judea, Samaria (“the West Bank”) and Gaza. The Yesha Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza is the representative body of the Jewish residents in those areas, otherwise known as settler’s.

\textsuperscript{12} This new Jewish identity, as a result of the Holocaust and the emergence of Zionism, is often discussed at length when seeking to understand the new Israeli mentality. In part, the Kibbutz movement forged a new identity to the Jewish character – one who was physical and (agriculturally) productive. The term “sabra,” a prickly fruit, sweet only on the inside, is a fitting symbol of the Israeli stereotype. The psychology of the “strong Jew” is a powerful factor in the Israel Defense Force’s reputation.
copycat attempts of the enormity or Baruch Goldstein. There have been cases of Jewish settlers stoning Arab vehicles, or attempting to bomb Arab schools, but the magnitude is incomparable to Palestinian violence. Jewish martyrdom is not a motivation in the contemporary political atmosphere for Jewish fundamentalism. Redemption is the motivation, and martyrdom is not even the preferred mean. This is a direct contrast to Islamic fundamentalism who enjoy martyrdom as a means and a motivation. The sobering reasons they adopt their deadly medium will be discussed in the following chapter.

I’d like to conclude this discussion on the nature of Jewish martyrdom and militancy in the current Intifada with a selection of the Book of Esther. At the conclusion it compels Jews to “stand up for themselves, to destroy, to slay, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might assault them, with their little ones and women.” This passage was one of the last Baruch Goldstein heard before he made a conscious decision to militarize a religious conviction. While not to deviate into a discussion on psychology, it is very clear how a fundamental reading of this passage can provoke a devout into a religiously fueled militant. As Jews are emerging from a century fettered with pogroms, Holocaust and terror, the discourse on what it means to be a Jew is very much alive. And as Jewish identity is still contentious, so will be opinions seeking to define it.

Though Jewish martyrdom has a long history, it holds no accepted place in the modern political narrative. In contrast to Islamic martyrdom, it seeks neither political rewards (in its biblical form) nor expedition to Paradise. Therefore, by Jews
understanding martyrdom through their own definition, it is no wonder that there is a failure to recognize why some devout Muslims so readily decide to employ suicide. There is a disparity on the merits of this life compared to those of the life to come for each faith. And, it is the existence of these two different understandings of martyrdom, meeting in one political conflict, which complicates the process of mending the societal rent and prospects for building a lasting peace.

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ii Sanhedrin, 74a. quoted in “Kiddush Ha-Shem,” The Jewish Encyclopedia. <www.jewishencyclopedia.com>
iii Deuteronomy 30:19.
v Kaplan, p. 15.
vi Exodus 20:13, and Deuteronomy 5:17.
vii Rosner, p. 71.
ix Genesis 15:18
x Juergensmeyer, p. 49.
xii Ibid., p. 50.
xiv Ibid., p. 42.
xvi Juergensmeyer, p. 54.
xvii Kahane, quoted in Juergensmeyer, p. 57.
xm Book of Esther 8:11
4. The Palestinian Cult of Martyrdom

The discussion in the previous two chapters was designed to present conflicting ideologies -- two very different perspectives on the concept of martyrdom. The purpose of discussing each position was to set a detailed context for understanding what it is which most Palestinians find so useful and most Israelis so monstrous. There are many natural questions which the most politically astute scholar cannot answer. Why does the Palestinian side continually rely on suicide bombers when it produces not tangible political steps towards statehood, but Israeli military incursion and aggression? Is there a moral equivalency in the killing of civilians on each side? Since it is clear that there is no military solution to the conflict, why does each party evade political solutions? How do you end the conflict while preserving the integrity of each party? Thus is the nature of a politicized religious conflict. Some would contend that the Arab-Israeli conflict is historic, or political, or religious, that these are mutually exclusive. It is my contention that they are not. By the deliberate use of religious ideology in a political context, the situation becomes increasingly difficult to breach, especially from an outside perspective.

There are many motives for use of the dramatic war tactic of suicide bombing. Only one, to dismiss popular conjecture, is Israeli occupation. While militarized occupation has certainly exacerbated the desperation and humiliation felt by Palestinians, and is internationally the most popularly acknowledged factor, it is only one of many components. On a simple comparative level, Islamic terrorism – from Chechnya to Bali to the World Trade Center – is practiced for reasons higher and more complicated than occupation.
To detail the nature of the Palestinian suicide strategy, it is supported and reinforced by (1) the historical/religious foundations, discussed in the previous chapters, (2) the deliberate indoctrination of the Palestinian population, specifically children, (3) the political nature of the conflict (4) the integral role of popular support in re-enforcing the cycle of violence, and, finally (5) the inhumanity of living in an economically and politically depressive environment as a result of living under military occupation. But, notably, a look at relative periods of calm, during the Oslo negotiations and following, before the Six Day War in 1967, and most recently the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon in May 2000, has seen offensive attacks against Israelis without militarized provocation. It is, in fact, that of the conflict in Lebanon, which fomented suicide bombing as a successful and legitimate tactic for the current Intifada.

How did we reach the current stalemate?

Hizbullah did not just instruct Palestinian Islamists how to kill Israelis through suicide bombing. It was, instead, a successful solution to a problem of parity, an Arab triumph over Israel, compared to the previous, failed endeavors. The goal of Hizbullah terrorism was “having [a] political impact which changes the enemy from one state to another and makes him think of altering his positions, otherwise it cannot be religiously sanctioned.” Terrorism in the name of Allah is unsuccessful and religiously forbidden if no political movement is produced, in other words - if people die but the situation

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1 These are only some of many factors contributing to the unique nature of the Palestinian culture and why they resort to human sacrifice as a viable offensive. Not included, among many, are psychological characteristics of suicide bombers, the potency of group dynamics, and tribalism. It is important to humanize the Palestinian persona, to see the conflict as variance between peoples, not just between governments or entities. Therefore, the author stresses that there are innumerable, individual factors to consider.
(political or military) does not change. According to Hizbollah, if progress is seen then the violent act earns religious endorsement. The combination of politics and religion synergistically created a guerilla war condition which caused Israel, as well as the United States, to retreat from southern Lebanon. Palestinian nationalists wished to duplicate this success through the “Lebanonization” of Palestine.

This was, in large part, a primary goal of the first intifada. As much an aggression against Israel as it was intra-Palestinian politics, it was ultimately the failure of guerilla warfare by the secularists and the success of the Islamist-led terrorist campaign which led to current dynamics. Fatah’s last gasp at attempts to “Lebanonize” the conflict ended with the unsuccessful smuggling of Iranian arms on the Karine-A. The success of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in its terror campaign, which was met with popular support, has led the secular Fatah to adopt the strategy of suicide bombing, and with it the inherent religious implications, through the al-Aqsa Martyr’s Brigade.

The al-Aqsa intifada was, in fact, a premeditated conflict. Despite the popular myth which asserts it was Ariel Sharon’s political assent to the Temple Mount which served as the impetus for the conflict, evidence supports the contrary. The Sharm-el-Sheik Fact Finding Committee asserted, in what is referred to as the “Mitchell Report,” that “The Sharon visit did not cause the ‘Al-Aqsa Intifada.’ But it was poorly timed.” In the Government of Israel’s First Statement to the fact-finding committee, they argued that the Intifada was premeditated. Later, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) intercepted a speech given by PA Communications Minister, ‘Imad al-Faluji to a group of Palestinians in a refugee camp in Lebanon, stating:
“Whoever thinks that the Intifada broke out because of the despised Sharon's visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, is wrong, even if this visit was the straw that broke the back of the Palestinian people. This Intifada was planned in advance, ever since President Arafat's return from the Camp David negotiations, where he turned the table upside down on President Clinton. [Arafat] remained steadfast and challenged [Clinton]. He rejected the American terms and he did it in the heart of the US.”

It is important to understand that the genesis of the Intifada was premeditated, because it shows how the encouragement of suicide bombers is not a whimsical, temporary activity of renegade, frustrated youth. It is part of an officially-sanctioned program. To support and control a culture of martyrdom, in both a top-down structure and a grassroots movement, “education of the population” is an integral step. Through media, schools, imagery and culture, Palestinians orchestrating terrorist campaigns take a concerted role in indoctrinating the population, specifically children, to present a united “message” to the world.

Indoctrination

Language has traditionally played a central and defining role in Islam. The Qu’ran states “Proclaim! And the Lord Is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (The use of) the Pen, Taught man that Which he knew not.” The power of language is not to be overlooked.

The Intifada is as much about building a nation as it is about building a state, and this is

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2 Introduction from the MEMRI dispatch (No. 194): “In his speech Al-Faluji stated that the Al-Aqsa Intifada was pre-mediated, and was the Palestinian response to their failure to achieve their goals at the Camp David negotiations. After Israel announced its intention to use Al-Faluji's words to support its response to the Mitchell Commission it was reported that Yasser Arafat pressured Al-Faluji to retract his statements. Subsequently, Al-Faluji announced that he had never made such comments [Voice of Israel Radio (Israel)]. March 6, 2001. However, similar statements by Al-Faluji as well as other Palestinian leaders have been reported previously.
achieved through harnessing the power of language. It is by rallying people behind “messages” which unify and invest peoples with a common identity. This describes one of many struggles in the Intifada. Messages are used not only to unite, but to motivate and incite. This is also the nature of the current struggle and has been manifested in a deliberate indoctrination to preserve and perpetuate the cult of martyrdom. Since ascription to the cult of martyrdom has rallied the Palestinian people, though through identification of a common enemy as opposed to common beliefs or goals, is has proven to be a step towards nation building and national unity. Indoctrination is an integral political move for the Palestinian leaders – both nationalist and Islamist – in the al-Aqsa Intifada.

Most striking, and disturbing, has been the deliberate programming of children to a culture which exalts martyrdom and espouses hate. Golda Meir’s famous adage, “We will have peace with the Palestinians when they learn to love their children more than they hate us,” has resurfaced as a truism to those in the Israeli camp.\(^vi\) Children are not only encouraged to support and participate in the Intifada, they are sent to the frontlines. It is this author’s opinion that the continuance of indoctrinating Palestinians to hate Jews and Israel – through textbooks, media, summer camps, and mosques is a most compelling impasse in the Arab-Israeli conflict and a true obstacle to peace.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Therefore, while Hussein Agha and Robert Malley present a compellingly optimistic solution to the conflict (“The Last Negotiation: How to End the Middle East Peace Process,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2002, Vol. 81, No. 3. pgs. 10-18) I am inclined to argue its viability. It appears shortsighted and wanting in its total neglect of the ingrained nature of hate endorsed by the Palestinian Authority on Palestinian youth. Peace can not prosper in an atmosphere of hate – proffered on either side.
Part of the willingness for children to participate in acts of aggression comes from their own frustration. They observe degradation, see death and experience personal tragedy. These are real emotions, not to be dismissed heartlessly. But, encouragement to stand on the frontlines comes from a greater strategy. As Jonathan Schanzer asserts, “One year into this uprising, approximately 161 children were killed and some 6,000 injured,” according to statistics by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. “This…constitutes a 27-precent increase in the rate of child deaths from the previous uprising. That nearly all of these children were on the front lines of the conflict and encouraged to fight by their families and the PA-owned media should come as no surprise.”

Palestinian children are “inculcated with hate for Israel and the Jewish people,” in the words of Senator Hillary Clinton, from their homes to the schoolyard. In school, textbooks, maps of “Palestine” replace Israel. Martyrs are glorified on book pages. At Hamas-run kindergartens, signs on the wall read: “The children of the kindergarten are the shaheeds of tomorrow.” This is a message which is reinforced in the home.

Parents, equally subjected to PA-sanctioned rhetoric and media “messages,” encourage the martyrdom of their children. There are financial rewards, from Yassir Arafat, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, for parents whose children select martyrdom. The aggregation of economic disparity, desperation and familial encouragement all play a role here.

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4 Also see “Palestinian schoolbooks fan the flames of hatred,” Haaretz, June 28, 2002
The phenomenon of the Fatah and Hamas-sponsored “summer camps” is quite numbing. In a *New York Times* article, John F. Burns explored the nature of these camps which engage droves of Palestinian children.

“Last summer (2000), some 27,000 Palestinian children participated in the camps, where they receive weeks of training in guerrilla warfare, including, operation of firearms and mock kidnappings of Israeli leaders. A common theme in the camps was preparation for armed conflict: “slitting the throats of Israelis” is one of the children’s exercises at these camps.”

The script of Palestinian nationalism is being emphasized in every aspect of a child’s life. In “Sesame Street”-style programming, children shout cries of hatred towards Israel and their desire to become martyrs. The role of the media, to be discussed at length in the next chapter, plays a crucial role in the instillation of hate verbiage in Palestinian children. The visuals, for example, of twelve-year-old Muhammed al-Dura, shot dead during a firefight between Palestinian snipers and the Israel Defense Force at the Netzarim junction on September 30, 2000, have become powerful symbols for children. “[A clip] was preceded by a black screen with the stark white words: ‘I am not waving to you to say goodbye, but rather to tell you to follow me.’ It was signed by Muhammed al-Dura.” Additionally, the final testimony of a suicide bomber is broadcast on television, and Palestinians newspapers often announce the death of a martyr not as an obituary but as a wedding between him and the “Black-Eyed in Eternal Paradise,” a reference to the virgins he will meet in Paradise.

Palestinian press is a notorious source for propaganda. Itamar Marcus of the Palestinian Media Watch has concluded that, “the problem lies not so much in the blatant
calls to violence which come and go, but in a more deeply entrenched process of indoctrination,” which he attributes to official media. It is in the media, both in and outside of the Territories, where hatred towards Zionists and Israelis is fueled by anti-Semitic slurs. Blood libels, Protocols of the Elders of Zion (recently the script for a TV series in Egypt), and Holocaust revision have been popular topics in Arabic press, including Palestinian press. Since Palestinian media is heavily restricted by the Israeli government, it is often these outside sources which penetrate Palestinian psyches. Both print and television media are subject to scrutiny, regarding their veracity and objectivity. Perhaps the most popular, and uncensored, medium, radio, has been the most successful in keeping Palestinian society “on message.” Radio stations, such as al-Quds and Voice of the PLO, have “beyond dispute, acquired particular significance during the[first] Intifada, given Israeli censorship of local Palestinian media.” Palestinian Authority TV has been, in this Intifada, a source of constant incitement and, therefore criticism. Palestinian Media Watch has been a meticulous shadow of PATV, condemning the indoctrination of children as “the ultimate child abuse.” Images and interviews are invoked to allaying children’s fears of death by portraying Paradise as beaches and Ferris wheels. All the while, the image of the Dome of the Rock sits in the upper left corner – catering to both religious and nationalist audiences.

The cult of martyrdom is thriving and pervasive in the Palestinian territories. The propaganda disseminated now is shaping the legacy the inheritors of Palestine will enjoy.

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5 Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, the PA controlled mouthpiece, uses language to portray perspective. Referring to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as the Israel Occupation Forces (IOF). Also, by referring to Chairman Arafat as President Arafat, it intends to emplace Arafat with legitimacy over the “state” of Palestine.
On a sophistic and pedagogical level, the inculcation of children with the symbols and rhetoric of martyrdom will create a generation willing to support suicide missions to achieve nationalist ends. And it is from a popular support base which energetically reinforces the cycle of violence. The last Intifada (1987-1993) “not only…fail[ed] to prepare the Palestinians for statehood. It left behind a culture of violence that militated against the success of state building.” This culture is being militarily and ideologically perpetuated to achieve unattainable political goals. While the sponsors and the encouragers of this “educational tradition” may find it helpful in rallying “soldiers,” and “creating Palestinian identity,” it is eroding the possibility of peace and the preparations for an independent Palestinian state.

Republican Senator John McCain illustrates best the paradox of indoctrination. While it is meant to unify the Palestinian image, to achieve “liberation” and international sympathy, it has been perceived by US leaders to be detrimental to the process of peace. "Telethons and poems glorifying suicide bombers are not steps toward peace. Cash payments to the families of suicide bombers are not steps toward peace. Communiqués glorifying the murder of innocents are not steps toward peace. All of this is evil, pure and simple.”

The Politicization of a Religious Conflict: Fatah’s Descent into Suicide Missions

A blurring of ideological lines has taken place. Secular, nationalist groups are adopting a religious means and ascribing political ends. Religious, Islamist groups are using political means to achieve religious ends. Both are using suicide bombing; both
consider martyrdom a viable “defense” against Israeli occupation. But this lukewarm similarity between otherwise extremely polar parties is motivated as much by intra-Palestinian politics as they are offsetting an Israeli military presence.

Martyrdom is so unquestionably preferred as a means of “liberation” because it thrusts popular support behind the group who orchestrated the mission. The tactic of violence reaps two benefits for a Palestinian terrorist group: it strikes at the enemy, and it builds prestige and legitimacy for their group. Groups are unabashed about claiming responsibility for a suicide bombing; it is the terrorist equivalent of political party campaign commercials. Suicide bombings legitimize a group’s efficacy and necessity. It is for this reason, the competition to dominate the Palestinian Liberation movement, which catapulted Fatah, vis-à-vis al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Tanzim, and Force-17, to the suicide bombing arena. Formerly a red-flag of Islamic terrorism, the use of suicide bombing by a secular, nationalist party has even been modified to include the recruitment of women martyrs, an action Hamas and Islamic Jihad have previously, on religious grounds, avoided. In the realm of Palestinian politics, political efficacy is measured not merely by one’s govern-ability, but also by the amount of devastation which can be wrought against the Israelis.\(^6\) It is a sick image, to envision political success determined by death tolls.

It is striking however, to consider the nature of this politicized martyrdom. This is the crux of my argument. Each side has been successful in employing a religious model

\(^6\) It is a strange identity which Hamas enjoys, in this sense. From a Western perspective, it is difficult to view charity and terrorism as anything other than mutually exclusive. But a primary reason for Hamas success in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is because they maintained a highly organized and effective charity, providing food and schooling which they are clearly not receiving from their “government.” It is this combination of suicide bombing and charity which earned them popularity, and forced Fatah’s politics to become more aggressive.
of martyrdom because the conflict between the nationalists and Islamists has merged “Palestinian identity with Islam by making Islam the principal component of Palestinian identity.”

In an excellent examination of the Islamists efforts to readapt history to current ideological needs, Meir Litvak discusses how Hamas has infused a spiritual element behind a national struggle. In a remarkably parallel structure to the notion of jihad, Hamas has designated short term and long term goals, being the liberation of Palestine and the co-optation of Palestine into a greater Islamic nation, respectively. It is in the liberation of Palestine that Hamas ideologically intersects with nationalist efforts.

The 1980s was a seminal decade in the development of Palestinian identity. As we have already seen, the successes of Hizbullah in Lebanon certainly inspired a Palestinian militancy in their struggle for independence. But as the Intifada exploded on to the political scene, intra Palestinian rivalry dominated the domestic scene as much as the Intifada. Former concordance between Islamic Jihad and the PLO broke, and Hamas emerged as a strong force against Israel and, therefore, a strong force among Palestinians. It was in this setting that the PLO began to adapt Islamic symbolism, such as pictures of the Dome of the Rock and Qu’ranic verse, in its political narrative. Islamic extremists began to criticize the PLO’s “overemphasis on Palestinian identity,” while the PLO attempted to make Islam established, to counter as a “safety valve in the face of fundamentalist extremists.” This was an important point of departure. Yasser Arafat, a one-time politically-exiled terrorist, entered the Oslo peace process, and groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad advocated a violent, unending struggle against Israel.
This violent, unending struggle manifested in perfecting suicide bombings, at the
core of the peace process. The popularity of these suicide missions delegitimized
Arafat’s peace efforts. The energy behind the Islamists condemnation of peace with Israel
was so strong, the secular camp adopted its platform to remain competitive. And, the
more “enchanted Palestinians…became with the achievements of their ‘martyrs’ the more
Fatah has found itself under pressure to adopt the suicide weapon.” Fatah’s first
espousal of martyrdom was November 29, 2001, when Abdel Karim Abu Nafa, who
served with the Palestinian police in Jericho, detonated himself along with a member of
Islamic Jihad in Hadera. Since then, Fatah has been an active competitor in the
deployment of suicide bombers, including women.

It was not only the nationalists who adopted religious symbolism to profit from
the decline of pan-Arabism and the rising popularity of Islamization in the Middle East.
Islamists also had to borrow nationalist symbols in order to participate in the construction
of Palestinian identity. Shrouding the dead with Palestinian flags is just one example.
Theological, as Meir Litvak describes, “Hamas remained first and foremost a religious
movement…[while] depicting the Palestinian cause as ‘a matter of faith and religion, and
not one of earth and soil.”

This is not a new trend, but one with historical antecedents. Hassan al-Banna, the
Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Organization and a virulent rejectionist of
qawmiyya (nationalism), which he viewed as a Western “evil” like Israel, interpreted
Islam to umbrella this newly popularized nationalist movement by asserting “Islam as a
religion which endows man with a true love for his homeland and a force to fight for
The marriage of Palestinian and Muslim identity has politicized a religious concept, and religiously charged a political conflict. It engenders a broad-based support by secularists, Christians, Muslims, and nationalists. While they may differ ideologically, nationalists and Islamists unite politically and militarily by employing martyrdom for “Palestinian liberation.” However, while it is clear that Islamists desire the state to be Islamic and are eager to escalate the armed struggle to achieve it, it is unclear what, in fact, the ultimate goals for the nationalists are. It is the lack of clarity coming primarily from Yasser Arafat which adds to the stalemate in the peace process.

The Energizing Role of Popular Support

While already discussed in the context of indoctrination and politicalization, the energy given by the population to the cycle of violence is intoxicating. Emmanuel Sivan refers to this population as the “periphery,” who shares the basic beliefs of the activists and “represents the proverbial waters where the militant fish can swim.” It is this population that is exposed to media and message. They encounter humiliating inspection at checkpoints. They have lost their jobs. They have sent their children to the front lines, and some of them have become martyrs. An acknowledgment of survey results close the question whether or not the Palestinian population supports the use of suicide bombing in the Intifada. The latest poll, conducted by the Jerusalem Media & Communication Center, indicate that 42.4% of 18 and over residents of the Territories strongly support suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians. About 20% somewhat support suicide bombings. Compared to a poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public
Opinion (PCPO) one year ago, 64.3% of a similar sample are in favor of suicidal attacks in Israel.\textsuperscript{xvii}

There is a clear majority in favor of continuing the use of suicide as a strategy. While there has been some vocal dissent, such as Hanan Ashrawi’s condemnation of suicide bombing as “hinder[ing] Palestinian aspirations to independence,”\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{xviii}} most of the dissent has emanated exclusively from intellectual circles. The majority is still under the impression, based on the Hizbollah history in Lebanon and the indoctrination by the PA, that martyrdom can deliver statehood. And with terrorist organizations, like Hamas, “combining political and social activism with guerilla warfare…[they have won] financial and moral support from Palestinians.”\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{xxix}}

The immediate consequences of suicide bombings have reinforced popular support. Having entirely shut down the Israeli tourist industry, put a chokehold on the economy, and instilled fear in daily activities to create an atmosphere of tension, there is a sense of retribution in the immediate successes of suicide operations. This “moral parity,” while delivering a sense of victory and hope, only blinds the population as to the long-term consequences of terrorism.

\textit{Humility and Humanity}

Islam, as a religion and culture of submission, is predicated on humility. I must reassert, it is crucial to consider the conflict on a human level. Mothers send their children to be martyrs. College students and technically trained men and women, from middle class homes, with siblings and hobbies, commit themselves to martyrdom. Not to
be overlooked as a motivation for a suicide mission, beyond political tools like history and media, is the personal offense Palestinians feel.

A reasonable, well-considered opinion could not diminish the intensity of a Palestinian’s suffering. “Living under Occupation” itself is not a cause of suffering. This is a political creation, a loaded term. It happens to be the characteristics associated with the particular situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which dispirit Palestinians. Birth rates and death rates are skyrocketing and the economy is nearly a negligible institution. During military incursions, there are curfews and little freedom of movement. Even during periods of calm, there have been innumerable accounts of the humiliation and numbing length of procedure to pass a checkpoint along the Green Line. These build daily frustrations, compounded with the visual degradation of a society uninvested, illness, poverty, unemployment – the Palestinian people are certainly not sponges regurgitating government spin. They live in an economic, political and emotionally depressive environment.  

It is tempting, and hopeful, to speculate that if real investment were committed to re-building Palestinian cities, and money was spent on social needs, like health and education, that support would turn away from groups like Hamas which does provide charitable services, and towards some democratic entity to insure stability and freedoms.

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7 It is not in the realm of this paper to discuss the causes that have created the situation in the Territories. While the Israel Defense Forces and the Government of Israel holds accountability for tangibles like political assassinations and home demolitions, they would attribute these activities to preserving security. There is no equivalence between the motive for the IDF to be in the territories and motive for Palestinians to kill soldiers and civilians, except that at this point in the cyclical violence, each feeds off the other as a motive for further destruction. It is in placing a parity between the Palestinians and the IDF which misleads a discussion. This paper, furthermore, does not discuss the abandonment of Jordan from investment in the West Bank, or Egypt for the Gaza Strip.
The Palestinian Authority is, at the current status in the intifada, not the vehicle to deliver this change. There are overwhelming indicators, from the level of propaganda fed to the public to the strength of polls positively receiving the misinformation, to support the assertion that this “government,” under Yassir Arafat is more concerned with proliferating a cult of martyrdom than a return to stability. An entirely new discussion could form here, regarding the role Israel, Jordan, and other neighboring Arab states play in rebuilding Palestinian society and instilling a democratic ethos, but for the sake of brevity it is fair to say that collective responsibility must be assumed in the spirit of humanity and community. As all parties, whether earnestly or otherwise, seek a cessation of violence and a return to negotiations, the focus must shift from finding fault and towards rebuilding social and economic institutions. This should be the necessary first step.

Conclusion

“The point is that the promises of Paradise…are taken literally not metaphorically, by those who surrender life to jihad. Miss that point and you miss the overarching fact that it really is a holy war, a clash of cultures that cannot be resolved by a negotiated agreement, in Israel or elsewhere.”

It is important to view this quote by journalist Joseph Lelyveld as instructive. Stripping cynicism and benevolence, there are a series of powerful factors overtaking the Palestinian psychology. By absorbing Palestinian nationalism one is adhering to Islamic tenets, whether said nationalist is religious or not. The nature of the politicization has married the two concepts. And, the majority chooses to express their nationalism by supporting or becoming martyrs. The magnitude, frequency and strategic timing of
suicide operations highlights an organizational structure, a manufacturing of martyrs: that, despite one’s natural proclivities, “the educational and religious backgrounds of many militants remind us that, however repugnant the act of extremists might be, they were not mindless or irrational.” This is often the most impalpable aspect of reflecting on suicide bombings.

Maybe even more incomprehensible is the continual energy placed into the propaganda machine which inculcates the population. If anything, it obfuscates political realities, creating false successes which can not deliver independence – the purported objective. It privileges the destruction of Israel over the independence of Palestine. As has been stated, this Intifada is as much about building a nation as it is a state. And in an atmosphere of poverty and death, as Palestinians seek comfort in grasping onto a group identity, they are being led, purposefully by the PA and its media, to pursue destructive solutions.

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1 Al-‘Ahd, 10 Safar 1406, quoted in Saad-Ghorayeb, p. 133.
2 Gal Luft, p. 2.
4 PA Minister: The Intifada Was Planned from the Day Arafat Returned from Camp David.” *Middle East Media Research Institute*, Dispatch No.194, 9 Mar 2001.
5 Qur’ān, 96:3-5
6 The Israeli Embassy website. <http://israelemb.org/>
13 Isabel Kirshner., p. 2?.
\[\text{References}\]

\[\text{XV} \text{ "The Ultimate Child Abuse." } \text{Palestinian Media Watch, <www.pmw.org.il>}\]
\[\text{xvi} \text{ Jonathan Schanzer, p. 33.}\]
\[\text{xvii} \text{ "Palestinian Children 'Forced Foot Soldiers.'" } \text{AIPAC Facts, American Israel Public Affairs Committee.}\]
\[\text{xviii} \text{ Meir Litvak. "The Role of Hamas in the Aqsa Intifada." } \text{Tel Aviv Notes, No.9. January 18, 2001, p. 1.}\]
\[\text{xix} \text{ Meir Litvak, The Islamization of Palestinian Identity, p. 15.}\]
\[\text{xx} \text{ Ibid., p. 14.}\]
\[\text{xxii} \text{ Gal Luft, p. ?.}\]
\[\text{xxiii} \text{ "Handbill No. 74, Filastin al-Muslima," June 1991, quoted in Meir Litvak, The Islamization of Palestinian Identity, p. 6.}\]
\[\text{xxiv} \text{ Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, “Redefining the Egyptian Nation, 1930-1945” (Cambridge, 1995), 80-83, quoted in Meir Litvak, The Islamization of Palestinian Identity, p.3.}\]
\[\text{xxv} \text{ Sivan, p. 130.}\]
\[\text{xxviii} \text{ Walid M. al-Sa’di, “Commentary says suicide bombings unacceptable in true Islam,” Jordan Times, June 23, 2002.}\]
\[\text{xxix} \text{ Esposito, The Islamic Threat, p. 281.}\]
\[\text{xxx} \text{ Joseph Lelyveld, pg. 49.}\]
\[\text{xxxi} \text{ Esposito, The Islamic Threat, p. 147.}\]
5. Responses and External Influences on Palestinian Suicide Bombing

The internal, human bomb-making machine is finely tuned and well-supplied. It shows little sign of retardation. There is little incentive to slow down, Palestinians have been made to believe that this is a winning strategy which will deliver statehood. However, it is only instantly gratifying. The wash of victory which covers Palestinians upon hearing of a suicide bomb is quickly rinsed with a military incursion, based on retaliation and security precautions. This only reinforces the cycle of violent exchanges, preventing any discussion of a two-state solution. It serves as one of many obdurate barriers in the conflict, rendering phraseology like “return to negotiations,” “seven days of calm,” “Oslo,” and “resolution” unattainable.

But the Palestinian public can hardly hold the burden for the perpetuation of violence on their shoulders, nor should they. Granted, there are households which send their children willingly to the front lines. But they are so repressed in an undemocratic society, indoctrinated by press and government, and shown little optimism for the future that the “most honorable,” or “productive” future is martyrdom. The purpose of the first Intifada was to put the Palestinian question, and notion of Palestinian legitimacy, on the political agenda. With attempts to deliver their own freedom, vis-à-vis the PLO as interlocutor, the violence certainly catalyzed the peace process, producing the Oslo Accords. However, if the second Intifada portends to reach for political legitimacy and statehood, the PA and Islamic fundamentalists’ selected means is failing their own people and their own aspirations. Israel is still identified as the Occupier, but perhaps it cannot be cast solely as the Oppressor.
Many are to be held accountable, not least the Palestinian leadership and not most the Israeli military or government. In a brief examination of the role of the media, and responses and reaction from the Arab world, Europe and the United States, an appreciation of the international character of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be gleaned. International forces are often necessary in deflating crisis, but often they only provide extra oxygen to fuel an already feeding fire. The international character of the conflict has, indeed, invested a greater audience, elevating it to a different standard by which to judge. Let’s be honest, the US or Europe certainly does not invest economically or politically to end ethnic conflicts in Africa like they do in the Middle East.

While media attention doesn’t turn government interest towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it certainly opens the scope of the average audience viewer who would, otherwise, know nothing of the Middle East. Are images of Israel and the Territories saturated on news programs because the nature of martyrdom is so beastly that it is rendered perversely intriguing to the Western psyche? Partially, but not to the point that it is unique from other atrocities which humans commit on their neighbor. Rather, the intrusive and interpretive role the media has played to internationalize the conflict has magnified the theatricality of war and, concomitantly, opened the conflict to a greater audience.

**Role of Outside Media in the Intifada**

If one cannot trust their news source for honest reporting, how is a non-participant supposed to educate themselves? This is the heart of the problem – when the media
abandons objectivity and inserts sympathies, through language or images, and opinions into news reporting. And be it by presenting a skewed lineup of experts, or presenting a one-sided story, or loaded idiom – biases and misleads in the media occur *all the time.*

Organizations like the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), Honest Reporting and the Palestinian Media Watch are just three of many examples of groups committed to holding media accountable to reporting standards. The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), additionally, is committed to accurate translation of Arabic press, to “bridge the language gap between the Middle East and the West.” Often, as a common adage in political circles go, “What Arafat tells the Americans in English is often different than what he tells his people in Arabic.” The efforts of these independent groups have gone to removing this discrepancy.

It is not difficult to understand why there is an information gap between the Arab world and the West. Palestinians read *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* (controlled by the Palestinian Authority), *al-Quds,* and watch *al-Jazeera,* based in Qatar.¹ And, unlike the similar message the Arabic press carries, American and European press is riddled with inconsistencies and biases. If one is pro-Israel, they would exclusively watch FoxNews², declaring CNN and National Public Radio (NPR) slanted. A pro-Palestinian enjoys most European press, especially the BBC, in radio, television and internet. As one of the

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¹ The Anti-Defamation League provides an interesting discussion on the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism into Arab news and political cartoons. <http://www.adl.org/main_as_arab.asp>

² FoxNews is perceived as being “pro-Israel” because it was the first station to employ the term “homicide bomber,” as requested by President Bush. “Homicide bomber” attempts to strip the honor of martyrdom which comes from sacrifice for liberation.
world’s larger media institutions, the dissemination of interpretive news has caused real concern.³

If the first cause of media distrust in the Intifada is inherit slant based on audiences, the second source of distrust is terminology. Harking back to the Introduction, words are very important in describing events and will immediately charge a connotation, even where one is not intended. When a Palestinian commits a suicide operation, he can be a *martyr, militant, gunman, homicide bomber* or *terrorist.* In an Opinion article written for *The Jerusalem Post,* Seth and Sheri Mandell, whose 13-year-old son Koby was shot by Palestinians while on a nature walk, describe the nature of language whitewashing:

“On the day of the shooting, the headlines in *The New York Times* and elsewhere reported that the attack had been perpetrated by Palestinian militants. In the morning, those militants had been transformed into gunmen – an even more offensive term, with its old-fashioned atmosphere and vapid neutrality. The word is blameless, a description rather than a definition. A man with a gun, engaged in illegal activity. Illegal, but not necessarily immoral.”³

The theater of press and language is so vast that only a sparse discussion is possible in this setting. The question remains regarding the role journalists should play in the conflict which, due in part to their “coverage,” has ballooned to international proportions.

It is advantageous for the Palestinian cause, unequivocally, to gain media attention. It endows the cause with a certain legitimacy and recognition. A medium will

³ In a recent criticism by CAMERA of a BBC Internet presentation on conflicted characters in the Intifada, just to illustrate the dangerous effects of word choice, Prime Minster Ariel Sharon, in his profile was labeled the “Controversial hardliner,” which on his own merits is true. But the article juxtaposes Sharon to Chairman Arafat, who is described as “a flawed symbol of Palestine.” And, notably, Gerald Butt, the author, notes his flaw not as the endorsement of terrorism but rather his inability to power-share and a poor negotiator. Language distorts the culpability of Arafat, and overtly sympathizes towards the Palestinian cause. (Ricki Hollander, *BBC’s Profiles Obscure Reality,* February 5, 2003, [http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=4&x_outlet=12&x_article=304]())
export a group’s dogma, and method, for international audiences. This is seen as a reward, a form of advertisement. Increased press time stamps an importance and immediacy on your cause. The incomparable media coverage of the Palestinian-Israel conflict, which garners huge ratings, not only becomes a device of the terrorist group, but, through their permeability, has even jeopardized an organic nature to the conflict.

During “Operation Defensive Shield,” the military incursion on Jenin to debilitate the terrorist infrastructure, the IDF and Government of Israel were beleaguered for not allowing media into the refugee camp, especially after “Palestinians claim hundreds of bodies are buried beneath the rubble.” This claim was later disproved by the United Nations and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Yonah Alexander identifies that a “major issue related to the problem of terrorism and media is the particular interaction of both with police agencies.” IDF Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz certainly gained an amount of celebrity in his constant media appearances, justifying why press and fact-finding committees couldn’t enter the refugee camp during the incursion. Jenin stands as the quintessential argument advocating accuracy and balance in reporting.

The media has the power of reaching audiences that even governments can’t. Women, children, laborers – information is certainly not the inaccessible realm of the educated or elite, it is a potent force for peoples. With this power comes responsibility, which has seen little care-taking. But, the Intifada is seemingly waged everywhere: outside of Israel and the Territories and outside of the media. Very much alive on the Internet, discourse and websites surrounding the actors and atrocities of the Intifada are
The opinions that media proffers, its inclinations and word choice, fuel the Intifada by making it global.

*International Responses to the Palestinian Strategy*

Implications of the Intifada can be seen on a global level. Liberation movements find inspiration in the re-definition of the David and Goliath dichotomy, formerly empathizing with Israel. The Arab and Muslim world is in arms, rallying on Palestine’s behalf. Jewish federations and groups are raising money, sending volunteers and tourists to assist Israeli’s economy. The halls of the US Congress are overrun with lobbyists from the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, Council on American Islamic Relations, Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, to name a few attempting to influence American policy towards the Middle East. While criticism is abundant of President George W. Bush’s investment, or lack there of, in a peace process or in cessation of violence, one cannot question an unwavering, bi-lateral support the United States gives Israel.

In Europe, however, one sees a different political situation. There is much less democratic activism (partially because of the nature of European democracy, the culture of political participation, as well as the supranational structure of the European Union) from Europeans to their governments. Responses in Europe towards the Intifada have been largely sympathetic towards the Palestinian cause, from governments to popular

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4 See “The Electronic Intifada” ([http://electronicintifada.net/](http://electronicintifada.net/)) juxtaposed with “Myths and Facts” ([http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/myths/mftoc.html](http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/myths/mftoc.html)) for a particularly contrasting treatment of similar issues. This disparity is illustrative of the wide angle under which the conflict is viewed, as well as the selective reading of history to fit one’s political purposes.
opinion. “In an opinion poll, only 14% said they were more sympathetic to Israel than to the Palestinian Authority.” Many have been quick to associate Palestinian sympathy with a renewal of an air of anti-Semitism. One cannot ignore the connection between the heightened situation in Israel with the increase in synagogue burnings and assaults perpetrated against Jews in Europe.

However, many of these incidents are committed by European Arabs against Jews. There is no indication that non-Arab, indigenous French or Germans, for example, have reverted to a World War II mentality. Indicators, like revival of the British National Party (which espouses a neo-Nazi political ideology) or the marginal electoral success of French populist, Jean-Marie Le Pen, are seen more a response to the increase in Arab immigrants, just as attacks are viewed as manifestation of Arab-European anger towards Israel. The Economist states correctly that “criticism of Israel does not equal anti-Semitism.” Regardless, the rise in acts against European Jewry, in a land still delicately watching its footing from WWII, is disturbing and linked to the escalation of violence in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The Arab world enjoys a strained familial relationship with their Palestinian brethren. Since the 1967 War, when Arab nationalism clearly failed the indigenous Arabs in Palestine, they have turned inward, thus supporting the Intifada’s struggle for self-determinism. This is also why the Palestinian national identity became married with an Islamic identity, gaining momentum (like in the entire Muslim world) around the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. While there is a clear tie – ethnic or otherwise – with the
Arab world, there are still strained relationships which cast perfidious shadows on the Palestinians.

Political gestures are mostly symbolic. Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, in offering the Saudi Proposal, acted for political symbolism. The Arab world stands united behind the Palestinian cause, but no real political steps towards cessation of violence or economic relief, are committed. If anything, Arab leaders only reinforce a cycle of violence by holding telethons and fundraisers to contribute money to suicide operations. Families of suicide bombers “now receive more than double the financial compensation than do the families of those killed by other means.”vii There has even been documentation found linking Yasser Arafat to the direct funding of families of suicide bombers, which is a central argument in his contradictory “denouncement” of suicide bombings.5

“The bulk of the money comes from … wealthy Arab businessmen, particularly from Saudi Arabia and other oil states, and well off Islamic families in the Western world.”viii Fundraising even in the United States (most ignominious is the HolyLand Foundation for Relief and Development) has provided “crucial financial support to the families of Hamas suicide bombers,” according the US Treasury Department.ix These assets are now frozen. Additionally, Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, was recently removed from his position as professor at the University of South Florida for connections with and fundraising for the Islamic Jihad.

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5 The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has many examples of documents recovered during Operation Defensive Shield which directly implicates Yasser Arafat, by his own signature, to funding wanted Israeli terrorists as well as Tanzim-sponsored suicide missions. <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0lkj0>
Monetary support for suicide bombers and their families has not been the only external support demonstrated by the Arab world. Arms smuggling to outfit the Palestinian resistance has been an effort met with both frustration and success. Iran and the PA got caught attempting to import arms on the Karine-A. Egyptian militants have dug tunnels in the Sinai to move arms into Gaza, with the aid of Arab-Israelis and Bedouins. And the state-sponsorship of terrorism by Syria is also important to note, to underline the intense geographic pressure applied around Israel. The Arab world, while experiencing tenuous ties to the Palestinians politically, has produced examples in support of religious and PA-sponsored terrorism.

Conclusion:

The world is as much a contributor to the Intifada as the Israelis and Palestinians. The press has, through altruistic or selfish motives, brought the conflict into living rooms worldwide. This has mobilized support for both sides in unprecedented numbers. It has also compromised an organic development of solution to the conflict. Furthermore, while the Intifada has played out on the global stage, these external factors only add more steam to an already overworked pressure cooker. Media ethics are always questioned and often precarious, but it is incumbent upon journalist to adopt some standardization of terminology. And, with the conflict being so distant for most audiences, the media serves as the crucial, unavoidable bridge.

\[1\] MEMRI website <www.memri.org>
\[3\] “Jenin Camp ‘Horrific Beyond Belief’,” BBC News, April 18, 2002 <http://new.bbc.co.uk>


vi Ibid., p. 48.

vii Gal Luft, p. ?.

viii Joseph Lelyveld, p. 49.

ix Ibid., p. 49.
6. Conclusion

Israelis and Palestinians knew that, when burying Yitzhak Rabin, they were burying the peace process. But what are they burying today? As death tolls rise, and innocent parents, siblings, and children go to their grave—on both sides—what is symbolically being severed? A fatalist would see the current political nadir as the last vestiges of coexistence—a defeated acceptance of the impossibility of peace.

Yet there are those that, despite the matsav (“situation,” the elusive term Israelis use in referring to the Intifada), fondly recall the spirit of Rabin. In a memorial ceremony for Rabin in 2001, Member of Knesset Yossi Sarid said, “Rabin understood that we and the Palestinians are here for good and that peace between us was unavoidable, while war could be avoided.” It is this population, which views the Intifada not as an end but a birth pain of peace, which will affect the future. Amputating Israel from the Palestinians—politically, economically, and socially—will irreversibly divide these geographic neighbors.

There is overwhelming obstinacy on both sides, trying very hard to close these doors. Whether endorsing terrorism or deploying troops haphazardly, the leaders of each side have reinforced militarization as the means to deliver peace. It should be clear by now that there is no military solution to the conflict. Leaders must explore political alternatives.

From the Israeli perspective, political alternatives seem impossible when the “peace partner” is an adamant endorser of suicide bombing and other terrorism. Additionally, it would be an empty peace to forge with a population taught to inherently
hate Israelis and Israel. From the Palestinian side, there is a great misunderstanding of Israelis, a product of the government indoctrination. Additionally, the perpetual military occupation creates an atmosphere of distrust, fear, and poverty. How is one to build bridges though this thicket of opposition?

The first step is in understanding that each side has different religious perspectives on which they are unwilling to compromise. Appreciating this fundamental difference between Palestinians and Israelis is not divisive, but at least establishes an undisputed fact. The Intifada is as much a product of historical and religious claims as it is of political leadership and militarized conflict.

This religious dissimilarity is highlighted in the differing perspectives on martyrdom as explored in this paper. The Jewish understanding of martyrdom is one that occurs under an inescapable duress – when one is forced to choose God. In the Jewish faith, the deeds you do in this world are more meritorious in the world to come than expediting one’s travel to the afterworld. Conversely, many Muslims now see their society as advocating martyrdom as an immediate deliverance to Paradise, and that the most honorable way to achieve your martyrdom is through suicide bombing.

Importantly, it should be reiterated that the decision to become a suicide bomber is not “mindless or irrational,” but rather a conscious manifestation to serve Allah and deliver Palestine. But, because of the differing Jewish perspective and its emphasis on this life, there is an inability for Israelis to interpret the act of a suicide bomber as anything but irrational and barbaric.
A suicide bombing is violent and perverse in its graphic display. But this statement should not be the point of departure in reaching understanding with Palestinians. Understanding the reasons supporting the cult of martyrdom in Palestinian society is integral to building bridges for peace. The nature of Palestinian martyrdom is one that synthesizes nationalist goals with Islamic tenets. Through borrowed symbols, political competition and charismatic leadership, these two endeavors became intertwined, making the current Intifada a religiously motivated pursuit for political independence.

Centrally important to understanding the political situation are the causes which motivate devout Muslim Palestinians to resort to martyrdom. Above all reasons is the overarching control the Palestinian Authority has in indoctrinating the Palestinian people to a message of hate, through media, schools, and summer camps for children. Financial endorsement for families of suicide bombers, by both Palestinian officials and Arab leaders, further reinforces this deadly pattern. The nature of Occupation and its byproducts – economic depression, humiliation, fear – are also reasons piquing interest to participating suicide missions. But, this paper has endeavored to highlight that this is not the strongest factor, nor the only cause, for suicide bombing. “Suicide bombing as a result of the Occupation” is a misnomer perpetuated, mainly, by the Palestinian Authority and disseminated by the international press. Occupation certainly is a tributary to the atmosphere of hate, but it is not the only source.

Historical/religious examples of martyrdom, the deliberate indoctrination of children and the Palestinian people by the PA, the politicization of the conflict, and the
re-enforcing nature of the conflict strengthened by popular support all support the Palestinian suicide-bombing machine. Global responses to this Palestinian cult of martyrdom have ranged from American condemnation to European sympathy.

International opinion is largely shaped and persuaded by the partial nature of the press in the Intifada. Through word choice or slanted stories, the media has internationalized the conflict and allowed for its inorganic development. Suicide bombing is as much to entertain the world theater, and garner international sympathy by promoting their cause, as it is to bring devastation to Israeli society.

The situation in Israel and the Territories is unique because the political conflict is substantiated on a religious concept of martyrdom. The discordance between sides is predicated on different interpretations of this central concept. Military occupation does not offer a successful defense against suicide bombers, and it is unrealistic for Jewish terrorist groups to adopt suicide and be successfully digested by the Israeli polity. Each side lacks the defense to negate the other’s offense, and furthermore, both sides lack the ability to either understand or positively influence the other’s ethos. John Esposito aptly describes this impasse: "Part of the explanation is that [Palestinians and Israelis] grew up with this, but part is also that they grew up in a confrontational situation. You make the world into 'us and them,' and therefore you buy into every possible caricature of the other."

Peace is imprecise. We often only understand it through its absence. But, this should not be the fate of Israel and the Palestinian people. As Yitzhak Rabin said, “Better have pains of peace than agonies of war.” A vague peace is better than a visible war.
Through a recognition of difference, bridged though dialogue, perhaps parties can resuscitate calm, and one day, even the peace process. It was the dream of Yitzhak Rabin, and despite obvious realities, there must still be the spirit of peace which has not died.

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ii Esposito, The Islamic Threat, p. 147.
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