Jihadist Suicide: A Moral Ideal

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CERTIFICATION

This work is entirely my own and has not been submitted in any form to another University. Where the use has been made of the work of others it is duly acknowledged in the text.

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November 2011.

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ABSTRACT

Many analysts mistake suicide bombing as a "natural" consequence of political grievance: as the ultimate in the politics of despair, citing the plight of Palestinians as the central case study. My contention is that the suicide–murder doctrine had its genesis in Revolutionary Iran and became institutionalised during the war years with Iraq (1980–1988). The ideology that supported suicide on the battlefield is identical to that of the suicide terrorist globally. The training of insurgents outside of Iran—including Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the al Qaeda global network—ensured the development of the phenomenon best termed Jihadist Suicide. Putting this phenomenon into a sociological and historical context, this work draws on comparative and ethnographic techniques to analyse significant concepts—like suicide, martyrdom, secularisation and ideology—to identify the nuances of Jihadist Suicide. It is argued that in the history of ethnic conflict, this form of suicide has been rare. Tradition does not support acts of such suicide—not even in its political or religious guise as martyrdom. Historically, it never occurred as a globalised phenomenon. Rather, it is a product of late modernity, whereby a world driven by ontological insecurity and uncertainty has opened the way for political elites and counter-elites to introduce radical ideas. It is not deviant behaviour, as is the common perception of suicide, but a moral ideal.

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ACRONYMS

Anon.	Anonymous, or unknown author
ARC	Aktion Reinhard Camps (associate information service for HEART)
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
CIA	United States Central Intelligence Agency
FBI	United States Federal Bureau of Investigation
FMO	Forced Migration Online
Hamas	Islamic Resistance Movement, or *Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʾIslāmiyyah*
HEART	Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team
IDF	Israeli Defence Force
IED	Improvised Explosion Devices
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
JMCC	Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEMRI	Middle East Media Research Institute
n.d.	No date
n.p.	No page number
NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCTC	(United States) National Counter Terrorism Centre
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Conference
PA	Palestinian Authority
PA TV	Palestinian Authority Television
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad, or *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami al-Filastini*
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PMW	Palestinian Media Watch
SPLC	Southern Property Law Centre
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republic
VBIED	Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosion Devices

ARABIC TRANSLATIONS

‘Amaliyat istishhadiya	Martyrdom operations
A’maliyat fida’iyah	Self-sacrifice operations
Al Aqsa intifada	Al Aqsa mosque uprising, 2000–2005
Al Gama’a al Islamiyya	Egyptian militant group
Al Ikhwan al Muslimun	The Muslim Brotherhood
Al Qaeda	The list
Al-amalyiat al-istishhaadiya	Martyrdom operation
Allah Akbah!	God is Great!
Al-shahid al-hai	The living-martyr
Basij	Militia, a government-affiliated militant group
Bassamat al-farah	The bombers smile of joy
Bicharehha	Unfortunate ones
Bikhudi	Self-annihilation
Dar al-Dawa	House of invitation, or better known as the abode of the *jahiliyya* (ignorance)
Dar al-Harb	House of war

Dar al-Hudna	House of calm
Dar al-Islam	House of Islam
Dar al-Kufr	House of disbelief
Fard ‘ain	Individual duty
Fard kifaya	Duty of the Islamic community
Fatwa	Religious edict
Fi sabil Allah	In the path of God
Fida’i	Sacrificer
Hadith	Writings of the Prophet Muhammad
Halal	Licit
Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami al-Filastini	Palestinian Islamic Jihad (also Islamic Jihad)
Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-ʾIslāmiyyah	Islamic resistance movement (Hamas)
Harma	Illicit
Hashshashin	Local colloquium for Assassin
Hezbollah	The Party of God
Hijra	The journey of Mohammad and his companions to Medina in 622 CE

Infidel	Non-Muslim
Irtidad	Apostasy
Istish'had	Islamic martyrdom
Jahiliyya	The people before Islam: the people of ignorance
Jamaat-i-Islami	The Muslim Brotherhood in Pakistan
Janbakhteh	Non-religious martyr
Jihad	Holly war
Kafir	Unbelievers, or *infidel*
Khod sazi e enquelabi	Construct a revolutionary self
Ma'alim 'ala Al-Tariq	Milestones Along the Way
Nafs	Self
Qur'an	Islamic Holy Book
Shahada	Death in the path of Allah
Shahadat	Martyrdom
Shahid	Martyr
Shurga	Paradise
Ulama	The educated class of Muslim legal scholars

Umma	Societal community of Muslims, believers
Velayat-i-Faqih: Hukumat-i-Islami	Guardianship of Islamic Jurists: Islamic Government

PART I :

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Introduction

Suicide bomber is now a term in daily parlance. A dramatic compound word, people know what the perpetrators do to people and to property so graphically. But few know why they do it. Is it really the "politics of despair" as is so often suggested about the Palestinian actions in Israel? Is it a new weapon of war, with youth manipulated by elders who simply hate the West, and the United States and Israel in particular? Is it religious fanaticism, a holy war on peoples deemed *infidels*? Is it primarily self-destruction, but with a "bonus" of bystander deaths? Is this really a matter of thought control over children who can be sacrificed in the new clash of civilisations?

Suicide bombings have claimed some 30 thousand lives and injured perhaps 70 thousand people since 1983[1]. Attackers have used suicide vests, backpacks, and items like guitar cases; and explosives hidden on donkeys, in bicycles, and motor bikes. In Afghanistan and Iraq, improvised explosion devices (IEDs) and vehicle borne improvised explosion devices (VBIEDs) are used. Suicide bombings have been reported in states as politically and culturally diverse as Afghanistan, Algeria, China, Egypt, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Syria, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States,

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[1] Source: Moghadam, 2008, pp.39–43; United States National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) Incident Tracking Database.

Uzbekistan, and Yemen. One analyst has called the suicide–terror phenomenon *the plague of the twenty-first century*.

The Rand Corporation contends that, on average, suicide attacks kill four times as many people as do more conventional assaults. They hit targets not normally vulnerable. Bruce Hoffman (2003, n.p.) asserts that “a person wearing a bomb is far more dangerous and far more difficult to defend against than a timed device left to explode in a marketplace”. The suicide bomber is a “human weapons system”:

> In April of [2002] a female suicide bomber tried to enter the Mahane Yehuda open-air market—the fourth woman to make such an attempt in four months—but was deterred by a strong police presence. So she simply walked up to a bus stop packed with shoppers hurrying home before the Sabbath and detonated her explosives, killing six and wounding seventy-three (Hoffman, 2003, n.p.).

Most attacks have been on buses, at bus stops, at religious meetings, shopping centres, recreational and entertainment sites, in hospitals, and even at funerals (Moghadam, 2008). This strategic psychological warfare creates a sense of terror, debilitating a population: “First you feel nervous about riding the bus. Then you wonder about going to a mall. Then you think twice about sitting for long at your favorite café. Then nowhere seems safe. Terrorist groups have a strategy—to shrink to nothing the areas in which people move freely” (Hoffman, 2003, n.p.). Scot Atran (2003, p.1534) agrees that “the primary target is not those actually killed or injured in the attack, but those made to witness it”.

In 1975, political scientist Brian Michael Jenkins asserted that “terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead”. He modified his theory in 2006, saying

“terrorists want a lot of people watching, *and* a lot of people dead” (cited in Miller, 2008). Shrapnel such as bolts, nails, and other metal objects in body-bombs suggests a cruel calculation and a desire for maximum “results”. Survivors are often debilitated for life, sometimes dying soon after the explosion. Sunstein (2003, cited in Frey et al., 2004, p.10) argued that individuals focus on the badness of the outcome, rather than on the probability that it will occur, resulting in a fear that is greater than the chance of harm. Daily life becomes less certain. Eckstein and Tsiddon (2004) claimed that fear, depression, and panic affect greater numbers of people, and that the services required to give adequate treatment to these patients become overstretched and inadequate.

There is substantial transitory and ongoing damage to individuals and states following suicide attacks (Frey et al., 2004). Fathali Moghaddam (2005) contends that the shocks are not only psychological but social, political, and economic. There is loss of trust in the government to protect the public and tension between needing increased security measures and protecting human rights and civil liberties. Some argue that increased security measures—which give law-enforcement agencies greater powers—simply give the terrorists what they want by default: a restriction of civil liberties and a violation of privacy.

Social derision of all or most Muslims arises from their victimisation as perpetrators: they bear the pressure of many false accusations of personal guilt as well as a slur on their faith. There has been physical abuse of Muslims in the United States following 9/11, with people pulled from their vehicles and violently attacked. The feeling of victimisation has resulted in “them” and “us” dichotomies, and a pervasive siege mentality in some cases.

Costs to states and individuals are significant. Frey et al. (2004, p.16) reported that the "collapse of the Twin Towers destroyed 13 million square feet of real estate, and 30 per cent of the superior office space in downtown New York", and property loss of between $10 to 13 billion. The human capital loss is estimated to be $40 billion because of serious downturns in the airline and tourism industry, the stock market, foreign and domestic investment, foreign trade and the urban economy, and pressure on government coffers. Frey et al. (2004, p.19) concluded that non-market values are, by definition, excluded from these measures. The fear of individuals and the grief of the victims and the bereaved are disregarded. In sum, the damage perpetrated by terrorism may be considerably underestimated.

From the start, reactive policy has been one of policing, intelligence, and counter-terrorism measures. Following 9/11, the more aggressive approach of military action began. Robert Brym (2008) argued that those who advocate a military solution to terrorism inevitably claim that religion is the root of the problem. Coercion is justified, says Toft, because "extremist religious beliefs are ... relatively impervious to the kind of rational discourse and considered compromise that politics often affords" (2007, cited in Brym 2008, p.90). This military intervention is "the fallacy of the instrument":

> This fallacy, as is well known, causes people with a hammer to see every problem as a nail. The best-known contemporary example of this fallacy is the US decision to combat non-state terrorist groups using military force, not because military force is appropriate (it is not), but because military force is the 'best' instrument at the United States' disposal (Holmes, 2006, p.171).

Mamdani (2005, p.254) championed this theory. He warned that: “The consequence of bringing home—wherever home may be—the language of the war on terrorism should be clear: it will create a license to demonize adversaries as terrorists, clearing the ground for a fight to the finish, for with terrorists there can be no compromise”. The military option is roundly criticised by many analysts who advocate a conciliatory approach (Johnson, 2000; Chomsky, 2003; Bloom, 2005; Pape, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005; Brym, 2008, to name just a few). Smith (2004 cited in Hronick, 2006) noted that 36.4 per cent of her sample group of academics recommended that states “strip away the terrorist groups’ supporters by engaging them in dialogue”. This is consistent with Atran’s (2003, p.1538) earlier analysis:

> The last line of defense against suicide terrorism—preventing bombers from reaching targets—may be the most expensive and least likely to succeed. Random bag or body searches cannot be very effective against people willing to die … A middle line of defense, penetrating and destroying recruiting organizations and isolating their leaders, may be successful in the near term, but even more resistant organizations could emerge instead. The first line of defense is to drastically reduce receptivity of potential recruits to recruiting organizations. But how?

Former United States Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asked: “Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the *madrassas* and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?” (2003 cited in Argo, 2006). The statistics would suggest not. In Robert Pape’s words (2005, p.197): “Although many of us would like to believe that suicide terrorism is limited to a tiny fringe, the fact is that there may be no upper bound on the potential number of suicide

terrorists". An estimated 4,164 people world-wide have blown themselves up in suicide bombings between the first bombings in Beirut in 1983 and 6 April 2011[2].

Despite massive research on motivation, suicide terrorism resists academic and intellectual dissection. Even more difficult is vivisection, that is, dissecting or deconstructing the living and incipient or immanent bomber. "The readiness of seemingly unexceptional human beings *not only* to massively murder innocents, *but also* to sacrifice their lives in the process, [is] contrary to the basic human instinct of physical survival" (Kruglanski et al., p.332, emphasis in original). My research investigates the sudden appearance of suicide bombing, delineates the development of suicide–terror, and attempts to establish the circumstances necessary to produce suicide bombers. Moreover, it challenges the reader to rethink suicide–terror: to appreciate better conceptualisations of such core issues as suicide, martyrdom and ideology in order to establish a solid theoretical base on which to assess this act.

Levene's (2005a) Rock Face

Mark Levene (2005a, p.9), a major figure in genocide studies, argued that "the dominant scholarship operates on the notion that genocide is an essentially extraneous, ill-fitting nugget in a broader rock-face which can be prised out from it through careful manipulation. The field of genocide concentrates on "the particularly aberrant and hence isolated social structures and situations" that surround acts of genocide, but that the

[2] Source: Moghadam, 2008, pp.39–43; United States National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) Incident Tracking Database.

answer is to be found in the broader picture of the “entire, global, political-economic system [that] has emerged” from the last century, that “it is the nature of the rock-face, or rather the process by which a recent vein became deeply embedded into its strata, which is the essential problem” (Levene, 2005a, p.9).

This same argument can be used to explain the current suicide–terror phenomenon. It did not simply strike us as an anomaly in an otherwise sane and stable world; it is a product of our world. A robust explanation of it cannot be reduced to particular individual motives or social and political structures, but can only be fathomed through a broader comprehension of the twenty-first century, and—ultimately—a holistic look at the communities that Jihadist Suicide emanates from. Levene (2005a, p.10) argued that his position and that of fellow genocide analysts is not insuperable, in that they are at least “looking at the same rock-face, and we are also in agreement that there is something wrong with it”. In his field, he felt that it was simply a matter of degrees of analysis. In this study it is sometimes a matter of degrees, but it is also—as Levene (2005a; 2005b) noted—a failure to view the bigger picture and, therefore, to bring into view social and political circumstances, as well as well-established theories that serve to explain the world from which phenomena such as genocide and suicide–terror emerged.

Levene’s strategy is synonymous with critical social science, which is concerned with the task of critically analysing social structures in order to develop knowledge for the purpose of bringing about positive change. The methodology used in critical social theory is not traditional in the sense of qualitative sociology being based on empirical research. It does, however, have an established base in social science research. The *Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* describes critical theory as “characterized [by] a blend

of practical philosophy and explanatory social science … Practical philosophy is concerned with the specifics of ethical and political life (praxis) and the actions that must be undertaken to achieve the good life; explanatory social science produces scientific knowledge of the general causes of social action". It does not set out to test any particular hypothesis because it is a journey of discovery.

Broadly defined, critical social scientists attempt to contextualise the lived experience of people undertaking a certain social action, or inhabiting a given geographical location (Seiler, 2006, n.p.). It follows the basic tenant of sociology, that is, that action cannot be studied isolated from its social context. How we view the ideas-action nexus depends upon our understanding of society. This thesis rests on the ontological premise of social constructionism as described by Scott and Marshall (2005, p.607):

> The imagined worlds of human social existence and activity, gradually crystallized by habit into institutions propped up by language conventions, given ongoing legitimacy by mythology, religion and philosophy, maintained by therapies and socialization, and subjectively internalized by upbringing and education to become part of the identity of social citizens.

Critical social theory privileges theory as an integral part of the search for emancipatory knowledge—in the understanding that it is only the dissemination of this knowledge that will free people from the bonds of power that bind them to participation in action that is harmful and (or) against their individual or collective interests. In such, it shuns common perceptions as a basis for enquiry. This thesis includes a comparative analysis of peoples in different times and places with that of the Jihadist. This includes an historical analysis of different concepts and times. The focus of this thesis is the

Palestinian and Iranian social and political milieu at the time of the development of the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines that inspire Jihadist Suicide. It uses suicide bombings, or acts that approximate this end like the attacks of 9/11, as a constant referent.

Historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994, p.17) suggested that a way forward is to pick out certain phenomena that emerged from "the debris of the period that has just come to an end" and analyse their content. What bears most particularly on the current suicide–murder phenomenon are secularism and the rise of individualism; religious revivalism and its move to political nationalism; suicide and martyrdom; ideology and the "clash of civilisations" thesis that—while ill-conceived—enables a conversation about how the extremes of the last century resulted in a clash within civilisations, or what has been better addressed as the end of modernity thesis.

Results of this Critical Analysis

Jihadism is a blueprint for social change and social action. It has produced the current suicide–terror phenomenon. The blueprint analogy shows the pathway to persuasion by teaching groups how to produce it. Hardly a simple feat, it was produced by creating dual and complementary ideologies: the "resistance" doctrine and the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. The most challenging part of this suicide–murder duality is the suicide component. Before the 1980s, suicide was taboo in all the cultures that have since adopted it. The suicide ideology worked hardest in changing the death meanings within societal groups. Murder is easier to explain.

The murder of defenceless victims, according to Chalk and Jonassohn (1990, pp. 27–28), does not come easily—even among hardened combat soldiers. Persuading people to achieve the murder of specific ethnic or religious groups is perhaps better understood following the proliferation of studies in ethnic cleansing and genocide after the Second World War. The excellent works of Kuper (1981), Chalk and Johassohn (1990), Bandura (1990), Staub (1992), Burleigh (1997), Weiz (2003), Veltlesen (2005), Levene (2005a; 2005b), LeBor (2006), Lieberman (2006), Baum (2008), and Wistrich (2010) have enlightened us on so many aspects of mass death and mega-death. Suicide–martyrdom is harder to explain.

Jihadist Suicide ideology does not fully replace an existing ideology. Rather, it overlays it and only partially destroys it. Like cancer, it feeds on healthy tissue while keeping the host organism alive. Indeed, the way the suicide–martyrdom doctrine is made relevant is by its accretion to, and disfiguration and transformation of established, meaningful and emotive symbolic icons. The metaphor of biological contamination suits a description of Jihadism well, because it highlights how it can spread from culture to culture, militant group to militant group, without discrimination as to race, creed, or ideology in the manner of a virus. It is not a biological phenomenon, but is an act of social engineering. The Jihadist Suicide doctrine can best be described as a cultural transformation.

Defining the Area of Research

Terror is the key issue on everyone's mind. It has not only cemented itself into the lexicon of the subject matter, but has become *the* core issue. However, any attempt to

form a meaningful interpretation of terrorism has faltered (Gearson, 2002; Silke, 2004; Hronick, 2006; Zulaika and Douglass, 2008). Few see any benefit in pressing for a consensus on a definition, yet the question arises repeatedly.

Lo Cicero and Sinclair (2008, p.12) noted that “some people think they know it when they see it, but there have recently been events variously claimed by some experts to be, and by other experts not to be, terrorism”. Tilly similarly argued ([2004] 2008, p.5) that the term is “politically powerful but analytically elusive”. He aimed for some causal coherency between cases:

> Although definitions as such cannot be true or false, in social science useful definitions should point to detectable phenomena that exhibit some degree of causal coherence—in principle all instances should display common properties that embody or result from similar cause-effect relations. By that criterion, what violent events actually ought to qualify as terrorism? (Tilly, 2008, p.8).

Tilly (2008, p.12) traced the conception of terror back to the French Revolution, and identified the sprawling use of terror across a vast array of users. He concluded that “terrorism is not a single causally coherent phenomenon”. Moghadam (2008) agreed that in the present day it has an amorphous nature. Groups that use terror today do not admit to a uniform ideology, but are a diverse range of actors who hold different political and religious beliefs and seek separate goals. Suicide–terror is like a *Typhon* of Greek mythology—a ghastly monster with a hundred heads.

Causal coherence has been sought by distinguishing between alleged motives. Saul (2005, p.82) argued that “reference to political motives helps to conceptually distinguish international terrorism from transnational organized crime, which is motivated by

‘financial or material benefit’ rather than political aims”. He attempted to distinguish between the long list of state-defined criminal actors like the Mafia who participate in kidnapping and murder for material gain, and groups like the Black September terrorist group which kidnapped and murdered Israeli athletes and their coaches in Munich in 1972 for political gain. So, what is the difference?

The distinction between political and material gain is not helpful: militants who engage in terror attacks often participate in organised crime as well as in politically motivated crimes. In 1978, the Italian Red Brigade kidnapped and later killed Aldo Moro, the Italian Prime Minister, in pursuit of their political goals. But they were also active in organised crime, mostly bank robberies, to finance their operations (Wagner-Pacifici, 1986). Crime to finance political terrorism has often been cited. Valuable work has tracked the illegal operations of al Qaeda, Hamas, and other organisations. The Jamestown Foundation has produced extensive reports[3] in this regard. Jamal Ahmidan, known as *El Chino* to his friends, is a small-town drug dealer and strongman who found radical Islam, but still dabbled in the proceeds of crime to finance his terror attacks (Elliott, 2007). Ahmidan is the alleged mastermind of the Madrid train bombing in 2004, allegedly swapping drugs for explosives.

The US State Department recorded the first significant terrorist attack of our era as the hijacking of a National Airlines plane by Antuilo Ramierez Ortiz on 1 May 1961. The US National Counter Terrorism Centre Worldwide Incidents Tracking System also

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[3] Reports are available online through their website: www.jamestown.org

includes such incidents in their database. These databases define terror as hijacking, assassination and murder; kidnapping and hostage-taking; gun, grenade, and rocket attacks; remote and suicide bombings; seizure of public buildings, religious sites, and embassies; chemical attacks such as Sarin nerve gas and anthrax; letter bombs, sniper attacks, and downing of aircraft. Similarly, the list of militant organisations or persons involved in the above operations is extensive. Terrorism is useful as an umbrella term describing individuals or groups who engage in any one of the array listed above. But it is not useful as an analytical tool because it is too broad to elicit a causal explanation.

A better term for suicide–terror is suicide–murder. Whether explicit or implicit, the definition of suicide–terror is held to mean dying while killing. Lo Cicero and Sinclair (2008, p.32) defined suicide or martyrdom terrorism as "the planful and intentional act of killing oneself in the service of killing others". Ariel Merari described it as "intentionally killing oneself for the purpose of killing others, in the service of a political or ideological goal" (2004 cited in Hronick, 2006, p.254). Hronick (2006) noted that Merari specifically dismissed "suicide without homicide for a political cause" as being included in the definition of suicide terrorism. Even when terrorism is not part of the terminology, the description of dying while killing still stands. "Suicide missions" are often implicitly or explicitly defined as dying while in the act of killing. Atran (2003, p.1534) coined the term "human bomb" and described suicide terrorism as "the targeted use of self-destructing humans against noncombatant—typically civilian—populations to effect political change". These explanations make sense because the focal point is terrorism, or more specifically, murder.

Perhaps we have erred in placing the emphasis on murder and not on suicide. Murder–suicide has an established basis in criminal and psychiatric research. The suicide is a consequence of the desire to murder and would not occur divorced from this purpose. Is this the position of suicide bombers? Did they want to kill? And do they develop a pathological need to do so, to the extent of being willing to kill themselves at the same time? Or is their purpose suicide and the killing a part of a ritual process? The former seems more plausible. A dominant paradigm has built up around this suggestion, summarised in Chapter 2. I refer to this body of theory as *grievance theory*.

A substantial amount of research into suicide terror argues that the cause is grievance driven. This is accurate only so far as we recognise that political elites, who hold grievances, have recognised the psychological damage that suicide–terror attacks exact on their enemies, and see this as a means of seeking revenge in a succession of tit-for-tat attacks, and often feel that these attacks will pressure their enemies into concede to their demands. But it is here that the importance of grievance ends. World opinion—from state representation in the United Nations, to media reporting and hence the common perception of the man-on-the-street—labours under the impression that to address the grievances of the political elites, and those that adhere to their way of thinking, will bring about an end to suicide–terror.

There is an urgent need to debunk this dangerous perception. The danger is that potential victims of suicide–terror will not be saved by appeasing the grievances of the political elites who dispatch suicide attackers. We can see that the groups that dispatch suicide attackers have a multitude of grievances. Sometimes we can recognise that there are conflicting grievances. Appeasing one grievance may lead to a lull in suicide terror

attacks from a particular group or an abandonment of attacks all together. But the essential nature of the suicide terror phenomenon is that one grievance can be replaced with another, and if the group so chooses, the attacks can begin anew. This is only possible because the underlying cause, the one that provides political elites with a seemingly endless queue of willing suicide bombers—lined up outside their doors, if we are to believe the boasts of Hamas's political elites—has very little to do with the actual grievance.

Instead, I argue that in order to have attracted community acceptance of the use of suicide attacks, and hence a substantial number of people voicing their willingness to participate in these attacks, the essential psychological cause had to penetrate the psyche of the said community on a far deeper level than that of an ephemeral grievance. I use the term "ephemeral", not only to highlight its sometimes fleeting existence, but also to reinforce the notion that every cultural group has in-built mechanisms for dealing with matters pertaining to their psychological and cultural existence, and my research has shown that these mechanisms have not, or rarely and not to my knowledge, extended to inciting the entire community to acts of self-destruction.

The motivations alleged to cause suicide–terror have been a constant feature of humanity, yet organised attacks of this nature have rarely occurred throughout history. Speckhard and Ahkmedova (2005; 2006) show how psychological states of distress make people vulnerable to opportunists who prey on their distress to condition them for suicide bombing. The earlier and significant work on brainwashing by William Sargant (1957) did much to substantiate this idea. High levels of religiosity and (or) nationalism

can make people vulnerable to appeals to undertake extreme actions. These ideas are canvassed in following chapters.

The other configuration is suicide–murder is where the act of killing another is seen as the means of securing self-death. I believe that suicide is the primary motive and that this is the correct configuration. These cases are less well-known. They are synonymous with what can be alternatively termed Jihadist martyrdom, or Jihadist suicide. I prefer the latter term because it accurately describes suicide; martyrdom is a much vaguer category. Suicide has the advantage of not defining the motive of the deceased: there are a myriad of reasons, ranging from an act of deviance to one of bravery. On the other hand, martyrdom needlessly binds us to the idea of self-sacrifice for a greater cause than life itself. In Chapters 6 and 7 I argue that this is a fallacy when it comes to suicide bombers.

Emile Durkheim's definition of suicide is applicable. His meaning is better understood as *the conscious renunciation of life*:

> We may say conclusively: the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.44, emphasis in original).

From this umbrella definition, Durkheim saw that the different causes of suicide could be categorised to enable greater explanation of their true nature. In sum, he saw "suicide" as a generic name for a multi-faceted phenomenon. Under this umbrella, he identified some acts of martyrdom—or self-sacrifice—as suicide. I take this argument a step further and argue that technically an act of suicide–terror, of Jihadist Suicide, does

not need to include an act of murder. We fail to acknowledge the sameness of persuasion in two categories that are usually seen as distinct, namely, dying while killing and dying *without* killing.

The ideology that underpins killing for the suicide bomber is identical to the "resistance" doctrine used with the *Basij* (the paramilitary of the Ian–Iraq war). Both are referred to as *shahid* (martyr). The *Basij* had little opportunity to cause their opponent harm. But they still operated under the "resistance" doctrine that always sees the *shahid* standing in opposition to an enemy other. The *Basij* died by the motto: "If you can, slay and if you cannot, die" (Shari'ati cited in Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.44). The "resistance" doctrine, does not mandate killing, but recommends it. In the case of the suicide bomber, the means of killing is substantially improved and so the intention is to kill. But if a suicide bomber fails to kill anyone other than themself, the award of *shahid* still stands. The motto is unchanged.

In grievance theory, suicides appear to have accepted their death as an unfortunate consequence of their circumstances, or a burden of conscience. What is missing is an analysis of the appeal of death. Analysts of this genre are few. Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, directors of Palestinian Media Watch, have archived, categorised, and analysed the popularisation of what is, essentially, political suicide, within the Palestinian arena:

> Palestinian society actively promotes the religious belief that their deity craves their deaths. Note the words of a popular music video directed at children, broadcast hundreds of times on PA TV [the official Palestinian Authority television station], which depicts the earth thirsting for the blood of children: "How sweet is the fragrance of the shahids, how sweet

> is the scent of the earth, its thirst quenched by the gush of blood, flowing from the youthful body” (Marcus and Crook, 2004, n.p.).

Analysts tend not to take this seriously. Jon Elster (2006)—an acclaimed academic in rational-choice theory—marvelled at how anyone could logically ascribe to the tenets espoused within Jihadist societies. But we have to think in terms of Mary Douglas’s thought–world, that is, an enclosed, self-referential entity where the kind of pseudo-religious eschatological language that supports acts of Jihadist Suicide appears “natural”. This is discussed further in Chapters 8, 9 and 10.

A point that should also be made about Jihadist Suicide—regarding its status as suicide—is that of different suicidal currents. Suicide is an aspect of social relations that is mediated by society. This is the case even in its deviant form. By deviant, I mean as an act seen to be contrary to the wishes and public policy of a society. With Jihadist Suicide, the act can be one of social obligation or opportunism. The act is only made possible by society affording the individual this opportunity. It is an act of suicide ritual, performed under the name of a political (or religious) cause; hence the inclusion of the word “political” in the description. However, it is a moral ideal, and is not primarily a political act. By “moral” I mean that the tenets that support it entice the individual to develop a proper self: one that craves suicide.

The Thesis

Briefly, the thesis is in five parts. Part I, Chapter 2 is the literature review. It is a history of the development and an outline of the major themes in suicide–terror discourse. It does not critically analyse each author’s work, but outlines the arguments for and

against cited in the literature. The major themes are discussed throughout the thesis. Part II, The Age of Extremes, takes as step back from the subject matter and surveys the recent era. It investigates the historical and political implications of the twentieth century to determine the stresses that may have led to the use of suicide–murder as a tactic of guerrilla war. It also makes some suggestions as to why people came to be in favour of these operations. We look at secularism in the Middle East, the Arab Spring, and generally discuss the rise of religion in the West and the East and the authority and legitimacy vested in religion that draws adherents during times of political unrest. Chapter 5 makes the case that suicide–terror can be seen as a phenomenon that developed from the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines that first appeared in post-Revolutionary Iran during the war years of 1980–1988, and spread to other arenas.

Part III includes an analysis of Durkheim's definition of suicide; it argues that the primary intention of the actor is suicide. It also questions the oft-cited claim of martyrdom in preference for the determination of suicide. It looks at the history of this concept, and questions the claim that today's Jihadist Suicide is acting in accordance with Islamic tradition as a soldier of war.

Part IV outlines how modern state resources were used in Iran during the Iran–Iraq war, and by Arafat at the beginning of the second *intifada* to institutionalise Jihadist Suicide ideology. It discusses the ways in which the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines have been instantiated and describes how the cultural suicide script works within society to produce adherence to the dual Jihadist doctrine. Concluding thoughts

comprise Part V. Here we look at the world of violence, murder and mayhem, point out some lessons from Iran, and, look at the road ahead.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Some literature reviews are relatively easy exercises: major disputation is rare, schism is rarer; the factors in the equation are recognisable and recognised. Suicide–terror discourse however is heavily contested; its literature is a quagmire of strongly defended yet equally criticised hypotheses. Research hailed as a breakthrough does not survive long before its rejection. Some profound research fails to gain popular acknowledgement. Bruce Hoffman of Rand Corporation noted that there is some form of "conventional wisdom", but that even this is plagued by "canards and misconceptions". Some scholars claim that suicide–terror research is politicised by left-wing or right-wing bias. There exists a heated debate on the very relevance of the academic research. Why is suicide terror discourse in such a state?

Making Sense of the Suicide–terror Discourse

New fields attract controversy; suicide–terror is no exception. The burgeoning research grew out of bewilderment. Towards the end of the last century, understanding the mindset capable of an act of certain, immediate, and horrific self-destruction was impossible. There was no established body of theory to assess it. Theories emerged from disparate disciplines: political science, anthropology, sociology, suicidology, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, and economics, each with a particular conceptual framework. The recent establishment of dedicated institutions for the study of suicide–

terror brings an array of disciplines together, but there is still a plethora of competing and contradictory theories.

Despite efforts to resolve a definition, no solution has been found (see Hronick, 2006). There is, however, a perception that the terminology is understood. Rarely do analysts clearly define terms, and the reader is left to decipher meaning from context. When definitions are given—or when a definition is inferred—sometimes analysts stray from their intended meaning. The task is to explain suicide attacks; the result is often an analysis of terror. Mintz and Brule (2009, p.365) have pointed to methodological difficulties and errors "such as selection bias and selection effects, use of anecdotal evidence that can be contradicted with competing anecdotal evidence, small sample size, and lack of measurement validity" that cast doubt on hypotheses and leads to a lack of confidence.

Several analysts assert that empirical research is difficult, if not impossible (Merari, 2004; Lester et al., 2004; Grimland et al., 2006). One difficulty is trying to piece together the circumstance of the bombing in a post-mortem attempt to picture the bomber's life and possible motivation (Lester et al., 2004, p.293). Militant groups that deploy suicide bombers do not want transparency in their *modus operandi*. This was discovered by Hany Abu-Assad, the director of the controversial film *Paradise Now*, when he attempted to film on location in the West Bank. He returned after a 20-year absence to shoot a fictional story about two Palestinian suicide bombers. He was forced to finish filming elsewhere after death threats and a kidnapping by militants, who worried that he would destroy the *mystique of martyrdom*. Many analysts see militants'

speeches and scripted video testaments of bombers as mere political rhetoric. Some research is based solely or substantially on such messages.

Hoffman's (2008) claim that the common wisdom is plagued by misconceptions partially flows from a form of institutionalised deception. Aspects of suicide–terror become "factual" through repetition. Challenges are rare. An example is the oft-cited claim that suicide attacks in Israel were the natural reaction to outrage following the Hebron Massacre[4] (Bloom, 2005, p.20; Stotsky, 2007, n.p.; Martin, 2010, p.358), a claim made repeatedly by Hamas and its supporters. The evidence does not support this: the Hebron Massacre[5] occurred on 25 February 1994; the first suicide bombing in Israel occurred on 16 April 1993.

This example raises the oft-cited problem of "Israel bashing": the claim that some are content to follow a line of argument, so long as it faults the Jewish state. Much research concentrates on suicide bombing against Israeli Jews. The claim is that racial bigotry resulted in attempts to justify suicide bombings, rather than the advancement of research. Claims of bias are widespread. Greg Sheridan (2007) argued that research into suicide terror cannot make itself useful in the real world. He attributes this failure "in part [to] … postmodern and left-liberal bias". Mervyn Bendle (2008) described it as a

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[4] There are other claims regarding the commencement of suicide bombing in Israel. The most popular was that it was a strategy to derail the peace process.

[5] The first Hebron Massacre occurred on 23 and 24 August, 1929 when 67 Jews, who had lived in Hebron for many centuries, were murdered by Arabs incited to violence over the threat of Zionism. However, a later event refers to an incident on 25 February, 1994 when an American-Israeli physician, Baruch Goldstein, opened fire on Muslim worshippers at prayer inside the *Al-Ibrahimi* Mosque in Hebron, murdering at least 30 men and boys and injuring many more.

form of radical pacifism or political correctness, which brought many analysts to attribute causality to Western governments' policies. Carlyle Thayer (2007, n.p.) argued that good research is "being drowned out by celebrity commentators who promote terror mongering to an uncritical media". Thayer questioned whether the media hi-jacked the debate, leaving sound research in the cold (see also Mamdani, 2005, pp.229-260).

I agree with Mintz and Brule (2009) that theoretical advancement is impressive and intriguing. This literature review is an analysis of dominant themes, and how they have developed. It is impossible to review everything on the subject, nor to do justice to the differentiated arguments. My aim is to capture the essence of the main debates.

Suicide–terror as a Strategic Rationale

Chapter 1 discussed suicide–terror as a strategy of an unconventional war. Suicide bombings were seen as the militants' most effective weapon; the precedents in Lebanon in the early 1980s, and in Israel during the 1990s, showed that its effectiveness far outweigh the costs (Berman and Laitin, n.d.; Atran, 2003; Hoffman, 2003; Pape, 2005; Bloom, 2005, p.36; Pedahzur, 2005; Kramar, 2005; Tilly, 2008; Moghadam, 2008; and Holmes, 2006, pp.171–172). Suicide–terror in these contexts is a means to an end. For al Qaeda it is fighting for the destruction of Israel and the West, and the establishment of a world-wide caliphate; for Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, and Hezbollah it is for the destruction of Israel; and for the Chechen Rebels, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the now-defeated Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) it is for autonomy, or even statehood.

The strategic logic of suicide–terror was initially raised by Atran (2003) and Hoffman (2003) as being a tactic in a war of attrition: the enemy is slowly worn down by repeated attacks which they cannot prevent. Robert Pape (2005; 2007) popularised the relevance of strategic logic. He conducted an extensive data analysis of all known suicide attacks from 1983 to 2003. He showed that most suicide–terror campaigns deploy against democracies with the intention of forcing an end to foreign occupation in territory that the militants see as theirs. Pape (2005; 2007) made a substantial contribution, not least by his identification of a trilogy of logic—individual, community, and militant—that works to enable suicide–terror attacks. Not all have agreed with his conclusion, arguing that it is too universalistic (Moghadam, 2008). The growing sectarian attacks like those conducted in Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan do not fall within the context of foreign occupation. Sectarian suicide attacks—whereby Sunni militants targeted Shi'a leaders, mosques, and religious events, and vice versa—are better described as power struggles designed to subordinate or destroy the opposing group.

Other strategic motivations have included the "spoiler" strategy in the Israeli–Palestinian peace process, whereby Hamas and PIJ hoped to stop peace negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel (Kydd and Walter, 2002). This was the case at the height of the 1993 Oslo negotiations, when suicide bombings began in Israel. Alternatively, as Bloom (2005) argued, it was a strategy used by PLO Chairman Arafat for increasing his popularity with Palestinians. Previously, the popularity of the Islamic militant groups increased with their use of suicide bombing. Others argue that it is a defence of Islam (Armstrong, 2001; 2004), or simply a means of destroying the West (Kepel, 2002).

The literature demonstrates that the resort to violence, including the use of suicide–terror attacks, is a question of operational practicality. We know that militant groups' use of suicide–terror tactics is extensive, extending to intelligence on small groups that operate over only a few square kilometres in the suburbs of Afghanistan or Iraq. This is necessary for policing purposes, but it is my view that we are myopic if we propose to find the root cause of suicide–terror in local studies of these groups. We quickly find ourselves immersed in intricate detail that can only lead to the conclusion that this particular group is ideologically, politically, and cultural diverse from the next group, leaving the analyst with no sense of causal coherence between cases. This form of analysis concentrates on differences, and any similarity becomes submerged under the weight of divergences. We should work from the general to the particular, and not the converse. Studies that work from the particular and fail to discover any causal coherence have left the analyst to assume that the militant group only need think of the strategy in order to implement it. I argue throughout that this is a misapprehension. (Chapter 5 specifically deals with this.)

Not all analysts concentrate on the militant group. Indeed, the greater part of research into suicide–terror concentrates on the suicide bombers' motivation. Mohammed Hafez (2006b, p.55) contended: "One should not conflate the goals of organizations with the motives of individuals. Moreover, while organizations deploying human bombs are, generally speaking, strategically-oriented, this is not the case of individual bombers". Elsewhere he argued that if the political goal alone is sufficient to "convince the broader public of the utility of suicide bombings" why do radical groups go to so much trouble to "promote a culture of martyrdom" (Hafez, 2006a, p.168)? Certainly, even those who

emphasise the strategic logic also recognise an individual logic. Many analysts are bewildered by the question of why the individual would agree to become a human-bomb.

The Motivation of the Suicide Bomber

Previously, the motivation of the bomber was barely considered. They were generally thought to be lone, crazed, and irrational. Common wisdom now sees them as ordinary people performing extraordinary acts. Debate on their motivation is centred mainly on personal causes, but argument extends to theories of social or cultural significance. Common themes aim at profiling the bomber. Generally, such themes recognise an evolution in analysis. Some commentators have noted an evolution in the feelings of the bomber; from a situation of regret at the imposition of death, to a sensation of joyous expectation. My thoughts are that this is not an evolution, but the use of two separate techniques designed to gain cooperation. The former involves an obligation to religion or country in sacrificing one's life; the latter, to a drastic change in traditional sensibilities about sacrifice, whereby the participant in a suicide bombing no longer see their death as a sacrifice in the traditional meaning of the word, but as a triumph.

Early profiles had success in establishing a demographic of suicide attackers. Pedahzur et al. (2003) provided statistical evidence. Their analysis of incidents in Israel and Lebanon during the period 1983 to 1995 showed that they were young unmarried males of low socio-economic background, and they were devoutly religious. This profile has remained consistent today. Lately, some authors have argued that demographic profiling is no longer relevant (Sageman, 2004; Argo, 2004; Pedahzur, 2005; Pape, 2005;

Moghadam, 2008). Assaf Moghadam (2008, p.258) described current suicide bombers as heterogeneous:

> Suicide attackers have been male or female, younger or older, richer or poorer, single or married (some with children), employed or unemployed. Some suicide attackers have engaged in petty crime, while others have not. Some appear to have had a difficult childhood, while others have grown up under seemingly solid circumstances.

A suicide bombing in Gaza on 23 November 2006 was carried out by a 57 year-old[6] grandmother, Fatma Omar An-Najar; she blew herself up, slightly wounding two Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers. Her social role as family matriarch was previously thought to exclude her from participation in such action. An-Najar left behind nine children and 41 grandchildren. Hers was not an isolated case. On 6 July 2009, Fatma Hassan Zeck, also of Gaza, and also a grandmother, was convicted of attempted suicide bombing. The bombing was to have been a two-pronged attack in Tel Aviv and Netanya, with the second bombing carried out by her niece, Roda Ibrahim Habib, a mother of four.

The occurrence of heterogeneity does not make profiling irrelevant, as these authors suggest. It does suggest that any demographic can be enticed to participate, and that no demographic is immune from involvement. It is my contention that the original profile revealed by Pedahzur et al. (2003), and still statistically accurate today, reveals the recruiting criteria used by militant groups (Sandilands, 2004). Examples such as those of An-Najar and Hassan Zeck show that if the militant group see an operational

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[6] An-Najar's age was given by local media as 64 years.

advantage in recruiting a wider demographic, it is well capable of doing so. In Israel, the operational necessity was as a result of the success of demographic profiling and the subsequent "lockout", or extreme caution exercised by Israel towards the high-risk demographic.

Demographic profiling was replaced with or augmented by a *psychological autopsy* of the completed bomber. Psychological autopsy is a technique adopted by Ariel Merari in his study of suicide–terror in Israel. "This deductive, investigative research method attempts to reconstruct the psyche of the perpetrator based on interviews, records, communiqués, and other imprints of the individual" (Hronick, 2006, p.254). Taylor and Ryan (1988), Lester et al. (2004) and Merari (2010) recognised that psychological profiling can uncover personality typologies common to suicide–terrorists. Not all are convinced. Sageman (2004, p.99) argued that trying to identify a suicide–terrorist by their "personality predisposition ... is of very little value".

Speckhard and Ahkmedova (2006) took the idea of psychological profiling further by arguing that a moment of psychological transition from normal to pathological can be identified. Pape (2005) had rejected this idea, arguing that it is unsurprising that the search for a moment of transition between an "ordinary" psyche and that of a suicide–terrorist cannot be found. The argument persists. Psychological profiling is valuable, because—like demographic profiling—it gives an indication of the currents within society that free the bomber to participate in this activity. It also gives valuable insights into the militants' recruiting criteria.

Initial attempts to attribute motivation were concerned to uncover one root cause, either in terms of religious obligation or as an act of suicidal depression. Kruglanski et al. (2009a, pp.332–333, emphasis in original) noted that currently the literature cites 31 motives for suicide–terror attacks, ranging from an emphasis on a single motivation to a "potpourri of motives" produced by a "*cocktail of feelings*". Analysts have dealt with such heterogeneity by reducing the list of cited motives to three: personal causes, ideological reasons, and social obligations (Kruglanski et al., 2009a, p.333). Suicidal violence is "grounded in the psychology of human needs … that views all three motivational categories as functionally fitting within an overarching framework" (Kruglanski et al., 2009a, p.353). I agree with their view that all three categories collide to produce the suicide bomber; some analysts rely solely on the logic contained within a single category.

Personal Causes

I refer to motivations listed under "personal causes" as *grievance theories*. They purport to explain the root cause of suicide–terror, but they only succeed in describing the conditions under which murder and brainwashing occur. They do not explain the will to die. Arguments listed under personal causes suggest the presence of a "natural instinct", which allegedly causes people to self-destruct should certain compelling situations occur. This is not supported by the evidence that suicide–terror has been a rare occurrence throughout history. When it has occurred in the past, it has been isolated and local; it did not develop into a phenomenon as the incidence of suicide–terror has today.

Such theories do one of two things: they give exhaustive detail of the circumstances under which militant groups find it easy to prey on the vulnerable and (or) change dominant paradigms within the societal group, by creating a situation in the bomber's mind that can only be resolved by their death. Second, they describe the conditions under which people will lash out violently, suggesting some form of psychosis, or unalloyed hatred. . It is possible that some bombers suffer from psychosis, but most experts agree that it is rarely detectable. In essence, these motivations may be sufficient for some, but they do not form a holistic explanation.

The category of personal causes is generally equated with ordinary suicide. Here, ordinary suicide is seen as voluntary self-death due to psychological states like depression, or an as an escape from emotional pain associated with personal trauma, including post-traumatic stress. These themes can be categorised as a frustration-humiliation-aggression hypothesis that includes issues of resentment, downward mobility, and poverty that lead first to despair and then to aggression. The second category is the copycat suicide hypothesis associated with post-traumatic stress and envy. The revenge hypothesis is also listed under personal causes.

Frustration-Humiliation-Aggression Hypothesis

The humiliation hypothesis spans the arena of armed hostilities (Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Israel, and Pakistan), and the general Muslim world. The literature generally concentrates on Israel. The hypothesis is that people forced to live with daily humiliation are driven to low self-esteem, desperation, and eventual psychological collapse. One source of daily humiliation is cited as Israeli checkpoints. Traversing

from one's home to another location for work, medical needs, or family visitation can become ordeals of frustration and humiliation because of long queues, or temporary closures, or because of (alleged) victimisation and abuse. Another form of regular humiliation cited in the cases of Chechnya and the Palestinian Territories is that young men who grow up under conditions of armed conflict often feel intimidated and develop a sense of worthlessness.

A broader category of humiliation is said to exist within the Muslim world where leaders and militants often cite the humiliation of Islam by the West and Israel as the cause of suicide attacks. In an address to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006, the Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, claimed that "recent events across the region—from Palestine and Lebanon to Iraq and Afghanistan—have helped make what may once have been extremist opinions part of the Muslim mainstream. The Muslim world certainly sees all these as a complicity to humiliate Muslim countries and Muslim societies". Similar claims by militant leaders were cited by Jessica Stern (2003) during her three-year tour interviewing terrorists.

Holmes (2006, p.144) contended that 9/11 was the result, in part, of the terrorists' sense of a "bruising loss of status and prestige". Elster (2006, p.246) compared these two modes—conflict-humiliation and greater-Muslim-humiliation—as the difference between interactive-based and comparative-based emotions. He concluded that conflict-humiliation has a far greater motivating force: "Envy of the United States' power will not provide the same multiplicator of the willingness to die as does the resentment of humiliation at the hands of the Israelis" (Elster, 2006, p.246).

The humiliation hypothesis has similarities with the frustration hypothesis. Frustration and anger develop within the potential bomber when high levels of poverty, lack of career opportunities, and downward mobility combine with a deep sense that life's opportunities are blocked by injustice. Again, this centres largely on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The argument pivots on the idea that fatalism overcomes the individual and life becomes meaningless.

The fatalism argument has been questioned by analysts like Atran (2003, p.1536) who argued: "Suicide–terrorists generally are not lacking in legitimate life opportunities relative to their general population". Hoffman (2003, n.p.), citing the work of Ronni Shaked, an expert on Hamas, wrote:

> Shaked debunked the myth that it is only people with no means of improving their lot in life who turn to suicide–terrorism. "All leaders of Hamas", he told me, "are university graduates, some with master's degrees. This is a movement not of poor, miserable people but of highly educated people who are using [the image of] poverty to make the movement more powerful".

Others argue that it is not poverty itself, nor even a lack of education that cause frustration and anger, but the lack of opportunity to fulfil one's career. The Palestinian psychiatrist, Eyad Sarraj (2003, n.p.) argued that many Palestinians received a degree, only to find that there are no jobs: they are left to survive by "doing the jobs that Israelis do not like, sweeping the streets, building houses, collecting fruit or harvesting". The Israeli policy of "disengagement" since 2002 ensured that not even these jobs are available.

Saleh (2005, n.p.) argued that politicians and scholars in the West no longer view poverty and education as crucial clues to suicide–terror attacks and conceded that the "search for clues must lie somewhere else". He argued that politicians and scholars in the Middle East still believe that "abject poverty mixed with political frustration and military imbalance are … prominent variables" but that "grievances, political environment, and frustration" are also factors in the equation. Stern (2003) summarised the situation accurately by noting the degree of opportunism from militant leaders who exploit "a deep pool of humiliation". She contended: "Holy wars take off when there is a large supply of young men who feel humiliated and deprived; when leaders emerge who know how to capitalize on those feelings; and when a segment of society is willing to fund them … They persist when organizations and individuals profit from them psychologically or financially" (2003, p.236).

Psychological Contagion and the Copycat Hypothesis

Psychological contagion can occur through post-traumatic stress from a sense of deep loss and from a sense of envy. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2005) argued that the yearning for reunion and a need to alleviate emotional pain can encourage loved ones or close friends to follow suit. Similar to Stern (2003), they argue that this has to do with Jihadist ideology and militant opportunism and that "Jihadist ideologies can even be seen as offering a short-lived type of psychological first-aid … by taking on a martyrdom mission the traumatised person accepts an escape from traumatic bereavement and hyperarousal" (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 2005, p.145). They asserted that militant leaders prey on the vulnerable and persuade them to engage in activities that, if given circumstances of psychological support, they would not

otherwise have undertaken. “Divorced emotionally from fear, even the fear of death by the defense of traumatic dissociation and using anger to keep oneself together the individual is highly vulnerable to an ideology that promotes using oneself to die as a human bomb or martyr while taking with them one’s enemies” (Speckhard and Akhmedova, 2005, p.133). They particularly noted this phenomenon in conversation with would-be bombers from the Palestinian Territories.

Envy is another form of copycat suicide. Cameron Bar (2002) cited the case of 18 year-old Ayat Akhras from the West Bank who blew herself up outside a Jerusalem supermarket two days after a friend was killed by the IDF. While conducting a psychological autopsy of Akhras, he came upon her friend Shireen, who described Ayat’s actions as “sensational” and “awesome”. Shireen’s eagerness to copy Akhras is reflected in her words: “If God wills it [and] if I had the means, I would have done it yesterday” (cited in Bar, 2002, n.p.; Sandilands, 2004. p.18). Barbara Victor (2003) noted that Shireen was apprehended in Israel the following year while attempting a suicide bombing. She was recruited by her uncle.

Taylor and Ryan (1988) noted that motivation to acts of self-death intensifies with its popularity: every new case serves to further legitimate the action. A conviction develops that so many people could not be wrong in their judgement. Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005, pp.50–51) extends this theory by arguing that martyrs form a “ghostly community in death”:

> Candidates for martyrdom now know that their dead brothers … are waiting for them “on the other side”. The contagion has two anthropological effects: on the one hand, it has an effect on the living,

> who become a "community of witnesses" to their glorious deaths; on the other, those who have died as martyrs form a "glorious community" or a "community of the chosen" that welcomes them with open arms and encourages them even more to take the next step and overcome their fear of dying.

A music video regularly aired on the official Palestinian Authority broadcasting commission (PA TV) shows that a beautiful girl is lured to be with her martyred boyfriend through a suicide mission and is welcomed to *shurga* (Paradise) as one of the 72 black-eyed virgins who are the reward of her beloved *shahid* (martyr) (video available from www.pmw.org.il). Holmes (2006) referred to this as "value-added martyrdom", whereby the allure of death becomes far more tempting than life. Biggs (2006, p.196) referred to this as "egocentric-despair suicide", arguing that "the non-instrumental motivation of despair" is overpowered by the theatrical representation of the death as "the selflessness of commitment to a collective cause".

The significance of the information given by Taylor and Ryan (1988), Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005), Holmes (2006), and Biggs (2006) is that attitudes towards death—in particular, suicide—changed within these communities. It is argued throughout this thesis that this change in traditional death meanings did not occur "naturally", or spontaneously, but that its emergence required an orchestrated effort.

Revenge Hypothesis

Robert Brym and Bader Araj (2006) and Brym (2007) cited revenge as the primary cause of suicide bombing in Israel. Their analysis is of 138 suicide bombings between October 2000 and July 2005; Araj supplemented this by interviewing militants and bombers' families in field studies conducted in 2006 in the West Bank. They argued

that suicide attacks "take place for nonstrategic reasons such as revenge or retaliation or simply when opportunities for attack happen to emerge" (Brym and Araj, 2006, p.1973). They argued that the militant group is aware that a successful suicide bombing may minimise their political gains, but they are driven to revenge at all costs.

Brym and Araj's (2006) analysis uncovered five stimuli to suicide bombing attacks. Three were revenge-related, one was due to strategic rationales, and the other was symbolic. They listed causes such as assassination of organisational leaders or members by Israel; Israel's killing of other Palestinians; anti-Palestinian actions by Israel not involving the killing of Palestinians—such as house demolitions; significant political events—such as an Israeli election, the visit of an American envoy, or an Arab summit meeting; and symbolically in significant religious or ideological events—such as the anniversary of Salah al-Din's retaking of Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187 CE.

Stimuli are distinct from motivation. Motivations were divided into individual rationales and organisational rationales. Individual rationales are given as a desire for personal, national, or religious revenge or retaliation against Israel for perceived wrongs; a desire to regain one's poor reputation after shameful behaviour; and a desire to achieve a religious goal other than revenge or retaliation, such as the defence or spread of Islam. Organisational motivations are given as a desire for organizational or national revenge or retaliation; a desire to achieve a tactical short or long-term political goal; and a desire to achieve a religious goal, such as the defence or spread of Islam.

Mia Bloom (2005, pp.23–29) argued that militant violence in Israel is often retaliatory: Israeli actions are sufficient to produce a wave of suicide bombing attacks. She cited the

Hebron Massacre by Baruch Goldstein in 1994 as "open[ing] the doors of revenge in Palestine like never before"; the 1996 opening of the Hasmonean tunnel under the al Aqsa Mosque; and the targeted assassinations of Palestinian militant leaders such as the Hamas bomb maker Yahiyeh Ayyash, and Izz Eddin al Qassam Brigade leader Salah Shehada in the spring of 2002[7]. Her hypothesis is that militant-group leaders take advantage of individual or collective motivations for revenge; they rush to plan a bombing in order to advance their popularity among Palestinians.

Merari's (2005b, p.76) study of Palestinian suicides between 1993 and 1998 concluded that the usual claims of self-annihilation due to a personal grudge were not necessary factors: they were "apparently not even a major factor in creating the wish to embark on a suicide mission". He noted it likely that it "was a contributing factor in some of the cases". This is consistent with Durkheim's ([1897] 1952) theory that within a given population, a certain number of people will succumb to certain "suicidogenic" currents (see Chapter 7) that do not affect the bulk of the population. Bloom (2005) has—to speak metaphorically—put the cart before the horse. She needs to first explain how suicide bombings came to become popular. Indeed, by Pape's (2005, pp.180–181) figures—very popular. During the second *intifada* (2000 to 2005), 139 suicide bombers were sacrificed.

Paul Wilkinson (1974, p.127) contended that the frustration-revenge-aggression hypothesis does not "play a major role in encouraging extreme violence". Of note here

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[7] Bloom stated that *Shehada* was assassinated in 2003. The correct date of his assassination was July 2002.

is that Wilkinson is speaking of terror, not *suicide*–terror[8]. Hence, the task of explaining the sacrifice of the in-group member is profoundly more difficult. He concluded that "political terrorism cannot be understood outside the context of the development of terroristic, or potentially terroristic, ideologies, beliefs and life-styles" (Wilkinson, 1974, p.133). This contention offers greater hope to understanding the suicide component of terror also.

Ideological Reasons, including Indoctrination and Brainwashing

Ideology is generally discussed as the idealised notion of the actor internalising reasons for sacrificing their life, usually based on religious devotion or nationalist aspirations. Indoctrination sees the bomber as having a partial understanding of the full weight of their actions. Brainwashing is a complete deception, whereby the actor may know that their action will result in death, but they have lost the ability to exercise reason or will about it. There are cases where suicide bombers were said to have no idea that they were about to die.

Terror organisations are known to use the mentally disabled. Morgenstern and Falk (2009, p.290) noted that in Afghanistan, the Taliban often recruit them. They also cited the case of a mentally disabled Sri Lankan who, in November 2007, unwittingly blew herself up outside the office of a Tamil minister (Morgenstern and Falk, 2009, p.290). Trickery has also been cited. Merari (1998, pp.194–195) noted the case of a bombing in Lebanon in 1985 where the operatives were told they had 10 minutes to clear the area,

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[8] He wrote this in 1974, some nine years prior to the beginning of the suicide–terror phenomenon.

but the bombs were timed to go off immediately. And coercion: a war reporter in Iraq noted that the driver of a truck-bomb was found with hands handcuffed to the steering wheel. There was little else left of him.

The examples listed above are rare cases. They occur in instances where a willing participant cannot be found. In such, they fall outside of the scope of this thesis. To reiterate, this thesis is concerned to understand the phenomenon of suicide–terror as a movement of willing participants. The above examples are important because they show that militants are prepared to go to any length in order to perpetrate an act of suicide–terror. These examples reveal a level of desperation, and an inability to actualise the blueprint that ensures willing participants.

Politics or Religion?

Debate over whether religion or politics is the cause of suicide–terror persists (Holmes, 2006, p.132). It has to do with what Atran (2004) saw as religious or nationalistic fanaticism. Moghadam (2008, p.55) noted:

> Examples of religious groups [that engage in suicide–terror] include Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hezbollah. Examples of groups that are secular or nationalist in character include the LTTE, the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] PFLP, Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the [Kurdish Workers' Party] PKK, and the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party[9].

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[9] The Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) is a Lebanese and Syrian political party that strives to unite as Greater Syria, the states of the Fertile Crescent: Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian Territories, as well as parts of Turkey and Iran. They are not well-known for conducting suicide–terror attacks, but Gambetta (2006, p.288) records suicide–terror attacks by them in Lebanon beginning in 1985.

A pro-religious analyst, Fine (2008) contends that Arab national struggles occurred without the use of suicide–terror, and that it was not until global Islamic revivalism, following the success of the Iranian Revolution, that suicide–terror began. "Too many analysts underestimate the [religious] ideological basis of terrorism and argue instead that rational-strategic rather than ideological principles motivate Islamist terror groups" (Fine, 2008, p.59). He concluded: "Comparison between terrorist groups with secular and religious agendas … suggests that ideology matters for both and that downplaying religious inspiration for terrorism … is both inaccurate and dangerous" (Fine, 2008, p.59).

Moghadam (2008) attributed the rise in suicide–terror attacks from 2001 to 2007 to the growing popularity of al Qaeda and its *Jihadi-Salafi* ideology. Acosta (n.d.) disagreed with Moghadam's assessment. He argued that the Sunni Palestinians legitimated suicide–terror, leading the way for groups like al Qaeda. Moghadam acknowledges the prior use of this tactic in Lebanon but plays down its importance, arguing that it cannot account for suicide–terror today, because the Shi'a Hezbollah no longer conduct suicide bombings. This is difficult. A tactic of war does not need to persist in order to legitimate its origin. It is the timeline that indicates origin. Indeed, as I argue in Chapter 5, Lebanese Hezbollah was not the genesis of the suicide–terror ideology, but it was Khomeini's Iran.

These arguments have a common general theme that an eschatological study of Islam will uncover the religious justification for suicide–terror. Others reject this theory, arguing that any ideology that currently supports suicide–terror is new, and does not belong to traditional Islam or to any of the religious groups that have used it

(Armstrong, 2001; Khosrokhavar, 2005; Mamdani, 2005). Data show that over half of the suicide attacks conducted between 1983 and 2007 were carried out by non-religious secular groups, suggesting that religious groups may use suicide–terror as a tactic, but that religion is not synonymous with it.

Lacking a central authoritative reference—such as the Pope is in Catholicism—the Islamic sacred texts are open to doctrinal interpretation. Traditionally, there are religious scholars charged with the task of settling debates on issues of religious dispute. However, the current debate on concepts such as *jihad* (war) and *shahada* (martyrdom) appear to have been taken over by those who claim to speak for Islam, but who are not religious clerics. Osama bin Laden is an example. He was best described as a charismatic leader; he lacked formal religious training, and yet he was the author of many *fatwas* (Islamic religious decrees) that were eagerly embraced.

Mamdani (2005) agreed that bin Laden was not a theologian but a politician. He argued that political goals and social grievances are the cause of suicide–terror, regardless of whether the group is religious or political. Fine (2008, p.60) argued that al Qaeda's demand is for "a new Islamic caliphate stretching from Spain in the west to Iraq in the east and eventually including Southeast Asia and Europe as well". Religious groups are seen as inspired to defend or expand their religion by territorial conquest. Mark Juergensmeyer (1993) recognised religious revivalism across all religions as religious-nationalism, meaning that it is naïve to assume that religious extremists do not seek state power.

Hafez and Merari (2004 cited in Hronick, 2006, p.254) recognise that suicide–terror is motivated by political ends, but that religion has been used as an instrument in inspiring commitment. The view that there is at least a binary logic was expressed by Brym (2008, p.91). Indeed, the distinction between religious and nationalist groups is not as prominent as it was in the past. Apart from the religious-nationalist theme, analysts note the adoption of religion by secular-nationalist groups to promote their legitimacy and to validate their use of suicide–terror, further blurring the lines (on Fatah and Hamas, see Mowbray, 2007). From my analysis, this is evident in the founding of the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade by the secular Fatah Party for the purpose of conducting suicide–terror, and in their naming of the second *intifada* as the *al Aqsa intifada*. Previously, Arafat recognised Islam, but his most outward symbol of "resistance"—the *keffiyeh* (checked headscarf)—represented a traditional peasant Arab uprising.

Soldiers

Sen (2009) argued that the ideology of nationalism must be seen as a stronger motivation to acts of violence than religion—and, by extension, violence against the self. He argued that in past wars the ideology of nationalism sometimes created a personification of violence, whereby violence becomes a person's identity—their most favoured characteristic. The argument is that the community glorifies the soldier to such an extent that the ego succumbs to visions of the self as a proud warrior. From Preston's (2002) experience of Jihadist training camps in Afghanistan, the identification of the self as a warrior is part of the appeal. He noted that the wealthy arrive at these camps fully fitted out with military gear, including camouflage clothing, jeeps, and hunting

knives. He noted further that it was the wealthy who tended to go home after their *boys-own-adventure*, and that the poor were more likely to be recruited for suicide missions.

The bomber is seen as performing much like a soldier in battle, risking life for the cause. According to Holmes (2006, p.149), “The warrior ideal, in sum, goes a long way towards explaining how the hijackers managed to armour themselves psychologically against the fear of death. They surely felt the warrior’s pride at having been selected to participate in an important mission”. Similarly, Pape (2005, p.173) argued: “Numerous suicide–terrorists are acting at least partly to serve their community’s interest in fighting the national enemy. These individuals … accept the task much like a soldier who accepts a ‘suicide mission’ in an ordinary war”.

This is flawed. Today, the bomber intends to die. Analysts note that the personification of the soldier does not account for the suicide–terror phenomenon. Merari (1998, 2005a) argued that the ethos of a soldier is vastly different from the ideology that supports suicide bombing. Self-sacrifice—especially in situations of military conflict—is not extraordinary. The ethos of the soldier is to risk death if called upon to do so, but there is rarely an explicit intention of dying. Examples of explicit intention are the well-known Kamikaze pilots and the less-known case of British fighter pilots—during the Second World War—who similarly vowed to die by flying their planes into enemy targets (Davies and Neal, 2000, p.39). But as Merari (1998; 2005a) pointed out, these deaths were an imposition on the soldier who, had he not been chosen for the mission, would have avoided death.

Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005) concurred with this, arguing that the desire for death personifying the suicide bomber is not only uncommon in the history of the solider, but represents a distinct shift from this ideal. He pointed out that the *mujahedeen*, who personify the warrior spirit, are of two distinct types: those who risk death but desire to live, and those who actively seek death. He coined the latter form "*martyropathy*" because of its pathological nature and uncontrollable spread. He pointed out that martyropathy inverts everything that we commonly hold to be normal and natural. In this syndrome, death is the privilege and life is purgatory: "The obsession with death leads to a state of mind in which death is seen as a voluptuous incarnation of the ideal. It is an ideal that has a value in itself, and its realisation would fill those who believe in it with joy" (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.59). Again we see evidence of the re-traditionalisation of well-established death meanings. Acknowledging that sensations expressed by Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005) are anathema to tradition, they prompt analysts to raise spectres of indoctrination, brainwashing, and coercion.

Indoctrination and Brainwashing

Some analysts see indoctrination as a middle ground somewhere between socialisation and brainwashing, arguing that ideology plays a part, but that other factors weigh heavily. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2005) argue that ascription to extremist ideologies becomes possible in states of high emotional distress. Fathali Moghaddam (2005, p.165) agreed. He argued that those who become bombers are indoctrinated, and he had a unique explanation. He likened indoctrination to ascending the staircase of an ever-narrowing building. On each floor there are fewer doors, giving fewer options. When the recruit reaches the top floor, they are ready to explode. Each floor represents a

different level of psychological pressure through which the "handler" takes the bomber: starting with a grave sense of injustice that turns to aggression and frustration, to feelings of rage and hopelessness, and finally into hatred of an identifiable other. A deadly morality is developed whereby the would-be bomber is taught to see the world as a fight between good and evil.

David Kilcullen (2009), through observation of militants in Afghanistan, noted the presence of Jihadist ideologies that combine with insecurity to create martyrdom. Traditional tribesmen in Afghanistan—whom he referred to as "accidental guerrillas"—accept extremism and suicide missions out of fear that traditional life is fading, or is being destroyed by foreign intervention. The theme of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety in the suicide–terror debate has been raised. Kinnvall (2004, p.763) articulated the use of nationalism and religiosity in equipping the individual with mechanisms to deal with feelings derived from these two psychologically damaging aspects of globalisation. She makes this point particularly about refugees who suffer a sense of "'homelessness' and alienation" and are susceptible to leaders who "channel existential fears and feelings of loss and despair" towards seeking security through immersing the self in extremist readings of religion.

Themes of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety repeat throughout the literature, without being made explicit. In an unrelated study, Jonathan Turner (1998) argued that ontological insecurity is the driving force behind extreme behaviour: everything is worth risking if what remains as a result of inaction is an unpredictable, unfamiliar, and disliked world. Analysts like Kinnvall (2004) note the relevance of theorists of late modernity in explaining the currents that produce suicide–terror, or that at least make it

possible. Less-often mentioned in the literature is the sense of moral panic that pervades Jihadist dialogue.

Brainwashing is not a popular theme in suicide–terror, but analysts have explored it. It takes the concept of indoctrination further, suggesting a similar process of socialisation. In this case it is often brutal: a denial of human rights in respect of freedom of expression and movement, and with psychological abuse designed to instil the duty of death in the recruit. This has been noted in the *madrassas* along the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan. Nasra Hassan (2006) interviewed a recruit from a militant training camp in Pakistan. It ran on a merit system: the further the trainee progressed through the ranks, the closer he got to suicide bombing. Life in the camp consisted of weapons and (or) commando training, but with a psychological aspect:

> We woke up two hours before sunrise for prayers and spiritual exercises. We prayed five times a day. Twice a day we heard lectures on jihad by mullah commandos, who drew lessons from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and told us of the forty grades of martyrdom. During the two daily breaks, we listened to tapes of jihad chants and sermons (Hassan, 2006, p.35).

Kepel (2003) noted that the technique used to indoctrinate trainees in Afghanistan relied upon emotional distress aimed at breaking the trainees' spirit and readied them to accept a manipulated interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *hadith* that created an urgent need for war and self-sacrifice. This is consistent with brainwashing techniques (Sargant, 1957).

It happened on a smaller scale in the Palestinian Territories during the first *intifada*. Hamas and the PIJ recruited young, religious, male devotees who were malleable to religious indoctrination. Chivers (2003) noted the visual stimuli in the continual

television loops of “violence and grief”, intended to keep the recruit in a state of heightened anxiety and, hence, suggestibility. Images were of “Palestinian boys throwing stones at tanks, an injured Arab writhing, widows, corpses, gurneys, guns” (Chivers, 2003, p.196). This form of brainwashing is no longer necessary in the Palestinian Territories. A process of socialisation has occurred whereby resistance to suicide is replaced with a cultural norm that recommends suicide. We see here the evolution of an individual and collective sensibility towards Jihadist Suicide.

Social and Cultural Aspects

Suicide–terror attacks are not the work of a lone assailant—they are always the product of a coordinated group effort (Merari, 2005b, p.446; Waldmann, 2006, p.134). With suicide bombings, the need for strategic and psychological support is essential. Two configurations are apparent: networked cells and whole communities.

Waldmann (2006, p.134) observed that “the number of people backing the terrorists need not be very high: five to ten per cent of the respective population can be a sufficient support base”. This allows for underground networks like Hamas and the PIJ once operated, and the al Qaeda-style networks that still operate. Waldmann (2006, pp.134–135) noted that groups are willing to endure suffering and persecution by being labelled “supporters of terrorism”, but the reward is that it acts as social cement, affirming their identity and ensuring social cohesion. By “transforming themselves from a relatively open ‘society’ into a closed ‘community’, from *Gesellschaft* to *Gemeinschaft*, to employ the classic dichotomy coined by Ferdinand Tönnies … the

population becomes, up to a certain point, immune against pressure from the outside world" (Waldmann, 2006, pp.134–135).

Small-group dynamics is well covered in the literature. Hudson (2005, p.34) contends that small-group dynamics play a part in conformity and consensus: "The group provides a sense of belonging, a feeling of self-importance, and a new belief system that defines the terrorist act as morally acceptable and the group's goals as of paramount importance". Further, one of the characteristics of terrorist *group-think* "are illusions of invulnerability leading to excessive optimism and excessive risk taking, presumptions of the group's morality, one-dimensional perceptions of the enemy as evil, and intolerance of challenges by a group member to shared key beliefs" (Hudson, 2005, p.35).

Sageman (2004, p.*vii*) argued that socially alienated young Muslim men in migrant societies are attracted to the mosque through a need for social companionship; they become "transformed into fanatics yearning for martyrdom and eager to kill" through the social obligation of honour and loyalty towards their companions. He referred to this as the "bunch-of-guys" hypothesis. He used his extensive military experience—interacting with the *mujahedeen* of Afghanistan from 1986 to 1989—and his psychological training to assess the biographies of 172 suicide–terrorists. He concluded that these young men commit to Jihadist Suicide out of a sense of comradeship.

Bond (2004, p.37) saw that a powerful sense of duty developed in "brotherhoods" of fictive-kin. He contended that "many psychologists agree, the single most important reason why rational people are persuaded to become suicide bombers" is a sense of

camaraderie. "It is an old trick: armies use it … to get people to fight for each other" (Bond, 2004, p.37). Bond goes too far here: they are not fighting for each other, but dying with each other. Suicide–terror cell members resolve to die together in a suicide pact (Elliot, 2007). For small cells like the ones Elliot (2007) investigated, it is easy to build a picture of suicide-cults in the fashion of The Peoples' Temple or Heaven's Gate and, for a time, this was the perception.

A pattern emerged which highlighted the importance of more mainstream social networks, like the radical *madrassas* of Germany, London, and Indonesia that recruited the 9/11, London, and Bali bombers respectively. While upholding a modicum of tradition, they espoused the "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines that were by now so well-known within radical circles by the time the above bombings took place. The final step to committing to a suicide-pact like 9/11 and London needed to be finalised within the isolation of Jihadist training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan. For Bali, it was within the isolation of back-water villages in Indonesia. Despite the significance of small-group dynamics, the conversion to a psyche willing and able to carry out a suicide bombing belonged—in the end—to intense psychological conditioning that could only be achieved in isolation from mainstream communities and peer groups.

As the phenomenon grew, whole societies became *Gemeinischaft*—having values of the same moral order in the way of Jihadism. For this, there needed to be a cultural change. Hafez (2007, p.16) described the initial dynamics:

> Mobilizing collective action consists of more than calling on people to rise up or take to the streets; it involves framing social ills as threats and opportunities for action, networking among activists and their constituencies, building formal and informal organizations, forging collective identities and alliances, making claims against opponents and states, and motivating individuals to assume personal costs when the benefits of success are not readily apparent.

He argued that five conditions of social networks produce high-risk activity. The first is a shared identity——either political or cultural, with a high level of trust and solidarity. Studies show that most people who join a social network know someone who is already a member. They produce reputational concerns that work to avoid problems of "free-riding"; they facilitate collective belief systems; and, finally, they ensure conformity. Here commitment starts to extend to people outside the radical groups, as the ideology starts to seep into the greater community.

Atran (2004) and Merari (2005b; 2010) highlighted the mechanisms within Jihadist societies that obliged the individual to commit to a suicide attack, and which make it nearly impossible for them to back out without bringing shame upon themselves and their family. These theories emphasise the entrapment of the individual within a web of social obligation that compels the actor to participate in their own death. Albert Bandura (1990) highlighted the techniques of moral disengagement used by those committing suicide–terror attacks. Kiran Sarma (2010, p.205) noted that the same techniques are employed by the societal group and their supporters in justifying the suicide–terror attack.

Another hypothesis is to see society as actively working to instil an aspiration for self-death as a positive personal characteristic. Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, co-

directors of Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), first raised the aspiration hypothesis in 2004. They describe their organisation as "an Israeli research institute that studies Palestinian society from a broad range of perspectives by monitoring and analysing the Palestinian Authority through its media and schoolbooks"[10]. Marcus and Crook (2004) noted that about two months before the second *intifada* there was a significant rise in incitement against Israel coming from the government-owned media outlets. They noted the encouragement of Palestinians to die for Allah. They argued that during the *intifada* there developed an aspiration for Jihadist Suicide, encouraged as an end in itself. The aspiration hypothesis has its detractors. Bloom (2009) claimed that Marcus and Crook are politically biased in favour of Israel and thus their findings should be disregarded. Her stance is not reflected in the wide-spread respect for the work of PMW. Marcus has often presented his findings to governments around the world who accept his evidence as legitimate.

The theory that the bomber has simply succumbed to the thrill of fame is a hypothesis adopted by other analysts (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005; Hronick, 2006; Hafez, 2006b; Biggs, 2006; Sen, 2009). Biggs (2006, p.207) saw "egocentric suicide" as having a "greater scope for ... vanity, due to the lengthy interval between volunteering and dying, during which the volunteer enjoys the approbation of others". Crenshaw (2000; 2009) argued that this phenomenon is a result of collective sentiments that give popular approval to suicide bombings for the cause, and that offer the would-be adherent an opportunity to become a hero and part of an exalted elite. Sen (2009) noted that "the

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[10] Taken from the "About Us" section of the PMW homepage: www.pmw.org.il.

children are ardent for some desperate glory". He likened this to the common notion of the war hero who is created by the collectivist sentiment that glorifies violent combat for the cause. The promise of glory is not received through combat, but through purposeful death. He argued that the same mechanisms apply—that is, that the same collectivist value that glorifies violent combat can also glorify violent death as an end in itself.

These analysts have highlighted how the adoration of the bomber permeates public spaces. Political suicides are regarded as heroes in their own communities, with their names given to babies, streets, public buildings, sporting tournaments, youth camps, and university and school halls. Their martyrdom is promoted by posters, music videos, memorials, poetry, public speeches, and television and newspaper eulogies, TV dramas, mass funerals, and an array of souvenir paraphernalia such as *shahida* key rings and *shahida* collector cards. In societies that venerate suicide–terror, there is no greater claim to fame than to be awarded the title of *shahid* in the act of *shahada*. Marcus and Crook (2004) recorded the words of a Palestinian mother who—convinced of the merit of *shahada*—expressed her joy at the death of her son by saying: "I wanted the best for him".

Some noted that the thrill of fame is augmented by the social and financial rewards lauded on the martyr and their family. Walter Laqueur (1999) explained how the Islamic "tradition" added an element of "deluxe martyrdom", offering rewards of the afterlife in far greater proportion than hitherto expected. These rewards are by now well-known to analysts. The rewards of becoming a martyr for Palestinian bombers and their families

are significant: the bombers improve their social status before and after their death, but also that of their family. The family is showered with honour and praise.

The financial rewards for the attack are substantial. Saddam Hussein is reported to have paid US$10 thousand to the family of each martyr, the Palestinian Authority (PA) to have publicly legislated that government dividends be paid to the family of suicide bombers, and that considerable payments and rewards were given to the family by groups such as Hamas. In addition to earthly rewards, the Jihadist Suicide receives the reward of an eternal life in Paradise, the permission to see the face of Allah, and the loving kindness of 72 young virgins who will serve him in heaven. The martyr also earns the privilege to promise a life in heaven to 70 of his relatives (Ganor, 2000; Hafez, 2006b; Hronick, 2006).

Juergensmeyer (2003, pp.198–201) suggested that there is the reward of sex, leading some to believe that the act of suicide bombing is a cathartic orgasm. Brooks (2002, p.18) would agree with this. He called suicide bombing "the crack cocaine of warfare ... It doesn't just inflict death and terror on its victims, it intoxicates the people who sponsor it. It unleashes the deepest and most addictive human passions—the thirst for vengeance, the desire for religious purity, the longing for earthly glory and eternal salvation" (Brooks, 2002, p.18). This is indeed a potpourri of motivations, possibly belonging to multiple actors. As argued above, revenge appears to be the motivation of the sponsors, who also seek glory in the act of dispatching the bomber; whereas a longing for religious purity, glory, and salvation may only belong to the bomber.

Another hypothesis is ritual cleansing. The individual is seen as performing an act that they believe will be accepted as atonement for past sins. Armstrong (2001) argued that Atta was suffering from nihilism. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2005, p.146) argued that immigrant Muslim populations in Europe—Atta was one—suddenly find themselves without the usual checks and balances on their behaviour when they move to Western countries where the opportunity to drink and womanise is readily available. They argued that the young fall victim to this temptation, only to realise the emptiness of this lifestyle and therefore actively seek out religious groups that condemn Western society, and seek to destroy it violently.

The difference is ideological: Jihadism—far from placing the blame solely upon the shoulders of Western decadence—reminds the individual of their sins and requires atonement. Part of the Jihadist belief system is a strong emphasis on the washing away of all sins at the precise moment the bomber detonates. Suicide bombing can be seen as the pursuit of eternity in an act of ritual cleansing, whereby Atta was not only concerned to wipe away the sins of the past, but to secure his reward in the afterlife. This is reflected in his last will and testament (see Appendix I).

Barbara Victor (2003) argued that Palestinian female suicide bombers are driven to this end by political and social forces. She argued that when Arafat called on Palestinian women to seek martyrdom—calling forth his "army of roses"—in a speech on 27 January 2002, not even he was prepared for the instant response. Later that same day, Idris became the first female suicide bomber of the *intifada*. Victor (2003) argued that cultural factors played a part: questions of unrequited love, cultural conceptions of honour and duty, all colliding in an atmosphere of despair, destruction, and

manipulation. These examples identify the individual as caught up in a web of social intrigue.

In suicide–terror discourse there is little talk of “culture” *per se*. Samuel Huntington (1993; 1996) set the tone by claiming that Muslims have a “cultural soul” that is set in stone. Mamdani (2005), a South African Muslim, agreed. He saw talk of culture post 9/11 as arguments over whether Muslims are all bad, or whether some are good. He noted that talk “focuses on Islam and Muslims who presumably made culture only at the beginning of the creation, as some extraordinary, prophetic act” (Mamdani, 2005, p.18). He saw the manifestation of suicide–terror as a clash of civilisations, but maintained that the answer is not found in cultural terms but in political terms. He concluded that the West’s self-perceptions are distorted by its grandiose vision of being the centre of the world, the leader showing the rest of the world how to be modern, democratic, and civilised (2005, p.17).

Analysts like Hafez (2007) and Moghadam (2008) claim that culture cannot play a part in motivation towards acts of suicide bombing. They argue that the cultural diversity—even within the microcosm of Iraq—is too prominent to elicit cultural explanations. Hafez (2007, p.16) draws further attention to the claim that many suicide militants in Iraq are not home-grown, but are of “transnational character”; some come from as far away as Europe and North Africa, while many come from neighbouring states like Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan.

Hafez (2006b, p.55) argued: “Strategically oriented organizations employ religion, ritual, and ceremony to legitimate and honor martyrdom; [and] frame their tactics as a

continuation of accepted and revered historical traditions". He downplayed the importance of this by describing it as a subculture. High numbers of volunteers for suicide missions are produced by militants who create a "cult of martyrdom" within the broader social setting, whereby the "symbolism of martyrdom becomes the vehicle through which individual bombers frame or give meaning to their different motivations for self-sacrifice" (Hafez, 2006b, p.55).

Conclusion

Suicide–terror does not stem from one isolated motive, but from a cocktail of personal, social, ideational, and cultural factors. A contention of this thesis is that a greater emphasis on the cultural forces that produce suicide–terror is needed to understand these passions. We need to think about culture in a different way to that expressed above. Cultures have changed throughout history; this also applies to religious cultures. Part of the dynamic of culture is that it is amenable to change through social and political pressure. It is not correct to see the suicide–martyrdom doctrine as a subculture. This implies that it resides alongside traditional culture as a supplement. Instead, the suicide–martyrdom doctrine transformed traditional culture. Indeed, a *modus operandi* of instantiating this doctrine was to tap into the primordial sentiments that exist in tradition and in changing the meaning of symbolic icons. The act of changing traditional death meanings and dictating emotional performance in relation to death was tantamount to enacting the suicide–martyrdom doctrine.

All roads lead to the prevalence of situating the actor within a social milieu that acts politically, religiously, and domestically to support suicide–terror. In Jon Elster's (2006)

words, “someone had to think of [promoting a culture of suicide] in the first place”. It is a falsehood to speak of an individual’s motivations for action in isolation from society. But Elster sees the suicide bomber as irrational and suffering from cognitive paralysis through the acceptance of a raft of contradictory beliefs. He particularly points to the Palestinians’ belief that: (1) Jews are omnipotent, and (2) we can destroy them. Contrary to Elster’s claim, the actor does act rationally in repeating and reinforcing contradictory beliefs by their actions. To do otherwise would uncover a flaw in the actor’s thinking because the moral fibre of a society is holistic. The normative beliefs of a society form a cultural system that can only be fully comprehended when analysed as a whole. Jihadist Suicide is an institution.

The question is: given that the world has always been in a state of turmoil with various actors intent on causing murder, violence, and mayhem, why did this institution of Jihadist Suicide appear now? The answer lies in an analysis of the Age of Extremes.

PART II :

THE AGE OF EXTREMES

Chapter 3

The Age of Extremes

Historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994) called his short twentieth century *the age of extremes*. It began in Sarajevo, 28 June 1914, with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand "which led, within a matter of weeks, to the outbreak of the First World War" (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.3). His century ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The "next century" was marred by the Bosnian war (1992–1995), which, like the First World War, was "a historic catastrophe precipitated by political error and miscalculation" (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.3). He was not alone in seeing the significance of the Bosnian war. He drew attention to the sudden visit to Sarajevo on 28 June 1992 of the ageing and frail French president, Francois Mitterrand. Hobsbawm saw this visit as a warning that the new century had the potential to descend into the horrors of the previous one. He did not know what to make of the new century, or how it would develop: he simply knew that the last century had delivered the new one into an era of unprecedented uncertainty and unpredictability.

Hobsbawm (1994, p.13) noted the contradictions and paradoxes: it was the most murderous century in recorded history, but countless thousands were saved from disease and illness through unprecedented advances in medical science and education in personal health care. He thought of the century as a sandwich, with the horror of war at each end and a *Golden Age* in the middle of "unprecedented economic growth and social transformation" (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.5). The social revolution of the 1960s and

1970s had a profound impact. Individuals could pursue a meaningful life, but the era ended with an abject inability to guide human behaviour in what he described as the complete abandonment of past models of social behaviour (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.17). Theorists of late modernity have focused on this issue, noting that ontological insecurity, existential anxiety, and moral panic became the hallmarks of this era (Giddens, 1991; Young, 1999). The result was extremism in attitude and behaviour, where relativist tolerance turned to hostile intolerance; a quest for absolute freedom turned to a call for authoritarian rule; “political correctness” began to support overt anti-Semitism again; a need to establish a watertight identity resulted in ascription to extremist cults; and—with the advent of Jihadism—self-actualisation required self-annihilation.

The Jihadist phenomenon represents the most extreme development of the new century—replete with its incumbent, irreconcilable contradictions that reside comfortably alongside each other. The last century witnessed a constant and growing capacity for murder and mayhem: on the other, deepening drives for self-preservation and self-fulfilment. The likelihood that vast numbers of people would engage in murder by self-annihilation seemed remote. There is a tendency to fixate on the murder. This is understandable given that it produces terror. However, it is not the murder that is remarkable, but the suicide.

Ordinary suicide is not remarkable, nor is self-sacrifice. Suicide–martyrdom—in the form that it is practiced today, as Jihadist Suicide—is remarkable. Suicide–martyrdom as self-actualisation has a precedent in Christianity during the early years of persecution. Its widespread occurrence could be described as a phenomenon; however,

it became discouraged and eventually vanished. For over a millennium, the Christian tradition has viewed suicide–martyrdom as a sin. Judaism and Islam have never recognised suicide–martyrdom as self-actualisation (see Chapters 6 and 7). While murder and mayhem are continuing and intensifying features of modernity—even to the point of "sacrificing" in-group members—from an individual perspective, self–preservation was the norm from East to West. Jihadist Suicide is a bewildering anomaly.

It is common to see extremist religion as the source of devotion leading to suicide. However, it is my contention that Jihadist Suicide is a product of our time, borne out of the historic juncture of late modernity, that freed the individual to imagine life trajectories previously deemed inconceivable; and the unprecedented power and authority vested in the modern-day nation-state. These two aspects of late modernity offered tremendous opportunity for charismatic leaders to mould the identity of recruits to serve their needs. Today, the power of the nation-state to mould individual and collective personality is enormous, but hardly acknowledged. This feature of modernity is touched on here and discussed in greater detail in Part IV of this thesis.

It is important to point out that Jihadist Suicide is not a natural evolution of late modernity, but a clever marketing exercise that more by chance than design struck the raw nerve of a global-people at a particular historic juncture. It is an accident of history[11]. It is not too much to say that the world has changed irrevocably because of it.

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[11] By accidental, I do not mean that it was not purpose-driven and intentional; but that it could not have been possible had the world not been in the state that it was, and that those who initially set out to create a

Chapters 3 and 4 throw some light on the state of the world today, and make some observations regarding how this has aided in the production of Jihadist Suicide.

The Most Murderous of all Centuries

Quoting Brzezinski (1993), Hobsbawm cited 187 million deaths due to human design (war, *faminocide*, and genocide) between the start of the First World War (1914) and the beginning of the Bosnian war (1991). This represents one death in every 10, based on the 1990 world population (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.12). This figure is conservative: political scientist R J Rummel cited 262 million deaths from *democide* (genocide, *politicide*, and mass murder) between 1900 and 1999. He noted that "if all these bodies were laid head to toe, with the average height being 5 [feet], then they would circle the earth ten times" (Rummel, n.d.). He coined the word *democide* because genocide does not include domestic murder by a government or regime for reasons other than ethnic cleansing of a people due to their race, religion, ethnicity, or language.

Indeed, episodes of intentional mass murder today extend beyond the definition given by Rummel: the examples of 9/11 in New York, and the Norway massacre of July 2011 are but two. With growing frequency, mass murder is today carried out by non-government organisations and individuals. But these incidents pale compared to the inhumanity of governments over the past century. Benjamin Lieberman (2006) saw this as Europe's *terrible fate*, whereby today monuments and buildings still stand in eerie

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nation of *shahids*, could not, and did not, contemplate all of these factors in judging its success. In this way, it was accidental. Following its initial success in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war years, it became a blueprint, that is, it was no longer accidental. It was modified, honed and perfected in accordance with the lessons learned.

memory of a people long disappeared. Systematic genocide was a recurring feature of the last century, from the Herero and Nama genocide (1904–1906), to the Armenian Genocide (1915–1922), to the present with, as Samuel Totten and William Parsons (2009) have well argued, no sign of abating. Since the Second World War, other words have made their way into the lexicon of the study of genocide, along with *democide*—like *politicide* and *faminocide*.

David Marcus (2003, pp.245; 262) coined the term *faminocide* to describe actions by governments which create or aid famine, with varying degrees of negligence and intent. Hobsbawm (1994, pp.259–261) saw death by famine as cruel neglect. The Ethiopian famine of the 1980s was seen as the result of war and poor government planning (de Waal, 1991), but Marcus (2003, p.245) reported: "the Ethiopian foreign minister told a U.S. *chargé d'affaires* that 'food is a major element in our strategy against the secessionists'", indicating that starvation was used as a strategy of war. The Ukrainian famine of 1933–1934 is estimated to have killed somewhere in the vicinity of five million (Marcus, 2003, p.245). Vasyl Hryshko ([1933] 1983), a survivor of the famine, wrote: "this was the first instance of a peacetime genocide in history. It took the extraordinary form of an artificial famine deliberately created by the ruling powers".

Faminocide and death by preventable disease were also features of war. In the Warsaw Ghetto, a creation of the Nazi occupation of Poland during the Second World War, starvation and preventable disease is estimated to have claimed the lives of five thousand per month by early 1942, with most dying from starvation. "A Polish source calculated that the daily calorific content of food, officially distributed to national groups in 1941, was as follows: Germans 2,613 calories, Poles 699 calories, Jews only

184 calories" (*ARC webpage*, 2006). Not many of the ghetto's approximately 380 thousand inhabitants survived. More than half were transported to Treblinka where they died in the gas chambers.

Indeed, the scale of genocide during the Second World War caused such panic that it became a crime. Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on 9 December 1948. Controversially, the legislation was applied retrospectively to those responsible for the genocide of the Second World War, with some 120 thousand being brought to trial and executed and others going into hiding. This appeared to do little to abate the killing. Following the Second World War there was a succession of such atrocities, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass murder.

The Burundi Tutsi-Hutu genocides of 1992 and 1993 killed an estimated 400 thousand, and the retaliatory attacks in Rwanda in the following years killed thousands more. The ethnic cleansing of East Timor by the Indonesian government is estimated to have killed 100 thousand to 200 thousand between 1974 and 1999. The Lebanese civil war of 1975–1990 killed an estimated 130 thousand to 250 thousand civilians. Genocide in Bangladesh in 1971 resulted in upward of 250 thousand dead; in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979 there were 1.7 million dead; and in Bosnia (1992–1995) there were eight thousand Muslims dead and the mass expulsion of around 25 thousand others. And the Guatemala massacre of Mayan Indians in the early 1980s claimed tens of thousands of lives. On a small scale, there was the biological attack by the Iraqi government on a Kurdish town in 1988 that is estimated to have killed some eight thousand people.

Indeed, such is the scale of killing over the past half century that Samuel Totten and William Parsons lamented:

> The writing of this book, *Century of Genocide*, began in the early 1990s and resulted in publication in 1995. With each revised edition, new genocides and crimes against humanity have had to be recorded. That is a telling and terrible statement about our contemporary world. Even the title of the book might be reconsidered because the slaughter has now spread into a new century (Totten and Parsons, 2009, p.1).

They noted that between 2004 and 2008, "it is estimated that between 250,000 and over 400,000 people have perished because of the genocidal policies and actions of the [Government of Sudan] … and the *Janjaweed* (Arab militia). As we write, the crisis continues; and as the crisis continues unabated so does the mass killing, the mass rape, and the deaths due to what is now being referred to as genocide by attrition" (Totten and Parsons, 2009, p.1)[12].

Human life is viewed by some governments and regimes as commodities. Levene (2005b) argued that it was a feature of colonial conquest of Third World nations for centuries to view indigenous populations as commodities to be exploited, or exterminated through medical experimentation, forced labour, or simply because of their so-called nuisance value. He noted that it changed in 1914 when this took on a "metropolitan context" (Levene, 2005b, p.3). In the first instance, it had to do with an aspiration for the homogenised, "cleansed" nation state. He argued that the West seemed to operate under the paradox of Enlightenment principles of human rights and

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[12] The fourth edition of their book will appear early in 2012.

tolerance, while at the same time strove for racial, cultural and religious homogeneity (Levene, 2005b, pp.2–3).

Two features of the 1980s and 1990s exemplify this outlook: the "production" of the human smart bomb (Hoffman, 2003), and the use of human shields, respectively. The use of a group member as a human bomb—despite the claim of volunteerism by the bomber—is a clear case of the intentional murder of the bomber by the group. This new trend in maximal human destruction started in the 1980s. Another innovation in mass death, beginning in the 1990s, is the use of civilians as human shields. The first recorded use of this tactic was in 1990 by Saddam Hussein: he used foreign hostages in Iraq to protect palaces and military instillations from United States and Allied bombing. He later encouraged civilian Iraqis to act in this way, but also used involuntary human shields by building military installations in heavily populated civilian areas. This practice has since been used by both Hezbollah and Hamas in protecting officials and infrastructure from Israeli bombing. It was also a tactic used by Gaddafi in Libya. A United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report (CIA, 2003, p.1) stated that, in reality, civilians inevitably become casualties during these operations, and in one sense these deaths represent a win for the militants, who encourage death for its propaganda effect. These examples represent a disregard for fellow members of the societal group. Identity politics has ensured that demarcation of "us" and "them" extends to in-group populations, where political elites engage in class warfare against their own people—always demarcating the masses as of lesser value.

We are beginning to see cycles of genocide where past genocides—thought to have run their course and valuable lessons learned in prevention acknowledged—are beginning to

resurface. Totten and Parsons (2009) noted that the Tutsi genocide of 1994 was, as of 2008, predicted to be repeated in the near future. They reported: "On January 10, 2008 reports from the Congo indicated that some extremist Hutus were calling for the extermination of the *inyenzi* (a Kinyarwanda term meaning 'cockroaches')" (Totten and Parsons, 2009, p.1). Post-Holocaust cries of "Never Again" are fading. Anti-Semitism is very much on the rise. The eminent historian Robert Wistrich (2010) has recorded a rise in anti-Semitism across the globe from East to West; from hate groups to the United Nations. Pre-war patterns of vandalism of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues and discrimination, boycotts, and harassment of Jewish organisations, shops, and individuals continue to increase.

Indeed, Wistrich (2010) argued that for radical Islam, there has been no hiatus between the Holocaust and the present day. In his *A Lethal Obsession*, he cautions that anti-Semitism is not just anti-Zionism. No consideration is given in the killing of Jews with regard to their political views on the State of Israel. He argued that radical Islamists today "are worthy successors of the wartime Palestinian leader and Hitler's ally Haj Amin al-Husseini, who in 1944 urged the Arabs over Radio Berlin: 'Kill Jews wherever you find them for the love of God, history and religion'. Such murderous calls have become common-place across the Muslim world today" (Wistrich, 2010, pp.780–781).

This century has witnessed the sharp rise of hate groups. Their propensity in the United States alone prompted the government to enact the *Hate Crime Statistics Act of* 1990 (US Department of Justice, 1999). The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), define a hate group as "an organization whose primary purpose is to promote animosity, hostility, and malice against persons belonging to a race, religion, disability,

sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin which differs from that of the members of the organization, e.g., the Ku Klux Klan, American Nazi Party" (US Department of Justice, 1999, p.3). The Southern Property Law Centre (SPLC) reported that in 2010 1,002 hate groups were active in the United States—76 more than the 2008 figure of 926. Not all groups listed by the SPLC are violent. They include white supremacist, neo-Nazis, Black separatist, nationalist, and religious groups.

The significance of hate groups today—as Ehud Sprinzak (1995) well argued—is that they break with the regular model of grassroots support for governmental genocide, as in many precedents. Today, terror from the extreme right, according to Sprinzak, is reached "through a trajectory of *split delegitimization*, which implies a primary conflict with an "inferior" community and a secondary conflict with the government" (Sprinzak, 1995, p.17, emphasis in original). The government is targeted for its alleged neutrality towards or support for the "inferior", cultural, religious, or ethnic group who are seen as threatening the material and cultural integrity of the extremist group. They include al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and organisations like al Gama'a al Islamiyya in Egypt, all of which are designated as terrorist groups.

That designation tends to emphasis the political grievances of these groups, or they are seen as right-wing extremists with political agendas. Often their bigotry, intolerance, and genocidal missions are overlooked. Laqueur (1996) and Wistrich (2010) contend that terror from the extreme right resembles the fascism of pre-war Europe. Wistrich, (2010, p.781) noted that "one finds a totalitarian mind-set, hatred of the West, fanatical extremism, repression of women, loathing of Jews, a firm belief in conspiracy theories, and dreams of global hegemony". Notably, he adds, "like prewar European fascists and

the present government of Iran, the Muslim radicals claim to speak for frustrated, underprivileged, and impoverished masses" (Wistrich, 2010, p.781). Laqueur (1996, p.151) noted: "The recruits to the plebeian storm troopers in Germany in 1932/1933 had a good deal in common in regard to motives and mentality with the thugs of Teheran who became the backbone of the mullahs' movement". He also noted the presence of the totalitarian mindset and unbridled intolerance:

> In Islam, Iran offers the best-known example of religious intolerance. This tradition, to be sure, dates back even to pre-Islamic times, as manifested in the persecution of the Turks and Uzbeks and, more recently, in the persecution of various Islamic sects, Bahais, Christians, Jews, and virtually all other religions (Laqueur, 1996, p.149).

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is well known for his anti-Western and anti-Semitic views, including Holocaust denial and the threat to "wipe the Jewish state off the map". Similarly, Kepel (2003b, p.149) noted that the radical Islamic group, Al-Gama'a al Islamiyya, that favoured the Egyptian government before Anwar Sadat, the then president, signed a "shameful peace [treaty] with the Jews", turned on the government and has been responsible for terror attacks in Egypt that have killed thousands".

Prominent among Jihadist groups—including Iran—is the same technique of dehumanisation prevalent in genocide. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn (1990, p.28) stated: "We have no evidence that a genocide was ever performed on a group of equals". Indeed, they added: "The victims must not only not be equals, but also clearly defined as something less than fully human" (Chalk Jonassohn, 1990, p.28). Kiran

Sarma (2010) noted that this technique of moral disengagement also applies to supporters of suicide–terror attacks.

> Terrorist supporters who disregard or distort the consequences of the terrorist action are less likely to feel guilt or shame in its wake. They suffer an attention deficit towards the immoral aspects of the action whilst simultaneously prioritising evidence that justifies the attack. Bandura notes that misrepresentation, or "active efforts" to discredit evidence of immorality, can have the same effects as selective inattention and distortion resulting in moral disengagement and apathy (Sarma, 2010, p.205).

According to Albert Bandura (1990), moral disengagement techniques used by terrorists are commensurate with those identified in genocide studies. He described four techniques applied to insulate the actor from the human consequences of their actions: "Reconstruing conduct as serving moral purposes, obscuring personal agency in detrimental activities, disregarding or misrepresenting the injurious consequences of one's actions, and blaming and dehumanizing the victims" (Bandura, 1990, p.161). My purpose here is not to explain genocide: countless writings have been dedicated to this field. It is to highlight—as stated above—that murder in Jihadism is not remarkable—it follows the same pattern of genocides of the past. The only exception is that genocide is no longer solely perpetrated by governments.

Late Modernity and Self-annihilation as Self-actualisation

The social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s proved to be a seminal moment in the history of our time. We are yet to fully acknowledge its consequences. Moreover—although there are hints to its impact within the writings of such notables as Osama bin

Laden, and other radical Islamic extremists—we are yet to acknowledge the extent to which this revolution became the staging ground for Jihadist Suicide. The marginalisation of religion emancipated both the individual and collective conscience, and allowed for the malleability and susceptibility of the individual to modes of thought and action previously unthinkable. Certainly, it opened the door to radicalism and extremism as respect for the authority imbedded in traditionalism was crushed. But, without doubt, it was the all-encompassing power and authority of the nation-state and its bureaucratic apparatus—that had become so "talented" in the art of mass-market propaganda—that was responsible for the creation of Jihadist Suicide[13].

It is my contention that the suicide–terror phenomenon developed out of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine that was the brainchild of Ali Shari'ati. Shari'ati was an Iranian Shi'ite who envisaged a nation of *shahids* (martyrs) rising up to defeat the pro-Western, secularising Shah of Iran, and restoring Shi'ism to supremacy. He did not live to see his dream; nor could have he contemplated the Iran-Iraq war, shortly following the success of the Iranian Revolution. But it was here that Khomeini used Shari'ati's precedent to sell to his people the idea of self-actualisation through self-annihilation. Although Khomeini setup a theocracy, he had inherited a modern nation-state.

To understand the historic juncture that enabled a persuasion to acts of suicide–martyrdom, we have to know something of the rise of secularisation through the birth of the modern nation-state. Moreover, we have to acknowledge late modernity.

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[13] The techniques that were used to "sell" Jihadist Suicide are discussed in the final chapters of this thesis.

The rise of the nation-state

Historically, the rise of the nation state was a consequence of the religious wars of the seventeenth century. Before then—dating back to antiquity—religion occupied a commanding position. The consequence of the religious wars did not, however, remove religion from politics; it simply allowed each sovereign ruler full autonomy in the appointment of an official state religion. The separation of church and state as a practical matter can be dated to the American Revolution (1775–1783) and the French Revolution (1789–1799). The late eighteenth century was a period of radical social and political change. Both revolutions advocated the abolition of monarchy and religious privileges. In France, this was achieved by overthrowing the monarchy and in the American colonies by severing ties with the British Empire. The idea of separation of church and state came from Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists Association in 1802. He wrote to the Baptists as a means of assuring them that the state would not interfere in their "natural right" to practise their faith:

> Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof", thus building *a wall of separation between Church & State* (Jefferson, 1802, emphasis added).

The separation concept came from the Enlightenment, its principles informing both the American and French Revolutions, but with a wider impact across Europe during the eighteenth century. One key principle was that rationality and science were the only

equitable means of enquiry. This resulted in a critical questioning of traditional institutions, such as the monarchy and organised religion. Hence, a major tenet of the Enlightenment was the overarching principle of freedom from the dictates of religion, producing, as it did, a wave of scientific evidence arguing the irrationality of religious belief. In this way, *reason* became the basis for purging religion from political power.

Modernity—from the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries to the present—served to marginalise religion, not wholly but significantly. While this broad sweep is disputed, the era of interest here is that which coincided with the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That era of innovation brought about a necessity for the coordination of relations between parties in modern institutions. Emile Durkheim and Max Weber argued that the nature of modern institutions was essentially as a result of industrialisation. Furseth and Repstad (2006, p.85) elaborated:

> According to Weber, attitudes informed by religion and values were replaced by attitudes informed by rationality and goal-orientation. He related this change in attitudes to the emergence of capitalism and industrialization, and to the development of a bureaucracy based on reason and regulations, which was becoming a form of government in every social institution.

Secularism can be seen as a philosophical doctrine that rejected religion and a bureaucracy that adopted this position. This outlook was well conceptualised by John Rawls (1971) in his *Justice as Fairness* thesis. He allocated religion—as a voluntary association—to the private sphere, while relations among people as they pertain to political power, the economy, and the legal system are demarcated as the neutral public sphere (Rawls, 1971). The sum effect of rationalisation and industrialisation was a pre-

eminent focus on secularism as just and equitable for all "comprehensive doctrines": that is, collective belief systems—religious or other—that could be pursued without interference, so long as adherents respected the right of other comprehensive doctrines to pursue their values and lifestyles legally. This formed the basic principle of the modern nation state. Here, religion became protected and marginalised.

Secular ideologies were said to provide the rationality that religion defied. The world could not agree on a definitive ideology. A feature of the twentieth century that Hobsbawm noted was a mentality of binary opposition; in particular, capitalism versus socialism. He put this down to the intolerance that a century of religious wars produced as its chief characteristic. He wrote, "even those who advertised the pluralism of their own non-ideologies did not think the world was big enough for permanent coexistence with rival secular religions" (Hobsbawm, 1994, p.5). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the alleged end of the Cold War saw capitalism "triumph".

Some scholars imagined for a moment that ideology was dead—especially as it pertained to hereditary monarchy, fascism, socialism, and communism. Wieviorka (2003) noted that this perception developed out of a body of argument from the 1950s following the publication of Daniel Bell's, *The End of Ideology*. It took another 30 years for this to become a reality. Francis Fukuyama (1992, p.*xi*) argued that it was an *end of history*, "that liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of mankind's ideological evolution' and the 'final form of human government'". He held that "liberal democracy could not be improved on" (Fukuyama, 1992, p.*xi*). Some states had relapsed to "more primitive forms of rule like theocracy or military dictatorship" but liberal democracy was the only equitable form of rule. He argued that the problems experienced by nations

like the United States, France, and Switzerland were a result of the imperfect implementation of this ideology, and not a flaw in the ideology itself (Fukuyama, 1992, p.*xi*).

Glock (1972) argued that ideology is dead—not because the world finally agrees—but because relativism has ensured that no consensus on ideological thought could exist. In a way, Glock's theory reflects Fukuyama's view that the end of history will produce "centuries of boredom" as "the willingness to risk one's own life for a purely ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism, will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands" (Fukuyama, 1989, n.p.). But a backlash against modernity produced the need to objectify one's beliefs in direct defiance of the relativism that Glock (1972) maintained would bring an end to idealism. Melanie Phillips (2010) recognised that this has led to ascription to all kind of secular cults, but it also produced religious revivalism.

Karen Armstrong (2001; 2004) explained that the advent of fundamentalism in the twentieth century among all religions is a backlash against modernity: "Wherever a modern, Western-style society has been established, a religious counterculture has developed alongside it in conscious rebellion. Despite the arguments of politicians and intellectuals, people all over the world have demonstrated that they want to see more religion in public life" (Armstrong, 2004, p.40). She noted a rise in religiosity across all faiths: Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, as well as Islam (Armstrong, 2001; 2004). Juergensmeyer (1993, p.1) saw Armstrong's words echoed in an interview with an

Egyptian theologian: “There is a desperate need for religion in public life” the dean of Egypt’s premier school of Islamic theology had told him.

Wieviorka (2003, p.80) contended that in the present era there is a “growing separation between reason and identity—particularly religious ones”, suggesting that the rise of religion has again swept *reason* from thought and, along with it, ideology. Yankelovich (1998, p.3) argued that “sharp discontinuities in values take place in [cultures]” through a process of “lurch and learn”: a tentative name given to the “habit” of societies in the twentieth-century of overreacting to confronting stimuli. Instead of making minor adjustments, he concluded that the trend is to lurch in the opposite direction, completely obliterating the parts of the previous system that were beneficial. In some way, this explains extremism today. Young (1999, p.15) noted that “amongst the intelligentsia, an aspect of political correctness involves a decline in tolerance of deviance, an obsession with correct behaviour and speech, and an insistence on strict policing of moral boundaries”. The rise in religiosity then, in Yankelovich’s (1998) terms, represents the lurch from secularism to the security of what is seen as legitimate and authoritative modes of “being in the world”. Ascription to any comprehensive doctrine—religious or otherwise—removes the doubt from day-to-day life that is a feature of late modernity.

Late modernity and extremist cults

Anthony Giddens (1991) is popular with theorists of late modernity. He prefers the term “high modernity” but uses the terms “modernity” and “late modernity” intermittently. I use “late modernity”, following Jock Young (1999). He used the term to connote the coming of the end of an era—ominously predicting the end of life as we know it, as

many claimed was the case following 9/11. Some saw that event as an apocalyptic end, as if the events were a sign from the heavens that human life was nearing an end. Others saw it as the end of our way of life: an end to freedom of movement, an end of security, an end of economic prosperity (Frey et al., 2004). Young could not have predicted 9/11. He saw the end of our era as a slow unravelling rather than the consequences of one catastrophic event. Islamic extremism started in much the same way, that is, as an awareness of the unravelling of traditional life.

Giddens (1991, pp.2–3) described late modernity as "a post-traditional order, but not one in which the sureties of tradition and habit have been replaced by the certitude of rational knowledge". Late modernity, according to Giddens, is marked by ontological insecurity, existential anxiety, and moral dilemma. Ontological security concerns a sense of being that strikes at the very question of our existence:

> Doubt, a pervasive feature of modern critical reason, permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness, and forms a general existential dimension of the contemporary social world. Modernity institutionalises the principle of radical doubt and insists that all knowledge takes the form of hypotheses: claims which may very well be true, but which are in principle always open to revision and may have at some point to be abandoned (Giddens, 1991, p.3).

This creates existential anxiety because there can be no confidence that the world is what it appears to be. A sense of certainty, according to Giddens (1991, p.39), serves as "protection against future threat and dangers which allows the individual to sustain hope and courage in the face of whatever debilitating circumstances she or he might later confront". Without this, he argued, we are left with Kierkegaard's sense of "*dread* …: the prospect of being overwhelmed by anxieties that reach to the very roots of our

coherent sense of 'being in the world'" (Giddens, 1991, p.37, emphasis in original). The individual has been set adrift in a sea of uncertainty.

For secular, liberal society, individualism represented the coming of age of humanity. Ayn Rand (1964, p.129) summed up this sentiment:

> Individualism regards man—every man—as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful coexistence among men, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights—and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.

Durkheim ([1897] 1952) spoke of the perils of the cult of the individual in the previous century, noting that it had created anomic and egoistic suicide. But individualism a century later was more profound than perhaps Durkheim could ever have imagined. Hobsbawm (1994, p.16) had not predicted it. He likened the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s to a moment in our history where "the branch began to crack and break". Yankelovich (1998, p.6) argued that the form of individualism produced as a result of the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s was "bad for the society, bad for personal relationships, bad for children and bad for the people who [practised] this individualism". His argument concentrated on the perception that developed during this era that "anything is permissible, so long as it is legal" (Yankelovich, 1998, p.6). He argued that this mindset produced all manner of social evils such as an abandoning of personal and social duty; less value placed on social conformity; less value placed on socially ascribed behaviour; and an almost complete abandonment of the norms of sexual morality.

Moreover, while the individual became master of their destiny, it simultaneously removed the certainty of one's identity and role in life. In traditional society, one's role in life was often mapped from birth. In modern society, the emphasis is on "making something of yourself". In the new century, the need for a solid and stable identity has never been so eagerly or so desperately sought. Kinnvall (2004, p.746) argued that identity is "an anxiety-controlling mechanism reinforcing a sense of trust, predictability, and control in reaction to disruptive change by re-establishing a previous identity or formulating a new one". An unstable or non-existent identity is linked directly to the loss of tradition. This is what Hobsbawm (1994, p.16) stated as the abandonment of "the old maps and charts which guided human beings", which resulted in a lack of knowledge about "where our journey is taking us, or even ought to take us". Giddens (1991, p.70) also noted the "lack of embedded biography and life trajectory" in the making of anxiety and insecurity about the world.

Religious extremism, even in its Jihadist form, seeks existential security by reasserting a moral base. Giddens (1991) argued that a feature of late modernity is that it institutionally excluded problem-solving when it came to moral dilemmas. Furseth and Repstad (2006, p.92) noted that a popular theme among sociologists of religion since the 1980s has been that religion in the new century is no longer about faith but "about moral issues and the desire for community and belonging". Although Young (1999) identified this as existing in Islamic extremist groups, his emphasis is on the moral panic within Western society. In essence, the clash *within* civilisations and *between* civilisations is an ideological clash over value systems, that is, traditional value systems that see their moral superiority rooted in religion, and what Shari'ati (1981) referred to

as the humanism of the past three centuries that has become completely devoid of meaning or purpose. Shari'ati describes the goals of Western culture—the culture that was quickly displacing Eastern culture—as being pointless. He said: "If the train in which I am a passenger has no destination, then my choosing a direction is senseless" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.15). His message is that in order to get back on a train that has a direction, one must "return" to Islam.

Here we can recognise the current suicide–terror phenomenon as a moral ideal. Despite any connotations in the above to the idea that the current suicide–terror phenomenon is simply a continuation of the declining moral standards of the previous century, to the contrary, the current suicide–terror phenomenon is a result of people trying to rebuild a reciprocal moral base. But it is an essentially flawed ideology that has—as many have noted—rebounded and become as morally bankrupt as the world that it rages against (Battin, 2004).

Young (1999) noted that intolerance is a hallmark of moral panic:

> Because of ontological insecurity there are repeated attempts to create a secure base. That is, to reassert one's values as moral absolutes, to declare other groups as lacking in value, to draw distinct lines of virtue and vice, to be rigid rather than flexible in one's judgements, to be punitive and excluding rather than permeable and assimilative (Young, 1999, p.15).

Moral absolutism is identified in groups due to their abject intolerance that advocates the death of "guilty" parties through murder or execution. For instance, Button (2006, n.p.) noted that "before he killed the Dutch filmmaker, Theo Van Gogh, Mohammed Bouyeri tried to knife a young man he believed was having (consensual) sex with his

[Bouyeri's] sister". The cosmic war (Juergensmeyer, 2003) is not only a fight between good and evil, but an attempt to validate the self through nurturing a "proper" identity. Those who kill, like Mohammed Bouyeri, see the murder as confirmation of their moral self. It is not so much who dies that matters, but the symbolic nature of the death as good triumphing over evil.

Armstrong (2004, p.45) charged that Muhammad Atta—the so-called mastermind of the 9/11 attacks—was suffering from "the nihilism at the heart of some of the more desperate fundamentalist visions"; her meaning is that he had explored his religious beliefs to the point that life appeared to be without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. She could not otherwise account for Atta and his co-accused Janus-faced behaviour as they appeared to embrace their religion, but "drank alcohol and frequented nightclubs, which are hated symbols of modernity to more traditional fundamentalists" (Armstrong, 2004, p.45).

Ruthven (2001), on the other hand, argued that Atta was not suffering from nihilism but was engaging in an act of ritual cleansing to atone for past misdemeanours. He described this kind of behaviour as coming from "born-again" Muslims who "having adopted or absorbed many modern or foreign influences make a show of discarding them in his search for personal identity and cultural authenticity" (Ruthven, 2001, n.p.). His argument is, in essence, that those who kill unknown people in an office tower are not so much concerned with the task of murder but of destroying a symbol of Western decadence that they blame for their own corruption and the corruption of the world in general. One of the major tenets of Jihadism is that death is an act of purification—earning immediate entry to *shurga* (Paradise), or Heaven.

Young (1999) argued that this need for self-actualisation becomes urgent as the need for ontological security creates a need for a watertight identity—delineated from all others—has created subcultures within subcultures. This burning need, as Phillips (2010) noted, has led people into all manner of self-affirming cults that are most notable for their complete abandonment of reason. She noted that “an astonishing number of people subscribe to celebrity endorsed cults, Mayan Armageddon prophecies, scientism, and other varieties of new age, anti-enlightenment philosophies” (Phillips, 2010, p.270). She noted that new visions of “redemptive inner truth” (Phillips, 2010, p.270) abandon traditional religion for experimentation in other “religions” that are claimed to be able to lift the individual to heights of spiritual awareness. Armstrong, (2001, p.17) noted that the English find this in football hooliganism:

> In Britain, we do not express our disquiet in religious terms, but the desire to belong to a clearly defined group, the sense of lost prestige, the pent-up rage and frustration that we see in our football hooliganism show the same brew of emotions. This profound disaffection, wherever it occurs, indicates anxiety, anger and resentment.

This is, indeed, the diagnosis offered for the August 2011 riots by young people in London.

Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005) recognised the same abandonment in Jihadist Suicide. Moreover, he noted the duplicity of political elites in playing on these popular sentiments:

> The appearance of new martyrs is not due to the reproduction of traditional structures with Muslim societies … The new martyrs are

> indeed, sometimes in excessive or even pathological form, new figures of emancipation from tradition.
>
> They espouse forms of legitimacy that claim to follow a tradition but at the same time marginalise it in the real world. We are dealing with the paradox, which has become a classic problem for sociologists of religion of a new religiosity that breaks with traditional forms of communitarian life and at the same time conceals the break behind a more "authentic" version of early Islam. Much of the novelty of the so-called "Islamist" phenomenon lies in its ambivalent use of the register of religious tradition in order to undermine it (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.5).

The transmogrification of traditional religion into Jihadism allowed reason to be subjugated and common values turned upside down—like Nazi Germany where love became hate, life became death, peace became war, and killing became curing—self-actualisation became self-annihilation.

The process of validating the self through nurturing a *proper* identity is demonstrated by the ideal of *al-shahid al-hai* (the living-martyr), which well illustrates the paradox of self-actualisation through self-annihilation. The term was coined in the early to mid-1990s to describe the suicide bomber in waiting[14]. But its ideological formation occurred much earlier with the writings of Ali Shari'ati who spoke of the living-martyr at a time when they were merely a vision: "True that his existence [as a *living-martyr*] becomes a non-existence, but he has absorbed the whole value of the idea for which he

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[14] Over the course of the last decade, the term *al-shahid al-hai* (the living-martyr) has come to be used to describe prisoners of the "resistance" in Israeli jails. However, there is little resemblance to its original meaning as one who waits to self-annihilate. The relationship to the original meaning resides in the prisoner's literal living-absence.

negated himself. The martyr becomes sacredness itself. He had been an individual who had sacrificed himself for thought and now he is thought" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.180).

The living-martyr, according to Jaber (2002) had undergone the required indoctrination and was in readiness for the call to carry out a bombing. From Jaber's investigation, initially, the bomber would remain sequestered in the hideout of a militant group in order to prevent a change of heart, and to prevent the suicide–martyr's family intervening. Since suicide–terror attacks have become the accepted norm in places like the Palestinian Territories, the living-martyr is free to carry on with life as normal until called upon. In both epochs, the living-martyr is awarded great reverence.

The powerful image of becoming all that there is to think about, all that is on the lips of one's peers, and all that is in the hearts of the community, appeals to the modern-day individualist who strives for self-actualisation through popularity. There is a paradox here. The individualism of the 1960s and 1970s threw off concern for community approval. Self-actualisation was achieved through "going your own way", "making a stand", and generally shunning the norms of society. Here, Jihadist Suicide, exemplified in the phenomenon of the living-martyr, is an act of self-actualisation through the placation of the societal group.

In conclusion to this section, there is a sense today that the suicide bomber is an anomaly in an otherwise "normal" world. The sacrificial devotee is a product of our world, and not even a specifically narrow, marginalised, and segregated part of it, but a product of the world in its entirety—the past and the present, the East and the West. They are a product of globalisation in late modernity and its incumbent ontological

insecurity and existential anxiety suffered by those in the East and in the West. Moreover, they are a product of a concerted effort by political elites and counter-elites to monopolise on the insecurities and ambitions of the time. It is common to think of the rise of personal aspiration as belonging predominantly to the West, but the East has not been immune from this. The secularisation of the East, and its particular vulnerability to radicalism, is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

In particular the suicide–terror phenomenon is a paradox of the last century. The paradox lies in the very concept of twentieth century individualism and its incumbent search for self-expression and self-fulfilment that became so vacuous by the end of the century, as to produce an urgent need for social ascription and social recognition. People feel morally isolated and unsure of the world they live in; they want to strive for objectivity and reject relativism, but they do not want to give up individuality and materialism. Jihadist Suicide is the product of elites' careful interplay between individualist expectations and collectivist moral obligations. It is the most extreme paradox of the twenty-first century.

Chapter 4

The Religious Divide

> *"Who ever took religion seriously?" cried a frustrated official in the US State Department shortly after the [Iranian] revolution.*
>
> Karen Armstrong, 2004, p.40

A long-held perception is that religion would never again rise as a political force. The Iranian Revolution (1978–1979) that established the Islamic Republic was a surprise. Secularism was thought to have triumphed over religion: the former was seen as rational, the latter as superstition. In the modern nation-state, which Iran was striving to be, it was thought that people would never again turn to religion in preference to their rational economic and psychological needs as free-thinking individuals. The Iranian Revolution appeared to reverse the success of the French Revolution, which is seen as the historic emancipation of humanity from servitude to the dogma of religion.

Islam and the State

The approximate equivalent of the separation of Church and state happened in the Muslim world following the First World War defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The collapse of the empire effectively brought to an end the last Islamic caliphate, which lasted from 1300 to 1922. The caliphate ruled over a vast territory that included much of the Balkans, Anatolia, the central Middle East to the borders of Iran, most of North Africa, and historic Palestine. War alone did not end Ottoman rule. Ottoman power waned during the nineteenth century because of rising nationalism. Non-Arab states like

Greece won independence from the Ottomans in 1832, and the Balkan nations soon began to break free. Following the First World War, nationalism in the Arab world was strong. Political leaders recognised that they would remain weak if they did not emulate modern industrialised civilisations. The Young Turks—the equivalent of the English Radicals—fought hard to abolish Ottoman absolute rule.

It was not European powers that finally defeated the Caliph, but an internal Turkish mandate. On 3 March 1924 the last Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey, Mohammed VI, was deposed and the caliphate abolished under the first President of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, with the full support of the parliament (*Time Archive*, 2008). The Caliph was appointed only two years previously, but was thought to have been deposed because he “proved himself not pliable enough to the Government”. In short, the Caliph opposed the reforms of the new parliament whom he considered were “turning [their] head to the West and forgetting the East” (*Time Archive*, 2008).

Today there is no agreement on the reestablishment of the caliphate among political elites in Arab nation-states with majority Muslim populations. Power, prestige, and autonomy of state leadership and control are highly sought and zealously defended. A summit convened in Cairo in 1926 discussed the caliphate’s revival, but most Muslim countries did not participate and no action was taken to implement the summit's resolutions. Membership in the nation-state, and the opportunity to participate in the international economic system offered rewards that were too great to jeopardise. The consequences of Arab-nation isolationist policies—like the establishment of an Arab-wide theocracy—seemed sure to mean economic ruination and eventual loss of territory.

Instead, a state-based system, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), was founded in 1969. The OIC comprises 57 Muslim states and operates as an international body, with a permanent delegation to the United Nations and a lobby group in other international arenas. Its core objectives are to "enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States; and safeguard and protect the common interests and support the legitimate causes of the Member States" (OIC, n.d.). It does not operate as an authority over Member States. Its charter states that it will "respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in domestic affairs and respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State" (OIC, n.d.). In essence, this preserves the integrity of the nation-state system.

Shi'i Islam does not recognise the caliphate of the Umayyad dynasty, of which the Ottomans were the last. Iran—under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi—was a founding member of the OIC in 1969. Iran retained its membership following the revolution and remains a member. Khomeini's vision was to see the Muslim world—both Sunni and Shi'i—united under the Iranian Republic; his vision was to reinvent the caliphate with him as the self-fashioned Twelfth *Mahdi*. This vision lasted until his death on 3 June 1989. The regime—under the newly elected spiritual leader Ali Khamenei, and the newly elected president Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani—is a telling tale of Realpolitik, as the new regime gave Iranian national interests primacy over Islamic doctrine.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani understood the importance of economic growth and lobbied for normalisation with other nation-states—not necessarily the West, but certainly to such extent that Iran did not suffer international sanctions, and hence could continue to maintain its strength in the competitive nation-state system. He lost the presidency to

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in close elections in 2005. Ahmadinejad is a hardline Islamist with a deep hatred of the West and Israel. His ardent support of the state's nuclear program—with the alleged purpose of wiping Israel off the map—gained him few international friends. Even Saudi Arabia is opposed to or, at the very least, suspicious of his intent, fearing Iran's designs on the Saudi Kingdom.

The success of the Iranian Revolution in defeating the Western-backed secularising government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and the restoration of the state to a theocracy, encouraged Islamists throughout the Sunni world, and the Shi'i of Lebanon, to rise up also. Osama bin Laden remained steadfast until his death in the fight for the establishment of a caliphate. The greater al Qaeda network persists in this cause. Judith Miller (1994) noted that Hassan al Turabi and Muhammed Fadlallah (until his death in July 2010)—two of the most powerful men in Radical Sunni and Shi'i Islam, respectively—worked confidently towards their dreams of Islam as the world-religion, and the reestablishment of the caliphate.

Islamic Extremism and Radicalism

The ultimate goal of radical Islamists—both Sunni and Shi'i—is to re-establish the caliphate. A popular *Salafist* discourse is to return the *umma* (community of believers) to the Golden Age of Islam: to the fundamentals of their beliefs held before Islam was corrupted by secular influences. Despite this rhetoric, there is a contention that radical Islamists do not desire to return to a Golden Age of fundamentalism. They desire to create the world anew. The terms "radicalism" and "extremism" are better suited. Fundamentalism is a word coined by conservative Protestant theologians in the early

twentieth century who sought a return to the fundamentals of their doctrinal belief. Armstrong (2004) argued that this interpretation does not adequately describe the religious revivalism that is currently being experienced across all religions. She argued this is better described as a backlash against secularism, and hence modernity. At its core is a desire for radical social reform.

Radicalism has its root form in rejecting tradition. The term "radical" is from the Latin *radix* meaning root, but it was used in the context of *getting to the root of the problem*, to identify the core issue causing social disharmony. The Radical Movement of the late eighteenth century—from where the term originated—sought political reform by advocating greater representation through their argument for universal male suffrage. It later became a general term for those favouring or seeking political reforms which include dramatic changes to the social order. Historically, early radical aims of liberty and electoral reform in Great Britain widened with the American Revolution and the French Revolution so that some *radicals* sought republicanism, abolition of titles, the redistribution of property, and freedom of the press. In its current use, radicalism tends to mean little more than conflict over the norms of social belief.

Radicalism is akin to extremism. Extremism at its very basic level is to hold beliefs and attitudes that are outside the norm of society, with a further connotation of intolerance and conflict (Coleman and Bartoli, n.d.). Radical Islamists are not always violent. Lisa Anderson (1997), drawing on the Tunisian, Algerian, and Moroccan experiences, argued that the turn to violence was reactionary and a question of operational practicality. Margaret Andersen and Howard Taylor (2008, p.462) warn that "any religion, taken to an extreme, is a dangerous phenomenon because extremists come to

believe that it is their sacred duty to impose their beliefs on others and eliminate those having a different worldview". They argued that extremists tend to see the world as a dichotomy between "good or evil, us and them, godly or demonic" (Andersen and Taylor, 2008, p.462).

The battle between good and evil can be seen as an attack on what extremists see as immorality and a lack of social order. Young (1999) referred to this as "moral panic". The moral panic of radical and militant Islam is demonstrated in the writings of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). He was an Egyptian Sunni ideologue and activist who opposed the secularisation of his homeland and was alarmed by the decadence. His radicalisation occurred during the early 1950s. He was horrified by his experience of the West—particularly the United States—and voiced his disdain for Western culture and freedoms in volumes of literature and personal correspondence. He encountered the East moving from tradition to modernity. He concluded that nowhere was safe from the perils of demonic influence, as even the Muslims of his native Egypt had returned to the time of the *jahiliyya* (ignorance and barbarism).

Qutb's radicalisation coincided with him joining the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) in Egypt in 1952. He was an influential member of the Muslim Brotherhood, but he did not support the founder's ambition of religious revivalism through non-violence. The founder, Hassan Ahmed Abdel Rahman Muhammed al Banna, advocated the gentle act of gathering the "lost" Muslims back into the fold by education and charitable works. Qutb advocated *offensive jihad* (as opposed to its traditional meaning of *defensive jihad*) to abolish secular Arab governments and to

spread Islam throughout the world. He was influential in changing traditional thinking on the concept of holy war.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 in Egypt. It spread throughout Palestine and Jordan during the first half of the twentieth century and has grown in strength since that time. Its members were responsible for the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954, which led to a crackdown on the organisation in Egypt and Gaza. His opponents saw him as espousing pan-Arabism and nationalism to the detriment of Islam. Qutb was found guilty of treason and hanged in Cairo in 1966. In 1981, officers loyal to the Muslim Brotherhood were successful in assassinating President Anwar Sadat, primarily in protest at the peace treaty that he signed with Israel in 1979.

Moral panic is reflected in Qutb's concept of *jahiliyya*. This was a fear of a return to the way of the *jahiliyya*; that is, a return to the time before Islam where people lived in barbaric ignorance of the proper way of life: the Islamic way. This is the opening stanza of his famous book, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (*Milestones along the Way*, commonly referred to as *Milestones*) (1964):

> Mankind today is on the brink of a precipice, not because of the danger of complete annihilation which is hanging over its head—this being just a symptom and not the real disease—but because humanity is devoid of those vital values for its healthy development and real progress ... In short, all man-made theories, both individualistic and collectivist, have proved to be failures. At this crucial and bewildering juncture, the turn of the Islam and the Muslim community has arrived because it has the needed values.

His concept of *jahiliyya* entailed a reworking of the traditional Islamic division of the world into two radically different spheres—*dar al Islam* (the land of Islam), and *dar al harb* (the land of the unbeliever). In the glorious days of the caliphate, *dar al Islam* was guaranteed its supremacy. Sunni radicals see it as their duty to win back control and expand *dar al Islam*.

The coming of the Shi'ite days of modern dissention to Westernisation did not eventuate until the mid-1970s with the Iranian Revolution. Yet despite the slightly adjusted timetable and the theological differentiation, both radical Sunni and radical Shi'ite ideology recognise the same revised interpretation of *dar al Islam* and *dar al harb* that separates the modern world into warring parties. In a further radical interpretation, *dar al Islam* is seen as the physical geographical space that adherents of Islam occupy, rather than traditional lands *per se*. Therefore, any nation-state with significant numbers of Muslims in their population is included in *dar al Islam* and is a legitimate target for *jihad*.

Qutb was responsible for the foundations of modern radical Islam (Musallam, 2005). He was considered by his peers as an important theorist in the Islamist movement. He had a profound effect on Abdullah Yussuf Azzam (1941–1989), the Palestinian founder of the organisation that would become al Qaeda. While studying at Cairo's Al Azhar University, he met Ayman al Zawahiri and other followers of Qutb, adopting his doctrine of *jihad* as offensive war. Working in large part from Qutb's ideas, during the Afghan-Soviet war, Azzam transformed radical Islam from a group of disparate national movements into a potent international force. He is touted as one of the principal

inspirations for the type of Islamist ideology pursued by Osama bin Laden and his Egyptian chief lieutenant al Zawahiri.

Radical Islamists see the modern nation-state as the epitome of the decadence of modernity. Westernisation of the East is seen as a result of Western corrupting hegemony. There is a stated intention by militant Islamic groups to overthrow the nation-state system—one state at a time or globally. In 2001, al Qaeda stated its intention of establishing a worldwide caliphate. Bin Laden wrote in his communiqué of 21 October 2001, *Terror for Terror*: "So I say that, in general, our concern is that our *umma* [community of believers] unites either under the Words of the Book of God or His Prophet, and that this nation should establish the righteous caliphate of our *umma*, which has been prophesised by our Prophet in his authentic *hadith*" (cited in Lawrence, 2005, p.121).

This was repeated in 2005 by bin Laden's second in charge, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, in his publication *Al Qaeda's Second Generation* (Hall, 2005). He set out an ambitious timeline for al Qaeda's seven-step plan to "definitive victory". A worldwide Islamic caliphate would be established between 2013 and 2016. At this time, a period of "total confrontation" would ensue between the "Islamic Army" and the "non-believers", until final victory. Between 2007 and 2013 there would be "increasingly frequent attacks" against Muslim nations like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, oil suppliers, the United States economy, and secular regimes like Turkey, as well as al Qaeda's arch-enemy Israel (Hall, 2005).

The stated goal of Hamas is the destruction of the Jewish state and the establishment of an Islamic Republic. But their wider goal is consistent with that of the Muslim Brotherhood, of which they are a schism or splinter group. The ultimate goal of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood is uniting the world under one Islamic rule. Leiken and Brook (2007), for instance, observed that the Muslim Brotherhood is the oldest and most influential pan-Islamic organisation in the world, thus indicating that the overthrow of the Egyptian state is only the first step in the Islamisation of the world. In evidence presented in 2008 at the legal proceedings of *The United States v. Holy Land Foundation,* it was revealed that Hamas's ultimate goal is the establishment of a "global Islamic State". Mohamed Akram, a senior Hamas leader in the United States, referred to this aim in his 1991 *An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America*. He set out the means by which his group would bring about the destruction of the United States by internal sabotage.

Levene (2005a; 2005b) recognised that the internal convulsions that create or reorganise nation-states are often concerned with ethnic cleansing and (or) genocide of ethnic groups—their demarcation is often along religious lines. Post-Cold War, the convulsions that create new states have seen other nation-states divide along religious lines. This hypothesis belongs to Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996). There has been a lot written about his *clash of civilisations* hypothesis; most of it is critical. He presented unpalatable ideas such as his claim that all Muslims are hostile and violent. His thesis contained analytical errors like the idea that cultures are set in stone—they are not. But his core idea that conflict, post-Cold War, would divide along "civilisation", or rather religious lines proved correct.

The Clash of Civilisations: The New Religious Wars

Huntington (1993; 1996) argued that with the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent end of the Cold War, the West faced a new challenge. This time it would not be along the secular ideological lines of capitalism and communism, but as a contest over cultural and religious identity and the political systems that support them. He argued that it would be a conflict characterised by mutual intolerance and a single-minded sense of self-righteousness on both sides. Christianity and Islam hold the dogmatic view that their cultural and religious values are the only correct ones and both actively seek world hegemony[15].

The first question that must be tackled is: what did he mean by civilisation? The English poet TS Eliot (1948) sought to define culture. He gave thought to comparing it to the "journalistic" term "civilisation" but he abandoned this pursuit. He concluded that "any such attempt could only produce an artificial distinction … which the reader would have difficulty in retaining; and which, after closing the book, he would abandon with a sense of relief" (Eliot, 1948, p.13). He was not alone in his dismay at the interpretation of the word. Fox (2001) questioned whether Huntington meant "religion" when he wrote "civilization". There was considerable overlap: seven of Huntington's eight categories of civilisations have an obvious religious component. And there was, of course,

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[15] As a counter argument to Huntington's religious-divide debate, many Arab-Muslim states aligned themselves with the Christian West—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Yemen—but not with the Jewish state. All Arab and Muslim states objected to Israel from its inception; some entered into military conflict with it.

Huntington's contention that in a clash of civilisations people would divide along religious lines, because religion forms the primary basis of one's cultural identity:

> In class and ideological conflicts, the key question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" … A person can be half-French and half-Arab and simultaneously even a citizen of two countries. It is more difficult to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim (Huntington, 1993, p.27).

In 1996, Huntington argued that cultures have a "soul" that developed and persisted over time. In this sense, soul-culture is immutable. A soul can be identified as the moral hub of the individual—or in this case, the collective. Presumably, Huntington was talking about memes as opposed to genes. Meme is the name given to cultural ideas that are reciprocated and transferred from one person to another and from one generation to another through symbols, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena.

In Islamic culture Huntington recognised this "cultural soul" as being inherently violent, a point that raised considerable controversy. He argued that "Islam's borders are bloody", and cited as evidence a history of conflict between the West and Islamic civilisations dating back some 1300 years (Huntington, 1993, pp.31–34). Osama bin Laden never tired of reminding the Christian West of its blood-soaked history, referring to Westerners as "Crusaders". The *Oxford Dictionary* defines "Crusade" as "any of several medieval military expeditions made by the Europeans to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims". Following the United States' invasion of Afghanistan, bin Laden wrote a communiqué in 2001 urging the faithful to rise up against the West:

> The *umma* [community of believers] is asked to unite itself in the face of this Crusaders' campaign, the strongest, most powerful, and most ferocious Crusaders' campaign to fall on the Islamic *umma* since the dawn of Islamic history. There have been past Crusader wars, but there have never been campaigns like this one before (cited in Lawrence, 2005, p.121).

The original Crusades lasted nearly 200 years (1095 to 1291). The number of casualties is indeterminate but known to have been huge. The historian Fulcher of Chartres reported that when the First Crusade reached Jerusalem, some 30 thousand Muslims and 6 thousand Jews were murdered: "If you had been there, your feet would have been stained up to the ankles with the blood of the slain. What more shall I tell? Not one of them was allowed to live. They did not spare the women and children" (Fulcher, 1998, p.91).

This graphic description is reminiscent of the Islamist extremist oft-repeated call for "rivers of blood" (Shaheen n.d.; *MSNBC News*, 2010). As *MSNBC News* reported, the November 2010 al Qaeda siege of a church in Baghdad that killed 58 people had called for "rivers of blood". A communiqué from al Qaeda's front group in Iraq promised more Christian killings. This was in response to Egyptian reports that a Coptic Church held Christian women captive when they voiced a desire to convert to Islam: "As a result, the [al Qaeda] group said in a statement posted … on militant websites, 'All Christian centers, organizations and institutions, leaders and followers are legitimate targets for the mujahedeen (holy warriors) wherever they can reach them'".

Militant Islam is vocal in its denunciation and threat of conquest of the *infidels* (non-believers) in the West, as well as the *kha'en* (traitors) in the East who are accused of

takfir (apostasy). The enormous emotional impact of suicide bombings—in particular, 9/11 (2001), the Bali (2002) and London (2005) bombings, the Mumbai suicide massacre (2008)—raised the level of intolerance for Islam among Western populations. Despite Western protestation that the War on Terror is not a war on Islam, governments appear to be cracking under the pressure of popular sentiment, bringing Islam (Phillips, 2011) and the global threat from the *mujahedeen* into their public debates. We also observe a growing—some may say, panic—level of inter-faith dialogue and cooperation. This can be seen as coming from conservative religious organisations; the trend is to lean towards extremism. The Bosnian war is symptomatic of a religious divide.

In the Post-Cold War era, according to Huntington (1993; 1996), conflict would not necessarily be in the form of traditional wars, or what he termed "core state conflicts", but in "fault lines" between different cultures and religions. Core state conflict would ensue when adjacent states of different cultural and religious values rally to protect their ethnic kin. This scenario played out in Bosnia at the time Huntington penned his original thesis. Bosnia, one of the six republics of the former Yugoslavia, was multi-ethnic, comprising Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Croats (Roman Catholics), and a growing Muslim population known as Bosniaks.

Civil war[16] broke out as a result of the break-up of Yugoslavia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Yugoslavia ceded control of Bosnia on 12 May 1992 when it

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[16] Ethnic cleansing was also a feature of the Second World War. During the war, partisanship was divided along ethnic-religious lines and the cover of the war was sufficient to allow for ethnic cleansing of

recalled its army from the region. The catalyst of the civil war was Bosnian-Serb insecurity about the changed demographic of the region and their consequent marginalisation. Once the dominant group, their majority was eroded through a large increase in the Muslim population—particularly since the end of the Second World War. In 1992 there were more Bosniaks than Serbs. Hence the Serb leadership boycotted the plebiscite of February 1992 where Croats and Bosniaks overwhelming voted for independence and for the creation of their own Republic.

Opposition to the new Bosnian-Serb Republic was overpowered by the military might of the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his commander, General Ratko Mladić. During Karadzic's trial at The Hague for war crimes and crimes against humanity, Karadzic strongly defended his actions during the war and called the Serb cause "just and holy". He argued that Bosnian Serbs acted in self-defence, and accused Bosniaks of ethnic cleaning in order to carve out a fundamentalist Islamic state. There was some evidence of this (Totten et al., 2008, pp.189–190); however, Donia (2006) noted that before the first shots were fired, the Bosnian Serb Assembly adopted a resolution dividing Sarajevo into a Serb territory and a Muslim territory, indicating that ethnic cleansing was their intention. The War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague placed the war dead as 102,622; large proportions were Muslims.

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minorities such as Jews and Gypsies. Tensions between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Croats prior to the Second World War were noted, with the 1939 declaration of limited autonomy for ethnic Croats within Yugoslavia; this political achievement was short-lived, when the Axis powers invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941. And even before the breakup of Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions flared during the 1980s with the economic crisis of that era.

At this time, there was no regional distribution of the ethnic populations. Ethnic Serbs, ethnic Croats and Bosniaks lived as neighbours. The Social Democratic Party's founding member, Nijaz Durakovic, told a peace rally in Sarajevo on 6 March 1992, "[The Serbs] have begun to divide regions, cities. Tomorrow they will divide villages and streets, factories, apartment buildings, maybe even common beds" (1992, Durakovic cited in Donia, 2006, p.281). Donia (2006, p.288) noted that the Bosnian-Serb Vice President Kokjevic was speaking in euphemisms when he suggested that Bosnia would be "territorialized" into "national communities". The propaganda campaign launched by the Bosnian-Serb leadership worked hard to set Bosnians against each other, instilling fear of Muslim conspiracy.

Core state intervention in the war occurred in the way that Huntington suggested. The Serbian President, Slobodan Milošević, supported Karadzic; the Croatian Army fought in Bosnia in defence of the Croats; and Islamic Iran provided substantial support for the Bosniaks. Gilani (2010, n.p.) revealed Iranian intentions in the Bosnian war in a candid news article: "The foreign minister at that time, Ali Akbar Velayati, has since described how Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei asked him and Revolutionary Guards chief Mohsen Rezayi to do all they could to assist the Bosnian Muslims resist the 'crusade' being waged against them". He observed that Khamenei ordered "military, medical and financial assistance" as well as dispatching a contingent of Revolutionary Guards. Following the United Nations ban on the supply of weapons to the warring parties, Iran continued to ship weapons to the Bosniaks (Giliani, 2010).

Iran's involvement caused concern in London and Washington. Hysteria arose about a Muslim takeover of Bosnia resulting in a terrorist safe haven. The *BBC News* (2001, 2

October) suggested that Osama bin Laden had a Bosnian passport—a rumour that the Bosnian government firmly denied. Gilani (2010) noted: "According to a Bosnian diplomat in London, who asked to remain anonymous, 'Iran's strident policies during the war scared the West and made Bosnia keep its distance [from Tehran]'". The United States became anxious about the presence of the *mujahedeen* (holy fighters) who had taken up Bosnian citizenship following the war. A large contingent of foreign fighters had flooded into Bosnia; their allegiances were along religious lines. The Roman Catholics and Protestants supported the Croats; the Orthodox Christians from countries such as Greece supported the Serbs; and the Muslim fighters supported the Bosniaks.

The world remains immersed in a clash of civilisations that divided nations, communities, and even households along religious lines. The political scientist, Jonathan Fox (2001) analysed all ethnic conflicts in the last century to ascertain whether civilisation or religion had the greater effect. Not surprisingly, his findings were inconclusive. He did, however, record a definite rise in religious violence after 1965 and its sharp upturn during the 1980s.

Religion was not the primary cause of ethnic conflict. He concluded that "discrimination, repression and mobilization often have a greater impact" (Fox, 2001, p.311). How we account for the division along religious lines, he could not say. Huntington addresses this issue in terms of social solidarity, claiming that the demise of secular ideologies forced people to find security among their religious fictive-kin. Tiryakian (1988) and others have argued that religion has a potent allure, particularly associated with addressing the questions of late modernity as they pertain to identity and moral panic. At the core of this argument is mobilisation.

The Allure of Religion

Ethnicity—like civilisation—is not easily defined. In *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Donald Horowitz (2000) dedicated much space to this task. He concluded: "Many of the puzzles presented by ethnicity become much less confusing once we abandon the attempt to discover the vital essence of ethnicity and instead regard ethnic affiliations as being located along a continuum of ways in which people organize and categorize themselves" (Horowitz, 2000, p.55). How people organise and categorise themselves is the key issue. Brass (1978) argued that "every person carries with him through life 'attachments' derived from place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that are 'natural' for him, 'spiritual' in character, and that provide a basis for an easy 'affinity' with other peoples from the same background" (Brass, 1978, p.35). It is a function of our primordial sentiments to find affinity with those that share our daily practices and habits, including—or particularly—religious customs.

Opponents object to this model, contending that globalisation seems to have ensured that such attachments are no longer assured. But Brass argued that some aspects of primordial theory are hard to deny:

> Even in modern industrial society, let alone in pre-modern or modernizing societies, most people develop attachments in childhood and youth that have deeply emotive significance, that remain with them through life either consciously, in the actual persistence of such attachments in the routines of daily life, or embedded in the unconscious realms of the adult personality (Brass, 2010, n.p.).

Religion as identity and affinity is the easiest cultural object to manipulate in order to mobilise the masses. Brass (1978, p.39) noted that political (including religious) elites

know that people see those of the same religious group as being (fictive) kin. In his study of the formation of the separatist state of Pakistan, Brass (1978) noted that power elites first created a sense of collective religious identity, and then they offered their religion as a refuge against the alleged, but largely non-existent, discrimination against them as Muslims. He remarked that this was quite an achievement, given that the increasingly secular Muslim population assimilated well into Indian society. Mobilisation—and hence hostility to their Hindu neighbours—was achieved by creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust in the majority Hindu population. This is synonymous with the tactic used by the Serbs in Bosnia to promote the religious divide there. This tactic, and more, can be seen at work in Egypt.

Islam is the Solution

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt coined the term "*Islam is the solution*". Miller (1994, p.126) noted that "for American and European officials charged with protecting Western interests abroad, [radical Islamists] evoke images of car bombs, murder, and young, bearded holy warriors bent on historic revenge. In Arab capitals, they represent the militant Islamic revival feared by conservative rulers". For many millions of poor, futureless, and unhappy Arab men—the "disinherited"—they represent a solution to the problems of daily life, as well as salvation from the nihilism of secular life (Miller, 1994, p.126). In the East—more so than in the West—the problem of late modernity is compounded by political realities.

The Iranian Revolution encouraged radical Islam in the Arab world—both Shi'i and Sunni. Political protest in the Arab world resulted from a feeling that Arab nationalism

had failed (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Miller, 1994; Laqueur, 1996; Musallam, 2005). Earlier hope in the benefits of the secular, modern, nation-state waned considerably by the mid-to-late 1960s. The major problem cited is that the Arab world has not embraced democracy, and has remained governed by what Fjelde (2010) referred to as "kings, generals and dictators". The result has been nepotism, cronyism, corruption, and serious inefficiency; wealth was not distributed to the masses, but has remained concentrated in the hands of the elite. Unemployment and poverty are high; and governments have not provided adequate community services to cope with the needs of the population. A policy of the Muslim Brotherhood since its inception has been to fulfil such needs.

The Muslim Brotherhood's influence in spreading its doctrines to the mainstream lay in its charitable and social welfare programs, and its extensive networks that produced an atmosphere of trust and solidarity (Mishal and Avraham, 2000, pp.20–23; Wickham, 2002; Ismall, 2004; Levitt, 2006; Flanigan, 2008). Client-patron relationships create an implicit or explicit obligation to embrace the specific doctrinal beliefs of the assisting organisation. Janine Clark (2004) contests this. Her study of Islamic charity networks in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen revealed no evidence of the recruitment to activism that many analysts claim provide radical organisations with a steady flow of recruits.

However, the claim of recruitment to high-risk activism is overstated. These organisations—which operate throughout the Middle East and North Africa—are concerned to win the hearts and minds of the mainstream in order to steer them back, or towards Islam, as a practical solution to their day-to-day needs. They do not operate primarily as a channel for militant recruitment. This may be the result of a dedicated

obsession at this level, but it is not the primary objective of Islamic revivalism as a whole.

Ismall (2004) argued that recruitment to high-risk activism is a by-product. He maintained that organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood work on the basis of turning the heads of ordinary Egyptians towards Islam, thus altering the moral fabric of society:

> The pursuit of morality in the public sphere can give Islamists power vis-à-vis the state and society, in particular, the power to dictate the norm. At the forefront of Islamist activism are what some scholars call "small entrepreneurs of morality"—individuals and small groups seeking to enforce moral norms in the public domain (Ismall, 2004, p.36).

These entrepreneurs not only enforce morality, but they dictate it by "propagate[ing] a mode of classifying objects, behaviour and cultural products like novels and plays as *halal* and *harma* (licit and illicit) and Islamic and un-Islamic" (Ismall, 2004, p.36).

Entrepreneurs of morality also operate—or, more precisely, have the greatest effect—within universities like the al Azhar University in Cairo. Al Azhar educated such notables as Sheikh Izz ad Din al Qassam, the founder of the Black Hand Brigade in Palestine; Mohammad Amin al Husayni, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem; and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a co-founder of Hamas. Wickham (2004) argued that from her studies of Islamic activism among the young people educated in Egypt it was noted that:

> Most graduates initially joined Islamic networks because of various social, psychological, and emotional benefits conferred by participation, much as "rational actor" models of mobilization would predict. But while such benefits help explain involvement in initial low-risk forms of activism, they alone cannot explain an eventual progression to riskier, more overtly political forms of Islamic activity (Wickham, 2004, p.232).

Like Ismall (2004), she argued that after the initial thrust into radical Islamic activism, another frame was used to encourage higher-risk activism: moral obligation. Here, we are not talking about suicide–terror. Radical Islamic groups in Egypt have not taken up this tactic, but they are known to have carried out high-risk operations like (non-suicide) bombings, assassinations of political rivals and government officials, and other terror attacks. Terror activities were designed to weaken and overthrow the Mubarak regime. It was revolution in the Arab Spring that achieved this.

Revolution and Ethnic Cleansing

The Arab Spring is the name given to a series of popular uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa since December 2010. It started in Tunisia after a 26 year-old man, Mohammed Bouazizi, self-immolated outside a government office in protest at economic deprivation by the state, and police brutality. The swift success of the uprising—otherwise known as the Jasmine Revolution—in bringing down the Tunisian government caused similar uprisings in Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, Bahrain, Libya, and Kuwait. These protesters are seen as demanding democracy; at the very least, they are demanding regime change. The common consensus among analysts is that they were largely secular. The special allure that religion has for cementing social solidarity, and compelling moral obligation, is augmented in times of social revolution.

Two factors determine the occurrence of a revolution—or to use the Arabic word *intifada* (uprising): a sudden economic crisis, or persistent economic hardship; and political discontent (Tiryakian, 1988). Despite political manoeuvring from radical Islam

as well as from democratic reform groups, these were the factors that drew the crowds onto the streets. The *intifada* spread rapidly, encouraged by the swift success in Tunisia. In 1895 Gustave Le Bon argued that the age that the world was about to enter was the Era of Crowds: “While all our ancient beliefs are tottering and disappearing, while the old pillars of society are giving way one by one, the power of the crowd is the only force that nothing menaces” ([1895] 2002, p.*x*).

Radicalism and revolution are the perfect accompaniments for societal transformation. A feature of revolution is violence—symbolic as well as physical: the process of societal transformation can only occur by producing society’s “corpse”. Revolution has as its aim the reordering of the world by abolishing established power and social structures, and remaking the world in accordance with the principles of the revolutionary movement. Levene (2005a, p.171) pointed out that the convulsions necessary for this achievement can only produce “pariah—‘out-groups’ who are accused of malevolence to the new, all-encompassing national project, both by dint of their alleged record of past transgressions against the nation’s existence as well as their predictable efforts to sabotage its future hopes of redemption”.

The revolutionary crowd is at first exemplified by its sentiment of social solidarity whereby “the relatively distinct individual consciousness of everyday life becomes sentient with the others in the common situation and in a common enterprise” (Tiryakian, 1988, p.45). The collective effervescence that is produced in collective gatherings of great energy “entails the sustained interaction of large numbers of persons; it entails the coming together and welding of various social factions into a larger whole having consciousness of itself in a collective purpose” (Tiryakian, 1988,

p.50). The collective effervescences fill the actor "with exultation and a feeling of force or energy … [which] conveys a sense of power. The power to do things, and, in certain circumstances, to transform (or re-form) the social order" (Tiryakian, 1988, p.50).

Once the regime is removed, and power is secured by the victor, this sentiment vanishes. Tiryakian (1988, pp.58–59) argued that a process of differentiation takes place, whereby society is once again divided into social and political rankings. If democracy is the victor, an orderly transition may prevail, whereby each ideological and (or) religious group is given the opportunity for equal representation. This was the case in Tunisia following the Jasmine Revolution. In other Arab nations there will be contention over power, with the likely victor being radical Islam. This is likely to be the case in Libya and Egypt.

Organised religion is best positioned to usurp power from other actors in the revolution through mechanisms of communication and moral authority. Le Bon ([1895] 2002, p.39) considered that the power of the religious crowd is held in the belief they are "in the possession of the secret of earthly or eternal happiness". Durkheim argued that the power of the religious crowd predominantly emanates from their conviction that they hold possession of the moral order (Furseth and Repstad (2006, p.19). It is moral righteousness, subsumed by the dominant religion, which draws its members together into a community of fictive kin. The "moral possession" that the crowd feels is enunciated in the motto: "We are right; God is with us", or in the simple call: "*Allah Akbar*!" (God is great!).

Levene (2005a, p.171) noted: “Once in power … our untried and inexperienced protagonists are able to promote their extreme ideology as the essential glue for their programmes aimed at reasserting state power and resolving its societal crisis through a revolutionary style social and political transformation”. Le Bon ([1895] 2002) argued that the crowd that is roused by religious sentiment presents a substantial threat to social harmony:

> This sentiment has very simple characteristics, such as worship of a being supposed superior, fear of the power with which the being is credited, blind submission to its commands, inability to discuss its dogmas, the desire to spread them, and a tendency to consider as enemies all by whom they are not accepted (Le Bon, [1895] 2002, p.38).

He argued that “intolerance and fanaticism are the necessary accompaniments of the religious sentiment” (Le Bon, [1895] 2002, p.39). In Egypt, post-revolution, fresh protests have drawn violent clashes in Tahir Square between democratic reform protesters and radical Islam.

The Egyptian *intifada* of 2011 was quickly followed by attacks on the indigenous Coptic Christian populations—a trend that led to the death of 27 Coptic protestors on 9 October 2011, following the 30 September torching by Muslim hardliners of a Coptic church in Southern Aswan. Katherine Weber (2011, n.p.) reported that the head of the Egyptian Federation of Human Rights, Naguib Gabriel, released a report stating that the post-*intifada* violence since March 2011 against the Coptic population is expected to result in around 250 thousand emigrants by December 2011. The overwhelming opinion of the Coptic population is that regardless of whether democracy or a Muslim theocracy eventuates, there will be a majority consensus on the elevation of Islam to the state

religion and the institutionalisation of *shari'a*; this would to all intents and purposes place them as pariah citizens, effectively outside the state.

The victor in Egypt for the foreseeable future is the Supreme Council of Armed Forces. The Supreme Council has "made it clear they will retain control over the appointment of the Prime Minister and the cabinet as well as control over the budget" (Steavenson, 2011). Kepel (2004) noted that radical Islamists encourage their followers to join the army and intelligence services, and to take up positions within the government. When the opportunity comes for a takeover, they are not merely a grass-roots organisation, calling from the streets, but—depending upon their level of saturation into these occupations—they are in a position of real power in dictating the outcome of revolution, or as it is or pretends to be in the Arab Spring, of democratic elections.

On the surface, the Muslim Brotherhood is divided between hardliners who want a theocracy in the fashion of Iran, and moderates who want the state to be run by "an Islamic frame of reference" (*BBC News*, 9 February 2011). Walid Phares (2011, n.p.), an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, noted that as soon as the bottom-up *intifada* began, "the Islamist political machine went into high gear" supporting the overthrow of the Egyptian regime, but at the same time remaining tight-lipped on their designs of setting up a theocracy. An indication of the level of lobbying for a theocracy is seen in the surge of volatile protests following Friday noon prayers; this has been a constant feature of the *intifada*.

The elections to be held between November 2011 and January 2012 have as their outcome the establishment of 100 delegates charged with the task of penning a new

constitution, which will then go to a referendum. Election of a new government will not happen until sometime in 2013. Laqueur (1996, p.165) warned that it was the case in Algeria that "if the Islamists had gained power through victory in a free vote, these would have been the last free elections". He noted: "According to the teachings of the radical Islamists, Shi'ite and Sunni alike, democracy is a mortal sin against God" (Laqueur, 1996, p.165).

Regardless of the outcome of these elections—or perhaps as a result of the preconditions imposed by the current military regime—the nation's problems will not be solved. Area expert Leanne Piggott (2011, p.5) noted that grass-roots unrest in the Middle East and North Africa will likely continue long into the future. She noted that the problems of the area are crippling and endemic. For instance, she estimated that around 100 million jobs will need to be provided over the next 10 years, simply to keep pace with the staggeringly high unemployment problem (Piggott, 2011a, p.5). Eventually, we may see the same disenchantment with radical Islam in Egypt as is currently being subdued by military force in Iran.

Piggott (2006; 2007) has discovered that post-9/11 Arab Muslim states are a surprising mixture of conservatism and radicalism. For instance she reported that polls showed that despite "internecine violence that has been unleased in Iraq … most Iraqis have maintained a cautious optimism about the future and remain defiant of the *jihadi* bombers and death squads" (Piggott, 2007, p.1). The overwhelming mood in Arab Muslim nations is that terror attacks like 9/11 have their root cause in United States foreign policy and Zionism. She noted that despite grave restrictions on freedom of speech, conspiracy theories citing American and Jewish culpability spring from every

media source and often from the mouths of well-respected intellectuals, as well as government, royal, and religious persons (Piggott, 2006, pp.168–184). She saw this as indicating that this form of “unalloyed hatred” is officially sanctioned. However, she did remark that Arab Muslim intellectuals and government persons opposed to this form of “channelling” speak out strongly against it. For instance, she noted: “Lambasting the wave of conspiracy theories propagated by the religious elite in the wake of September 11, one Saudi writer stated that if ‘this is the condition of the enlightened elite, what can be said about the cave-dwellers of Kandahar?’ referring, with ill-disguised contempt, to bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda fighters” (Piggott, 2006, p.177).

Conclusion

In the age of extremes, religion occupies a curious place. People are returning to religion in a way previously thought impossible. Radicalism and extremism has proliferated in all religions. It is common to attribute suicide–terror to radical or extremist Islam, with the thought that there is something latent within traditional Islamic texts that only needed reviving in order to actualise suicide–terror in the twentieth century[17]. Contrary to these thoughts—and the knowledge that it appears to attract a predominantly Muslim following—the dogma that brought it into play, and the attraction it has for the individual, is mostly secular. Jihadism is a new religion, crafted out of the past and the present; the East and the West. Given the right conditions, it has the capacity to take root anywhere.

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[17] Jonathan Fine (2008, p.69) epitomises this thought: “In order to better understand the political mindset of Islamist terrorist organizations, the formative texts of the Sunni and Shi’i leaders should receive as much if not more attention than the strategies and tactics they apply”.

Radicalism and extremism play a part by rejecting tradition—rather than embracing it. Moreover, as the example of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has highlighted, radicalism and extremism are insufficient to produce suicide–terror, without the desire, political capacity and the knowledge of how to actualise it. There is an assumption implicit within suicide–terror discourse that Hamas was led to the use of suicide–terror as a tactic of war through their continued radicalisation, meaning that the extremity of their fanaticism produced the need and (or) desire to implement the more radical teachings of Islam as espoused by ideologues like the Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb.

Qutb did not develop the Islamic concept of *shahada* (death in the path of Allah) into the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. Qutb did epitimise *shahada* as martyrdom, but not as suicide. That is, not as intentional and (or) planned death. The furthest Qutb's version of *shahada* went is to call for high-risk activism. Hamas developed the concept of *shahada* as suicide out of contact with Hezbollah in Lebanon after it had been used there by secular and radical Islamic entities. It had to be learned. Evidence has shown that every militant group that has produced suicide–terror—from Hezbollah to the Tamil Tigers—have had direct or indirect contact with post-Revolutionary Iran as a means of learning how to actualise it in their respective communities (see Chapter 5).

People who have maintained a relationship with conservative Islam are largely—but not wholly—immune from involvement in acts of suicide–terror. Conservative religious tenets and an adherence to traditional ways of life, protects the adherent from accepting strange new ideas. Indeed, Osama bin Laden preferred recruits to al Qaeda, who had no religion, so he could socialise them in the Jihadist way of "jihad" and "martyrdom". The marginalisation of religion left the way open for all manner of radical cults, only some

of which are Jihadist. The current surge of people returning to religion is complicated by the absence of knowledge about what to expect, leaving the way open for people to fall into Jihadist groups without intention. Others simply gravitate towards these groups out of a sense of frustration or socialised hatred, knowing to expect extremism and violence. They no doubt, initially find themselves immune to the idea of suicide–martyrdom.

Chapter 5 describes the genesis of suicide–terror in Iran during the Revolution and the Iran–Iraq war years, and traces the export of the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines from Iran to Hezbollah and other international organisations, including the Buddhist–Marxist Tamil Tigers (LTTE).

Chapter 5

The Genesis of Jihadist Suicide

Establishing the genesis of the suicide–terror phenomenon enables the act to be demystified. Knowing how and where it started facilitates study of the circumstances that produced it. This is not an attempt to make a case for absolute uniformity among the militant groups that use this tactic. They are all distinct. Establishing the source allows us to tease out the commonalities. This is possible because the phenomenon is new. If the source can be located, then we can better appreciate what changes occurred in that societal group to facilitate it. We speak constantly of the decision to use this tactic, but it is incorrect to assume that militant groups knew immediately how to do it. Socialisation, indoctrination, and brainwashing tactics have had to be experienced.

The initiator was Khomeini. He created a yearning for death during the Iran–Iraq war years (1980–1988) that was pathological. White (n.d.) placed the number of war dead at 700 thousand. Resistance to the claim that Iran was the birthplace of Jihadist Suicide comes in two forms: first, the human-wave attacks carried out by the *Basij* do not resemble suicide bombing because they did not die by their own hands; second, because murder was not their intent. This is an illusion: it can be demonstrated that the ideology that produced the *Basij* also produced the suicide bomber. Before addressing these matters we must note that there is considerable resistance to the idea that today's suicide–terror phenomenon admits of any causal coherence whatsoever.

Bloom (2009, p.388) argued that because the use of suicide–terror is so widespread—across a diversity of arenas and populations, with an ever-growing range of domestic, political, religious, and ideational spectrums—the possibility of uncovering a universal causal statement appears improbable, perhaps impossible. Moghadam (2008) argued that the kind of globalised suicide–terror that al Qaeda produces is different from that of localised organisations like Hamas. The causes of the disputes are different, there are ideological differences, and their *modus operandi* are fundamentally different. Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005) contended that differentiated ideologies cannot show a causal link. Despite his substantial understanding of the mechanisms that produced Jihadist Suicide in Iran, he doubted that it was responsible for the spread of the behaviour to groups like Hamas and al Qaeda. The latter developed a "fundamentally different form of martyrdom" to religious-nationalist groups. His view is that "the subjectivity that inspires its actors and the form taken by its hatred of the world are fundamentally different" (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.2).

These analysts are correct insofar as the goals and the audience they wish to influence are different. But it remains clear that the "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines that are used by all terrorist groups are essentially the same. The suicide–martyrdom doctrine is concerned with the persuasion to self-annihilation. This is distinct from "the form of hatred" held by each of the parties. But even in this respect, the justification for murder is always based on the premise of a battle between good and evil. The point overlooked in the above arguments is that Jihadist ideology does not replace an existing ideology altogether. Rather, it overlays it. In this way it is like a cancer that feeds on healthy tissue while keeping the host organism alive. Indeed, the way the suicide–

martyrdom doctrine is made relevant is by its accretion to, and disfiguration and transformation of, established meaningful and emotive symbolic icons. The metaphor of biological contamination suits a description of Jihadism well because it highlights how it can spread from culture to culture, without discrimination as to race or creed, in the way of a virus. In reality, it is not biological at all but an act of social engineering.

The Jihadist doctrine can best be described as a cultural transformation. The traditions—and in particular, death meanings—within the cultures that have taken up suicide–terror attacks acted as a hindrance to the establishment of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. Jihadist ideology is anathema to well-established values and beliefs; these meanings had to change before the phenomenon could take hold. This chapter casts some light on the birth of Jihadism as a cultural transformation that had its genesis in wartime Iran (1980–1988) and then spread to other conflicts. This "contagion" occurred through direct contact with Iran or, its proxy, Hezbollah in Lebanon. The evidence shows that all major terrorist groups today had some form of contact with the primary agents—despite bitter sectarian conflict between them.

Iran as the Birthplace of Jihadism

Iran appears an unlikely birthplace for Jihadism. It is not well known for carrying out suicide bombings. Analysts have long assumed that suicide–terror had its beginning in Lebanon with the militant Shi'i Lebanese Muslim organisation, Hezbollah (the Party of God), in 1983. The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), now reportedly defeated, were once touted as the "leaders" in suicide bombing because they had carried out most of the attacks. This "record" has been eclipsed by suicide attacks since the start of the

Iraq war (2003 to at least 2011). Al Qaeda has claimed the most lives in these operations, the suicide–terrorists *par excellence*. The Sunni and secular groups in the Palestinian Territories are the most forthright in their use of suicide–terror.

Iran appears to be only recently affected by such bombings. Three suicide bombings occurred there between 2009 and 2011: two occurred in Sistan-Baluchistan province on 18 October 2009 and 16 December 2010; another occurred at a mosque in Zahedan on 20 June 2010. All three were against Shi'i targets, claimed by the *Jundollah*, a Sunni separatist organisation. The official Iranian position is that these bombings were the work of the United States, Britain, and Israel (Tait, 2009; Haaretz, 2010; Black and Dehghan, 2010). The official position is also that *Jundollah* may have been trained by Sunni Iraqis, or perhaps even by insurgents from Pakistan. The allegation is that only external interference could have facilitated these attacks. This is a view that was taken by Alfoneh (2007) regarding the popular rise of suicide brigades among the Shi'i in Iran since the early 2000s.

Alfoneh (2007) dates the formation of these brigades from 2004. He doubts that they will ever carry out a suicide bombing, despite the proliferation of suicide units from different organisations and the high number of volunteers, alleged to be in excess of 40 thousand. Quoting one government official, Alfoneh (2007) stated that if Iran wanted to deploy suicide attackers they would keep them a secret: the fact that there had been public announcements by official, semi-official, and non-government organisations of the establishment of suicide units meant that they were for propaganda purposes only. He concluded that the suicide units were most likely a means of deterring Israel and the United States from attacking Iran's nuclear facilities, and as a means of repressing

internal opposition to the hard-line regime. This is a valid assessment, particularly given that the threat of a new wave of suicide–terror attacks is itself a form of psychological warfare. The number of volunteers cannot be confirmed, and it could well be that this figure has been inflated to maximise the effect of this propaganda. But Alfoneh goes too far in dismissing the presence of suicide units altogether.

Alfoneh (2007) bases this conclusion on the lack of evidence of the establishment of government training camps, and of any external terror groups supporting the internal organisations, like Hamas, the Lebanese Hezbollah, or al Qaeda who could offer training. He places too much emphasis on training camps. Their need in present-day Iran is minor, at best. Often we hear mention of training camps in Afghanistan, Gaza, Pakistan, and Lebanon. Sometimes they are involved in conventional military training; sometimes they train operatives in explosives; sometimes—we can imagine, especially given the high level of coordination involved in carrying out a bombing—they would give training in logistics and operations. But the training of suicide bombers is psychological—to prepare them for steadfast completion of a mission that, if successful, would cost their lives.

Here we are talking about indoctrination[18] that can be carried out in quiet seclusion rather than in the wide-open spaces of a military training camp. Curiously, Alfoneh (2007) foreshadowed this position in quoting Hussein Allah Karam, a member of Iran's

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[18] Many analysts argue that indoctrination is not a factor in suicide missions (Pape, 2003; 2005). This is a misapprehension that stems from the idea that indoctrination is something that happens within cults, and that does not belong to the 'real' world that is taken to be without indoctrination. Further discussion appears in later chapters.

Ansar-e Hezbollah, in stating that government permission to set up training camps is not required, since the bombers do not need weapons training. But not even clandestine cells, organised to indoctrinate would-be suicide bombers, are required in present-day Iran. The psychological work has already been done. In Iran, the disposition necessary to participate in planned self-annihilation for a religious or nationalist cause is already well established. That disposition is synonymous with the disposition necessary to explode oneself purposefully on a landmine. This was a practice of the Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988). Boy-soldiers were sent to the frontline to die by exploding landmines in the open field[19]. The purpose was to protect the advancing Iranian army.

If we ask how this situation could be logically possible, thoughts turn to the message given to the child that his life was worth less than that of the trained soldier. In truth, this was not the message they were given: they were led to believe that their death could only occur if Allah recognised their *special merit*, thereby proving that they were more important in the eyes of god—in the eyes of the nation—than the entire army. This indoctrination happened in the first instance in military-style training camps where discipline was harsh and rewards were few. But this configuration became hardly necessary: by means of social engineering orchestrated by Khomeini, it became a cultural norm.

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[19] There is evidence that the *Basiji* were not unanimous in their desire to seek death. One eye-witness account recorded the use of rope to form a "chain-gang" in order to prevent youth from fleeing the battlefield. It is popular to assert that they were willing to risk death, and did not seek death. However, the statistical information shows that death was almost certain (see Reuter, [2002] 2004), mitigating the claim that participation in a human-wave attack was seen by the youth as merely a risk. Moreover, the evidence from Varzi (2002) and Reuter ([2002] 2004) shows that it was, at the very least, popular to voice the desire to seek death.

This hypothesis is argued at length in the following chapters. The situation echoes the famous words in October 1944 of Vice Admiral Onishi, who was asked how he convinced his pilots to sacrifice their lives in Kamikaze attacks. He replied: "The decision to adopt organized suicide tactics had been made in a matter of minutes, though the psychological groundwork had been laid during many centuries" (cited in Taylor and Ryan, 1988, p.103; Sandilands, 2004, p.3). Self-annihilation for the Japanese pilot was enabled by cultural norms that ensured it. In Iran, a cultural transformation had to occur first. This happened during the 1980s. It was not centuries old, but it was just as effective. The rush during the last half decade of ordinary Iranians to lodge application forms for the chance to become a suicide bomber is as a result of the cultural norms that now endorse it.

It should be mentioned that the *Jundollah*—who have carried out three suicide bombings against government and Shi'a targets in Iran—were privy to the cultural transformation that Khomeini orchestrated. As Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005, p.70) explained, during the height of the war "[suicide]–martyrdom was everywhere", meaning within every socio-economic group and every religious denomination.

From Tradition to Martyrdom

Religious scholar Ninian Smart (1998, p.79) contends that throughout history man has created and changed traditions: "The only thing perhaps that we can change is the past and we do it all the time". When we are aware that people are *unaware* of the past we can change tradition: "If you can assume that what is passed on downward through the generations is forgotten, you can shape it as you want" (Smart, 1998, p.79). We are not

living in a time particularly dominated by de-traditionalisation; “rather we are as busy as ever retraditionalizing” (Smart, 1998, p.86). Normally we would think of this in terms of small changes over time. Perhaps some cultural icon is transposed over the years from a religious symbol to a secular icon. In Smart’s (1998) analysis, they are noteworthy because—for the most part—people simply do not notice the change. Hence, it is commonly assumed that tradition is set in stone—very much in the way that Huntington (1993; 1996) argued. Not only is tradition not set in stone—as Smart argued—but during different epochs in history, change has occurred so rapidly that very few could be unaware of it.

It is argued here that the current suicide–terror phenomenon occurred through a re-traditionalisation resulting in cultural change. It occurred so rapidly that it did not go unnoticed within Iran, or by the outside observer. The extensive cultural changes in Iran post-Revolution prompted Karen Armstrong (2004, p.45) to write: “Khomeini’s revolutionary exegesis overturned centuries of the most sacred Shi’a traditions, and was as shocking for Muslims as the prospect of the Pope abolishing the Mass would be for Catholics”. Roxanne Varzi (2002), an Iranian who migrated to the United States, also noticed on a study visit that the fabric of Iranian society had changed irreparably. In eloquent prose, reminiscent of her beloved Sufi poetry, Varzi (2002) wrote about the need following the Revolution for some *birds* to fly West, and some *birds* to fly East, while others were shot dead where they stood, or hung in Tehran’s infamous Evin Prison—and not merely for the reason of ridding society of the old guard. It was for the purpose of making the world anew, much in the way that the French Revolution dealt with those who stood in the way of their “brave new world”.

Analysts noted that Khomeini was not true to his intentions when he returned to Iran in 1979. They remarked that he claimed to be taking Iran back to the beginnings of its traditions (Armstrong, 2004; Kepel, 2004; Mamdani, 2005; Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005), but as Reuter ([2002] 2004, p.40) pointed out, upon his return, "the new constitution reflected anything but a return to tradition". The new constitution marginalised everything beneath a superior and burdening network of Islamic institutions that were less liberal in their outcomes than were those of Mohammad's empire. Khomeini declared himself Supreme Leader, claiming a position of power and authority that eclipsed that of the now defunct title of Caliph. Indeed, Reuter declared ([2002] 2004, p.40, emphasis added): "The 1979 constitutions that laid out this new order represented a *parallel universe* unique in the history of the world".

This second universe was not confined to constitutional matters, but involved substantial cultural change. Khomeini had once been a supporter of Ali Shari'ati (1933–1977), a sociologist with a passion for revolution, Marxism, and Third Worldism. He is the ideologue responsible for a substantial proportion of the current suicide–martyrdom doctrine. Khomeini's rhetorical speech reflected that of Shari'ati's speeches and writings, but Khomeini eventually turned against Shari'ati. According to Milani (2010), Khomeini had denounced Shari'ati's lectures at the Islamic Institute, *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*, in Tehran. It is widely held that Shari'ati's eventual demise resulted from the popularity of his ideological discourse. Allegedly dying of a heart attack in 1977 at the age of 43, only three weeks after his voluntary exile in London, conspiracy theories suggest that he was either assassinated by the Shah's secret police or by Islamic hardliners connected to Khomeini who were equally afraid of his growing popularity.

Shari'ati conceptualised the current "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines that form the basis of Jihadism. His objective was to bring about cultural change in Iran. There is no evidence that he ever intended it to become global. He began by propagating his ideas among the intellectually and politically astute, with the intention of—in his words—forming a "new religion", but in effect, creating a cultural transformation. He started this in the Revolutionary years, but it did not become a cultural norm until Khomeini took supreme control of the state's institutions, when he monopolised the bureaucratic apparatus charged with the propagation and dissemination of ideas.

Shari'ati envisaged this. He recognised two stages involved in the adoption of the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines. The first is best described as the birth of an ideal—as all revolutionary thought must begin. In his conceptualisation, it was born of righteousness, zeal, and passion; but its concepts were obscure and alien. It enjoyed currency in the intellectual fringe, though ideological rigour was less important than fanatical enthusiasm for recreating the world in accordance with the utopian dream. They were conscientious objectors who guarded against self-destruction while enticing the newly initiated to their deaths. It was an historic period marked by the dubious volunteerism of the martyr. At this stage, indoctrination was necessary. In the second epoch—according to Shari'ati—this need would be obfuscated because it became "tradition" or what he called "mores and folkways" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.89).

The second epoch—the institutionalised stage—is vastly different. In Shari'ati's words: "In its institutionalised stage, [it] is a social organization and a bureaucracy" that is defined by the "protecting and freezing of principles" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.89). He wrote, "at this point an ideology, religious or nonreligious, is no longer an ideology; it is a

tradition which is not consciously chosen by the individual" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.89). Political suicide was by now an institution that permeated the fabric of society, seemingly owned by no one individual but is a facet of the collective consciousness. It has become their culture. This is the culture from which Alfoneh (2007) recognised the sudden establishment of suicide brigades: not as a new phenomenon, but as the revival of an old one that had lain dormant for a decade or so since the end of the Iran–Iraq war when martyrdom was discouraged. Established in the war years, it was not difficult to revive.

Gellner (1988, cited in Salzman, 2008, p.9) noted: "Men and societies frequently treat the institutions and assumptions by which they live as absolute, self-evident, and given". No doubt the generation of the *Basij*—the young paramilitary irregulars that happily[20] marched to their deaths in the human wave attacks of the Iran–Iraq war—thought that the beliefs that they held were substantiated by a timeless grace. This is that the perception that the "truth" is always the truth, whether newly discovered or benefiting from some longevity. Shari'ati had no doubts as to how to create this phenomenon in the minds of the young. And as Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005) noted, Khomeini deployed Shari'ati's concepts and mechanisms with outstanding success. He contended that "from the year 1979 to the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989—the phenomenon of martyrdom developed with an intensity that had never been known

[20] Evidence suggests that most of the *Basij* voluntarily marched into "battle". But some reports of these attacks claim that rows of young men and boys were roped together in lines of 20 to guard against desertion.

in Iranian history in general and in the history of Islam in particular ... martyrdom was everywhere" (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.70).

Khomeini deployed Jihadist Suicide for the reason of practical necessity. Its catalyst was Iraq's invasion of Iran in the months following the success of the Iranian Revolution. Iraq's invasion was opportunistic, taking advantage of the turmoil in post-Revolutionary Iran. He argued that when Iraq invaded in September 1980, the army was weak from the purges in the military of officers loyal to the Shah, and there was no standing army to speak of. Abrahamian (1993) argued that Khomeini faced a challenge that had the potential to overthrow his position before it had even had the chance to be realised. He needed to send the fear of God through the invading Iraqi army by producing a "wall" of mostly unarmed Iranians, fiercely prepared to die in "holy battle" in defence of the nation. Reuter ([2002] 2004, p.44) argued that "the Khomeini regime did what it could to persuade the people that the best thing that could possibly happen to them would be to die fighting the eternal Sunni enemy".

Khomeini saw the war as a blessing (Abrahamian, 1993). The post-Revolutionary period had caused considerable social disharmony. In Hegelian terms, war has a means of shaking to the rafters those things that separate and isolate the individual during times of peace. Although we could not speak of the time directly following the Revolution as a time of peace—the summary executions of the old guard and any form of opposition to the new regime could be likened to the Bloody Terror of Revolutionary France—the Iraqi invasion still had the effect of raising the spirit of the nation in solidarity against the new threat. A high degree of social solidarity, together with a monopoly on the propagation and dissemination of ideas, were essential in turning the

once-bizarre idea of planned self-annihilation for the religious nation into a cultural norm.

Khomeini was not overly concerned about the Iraqi invasion and noted that Khomeini "described the war as a 'piece of good fortune' and a 'gift from Heaven'" (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.42). The enemy needed to be defeated and the quickly fragmenting Islamic Republic needed pulling back together. What better way than to resurrect the legend of Karbala in the present? "Khomeini thus became Imam Hussein, and the Iranian people were cast in the role of the proverbial seventy-two loyal followers, fully prepared to die" (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.43). This was a re-traditionalisation of the myth of Hussein.

Martyrdom was anathema to Shi'a tradition. It was not so long ago that the idea of voluntary units of *estesh-hadiyun* (martyrdom-seekers) in Iran would have been improbable. Gilles Kepel (2004, p.34) noted that Islamic Shi'ism—the main religion of Iran—had a proclivity to martyrdom arising out of reverence for Imam Hussein, 'the prince of martyrs', who died in battle at Karbala in 680 CE defending Muhammad's bloodline as the true rulers of the Muslim people. It was this legendary battle that finally divided Muslims into the Sunni and Shi'ite sects. Despite Shi'a reverence for Hussein's martyrdom, the Shia cultural tradition did not advocate martyrdom but, rather, virtue through patience and suffering (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.41). The ritual of *Ashura*, which commemorates Hussein's martyrdom, is traditionally a time for mourning, sorrow, and respect. The tradition of quietism—to wait, pray, and hope—in Shi'ism is also related to the Twelfth Imam, Mahdi, who is said not to have died, but was hidden by Allah until such time that he will emerge to bring peace and justice to the world. A tremendous

effort went into re-traditionalising in Iran post-Revolution. As already mentioned, this could not have happened without Khomeini's absolute authority over, and use of, the bureaucratic apparatus, including the media and the school curriculum.

The need to re-traditionalise in all other cultures that eventually took up suicide–terror attacks was also necessary in bringing about mass acceptance of this doctrine. The significant concept and method of re-traditionalisation was what Khomeini—and by extension, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—exported to the world. The export of Jihadism was not simply the accretion of foreign cultural mores—like the re-traditionalisation of the martyrdom of Hussein—onto other cultures; it was the export through instruction of how to go about completing their own re-traditionalising. The Shi'ite Lebanese Hezbollah—who also revered Hussein—were free to accept the re-traditionalisation of Hussein verbatim. But for the Sunni Palestinians, the re-traditionalisation of the legend of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam would make an excellent substitution[21]. Al-Qassam was a Syrian militant who fled to Mandate Palestine in the 1930s with a warrant on his head for insurgency against the French. He died in a gun battle with British forces in November 1935. As Addullah Schleifer (1993) noted, al-Qassam—prior to the re-traditionalisation of his legend—was revered as a symbol of "resistance" and not martyrdom. The method of re-traditionalising and the form it took

[21] The legend of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam had presence in the political and military struggle against Zionism from an early time. According to Mishal and Sela (2000), al-Qassam headed the Haifa branch of the Muslim Brotherhood prior to his death and was active in the assassination of Jews and British officials in Mandate Palestine. They noted that al-Qassam was revered for his self-sacrifice, but also observed that he had no intention of dying, and believed that the battle for Palestine had only just begun (Mishal and Sela, 2000, p.16). This is tantamount to the actual mindset of Hussein at the time of his death in Karbala (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.38). Neither intended to die, but both became icons of planned self-annihilation.

is discussed later in this thesis. What follows here is a repertoire of the available evidence of the spread of Jihadism.

Tracing the Export of Jihadism

Khomeini intended exporting his revolution. Abrahamian (1993, p.32) averred that Khomeini announced his desire to do just this in a speech on 13 April 1988. His greatest asset in the destruction of imperial powers was his army of *shahids* (martyrs). He did not send the willing-to-die to support other battles, but—as mentioned above—sent trainers studied in the art of instilling the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines. It can be speculated that Khomeini did not intend to export it to Sunni insurgents. The timing of suicide–terror attacks by Sunni insurgents, and intelligence reports on contact by these groups with groups already familiar with orchestrating this form of attack, shows that it only happened after Khomeini's death in 1989. Until this time, it had been confined to secular, pro-Syrian and Shi'ite Lebanese, who were deeply subordinate to Tehran; and to the Tamil Tigers, who have never represented a threat to Iran, but were at war with other hated regimes of Tehran—Sri Lanka and India.

There is no conflict among analysts that Iran exported its tactics to Lebanon. Hezbollah is known to have had direct contact with Khomeini's regime before the first suicide attacks in Lebanon in 1983 (Reuter, [2002] 2004; Kean and Hamilton, 2004; Pedahzur, 2005; Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005). By June 1982, Iran had retaken all the land captured by the invading Iraqi army. Iran was now on the offensive, and Khomeini had seen his way clear to send Mohsen Rafiqdost—possibly his most trusted operative—to Lebanon to set up training camps to spread the revolution (Harik, 2007, pp.171–173). Similarly,

Reuter ([2002] 2004) noted that during the early 1980s Khomeini had sent 2 thousand IRGC—of which Rafiqdost was a founding member—to Lebanon. It was the IRGC who recruited and trained the young for death on the Iranian frontline (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.45). More recently, Zalman (n.d.) noted that the IRGC is known to deploy special units for the purpose of paramilitary and terrorist training outside of Iran.

The first of the suicide bombings in Lebanon occurred approximately a year after the establishment of the Baalbek training camps in the Bekaa Valley. Harik (2007) cited reliable sources as claiming that Imad Mughniyah (1962–2008) was responsible for these bombings, which occurred in 1983. They targeted the American embassy in Beirut on 18 April, and the United States and French barracks at Beirut Airport on 23 October, killing over 350 and maiming many more. Mughniyah was a Shi'ite from Southern Lebanon. He is the man responsible for the formation of Hezbollah and its association with Iran in the early 1980s. He was once closely associated with Yasser Arafat in Lebanon and motivated other Lebanese to join Fatah's military training units. He became involved with Rafiqdost following the PLO's exile to Tunisia in 1982 (Harik, 2007). Harik (2007, p.171) wrote, "Mughniyeh turned toward Ayatollah Khomeini's version of political Islam, finally committing himself, along with his partners, to continued actions against the Israelis as Islamic mujahidin". In other words, it was only when Mughniyeh lost the moral and military support of Arafat's secular PLO that he turned to Shi'i Iran for help. If he had not done this, he would not have established the suicide-*mujahedeen*.

The militant interpretation of *mujahedeen* as "holy warrior" confers the idea of soldiers of war. As argued in Chapter 6, there is a vast difference between the common ideal of

the self-sacrifice of a soldier in times of war and the yearning for self-annihilation depicted by the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. Mughniyeh's battalions were trained to fight—not to die like the *Basij*. But this changed with the arrival of Rafiqdost. This was not initially apparent, because the tactics of war had changed. Khomeini's initial idea with the *Basij* was to frighten the Iraqi enemy with a garish display of revolutionary zeal and dedication to dying. He later envisaged better results in Lebanon by targeted attacks that claimed the lives of one or two of the faithful, but killed great numbers of the enemy. One reason was that after only a few years of extensive losses on the frontline in the war with Iraq, Khomeini could see the effects of *martyr inflation*—whereby the social value of martyrdom was devalued by the commonality of it—causing it to lose its appeal. Martyrdom as practised during the Iran–Iraq war could not be sustained and, according to Abrahamian (1993), this was a decisive factor in Khomeini's truce with Saddam Hussein.

There is evidence that the IRGC also trained the LTTE. The latter carried out its first suicide bombing on 5 July 1987, killing 40 troops at the Nelliyady army camp in the north of Sri Lanka. The LTTE was a separatist-secular organisation (sometimes described as Leninist or Marxist), whose aim was to establish a Tamil homeland in the majority Tamil areas. They had been operating since 1972, carrying out their first (non-suicide) bombing on 17 September 1972. They were not opposed to unremitting violence from their inception; however, the suicide unit of the Black Tigers did not come into operation until 1983 (Bhatti, 2008). Yoram Schweitzer (2000) reported that between July 1987 and February 2000, the group carried out 168 suicide attacks, killing and maiming thousands. He noted that the Black Panthers were different from the

mujahedeen of Hezbollah in that the suicide unit comprised men and women, and they carried a cyanide capsule around their necks as a sign of their commitment to dying.

Meytal Grimland, Alan Apter, and Ad Kerkhof (2006) noted that despite differences in appearance (and ideology), the LTTE were inspired by Hezbollah. They contended: "The LTTE adopted the tactics it used to kill the heads of state of Sri Lanka and India from the Hezbollah in Lebanon, the first nonreligious group to engage in what we define as modern suicide bombing" (Grimland et al., 2006, p.108). The *9/11 Commission Report* (2004) released by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States also cited evidence of direct contact between LTTE operatives and Hezbollah in Lebanon for the purpose of training for suicide-bombing attacks.

Kepel (2004, p.34) noted that the spread of the suicide–terror phenomenon went beyond Hezbollah to other arenas in the Arab world. He referred to bombers as "human weapons" and noted that: "The tactics inaugurated by revolutionary Iran were exported to the Arab world via extremist Lebanese Shiite organizations, inspired by the imam Khomeini" (Kepel, 2004, p.34). Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005, p.48) also noted the spread of the suicide–terror phenomenon from Shi'ite Hezbollah to Sunni factions such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas.

As noted above, the spread from Shi'ite Islam to Sunni and secular Arab militants did not occur until after Khomeini's death. This may have been coincidental, but it can be speculated that Khomeini did not wish for something that he considered a powerful asset—the ability to produce death squads—to be known to his long-time enemy. For Khomeini, the Sunni were as satanic as the United States and Israel. It was noted earlier

that Khomeini represented the war with Iraq as a battle against the eternal Sunni enemy. For this reason, there is lingering doubt among analysts that the suicide–terror phenomenon spread from the Shi'ite to the Sunni world (Moghadam, 2008).

The general feeling is that the Sunnis developed the art of suicide bombing on their own. Nasra Hassan (2006, p.30) claimed that the Palestinians had debated whether to use suicide–terror tactics for six years, from the beginning of the first *intifada* in 1987, eventually resulting in the first suicide bombing in 1993. She gives no evidence for this. She contended that the debate went on at a high level between operatives in Gaza, the West Bank, and the Diaspora, but the decision was finally settled in accordance with public pressure. This analysis is not consistent with what is known about the start of suicide–terror attacks in Israel. The Palestinians were initially shocked and disapproving at the use of this tactic. They had resisted for some seven years until Arafat publicly condoned it in 2000.

The proposition that the Sunni's developed the tactic on their own is particularly the case with al Qaeda[22] who have eclipsed their mentors—Hezbollah—in innovation and reach. With an organisational capacity to perpetrate suicide–terror attacks of spectacular nature—such as the 9/11 attacks—they appear as the mentor, rather than as the pupil. MacVicar (2009) explained why al Qaeda continues to capture the attention of the world when it comes to innovation and tenacity. "Al Qaeda has developed a new tactic that allows suicide bombers to breach even the tightest security" (MacVicar, 2009, n.p.).

[22] Al Qaeda, including bin Laden, as well as the Afghani Taliban, practise a distinct form of Sunni Islam known as *Wahhabism*. *Wahhabis* are said to be intolerant of all other sects within Islam, including the Sunnis.

Giving details of the attempted assassination in August 2009 of Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, head of Saudi Arabia's counter-terrorism operations, MacVicar (2009, n.p.) described how an al Qaeda operative inserted "a pound of high explosives, plus a detonator … in his rectum" and "avoided detection by two sets of airport security including metal detectors and palace security". He blew himself up in the prince's palace causing no other fatalities, but the incident sent shock waves through the security industry. Morgenstern and Falk (2009, p.290) summed up the situation:

> Regardless of ideology, religion, language, or purpose, militant groups worldwide will continue to learn from each other and adopt new tactics as they seek to achieve the upper hand. While suicide bombing may be a decades-old phenomenon, the ingenuity applied by terrorist groups has very much added new life to the tactic.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with the audacity of al Qaeda and to consider them a major threat. But it is quite incorrect to suggest that they hold the key to understanding Jihadism. The cloak of mystery that they seem to hide behind reveals no further understanding of the suicide–terror phenomenon once removed. They are well financed, well organised, technologically advanced, and capable of drawing wide-ranging popular support. This has had the effect of eclipsing the importance of Hezbollah and their crucial role as Iran's proxy in the dissemination of the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines. Tactical innovation and a highly coordinated command structure have not replaced the dual Jihadist doctrine that still works effectively to train the *mujahedeen* for suicide missions. The special nature of sectarianism in the Arab world explains how the spread was possible.

Sectarianism and the Spread to Sunni and Secular Militants

Sectarianism occurs when disparate groups that rigidly adhere to a set of religious or political doctrines—intolerant of each other's views—succumb to social, political, and even military conflict. Political doctrines can be as diverse as are Marxism, capitalism, socialism, and feminism. Religious sectarianism occurs between Christianity and Islam, or between Catholics and Protestants, and between Islamic Sunnis and Shi'ites of the Middle East. We observe from the past and in the present that sectarian violence within a religion has the potential to be long and bloody. It is not unheard of for disparate groups to come together in political and (or) military cooperation against a common enemy. In practice, this ideal often fails, or one can discern an uneasy or tenuous truce. It is not uncommon for these groups to explode into sectarian violence once the perceived enemy has been defeated, or when political advantage presents itself, or sometimes simply through petty jealousy.

Salzman (2008) maintains that in the Arab world a coming together against a common enemy is part of tradition. There is no contradiction in Sunni and Shi'ite groups banding together in opposition to the West and Israel. He argues that the Arab tribal tradition—which is still prevalent today in the suburbs as well as in the tribal lands (Salzman, 2008, pp.97–100)—is of clan loyalty in matters of defence and offence. It is governed by what he termed "balanced opposition" (Salzman, 2008, pp.11–12). This is an innovation of the Arab world that is strikingly simple, but substantially effective. Salzman (2008, p.11) asserts that it is "decentralised … democratic … egalitarian … [and] to a substantial degree effective, in that balanced opposition often successfully deters attack by threatening reprisal".

> In the tribal framework, the conception 'my group, right or wrong' does not exist, because the question of whether 'my group' is right or wrong does not come up. Allegiance is to 'my group,' period, full stop. Most important, 'my group' is defined by and always stands against 'the other'. An overarching, universalistic inclusive constitution is not possible. Islam is not a constant referent, but rather, like every level of tribal political organization, is contingent. That is, people act politically as Muslims only when in opposition to infidels. Among Muslims, people will mobilize on a sectarian basis, as Sunni vs. Shi'a. Among Sunni, people will mobilize as the Karim tribe vs. the Mahmud tribe; within the Karim tribe, people will mobilize according to whom they find themselves in opposition to: tribal section vs. tribal section, major lineage vs. major lineage, and so on (Salzman, 2008, pp.159–160).

Collusion between Shi'ite and Sunni in opposition to the West, which always includes Israel, does occur. It is incorrect to think that widespread sectarian violence between these groups precludes cooperation. Judith Miller (1994, pp.123–142) reported collusion between two of the most influential and powerful men in radical Islam: Hassan Abdallah al Turabi, a Sunni of Sudan, and Sheikh Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah[23], a Shi'ite of Lebanon. "Each leads a movement dedicated to the destruction of social and political order in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries with pro-Western regimes" (Miller, 1994, p.126). She noted: "On the surface, Fadlallah and Turabi would seem to have little in common" but they admit to holding respect for each other, and—although they have never met—they often correspond (Miller, 1994, p.127).

[23] Fadlallah died of natural causes in Lebanon on 4 July 2010.

Al Turabi is a self-professed “fundamentalist” who has lobbied strongly for cooperation and collaboration in the fight against the *infidel*. In a speech in Madrid in 1994, al Turabi said this about sectarianism:

> Modern Islamic movements don’t believe in schools of jurisprudence, they don’t define themselves as Shia, or Sunna, or of this Sufi order or that Sufi order. They recognise this as quite a heritage and they can learn a lot from such history. They don’t want to break with history altogether, but they want to go forward and develop (al Turabi, 1994, n.p.).

The US State Department was not taken in by what al Turabi meant by this somewhat cryptic message. Their intelligence reports stated that he was influential in forming an alliance between the Shi’a Islamic Republic and al Qaeda. He had acted as a mentor for bin Laden since at least 1989 and had persuaded him to set up a base in the Sudan. In late 1991 or 1992, he set up meetings in the Sudan between bin Laden and Iranian operatives who agreed to provide al Qaeda with training in explosives:

> Not long afterward, senior al Qaeda operatives and trainers traveled to Iran to receive training in explosives. In the fall of 1993, another such delegation went to the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon for further training in explosives as well as in intelligence and security. Bin Ladin reportedly showed particular interest in learning how to use truck bombs such as the one that had killed 241 U.S. Marines in Lebanon in 1983. The relationship between al Qaeda and Iran demonstrated that Sunni–Shia divisions did not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to cooperation in terrorist operations. … al Qaeda contacts with Iran continued in ensuing years (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 2004[24], p.78).

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[24] References contained in this report were cited as: Intelligence report, Establishment of a Tripartite Agreement Among Usama Bin Ladin, Iran, and the NIF, Jan. 31, 1997; Intelligence report, Cooperation Among Usama Bin

It is suspected that al Qaeda carried out its first truck bombing on 29 December 1992 in coordinated attacks in Aden and Yemen. This was not a suicide attack. Bin Laden claimed responsibility, but no proof emerged to confirm this. The first truck bombing that was linked definitively to bin Laden was the World Trade Centre bombing of 26 February 1993—but this too was not a suicide attack. Al Qaeda did not carry out a suicide bombing until 7 August 1998 with the coordinated bombings of the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Tanzania, killing more than 200 people and injuring more than 5,000 (Lough, 2008).

These operations were synonymous with attacks perpetrated by Hezbollah and the evidence suggests that al Qaeda were able to bring about suicide–terror attacks from their training with Hezbollah. The question we may ask is why al Qaeda waited so long—from induction in Lebanon in 1993 to 1998—to carry out a suicide bombing? But the evidence remains that al Qaeda did not carry out so much as a truck bombing—better known as a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosion Device (VBIED)—until they engaged Hezbollah for instruction on how to do this.

This is evident with suicide bombing in Israel. Initially, the attacks were not claimed by any militant group. Christian and Muslim Arab cultures could not tolerate the use of their loved ones for what amounted to "collateral damage". In the common interpretation of this concept, the bomber was seen as a tragic victim of the conflict—

Ladin's Islamic Army, Iran, and the NIF, January 31 1997; FBI report of investigation, interview of Fadl, November 10, 1996; trial testimony of Fadl, United States v. bin Laden, February 6, 2001 (transcript pp. 290–293); FBI report of investigation, interview of confidential source, September 16, 1999.

and not even a conflict that all Palestinians supported[25]. In time, it emerged that Hamas and the PIJ claimed responsibility either jointly or severally. The timing of events and evidence available shows that the PIJ and Hamas had contact with Hezbollah prior to their use of suicide bombing in Israel. In 1991, Israel deported some 400 members of the PIJ and Hamas to Lebanon. Hezbollah is reported to have taken the deportees under their wing, giving them training in suicide attacks. In 1992, under international pressure, Israel allowed the deportees back into the Palestinian Territories. One year later, the first suicide bombing occurred in Israel.

Apart from the timing of events and the documented contact between the PIJ and Hamas and Hezbollah, the way the Palestinians developed into a culture of suicide–martyrdom is reminiscent of what occurred in Iran. Consistent with Shari'ati's first epoch, the PIJ and Hamas encouraged the vulnerable away from their friends and family to seclusion—much in the same way that the IRGC enticed the *Basij* away from their families to the seclusion of the training camps. This was necessary because common sentiments—traditional to both cultures—ensured the protection of their communities from the suggestion of deliberate self-annihilation.

In the second epoch, Hamas—through its extensive network of institutions—used its mandate over these institutions to instil the suicide–martyrdom doctrine in the manner of Khomeini. But Hamas were hindered by the fact that they did not hold a monopoly on the dissemination of ideas, beliefs, and values in the community. Arafat and his

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[25] Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal (2003), for instance, argued that many prosperous Palestinians were opposed to the first *intifada* on the grounds that it would damage them economically.

Fatah Party were also busy deploying their propaganda. Much of this was in opposition to Hamas whom they considered a threat to their international standing and their internal power. Like all opposing political parties, they did not hesitate to condemn the other, including the discrediting of their policies. This had the effect of creating a buffer to widespread support for suicide–martyrdom.

There were reasons why Arafat had not authorised suicide–terror attacks until the year 2000. He did not want to lose his international standing as a peace partner in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Further, in the early years he did not know how to facilitate that technique. Fatah had not been trained by Hezbollah in the way that of PIJ and Hamas had. He had fled to Tunisia from Lebanon by the time Rafiqdost had arrived. But the second epoch of Shari'ati's new religion ensured that the suicide–martyrdom doctrine that the Hamas bureaucracy instantiated among the faithful could not remain opaque to the greater society. Arafat, by now, knew how to create his own league of suicide–martyrs. He simply had to follow Hamas's formula, which amounted to a specific doctrinal dissemination. He authorised the first suicide bombing of the newly created al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade on 22 December of 2000.

Chechnya, as at 2005, had not yet passed into the second stage of *martyropathy*, that is, as an institutionalised phenomenon but remained in the first epoch as an activity confined to closed cells. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2005) interviewed twenty-five year-old Chechen women, Fatima:

> My brother was killed in the last year, he was exploded on a mine. He was only 17 years old. Sometimes I feel such strong hatred of Russians for this war... [But] I will never go to kill civilians, who are not guilty in

> anything. But after the death of my brother I had thoughts about blowing myself up in some checkpoint with some military men ... When I pray, I ask Allah to give me reason and patience not to do it" (cited in Speckhard and Akhmedova, 2005, p.129).

The fact that Fatima prays to Allah to stop her from performing an act of suicide bombing shows that she is not inducted into the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. If she was, she would pray to Allah to recognise her "special merit" and grant her this mission. As argued in Chapter 2, Speckhard and Akhmedova's (2005; 2006) argument that a moment of psychological transition between non-involvement and eager involvement is due to emotional exhaustion or desperation is unconvincing. The transition does not belong to the individual, but to the social milieu. The example of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon demonstrates this.

Close association with a mentor and relative isolation are necessary in induction to suicide–martyrdom. By way of introduction to this argument, Simon Haddad (2004) noted a curious discrepancy between support for suicide–terror among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the native Lebanese. Support for suicide attacks was higher among native Lebanese than among Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. He found a correlation within the Lebanese community between support for suicide attacks and commitment to political Islam. But commitment to political Islam was stronger amongst the Palestinian refugees, indicating that support for suicide attacks should also have been high. Haddad could not explain these findings.

Goleman (1986) cited the work of Field—a researcher in the psychological makeup of terrorists—who in 1982 interviewed children of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian

refugee camps in Lebanon prior to the massacres at those camps, and about a month after the massacres. His explained that:

> When [Field] had tested boys there before the massacre, she found that they resented the military training they were forced to take from the age of eight, and that they were particularly antagonistic toward the members of the Palestine Liberation Organization who gave them the training.
>
> "After the massacre, the boys felt both grief and intense guilt about their earlier feelings of resentment", Dr Fields said. "Psychologically, they somehow felt responsible for what had happened, and felt the only way they could make amends was by taking the place of those who had been killed. They were left with a monomaniacal obsession with revenge" (Goleman, 1986, n.p.).

Like Fatima in Chechnya, they were not inducted to the suicide–martyrdom doctrine and have not to date carried out a suicide–terror attack. What the bitterness of vengeance produced in the Palestinian refugees was a proclivity towards hatred and violence, and not self-annihilation[26], which is anathema to tradition.

Because of their position of marginalisation and ostracism, Palestinian refugees are relatively immune from the cultural transformations that affected many Lebanese. Pre and post-war government policies (FMO, n.d., n.p.), sectarianism (Salzman, 2008, p.177), and a sense of distrust towards the Palestinian refugees led to their ostracism. Julie Peteet (1996, cited in Haddad, 2004, p.348) highlighted the political, social, and economic isolation of the refugees in Lebanon:

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[26] Goldman's (1986) argument is an example of the confusion among analysts about the concept of terror and the concept of suicide–terror.

> Palestinian refugees have been pathologized [by their Lebanese hosts] in a manner reminiscent of turn-of-the-century American hyperbole that immigrants carried tuberculosis. Segregating Palestinians would facilitate normalization of post-war Lebanon with national health restored through the isolation of an infectious presence (Peteet, 1996, cited in Haddad, 2004, p.348).

This may appear to be contradictory to the argument that Hezbollah trained the PIJ and Hamas for suicide–martyrdom between 1991 and 1992, but it can be shown that there was a very different relationship between the PIJ and Hamas and Hezbollah, and the refugees and Hezbollah. Indeed, as Yassine (2010, n.p.) argued, there is today strong distrust between the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the factions in the Territories. It is not possible to understand this discrepancy without knowing something of the history of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the militant factions that sprang up around them.

The refugees arrived in Lebanon in 1948 as a result of the Israeli War of Independence. Forced Migration Online (FMO, n.d., n.p.)[27] noted: "Between 1948–1958, the Palestinian refugees lived in relative harmony with their Lebanese hosts, with some freedom of expression and political activity. … [but] the initial welcoming and tolerant attitude of the Lebanese changed".

> In order to discourage permanent resettlement, the Lebanese government started placing harsh restrictions on the refugees. For example, no housing development was permitted. In 1962, Palestinians were

[27] This website is run by the Refugee Studies Centre in the Oxford Department of International Development at the University of Oxford.

> classified as foreigners and work permits became difficult to obtain. Martial law was imposed on the refugee camps (FMO, n.d., n.p.).

The situation worsened during the 1970s with the arrival from Jordan of Arafat and the PLO. Although weakened and demoralised from the Black September massacres in Jordan, Arafat wasted no time in seeking political power. He did not reconcile with the existing Palestinian factions, but brokered for a political position by giving financial and military support to the Lebanese Left, which angered the Christian Maronites and right-wing parties. After a brief foray with the nascent Hezbollah, he was forced out.

Suleiman (1999, cited in FMO, n.d., n.p.) noted that in 1999 there were about 15 Palestinian militant groups in Lebanon, none of which had contact with Hezbollah. Yassine (2010, n.p.) noted that today, “relations between [Palestinians and the Lebanese] inside Lebanon are still marked by a lack of trust”. The situation was different for the PIJ and Hamas members deported to Lebanon in 1991. Perhaps—in the same way that the LTTE did not represent a threat to Hezbollah or Iran, but could be useful in their homeland—they were trained in the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. The PLO—and by extension Fatah—as well as the Palestinian refugees were not.

Globalised Jihadism: A New Era, but Connected to the Past

As the *Age of Terror* (Taylor, 2008) has drawn on, we have entered the era of globalised *jihad*. Analysts argue that the suicide–murder doctrine has spread through terror networks. The primary idea of this is of a Brotherhood of “fictive kin” (Atran, 2003). Speckhard and Ahkmedova (2006, p.448) noted that it is common for terror groups to instil “a sense of familial ties in order to generate a sense of loyalty and a willingness to

die for one another just as blood relatives often are willing to do so". This phenomenon occurs within closed cells of trusted associates, either in migrant communities, or of militants operating in such places as Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Iraq (Sageman, 2004). It can occur among those who have never met. Analysts have also noted that *Jihadism* can spread by use of the Internet (Weimann, 2004; 2006; Sageman, 2007). Sageman (2007) commented at a Jamestown Foundation seminar that subscription to suicide bombing appears to be spreading by "sound bites"—that is, that the language and symbolism of Jihadist Suicide are already so well known within Jihadist Internet forums that the ideology can be absorbed while sitting at the home computer.

Gabriel Weimann (2004, p.1) contended that "terrorists fight their wars in cyberspace as well as on the ground". She argued that their use of the Internet fulfils eight purposes "ranging from psychological warfare and propaganda to highly instrumental uses such as fundraising, recruitment, data mining, and coordination of action" (Weimann, 2004, p.1). The community of fictive kin engage in pseudo-religious eschatological arguments designed to instil a particular world-view and develop a particular moral outlook and belief system.

Militant Jihadist organisations who engage in cyberterror—which, according to Weimann (2004; 2006) is all of them—are heavily involved in disseminating Jihadist ideology. These networks of fictive kin enjoy currency based fairly closely on the principles of suppressed socialisation, as espoused by Ernest-Charles Lasègue and Jean Pierre Falret (1877) in 'La Folie a Duex ou Folie Communiquèe'. According to their theory, *the madness of one*, a sane individual can persuade another to ill-thoughts through social isolation. The contemporary Internet culture can emulate this practice

without the need for physical isolation: those heavily involved simply cut themselves off psychologically from family, friends, and peers to join the cyber family.

Jerrold Post (1990) and Ehud Sprinzak (1990) agreed that those who become involved in terrorist organisations—either on the ground, or through cyberspace—develop an identity that is inextricably linked to the terrorist ideal. On the ground, it is spread through radical mosques and *madrassas* (Islamic religious schools) where they are also well versed in the pseudo-religious eschatological language of Jihadism. In the *Age of Terror*, primary contact with Iran—or their proxy, Hezbollah—is no longer necessary.

The level of commitment in terror networks—either cyber or home-grown closed cells—is rhetorically high and numerically significant. But as Merari (2010, pp.261–263) pointed out, not many are willing to take the final step and carry out a suicide–terror attack. Some insist that these attacks are not possible without operatives seeking training in camps such as those in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, or the Bekaa Valley. Security agencies closely monitor travel to these destinations for this reason. Merari (2010, p.268) pointed out that current data show that the majority of those participating in suicide–terror are of one of two personality types: dependent–avoidant, and impulsive–unstable. But he cautioned that this data is new and we should wait to see what can be made of it.

Certainly, Durkheim ([1897] 1952) contended that an individual suicide is dependent upon individual suicidal currents. We have seen from Chapter 2 that the demographic uncovered by Pedahzur, Perliger and Weinberg (2003) was the militant's recruitment criteria. The work of Pedahzur and Perliger (2006) did much to reveal this. The

situation may well be that Pedahzur et al. (2003; 2006) revealed the suicidal currents that made Jihadist Suicide possible in the first epoch; and Merari (2010) may well have revealed the disposition necessary for *martyropathy*. I strongly suspect that this is the case. Commitment resides in the level of development of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine within the network, rather than the individual. Within global *jihad* groups, the formula still remains as outlined by Shari'ati of a first epoch of zealous enthusiasm among the politically motivated; and a second, whereby the doctrine has entered the common conscious.

It is not unthinkable that segments of Western society can reach *martyropathy*—where it has become institutionalised. This would have greater opportunity in ethnic enclaves, where the community is relatively immune to external interference, and radicals have significant power and influence. This is what Salib (2003) referred to as *folie à plusieurs* (the madness of many).

PART III :

SUICIDE AND MARTYRDOM

Chapter 6

Jihadist Martyrdom

Who is a martyr? Throughout history and within different societal groups, the criteria for the title of martyr have been idiosyncratic and prone to change. Common themes are traceable from antiquity to the present; they are derived from early Greek, Roman, Judaic, Islamic, and Christian sources. Similarities and differences occur across time and between religious denominations. Here we aim to uncover Jihadist martyrdom in its idiosyncratic form by asking where it diverts from traditional forms of martyrdom, and where it can be seen as similar. Jihadist martyrdom is the personification of suicide. Subjectively we may call the suicide bomber a terrorist, a freedom fighter or a martyr; objectively, he or she is a suicide. It is too easy to get swept up in talk of martyrdom and self-sacrifice and miss what is most important in Jihadist martyrdom. We are apt to miss the point that suicide is the reward of Jihadist martyrdom.

Contemporary Perceptions of Martyrdom

The historian Lacey Baldwin-Smith (2008, p.435) defined martyrdom "in its strictest sense" as "the witnessing unto death of divine truth". Legitimate religions are allowed their martyrs despite some acrimonious debates over the meaning of *divine truth*. The importance of giving the Jihadist Suicide the title of martyr is in the legitimacy it awards the naming group. The respect for what is perceived as Islamic martyrs has largely been held in the West as well as in the Islamic world. This is not universal: in the *age of extremes*—of rising disharmony and intolerance—the possibility that one

man's suicide–terrorist can be another man's hero has become a legitimate dichotomy. The perception of martyrdom has not always been political, but the politicisation of martyrdom—particularly in the current era—has ensured that some of the acts defined as martyrdom in particular social or political settings are seen as demonic in others. This does nothing to lessen the reward of martyrdom, because the right to name a martyr belongs to the in-group, not the out-group.

A martyr is anyone whom a societal group claims to be a martyr. This is not a national understanding of society, but is understood as the perception of a moral collective. Here we need to define what we mean by "society" in order to distinguish between Baldwin-Smith's (2008) implicit interpretation of a society as the entire population of a nation, and my preference for Durkheim's use of the term as *a moral collective*, be it religious, political, or domestic. With liberalisation and globalisation, particularly since the end of the Second World War, nation states struggle to maintain the illusion of a collective moral conscience. In reality, peoples' loyalties can correspond to the national agenda, but they may also cut across this boundary and have greater resonance within the religious, political, and domestic collectives to which they give greater significance, and from where they form their philosophical beliefs and develop their cultural practices. Hence, when we speak of society we speak of the moral collective, which is not necessarily geographically bound.

Van Henten and Avemarie (2002, p.7) stated: "People only become martyrs because others make them so". As one indication of this process, they pointed to the "complicated and time-consuming process" of the Vatican in deciding whether a nominee should be recognised as a martyr. This example indicates how zealously

political elites—such as those in the Catholic Church—guard their particular idiosyncratic conception of martyrdom. Indeed, the symbolic power invested in the image of martyrdom within each societal group has the power to change the course of history, as the philosopher Alfred Whitehead once asserted.

From antiquity, martyrdom stories have been about setting an example for the rest of the population to follow in life and, sometimes, in death. The moral obligation to attain a proper death was summed up by Aristotle: "it is better to live one year nobly than many years commonly". Hence, the martyr is a symbol of righteousness that political elites use to legitimate the established order; while counter-elites—those opposed to the established order—use the symbolic power invested in their martyr to validate their utopian dream (Lasswell, 1950, p.29). The martyr serves to justify the cause, elevating it to a revered position beyond what might be achieved by any other means. Indeed, the martyr becomes synonymous with the cause, intimately intertwined as a symbol of truth, justice, valour, and triumph. The martyrs' death is always seen as triumph: their valour in the face of death represents the undying sanctity of the cause. The strength of this puritanical symbolism enables the legitimacy of the cause to recede quietly into the background. The societal group always celebrates the triumph of the cause in greater proportion to the martyr. Whether the societal group is religious or secular, the martyr always takes on the element of the sacred.

The battle to claim a martyr as their own among rival counter-elites in the Palestinian Territories indicates how eagerly sought is such validation. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas often separately claimed responsibility for suicide bombers in Israel (Bloom 2005, p.29), particularly as the practice became publicly acceptable to

Palestinians in the Territories. The death of the bomber served to legitimate their own particular form of ideological utopia and, as Bloom (2005) pointed out, won them greater public support. Bloom argued that during the *al Aqsa intifada* (the second *intifada*, 2000–2005), the social and political worth of the martyr reached such fever pitch that the battle to claim multiple martyrs had turned into an outbidding war. Bloom argued that the dispatch of suicide bombers by Fatah during the *al Aqsa intifada* signalled the dawning of a political reality to Fatah that they would lose popular support if they did not embrace martyrdom. Despite Fatah being a secular party, and despite the modest number of Palestinian Christians still remaining in the Territories, it is significant that Arafat chose to conceptualise the Fatah martyr as an Islamic martyr.

From the Iranian and Palestinian cases it is clear that the distinction between the religious martyr and the secular martyr is largely semantic. The Ayatollah Khomeini spearheaded the Jihadist martyrdom revolution through his use of the bureaucratic apparatus. During the Iranian Revolution, Khomeini was content to see opposition to Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Western-backed Shah of Iran, as a popular uprising. He referred to those killed for the cause as *bicharehha* (unfortunate ones), but raised the status of the war dead during the Iran–Iraq war, less than a year later, to that of *religious* national heroes by adopting the usage of the word *shahid* (martyr). The social philosophy that supported a “nation of *shahids*”, as Khomeini would boast, emanated from the speeches and publications of Ali Shari’ati from the late 1960s.

Shari’ati developed an extensive philosophical repertoire in support of *jihad* as predominately a defensive “holy war” (as opposed to an internal struggle against the self). This was not particularly unique—the Egyptian Sunni ideology, Sayyid Qutb, had

also advocated *jihad* as a defensive holy war. Shari'ati had also advanced "*shahadat*" (martyrdom) as the natural and legitimate act of the Shi'a, despite the Shi'a religious tradition being wholly to the contrary, that is, of quietism and patience for the coming of the twelfth Imam. Shari'ati's philosophy was as much secular as it was religious, borrowing heavily from Western philosophy through the writings of Karl Marx and Franz Fanon.

Whitehead and Abufarha (2008) noted the change in discourse from secular to religious terms among Palestinian militants. The more secular *fida'i* (sacrificer) was popular prior to the first *intifada* when suicide missions were referred to as *a'maliyat fida'iyah* (self-sacrifice operations). They noted that the "*shahid* (martyr) became the icon of the first *intifada* (uprising) of 1987–1992" and that the secular *a'maliyat fida'iyah* (self-sacrifice operations) was replaced by the religious *'amaliyat istishhadiya* (martyrdom operations) (Whitehead and Abufarha, 2008, p.397). The expression *shahid* assumed a political slant, meaning "a victim who falls at the hands of oppressive occupation", while "the term *istishhadi* … is new" and "used in particular for those who carry out the martyrdom operation or (suicide bombing)" (Whitehead and Abufarha, 2008, p.397). In effect, this information is slightly misleading. During this period there had not been so much a change in discourse as a differentiation in sources.

Until the first *intifada*, the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza maintained a position of non-violence. It was not until the first *intifada* and their name change to Hamas that the organisation became openly and extensively violent (Mishal and Sela, 2000; Levitt, 2006). Prior to the first *intifada*, it was largely the secular Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) that controlled the violence; that had been overshadowed by the

Islamic Hamas who, like Khomeini, raised the position of the martyr to one of religious–national significance. The change in discourse from secular to religious within the secular Fatah Party did transpire, but not until the *al Aqsa intifada* that began in 2000.

Currently, there is a political about-face in Iran about the use of religious or secular terminology to describe or claim ownership of the martyr. It is worth describing a case to illustrate this, as well as reinforcing the point about naming rights. The case is that of Neda Agha-Soltan. She was a beautiful, young, secular, engaged Iranian woman who, according to her fiancé, was an art student with no particular political interests. She had not voted for the incumbent president or the opposition in the 2009 disputed election. During the anti-government protests in Tehran—where thousands gathered in the streets to protest at what many perceived as the political corruption of the government in rigging the recent election results—Agha-Soltan attempted to travel from one point of the town to another but was caught in a traffic jam caused by the protests. Eyewitness accounts claim that she simply stepped out of the car to see what the hold-up was and was shot in the chest, believed to have been by the police or the feared *Basij* militia, a government-affiliated militant group.

Despite Agha-Soltan's unintentional involvement, she instantly became a martyr for the cause, in this case, of opposition to the Islamic regime of Iran. Hildebrandt (2009, n.p.) wrote that, "before the details of [Agha-Soltan's] identity were even confirmed, [she] had become the symbol of struggle against the hard line Iranian regime", and added that "headlines have heralded the young woman as a martyr and some even dubbed her Iran's Joan of Arc". Notable was the staunch opposition to the once popular religious

terminology of "*shahid*" when referring to her martyrdom. In interview with Hildebrandt (2009, n.p.), Amir Hassanpour—associate professor with the University of Toronto who teaches about the modern Middle East—noted that in the 20 years since the end of the Iran–Iraq war—where hundreds of thousands were martyred in the name of Allah and the Ayatollah—the use of the word *shahid* lost its appeal. The legacy of that time is ever-present in day-to-day life with streets, universities, and institutions named after the fallen *shahid*. It is a constant reminder of excessive zeal and bitter disappointment (Varzi, 2002; Rosen, 2005). Those who now protest against the Islamic government of Iran reject the use of the word *shahid* and prefer the use of the non-religious "*janbakhteh"* when describing heroic death for the cause (Hassanpour cited in Hildebrandt, 2009).

Despite the claim of anti-religious, secular self-sacrifice, the martyr is eulogised in the same way as religious martyrs. They stand as a symbol of the "truth", according to the societal group proclaiming their significance; they become an icon in the form of the sacred that cannot be fully overcome, despite the force with which it may be contested. Such was the case with Agha-Soltan—her martyr status baffled her friends and family. Of note is that the sociologist Ali Shari'ati (1986, p.153–230) preached about the sacred nature of the *shahid*. He used this reward as an enticement to martyrdom. Agha-Soltan did not belong to the classification of Jihadist martyr; her martyrdom followed the traditional form of innocence—and thus righteousness—in the face of despotic repression. That she was uninvolved in the protests only served to reinforce her innocence and purity. We ask ourselves: what is idiosyncratic about Jihadist martyrdom? What has been discovered is that—in complete reversal of the case of

Agha-Soltan—Jihadist martyrdom is marked by the intent to die. This is counter to historical precedents of martyrdom.

The theme of death in historical precedents

Martyr derives from the Greek root, μάϱτυς, pronounced *mar-tys*. It means witness; the connotation is bearing witness to the truth. In the ancient and mediaeval worlds, the truth was eternal and one only needed to acknowledge it to bear witness. It did not necessarily mean to suffer and die in the face of acknowledging the truth, but stories of noble death often contained this theme. Socrates was the famous death in this tradition: he was persecuted for his beliefs, brought to attest to those beliefs, and condemned to death because of them. But ancient stories of martyrdom were not always about execution and noble death; they were more to do with virtue in the face of persecution than they were about death. Van Henten and Avemarie (2002, p.9) cite the oldest story of this tradition. *The Story of Ahiqar*—which dates from the eighth or seventh century BCE—is of Aramaean origin.

There are two deaths in the story, but they are not of the hero Ahiqar. The first is of a man of low social status brought to be executed in place of Ahiqar to fool the king who has sentenced Ahiqar. With no social standing, his death passed without fuss. In the version of this ancient tale retold by Van Henten and Avemarie (2002), the man remains nameless. The other death is of Nadin, Ahiqar's nephew, whom he adopted as his son and who is the protagonist of the story. Ahiqar had been a sage and councillor in the royal court for many years. When he appointed Nadin to the court, Nadin conspired against him and convinced the king that Ahiqar had committed treason. Through

intrigues, the king regretted Ahiqar's execution and the truth that Ahiqar lived was revealed. In the version retold by Van Henten and Avemarie, Ahiqar is eventually restored to his full courtly position, and having refused a reward for his loyalty and compliance with the king's wishes, he asked permission to deal with Nadin, whom he tortured and who died a horrible death (Van Henten and Avemarie 2002, pp.9–10).

The story is a familiar one of virtue in the face of false accusation, and miraculous salvation from certain death through the wisdom and continued virtue of the accused. Van Henten and Avemarie (2002, p.10) argued that "in martyrdom stories this rescue is transposed after death, for example as a resurrection". This theme is used in Jihadist martyrdom. Maher Jarrar (2004, pp.324, 326) noted that the Islamic martyr—from which Jihadists draw their inspiration—envisions his reward in Paradise in the throes of death. But as the story of Ahiqar showed, death is not equivalent to martyrdom. In its earliest tradition, martyrdom is honoured as virtue in the face of persecution. Torment, suffering, and death in steadfast righteousness are what turn noble behaviour into triumph.

The concept of martyrdom as death became prominent in the West through tales of the persecution of the early Christians of the first to third centuries CE, often killed for their religious beliefs. Christianity cites Saint Stephen as the first Christian martyr, stoned to death by the angry crowd in Jerusalem c. 35 CE. The concept of martyrdom did not appear in Christian writings until the end of the first century CE with Clement's *Letter to the Corinthians*. Van Henten and Avemarie (2002, p.88–89) pointed out that the letter, in part, talked about the persecution of Christians and the martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul. They noted that Clement "had a considerable knowledge of popular

philosophical ideas as well of what became the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament [of the Christian Bible]". They also noted that the first Christian text fully devoted to martyrdom was *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* dated 155–160 CE (Van Henten and Avemarie, 2002, p.94). Similarly, they noted that with this story there "is a structural correspondence with Jewish stories about martyrdom and the narrative shares significant motifs with these stories" (Van Henten and Avemarie, 2002, p.95). The significance here is that there is a traditional theme to martyrdom as death that predates the Common Era, even though the word "martyrdom" itself did not appear until some centuries into the Common Era.

Judaism has no semantic equivalent to the Greek or Christian term martyr as witness. Martyrdom is referred to by the Hebrew term *kiddush haShem*, meaning sanctification of the name of God as expressed in the Torah, Leviticus 22:32. The term depicts any action by a Jew that brings honour, respect, and glory to God and is not restricted to death as a sanctification of God's name. But this was a familiar theme in early martyr texts and was to become prominent throughout the ages. Van Henten and Avemarie (2002, p.42) noted: that the "oldest Jewish stories of martyrdom [as death] are part of Second Maccabees ([written] around 125 BCE), one of the four books named after the Maccabean brothers who rebelled against the Greek king Antiochus IV". Second Maccabees recounts numerous martyrdoms suffered by Jews resisting the destruction of their religious and cultural heritage by the Hellenic occupying forces in Judea during the second century BCE. This was not generally suicide, but execution through persecution. It became a crime punishable by death for Jews to practise and uphold their religious and cultural traditions, and they were executed for observing the Sabbath, circumcising

their children, observing dietary sanctions, or refusing to observe the new Hellenic traditions, including the glorification of false deities. During this era, thousands were executed.

Murray (2000, p.87) stated that early Christians carried into their doctrines the *Zeitgeist* of this tradition. They also changed it. According to Murray (2000, pp.104–110), suicide became a feature of martyrdom. He argued that the only way a Christian could prove their devotion was to be "tested" by the imperial authorities and remain steadfast, or die as a martyr. Salisbury (2004, pp.194–195) noted that many felt it was their only hope of salvation. This developed the tradition of "volunteerism" in persecution, where many died spectacularly in the Colosseum. She noted that scholars claim that more died this way through volunteering for death than were arrested against their will. She argued further that by the end of the third century many Christians wanted to live in peace with the Empire and sought reconciliation rather than rejection (Salisbury, 2004, p.196). Yet, another era of volunteerism was on the horizon. When Constantine elevated Christianity to a position of favour, martyrdom through persecution ceased to exist within what became the Catholic Church. Some Catholics were unable to accept this, and committed crimes in the name of their religion in order to be executed. But Murray (2000) pointed out that the main source of provocation of execution came out of the schism of 313 between the Catholics and the Donatists.

The Donatists denounced imperial authority and rejected the official church in Africa as illegitimate, setting up their own bishopric. It was here that Christianity made a brief foray into political suicide. The imperial authorities saw the Donatists as heretics, and persecution of varying degrees occurred, sometimes resulting in execution. According

to Murray (2000, pp.104–105), things were made worse by the involvement of the extremist peasant warriors, the Circumcellions, who “read religious dissent as an invitation to political revolt, and whose spontaneous violence inspired bloody reprisal”. Martyrdom multiplied, according to Murray, who noted that the Donatists eagerly sought martyrdom because of their conviction that it would deliver them to victory, just as it did for Christianity against the pagan imperial authorities.

Murray noted that Catholics who were anxious to deny the Donatists’ martyrdom were “provoked … into examining where martyrdom stopped and self-homicide began”. This was a problem inherited by Augustine (*n.*354–430) in 395 CE when he became Bishop of Hippo. Murray recounted the event in 420 that prompted Augustine to determining the matter. A Donatist bishop, Gaudentius, objecting to new laws had locked himself and his faithful followers in his church, threatening to burn all alive:

> Augustine … pointed out that since the Donatists could expect from the Empire nothing worse than confiscation, not death, their proposed “martyrdom” inside the church building was not martyrdom. It was rather deliberate self-homicide, of the kind done for revenge, or threatened for blackmail (Murray, 2000, p.107).

He wrote in a *Letter Against Gaudentius*: “*Martyres verso non facit poena sed causa*: true martyrdom is not determined by the penalty suffered, but by the cause” (Murray, 2000, p.107). This suggested, as argued above, that a martyr could only be named by the in-group. Augustine, on the other side of the Christian divide, saw the Donatist cause as no cause for martyrdom at all.

Gaudentius claimed that the Bible supported suicide in cases of oppression and unbearable torment. Having recourse to Second Maccabees, Gaudenius cited the case of "the heroic Razias … [who] had killed himself rather than yield to oppression"; and to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, who showed that "Christians tested beyond endurance were allowed to kill themselves" (Murray, 2000, p.107). Murray (2000, p.109) noted that Augustine responded with "inconsistent inventiveness", at times agreeing with Gaudenius in saying that Razias, like Isaac and Sampson, was acting on divine command. But he concluded that it was not the manner of Razias' death that the Maccabees text adulates, but his life and courage. Similarly, he argued that Jesus resisted the "demonic temptation" of suicide, and notably, it was the traitor Judas who killed himself following Jesus' crucifixion. He retorted: "By trying to make yourselves martyrs, by burning yourself on the altar of Christ, you will in fact make yourselves a sacrifice to the Devil" (Augustine cited in Murray, 2000, p.109).

Islamic Attitudes to Martyrdom

It is not difficult to see the similarities in these examples with today's schism between conservative Islam and Jihadist Islam: each side claims to represent true Islam, and believes it will be the victor. While conservative Islam rests comfortably with its traditional legitimacy, Jihadist extremists see the battle as a fight to the end against the "apostates" and the *infidels*. Radical extremists of all varieties have joined the Jihadist violence, using religious dissent as an excuse, or as a means for political revolt. They seek a violent death under the belief that sustained martyrdom legitimates their cause, as well as ensuring their victory. But there is a significant question mark over whether this

form of martyrdom—to murder and suicide—is consistent with Islamic tradition. The evidence suggests that it is not.

Islam does not support the kind of "volunteerism" through persecution that Christianity witnessed. Islamic martyrdom is essentially consistent with the Jewish tradition of virtue, steadfastness, and dedication to God in the face of persecution. In Islam, a martyr is known by the terms *shahid* in the masculine and *shahida* in the feminine, as witnesses to truth. Persecution of Muslims followed the same pattern as persecution of early Christians prior to volunteerism. In Mecca, where Mohammad received his revelations and first began to preach, many tribes had rejected his teachings and persecution had become severe, with the torture and death of some members, and laws were enacted prohibiting trade and humanitarian assistance to the Mohammadeans. Only a few short years after that, the first martyrdom of Islam occurred in Mecca in 615 CE. The first recorded martyr is the old woman, Sumayyah bint Khabbab, who was tortured and murdered under orders of the tribal chief, Abu Jahl. Persecution was so severe that in the years following the martyrdom of Summayyah, Mohammad fled to Medina with many of his followers, and the remainder, led by Mohammad's daughter Ruqayya and his son-in-law Uthman, fled to Abyssinia.

If one dies, *fi sabil Allah* (in the path of Allah), as Summayyah did, it is not intended that this death is sought with the explicit or implicit intention of dying. Rather, it is the unfortunate consequence of standing firm in the face of opposition. Islamic attitudes to suicide make this clear. The renowned historian and authority on Muslim suicide, Franz Rosenthal (1946, p.255), concluded that Islam views suicide as a sin under all circumstances, and sees it as the "commission [and] … perversion of heretics". He

noted that suicide due to persecution was denied. He recounted the story of the tax collector, Abu ‘l-‘Abbas bin Sabur, who was tortured to death c. 985 CE:

> Shortly before his death he sent an anonymous letter to the jurisconsult Abu Bakr al-Huwarizmi, asking him whether a person who suffered intolerable tortures was permitted to commit suicide. As it could be expected, al-Huwarizmi replied in the negative and recommended patience, which would be amply rewarded with the forgiveness of sins in the other world (Rosenthal, 1946, p.247).

Rosenthal reported that the *Qur’an* says very little about suicide, and what it does say is ambivalent. Islam’s unquestionable condemnation of suicide occurs in the *hadiths* that were written during the 200 years or so after the *hijra* (the journey of Mohammad and his companions to Medina in 622 CE).

Hadiths have less authority than the *Qur’an*. Murray (2000, p.555) describes them as a “supplement, corroboration and elucidator” of the *Qur’an*. This is consistent with popular opinion. Some *hadiths* have greater authority than others: the *hadiths* cited below have been drawn from jurisconsultants of great authority. Several *hadiths* on suicide bear on the question. The first is a *hadith* mentioned by al-Buhari and is said to have been the words of “God Himself”: “the Prophet was present when a wounded man killed himself. Whereupon God said: My servant anticipated my action by taking his soul (life) in his own hand; therefore, he will not be admitted into Paradise”. Another *hadith* mentioned by al-Buhari, Ibn Hanbal, and others proclaims suicide as a sin. Murray’s (2000, p.555) compilation of this *hadith* is: “Whoever strangles himself will repeat his deed in the Fire, and whoever kills himself by stabbing his own body with

some steel instrument will repeat his deed in the Fire. The same goes for the man who poisons himself or precipitates himself from a high place".

Another oft-cited *hadith* proclaims that regardless of how meritorious a man's actions are, if he commits suicide he is doomed (meaning that he will go to hell):

> The story, in brief, reports that a man who fought most valiantly on the side of the Muslims was seriously wounded, and, in order to shorten his sufferings, he fell upon his own sword and thus ended his life. Since the Prophet had predicted that this man would be doomed in spite of the valor he displayed for the Muslim cause, his suicide was taken as an indication that the Prophet had not been mistaken (Rosenthal, 1946, p.244).

Rosenthal argued that the ethos of death before dishonour is pre-Islamic. He noted that the "interplay of a heroic tradition, which preferred death to dishonour, and a religion, which considered suicide prohibited under any circumstances, can occasionally be observed" (Rosenthal, 1946, p.253). He recounted the tale of the Abbadid Caliph, al-Mu'tamid, who, according to custom, should have committed suicide when his castle fell into the hands of his enemies in 1090 CE. Instead, fearing "the magnitude of this step", he preserved his life, surviving another five years in terrible misery. The tale concludes that al-Mu'tamid could not kill himself on account of his religious beliefs. Rosenthal explained that "it is not impossible that the Caliph himself (or some later historian) invented the story of his religious scruples in order to explain why he preferred a life in disgrace to an honourable death". Rosenthal's account affirms the notion that Islam—in its traditional form—rejects suicide as honourable death.

To plan one's death precludes the actor from gaining the title of martyr. The *Qur'an* states that a *shahid* can be killed in an accident, so long as it does not happen with the intention to commit a sin (*Qur'an* 3:140). The *Qur'an* states that if one plans one's death, this is a sin. According to this interpretation, one who plans their death cannot be a martyr. There have been instances, however, when the Muslim community has accepted acts of suicide–terror as martyrdom. These are few. Oft-cited today as resembling Muslim extremism in Egypt is the legend of the Kharijite (Kenney, 2006).

The Kharijite sect appeared briefly in southern Iraq in the late seventh century. They were a warring sect who sought to defeat Muslims whom they believed had strayed from the true meaning of Islam. Kharijite members were willing to trade their lives in battle for God and they boasted of this. Their legend is often interpreted now as intent to die, but this was not the norm. According to *Witness-Pioneer* (n.d., n.p.), they had been radicalised due to their bloody defeat in the Battle of Nahrawan in 661 CE, and vowed revenge by assassinating the three rival Islamic leaders in suicide missions:

> The Kharijites in Makkah met at the Kaaba, and commissioned three young men to carry the plot of murder into effect. Abdur Rahman b Maljam al Sarimi was chosen to assassinate Ali at Kufa. Barq b Abdullah was entrusted with the task of murdering Muawiyah. Amr b Bakr was assigned the task of putting an end to 'Amr b Al-A'as at Fustat. These young men whitened their swords with deadly poison. Thereafter they were required to proceed to the places assigned to them, and there wait till the seventeenth of the month of Ramadan, when all the three assassins were to fall on their victims and kill them (*Witness-Pioneer* n.d., n.p).

Only Ali's assassin was successful. All three assailants were captured, subjected to horrific torture, and killed. These acts may be likened to early Jihadist martyrs today:

they were selected because of their religious devotion and agreed to perform an act of suicide–terror at a time when it was anathema to the cultural norm. Perhaps if the Kharijites had survived, and not been decimated soon after the assassination of Ali, they may have developed the practice of suicide–terror as a culturally accepted strategy of war, but they were not given the chance. They faded quietly into history.

The *Assassins* lasted nearly 200 years (c. 1092 to 1265) and had developed a culture of death. Meaning *Hashshashin* in the local dialect, it was the name given to a faction of Nizari Isma'ili Shi'a Islam who occupied the Alamut fort in the region of the Alborz Mountains in Iran from where they launched suicide attacks. They would travel from their fortress to the cities and attempt to get close to a chosen target, usually a member of the Knights Templar, considered Christian occupiers and *kafir* (unbelievers, or *infidel*), or a Sunni official who was claimed to have committed *irtidad* (apostasy). They would unsheathe a dagger hidden in a cloak and stab the victim. They made no escape plans and the source of their target and the nature of the attack meant that death would swiftly follow. This description is consistent with Durkheim's definition of suicide as discussed in Chapter 7.

As is usually the case with martyrdom, the claim of suicide was fiercely rejected by those launching the attacks. Yet the preparation for death through indoctrination to the surreal pleasures of heaven created an ideation for death. It has been claimed—but strongly rebuffed by contemporary scholars—that the locals gave the name "*Hashshashin*" to the Assassin due to their "crazed" behaviour. Another suggestion is that cannabis was part of the indoctrination. Legend says cannabis formed part of the hallucinatory vision of *shurga* (Paradise). While the Assassins were drugged, they were

secreted to a garden paradise in a secluded part of their compound where they experienced all the wonders of their promised eternal destiny. Once they were returned to sleep, they were spirited back to the harshness of their real-world existence, where, once awake, the young warriors yearned for the pleasures experienced in a "dream". This form of indoctrination to acts of suicide–terror is speculative and does not have a known precedent in today's Jihadist martyrdom. The case of the *juramentado*, however, raises a number of similarities.

The *juramentado* in Philippine history of the late-nineteenth and (or) early twentieth century were indoctrinated to believe that a suicide attack would deliver them immediately to the pleasures of the afterlife. *Juramentado* was the name given by the Spanish to those of their Muslim opponents who conducted suicide–terror attacks on Christians to kill or maim as many as possible. It derives from the Spanish *juramentar*—meaning one who takes an oath—so named because the *juramentado* would take an oath on the *Qur'an* to execute his mission steadfastly by killing as many Christians as he could before eventually succumbing. J Franklin Ewing (1955) conducted an historical study of the *juramentado* and from his writings I compiled the following account.

Spain had for decades encountered fierce resistance to colonisation and conversion from the Muslim tribes of the areas around Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelagos. They were known to the Spanish as the *Moro* tribes, a derogatory term meaning the heathen, isolated minority. From the ranks of the *Moro* came the *juramentado*: usually young, devout religious men who were trained for battle and highly skilled in the use of their native *kris* or *barong* (serrated-edged weapons). Their purpose was not only to destroy

the enemy by killing as many as possible, but also to terrorise the local population who, in the areas controlled by the Spaniards, had converted to Christianity in large numbers. The *juramentado* could be described as a group of freedom fighters, but their martyrdom—like that of the contemporary Jihadist martyr—was epitomised by the intention of dying.

Heroic Death and Suicide

Ewing (1955) argued that his anthropological study of the *juramentado* is interesting because it demonstrates cultural change. The study of all three examples identifies societal groups that lived outside the norm. Jihadist martyrdom represents the same anomaly. Through intrigues, the cultural meaning of death in battle was changed. Jihadist martyrdom is not confined to the act of killing and dying. We can see that in the case of the *Basij* (boy-soldiers during the Iran–Iraq war), they did not have the means to attack the enemy, so their deaths were largely symbolic. Another example where offensive effectiveness is marginal at best—but also consistent with the ethos of Jihadist martyrdom—is the case of Palestinian youth stone-throwers. Indeed, Merari (2005b, 2010) pointed out that Jihadist martyrdom is not primarily a psychological process involved in the making of a military suicide unit: it is a social phenomenon that appeals to the individual. The propaganda that creates suicide martyrs is couched in terms of the holy warrior, or *mujahedeen*. Today's Jihadists refer to suicide bombers as "*istishhadi*" (martyrdom seekers), implying that they have died legitimately in battle. Many scholars agree.

Murray (2000, pp.560–561) argued that the Islamic tradition of conquest, and the fusing of political and religious authority, "brought the centre of gravity in Muslim doctrine nearer to the virtues of the religious warrior; and that, in turn, had the effect of weakening … any doctrinal distinction between military martyrdom and suicide". His argument is that the ideological groundwork necessary to produce suicide martyrs had already been completed in the Muslim world, and one only need call upon the ideology to produce it once more. He argued that this is where Islam differs considerably from the West. I differ: the evidence suggests that traditional Islamic ideas about the ethos of a soldier are consistent with those in the West.

Contrary to Murray (2000, p.561), the West does have an ideological concept of heroic death. Every major war tells tales of heroic death where troops have pushed forward to almost certain death, believing their sacrifice served a noble cause. The rhetoric of the noble warrior today is bound up in the soldier ever ready to lay down his life, in the words of General Douglas MacArthur, for *duty, honour, and country*. The rhetoric used by militant Islamic groups is synonymous with the way the West glorifies its soldiers and the fallen. In a speech at West Point on 12 May 1962, MacArthur glorified the death of United States soldiers: "I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death. They died, unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in their hearts, and on their lips the hope that we would go on to victory." The General was not averse to speaking of religion and faith as being tightly bound with the self-sacrifice of a soldier:

> The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice. In battle, and in the face of danger and

> death, he discloses those divine attributes which his Maker gave when He created man in His own image. No physical courage and no greater strength can take the place of the divine help which alone can sustain him. However hard the incidents of war may be, the soldier who is called upon to offer and to give his life for his country is the noblest development of mankind (MacArthur, 1962).

In Islam there is the notion of selling one's soul to God:

> Lo! Allah has [bought] from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs: they shall fight in the way of God and will slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. Who fulfils His covenant better than God? Rejoice then in your bargain that you have made, for that is the supreme triumph (Taleqani, 1986, p.63).

This ethos is misused by religious militants and misunderstood by many scholars. The notion of selling your soul to God, in its traditional form, is to put your life in the hands of God. If one goes into battle, having sold their soul to God, one goes into battle accepting that God may call them to heaven. Going into battle believing that God has already called them to heaven—that their death is inevitable—is an abuse of the traditions original meaning.

MacArthur placed a nationalist slant on this—suggesting that the soldier offers his life for country. The intent is the same: to risk one's life. The reward of the soldier who loses his life in battle is a place in heaven, or the honour of the homeland.

Rosenthal (1946, p.256) noted that the enthusiasm in Islam for the honour of martyrdom may indeed add to the number of warriors killed in battle, but essentially the traditional ethos does not call for suicide. From a strategic perspective, the idea of the soldier as

suicide is illogical. While a soldier is trained to be prepared to die if the situation calls for it, it is contrary to the ethos and health of an army to train their soldiers to seek death. Pointless deaths on the battlefield would deplete the ranks and threaten the defeat of the army by attrition alone. Yet the *Basij* on the frontline in the Iran–Iraq war were trained to seek death. They marched into enemy fire by their thousands, seldom armed with anything more than a plastic key around their necks so that they could let themselves into heaven without delay. By the end of the war, the number of dead exceeded the number of available *mujahedeen* (Rosen, 2005; Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005). The Iranian regime encountered the problem of collective emotional exhaustion by war's end, as almost everyone had lost a loved one. This factor contributed to Khomeini's reluctant decision to call a truce. To train soldiers to seek death, instead of winning battles, is not good strategic military planning.

It is not unimaginable that military training can aim at producing suicide units and the example of the Japanese Kamikaze pilot is often raised. The point that analysts such as Merari (2005b) wish to make is that it is against the norm from a military training perspective to discover the presence of groups of people who have the explicit intention of dying in a suicide–terror attack. The training of the *mujahedeen* in Iran during the Iran–Iraq war—and later with the LTTE, Hezbollah, the PIJ (Palestinian Islamic Jihad), al Qaeda, and Hamas—did entail encouragement to die. It is a major tenet of Jihadist martyrdom. Confusion on the issue of whether the Jihadist martyr seeks death is largely due to the inability of many analysts to identify a switch point between traditional heroic death in battle and the current Jihadist martyrdom doctrine of seeking death.

It has been argued elsewhere that the ideology supporting planned self-death started during the Iranian Revolution (1978–1979) that involved a "retraditionalisation". It is sufficient to say here that evidence shows that in the contemporary era explicit instruction in the art of suicide as martyrdom comes from the recent past, particularly Iranian ideologues of the Revolution like Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani, Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari, and Ali Shari'ati. There can be no mistaking the intention in this poem recited by Taleqani in a sermon given at the height of the Iranian Revolution:

> From head to toe, God's light you'll radiate,
> If in His cause, you self-annihilate!
> (Taleqani, 1986, pp.67–68).

Here, the intent to suicide is clear.

Conclusion

Western and Islamic scholars tend to dismiss suicide–terror as suicide. Sheikh Yousef al Qaradhawi, head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, and a prominent Sunni cleric, conducted a study in 2003 to elicit the meaning of suicide bombings (MEMRI, 2003). He denies that the suicide bomber is committing suicide. His findings were reported in the London-based Arabic language daily *Al Sharq Al Awsat* on 19 July 2003 : "Those who oppose martyrdom operations and claim that they are suicide are making a great mistake", he declaimed. He described suicide in accordance with common perceptions: "The [person who commits] suicide kills himself for himself, because he failed in business, love, an examination, or the like. He was too weak to cope with the situation and chose to flee life for death. The martyr sacrifices himself 'for the sake of a higher goal', giving no consideration to what he must sacrifice".

Self-sacrifice here is seen as honourable and just, which is contrary to the common understanding of suicide as deviant behaviour. "Deviant" suicide is contrary to traditional Judaic, Christian and Islamic conceptions of honourable death. Hence, there is a circular logic that appears to justify the notion that the phenomenon I call Jihadist Suicide is not suicide. To our disadvantage, today's common perception precludes adequate understanding of the suicide–terror phenomenon. Emile Durkheim confronted this problem over a hundred years ago. He argued that "the classification from which [common interpretations] derive is not analytic, but merely translates the confused impressions of the crowd" ([1897] 1952, p.41).

Durkheim's description of suicide would include al Qaradhawi's martyr. The martyr is responding to normative beliefs. They are not beliefs regarding life, but about death. Jihadist martyrdom as suicide is a moral ideal. The common conscious is not accustomed to thinking about suicide as morally acceptable. Martyrdom—at first glance—appears as a closer fit. But martyrdom is a political category that does not enunciate what the death meant to the martyr.

Jihadist martyrdom is not simply a call to arms—it is an invitation to suicide. The persuasion to kill oneself—or, moreover, to encourage one's loved ones to kill themselves—is an indoctrination entirely different to that of a soldier and martyr. Moreover, analogies with the present-day concept of noble death that "one lives if one can, and dies if one must", have been overturned in place of an ethos that categorically insists that the purpose of life is to work industriously towards a violent—and collectively meaningful—death. It is the most ostentatious representation of Jihadist martyrdom's schism with contemporary views on the ethos of the soldier and martyr.

Chapter 7

Jihadist Suicide

Why the need to talk about suicide? Suicidology is a mass, sometimes a mess, of complex and often contradictory theories. Tackling the subject in the context of suicide bombings is arduous. If not for its central importance, I would avoid it. There is ambivalence in this terror discourse: some say it is suicide, others say it is not. Its definition is highly mediated and narrowly confined. To progress, it is necessary to strip away these perceptions. I have put them aside in preference for Durkheim's "scientific" definition of suicide. His view was that "the essential thing is not to express with some precision what the average intelligence terms suicide, but to establish a category of objects permitting this classification, which are objectively established, that is, correspond to a definite aspect of things" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.42). His main objection to common interpretations was that:

> Categories of very different sorts of fact are indistinctly combined under the same heading, or similar realities are differently named. So, if we follow common use, we risk distinguishing what should be combined, or combining what should be distinguished, thus mistaking the real affinities of things, and accordingly misapprehending their nature (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.41).

The central importance of suicide lies in its social determination. Ronald Maris (1997, p.41) argued "at first blush suicide seems like the ultimate private action". This thought reminded him of Ludwig Wittgenstein's "private language argument" whereby the individual is the sole custodian of his or her sensations (*empfindung*) of pain or pleasure

(Maris, 1997, p.41). Certainly, there is no argument with the latter part of this statement. This is where we tend to err: we have no way of knowing whether the suicide bomber was responding to pain or pleasure. In Durkheim's understanding, intent is too personal to determine with much precision. Even the bombers are not likely to be fully aware of why they are doing this. Why then do we profess to know what is in their heads?

We profess to knowing because here the suicide is not a private action, but a ritualised, scripted, very public death (discussed further in Chapter 10). But from this, we do not ascertain meaning for the bomber, but for the collective. In Durkheim's terms, this is essential in understanding what that death meant to the suicide. The social determination underlying, or even underpinning, the death can tell us something about what the suicide may have been thinking. The determination of the suicide's action does not lie in a psychological autopsy, but in a psychological assessment—if that is really possible—of what society is thinking and doing. This means nothing if we cannot place the suicide bomber squarely within the category of committing suicide. And we cannot make any further determinations if we disallow acts like the Iranian *Basij* and the Palestinian youth stone thrower from the category of suicide. This is because the way is blocked to an appreciation of this group responding to the same "suicidogenic" currents as the suicide bomber. Common interpretations do not permit this.

Durkheim's *Suicide* and Common Perceptions

The classification of suicide today is scientific. Its "colonisation" by medical sciences ensured this. There is considerable objection to this form of "scientism" (Atkinson 1975; 1978; Améry [1976] 1999; Tatz, 2001; Leader, 2009). Analysis shows that these

perceptions are narrow, subjective, and ethnocentric. Today's trend sees suicide as illness. As such, the "patient" has a genetic disorder[28] or chemical imbalance in the brain.[29] This biomedical model views suicide as in need of a pharmaceutical cure or treatment, and sometimes surgery. According to Darian Leader (2009), psychiatry in the treatment and prevention of suicide in the fashion of Freud's "talking cure" is slowly being reduced to pharmaceutical prescriptions. The pharmacopeia treatment has been ongoing since Enrico Morselli (1852–1929) pioneered today's psycho-medical model[30] (Douglas, 1967; Goldney, 2004; Tomasi, 2000). Atkinson (1975) argued that the consumption of suicide within the hospital research environment ensured the establishment of psychiatric departments, populated by experts capable of diagnosing and treating the psychological ailments responsible for suicide. The logical outcome was the "discovery" of medical solutions.

Leader (2009) contended that a reason why depression is held to be *the* leading cause of suicide is because of its huge advantage for the influential pharmaceutical industry. The power of that industry—and its funds to advance its position—means that published

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[28] Research suggests the possibility of a "suicidal gene". The American website, *HealthyPlace*, reported that genetic scientists are preparing to conduct research into causes of high-suicide families to discover "whether it is 'learned' behavior, passed on through a grim emotional ripple effect, or a genetic inheritance". Add mixed ancestry, and the impossible question is "whose genes"?

[29] This diagnosis is common. In a psychological autopsy of "Arthur" (a pseudonym), Shneidman (2004) recorded that his psychiatrist failed to hospitalise him, knowing of his attempted suicide the previous night; he was convinced Arthur's suicide was inevitable, due to a chemical imbalance of the brain. Not knowing a balanced one, .we cannot recognise a chemically unbalanced one.

[30] Morselli wrote: "it is a gross tautological sophism to give the title of 'moral suffering' to sorrow for a misfortune, to misery, privation, crossed love or jealousy, while they reserve the title of 'physical suffering' to pain which arises from a mechanical injury, from an irritation of the peripheral nerves, or disease of the intestines. The cause is unequal, but the effect is the same … the expression of moral suffering is the same as that of physical suffering" ([1897] 1881 cited in Goldney 2004, pp.39–40).

research opposing the biomedical model receives a fraction of the coverage of industry-funded research. Atkinson (1978) and Lieberman (2003) contended that perceptions of suicide have always been mediated by the most powerful.

The common perception of suicide as espoused by al Qaradhawi (2003) and others (Sarraj, n.d.; Speckhard and Ahkmedova 2005; 2006) is *inconsistent* with today's biomedical trend. The common perception is of mental illness, with the suicide's faculties diminished through mental perturbation or substance abuse. Edwin Shneidman (1985a, p.203) described suicide as "a conscious act of self-induced annihilation, best understood as a multidimensional malaise in a needful individual who defines an issue for which the suicide is perceived as the best solution". He compiled a list of ten commonalities[31] in a suicidal individual related to their desire to escape the psychological pain made unbearable through a negative outlook of hopelessness and helplessness (Shneidman, 1985a; 1985b).

The move towards seeing the suicide as a victim of mental perturbation was a product of eighteenth-century England. According to Hillman (1997, p.7), "juries—which bore the duty of having to determine the causes of so-called unnatural deaths—to find a way to show mercy to the victims, both dead and alive" thus proclaimed that suicides must be insane. This implied that suicide was a criminal offence against King and God. Retribution for this wilful crime resulted in the deceased being denied burial in

[31] These commonalities include the: (1) purpose of suicide (to seek a solution); (2) goal of suicide (cessation of consciousness); (3) stimulus (psychological pain); (4) stressor (frustrated psychological needs); (5) emotion (hopelessness-helplessness); (6) internal attitude toward suicide (ambivalence); (7) cognitive state (constriction); (8) action (escape); (9) interpersonal act (communication of intention); and (10) consistency in suicide (lifelong coping patterns).

consecrated ground, and the confiscation of all worldly possession and their forfeiture to the Crown. Hillman (1997) argued that no one at the time of this shift in perception really believed that the suicide was insane. It was merely a legal device to skirt the law. The thought was that no one can be held responsible for their actions if they are insane. In eighteenth-century England people committed suicide for reasons nothing to do with despair or insanity; they were known to kill themselves from sheer boredom.

Pearson and Liu (2002) noted the ethnocentric categorisation of suicide in the West. They wrote: "depression is said to be commonly present in people who kill themselves in Western countries", but this appears to be peculiar to the West (Pearson and Liu, 2002, p.347). They argued that in China, depression is rarely diagnosed in suicides. This may be due to the Chinese coroners' mandate to avoid verdicts of depression; however, it would be impossible to avoid this verdict in the majority of cases, where evidence revealed that the suicide showed signs of depression in the workplace, home, and (or) community.

Slightly differently, Yoshitomo Takahashi (1997) showed decisively the ethno-professional collision, where psychiatry wins out over traditional conceptions of suicide. He saw changing attitudes to suicide in Japan. Once suicide was seen as "an honourable way of taking responsibility", the contemporary attitude is that "people often consider that death is the only way of resolving a desperate situation, being neither an honourable form of behaviour nor a tradition condoned by society" (Takahashi, 1997, p.138).

Changing attitudes in Japan stem from the "medicalisation" and Westernisation of suicide and the perception that it relates to mental illness. Takahashi's (1997, p.139) perspective is that suicide is a sickness, and hence refers to those contemplating suicide as "patients" who require "therapy". His interpretation is consistent with the logic of his profession, as Atkinson (1978) argued, the categorisation process used in psychiatry demands adherence to set suicide models that exclude traditional Japanese models within the psychiatric model.

These scholars have shown that the prevailing wisdom on what constitutes suicide is highly mediated and based on conceptions that are made to appear scientific. Varty (2000, p.60) concurred with "Douglas' [and Taylor's] general point … that official statistics are 'socially constructed,' as opposed to being objective, reliable measures of social phenomena". The biomedical and psycho-medical models rely on official statistics. Jean Améry ([1976] 1999) claimed to hold simultaneous respect and contempt for this "scientism". After all its ardent endeavours, he concluded, it tells us nothing. As for categorising and indexing: "There are ideas of voluntary death that are so different from each other that it seems only possible to say that their commonality consists in nothing other than the fact that a suicidal person is seeking a voluntary death" (Améry, [1976] 1999, p.5).

Durkheim ([1897] 1952, p.41) warned that "the scholar employing [terminology] in their accepted use without further definition would risk serious misunderstanding". He devised a meaning for suicide that is better understood as *the conscious renunciation of life*: "We may say conclusively: the term *suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself,*

which he knows will produce this result" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.44 emphasis in original). From this umbrella definition, Durkheim saw that the different causes of suicide could be categorised to enable greater explanation of their true nature. He saw "suicide" as a generic name for a multi-faceted phenomenon. There is no essential difference between one who suicides for negative reasons, like melancholia, and one who suicides for positive reasons, like martyrdom. They made the conscious decision to renounce existence based on reasoning that death is preferable to whatever alternative they foresaw at the time—regardless of whether this was negative or positive.

Durkheim ([1897] 1952, p.42) pointed out that the usual idea of suicide is that the suicide dies of his or her own hand, that the "author is also the sufferer". He referred to this as being "commonly conceived as a positive, violent action involving some muscular energy": the plunge of a sword, the taking of poison, or the jumping from a cliff ([1897] 1952, p.42). But he rejected the idea that one can only commit suicide by the deliberate action of the suicide upon him or herself. Again, Halbwachs ([1930] 1978) disagreed. He specifically ruled out death by proxy: "the suicide must be his own, sole executioner; the perpetrator of the murder and the victim are one and the same, death occurring without other human intervention". (Goldblatt cited in Halbwachs, [1930] 1978, p.*xxii*).

Durkheim argued that suicide can occur by the hand of another, so long as the suicide was free to make a choice regarding whether they would act to free themselves from their executioner. "The iconoclast, committing with the hope of a martyr's palm the crime of high treason known to be capital and dying by the executioner's hand, achieves his own death as truly as though he had dealt his own death-blow" (Durkheim, ([1897]

1952, p.42). What is important is that the suicide, by their volition, knowingly acted to end earthly existence, or knowingly failed to act to preserve life. An example of suicide by proxy is the human-wave attacks of the *Basij* during the Iran-Iraq war. According to Durkheim's definition, they committed suicide by desiring death when they marched into enemy line positions.

Some cited cases of martyrdom are not suicides. The martyrdom of Yahya Ayish (1966-1996), otherwise known as The Engineer, was not a suicide. Ayish was a chief bomb maker for Hamas and the leader of the West Bank battalion of the *Izz ad-Din al-Qassam* Brigades, a terror group dedicated to the destruction of Israel. He was assassinated by way of a booby-trapped mobile phone that exploded once he pressed the phone to his ear. We can accept the popular Palestinian claim that Ayish was a martyr and that he made sacrifices in order to advance the cause. But his was not a suicide because he did not make a conscious decision to renounce existence. At best, he gambled with his life, but as argued earlier, gambling with one's life is not the same thing as intending to die.

Conversely, the sudden death of the Palestinian youth, Faras Ouda, who was shot dead during a confrontation with Israeli soldiers, is a suicide. This remains the case even though he did not die of his own hand. Sudden death in the act of stone-throwing—as Ouda was engaged in—is not commonly referred to as suicide, though the deceased is always given the title of martyr. In Ouda's case, he made a conscious decision to renounce his existence. The evidence of his intention to die as reported by Marcus and Crook (2004) was that he decorated a wreath in honour of his planned death with photographs of himself and attached a commemorative inscription that read "*The Brave Shahid Faras Ouda*" (Marcus and Crook, 2004, n.p.; Sandilands, 2004, p.38).

Martyr Testaments and the Question of Motivation

Shneidman (2004) contended that the subjective meaning of any suicide is difficult to grasp. Some analysts claim to understand the subjective meaning of death to the Jihadist Suicide through their martyrdom testimonies, usually in the form of videotaped "confessions" (Brym, 2005; Brym and Araj, 2006). These testimonies do not reveal motive or much about the martyr. They present in a particular jihad-martyrdom genre. As political statements, they are rhetorically, symbolically, and ritually scripted. This is apparent in the fragment of film that remains (available to the West) of the martyr video of Mohamed Atta and his co-conspirator, Ziad Jarrah. Jarrah led the airborne operation that was, allegedly, aimed at the White House on 11 September 2001, but which crashed in a field in Pennsylvania.

Atta and Jarrah's martyr video was recorded around January 2000 in Afghanistan, allegedly within Osama bin Laden's compound (Fouda, 2006). Fouda reported that there is no sound in the video, and lip readers have failed to decipher it, but their disposition and body language reveal a stage enterprise:

> Two bearded young men laugh and joke for the camera. They appear relaxed, well groomed, intelligent; they might be high-achieving students quietly celebrating an exam success. They look at a piece of paper and laugh some more. What is so funny? Certainly not the piece of paper. There is Arabic script on it. Easily decipherable is the word "*al wasiyyah*". This means "the will" (Fouda, 2006).

When the time comes to record the martyr testament, Atta and Jarrah change their disposition to quiet serious resolve; the camera pans to reveal an AK-47 at Atta's side. All martyr videos display—more or less—the same ritual. The will is read. It is

presumed their message follows the same template as the many hundreds of other martyr testaments available through social media networks and that are for hire in Palestinian video stores. The symbolic props are always the same: the display of military weaponry, the *Qur'an*, the *keffiyeh* scarf.

Jihadist martyrs often give an impression of tin soldiers. We learn their name, the date, location, and circumstances that lead to their death. Prominent is information about how many they killed, and sometimes how many they wounded. Information about the group that sent them, or at least claiming responsibility, is given; some statement is made regarding the "sins" of the victims who perished with the martyr. Very little is known about the martyr. We can observe instances where information emerges about the immediate circumstances of the martyr's life prior to the attack that may suggest alternative motives to the collective cause. To maintain the illusion of many "soldiers" ready to suicide for the cause, the bomber's handlers go to pains to deny these personal circumstances.

Reem Riyashi, a 21 year-old Palestinian mother of two from Gaza City killed herself and four Israelis in a suicide bombing on 14 January 2004. She left a martyr testament in a photo and a video stating that she always wanted to be the first woman suicide bomber and that her joy will be complete when she sees her body parts fly in all directions. Rumours suggested that her family forced her into the suicide bombing because she had been discovered having an affair. Similarly, Wafa Idris—who was the first Palestinian woman suicide bomber—was claimed to have been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder due to being a paramedic with Red Crescent. There was also

the claim that she was suffering from depression from her divorce arising from infertility.

Shneidman (2004) noted that even with an in-depth psychological autopsy, motive is difficult to ascertain. He demonstrated this from a psychological autopsy of "Arthur" (a pseudonym). Even from the opinions[32] of numerous psychiatrists invited to join the investigation, extensive interviews with highly articulate surviving respondents, and the benefit of Arthur's 11-page suicide note, the findings were inconclusive. There were several strongly held, but contradictory opinions:

> So in the end we see that there is no simple understanding of any one suicide, that we are back at the end of [the Japanese-made cult-film] *Rashomon*, scratching our heads, wanting to run the film over again albeit with a different ending, and, unhappily, thinking about it and puzzling over it for the rest of our lives as to who and what played this or that role in the tragic ending and whether [the suicide] was star-crossed from early on (Shneidman, 2004, p.163).

Film critic, James Berardinelli (1998, n.p.), argued that *Rashomon* highlighted "the inability of any one man to know the truth, no matter how clearly he thinks he sees things. Perspective distorts reality and makes the absolute truth unknowable". In *Rashomon*, the only meaning that is relevant to the individual is their subjective and unstable opinion. Shneidman noted that with suicide, there is always a continual

[32] The almost unanimous verdict of the psychiatrists was that Arthur suffered biological problems that would always require medication to prevent depression. They based this prognosis on the opinions of his family—particularly his mother who saw Arthur as always a problem child.

“etcetera clause”; the conclusion is always tentative upon the establishment of further clues, or even changed attitudes.

This pertains to cases of suicide that are alleged to be acts of self-sacrifice. Warren Schmaus (1994, p.99) asked: “how do we know whether the soldier who saved his companions by throwing himself on a live grenade intended only to save others from death or whether he seized this as an opportunity to end what he felt to be an unbearable existence?”. Durkheim observed that intent is not readily observable—not even within us:

> How discover the agent’s motive and whether he desired death itself when he formed his resolve, or had some other purpose? Intent is too intimate a thing to be more than approximately interpreted by another. It even escapes self-observation. How often we mistake the true reasons for our acts? We constantly explain acts due to petty feelings or blind routine by generous passions or lofty considerations (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.43).

Durkheim argued that if we want to understand human action, we ought to study the social milieu and not waste valuable time dabbling in mindreading. He deals with this by advocating the primacy of knowledge. He argued that it is easier to determine whether someone would know that their actions would result in death than it is to determine their primary intent. Schmaus (1994) agreed that despite contrary argument, it is easier to infer through observation what the victim *knew* than what they *intended*. He argued: “Clearly the knowledge that death will result is necessary for intending it by one’s actions” (Schmaus, 1994, p.98). This appears to be logical: the suicide who took a lethal dose of drugs knowing that it would lead to death could logically be said to have

intended death. But when it comes to self-sacrifice, the question is muddied by the question of desire.

Durkheim ([1897] 1952) was vague on this. Halbwachs ([1930] 1978, p.292) wrote, "to Durkheim ... it seemed rather unimportant whether death had been accepted only as a necessary condition to which one had to submit in order to attain a certain desire, or whether death had been desired and sought for its own sake". Durkheim pondered: "shall only he be thought truly to slay himself who has wished to do so" (p.43), and "[should we be concerned if] death is accepted merely as an unfortunate consequence, but inevitable given the purpose, or is actually itself sought and desired" (p.43). He emphatically stated that "the soldier facing certain death to save his regiment *does not wish to die*" (p.43, emphasis added), but later conceded that *all* suicides *do* desire their own death "at the moment of renouncing [life]" (Durkheim, [1930] 1978, p.44).

If he had developed this theory—that all suicides desire their own death—he may have averted criticism, but it remained nascent in his work. He defined suicide as an act that the suicide knows will produce this result. At that time, the suicide must have desired it in preference to any alternative. This is as true of ordinary suicide as it is of self-killing for the sake of another or for a cause greater than the self. Varty (2000, p.59) confirmed this by stating that essential for Durkheim was that the actor did not need to seek death as a *primary* goal. This is equally true of ordinary suicide and suicide as sacrifice.

Renouncing existence in Durkheim's theory pertained to *the resolve that one must die to avoid a situation that was considered worse than death* (albeit that he did not fully enunciate this). This could be of the soldier on the battle field who renounces existence

in preference for the death of his comrades, or the mother who sacrifices her life in preference for the death of her child, or the merchant who prefers death to the embarrassment of bankruptcy, or the child who prefers death to the horror of waking the next morning to recall their failings, or the young man or woman who prefers death to that of unrequited love—the list could be endless. For Durkheim, there was no appreciable difference between these cases because they all rest on the common fact that each actor had made *a conscious decision to renounce life* in order to *achieve an alternative end that was seen as preferable*. Of utmost importance is that the suicide is able to anticipate his or her death, *desire it at the moment of renouncing it* and be of sufficient faculties to be able to make this decision.

Shneidman (1985) argued that one of the commonalities of ordinary suicide is ambivalence. While the suicide desires death, they simultaneously wish to be rescued. From Shniedman's interpretation it becomes clear that the ordinary suicide would prefer to live if through someone, or by some means, their burden could be relieved. But at the moment of making the resolve to renounce existence they consciously choose this act over the only alternative that they can envisage, that is, a life of suffering and torment. Thus the ordinary suicide fulfils the condition set by Halbwachs ([1930] 1978, p.292) for self-killing as self-sacrifice: "death had been accepted only as a necessary condition to which one had to submit in order to attain a certain desire". To prevent the suffering of another or to prevent their own suffering is a primary goal: in both cases, suicide is the secondary goal.

Durkheim ([1930] 1978, pp.43–45) furthered his argument on knowledge and intent by pointing out that suicide is not an isolated monstrous act. He wrote, "an act cannot be

defined by the end sought by the actor, for an identical system of behaviour may be adjustable to too many different ends without altering its nature". This raises the spectre of suicide as merely a scene in a long play. For instance, one may develop over the course of life a yearning for fame. This produces certain behaviour from the actor that may lead to suicide, but it may not. As suicide is the result of a behavioural attitude, Durkheim saw that suicide could be equally produced "on the one hand, [by] courage and devotion, on the other [by] imprudence and clear neglect" ([1897] 1952, p.46). In other words, suicide is a conscious decision made in the light of an existing behavioural attitude; whether it is classed as noble or deviant behaviour is of no importance to the determination that it is suicide.

In essence, martyr testaments are said to reveal the psychological condition of the suicide bomber. What they reveal is a *collective psychology*. Durkheim concluded that the social suicidal tendency was "a distinctive trait of each collective personality [and] explained the collective suicidal tendency in terms of the social forces that arise from collective representations" (Schmaus, 1994, p.172). Durkheim recognised the importance of the individual's psychology, but found the study of the collective psychology far more fruitful. He made clear his position on the importance of psychology in *The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions*:

> Although sociology is defined as the science of societies, it cannot, in reality, deal with the human groups that are the immediate object of its investigation without eventually touching on the individual who is the basic element of which these groups are composed (Durkheim [1914] 1973, p.149).

But for Durkheim, psychology cannot explain human action without acknowledging that "our mental states ... are of social origin" (Durkheim [1914] 1973, p.149). Psychology, according to Durkheim, leaves out the most important aspect of understanding human action: the social condition. He makes this point in *Suicide* by arguing that "psychology *alone*" cannot account for trends in suicide from nation to nation and from time to time (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.46, emphasis added).

Alpert (1958, p.663) argued that it was not psychology that Durkheim objected to but "a particular schema of etiological analysis" that resulted in the analyst deriving an explanation for social action from a "table of psychological elements" that pays no mind to social realities. According to Alpert (1958, p.663), the fixed psychological element approach assumes "a biologically given, presocial, and precultural individual". He argued that "Durkheim devoted considerable effort to exposing the inadequacies of this standpoint. Man, he insisted, is a product as well as a creator of society, and consequently, a theory of human nature must be the end result and not the starting point of a science of sociology" (Alpert, 1958, p.663).

Durkheim needed to explain why only some members of society commit suicide while the majority do not. This is raised by suicide–terror analysts who question the collective-psyche hypothesis. For instance, Victoroff (2009, p.397) rejected the self-actualisation hypothesis put forward by Kruglanski et al. (2009) on the grounds that "if a quest for significance is a human universal, one must explain why such a tiny proportion of Saudis have become suicide bombers". He cited the population of Saudi Arabia as about 22.5 million (excluding 5.5 million non-nationals) and the number of completed suicide bombings by Saudis in Iraq as 53; thus, a mere 0.00024 per cent of

Saudis were suicide bombers. Conversely, the Palestinian psychiatrist and retired director of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Eyad Sarraj, who ascribes to the grievance hypothesis, questioned why it is that more people do not take this option, given that the collective psyche of the Palestinians is one of despair and revenge.

The answer to both of these queries is because suicide–terror operations are politically controlled, with the resources needed for an operation withheld until the group decides that an operation is warranted or possible. But this is not the answer sought here. How do we account for the knowledge that a collective psyche will only influence a percentage of the societal group to action? Durkheim suggested that the "mental constitution of suicide victims may offer less resistance to 'suicidogenic currents'" (Schmaus 1994, p.366): whether they were prone to low emotional states due to disappointment or failure, or whether they are narcissistic and more likely to succumb to the thrill of fame. Schmaus argued that "an individual suicide for Durkheim is a psychological fact that requires a psychological explanation" (Schmaus, 1994, p.172). But importantly, the individual's psychological reason for suicide does not detract from the social determination under which the death lay. Ironically, martyr testaments—far from revealing the motivation of the suicide—reveal the social and (or) political determination underlying the act; they do not tell us what "suicidogenic" currents lead the actor to that act.

The Living Martyr: Honour as a Commodity

Riaz Hassan (2006) argued that a suicide bombing is a consequence of the actor's deep-felt sense of honour and duty. This is not the end of the story: it is the beginning. As Mary Douglas (1986, p.31) argued, explanations of self-sacrifice to "satisfy a … need to maintain self-esteem" are ill placed: "We would have to ask what switches on the public-spirited emotional attitudes". Certainly, Hassan (2006) was referring to a culturally acquired disposition towards strong feelings of shame and honour, but did not elaborate on this. Douglas argued that for the actor to avail themself of the commodity of honour, that commodity has to be made available to the actor, whether this is through a small group, or "cell", or through a societal group. Honour codes have to be written into the group, reminiscent of Durkheim's category of altruistic suicide. Elements of his theory on the three forms of altruistic suicide—obligatory, optional, and transcendental—can be found in Jihadist Suicide. But we also observe a new element, personified in the living martyr: a suicidal mind resolved to envisage suicide constantly and contemplate it with joy. The societal configuration that allows the phenomenon of the living martyr is the paradigm that suicide is a moral ideal. Common perceptions leave no room for questions of morality in ordinary suicide. But what do we mean by morality?

The *Oxford Dictionary* cites the meaning of "moral" as "concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behaviour, or with the distinction between right and wrong" and "concerned with accepted rules and standards of human behaviour". This is often interpreted as abiding by a universal ideal of doing no harm, in other words, that morality is about protecting others from injury—physical, emotional, and economic.

But this is not what the description of morality intends to convey. The difference between "goodness and badness" and "right and wrong" concerns the ideals of the societal group, whether or not these ideals involve harm to others. Morality is subjective, relative, and ethnocentric—rather than objective. Indeed, many cases can be cited of collective behaviour deemed to be moral within one particular societal group that is frowned upon in another (Lutz, 1998).

Ordinary suicide has not always attracted the ire of society. From the earliest recorded writings on self-killing—dating back to Plato, and particularly the philosophy of the Stoics—it could be an act of human agency that was not only morally permissible but in some cases expected, admired, or simply a good idea. As Plato questioned in *Phaedo*, if death is better than life, why is it that man cannot open the door of his prison and run away? In his dialogue of Socrates' death Plato wrote:

> I suppose that you wonder why, as most things which are evil may be accidentally good, this is to be the only exception (for may not death, too, be better than life in some cases?), and why, when a man is better dead, he is not permitted to be his own benefactor, but must wait for the hand of another (cited in De Botton 1999, p.597).

Cholbi (2008, n.p.) noted that Plato did not restrict self-killing to "extreme and unavoidable personal misfortune". In *Laws*, he recognised three other occasions on which the taking of one's life was permissible and that related to questions of moral corruptness, judicial order, and shame[33]. In all other cases, Plato saw self-killing as "an

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[33] The four cases where Plato saw that suicide was permissible, as quoted to Cholbi (2008), were when: one's mind is morally corrupted and one's character can therefore not be salvaged (Laws IX 854a3–5); the self-killing is done by judicial order, as in the case of Socrates; the self-killing is compelled by extreme

act of cowardice or laziness undertaken by individuals too delicate to manage life's vicissitudes" (Cholbi, 2008, n.p.). One's life was held not to be their property, they were a servant of the gods, and therefore should endure life with courage.

John Sellars (2006) pointed out that for the Stoics a belief in "cosmic determinism" was equally matched by a belief in human freedom and the belief that it is virtuous to maintain a will which was theirs in accordance with nature. As such, Cholbi (2008) pointed out, the Stoics held no moral interdiction on suicide such as those enunciated by Plato, advocating instead that once life has lost "'natural advantages' (for example, physical health)" it "neither enhances nor diminishes moral virtue" to end it.

> When a man's circumstances contain a preponderance of things in accordance with nature, it is appropriate for him to remain alive; when he possesses or sees in prospect a majority of the contrary things, it is appropriate for him to depart from life. ... Even for the foolish, who are also miserable, it is appropriate for them to remain alive if they possess a predominance of those things which we pronounce to be in accordance with nature (Cicero, III, 60–61 cited in Cholbi, 2008, n.p.).

Such liberal views of the moral permissibility of self-killing all but vanished, largely due to the influence of Christianity. Sellars (2006) pointed out that Stoicism—and the general Greek philosophical thought—was quelled by the closing of philosophical schools by Justinian I who complained that these "pagan" philosophies were contrary to Christian teachings. Thus there was a hiatus in the West when questions of rational choice were not uttered. This was roughly from the time of Justinian I (c. 500 CE) until

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and unavoidable personal misfortune; and the self-killing results from shame at having participated in grossly unjust actions (Laws IX 873c-d) (Cholbi, 2008, n.p.).

the Enlightenment, when once again questions came to be asked about the moral permissibility of suicide.

The interdiction on self-killing from the time of Augustine was due to the high number of acts known as Christian martyrdom. Davies and Neal (2000, p.48) noted that the occurrence of hysterical religious suicides once caused "Augustine to … [ask] why those who were obsessed with the desire for a martyr's death never employed the rope which offered a much more comfortable way of taking one's life". Jesus' death on the cross was viewed for a time by early Christians as an exemplary act worthy of imitation. For Christianity, Jesus' death is seen as a deliberate act of self-annihilation in order to save mankind. To stem the tide of Christian martyrdom it was incumbent upon the Church to turn all acts of self-killing into a sin contrary to the wishes of God. The teachings of the Church and the religious laws (edicts) enacted, all strove to create this reality (Murray, 1998; 2000). Following the example of the ancients—and found in Judaic thought—man was held to be not of his own property; therefore self-killing turned from being honourable to immoral.

Arguments in support of the moral permissibility and the practicality of self-killing appeared during the Enlightenment due to a burgeoning freedom of expression. The dogma of Christendom prohibited freedom of expression and also exacted harsh penalties on those violating this law. The first recorded citing of a written argument against the interdiction of suicide was of the famous pamphlet by John Donne (*n*.1572–

1631) in *Biathanatos* (c. 1607, first published in 1644) on *self-homicide*[34]. In a similar vein to Plato, Donne questioned why it is that self-homicide is not permissible when one would be better off dead. He argued that, at times, there is a natural persuasion to death: "Whensoever any affliction assails me, methinks I have the keys of my prison in my own hand and no remedy presents itself so soon to my heart as mine own sword" (1644 cited in Lieberman, 2003, p.14).

David Hume similarly argued that suicide does not violate God's plan for us, and he "concludes that suicide 'may be free of imputation of guilt and blame'" (1783 cited in Cholbi, 2008, n.p.). Hume used logic to argue the unsoundness of a prohibition on suicide. However, as Cholbi (2008) pointed out, there persisted a strong moral interdiction on self-killing. And this was relevant to Morselli and Durkheim who saw suicide—in all its forms—as a moral problem. Tomasi (2000, p.11) pointed out that Durkheim was concerned with ethical problems during his intellectual formation and "followed closely the thought of Immanuel Kant and his school", who, according to Cholbi (2008, n.p.), saw suicide as man effacing humanity in his being. Indeed, Douglas (1967) pointed out that the combination of the question of morality in suicide, together with the "scientific approach" of using official statistics had earned researchers in this field the label of moral statisticians.

Similarly, William Ramp pointed out, Durkheim "position[ed] the discussion of suicide on grounds that clearly necessitates a distinctive *sociological response* to a *moral*

[34] Farberow (1975) said that "suicide"—according to the Oxford Dictionary—only appeared some six years after the publication of Donne's pamphlet; Murray (1998; 2000) argued that it appeared as early as the twelfth century.

problem" (2000, p.85, emphasis in original). Durkheim recognised altruistic suicide as a moral problem in the same way as he perceived egoistic, anomic, and fatalistic suicide. Although he expressed no moral indignation toward altruistic suicide, he showed his disapproval by suggesting ways to overcome it. In all four types, Durkheim clearly saw suicide as an act of human agency. It could exist in situations of moral fortitude—in the case of altruistic suicide—or moral weakness—in the cases of egoistic, anomic, and fatalistic suicide. But most importantly, he determined that suicide and the individual's orientation towards it was a social construction. All this demonstrates that to reinvent ordinary suicide as a moral ideal in the twenty-first century is not borne of a highly excited imagination: it is a very real likelihood, given what we know of the ideology that supports it.

Elements of Altruistic Suicide in Political Suicide

Durkheim's altruistic suicide involves a state of rudimentary individuation whereby the suicide is coerced to do the group's bidding, seeks their praise, or feels a mystic calling to the next life. None of these actually describe self-sacrifice. Davies and Neal (2000, p.36) pointed out that Durkheim's categories of altruistic and fatalistic suicides have been much neglected by later sociologists in favour of an almost single-minded concentration on the egoistic and anomic categories. They argued that their neglect is mostly due to a perception that altruistic and fatalistic suicides do not apply to today's modern society. This changed with the onset of suicide–terror. All four categories have been discussed in suicide–terror research.

Durkheim's altruistic suicide rested on the principle that the individual was highly integrated with the societal group. Scott Atran noted that "cultures of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia where [suicide–terror] thrives tend to be less individualistic than our own" (2004, p.76):

> These cultures are more attuned to the environmental and organizational relationships that shape behaviour and are less tolerant of individuals acting independently from a group context. Terrorists in these societies also would be more likely to be seeking a group, or collective, sense of belonging and justification for their actions (Atran, 2004, p.76).

Pape (2005, p.187) similarly noted that "it is impossible to understand the conduct, motivation, and self-perception of individual suicide attackers without considering the importance of the intimate ties that generally exist between suicide–terrorist organizations and their communities".

Conversely, Merari (2005b) and Biggs (2006) argued that Durkheim's ([1897] 1952) altruistic suicide cannot explain suicide–terror because it fails to comply with the requirement of a high level of social integration. Biggs (2006) contended that this category is characteristic of "highly integrated primitive societies" and does not exist in modern societies (except in the armed forces). He argued that modern suicide is "symptomatic of a lack of social integration and regulation" (Biggs, 2006, p.186). He concluded that "Durkheim's conception of social integration is notoriously difficult to operationalize" (Biggs, 2006, p.186). Merari (2005b) argued that altruistic suicide cannot apply to suicide–terror, because the level of social cohesion in the various religious and nationalist groups that now partake is inconsistent with Durkheim's theory. He pointed out that "the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

has a much tighter structure and discipline than Hamas. Yet, the PFLP has only generated a few suicide attacks whereas Hamas has carried out many" (Merari, 2005b, p.77).

Merari (2005b) and Biggs (2006) correctly identified that the level of social integration does not explain Jihadist Suicide. However, integration and regulation are not the cause *per se* of altruistic suicide: it is dependent upon the rules of the societal group. Suicide as a moral ideal is dependent upon the social recognition of suicide as a social good. As Davies and Neal pointed out: "if individuals are strongly integrated and strongly regulated, then their behaviour, including the committing of or restraining oneself from suicide, must depend on *the nature of the group and the content of the rules*" (2000, p.49, emphasis added). If we wished to stipulate a single quality that satisfies the condition for altruistic suicide, it is not the degree of integration, but that society permits it. Durkheim pointed out that a low suicide rate can be achieved in a strongly integrated society, such as with Catholicism, or conversely that a high suicide rate can be achieved in a strongly integrated society such as Bartholin's Danish warriors who "considered it a disgrace to die in bed of old age or sickness, and killed themselves to escape this ignominy" (Durkheim [1897] 1952, pp.217–218).

Obligatory altruistic suicide

According to Durkheim, obligatory altruistic suicide is coercive ([1897] 1952, p.220). The group makes certain claims on the individual that it feels is in the collective interest should some preordained event occur:

> If he fails in this obligation [to kill himself], he is dishonoured and also punished, usually, by religious sanctions. ... Now, we have seen that if such a person insists on living he loses public respect; in one case the usual funeral honours are denied, in another a life of horror is supposed to await him beyond the grave (Durkheim ([1897] 1952, p.219).

In essence, the actor makes a rational decision to renounce existence because the alternative is perceived to be a fate worse than death. We can see this in suicide–terror.

According to Hoffman, it is impossible to evade a suicide attack once chosen for the task because of the shame and humiliation that would follow such a refusal (2003, p.25; Sandilands 2004). This is exemplified in the Jihadist Suicide of Mohammad Farhat, described by Spencer (2006) as a blatant case of infanticide. Farhat's mother, Maryam Mohammad Yousif Farhat—also known as the Mother of Martyrs and Umm Nidal—videotaped herself with her 17 year-old son prior to his death in what she called a "parting ceremony" (Palestinian Media Watch). In the video, Umm Nidal's instruction to her son was that he was not to return: he had to die in the attack, which he did in a suicide attack on a Jewish settlement in Gaza.

Similarly, 21 year-old Abdurahman Khadr fled to Canada from Afghanistan following a death threat from his father after he refused to become a suicide bomber (*Four Corners* 2004; Sandilands, 2004). Khadr senior was highly involved with bin Laden and al Qaeda. It was reported by Khadr junior that his father had told him that if he turned his back on his duty to al Qaeda, he would kill him. But, unlike Mohammad Farhat, who had no opportunity to envisage life outside the group, Khadr junior spent his formative years in Canada where he developed a sense of self that was not irrevocably tied to the group. Moreover, he knew of a destination where he could seek refuge, where he would

not be rebuked, condemned, and humiliated for refusing to commit an act of murder–suicide (Sandilands, 2004).

Optional altruistic suicide

Durkheim used the word *optional* because he said "a man kills himself without being explicitly forced to do so" ([1897] 1952, p.222).

> His motive does not entail a deep-seated sense of duty as in the case of *obligatory suicide*, but rather can be for the most immediate and futile reason … His persuasion to do away with himself so readily is because he knows that his passing will not be mourned, rebuked, or regretted, but rather that it will win him esteem (Sandilands, 2004).

It is the same as obligatory suicide insofar as society condones it; but with optional altruistic suicide, the suicide's self-interest is better described as self-fulfilment.

Blake (1978, p.48) described optional altruistic suicide as a struggle between social recognition and social blindness to the individual's worth (Sandilands, 2004). This highlights Durkheim's theory of rudimentary individuation, but it also highlights the perception of the collective that there is nothing significant to be gained in an earthly existence save toiling for the collective good. His existence is to labour industriously for the good of the group and to accept his death and the death of others in his community without sadness or despair. Durkheim wrote, "so valueless a sacrifice [as the one who is "accustomed to set no value on life"] is easily assumed" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.223). Blake (1978) argued that such a state of insignificance is countered by the desire for public recognition of his personal worth through the enactment of a social norm considered praiseworthy. Durkheim pointed out that in societal groups that condone

optional altruistic suicide, such death is expected. In essence, it is the pointlessness of clinging to life that puzzles society when death is considered praiseworthy (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, pp.222–223).

Examples of this mindset are found in suicide–terror research. Chivers (2003, n.p.) quoted the story of Qais Ibrahim Khadir, a prisoner in a Kurdish jail who had been caught following an assassination attempt on Barham Salih, the Patriotic Union's Prime Minister. Khadir held just such a lack of concern for his own being. Chivers (2003) wrote, "he grinned beatifically at the prospect of paradise and talked comfortably about the possibility of his own execution … He marvelled at our interest in him, saying no single terrorist is significant". Chivers noted further that the ideology that supports Jihadist Suicide works specifically to place members of the group in just such a position of rudimentary individuation. He cited the words of Amd Abu Mujahed—a trainer who prepares participants for suicide missions—as saying that "men who embraced suicide missions were untroubled by the battlefield deaths of peers" (cited in Chivers, 2003; Sandilands, 2004). Enticing death through the impression that the death will be praised—not rebuked, mourned, or condemned—is one of the major tenets of Jihadist Suicide.

Optional altruistic suicide raises the spectre of suicide missions as "egocentric suicide" that is motivated by the prospect of "attaining an exalted existence after death" (Biggs 2006, p.196), and provides the actor with a "greater scope for ... vanity, due to the lengthy interval between volunteering and dying, during which the volunteer enjoys the approbation of others" (2006, p.207). The claim that the bomber has simply succumbed to the thrill of fame is a hypothesis that has been extensively highlighted (Varzi, 2002;

Argo, 2005; Marcus and Crook, 2004; Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005; Bloom, 2005, pp.29–30; Hronick, 2006; Hafez, 2006b; Salzman, 2008, p.129). These analysts have stressed how the adoration of the bomber permeates the public spaces: suicide attackers are regarded as heroes in their communities. When one 14 year-old Palestinian failed suicide bomber, interviewed in an Israeli jail, was asked why he wanted to do be a suicide bomber he replied, because "it was better than anything; it was better than being a football star". Fame is closely tied to the paradigm of Jihadist Suicide being a moral ideal.

Acute, Mystic or Transcendental Suicide

The use of religion in the Jihadist Suicide paradigm has ensured that acute, mystic, or transcendental suicide (hereafter referred to as transcendental) is a strong feature. Durkheim noted that optional and obligatory altruistic suicide "caused a man to kill himself only with the concurrence of circumstances ... But it ... happens [with transcendental suicide] that the individual kills himself purely for the joy of sacrifice" ([1897] 1952, p.223). Like optional altruistic suicide, the goal is self-fulfilment. For Durkheim, transcendental suicide "has the more definitely altruistic character": here "we actually see the individual in all these cases seek to strip himself of his personal being in order to be engulfed in something which he regards as his true essence" ([1897] 1952, p.225). They see this life as an obstacle. Moreover, transcendental suicide "springs from hope; for it depends on the belief in beautiful perspectives beyond this life" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952, p.225), "it even implies enthusiasm and the spur of a faith eagerly seeking satisfaction, affirming itself by acts of extreme energy"

(Durkheim, [1897] 1952, pp.225–226). Durkheim noted that belief in the afterlife leads "more directly and violently to suicide" ([1897] 1952, p.223).

Durkheim noted that the Christian "thinks that his true country is not of this world": their life is but a "sad trial" designed to assess their worth in entering the afterlife—the true life ([1897] 1952, p.226). This is reflected in Jihadist Suicide. The notion of this world not being the final destination is reflected in the words of Walla and Yusra, two articulate Palestinian girls who long for death. In an interview regarding their attitudes to martyrdom, they state clearly that "*shahada* [death in the path of Allah], is not death". But they do concede that there is a physical absence following the act of *shahada* that must depict the consequence of death. There can be no mistaking the absence of life among those that remain. *Shahada*, for Walla and Yusra, is opening the door of their earthly existence and receiving the passageway to another dimension (cited on Palestinian Media Watch).

Freud (1918) contended that visions of the afterlife have existed throughout time, but that it was religion that:

> declared this after-life as the more valuable and perfect and to debase our mortal life to a mere preparation for the life to come. It was then only logical to prolong our existence into the past and to invent former existences, transmogrations of souls, and reincarnations, all with the object of depriving death of its meaning as the termination of life.

It is not unusual therefore, that transcendental suicide is not viewed as death. He further contended that "our unconscious … does not believe in its own death; it acts as though it were immortal". Tatz (2001, p.113) recognised this in indigenous Australian and New

Zealand youth who often promise that they will *see* those who attend their funeral. His study of Aboriginal youth suicide and Freud's theory on transmogrations of the soul demonstrate that children are particularly vulnerable to suggestion of suicide when these factors are "alive" in a child's thinking. Moreover, they create the necessary paradigm for the establishment of the syndrome of the living martyr.

The syndrome of the living martyr

The other consideration in a theory of life after death is death during life. It is recognisable as a combination of optional and transcendental suicide, but it has as an additional symptom, that of being the living dead. Alvarez (1971) gave this example in a description of the suicide of Ellen West as described by her treating psychiatrist, Ludwig Binswanger. He explained that her life consisted of "being-a-corpse among people". Binswanger (1958, cited in Alvarez, 1971, p.124) described her demureness when he saw her just before her suicide: she appeared "calm and happy, perhaps for the first time ever"—indeed, she appeared in a "festive mood". Her existence as a corpse among people had only one purpose—to die. The realisation that that moment had come, according to Binswanger, was enough to fill her spirit with joy.

This may simply be another way of explaining a life-long dream to fulfil a childhood ambition—like walking on the moon, or something less ambitious like becoming a fireman, or a mother. Suicide, according to Alvarez, can be a life-long ambition. It is something that every move throughout life either aids or frustrates—the one creating satisfaction, and the other, a brooding melancholy. Alvarez understood this sensation from his experience as a failed suicide. On reflection, he dated the idea back to his

childhood, recalling his bemused reaction to his parents' half-hearted claim that they had stuck their heads in the gas oven. He thought it a "splendid gesture … something hidden, attractive and not for the children, like sex" (Alvarez, 1971, p.225). Later in life he experienced what he thought was a cathartic taste of suicide: vaguely explained, he recalled it had to do with a repeated dream about solving a mathematics problem and saving the family, but never getting it right. Then, in the throes of being anaesthetised, he drifted off remembering the dream; he woke following the operation knowing the mathematical equation. In his mind, he recalled in the years following his attempted suicide, he had deceived himself to view his death—the death he knew he would have at his own hand—as filled with the same knowing certainty (and, perhaps, calm resolve).

Like *Rashomon* his understanding of his attempted suicide is fleeting, fragile, and uncertain—continually open to another recollection from the past. With certainty, he understood that at some stage the seed had been sown, and, like poor Ellen West, he was certain of its inevitability. With Jihadist Suicide, the planted seed is not as unclear. The means of arriving at this thought are not trapped away in the partially forgotten memory of a child tantalised by the forbidden fruit of adulthood; it can be recalled through successive memories of incidents, all steering the child towards this "splendid gesture"—suicide.

This phenomenon is not confined to children. Hassan, at a conference on suicide missions at Macquarie University in 2006, showed a video recording of a suicide bombing in Iraq. The clip showed an overjoyed man preparing for the mission—his joy was so extreme that at times he appeared unable to follow the instructions given by his handlers. His instructions were simple: drive the car packed with explosives towards the

United States army convoy on the road ahead and, when you reach it, press the detonator. Hassan explained that his joy was due to his resolve that he was avenging the alleged rape of a woman at the hands of Allied troops. His disposition lacked the dignified resolve expected of one resigned to die for honour. It better resembled the uncontrolled joy of a child at a fairground. Like Ellen West, his life had suddenly "become ripe for its death … this death, was the necessary fulfilment of the life-meaning of this existence" (Binswanger, 1958, cited in Alvarez, 1971, p.89). Like Walla and Yusra, the honour of killing—and killing oneself—is the life-meaning of this existence. The stated motive—whether the killing of Jews in Israel, or avenging war crimes in Iraq—is secondary to the fulfilment of the social norm. Tomasi (2000, p.15) noted: "Durkheim argued that only the group could furnish the individual with valid reasons for his or her existence". A life-long ambition to enact an "honourable" death is also a purpose for living. It is simply a reversal of the moral order that is common to the rest of the world.

PART IV :

IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE CHANGE

Chapter 8

Ideology and the Jihadist Suicide Phenomenon

"Freedom fighter" is one name given to suicide bombers. That wording takes us on a path of enquiry that concentrates on war and violence rather than on the death of the Jihadist Suicide. The suicide–terror doctrine is dual: it consists of one vein that promotes killing and another that promotes suicide. They are complementary, but they can be identified as unique. Thus, *jihad* (or "resistance") is the pathway that promotes conflict and killing and is a negative view of the world as evil, with outsiders as legitimate targets for killing. On the other hand, martyrdom—the avenue that promotes Jihadist Suicide—is positive, viewing death as the ultimate accomplishment of life. The suicide–martyrdom doctrine appears to elide with the "resistance" doctrine that creates freedom fighters.

Suicide–terror is seen as a spontaneous reaction to humiliation, injustice, and an imbalance in military force. The perpetrator is believed to be inspired by an ideational disposition towards self-death and is simply reacting to their socio-political environment. In short, the political goal, plus the need to defeat, or at least hurt, a stronger enemy, is thought to be sufficient to produce suicide–terror (Holmes, 2008). Hence, much work on suicide–terror concentrates on ideology as a justification for conflict and killing. Certainly, much valuable work has been done to acknowledge the justifications given by militant leaders for the use of this tactic (Pape, 2005; Moghadam, 2008; Merari, 2010). The most we can ascertain from the accumulated knowledge on

the terrorists' justifications (or motivations) is that they admit to "equifinality", that is, they all produce the same consequence via different ideological pathways. I contend that the political struggle is necessary but not sufficient to produce suicide–terror. Political struggle has been a constant feature of humanity; political suicide has not.

The doctrinal vein that produces suicide can be studied—and ought to be studied—quite apart from the study of an ideology that promotes the struggle for political power, separatism, and (or) irredentism and world domination. The suicide–martyrdom doctrine is not always concerned with political goals *per se*, but rather changing traditional death meanings. As discussed earlier, the suicide–martyrdom doctrine is anathema to traditional ideas about death and self-killing. It is new. In one sense, analysts like Pape (2005; 2008)—who claims that no moment of transition between high-risk activism and suicide can be found in the psyche of the suicide bomber—are correct. But this is not because an ideological and cultural change did not occur to change the dominant paradigm of heroism from high-risk activism to suicide. It simply means that no change was apparent in the mind of the bomber at the time of their interview.

We ask: how could this be the case? As Khosrokhavar (2005) has noted, we have to recognise two epochs of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine: the first that pertained to small-group activity where indoctrination and brainwashing were necessary; and the second—the epoch he referred to as *martyropathy*—in its institutionalised form. For instance, ideologies of valour and sacrifice were prolific during the Iranian Revolution, but only the politically involved sacrificed their lives. Following the Revolution—in the war years—*martyropathy* was everywhere. A distinction between Khosrokhavar's two

epochs can be seen between the episodes of the first and second *intifadas* in Israel. At the end of the first *intifada*, evidence of small-group activity and brainwashing can be seen; the entire second *intifada* was marked by *martyropathy*.

During the first epoch of the Palestinian example, there was a concerted effort to change the thinking of the bomber—hence a moment of transition can be identified. I discussed this earlier in relation to Sageman's theory of "in-group love", small-group dynamics, and conversion. In the *martyropathy* epoch, suicide appears as "natural" and no moment of transition is apparent in the mind of the thinker. It can be shown from case studies of the Iranians and the Palestinians that for the suicide–martyrdom doctrine to become institutionalised, it needed state (or equivalent) approval: a majority consensus among political elites and counter-elites, the availability of vast resources, and a monopoly (or a coalition) in the dissemination of these ideas.

The Birth of an Idea

The instrumentalist view of Jihadist Suicide has run into epistemological difficulty. Iris Jean-Klein (2002) contended that a dominant trend in suicide–terror discourse is to lean towards ideology as false consciousness. This paradigm sees the masses as unequal partners "under the influence of manipulative, if not coercive, authoritarian political and/or religious regimes or figures", which use idiosyncratic interpretations of sacred texts to their advantage (Jean-Klein, 2002, p.27). Hart (n.d.) noted that Marx thought the French Revolutionary figure who conceived of ideology—Antoine-Louis-Claude, Comte Destutt de Tracy (*n*.1754–1836)—a "*fischblütige Bourgeoisdoktrinär*" (a cold-blooded bourgeois doctrinaire).

Geertz (1973) contended that ideology as accusation caused something of a dilemma in social science. It resulted in a dire need to analyse objectively—and either support or condemn—the ideological argument. In essence, the social sciences developed a perception, through intellectualised pursuit, that one must create an opposing ideology in order to counter what is considered incoherent, or perhaps unpalatable. Hence, the meaning behind his opening statement that "it is one of the minor ironies of modern intellectual history that the term 'ideology' has itself become thoroughly ideologized" (Geertz, 1973, p.193). He argued that this is a backlash against the horrors of the last century:

> Perhaps it is even not too much to suggest that, as the militant atheism of the Enlightenment and after was a response to the quite genuine horrors of a spectacular outburst of religious bigotry, persecution, and strife …, so the militantly hostile approach to ideology is a similar response to the political holocausts of the past half-century (Geertz, 1973, pp.199–200).

Napoleon started the trend by denouncing Destutt de Tracy and his colleagues as "ideologues", using the term in a derogatory way. At first Napoleon supported him, but soon became bitterly opposed to his liberal republicanism. Destutt de Tracy conceived of ideology as a political philosophy that was set apart from other thought-systems for two reasons: it was pragmatic in that it attempted to improve the condition of human life; it was programmatic as it attempted to implement a political program intended to garner support and change attitudes (Cranston, n.d.). He did not see his particular form of ideology as the vulgar struggle for advantage, but as the emancipation of man from the servitude and dogma of religion, and deliverance to the principles and practices of

reason. This argument between Napoleon and Destutt de Tracy is the approximate equivalent of modern debates that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

Geertz (1973, p.194) argued against the possibility of cold-hearted objectivity. He agreed with Mannheim that ideology "does not grow out of disembodied reflection but 'is always bound up with the existing life situation of the thinker'". In sum, it is disingenuous to assert that any study of ideology can claim intellectual cold-heartedness, or that methodological procedure can allow the researcher to set aside the "immediate concerns of the day" and develop a "cultivated awareness of and correction for one's own biases and interests" (Geertz, 1973, pp.194–195). Moreover, Geertz (1973, p.195) saw the pursuit of such a methodology as having the ultimate effect of producing "an ethical and epistemological relativist" position. He noted, that even Mannheim was uncomfortable with this as he struggled to overcome the problem of finding a "non-evaluative conception of ideology" (Geertz, 1973, p.194). His solution to this epistemological dilemma was to avoid questions of moral certitude and simply see ideological formation as social facts about human agency and the socio-political environment.

This is closer to Destutt de Tracy's conception of ideology as the science of ideas. It was developed with his colleagues, known as the *Idéologues*, at the *Institut National, Section de l'Analyse des Sciences et Idées*. Cranston (n.d.) noted that Destutt de Tracy built his conception of ideology from the theoretical work of John Locke, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, and Francis Bacon. It was an intellectual pursuit concerned with the study of habits, sensations, and the workings of the will. The programmatic side of his ideology was mostly concerned with an education program, believing that the

dissemination of ideas (as opposed to dogma) was sufficient for the task of humanity's emancipation. The *Oxford Dictionary* cited the etymology of ideology as from the French *idëologie* and as derived from the Greek root words *eidos* (idea) and *logos* (reason, discourse).

Intellectual leadership was the cornerstone of Destutt de Tracy's ideology. But the idea of ideology as a coherent set of beliefs that only needs to be disseminated to draw action led to the same epistemological problems as Geertz outline above. Kruglanski et al. (2008, p.333, n.2) pointed out that ideology in suicide–terror discourse "has been taken to imply a relatively intricate belief system that requires an extensive background knowledge to enable the extraction of its action implications". This is consistent with the popular view of ideology in the social sciences as "a comprehensive, consistent, deductively organized belief system" (Shils, 1958 cited in Putnam, 1971, p.655). Putnam (Naess, 1956, cited in Putnam, 1971, p.656) objected, concluding that if we were to accept this definition, "it is far from being a 'fact' that any ideology has ever existed". We simply give too much to Jihadist ideology by viewing it as having sufficient doctrinal strength alone to have produced the suicide–terror phenomenon. Indeed, analysts have noted that there is no doctrinal consistency in the suicide–martyrdom doctrine (Lawrence, 2005).

Certainly, the idea did come from the intellectual fringe. The suicide–martyrdom doctrine—like Destutt de Tracy's endeavour—was a process of knowledge-building and intellectual refinement. It is widely held that it stemmed from the thought of such contemporary ideologues as Sayyid Qutb (*n*.1906–1966), a Sunni Egyptian; Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari (*n*.1920–1979), an Iranian Shi'i; Sayyid Abu Ala al Mawdudi

(*n*.1903–1979), a Sunni Indo-Pakistani; and Ali Shari'ati (*n*.1933–1977), a Shi'i Iranian. Sayyid Qutb has attracted great attention from scholars who seek a doctrinal understanding of suicide–terror. An eminent scholar, poet, and Islamist, Qutb amassed a popular following and his doctrine came to be known as *Qutibism*. His execution in Egypt in 1966 created a revolutionary fervour amongst the politically active. But Qutb was unsuccessful in changing the traditional Egyptian–Sunni death meanings to support the doctrine of martyrdom as a suicide. Noteworthy is that suicide–terror in the Sunni world did not spring from Qutb. His legacy lies in the doctrinal groundwork he left for ideologues like Shari'ati.

Qutb's ideological doctrine is best known for its concept of *jihad* as *offensive* war, as opposed to the traditional meaning of *jihad* as *defensive* war; and his conceptualisation of our current time as being marked by the return of the *jahiliyya*, the people of ignorance. He developed these concepts by reference to two radical Islamists: Ibn Taymiyyah (*n*.1263–1328) with regard to *jihad* as offensive war and, with regard to his theories on the *jahiliyya*, Sayyid Abu Ala al Mawdudi (*n*.1903–1979) the influential Indo-Pakistani Islamist ideologue and founder of the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, the Pakistani version of the Muslim Brotherhood. Killing was permitted under his version of *offensive* jihad. Qutb sanctioned traditional martyrdom—the will to risk life for Allah—as the duty of every "true" Muslim.

Ali Shari'ati borrowed from the thought of Qutb, playing on the two registers of *jihad* as offensive war, and martyrdom as the obligation of each and every "true" Muslim. But unlike Qutb—who railed against Western thought and tried to establish the myth of a pure Islamic culture—Shari'ati embraced Western thought and discourse. He was a

sociologist and understood the importance of developing a *revolutionary* ideology that would raise the masses from their contentment and rally them on the streets in a fight against evil. Milani (2010, n.p.) pointed out that Shari'ati's ideological doctrine was "was emblematic of the incongruent political coalition that came together in Iran's pre-revolutionary days". He noted that Shari'ati's "lectures in Tehran attempted to synthesize Marx and Muhammad, Imam Hussein (the quintessence of the Shia cult of martyrdom) and Che Guevara" (Milani, 2010, n.p.). He embraced Third Worldism and translated the works of Frantz Fanon into Persian and introduced Fanon's thought to the urban youth. He wrote prolifically and worked tirelessly to disseminate his ideas in rallies, lectures, and recorded speeches.

Shari'ati's idea was to create a new religion based on sacrifice and martyrdom. He displayed an appreciation that despite encouragement to challenge existing socio-political realities, the dominant paradigm or mindset can prevent change from being advanced. He set out to change dominant paradigms. He argued that this new religion started with an ideology, which was chosen by the people out of prudence, to cement the "group's beloved ideals into reality" (Shari'ati, 1981, p.89). He knew that this would not be achieved through reasoned and rational debate, but through symbolism. He spun elaborate webs throughout his writings, designed to change dominant paradigms through the use of imagery. In the following passage he alerts us to his understanding of the malleability of cultural objects:

> Once I came across a portrait of Ali with mustaches twice as long as those of Shah Abbass' in the hand of a student in Europe who was from the 'Druze' denomination. I asked him who he was, whereby he responded, 'Ali (PBUH)!" Now look at the Iranian drawings of Ali and

> Mohammad (PBUH); they both look like Persians. The prophet looks like Zoroaster, his Arabic attire has changed, so has his makeup! These are indicative of the fact that the spirit of nationality of a race manifests itself in religious symbols, traditions, and mottos; this is what Durkheim talks about when he uses 'manifestation of the collective spirit' (Shari'ati, 1981, pp.88–89).

The dominant paradigm that Shari'ati needed to change in order to bring about his new religion was traditional death meanings. Revolutionary fervour was much easier to achieve. According to Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005), Shari'ati constantly plays on the theme of building a revolutionary sacrificial self. On the one hand, he tries to break the bonds of a communitarian society—or, as was the case with many of the urban youth of the time who were experiencing the effects of late-modernity, he attempts to justify their individuality by emphasising the essential role of the individual, who is free to "'construct a revolutionary self' (*khod sazi e enquelabi*)" (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.41). The second register that Shari'ati plays on is the responsibility of the revolution that demands death: "Characterised by the demand for self-sacrifice for an ideal that is more important than life" (Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.42). Here he introduces the notion that death is its own reward and the sole right and responsibility of the actor. This is reflected in his motto: "If you can, slay and if you cannot, die" (Shari'ati cited in Khosrokhavar, [2002] 2005, p.44).

Shari'ati died (not of his own volition) almost 10 years before the first suicide bombing. Like Qutb, he was unable to realise his dream of a new religion in his lifetime. This, together with a dearth of suicide bombings emanating from Iran, contributed to the tendency to overlook him when studying suicide–terror. Apart from Qutb, it has been popular to attribute the suicide–terror doctrine to *Salafism*, particularly the al Qaeda

version, and to bin Laden's deputy, the Palestinian Ayman al Zawahiri. It is not necessary to look farther afield than Shari'ati in the search for the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. However, we need not dwell too long on the detail of this doctrine. We will not make any great discovery through a study of its doctrinal strength or a debate on its legitimacy. Ideology here is best approached as the study of how these utopian ideas, developed by intellectuals and implemented by political elites and (or) counter-elites, affected the masses through a monopoly on resources—both material and charismatic—and the malleability of cultural objects and their impact on emotions.

Political Elites, Autocracy, and Institutionalisation

Harold D Lasswell (1936, p.3) contended that "the study of politics is the study of influence and the influential". He noted that the "influential are those who get the most of what there is to get". Like Lasswell, Putnam (1971, p.651) noted that there are members of every societal group who "are much more interested, much more involved, and much more influential in public affairs than their fellows". He took it for granted that there is an elite political culture and a mass political culture. He contended that it is the elites who hold "quite sophisticated and complex political belief systems" (Putnam, 1971, p.652). These individuals, or groups of individuals, are responsible for forming "the set of politically relevant beliefs, values, and habits" (Putnam, 1971, p.651). These inform behaviour: their own and those whom they are able to influence.

According to Zuckerman (1977, p.331), a comprehensive definition of "political elite" is yet to be decided. He argued that it is enough to arrive at a workable definition—one that clearly defines members of the political elite. I favour Putnam's (1971) emphasis

on *influence*, rather than political power *per se*. Brass (1978; 2010) contended that social influence goes to counter-elites also. The definition of counter-elite is vaguer than that of elite. Brass uses this term to describe the secular and religious Muslims in India, who were motivated to form a separatist Muslim state. In their success, these counter-elites became the political elites of the newly formed state of Pakistan. In the same way, counter-elites like Khomeini and Arafat became political elites once they attained state (or equivalent) power.

The influence of political elites and counter-elites is aided by two factors: legitimacy and skill (Lasswell, 1936; Brass, 1978; 2010; Wuthnow, 1987; Schudson, 2002). Legitimacy is usually awarded to traditional figures, like Khomeini and Sheik Yassin, but in the modern world this is extended to charismatic newcomers who are able to usurp legitimacy from traditional holders, or forge political space for themselves in competition with traditional elites. Men like bin Laden and Arafat come to mind. Charisma—more than tradition—demands skill in drawing an audience, disseminating ideas, and recruiting adherents. This has more to do with rhetorical force and dramaturgical ability than with doctrinal consistency. Milani (2010, n.p.) argued that Shari'ati's fiery lectures successfully fulfilled this requirement: he was "hardly a man of great erudition" but "had a gift for ideological alchemy". Khomeini is also touted as having the same fiery oration as Shari'ati; actors like bin Laden and Sheik Yassin were equally rhetorically and dramaturgically successful in assuming the position of quietly spoken Messiah-like characters.

Weber recognised charisma as a resource. These resources are sufficient to influence small groups, like underground sleeper cells, where radical ideas can be absorbed

through the mechanics of isolation (Lasègue and Falret, 1877), and small-group dynamics (Hudson, 1999) which ensure that the idea-action nexus works. Lasègue and Falret recognised that irrational ideas held by an insane individual can be taken up by a sane individual if they are isolated from competing ideas. Salib (2003) argued that today's small-cell terror organisations have ensured that *the madness of two* (the title of Lasègue and Falret's 1877 thesis) have ensured *the madness of many* (Sandilands, 2004). Here, madness is defined as radical and disturbing ideas rather than insanity *per se*.

In the twenty-first century it is not hard to find a band of the "lost", suffering from ontological insecurity and moral panic, who are looking for radical certainty in extremist groups (Young, 1999; Phillips, 2010). This includes those drawn to fundamentalist religious groups with extremist and radical beliefs. Surprising recruits like Richard Reid—also known as the shoe bomber—hail from small pockets of extremism. Reid was converted to radicalism while attending the Finsbury Park Mosque in North London, which was then under the leadership of the radical *imam* Abu Hamza al Masri. Organisations—like al Qaeda that facilitated Reid's attempted bombing of an American Airlines plane in 2001—aid in the dissemination of radical ideas in training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But they only have the resources to influence members of the in-group. To family members not involved with the radical group, and to the outside community, their ideas remain unpalatable.

The advancement of a specific ideology does not happen without resources sufficient to institutionalise the idea within the political, religious, and domestic spheres (Wuthnow, 1987, p.172). Schudson (2002, p.146) argued that if these ideas "never turn up in a

school classroom, never become a part of common reference, never enter into the knowledge formally required for citizenship or job-holding or social acceptability, their power will be limited". This is because "the more thoroughly a cultural object is institutionalized—in the educational system or economic and social system or in the dynamics of family life, the more opportunity there is for it to exercise influence" (Schudson, 2002, p.146).

Becoming an institution involves "developing a relatively stable means of securing resources, an internal structure for processing these resources, some degree of legitimacy with respect to societal values and procedural norms, and sufficient autonomy from other institutions to be able to establish and pursue independent goals" (Wuthnow, 1987, p.169). Certainly, organisations like al Qaeda have institutionalised Jihadist Suicide within their organisations, but they only have the power to affect in-group members and, to a limited degree, a global network of Internet users who have internalised their tenets and isolated themselves from competing ideas.

There are two stages to the institutionalisation process. Khosrokhavar (2005) recognised the first epoch of Jihadist Suicide as during the Revolution with the death of martyrs. The second epoch is the post-Revolutionary phase when martyrdom was in pathological existence: hence "martyropathy". My analysis differs slightly from this. I recognise two epochs, and I agree that his second epoch—that of *martyropathy*—is its institutionalised stage. But I do not see Khosrokhavar's first epoch—that of the bravado-filled hotheads—as the first epoch, but in fact as a different phenomenon altogether. This behaviour is consistent with high-risk activism and is not the same as Jihadist Suicide where the attackers plan their deaths and intend dying. I see the first epoch as the initial

spread of Jihadist Suicide from Iran to Hezbollah, the Tamil Tigers, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hamas. This was before the institutionalisation of Jihadist Suicide in these communities. I recognise Jihadist Suicide during this first epoch as a cult or a sect.

The description that I take from Wuthnow is his distinction between churches and sects. He argued that churches “extract resources in a relatively non-intensive way from a large segment of the environment”, whereas sects “extract resources intensively from a smaller segment of the environment” (Wuthnow, 1987, p.173). The former represents the institutionalised stage of an ideology; the latter is indicative of small-group dynamics, whereby an extreme effort is required to bring the fresh recruit to accept the bizarre new ideas. This form has been well covered in the literature (Sageman, 2004; Post, 1985; Hudson, 1999) and is discussed here in Chapter 7 under the section on altruistic suicide.

There has been less coverage in the literature of the institutionalised state, yet it was the very state that Shari’ati envisaged and laboured to achieve. “Throughout history ... we come across two kinds of religions (or two historical epochs): a period in which religion appears in the form of an ideology, or one in which religion is in the form of mores and folkways” (Shari’ati, 1981, p.88). “Mores and folkways” was an expression used by Althusser to describe normative behaviour, in the same way that Mary Douglas (1986) saw an ideology imbedded in culture as a “thought-world”. Shari’ati was cognitive of ideology stemming from the intellectual fringe, and of it eventually being absorbed in the culture:

> All the great prophets, at the outset of their missions created a consciousness-generating enlightening movement, and they voiced distinct human, group, and class mottos. Consequently, all those who joined them: slaves, scientists, or philosophers, did it consciously. But later these religions were transformed from 'movements' into institutions; they became organized and turned into the foundation of society. In this institutionalization stage, religion is a social organization and a bureaucracy. It becomes genetic and hereditary; once a child is born he is automatically a Muslim, Buddhist, socialist, or a materialist. At this point an ideology, religious or nonreligious, is no longer an ideology; it is a tradition which is not consciously chosen by the individual (Shari'ati, 1981, pp.88–89).

Khomeini needed to seize power before this was possible. Traditional death meanings and a protectionist spirit towards one's loved ones protected Iranian society from the institutionalisation of Shari'ati's ideas. In both the Palestinian and Iranian cases of *martyropathy,* the ideological imagery had been disseminated for some years prior to a sudden burst of collective zeal. Both incidences correspond to the institutionalisation of Jihadist Suicide in these areas of conflict. The circumstances in each case differ, but they both rest on the use of autocratic power.

Juergensmeyer (1993, p.6) defined a nation-state as "a modern form of nationhood in which a state's authority systematically pervades and regulates an entire nation, whether through democratic or totalitarian means". We have been conditioned to think of the democratic legal-bureaucratic state in terms of the separation of powers and, hence, independent organisations operating under their own ideological logic. In practice, each state—whether democratic or totalitarian—dictates the ideological underpinning of these organisations. Wuthnow (1987, p.178) pointed out that even within a democratic

setting, the vast resources of the state “can sometimes simply ‘swamp’ all other competitors by declaring a particular ideology to be official”.

Khomeini’s ability to command vast resources in part came from his “inheritance” of rational-bureaucratic organisations developed under the Shah in his quest to modernise. Traditional organisations are harder to bring under control, because they lack a central authority. Part of his work in seizing total power was already done. He had written during the Revolution in *Velayat-i-Faqih: Hukumat-i-Islami* (*Guardianship of the Clergy: Islamic Government*) on his vision for a totalitarian government once in power. When he gained power he implemented this. His first action was to declare himself Supreme Leader, and he set out to order society in his vision. His totalitarian rule destroyed some institutions and created others. Certainly, many of the changes to the institutional structure of the Islamic Republic were designed to ensure the supremacy of Islam. Organisations like the newly created, *vilayat-i-faqih* and the Revolutionary Guard were charged with this task, but also with social control generally, which extended to the elimination of competing ideological doctrines. Khomeini used the state’s institutions to bring about an ideological change that would not have been possible if he did not have control of the bureaucratic apparatus.

In relation to the Palestinian case, these factors were virtually identical. But Arafat had to be content with a power-sharing position with Hamas. He lacked the totalitarian hold that Khomeini enjoyed. Certainly, on Bloom’s telling (2005, pp.19–44), there is a question as to whether Arafat truly desired to create a nation of *shahids* (martyrs), or whether he simply bowed to popular pressure. Bloom (2005, pp.23–29) contended that Palestinian popularity for suicide bombings was a result of Israeli provocation. She

listed precipitants that spanned the 1994 to 2002 period as being sufficient provocation to account for the popularity of suicide bombings against Jewish Israeli targets. However, it is not clear from this analysis why there was a sudden spike in popularity on the eve of the second *intifada*, where—during the *intifada*—suicide-bombing attacks reached the state of *martyropathy*. The precipitants listed by Bloom (2005, pp.23–29) were equivalent events to others that had occurred over many decades, without a sudden shift in traditional sensibilities about the suicide of loved ones.

It is the suddenness of the shift in public opinion that is startling. An opinion poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC) (JMCC, 2001, n.p.) in March 1999 recorded support for suicide bombings within the Palestinian population in Israel and the Territories as only 26.1 per cent. The same poll conducted in June 2000—a mere 15 months later—recorded the support as 68.6 per cent. During this period, support for conventional militant attacks against Israel was consistently high (62.3 per cent in April 1999, rising by 19.3 percentage points to 81.6 per cent in June 2000). Persuasion to suicide attacks could not be measured in terms of maximal damage to the enemy-other, as is so often claimed in suicide–terror discourse.

The available evidence is that the last successful suicide bombing—that is, one that claimed the life of a Jewish Israeli—occurred on 6 November 1998. It killed two Israelis and wounded 20. The only other successful suicide bombing in that year occurred on 29 October, killing one Israeli. In 1999, two suicide bombings occurred; the only deaths were that of the bombers. Given that recent history, suicide bombings hardly represented a means of seeking revenge. Given the result of the first wave of suicide bombings that were designed to derail peace negotiations, one would wonder at

the June 2000 poll in support of suicide bombings when the Camp David II Peace Conference was still in process, and had not in fact concluded until 5 July 2000 when Arafat walked out. Did the Palestinians intend to spoil the peace negotiations? Did they hold such a pathological need to do so that they were prepared to enlist loved one's for suicide missions? In my view, it was unlikely that they gave much mind to Israel in this decision. The answer lies with political changes that occurred within Palestinian society, and not at the level of third-party (Israeli) behaviour, unless we are talking about the use of these events as propaganda.

It happened because a synthesis between Arafat's Fatah Party and Hamas at the time of the second *intifada* institutionalised Jihadist Suicide. The Palestinian Authority (PA) under the leadership of Arafat had developed a modern bureaucratic apparatus with the guidance of state-building developmental advice from the United States and other interested parties. He held the same autocratic rule over the ideological underpinnings of the PA as Khomeini held over the Iranian bureaucracy. Arafat did not enjoy total control, because Hamas had established a government bureaucracy in parallel with the PA. Hamas held enormous influence in the development of ideologies, because of their command of these bureaucratic organisations, including hospitals, charities, television and radio stations, and their control of mosques. They—along with the PIJ—had imported the suicide–martyrdom doctrine in 1992 with the return of the deportees from association with Hezbollah in Lebanon. Yet Hamas had not institutionalised Jihadist Suicide because Arafat had remained neutral. In other words, there was not yet total public and domestic saturation of these ideas in the marketplace.

In the world of Realpolitik, elites and counter-elites constantly adjust their ideas to maximise advantage. Lasswell (1936, p.207) contended: “Politics is a changing pattern of loyalties, strategies, tactics; and political analysis may quite properly review the succession of predominant attitudes through the stream of time”. One such succession of attitudes to Jihadist Suicide can be seen with Arafat and his support of suicide bombings. Bloom (2005) argued that he joined his political rivals, Hamas, in support of suicide bombings because of his conviction that he was losing a popularity war with the Islamist group. This may have weighed on his mind and been a factor in his decision, but his decision resulted in cooperation and not opposition. Zuckerman (1977, p.334) noted that cooperation between elites “derives from a set of shared circumstances and personal goals”. Even though Hamas and Arafat’s Fatah Party were in opposition, they nonetheless cooperated in order to further their war with Israel. Jihadist Suicide by Palestinians of all political persuasions, and of the Christian and Muslim religions, proliferated from the time of Arafat’s cooperation. The statistics are staggering. In 2002 alone, there were 55 suicide bombings resulting in the death of 220. In March 2002, there were 12 suicide bombings, representing upward of one every three days.

Ideology as the Study of Sensations

Destutt de Tracy ([1817] 2009, p.*xxv*) wrote: “The faculty of willing is that of finding some one thing preferable to another. It is a mode and a consequence of the faculty of feeling”. Today we may simply say that in order for an ideology to recruit adherents and influence behaviour it must resonate with the audience. The importance of Destutt de Tracy’s study of ideology as the study of sensations—or feelings—is that it reminds us

that people do not commit to costly action or beliefs simply out of material advantage. Glock (1972, p.2) argued that the "precise task of ideology is to convince everyone that it is in their self-interest to conform". This is commonly taken to imply material interests. He argued that "material self-interest is perhaps sufficient to warrant a form of social organization for those who are highly rewarded, [but] … for the deprived the appeal to self-interest is likely to be in a form other than material rewards" (Glock, 1972, p.2). This was the observation of Mansour Moaddel (1992, p.375) in a study of the ideology of the Iranian Revolution and the war years. He argued that the specific form of ideology used by the counter-elites of the Revolution—who then became the elites of the reformed state—was not concerned with the interests of the masses. But it did serve the elites' interests. He referred to the dramatic change in ideological discourse between the Revolution and the Iran–Iraq War—barely 20 months—as opportunistic.

During the Revolution, he contended, the masses were roused by the Marxist idea of a class struggle of the majority bazaar class against the wealthy, privileged minority who were seen as the Shah's cronies: those enjoying favouritism to the disadvantage of the rest. Post-Revolution, the idea of a class struggle was counter-productive to the interests of the new dominant class that had risen to power with the Ayatollah. The old guard had been destroyed—fled, imprisoned, or executed—but a discrepancy between the wealth and privilege of the new elites and the masses still existed. According to Reuter ([2002] 2004), this new class held a position of unparalleled power and authority in Iran. The ideology of a class struggle in motivating the masses to action could no longer suffice. Indeed, Sepehri (2002) pointed out that following the Revolution, Khomeini was afraid

of the power of the left and of the ability of the workers' committees to mobilise against the new regime, and so instead of promoting their interests he laboured to destroy them. Moaddel (1992, p.373) argued that the Iran–Iraq war assisted in the shift in ideology from one of a religious-class struggle to one of religious-nationalism.

Nationalism is the preeminent call to social solidarity in the age of the nation state. Khomeini abhorred the nation-state system, but Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran created an opportunity for the cultivation of fear of state collapse as a rallying tool for social solidarity. War—in Hegel's (1807) terms—has the effect of reviving the common spirit of a nation in solidarity: "In order not to let [individuals] become rooted and settled in this isolation and thus break up the whole into fragments causing the common spirit to evaporate, government has from time to time to shake them to the very centre by war" (Hegel 1807 cited in Lukacs, 1938). In the case of post-Revolutionary Iran, it was not prolonged peace that was causing society to fragment and disintegrate, but the aftermath of the Revolution. Khomeini could not believe his good fortune: war had erupted with Iraq. War had the effect of creating social solidarity, and centring attention on another ostensibly guilty party, thus diverting attention away from the new regime that had quickly fallen out of favour with Iranians. It also had the effect of creating the atmosphere necessary for the malleability of minds.

Psychiatrist William Sargant (1957) argued that war and political crises place people in a state of heightened suggestibility. Under such circumstances, the acceptance of strange ideas is greatly improved. During the Second World War, inhabitants of *Blitzkrieg* London wholeheartedly believed Nazi propaganda, even though substantial evidence existed to prove that there was no substance to the allegations (Sandilands,

2004). This example is of enemy manipulation: in the case of Jihadism, it is the elites that use their resources to keep society in a state of heightened anxiety. This was the case in Iran, as well as with the Palestinians, and it is a feature of the "resistance" doctrine.

The Iranians referred to the Iran–Iraq war as the "imposed war", casting the Iranian people as the hapless victims of Iraqi aggression. It was Iraq that invaded Iran with the intention of taking over this territory from a weakened and demoralised Iranian Defence Force. Khomeini cast the invasion as a Sunni attempt to annihilate the Shi'a people—drawing on graphic images of Hussein's beheading in Karbalah (in present-day Iraq)—during his last stand against the Sunni aggressor. It is difficult to overstate how much this imagery stirred sentiments. The Palestinian example follows a similar pattern of propaganda designed to instil fear of individual and collective extermination. Jews are cast as evil, inhuman slaughterers of children who would do anything to steal their land, including committing genocide against the Palestinian people. Much use of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is engaged to prove these "truths" (see Marcus and Crook, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; Wistrich, 2010). *The Protocols* have long been proven to be a fraud, written by a Russian gentile for the purpose of stirring up fear and hatred of their Jewish neighbours. They are employed in the Arab world for the same purpose. Of course, the actual presence of war in both of these examples did much to advance the propaganda.

The formation of the "resistance" community was facilitated by propaganda—real or fabricated—of an imminent threat to life and property and, moreover, to traditional life. The ontological insecurity that is a feature of late modernity is used to advantage in the

cultivation of fear and hatred. Holmes (2008, pp.168–169) recognised that the "mobilizing ideology behind 9/11 was ... a specific narrative of blame. Even despair must be interpreted to become politically effective. To dispel fatalistic illusions and stimulate feelings of aggression, it is necessary to focus the mind on an ostensibly guilty party". As Turner (1988) argued, ontological insecurity is one, if not the most, motivating feature of action.

The cultivation of fear in times of physical and emotional insecurity gives greater scope for political elites and counter-elites to bring about ideological change. It is common to think of political power as a monopoly on violence, but in the new era, propaganda through the use of imagery has largely replaced the need for violence. Of course, the presence of both simply adds to the impact. Levene (2005a, p.18) noted that violence is always kept in reserve, but it is more common for states to use ritual, symbolism, and propaganda to "ensure conformity to a set of images that create the illusion of [authority, legitimacy, and solidarity]". But it also opens enormous scope for propagating ideas.

Moaddel (1992, p.375) contended that the primacy of "a set of ideas internalized by actors" to describe ideology is overstated, particularly as it pertained to the Iranian Revolution. He viewed the particular discourse used by counter-elites like Khomeini as *episodic discourse*: "a set of general principles, concepts, symbols, and rituals that humans use to address the problems of a particular historical episode" (Moaddel, 1992, p.359, p.375). Here, ideology is seen as manifest in culture. He argued that by taking control of cultural objects, the regime was able to communicate an array of ideological tenets specific to their needs such that they inspired collective action. Wuthnow (1987,

p.169) concurred that the “dynamics of institutionalization can be illustrated with respect to rituals, organizations, and the relations between ideology and the state”.

According to Brass (2010, n.p.), the study of politically induced ideological change “is the study of the process by which elites and counter-elites within [collectives] select aspects of the group’s culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group”. He contended that success goes to those elites who “can operate most skilfully in relation both to the deeply-felt primordial attachments of group members and the shifting relationships of politics” (Brass, 1978, p.41). In a study of the partitioning of India and the creation of Pakistan, Brass (1978) recognised that the cow became a symbol of power. The significance of the cow for Muslims in India prior to Pakistani independence is interesting because, as he pointed out, to begin with the cow had no traditional symbolic significance. It is highly significant for the majority Hindu population who see the cow as sacred. The Muslim population was engaged in the ritual slaughter and consumption of the beast, which caused affront to the Hindus and became a point of contention. Brass contended that the issue could have easily been resolved, but instead, the *ulama* (religious clerics) used the issue to emphasise a demarcation. Moreover, the cow became a symbol of the alleged but largely non-existent repression of the Muslim minority, thus acting as a call to arms. This was the beginning of an education process aimed at producing a Muslim ethnic identity separate from the Hindu majority whereby, hitherto, the increasingly secular Muslim minority held a provincial identity largely indistinguishable from their Hindu neighbours. The humble cow became part of a symbolic web powerful enough to create a nation.

This is the crux of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. Shari'ati's ideology rested on mythology, metaphor, and symbolism. The institutionalisation of Jihadist Suicide was achieved by Khomeini through tapping into the traditional sensibilities of Iranians. The myth of Imam Hussein in Iran filled a similar role to that of the cow in India in cementing a collective identity and acting as a call to arms. Moaddel (1992, p.353) argued that the "distinctive feature of the Iranian Revolution was the all-encompassing role played by the imageries and symbolism of Shi'i Islam in initiating and sustaining the revolutionary movement". Husain ibn Ali was the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad. He died in battle in Karbala in present-day Iraq in 661 CE attempting to claim the title of *Imam*, the rightful leader of the Muslims, from his rival Yazid, the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. Following the Revolution he was transformed into a role model for all Iranians to follow his example as someone who planned his death. Reuter ([2002] 2004, p.170) concurred that the "modern cult of martyrdom ... began in Shi'ite Iran, with its Passion mythology of Imam Hussein's self-sacrifice for a just cause and the True Faith". Significantly, Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005, p.38) noted that "according to Nadjaf Abâdi, Husain did not aspire to martyrdom … He wanted to seize power, and his death was the logical outcome of his failure to do so". The transformation of Husain into a suicide–martyr involved the re-traditionalisation of this Shi'a symbolic icon.

The new myth attempted to reject the image of Husain as a superhuman saint, and to project a human dimension to his character with an emphasis on him as a rational actor who willingly participated in his own death. Shari'ati led the way in perfecting the new myth. Khosrokhavar ([2002] 2005, p.39, emphasis added) noted that the "theme of

martyrdom was appropriated by young people from the working classes. *They asserted their willingness to die a holy death not only in rituals, but by staging their own deaths*. In doing so, they created a version of Islam that was largely unknown to the dominant tradition". Reuter ([2002]; 2004, p.36) marvelled at how the re-traditionalisation of this simple myth had enormous repercussions, not only with Iranians, but with Palestinians:

> Nobody … could have had the faintest idea 1300 years ago of the seismic effect that this skirmish … would have. That this was why tens of thousands of children would run into the Iraqi firing line and into the minefields; why, only two years earlier, the Ayatollah Khomeini, despite being based in Paris had been able to lead a nonviolent revolution in Iran that defeated a regime armed to the teeth; and why, twenty years later, Palestinian suicide assassins would adopt rituals from Iran that were essentially completely alien to them (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.36).

The Palestinians had also been busy re-traditionalising. In like fashion is the appropriation by Hamas of Sheikh Izz al din al Qassam, the Syrian fugitive who took refuge in Haifa following arrest warrants by the French in occupied Syria. Like Hussein, he has been re-mythologised from a brave fighter who died valiantly in battle to a hero for the cause who died voluntarily. Al Qassam was instrumental in organising the 1921 Syrian Revolt against the French, and following his arrival in Palestine he founded the Black Hand Arab militant group to fight against the Jews and the British Mandate government. He died in a gun battle on 20 November 1935 when the British attempted to arrest him. He had been sentenced to death in absentia in Syria. Risking his life in battle to avoid arrest was crucial for his survival. Al Qassam also became the iconic symbol of one who chose to die willingly for his nation. Hamas adopted al Qassam as

their national hero. The militant wing of Hamas is named after him, as too is the home-made rocket Qassam that is fired from Gaza into Israel.

Certainly, it can be argued that al Qassam is commonly referred to by Palestinians as a martyr, and that no overt suggestion exists linking him with suicide (as understood as planning one's death). This is an illusion. "Martyrdom"—or *shahada*—within the "resistance" community, means Jihadist Suicide. The word is codified, or what we may refer to as "eschatological language": a body of doctrinal belief that is so deeply interwoven within the cultural fabric that it has to be "lived" to be fully understood. But there is no mistaking its intention here; as projecting al Qassam as a role-model, as someone who planned and enacted his own death as a matter of moral principle.

Conclusion

For an ideology to become institutionalised it has to resonate with the masses. This was achieved through a change in imagery. Jihadist Suicide became institutionalised in the way that Shari'ati had foreseen, where, in his terms, it had become "hereditary" and "traditional"; where "jihad" and "martyrdom" became part and parcel of the culture's "mores and folkways" (Shari'ati, 1981, pp.88–89). Here, ideology no longer exists for the bulk of society as a point of intellectual debate, but as a thought–world (Douglas, 1986). Shari'ati saw this thought–world as a "new religion", that is, in the way that Hobsbawm (1994) talked about communism and fascism being the new religions of the twentieth century. It starts with a new ideology: strange and obscure, but which becomes the norm, where ideas and action appear as "natural" and options, constraints, and interpersonal relations work to ensure normative conformity.

An aspect of the suicide–terror phenomenon that appears contrary to Douglas's (1986) thought–world is its late temporality: mental models that support Jihadist Suicide lack the longevity of belief necessary to become a "natural" thought. The idea that Jihadist Suicide is a manifestation of the collective thought–world also seems contrary to the position taken in this thesis that traditional death meanings did not support this activity. The answer to this conundrum lies in the nature of the ideological change. It was not produced by a process of education aimed at abandoning old thought, but by redirecting old thought. In some instances, the change was subtle, hardly raising a moment's alarm. On bigger issues—like the question of encouraging the death of one's loved ones—resistance was apparent until the end, when pressure to conform to majority sensibilities forced compliance.

In the search for ontological security, people commit themselves to thought–worlds that may be ideologically intense—meaning intellectually challenging—but this is not the level at which Jihadist Suicide operates. It resides on a lower level—a primordial level where ascription to death is seen as "natural". These feelings were a consequence of the program put in place by political elites and counter-elites in their quest to secure willing participation from in-group members in acts of Jihadist Suicide.

War alone cannot satisfy the requirement of institutionalisation. Indeed, political unrest had been the case with varying levels of intensity for decades in the Palestinian Territories, without the production of Jihadist Suicide among Palestinians. But as Sargant (1957) recognised, anxiety only places people in a position of heightened suggestibility; the ideas that are disseminated are a matter for political elites and counter-elites. The institutionalisation of Jihadist Suicide with Iranians and Palestinians

only occurred following the public saturation of these ideas in the marketplace. This aspect is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 9

Cultural Artefacts in the Production of Jihadist Suicide

Archaeology defines a cultural artefact as a material object that holds clues to the culture of its human makers. Social constructionism broadens this concept to include all material, symbolic, ritual, and cognitive constructs that create a conception of social reality for the individual and the collective. Cultural artefacts are created and made into tradition by human enterprise, but they are not set in stone like artefacts unearthed in an archaeological dig. Rather, they require constant reproduction, even modification, to remain relevant. Without this ongoing dynamic they would fade, or wither. But this dynamic of constant renewal—as Eric Hobsbawm (1983) in *The Invention of Tradition* pointed out—can bring about new traditions or it can alter old ones.

Some cultural traditions are more malleable than others. Brass (1978, p.40) noted that "cultural groups differ in the strength and richness of their cultural traditions and even more importantly in the strength of traditional institutions and social structure". All are amenable to change. But some scholars view culture as immutable. Orientalism, for instance, is the perception that the East is an ancient, exotic culture frozen in time. Post-Orientalism views Middle Eastern cultures as changeable, but only as hybrid varieties stitched together from a patchwork of existing global cultural forms. Arce and Long (2000, p.177) objected to this form of hybridisation. They argued that "new social and

cultural forms are better understood as mutations, characterised by rapid transformation and self-organising, internally generated changes".

Brass (1978, p.35) argued that cultural mutation is closely associated with "primordial" identities, relating to "place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that are 'natural' … [and] 'spiritual' in character". It is these unconscious sentiments that easily facilitate ideational and cultural changes if skilfully manipulated. Political elites work to alter primordial sensations by tapping into the deep emotive sentiment attached to cultural objects. This method is used by political elites, regardless of whether the culture is "ancient or is newly-fashioned" (Brass, 1978, p.35). The importance of tapping into these primordial beliefs is—as Moaddel (1992, p.354) noted—that symbolism is "non-reductionist", that is, it has an immediate emotional and cognitive value. As sentiment, rather than conscious thought, it cannot be easily evaluated. If the skill of the political elite is such that they can alter these unconscious sentiments, they go largely unchallenged.

Roxanne Varzi (2002, pp.35–50) showed how Khomeini appropriated *The Tale of Leili and Majnun* and substituted himself for the beloved one. Said to be a true story, it is a Romeo and Juliet motif. The twelfth century Persian poet, Nizami Ganjavi, had written the most popular version of the tale and gave it a distinctive Sufi outlook, incorporating mysticism. Varzi (2002, p.36) noted that "mystics choose metaphorical love in preparation for divine love". A young man, Qays, falls in love with a girl of the same tribe, Leili. Leili's father refuses Qays' marriage proposal. Leili is soon married to another man. When Qays hears the news, he leaves the tribe to wander the desert. The tribe changed his name to *Majnun*, meaning madness.

Majnun eventually reaches union with Leili. “Rumi says that lovers are strange; the more they are killed the more they are alive. It is this symbolic death (of the *nafs* [self]) that is paramount to the Sufi experience” (Varzi, 2002, pp.40–41). Sufi mysticism entails drawing the image of the divine into the self through a process of *bikhudi* (self-annihilation). True love is destroying the self—one’s subjectivity—while internalising the imagery of the beloved and therefore changing physical to spiritual love: “annihilation of the self is the moment of divine epiphany”, where one makes a sudden intuitive leap to enlightenment and union with the beloved (Varzi, 2002, p.42).

Khomeini skilfully brought out the romantic myth of union with the beloved—the idea of a symbiotic union between two souls (or two transcendental spheres) that are in perfect harmony—to promote suicide–martyrdom. (A myth that is not quintessentially Islamic, but Iranian.) Through rhetorical and subtle reminders of this mystic union, Khomeini slowly created a yearning, a need, to be united with the other in unconditional love. Only he replaced the image of Leili—a vision of perfection—with another: his own (Varzi, 2002, p.49). The catch is that union with the beloved under Khomeini could only be achieved in physical death.

The mythic union of the suicide–martyr with the beloved, Khomeini, during the Iran–Iraq war was made vivid by the state practice of juxtaposing images of the dead—or the soon to be dead—with a picture of Khomeini. Varzi (2002, p.34) noted:

> Image is an important device used by novices on the Sufi path to move from earthly love to metaphoric love and finally to divine oneness. The image is tied to a larger world of images, the *alam al mithal*, (world of images or archetypes), which can only be accessed by a seer with the kind of vision that is a result of alchemy, magic, dreams and love.

From interviews with Avini, who was a member of the Ministry of Islamic Propagation in Shiraz, Iran, during the war years, Varzi (2002, p.112) learned that "Khomeini played the role of Sufi sheik". Avini explained:

> The front was the place to experience life, because death is life's biggest experience. Khomeini told us that the spirit of Islam is in this war. The war front was the best place to practice faith. It takes sometimes seventy years on the mystical path (*Arutha delsukteh*) to come close to transcendence. The front is an expressway to heaven (Varzi, 2002, p.113).

The union of the death-seeking *Basij* with the beloved was like the rays of the sun: Khomeini was the sun, and all the rays around the sun were like him, because they were close to him—they were him (Varzi, 2002, p.112). The *Basij* went to the war front with a picture of Khomeini pinned to their shirts or jackets.

Schudson (2002) viewed cultural objects as valued entities that have an aura. As a tradition (or primordial attachment) they generate their own power. Resonance, therefore, lies in the ability of the cultural producer to retain the aura of a cultural object while at the same time changing its meaning. He argued that a "rhetorically effective object must be relevant to and resonant with the life of the audience" (Schudson, 2002, p.145). For a political ideology to "successfully impose culture on people … the political symbolism they choose [must] connect to underlying native traditions" (Schudson, 2002, p.145). For Varzi (2002), traditional Iranian poetry is close to the "heart and soul" of ordinary people; it is not just an elitist pastime.

Destutt de Tracey ([1817] 2009) well understood the art of recontextualising traditional symbols for political ideological reasons. He warned of its peril:

> None of our judgements, separately taken, can be erroneous: inasmuch as we see one idea in another it is actually there; but their falsity, when it takes place, is purely relative to anterior judgments, which we permit to subsist; and it consists in this, that we believe the idea in which we perceive a new element to be the same as that we have always had under the same sign, when it is really different, since the new element which we actually see there is incompatible with some of those which we have previously seen; so that to avoid contradiction we must either take away the former or not admit the latter (Destutt de Tracey, [1817] 2009, p.2).

The craft of ideologues, according to him, is to convince the audience that the new element is the same as the existing element.

Moaddel (1992, p.353) asserted that the "distinctive feature of the Iranian Revolution was the all-encompassing role played by the imageries and symbolism of Shi'i Islam in initiating and sustaining the revolutionary movement", that is, by tapping into primordial sensibilities. Similarly, Kinnvall (2004) viewed the ideology of suicide–terror as depending upon the rejection of one set of cultural structures as a means of implementing a new or different set. This required the "construction and reconstruction of historical symbols, myths, and chosen traumas [to] supply alternative beliefs" (2004, p.763). Lasswell (1936, p.8) observed that "skill in handling persons by means of significant symbols involves the use of such media as the oration, the polemical article, the news story, the legal brief, the theological argument, the novel with a purpose, and the philosophical system".

For Geertz (1973), symbolic webs are so thick that to penetrate them as an outside observer is sometimes nearly impossible. This is akin to Parsons' (1966) view that symbolic meaning does not necessarily reside at one level, but is dependent upon

higher-order symbolic meaning (cited in Staubmann, 2003 p.10). It requires training in semiotics, or the keen eye of a "native" observer, sufficiently astute at reading symbolic meaning. For this reason, I have chosen two guides to enlighten—even if only slightly—our understanding of the symbolism in the "marketing" of Jihadist Suicide. Roxanne Varzi (2002), an Iranian-American studied the symbolism in Iranian culture during the Revolution and its aftermath, including the Iran–Iraq war; Mahmoud Abu Hashhash (2006) is our guide on the visual representation of martyrdom (Jihadist Suicide) in the Palestinian context. Other commentators have given further hints about the symbolic meaning of representations of Jihadist Suicide. But the primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that the central message—that Jihadist Suicide is a moral ideal condoned by society—is omnipresent in these groups. For this purpose, no training in semiotics is necessary: the message is clear.

Total Saturation of the Doctrine of Political Suicide

The importance of autocratic control lies in the total saturation of ideas in the public arena. Schudson (2002, pp.143–144) asked: "From the perspective of someone who would seek to manipulate cultural objects to advantage, the question is how to make some key elements of culture more available to audiences". He called this the *economy of retrievability*, using the word "economy" to describe the ease or difficulty with which a cultural object may be retrieved. It is about "marketing" cultural change, with a strong emphasis on what the advertising industry calls "reach". Ideas that are more readily available to the individual are more likely to produce action. Hence, the saturation of new ideas in the public arena is significant.

For Schudson (2002, pp.141–148), “a cultural object is more powerful the more it is within reach, the more it is rhetorically effective, the more it resonates with existing opinions and structures ... the more thoroughly it is retained in institutions, and the more highly resolved it is toward action”. He noted that in the present era, cultural change can occur through concepts commonly taken to belong to marketing and advertising. These concepts work well in explaining the idea-action nexus of Jihadist Suicide. Repeated information has the effect of creating an innate plausibility.

During the Iran–Iraq War, death was everywhere (Reuter, 2002, [2004]; Khosrokhavar, 2005). The act of Jihadist Suicide was mostly concentrated along the war front, but given the enthusiasm for death that swept the country, no town or village was spared the news of numerous war dead. Reuter (2002, [2004]) observed that in some cases an entire grade within a school was martyred: death occurred often and everywhere. Martyrdom as a marketable object was also everywhere.

For the religiously devout in Iran—or for those who feared retribution due to non-attendance—Friday prayers post-Revolution offered an opportunity to disseminate the suicide–martyrdom doctrine (Ram, 1991). Khomeini and the supporting *ulama* (religious clerics) broadcast elaborate speeches reflecting Shari’ati’s motto “to kill or be killed”. The doctrine was disseminated within schools by the Revolutionary Guard. They travelled widely, singing the praises of death on the battlefield and they rounded up recruits, forcing others to join their fellows in the training camps. Large murals marketing martyrdom covered walls. Banners hung from lamp-posts, and streets and buildings were named after the dead. Poetry was written. And hardly of word of dissension was heard.

In the Palestinian Territories, the marketing of martyrdom is equally ubiquitous. It permeates the education system, political speeches and sermons during Friday prayers. The marketing extends to social media. Both Fatah and Hamas use the state-run broadcasting services to disseminate the doctrine.

Abu Hashhash (2006, p.391) noted: “Martyrdom is an everyday event that continues to perpetuate itself in Palestine [sic] and its representation is a frequent visual motif in Palestinian art, media and life … Martyrdom has become a daily word in the Palestinian lexicon”. Public saturation requires ubiquitousness. The institutionalisation of a cultural change cannot take place through top-down pressure alone. In *Power and Knowledge*, Michele Foucault ([1972] 1980) stated that to bring about social change one does not only need to control the state apparatus, but to appeal to the institutions that operate alongside and beneath the state. This is similar to Talcott Parsons’s ([1939] 2011) idea of the “cultural fiduciary sub-system” that is a patterned normative order through which the life of a population is collectively organised. Institutionalised norms are strongest through a concerto of subsystems of society, all singing the same tune.

Sewell (1985, p.61) contended that “the whole of an ideological structure (with its inevitable contradictions and discontinuities) is never present in the consciousness of any single actor—not even a Robespierre, a Napoleon, a Lenin, or a Mao—but in the collectivity”. He argued that an “ideological structure is not some self-consistent ‘blueprint,’ but the outcome of the often contradictory or antagonistic action of a large number of actors or groups of actors” (Sewell, 1985, p.61). He concurred with Giddens (1985, cited in Sewell, 1985, p.60) that “ideological structures undergo continuous reproduction and/or transformation as a result of the combined wilful actions of more or

less knowledgeable actors within the constraints and the possibilities supplied by pre-existing structures". He took Giddens's (1985, pp.4–7) theory of unintentional change a step further by arguing that all ideological formations are unintended.

Certainly, it is not a lame question to ask whether Khomeini was at all surprised by the level of enthusiasm among Iranians to kill themselves in a show of religious nationalism. A certain amount of personal and collective entrepreneurial activity can no doubt be teased out of the events and elements that go to make up the suicide–martyrdom doctrine. But in a Parsonian view, culture needs to be reproduced authentically by the fiduciary subsystem in order for culture to work at all. The core substance of the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrines can indeed be viewed as a blueprint. Sewell (1985) goes too far in arguing that differentiated parts of the social and cultural subsystem have equivalent power of influence and change as elites—particularly in an autocratic or totalitarian society.

Elites and counter-elites which have vast resources at their disposal require cooperation from members of the group who are of a lower status: television producers, journalists, education administrators, and the like. In an autocratic society they would simply be replaced if they did not support the official ideology. Certainly, their interpretations of the ideology and ingenuity can modify and (or) progress the ideology in ways that power elites may not have envisaged. But even these actors lack the resources necessary to bring about drastic changes. In the Iranian case, Christia (2007, p.4) noted that propaganda in the form of overpowering and prolific billboard murals is commissioned: "Midway through the Iran–Iraq war, the Artistic and Cultural Bureau of the Qom Seminary's Office of Propaganda published a collection of exemplary Iran–Iraq war

murals along with a set of detailed guidelines for aspiring muralists". The purpose was to create overarching narratives.

Overarching Narratives

Overarching narratives are important in ideological formation and maintenance. They are not new. Religious doctrines contain narratives about how the world should be interpreted, and about human nature and morality, espousing a particular world-view. This thesis is concerned with the particular world-view of Jihadism: the dual "resistance" and suicide–martyrdom doctrine.

The "Resistance" Narrative

The "resistance" narrative is older than the martyrdom one. In many ways, it simply follows well-established dehumanisation and delegitimisation of the enemy other. The external world is evil. It is defined as the world that does not practise "true" Islam; it is the consequence of modernity, Western decadence, and Zionism. Non-Islamic religions threaten moral order through the destruction of traditional religious culture. Jews threaten to take over the world. This outlook sees the world in need of saving: man's position is untenable; immorality and injustice are everywhere; Muslim apostates and (or) the *infidels* (non-Muslims) occupy Muslim lands—also untenable. Life without Islam is like being on a train that has no direction. The secular version differs only slightly. Instead of the world in need of saving, it is the individual and their collective that are in need of rescue.

Evil is tangible, identified as the *jahiliyya* (the people of ignorance) as broadly described: Israel, the Great Satan, America, or the West in general, and apostasy in the Muslim world. These are the common depictions of evil, but it may be described as a rival sect or political party. Evil is a generic name for a multitude of actors; the depiction of evil is in the naming of evil, rather than a stable, coherent group of actors. Thus, sectarian violence in Iraq is propagated on the premise that Sunni insurgents name their Shi'a rivals as evil, and vice-versa. The naming of evil is abstract: it generally simply implies to the oppositional other.

The Narrative of Jihadist Suicide

The Jihadist Suicide narrative is very different. The "resistance" narrative is negative, the martyrdom narrative is positive. National and religious duty demands that each individual has a personal obligation to die. Death is the glorification of religion or the homeland; and the glorification of the individual who has been transformed into a sacred object. Death is a gift from Allah; death is a gift from the West; death is preferable to life. Life is really death, and death is life.

There was a martyrdom narrative before this current narrative. It was a secular narrative of heroism through risking one's life in high-risk operations. For the *fedayeen* (sacrifice), the tale was one of heroic death, much in the tradition of martyrdom from the time of the Judaic tales of the Maccabees. For the community, the death was both honoured and lamented, much in the way of traditional notions of heroic death. For the new narrative, death is planned, desired, and rewarded. For today's *shahid*, martyrdom is a reward earned through death, a prize to be won. At its core is egocentrism, a notion

of self-aggrandisement and self-fulfilment that is a product of post-modernity, or post-Enlightenment, since the 1960s.

Abu Hashhash (2006, p.394) recognised an ideological and symbolic change in Palestinian martyrdom from the beginning of the second *intifada* in September 2000. Before then, those who died in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict were seen as victims—they had been transformed into “courageous heroes”. He argued that this was a result of the failure of Camp David II peace talks and “lost hope of gaining any further international support when responsibility for the failure of the peace process was laid on the Palestinians” (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.394). Arafat made public announcements to the contrary; blaming Israel for the failure. In order to encourage suicide bombings, it was necessary that he change the narrative of death from sadness and victimhood to celebration and triumph.

Public Opinion

“Public opinion” indicates a dominant opinion on a particular issue. In social science, a dominant public opinion is taken as a “snapshot” of society that has historic and political implications. It is a cultural construct that gives clues to the temperament and ideas of a particular group at a particular time. Here we are not interested in gauging its response but on how propagandists and other manipulators make use of these media to advance the ideological goals. A saturation of volunteer—or purported volunteer—commentators voicing their opinion in concert with the prescribed ideology is intended to give the impression of collective acceptance. Below are four examples of alleged volunteer opinion on Jihadist Suicide (martyrdom), taken from the Palestinian media.

The first is from a children's television show, *Pioneers of Tomorrow*, aired on Hamas's Al Aqsa TV on 22 January 2010, and reproduced by Palestinian Media Watch. The young female host is speaking on the phone to a 10-year-old girl from Gaza, following the Gaza war of 2009. A large mural of devastation partially covers the wall behind the host:

> Host: "How was it for you during the [Gaza] war [2009]? Were you afraid that you would die, that you would leave this world?"
>
> Girl: "No. I wasn't afraid. I wished for Shahada [Martyrdom]—Shahada for Allah."
>
> Host: "How wonderful. Even this little girl—how old are you?"
>
> Girl: "Ten".
>
> Host: "[She] is not more than ten years old, and wants to die as a Shahida [Martyr] for Allah. We all wish for this [Shahada]".

Figure 1 is a still frame from the interview.

Figure 1: Excerpt from *Pioneers of Tomorrow*.
Al Aqsa TV (Hamas).

The following is an extract from a 10-minute television special broadcast entitled *The Best Mothers*, which was aired on PA TV during Ramadan 2011. Each day a different mother is honoured as the ideal representative of Palestinian motherhood. The first interview is with the mother of a bomb maker from Fatah's military wing, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Yusuf Shaker Al-Asi. He was killed in a shootout when the Israeli army tried to arrest him:

> People always told me, "Marry him off, so he will bring you happiness". I said to him (my son), "I want to marry you off". He said, "Are you laughing at me? Just one wife?" I asked him, "What do you want? Four, according to [Islamic] tradition?" He said: "I won't rest until I have 70 [wives]. I want 70", he told me.

Figure 2 shows a still frame from the interview. One of the rewards of Jihadist Suicide is the prize of 70 beautiful wives.

Figure 2: *The Best of Mothers*, 2 August 2011.
PA TV Program: Interview with the mother of Yusuf Shaker Al-Asi.

These are excerpts from an interview with a Palestinian Legislative Council member, Um Nidal Farhat—the Mother of Martyrs—that was aired on Iqra TV, 19 February 2006. Both interviews are from the collection of Palestinian Media Watch, www.pmw.org.il:

> Ever since [my son] Muhammad was a little boy, he carried and used a weapon. This was natural for him. It is not that he all of a sudden took up a weapon, carried out operations, and so on. *This was a gradual process for him*, ever since he was little.
>
> There was an operation that was about to take place—the same operation that he eventually carried out. [My eldest son] Nidal, may he rest in peace, said to me: "I want to give this operation to my brother Muhammad". He insisted on this because he loved Muhammad very much. He chose him. He chose him for the operation over the rest of the guys. Some of the guys were even a little mad at him for not considering them for this operation, but he said: "By Allah, this operation leads to Paradise, and I will choose nobody but my brother".

Um Nidal, in an interview posted on the official Hamas website on 1 January 2006:

> How do I feel, as I promise my son Paradise, and as I offer something [my son] for Allah? By Allah, today is the best day of my life. I feel that our Lord is pleased with me, because I am offering something [my son] for Him. I wish to offer more [sons] for Allah's forgiveness, and for the flag [of Islam], 'There is no god but Allah', to fly over Palestine. That's what we want. We want the rule of Islam.
>
> I am not parting from him to his death, but rather I part from him as he goes to a better life, the Afterlife, which our Lord has promised us. By Allah, if I had 100 children like [my son] Muhammad, I would offer them with sincerity and willingly. It's true that there's nothing more precious than children, but for the sake of Allah—what is precious becomes cheap.

This is part of an interview with a mother after her son murdered four Israeli teenagers and "attained martyrdom". Arab News Network TV, March 2002 and telecast on Palestinian television:

> I gave my son to Jihad for Allah. It's our religious obligation. If I wanted to have compassion for him, or to make him change his mind, it would be wrong, a mistake. I don't want to be guided by my feelings, a mother's feelings. I put them aside for a while for something greater, although a mother's feelings are involved. Why? Because I love my son, and I want to choose the best for him, and the best is not life in this world. For us there is an Afterlife, the eternal bliss. So if I love my son, I'll choose eternal bliss for him. As much as my living children honor me, it will not be like the honor that the Martyr showed me. He will be our intercessor on the Day of Resurrection. What more can I ask for? Allah willing, the Lord will promise us Paradise, that's the best I can hope for. The greatest honor [my son] showed me was his Martyrdom.

From the collection of Palestinian Media Watch, www.pmw.org.il.

Educational Instruction: Formal and Religious

When an autocratic or totalitarian state wishes to mobilise its resources in the production of the state's ideological values, the religious and formal education systems are invaluable. This is the case particularly in the light of Parson's theory of pattern-maintenance, whereby the norms and values of a society must be reproduced faithfully in order for the collective to remain stable. Structures with integrative primacy—like the education system—must follow some normative code. Norms must be defined, interpreted, and implemented. The first imperative of a system of norms is internal consistency. Second, there is the specification of higher-order norms to levels where

they can guide the action of the society's lower-level structural units by defining the situation for them.

Parsons ([1939] 2011) took from Durkheim the understanding that roles imply obligations. The role of educator in the formal education system, and the role of mentor in organised religion dictate that these roles are governed by a universal obligation to uphold the norms and values of the collective. This is important because, as Elizabeth Anscombe (1973) argued, moral authority derives from internal and external sources, that is, that some moral "truths" appear to us as "facts", while others are "revealed" through the good practice of taking the advice of those accredited with authority to give good advice. Rogue teachers and clerics who do not uphold the moral ideal are soon removed from their positions.

The Palestinian school system implements the cultural norm of Jihadist Suicide. Arnon Groiss (2008) demonstrated that Palestinian textbooks—from Arafat to Abbas and Hamas—have shown an alarming dissemination of the "resistance" and Jihadist Suicide narratives. This is particularly the case since 2000. He noted further that the PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas relaxed the guidelines on the dissemination of these norms, and that this appeared in Year 11 textbooks in 2004. Groiss (2008, p.17) lamented that this initiative was "nipped in the bud" when Hamas won government in 2005, not only reinstating the guidelines, but increasing their severity. He did note, however, that the "2007 edition of one of the [text]books does not include a text that urged the students—as in the 2000 edition—to glorify 'the concept of martyrdom and martyrs'" (Groiss, 2008, p.18). Elsewhere, the practice continues.

Two examples of school activity reported through Palestinian newspapers, and two examples from Palestinian school textbooks are shown below.

Figure 3: PA Schools Teach Kids To Love Death As Martyrs.
PA TV, 14 November 2008.

> The boy is chanting: “I have let the land drink my blood, I love the way of Martyrdom” (translated by PMW).

The Ramallah-based *Al-Ayyam* Daily, a Palestinian Authority (PA) newspaper, on 3 May 2011, published sample questions for high-school students about to sit exams:

> Headline: “Sample questions and answers in preliminary [PA] matriculation exam”
>
> Text: Al-Ayyam presents to its high-school readers sample questions and answers selected from the curriculum … under the supervision of a group of specialized teachers, with the aim of helping students to pass the examinations successfully.
>
> Arabic Language—Part II [Question 5] a. Find the verb in the future subjunctive, and explain why it is so: —Don’t expect to excel if you

> neglect your studies. —You will never attain your rights by begging. b. Punctuate the underlined phrase: —We shall die in order that our land may live.

From the collection of PMW, www.pmw.org.il.

Indoctrination to Jihadist Suicide starts in kindergarten. Below is a report from the *Al Hayat Al Jadida*, a PA newspaper, on 2 June 2001, of a play entitled *The Martyr's Wedding*.

> A Palestinian kindergarten ceremony included a play performed by children named *The Martyr's Wedding* alongside a play from the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Palestinian Media Watch has documented the frequent use by Palestinians of the term "wedding" to refer to the death and funeral of "Martyrs," in keeping with the Islamic tradition that the Martyr for Allah marries 72 Dark-Eyed Virgins of Paradise:
>
> The 'Birds of Paradise' kindergarten held a nice graduation party ... The ceremony included beautiful performances ... one of the most outstanding was a play from the story of Little Red Riding Hood, and another performance named 'The Martyr's Wedding', delighted the audience by the role-play of the children, whose acting depicted the reality of roadblocks, children, occupation soldiers, and the children's death as Martyrs. This charm caused the audience to cry, as the children's performance was accompanied by the playing of nationalistic songs.

From the collection of PMW, www.pmw.org.il.

These are extracts from Grade 6/7, and Grade 8 textbooks designed to teach children to read. The PA Ministry of Education publishes these textbooks; they first appeared in 2006 and are still in use in 2011. Both examples come from the collection of PMW, www.pmw.org.il:

Our Beautiful Language for Grades 6 and 7, Section 1:

> I shall carry my soul in my palm, And toss it into the abyss of destruction ... And then, either life, gladdening friends, Or death, enraging the enemies. By your life! I see my death, But I hasten my steps towards it ... By your life! This is the death of men, And who asks for a noble death—here it is ...

Reading and Texts Grade 8, Part II:

> O heroes, Allah has promised you victory ... Do not talk yourselves into flight ... Your enemies seek life while you seek death. They seek spoils to fill their empty stomachs while you seek a Garden [Paradise] as wide as are the heavens and the earth ... death is not bitter in the mouth of the believers. These drops of blood that gush from your bodies will be transformed tomorrow into blazing red meteors that will fall down upon the heads of your enemies.

Two examples of religious education in the service of implementing the cultural norm of Jihadist Suicide are given below. The first is from a sermon given by Ayatollah Taleqani (*n*.1911–1979), a religious scholar and supporter of Khomeini. He distorts and blends the two concepts of *jihad* ("resistance") and martyrdom (Jihadist Suicide) in an attempt to cultivate norms of behaviour. He preached that reason should not be used when dealing with issues that draw one to anger. Anger is seen as a positive part of a person's personality. The only guidance one needs in the use of anger is "divine legislation". In essence, that *jihad* as war need only be preached from the pulpit for it to be justified: no rational debate can be entered into.

> … according to the law of evolution and instinct, exemplified by the development of the horn, talons, and teeth, and in man, is manifested in the emotion of anger. Since reason in man is the director of his other faculties, he utilizes anger as a weapon to defend his rights, territory, dignity, nationality, and what have you … First, anger is a natural fact.

> Second, it must be guided by divine legislation (Taleqani, 1986, pp.48–49).

Divine legislation renames war and killing "*jihad*", which is "always attached to the locution *fi sabil Allah* (in the way of God)". Taleqani (1986, p.49) preached that *fi sabil Allah* is not "toward the heavens, toward Mecca, or toward Jerusalem … [but] the way of justice, truth, and human liberty". He continues by drawing into the speech elements of the class struggle espoused by Shari'ati. He refers to the "dominant class" as trying to suppress the "natural" instinct of anger and therefore depriving the listener of their humanity (Taleqani, 1986, pp.50–51).

The true essence of humanity is not to be found in anger and fighting, but in self-annihilation. "A discussion on *jihad* cannot be complete without an elaboration of the meaning of *shahid* (Taleqani, 1986, p.67). In this part of the sermon Taleqani re-defines the traditional meaning of *shahid* by enlightening the *umma* to the "true meaning":

> In short, anyone who has understood this truth and divine goal and has stood for it, sacrificing his life, is called "shahid" in the terminology of the Qur'an and jurisprudence. The shahid is the one who has experienced the shuhud (vision) of truth … This is the true meaning of the esoteric term "fanā fī Allah" (self-annihilation in God). Fana is not what the Sufi does in the khanaqah, shouting "Hu! Hu!" and then imagining that he has reached God. The real meaning of "fana" is exhibited in the following poem:
>
> > "From head to toe, God's light you'll radiate,
> >
> > If in His cause, you self-annihilate!" (Taleqani, 1986, pp.67–68).

The second example (Figure 4) is from an Islamic scholar in the Palestinian Territories who promoted Jihadist Suicide in a telecast sermon on PA TV on 17 August 2001.

Figure 4: Preaching the Benefits of Jihadist Suicide.
PA TV 17 August 2001

> When the Shahid meets his Maker, all his sins are forgiven from the first gush of blood. He is exempted from the torments of the grave (Judgment). He sees his place in Paradise. He is shielded from the great shock, and marries 72 Dark Eyed (Virgins). He is a heavenly advocate for 70 members of his family. On his head is placed a crown of honor, one stone of which is worth more than all there is in this earth (translated by PMW).

Imagery and Meanings

Framing Jihadist Suicide (martyrdom) on Iranian television during the war years was the task assigned to the Ministry of Islamic Propagation in Shiraz, Iran (Varzi, 2002, pp.103–144). Like the Qom Seminary Office of Propaganda (Christia, 2007, p.4), it also produced symbolic imagery according to government mandate. Only images that meet the official criteria are permitted. Varzi (2002), from a study of the works and writings of the famous Iranian wartime film-maker, Sayyed Morteza Avini (1947–1993), recognised that making documentaries of the *Basij* culture of martyrdom at the war front was an exercise in neo-realism. According to Avini: “By manipulating the surface

reality in order to expose what is hidden, the filmmakers partake in a surrealist enterprise, utilizing montage and decoupage to put forth a representation of what might be real and in turn recreate the surface" (2000[35], cited in Varzi, 2002, p.116).

Varzi (2002, p.119) saw that "neo-realism is about the liminal space between what has the possibility of existing and what does exist". She noted that "people who respect artists look at their work as an element of the artist's soul and not as real life" (Varzi, 2002, p.119). "Avini's mission was to promote a culture of martyrdom in order to encourage men to fight in the line of the Imam. They did not consider this objective propagandistic in that their particular aim in recording the war was to show the truth of this martyr or *Basij* culture" (Varzi, 2002, pp.117–118). Images of Jihadist Suicide from all media dwell in this liminal space between symbolic meaning and re-symbolised meaning: *where the idea that we see there we believe to be the same as that we have always seen (or felt), but "it is really different, since the new element which we actually see there is incompatible with some of those which we have previously seen"* (Destutt de Tracy, [1817] 2009, p.2, emphasis added).

Once a Ninja Warrior

In the 1980s, *everybody was Kung Fu fighting*—to borrow the words of the popular culture song by Carl Douglas. This craze had captured the imagination of a time. Its imagery was everywhere: in cartoons, movies, merchandising, advertising, and song

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[35] Avini's memoir was published posthumously. He died in 1993 by stepping on a landmine while filming a special on the aftermath of the Iran–Iraq war.

and dance. It had particularly affected young men and boys who dressed as Ninja Warriors and pretended that they too could *move as fast as lightning*, and *fight with expert timing*, and disappear and reappear as if by magic.

The appropriation of the Ninja Bandana as a symbol of Islamic (or Arab) superiority in battle occurred during the Iran–Iraq war—at the height of the Ninja craze. Figure 5 shows a sample of the commemorative backpack given to school students in Iran to honour the death of a 13 year-old, Hossein Fahmideh, who died on 30 October 1980 in Khorramshahr, on the Iranian war front.

Figure 5: Commemorative Backpack.
Official school backpack to commemorate 13 year-old Hossein Fahmideh

Fahmideh threw himself under an Iraqi tank while exploding a grenade. Robert Baer, a former Middle East Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent, visited the family of Fahmideh. He referred to Fahmideh as “the world’s first suicide bomber”, a title that the family felt horrified by: “he was a martyr, through and through” (Fahmideh’s sister-in-law, cited in Baer 2006, my transcript from video stream). The backpack shows a cartoon-like image of Fahmideh wearing the Ninja head band with the words inscribed

to the effect that he is going to heaven. He is holding what appears to be a samurai sword. If this was the case, the sword failed to acquire popular support and has since been replaced by the Russian AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifle as the symbol of "resistance". Figures 6–8 show the use of the traditional Ninja dress in militant and suicide–bomber attire.

Figure 6:
The Ninja-Jihadist Bandana

Figure 7:
Ninja Suicide–bomber

Figure 8:
Traditional Ninja Warrior

Other symbols of "resistance" and Jihadist Suicide that have been appropriated include the Arab checked *keffiyeh*, once the attire of peasants as means of protection from the sun and wind, it is now a sign of Palestinian nationalism: black and white for Fatah, and red and white for Hamas. Figure 9 shows Arafat in *keffiyeh*. Of note is the way Arafat fashioned the flowing part of the *keffiyeh* into the shape of Greater Palestine.

Figure 9: Arafat in *Keffiyeh*

The "V" sign, made with the fingers, is commonly mistaken for a peace sign. The peace sign is a symbolic icon of the 1960s and 1970s, and was part of the war counter-culture during the Vietnam War. It was appropriated by Iranians and Palestinians as a "victory" sign, giving it the exact opposite meaning of its original form.

Figure 10: Palestinian "V" Sign for "Victory".
(Bloom, 2005, Dust jacket)

Further imagery is explained in the following sections.

Art

Figure 11 shows *The Palestinian Martyr* by Mikhail Hallaq, Galilee, 2002.

> The painting by Mikhail Hallaq, entitled The Palestinian Martyr, might remind the viewer of Michelangelo's Pietá, but the major difference between the two is that no indication of any wound of martyrdom occurs in Hallaq's painting. The only Palestinian sign in the painting is the headdress, the kaffiyeh, which covers the Christlike martyr's loins. This specific object as a sign or symbol becomes a signifier of martyrdom in the manner of Christian iconography (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.395).

Figure 11: *The Palestinian Martyr* by Mikhail Hallaq, Galilee, 2002.
(Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.395)

Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ voluntarily died to save humanity.

Figure 12 is a sketch from Avini's book. "The bombs were considered a gift, an opportunity to be martyred" (2000, cited in Varzi, 2002, p.317). "The desire for death as

a positive achievement is reflected in the Iranians' war–ideology as the Iran–Iraq war being a 'gift' from the West" (Moaddel, 1992, p.374).

Figure 12: Sketch: "The gift of the enemy"

Murals

Fontini Christia (2007, p.4) was taken by the "sheer number and size, along with their powerful iconography and aesthetics" of Tehran's "state-sponsored murals":

> In an effort to guarantee the maximum possible resonance with the public, muralists have traditionally employed strong visual cues of the Shi'a faith. The iconography and symbols revolve around holy sites such as Mecca, the Dome of the Rock, or Iman Hussein's shrine in Karbala. Though primary colors dominate the muralists' palettes, the Islamic green is overwhelmingly the color of choice. Calligraphy, geometric shapes, and curvilinear designs suggestive of Islamic art are also part of the muralists' artistic repertoire. These are in turn fused with highly specific symbols such as the hand, whose five fingers standing for

> Mohammad, Ali, Fatemeh, Hassan, and Hussein represent the prophet's family. Blood stained hands evoke the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in Karbala and the mutilation of Abbas, Hussein's half brother, while red flowers such as the tulip or the rose symbolize love and sacrifice. They depict the blood of martyrs, and they promise reward of heavenly bliss (Christia, 2007, p. 5).

Figure 13 shows a "Tehran mural entitled 'Martyr' depicts the 12th Shiite Imam Mahdi holding the body of a lifeless martyr. Commissioned in 2003 on Ashura, the day commemorating Imam Hussein's martyrdom, it reads: 'Martyrdom is our inheritance from the prophet and his lineage'" (Christia, 2007, p.7).

Figure 13: A Billboard in Tehran (Example 1)
(Christia, 2007)

Christia (2007) recognised that part of the consecration process of the "martyr" was the placement of the photograph of the *Basij* with the Ayatollah Khomeini, indicating that the symbiotic union of the two. Figure 14 shows a Tehran mural commemorating a fallen soldier in the Iran–Iraq war.

On the soldier’s headband reads: “O, the shining moon of the tribe of Hashim!” referring to Hussein, the 3rd Shiite Imam. On the soldier’s rifle, a portrait of Imam Khomeini. In the background, a field of tulips, symbolizing the martyr’s blood and sacrifice, and the shrine of Karbala, symbolizing the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (Christia, 2007, p.6).

Figure 14: A Billboard in Tehran (Example 2)
(Christia, 2007)

Posters

Mahmoud Abu Hashhash (2006, p.394) noted that the poster is the preeminent symbolic representation of Jihadist Suicide in the Palestinian Territories. He recognised that posters of “martyrs”, that are “produced by different Palestinian political parties, are now the leading form through which the concept of martyrdom is represented and communicated”:

> There is always space for one more poster on the walls of Palestinian towns. If the walls are overcrowded with posters, the new can always find a place over an older one. To strip the many layers of posters from a wall is to carry out a form of archaeology. One thick layer of posters will

> mark the history of the Al-Aqsa Intifada over the previous five years (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.394).

He argued that “Martyrs’ posters are loaded with classical, religious and national references”:

> In general, there are three indispensable and consistent elements among numerous inconsistent ones in every poster of a martyr, regardless of the martyr’s political affiliation (if any), age or sex. These elements are a photograph of the martyr, the ‘obituary’ text that usually includes a Qur’anic verse, and various symbols (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.394).

Abu Hashhash (2006, p.394) contended that the “quintessential image of the second Intifada is … that of fifteen year-old Fares Odeh desperately stoning the most devastating of Israeli tanks, the ‘Mar kava’”. He compared this photograph to the iconic photograph of Tiananmen Square where a lone man stopped the advancing Chinese tanks in 1989. He noted that the photograph of Odeh “was printed as a poster and distributed everywhere” (2006, p.393). He noted further that Odeh did not die on this occasion, but two days later on 8 November 2000 (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.394).

Arafat lauded Odah who had committed a clear act of Jihadist Suicide, that is, he intended to die and knew that his actions would kill him. Arafat followed the same narrative as Khomeini in praising the 13 year-old Hossein Fahmideh, who threw himself under an Iraqi tank and exploded a hand grenade. Figure 15 shows a poster of 14 year-old Fares Odeh.

Figure 15: Poster of 14 year-old Fares Odeh.
(Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.394)

The photograph normally depicting a moment in a person's life is not placed there on the poster to remind us of that particular moment in a denial of death fixed by the camera. It is there to announce that person's death in a fantasised manner calculated to arouse a complex of different feelings in the viewer. The existential question of death posed in the eyes of the martyr confronts the viewer inescapably (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.396).

Figure 16: A Billboard in Balata Camp, West Bank.
(From http://bethlehemmedic.blogspot.com/).

Graffiti

Figure 17 shows “boys in front of a wall in a public square in Rafah, the Gaza Strip, covered with the names of martyrs of the intifada” (Oliver and Steinberg, 2005, Figure 42). Traditional memorials of this kind honour the dead with sad reflection: here, the wall is a beacon of aspiration.

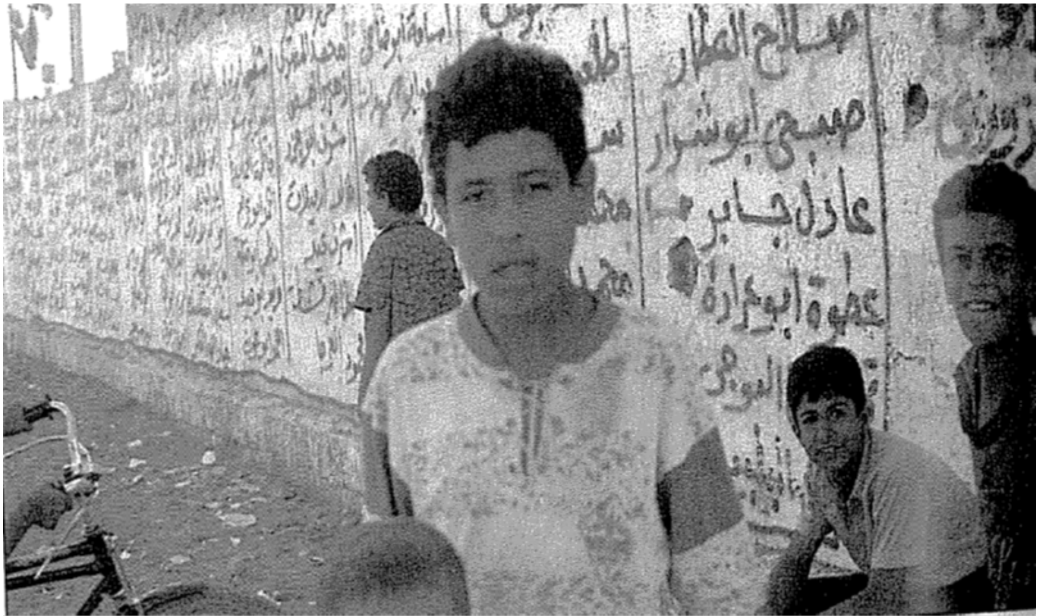

Figure 17: *Shahid* Graffiti, Gaza Strip
(Oliver and Steinberg, 2005, Figure 42)

Commemorative T-Shirts

Figure 18 shows “two boys in the West Bank village of Beit Rima wearing matching martyr T-shirts” (Oliver and Steinberg, 2005, Figure 16).

> While the act of martyrdom in Palestine has gradually undergone a metamorphosis into a heroic act of resistance that breeds its own secular ethics, the martyr has become progressively consecrated (Abu Hashhash, 2006, p.392).

Figure 18: Commemorative *Shahid* T-Shirts
Text in top corner of T-shirt: "*Shahid*" ("martyr")
(Oliver and Steinberg, 2005, Figure 16)

Street, Building, and Town or City Spaces, Names, and Signage

Varzi (2002, p.66) noted that in Iran, "towards the end of the war, street names were changed so often that even the post office was lost". Calling an ambulance was pointless. The estimated war-dead is just under 1 million: much higher than the official Iranian tally of around 300 thousand. But even by this latter figure, the number of times the street names had been changed to honour yet another "martyr" meant that some streets changed names every other day. In the Palestinian Territories, the same practice is enacted, raising the status of the "martyr" to that of divinity.

Figure 19 shows a street sign in Ramallah, West Bank commemorating the "martyrdom" of Dalal Mughrabi. In 1978, Mughrabi and others infiltrated Israel by

sailing from Lebanon to the coast of Israel. There they hijacked a bus on the Coastal Road, killing 37 Israelis, 13 of which were children. Mughrabi was killed by the IDF. Hers was not a case of Jihadist Suicide, but a high-risk operation. Nevertheless, her "martyrdom" is portrayed as Jihadist Suicide, that is, as if she intended to die.

Figure 19: Street Sign in Ramallah, West Bank
Text: "Shahida (Martyr) Dalal Mughrabi Street.
Date of Martyrdom
11-3-1978"

Song

Recently, a girl on PA TV chose to sing the following song, which praises the ideal of sacrificing oneself as a Martyr for "Palestine.":

Girl:	"I am the voice of the Intifada, and no voice is louder than mine; I am the last will of the Martyr who loved death upon the soil of the homeland. My voice refuses to be silent. I am the sister of the one who adorned herself and girded herself with death. I am the voice of the stone and the tree, the bleeding wounded".
PA TV host:	"Bravo, our friend Bara'a; that was a beautiful song".

Marcus and Crook (www.pmw.org.il) noted: “Interestingly, the PA TV host later asked her to sing a song with different content—one about life, not death”, suggesting that even in a state of *martyropathy*, a small voice of resistance can be heard. But this is the exception and not the rule.

> This music video is an example of the continuous indoctrination of this message by the PA. The longest running music video on PA TV, first broadcast in 2000 and regularly still in 2010, shows a male Martyr being greeted in Islam’s Paradise by dark eyed women all dressed in white. As the PA religious leader wrote, its purpose is to “fill Muslims with desire for Paradise” (Marcus and Crook, www.pmw.org.il).

Figure 20: Birds of Paradise Video

Infotainment Media

The word “infotainment” is a conjunction of the words “information” and “entertainment” and, according to David Demers (2005, p.143), it is “information-based media content or programming that also includes entertainment content in an effort to enhance popularity with audiences and consumers”. This is an example of infotainment

on Jihadist Suicide in the Palestinian media. It is a Hamas music video that was broadcast repeatedly from 2007 to 2009. It depicts the real-life suicide–bombing of Reem Riyashi. It portrays her daughter promising to follow in her mother's footsteps:

> "[Five] year-old daughter of suicide–terrorist Reem Riyashi, sings to her mother, promising to follow as suicide–terrorist: 'Mommy, what are you carrying in your arms instead of me? A toy or a present for me? [Visual: Mother prepares bomb, hiding bomb] Are you going out, Mommy? Come back quickly, Mommy'. [Girl sees TV news about her mother's bombing] 'Instead of me you carried a bomb in your hands. Now, I know what was more precious than us. My love [for Muhammad] will not be [only] words. [Picks up explosives in mother's drawer] I am following Mommy in her steps! My mother! My mother!'" [Girl looks at bomb in her hand] (Marcus and Crook, www.pnw.org.il).

Figures 21 and 22 show still frames from a viewing of the music video broadcast on 22 May 2009.

Figures 21 and 22: Excerpts from Hamas Music Video.
Al Aqsa TV (Hamas).

Martyrdom Collector Cards

Martyr Collector Cards resemble football collector cards. They show a picture and the name of the martyr on the front of the card and give vital statistics on the back: age, place of martyrdom, political affiliation, number of dead (Oliver and Steinberg, 2005).

Internet Website

Journalists from the East and the West often depict Palestinian youth stone-throwers as engaging in a David and Goliath protest against Israeli military occupation. In the Palestinian Territories, stone-throwing is marketed to children as a means of "achieving martyrdom"; traditional gender roles are ignored:

> We bless and honor the proud. The blood of the Shahid has taught us that Shahada is a new life. O Allah, bless the steps of the rebels. Indeed, Shahada is a clear victory". (Excerpt of text accompanying Figure 23 on Al-Fateh.net, cited on PMW.)

Figure 23: Front Page of Hamas Children's Website Al-Fateh.net—7 March 2006.

Conclusion

People can only form opinions and develop action plans based on the knowledge that they are permitted to gather. Censorship and isolation play a large part in the direction that idea-formation is capable of taking. The “problem” faced by the government of China in limiting access to foreign Internet sites due to a perceived threat to social stability is an example of how political elites with vast resources at their disposal act to limit information supply. According to Foucault ([1972] 1980), “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations”. The saturation of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine and the censorship of competing messages in Iran and in the Palestinian Territories constitute power relations between the power elites and the rest of society.

In the way that “tradition” is “mores and folkways” for Ali Shari’ati, the reproduction of the “resistance” and suicide–martyrdom doctrines relies on the maintenance of a set of normative beliefs (the social control of cognition) and the production and reproduction of emotive cues that have the dual purpose of cementing cultural ascription and keeping the society in a state of heightened anxiety and mobility through collective effervescence. Legitimisation is achieved through the appearance of a unanimous social contract in support of it. Of importance is the total commitment to social solidarity and the expectation of cooperation from all members of society. A trust in the mutuality of suffering ensures commitment.

Through processes of normalisation and institutional embedding of new ideas, they become codified, serving as cognitive filters through which actors come to interpret environmental signals. Actors are strategic, seeking to realise certain complex, contingent, and constantly changing goals. They act within contexts that favour some strategies over others. Interests are rooted in social obligations and (or) rewards: they derive from ontological insecurity, and (or) egocentrism. Structural constraint to Jihadist Suicide should be seen as material constraint only; it is characterised by structural enablement.

The final formation of the dual Jihadist doctrine may—as Sewell (1985) argued—have been an unintended consequence, but once it had been developed through the Iranian war years—and its use in Lebanon shortly thereafter—it became a “blueprint” that could be exported to any domain, regardless of their political cause, ideological underpinnings, or cultural tradition. Khomeini was able to instate it in Lebanon swiftly, and the Lebanese were equally expeditious in transferring this blueprint to the Palestinians of Israel. In both of these instances, the high detail of the doctrine became nuanced to accommodate local and sectarian differences but, by and large, doctrinal integrity was preserved. This was a necessity of its success.

Chapter 10

The Cultural Script

> Then a soldier,
> Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
> Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
> Seeking the bubble reputation.
>
> *All the World's a Stage*, William Shakespeare

Palestinian children in 2011 have inherited institutionalised Jihadist Suicide. Durkheim ([1897] 1952, p.227) wrote that "men can conceive of the world only in the image of the small social world in which they live". To the average Palestinian child, the world is not upside down, but stable and predictable. Palestinian children are born into a ready-made world, where action options are given by society. Canetto and Lester (1995; 1998) described these action options as a cultural-suicide script. There is a perception in suicide–terror discourse that the living martyr—as a role model—is overtly militant. This is largely an illusion. These children aspire to be moral citizens, worthy of societal approval. They cannot achieve this without adopting the persona of a soldier of the "resistance" community.

As with the Filipino *juramentado*, an act of political suicide is an action offered and controlled by society, a ritual performance communicating the moral worth of the suicide. The act is supported by the political, religious, and domestic spheres. Not a "natural" evolution of society, it is a transformation of society by thought control, orchestrated by political elites, designed to secure the regime or promote its political

agendas. Lasswell (1936, p.8) noted the importance of “skill in handling persons by means of significant symbols” and also ritual. Thought control in Jihadist Suicide also involves mandating the meaning of emotional expression.

The Cultural Suicide Script

Anthropologist Dorothy Ayers Counts (1980, p.335) concurred with Durkheim’s view that “suicide is an aspect of social relationships, not an individual and isolated act”. She argued that there are “rules of procedure that, if they are followed, allow the suicide victim to communicate a powerful message by his act” (Counts, 1980, p.346). During an ethnographic study of the Lusi people of Kaliai in Papua New Guinea, she recognised that “these rules are implicit in the myths, legends, and folk tales of Kaliai, and are communicated at storytelling and gossip sessions where people discuss past suicides and evaluate the act and its results” (Counts, 1980, p.346). This is not particular to traditional peoples. This is a cultural-suicide script, and they are common across all cultures and historical times.

Individuals draw upon these cultural scripts in choosing their course of action and in giving this course of action some public legitimacy (Canetto and Lester, 1998, p.163). Schipkowensky, Milenkov and Bogdanova (1975) discovered in a statistical analysis of the method of Bulgarian suicide that these methods correlated with the popularity of methods used in Bulgarian folk songs. These narratives provide action-options that, if followed correctly, can purvey a powerful message. Each suicide scenario is heavily invested with cultural meaning.

The idea of a cultural script is appealing because it gives rise to a vivid picture of actors playing out their part on life's stage; directed by social cues. It is like a *Choose Your Own Adventure Story* where the reader can select different options during the course of the book, and thus alter the plot line and the eventual ending. The actors are never compelled to follow any course of action by being set on a course over which they have no control, nor is the actor seen as a robot who mindlessly apes social convention. We can observe from the examples below that the actors are caught up in a web of psychological and cultural intrigue that leads them along the path to final choices. In essence, the cultural script provides the actor with *action options* as social relations among individuals unfold. They do so by ensuring that the meanings of those action options form a collective interpretive background for which actions are recognised and evaluated.

An example from China affirms the point. Veronica Pearson and Meng Liu (2002) noted that suicide among young women in China is extraordinarily high. They conceded that it is difficult to attain accurate suicide rates in China because of government reluctance to make these details public (Pearson and Liu, 2002, p.347). Based on independent studies, they were able to establish a reliable rate. They estimated that China's suicide rate in 2002 was almost three times higher than the rest of the world, and that China accounts for 21 per cent of the world's population, but for nearly 56 per cent of the world's female suicides (Person and Liu, 2002, p.347).

These women are not commonly depressed, but are culturally compelled to suicide in certain situations. Pearson and Liu (2002) investigated the suicide of villager Ling. Her mood at her death was rage and anger, and with no indication of depression or sadness.

The suicidal ideation that eventually claimed Ling's life grew out of a sense of jealousy and injustice resulting from favouritism by Ling's parents-in-law towards her husband's younger brother and his wife. The circumstances were an argument with Ling's sister-in-law in which the mother-in-law supported the sister-in-law. "Ling took the time-honored route for Chinese females who want to protest against injustice that they believe has been committed against them and for which they have received no redress" (Pearson and Liu 2002, p.356).

The cultural script indicates which options bring criticism or rewards. Pearson and Liu (2002) noted that it was evident from their investigation that the key actors in Ling's suicide knew what the reactions of the village would be. The cultural script does not only tell people how to think about the suicide, but it also prescribes the method of self-destruction (Canetto and Lester, 1998). On further investigation the philosophy behind any particular method of suicide may be discovered. But whether the folktale that explained the choice of drowning is still known to the locals or not, the point is that women still subscribe to this cultural script when choosing their manner of death. The act of drowning oneself in the village water supply is an action ritually performed. It has personal and social meaning.

Going Juramentado

Do these rules apply to Jihadist Suicide? The case of the Filipino *juramentado* shows that it is compatible. *Juramentado* was the name given by the Spanish military occupation of the Philippines in 1876 to militant native Filipinos, who in J Franklin Ewing's (1955, p.148) terminology, had been "Mohammedanized". *Juramentado* is

Spanish for “one who takes an oath”. Vic Hurley (1938) reported that the Spanish encountered heavy resistance from the *juramentado* in bringing the archipelago under its control. Indeed, the occupation never succeeded in this task. The in-group name for the *juramentado* was “*mag-sabil*”, meaning “to endure the pangs of death” (Hurley, 1938, p.128).

The controversial point raised in Chapter 7 about the Jihadist Suicide as an ordinary suicide is made clear with the example of the *juramentado*. Ewing (1955) conducted an ethnographic study of the *juramentado* and discovered that the religious act of “*going juramentado*” could be an act of suicide in war, or an escape from an unbearable life. The cultural script is exactly the same in each case. Going *juramentado* involved “a man from Joló or Siasi … going to a place known to be frequented by Christians, and killing them, with the hope (usually realized) that he will die in the course of this activity” (Ewing, 1955, pp.148–149). Going *juramentado* is suicide because while the actors do not die by their own hand, they act in a way intended to bring about their death.

Realised in Ewing’s (1955) account are personal causes consistent with those discussed in suicide–terror discourse:

> A man may find himself generally disgusted with life, he may have been experiencing a very unhappy marital life, he may have been shamed by his fellows (as on the occasion of their pointing out that he has had a relative killed by the Constabulary, and he himself has not revenged the death), or some other motivation may influence him, and he decides to “*go juramentado*” (Ewing, 1955, p.149, emphasis in original).

They were thought to be soldiers of war, or religious fanatics acting out their "*furor politico*", or criminals who did not identify with religion or politics. In other words, observers were unable to identify a single motivation for the act of suicide–terror. *Going juramentado* could be an act of militancy, but it was not mandatory. Indeed, the case studies carried out by Hurley (1938) and Ewing (1955) show that militancy was not significant. This is the same with Jihadist Suicide. When it comes to the motivation of the actors, the only consistency is that they intended to die, and they did so by performing a ritual act of suicide under the name of a political cause.

The *juramentado* engaged in a form of institutionalised political suicide that was supported by the three societal configurations to which Durkheim ([1897] 1952) often referred—political, religious, and domestic—that work, or we may even say, conspire to free the individual to commit suicide. In the case of the *juramentado,* the parents, the Sultan and the Imam condoned the suicide. The ease of the journey from adolescence to *mag-sabil* was facilitated by societal approval, and by a collective conception of death that placed great importance on dedicating one's life to this ostentatious form of death.

Justification for the attacks, and the rewards granted the *mag-sabil* came from within the teachings of the local Muslim establishment. The Sultan, the practical ruler of the immediate lands in which Islam dwelled—in this case, the areas around Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelagos—required that the choice of *mag-sabil* as well as the details of the murder–suicide attack met with his formal approval prior to the mission. The *mag-sabil* also had to seek the approval of his parents before he could prepare himself through the ritual process. Hurley (1938) noted that this approval, in most cases, was a formality; *going juramentado* was highly regarded and seldom denied.

Hurley (1938) and Ewing (1955) highlighted the ritualised process that went into creating the *juramentado*, as well as the collective death-meaning within the group that lead to the suicidal act. Hurley (1938, pp.127–128) noted that fanatical youths would gather in the mosques to hear the Imams who would inflame their ambitions, urging them on to acts of political suicide. He described the ritual process:

> Prayers were offered and each candidate placed his hand upon the Koran and repeated the following: "*Jumanji kami hatunan ing kami ini magsabil karna sing tuhan*" (We covenant with God that we will wage this holy war, for it is of God). The body was then carefully washed, the teeth were cleaned and the nails cut and trimmed. The family of the candidate shaved his eyebrows so that they "looked like a moon two days old." The hair was cut short. The waist was supported by a tight band for strengthening effect. A man so bound could remain on his feet long after an ordinary man would succumb to wounds. The candidate was then clothed in a white robe called the *jubba* and was crowned with a white turban. To the waist was attached an *anting-anting*, or charm, to ward off the blows of the enemy. The genitals were bound tightly with cords (Hurley, 1938, p.128).

He further described the method of attack:

> After beautifying and polishing his weapons, the candidate was then ready to go forth to the holy war … The method of attack of the *juramentado* was to approach the largest group of Christians possible and shout to them from a distance with the Arabic phrase, *"la ilaha il-la'l-lahu*"—There is no God but Allah. The *kris* or *barong* was then unsheathed and a rush was made, each *juramentado* hoping to kill at least one Christian before he found a martyr's death (Hurley, 1938, pp.128–129).

Ewing (1955) noted the rewards of the death in that:

> After his death, the *juramentado* believes, he will mount a flying horse (*kúra sambálin*), which will bear him to Heaven, where forty houris (*bidadáli*) [beautiful maidens] are waiting to be his wives. In Heaven, too, there are all the best foods he can imagine, always ready when he may desire them; there is no need of ever doing any work; the surroundings are of the greatest possible beauty (Ewing, 1955, p.150).

The Palestinian example is synonymous with the *mag-sabil*. Political, religious, and domestic approval, support, and encouragement are assured. In the first epoch of Jihadist Suicide in the Palestinian Territories, domestic approval was not assured. Some parents commented after the death of their loved one, usually a son, that they would have locked him in the house had they known he was about to suicide. In this second epoch of *martyropathy*, parents, siblings, and spouses often know of the intention of their loved one. Sometimes it is still a surprise. At other times, like in the example of Um Nidal Farhat, open encouragement of the loved one is known. In all three case studies—*juramentado*, Palestinian, and Iranian—cultural depictions of honour and glory played a part.

These three cases differ from the Chinese example: the scripts are different; and while the Chinese example is steeped in tradition, the others are not. Hurley (1938) noted that the *juramentado* performed an unorthodox form of *jihad* that was neither Islamic nor native. The re-traditionalisation of Iranian society has been documented in this thesis. The same process of re-traditionalisation can be observed within the Palestinian society. Cultural scripts do not need to be steeped in tradition to be effective. Newly created cultural suicide scripts appear from time to time. Colin Tatz (2001, pp.24–27), in a study of Aboriginal suicide, noted the rapid construction of the parasuicide and suicide scripts. He contended that Aboriginal suicide is different: it did not spring from a

Western culture, or a traditional Aboriginal culture, but from a present-day Aboriginal youth culture. From an historical investigation of suicide in Aboriginal culture, he found that suicide was unheard of before the 1960s. There was no word for it in any of their languages. The present-day cultural script for suicide is a product of the period post-1960, when the first suicides, or parasuides, became evident while the person was in custody. Youth suicide, from as young as 10, is now an epidemic.

Despite the differences between this example and Jihadist Suicide, one similarity—apart from its rapid growth—stands out: that Aboriginal youth suicide culture was made possible in large part by the destruction of the traditional culture. Hobsbawm (1994, p.16) lamented that it is now possible to see a future without the past, where the maps that used to guide human existence can no longer chart a safe course throughout life. Apart from the loss of meaning, the destruction of traditional culture also frees individuals to chart their own course, completely free of the cultural "safety nets" that once protected them. Indeed, if we were looking for an incubator that allowed the virus that I call Jihadist Suicide to germinate, it would be the loss of tradition.

The Aboriginal youth-suicide culture is different from Jihadist Suicide for many reasons, not the least of which is that Aboriginal youth suicide does not include murder or intend harm to others. Another difference is that Aboriginal youth suicide is a grass-roots cultural formation, whereas Jihadist Suicide comes from top downward. In the Aboriginal case, the elders have not been able to stop this undesirable activity. In the case of Jihadist Suicide, the development of the cultural norm for this action option was facilitated by the strength of the political elites.

Thought Control

Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes attempt to control every part of the individual's life, even their emotions. William Sargant (1957, p.72) contended that the "leaders of successful faiths have never … dispensed entirely with physiological weapons in their attempts to confer spiritual grace on their fellow men". He argued that "many methods [have been] used to modify normal brain function for religious purposes. Some sects pay more attention than others to a direct stirring up of emotions as a means of affecting the higher nervous system; but few wholly neglect it" (Sargant, 1957, p.72). He mentions religious sects, but his theory relates equally to any collective: religious, nationalist, or New Age.

Talk of emotion in social research has largely been shunned. Catherine Lutz (1988, p.3) asserted that this is because it is common to think of emotion as a "bio-psychological event". But as she and Arlie Hochschild (1983) have argued, emotion has social origins and implications. Lutz (1988, p.6) takes from Rosaldo (1980) the cue that "emotions as forms of symbolic action whose articulation with other aspects of cultural meaning and social structure is primary". In sum, she sees emotions as a "culturally postulated psyche" (Lutz, 1988, p.7): "an emergent product of social life" (Lutz, 1988, p.5), that is not so much an internal state but is a communicative moral device. It is a form of discourse. This is borne out in the production of Jihadist Suicide.

Mary-Jo Delvecchio Good and Byron Good (1988, pp.43–63) noted the use of emotional discourse in the Islamic Republic in the making of the "prototypical" loyal Iranian citizen. They recognised the "role of the state in defining the meaning and

legitimacy of emotions and their expression" (Good and Good, 1988, p.45). They marvelled at how the "leaders of the new Islamic Republic decreed sadness to be the appropriate demeanor of its citizens and the paradigmatic emotional tone for contemporary public life" (Good and Good, 1988, p.43). The intention of the regime was to build a nation of *shahids*; fully committed to Jihadist Suicide. Varzi (2002, p.66) noted: "After the Revolution, Khomeini banned all mystical practice for strict Islamic jurisprudence and made moves to oppress emotion, [and] he allowed an emotional catharsis only in the purist sense of the mystical definition by glorifying martyrdom".

Political suicide became the organising principle of society around which everything else revolved or was subordinated. Good and Good (1988, p.56) contended that during the Iranian Revolution, and particularly in its post-Revolution phase, the paradigm of Karbala provided the same central organising principle. I disagree. Although the myth of Hussein and his martyrdom was the central organising factor of the Revolution, post-Revolution it was the *Basij,* the *shahid*, that rose to the status of the sacred. Although the myth of Karbala was prominent during the Revolution, the Jihadist Suicide—that, as Christia (2007) argued, was fashioned more on Khomeini than Hussein—came to the forefront. In Iran, only Khomeini eclipsed the Jihadist Suicide in reverence and respect, and then only slightly.

We would not be able to explain *martyropathy* if it were not for the elevation of the Jihadist Suicide to the position of the sacred. It was the gift of the regime to the people who had hitherto occupied the humble status of loyal servant. Never before in the history of the Shi'ite could such a status of glory have been attained. Indeed, the status of the Jihadist Suicide as the sacred is a central organising principle in all arenas of

Jihadist Suicide. Despite the oft-cited claim of radical clerics and militants that the Jihadist does not value life, subscription to Jihadism entails the construction (or reconstruction) of the self to the moral ideal. In other words, far from being an inconsequential sacrifice in an external struggle, the ego plays a large part in the passage to death.

The Iranian and Palestinian collectives in the era of *martyropathy* are reminiscent of Durkheim's social religion. Here, society is bound together by communal emotion. He believed that people ordered the social and supernatural worlds according to communal principles. The world is divided into the profane and the sacred. The profane applies to the ordinary, the everyday, which is most of the world. The sacred is the consecrated, revered, and admired. The sacred relates to the man-made symbolic ordering of the world, which is not God-given. Tiryakian (1988) recognised that revolution and religious revivalism have been shown to be moments in history when the differentiation between the profane and the sacred can be torn asunder in the remaking of the world in accordance with the prevailing utopian dream. These are moments when the profane can become the sacred. In essence, these are times when the meek and mild can rise to the position of the untouchable.

Good and Good (1988, p.56) noted that the Islamic Republic's redefinition of the sacred occurred by way of ritualised public performance. The regime did this by means of the "infusion into public social and political life of those symbols, rituals, and attendant emotions" that were central to the ideal, namely, the creation of a nation of *shahids*:

> Thus as the state came to define the appropriate Islamic demeanor, intensifying its meaning through the religio-political Friday prayers, the rallies in commemoration of the war martyrs at the Fountain of Blood … the encountering of the slain in circulated 'Books of Martyrs,' and the media interviews with the bereaved families of the martyred youth, public display of sentiment and emotion, of grief and mourning, became not only a sign of piety but also one of loyalty to the new regime (Good and Good, 1988, pp.56–57).

Here, the cultural script is completely rewritten, not only in relation to societal access to suicide but in all facets of social being. Good and Good (1988) noted that ritual in pre-Revolution Iran, namely, the commemoration of *Ashura*—ritual remembrance of Hussein's death at Kabalah—was a transcendental experience: the opportunity to be with God, if only momentarily. But all of the rituals of the new regime were aimed at transformation, that is, transformation of the Iranian populous into a moral collective: a nation of *shahids*, or a nation of ardent supporters of the Jihadist Suicide. The transformation was brutal and rapid.

In the case of the Palestinian Territories, the transformation of society did not happen in quite the same way. It occurred incrementally, from the return of the deportees in 1992 to its dramatic and violent crescendo in 2002, when 55 people exploded themselves in a bizarre new ritual. The last trimester of this traumatic birth occurred rapidly following Arafat's deployment of the dual Jihadist doctrine. It was also brutal, from the time of the schism, or the renaming of the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas in Gaza. As with Khomeini, the first task of Hamas was to take control of the mosques. This entailed the casting aside or the murder of many traditional and revered clerics, who were suitably equipped—cognitively and spiritually—to defend the *umma* (community of believers)

against the radical new regime. Unfortunately, they were not violently or militarily equipped for this task (Mishal and Sela, 2000; Kimmerling and Migdal, 2003).

Mishal and Sela (2000) recognised that the collective shock of this time was not the popular uprising against Israeli occupation, but the internal social upheaval that was Hamas. Such was their power and influence by 2000 that Arafat gave up pretences to reconciliation with Israel and fell in with the Hamas momentum in the transformation of society into a nation of *shahids*. So, in essence, in order to bring about societal transformation, societal destruction is a prerequisite. So too is the social mandate of a principal organising doctrine to replace it, together with its incumbent social construction of the new mood of the nation. Good and Good (1988) noted that in Iran the demeanour is sadness. In the Palestinian Territories it is anger. Both subscribe to the public and private control of symbols, rituals, and emotions that glorify the Jihadist Suicide.

Mosques, madrassas and closed cells

There is great importance in taking over conservative mosques and *madrassas* to socialise the *umma* in the way of Jihadism. The politico-religious sermon has much in the way of brainwashing in the style of Pentecostal movements. Sargant (1957, pp.115–116; pp.132–133) attributed this to the herd mentality, a certain psychological disposition of the individual adherent, and much upsetting of the emotions, which "must be stirred to their depths, at frequent intervals, by unaccountable feelings of compunction, joy, peace and so on, or how could you be certain that the Divine touch

was working on your soul?” (Knox, 1950, cited in Sargant, 1957, p.115). In its inverse, the Jihadist politico-religious sermon relies on sadness, hatred and anger.

Indoctrination and brainwashing in closed cells and *madrassas* run by radical clerics have been well documented. Techniques used are reminiscent of those developed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) for mind conversion. This is what Sargant (1957, p.157) called *Pavlovian psychology*: “Soviet psychologists have held that, given the proper conditioning, the human being could be turned into the ideal new Soviet man”. Citing Richard Walker in *China under Communism*, he gave a detailed account of how Pavlovian psychology works to produce the ideal man through using physical and psychological deprivation. Walker noted (1956, cited in Sargant 1957, p.156) that the Communist Party used this technique to produce the ideal communist representative, who acted as a “‘transmission belt’ between the Party and the masses”, for the purpose of upholding the communist ideal.

This technique—according to Walker (1956) and Sargant (1957)—was best suited to small groups in isolated areas, much in the way that the Taliban *madrassas* work, as well as al Qaeda-style terror cells, and Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) safe houses during the first epoch of Jihadist Suicide. Owais Tohib (2011) interviewed a young man, Arshad Khan, in Pakistan who had managed to get away from the Taliban:

> Abdur Razzaq, a militant commander known to be a suicide bomber recruiter trained Arshad Khan at a *madrasa* in Pakistan. He [Khan] says he remembers the militant commander telling the *madrasa* boys that “everybody lives for worldly life, but those who choose to live for the hereafter are the most sacred’. It was exciting and radical and seemed to make sense at the time” (Tohib, 2011).

Khan remains fixated on the "delights" of Jihadist Suicide (Tohib, 2011). Like "poor Ellen West" (Binswanger, cited in Alvarez, 1971, p.89), life seems nothing more than the contemplation of death, tantalisingly summoning him to his final destination. Sargant (1957, p.73) noted that the physiological and psychological stresses, once removed, can return a person to psychological equilibrium, whereby the state of heightened suggestibility is no longer present. But, he argued, often the thoughts planted in the mind of the recruit remain forever (Sargant, 1957, p.73). Khan is like a ticking time bomb.

Role definition and role playing

The formation of prototype personalities is a key factor in understanding the phenomenon of Jihadist Suicide. Faris (1936, cited in Alpert, 1958, p.664) argued that personality is a social construct: "Human personality, arising in communication, is the result of conduct which takes place in the presence of others and in contacts with friends and enemies, allies and opponents". Society and custom provide the individual with personality options, which are developed through participation in "ongoing social processes" (Faris, 1936, cited in Alpert, 1958, p.664). The idea of the self as the living martyr, or the mother of martyrs, or the Ninja–Jihad warrior is provided by society (or the *madrassas*, or the closed cell).

This harks back to Durkheim's social religion, whereby the communal principles are manifest in society's role models. Sargant (1957) concentrates on thought control through psychological and physiological stress. However, it can be shown that thought control can also be achieved through wooing the masses: enticing compliance to

demanding social and cultural norms by offering rewards. A social norm can be a social good or a social resource that is craved or sought after, as we would expect with Durkheim's category of optional altruistic suicide. Here, the suicide is only possible by the collective conscience that approves of this behaviour. One is not compelled to fall on one's sword by coercion, but jumps happily to one's death in the anticipation of some reward, either external or internal (psychological), that society has afforded the individual.

Here, the individual strives for the moral ideal. Different psychological and physiological stresses or excitements can produce different individual responses. Both techniques, stress and reward, offer a means of shaping the personality of the actor. Jihadist Suicide is seen by those who practise and support it as a good deed. It is so highly regarded—by the *juramentado*, Palestinians, and Iranians—as a moral ideal that families are prepared to sacrifice loved ones. This is achieved by the encouragement through peer pressure to develop a moral self in accordance with convention. The moral self is a social performer, and if the performance is successful, the ideals of society are upheld and their interests are furthered.

Gideon Kunda (2002) described role performance in corporate ritual: it equally describes role performance in an authoritarian or totalitarian society. Each is mediated by power elites, who hold each member under strict tutelage. Success or failure as a member is dependent upon, at the very least, the impression of compliance with the ideals, values, and beliefs of the collective. Kunda (2002) described how presentation rituals in a corporation mediate behaviour: "In sum, presentation rituals are occasions for enacting, enforcing, and reinforcing the display of the managerially sanctioned

member role and are thus a mechanism for mediating normative demands and normative responses” (Kunda, 2002, p.95). In Jihadist societies (or cells), ritual is equally an occasion for affirming, or reaffirming one’s membership of the collective. And, like Christopher Browning’s (1992) “ordinary [‘Nazi’] men”—one does not need to believe in the ideal to participate (see the conclusion to this section).

Kunda (2002, p.92) noted that in a collective, “reputation, status, and real rewards … [require] a fluency in the language, mode of thinking, and style of ideological discourse”. Um Nidal Farahat has perfected the discourse of the ideal mother of martyrs and has reaped the rewards offered. The norm depicts that the deaths of her three sons benefitted her in life—materially and in social standing—as well as in the afterlife, as the death of each son ensured her immediate entry to heaven through their act of Jihadist Suicide. Her understanding is not one of selfishness; indeed, her belief is the inverse. She believes that she would be acting selfishly by stopping their act of Jihadist Suicide: she wants what is best for them, and this is *shahada* (Jihadist Suicide).

The prototype that Um Nidal exemplifies is the legend of al Khansah, revived and made applicable to present-day Palestinian society. Al Khansah typifies the ideal Palestinian mother:

> Al Khansah was a poet in the early Islamic period. Before she converted to Islam, her brothers died, and she grieved. However, Islamic historian Ibn Athir writes that after she converted to Islam, she delivered a fiery speech encouraging her four sons to march into battle for Allah. When all four were killed, the poem she wrote was one of joy, rejoicing that Allah had honored her with the deaths of her sons. Al Khansah is considered the archetypal mother of Shahids, a woman glorified by Palestinians for encouraging her sons to kill and die for Allah, and

> rejoicing when they achieved their Shahada deaths (Marcus and Crook, 2005, n.p.).

Not all Palestinian women have been able to adapt as successfully as Um Nidal did to the ideal. Reuter ([2002] 2004, p.177) also witnessed Iranian mothers struggling to uphold the ideal. We can imagine that this was the case with the *juramentado* also.

Ritual and public performance extends to interviews with the grieving parents, usually the mother. The officially sanctioned emotional performance is one of joy and pride. A new tradition is for the mother of the martyr to shriek with joy upon hearing of their death. As Good and Good (1988, p.56) noted, the means of creating the ideal prototype was the "infusion into public social and political life of those symbols, rituals, and attendant emotions" that were central to the ideal. To perform the ritual performance successfully, one has to comply with what Hochschild (1983) calls "feeling rules". Feeling rules are internalised rules for the display of emotion in public ritual.

Lutz (1988, pp.1–7) pointed out that every societal group has such rules, and they change from group to group. Hochschild (1983, p.57) noted that we recognise a feeling rule "by inspecting how we assess our feelings, how other people assess our emotional display, and by sanctions issuing from ourselves". She noted several ways in which the feeling convention is upheld in Western culture: "We can experience it as a private mumbling to ourselves, the voice of a watchful chorus standing to the side of the main stage on which we act and feel" (Hochschild, 1983, pp.57–58). We are also asked by those near to us to account for how we feel and are reminded of how we should feel: "Sanctions common on the social scene—cajoling, chiding, teasing, scolding,

shunning—often come into play as forms of ridicule or encouragement that lightly correct feeling and adjust it to convention" (Hochschild, 1983, pp.58–59).

Hochschild argued that people can be cajoled into changing their emotions. Even without external prompting, people can be active in "rallying" themselves into a different way of feeling. She called this "emotion work". She recognised that "taken together, emotion work, feeling rules, and interpersonal exchange make up our private emotional system" (Hochschild, 1983, p.76). This form of social control is opaque, because it relies on self-policing of outward expressions of emotion. But in reality, as Kunda (2002) pointed out, the corporate rituals he witnessed were occasions to assert the corporate ideology. He noted that "since the ideology is one of openness, informality, individual initiative, and real feelings, symbolic power is exerted, for the most part, quite subtly" (Kunda, 2002, p.91). He pointed out that feeling rules, as they apply to rituals, do not work if they appear forced. This is because "overt, centralized control and forced compliance would belie the messages of the ideology" (Kunda, 2002, p.91). For rituals to work in accordance with the conventional paradigm, they must appear "natural". Kunda pointed to the reality that they are anything but "natural" and unaffected. Indeed, their entire purpose is to define reality.

There are standard feeling rules that apply across cultures: people are expected to display sadness at a funeral and joy at a wedding. Jihadist Suicide mandates that these feeling rules are reversed:

> Villagers [in Iran] recently told an anthropologist that they used to celebrate weddings and go to the graveyard to weep, but now they go to

> the graveyard for celebrations, while weddings are quiet and other life-fulfilling rituals are suppressed (Good and Good, 1988, p.58).

It is the same in the Palestinian Territories. This is demonstrated in the accretion to Palestinian culture of the Shi'i tradition of the wedding-funeral of the Jihadist Suicide. Reuter ([2002] 2004, pp.48–49) was baffled by the Sunni Palestinian adoption of this tradition:

> Many of the deaths [in the Iran–Iraq war] were celebrated with a tradition that would find favour many years later with Sunni Palestinian suicide assassins in their encampments in Gaza: the macabre-seeming designation of death as a wedding celebration. Strictly speaking, it takes its inspiration from events of the Shi'ite tradition: Qasim, Hussein's nephew, fell at Karbala shortly before his wedding, and his wedding tent then became the repository of his dead body. It thus became the custom with unmarried men killed in the war to put a miniature version of the traditional Iranian wedding table with mirrors and candles in the display cabinets above their graves (Reuter, ([2002] 2004, pp.48–49).

The social drama that is played out during martyr wedding-funerals is mediated by a powerful moral imperative to uphold the myth of joy, celebration, and approval. According to Kunda (2002, p.92), deviance from the mandated ideology results in "brief episodes that resemble a small-scale version of what Turner (1974) calls 'social drama'":

> In Turner's view, a social drama is a fundamental and recurring part of the process of group life that unfolds in predictable stages: a public and dramatic breach or a challenge to the prevailing order is followed by a sense of mounting crisis and a series of attempts at redressive action, and culminates in either an unbridgeable schism between the opposed parties or integration and reestablishment of order (Kunda, 2002, p.92).

Although Hochschild (1983) and Kunda (2002) see the re-establishment of social order as subtle, in authoritarian and totalitarian societies sanctions may not necessarily be gentle—particularly if a Hamas member attends the house of the "grieving" parents to ensure that the *shahid* (Jihadist Suicide) is "honoured" in accordance with convention. Heavy-handed tactics are not out of the question, ranging from physical violence to withholding financial gratuities for the death.

The social drama is also played out in interviews with the "mother-of-martyrs". Peer pressure can result in what Hochschild (1983, p.42–48) called "deep acting"—cajoling oneself into changing one's feelings to comply with convention. Examples can be viewed in two interviews with Palestinian mothers aired on PA TV (the state-owned Palestinian television station).

Example 1:

The first example was aired on 6 June 2004. Figure 24 shows a still frame from this broadcast from the collection of PMW. The segment starts with a poster of three Jihadist Suicides. The text on the poster reads: "The Popular Resistance Committees proudly announce the falling of three Shahids (Martyrs) of the Great Islam". A voiceover announces: "The Shahid [Martyr] Muhammad always aspired Shahada [Martyrdom] despite his young age. [The three boys] became outstanding for all Palestinians, outstanding in their medals of honor—Shahada". The camera cuts to an interview with the mother of one of the dead boys, Muhammad:

Figure 24: Mother of Martyr

> It was sad and joyous about him, meaning he always like the Shahada [Martyrdom]. All children at his age do. He always cared for me. I would have preferred that one of his other brothers would have attained Shahada instead of him, because he was the joy of my life (mother of Muhammad, translated by PMW).

It may be speculation, but the mother appears to be more sad than joyous. From a personal perspective, I cannot image a more traumatised scenario than feeling a social obligation to commit one of my children to Jihadist Suicide, and having to go through a mental accountancy procedure in order to determine which one I would prefer to die. In my view, her words betray her inner trauma. But it is too late, her favourite is already dead.

Example 2:

On 3 August 2011, PMW released an extract from the PA TV program, *The Best Mothers*, showing an interview with the mother of Darin Abu Aisheh, a suicide bomber who blew herself up at a roadblock in 2002, wounding three Israelis. Figure 25 shows a

still frame from this broadcast. It is not clear from the report whether this interview was taped in 2002, shortly after Abu Aisheh's Jihadist Suicide, or especially for the *Best Mothers* program. The implicit suggestion is that it was taped especially for the program. In this case, some nine years after the daughter's death, the mother's emotions are still raw. Her grief is apparent. She knows how she is supposed to react and what she is supposed to say and she tries to comply.

Figure 25: *The Best of Mothers*.
PA TV (Fatah).

> I didn't scream, even my scarf stayed on my head. Everyone came. Everyone heard what happened ... I was sitting and started to sing to her. I said, "It's the night before your wedding, Darin, and we won't see you anymore, my daughter". People around me said, "Allah be with you". I said, "I haven't gone mad, I'm not crazy. I want to sing, Darin is a bride" (translated by PMW).

Elevation of the Political Suicide by the Oppression of all Other Emotions

The centrality of the Jihadist Suicide as the symbolic frame of the nation is facilitated by lowering public and private expressions of joy for any other activity or ritual. The

incidents of this are well recorded in Iran, the Palestinian Territories, in Afghanistan under the Taliban, and within the al Qaeda network. Apart from strict control of sexuality, there are the more bewildering bans on emotional outlets. For instance, Pierre Tristam (n.d., n.p.), says that Taliban rules, decrees, and prohibitions—as posted in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan beginning in November and December 1996—decreed it a criminal offence to play music, fly a kite, or keep pigeons for a hobby. These offences were punishable by imprisonment.

Notable in Iran and the Palestinian Territories is the banning of what Hamas calls "shameful weddings" that are celebrated with song and dance. In the Palestinian Territories, the promise of a new beginning through the enactment of a joyous wedding has turned into something subdued. The traditional mourning ceremony—where one serves bitter coffee and so forth—has been turned into a celebration when it comes to the burial of a Jihadist Suicide with the serving of sweet coffee and doling out sweets. Social control is enforced by the dictum that if one does not celebrate the death, one is being disrespectful to the "brave hero". The unconscious message is that life is not worth living, but death is exceptional—death is the new beginning that marriage once promised.

The same deformation occurred in Iran. Good and Good (1988, p.58) wrote: "Joyful village wedding music has been forbidden, the gypsy musicians put out of work". The ban on joy extends to childhood play. It has been noted that despite the Palestinian factions being the highest recipients of aid finances per capita, Palestinian towns and

villages are devoid of playing fields[36]. Children play with guns from an early age with some incidents of accidental death of family members recorded as a result of this pastime. Children play a *shahid* (martyr) game: some children dress up as Jews, the lucky one dresses as the suicide bomber and they all fall down dead (Oliver and Steinberg, 2005).

In the same way that Varzi (2002) and Good and Good (1988) recognised that Iranian state policy promoted Jihadist Suicide by oppressing emotion, this occurs today in the Palestinian Territories as official government policy. Two advertising campaigns have been run on Palestinian Authority television (PA TV) targeting children. They used some of the same footage in both telecasts: one is a music video and the other is in the style of a commercial or short skit. In the latter, a young boy is seen in the distance playing with a toy truck. The camera zooms in while asking the question "Are you a Palestinian child?" This is repeated until the camera is within a reasonable distance of the child. The child drops the truck and picks up a rock. The boy walks off with determination: the outcome is satisfaction that he *is* a Palestinian boy after all. The same camera shots and dialogue are repeated, this time with a young girl playing with a doll. The campaign is to instil in the child a sense of guilt at playing; and the counter-message is that the only means of emotional release is to engage in bouts with death.

Figure 26 shows a still frame from this broadcast, it is from the collection of PMW.

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[36] For instance, a United Kingdom organisation, Hope and Play, are dedicated to raising funds so they can build Palestinian children in the West Bank and Gaza playfields (http://www.hopeandplay.org/).

Figure 26: “Are You a Palestinian Child?”

The ban on joy and emotional outlets channels activity into socially approved activities. Juergensmeyer (2003, pp.198–201) observed that young men with sexual frustrations see a suicide bombing as one huge cathartic orgasm. He contended: “There is a certain amount of folklore about men and guns that cannot easily be dismissed—the notion, for instance, that sexual frustration leads to a fascination with phallic-shaped weaponry that explodes in a way that some men are unable to do sexually” (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p.201). Hamas men he interviewed described the ritual process of a suicide bombing as a wedding: “One young man who had committed himself to becoming a suicide bomber said that ‘when I explode’ and became ‘God’s holy martyr’, he was promised a place for himself and his family in paradise, seventy-two virgins, and a cash settlement for his family equivalent to six thousand dollars. It was the virgins that seemed to interest the young man the most” (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p.201).

No doubt Juergensmeyer’s (2003) idea raised both ire and mirth. We can see, however, that the cultural control of sexuality—as Juergensmeyer (2003) pointed out—can have a

profound effect on emotion. This was the finding of Margaret Mead ([1928] 1973, p.6) in a study on the "effect of civilisation upon a developing human being at the age of puberty". She concluded that the problems experienced by American adolescents were not of being adolescent, but being adolescent in America. Similarly, young Middle Eastern men who claim an attraction to suicide bombing for sexual gratification are responding to their particular cultural circumstances. Withholding outlets for emotional expression is a form of social control, and ultimately is a means of directing the individual towards expressions of cathartic emotional release sanctioned by the regime and beneficial to it.

Conclusion

Who would have thought to build an obligation to die on the back of an egocentric desire for self-fulfilment? It almost defies comprehension. We can see that some Iranians and Palestinians struggle to accept this social norm. But by and large, the enthusiasm to attain this goal—a proper death, a ritually performed suicide—can reach fever pitch. Tiryakian (1988) noted that at specific historic junctures with environmental states, the profane—the mundane self and a mundane life—can be transformed into the sacred. This is what Jihadist society offers the individual—no longer a mere mortal, the living–martyr is the embodiment of the sacred. Like the sun itself, the living–martyr fills the dim-dark world with a glowing aura. In just under three decades, over 4,000 people have ended their lives in suicide–bombings. If we add all the other cases that are not suicide–bombings—like the *Basij* and other "martyrs" of the "resistance" from the Palestinian Territories, particularly since 2000—the number swells considerably.

The moral ideal describes a situation where the need to conform to the dictates of society, or the “terror” cell, is met with anything from ambivalence to a burning desire. But we should say something about the need to conform to this norm through ambivalence. Regardless of whether the society (or group) is dictatorial or totalitarian, or free and liberal, the appeal to conform always gains a response. We know from history what a compelling force conformity can be. Take for instance Police Reserve Battalion 101 in Poland during the Second World War. Christopher Browning (1992) explained how ordinary men can perform acts otherwise considered psychopathic through a process of internalising the act as a moral ideal where men seek to belong, to conform.

In this case it was the cold-blooded murder of Jewish men, women, and children in the Lublin district of Poland. Browning marvelled at how ordinary the perpetrators socio-political backgrounds were. Hardly any of these men—responsible for the murder of thousands—belonged to a political party. Indeed, he noted that many of the men were opposed to the Nazi Party. The majority were not members of the standing army, but were gardeners or held middle-level professional jobs prior to the war, like school teaching and accountancy. The bulk of these men had an ambivalent attitude to the killing. They were able to perform what must have been an unrelenting bloodbath, simply out of a need to conform. They willingly acquiesced to being a part of the murderous mob because they did not want to be seen as different.

Peer pressure of this sort derives from what Daniel Katz and Floyd Allport (1931) named the theory of “pluralistic ignorance”. It is a result of peer pressure that derives from action intended to avoid social ostracism. If people believe that their peers support

a norm (or action), they simply go along with it in order to conform. Damon Centola, Robb Willer, and Michael Macy (2005) took this theory further by analysing the mechanisms that support such behaviour. They conceptualised pluralistic ignorance as the phenomenon described by Hans Christian Andersen ([1837] 1998) in *The Emperor's New Clothes*. No one wants to be the odd one out—the one who dares to laugh at the emperor.

It was argued by Centola et al. (2005) that once a norm becomes institutionalised within the political, religious, and domestic sphere, non-compliance with the norm becomes near impossible. People become trapped in what is referred to as "a *Nash equilibrium*", whereby "even if everyone prefers that the norm would disappear, no one has an incentive to change strategy unilaterally—thereby becoming the lone deviant in a population [willing to comply]" (Centola et al., 2005, p.1016). The experiments of Centola et al. (2005) showed that among a small group of, say, eight people who are reluctant to comply with a norm (or action), it only took four people willing to step forward and comply for the rest to follow suit. So, in effect, the men of Battalion 101—who were not inspired ideologically, or forced to comply by their commanders—did not require a lot of encouragement from their comrades to pitch in and perform tasks considered by ordinary sensibilities as heinous.

The same institutionalised norm enforcement is exemplified in a meeting Reuter ([2002] 2004, pp.169–170) had with a mother-of-martyr in the Behesht-e Zahra martyr's cemetery in Tehran:

> She is soon telling me about a terrible day in 1984 when her little boy Reza, then aged thirteen, came home from school and announced proudly that he was going to the front. She tells me of her helplessness and despair at that moment, knowing the futility of opposing a decision supported by her son's teachers, and by her own government—and knowing that no help would be forthcoming from her husband—who was at the front himself.

Five weeks after going to the front, Reza was dead. Now that the war is over, the mother-of-martyr repeatedly tries to persuade herself that it really had been a good and meaningful death:

> "I can't presume to judge", says Reza's mother with that indefatigable Iranian politeness. "But I don't believe it's God's will for someone to just throw his life away". Having said her piece she stands up, gathers up her chador, and disappears, receding from view in the stony forest of gravestones (Reuter, [2002] 2004, p.178).

Dissension is still subdued. The institutionalisation of the norm meant that the myths and legends that created a *nation of shahids* cannot readily be denied: to deny them is to bring dishonour to the dead. For the older generation, this new "tradition" became a matter of sad reflection and bitter contempt towards the state in Iran following the heady days of Jihadist Suicide during the Iran–Iraq war.

PART V :

CONCLUSION

Chapter 11

The Return of the *Jahiliyya*

After the Holocaust, survivor Victor Frankl observed that "our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is" ([1946] 1997). But human behaviour continues to surprise. Forty years later, who could have imagined that human beings would not only invent a new and original way to kill, but to be killed? In 2006, Elster declared that the world-wide phenomenon of suicide–terror started as an enigma wrapped in a puzzle. Have we decoded the enigma and have we solved the puzzle? We have a mass of observations and diagnoses of the suicide-bombing phenomenon: we have political, social, and psychological x-rays, ultrasounds, and even dissections of suicide bombers—their biographies, ideologies, beliefs, and values. But are we any closer to a point where understanding can lead to a prevention of, or even an antidote to, this strategy?

There are many theories about the root cause of suicide–terror. This thesis is yet another. It is critical social theory. It lies mainly in sociology and political science, but has used history, anthropology, and social psychology to help unravel the puzzle. My task has been, in part, to assess the mass of literature on the subject. I learnt Arabic, but not well enough for it to have been of great assistance. However, it is not the language that is needed, but cultural awareness and an ability to perceive of the cultural transmogrification that was an essential part of actualising this phenomenon. There is

currently a dearth of analysts employed in this task, or at least can be heard above the roar of the popular grievance theorists.

I have not read everything, but certainly widely and constantly. In a dynamic and ongoing political vortex—such as in Middle East and radical Islamic politics—events do not stand still for long. The escalation of suicide–terror since the Iran–Iraq war has been so swift as to become a near-universal tactic. Unlike some thesis topics, it is not possible to draw a clear line and say that this thesis is confined to a geographic space, but we can see a distinct time frame. Suicide–terror, in the distinctive form of Jihadist Suicide, had its genesis during the war-years of the Iran-Iraq war. It morphed into different forms as it spread globally.

Surveying this field and making sense of it has been like a detective investigation: searching out clues and following leads, critically analysing the evidence, and sorting fact from fiction. Investigation included sourcing theoretical works with which to make sense of the data. This phenomenon can be explained by reference to established theoretical work in other areas of research, and in relation to events in different spatial and (or) temporal dimensions. Concepts had to be challenged, including some well-known postulates like suicide, martyrdom and ideology that have become distorted by common perceptions. The job was to create a picture of the world from which the suicide bombers emanated and the domains in which they still operate.

What I have contributed is a clearer picture of suicide bombers; resolved some niggling issues that have created paradigm paralysis by taking the focus off the militants; and looking more directly at the actors in Jihadist Suicide. The desire to create terror is not

the issue here; yet most research has focused on the militants—what they want, and why they use this tactic. Since at least 2005, research has recognised an individual logic distinct from a strategic logic, but somehow the actors in the suicide operations are presumed to be merely carried along by militancy and the desire to murder. This research has attempted to tease out other factors in the social milieu by focusing on *how* rather than why the militants achieved suicide–terror. This research contributes to the literature through building a robust understanding of concepts like martyrdom, suicide and ideology; and recognising the significance of re-traditionalisation in the production of *martyropathy*: the use of emotion, and the tapping into primordial sensibilities to change the traditional meaning of key cultural features of the society, like death meanings, responsibility, and the vision of the self. It also uncovered the immense importance of autocratic power in establishing Jihadist Suicide within the Iranian and Palestinian domains. Without this advantage, the phenomenon may never have spread.

This thesis diverts from the standard formula for a dissertation in that it does not involve empirical research by fieldwork or archival research (for qualitative studies), or rigorous collection and analysis of data (for quantitative research). However, it is my contention that empirical research of this nature is wasted—if not dangerous—if it does not stem from robust theoretical underpinnings. If we cannot form a sound conceptual framework incorporating core issues such as martyrdom, suicide and ideological socialisation, empirical research runs the risk of building an argument for a certain viewpoint that does not represent the situation on the ground.

I make this point with particular reference to what I refer to as grievance theories—the argument that the suicide-bomber (or equivalent) is driven to this end through some

form of social and (or) political grievance. It is not hard to build a case supporting grievance theories; firstly, they accurately describe the motivations of the militants who prepare and send suicide bombers; and secondly, social and political grievances are common features of life in our era. Grievance theories err in that they purport to be scientific, but in effect rely on Western sensibilities that place far too much stock in the failure of humankind to weather the turbulence of our time.

Instead, I contend that suicide–terror requires willing actors who respond to collective sentiments that encourage and support their participation. It is not overt militarism. It was a product of war and remains today the sole practice of militant groups. Political (including religious) elites are often opportunistic. A means of encouraging the masses to accept the required collective sentiments was developed. These sentiments encourage the responsibility of the individual to develop a “proper” self; one more closely attuned to egocentrism than to militancy.

The living–martyr is the personification of the sacred. They shine so brightly that no cause could eclipse their aura. The collective sentiments that produce this form of egocentric suicide worship the cult of the individual. The individual is freed from all traditional forms of responsibility to live a full life, and free to usurp the position of God in deciding the moment of death. They are exonerated from the responsibility to fulfil traditional roles, such as breadwinner or mother. Indeed, the living–martyr has no responsibility to reproduction, or to the foetus blown away with the mother. They have no responsibility to education and the betterment of the community through good works. They have no responsibility other than to complete this life by enacting a proper death. They are a corpse amongst the living.

The collective sentiment that allows for the development of the living–martyr is not traditional. It is not to be found as a nascent feature of tradition. It is new. It did not abandon tradition altogether—but transformed it. It involved a re-traditionalisation of collective sentiments by tapping into traditional symbolic icons and changing their meaning. This is not a new tactic of mass conversion to a new ideology—a new set of beliefs and values—but as perceived by the *idéologues* of the French Revolution who recognised it as the meaning of the word "ideology". It is an old trick with a new purpose: to produce voluntary death, on call.

For this to have happened, tradition—or the common conscience—had to be weakened. Communities held together by strong traditions are immune from the sort of re-traditionalisation that occurred. Evidence of the strength of the tactics used by political elites to bring this about—and the relative weakness of the community to resist—is suggested by the significance of the change. We are not simply talking about, say, the pattern of the national flag, but about the sanctity of life.

The Middle East is considered communitarian compared to the West. It is incorrect to assume, however, that they are not individualistic. The evidence shows that within Iran—where Jihadist Suicide began—and within the Palestinian Territories, individualism was a feature of the society. This was the reason that radicalism emerged during the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. This is what radicals like members of the Muslim Brotherhood—both in Egypt and Gaza—as well as Khomeini and his supporters railed against. This mix of striving for and demanding individualism, while at the same time fearing for the future and fighting against it, created the environment ripe for suicide–terror.

The paradox is that the more individualistic society (by extension, the world) became, the more people have felt a desperate need for *gemeinschaft*, community, and a sense of belonging. People today—from East to West—ascribe to all manner of strange and ludicrous beliefs espoused by even stranger cults. The members of the Heaven's Gate cult, for instance, committed mass suicide in 1997, believing that there was a spaceship following the comet Hale-Bopp that would capture their souls and transport them aboard.

A psychological autopsy of members would no doubt reveal that they were all of the psychological category *dependent-avoidant*, which makes them more susceptible to agree to acts of a bizarre nature—like those recently discovered to account for a high number of suicide bombers. This does not explain the process of re-traditionalisation: the whole community is not suffering from this psychological disorder. Yet for re-traditionalisation to occur, the whole, or majority community, must concur with the new interpretation of death meanings, and a myriad of other cultural practices that go to encourage and support the practice of suicide bombing.

The rise of religiosity and the takeover of conservative mosques underpin the transformation of society. Suicide–terror is not a product of Islam. If you belong to a religion but have never been religious, then you have little idea of the tenets of your religion. "Religious" ideas can come in whatever form those charged with the authority to espouse religious ideas deem appropriate at the time. The selection of a conservative synagogue, church, or mosque would alleviate the risk of radicalisation. The trend is today, however, to *lurch* from nihilism to religious radicalism.

Radicalism is about fighting against the norms of society, but instead of merely destroying or fighting against what is considered bad, the practice of *lurch-and-learn* (discussed in Chapter 3) is to destroy everything in an overreaction to unwanted stimuli. Moving from tolerance to abject and total intolerance is a feature of this syndrome. The attraction of radical Islam—like New Age cults—is that it offers intolerance and opens the way for the adoption of strange new religious beliefs, including a lifting of all limits on what are recognised as traditional or acceptable norms. Anything and everything "goes". Add the component of civil unrest, or war—and it makes people yearn for authoritarian rule to keep society together. People will gravitate in the direction of organised religion to find security and solidarity. Organised religion has the advantage of claiming the moral high-ground. But, in the end, with the opportunism of political elites, who craft the community to their will, they have taken the religious community in a direction far away from their religion's traditional tenets. In so many ways, it represents the return of the *jahiliyya*: the people before faith who practised ritual blood sacrifice and prayed to false gods.

The Last Man Standing

Who will be the last man standing? Will there be an end of history as the world unites under the banner of radical Islam, as Osama bin Laden hoped, and as Hassan Abdallah al Turabi still schemes for? Will radical Islam eventually burn out like militant Christianity did centuries ago? Or will it be a fight to the death, leaving but a few desperate victims to rebuild the world? Militant Islam is intent on striking the West at its weakest points—its civilian populations who are not in the immediate, or at least the

obvious, battlefields. The West, as we have seen from the start of the twentieth century, operates under a reflexive policy of military intervention, saturation bombing, and war devices of every kind. It is what they call strength, and they live by its power. But this is not simply a war of “us” against “them”: we have created a Hobbesian world of every man against every man.

Suicide terrorists do not discriminate between civilians and military personnel. Indeed, their *modus operandi* is to attack soft targets that are unprepared and unable to defend themselves. They are equally *un*concerned for the safety of their civilians. Defence tactics include launching operations from heavily populated civilian localities, and using civilians as human-shields to defeat attempts to assassinate militant leaders. During *Operation Cast Lead* in Gaza that began in December 2008, Israeli Intelligence claimed that militant leaders had likely retreated to underground bunkers under a Gaza hospital. In consideration of the Geneva Convention, these targets were out of the question for attack.

Violations occur without retribution—the blanket bombing of Dresden during the Second World War, the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Osaka, the saturation bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War, to name just a few instances. Winners do not pay the price, only the losers do. Crimes against humanity carried out by the Sri Lankan government against the indigenous Tamil population in the routing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam; war crimes committed by the so-called “rebel force” in Libya in 2011, heavily supported by NATO forces that “accidently” wiped out entire families in “precision-bombing raids”, all fade from view. Apart from a murmur or two on the news networks, little of any consequence is said in the United Nations.

Silence reigns, unless it is an action carried out by Israel. In this case, everything is a crime against humanity, regardless of whether it was a genuine accident, or a policy of callous disregard, or an operational necessity to save many lives. Israel causes street marches in every capital city from East to West, the burning of the Israeli flag, and the murder of Jews wherever they may be found; Israel evokes boycotting of Jewish shop owners, whether Zionist or anti-Zionist, and robust condemnation in the United Nations. Raging anti-Semitism in the twenty-first century, only 60 years after the world said “Never Again”, is the litmus test of the state of humanity. By all accounts we are not faring well.

Violence, murder, and discrimination are not confined to racist bigotry, but extend to “brothers” and “sisters”, as shown in the Tutsi–Hutu genocidal massacres. The practice of so-called “collaborator killing” is accepted in the Palestinian Territories, and perpetrators are immune from prosecution. Mamdani (2005) acknowledged that this practice in South Africa sometimes resulted in deaths of the innocents, but did not see it as a crime, calling it “amoral”. The “necklaced” victim is denied the natural carriage of justice, with no chance to protest innocence, or to plead for mercy. There was footage of this kind during the 2011 Libyan rebellion. On the matter of a captured civilian who was pro-Gaddafi, film crews claimed: “We don’t know what the fate of this man was”. But there was no mistaking the smell of kerosene. It is a common practice of guerrilla forces to torch their captives and leave their bodies. It is a form of psychological warfare. The West turns a blind eye to events “on the ground”, claiming “collateral damage”, or “regrettable incident”. Perversely, it would seem, the West’s reaction to the manner of Gaddafi's death in October 2011 was outrage and righteous indignation that

this mass murderer was “executed”. Had a NATO bomb killed him, it would have been a notable military achievement.

We can observe the phenomenon of government policy on the targeting of civilians, even those of the victim state. Speckhard and Ahkmedova (2006, pp. 436–437; n.13) noted that most of the 129 hostages who died in the 2002 Dubrovka theatre takeover by Chechen suicide terrorists were killed by gas pumped into the theatre by Russian Special Forces. Two hijacked flights from Moscow in 2004 were allegedly shot down by Russian Forces. Speckhard and Ahkmedova (2006, pp. 436–437; n.13) concluded: “while the official line from Russia is that the bombers brought the planes down it must be acknowledged that it is increasingly becoming agreed on policy by government that domestic planes overtaken by suicide terrorists intent on using the plane as a weapon may be downed by military means”. The unthinkable—that governments can shoot down their citizens—is now a reality.

In suicide–terror, the “us” against “them” dichotomy—as in radical Islam against the West and Israel—has lost its sharp dichotomy. Jihadist Suicide started in Iran with the Shi’a against Sunni Iraq. Today, the majority of suicide attacks are by Sunni against Shi’a targets. Jihadist Suicide has become the new guerrilla warfare: it is not necessarily seen as a David and Goliath battle against superior forces, but simply as a new method of warfare that has considerable advantage over conventional methods. The target is the oppositional other—whoever that may be. The site *Al Jazeera*.net and other Arab networks reported that a bomb blast on 25 July 2008 that killed five Hamas members and one civilian in Gaza was a suicide attack carried out by a Fatah operative (Baroud, 2008, n.p.).

The last man standing may be the result of nuclear war, as Einstein believed: “I do not believe that civilization will be wiped out in a war fought with the atomic bomb. Perhaps two-thirds of the people of the Earth might be killed, but enough men capable of thinking, and enough books, would be left to start again, and civilization could be restored” (*Quotes.net*). No one, it seems, has a solution to Iran’s nuclear ambition.

Travelling Dangerously in the Wrong Direction

A traffic incident witnessed by Varzi (2002) in Tehran is a metaphor for a world turned upside down. A car stopped at an intersection. Noticing that the street was one-way in the opposite direction, the driver entered the street, and then pointing the car in the correct direction put the car in reverse, and travelled some distance at speed until he reached his desired street. Since the implementation in Iran of *shari’a* (Islamic law) and its strict policing, everyone appears to be travelling in the right direction, along the path of *shari’a*; but instead, everyone is travelling dangerously in the opposite direction. There are lessons from Iran.

Iran is awash with social problems. There is currently a strange form of protest movement in Iran stemming from an underground youth culture that makes a show of throwing off the strict moral social codes of the *vilayat-i-faqih*. Promiscuity—even prostitution—alcohol and drug abuse are common (Memarian and Nesvaderani, n.d.; Mitra, 2011). Iranian youth are said to by schizophrenic. Resistance to *shari’a* and fear of the religious police are everywhere. Behind the scenes, many Islamic reformists who worked tirelessly for *shari’a* now work tirelessly for a return to secular life. Religious revivals and strict rules can take people in the opposite direction.

The dual Jihadist doctrines are suited to a state of war: but as a cultural construct they do not readily disappear once peace is achieved. There are two difficulties in the transition process from war to peace. The first is that living–martyrs are left bereft, with a sense that society has broken its social contract. Society promised to deliver them to their life-destination and now they are left with no means of achieving this. It was war, and not religion, that became the social cement. The youth who survived the war struggled to find meaning without it. An overall sense of disorientation developed among young Iranians who were in their youth during the war period.

The new Islamic regime has been at sea in stemming the youth suicide rate since the war. Varzi (2002) noted that the Iranian government has implemented self-help programs of every sort, with no difference to the epidemic. The appearance of societally generated death means that the suicide–martyrdom doctrine created removed the checks and balances within society that had formerly protected people from suicide. The ideology removed responsibility to kin and career, and emphasised a responsibility to seek death. The regime cannot simply abandon the belief system and return to the old and disavowed values. This would take an equal amount of effort in indoctrination and several generations to achieve.

The recent revival of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine in Iran, with the alleged creation of some 40 thousand Iranians signed up for suicide-bombing operations (see Chapter 5) has revealed the ephemeral nature of suicide–terror as a tactic, but—on the other hand—its proclivity to revival if summoned. Varzi (2002) argued that the revolutionary ideology of the war years could not affect the Muslim's *batin* (what resides within) and only affected the *zaher* (what is evident on the surface). I think that she underestimated

the power of the suicide–martyrdom doctrine to stir primordial sentiments and also just how deeply these had penetrated the psyche of the nation. The heart of the new nation was built on the *shahid*—on the graves of so many dead that the fountain at Teheran's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery ran red with the blood of the martyrs.

Where Does the Road Go?

The topmost hurdle in this research was to negotiate the dominant paradigms that hindered the research: these are the primacy of murder, and grievance theory. And from "left field" came the imposition of anti-Semitism. Both problems present a difficulty, or a hindrance to progress. On the first matter, it is almost as if we have come to a roadblock, where paradigm paralysis has set in. Paradigms are very helpful because they allow us to develop expectations about what will probably occur on the basis of a set of shared assumptions. They are also very good at causing myopic vision, or causing analysts who wish to join a debate to fall in with a paradigm without question. Data that fall outside the paradigm are often dismissed as an aberration, causing paradigm paralysis.

The psychological training that the bomber is given can produce a pathological hatred, an "unalloyed hatred" or an emotionless state through the dehumanisation of the other. But the primary objective is to *be* killed, and kill if you can. This is exemplified in *Basij*, and also in the suicide of Faras Ouda, who planned his death but had little hope of injuring anyone else. Yasser Arafat lauded Ouda as the "poster-boy" of the second *intifada*. Ouda died provoking Israeli Defence Force soldiers to shoot him. It was his

second attempt; he was responding to the same psychological indoctrination that produces suicide bombers.

The paradigm of the primacy of murder is supported by, or perhaps enables, the prominence of grievance theories. Logically, if they want to kill us there must be a reason. The idea of a “natural instinct” that allegedly causes people to self-destruct is not supported by the evidence that suicide–murder attacks have been a rare occurrence in history. When it has occurred, it has been isolated and local; it has never developed into a world-wide phenomenon. If there was a natural instinct to self-annihilation because of injustice and humiliation, surely it would have surfaced during the Holocaust, or in a myriad of other situations that could have ended in a pathological need to kill and be killed. Reliable research suggests that, at best, people who live in distress like those who live in a state of war are vulnerable to exploitation. In essence, it is the exploitation that causes their involvement in a suicide bombing, and not an alleged natural instinct for self-annihilation. Further research is needed to address this, particularly in the field of social psychology.

In some quarters there is a political interest in maintaining this paradigm. Grievance theories point to an overtly guilty party. Israel is seen as the root cause of suicide–terror: by driving every-day Palestinians to this end through grief and despair, or by enraging—together with the United States—the greater Arab world to the same end. This is reflected in aborted attempts in the United Nations to categorise terrorism as a criminal offence. Jörg Friedrichs (2006) noted that resistance to this has come from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-aligned Group. The Non-

aligned Group attempted to cement in legislation that some acts of terrorism are justified.

Justifiable suicide–terror is well entrenched in academic circles. I presented a paper in 2005 offering preliminary thoughts about the level of encouragement to aspire to martyrdom within the present-day Palestinian culture. I was accused by the convenor of "chasing straw dummies". There was significant hostility towards the paper. During the presenters' dinner, I sat with four middle-aged male academics; they proceeded to assert that, under some circumstances, suicide bombings are justified. According to them, it is fine to blow up a bus full of school children if they are occupying your land.

At that time I was in correspondence with Anne Marie Oliver about her book, *The Road to Martyrs' Square* (2005). I emailed her, voicing my dismay. She responded that as I have chosen to research in the field of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, I should develop a thick skin, because I may as well be walking through a minefield. On three later occasions, I experienced hostility about my research. I belatedly realised that it was not that my hypothesis criticised present-day Palestinian culture, but rather that it failed to condemn Israel. The latter stance appears to be a prerequisite for credibility in some circles, regardless of how poor the research may be.

In such an atmosphere, it is difficult to comprehend how research can be advanced. If motive and *raison d'être* is to vilify an enemy other, then recourse to grievance is all that is needed. Once blame has been attributed, logic does not require any further analysis. My positing is plain: as a student of genocide and its aftermath, I support the state of Israel. It has not affected my research. It defies explanation as to why anyone

would find a cure for a disease and keep it from the people who need the help. If I found that Israeli policy was the root cause of suicide–terror, this is what I would report.

Rather, as I have demonstrated, suicide–terror conforms to deep cultural scripts that have evolved and developed out of an historical background and political developments. Any efforts to ameliorate or control it will similarly have to be a result of massive cultural and political change. The danger is that if we do not accept this proposition, we will continue to treat suicide–terror as an enigma. Moreover, we will continue to devise political solutions and follow political strategies that cannot succeed in correcting this accident of history.

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APPENDIX I

Mohammed Atta's

Last Will & Testament

Oct. 4 — Mohammed Atta, a suspected ringleader of the Sept. 11 attacks who is believed to have piloted the first plane that struck the World Trade Center, left behind a will with a list of strict instructions for handling his corpse. The FBI would not provide a copy of the will, which officials confirmed was found in Atta's luggage along with a four-page letter that was released last week. But ABC NEWS has translated a copy of the will that was published in the German magazine, *Der Spiegel*:

Mohammed Atta's Last Will & Testament

In the name of God all mighty

Death Certificate

This is what I want to happen after my death, I am Mohamed the son of Mohamed Elamir awad Elsayed: I believe that prophet Mohamed is God's messenger and time will come no doubt about that and God will resurrect people who are in their graves. I wanted my family and everyone who reads this will to fear the Almighty God and don't get deceived by what is in life and to fear God and to follow God and his prophets if they are real believers. In my memory, I want them to do what Ibrahim (a prophet) told his son to do, to die as a good Muslim. When I die, I want the people who will inherit my possessions to do the following:

1. The people who will prepare my body should be good Muslims because this will remind me of God and his forgiveness.

2. The people who are preparing my body should close my eyes and pray that I will go to heaven and to get me new clothes, not the ones I died in.

3. I don't want anyone to weep and cry or to rip their clothes or slap their faces because this is an ignorant thing to do.

4. I don't want anyone to visit me who didn't get along with me while I was alive or to kiss me or say good bye when I die.

5. I don't want a pregnant woman or a person who is not clean to come and say good bye to me because I don't approve it.

6. I don't want women to come to my house to apologize for my death. I am not responsible for people who will sacrifice animals in front of my lying body because this is against Islam.

7. Those who will sit beside my body must remember Allah, God, and pray for me to be with the angels.

8. The people who will clean my body should be good Muslims and I do not want a lot of people to wash my body unless it is necessary.

9. The person who will wash my body near my genitals must wear gloves on his hands so he

won't touch my genitals.

10. I want the clothes I wear to consist of three white pieces of cloth, not to be made of silk or expensive material.

11. I don't want any women to go to my grave at all during my funeral or on any occasion thereafter.

12. During my funeral I want everyone to be quiet because God mentioned that he likes being quiet on occasions when you recite the Koran, during the funeral, and when you are crawling. You must speed my funeral procession and I would like many people there to pray for me.

13. When you bury me the people with whom I will be buried should be good Muslims. I want to face East toward Mecca.

14. I should be laying on my right side. You should throw the dust on my body three times while saying from the dust, we created you dust and to dust you will return. From the dust a new person will be created. After that everyone should mention God's name and that I died as a Muslim which is God's religion. Everyone who attends my funeral should ask that I will be forgiven for what I have done in the past (not this action).

15. The people who will attend my funeral should sit at my grave for an hour so that I will enjoy their company and slaughter animals and give the meat to the needy.

16. The custom has been to memorialize the dead every forty days or once a year but I do not want this because it is not an Islamic custom.

17. I don't want people to take time to write things on paper to be kept in their pockets as superstition. Time should be taken to pray to God instead.

18. All the money I left must be divided according to the Muslim religion as almighty God has asked us to do. A third of my money should be spent on the poor and the needy. I want my books to go to any one of the Muslim mosques. I wanted the people who look at my will to be one of the heads of the Sunna religion. Whoever it is, I want that person to be from where I grew up or any person I used to follow in prayer. People will be held responsible for not following the Muslim religion. I wanted the people who I left behind to hear God and not to be deceived by what life has to offer and to pray more to God and to be good believers. Whoever neglects this will or does not follow the religion, that person will be held responsible in the end.

This was written on April 11, 1996, the Islamic calendar of zoelqada is 1416.

Written by MOHAMED MOHAMED ELAMIR AWAD ELSAYED

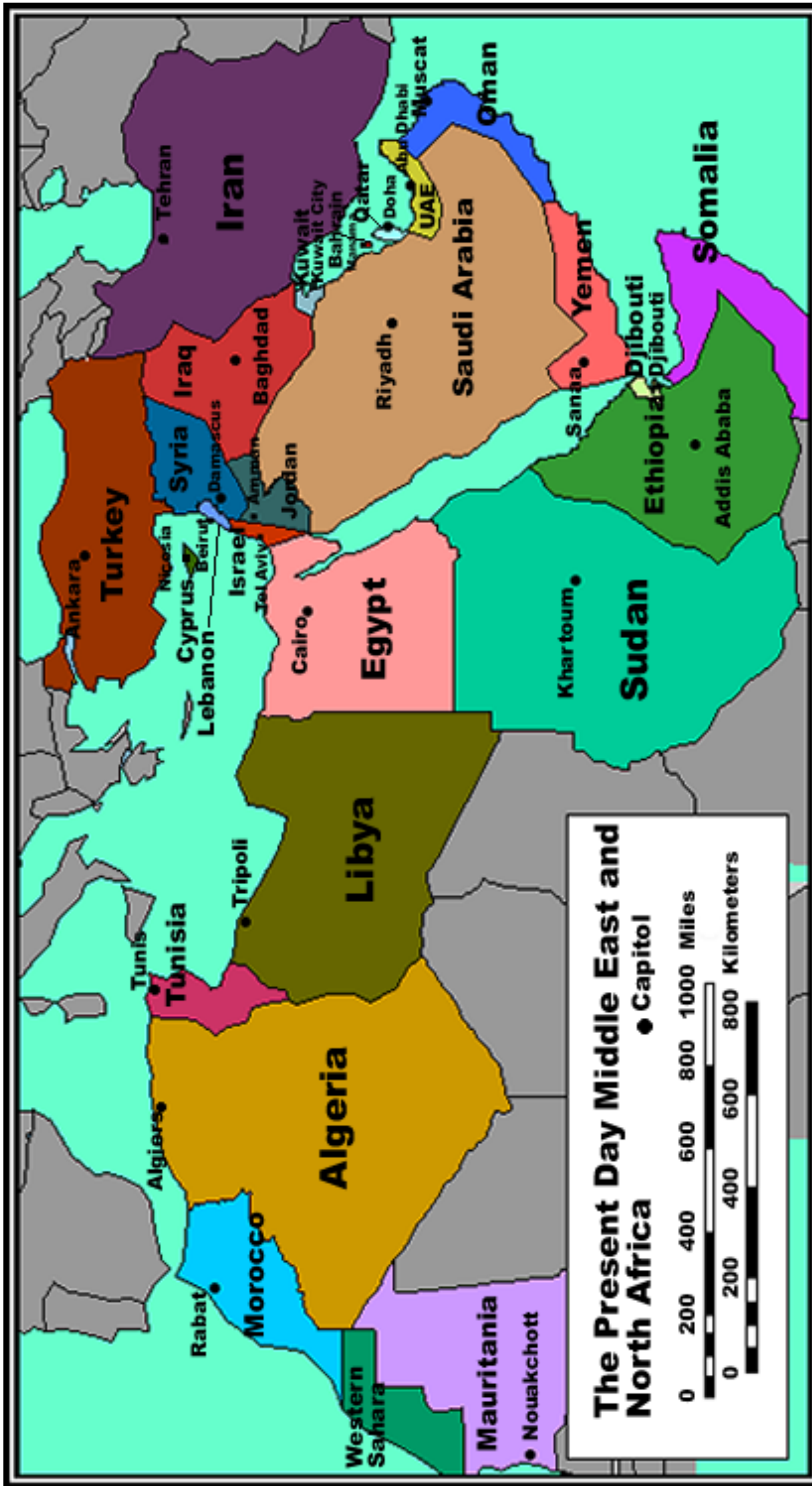
Witness: Abdelghani Muzwadi

Witness: Almutasadeq Munir

Source: http://www.werismyki.com/artcls/atta_will.html.

APPENDIX II

Map of the Middle East and North Africa


The Present Day Middle East and North Africa
Capitol
0 200 400 600 800 1000 Miles
0 200 400 600 800 Kilometers
Turkey
Ankara
Cyprus
Nicosia
Lebanon
Beirut
Syria
Damascus
Iraq
Baghdad
Iran
Tehran
Israel
Tel Aviv
Jordan
Amman
Kuwait
Kuwait City
Bahrain
Qatar
Doha
UAE
Abu Dhabi
Oman
Muscat
Saudi Arabia
Riyadh
Yemen
Sanaa
Djibouti
Djibouti
Somalia
Ethiopia
Addis Ababa
Sudan
Khartoum
Egypt
Cairo
Libya
Tripoli
Tunisia
Tunis
Algeria
Algiers
Morocco
Rabat
Western Sahara
Mauritania
Nouakchott