

# Chapter 7

## The Time Factor as a Barrier to Resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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### 1. Introduction

Time is a key factor in understanding the universe. A world without time is a frozen world where nothing happens and nothing changes.

Time is an essential factor in the life of every living creature, affecting its ability to survive and to adjust itself optimally to its environment (Michon, 1985). Time is also an essential and central factor in the life of every human being, as an individual and as part of a group.

Without attention to the factor of time, it is not possible to describe life in any human society, all the more so in western-technological society (Zakay, 1998).

This chapter explores the nature of attitudes towards time and the effects of the conceptualization of time on thought and negotiation processes, and it examines the extent to which these factors affect the chances of resolving conflicts between representatives of different cultures. First, we will discuss the concept of time generally and its relationship to an individual's personality and to culture. Then we will look at how the time factor is reflected in conflicts and negotiation processes. Following that, we will examine the concept and conceptualization of time in Arab-Islamic culture, on the one hand, and in Jewish-Israeli culture, on the other. Against this background we will then analyze the effects of the two cultures' different conceptualizations of time with respect to the conduct of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### 1.1 Types of Time

There are various types of time. The principal ones are physical time (measured by the clock), biological time, and psychological time.

**Physical time** is objective and uniform. Its measurement by means of various clocks reflects a defined change of a defined physical element. This type of time is continuous, has a uniform pace, and moves from the past to the future.

**Biological time** represents the occurrence of biological processes that take place within living organisms, and it is controlled by biological and physiological timers. Its characteristics are similar to those of physical time.

**Psychological time** is time as experienced by one's consciousness, and it is the focus of this chapter.

In order to understand the distinctness of psychological time, consider the objective minute that passes while waiting in a queue, as opposed to the objective minute that passes while reading an engrossing book. The experience of time will differ in each case.

The first circumstance generates a sense of "crawling" continuous time, whereas the second circumstance generates a sense of time flying by, and the minute will perhaps pass without even being felt.

It follows that psychological time is not uniform. Its pace varies. It is not necessarily continuous. As happens in dreams or hallucinations, it can flow from the future to the past, and its essence may be affected by the essence of events that take place during its passing (Zakay, 1998). The writer Thomas Mann, for example, addressed the experience of time in his book *Magic Mountain* (1955, Hebrew version), in which he described the experience of time among hospitalized tuberculosis patients during their daily temperature measurements. The measurement was short in terms of time as measured by a clock, but it was long in the perception of the tuberculosis patients because it had great importance with respect to the diagnosis of their condition.

Expressions that describe time, such as "time froze," "time flew," "time crawled," "time stood still," and others, reflect the distinctness of the experience of psychological time. Another example of the complexity of psychological time is reflected in the difference between "retrospective" time and "prospective" time. The former describes a sense of time in "reverse," after the event – the duration of which needs to be assessed – has concluded. The latter describes the sense of

time created during the course of the event's occurrence. In each of these cases, the experience of time will differ (see Zakay & Block, 1997). It follows that the experience of psychological time depends on context.

## 1.2 The Essence of Time

Since the dawn of the human age, people have studied and explored the essence and meaning of time. The original reason for this was observation of the cyclical changes of the day, the change of seasons of the year, and the cyclical nature of the life cycle. Later, philosophers began to wonder about the meaning of time in a more studied way. Nevertheless, the essence of time has always been obscure and unclear.

The fourth-century philosopher St. Augustine described well the difficulty in understanding time when he wrote in his book *Confessions*, "What is time? When no one asks, then I know. But when I want to describe it, then I do not know."

St. Augustine's conclusion was that whatever time is, it is subjective by nature (Roecklein, 2008). This perspective is popular today as well. Time is more a product of consciousness than of the chronometric order naturally existing within life or society (Trautmann, 1995).

Emmanuel Kant, the 18<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher who also addressed the question of time, argued that space and time are two *a priori* concepts. That is, they are not the products of a process of perception; rather, they exist in our consciousness in the first place.

According to Jamal (2006), the importance of time in human society derives primarily from human beings' awareness of the end of their lives. This awareness makes the organization and management of time an important component of human behavioral patterns. Human beings aspire to fill their time with content as a way of controlling it, fully exploiting it, extending it, and even overcoming its limitations.

The question of the essence of time continues to serve as the subject matter of physical, philosophical, biological, and psychological research to this day. Clearly, time has implications for almost every aspect of human life because it is

an inseparable part of every event or occurrence and of every human experience (Flaherty & Meer, 1994).

Despite this, the significance of time and its implications for the formation and resolution of conflicts have been discussed and studied less than other subjects. The aim of this chapter is to contribute to a discussion of this topic both at the level of general principles and with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

### **1.3 Time and Personality – Time Perspective**

The attitude towards time is one of the traits that reflect the nature of a person's character. This is expressed in a number of ways, such as, for example, the trait known as "time urgency," which reflects the extent to which a person is subject to a sense of time pressure in the course of his regular conduct. This trait has been found to be linked to personality types termed Type A and Type B, as well as to mentally healthy personality types (Gastorf, 1981).

We will focus here on the aspect known as "time perspective."

Time perspective refers to the subjective organization of the past, the present, and the future and to the relative weight that a person attributes to them in his perception of the course of his life (Macey, 1994).

Time perspective is the frame of reference that provides order, organization, and significance to life events (Boyd & Zimbardo, 2005).

People may be characterized as having a past, present, or future time perspective. Accordingly, they base their behavior on the past, the present, or the future, respectively (Karniol & Ross, 1996).

Time perspective is therefore a fundamental and very influential aspect of human behavior, an aspect shaped and influenced by personal, social, and cultural events (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999).

Thus, for example, it has been found that Holocaust survivors' time perspective tends to be based largely on the past, compared to other people of the same age who did not experience the Holocaust (Shmotkin & Lomrenz, 1998). Survivors perceive the Holocaust as spreading over the entire past, even though in "calendar time" it "only" lasted four years. The trauma of the Holocaust is apparently what

causes life to be focused on the past. Time perspective is possibly one of the factors that make it difficult for many Holocaust survivors to return to a way of life focused on the present and future.

A person's time perspective has implications for his lifestyle. It may be argued that a person who is focused primarily on his past will have difficulty planning the future, and his life might have no direction or purpose. On the other hand, a person whose life is only directed towards the future might find himself in a sort of fantasy life with no grounding in reality. A balanced personality, allowing normal living with a sound outlook on reality, requires the right balance among attitudes towards the past, the present, and the future (Zakay, 1998).

The effect of time perspective can be seen in the conduct of organizations as well. Thus, for example, Thomas and Greenberger (1998) point out that an organizational vision is defined as an image of the future. They present research findings that show a correlation – among organizational directors – between a future time perspective and the ability to construct a vision of the future.

## **1.4 Time and Culture**

A culture is characterized by the system of beliefs and concepts of all who belong to it (Birx, 2009). This system of beliefs influences language, way of life, and behavior.

The attitude towards time and the nature of its conceptualization are key factors by which we can differentiate various cultures and aspects of human behavior, such as the pace of life, punctuality, and others (Macey, 1994).

Without an understanding of attitudes towards time, beliefs about time, and linguistic expressions involving time, it is difficult to understand the behavior that characterizes a given culture.

Roughly speaking, it is possible to classify cultures on the basis of their attitude towards time into two categories (unjustly in terms of the variety of cultures but of necessity for the purpose of descriptive brevity).

The first category is that of western, technological culture, and the second is the array of “non-western” cultures, such as eastern cultures or the indigenous cultures of South America and other places, e.g., Indian tribes predating western

conquest and continuing to this day (some observers describe the time factor associated with these cultures as “Indian time”).

Below are a few salient differences between the two abovementioned categories of culture in their attitudes towards the concept of time:

### **The extent of differentiation among the past, the present, and the future:**

In “techno-western” culture this differentiation is clear. Linguistic expressions that describe various times are well-defined, and linguistic grammar clearly delineates the conjugation of verbs in accordance with the time that they describe.

In “non-western” cultures there is often a merging of the past with the present or of the present with the future. For example, the language of the Hopi Indian tribe does not have any concepts representing the past, the present, or the future, and verbs are not conjugated according to various times.

**“Techno-western” culture** regards time as an economic resource. The essence of time is independent of what occurs during its passage. Time is neutral with respect to human beings, and time perspective is directed towards the future. This culture stresses the importance of planning and punctuality.

**“Non-western” culture** does not stress the economic value of time and is not neutral with respect to human beings. Time perspective is directed towards the past. Planning and punctuality are not necessarily key values within this culture. Descriptions of the conceptualization of time, as presented earlier, accurately reflect the conditions that prevailed in past centuries.

Today it is difficult to find pure “non-western” cultures, whereas “techno-western” culture is spreading further and further.

Nonetheless, we argue that in many aspects of life, the influence of different cultures’ conceptualization of time remains strong and significant. One of these aspects is the nature of attitudes towards conflict and its resolution. This can be explained by the charged emotions and strongly held values associated with conflicts, which cause deeply embedded layers of personality – which in turn are linked to collective cultural myths and ethos – to “surface” and affect behavior. We will provide an illustration of this argument below.

## **1.5 Time and Religion**

The conceptualization of time – being a necessary element of any effort to explain human existence – is a key, essential component of every religious belief system (Birx, 2009). A strong link exists between religion and culture as well. For this reason, almost all religions have regard for the factor of time and the nature of its conceptualization.

An analysis of the perspective of time will inevitably have to take into account the combination of culture and religion. This combination is of singular importance for efforts to understand conflicts with cultural and religious dimensions.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a case in point.

## **2. The Time Factor and Its Reflection in Conflicts and in Negotiation Processes**

Next we will review various implications of the time factor for conflict and negotiation processes.

By their very nature, conflicts and negotiation processes continue over the course of time (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Moreover, time has direct effects on them – some of these effects being technical – as well as indirect but substantive effects (Druckman, 1994). It should be remembered that conflict and negotiation are social processes in which societal time is a central constituent factor (Elias, 1992). Some analysts see the time factor as a conceptual framework for social interactions such as conflict and negotiation (Alon & Brett, 2007).

The attitude towards time is one of the principal obstacles to achieving inter-cultural coordination (Jamal, 2009).

In social terms, the division of time, its classification, and its use in relation to others constitute an integral mechanism in the power relations among different groups. By classifying time, for example through a calendar, one establishes a certain type of relationship with other human beings (Elias, 1992). It follows that time is a type of cultural and social border or partition and that some parts of society try to impose their organization of time on others. An example of this is the determination of holidays and days of rest. It is therefore natural that time

becomes a source and a focal point of conflicts (for example, the conflict between the secular and ultra-orthodox in Jerusalem over observation of the Sabbath).

Another example of conflicts that are linked to time is the process of waiting in a line or queue. The queue is a social system in which those waiting compete over the division of time, which in this case is a limited resource. It is only natural that in such a situation, conflicts and differences of opinion will erupt regarding distribution of the resource (Fleisig, Ginsburg & Zakay, 2009) because all those waiting in a queue have a basic expectation of “distributional justice” regarding the resource of time.

A survey conducted among 10,000 adults over the course of 30 years revealed that differing attitudes towards time between spouses or partners to a relationship constitute a significant factor in the formation of conflict for the couple (Boyd & Zibardo, 2005).

Other examples include conflicts that result from the violation of time as a cultural and religious symbol. Thus, for example, the Yom Kippur War, which broke out on Yom Kippur, 1973, was perceived, among other things, as an insult to the feelings of the Jewish people because of the selection of the holiest day of the year for Jews as the day to launch a war.

## **2.1 The Direct Effects of Time on the Conduct of Negotiations**

### **The Attitude Towards Time on the Part of Negotiators**

Given the existence of personality and inter-personal – in addition to cultural – differences in attitudes towards time, conflict and negotiation inevitably bring together two sides with different characteristics in this regard.

This is expressed directly through the attitudes of the negotiators themselves towards time, in addition to their cultural baggage as expressed in their attitude towards time, whether consciously or unconsciously. It follows that the larger the gap between the negotiating parties in terms of their respective attitudes towards time, the harder it will be to make constructive progress during negotiations.

An example of this is the difference in the sense of urgency that the negotiators attribute to the negotiations.



## **The Sense of Time Urgency**

Someone with a stronger sense of time urgency will seek to conduct negotiations at a faster pace than will someone who does not sense such urgency. This affects the pace of the negotiations and the time pressures (see below).

An example of this is former Prime Minister Ehud Barak's effort during the second Camp David Summit (2000) to reach a final agreement that would mean the "end of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" within a short period of time. In contrast, the other side (Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority) did not have a similar sense of readiness or time urgency. From the description of his assistant, Gilad Sher, it appears that Barak was acting out of a sense of urgency. Sher claimed that Barak felt that in light of global and regional developments – such as the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and the proliferation of unconventional or nuclear weapons – time was not working in Israel's favor. It followed, therefore, that termination of the conflict and of all associated demands was the most important objective for Israel in the negotiations (Sher, 2001: 21). Presumably, this sense of urgency is what led Barak to pose a 15-month timeframe for the achievement of a permanent arrangement (see below). The gap in the sense of urgency between Arafat and Barak almost certainly contributed to the failure of the negotiations.

## **The Influence of Time Pressure**

Time pressure is liable to affect the chances of a successful outcome of negotiations to resolve a conflict.

Time pressure in negotiations arises when there is a will to conclude them and reach an agreement as quickly as possible (Pruitt, 1982). The posing of "deadlines" also increases the sense of time pressure. This feeling in turn affects the information-processing and decision-making processes, primarily through the selective use of information, a high likelihood of miscalculation or misjudgment, and a greater sense of importance being attributed to negative information in comparison to positive information (Zakay, 1993). Time pressure can even lead to increased closed-mindedness. The side that is more affected by time pressure during negotiations is more likely to be predisposed to reaching a quick agreement while making drastic concessions (De-Dreu, 2003).

For example, Yossi Beilin, in his book *Manual for a Wounded Dove*, describes the Taba negotiations in January 2001, during which the negotiators sensed a shortage of time, that is, they felt that if they did not accomplish something, then a great deal of time would pass before they met again, if at all. Dr. Nabil Sha'ath told Beilin, "If the Taba talks had taken place immediately following the Camp David Summit, then a permanent agreement would already have been signed" (Beilin, 2001: 13). Beilin describes the negotiations as if they were taking place during the 25<sup>th</sup> hour. This was after the end of the Clinton presidency, a few days before elections in Israel, when both the right and the left were challenging the legitimacy of the negotiations. Beilin summarizes, "The 25<sup>th</sup> hour seemed as if it did not occur."

### **Time as a Source of Power and the Tactical Use of Time**

Anyone who believes that time is working in his favor and who does not feel a sense of urgency to conclude negotiations within a short and defined period of time will tend to use the time factor as a source of power and employ it tactically against the rival who feels a sense of urgency. Tactics such as postponement or suspension are common in such cases. A laboratory experiment conducted by Raiffa (1982) found that someone who has more control over time and is able to exercise patience has greater chances of success than someone with less patience and control over time.

The effectiveness of threats (and inducements) on one of the parties to negotiations also depends very much on timing.

According to Pruitt (1981), an explicit threat issued during the final stages of negotiations will be perceived as more credible and convincing than if issued during the early stages because such a threat, if issued early in the negotiation process, would sabotage relations between the negotiators.

One of the tactics that represent manipulative use of time during negotiations is the setting of deadlines.

### **Setting Deadlines**

The setting of deadlines with the aim of influencing the other side is a common tactic during negotiations.

The influence of deadlines is greater if someone feels that time is not on his side, especially when the deadline is real and tangible from his point of view. Such a situation creates time pressure and increases the tendency towards concession (De-Dreu, 2003).

Within the literature, there is a debate over the question of whether one of the parties should disclose the existence of a real deadline from his point of view to the other party (Gino and Moore, 2008). A meta-analytical study by Druckman (1994), however, found that setting some sort of timeframe is important for the advancement of negotiations. When no time limits are set, the parties are likely to find themselves trapped in their basic positions, and the negotiations could reach a deadlock. It follows that the setting of deadlines can be used both as a way of advancing negotiations and as a way of pressuring the other side to make concessions. The setting of deadlines can also, however, serve as a tactic for prolonging time when there is no real desire to reach a solution. Examples of this are Yitzhak Shamir's declaration as prime minister of Israel that he was prepared to continue negotiations, even for ten years, and Binyamin Netanyahu's conduct after being elected prime minister of Israel and having to take a stance on the Oslo process.

Yossi Beilin (2001) describes how suspicion grew within the Egypt-Jordan-Palestinian trio – as well as within the United States and Europe – that Netanyahu had an interest in reaching the target date set for signing a permanent agreement – 4 May 1999 – in a state of crisis that would cause the Palestinians to unilaterally declare statehood, which he would not recognize, thereby permanently releasing him from the Oslo Accords. Such a unilateral declaration would be an unequivocal violation of the Accords (Beilin: 35). In his book, Beilin further describes how, in order to prevent excessive time delays, the Americans set an artificial deadline – 4 May 1998, a year before the final deadline for reaching a permanent agreement according to the original Oslo process – and declared that on this date a summit would take place in London with the participation of U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Netanyahu, and Arafat (Beilin: 37). The strategy of prolonging time while exploiting the setting of deadlines is illustrated in the 19 June 1998 statement of U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering: “We went from *shalom* [peace] to *schlep* [‘drag’ in Yiddish]. The feeling is that every time new hope regarding Israeli-Palestinian agreement

arises, it is again dashed. Precious time is passing, and the end of the interim agreement is drawing near” (Beilin: 42).

Another example of the use of target dates is Ehud Barak’s declaration that within 15 months, i.e., by September 2000, he would know whether or not it would be possible to reach a permanent agreement with the Palestinians. President Clinton refrained from accepting the 15-month target, regarding it as unnecessary. Beilin notes that Barak’s attitude towards time is special and is reflected, among other ways, through his famous fondness for dismantling and reassembling clocks (Beilin: 75). Setting precise target dates was characteristic of his approach and was something he repeated, even though he usually did not meet these target dates. Beilin also notes that the Palestinians did not understand Barak’s system of target dates and were suspicious of it (Beilin: 87). Barak’s predisposition to setting target dates and timeframes – although he himself did not abide by them – was a source of tension between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, as evidenced by the reactions of Palestinians, who voiced concern that Barak’s objective was to prolong time until it would be too late to conduct serious negotiations given the political timetable in the U.S. and the region (Beilin). Gilad Sher (2001) also cites Arafat’s reaction to the 15-month timeframe for reaching a permanent arrangement, which Barak posed on 26 July 1999. According to Sher, Arafat said, “He can forget about 15-month-long negotiations towards a permanent arrangement.” It would appear that the differing approaches regarding the use of fixed deadlines are among the reasons for the failure of the negotiating process because they generated mistrust among the Palestinians with respect to Barak’s sincerity about achieving a peace agreement.

U.S. President Barack Obama’s decision to hold a three-way summit with Netanyahu and Abu-Mazen in September 2009 – where he would announce the renewal of negotiations towards peace and his expectation of achieving an agreement within two years – can be seen as an illustration of the use of deadline setting in order to generate movement and prevent standing in place. This is reflected in the statement of U.S. Department of State Spokesman Ian Kelly: “Of course we were hoping for some kind of breakthrough” (Reuters, 18 September 2009) (English text available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN18264253>).

## **The Influence of Time on the Trust Building Between Parties to a Conflict**

Lewicki and Weithoff (2000: 87) emphasize the importance of time in the building of trust during conflict resolution. They stress the point that trust develops over time. Time is needed to allow each side to see that the other side indeed fulfills its promises, and this holds for deadline setting as well.

One of the problems during the negotiations that Barak conducted in continuation of the Oslo process was the lack of trust between the parties. Despite this, Barak set a strict deadline of 15 months for the conclusion of negotiations. Ben-Ami (2004: 465) argues that in retrospect it can be seen that it was a mistake to try to impose an unrealistic timeframe without taking into account the need for a gradual process of trust building between the parties.

The tactic of gradual progress towards a solution to a conflict, moving through stages and interim agreements, is a process that also allows trust building between the sides. Interim agreements were typical of most efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as other agreements between Israel and Arab states. A clear example of this is the interim arrangements reached through U.S. mediation with Egypt in 1974 and 1975, which later enabled the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem and the conclusion of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty. The original Oslo Accords, formulated in the Declaration of Principles signed at the White House on 13 September 1993, are based on a gradual multi-phased solution involving Israeli withdrawal from the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the gradual transfer of authority over these territories to an independent Palestinian government for an interim period of five years, at the conclusion of which a permanent agreement would be sealed.

## **The Effect of Temporal Distance Between the Time of Negotiations and the Scheduled Implementation of Conflict Resolution Proposals**

According to temporal construal theory (Trope & Liberman, 2003), people construct and conceptualize objects and events differently, in accordance with their psychological distance. Generally speaking, when the distance is great, their attitude is at a remote and abstract level, with little attention to details; the point of view is global and relates to the essence. When the psychological distance is

short, the nature of construction and conceptualization is reversed and focuses more on details. Because distance in time is a form of psychological distance, the same principles of construction and conceptualization apply to objects and events expected to take place within a short or a long period of time as well (Trope & Liberman, 2000).

In accordance with the predictions of the temporal construal theory, researchers (Okhuysen, Galinsky & Uptigrove, 2008) have found that parties seeking to reach an agreement were more successful when expecting it to be implemented within a year than when the agreement was to be implemented within two weeks. Others (Henderson, Trope & Carnevale, 2006) identified an advantage in the achievement of an agreement that was to be implemented later in time over an agreement expected to be implemented in the near future. The reason for this is that consideration of events that are far away in time takes place at a high level of abstraction, without going into detail. It is therefore easier to agree on a solution that is formulated at the general level and does not go into practical details.

It remains to be seen, however, what will be the fate of a “distant” agreement when its implementation date draws near – whether it will survive or whether the parties will then begin considering the details and concrete problems that they had avoided earlier.

### **3. The Concept and Conceptualization of Time in Arab-Islamic Culture**

Islamic culture within Arabic-speaking societies is firmly anchored in the principles of Islam and in the religious beliefs that form the basis of Islam. The concept of time occupies an important place in this religious-cultural system (for a comprehensive overview, see Alon & Brett, 2007).

The characteristics discussed above as distinguishing between cultures on the basis of time perception and conceptualization suggest that Islamic culture is among the cultures that regard time as “event time,” namely, time that is defined by the events occurring within it, or as qualitative time, and ascribe less importance to quantitative time or “clock time.” The perception of time as an economic resource measured by money is not characteristic of this culture. It regards time, to a great extent, as a circular process.

Time itself is a powerful force directed towards and affecting human fate. There is a distinction between earthly time – the time a person spends on Earth – and heavenly time, which is time after life. But human beings attribute importance to all types of time because time unites earthly existence with heavenly existence, the latter being more dominant and highly regarded. Time itself is controlled absolutely by God, and the purpose of human existence on Earth is to achieve full submission to God. Islamic culture emphasizes and glorifies the value of patience and waiting, and it regards haste as a negative quality. It follows that this culture does not believe in “time urgency.” Patience is among the important qualities for the Muslim believer and is expressed in a number of ways: patience in worshipping God, patience and courage in resisting sin, and patience when being tested.

Given that Muslim culture is based on religious belief, which is the basis of all conduct, it follows that the time perspective of Arab-Islamic culture is in essence a past perspective (see below).

### **3.1 The Conceptualization and Perspective of Time in Arab-Islamic Culture and Their Influence on the Conduct of Negotiations**

Alon and Brett (2007) list a number of implications of the perspective and conceptualization of time in Arab-Islamic culture for the conduct of negotiations.

Given the advantage of patience, there is no harm in suspending or postponing negotiations. This approach is also related to the belief that time is on the side of Islam’s faithful because ultimately Allah will gather all human beings under the auspices of Islam. In addition, time for a believer is not merely “secular” earthly time but also divine and eternal. The practical significance of this approach is that negotiations are conducted in a spirit of calmness and patience, which in turn prevents concessions and allows the negotiators to withstand the consequences of delays in the process.

This system of beliefs rejects attempts at an ultimatum and predetermined deadlines by the other side. The past serves as a criterion and frame of reference for negotiations, and much use is made of historical processes and their glorification.

In contrast, attention to the future and to planning are seen as problematic because they are perceived as human intervention in processes planned by God, in whose control the future lies. This is the reason why commitments and promises are non-explicit with respect to dates of implementation.

### **3.2 *Hudna* or *Regi'a* – A “Short Circuit” in the Understanding of the Concepts of Time**

As stated above, the expressions relating to time within a language reflect the attitude towards time and the nature of its conceptualization within the relevant culture. When two parties to a conflict try to communicate about problems related to time in the course of negotiations, complete understanding of one another’s culture is an essential condition for the achievement of a stable and acceptable agreement.

An example of a problematic situation arising largely out of cultural misunderstanding of concepts of time can be seen in the talks between Israel and Hamas in Gaza about what is known in Arabic as “*hudna*” and in Hebrew as “*regi'a*” (“calm” or “quiet”).

The concept of “*hudna*” is one in which the time factor is diluted. The meaning of the word “*hudna*” is a ceasefire, a break, or a rest. In Arab-Islamic tradition, the *hudna* is permissible for the sake of conducting negotiations between rivals (Reut Institute, <http://reutinstitute.org/he/publication>). It follows that the *hudna* is temporary in essence and can even serve the purpose of reinforcing fighting positions. The word *hudna* does not suggest any preparedness to solve the problem or any commitment not to violate the ceasefire.

Here too, the past perspective governs the concept of time. The understanding of *hudna* draws from the precedent of the Treaty of Hudeibiya signed between the Prophet Mohamed and members of the Tribe of Quraish in the year 628 but breached by Mohamed in 630 after he gathered enough forces to conquer Mecca. The attitude of suspension and patience is also reflected in this concept.

In contrast, the concept of “*regi'a*” (“calm” or “quiet”) does not hint at time, and its sound conveys a sense of a permanent situation. Among the dictionary definitions for the word *regi'a*, we also find “agreement, treaty reached on the



basis of the goodwill and complete concurrence of the two sides” (Even-Shoshan Dictionary, 1991). Undoubtedly, one of the difficulties in conducting negotiations to reach a *hudna* or *regi'a* is the different understanding of time and its operative consequences within the two cultures.

#### **4. The Time Factor and Its Conceptualization in Jewish-Israeli Culture**

In seeking to analyze Israeli-Jewish society's attitude towards the concept of time, we must take into account two components: the Israeli-secular component and the traditional-religious component. To a great extent, these two components represent different elements of the culture. Although Palestinian society also has secular elements (Fatah) and religious elements ( Hamas and others), it appears that the homogeneity and dominance of values and beliefs grounded in religion are greater within Arab society than within Israeli society. The secular component of Israeli society is part of “techno-western” culture, and in this context, Israeli culture and techno-western culture share the same conceptualization of time and attitudes towards it.

Regarding the religious component, the Jewish religion is in many aspects similar to the Muslim religion, and much of the perspective of time and attitude towards it that characterize Islam are present in Judaism as well, though not completely and not as intensely (Birx, 2009). The emphasis on time as divine and the distinction between earthly time and heavenly time are not emphasized in Judaism, although it does refer to the time that comes after life on earth. Jewish tradition recognizes qualitative time (for example, the distinction between sacred and profane time) and has a perspective of circularity, but it is not emphasized as in Islam.

Time is, in principle, determined by God, who thus controls the future as well, as reflected in the popular expression regarding the future, “God willing.” The complexity of the regard for the future as deterministic, on the one hand, but enabling human choice, on the other, is reflected in the well-known expression, “all is expected and permission is granted,” attributed to Rabbi Akiva (The Words of the Fathers).

Patience and caution against haste also appear in Judaism. Thus, for example, Breslev Hasidim cite their teacher's rule "not to press time but to be patient, for on this rests a man's success" (from the Breslov booklet *Do Not Press Time*). The Chabad/Lubavitch movement also produces stories for children and youth with the aim of strengthening values such as patience. One of these stories tells of a righteous man, Rabbi Yitzhak of Warka, who was known for his great patience (from the website of "Chabad Youth" [www.chabad.org.il](http://www.chabad.org.il)).

In contrast, as noted above, Israeli secular society is characterized by a "techno-western" perception of time, and many sectors of religious Judaism that have merged with business, trade, and scientific life have, at least in part, adopted such a perspective of time (an illustration of the tension between these two perspectives of time can be seen in the struggle over "Sabbath time" and the content of that struggle).

Some researchers have described the transition from one perception of time to another as a paradigmatic change that occurred within the perspective of time in Zionist thinking (Eisenstadt & Lisak, 1999). According to them, Zionist thinking developed a modern perception of time fundamentally similar to the western perception of time and different from the worldview embodied in Jewish holy writings and tradition. As a result, a change in societal perception of reality as controlled by time also took place. The new perspective holds that societal reality can be changed and shaped by willful intervention. In a similar spirit, Jamal (2009) argues that within the Zionist narrative, Jewish time is dynamic and is expressed by extricating Jewish national identity from the depths of history and placing it in a modern historic journey. In contrast, the Zionist narrative perceives Palestinian time in static terms. The Palestinians are presented in this narrative as being stuck in the past.

We argue that in national-historical matters, such as those at the basis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israeli society experiences a dialectical tension with respect to time. On the one hand, we can discern an economic approach that sees time as an economic resource to be exploited and not wasted. This is an approach that seeks speedy results based on a future-time perspective. One expression of this was the formation of the "Peace Now" movement in 1978, a movement whose name reflects the desire and the need for a speedy and even immediate solution to the conflict. On the other hand, the approach to resolution

of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterized by a past-time perspective that reflects the strong influence of religion and tradition. Explicit expressions of this perspective relate to the rights of Jews to the land of their ancestors on the basis of promises made by God to the nation's forefathers in the distant past.

Another factor that makes the time perspective tend towards the past is the memory of the Holocaust. The Holocaust, known to have a strong and decisive effect on Israeli public opinion and policymakers, further reinforces the link to the past and to the rights that the lessons of the Holocaust grant to the Jewish people.

An example of the tension between past-time perspective and future-time perspective can be found in the "Bar-Ilan speech" of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, a statement of the principles on which his government's policy regarding resolution of the conflict is based.

**Excerpts of the speech that represent a past-time perspective include the following:**

"Let me say this upfront: the Jewish people's relationship with the Land of Israel has existed for over 3,500 years. Judea and Samaria, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah walked, are not a foreign land to us. This is the land of our forefathers"... "Our right to establish our state here, in the Land of Israel, derives from one simple fact – this is the homeland of the Jewish people and here our identity was forged."

**The following excerpt from the same speech presents a future-time perspective:**

"If we join hands and work together in peace, there is no limit to the prosperity and development that we can bring to both our peoples – in economics, agriculture, trade, tourism, and education – and above all the ability to bequeath to our younger generation a secure place to live, a tranquil life full of substance and creativity with expanses of opportunities and an expansive sense of hope."

**This excerpt reflects the tension between past and future perspectives:**

"Even when our eyes look to the horizon, our feet must be firmly planted on the ground of reality, of truth. And the simple truth is that the cause of the conflict

was, and remains, the refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of its own in its historic homeland” (*Haaretz*, 15 June 2009).

## **5. The Palestinian Sense of Time**

In order to complete the picture of the perceptions of time of both sides to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we will also present the day-to-day experience of time that characterizes the Palestinian population in Israel and beyond.

Jamal (2009) argues that the Palestinians have a strong awareness of time based on a sense of being “extricated from history, having their time voided of content and suspended.” According to Jamal, even Palestinians who live within their homeland experience a daily sense of exile from space and time. Since the events of 1948 (the “*nakba*” in Palestinian terms), everyone shares a sense of suspended time – life on hold, with no control over it. Jamal calls this “a crisis of voided, or suspended, time,” that gives rise to a constant sense of waiting. As a result, temporariness has become the Palestinian “cognitive-time” space (see below, paragraph 9).

## **6. Expressions of Past Perspective on the Israeli Side**

The past perspective, which is mainly emphasized in the national-religious sector but also exists in the consciousness of most of Israeli society, stresses “our right to the land” as the basis of any solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as noted above. A salient example of this is the publicity campaign of the Council of Judea and Samaria, conducted under the heading “The Story of Every Jew.” The campaign stressed that “every people has its story, and every story has its place. Our stories have a place. We have a place: Judea and Samaria. The story of every Jew.” The explanation for this can be found in the stories of forefathers and foremothers, prophets and kings, and stories of bravery, all of which are entangled with the present in each one of us (see <http://www.jstory.co.il>). The similarity between these arguments and the “past” portion of the “Bar-Ilan” speech noted above is interesting.

Another example is the justification for the location of the “Alon Moreh” settlement near Nablus, as presented on the website of the Council of Judea,

Samaria, and Gaza. It states that the city of Nablus was the first meeting place of the nation and its forefathers with their land, and that our Father Abraham, following God's orders to come to this land, passed through Alon Moreh (Zakay, 2005). Regarding the effect of memories of the Holocaust on the predisposition of time perspective towards the past, we cite as an example the words of Israel Defense Forces Chief Educational Officer (Brigadier-General Stern): "Every IDF officer must see himself as a survivor of Auschwitz ... in order both to act morally and to ensure that the Holocaust does not recur" ("In the Afternoon." *Kol Israel*, Radio Network B, 6 December 2004).

The past perspective is also reflected in the arguments of those opposed to the Oslo Accords, which generated harsh criticism within the political right (Begin, 2000). Rabin was accused by this opposition of relinquishing part of the historical homeland of the Jewish people and undermining the security of Israel and its citizens.

## **7. Expressions of Past Perspective on the Palestinian Side**

The past perspective and its dominance on the Palestinian side are expressed through reliance on historical claims as well as by linking between the discussion of a solution to the conflict and national Arab myths. An example of this is Gilad Sher's description (2001) of Arafat's attitude to the question of the Temple Mount at a meeting with then-Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami during talks in Nablus on 25 June 2000. During a discussion of the problem of Jerusalem (Al-Quds), Arafat mentioned the "Omar Covenant" – the agreement signed in Jerusalem in the year 638 between Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, conqueror of the Land of Israel, and Byzantine Patriarch Sofronius. Among other things, the agreement forbade Jews to reside in Jerusalem. Ben-Ami (2004: 487) also cites this statement of Arafat's. According to him, Arafat said at this same meeting that his willingness to accept Jews in Jerusalem is a historic concession on the part of someone who sees himself as Ibn Al-Khattab's successor. Ben-Ami adds that Arafat continuously cultivated his own image as a conqueror, a modern Salah A-Din, who would liberate Jerusalem from the Crusaders.

More generally, there is a widespread perception on the Palestinian side that regards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an extension of the Islamic struggle

against the Crusaders. Zionism is portrayed as analogous to the Crusades and described as “the new Crusades against Palestine.” This equation also hints at a belief in the circularity of time and the possibility of going back in time. Arabic literature on this topic states, “If history repeats itself, we do not fear the hardships because the Arabs who drove away all the western states will have the ability to drive away multitudes of foreigners in the future.” This attitude illustrates how Arabs rely on the past when they hope that the fate of the Zionists will be the same as that of the Crusaders (according to Benvenisti, 1993; Ron, 2003; Sedan, 1993).

## **8. The Focus on the Past as a Barrier to Resolving the Conflict**

### **8.1 The Debate over Jewish and Palestinian Settlement of the Land of Israel**

Another clear example of the focus on the past and its implications for the conflict can be found in the debate over the following question: what are the origins of the Jewish population, on the one hand, and of the Palestinian population, on the other? While the basic claim of Zionism is that the Land of Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, from which it was exiled, and that this is the source of its historical right to the Land, other claims deny that the Jewish people are the direct descendants of the Jews who lived in the Land of Israel in days gone by. An example of this is Sand’s book *When and How Was the Jewish People Invented?* (2008), which argues that the Jewish people are not direct descendants of the residents of Judea who were exiled when the Temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. but are the descendants of tribes that converted to Judaism in North Africa and of the Khazar Empire, which converted to Judaism and became the origin of eastern European Jewry.

On the other hand, the debate over the question “who are the Palestinians?” is also mired in controversy. Today the United Nations and most of the world’s states define as Palestinians only the Arab residents of the Gaza Strip, Judea, and Samaria (Morris, 1987). According to the historical view salient among Palestinians, the Arab residents of the Land of Israel already had a distinct and

separate national identity during the first millennium C.E., and there are those who ascribe the origins of the Palestinian people to the Canaanite tribes who lived in the Land of Israel during biblical times (Kimmerling & Migdal, 1999). Conversely, there is an opposing view that holds that the Palestinians are not members of a distinct nation, as reflected in the famous quote of former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir (15 June 1969): “There is no such thing as the Palestinian people...” A popular argument voiced in this context holds that the Arab residents of the Land of Israel during the time of the British Mandate were mostly nomads who emigrated from other states in the region following the development of the land by its Jewish residents and the British.

The motivation for this debate, beyond its historiographic importance, is clear: it begs the question of who has a historical right to the Land of Israel – the Jews or the Arabs? From the viewpoint of the search for a realistic solution to the conflict, however, this debate is meaningless. Today Arabs and Jews live in the Land of Israel alongside each other. Focusing on the historical question might therefore be considered a diversion from efforts to find a solution to the conflict, derailing them from the main track on which they should be conducted – the future.

Another – more emphasized – example of a past-perspective barrier to resolution of the conflict is the debate over the creation of the Arab refugee problem.

## **8.2 The Debate over the Creation of the Arab Refugee Problem**

A fierce debate that further reflects the past perspective in relation to the conflict centers on the question of the causes of the Arab refugee problem. The circumstances of the refugees’ departure are a matter of controversy. The official Palestinian position accuses Israel of a deliberate policy of expulsion, recalling the operation in Deir Yassin in this context. In contrast, the official Israeli position holds that most refugees left of their own will or were expelled because they took part in the fighting.

According to Regev and Oren (1995), one claim is that the local Arab leadership did nothing to stop the flight of the refugees, and in many cases its members were among the first to flee. This claim is supported, for example, by the Palestinian

newspaper “A-Tsariah” (30 March 1948), which wrote, “Residents of the large village of Sheikh Munis and of many other villages in the vicinity of Tel Aviv disgraced us all when they abandoned their villages with their possessions and offspring.” Talmi (1953) writes that the Arabs of Safed fled after concluding that they did not have the strength to overpower the Jews. Arab leaders, not only the residents in their masses, also concluded as such, and so began the great escape of 12,000 Arab residents of Safed.

Golda Meir (1975) wrote that the Jewish leadership explicitly wanted the Arabs of Haifa to remain. According to Shimoni (1988), the Arab League called upon Arabs in the Land of Israel to abandon their lands and their country, while promising that this abandonment would only be temporary and would come to an end within a matter of days, with the conclusion of the Arab retribution against Israel. Abba Eban, Israel’s representative to the United Nations, presented the Israeli position to the General Assembly on 18 November 1955, stating that the refugee problem was caused by a war of aggression in which Arab states attacked Israel in 1948 in order to prevent the establishment of the state. The Palestinian view holds that the expulsion was, in fact, deliberate ethnic cleansing that reflects official Israeli policy. This view is supported by a number of “new” Israeli historians such as Benny Morris (1987).

It is noteworthy that in July 2009 (*Haaretz*, “Education and Society” Supplement, 23 September 2009), the Ministry of Education approved a high school history textbook entitled *Building a State in the Middle East*, in which three versions of the creation of the refugee problem are presented alongside one another. The Zionist version holds that “the escape of the upper echelons shook up the Arab population in the Land and led to demoralization and the collapse of spiritual and organizational frameworks. In order to achieve what they saw as a condition for speedy and easy military invasion, Arab League leaders called upon the ‘residents of Palestine’ to move to nearby countries. Not only was the flight of Arabs guided and conducted at the initiative of Arab leadership, but Jewish leadership even tried to stop and prevent it on more than one occasion.” According to the Palestinian version, “This was the historic opportunity (of Jews) to cleanse the Land of Israel of Arabs, to deny the Arab presence by simply erasing it. The method employed was massive sudden attacks against civilian Palestinian populations, which had been weakened by continuous shelling. At



the psychological level, this involved recurrent broadcasts and speeches through loudspeakers warning of disease and punishment and proposing escape routes to avoid death.” In addition, a modern version following Benny Morris’s book (1987) is also presented, referring to what is known as plan D: “Plan D gave the *Hagana* (Jewish military) leaders at the level of brigade and regiment commanders a free hand to clear strategically essential territories of their populations as well as permission to vacate hostile villages. Every unit interpreted these instructions as it understood them, although there was no decision at the political level to ‘expel the Arabs’ from the territories of the Jewish state.”

In our opinion, the discussion surrounding this question has important historical value, and presenting high school students with all of its versions contributes to pluralistic thinking. From the perspective of conflict resolution processes, however, solution of the refugee problem will not result from the adoption of one or another version of its creation. The historical debate only constitutes a barrier on the path to resolution because it almost certainly leads each side to solidify its thinking and permanently fix its version, preventing the finding of a creative solution to this problem, which is perhaps the central problem within the conflict (Klar, Zakay & Sharvit, 2002).

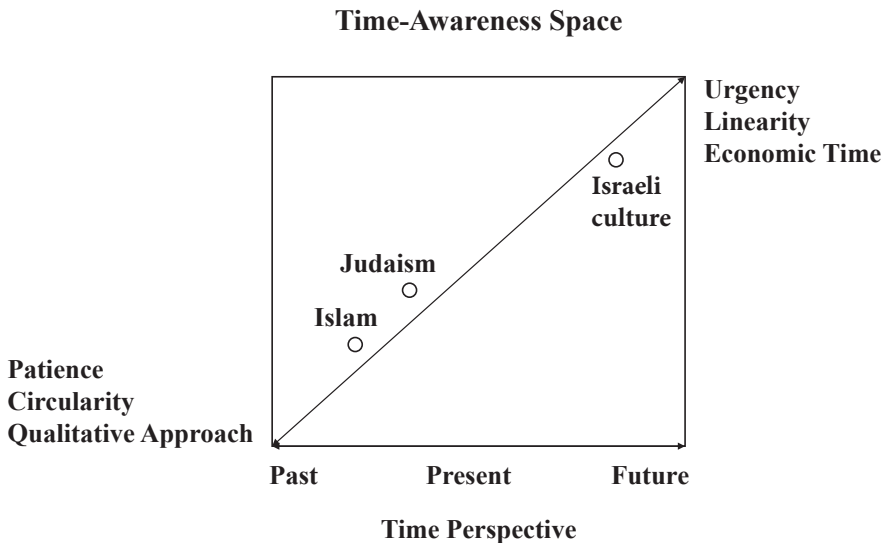
## 9. “Cognitive-Time” Space

We intend to posit the argument that the emotional events of human beings take place in a virtual “cognitive-time” space. This space is defined by the time perspective, on the one hand, and by the nature of the attitude towards time, on the other. Time perspective determines the predisposition towards the past, present, or future, whereas the nature of the attitude towards time might be quantitative or qualitative, expressed in terms of time urgency or not, of the view that time is an economic resource, linear or circular, and so on.

People may move about within their personal “cognitive-time” space as a result of the influence of the type of event involved, personal traits, and context. A person might be situated, for example, in the region of past qualitative-circular time when immersed in a nostalgic memory or dream state. That same person might move towards a region of future economic time when planning a financial initiative, or he might be found in the region of present quantitative time when

planning to arrive at a set time for an upcoming meeting. If he is situated within cognitive-time space in a region that does not accord with the events he must confront, his behavior will be ineffective and non-adaptive. Thus, for example, being situated in the future region of qualitative time will almost certainly cause one to miss a planned meeting. Every person has a dominant region within cognitive-time space where he is more likely to be mentally situated in relation to other regions within the space. In situations of conflict or negotiation as well, each of the parties is located in some region of cognitive-time space, and this region is in turn determined by his traits, personality, culture, religion, and context. Some locales within cognitive-time space may probably be characterized as more conducive to negotiations than others. This matter requires further research.

Next we outline a possible schematic of cognitive-time space, with the possible locations of different cultures according to the above analysis. From the schematic we see that there are gaps in the attitude towards time between the combined Israeli-Jewish culture and Islamic culture. This picture is further complicated by the internal tension among elements of the Israeli-Jewish culture itself. Thus, for example, it appears that Islamic culture places greater emphasis on patience, circularity, and a qualitative approach to time, whereas Israeli-Jewish culture – particularly because of the Israeli component – places greater emphasis on time as an economic resource, time urgency, and a quantitative approach to



time. Nevertheless, both the Islamic culture and the Jewish component of Israeli-Jewish culture are situated in the past region of cognitive-time space. The Israeli component itself is located more within the future region, causing unresolved tension within Israeli-Jewish society and making understanding of the message being conveyed by the Israeli-Jewish side to the Palestinian side more difficult.

We have already shown how this tension was reflected in Netanyahu's "Bar-Ilan" speech. We also argued that this tension is expressed through an inconsistent message based on a past perspective relating to the Jewish right to the land of their forefathers, but denying a past-time perspective and demanding a future-time perspective in relation to the Arab stance on the right of return.

The difference in locations within the "cognitive-time" space of Israel and Palestine respectively is reflected in the following statement by Ben-Ami (2004: 467): "Barak, and we as well, did not expect applause from the Israeli public, but we did believe that future generations would thank us and that history would justify our actions. Arafat, in contrast, expected an agreement that his public would applaud today, here and now." Ben-Ami adds (p. 498), "The Zionist ethos was constructivist in essence. It was an ethos about building a society, creating a living language, developing national institutions and infrastructures. In contrast, the main ethos of the Palestinian national movement is of a struggle over stolen rights, a search for elusive justice, remedy of an injustice inflicted upon refugees, and return in the simplest sense, return to the fig tree and the cactus bush, as if history can be returned."

An interesting opinion regarding the gap in locations within "cognitive-time" space can be found in the writing of the Palestinian researcher Fouad Ajami (2000, Hebrew version) in his book *The Dream Palace of the Arabs*. As an example of the Palestinians' situation, Ajami describes the stance of Hisham Sharabi, a Palestinian-born American intellectual, as follows (p. 250, Hebrew version): "Memory places an obstacle on the path to reconciliation. The ghost of Old Palestine scorned this pragmatic peace. Memory sanctifies everything that existed there before the loss and the defeat." Ajami also quotes Sharabi as saying, "I remember well the sea of Jaffa. It is the sea of my childhood. I can still smell it, taste its saltiness, feel its breeze on my face."

In stark contrast to this description, which reflects a location within the past region of "cognitive-time" space, Ajami clearly describes Israel as situated within

the future region, perhaps even the too-far extreme future. Ajami presents the Israeli side by way of its attitude to the Oslo peace process and to its architect, Shimon Peres (p. 256, Hebrew version): “It did not benefit the Oslo peace that its Israeli architect, Shimon Peres, marketed it as the dawn of a new age for the region and announced the birth of a ‘new Middle East.’ Peres’s vision, a messianic vision in its expectations, is a world of markets, of secret elections, and open borders. The deserts of the Middle East will bloom, the occupation will make way for trade, nationalism will lose its hold.” It appears that Ajami doubts the likelihood of such a future, which does not accord with the Arab perception of time.

## **10. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict As Reflected in the Negotiating Clock**

The above analysis of the perception and conceptualization of time on both sides of the conflict points to a number of problems that make progress towards resolution of the conflict difficult. While the Palestinian side adheres to a slow negotiating process and does not fear its suspension – based on the religious belief that time works to the benefit of Islam’s faithful – the Israeli side operates out of a sense of time urgency and immediacy and a sense of the heavy economic toll generated by the passage of time.

The Israeli side also lacks any certainty that time is working in its favor – mainly because of the influence of the “demographic clock.” This feeling was reflected in an October 2009 survey that found that 75% of the Jewish public in Israel supported negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians – the highest level of support found in recent years (Yaar & Hermann, 2009). The same survey found that 46% of the Jewish public is certain that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is sincere when he says that, from Israel’s point of view, negotiations on an agreement with the Palestinians may begin immediately. In contrast, the Palestinian side, headed by Abu-Mazen, displays a lower sense of urgency regarding the initiation of negotiations.

The Israeli side operates out of a sense of need for a rational plan for the future – an approach that is not characteristic of the Palestinian side, which wants first and foremost to achieve historical justice by reversing the wheels of time. This

mix is further complicated by the non-uniformity of the Israeli time perspective: it is a past perspective in relation to Israeli claims and a future perspective in its rejection of Palestinian claims. On fundamental, essential matters, both sides think in terms of past perspective, which places them in the past region in terms of cognitive-time space.

The location of both sides in the past region is not fruitful for the negotiating process, and it makes finding a solution difficult. Indeed, the ability to solve problems creatively requires parties to let go of the past and direct their awareness towards the future. Thus, for example, Webber (1972) spoke of “worship of the past.” In his words, decision makers need to engage in the future rather than the past, and the past need not affect decisions about the future. History is rife with examples that illustrate how adherence to old habits and “submission” to the past have produced disastrous results.

The paralyzing influence of the past is expressed in the process known as a “paradigm shift,” wherein supporters of an old paradigm make change difficult and seek to prevent the emergence of a new, better, and more effective paradigm (Kuhn, 1962).

In the area of decision making, Klein (1993) identified a popular strategy called “recognized prime decision,” which is based on implementation of decisions taken in the past. This strategy often leads to implementation of decisions that no longer apply to the current situation and thus produce unwanted results.

Some researchers (Fisher, Ury & Bruce, 1991) are certain that in order for negotiations to produce a successful and consensual result, the parties must focus on the future. This is not by any means simple, though. Aristotle has observed that regard for the past has its origins in the fact that perception of time is only possible because of the existence of memory, given that only someone with the ability to remember is able to appreciate the passage of time (McKeon, 1941). Therefore, as long as human memory exists, it will be impossible to avoid the past-time perspective. On the other hand, it should be recalled that the achievement of historical justice has a moral importance that cannot be dismissed. It is therefore important to remedy past injustices before approaching a solution to the problem based on a view to the future.

## 11. Conclusions: “Forget the Past and Turn Over a New Leaf” – Is This Possible?

The time factor has many implications for the creation of conflicts and the possibility of resolving them. Because time is a resource, particularly in “techno-western” societies, and because it is often a limited resource, conflicts might actually have their origins in the resource of time itself.

The time factor has direct and indirect implications for the negotiating process and the chances of conflict resolution. Some of the direct implications are tied to aspects that appear technical, such as the pace of negotiations, the ability to work under time pressure, the attitude towards timetables, and others. These factors, however, have a deeper and more decisive effect than simply as technical aspects when different systems of belief, religion, and culture are involved.

Differences in the attitude towards time that reflect religious and cultural differences can constitute a barrier to efforts at conciliation and resolution by two sides to a conflict.

Problems that are rooted in cultural and faith-based differences and are linked to the time factor are not openly visible, and thus those engaged in resolving the conflict will find it difficult to identify and address these problems. At the surface level, the problem can often appear as a technical matter of communication and time-related linguistic terminology of the two sides. A deeper analysis, however, will show that the linguistic communication problem is merely the tip of the iceberg emerging from the “sea of conflict,” while the real and moral aspect of the problem is buried deep underwater. This chapter illustrated the problem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by juxtaposing the terms “*hudna*” and “*regi’a*.”

This chapter posited that the greatest barrier to conflict resolution occurs when both sides represent cultures that embody time perspectives and orientations that lead to a clash of values. The situation that poses the greatest difficulty to resolving conflict is one in which both sides represent past-time perspectives, that is, the conflict is deeply entrenched in their pasts and the path towards a solution cannot circumvent the magnitude of the past. Without the willingness or ability to overcome the burdens of the past, and in the absence of a dominant time

perspective directed towards the future, it will be hard to make progress in a way that is based on a mature “problem solving” approach.

Analysis of the attitude towards time within Islamic culture and religion, on the one hand, and within Jewish culture and religion, on the other, reveals that both are dominated by a past-time perspective. In the case of Israel, there is indeed a dialectical tension between the past and future perspectives, but the past perspective remains dominant primarily because of the effects of religion, tradition, and the memory of the Holocaust.

Under these circumstances, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict occurs primarily in the past region of the “cognitive-time” space of both sides. This often happens at an unconscious level, but it has great influence on the open and declared conduct of the parties.

This analysis does not leave much room for optimism regarding the chances of finding a stable solution that would be acceptable to both sides.

The combination of an aware and educated approach by both sides to all aspects of the time factor, an effort to understand the belief system and culture of the other side, and self-reflection aimed at increasing awareness of time perception, could perhaps contribute to progress.

Undoubtedly, as in any effort to resolve conflicts, appropriate attention to the positions of the parties and their relationship to the time factor will be beneficial.

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