Why Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?

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The question of why fear overrides hope in societies embarked on the road of peacemaking after years of intractable conflict is answered on the basis of accumulated knowledge in the psychology and sociology of emotions. This knowledge suggests that fear is an automatic emotion, grounded in the perceived present and often based on the memorized past (also processed unconsciously), that leads to freezing of beliefs, conservatism, and sometimes preemptive aggression. Hope, in contrast, involves mostly cognitive activity, which requires the search for new ideas and thus is based on creativity and flexibility. Because hope is based on thinking, it can be seriously impeded by the spontaneous and unconscious interference of fear. Both fear and hope can become collective emotional orientations that organize society's views and direct its forms of action. It is assumed that societies involved in intractable conflict are dominated by a collective emotional orientation of fear, which is functional in their coping with the stressful and demanding situation. But such an orientation serves as a psychological obstacle to a peace process once it starts. The Israeli Jewish case of collective fear orientation is offered as an example. The presentation includes the roots of this orientation, the ways in which it is reflected and disseminated, and its expressions among the Israeli Jewish public; it ends optimistically with the suggestion that societies can determine to overcome their fear and establish a collective orientation of hope for peace.

KEY WORDS: intractable conflict, emotions, fear, hope, Arab-Israeli conflict.

> *No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.*
>
> Edmund Burke

Why does fear override hope in societies that finally engage in a peace process after years of intractable conflict? For observers of intergroup conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland or the Middle East, this is a focal question because, at

first glance, it is disappointing that after many years of bloody and vicious conflict, the opposing societies, rather than being fully driven by hope for a peaceful future, fixate on their past fears, thus impeding the progress of the peace process. The situation is even more disappointing when we remember that at an earlier time—when the violence was at its peak, and the conflict was perceived as irreconcilable and of a zero-sum nature—the societies involved would often stress their desire for peace (see, e.g., Antonovsky & Arian, 1972; Staats & Partlo, 1993). But when this longed-for opportunity finally is being realized, fear often comes to constitute a major psychological obstacle to the achievement of peace (see, e.g., Heskin, 1980; White, 1996).

The answer to the question of why fear overrides hope depends on the accumulated knowledge in the psychology and sociology of emotions in general, and of fear and hope in particular. Thus, the first part of the presentation attempts to explain the overriding influence of fear over hope on the basis of individual psychology. The conception is then applied to the collective level, with the focus on the collective emotional orientation of societies engaged in intractable conflict. Finally, the case of the Israeli society, which has been involved in the Middle Eastern conflict, is offered as an example.

The Functioning of Fear and Hope

Fear and hope, as emotions, are fundamental psychological reactions of every person, and hence play an important role in determining human behavior. In essence, emotions are a multifaceted phenomenon of subjective feeling accompanied by physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses (Ekman & Davidson, 1994; Zajonc, 1998). They evolved for their adaptive functions in dealing with the basic challenges of human life, as modes of relating to the changing demands of the environment (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Lazarus, 1991). In this major role, they represent a process by which events that are relevant to the individual's or community's well-being are signaled to a person's cognitive and action system (Frijda, 1986). The signaling is done on the basis of people's appraisal of their environment (Ellsworth, 1994; Lazarus, 1991). In other words, emotions serve as mediators and as data for processes of judgment, evaluation, and decision-making, which may then lead to particular behaviors (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Clore, 1992; Frijda, 1986; Jarymowicz, 1997; Wiley, 1990).

Of special note for the present conception is the fact that emotions are not merely phenomena in individuals, but cultural-societal reflections as well. Culture considerably affects the individual's emotions. This notion will be elaborated later, but for now I would like to concentrate on the two emotions addressed in the title: fear and hope.

The Power of Fear

The emotion of fear is a specific subjective aversive feeling that arises when one perceives a threat or danger to oneself and/or one's society, and enables an adaptive response (Gray, 1989; Öhman, 1993; Rachman, 1978). A great variety of threats and dangers can be detected in the present or anticipated in the future. These can be personal, such as a dog or darkness, or social, such as political persecution, terror attack, or war.

Fear constitutes combined physiological and psychological reactions programmed to maximize the probability of surviving in dangerous situations in the most beneficial way. Although reactions of fear may be evoked in view of the situation's appraisal through conscious process, they also may be activated via a programmed system that allows unconscious reaction processing, which deals with danger in a routine way, regardless of intention or thinking. The latter process was recently discovered by LeDoux (1996) in his work on the short circuit of emotional fear responses, which bypasses the thinking process. It reflects a mechanism of adaptation that automatically protects life and homeostasis, but may operate irrationally and even destructively at the moment it is invoked.

Fear reactions are evoked not only as a result of cues, which directly imply threat and danger, but also by conditioned stimuli that are non-threatening in their nature (LeDoux, 1996; Öhman, 1993; Rachman, 1978). In addition, as demonstrated by Grings and Dawson (1978), fear can be acquired on the basis of received information about certain objects, events, people, or situations that are supposed to threaten the person or his or her society (see Rachman, 1978). Once the information about threatening or potentially threatening stimuli is acquired through different modes of learning, it is stored in the memory, as explicit memory about emotional situations. Moreover, LeDoux (1996) pointed out the functioning of implicit emotional memory, which unconsciously arouses reactions of fear in view of a particular cue. This memory is particularly resilient, exhibiting little diminution with the passage of time. Later, when one encounters the same stimuli, perceives similar stimuli, or even conditioned stimuli, fear may be retrieved and evoked (Lazarus, 1991; LeDoux, 1996). But the memories, which may even last throughout life, are never carbon copies of the information provided by learning. Rather, they are biased and modified reconstructions of the absorbed information (Smith, 1998).

All this means that fear may be evoked by a wide range of cues and information, much of which initially did not imply either threat or danger. In addition, as indicated, the implicit emotional memory elicits fear automatically, overcoming rationality and logic. Indeed, it dominates and controls thinking, because the connections from the emotional system (where the fear is localized) to the cognitive system are stronger than those in the opposite direction (Jarymowicz, 1999; LeDoux, 1995, 1996; Öhman, 1993). As a result, fear floods consciousness, preparing the individual to cope with the threatening situation.

A prolonged experience of fear leads to a number of observed effects: It sensitizes attention to threatening cues, it gives priority to processing information about potential threats, it extends associative networks of information about threats, it causes overestimation of dangers and threats, it facilitates the selective retrieval of information related to fear, it increases expectations of threat and danger, and it increases accessibility of procedural knowledge that was effective in coping with threatening situations in the past (Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994; Gallagher & Clore, 1985; Gray, 1989; Isen, 1990; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LeDoux, 1995, 1996; Öhman, 1993). At the same time, there is empirical evidence that fear also has more general effects on cognitive processing: It tends to cause adherence to known situations and avoidance of risk, uncertainty, and novel situations; it tends to cause cognitive freezing, which prevents openness to new ideas (Clore et al., 1994; Isen, 1990; LeDoux, 1995, 1996; Öhman, 1993).

Finally, fear motivates protection from events that are perceived to be a threat. One well-observed mode of protection is defense, or aggression, against the source of the perceived threat. That is, when in fear, human beings sometimes tend to cope by initiating a fight, even when there is little or nothing to be achieved by doing so (Eibl-Eibesfeldt & Sütterlin, 1990; Lazarus, 1991; Plutchik, 1990).

The Cognitive Foundation of Hope

The emotion of hope arises when a concrete positive goal is expected (Stotland, 1969); this may even include the yearning for relief from negative conditions (Lazarus, 1991). It consists of a cognitive element of expecting and an affective element of feeling good about the expected pleasant events or outcomes (Staats & Stassen, 1985). According to Snyder (1994), this subjective feeling is based on goal-directed thinking, which combines goal-directed determination with planning to achieve this goal. Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) argued that hope should (a) refer to an aspiration for achieving a concrete goal that has a likelihood of attainment; (b) pertain to an aspired goal of vital interest and not of triviality; and (c) reflect moral values, because people should not hope for socially unacceptable goals.

Hope has not been associated with any specific physiological response. It is based on higher cognitive processing, which requires mental representations of future situations and, more specifically, setting goals, planning how to achieve them, and the use of imagery, creativity, cognitive flexibility, mental exploration of novel situations, and even risk-taking (Breznitz, 1986; Clore et al., 1994; Fromm, 1968; Isen, 1990; Lazarus, 1991; Snyder, 1994). Hope resembles a state of mind, which is marked by its disconnection from the past by planning, dreaming, expecting, fantasizing, and so forth—all in a positively valued direction. This state of mind requires development of new "scripts" about future actions. In the view of Fromm (1968), hope requires conviction about the not yet proven, courage to resist

temptation to compromise the vision, and transformation of present reality in the direction of greater aliveness.

Individuals differ in their hope orientation. Some have more of a disposition to hope than others (see Snyder et al., 1991). A review of the empirical literature indicates that, relative to individuals with low hope orientation, those with high hope orientation are cognitively engaged in more positive events and in fewer negative events; they spend more time thinking and were found to perform better on cognitive tasks (Snyder et al., 1996); and they have greater problem-solving ability and a rational problem-solving style, and are less prone to use wishful thinking, self-criticism, and social withdrawal strategies (Chang, 1998; Snyder, Cheavens, & Michael, 1999).

Summary

The above review indicates several major differences between fear and hope, which have important implications for the analysis of why fear overrides hope in situations of intergroup conflict. Fear has a physiological basis, whereas hope does not; fear can be processed unconsciously, whereas hope always requires conscious cognitive activity; fear is basically activated automatically, whereas hope is always based on thinking and requires various cognitive skills such as creativity and flexibility. Fear is grounded in the perceived threatening present, often based on the remembered threats in the past; hope is based on a positive imagination of the future. Fear often leads to aggressive-protective behaviors used in the past; hope requires conceiving of new behaviors to achieve the desired, positively valued goal.

The above comparison shows that fear overrides hope by occurring automatically, unconsciously, often on the basis of past memorized experiences. It is an evolutionary safeguard that ensures survival in view of potential threats and dangers that human beings encounter. Fear is a fundamental mechanism, easily evoked, that governs human consciousness. Hence, if hope can subdue the often irrational and spontaneous domination of fear, it must do so through reasoning and imagination.

If we want to address the political question of fear and hope that is at the center of this presentation, then we must now turn to the analysis of emotions on the societal/cultural level.

Collective Emotional Orientation

A basic assumption of this presentation is that, just as individuals may be characterized by one particular dominant emotion, so also societies may develop collective emotional orientations, with an emphasis on one or more particular emotions. The society provides the contexts, information, models, emphases, and instructions that influence the emotions of its members. Because these are cultural frameworks shared by society members and have strong effects on them, emotional

experiences become a societal phenomenon, taking the form of collective emotional orientation (Rimé & Christophe, 1997). Another assumption I make is that it is possible to extend our knowledge on the nature of the individuals' emotions to societal functioning. This latter assumption is based on the fact that although in the macro societal analysis the focus is on sharing of emotion by society members, individuals (as society members) are the ones who experience emotions and, therefore, the principles of individuals' functioning can be used in explaining the behavior of a society. Although shared emotional behavior of society members is not a mere addition of individuals, it indicates unique holistic qualities of the society.

The idea that society, or specifically its culture, shapes individuals' emotions is not a new one (see, e.g., Averill, 1980; Ellsworth, 1994; Harré, 1986; Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Lazarus, 1991; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Markus and Kitayama (1994) pointed out that

> every cultural group has some key ideas that have been traditionally and collectively held in place and that are used to select and organize their own sociopsychological processes. These *core cultural ideas* can influence the nature of the group's habitual emotional tendencies through constraining and affording particular, relatively culture-specific sets of immediate and everyday life realities, in which members of the cultural group are socialized or "trained" to think, act, and feel in a more or less adaptive fashion. (pp. 341, 343; emphasis in original)

This is to say, in other terms, that people who live in a particular society (i.e., culture) share central societal beliefs that consist of such contents as collective memories, ideologies, goals, myths, etc. (see Bar-Tal, 2000a). These central societal beliefs provide the prism through which society members view their world and relate to it. This prism not only organizes society's cognitive outlook or directs intentional forms of actions, but also sets its collective emotional orientation. Being disseminated through a society's channels of communication and its institutions, societal beliefs characterize that society. The central societal beliefs, as a dominant cultural expression, have a major influence on the emotional functioning of society members. They first provide the beliefs that evoke the particular emotion(s); they then supply the criteria and sensitivity for the selection of information, which in turn evokes emotion; they affect the interpretation and evaluation of situations in terms of particular emotions, signal what emotions are appropriate in general and in particular situations, direct how these emotions should be expressed, and guide the behaviors performed as reactions to emotions (Armon-Jones, 1986; Zajonc, 1998).

Collective emotional orientation is a result of the described influences. A society may be characterized by sensitization to a particular emotion and by the evaluation and expression of that emotion. Society members share this emotion, because emotions reflect norms, values, and expectations of the society (Smith-

Lovin, 1990). So from their early age, society members are socialized to acquire the culturally approved emotional orientation. They learn what cues to attend in order to feel a particular emotion, how to appraise them, how to express the emotion, and how to behave in accordance with it (Averill, 1980; Lewis & Saarni, 1985). This learning is also done, beyond the family setting, via political, educational, and cultural mechanisms, including mass media and other channels of communication. It is thus not surprising that societies can become characterized by particular emotion(s). For example, Bellah (1967) proposed that hope characterizes American society: It is a central ingredient in what he called the "civil religion" of the United States. Paez and Vergara (1995) found differences in fear feeling among Mexicans, Chileans, Belgians, and Basque Spaniards; the Chileans were found to be characterized by the highest fear, the Mexicans by the lowest.

That a particular emotion saliently appears in a particular society does not imply that it is characterized by a particular collective emotional orientation. I propose the following criteria for identifying collective emotional orientation:

1. Society members widely experience the emotion.

2. The emotion appears frequently in the society's public discourse: It is expressed and discussed often in public debates by societal channels of communication.

3. The beliefs that evoke the particular emotion are widely shared by society members and are expressed by society's communication channels. Beliefs that imply potential threats and dangers, triggering fear, can serve as an example.

4. Cultural products, such as books, films, or theatrical plays, express the particular emotion and the beliefs that trigger it.

5. The educational system, through school textbooks, ceremonies, and teachers, transmits beliefs that evoke the particular emotion.

6. The emotion and the beliefs that evoke it are embedded in the society's collective memory.

7. Beliefs evoking the particular emotion are used for decision-making by society's institutions, and influence policy or course of action.

Corradi, Fagen, and Garreton (1992) analyzed the formation of the collective emotional orientation of fear in four South American societies in the 1970s: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. In these cases, the collective emotional orientation of fear developed because of certain threatening societal conditions: Members of the four societies were subjected to the systematic and consistent use of terror. As a result, they perceived the political system as generating life-threatening dangers. This perception was shared by a substantial segment in each society, resulting in a "fear culture," as the researchers called it.

Collective Emotional Orientation of Fear in Societies Engulfed
by Intractable Conflict

Another assumption is that societies involved in intractable conflict tend to be dominated by a collective fear orientation. This assumption is based on the stressful nature of intractable conflicts caused by threats and dangers to society members and to society as a whole. Intractable conflicts go on for a long time, at least a generation; they involve physical violence in which soldiers and civilians are killed and wounded, civil property is destroyed, refugees suffer, and often atrocities are performed; they are perceived as irreconcilable, because attempts to resolve them fail; vast military, economic, and psychological investments in their continuation are made; they are perceived as having a zero-sum nature, are perceived as concerning existential and basic needs or values, and preoccupy society members continuously (Bar-Tal, 1998a; Kriesberg, 1993).

The prolonged experience of violence impinges on the personal life of society members, imprinting their behavior. In such stressful situations, society members tend selectively to process information, focusing on the evil and malintentional acts of the adversary, which are threatening and full of dangers. These experiences are embedded into collective memory, get incorporated into cultural products, and then are disseminated via society's channels of communication (Bar-Tal, in press; Paez, Basabe, & Gonzalez, 1997; Ross, 1995). Eventually, they serve as a fertile ground for the formation of the collective fear orientation.

From another perspective, the formation of a collective fear orientation in cases of intractable conflict is inevitable because of the special impact of negative emotional information on the human mind. Accumulated evidence in psychology shows that negative events are well attended and remembered and that they have determinative influence on evaluation, judgment, and action tendencies (see reviews by Christianson, 1992; Lau, 1982; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990; Taylor, 1991). This negativity bias is an inherent characteristic of the negative motivational system, which operates automatically at the evaluative-categorization stage. It is also structured to respond more intensely than the positive motivational system to comparable levels of motivational activation. This tendency reflects adaptive behavior, because negative information—especially when it is related to threats—may require an immediate reaction of defense.

Fear in a public threat situation is often contagious, which is another reason for the development of a collective fear orientation. This social contagion is the result of the automatic and spontaneous functioning of fear, which does not resort to higher mental processes (in contradiction, as we have seen, to hope). Fear is spread out, because society members easily intercept its signals through their empathetic mechanisms. This can occur during interpersonal interaction, in crowd situations, or as a result of threatening information of the type that is widely disseminated in cases of intractable conflict (see Rachman, 1978; Rimé & Christophe, 1997).

A collective fear orientation cuts deeply into the psychic fabric of society members and becomes linked with a societal ethos of conflict. This embeddedness of the collective fear orientation in the societal ethos takes place because fear is functional and adaptive in the situation of intractable conflict, because it prepares society members for better coping with this stressful situation (Collins, 1975; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This connection is achieved in a number of ways: (a) It sets the society members to be in constant readiness for potential dangers, so no sudden surprises can overtake them; (b) it directs attention and sensitizes society to cues that signal potential danger and to information that implies potential threat; (c) it increases solidarity and cohesiveness among society members in view of the potential threats to the individuals and to the society at large; and (d) it mobilizes the society members to act on behalf of the society, to cope with the threat, to act against the enemy and defend country and society.

But, in addition to the above noted functions of the collective fear orientation, there are other consequences of this orientation. It may lead to a collective freezing of beliefs. A society in intractable conflict tends to stick to its beliefs about the causes of threats, about the conflict, about the adversary, and about ways of coping with the dangers. It becomes difficult to entertain alternative ideas, solutions, or courses of action. As Maslow (1963) noted, "all those psychological and social factors that increase fear cut impulse to know" (p. 124).

Furthermore, the collective fear orientation tends to limit the society's perspective by binding the present to the past experiences related to the conflict, and by setting expectations for the future on the basis of the past. This seriously undermines disassociation from the past and impedes thinking creatively about new alternatives that may resolve the conflict peacefully. Oversensitized by fear, a society tends to misinterpret cues and information as signs of threat and danger, searching for the smallest indication in this direction, even in situations that signal good intentions. The fear also leads to great mistrust and delegitimization of the adversary because of its harmful acts and threats. Finally, the collective fear orientation is a major cause of violence. A society in fear tends to fight in order to cope with the threatening condition. Fight is a habituated course of action based on past experience, and thus a society again fixates on coping with threat in a conflictual way, without trying new avenues of behavior that can stop the violence.

The above analysis suggests an answer to the question posed in the title. A society in intractable conflict tends to develop the collective fear orientation as a result of the threatening experiences of violence that are relevant to every society member. In turn, the collective fear orientation feeds the continuation of the intractable conflict, creating a vicious cycle of fear, freezing, and violence. This orientation of fear is functional in times of intractable conflict, facilitating types of behavior that enable coping with the situation. In times of conflict, the collective orientation of fear is not only maintained by the experiences of the society members, but usually is also reinforced by society's channels of communication and its institutions.

But when the rival societies embark on the road of peacemaking, the collective fear orientation plays a hindering role in this process. Being well entrenched in the psyche of society members as well as in society's culture, it inhibits the evolvement of the hope for peace by spontaneously and automatically overflowing the consciousness, in view of perceived threatening information. Society members have difficulty freeing themselves from the domination of fear in order to construct goals regarding realistic and concrete outlines of peace and plans for how to achieve them—both elements that reflect hope (goals and plans).

The violent confrontations in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Kashmir and the Balkans are all examples of intractable conflict. In all of these cases, fear has been identified as an important motivating force in their severe violence and in the continuous resistance to their resolution (see, e.g., Heskin, 1980; Volkan, 1997; White, 1996). Of special interest to me is the Middle East conflict. In this conflict, the two rivals, Israeli Jews and Arabs, developed a strong collective orientation of fear on different foundations. I'll analyze only the domination of the collective fear orientation in the Israeli Jewish society of which I am part. It is widely accepted that Israeli Jews' fears and insecurity have played a major role in the way they have been managing the conflict and the peace process. They are still well-grounded in the Israeli collective, being nurtured through generations, despite the observable changes in Israeli beliefs and attitudes. Indeed, fears and insecurities are the major, formally declared factors that have guided Israeli peace negotiators (Ben-Dor, 1998; Ben-Meir, 1986; Brecher, 1972; Rabinovich, 1998). In view of the analysis presented above, it is assumed that they override the evolving orientation of hope, which is the necessary underlying basis for the peace process.

Collective Fear in Israel

The Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East developed about the contested land known over the last centuries as Palestine, which two national movements claimed as their homeland. For more than 100 years, Palestinian nationalism and Zionism, the Jewish national movement, have been clashing recurrently over the right to self-determination, statehood, and justice. The conflict began as a communal conflict between Jews and Palestinians living in British-ruled Palestine, but it evolved into a full-scale interstate conflict between Israel (founded in May 1948) and Arab states during the war of 1948–1949. Since the 1967 Six Day War, which ended with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the conflict is on both the interstate and communal levels (Sandler, 1988).

Over the decades the conflict acquired an intractable character, which reached its climax from the late 1940s, with the war of independence, until the end of the 1970s, with the visit to Israel of Egypt's President Sadat in 1977. The conflict was intractable in the classical sense. It was protracted, violent, total, central, with much investment in its continuation; it was perceived as irreconcilable and zero-sum (Bar-Tal, 1998a). This intractable nature of the conflict served as a fertile ground

for the evolvement of the collective fear orientation. The conflict has been on Israel's public agenda daily, occupying a central place in news and public debates. Many threatening events have left their impact on the Israelis. Israeli citizens have felt threatened not only as a collective in a Jewish state, but also as individuals: Many of them took part in the military actions and became victims of the violence, directly or indirectly.

The best way to understand Israelis' collective fear orientation is by looking at the determinative role played by their collective memory (Bar-Tal, 1990; Kelman, 1987).

The Influence of Collective Memory

In their collective memory, Israeli Jews have lived with constant and continuous threats to their existence, both as individuals and as a society, as a result of the Arabs' objection to their return to their homeland and to the establishment of the Jewish state. Specifically, in the years before the foundation of the Jewish state, Arabs tried to stop Jewish immigration and organized anti-Jewish demonstrations, strikes, and occasional riots, which claimed lives. After May 1948, Palestinians tried to destroy the newly declared state with the help of regular armies, mainly from five Arab states. From 1948 until the peace treaty in 1979 with Egypt, Israelis felt that they were surrounded by hostile states that maintained the pressure of a war, refusing to recognize Israel and using a threatening rhetoric referring to the "annihilation of the state of Israel" and the "liquidation of the Zionist aggressor." Moreover, further wars were fought in 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982—the first three of which almost all the Israeli Jews perceived as defensive and imposed by a real threat to Israel. In the Arab-Israeli wars, many thousands of Israelis fell and many more were injured. In addition, Arabs, and particularly Palestinians, have carried out through the years terror raids into Israel in which civilians and soldiers were killed and wounded (see Aronson, 1978; Ben-Gurion, 1975; Eban, 1957; Meir, 1973; Netanyahu, 1993). Bar-Tal and Teichman (in preparation) provided an extensive analysis of Arabs' representation through the 100 years of the conflict in political, social, educational, and cultural channels. This study provides unequivocal evidence to the consistent threatening presentations of Arabs that become part of the societal beliefs of the Israeli ethos of conflict. This continuous presentation is one of the factors behind the aroused insecurity and fear by the Israelis.

However, the Israeli emotional collective fear orientation has an even deeper foundation, given that it is based not only on the experience of intractable conflict with Arabs but also on the collective memory of the Jewish history as preserved in Israel, which encouraged the maintenance of a siege mentality (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992). According to this collective memory, throughout the centuries Jews were exposed to continuous threats: from the Greek and Roman eras, through Islamic conquests, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, up to the present time (Poliakov, 1974). The threats took the form of anti-Jewish tracts,

libels, the imposition of distinctive dress, the levying of special taxes, religious, social, and economic restrictions, forced conversions, deportations, expulsions, and pogroms (Grosser & Halperin, 1979). These experiences were transmitted between the generations throughout the centuries, becoming part of the Jewish culture (Liebman, 1978; Stein, 1978). Their peak took place between 1941 and 1945, when 6 million Jews—one-third of the Jewish people—were exterminated in an organized and systematic genocide, the Holocaust (Bauer, 1982; Dawidowicz, 1975). The Holocaust has had a special imprinting effect on Israeli society by raising the existential chronic fears to play a major role in the Middle Eastern context. As Elon (1971) rightly pointed out,

> The lingering memory of the Holocaust makes Arab threats of annihilation sound plausible. The trauma of the Holocaust leaves an indelible mark on the national psychology, the tenor and content of public life, the conduct of foreign affairs, on politics, education, literature and the arts. (p. 199)

One way to examine the collective fear orientation in Israeli society is to look at the cultural, educational, and political mechanisms as well as mass media channels, which both reflect the fear orientation and disseminate it. The next sections provide examples of this reflection and dissemination via literature, education, and the press, focusing on the peak period of the intractable conflict (the 1950s through the 1970s) while also indicating some changes that took place over time.

Fear in Israeli Literature

At the peak of the intractable conflict, Israeli literature—prose and poetry for children, adolescents, and adults—expressed extensive fears and insecurity referring to the threats Jews have encountered (e.g., Ben-Ezer, 1977, 1978, 1997; Govrin, 1989; Yaoz, 1980). These expressions were in the framework of writing about such themes as the continuous Jewish victimhood throughout history, the persecution of Jews by non-Jews, the sense of siege and entrapment in the Diaspora (a feeling that continued to exist in Israel), and the threats and dangers that the Jews have faced more recently in Israel. Special place has been devoted to the Holocaust, viewed as a symbolic climax that encapsulates all the Jewish suffering throughout history and at the same time has been regarded as a unique event unparalleled in the history of civilization. This theme served as a focus for hundreds of literary works by writers and poets who experienced the Holocaust, or who were related to it directly and indirectly (i.e., were descendants of survivors, lived in Europe before the Holocaust, or met the survivors; see Holtzman, 1995–96). Many of the works provided realistic-naturalistic descriptions of suffering, agony, and death, which implied fear, helplessness, and hopelessness (Shaked, 1997). Yaoz (1984) called such literature the "art of nausea." In addition, Yaoz (1980) identified a type of Hebrew Holocaust fiction that she called "trans-historical," characterized by the

lack of a historical period and geographical place as its basis. Works of this kind, like Aharon Appelfeld's "The Hunt" in a story collection entitled *River's Footplate* (1971), do not aim to describe the actual horrors of the Holocaust, but rather "the reality of the life of the Jew persecuted throughout history" (Yaoz, 1980, p. 129). The image of the hunt serves as a metaphor for anti-Semitism, which does not require either a political basis or social background, but is a natural phenomenon that exists just as the hunter has existed since the beginning of humanity.

A somewhat similar line of thought can be found in the literary work of those writers and poets who are influenced by the Jewish past and apply it to the present, by expressing existential anxiety, gloom, estrangement, bereavement, and fear as part of the unavoidable Jewish destiny, not only in the Diaspora but even in Israel (Ben-Ezer, 1977, 1978; Shaked, 1989). A salient example of the described climate can be found in *Holocaust II* by Amos Keinan (1975), who prophesized another Holocaust because the Jewish people are destined to be victims.

The preoccupation with the Arab-Israeli conflict in Israeli literature went through a number of phases. Of special interest for the present analysis is the period of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s in which the literature extensively and directly expressed fear and siege of the Jewish existence in the face of the Arab threat (Ben-Ezer, 1992, 1997). Stories by A. B. Yehoshua (e.g., *Over Against the Woods*, 1968), Amos Oz (e.g., *My Michael*, 1984), or Yitzhak Orpaz (e.g., *Ants*, 1968) are representative of this period. They portray Arabs as frightening, cruel, inhumane, out to harm, to destroy and kill. According to Ben-Ezer (1992), the Israeli literature turned

> the Arab into a nightmare, into something essentially sinister, into that dark part of existence onto which we project our own fear, our dread and terror . . . the Arab has no existence—for himself—a social, national, everyday existence. He is a scary projection born from the soul of the Israeli hero. And even more than he instills fear, the Arab is a nuisance who doesn't allow the Israeli person to get on with his life as he would like to, away from his ongoing troubles with the conflict and the wars it has caused. (p. 36)

Similarly, negative and threatening portrayals of Arabs can also be found in Israeli children's literature. The extensive study of Cohen (1985) analyzed the image of the Arab in children's books from the 1950s until the early 1980s. He found that Arabs were consistently dehumanized as a threatening entity, beginning with the description of their external appearance (e.g., "having a scar," "an angry and evil face," or "horrifying eyes") and ending with characterizations (e.g., murderous, villainous, ruthless, cruel). They are sometimes compared to Nazis, and their intention is frequently presented as to kill the Jews and/or annihilate Israel.

It should be noted that although the works written during this period are still read and learned, Israeli literature has undergone significant changes. The Holocaust continues to occupy an important place, but instead of relating its events, now

the literature focuses mainly on its reflections in the lives of its survivors and the families they have built in Israel (Holtzman, 1995–96). Nevertheless, the existential anxiety of the survivors and their children is still a major feature. With regard to the Israeli-Arab conflict, according to Ben-Ezer (1997), Israeli literature started internalizing the reality of the conflict. Jewish heroes take part of the guilt on themselves, and they are asking themselves troubling questions about the conflict. The Arab, although no longer presented as a nightmare, does not appear as a person in his or her own right, but only in relation to the conflict and the Jew's distress. The literature deals with the key issues of Jewish and Arab coexistence in one country.

Fear in Israeli Schoolbooks

Israeli schoolbooks played an important role in transmitting a fear orientation to young generations during the 1950s–1970s period. They focused on Jewish isolation, anti-Semitism, threats of annihilation, persecutions, pogroms, Arab wars against Israel, and so on. The nations of the world, and especially Arabs, were portrayed as wicked, malicious, hostile, or envious (Bar-Tal, 1998a; Firer, 1985; Podeh, in press). All this, of course, implied threat and danger to Jews in Israel. Firer (1985), who analyzed history textbooks, found that "the dominant approach in the books is that the hatred against Jews is eternal, with only its external manifestations changing according to periods" (p. 57).

In this presentation of Jewish history, the study of the Holocaust played an important part. It began to crystallize after the Eichmann trial in 1961, when a specific Holocaust curriculum was introduced (Firer, 1989; Keren, 1985; Schatzker, 1980). Although the Holocaust instruction in the educational system has changed its emphases over the years, it has consistently provided a particularistic perspective on existential threats to Jewish existence in the past, present, and future. It points at the anti-Semitism of the world at large and its indifference to Jewish suffering. It also finds similarity and draws parallels between the kind of threats currently faced by Israel and those experienced during the Holocaust. Subtle and implied comparisons shed threatening light on the Arabs, who in this view wish to realize the intentions of the Nazis.

Israeli textbooks presented the Arab-Israeli conflict one-sidedly, focusing on Arabs' ill intentions, their cruelty and hostility, their violence against Jews, and their wish to annihilate Israel; they ascribed to them sole responsibility for the outbreak and continuation of the conflict (Bar-Gal, 1993; Bar-Tal, 1998a; Firer, 1985; Podeh, in press; Zohar, 1972). These books presented a simplified, black-and-white picture, and a negative attitude toward Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular. As Podeh (in press) points out:

> Undoubtedly, the narrative of the old textbooks also reflected a genuine sense of fear of the enemy, which may with hindsight seem exaggerated.

The sense of being a state under siege (euphemistically depicted by the biblical phrase *"am levadad yishkon"*—"a people that shall dwell alone") was perceived as relevant until 1967, and for some it continued in the post-1967 period as well. The fear of another round of war with the Arabs was genuine and not theoretical.

I recently (Bar-Tal, 1998b) analyzed all the textbooks in history, geography, Hebrew, and social science for grades 1 through 12 approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the year 1994–1995 to investigate the extent to which they express the ethos of intractable conflict. The content analysis showed that the theme of victimization still receives a prominent place in textbooks by dwelling on the image of Jewish victimhood from the earliest stages of Jewish history through the present. Jewish history is presented as an endless sequence of threats and dangers from different nations in different situations. Special attention is devoted to the Holocaust. Finally, the victimization of the Jew is also presented in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In all the textbooks, it is the Arabs who initiate violence against the Jews, who are thus forced to defend themselves. The following words of a Jewish character in a story in one of the readers, describing the first Jewish settlement in the Galilee, represent more generally the experience of the Jews in Israel: "We were lonely . . . pioneers surrounded by a sea of enemies." Although there is hardly any delegitimization of Arabs, the textbooks continue negative stereotyping and rarely stereotype them positively. This stereotyping is in line with the still-prevailing presentation of Arabs as enemies, usually in the context of the conflict.

Nevertheless, the most recent history textbooks written during the 1990s present a more balanced picture of the Arabs and the Arab-Israeli conflict (Firer & Adwan, 2001; Podeh, in press). What we observe here is a first genuine attempt to formulate a narrative that not only glorifies Zionist history but also touches on certain more shady sides of this history. For the first time, too, Palestinians are presented not merely as aggressors, but also as victims of the conflict. Moreover, their right to self-determination is recognized and part of their national narrative is presented.

Fear in the Press

The Israeli press, perceived as a free channel of communication in a democratic state, contributed to the evolvement of the collective fear orientation. This trend was especially salient during the 1950s–1970s period when, in fact, largely government media were mobilized to help the nation cope with total conflict, and were preoccupied with security issues (Barzilai, 1996; Peri, 1998). The press contributed its share to Israel's siege mentality by frequently referring, especially from the 1950s through the 1980s, to an anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli world (Bar-Tal

& Antebi, 1992). An example of this contribution can be found in an article for the Labor Party's newspaper, *Davar*:

> Right and left joined together in order to inflame the old-new anti-Semitism: the cross-fire within which the Jewish people, Zionism and the State of Israel find themselves on both sides of Europe. . . . The anti-Semitic movement in all its anti-Zionist and anti-Israel revelations proves that its perpetrators wish to complete the "final solution" which Hitler initiated through the division of roles: The Arab nations will continue with physical genocide and the "enlightened" nations will conduct a spiritual genocide of survivors. (Gothelf, 1970)

Preoccupation with the Holocaust is another key theme in stirring up collective fear. The Israeli press began its extensive preoccupation with the Holocaust during the 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. This was the period in which Holocaust memories were nationalized, that is, expressed in national ceremonies and presented in national media (Guttvein, 1998). The press published many personal survivor accounts, often with xenophobic implications, arousing mistrust of the non-Jewish world, referring to its universal anti-Semitism and present threats (e.g., *Politics*, 1988; Zemach, 1995). Since then, the preoccupation of the press with the Holocaust and its implications has not been limited to Holocaust Memorial Day or the coverage of perpetrators' trials. The press often makes the connection between past and present when reporting about anti-Semitic activities in the world, or about events related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nossek's (1994) study provides analyzed examples of how the press uses the Holocaust to frame the terror events. Terrorists are often portrayed as "Nazis," the victims as "Jews," and the world as indifferent to Jewish suffering. In these reports, Israeli soldiers, the practical expression of Jewish revival, are the ones who save the victims.

Of direct relevance for the present analysis is a study by Barzilai (1996), which investigated the coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict and security matters by the Israeli media from the declaration of independence in 1948 until the early 1990s. In the period from 1948 to 1973, the press emphasized the threats and dangers coming from the surrounding Arab nations, reflecting the general mood of serious existential anxiety and at the same time expressing the government's policy of national mobilization. Only after 1973 did the press begin to voice criticism of government positions regarding the management of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to present dovish opinions regarding its solution. Still, Barzilai (1996) concluded that as late as the 1980s and early 1990s, the Israeli media have tended to be conservative, preferring to express the formal position of the political establishment.

In discussing the role of the press in the evolvement of the collective fear orientation, published or broadcast statements by political leaders should also be taken into account. They serve as epistemic authorities for the public, affecting its worldview and emotional orientation. A review of the leaders' publicized speeches

shows that almost all of them, including prime ministers and presidents, expressed fears about the threats that Jews in Israel face from a hostile, anti-Semitic world and/or specifically from Arabs. Following are examples of expressions made by Israeli prime ministers:

> In the course of its long 4,000-year-old journey across the stage of world history, through most of the world, east and west, north and south, our people have incessantly met with expressions of hatred and hostility, libels and accusations, persecution and torture, destruction and massacres. . . . Over thousands of years, this hatred and animosity changed form but its essence never altered much. (David Ben-Gurion, *Davar*, 17 February 1953)

> You know what I've been doing, and what we have all been doing, to avoid war and bloodshed—but it is our fate in the Land of Israel to fight for our souls. Believe me, the alternative is Treblinka, and we are determined that there will be no more Treblinka. (Menachem Begin, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 11 June 1982)

> In every generation they rise up to destroy us,[1] and we must remember that this could happen to us in the future. We must therefore, as a state, be prepared for this. (Yitzhak Rabin, *Haaretz*, 27 April 1987)

Expressions of the Collective Emotional Orientation of Fear

As early as 1961–1962, when the Arab-Israeli conflict was perceived as irreconcilable, a national sample of Jewish Israelis was interviewed about their hopes and fears (Antonovsky & Arian, 1972) as part of an international project initiated by Hadley Cantril (1965), the social psychologist. In response to two open-ended questions about their hopes in general, 55% expressed hopes for peace with the Arabs and about 49% mentioned their fears of war with the Arabs. The responses showed an unusually high degree of consensus, with little difference between social subgroups.

Years later, but still at the height of the intractable conflict, Israeli polls began to gauge Israeli Jews' fears and hopes. Unsurprisingly, they showed that Israeli Jews felt threatened and expressed worries about the security situation. In 1970–1971, about 70% of Israeli Jews expressed security worries; this percentage fell to about 60% in 1972, but rose to 90% after the 1973 war (Stone, 1982). With regard to specific threats, between 1973 and 1977, at least 70% and often more than 90% of Jewish respondents thought that there would be another war with the Arab countries. During and immediately after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November

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[1] The phrase "In every generation enemies rise up against us and seek to destroy us" appears prominently in the Passover Haggadah, and participants in the seder generally say it aloud as one of the main lessons to be learned from the tale of Jewish slavery under the Egyptians (Ophir, 1994).

1977, this percentage fell to 50%, but hope faded quickly and in 1978 the percentage was on the increase again. Another specific fear, fear of terrorism, appears at the top of the list. Between 1968 and 1978, at least 80% indicated worries about terrorism (Stone, 1982). Complementing these beliefs, Israeli responses showed a relatively pessimistic outlook with respect to chances for peace. Between 1967 and 1979, only a minority of Israeli Jews (ranging from 20% to 30%) believed that the Arab countries were ready to talk seriously about peace with Israel. This percentage rose significantly, reaching 80% during the visit of Sadat to Israel, after which it fell again, however, to 40%.

But Israeli Jews have been going through a slow process of "dovization" moderating their view of the Israeli-Arab conflict and its solution at least until the recent violent confrontations with the Palestinians (Bar-Tal & Oren, 2000; Shamir & Shamir, 1993). Arian (1995) found that during the period from 1986 to 1994, the hope for peace had increased and the fear of war decreased in public opinion. In 1986, about 60% to 70% of the Israelis believed that war was probable or very probable, but by 1994 the percentage dropped to 43%. At the same time, in a separate question, peace was perceived as more likely as time went on, reaching 73% of respondents in 1994, whereas in 1986 only 57% perceived a high likelihood of peace. Nevertheless, the Jewish Israeli public remained diffident about Arab intentions. Throughout the 1986–1994 period, as the peace process was gathering momentum, 50% to 75% believed that the ultimate goal of the Arabs was either to conquer Israel or to conquer Israel and kill the Jews (Arian, 1995). A public opinion poll on 28 February 2000 showed that only 37.2% of Israeli Jews believed that the peace process would lead to true peace with the Arab world, and 69% believed that the majority of the Arabs had not reconciled themselves to the existence of Israel and would destroy it if they could. Yaar and Herman (2000) pointed out that this position, which is related to a hawkish orientation, has not gone below 60% since February 1995.

Of special interest for the present thesis are those studies that investigated the effects of fear. In general, the findings indicate a very robust relationship between threat perception and conciliatory positions regarding the solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Arian (1989) found a correlation of –.55 in the responses of the Jewish national sample between beliefs of being alone in a hostile world and readiness to withdraw from the territories occupied in the 1967 war (i.e., a dovish position). He also found a correlation of –.43 between threat perception of Arabs and readiness to withdraw. The latter results were replicated during 1996–1999, with national samples of Israeli Jews showing correlations ranging from –.51 to –.55 (Gordon & Arian, 2000). From an opposite perspective, Arian (1995) reported that a conciliatory position toward peaceful resolution of the conflict is related to a hope for peace and an assessment of the outbreak of war as unlikely.

We recently carried out a number of studies about collective fear and hope at Tel Aviv University (Bar-Tal, Zafran, & Almog, 2000). First, scales assessing collective fear and hope orientations, as well as collective memory regarding

threatening and peaceful events, were constructed. The studies were done with a group of university students who responded to questionnaires. The first study showed that students supporting the peace process differed from students opposing it in collective fear and hope, but not in personal fear and hope. Relative to opponents, supporters of the peace process were lower in collective fear but higher in collective hope. In the second study, the results showed that the collective fear orientation is based on the collective memory of threatening past events. Those students who were more preoccupied with the threatening past events of Jewish Israeli history (e.g., anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Arab aggression) were more prone to hold a collective fear orientation and express more objection to the peace process. In contrast, those students who were more preoccupied with peaceful past events (e.g., Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, peacemaking with Jordan) were more prone to hold collective hope orientation and express more support for the peace process. In a third study, it was found that students opposing the peace process were more likely than those supporting the peace process to think that threatening past events should be taken into consideration in making present policy. An opposite result was found with regard to peaceful past events: Students supporting the peace process were more likely to think that these events should be taken into consideration in making present policy.

Conclusion: Moving From Fear to Hope

In societies that were or are involved in intractable conflict, the dominance of a collective fear orientation is not the exception but the rule. The above analysis of Israeli society provides an example of such dominance. But it is assumed that analyses of the rival Arab societies, or of societies participating in other intractable conflicts (as, for example, in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, or Kashmir), would present a similar picture. The collective emotional orientation of fear is functional during the years of intractable conflict. But when societies involved in intractable conflicts begin a peace process, this emotional orientation becomes a major psychological obstacle to peacemaking. In the Israeli case, with Sadat's historic visit to Israel in 1977, which was followed by a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt signed in 1979, the intractable nature of the Israeli-Arab conflict began to change. The long road toward peace started, encompassing the Madrid Conference of 1991, the Oslo agreement with the PLO of 1993, the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty of 1994, the negotiations with Syria, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 1995, the Hebron, Wye, and Sharm El-Sheikh agreements with the Palestinians, and the establishment of relations with various Arab states in North Africa and the Persian Gulf. But the collective fear orientation serves as a stumbling block to the progress of the peace process. The present eruption of violence evoked deep-seated fears of the Israeli public, causing it to regress considerably in its hope for peace.

Disconnection from the dominance of fear, and commitment to a hope for peace, are necessary if societies want to unfreeze the beliefs that feed the continuation of conflict and to form new beliefs functional to conflict resolution and reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2000b). As Fromm (1968) pointed out, "hope is a decisive element in any attempt to bring about social change in the direction of greater aliveness, awareness and reason" (p. 6).

Developing the collective orientation of hope for peace would imply the formation of new goals of living in peaceful coexistence and cooperation with yesterday's enemy. It also requires selecting new ways to achieve these goals by negotiation, mediation, compromise, concession, and reciprocity.

The psychology of hope involves higher mental processes of vision, imagination, setting goals, and consideration of alternatives—all of which require openness, creativity, and flexibility. These processes have to overcome the automatic and spontaneous emergence of fear. This is a very difficult undertaking, in view of the fact that although during a peace process a conflict loses its intractable nature, it still continues to exist and still has violent reflections such as terror attacks on civilians, military encounters, aggressive rhetoric, agitation, or other hostile acts. The dangers and threats are still very much alive for the Israeli and Palestinian societies, as they are also for the Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Hostile and aggressive acts do not stop at once, but usually decreasingly continue for years and even increase occasionally. In such a reality, when the collective memories of the intractable conflict are salient with other collective memories eliciting fear (as, for example, the Holocaust in the case of the Israeli Jews), the collective fear orientation remains a powerful force in the psyche of these societies. It overflows conscious, rational thinking and brings up beliefs and ideas about past threats and dangers, triggering habituated courses of action. The result is mistrust, reliance on past assumptions and conceptions, and adherence to the ethos of conflict, which feeds the continuation of the conflict as it happens presently in the Israeli society. A hopeful, peaceful future spells uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. Societies involved in intractable conflict, like the Israeli Jewish society, know how to cope with violent conflict and its threats and dangers; some have very successfully adapted to this situation in the past. The hope for peace, in contrast, demands new solutions to new situations of peacemaking, which the collective orientation of fear inhibits from developing.

It should also be remembered that even when an orientation of hope evolves, the foundations of fear are not eliminated. The collective memories associated with fear are well organized in the memory system and are automatically activated when either real or symbolic threats are perceived. Thus, hope orientation not only needs to inhibit the automatic activation of memories associated with fear, but also must replace these memories with new beliefs and behaviors. These new beliefs must be attended, comprehended, accepted, learned, and practiced before they can serve as an alternative to the automatically activated fears. When the signs of conflict still appear, as is the case for now, this is a very challenging mission.

The above conclusions are based on the accumulated knowledge about functioning of fear and hope on the individual level. The present analysis nevertheless applies this knowledge to the functioning of societies on the basis of the assumption that individual society members experience emotion(s) and only by the sharing of this experience among a substantial portion of the society does it become a collective phenomenon.

The analysis suggests that emotions play an important role not only in individual behavior, but also in societal functioning. The evolvement, dominance, dissemination, and functioning of emotional orientation in a society is a necessary direction of study in political psychology. Without such study it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand the dynamics of intractable conflict and the subsequent inhibition of the peace process, if it follows.

Finally, it is important to point out that my analysis is not as deterministic as it may sound. Societies have been seen to peacefully resolve their longstanding conflicts, and the Israeli Jewish society, too, has moved a long way forward on the peace track. The description of this process requires another lengthy analysis. At this point, I'll only say that its success depends on the will and behavior of the other, Arab side, but it also depends on the Israelis' liberation from overreliance on their past experiences, from their collective memories that fixate their fears. The latter requires much courage, maybe even more than is needed to fight wars, which are based on the memories of the past. This is not to say that collective memory should be erased, because a society that forgets its past cannot substantiate its social identity in the present; but it is equally true that a society that constructs its visions mainly on the basis of its past cannot adapt to the changing conditions of the future. As Fromm (1968) pointed out in his book, *The Revolution of Hope*:

> Those whose hope is weak settle down for comfort or for violence; those whose hope is strong see and cherish all signs of new life and are ready every moment to help the birth of that which is ready to be born. (p. 9)

And later in the same book he wrote:

> It is up to the people to shake their warning seriously and to change their ways, or to remain deaf and blind—and to suffer. (p. 18)

It is up to Israeli Jews and Arabs—as well as to other societies involved in peacemaking—to abandon the path of fear, which leads to mistrust and violence, and to move onto the path of hope, which can bring peace to the region, torn for too long by the vicious conflict.

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