

Plumbing the depths of Islamic Jew-hatred

Israel has become a central element in a collective Muslim delusion, argues Neil S. Kressel in 'The Sons of Pigs and Apes' **By Tibor Krausz**

THE BOY looks to be about seven and appears in a YouTube clip recorded from the Egyptian television station Al-Rahman last October. In a high-pitched, monotonous tone of well-coached singsong oratory, he is reciting the words from memory: "Oh Islamic nation, oh all Muslims... martyrdom on the path of Allah is a religious duty incumbent upon you, oh believers. Pray: 'Oh Allah, destroy Israel' – Amen."

The camera cuts to a bearded imam in a white robe as he looks on with a smile of approval. He raises his gaze heavenwards with a gesture of thanks, then compliments the youngster: "You're such a beautiful boy, by Allah." The boy is child preacher Ibrahim Adham. In a subsequent broadcast, in November, he followed up on that theme. "Oh Zionists, we love death for the sake of Allah just as much as you love life for the sake of Satan," he informed viewers.

In another YouTube video, this one recorded from Iqra TV in Saudi Arabia, Basmallah, a plump-cheeked three-and-a-half-year-old girl in a white hijab, obligingly answers a female reporter's questions.

"Are you a Muslim?" the woman asks. "Yes," she responds.

"Basmallah, do you know the Jews?" the

MUSLIM SCHOLARS HAVE OFFERED A VARIETY OF OPINIONS ON WHETHER ALLAH LITERALLY TURNED JEWS INTO MONKEYS AND PIGS

woman asks next. "Yes," she confirms.

"Do you like them?" "No."

"Why don't you like them?" the reporter eggs the girl on, clearly expecting pre-taught answers. "Because they are apes and pigs," Basmallah explains.

"Who said that about them?" "Allah."

"Where did he say it?" "The Koran."

Clearly, for some Muslims it's never too early to start instilling a visceral hatred of Jews in children. And so the pathologies of one generation are transferred onto the next.

And pathologies there are. Saudi Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Al-Sudais, imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, held forth on Jews in a sermon. They are, he informed worshippers, "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements, the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs." Courtesy of the U.S.-based watchdog Middle East Media Research Institute, there are myriad such videos on YouTube of unabashed Muslim Jew-hatred in the Arab media.

In his new book, "The Sons of Pigs and Apes," Neil J. Kressel, who directs the Honors Program in the Social Sciences at William Patterson University in New Jersey, cites similar videos in tackling what he sees as a blind spot – "a conspiracy of silence" – among Western academics, policymakers and journalists about the extent of Muslim anti-Semitism. In Arab societies, he notes, the very words "Jew" and "Zionist" have become generic slurs. "For many [Muslims], Israel has become a central element in a collective obsessional delusion," Kressel writes.

Yet many Western opinion formers, Jews

included, remain willfully blind to the issue, Kressel argues. "Otherwise reliable opponents of bigotry too often duck when confronted with massive evidence of Jew-hatred in Arab and Islamic countries," he notes. "They offer either dismissive interpretations or complex justifications in lieu of plainspoken opposition." Those who don't ignore the subject outright prefer to downplay it, dismiss it as a peripheral cultural phenomenon, or justify it as a righteous response to Israel's maltreatment of the Palestinians.

By implication, if only the "Zionists" had behaved themselves better, Jews everywhere wouldn't bear the brunt of so much hatred among Arabs and Muslims. Kressel, a social psychologist and author of "Bad Faith: The Danger of Religious Extremism," goes out of his way to insist that not all criticism of Israel is ipso facto anti-Semitic. Nonetheless, he dismisses such excuses as generally bunkum.

Rightly so. Don't take my word for it; take that of Egyptian cleric Muhammad Hussein Ya'qub, who minced no words in a televised sermon, now available online, in 2009. "If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not," he explained. "The Jews are infidels not because I say so but because Allah does... They aren't our enemies because they occupy Palestine; they would be our enemies even if they had not occupied anything."

The roots of Islamic anti-Jewish sentiments, Kressel reminds us, go much deeper than the Israel-Palestinian conflict, which has undoubtedly helped bring them to the fore. He dismisses the "rosy past scenario" of oft-cited historical Muslim tolerance towards Jews as





The Koran is ambivalent about Jews; an Egyptian holds a Koran during a rally in Cairo

largely fictional.

The Koran and the *hadiths* – the deeds and sayings of Mohammed – are rather ambivalent about Jews. At times Islam’s holy book urges respect and tolerance towards them; at other times it goes on and on, verse after verse, about their bloodlust, hypocrisy and perfidy for willfully and ungratefully perverting God’s instructions to humanity through their lies and treachery. For their intransigence, Allah has cursed Jews and turned them, the Koran tells us repeatedly, into “apes and pigs.”

MOHAMMED HIMSELF set an ominous precedent for dealing with Jews. After failing to win them over for his cause, he expelled two of the three Jewish tribes of Medina and massacred all the males of the third, enslaving their wives and children in the process. According to a Muslim tradition, a Jewish woman poisoned the prophet in revenge (just as those perfidious “Zionists” allegedly poisoned Yasser Arafat), thereby earning Jews the enduring enmity of true believers.

As an influential *hadith* has it, the Day of Judgment will not come until Muslims fight the Jews and kill them.

Leavening the old sources are the writings of modern Islamic radicals such as Sayyid Qutb and Hassan al-Banna (founder of the Muslim Brotherhood), virulent anti-Semites both. And so across the Islamic world imams routinely decry Jews for their evil ways, often citing Koranic passages as proof. Kressel reels off a series of odious diatribes by Muslim spiritual leaders and “intellectuals” in an endless merry-go-round of scripture-inspired bigotry.

Down through the ages, Kressel explains in an engrossing passage, Muslim scholars have offered a variety of opinions on whether Allah literally turned Jews into monkeys and pigs. More recently, in 2009, Sheikh Ahmad Ali Othman, a high-ranking official at the Egyptian Ministry of Religious Endowments, explained that the reason Muslims were forbidden from eating pork is that “the pigs living today are descended from those Jews

[whom Allah turned into swine].”

Sheikh Ali Abu Al-Hassan, head of the Al-Azhar University Fatwa Committee in Cairo, rebuffed Othman’s argument, reasoning that Allah turned only the disobedient followers of Moses into apes and pigs, but “they died and did not multiply.” Presumably, that’s why we won’t find pigs these days wearing kippot and putting on *tefillin*.

Other Muslim scholars have offered learned views about whether Jews were really apes. The Jews, some noted, were behind Darwin’s theory of evolution to make it sound like their apish origins applied to the entire human species. “Their ancestors may have been apes,” a Yemeni cleric Abd Al-Majid Al-Zindani asserted on Hamas’s Al-Aqsa channel. “But ours were human beings [created by Allah].”

One could laugh off such rhapsodies of nonsense as the misguided musings of benighted souls, but pervasive Islamic Jew-hatred has real-life consequences. By relentlessly dehumanizing Jews, Islamists



Egyptian child preacher Ibrahim Adham promotes martyrdom

seek to legitimize their murder as justified owing to Jews' inherently atavistic and animalistic nature. Thus, killing Jews becomes both a religious duty and a moral imperative.

And so we end up with people like Algerian-French Muslim Mohammed Merah, who methodically assassinated four people, three of them young children, at a Jewish school in Toulouse, in March last year. Members of

KILLING JEWS BECOMES BOTH A RELIGIOUS DUTY AND A MORAL IMPERATIVE

the local Muslim community openly rallied in support of him as random attacks against French Jews intensified across the country.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calls for the eradication of Israel any chance he gets. Not to be outdone, Egypt's current president Mohammed Morsi, a presumed "moderate," echoed that sentiment in a televised address in 2010, decrying all negotiations with the evil

Zionists, "these blood-suckers, warmongers [and] descendants of apes and pigs" who must be driven off "the entire land of Palestine." In a later speech, Morsi reminded Muslims "not forget to nurse our children and grandchildren on hatred towards those Zionists and Jews."

"Dehumanization plays a key role in the social psychology of genocide," Kressel notes apropos such pronouncements. "It is much more effective when it can plausibly be attributed to an ancient and sacred source, held by believers to be infallible." Add to that a potent paranoia about a Jewish world conspiracy, and what you have is a volatile mix of loathing and fear. The fraudulent "Protocols of the Elder of Zion" and Hitler's "Mein Kampf" are both perennial bestsellers from Egypt to Pakistan. The "Protocols" is often cited as proof of Jews' bottomless mendacity, not least in the Hamas Charter, and has been turned into a hugely popular 41-part television series. Functional illiteracy is rampant across the Middle East, and any cockamamie conspiracy theory about Jews finds fertile ground in local communities.

Hardly a day goes by without yet another libel, whether outrageous or inane, usually

both. In a sermon broadcast on Egypt's Tahrir TV last November, Muslim cleric Abd Al-Fattah Abu Zayd insisted that those "abominable elders of Zion" have set out to "corrupt the nation of Mohammed" by inundating the Internet with porn.

In 2007, meanwhile, Iran's intelligence services "arrested" 14 squirrels for spying for the Zionist Entity. The rodents joined several vultures, which had been tagged by Israeli conservationists for monitoring, that alert officials from Turkey to Sudan have intercepted as alleged Zionist spies.

Pathetic? Certainly. We need to remember, though, that if you believe you go straight to paradise, where 72 virgins await, for murdering random Jews in suicide attacks, it's not a big leap to believe that Jews can control various creatures to visit harm on Muslims. Especially, since they're themselves sons of apes and pigs.

Confronted with such asinine views, many Westerners are incredulous: How could anyone believe such baloney? But people's beliefs, however irrational, inform their views of the world and influence their actions. Hate needs no logical basis; in fact, the more

irrational hatred is, the more implacable it can become. The long centuries of pogroms and massacres of Jews based on claims they poisoned wells and slaughtered Christian babies for their rituals taught us that.

Troublingly, Muslim demagogues have embraced both medieval Christian and modern racist anti-Jewish calumnies. Many Arab cartoonists have adopted Nazi anti-Semitic imagery. In a Middle Eastern context, we should point out, such images can result in instances of unintended hilarity: Witness those caricatures of evil Jews with their hooked noses in the newspapers of Arab countries where petite little schnozzles aren't exactly the genetic norm.

But irony is not the bigots' strong suit. Neither are logic and common sense. Like conspiracy theorists in general, Muslim Jew-bashers routinely entertain wholly contradictory ideas. Thus, they deny the Holocaust ever happened, yet lionize Hitler for it. They celebrate Osama bin Laden for sticking it to Americans, while they simultaneously insist that 9/11 was a Zionist plot.

HERE'S THE conundrum: In the topsy-turvy world of political correctness, moral relativism and political expediency, combating Muslim anti-Semitism can be a Sisyphean undertaking. By bringing attention to instances of Muslim Jew-hatred, you risk being labeled a racist or an "Islamophobe" simply for criticizing Muslims for some of their views. By pointing at a bigot, you become a bigot yourself.

But "fear of venomous hatred," Kressel stresses, "is not a form of bigotry." Watchdogs like Human Rights Watch, he says, ignore the genocidal rants of Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran's leaders, even as they reflexively condemn Israel at the slightest excuse. Then there's the UN's Human Rights Council, which seems to exist for the sole purpose of denouncing the Jewish state. Muslim anti-Semitism? The Council won't hear of it. It censured a Jewish delegate just for bringing up the subject. The UN-sponsored anti-racist conferences Durban I and II, in 2001 and 2009, turned into notorious hate-fests against Israel; the latter featured Ahmadinejad as a keynote speaker.

Meanwhile, a global Pew poll last year found that only 2 percent of Egyptians, Jordanians and Lebanese had favorable opinions of Jews. Even as far afield as Pakistan, the pollsters could barely find Muslims (a mere 2 percent) who said they liked Jews.

Here and there a few lone voices across the

Arab world call for reason and moderation. Abdulateef Al-Mulhim, a retired Saudi Navy commodore, wrote an op-ed last October in the country's English-language daily Arab News. Israel wasn't the real enemy of Arab nations, Al-Mulhim insisted; it was corruption, sectarian strife, oppression, and

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lack of education. From Syria to Iraq, Arabs have inflicted far more harm on one another than Israel has ever done, he argued. "It is time to stop the hatred and wars and start to create better living conditions for future Arab generations," Al-Mulhim wrote.

Sadly, if they aren't condemned outright, such welcome voices (Kressel himself cites others) are largely drowned out in the hubbub of loudmouth bigots and government-sponsored anti-Zionist propaganda.

In a sense, Jew-hatred performs an important psychological function for Muslims. It serves as a point of agreement for Shias and Sunnis, Sufis and Salafis, who often don't see eye to eye about much else – and continue to savagely massacre each other. The Palestinian cause has become a convenient rallying cry for global Muslim unity. Bernard Lewis, an eminent scholar of Islam, has called state-sanctioned opposition to Israel in oppressive Muslim regimes a "licensed grievance," an approved mode of collective venting.

Kressel agrees. "Antisemitism in the Muslim world," he writes, "is a form of political manipulation that rests on a psychological foundation." Jews, the author notes, were once the subjects of Muslim whim, but are now far more advanced and prosperous.

The success of Israel, a tiny country run by a formerly despised or at best tolerated people, has been a massive blow to collective Muslim self-esteem. The flourishing of Jews on previously Muslim-ruled land seems to negate the eternal superiority of Islam, as ordained by Allah and his prophet. And so Israel is an insufferable provocation both religiously and politically. Muslim anti-Semites, Kressel argues, are afflicted with "cognitive dissonance," a conflict of reality with their cherished and deeply held beliefs.

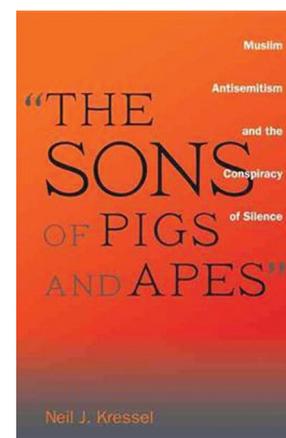
That's why peace in the Middle East has been so elusive. Reconciling with the existence of the Jewish state, the author

posits, "might extract a psychological, and perhaps theological, cost that would be too great to bear." In other words, there has been no peace in the Middle East not so much because Israel's policies have antagonized Muslims, but because thanks to their already entrenched antagonism many Muslims have been unable to reconcile themselves to the existence of Israel in the first place.

The situation is bleak. So what's to be done? For starters, we could stop pretending the problem doesn't exist or continuing to downplay it. In the end, Muslim Jew-hatred is as much a threat to Muslims themselves as to Jews: This pathological and murderous obsession helps mire Muslim communities in a perpetual state of ignorance, obscurantism, resentment and self-pity by blinding people to the failures of their own societies.

Many Muslims with entrenched anti-Jewish views aren't inherently intolerant; they simply don't know better, having been marinated all their lives in an atmosphere of casual anti-Semitism. We don't do them any favors by pretending there is nothing wrong with their views.

Kressel, an otherwise level-headed observer, warns of plenty more bloodshed if Islamic Jew-hatred is allowed to fester. He calls on the UN, human rights groups and Western progressives to break their "conspiracy of silence" and adopt a policy of "zero tolerance" in the face of widespread bigotry across Muslim lands. That's a laudable proposal. But I won't be holding my breath. ■



**"The Sons of Pigs and Apes"
Muslim Anti-Semitism and
the Conspiracy of Silence**

By Neil J. Kressel
Potomac Books
282 pages; \$29.95