

Chapter 3

Paḥad: Fear as Corporeal Politics

Fear in Israel was elusive but palpable, inexplicable but shared. Israeli Jews commonly assumed that Palestinians caused fear, that Israelis felt fear, and that suicide bombings reinvigorated the circulation of fear. People spoke about fear without a referent, expecting the listener to already comprehend their anxiety about Palestinians and their fear of bombings. The second intifada was not the first time that fear was an omnipresent trope that saturated political rhetoric, steered public opinion, and seemed to unite Israeli Jews through shared senses of physical and national threat. But fear's most recent incarnation was particularly pervasive. Israeli ideas about fear reinforced long-standing narratives of Jewish suffering, but fear also came to life as a tangible entity that flowed through public space, so seemingly conspicuous and ubiquitous that observers could apprehend it and depict it. Israeli Jews experienced Jerusalem, in particular, as a place of routinized fear where civilians homogeneously and consistently assimilated national fear. Government ministers formulated military operations as responses to national fear as often as television comedians mocked the country's anxieties. Fear was itself an object of journalistic reporting. Following the Palestinian bombing of a Jerusalem city bus en route to Hebrew University, a Jerusalem newspaper reported: "Look at how people internalize feelings of fear, and what relief you see on their faces when they get off the buses" (*Kol Ha-Ir* 2004). Fear was seen as an enveloping entity that came from outside individuals and encased them as bodies and as a collective.

Israeli Jews experienced fear as a pervasive cultural force, but fear was a more grave way of life for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. Israeli military checkpoints instilled in Palestinians deep uncertainty about their ability to move and endure, and government curfews and the indeterminacy of Palestinians' legal status induced constant insecurity (Kelly 2006a: 106).¹ As genuinely afraid as Israeli Jews were of Palestinian bombings, laying claim to fear by depicting Israel as a fearful society and a dangerous setting also served as a veiled way of legitimizing the value and virtue of Israeli daily life as a political struggle. Fear was one of the masks (Ben-Ari 1989) Israelis wore to cope with the unease of their implication in the policing of Palestinians, to deal with unspoken guilt about Israel as an occupying power while still seeing themselves as members of a democratic society. Expressing fear was a means to diffuse discomfort about Israeli occupation without overtly acknowledging either the violence or their own moral quandary.

In recent years, much has been written about the ways fear, whether of natural disaster, environmental catastrophe, crime, foreigners, or terrorism, pervades social life and political agendas.² Scholarship on fear often depicts fear as a self-generating phenomenon with a force of its own. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, writes that "fear becomes self-propelling and self-intensifying; it acquires its own momentum and developmental logic and needs little attention and hardly any additional input to spread and grow—unstoppably" (2006: 132). Bauman's argument productively probes the social construction and cultural effects of popular anxieties, but the depiction of fear as self-propelling can tend to conceal the agency and political strategy behind fear as well as the daily work that goes into fear's perpetuation. Discourses of fear circulate and persist because they enter the crevices of people's daily lives and bodies and because emotion is transvalued to have political significance. This chapter first studies the manifestations of a discourse of fear in Israel that circulated in social life and assumed tangible and corporeal form in the public domain. This chapter then suggests that everyday engagement with fear in Israel did not simply reiterate national discourses. Even when political subjectivities were conditioned by Israeli notions of fear, and even when people consciously rallied fear to bind themselves to the state and nation, they also experienced fear in personal ways by ascribing it to particular spaces, places, and body parts. People wore fear on their bodies and in their gestures, and this very embodiment of a discourse of fear gave the public life of fear in Israel particular power and momentum.³ The meanings Israelis ascribed to fear and the ways in which they attached it to their bodies were part and parcel of how they

defined themselves as Israelis and commented on Israel's relationship with Palestinians.

Fear Embraced and Denied

One Sunday morning in December 2003, I rode along with Merav Bentsur in her white Peugeot while she showed me apartments in the Jerusalem residential neighborhoods of Rehavia, Baka, and the German Colony. Merav was a real-estate agent and I was posing as an interested client in the hope that her tour of local rentals would offer me insight into how Israelis represent and market urban space. Merav treated me like a foreigner who needed reassurance. The Jerusalem neighborhoods we traversed were friendly and tranquil, she assured me. "Look, children as young as six walk by themselves to the corner market. People often leave their apartment doors unlocked." People feel safe and at home here. Soon, our conversation turned, as it often did during my fieldwork, to the reason I was in Israel and to the topic of my research. Upon offering Merav a précis of my interest in security, she quickly substituted a saleswoman's white lies for more candid and personal revelations: "I grew up all my life in Jerusalem, in the city, but for the last three years, or four already, I'm afraid. My friends and I, we're afraid. No matter what, we're afraid."

Merav, in her early forties, was born in Jerusalem and now lived with her husband and two children in Tzur Hadassah, an Israeli suburb fifteen minutes west of Jerusalem. She told me about the stress of driving on "bypass roads" from her real estate office in Jerusalem to her home,⁴ and impressed on me the magnitude of her fear in the city. "Let's say we're sitting in a coffee shop at night, you think: look it's so busy here, and it's crowded, and so easy to put a bomb here, with the windows, and you sit there and you're afraid. I once took a bus to Haifa and for two hours, I was petrified." Merav's anxieties filled the small space of her car. When she was offered the opportunity to portray her experience to an attentive foreigner, Merav's fear swiftly came to the fore. Her perspective had shifted, but Merav was still, in effect, making a promotion: she offered a rationalization of fear couched in patriotism. "Look, I love this country," she said. "I won't leave this country. But there's fear. I can't say it's comfortable living here."

Not all Israelis delved into the intensity of their fear. Some pointedly refused to do so, although this, in its own way, became a conversation precisely about fear. Several weeks before my drive with Merav, I had dinner in the Katamon apartment of Esther Shenhav, a physical therapist in her mid-sixties, and her husband Shimon, a retired linguist in his mid-

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seventies. After a meal of fish and salad, as we stood to stack dishes and clear the table, Shimon spoke to me, firmly, as if offering his conclusive perspective on my subject of study. "I can say one thing. We realize that there is always danger, but that doesn't mean we live with fear. I know that the [Israeli] newspapers claim some children have constant fear and so on. Not us. We know we have to be careful, and we know that it is always dangerous, but that's it. That is life." Speaking in the third person plural (it was not clear whether his proclamation was made on behalf of all Israelis or if he spoke just for himself and his wife, who in fact later divulged her own fears), Shimon refuted the sensationalist fears swelling in the Israeli media and underscored his belief in perseverance despite adversity. He looked down on those who wallow in fear even as he spoke for them, suggesting that fear is something one must recognize and then shake off. The intensity and confidence of his refutation of fear appeared to be an attempt to do this very shaking off.

As we moved to the living room for tea, Shimon turned to me and added, "I have no fears here [in Israel], only anger," referring to his enmity toward Palestinians. "Perhaps it is because I know that my people fight for me," he said, asserting his confidence in the IDF and its soldiers. Shimon, born in Czechoslovakia, survived the Holocaust, immigrated to Israel by himself in the 1950s, and served in the IDF. His grandsons were currently serving in the army. The more Shimon attempted to distance himself from fear, the more I sensed his fixation on it. It was not so much his anxiety about Palestinians or bombings as his concern that any expression of fear would signal—to me the researcher or perhaps to Palestinians—that the nation was weak.

I was well aware that my presence as a foreigner and an anthropologist may have incited Merav and Shimon to embellish their emotive state. Ethnographers' presence can always confound informants' emotion, and fear, particularly in contexts of conflict, is no exception. Kay Warren, studying Mayas after years of war and state repression in Guatemala, interrogated the effect of the anthropologist in contexts of political violence: "Does our presence as outsiders—no matter how familiar—cause people to shift to a politically ambiguous language or to exaggerate uncertainty?" (1998: 111). Avram Bornstein, studying Palestinian prisoners incarcerated by Israel during the first intifada, cautions against the power of ethnographic empathy when imagined international scrutiny is at play (2001: 550). In my presence, both Merav and Shimon indeed appeared to amplify their unease, perhaps imagining me as an embodiment of international scrutiny, aware that personal narratives of fear and its refutation would do a certain kind of political work. Shimon presented himself as he hoped I might perceive of the entire nation: stoic and indomitable. Merav depicted Israeli life as a noble struggle by affirming her devotion

to Israel while depicting the obstacles of everyday life. By invoking fear, they designated an enemy, defined themselves in opposition to threatening others, and reinforced a narrative of Jewish Israeli suffering. Merav and Shimon harnessed fear to bind themselves to the state.

Despite Merav and Shimon's rather different perspectives on fear, they evinced comparable comfort in talking about it. Speaking easily and succinctly, they both displayed a certain connoisseurship of fear; they were familiar with the way fear moved through their minds and through public space. They seemed to know what fear was and what it meant, where it came from, and who had it. Once invoked, fear was already known. The pervasive fear that Linda Green describes in her study of Mayan Indian women's lives amid the totalizing violence of revolution was "invisible, indeterminate, and silent," hard to detect, and veiled (1999: 55). Fear in Israel, by contrast, appeared to be known in multiplying, concrete, and public ways. It was patent and observable, treated as a self-evident, circulating object. The intense coherence of Merav and Shimon's trope-like statements about fear was not a product of their sensitivity to emotion but a quality of the Israeli discourse itself. Israelis readily identified fear, easily invoked it, and readily situated themselves in relation to it, as if fear were a revered national treasure. The next two sections outline the antecedents and multiple guises of the contemporary Israeli discourse of fear.

The Reiteration of Fear

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, may have been paraphrasing Plato when, during his second term in office, he defined courage as "the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared," but his veneration of fear also expressed a sentiment at the core of Israeli national belief: that fear and senses of impending threat were formative experiences for the Jewish people and catalysts for the creation of a Jewish state; that fear is dynamic rather than destructive. Even before Israel became a state, Jewish leaders invoked historical events, from biblical stories of exile to the siege at Masada, to reinforce a collective memory of fear and suffering and to give meaning to new generations' experiences of victimhood.⁵ The Holocaust, in particular, has served as a trope to express fear at the core of Jewish existence. Idith Zertal (2005) contends that national narratives conceptualized every war in Israel, from 1948 through the intifada, in terms of the Holocaust, using Hitler's extermination of the Jews as rallying points for military action and as metaphors for opposing states. The Holocaust stood as a prime symbol for Israeli vulnerability and isolation, a "moral justification," in Ronit Lentin's critique, "for the

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occupation and its excesses" that persists despite the strength of Israeli military power (2000: 145). As Avi Shlaim argues, as much as the Holocaust spurred Israeli Jews to seek safety and security, it also enabled them to ignore the fear they instilled in Palestinians and to overlook the magnitude of Palestinian suffering (2000: 423).

Anthropologists Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban (1996) use the term *entextualization* to describe how particular discourses remain continuously emblematic of a culture, even when they are only periodically performed, by being repeated and re-embedded. The Holocaust is so embedded in Israeli culture that present fear becomes, not like the past, but experienced *as* the past. During the second intifada, accounts of Holocaust suffering were used to explain, stand for, and foretell Palestinian violence.⁶ In April 2005, between the Jewish holiday of Passover and the national celebration of Israel Independence Day, the nonprofit organization Mishpaḥa Eḥat (One Family), which assists "victims of terrorism in Israel," ran a pop-up ad on the Web site of the newspaper *Ha'aretz*. The advertisement conjured an ongoing cycle of Jewish suffering by juxtaposing iconic images of Passover, the Holocaust, and the current intifada. With the words "In every generation" the pop-up began by flashing a refrain of the Passover text. "They rise against us. To annihilate us." The ad referenced the oppressions of Jews by Pharaoh in Egypt, but the accompanying photo was of the Auschwitz concentration camp. In the final screens, a flash of images juxtaposed the shell of a Jerusalem bus destroyed in a suicide bombing with an Israeli flag. Equating the intifada with the Holocaust and blurring distinctions between Ancient Egyptians, Nazis, and Palestinians, the ad transposed and re-embedded multiple generations of fear. It aimed to make communal memories of past Jewish suffering relevant to Israelis in the present by fashioning the present as a reincarnation of a history of threat. When fear is not only a reaction to danger or consequence of conflict but the connective tissue of a society's memory, fear itself becomes a domain of political conflict.

A Discourse of Fear

Although belief in the tenuousness of Israeli existence conditioned Israeli depictions of looming danger during the second intifada, the discourse of fear also portrayed the contemporary Palestinian "threat" as unprecedented. There were three particularly distinctive expressions of this discourse. "Fear of terror" was constantly reified as a component of daily life, "Palestinian threat" and "security threat" were invoked to incite civilian fear, and "existential fear" encapsulated anxieties about the viability and longevity of a Jewish state. I elaborate upon these below.

The most common colloquial expression of fear during the second intifada was the phrase “fear of terror” (*pahad mi-terror*). This referred specifically to people’s fears of Palestinian suicide bombings, but it also came to refer to a condition that plagued Israelis. School trips were cancelled because of “fear of terror” and festivals were postponed or moved indoors because of “fear of terror”. The notion of “fear of terror” was so familiar that it was considered to be quantifiable. In October 2000, Haifa University’s National Security Studies Center launched the Index of National Resilience to monitor, in the words of the center, the ability of the Israeli population to cope with conflict. Notions of threat and of fear comprised the basic language of its surveys and also conditioned its interpretive logic. One poll conducted in April 2004 collected data on “fear of terror” by asking respondents to gauge their fear by responding to four descriptions of terror: “terror that will shake the foundations of the political system”; “terror that will harm me or my family”; “terror is a strategic threat to Israel’s national security”; and “terror disrupts daily life in Israel.” Results indicated that Israelis’ level of fear was 75 percent overall, similar to the 80 percent at the start of the intifada in October 2000. The Index of National Resilience, whose very name seemed to forecast its research findings, reported that chronic civilian fear coexisted with a continued high level of trust in state institutions. It concluded that the nation, undeterred by Palestinian violence, is decidedly resilient, which referred to citizens’ commitment to the state despite fear (Rudge 2004). Here, the presence of fear was a crucial factor in corroborating Israelis’ patriotism. “Fear of terror” was a trope of political belief, a quantifiable political category through which citizens, consciously or not, were thought to express their commitment to the state. The very enunciation of fear was thought to make claims and do political work.

When Israel’s political leaders recognized the country’s “fear of terror,” they were more likely to acknowledge its incisiveness rather than to placate it, more likely to underscore anxiety about Palestinian suicide bombings than to offer comfort. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, addressing the Knesset in August 2002, commended all Israelis “who in spite of the worries and understandable fear, still continue our lives.” Sharon’s statement, like Shimon’s stoic stance described earlier, exemplified a classic tension in national imagination between a narrative of persecution and the post-Holocaust ethic that “never again” shall Jews be powerless or defeated. The result was a positive configuration of fear, as in Ben-Gurion’s adage decades earlier. Sharon appeared to establish his power as protector not by promising to ameliorate violence but by sympathizing with Israelis’ fears. It was as if by recognizing fear, rather than eradicating it, the prime minister attested to his political authority. Acknowledging the nation’s fear did political work. In recognizing civilian trepidation he

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The Israeli discourse of fear treated "threat" not as an indication or a warning of possible danger but as an already extant menace. Politicians persistently invoked a range of looming political threats in addition to Palestinian terror, including the growing Arab birthrate (Morris 2004), missile attacks from Syria, and Iran's development of nuclear weapons. In 2003 Israel declared the elimination of any "Iranian nuclear threat" a top national priority. Iran denied Israel's right to exist, supported Hezbollah, and severed diplomatic and commercial ties to the country, but Israel saw Iran's nuclear potential as most menacing.⁷ Iran's nuclear weapons program was not as advanced as Israel had feared, but in any case, in the early years of the second intifada it was not so much concern with nuclear capacity as less specific and all-encompassing "security threat" and "threat of terror" that contributed to public perceptions of Israel's vulnerability.⁸ The Israeli media tended to use "Palestinian threat" and "security threat" interchangeably, speaking of "threat" without delineating the nature of that threat. For example, in an editorial in July 2005, Ari Shavit (2005) described Israel as "under threat" and "a threatened nation," as he argued that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was generated by a Palestinian threat to Israel and not by Israeli occupation, and, furthermore, that Israelis accept the occupation because of their fears of threat and not because of any disregard for Palestinian fate. When Shavit spoke about "the threat," he presumed without specification that Palestinians are the referent source of danger.⁹ Appeals such as this made "threat" appear not only ubiquitous but also inexorable, as if unprovoked threat was the landscape in which Israelis lived.

National narratives often framed threat to the state as "existential threats" to Jewish nationalism, and during the second intifada talk of "existential threat" and "existential fear" were especially pervasive. Anthropologist Don Handelman characterized existential fear as "the greatest of ongoing, pervasive fears among Israeli Jews—the terror that the State could cave in upon itself, either because of threat from without or because of weakness from within, or one leading to the other" (2004: 7). Poet Eliaz Cohen, who considers himself a religious Zionist, described his recently published book of poetry as an exploration of how "the current events [of the second intifada] have infused the individual Israeli Jew with existential terror at a level never experienced before" (Halkin 2004).¹⁰ Trepidation about the demise of the Jewish state was not a trait only of the Right. Novelist David Grossman, who is a member of Israel's Leftist political party Meretz, asserted in an interview that the first two years of the second intifada created an Israeli population

forever imagining their state's failure: "I think that everyone who lives here also lives the alternative that maybe Israel will cease to be. That's our nightmare. . . . What has happened here in the past two years is that suddenly the possibility that Israel will no longer exist has become concrete" (Shavit 2003).

Cohen and Grossman depicted fear of the demise of a Jewish body politic as a dread both visceral and instinctive, as a "nightmare" that "infused" individuals. This discourse of existential fear blurred the political and the emotional as well as the self and the state. Likewise in my conversation with the Jerusalem real estate agent, Merav extended her discussion of personal fear into a questioning of Israel's longevity: "I don't see Israel continuing for very long. The economic situation is getting worse, and the pressure that Israelis are under—it's crazy. It's crazy. You can't live like that for long." Merav superimposed fear for the state onto fear for herself; she transposed state survival onto personal survival. The discourse of existential fear bound concern for the state with unconscious anxiety and embodied angst in ways that made fear appear beyond politics, rather than deeply bound with an Israeli ethos of power and perseverance.

In some ways, fear in Israel worked in the way anthropologists writing in the 1980s described the social construction of emotion. They argued that affect is public and relational, that emotions are always "*our* emotions" (Lutz 1988: 71), "*in* and *about* social life" (Abu-Lughod and Lutz 1990: 11).¹¹ They wrote against an understanding of emotion as personal, subjective, selfish, or unknowable and instead treated emotion as communal and public, accessible and discernible. Setting this constructionist approach to the emotions apart from psychoanalytic approaches and denying an unconscious basis of emotions, their interests lay in the ways emotion words were reactions to and themselves social actions. In the mid-1990s, anthropologists began to suggest that this discursive approach to the emotions explained away rather than accounted for experience. They argued that studying emotion as culturally constructed obscures the inner states of affect and the ways emotion is expressive of the self and highlighted the unconscious life and the embodied nature of feeling. Emotions, according to John Leavitt, are "experiences learned and expressed in the body in social interaction" (1996: 526).¹² Indeed, fear in Israel was not only a function of discourse, public and political, but also had an interior life, felt in people's bodies. But this is not to say that fear was simply concurrently discursive and embodied. There were times when Israelis did not so easily tap into the public discourse of fear, times when they found it hard or inappropriate to describe their fear in ways that cleanly reiterate national narratives. In these cases, as we will see, recourse to relationships and to bodily feelings became alternate

the same relentless fears and with a detached research interest in the subject.

Women were more likely to tell me about their fears, in part the result of the more intimate relations I naturally developed with women during my fieldwork and in part because of the lingering gendered typecast of Israeli men as stoic. On the one hand, the culture of machismo in Israel (Almog 2000) has been on the wane for decades and, as Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari explain, Israeli society became more open to psychological language and therapeutic perspectives after 1973 as "combat reactions" became medicalized by the IDF (Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2010).¹³ On the other hand, as Noa Shahar once explained to me as we sat on her front stoop, Israelis still tended to see fear during the second intifada as a gendered phenomenon. "Men talk about fear less," Noa told me, "because that's how men are educated, to talk about it less, to express their feelings less. Even nowadays, although we encourage them to express emotion, they still talk less about it." Her assessment commonly played out in other women's comparisons of their own emotions to their husbands'. The Maimons' oldest daughter said that she is "very, very aware of my fear, and engage in it," while her husband "is afraid, but he succeeds in putting it aside."

People often expressed anxieties about bombings through stories of parental concern.¹⁴ One woman, a resident of a Tel Aviv suburb and the mother of two grown children, told me, "I am not afraid for myself, but when my daughter wants to meet with friends, I make sure she doesn't sit in a café that is on the sidewalk of a main street. I always check where they are going, and I interfere." She experienced parenthood as something that sanctioned fear and made expressions of fear more socially acceptable. This was one contemporary expression of the ways the nation has long enlisted Israeli women's bodies, or emotions, to serve the needs of the national body. Susan Kahn (2000), for example, describes how Israeli Jewish women's use of state reproductive initiatives implicates Holocaust discourses and Arab-Israeli demographic disputes.¹⁵ Expressions of fear were also, to some extent, a way that mothers and, to a lesser extent, fathers bound themselves to the nation at this time.

When a culture of security is itself fueled by a trenchant belief that the nation is under threat, it is a challenge to write about Israelis' desires for protection and safety without reifying their fears of Palestinians and without perpetuating a discourse of Israeli victimhood. Objects of anxiety and foci of fortification need to be studied obliquely, without naming the emotions under scrutiny, reifying people's imaginaries of danger, or sanctioning their perceptions of threat. In the three individuals' expressions of fear that I describe below, fear emerges gradually out of conversations about other aspects of life and work. Despite streamlined

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narratives and political discourses of fear in Israel, in comfortable set- tings, in the context of long-term relationships, people narrated their experiences of fear in ways that were, if not divorced from discourses in the public domain, then not fully of them. Without full recourse to po- litical rhetoric, their fear was embodied: a set of dispositions to activity, nonlinguistic ways of knowing and being. The emotion hovered between the corporeal and the discursive, not yet fully converted into or infused with national narratives of fear.

In Arad, I met with an urban planner to talk about recent building projects in the city. Roni Gavish was in her mid-thirties and had lived her entire life in Arad, where she had a large extended family. A discus- sion about Arad's distance from Jerusalem caused our conversation to digress, and Roni began to talk about how her unease had swelled since the beginning of the second intifada, which coincided with the birth of her first child. "There is fear (*paḥad*)," she said, speaking of her own emotion. She continued to speak, using different synonyms for fear to describe her emotion: "There is fear (*ḥashash*). Look, I have little girls. I used to go through East Jerusalem to the Western Wall or to hike freely. But, now, my daughters still have not been to Jerusalem. There is anxiety (*ḥarada*), and so I do not like to go to malls with them. It's a matter of safety." For Roni, fear was temporal as well as spatial. She distinguished between a time when she used to hike and travel to East Jerusalem or the Old City without restraint and the "now" in which she travels to malls or Jerusalem cautiously or not at all.

Roni used different words for fear to describe what seemed to be the same phenomenon and the same word for "fear" in different contexts, but the seeming interchangeability of the terms indicates less their equiv- alence than their nuanced semantic difference. The first term Roni used, *paḥad*, is akin to the English "fear" not just in terms of its connotations of apprehension and insecurity but also in terms of the frequency of use and its occurrence in noun, verb, and adjective forms: fear (*paḥad*), to fear (*lefahed*), afraid (*mefahed*), frightening (*mashid*). *Paḥad*, as opposed to *bitaḥon* (meaning security in a national or personal sense, or confi- dence), expresses both a tense anticipation of physical harm and, more abstractly, a sense that order and stability are being threatened. "There is fear (*ḥashash*)," Roni also said. The word *ḥashash*, more so than other fear-related words, is most likely to be translated "anxiety." In biblical He- brew, the word *ḥashash* means simply to feel a sensation or feeling or the capacity of an individual to feel. In its contemporary usage, *ḥashash* tends to refer to private, personal affect rather than to social or political senses of threat. Roni also expressed her experience of *ḥarada*, a word derived from the biblical root *h-r-d*, referring to emotive movement such as trem- bling and shaking in the face of God. The modern term *ḥarada* generally

conveys a fear of greater magnitude, but it can also express a particularly embodied fear.¹⁶ In daily secular conversation, Israelis tended to shift as Roni did from one term for fear to the other, each expressing different facets—physical, intellectual, communal—of this emotion. This linguistic shifting was a manifestation of the simultaneity of different modes of fear in Israel, sometimes discursive and other times affective, private and public, personal and political.

In March 2004, Naomi Bergmann and I were sitting in the kitchen of her home in Arad, talking about the vacation time she has more of now that her sons are grown. She would love to visit the Czech Republic and Argentina, she said, and she had noticed some recent package travel deals on the Internet. After several moments of travel reverie, Naomi cut herself off: her fear of bombings, she acknowledged, has deterred her from traveling both within the country and abroad. She said: “I look in the newspaper, I say, ‘Oh great, there’s a nice place to travel to,’ or ‘There’s a good deal!’ But you always have here, here, the fear (*ha-ḥashash*).” As she spoke, she poked her index finger into different points on her forehead. She explained further: “It’s all fear about a bombing (*ḥashash mi-pigu’a*). On the one hand, I am happy that I have many opportunities to travel. But every time we prepare to travel, I have—I need Arieh [her husband] to calm me down. Usually, it is enough for me to hear him say, ‘It’s okay, nothing will happen.’ But my worry (*ha-dē’aga etsli*) is simply—well, it is as if you have your skin, and then your clothes, and then there is another something. It’s another layer we are wearing. The fear is just there. It is like there is another layer of skin.” Naomi situated fear on her body in a number of ways, first pointing to spots on her forehead as places where she both locates and feels fear and then depicting her worry about bombings as an outer “layer of skin” that encases her flesh and presses in upon her. In experiencing fear as a layer of skin, Naomi sensed fear as a mediator between her body and the world. Constricting her body such that it became part of it, fear was a mode in which Naomi related through her body to the world. Far from an abstract concept, Naomi’s fear was a physical and an intersubjective experience—a way of “comporting oneself towards objects and others” (Crossley 2001: 85)—as she depended on her husband Arieh to soothe her worries.

For Shlomit Maimon, fear was similarly somatic and intersubjective. As we walked one evening through her neighborhood of Ramat Eshkol, Shlomit spoke about her older son’s army service in the early 1990s, which led her to reflect on the contingencies of her fear during the current period of conflict. “I don’t feel preoccupied all the time with suicide bombings,” she told me. “You can’t always be afraid.” Still, there were times that Shlomit felt fear, which she expressed this way: “If I need to go to a bustling place, like the mall, or if Ilan [her husband] goes to the

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outdoor market, then there's something in me that goes like this—" Still
 walking alongside me, Shlomit proceeded with her explanation using
 hand gestures. She made a wringing motion with both hands held in
 front of her stomach, conveying that she feels the worry of going into
 crowded places in her abdomen. She felt the same twisted stomach when
 she or her husband went to spaces she feared might be bombed, her
 fears for self and for an intimate other similarly embodied. What Shlomit
 said about her fear and the bodily way she expressed it were prompted by
 and entangled with each other. While speaking, she continued to wring
 her hands in front of her stomach. "I feel that until Ilan comes back
 home—. Well, I do worry." Linda Green notes in her study of Guate-
 mala that "One cannot live in a constant state of alertness, and so the
 chaos one feels becomes diffused throughout the body" (1999: 60). In
 Israel, the emotion conditioned the way people carried themselves and
 encountered the world (Crossley 2001: 85). Shlomit's alertness and fear
 assumed a constant presence in the form of bodily feelings. Her fear of
 Palestinian bombings, like Naomi's, were deeply corporeal, binding her
 to her own body and expanding outward to bind her in a reciprocal re-
 lationship with her son or her husband.

Fear as a Corporeal Politics

Narratives of victimhood and of Palestinian threats sedimented them-
 selves in Israeli Jews' gestures and habits, in their perceptions of place,
 and in their sensitivities to others. State discourses of fear were instanti-
 ated in people's perceptions such that what Israelis said about fear and
 their bodily feelings of fear were inextricably intertwined. Shlomit and
 Naomi relied on their bodies to depict their fears, and their inextricably
 relational fears were entwined with national discourses. When Naomi en-
 capsulated her fear as a fear of bombings, she elided specific reference
 to Palestinians, in a manner common to the Israeli discourse of fear. She
 also spoke of fear as "just there," resonating with media reifications of
 fear as an object seemingly detached from the context and narratives
 that produce it, an artifact that sits and circulates in the Israeli environ-
 ment. Shlomit's embodied fear also resonated with national discourses
 of fear. She prefaced her fear by upholding an ethic of resilience: "You
 can't always be afraid." Even embodied fear had a politics that concealed
 Palestinians and that was thought to circulate autonomously; a fear that
 was alternatively revealed and concealed, embraced and denied. Fear
 was a corporeal politics that many Israeli Jews carried in their bodies and
 their daily routines.

And yet, fear was not a mere construction of or by the nation-state

that inevitably propagated state discourse. Shlomit's stomach did not feel twisted only because Israeli discourses of fear were inescapable; her stomach did not twist simply because she wanted to demonstrate the effects of Palestinian terror. Fear, this wringing in her stomach, was where Shlomit experienced the collision between her identity as an Israeli who wanted to defend her country and a mother who wanted to protect her son; it was where she negotiated the tension between her political commitment to perseverance and her deep concern for her husband. When Naomi engaged in and negotiated national narratives of fear through her body, biography, and psyche, she actively experienced and expressed emotion in ways distinct from those of Shlomit or Shimon. Each harnessed political discourse and rendered it intimate. Fear was thus not only a mode of attachment to the state but also a constantly negotiated form of connection to family. Within a corporeal politics, political and affective fears intersect, diverge, and realign.