

Druze identity study

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Table of content

Introduction	
- definition	3
- process	5
Phase 1 – Observation-	
- characteristics	7
- historical	11
- culture, tradition	14
- economy	16
- religion	18
- education	24
- sociology	25
- women	30
- Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel	32
- Druze/Arabs	35
- Druze /Israel	38
- + / -	44
- Internet era	46
- Image & communication	47
- evolutions	48
- challenges	50
Phase 2 – Interpretation	
- analysis	53
- major factors	58
- diagnosis	60
Phase 3 - Creation	
- identity concept	60
- identity system	62
Phase 4 – Application	
- identity manual	
. lexicon	64
. users guide	66
- identity program suggestions	
. internal	69
. external	71
bibliography	73

Introduction

Definition

This identity study analyzes the present situation of the Druze community, as a whole, in itself and within its environment.

Identity

“Identity”, is a concept.

Others words for it could be “personality”, or “unicity”, or “specificity”. Or “soul”. A French historian, André Siegfried, wrote a book, “The soul of the nations”. In this study, it means the soul, the central idea that characterizes the Druze community.

As examples, it could be said that for United States it is “power”, for Spain it is “pride”, for Italy it is “creativity”, for France it is “humanism”, for Japan it is “tradition”.....

Attached to “identity” is the notion of “permanence”.

Identity comes from the Latin word, “idem”, the same.

That means that the Druze identity is the constant element which insured the continuity of the unicity of this community through centuries.

“Identity” is a force.

Permanence is only possible when the concept is also a force that cross time. If not, the concept would be a dead element, no more acting, to be studied from an historical point of view.

The Druze identity to be found comes from its very roots and is still present.

It is faithful and respectful of the past, should inspire the present and conduct the future of the community.

Study

This study is an operational study.

It is not an academic study. There are already plenty of them.

I applied to it the methodology I developed when I was working professionally in France on companies identities, with the concrete objective to help them to better conduct their business.

This study aims at given to the Druze community a path to help it to better conduct its present and future actions.

Druze

This study applies to the Druze in Israel

At first the study looked for the identity of the Middle-East Druze.

As it appeared that it was not possible to include the study of the Druze from Lebanon and Syria in it, those two communities were just included in the analysis of the environment of the Israeli Druze community.

Process

This study is qualitative

It is not a quantitative one. It is not based upon statistic figures and surveys, even if some existing results of quantitative researches have been used.

Its process runs through 4 phases:

Observation

- . interviews qualitative, confidential, of a sample of 20 very diverse personalities: Druze men and women, young and aged, religious or secular, Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs,
- . study of articles, books, web sites, videos,

Interpretation

- . analysis of the whole information cursus,
- . detection of the main factors participating to the definition of the Druze identity,
- . diagnosis of the identity situation

Creation

- . definition of the Druze identity concept
- . conception of the identity system, attached to the concept,

Recommendation

- . establishment of the manual for using the Druze identity system,
- . suggestions for actions.

Phase 1 – Observation

(italic script is quotation from interviews, right writing is extracts from materials)

Characteristics

- *one major characteristics, systematically emphasized, is their fidelity to the country where they live in.*
- *the necessity for the Druze community to adapt oneself to Middle-East context explains partly the re-enforcement of its own specificities,*
- *Druze are traditionally established on top of mountains, because it is a way to protect themselves , it is a way to perpetuate their rurality, and it is a way for preserving their unity,*
- *Druze is a society of transmission, more than a secret society,*
- *in the Druze community as well as in the families, traditional and occidental behaviors cohabit often de facto, quite naturally,*
- *Druze are part of the Arabs from Middle East area, by language, culture, they are part of the Arab nation, of the Islamic community, even if the new nationalism trend creates detachment between them,*
- *the basis of the Druze society is the family unit. It is a clan society,*
- *Druze are good soldiers, but fundamentally, they dislike strength, it is a pacific community with a strong sense of its duty,*
- *the primary aim of the Druze is to build themselves as individuals, both for themselves and for the Druze community,*
- *in Israel, Druze are a minority within a minority, which doubles complication of their life,*
- *within the Druze society, there is mutual respect between the uqqual and the juhada, in contrast with the Jewish community where there is rather mutual dislike between religious and no religious populations,*
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- *one must be a lord in the real sense of the term, lord of one's own life,*
- *it is not surprising that there are so many people of liberal inclination amongst the Druze, for all that they retain a great pride in their community and in their religion, cultural and political heritage. They are famous throughout history for their liberal mentality and lack of chauvinism,*
- *there is a certain dignity to Druze esotericism, which is a mixture of wisdom and realism. We are a people with 5000 years of history behind us and we trace our time back to Hermes Trimegistes, whom we call Imkopeh, Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato are widely read in our little community; people greet each other with "peace be upon him", Al salam alaih,. In short it is a kind of tiny humanist Greece, an "agora" in which people take an interest in everything,*
- *a sense of responsibility and a love for freedom go hand by hand with possession of land,*
- *prudence is another of the distinguishing traits of the Druze. They do not shout into the wind, ; ever alert, they gauge their surroundings and choose their words carefully, assessing what must be said and what can be said,*

-
- the Druze are of mixed race. They are largely of Arab decent, but they have also Iranian, Kurdish and European heritage,
 - they have seemed radical for their belief in equality for men and women, abolition of slavery, and separation of church and state,
 - they are roughly 1 million people, around 400 000 in Lebanon, 450 000 in Syria, 80 000 in Israel, 20 000 in Jordan, and about 80 000 all over the world,
 - the majority of the Israeli Druze, 98%, live in 18 "villages", in the North of the country, , in Galilea and not far from Haifa. The four most important localities, more town than villages, are Daliat-El-Carmel, Yarka, Maghar, Bet-Gean,
 - the reduced weight of agriculture as principal source of livelihood, members of the young generation can now free themselves of economic dependence

on the father, a development that leads to a weakening of their attachment to his way of life.

This phenomenon is reinforced, the young son being more educated than his father, exposed to Western culture, introduced in new social circles, and confronted to new way of life in the army.

- more and more, in the Druze society as in every other society, individualism is growing, impacting the family life tradition,
-
- the Druze society is under permanent tension, the "Minha", and protects herself through the "Taqiyya", prudence and dissimulation,
- Druze society is strongly attached to ethics, meaning equality and freedom, and refusal of slavery and polygamy,
- a unique phenomenon characterize the Druze community: the ownership of the land by inheritance or purchase, and its cultivation and defense have always been a supreme value, ensuring their physical survival,
- the Druze concept is that when colossal forces are at work in the vicinity, it is only the powerless minorities that pay the price, the way is to preserve neutrality,
- Druze have developed a special art of adjustment that encompasses all of life, religious and non-religious, old and young, women and children. They differ from other people and religions in that they avoid unnecessary confrontation with their neighbors and focus their efforts instead on building their society as they fit,
- Druze society is, in fact, very complex. Friendly, yet sometimes violent, reaching out, yet closed to outsiders, divided and united, ethnically Arab and sometimes with strong Zionist convictions,
- the Druze started in Israel from a low point of development and they have a long way to go. They have the lowest level of education, as a rural entity the emergence of their first generation of educated urban strata is a complex social phenomenon,
- few people in Israel and perhaps in the entire region, can match Druze friendliness and openness. A visitors feels truly welcome and the best thing that has happened to the host,

- Druze managed to maintain their values without trying to enforce them on anyone else,
- their combination of religious values and group solidarity steer clear of the temptation to think in terms of domination, they are a minority behaving like a minority,
- the Druze experience shows how it is possible for a community to hold fast its land and at the same time enjoy the civil rights guaranteed by the majority in the state in which they live, without any need to control an independent sovereign state of its own,
- sharing the leadership with the religious leaders, are the traditional political figures who belong to the uninitiated. Politically they dominate the uqqal in all matters affecting the community except purely religious ones,
- Druze have their own juridical school, and their sacred laws together into "Epistle of Wisdom", written between 1017 and 1042,

Historical

- *permanent need for survival has always re-enforced the sense of community, as it explains the tradition of fidelity which makes safe by integration,*
 - *in Israel, in 1997, a secular Committee has been created beside the religious leader.
This separation religious and secular powers was already existing for the Lebanon and Syria Druze communities,*
 - *there is an historical link between the real descent of original Druze people and the description of Jethro's children in the Bible,*
 - *the best supposition is that because of wars, separate Druze groups migrated to concentrate,*
 - *the differences between the Israeli Arabs and the Israeli Druze started only when the Druze leaders decided to accept that the Druze men will go to the Israeli army,*
 - *in less than a century, the Druze fell from a dominant to a dominated position. Throughout history, they had played a role out of all proportion to their numbers; This "tour de force" was only possible because they were the a proud, organized, dynamic and warlike nation. One should always bear in mind that they represented the Greek sense of order, having inherited, in their holy books and secrets, the whole philosophy of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and neo-Platonism.*
-

- In 1957a Druze Religious Council was established, along with Religious Courts. In 1962, the term "Druze" replaced the term "Arab" on ID cards and birth certificates.
In 1976, the educational system serving Druze villages was separated from the overall Arab school system and a distinct educational system was set up,
- the Druze also known as the "Sons of grace", are a secretive, tightly-knit religious sect whose origins can be traced to Egypt a thousand years ago,

- the Druze community in its early stage could only be considered as a model of sectarianism. But the next step of development of the new identity was the dissociation from its ethnic surrounding, Arab, with whom the Druze could still be associated for a long time, with reserve to the religion peculiarity.
Then the closing of the community takes place: the strict endogamy becomes a guaranty of preservation of the esoteric religious knowledge inside the community,
- ethnic fragmentation extends its ramifications in Middle-East politics today. This state of affairs call for creativity, pluralism and tolerance. In this ocean of turbulence, the Druze have remained an island of stability in Israel, Lebanon and Syria,
- the French authority granted them the right to officially administer their own civil affairs according to the laws and customs of the community.
- later, in Israel, the growing Druze population was permitted to exercise separate jurisdiction in matter of marriage and divorce, together with participating in the same compulsory military service required of all residents,
- the Druze did not share the founding experience of the Nakba, there leaders staid and adapt themselves and the community to the creation of the new Jewish state,
- a recent new genetic study has confirmed that the Druze community started its genetic consolidation in the 11th century, and since then, it has not been subjected to genetic influence by other ethnic groups,
- the caliph Al Hakim took three decisions, founder of the Druze law:
 - . abolition of slavery,
 - . interdiction of polygamy,
 - .separation between the matter of faith and the matter of the State,
- most of the texts constituent of the Druze faith came from Hamza. He is the reincarnation of the Jethro – Nabi Shoëb – they venerate his grave in the village of Khetin, above Tiberiade,
- the third personage, quite controversial, was a student and adept to Hamza, Nashtakin Al Darazi, gave his name to the Druze people,

- only on April 1957 did the state of Israel recognize the Druze as an independent autonomous religious community. This act, which was of historical significance, was accompanied by the enactment of the Druze Religious Tribunal Law. Druze religious courts were opened in 1962. This positive step, together with the "Druze", instead of "Arab" entry in identity card completed the formal process of separation of the Druze from the Arabs,
- professor Ben-Dor initiated in 1974 the establishment of a research center for Druze studies at the University of Haifa. This center serves as the nucleus for studies and research relevant to the history of the Druze and included books, periodicals and documents,
- the Elite Druze chose to encourage neutrality in the 1929 riots due to security concerns and religious indifference, they felt they had no reason to endanger themselves by fighting and had no religious stake in the issue anyway,
- nationalist history tend to read history backward and solidify categories of identity, which prevents analyzing how minority groups labelled as "enemies" by a more powerful military group, manage to construct their identity as separate from other "enemies" through credible commitments,
- the paradoxes of Druze life, simultaneously loyal to state and community, presents an intricate picture of perseverance, patriotism and patience in Israel,

Culture / tradition

- *young people want to stay as Druze, because of family, tradition, proudness, because of religion, because their attachment to their village,. They are protected from splitting by the interdiction of marriages out of the community,*
 - *it is a closed society that opens oneself in order to better survive into the modern world, by maintaining the tradition in order to be a Druze in his home, together with integrating external society in behaving as a human being outside,*
 - *differences of opinions varies according to differences of education and social family context,*
 - *there is a fundamental contradiction between the will to keep secret the Druze religion and the wish to make the religion giving its values to civil life. That makes the teaching of religion more historical than about its content, and makes that students do not really know the major points of the Druze society,*
 - *the typical way Druze way of thought is to seek the essence of the truth through religion, but to transcend them, neither narrow nor formalistic, liberal in spirit and free of all messianism. There is no use in proposing to someone that they become a Druze. Everybody remains what they are After death, a Druze soul moves one to one Druze body and the another and so on until the end of time.,*
-
- their flag strengthens their sense of unity, five colors representing the five prophets,
 - hospitality is an important feature of the culture. They are known for their generosity and are guided by a sense of chivalry and honor,
 - polygamy is forbidden among the Druze and marriage outside of the Druze faith is forbidden,

- Druze are said generous, courageous warriors, they advocate tolerance and love, , their religion is based upon the research for supreme wisdom through study of philosophy and analysis of the philosophy of other religion,
- they are deeply attached to their land and like farming,
- the religious Druze , named "El Masheyekh", plural for "Sheik", wear a black sarouel and a shirt same color, and a white "Laffé" on the head. The religious Druze women wear long black skirts, long sleeveesshirts with a big white veil called "Menndil",
- the Druze have preferred a more insular identity, remaining outside of the ideological rift in the country, while sharing the Arab language and aspects of Arabic culture with the large Arab-Israeli community,
- the substance and spirit of Druze identity have been articulated as impressively coherent, constant and complete, preempting any "identity crisis" over the many generations of Druze history. This successful transmission has had to content with the seeming decline in religion values, though not in religion belief. The Druze preserve their place in Israel changing and privatizing society, and with the forces of modernity – education, media, urbanization, politicization – which absolutely challenge on the Druze path,

Economy

- *familial solidarity plays a strong role,*
- *majority of men go to military duty or to services in other fields, and a minority stays in rural business,*
- *Druze are weak, because they are small and divided in two parts, the one who go to the army and those who do not go,*
- *they hoped to get more by doing the military service, but they did not receive more help or money in return, because they are too deeply peaceful,*
- *in the sixties, Druze were essentially farmers and 5% in the army, now 30% work in the national defense, 30% in liberal professions and 40% in services and farming,*
- *it is a poor community, poorer than the Arab one,*
- *discrimination by Israel authority contributes to maintain poverty marked by collapse of farming activities because of land confiscation, illegal building, unemployment,*
- *there are two main reasons for the new interest Israel found at investing into the economic development of the Druze part.*
First, in order to include Israel in its ranks, OECD asked that the Israeli state maximize development in its minorities territories, and in particular in tourism infrastructures.
Second, the Israeli banks demonstrated that investment into the minorities economy could produce millions of revenues for the national GNP,
- *the paradoxical situation is that Israel Government defined lately a quite important budget for the economic development of the minorities, including of course the Druze. But for the time being, only 30% of this budget has been employed, because only few real economic programs have been prepared by the civil organisms of those minorities.*
As the villages or towns mayors focused traditionally on the interests of their families, the communal economy stays weak,

- *the other bottleneck much restraining possibilities of development is the extreme difficulty to obtain from the authority, licenses for new buildings on the minorities' land, with unbearable delays which could take 10 to 20 years long,*
- *the objective is to get into a yearly process of budgeting, instead of establishing for or five years budgets, and to establish those yearly budgets through a programming process bottom up and not up to bottom as it is now,*
- *the minorities within the Israeli society have now a real opportunity, depending on their creativity and their dedication to communal interest, to use an available budget to develop real estate business, skills and education, transportation, agriculture,*
- *the obligation for young Druze men to do military service, has the advantage to allow them the discovering of another world, but the disadvantage to make them eager to enter immediately into professional activity. Comparatively to them, young Arabs become more educated and can get to better professional positions,*
- *there is no place for the weak in any world and still more in modern time. Druze economy has to become strong and competitive,*
- *there is now a situation of fight to place the community above the family level, in order to share for the benefit of everybody the finance availability and the investments,*

-
- *although still a largely rural people with a long tradition of farming, , younger Druze are seeking more professional occupations such as banking, , trade, small business, transportation,*

Religion

- *the secret side of the religion, which is ordinary put forward and associated to the Druze community, is in fact not very important in ordinary life.*
- *the Druze society is getting more and more educated but also more and more religious,*
- *secret is linked originally, 1000 years ago, to need for protection. To-day new conditions like Israel democracy makes it somehow obsolete, general redefinition becomes the more a strong need,*
- *religion and civil lives play respectively their role. Religion is determining main political orientations, and the spiritual characteristics of the Druze society, it insure its continuity, in spite of its dispersion,*
- *it is a sect of Islam who made another lecture of Coran, materializes by the principle of reincarnation,*
- *our religion is a meditative one. The purpose of life is the meditation of reason. It is not like all the others religions, , a "Shari'a" (law) in the Koranic or the Hebrew sense, a religion based on faith like Christianity or Islam. What matters for the Druze is personal conviction, a vision of internal truth, self knowledge, a mind unencumbered by anything in its quest for absolute. It is a religion of spiritual ascetics, a gnostic committed to ordinary life: a religion of ethics as much as of knowledge. The "know thyself" which is fundamental to truth is basic to the Druze whose essential quest is for complete genuineness,*
- *who are the Druze ? Our dogma is based on initiation; only the initiates know how to read and understand the holy book that we call the Books of Wisdom. It is an extension of the Greek and Egyptian hermetic schools – the esoteric traditions - which have passed into Muslim Sufism,*
- *the Druze religion preaches the essential unity of all things and beings, the substantive unity of the universe in its spiritual and physical form. God, the world, and the soul form a single entity,*
- *a hand written book has much more psychic power than a printed one. The effort and intellectual tension contributed by the transcriber gives the word an enormous suggestive power,*

- *everything which exists partakes of a divine nature, for in our understanding, the divine exists only in term of contradiction with the material or non-divine. But everything is physically and psychically formed out of this divine substratum,*
- *the three ideals coming from Jethro are monotheism, God fearing and social and justice.*
- *even for non-religious Druze people, everyone goes to Jethro's grave, and everyone considers social and justice as a need,*
- *secret is an internal barrier but everyone has a knowledge basis and has the potentiality to enter into it,*
- *it is a link, as for every community, and as it happens now everywhere in the world, the role of religion is getting stronger,*
- *there is no half measure, to be religious or not. When a Druze is not religious, the religious environment makes him naturally use to ethic, human behavior. Education, obligation to inter-Druze marriage, keep him also into the Druze world.
Reincarnation, like religion, is a matter of belief. Ones could feel deeply Druze without believing in it.*
- *the Religious Council should be democratic, it acts in reality in a dictatorial way. There is no true leadership and there is a lack of program.*
- *in the balance religious/secular, religion is leading,*
- *reincarnation is, in fact, a natural thought throughout humankind,*
- *a majority of Druze do not know the religion,*
- *the two sources, Islam and Sufi, joined for the creation of the Druze religion. It is the most important component of Druze existence,*
- *the "uqqal" have a strict behavior, peaceful, illustrating a vision of life,*
- *keeping religion secret contributes to its preservation, but it has the negative consequence of making the majority of Druze people not only ignorant of the whole richness it contains, but also dependent of a minority in a time, the modern time, when people become responsible from themselves,*
- *the absence of proselytism makes Druze pacifists,*

- *the morality, issued from religious principles, is in fact in an awkward situation, because leadership and family/clan system limit the sharing of richness and the benefit of modernization in the whole Druze community,*

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- the religion has no liturgy, just a simple place of worship, no hierarchy through the Imams, no charia. Conversions are not admitted and monogamy is the rule,
- Islamist Arabs see Druze as “kaafirs”, as apostates from the religion of Islam, they are heretics whose repentance cannot be accepted,
- Druze believe that God was incarnated on earth in the form of their leader, al-Hakim bi-Amrih Alla,
- belief in reincarnation is one of the pillars of Druze religion and heritage. They think that only they have interpreted it correctly and that they experience it in a stronger manner because it is so dominant in their creed,
- it stands for justice and probity, requiring people to distinguish between good and evil,
- the entire humanity has vested interest in providing a spiritual enlightenment until eternity. The Druze theology is the last beacon of hope for the human salvation.
- the tenets of the Druze religion are secret, even to many Druze themselves. only a limited number of elite men and sometimes women, called “Uqqal”, the enlightened” study and learned all of its aspects. Other Druze known as the “juhhal”, the “unenlightened” are not permitted to access the religion’s six holy books but are given a strict code of moral and ethical behavior,
- reincarnation is a key belief of the faith.. The Druze believe that the number of days of one’s life is fixed,

- in the Druze faith, God is absolute existence, transcendent and immanent, the human soul realize itself in the human body, virtue is moving toward unity with the rest of humanity,
- the Druze philosophy, mythology, terminology, are of Ismaili origin.
- its specificities are the abolition of the hereditary system, unity of God, its neo Platonism, and its seven principles: truthfulness, mutual aid, no other religion, no obligation for non-Druze, unicity of God, acceptance of his actions, submission to his will,
- Druze does not constitute an ethnic group but a religious community,
- Druze religion is a very tolerant one, there is no religion coercion, rule is live and let live
- the Druze religion, which differs substantially from Islam, to the extent that some refuse to consider them as Muslims, and which is the cement of their society, came from the Shia Ismaili, also said Septimanien – Sabiya,
- alone the insiders, - uqqal – can understand the mystery and practice properly the true religion. It is from their ranks that come out the “perfects” – adjawib – the only authorities.
- their isolationism – taqqiya – is accompanied by an undeniable willingness to openness to others, a refusal of fanaticism,
- as Druze believe in reincarnation, according to their tradition, the number of Druze on earth is constant and will stay as it is since the dead reborn within the community
- Druze have their own sacred books, the “Book of Wisdom” – rassa’il al hikma”, six of them,
- the Druze gastronomy includes the bread, “Saj”, Manakiche, and the breuvage “Matti”, from matted Yerba,
- there is mainly two Druze fests, “Sabalon” in September and the “Adha” fest,

- religion preaches modesty and religious leaders are modest, the Druze religion aspires to absolute integrity on the part of the believer, bringing him closer to the Creator,
- since it has no missionary bent, the Druze religion need not publicize itself or reveal itself to others in order to gain sympathy or to win new members,
- it has its holy books, but unlike the others it has been penned by a single author and have a single unchallengeable interpretation.
- three precepts bind believers. The first is "guarding one's speech", the believers has to use civil language, keep its promises and always speak truth.
The second is the protection of brothers". All members of the Druze community are responsible for one another, ensure that no harm comes to another member.
The third is the "prohibition of idolatry",
- religious affiliation has been the marker of political identity, in the sense that when political national issues were considered, the interest of the religious community have been given priority over other considerations,
- the Druze conduct simple services of worship on Thursday evenings, at a place for seclusion and prayer called "jhalwa" or "majlis". Every village has such a building, usually an austere hall, without architecture embellishments and without furniture, except small lectern to lay books on during meditation. During the first part of the service, community affairs are discussed in the presence of all who wish to attend, including the Juhhal who have to leave when prayer, study and meditation begin,
- the religious leadership of the community is in the hands of the religious elders, the chief of which in a given area is the "shaykh al-'aql"
In Israel, the office of spiritual head of the Druze has for several generations be hereditary in the Tariff family, of Julis.
These leaders, the shaykhs and judges under them administer civil law in matter of marriage, divorce and inheritance.
- though the uqqal probably make up less than one-fifth of the Druze, their presence in any Druze town or village is a dominant one,
- the religion exists in a break with the worldly order. It practices asceticism, that brings the Druze closer to the mystic Muslims.

- but that asceticism established the initiated as active references for the society, ones owe them respect,
- the soul, according to the Druze religion, is central, while the material body is ephemeral. So the soul can pass from one person to another, from one body to another,

Education

- *democracy starts with education. Without it, it is illusionary to hope for a strong economic side of the Druze society,*
- *the difference between Jewish and Druze in education is mainly due to the difference between the dimension of investment, much less for Druze education,*
- *the State of Israel, makes special program for them,*
- *in the Israeli education system, now, the disciplines linked to humanism are strongly declining, history, culture, literature, art,...to the benefit of disciplines linked to materialism, physics, mathematics, informatics,.... It is another form of Americanization of the Israeli society,*
- *now that family education can no longer do the job, the key to preserving Druze identity is institutional education,*
- *Druze have to get to the better level in education outside, together with maintaining good education at home, in order to keep humanity as their major principle for life, they have to succeed in preserving the mix between knowledge and mankind,*
- *there is only one way to keep on the solidarity and the unity of the Druze community, which is the development of a teaching program, accompanied by a caring program,*

- 60 / 70% young educated people are struggling for integration in the Israeli society,
- given that the common Druze family is not equipped to adapt the religious way to modernization, , in the absence of a decent leadership to show the way, the only real alternative is the educational system. Alas, however, the educational system in Druze schools, very much like systems in the rest of the country, is rather mediocre. Most teachers have neither the expertise nor the authority to fill in the growing gap in Druze heritage,

Sociology

- *it is a more complex society as it could seem, together with a real level of solidarity and also partly clanic with tribal customs still existing, quite divided and making not enough efforts to tame internal animosities coming from ancient life,*
- *in time of real trouble, they unit, as the recent example of the Druze in Golan demonstrated it,*
- *the dress code are changing for boys and girls, as well as the code for relationship between them with the risk that it goes too far from Druze tradition,*
- *intermarriage is a constant concern for Druze society,*
- *around 95% of the population is still living in villages, for only 5% in towns,*
- *the fraternity side is partly overwhelmed by the rivalry in searching for better places in the society,*
- *the three rules for the young people are, not to be intermarried, not to be allowed to polygamy, and discouraging of urbanization for the sake of linkage preservation,*
- *situation of dispute between old and new generations, but the family approach makes it quite bearable, with the fact that young are practical and that they have no real choice,*
- *the Druze who live in a town stay linked to their village, because of the family attachment, they keep a sense of community and they come back by need for calm, nature,*
- *there is a Civil Committee by village,*
- *the old generation stays as an example of respecting human kindness, and representing the continuity of the reincarnation,*
- *a good part of young people go to the army, then come back to their villages and stay under-educated,*
- *even when Druze children live in town, apart from the village, even if they become assimilate, their family keeps them aware of their Druze membership,*

- *old people stay traditionally until their end within the family,*
- *the new generation keeps the feeling of community membership, young people are more materialistic but stick to the spirituality basis,*
- *solidarity interconnects the family life, but communal solidarity is a problem,*
- *Druze love to consider them as a community, but in the same time, they are looking to become fully Israeli citizen,*
- *the difference between uqqal and jehad creates a difference in social life,*
- *Druze are not fully Arabs, they are not really Israeli, they are and they feel they are in a middle and quite shaky situation,*
- *villages, built on top of hills for protection, are also places where to keep Druze traditions, proximity, and family worship,*
- *to be Druze is in the subconscious, it is inside, it is connected to the secret book, even if ones does not know anything about it, and reincarnation has a big complementary influence in it,*
- *the feeling of belonging leads to a deep sense of identification with members of the group,*
- *traditionally, Druze men get married quite young, around 25 years old. The consequence is that they go quite soon into working life, most often after their military service, in order to earn money and be able to build a house for their family.*
Indeed, there is no available flat for them, as for the Jewish population of Israel, and Druze men have to build their house.
The other consequence is that a majority of them don't get high education, they have more chance to get jobs of second position, and to earn less money,
- *modern life induces quick changes which affect directly the younger generations and creates a risk of splitting traditional Druze life.*

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- main concern for the Druze society is moral standard and level of education,
 - religion is the main common factor, and several sub-groups hold together by a supreme communal source of power,
 - Druze membership can be defined in a cultural sense, social sense, in term of lifestyle, or as a common fate, but above all that in a religious sense,
 - sub-units are extended families,
 - ethnic studies are before all, instrumentalist. Loyalty to a linguistic group, religious community, form the fundamental inspiration for the way people organize their social and political realities, reinforced by "nation-state" appartenance, and modernization,
 - Druze ethnicity and ethic issues are still instruments in the hands of Israel Government and Druze elite interest,
 - Druze do not feel comfortable with the Arab national component of their identity, for various reasons, one of the more significant factors being the negative image that Arabs are from the Druze,
 - there is a big discrepancy between the "blood tax" the Druze are paying and the plundering of their land, between the investment in Jewish settlements and Druze villages, villages which still lacked of development projects, electricity, access roads, and suffer of instability of industrialization, collapse of agriculture,
 - a new word has been invented by a writer, assuming it explains the perennity of the Jewish people through centuries, the "Gmi'kshout". It came from the contraction of "gmishout", flexibility, and of "nakshout", stiffness. "Gmi'kshout" could apply easily to the Druze history,
 - military service exposes the young Druze men to temptations of the outside western world, with the dangerous potential of leading to assimilation. The way to avoid that is to ensure that the family link is stronger than outside temptations, and the only way is to educate young people in an agreed-upon set of codes and rules.

- The Druze community as a whole is a “federation” of enlarged families – hamulas - and one main pillars of the society, coming from religious code, is mutual brotherly aid.
- talk to a Druze about Druze politicians, and your ears are likely to burn. Talk to a Druze about the community and you will hear only praise,
- the border between religion and tradition is quite blurred, even secular Druze try to observe the basic principles of Druze tradition,
- the Druze consider the state in which they reside as an organized mechanism through which they can also participate in life of the world. The rule, then, is to maintain relations with the other components of society in spite of differences, at the same time preserving the minority way of life, worship, language and culture, while holding on the lands of one’s ancestors,
- their emphasis is on that which unites rather than that which divides. This pragmatic approach, based upon wisdom and experience of the Druze in Middle-East, held good for a thousand years. Their attitude is based on the Druze tradition, which earned them the title of “the Gracious people”,
- the geo-demographic co-existence , clearly perceived by researchers in all Druze settlements of Syria, Lebanon and Israel, conclusively proves that Druze hearts, villages and homes have been open to other Arabs of different faith throughout history,
- an ethnic minority with a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, derived from the community religion, , an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity, is most likely to preserve its ethnic character,
- they reject the political requirements of Arab nationalism by serving in the Israeli army, claim they are Arabs culturally but not politically and believe that their political national identity stems from their religious affiliation and not the language they speak,
- the uninitiated are not without a religion, but are given a simplified outline of their faith in the form of a strict code of moral and ethical behavior,
- usual praises about the Druze are related to their virtues, particularly their sense of hospitality,
- the “patrilinear” family is the basis of the social organization, and politics is the exclusive research for the personal interest,

- the reduced weight of agriculture as principal source of livelihood, members of the young generation can now free themselves of economic dependence on the father, a development that leads to a weakening of their attachment to his way of life.
This phenomenon is reinforced, the young son being more educated than his father, exposed to Western culture, introduced in new social circles, and confronted to new way of life in the army.
- more and more, in the Druze society as in every other society, individualism is growing, impacting the family life tradition,
- the Druze in Israel evinces a minority syndrome that leaves the group caught between conflicting identities and affiliation. This is a disorienting experience. While a threat of assimilation is not a real danger, the Druze must balance the Arab links with other Israel allegiance,

Women

- *situation of women is quite alike position in Arab society. Surprisingly, conservatism of ancient tribal time keeps them still partly in second line within the society, for instance, divorce makes difficult to them to reconstruct a second life.
More and more, dresses in Arabs way, perhaps linked to Islamic influence, but also, fed up with patriarchal conventions, they are more engaged in civil life, and they probably represents a strength for the future.*
- *women status is still bad, because of religion, of tradition, 60% does not work, but it is improving because of internet, the fact that more and more goes working.*
- *the growth of role of women shakes the moral values of the Druze society but does not change the sense of belonging,*
- *they are still a nice toy in the house,*
- *80% of Druze women are religious, whereas only 13% of men are, while keeping the tradition spirit,*
- *70% of the Druze women are engaged in education cursus, comparatively to 30 for men,*
- *Druze women have still an inferior status than the Arab ones,*
- *women's honor is one of the most important element in Druze society.*
- *today's situation among the Druze, in terms of women's place in education and in the working world, has improved by leaps and bounds. It has been proved that it is possible for women to respect and keep Druze culture, to respect religion, to educate their children with Druze values, and be part of the modern world at the same time.*
- *in Druze religion, women are fully respected, and their status has evolved. Non-religious women may now go to University, drive in and out of their villages, have a professional activity, dress in the occidental way.*

Religious women may also go to University, drive in their village, but dress still themselves in the traditional clothes,

- *women are at a crossroad where they have to combine the new possibilities they got in matter of liberty, education, life style, work, with respect to the traditional Druze rules of life,*
 - *the recent fact that more women get high level of education than men creates the problem of their marriage with Druze men who are in a kind of intellectual inferiority with them.*
 - *the closeness of the Druze community, beside the advantage to preserve its unity, have the inconvenient of internal phenomenon such as rumors, distrust climate, that make, particularly, women life not so easy,*
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- the wind of change began around 2007 when community members started opening up to the idea of women leaving the village to study and work,
- although Druze tradition is patriarchal, the Druze women has a special status in the family. Not only, she is the only wife, unlike Muslim tradition, she also equal to the husband in practice,
- in practice, Druze women have still often to comply with the dictates of men in the family. The religious establishment as such is dominated by men. Certain functions are considered beyond limits for women, she cannot be a farmer or a soldier because her role is to be a mother,
- sobriety, gravity, decorum, are the qualities expected of and admired on Druze women. A firm counterbalance to these austere social demands, however, are their legal rights, which far exceed those of Muslims and equal those of Eastern Christians

Diversity: Syria, Lebanon, Israel

- *differences between them come mainly from the difference of local contexts,*
- *internal disunity, with Lebanon Druze who considered them as master piece of the country, and with the Syrian and Israeli minorities who does not want their own country,*
- *Israeli Druze do not feel to be Arab, as the Lebanon Druze feel to be,*
- *the Lebanon Druze are the most educated ones, they are considered as the intelligentsia.*
In the twentieth century, they defines themselves as Arabs,
- *the Israeli policy aimed at separating the Druze identity from the Arab's one, and it succeeded at that.*
During the 60 years, the intelligentsia adopted nationalism. This disturbed the political level but did not impact Druze at personal level.
Majority of the Israeli Druze are Arabs in descent and Druze in religion, at the opposite of Druze of Lebanon and Syria,
- *the personality of the Uqqal constitutes a common denominator between Druze of the three countries,*
- *the Lebanese Druze women get better social position than the Israel Druze women,*

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- *if, in Israel, the Druze, a tiny minority, accepted the Jewish domination in 1948, and did not hesitate to serve in the army, in Lebanon and Syria, Druze kept their total independence of decision and exercise an influence much higher than their number,*
 - *in Lebanon, the Druze participate to the confessionalism system, established by the 1926 constitution and the 1943 national pact, which gives them 6% of*

the seats in the State institutions. Their leader, Kamal Joumlatt, assassinated in 1977, then his son Walid plays an eminent role in the Lebanon progressive opposition,

- in this region of the world where passion as much a part in politics as does reason, the “Moallem” will remain the man who stood for compromise and balance, , for the compromise between ideals and the practical,
- rationality is not the basis of politics in Middle-East. Passion fear, mistrust, the struggle for survival, extremism and dreams, the resort to arms; these are the rulers hers, and the enemies of compromise and reasoned agreement. The Middle –East is the region of the historical non compromise
- those who knew the old Lebanon constantly evoke the country’s delightful climate, the proverbial hospitality of the Levantines and the merits of Lebanese tolerance, which made it possible for 17 different communities to leave in peace together. Lebanon was once offered as an example of harmony. “The land of milk and honey” said the tourist brochure,
- Druze in Lebanon perceive themselves as members of the Arab Lebanese nation, Druze in Syria are Arab Syrians and Druze in Israel are part of the Israeli Arab community. They differ from their brethren in the Arab countries, because they are the only Druze community in the region that identifies itself as purely Druze,
- young Druze serve three years of compulsory military service, which creates a gap between them and their Christian and Arabs neighbors. Once they return home they face unemployment, when their Arab and Christians counterparts can complete university studies, making them better educated and also better off economically,
- Druze in Lebanon have lost their Druze identity because intermarriages with Muslims and Christians are so common. Their Druze consciousness is not as strong as in Israel,
- the Druze in Syria are probably the least known of the Druze communities in the Middle East. Their part throughout Syrian history has been a rebellious one, thus amassing a cultural capital casting them as the scions of Arab nationalism,
- hospitality, courage, virility and above all fighting power were the traits that counted high by the Syrian Druze to prove their Arabness

- the fortune of Druze community differs greatly between Lebanon, Syria and Israel partly as a result of the differences in their structure in each of those countries, but even more so because of the difference in the political structure and culture of the three countries,
- the loyalty of the Druze of Israel enables them to guard their brethren in Lebanon and on the Golan from any Israel injury. The community thereby proved that even a minority of insignificant size it could, by acting honestly and gaining the confidence of its allies and its brothers over the border, play a balancing and mediatory role in term of crisis,
- in the three countries, the Druze have their own group structure and religious, tribal and political leadership. Yet a strong communal sense binds them together into a unity whose cohesiveness transcends geopolitical boundaries in all matters except political issues,
- Druze is a minority who has a centuries trend to dispersion, and for who the constant link most often chosen is the religion

Druze / Arabs

- *globally, Druze want to distance themselves from Arabs, particularly through their fidelity to Israel,*
- *the mistake for Druze is not having managed the relation with Arabs,*
- *in fact, language, origin, culture, civil life structure like holidays make Druze to be Arabs,*
- *the source of difference relies historically and still now on the difference of religion, determining a difference of identity.
Differences of religion influences differences of tradition,*
- *a research on the genes of Druze people shows that it did not change for the last 1000 years, which means that the community succeeded in preserving its unity through time, as well as it re-enforce the belief in reincarnation,*
- *when Druze come back from the army, they are confused about themselves. In particular, they feel quite apart from the Arabs.*

In fact, they are Arabs, in spite of the big difference coming from religion, within the Arab world, flags, places of worship, prophets, Book, make Druze specificity,

- *Druze are part of the Palestinian Arabs, but they are also apart because they do military service.
To create a separation between the two communities is a Zionist approach, it is the same phenomena with the Christian Arab.
In fact, it is the same population, the religion does not matter, everyone is on the same land, it is the same nation, a bloc of population.
Israel came and try to change the identity, the culture of this whole community, but Druze do not feel really that they are Israeli.*
- *Druze are against violence and do not want to be part of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict*
- *Since Druze quitted Islam and did not recognized its 5 principles, the Islamist hate them, even more than the Christians and the Hebrews,*

- *Islamists see Druze as apostate, as secular Arabs have no problem in seeing them as included in the Arab community,*
- *The Druze community in Israel is one among many in the nation's ethnic mosaic. They may be viewed as a minority within a minority: a religious ethnic minority within the Arab minority, that chose, or was manipulated to choose, a different path than the others Arabs in Israel and a different kind of involvement in the life in the country,*
- *Druze look to others with tolerance because they don't have missionary ambition, they don't interfere in others groups life,*
- *they have nothing to do with the Palestinians,*
- *religion is not the important thing for the majority of the Arabs, it is so only for the minority of extremis Islamists,*
- *most Druze identity as Arabs, and most Arabs see Druze as one of them, their history is shared as are villages, customs, culture, food and clothing,*
- *the fact that Druze are required by law to do IDF service, whereas other Arabs are not, does not disturbed relations between Druze and other Arabs. It is just one element and one cannot base the entire relationship on it, history between the two is long, it would not be right to highlight one element like this,*
- *someone who wants to advance the issue of equality has to convince 33% of the Jews in the country. The other 33% don't agree, but at least are willing to listen. The last 33% hates him and will oppose him. But the first third is crucial.*
- *Druze are considered as anti-Palestinians by the Arabs, and suspected to be pro-Palestinians by the Israelis,*
- *Government is pushing the separation between Arabs and Druze communities, whereas there is no problem between the populations themselves. One example of this policy is the splitting of students in separate Arab classes and Druze classes,*
- *Arabic is the language for the Druze, but it is becoming a specific version due to the introduction of Hebrew language influences in it,*

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- A common dismal fate, binds the Arabs and the Druze as victims of Israel's land appropriations policy, deficiencies in the Arabic language state educational system, and a host of other disabilities that, it claimed, discriminate against all non-Jewish sectors of the population,
 - Druze politicians and intellectuals reject Arab membership,
 - Like their Arab brethren, protecting their lands has become sacred value, second only to protecting the family and its honor,

Druze / Israel

- *the question is: why loyalty to the majority does not get reciprocity from the Israeli government, why the majority does not give to thus minority equal part of the "national cash" ?*
- *there are several challenges:*
 - . *Druze make efforts to become integral part of Israeli society, to become recognized,*
 - . *they contest the fact that central Authority dos not develop as it should be, industrialization, education and modernization of the Druze community, (although in the education field it is opposed to them that Druze received similar opportunities, and results are often better, as it is often the case for a diaspora community),*
 - . *young Druze are now less tempted by the Jewish army, partly because they feel less appreciated,*
- *Israel makes them secure, gives them liberty which allows them to keep on their specificity,*
- *Druze speak Hebrew fluently, but much less English, which is a handicap to join the contemporary world,*
- *the army is for the Druze a place to learn and a place to integrate Israeli life. It gives a different conception of the world, it opens the way to education, to work, to better know Jewish people,*
- *the Israeli Government policy is good in maintaining Arabic language as official, in providing security, preserving freedom, offering good education s and medical systems, freedom of press, of movement, in bringing freedom of election as a part of a democratic process.*

It is bad in always marginalizing Arabs including Druze, in keeping the prerogative of decision, in disputing land by confiscation of Arabs and Druze properties, in being tightwad when giving land for young people, both being existential questions for the Druze community,

- *the Druze participation to Israel security makes the Government quite cooperative.*
It is a fact that defending Israel, Druze are also defending their own land

- *Israel opens the education system to the Druze community, but manages to keep it at a quite low level in order to limit its capacity to defend its position,*
- *Israel misuses democracy. They go on considering as their major interlocutors the same Druze leadership to receive their assistance and money, knowing that those leaders use it for their own business, for maintaining their leadership, instead of using it for the whole community,*
- *Druze played an important role in 1948 in helping the establishment of the State of Israel, but Israel responded to it by promoting Druze internal rivalries, then imposed them to go to the army, and it took practically all their land to the point that now there is left less than 1 hectare for 1 Druze,*
- *every Israeli Government lied to the Druze by not realizing its promises in matter of infrastructure, education, industry.
It is in fact, an expression of racism,*
- *Israeli people is good, but not their government,*
- *80% of young Druze still declare to be willing to go to the army, and 60% of the Druze soldiers are in fighting units,*
- *the army is a good place to make the difference between Druze and Israeli disappearing, to allow a young Druze to prove oneself,*
- *both people appreciate each other, that is the Israeli Government which is unfair and does not counter balance what the Druze are bringing to the Israeli society.*
- *6 000 houses in the Druze villages have not yet regular electricity connection, and 55% of the Druze population is still under the poverty line,*
- *Israeli should accept Druze as they are, and as well Druze should accept Israelis as they are, the multi-culture is a positive element,*
- *he Israeli politics is:*
 - . *to advantage Druze relatively to the other minorities,*
 - . *to enlarge the difference between Druze and Arabs following the precept, to divide for reigning,*
 - . *to favor a specific Druze identity,*
 - . *to favor the relationship with the Druze spiritual authority,*
- *every Druze village defines an annual plan, and the Israeli Interior Minister apply equality through a balanced support ("support d'équilibre").*

Yet the Israeli allocation is always inferior relatively to allocations to Israeli equivalent locality,

- *they see themselves as Israeli citizen, with no national aspiration, there problem is the uneven repartition of investment between Jews and them. Druze feels they are deprived, they don't get the same treatment from the state as Jewish Israelis after being discharged from the army,*
- *the controversial Jewish Nation-State bill is problematic, it could harm the Druze community, which is a small ethnic group with its own tradition. It should be altered to clarify its inclusion of minorities which support the Jewish State, the Government should prevent sparking incitements against the Jews,*
- *Jewish people are more open toward the Druze community, they see it with spontaneous sympathy, whereas the establishment, at the exception of the army, has a much more ambiguous attitude, apparently friendly but manipulating in reality, with discrimination policy, confiscation of land,*
- *even when policy makers adopt the right decision vis-à-vis the Druze population, Jewish civil bureaucrats often treat them like Arabs, maintain the old nasty approach of "respect and suspect",*
- *there is no intentional policy of discrimination against the Druze, but the authorities just don't care,*
- *"we are Druze in obligations and Arab in rights",*
- *to obtain equality in every field, with the Jewish population, Druze people have not to wait for the Israeli to give it to them, it has to take initiative, not to wait being feed with fishes but to learn how to fish by itself,*
- *the question of Israel, Jewish state, is right at the center of the present debate in the Arab community, to the point of blurring the traditional distinction between Muslims, Christians and Druze,*
- *relationship between Druze and Jewish community inside the Israel state are good, but Druze have to get their rights from the Governments, their whole citizen rights, to begin with the basic ones, such as being connected everywhere on the Druze territory to the national networks for electricity, water, which is not the case in this 21th century,*
- *Israeli do not know more who are the Druze, apart for some clichés like good food, secret religion, good soldiers and nice villages. An education effort should be made to extend knowledge to its more fundamental characteristics,*

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- the history of relationship between Israel and Druze constructs the past according to the need of the present.
 - in fact, the "cooperative attitude" came from economic status, from the singular interest of the Druze elite, from the Zionist policy to foster their attitude,
 - there is no doubt that in a democratic, pluralistic society, national service is one of the fundamentals of equality: "perform your obligations and receive your rights".
That is particularly true of Israel, a state that must bear a heavy security burden and be constantly concerned for its survival in view of the incessant threat posed by neighboring Arab states,
 - Israel is a State in the Middle-East with an Eastern political culture with large Middle-Eastern minorities. Because of the endless Arab-Israeli conflict, and as long as the Arab countries challenge Israel's right to exist, their situation was never addressed along the line of majority-minority relations, but along lines of endless national and international conflict,
 - the first bond forged between Jews and Druze were due to their respective constraints and mutual interests, basic to which was a firm resolve to live in Palestine, and take steps to protect their physical existence and survival,
 - as progenitors in the cooperation between Jews and Arabs in present-day Israel, have acted a stabilizing influence, they adhere to the belief that the struggle for equality of rights is more effectively carried out within the existing democratic mechanism as opposed to having recourse to violence and bloodshed,
 - "a proud Israeli on the way to conscription, but a dirty Arab on the way home",
 - Israel has no Druze policy, it has an Arab/Palestinian policy of which the Druze affair forms a part,

- in its policy toward the Druze, the Government of Israel has emphasized the symbolic rather than the practical. It has relied on the concept of fragmentation, facilitating control and ensuring dependence,
- gradually, generations of Druze became dependent on the Government. The recruiting factors of those providing funding tightened their supervision over all political or public activity not directly connected with the protégé's job. As a result, the Druze became Israel's most backward non-Jewish community, the fewest university graduates. It was also the least prosperous economically, its farmers the last to adapt to modern method,
- in a pioneering spirit, the Druze voluntarily accepted their role as a model for coexistence within a multicultural, multi religious and multi linguistic Israel,
- Israel turned the custom of Taqiyya into religious principle,
- the village Beit Jann has lost 56 of its inhabitants to Israel's wars, the highest number of men per capita of any locality in the country,
- pledges for improvements are often made by ministers just prior to elections, but evaporate afterwards,
- welcome by Sheikh Moafaq Tarif, the head of the Druze community in Israel, visiting the tomb of the prophet Shu'ayb, whom Druze tradition recognizes as the biblical Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, President Reuven Rivlin said that the covenant between the Druze and the Jews was sealed by Jethro and Moses, that today the two people in a spirit of cooperation share a common destiny.
- he said he would like to see members of the Druze community integrated into all aspects of Israeli endeavor, economics, science, culture, education, sport, and in the social fabric of the nation.
- it would be detrimental to Israel to allow the Druze, who are full citizen of Israel, to walk around with the feeling that they are no horizon open to them,
- like the Jews, solidarity with the tribe is paramount, surmounting any other loyalty. Like the Jews, preserving the community and maintaining its strength have always been the prime elements,
- the Druze of Israel, although they enjoy freedom of activity as a community and symbolic esteem for their contribution on the part of the authorities, have never been made a partner in the determination of any policy, especially decisions at the national level. As a result, their feeling of

belonging, of being an integral part of the sovereign state, has grown weaker, and their pride in being Israeli is in retreat. This situation does harm the principle of partnership and religious and national co-existence that must undergird an enlightened, modern democratic state,

- even though the Druze first volunteered and later were ordered to serve in the Israeli army, many of their lands were nevertheless confiscated under the Land Law of 1953, demonstrating how the Israeli authorities still treated the Druze as second-class citizens,
- of the minority groups who lived through the 1948 war, the Druze were unique in that they did not flee, and were not expelled. This evidence suggests that the Jews did not consider the Druze "Arabs" but viewed them instead as allied of unique status.

This is all the more remarkable that the Druze were ostensibly good candidates for joining movements that resisted the Jews. They were culturally similar to local Arabs Muslims as well as in term of political structure. Both societies were composed of family factions influenced by religious leaders,

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- *servicing in the army makes Israel anxious not to hurt them and protect their own way of life,*
- *strong familial solidarity,*
- *good relationship with external partners,*
- *close one to another,*
- *solidarity, as the hand fingers in time of peace, as a sword in time of war,*
- *solidarity linked to minority status, and exposition to endless difficulties,*
- *secret and reincarnation,*
- *in spite of rivalries, united for the real big questions,*
- *attachment to the Druze specific culture,*
- *ousting Druze not respectful of the culture,*
- *obligation of intra-marriage,*
- *they are part of a bigger group, the Arab one,*
- *community of roots with the Lebanon and Syrian Druze,*
- *intermarriage keeps identity, culture,*
- *social coherence,*
- *tradition and religious rules,*
- *importance of education,*
- *holy text inspiration,*
- *perpetuation of Greek philosophy,*
- *the geographic places,*
- *security of the areas,*

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- *internal splits, inter-groups quarrels,*
- *lack of fraternity,*
- *society still blocked,*
- *lack of well established religious leader,*
- *consequences of individualism, disorganization, family splitting,*
- *weaknesses in matter of level of life,*
- *vote (only 60 000 in age to vote),*
- *mountains far from main cities centers,*
- *difficulty to have a civil authority accepted*
(either Village civil Committee or deputy)
- *dispersion between Lebanon, Syria, Israel,*
- *separation uqqal / djuhhal*
- *modernization diminish the specificities of Druze behavior,*
- *too small,*
- *too peaceful,*
- *intermarriage separates from other communities,*
- *no big city, no Druze urbanization,*
- *insufficient modern education,*
- *no common big library,*
- *secret religion,*
- *far from Israel center,*
- *opposition family/ community,*
- *land being private,*
- *ignorance of religion by young Druze,*

Internet era

- *a mark-up of generations, the oldest one being disconnected from modernity,*
- *it changes the relationship men/women by introducing full equality,*
- *It is a powerful element for changes, but the social media could make people hates themselves,*
- *modernization opens the closed world of Druze as for every other social group, and in the same time, it provokes a need for religion and a renewal of religion,*
- *there is a negative way of using the means of modernity, which applies too to the Druze, such as the addiction to tools as Facebook, besides the new opportunities it opens,*
- *very good and inevitable, but also a bad tool for spreading hate,*
- *modernization accelerates the transition between the traditional and the modern society, and provokes reflexes of defense from the religious people who try to erect barriers,*
- *internet offers a double interest for the Druze: to open new approach and possibilities for their global development, and to offer for the individuals as for the family level, to improve knowledge and openness of mind,*
- *specific Druze incubators could be created within the Druze territory, as the one waiting at Yarka its inclusion into an economic program,*
- *main danger of the internet influence is that the Druze parents are mostly not able to fold the use their children are doing with it, while it is first impossible to stop this use, and second the benefits of the internet is obviously too big for a small community as the Druze one to limit its use,*

Image & Communication

- "The pen is in thy hands, write and fear not" This led to the creation of lines of communications that recorded the way of enlightenment, the strength required, the integrity demanded and ingenuity called for,
- research about Druze identity can be traced back to the middle of the 19th century.
Debate is about its relation to Arabism and Islamism, and its position toward various middle-East nations-states,
- the Israeli media cultivate a "self- image" of the Druze that has little to do with reality but is, rather, an "image" the Israel authority and the Jewish majority has formed in their minds.
They are portrayed as the mirror image of the Jewish nation, community, religion, the entanglement religion/nationalism, the preservation of authenticity and independence, the destiny of a minority are presented as similar,
- they pretend to know what is good and what is bad for the Druze,
- Druze call themselves also," Mouwahidoun", the ones who believe in one God, or "Banni Maa'rouf",
- A five pointed star, colored green, red, yellow, blue, white, is the Druze symbol.
The Druze attribute to the number "five" a symbolic force, representing the majors cosmic principles emanating from God:
 - . Universal Intelligence,
 - . Universal soul,
 - . the Verb,
 - . the Previous,
 - . the Next,

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Evolutions

- *since 2005 a strong budget investment has allowed the number of Druze students to grow from 1000 to 4000, and in the near future to 8000,*
- *a big plan aiming at improving the tourism structures in Druze area is being developed, particularly by improving in the villages, the street naming, water and electricity supply,*
- *from 2005 on, to prevent a dangerous gap between old and new Druze generations to extend itself, an action enhancing Druze identity toward the 12/18 years young will be made, including educational program, a youth center in every village, installation of bookstore in every villages*
- *the familial tradition is declining in the civic side of the society, but it is still resisting in the religious side*
- *mostly secular before, Druze society is becoming more religious,*
- *the new generation is rapidly getting away from tradition in matter of clothes, religion, food..., in a way that the oldest one , more linked to religion, does not accept well,*
- *the patriarchal type of society is put in danger by the upheaval of individualism, as well as the average education level is getting higher,*
- *the information era opens Druze community to the external world, with the danger than remoteness generates loss of contact,*
- *“We did not get lost hope”,*
- *from 1954 to present time, birth rate went from 7,9 children for one couple to less than 2,*
- *influence of greatest education level, and the development of the place of women.*

- *comparing behavior today of Druze people with that of ten years ago, it looks like night and day. Twenty or thirty years from now the influence of modernization will be so strong that Druze community should be scared,*
- *as majority of the men go directly to work after their army time, women take a strong place in the field of education, 70% of them going to the education system against only 30% for men,*
- *more than any other time in the past, Druze need people of stature who can interpret religion in a modern way. What exist today are either fundamentalists who drag the community backward, or individuals who do not have the strength to pull it forward,*
- *we are threatened by an economic and political Americanization that degenerates form of the old pragmatism which at least had the merit of referring to certain basic values quite frequently. Americanism may be good for America but it is a poisonous export. The European people are losing their soul in it,*

- with materialism dominating modern life, it is rewarding to look into the spiritual side of life,
- weakening of families and villages ties, because of migrations, of the modification of status of women, and of the urban demanding for dismantling of hoary tradition,
- there is a slow subjective secularization,
-

Challenges

- *one of the major challenges Druze society is facing is to find the best balance between the religious and the civil sides in the coming years.*
- *as everything, the community is irresistibly changing, and the true question is to know if the Druze will know how to define a new model linking modernization and keeping its essence.* It
is anyway necessary to anticipate the research for such a solution,
- *being Druze, should pass from a direct, unconscious feeling, to a conscious adhesion, somehow similar to the way the secular Jews relate their Jewishness to the Bible,*
- *the growth of individualism has to be kept into the frame of Druze community feeling,*
- *Druze should find the way to participate more fully to the Israeli society,*
- *the development of the Druze villages is a necessity for the next future,*
- *there is now a crisis of leadership in the Druze society, as well civilian as religious, which has to be solved,*
- *developing education is a must,*
- *to open tradition, the religious comity has to find the way to keep people into the community without pressing them,*
- *to keep alive the duty of memory and transmission,*
- *to find the path to liberate women, to makes them exist for themselves, to engage themselves into a professional career, in an acceptable way for the basis of Druze society which is the family life,*
- *3 key subjects:*
 - . education: it need a revolution,*
 - . openness of opportunities: by the Israeli Government to the Druze community*
 - . economy: overall development*

- *the most important is education, which determines the level of life,*
- *development of Druze villages with industrial zones, tourism infrastructures,*
- *definition of a civil identity , besides the religious identity, to face up modern time,*
- *. the development of radicalization will makes life more difficult for the minorities,*
- *. if there is no solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict, Druze will be affected by it,*
- *the new generations will be more and more impacted by the consequences of modernization, in term of openness to external world, life style, ambition,*
- *Druze have to rebel against Israel false paternalism which keeps them in a sort of second status,*
- *Israel has to understand that the world is a new world, that it can no longer discriminate minorities like the Druze, and to understand that it will be a winner to make them full citizen of the country, in an adult position,*
- *the Druze community has to accept to integrate its Arabs side to which the younger generation will become more and more attached,*
- *the great challenge is to get full exposure to the Israeli society while maintaining the tribe and its customs, and to live side by side with Jewish and Arab neighbors, and yet preserving one's Druze identity,*
- *what Druze society needs is an infusion of resources and a sense of confidence about its permanent place in Israeli society,*
- *the fate and character of the Druze community for generation to come will not be determined only by achievements in education, technology or economics. They will be determined foremost by the cultivation of the community spiritual values,*
- *future is very much linked to the faculty of the community and the religious leaders, to anticipate the way for keeping active the Druze religious principles, together with conducting modernization and development of the Druze society,*

- *the leaders and the whole Druze community have to learn and to make ways for organizing the introduction and the use of the new technologies, in every field of life of the Druze community, social, economic, cultural,*
- *the contemporary world requires from the Druze community, as for every community but with a stronger intensity because it is a minority, to think in an holistic way, linking together history, religion, modernity,*
- *the changing life style for the new Druze generation imposes to invent a way combining a modern type of behavior, together with maintaining traditional familial and communal life.
In that difficulty of mixing both sociological universes, Druze values could be of great help,*
- *main challenge is to maintain an internally focused Druze community, inspired by a secret religion, and to sustain an opening of its mind due to the irresistible need of modern external society,*
- *we have no wish to entrust our fate to an absolute liberalism, blindly seeking its own path and the laws of its development. We want to develop a scientific analysis of the body politic, as a perennial entity, in order to bring to light the specifically human and beneficial motivations within it, the internal and external laws of their "dharma", within the context of mankind's real destiny. One cannot simply leave everything to the whims and passions of individuals to the vagaries of new scientific discoveries or to the ambitions of the technocrats,*

Phase 2 – Interpretation

Analysis

Characteristics

Behind a stereotyped image of the Druze community, it does exist a reality much more sophisticated.

Effectively, the Druze lives in villages on top of mountains, their religion is secret, they believe in reincarnation, they stick together and marriages are strictly and only between them, they are loyal to the country they live in, and they are very good soldiers.

But, more in depth, the Druze have maintained through centuries a society of transmission: their religion feeds the community with ethic principles such as dignity, modesty, solidarity, honesty, the distinction between the enlightened and the unenlightened at the individual level, is developed in distinction between secular and religious at the society level, they are Arabs by roots and Israeli by citizenship, they are deeply attached to their land and their traditions, the basic social structure is the family.

Historical

The mix of determination in keeping during a thousand years the specificities of their community, their own secret religion, a strict endogamy, and of flexibility allowing their minority to go along with stronger majorities, help the Druze to survive through history.

It makes think of the Druze community as "a reed that bends but never breaks".

Culture and tradition

Clan solidarity, very strong link to the village, deep hospitality, respect of religion values as well as religion belief, all those cultural characteristics, and the traditions inherited from their Arabic roots are preserved by the closure of the Druze society. Those Druze culture and tradition have now to be preserved in their cohabitation with the Israeli's ones and their confrontation with the modernist trends.

Economy

Under impulse coming from education, army conscription, the Druze economy *evolved from an essentially rural structure to a more equilibrated one, with third parts*, in defense activities, liberal business and services plus farming.

Handicapped by lack of managerial culture, the centralization of investments by family leaders, it is hampered by the brakes the Israeli policy imposes on it.

Religion

Historically and sociologically cement of the community, the Druze religion defending monotheism, God fearing, social and justice, reincarnation, is quite notorious through its secret dimension.

Its secret is effectively a specificity, but secret hides in fact its real originality. Based on Greek philosophy, it develop a corpus of ethic principles which irrigates the civil society, a spirituality and wisdom that, in turn, fed the respect of religion and of the enlightened.

Education

There is a consensus amongst the Druze to consider education as the number one factor of development and wealth of the community. It is already a success since 70% of the Druze women get high level education.

However it exists a double risk that have to be avoided. Outside education has to be balanced by family education in order to keep alive the principles of the Druze society. And the imbalance of level of education between women and men has to be analyzed and redressed.

Sociology

The Druze community is more complex at first glance. Solidarity is undermined by internal inequality and animosity, the benefit of conscription for men are lessened by the need to work immediately after, Israeli allegiance is in balance with Arab links. Yet, inside attachment, association of flexibility and resistance, bridges between secular and civil rules, confer its price to the Druze community.

Major danger to the continuity of Druze specificity come from possible assimilation to Israeli lifestyle by new generations, and excessive split between modern and traditional sections of this society.

Women

There is still an ambiguous situation for women in the Druze society, insofar as the evolution toward high education, liberalization with possibilities for working, driving in and out, modern clothing, give them a new position, and in the same time, religious women mainly are most often limited to their classic role of house mistress. As respected as they are, their key role in the modernization of the Druze community will probably put the pressure to treat this ambiguity.

Lebanon/Syria/Israel Druze communities

Common denomination, Arab in descent and Druze in religion, strong communal sense, history, bind those communities together.

Recent historical events, differences of political structures, loyalty to their respective countries, creates sensible differences between them, without destroying a same sense of belonging, and continuous exchanges.

Druze / Arabs

The differences of religions have led to internal differences of traditions and of identities and of external position in matter of tolerance, , relationship with Palestinians. But, culturally, Druze are Arabs in matter of language, family importance, sense of honor, food and clothing habits, attachment to land and villages.

Differences between both minorities are emphasized by the Israeli political strategy.

Druze / Israel

Loyalty from the Druze to Israel is a basis of their relationship, concretized by the conscription to the Israeli army, and various job possibilities in the security sector. It gives to the Druze a special place as a minority and some benefits.

On the other side, land confiscation, discrimination in investments, freezing of building licenses, electricity and water limited access, generates a strong frustration feeling that damages this relationship.

+ / -

There is a certain equality between solidarity, religious cement, attachment to tradition, real spirituality, on one side and internal splits, blocked society, religious ignorance by young people, economic weakness on the other side.

Internet

For the Druze community, perhaps more than for other communities, internet and informatics evolutions and tools, represent the best and the worst. It penetrates irresistibly into a society until now very much closed in itself, bringing openness to external world, but upsetting tradition centuries old, access to technology for the younger, but difficulties for the older, introducing modernity, but provoking defensive reactions.

As the outpost of the inevitable modernization, internet acceptance and assimilation will become a key item of the Druze community next future.

Image and communication

There is no real, organized Druze communication, which leaves the field to an image forged by the Israeli side, a mirror image of the Jews community, religious, independent, traditional.

Even the use of a serial of symbols, flag, colors, related to the religion content, are not sufficient to make visible the deep reality and truth of the Druze community.

Evolution

The positive tendencies are the progress of education, the new opening of the society toward more freedom for women, for new fields of economic activity, the persisting attachment of Druze going outside of the community to their tradition, family, village.

The negative trends are the declining demography, the persistent gap between leaders and the overall population, between educated women and less educated men, the remoteness of the Druze villages from the big urbanistic zone where economic and technologic are booming.

Challenges

The Druze community will be engaged into a set of challenges in order to master the invasive modernity wave.

To integrate modernity without loosing or weakening its essence and spirituality.

To maintain the right balance between religious and secular.

To liberalize its tradition while limiting the growing individualism trend.

To participate fully to the Israeli society without accepting a paternalist partnership.

To develop the villages activities by entering in the urbanization process.

To find an holistic way if interlinking history, religion, modernity.

Major factors

1 – Original religion basis

Basic fundamental factor of the creation of the Druze community, their religion developed basic specificities amongst all others religions.

Secret by necessity, it has never been invading public the Druze life, it remained at the individual level.

Irrigated by Greek philosophy, it diffused to civil side of the community essentially moral principles. It transcended the geo-political frontiers between Lebanon, Syria and Israel. It played an internal preservative role as the essence of a community federated as much by respect as by belief. The religious leaders have preeminence in the community life.

But, its role risks to be disturbed by the irresistible wave of modernity, by the handicaps attached to its protective secret, closed society and religion ignorance.

2 – Original Israeli membership

The Druze community has de facto a special status amongst the Israeli minorities, even if it is partly the result of an Israeli policy aiming at separating Druze from the Arabs.

Israel brings to Druze, security, education and health infrastructures and access, Druze schools, jobs in public services, liberty of movement. The conscription system of the Druze men makes from the Israeli army a place of evolution, opening of mind. Druze brings to Israel good soldiers, multi-cultural enrichment, an additional culture and touristic territory.

But, the Druze/Israel relationship could be weakened. Land spoliation policy, social and economic discrimination, administrative locking, focalization of dialog on the Druze leaders only, conducted by the Israeli Government, give birth to a "Druze in the army, Arabs at home" resentment. Although new generation of Druze men are still willing to go to the military service, the proportion of them declaring to "feel Israeli" is declining.

3 – Original culture and tradition

The social basis of the Druze community is the family.

The strength of the familial solidarity extends itself to familial clans, till to make the Druze community as a federal clan structure.

Strong elements reinforced this social and cultural unity, such as the localization in villages in mountainous environment, the obligation of intra-marriages, the belief in reincarnation.

This solidarity takes a spiritual depth through the principles issued by the religion, and participates in making the Druze community as a society of transmission.

But, a series of phenomena endangers this multi-secular culture foundation.

The strength of tradition could become a weakness in time of invading modernity.

The Druze society is still largely blocked. The under educated young men get frustrated. Generalized growing urbanization may confront the Druze rural and isolated position.

And, the economic development is strongly prevented by the bad redistribution of the Israeli investments, by the absence of programming by most of Druze areas, by limitation of hi tech knowledge.

4 – Original Arab linkage

Muslim, Christian, Druze Arab minority, constitutes in Israel a bloc of population.

A set of similarities link them together. Arabic language, even if uses have introduced some variations between them, food, sense of hospitality, geographic situation in villages, in rural areas, family centering structures and traditions.

Inter relationships between the populations, are generally good.

But, many items make this Arab/Druze linkage controversial.

Islamists considers the Druze as entering into a pact with the enemy, Israel, in particular in going to the Israeli army.

More in depth, Druze are clearly culturally pacifists

5 – Originality of evolution

A number of current developments are consolidating the Druze community in its present structure.

The priority which has been given to education enlarges the possibilities for Druze to find a better place in the society and within the Druze community.

The relative emancipation of women, together with the fact that 70% of young Druze girls go to University, stimulate their position and role into the community.

A multi-yearly program for modernization of the Druze environment – roads, transportation, signalization, touristic infrastructure - has been engaged and will be deployed in the coming years.

But, a series of numerous others factors threaten changes.

The most impossible to avoid is the global invasion of the high technology new world that will inevitably impact the life style, and the internal life of the Druze community. Internet, the social networks, the growing media presence, will also confront the blocking force of the Druze society.

Specific problems will appear such as the cultural inequality between a majority of young women highly educated versus young active men under educated, the way to ensure the continuous loyalty to Druze faith and tradition of young Druze people bathed professionally into the occidental and urbanistic environment.

Diagnosis

Historically through a thousand years, across multiple successive critical periods, the Druze minority has succeeded to survive, preserving its singularity in matter of religion, culture and tradition, in a highly complicated Middle East region, besides and sometime against Arab and Christian communities.

This success is mainly due to the constant, individual and collective respect kept alive by the Druze to the fundamental principles brought by their original religion to the Druze community.

In modern time, this constant respect of those principles, together with the also permanent strategy of a weak minority to avoid the confrontation with strong majority, allowed the Druze to find a place in the new state of Israel, without ignoring its Arab roots.

However, the rapidity of emergence of a new world, not only of a new State, will soon change drastically the conditions of survival, through adaptation by the Druze community to the coming configuration.

The way to enter into this new open, technologic world, and so to ensure the continuity of the Druze history and presence, should only be defined if it preserves the spirituality and the singularity of the Druze community.

At this vital crossing point, Druze have to call on the essential concept that maintained their existence through centuries, in order to balance its integration into modernity, with the attractiveness of its spirituality.

Phase 3 – Creation

Identity concept

RESPECT

Druze are the people of respect

- it has a moral sense that encompass the rules and principles which religion has given to the Druze society: honesty, dignity, modesty, freedom, wisdom, together with intermarriage law and reincarnation,
- it has a practical sense that encompass the behavior and the life style of the Druze community,
- it has a transmission sense which represents and defends Druze identity from the historical beginning to present time,
- it has an individual sense, regarding attitude to family, religion, principles, tradition, community and land,
- it has a community sense regarding the relationship with Israel, the brotherhood with Lebanon and Syria Druze communities, the Arabic linkage,
- it has a federative sense, stimulating the generations linkage, allowing the community to federate individuals instead of individuals taking the lead upon the community,

Religion, with culture and tradition, are the backbone of the Druze community. The identity concept and the identity system does not pretend to change this fundamentals. But it gives pulpit and muscle to consolidate them at a time when the community has to find a new strength in front of the external world.

Modernization is alike tsunami. It is impossible to stop it. And it is so more impacting when the epicenter is quite near.

In Middle East, Israel, the "start-up nation", is this epicenter. Which means that minorities have to integrate as much as possible this modernity tide, to stay above the flow.

The Druze community has to add to its constant effort in respecting its unity, the secretion of its religion, its rules and its traditions, its family and clan structure, another new effort, in respecting also the necessities of modernity.

Double respect is the key for perpetuating the Druze community in all its specificities, keeping its very soul alive in the new world.

But, on the other hand, The Druze may bring to this world in making, an example of a society respecting and preserving humankind while entering into modernization.

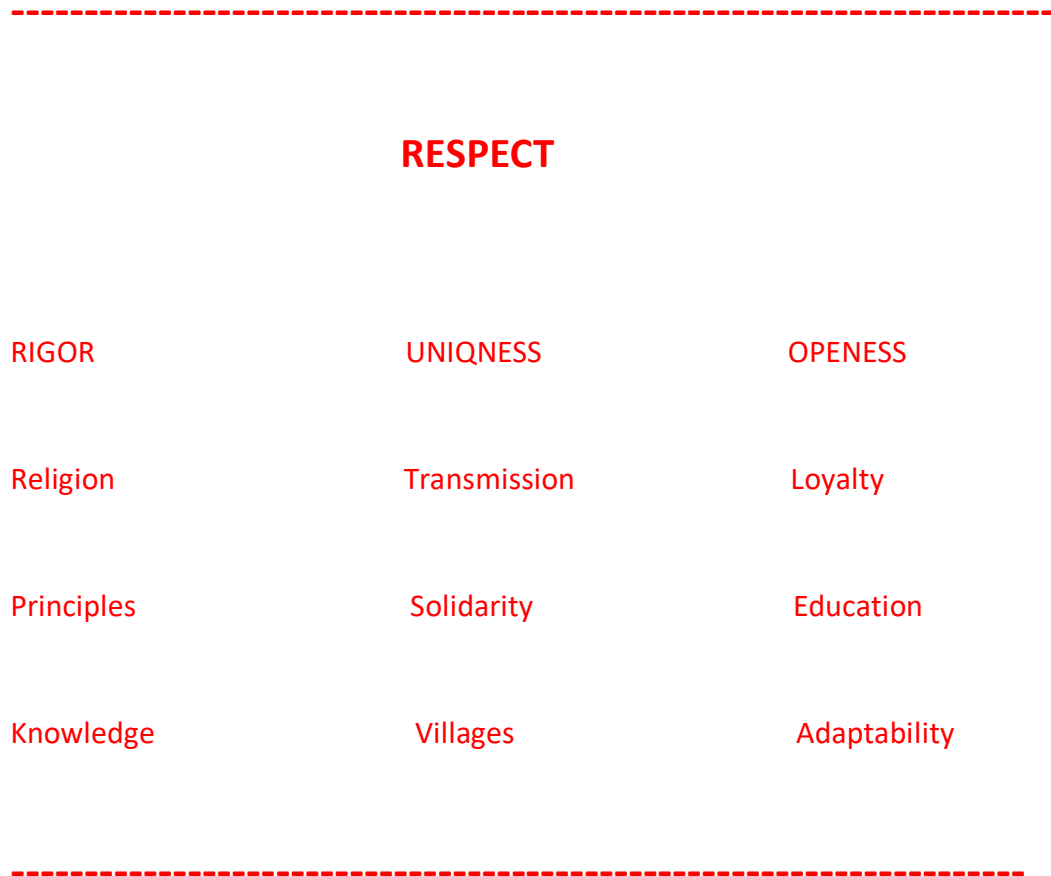
Modernity brings with itself, beside openness, inventions, new opportunities, networking, health progress, education access, growing individualism, invading media, virtual reality, materialism, excessive speed, religious radicalism, intolerance. And this dual face of modernity is present at its utmost in the Israeli society. Independently of any political opinion, it seems obvious that its initial spirituality has in good part vanished.

A Druze community able to combine its modernization with the respect of its intimate spirituality would present to Israel a renewed face, worthy of respect.

Identity system

The identity concept expresses the Druze identity, but it federates also a number of complementary notions characterizing the Druze community.

This set of notions that allow to deploy the whole richness of the Druze identity, under the umbrella of the identity concept, constitutes the Druze identity system.



The identity system is not only a faithful summary of what makes the specificity of the Druze community, it is a reservoir of ideas that should help the Druze to find in their own way, the responses to the future challenges they will encounter.

Phase 4 – Application

Identity manual

Lexicon

Every notion participating to the identity system has to be well understood and known by the Druze, in order to be used easily.

This lexicon constitutes a kind of Druze specific dictionary.

RIGOR: in the Druze world, it is essentially related to a moral attitude, linked to observance of religious rules and fidelity to the ethic principles religion has infused in civil life.

Contrary is weakness, softness, easiness,

RELIGION: essence of the Druze essence, its secret practice gives to it a kind of subliminal presence in the Druze life, related to wisdom, to Platonism philosophy, Inspiring but separated from civil life, not ecumenical by definition, it is a unique as being non-invasive, pacific, limited to its only territory.

Contrary is agnosticism, extremism, libertinism

PRINCIPLES: rules of action, based on values such as modesty, solidarity, moral rules such as truthfulness, honesty, inducing individual and collective behavior, coming from the religion, shaping the Druze community.

Contrary is indiscipline, permissiveness, free will.

KNOWLEDGE: linked to education which brings understanding of various disciplines as science, history, languages, mathematics, technology, extended to wisdom that knowing display.

Contrary is ignorance, incompetence, incapacity

UNIQUENESS: Druze have to defend and to perpetuate their originality as a people and their unicity as a community. Secrecy of their religion, closeness of the community by only intra-marriages, villages and mountains localization, belief in reincarnation, loyalty to Israel make their singularity amongst others populations.

Contrary is common, ordinary, generality.

TRANSMISSION: the Druze community is a society of transmission. Its continuity, as a minority, through one thousand years, has only be possible because of the persistence of its religious rules and its principles of life, because of continuous strategy of adaptation of the weak to the strong.

Contrary is interruption, nonlinearity, disappearance.

SOLIDARITY: characterizes the relationship between Druze within their family at first, within their community then, including a moral obligation for mutual assistance,

Contrary is individualism, egoism, indifference,

VILLAGES: the attachment to their villages is a key point of the faithfulness of Druze to their community. The isolation of those villages, on top of mountainous areas, materializes its uniqueness, and contributes to maintain its need for protection as well as for its confinement on oneself.

Contrary is anywhere, impersonal, soulless.

OPENESS: the focus of the Druze religion in the field of spirituality and wisdom leaves the field to the civil side of the society to open freely itself toward Israel society. And moreover, the Druze community appears as one only example of an enriching entanglement between both religious and civic sides.

Contrary is contraction, egocentrism, closing.

LOYALTY: the pragmatism of the Druze community as a minority not to oppose to a majority, makes it loyal to the country in which she lives. This strategy takes its value not only from its efficiency, but also because loyalty is in line with the moral principles that sustain together the Druze society.

Contrary is duplicity, occasional, trickery.

EDUCATION: it is central to the evolution of the Druze society and to its capacity to better enter into the coming new world. It is the essential lever to make the community to find a place in the rapidly changing and sophisticated Israeli society.

Contrary is behind hand, outdated, ignorant.

ADAPTABILITY: the long life of the Druze community has learned it the necessity to take into consideration external constraints and opportunities, and the internal way to avoid the first ones and to benefit from the second ones.

Contrary is stubbornness, inattention, rigidity.

Users guide

For every subject, the process consists at:

- 1 – to look which notions, part of the Druze identity system, are relevant for it,
- 2 – to use those notions to imagine answers to the demand.

Examples

- Demand: how Druze women can participate in helping young Druze to have a good knowledge of Druze religion principles and of Druze tradition rules,
 - 1 - selection of notions : principles, knowledge, transmission, education
 - 2 – creative answer: to define a minimum program of knowledge and to organize in every Druze village, periodic lessons ensured by some educated women from the village

- Demand: how to combine the preservation of Druze villages as an eminent piece of Druze life style and identity, with the irresistible process of urbanization as an eminent piece of modernization.
 - 1 – selection of notions : openness, knowledge, adaptability,
 - 2 – creative answer : to conceive and to develop, via internet, a virtual town interconnecting the Druze villages with a common web site, the implementation of common projects, and if possible in relation with Haifa University, local incubators, a big high tech company.

Identity program suggestions

Until now, the Druze strategy, minority confronted to majorities, has most of the time, be mostly and successfully defensive.

The difference between the present situation and the past ones is that the Druze community is no more only faced to a superior community, but to a change that affects every community, worldwide.

The consequence is that, at this time, Druze cannot simply be defensive. It has to behave offensively, in order not to stay on the road side, whereas the society as a whole and others communities, minorities or majorities, will evolve and will integrate the modern new world.

Offensively means anticipation. The material to anticipate can be found partly in the Druze identity system. The field of anticipation is either internal to the community, either external.

In order to build on its identity the answers to address to the changes that the invading modernization requires, the Druze society should develop a program of actions inspired by its religion and tradition fundamentals, such as the Druze identity system represents.

This program has to be thought upon and defined by the Druze community itself

.

Yet, the following suggestions for an identity program come from information gathered along this study, and have for object to propose some precise examples for this programing effort.

Internal

- Integration into high-tech world.

Key identity notions: openness, transmission, adaptability, education

It could become a menace but it could also become an opportunity. The opportunity comes from the fact that Druze can jump directly to the last state of the art of the technology, without having to pass through the previous phases of development.

To acquire the knowledge, a serial of actions could be defined:

- . census of existing expertise in the whole Druze territory in matter of people, field of activity, material, place,
- . creation of a scientific Druze committee, managing the integration process,
- . large consultation to receive ideas, suggestions...
- . definition of an annual multi integration program adapted to Druze environment, such as agriculture, wood, tourism, craft, building,....covering education for general learning and specialized knowledge,
- . proposal to some big High-tech companies and to incubators surrounding the Druze place, to become partners of the Druze community, as well as the Haifa Teknion University, Druze schools,
- . negotiation with the Israeli Government to propose investment associated with the benefits the Israeli society will get from the Druze modernization program,

To ensure that this move of the Druze into modernization will stay compatible with the perpetuation of its spirituality its rules and its tradition, a serial of actions could also be made:

- . a committee of Uqqal will be installed and will be in constant dialog with the scientific committee,
- . a special education program will be developed in two ways. For the parents to get a sufficient knowledge in matter of technology to be able to follow the use made by their children. For the children for them to know the risks of wrong uses and what culture and rules of life may add to technical knowledge.

Economic development

An offensive strategy should be of great help to stimulate the Druze economy. One of its advantages is that it will allow to reverse the relation with the Israeli Government or administration.

Key identity notions: rigor, openness, solidarity, principles

Instead of opposing, Druze will propose.

- . a specific economic development Druze Authority could be created representing the Mayors of the villages and the leaders of the community.

Its role will be to define a common development program, to initiate the actions and to give or not agreement to proposals, to focus efforts on the most relevant economic sectors for the Druze, such as agriculture, crafts, forests, tourism, or software creation, all sectors allowing to fix the Druze working population within the Druze territory, to become the common interface with the Israeli authorities, to allocate the money to be invested relatively to needs and equity principles, to stay in close relation with the scientific committee to cross and enrich both programs possibilities.

- . the already existing Druze actor, industrials, banks, craftsmen, farmers, will be associated to the programming process as much as they will, and to the execution phases as much as they could.

Every village, every mayor and his team, will get in charge of a part of this program in order to maximize efficiency and to make it visible to every family,

- . the program will be presented, discussed and coordinated with the Authority for the economic development in the minorities sector.

It will integrate the 5 years program of investment already existing, concerning electric and water distribution, improving the roads network and the transportation system.

Others action should be part of the internal actions programmed, such as

- . redefining the place and role of Druze women in the working side of the community, in benefiting of their high education level,

- . to increase the education effort on the knowledge of religion, tradition, and on the good practice of new technologies, including internet,

- . to develop, culture, music, sport infrastructure and participation.

External

Urbanization

Key identity notions: knowledge, transmission, openness, adaptability

To participate, rather than to resist, to the strong trend for urbanization that accelerates everywhere in the world, is a must for a rural society like the Druze one. The objective here would be to find a way that does not weaken the villages tradition and role that is a decisive element of Druze identity. It could be obtain in two ways.

To initiate special relationship between the Druze community and significant town in its surrounding:

- . creation of a committee for urban/rural relationship, including some village mayors, and representatives of economy, education, culture,
- . selection of towns, such as Haifa, Nazareth, Akko,
- . conception of project for special relationship, in different fields such as financing, innovation, economic development, tourism, education, to be submitted and discussed with authorities in every town,
- . organization of exchanges, definitions and planning of actions,

To solidify the attachment to the Druze community by Druze men and women who go out of villages for Israeli towns:

- . creation of a special page for them in the Web site of the Druze community,
- . to associate them into the various programs developed by the Druze, by asking them to participate, to bring ideas, to propose complementary actions,
- . to organize in the villages lectures about Druze religion and tradition, for the children of Druze couples living outside,

Relationship with Israel Authorities

Respect, the Druze identity concept, applies to internal life within the community. In the relationship with external world it should apply too, in particular toward Israeli society and Authority, but in a reciprocal way.

To succeed in getting revers respect from the Israeli, Druze have not to stay in demand but to anticipate and take the initiative.

Key identity notions, rigor, loyalty, openness, adaptability

To take the lead in this relation, Druze could at first prepare a White Paper, summing the different subjects, the present status for every one of them, the precise demands to the Israeli Authority, a suggested planning for realization,

This White Paper will be prepared depending upon the precedent programs, for economic development, urbanization.

It will make specific proposal concerning the protection of what is left of Druze land, the necessary equity for investments in Druze villages relatively to Jewish settlements.

In order to get maximum impact and to ensure its inclusion, this White Paper will be publicized

A review of its application will be made on a yearly basis.

Others actions could be programed in the direction of external publics:

- . organization of exchange of information, experiences, knowledge, with corresponding external entities in every field of main Druze activities, agriculture, crafts, tourism.....
- . organization of tours and meetings for the Young Druze outside of the Community, in order to make known to them this external world in an organized way.

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