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Intermarriage among Druze Men

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Abstract

In cases of intermarriage, both spouses profess different religions. For 50 years, this trend is rising constantly; naturally, it has not skipped the Druze community, even though its religious laws prohibit intermarriage, up to the point of being outcast from the community. The current study focuses on the extent of adjustment to the other society from the perspective of the Druze married men. The study is made by the qualitative method, the data is gathered through interviews of 5 Druze men, who are married to non-Druze women. The findings indicate that young Druze men meet their non-Druze spouses in the course of working in the city or during their military service. After being married, the Druze men integrate in the new culture, at the same time of being outcast from their Druze family. Over time, they experience disillusionment and enter the phase of nostalgia, yet, they cannot come back home as long as they are married to non-Druze women. The third phase is the phase of integrating between the identities or assimilating the two previous phases, if this phase is not completed properly, the Druze man would leave his non-Druze wife and children at a later age and would try to return to his Druze family and village, or would remain outcast forever.

Keywords

Intermarriage, Mixdness, Druze, Males, Israel

1. Introduction

A person is born into a specific religion, lives and dies in the same framework, regardless of one's will. Some fanatically preserve the religious principles, some follow the basic religious principals, others choose to leave their religion in favor of another religion, and one way to leave religion involves intermarriage.

Mixed marriages involve spouses within different religions, a phenomenon

which has become common in the last two decades. During the last 50 years, the phenomenon of intermarriage has increased also in Israel, about 5% of all Israeli families are mixed, that is to say, one of the parents belongs to another religion (Cohen, 2003).

The Druze is a unique secluded religion, thus, Druze by definition is a person who is born to Druze parents. The Druze religion strictly prohibits intermarriage (both of men and women), breaking this law leads to community outcast; therefore, Druze men who choose intermarriage are forced to abandon their village, to give up their relations with their parents and to leave home.

A study which was conducted in 1992 has revealed more than 100 cases of Druze interracial marriages, in which, 52 cases involve marrying Jewish women, 50 cases to Muslim women, and in 11 cases to Christian women (Hassan, 2011).

The current study focuses on the extent of adaptation to the new society and culture from the perspective of the Druze married men.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Adaptation

The term adaptation indicates of a new mode of adjustment, "Sapir Dictionary" defines the term in means of "getting used to a new situation, or as an opportunity of accommodating to a new situation", a process which is usually measured by timeline and in a number of aspects: physical, social and psychological (Eitan Abneon, Sapir Dictionary, 1997). The researchers Lunnir & Lazarus (1978) claim that every change is considered stressful if it evokes frustration, anxiety and unbalance due to the environmental requirements for adjustment.

Social adjustment is considered a behavioral aspect in self-esteem. It is defined as an interaction between the individual and one's environment, and the extent of adjustment to the new conditions and meeting of needs. Adaptation relates directly to personality. Personality is the link between the individual's social and physical environment, thus, it reflects the individual's adaptation patterns to the environment. The process of adaptation to the new environment involves physical, psychological, social and cultural modifications, in which, a person has to face his previous life as well as his new life-surroundings (Yacov & Friedman, 1999). According to Scott & Scott (1990), adaptation involves being satisfied by various aspects: personal-family, economic, social and political, as well as in aspects of employment, studying and spare-time. Each aspect involves distinction between objective adjustment—the measuring of a person's performance of tasks, and the subjective adjustment—whereas a person's satisfaction is measured. The assumption is that the two aspects are interrelated.

Berrey (1990), who has measured stresses in adaptation by symptoms of mental distress and psychosomatic, offers four general models of concept which examine the relationship between the culture of origin and the target culture: **Assimilation**—embracing negative attitude towards the culture of origin and positive one towards the new culture; **Separation**—clinging to the old culture and

avoiding the new one; **Integration**—a positive attitude towards the former culture and the new culture as well in an attempt to create synthesis; **Marginalization**—avoiding of the two cultures. In fact, the individual faces two core issues: one involves the extent of desire to preserve the culture of origin, while the other involves the establishment of a desirable intercultural relationship with the majority (Goltzman & Frugue, 2010). In the course of adaptation, the integrating stand point is preferable, while marginalization is the least desirable, for in the state of integration the sequence of the "self" between the past and present is maintained, providing a sense of harmony, and enabling better coping with the new reality (Berrey, 1990).

Ben-Ezer (1992) offers a model of adapting in relation to three timeline stages: **at the first stage, the individual** is engaged in the past, thus, one's identity is well defined and related to his religion of origin. This phase of "cultural grief" characterizes the individual's identity and is related to the cultural elements of the religion in origin. **The second stage** is characterized by an attempt to open up to the current reality, followed up by confusion, embarrassment and repeated attempts to redefine the identity. These efforts lead to emotional conflicts, great tension whenever criticism or peer pressure is exerted. **The third phase is the phase of** identity steadiness; a new identity is created, it contains the previous one, enabling a person to function well. Ben-Ezer assumes that successful process of adaptation means attaining the third phase, if the two previous phases are not properly internalized, the individual might experience pathological regressive process.

Cohen and Spector (2003) refer to the psychological phases of the transition into the new culture, defining **the first stage** of the transition euphoric. It appears that the individual is making great efforts to face the modification quickly and successfully, by adopting positive attitude towards the new reality and avoiding the difficulties. Naturally, this stage is momentary and the difficulties are great, and then **the second phase** appears, it is the stage of "longing and disillusionment" followed by disappointment, pain, depression, nostalgia and denial of reality. These emotions lead the individual to cling to the past, believing it is better than the new, dark one of the present time. **The third phase** is the phase of integration of the two previous stages; the individual is able to understand the consequences-the benefits and the disadvantages in adopting the new religion. Gradually, one begins to feel better, to play his roles better and to merge typical previous elements of behaving, to adjust and modify them in order to meet the codes of his new current society. Adjusting to the new situation and society requires the individual to raise great mental powers in order to fit in. This new mode of entering to an unfamiliar society with strangers and new behavioral codes, demands a change of attitude.

Many researchers have examined intermarriage in relation to the spouses' different reactions, the difference of situations (adaptation) and the origin for these differences. They have discovered that overcoming difficulties and the ability to cope with those difficulties depend on the individual's extent of maturity. Sup-

porting and aiding the individual at the beginning of the process may speed up the adjustment and prevent alienation and loneliness (Byron, 2003).

2.2. Intermarriage

Intermarriage is marriage between spouses professing different religions. Some countries still maintain law restrictions against interfaith marriage. Often, interfaith marriage is described by means of intermarriage, yet, the term has other meanings such as interracial marriage. Interfaith marriage allows the spouses to preserve the religion of origin, yet, in some cases, one of the spouses converts his religion (Cohen, 2003). In Judaism, marrying a non-Jewish spouse is prohibited, considered to be a key factor towards assimilation, and there are many references to this issue in the Bible. However, if a woman marries a non-Jewish husband, her Jewish descendants are still considered Jewish (Cohen, 2003). Most Christian streams do not prohibit interfaith marriage. The Catholic Church follows the Canon law, with its specific interfaith marriage laws. Some strands of Christianity oppose and forbids interfaith marriage, basing on some verses from the Corinthian's Second Epistle. Some of the Christian streams also prohibit marriage between spouses from a different Christian denomination (Cohen, 2003).

In the Muslim religion, the Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man, yet, a Muslim man is allowed to marry a non-Muslim woman only if she is Jewish or Christian. The Muslim religious leaders had determined that interfaith marriage is illegal in non-Muslim countries, and in cases of interfaith marriage, the descendants are considered Muslim only if the father is Muslim (Hassan, 2011).

Due to the fact that Druze do not accept intermarriage, most Druze do not leave their villages and only few families live in cities whereas there is a minor Druze congregation or does not exist at all. The intermarriage issue and the fate of their descendants were first discussed in 1977 by the Druze Court. The Druze men who marry non-Druze wives are treated with hostility by their family and community, for it is considered religious offence, entailing a sense of disgrace and humiliation. The findings describe the consequences of these marriages after a short period and after decades, in which, the majority of these marriages (of Druze men) fail and the men return to their village and religion, claiming that the "departure" of religion the Druze society were a direct result of lack of awareness towards their unique identity. This group includes also fathers who are forced to leave and abandon their children as a result of returning back to their old life. The open interaction towards intermarriage is relatively new phenomenon that was unknown to the Druze community in Israel. The exogamy of mixed-marriages creates extra divergence of relationships that weakens the ethnic loyalty towards the community. Religious Druze leaders believe that exogamy creates separation, conflict of interest and endangers the unique existence of the community, which is already less than 2% of the Israeli population (Hassan, 2011).

The Law of Personal Status for the Druze community had been established in Israel in accordance with the Religious Council in the November 2nd 1961, based on the Personal Status Law of Lebanon from 1958, in which, all Druze affairs are solved in the Druze Court and by Druze religious laws. This law was accepted also in Syria. In 1964, the legal-communal procedures in Israel were completed with the establishment of the Druze Court. The Druze religious Council is the court of appeal.

The Law has three basic elements: marriage is valid only in cases that the man and the woman are Druze; A complete ban on intermarriage; Polygamy (of women) is forbidden—a man cannot be married to two women (The Personal Status Law of the Druze Community in Israel, 1962).

The phenomenon of intermarriage is not widespread among the Druze community, although the weakening of the traditional frame. The modification is resulted in new employment patterns (the interaction with the Jewish population working outside the village and in various security services). Since 1950 to 1990, 115 cases of intermarriage of Druze men were counted: 50 cases to Jewish women, 46 cases to Muslim women, and 11 cases to Christian women, in the other 8 cases, the women's religion was hard to define (Hassan, 2011).

The intermarriage can be divided into four groups. The first group includes 50 cases of intermarriage between Druze men and Jewish women, in which third of the Druze men converted to Judaism in order to avoid religious duality in the family, whereas the other two thirds conducted civil marriage or chose informal marriage under the title of "common-law marriage". The second group includes 46 cases of intermarriage between Druze men and Muslim women. The third group includes 11 cases of intermarriage between Druze men and Christian women. The fourth group consists of 8 cases, in which the identity of the women is not obvious. To sum up, during the last 40 years, 115 intermarriages between Druze men and non-Druze women have been made (Dana 1998: pp. 94-99; the Druze Court of Acre; a field survey). The relatively large number of intermarriage to Jewish women (more than half of the cases) is related, among others, to the military service of the young Druze men and working in various security services, circumstances which provide plenty of opportunities to meet Jewish spouses (Hassan, 2011).

2.3. Druze

The Druze doctrine, before the dissemination of the Druze religion, was founded in the 11th century in Egypt during the rule of the 6th Fatimid ruler "al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh" between the years of 996-1021. Towards the end of his reign, the Druze sect began to form (Hazran, 2007). The Druze doctrine had been greatly influenced by the Isma'ili doctrine, and a year after its establishment (1018), Hamza bin Ali, one of its religious believers begun to spread the faith in public. The new doctrine aroused opposition among the Muslim believers, and in 1021, after the mysterious disappearance of the founder of religion—"al-Ḥākim", a purge against the Druze begun on the grounds of being heretics. The Druze, who

had to hide their faith and prove their loyalty outwardly, had begun using the method of "Taqiya" that allows its believers to 'fake' their religious loyalty to another religion, as long as they maintain their true faith by heart (Hazran, 2007). The Druze doctrine did not succeed in Egypt, yet, it has spread to the mountainous regions of Lebanon and the north of Israel, due to their persecution in Egypt. In 1043, when "the gate was closed" before new believers, the Druze transformed from religious-political movement into a closed community (Saleh, 1999; Amrani, 2010; Hassan, 2011). One of the most important elements in the Druze faith is reincarnation. The secrets of the Druze faith and laws are stipulated in 111 letters in 6 books, the Epistles of Wisdom were written in Arabic by teachers of the Druze Faith in the period of revelation and never been released, they were kept in secret by the religious leaders and are allowed only to the elite of initiates "the uqqāl", it cannot be rewritten, only copied by hand writing (Pereg, 2002).

Druze scholars claim that the commandment to religious secrecy until the end of days or judgment day appears in Al-Hikma al-Sharifa (the letters), and cannot be distributed or open to new believers (Halabi, 2002), forbidden to reveal. The secrets of the religion are open only for special people, who have gained spiritual maturity that enables mental engagement with the scripts, understanding of the burden and the power of the "internal true light" to carry out the responsibility. The Druze religion is not ritual, it has no practical precepts such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage or a day of rest that characterizing the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Dana, 1998). The Druze religion is philosophical, basing on the neo-platonic philosophy, which emphasizes the inner social layers of the spirit (Isaac, 2005). These are its basic principles (Halabi, 2002; Pereg, 2006; Amrani, 2010):

1) **Speaking of the truth**: The Druze is committed to veracity in speech and to truthfulness of the tongue, to keep his promises, his friends' secrets, to avoid gossiping and to speak kindly. This element is considered essential, its main focus is on human behavior in everyday life, the veracity is tested also by actions, intentions and thoughts.

2) **Protection and mutual aid to his Druze brothers**: The Druze is committed to protect and assist his community members worldwide in times of trouble.

3) **Avoiding idolatry and false prophets**: To avoid worshipping idols and repudiation of the devil.

4) **Confession in God's unity**: The belief in one God denies idolatry; God cannot be defined or understood by humans, for they are limited by the nature of creation.

5) **Absolute submission and resignation to God's divine will secretly and publicly**: A Druze must accept patiently God's decrees for better and for worse. The Druze religion does not support the freedom of choice, though, the Druze has a certain of freedom regarding one's personal life, yet, it does not apply to matters of life and death a person cannot choose the time and place to be born to

(family, nation or State), nor the time, manner or place of death.

6) **Reincarnation:** The belief in reincarnation is one of the fundamental principles of the Druze religion, its importance affects considerably the lifestyle and worldview of the Druze faith, and it is based on the recognition that God had created a fixed number of souls (Nasser-A-Din, 2002). Every person has both the physical element (the body) and the spiritual one (the soul), and at time of death, only the physical element dies, and the spiritual one is eternal. When a person dies, the eternal soul leaves the dead body, reincarnated to a just born baby. The soul passes from body to body (Falah, 2000). Hence, according to the Druze, the body is mainly a cloth that is traded at time of death; it also shades light on their approach towards death and customs of mourning (Nasser Aldin, 2000). The soul in its various incarnations is free to enter any man of any status, to reincarnate once into a rich man and in another generation to a poor one (Falah, 2000). This principle emphasizes the equality of opportunity provided by God to humans (Halabi, 2002).

The Druze in Israel is a rural, conservative and religious society. Their lifestyle is based on religion and guided by the elderly religious leaders (Falah, 2000). From the day of establishment, the Druze villages were characterized by a feud-al-patriarchal regime (Dana, 1998), which is based on hierarchical status within the family, clan and community. The Druze people believe in blood relations as a result of the faith in reincarnation (Faraj, 2006) (Faraj, 2016a) The Druze society is divided o two groups: the religious "Uqqāl" who attain regularly the "Khalwa" (the prayer-house) twice a week (in Sunday and Thursday evenings). A Religious Druze who does not follow religion is ostracized from religious gatherings for a period, according to the severity of offense (Faraj, 2016b) Two offenses (of murder and prostitution) are the most serious, and the offender is outcast of the meetings for the rest of his life. The religious leaders are the main influencers on the social and religious status of the congregation, they are entitled to keep out people from "the Khalwa" as a result of the following offenses: sitting together women and men at a wedding, singing and dancing together, or at a time of death for example, the leaders are entitled to decide not to pray for a person or avoid saying "God have mercy on you" which is considered most humiliating in the eyes of the Druze. The most sever offenses are murder, adultery and intermarriage, in those cases, a person is banished out of the village and family, loses the right to inherit, to marry his children to Druze, and becoming a dead man (Faraj, 2005).

The religious Druze is obliged to dress code: he must shave his hair and cover his head with a white turban, to grow a mustache and to wear traditional clothing: dark robe and baggy pants (Falah, 2000). One must avoid eating pork, smoking, drinking of alcohol and using of drugs, and above all, he must preserve moral values, to keep the commandments and to execute the religious principles. The secular Druze (the Jahl), do not know the secrets of religion and do not follow its commandments, yet, everybody is familiar with its basic rules. The Druze

is entitled to complete freedom in choosing the way of living, whether to become religious or secular (Falah, 2000).

The family has a significant role in the Druze society. The nuclear family is dominated by the father, while the extended family highly considers the family's elders. The family purity is one of the most important ethnic foundations of Druze society, the Druze cannot convert, and a non-Druze cannot join the Druze community, thus intermarriage between Druze and non-Druze is forbidden. Such an act is considered despicable and humiliating, not only by religious codes but also from traditional and social standpoint, thus, a Druze woman that marries a non-Druze man might be resulted in revenge and literally cost her in life (Falah, 2000). In order to preserve the family purity, the Druze religion is strict in matters of divorce; a Druze man who divorces his wife without sufficient reason must give her half of his property. The divorced couple is not allowed to live together under the same roof, and is not allowed to talk to each other, nor remarry each other (Falah, 2000). The Druze religious restrict laws and the religious and social boycott, as opposed to the Jewish law that supports marriage as long as the woman does not marry another man, and the Muslim law, in which the divorced couple can return living together only after the wife marries and then separates from the other man, the phenomenon (of divorcing) is relatively minor in the Druzesociety (Falah, 2018).

Endogamy still dominates the Druze society, thus, the extent of marriage between clans is high, most families prefer to marry their daughter to her cousin. The Druze practice the Jewish custom of Yibbum (levirate marriage), in which, the brother of the deceased is obliged to marry his brother's widow in order to protect her and her children and to ensure the family's estate, however, this practice is not required by law, it is merely customary, therefore, the widow or her brother in-law are entitled to refuse (Falah, 2000).

The Druze society, despite its prosperity, is still undergoing painful modifications, the traditional leadership loses its authority and the young generation, who is exposed to modernism outside its villages returns back with new conceptions (Faraj Falah, Maman, & Amasha, 2017). From a religious and economic point of view, the transition into urban life gradually takes place, leading to assimilation as an act of imitation of their Arab or Jewish neighbors, thus, in the course of the process, the relations to religion weaken. At the same time, the number of young Druzemen blurring their relations with the community and tradition increases, and they immigrate to the city. The phenomenon of marrying non-Druze women also increases. In the remote Druze villages of the Galilee, where the whole population is Druze, the problem is less noticeable, yet, in the mixed villages or the Carmel, near Haifa, the assimilation is prominent (Nasser A-Din, 2002).Dr. Ruth (Westheimer & Sedan, 2007) notes in her book "The Olive and the Tree: The Secret Strength of the Druze", that only a small minority is assimilated and intermarrying, mainly due to education, especially in early childhood. Thus, the role of the Druze mother is crucial. Reincarnation plays al-

so crucial role, for a Druze cannot convert.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Methodology

This is qualitative research of the type known as a case study. Case studies are normally conducted in the context of human activity at a particular time and place, seeking to understand a phenomenon that is part of the everyday fabric (Behrendt, 2017; Fuadiah & Suryadi, 2019; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2012)—violence against teachers in the education system. Thus, the researcher uses a "holistic approach" (Abuhav, 2013), focusing on uncovering, learning, and understanding the inner world of one's "subject", from the subject's perspective (Tov-al-Mashiah, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this approach, behavior is examined from the subject's point of view, that is to say, definitions, beliefs, values, and ideologies (Pelto & Pelto, 1978). Most of the research fieldwork is based on ethnographic, structured in-depth interviews as a primary source of information that enables the interviewee to tell his story freely while remaining focused on the research questions (Kapel-Green & Mirsky, 2013; Shkedi, 2011; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Maman, Farag-Falah, & NAPSO, 2018).

The current study focuses on adaptation to a different society from the perspective of the intermarried Druze men; therefore, this study was carried out by the qualitative method. The qualitative approach allows examining the extent of adjustment of the married Druze man, and allows examining the human experience rather than measuring the experience (Shkedi, 2011). This method highlights the subjective interpretation of the objects, in accordance to their social reality (Zabar, 2001).

3.2. The Study Population

For this study, I managed to interview 5 Druze men who are married to non-Druze women. Below is a table with the subjects' demographic data (the names are Fictitious).

No.	Name (Fictitious)	Age	The period of the marriage.	Occupation
1	Joseph	42	15.	Contractor
2	Suleiman	33	6.	Attorney
3	Sami	45	13.	Doctor
4.	Magid	35	8.	Military service
5	Fuad	57	14.	Attorney

3.3. The Research Tools

In the paradigm of the qualitative research it is common to use a variety of research tools (interviews, focus groups, observation, brainstorming, etc.)

The researcher selects the tools in accordance with questions and conflicts

that the research raises (Shkedi, 2011), for the purpose of my study, I chose to use the method of interviewing.

The study uses half-structured interview. This method requires the researcher to be involved in the course of the data collecting. The target of the interview is varied: to gain a change in concept or towards a person, or even towards the process; to provide the object information, to assist the applicant to gain insights regarding particular social condition, etc. (Zabar, 2001). In this study I chose a half constructed interview, due to the fact that it is adjusted to arrays semi-experimental, and therefore it is less common in the qualitative method of research. The interview usually managed by written briefs which specify the related issues in accordance to the purpose of the study, although the construction of questions or order is not determined in advance (Zabar, 2001).

3.4. The Research Process

I applied to the participants in person by phone, asking for their consent to participate in the research, I presented myself and explained the importance of the research and therefore the importance in their participant in the research, I provided, in detail, the purpose of the interview. After receiving their consent, we determined the time and place to conduct the interview, they all preferred to make it at home.

3.5. The Findings

The interviews raise some interesting findings:

1) How did you meet your wife: Each one of the interviewees met his spouse differently, yet, there is one common factor—all interviewees had met their spouse randomly, without planning in advance, especially when it comes to marriage, for example, **Suleiman** describes that "We served together, she was the secretary of the division I was serving in, I was the new lieutenant … At first, I did not tolerate her, it was mutual, she didn't stand me either, until the ice was broken and we found ourselves in love … I rented an apartment in Tel Aviv, for I was serving in the Kirya … We started dating and the relationship were grown stronger … She finished her military service and we flew together to Thailand for two months … and since then, we are together". **Joseph** states that "There was no prior acquaintance with my wife, I met her when I was working as a contractor at her neighbor's in TLV … We started dating … At that time she was a soldier and she knew that her parents would oppose the relationship … We continued dating until we decided to move in together. We lived together for a while and the rest is history …" **Sami** describes that "I met my wife when I was a stager in the hospital of Afula, she was the new nurse of the ward … From the first moment I saw her, I knew that we would have something … We dated for almost 3 years until we got married …" **Magid** states "Wemet at the end of the officer training. We started dating for two years, then we rented an apartment together for another two years, afterwards, we made it formal and got married". **Fuad** describes a complicated relationship "The first time I met my wife was in

our military service … After finishing our military service we had a break for two years … I began my B. A in Law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There I met her once again, we stated dating again … After two years we broke up, I returned to my village and got married …. My marriage lasted for 3 years, finally we divorced. I decided to move to TLV … and once again, I ran into her, she too had become a lawyer … We went out again for two years and then got married.

2) **The first period of the "new life"**: All interviewees did not notice any change between being married and pre-marital life. Some of them describe the new period as very good, believing it would have been better if it was done earlier. They all added that they had lived together before the marriage. In relation to family, they describe catastrophe, for example, **Joseph** claims that "My wife and I lived together before marriage and it didn't change much. My wife's family began to treat me well, they made peace with her and our life became cozy. The troubles came from my side of the family, it doesn't mean that there weren't any difficulties before the marriage, it only became greater…my family cast me, my mother has not spoken to me for over 15 years … My father died. I arrived to the funeral alone with my brother's consent, by the intervention of my relatives … I tried to talk to my mother but she refused". **Suleiman** describes: "There wasn't any significant change … Life continues and even improving when you have such a beautiful child as my boy … The drastic change was from the side of my family, I still maintain relationships with my two brothers, yet, my father, mother and sisters and all my of my second circle refuse to speak or to be in touch with me … They broke up with me after threatening that if I would marry my wife, my father would no longer see me ..." **Magid** believes that "After I got married officially, my state had been proven in terms of relations and other aspects, but it was all different in relation to my family, they all broke up with me … I find it extremely difficult" **Fuad** describes that "My relationship with my wife has improved and the feeling that I have a family of my own is great, it is good to know that you are married out of love and naturally you want to have kids with her and you are living your life as you wish … My parents, especially my mother have seized seeing me as their son, some of my brothers still talk to me only by phone, other refuse to talk ... I will be cut of the inheritance … this all would be fine except for the fact that my mother has cancer and I cannot see her because of her refusal, it hurts me very much ..." **Sami** feels that "Regarding the marriage, there is no special change, it is only improving in relation to my wife's side of the family, for they accepted our marriage as 'fait accompli' and the pressure seized to exist … Yet, regarding my side of the family-my parents, brothers, sisters and cousins, the change is for the worse, I barely see them up to the point of no contact at all … Six months ago, my uncle died, I wanted to come to the funeral but they did not allow me …".

3) **The Difficulties and Coping**: The interviewees claim that every marriage suffer from difficulties and conflicts. They all faced separation and divorce on more than one occasion. Currently, they all have chosen to overcome the tension

and difficulties involving the adjustment to marriage life and children in two different faiths. The interviewees explain that the difficulties arise as a result of several factors such as: family daily routine, the wife's side of the family, the close environment that is aware to the unusual marriage and consider it to be peculiar, and occasionally from the husband's side of the family. The interviewees note that these kinds of marriage involve many difficulties and concessions, which not everyone can or is willing to make. The interviewees were required to make far-reaching concessions for it is very hard to return to their former Druze community, the desire to raise your own family, and even more, to leave this family and your own children. The husbands make immense compromise in order to maintain the family intact and not to deteriorate the relations into divorce and separation. Some of the interviewees believe that the issue of the children's education and identity is a major cause for conflicts, for each side wants his/her child to adopt the their religion and identity, and try to impart his/her culture, for example, **Joseph** states that "Family life are characterized by quarrels and falls … I try to maintain my family united as much as possible, especially because we have children. My wife also tries to compromise in order to maintain our family … Recently, we had a quarrel over our children's education, we have a daughter and her mother allows her to be free, I feel it is wrong and forbidden … It's hard for me to think that one day my daughter will not marry a Druze, which I know that is exactly what is going to happen". **Sulaiman** says that a month ago "I had a fight with Shiran because I did not like the way she behaved at the wedding of her friend … maybe I was jealous, but the way she was dressed and behaved at the wedding was exaggerated … one of her relatives scorned me by saying I am a primitive Arab, and if I don't like it I can go back to my village". **Sami** claims "I live in peace with my wife but the surrounding environment is sometimes rude and cruel … My neighbors sting me many times and even my co-workers at the hospital, for not been converted … I expect I would face problems regarding my children's identity and education in the future". **Magid** believes that "There is no such thing as a perfect family or life, there will always be problems and disrupt. Every now and then, my army fellows make jokes for not converting yet … My wife also presses me to convert during my army service, for the process in the army is shorter and easier". **Fuad** claims that "There are always quarrels, for many reasons … I am relatively old in the late fifties … I had experienced many clashes with my family, neighbors or by the parents of my children's friends". The interviewees noted that they get little support in their crises and difficulties, the aid the wife, friends and acquaintances, or even by psychological treatment and marital counseling. The husband's self-capability is also a factor, for example, **Josef** writes that "We were already been treated by a marriage counselor … Our true friends helped us through these crises". **Suleiman** states "Mutual friends intervene from time to time to support us to keep going … I also consider my family as the most important asset, therefore, I try to maneuver as much as possible to avoid conflicts". **Sami** claims that "My wife supports me and the fact that I have many children also as-

sist me to get immunity against the hostile environment". **Magid** believes that "… the thought of destroying the family unit prevents me from giving up, on the contrary, it drives me to face the threats … My friends from the army help and support me a lot …". **Fuad**: "My family is the source for my support … I am doing everything to keep my family intact … My wife supports and help me … We have experienced a lot, there is nothing that could surprise me, we'll keep coping together …".

4) **The change over time**: Some of the interviewees claim that they have transformed a change of perception. It is clear that three of the five older interviewees undergo a change in relation to their worldview. **Josef** emphasizes "I think about the future often … I ask myself where I would be in old age … Where would I be buried … What about my parents, my brothers and sisters, my friends … I haven't seen them for the past three years and I really miss them … It is extremely difficult. Today, I am bound to my own family and cannot leave my wife and children". **Sami**, as Josef desires to be "Buried in a Druze cemetery with my parents and relatives … I long to my family and friends back in the village … I think about it a lot". **Fuad** also reinforces his feelings "I am old and I have to think what next … What will happen … To tell you the truth, I am fed up with city life … and I miss my family very much … I am bothered by the fact that I don't know my brothers and sisters' children … I even heard that one of the nephews is an officer in the paratroops … I miss my mother terribly and the house I grew up in … Today, I am at a point that I either go back or leave my wife and children …". **Suleiman** says "I live in the present, I wanted this life and doesn't want to change it … Anything can happen, thus, there is no point in planning or to be worried about … I chose this life and I will continue living them … " **Magid:** "The future is here, I chose it and I will continue living it … I believe we should be free and plan the future while fulfilling ourselves … I choose raising the family with my wife".

5) **Recommendations for mixed couples who are about to be married:** The interviewees hesitated and became silent in light of this question; they did not have any suggestions, except for three of the interviewees, who were willing to discuss the subject. They recommended abandoning the idea of intermarriage. **According to Joseph,** "the best is not to get married and leave this silly idea, for it would cause you great suffering". **Fuad** also recommended "to skip the wedding before the 'train leaves the station'". **Magid recommends to** "always remember, whether it is advisable or subjective, that the road to heaven is paved with good intentions, yet, anyway, you will have to face great difficulties".

4. Summary

The Druze community in Israel lives in rural society, and until three decades ago was conservative. Today, the Druze society is undergoing great changes which affect its properties (Falah, 2000; Amrani, 2010; Hassan, 2011). These modifications are emphasized by a loss of control and authority of the traditional leadership to the younger generation, which is subjected to life outside the village, the

same generation that holds new conceptions, which with its return to the village, it gains political and economic power.

The research reveals that Druze men meet their non-Druze wives in the city, during their study or military service. The openness towards modernism, at the same time with the transition to the city and the military service with the Jewish population—the dominant group in Israel with its openness modern lifestyle and the embrace of western values, lead to integration and to a blur of the relationship with the Druze religion and tradition, thus, the way to assimilation is short (Nasser A-Din, 2002; Hassan, 2011).

The Druze husbands undergo social adjustment and assimilation immediately after their marriage. It is found that they are well adjusted to the new society and culture. It is expected that the close environment of the new culture will reassure and encourage them on the bond of their marriage, and the negative attitude towards their former culture of origin and the positive attitude towards the new one (Berrey, 1990). Naturally, the individual raises his best efforts to cope quickly and successfully with the changes, by embracing positive perspective on the new reality and ignoring its difficulties (Cohen & Spector, 2003). As for their relationship with their family of origin, the changes are irreversible, thus, their family cut them off and abandon them, especially by their mothers, who cannot bare their son's marriage to a non-Druze wife. The meaning of this is that the men are exposed to great hostility by the Druze family and community due to the religious offense and the sense of humiliation (Hassan, 2011). Moreover, their mothers feel most guilty, for they fail to inherit the Druze values in young age, as expected from them (Nasser A-Din, 2002; Westheimer & Sedan, 2007).

After years of marriage, it is apparent that some of the Druze husbands are at a phase of disillusionment, they still cling to their old culture while keeping apart from the new one (Berrey, 1990; Cohen & Spector, 2003), for example, Josef (with his teenage daughter issue) and Suleiman (the behavior of his wife Shiran), while Sami and Fuad are in the phase of integration, they have developed positive attitude towards the former as well as for the new culture, in an attempt to create a synthesis between the two (Berrey,1990; Cohen & Spector, 2003). Magid is still in the phase of assimilation. Coping is mainly a result of the wife's aid, the husband's close circle and especially one's self-efficacy (Byron, 2003).

The Druze husband begins to long for his old culture, and as time passes, the longing grows bigger, as it is reflected by the older interviewees' statements (Joseph, Sami and Fuad). An examination of the proposed adaptation models proves that the Druze men who are in the phase of integration, develop synthesis between the old and the new culture (Berrey, 1990; Cohen & Spector, 2003). Yet, their inability to continue being part of the old culture (the Druze village) creates the intense longing to the old culture, in this manner, the process of synthesis is incomplete, for the two former stages were not internalized appropriately, and as a result, it could lead to pathological regressive processes (Ben-Ezer, 1992), and to separation. The husband could leave his family, abandon his offspring and break off the relations in order to return to the Druze village and religion, de-

spite being a father to children (Hassan, 2011). Indeed, there are many cases in which Druze men in intermarriage had abandoned their family and returned to their village.

In today's reality, the Druze community embraces modernism and western values that erode its unique characteristics. Intermarriages are one of the symptoms that the community tries to eradicate, to prevent from spreading. Due to the fact that Druze do not accept intermarriage, and most marriages are within the community, the majority of the Druze do not leave the Druze villages and only few families live in city.

I recommend further examination of the subject, using a larger sample with an emphasis on the married Druze men who returned to their old community and villages.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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