

Always behave like a duck – keep
calm and unruffled on the surface,
but paddle like the devil underneath.

Jacob Braude

On a Personal Note

The response to my previous book, *The Future Code: Israel's Future Test*, published by Yedioth Ahronoth in July 2008, soon made it apparent that I needed to write this sequel. *The Future Code* presented readers with a discipline for the study of the future, described the philosophic rationale behind future studies, and employed various methods of research to identify future global trends and their impact on Israeli society. *The Future Code* examined trends in numerous fields – from economics, security, and social aspects to future cultural identity issues. When the book resonated positively with readers, and some of the predictions that I set out (which in early 2008 may have seemed improbable to many) did actually materialize, I was then asked to write a sequel that would focus on the State of Israel's geopolitical future as part of the Middle East.

Even in the early 21st century, many Israelis still experience existential anxiety, and would like someone to explain to them, using reliable tools, what the future holds in store. They are troubled because even after 60 years of independence, the very existence of their tiny country is still threatened, and some believe that the danger has intensified with the addition of the Iranian nuclear threat. At the same time, they feel a sense of helplessness when Israel's

every attempt to end the conflict with the Palestinians seems to run aground, be frozen, or hits deadlock.

The Future Code emphasized that we should develop our forecasts in every aspect of our lives using valid methods of predictability. I am happy to say that this message received an enthusiastic reception by my readers and reviewers, with many praising my courage in demonstrating how reliable research methods can help envision trends even in the hectic, rollercoaster reality of the Middle East.

Here, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those readers of *The Future Code* who took the trouble to write to me, offer comments, correct a detail in the text, or ask me to write a sequel. Some even brought their remarks up for public debate and their commendable boldness resulted in our correspondence, which can be viewed at www.thefuturecode.com. I thank them from the bottom of my heart, and hope this new book will answer their needs. This book is dedicated to all these readers.

Although I am certain that the future will be different from anything we can predict at this point in time, my hope is that we will be able to learn from most of the forecasts that I managed to put into words here, which has been the main purpose of this endeavor.

For this English version of the book, I made some modifications to better reflect the changes that have taken place in the Middle East in the last two years since the book was published in Hebrew in 2010. The Arab Spring, as some like to term what has taken place in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Syria during 2011-12, is better explained. These events were predicted in detail in *The Future Code* (page 313), and in the Hebrew version of this book they were further developed before they occurred. In this English version, I reflect on their future path after they have already started to materialize.

David Passig,
May 2012

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

Oscar Wilde

Introduction

I am neither a prophet nor a prophet's son. My only aim is to challenge the short-term patterns of thought to which we have grown accustomed, since they often lead us toward mistakes and beckon us in the direction of failures that may tip us into dangerous extremes. This does not mean that long-term thinking makes us immune to failures. It does not. Still, we should try to understand the processes we are involved in and examine their long-term development trends, in the hope that by virtue of this examination, and the understanding that we gain from it, we will be helped to notice unique and fleeting opportunities to sidestep the pitfalls that we really want to avoid.

I have no crystal ball, but I do have methodologies¹ whose level of validity and reliability are capable of predicting long-term future situations that may indeed reflect the future we will witness, if not to the finest detail then at least in close proximity. Science in general, and the methodology of future studies in particular, attempts to make sense of what seems irrational and disorderly. There is the assumption that even an absence of discernible order in history is based on an orderly substructure that impacts upon trends and events. I do not believe that we can

We may not understand the order existing in history, but it is our duty to try to discover its patterns

understand the more obscure “meaning” of history, if it even has one, but it should be our duty to attempt to discover its patterns in order to improve our future prospects. If those who argue that there is no point in studying the future are correct, then everything that the human race ever did, is doing, and will do, is pointless. This means that there is no beginning or end, reason or purpose, and everything takes place within chaos, devoid of direction or meaning. In my humble opinion, to subscribe to such fatalism leaves human existence without any free choice or glimmer of hope. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and their children to do better.

The effort to study trends 50 years in advance may be viewed as an exercise in futility, rather silly and definitely frivolous – particularly by those who believe science should only study “pure and proven truth.”² I can only hope, however, that the readers of this book will see the study of the long-term future as a rational, applicable, and attainable process, despite the accelerated changes we have been experiencing in the early years of the 21st century. In point of fact, the uncertainty that characterizes this century is what makes this study even more valuable, if only to give us more time to react to potentially fatal eventualities.

To a certain extent, the work of researchers in any discipline, including futures studies, resembles the work of a chef. To prepare a tasty meal, a chef requires utensils with which to peel, grind, mix, roast, or bake the ingredients; he or she also needs basic ingredients such as flour, eggs, and vegetables; and dishes on which to serve his or her creations. This, then, is my “cookbook” for the study of the possible future.

The first part outlines the tools I have chosen for the core forecast this book makes, the second part comprises the data that shaped it, and the end product is served up in the remaining three parts of the book.

Here, I try to show the need to examine the global and Middle Eastern long-term trends that provide the context for and envelope

the State of Israel, to conclude how they are reflected in it, and mainly to design a complex and possible outline for the future geopolitical conditions that will mark its centennial. It is reasonable to assume that many details of the future picture I present here will appear wrong or even ridiculous in 2048, but I will try to give the readers tools with which they can analyze how man operates in history, and which demonstrate the mechanics with which man brings predicted historic events upon himself, even unintentionally. In any event, I would be very glad if one day my grandchildren will read this book and say: he was half-right.

My sole goal has been to identify the main events that will shape Israel's geopolitical nature when it is 100 years old in order to better reflect them in the decision making process of the second decade of the 21st century.