



Life-Coherent Discernment and Repair

Re-Grounding Spirituality, Religion, Peace, and
Geopolitical Conflict in the Protection of Life

Based on the academic white paper by Dr. Bichara Sahely

Wicked Conflicts Persist Because Their Failure Modes Are Misnamed

If a conflict is framed only as a security problem, a legal dispute, or a diplomatic impasse, the deepest driver of violence remains invisible.

Human beings do not fight only for material interests. They fight for meaning, memory, identity, and survival. They fight for their Ultimate Concern.



The Illusion of Negative Peace

• Direct Violence

(Bombs, assaults, hostage-taking, killing)

Ceasefire Threshold

• Structural Violence

(Blockades, statelessness, unequal law, restricted movement)

• Cultural Violence

(Dehumanizing theology, weaponized memory, enemy absolutization)

Peace as Silence



A flat line covering up structural and cultural violence. A temporary pause before recurrence.



Peace as Life-Condition

The presence of justice, dignity, access to life goods, and legitimate coexistence.

The Anatomy of the Pathology: Sacred Insecurity

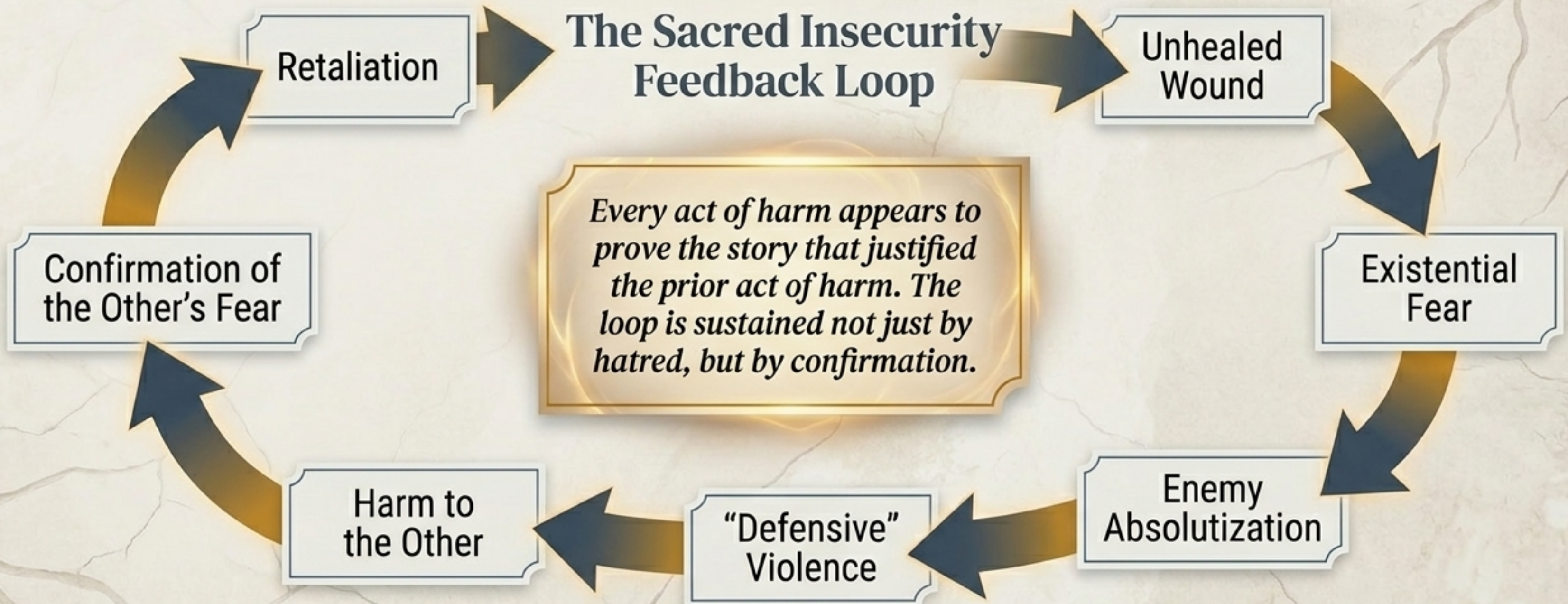
*The condition where practical disputes fuse with ultimate meaning.
The conflict becomes a vessel for the sacred.*



Key Diagnostic Symptoms

- ⚠️ Compromise appears as betrayal of the dead.
- ⚠️ The other's security feels like your own erasure.
- ⚠️ Violence appears defensive; revenge appears just.
- ⚠️ Civilian suffering is rationalized as tragic necessity.

Why Violence Becomes Self-Confirming



Peace requires nervous systems that no longer expect annihilation at every encounter.

The Affective Field: When Moral Signals Are Captured

Emotion is a living guidance system. But emotional truth is not the same as moral authorization.



Core Insight: Revenge is answerable to the wound. Justice is answerable to life.

From Measurement to Discernment

Measurement makes harm visible. Discernment names its meaning.
Both require a relational upgrade.



Measurement

What counts as progress?
(Metrics, outputs, casualty counts, borders)



Discernment

What is worthy of ultimacy?
(What is protected, sacrificed, and worshipped)

The Central Life-Coherent Test: *Does this sacred story, institution, or policy protect, repair, and expand life-capacity—or does it require the disposability of life?*

Naming the Failure Modes

The Diagnostic Matrix of Ultimate Distinctions

The Life-Good	The Threshold	The Sacred Distortion
✓ Security	crosses into	⚠ Permanent Domination
✓ Liberation	crosses into	⚠ Civilian Revenge
✓ Faith	crosses into	⚠ Absolute Certainty
✓ Sacred Memory	crosses into	⚠ Weaponized Victimhood
✓ Forgiveness	crosses into	⚠ Impunity

The Great Inversion: When the Vessel Becomes the Idol

Prophetic Religion



- Speaks from the life-ground.
- Criticizes its own side in the name of life.
- Protects the vulnerable even when it threatens institutional comfort.

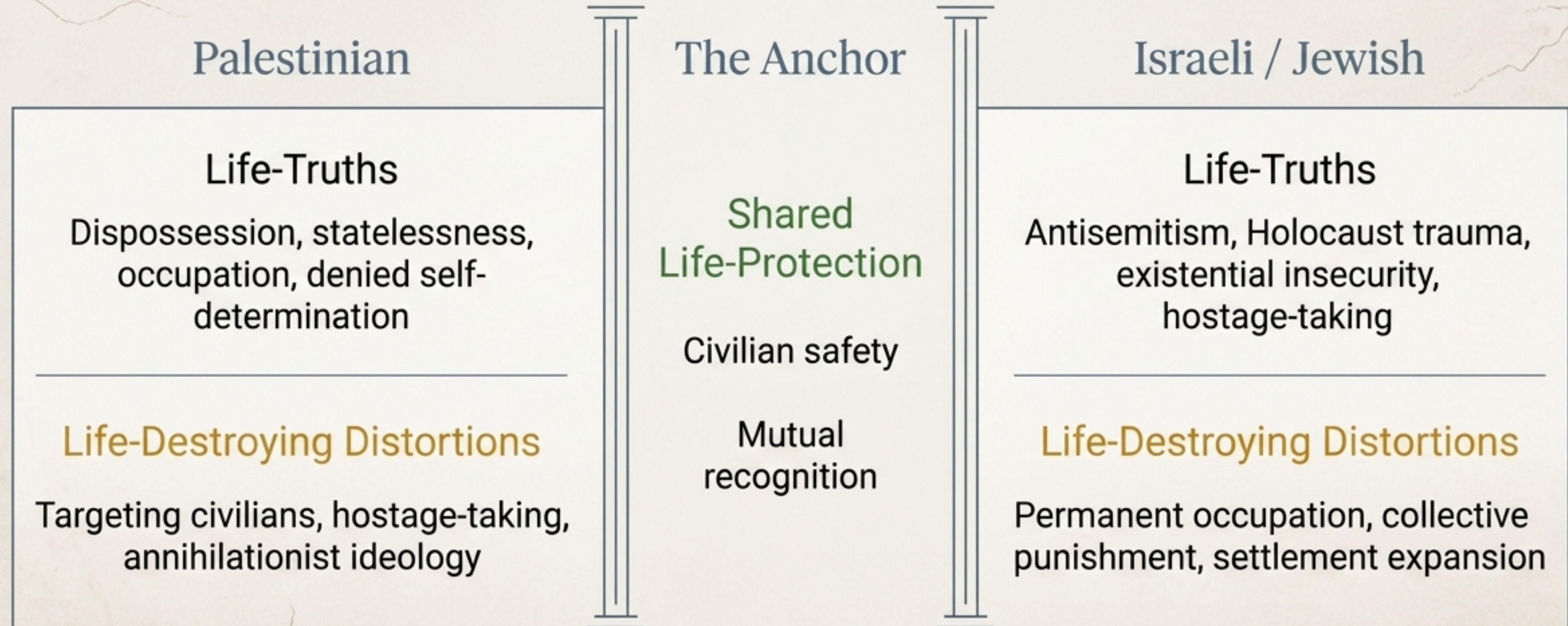
Captured Religion



- Uses sacred language to protect power.
- Treats dissent as disloyalty.
- The survival of the institution becomes more sacred than the victims it has harmed.

Honoring Wounds Without Sanctifying Violence

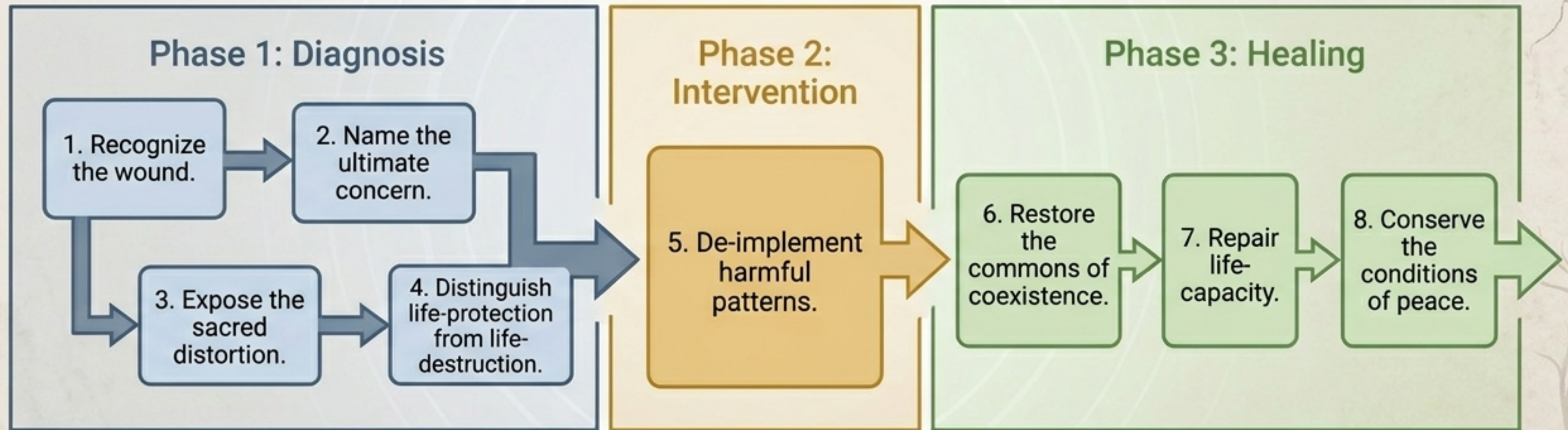
A life-coherent framework refuses false binaries. To name one truth does not erase the other.



The Clinical Pathway for Civilizational Repair

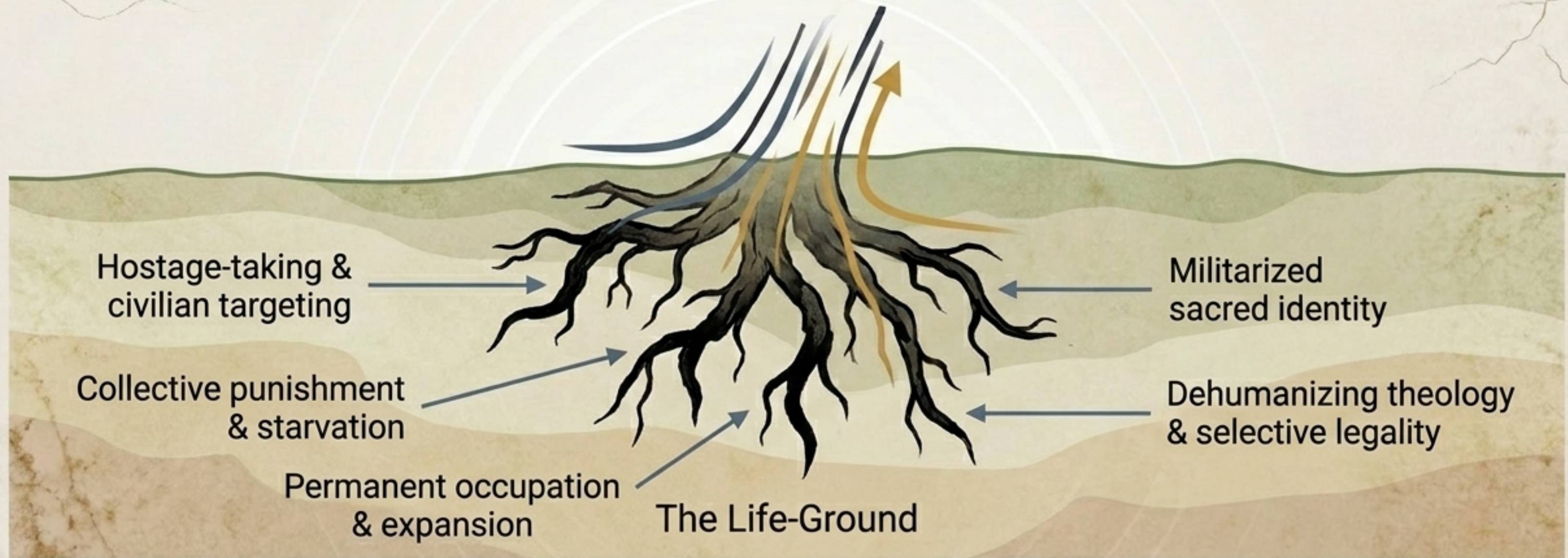
Recognition prevents denial. Distinction prevents moral collapse. De-implementation stops harm. Restoration rebuilds capacity.

The 8-Step Discernment & Repair Cycle



What Must Be De-Implemented

De-implementation is the deliberate withdrawal of legitimacy, resources, repetition, and institutional support from patterns that reduce life-capacity.



We cannot simply remove a harmful pattern if the life-need beneath it remains unmet.

Restoring the Commons of Coexistence

Rebuilding the shared conditions that allow different peoples to live without needing to dominate, exclude, or destroy one another.



Peace is not only a ceasefire. Peace is repaired life-capacity.

The Restoration of the “Thou”

The central problem in sacred conflict is that the “Other” ceases to appear as a legitimate being in coexistence. The enemy becomes an “It”—a target, a demographic, a pollutant, a problem.



The Vital Question:

Can the other people appear to you as legitimate? Can their grief correct your story? Can their children interrupt your strategy?

No sacred story, no national project, no security claim, and no institution can be considered life-coherent if it requires the disposability of life.

The true test of ultimate concern is whether it protects, repairs, and expands the conditions through which all peoples can live with dignity, memory, security, and a shared future.

