The Middle East is living a nightmare, partly because of a man of Russian origin who became Israel's greatest general and, later, prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon. What are the inner thoughts of this man? This is what Amos Oz, an acclaimed Israeli journalist, writer and novelist, with a world-wide reputation, helps us to discover in an interview published by the Israeli daily, Davar, in 17 December 1982.

Amos Oz:

We are talking while sitting on the balcony of the pretty country house belonging to Ariel Sharon which is situated in a prosperous Moshav [an agricultural co-operative]. To the west we see a burning sunset and there is a scent of fruit trees in the air. We are being served iced coffee in tall glasses. Sharon is about fifty years old. He is a man well known for his military actions. He is a strong, heavy, figure wearing shorts but no shirt. His body is tanned a metallic bronze shade, the colour of a blond man living in the sun. He puts his hairy legs on the table and his hands on the chair. There is a scar on his neck. His eyes wander over his plantation. He spells out his ideology in a voice made hoarse by too much smoking:

“You can call me anything you like. Call me a monster or a murderer. Just note that I don't hate Arabs. On the contrary. Personally, I am much more at ease with them, and especially with the Bedouin, than with Jews. Those Arabs we haven't yet spoilt are proud people, they are irrational, cruel and generous. It's the Yids that are all twisted. In order to straighten them out you have to first bend them sharply the other way. That, in brief, is my whole ideology.”

“Call Israel by any name you like, call it a Judeo-Nazi state, as does Yeshayahu Leibowitz [a revered Israeli intellectual]. Why not? Better a live Judeo-Nazi than a dead saint. I don't care whether I am like Gaddafi. I am not after the admiration of the gentiles. I don't need their love. I don't need to be loved by Jews like you either. I have to live, and I intend to ensure that my children will live as well. With or without a blessing of the Pope and other religious leaders.
or from the New York Times. I will destroy anyone who will raise a hand against
my children, I will destroy him and his children, with or without our famous
purity of arms. I don't care if he is Christian, Muslim, Jewish or pagan. History
teaches us that he who won't kill will be killed by others. That is an iron law."

"Even if you'll prove to me by mathematical means that the present war in
Lebanon is a dirty immoral war, I don't care. Moreover, even if you will prove
to me that we have not achieved and will not achieve any of our aims in Leba-
on, that we will neither create a friendly regime in Lebanon nor destroy the
Syrians nor even the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organisation], even then I don't
care. It was still worth it. Even if Galilee is shelled again by Katyusha rockets
in a year's time, I don't really care. We shall start another war, kill and destroy
more and more, until they will have had enough. And do you know why it is all
worth it? Because it seems that this war has made us more unpopular among
the so-called civilised world."

"We'll hear no more of that nonsense about the unique Jewish morality, the
moral lessons of the Holocaust or about the Jews who were supposed to have
emerged from the gas chambers pure. As for Eyn Hilwe [Lebanon's largest refu-
gee camp] it's a pity we did not wipe out that hornet's nest completely. I have
no regrets about that healthy bombardment of Beirut; and that tiny massa-
cre. Can you call killing 500 Arabs a massacre? We should have done it with
our own delicate hands rather than let the Phalangists [the Christian political
party and militia, allied with Israel] do it. All these good deeds finally killed
the bullshit talk about a unique people and of being a light upon the nations.
No more uniqueness and no more sweetness and light. Good riddance."

"I personally don't want to be any better than Khomeini or Brezhnev or Gaddafi
or Assad or Mrs. Thatcher, or even Harry Truman who killed half a million Jap-
aneise with two fine [nuclear] bombs. I only want to be smarter than they are,
quicker and more efficient, not better or more beautiful than they are. Tell me,
do the baddies of this world have a bad time? If anyone tries to touch them the
evil men cut off their hands and legs. They hunt and catch whatever they feel
like eating. They don't suffer from indigestion and are not punished by Heaven.
I want Israel to join that club. Maybe the world will then at last begin to fear
me instead of feeling sorry for me. Maybe they will start to tremble, to fear my
madness instead of admiring my nobility.

Thank God for that. Let them tremble, let them call us a mad state. Let them
understand that we are a wild country, dangerous to our surroundings, not
normal, that we might go crazy if one of our children is murdered – just one!
That we might go wild and burn all the oil fields in the Middle East! If anything
would happen to your child, God forbid, you would talk like I do. Let them be
aware in Washington, Moscow, Damascus and China that if one of our ambas-