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A MATTER OF MINDSET

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Many years ago I read the following (I will have to paraphrase, since I no longer have the book): A man is in a sinking boat with his wife, mother, and young child. He can save himself and only one other person on the boat. Whom should he save? The vast majority of people with Western values would say "Save the child." After all, the child has his/her entire life yet to live. What would the standard answer be in the Arab world? Surprisingly to most of us, it would be "Save the mother." Why? The reasoning is that "A man can always have another wife and another child; however, he will always have only one mother."

This contrast between value judgments by those brought up in a Judeo-Christian culture and those brought up in the Arab world struck me when I read about Palestinian reaction to the capture of Saddam Hussein. In the West the reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Even the leaders of European countries that had not supported the efforts of the U.S. to topple Saddam expressed approval. However, the reaction of many Palestinians to Saddam's capture was quite different. In an December 14 Reuters article headlined "Palestinians Mark 'Black Day' of Saddam Capture," Mohammed Assadi wrote of the mood in Palestinian areas:

"Disbelief and gloom seized many Palestinians Sunday at news of Saddam Hussein's capture as Israel fired off a telegram of congratulations to Washington. The former Iraqi ruler was a hero to many Palestinians for his stand against Israel and its U.S. ally, as well as for helping families of Palestinians dead in an uprising. For Israel, he was a menace over the horizon who long bankrolled the enemy. "It's a black day in history," said Sadiq Husam, 33, a taxi driver in Ramallah, West Bank seat of the Palestinian Authority. "I am saying so not because Saddam is an Arab, but because he is the only man who said no to American injustice in the Middle East," he said.

"Saddam paid over \$35 million to the kin of Palestinian suicide bombers, militants and bystanders who died in an uprising that began in 2000. Though far from all Palestinians supported him, militants marched to back Saddam ahead of the U.S.-led invasion in March.

Arafat himself had opposed the 1991 Gulf War that ousted Saddam's forces from Kuwait. Palestinians cheered when Iraqi Scud missiles crashed into Israeli cities. Some did not believe news of Saddam's capture even when images of the bearded figure flashed across television screens. "Maybe they captured someone who looks like him," said Laila Abusharigh, 55, in the Gaza Strip. "Saddam is a real man and all of us are with him." Fifteen youngsters from Arafat's Fatah movement tagged onto a rally in Gaza for the Islamic group Hamas, holding up posters of Saddam. Islamic factions sworn to Israel's destruction have taken strength from Iraqi resistance and cautioned Sunday that Saddam's capture would not end attacks on U.S. forces. "The war will start now in Iraq," said 16-year-old Yusef Khaill in Gaza. "Saddam helped our people and we will not forget him." "< BR>

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The striking thing about these comments is the fact that Saddam is responsible for killing and torturing hundreds of thousands of people is of no consequence to these Palestinians. Why? "...for his stand against Israel and its U.S. ally," and "because he is the only man who said no to American injustice in the Middle East." Thus, the overriding principles are not the sanctity of life and the inalienable right of each individual to live freely. These principles are the foundation stone of the values system of the vast majority of those raised within a Judeo-Christian framework. Rather, for many Palestinians some form of "slight

to honor" is more important than anything else. In their values system, all sorts of heinous crimes are justified just so long as one stands up to the U.S. and Israel.

At this point the reader should not get the impression that all is fine with the views of those brought up within a Judeo-Christian framework. Jews know all too well that this is simply not true. The basis of the Christian approach to Jews over the centuries was put forth by Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE). According to him Christianity required that Jews be

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oppressed, but not necessarily killed. Also it was crucial, according to Catholic doctrine, that Jews be dispersed throughout the world and not to have a homeland in Eretz Yisrael.

As we know all too well, there were times when zealots "forgot" Augustine's doctrine that it was not necessary to kill the Jews. This led to countless massacres and pogroms over the centuries and culminated in the Nazi "solution" to the Jewish "problem." Malcolm Hay, a non-Jew, shows conclusively in his book *Europe and the Jews* that the Holocaust was a direct outgrowth of centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.

It is important for those looking for "solutions" to the situation in the Middle East to keep in mind that many Palestinians simply do not view the world as we do. Negotiated settlements are based on both sides sharing a common mindset and then working out a compromise based on this common outlook. However, if the parties do not share a common mindset, a negotiated solution is impossible. You can only peacefully resolve differences with a neighbor if that neighbor is willing to sit down with you and come to an agreement. However, if he is intent on killing you, there is no hope of a negotiated solution.

Many Palestinians and, for that matter, most Arabs have made it quite clear that they do not want Israel to exist. They desire to drive the Jews out of Israel. If this requires killing thousands and thousands of Jews, then so be it. Again, the killing of thousands is justified, because there are other principles that are more important in the Arab mind.

Attempting to negotiate a peace agreement with those who have this mindset is an impossibility. While in the short run there may be a minor success here and there, in the long run nothing less than the obliteration of Israel is the goal of those with this mindset. Negotiating with such people is not only futile; it is an exercise that will lead to the deaths of more and more Jews.

It is truly unfortunate that the world refuses to see this. Many individuals and governments keep saying if only Israel would do this or that, withdraw from this area or that area, etc., then there would be peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This approach assumes that the Arabs actually want a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. While some of them may verbalize this in one fashion or another, the murderous actions of Muslim terrorists and the support by the Arab populace at large for these crimes are a clear signal that many Arabs do not want peace.

Again, one cannot negotiate with a neighbor who wants to kill you. Why the world - including many Jews on the Left - refuses to see this is beyond me. To live in a dream world will only lead, G-d forbid, to waking up to a nightmare.

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