

CHAPTER

10

THE UNFAIR PSYCHOLOGICAL PRICE OF THE GEOPOLITICAL STATUS QUO ON ISRAELI SOCIETY



The psychological damage to innocent Palestinians of having Israelis rule over them with a heavy hand is tremendous.

Even if Israeli security measures are logical and morally justified in the sense that any state's first responsibility is to protect its citizens, undoubtedly great harm is caused to many who wish Israel no ill will. Commerce is hurt, livelihoods are ruined, and delays in freedom of movement are wasteful and humiliating.

Of course, two things must be remembered: 1) the Palestinians had freedom of movement and growing economic prosperity in the territories until the terror began erupting from within the territories, and 2) Most Palestinian Arabs wish to annihilate Israel.¹

Beyond the damage to Palestinians, there is a great price that Israelis pay for being moral in their dealings with

Arabs who hate Israel and wish it permanent harm. Israeli morality costs it more than extra lives lost on its side. There is a psychological price to pay for hand-to-hand killing that is simply not present in an all-out indiscriminate aerial video-game-style killing from the sky. It is much easier to inflict a greater loss on enemy lives if there is a willingness to accept a greater collateral killing of civilians who wish only to raise their family in a non-combat zone. But Israel constantly suffers additional casualties of its own rather than subject Palestinian civilians to the full might of its firepower. (And this was true in the 2006 fight against Hezbollah in Lebanon as well, when Israel used extensive air power. Unlike other armies through history, Israeli troops on the ground engaged in house to house combat and suffered additional casualties instead of taking the easier path of inflicting greater Lebanese civilian death—this even though Hezbollah deliberately fights from civilian areas in contravention of international law, and with the support of the local population).

The Israeli record is not perfect, but it is far better than any other country's when it comes to dealing with murderous enemies who purposely attack from civilian areas and take pride in, and celebrate their evil.

Just as the Jewish community never sought revenge on Germans, they have not sought to return Arab evil in kind. Generation after generation, this restraint takes a toll. To paraphrase the troubling remark of Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel nearly 40 years ago: we can forgive the Arabs for murdering our kids, but how can we forgive them for making us kill theirs?

There is also a psychological price Israeli society pays for living on the edge. The constant attempt by Arabs to infiltrate and terrorize Israelis has had deep psychological and moral consequences beyond the negative economic, military and political affects on Israel.² Generation after generation,