

## Angst of a Parent

I left the house Thursday morning for a Pennsylvania Bar Association meeting in Harrisburg. The look on the face of my beautiful wife, Kim, the woman I still call my bride, told the whole story. We did not need to speak a word. We were worried beyond description about the safety of two of our children currently studying in Israel. Kaila, 22, is in a graduate program in Jerusalem, and Joshua, at age 18, in his first year of college, only a few blocks away from his sister.

As I drove to Harrisburg, trying to pretend that life was normal, I felt so distressed by the news coming out of the Middle East and concern for my children that I thought about pulling the car over to the side of the road so I could throw up. I remember having this feeling only once before in my life. Back in 2001-2002, as President of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association, now the Pennsylvania Association for Justice. I drove back and forth to Harrisburg several times a week. During that time frame, fundamentalist Muslim Arab homicide bombers were blowing themselves up on a regular basis in Israel. They targeted hotels, cafes, synagogues, and the most innocent people they could find. The death toll was incomprehensible. The murderers were celebrated in the streets of the Arab world as heroes. How did these people become so desperate and angry that they came to celebrate death as the best choice that could be made in life?

A combination of fundamentalist religious training combined with an assault on Western civilization is at the root of the problem. Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon all created camps in which they placed their hated Arab brothers. The sole purpose of these camps was to sow the seeds of hatred and to make human beings into living missiles to be hurled at the non-Muslim world. This strategy has worked effectively with the acquiescence of the West.

The United Nations, the United States, and most European democracies have fed, housed and clothed the Arabs in these camps, while the Arab world has done nothing other than sow the seeds of hatred among the refugees which those manipulative nations created. Israel and the West are not responsible for Arab rage. Fundamentalist Islam which grew up within the poverty of the Arab world was a deliberate creation of the Arab states. Awash with Western oil money, the Arab regime leaders invested their money in Swiss bank accounts rather than creating a better life for their own people.

As I drove down to Harrisburg today, I once again had that feeling of nausea that comes from the realization of the fact that the 3,400-year-old war against the Jews continues unabated. Western Europe refuses to cut off Hamas' funding as a terrorist organization. If European democracies would take that one simple action, the funds required to launch missiles against the Israeli democracy would dry up overnight.

Without cold hard Western cash to pay Iran for missiles, there would be no aggression against the Jewish people in the tiny conclave known as Israel.

Should we let our children, the pride of our youth and our flesh and blood, stay in harm's way? There is a side of me, a very strong sentiment that wants to bring them home immediately. They are, after all, Americans with a safe, comfortable home in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and all the opportunity to succeed in college and the career of their choice.

There is another family of mine in Israel, who would stay behind if I brought my children home. My mother's uncle and her first cousin survived the gas ovens of Auschwitz in Poland. Avraham Schneps and his son, Joseph, were the only members of my mother's family born in Krakow, Poland, who were not incinerated by the Nazi war machine. Avraham and Joseph escaped Auschwitz and fought for the Red Army. Their reward was to have Stalin send them to Siberia as "undesirable Jews." After the war, Avraham remarried and had a daughter, Sarah. Sarah is my age. Avraham and Joseph have now passed away, but their family has blossomed anew in Israel like the Phoenix rising from its ashes. Those cousins are sabras, native born Israelis, who have nowhere to go. Their very recent ancestors survived the death and destruction of Europe and now are proud Israelis.

I remember as a child the family raising the grand sum of \$3,000 to bring these two Holocaust survivors and their family from the small tent village of Hadera, Israel, to the United States. I remember my mother passing around a black and white picture of the tent in which our relatives lived. They refused to come to the United States. "We do not need nor do we want the sympathy or the money of anyone in the United States. We survived the Holocaust and we will live or die as free men and women in the reborn State of Israel."

My children were raised in the a comfortable community in Central Pennsylvania, have gone to fine schools, and have only known comfort and the relatively relaxed life of American adolescents. They are part of the tradition, heritage and moral courage which the Jewish people have gifted to the world.

My willingness to let our children stay in Israel has little to do with religious commitment and more to do with historical continuity. We have lived and died for the values that created Western civilization. While I do not like to see my children on the firing line, it is their decision as to whether they are comfortable with the role that history has created for them.

We have given the world the monotheistic G-d, the Ten Commandments, the Bible, Jesus, and even the good teachings in Islam. I have agreed, temporarily, to loan my children to that immortal precept known as "Am Yisrael Chai" – the nation of Israel lives.

I pray every day for the safe return of my children from the State of Israel, as well as for health, peace and contentment for all the good people in the world.

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