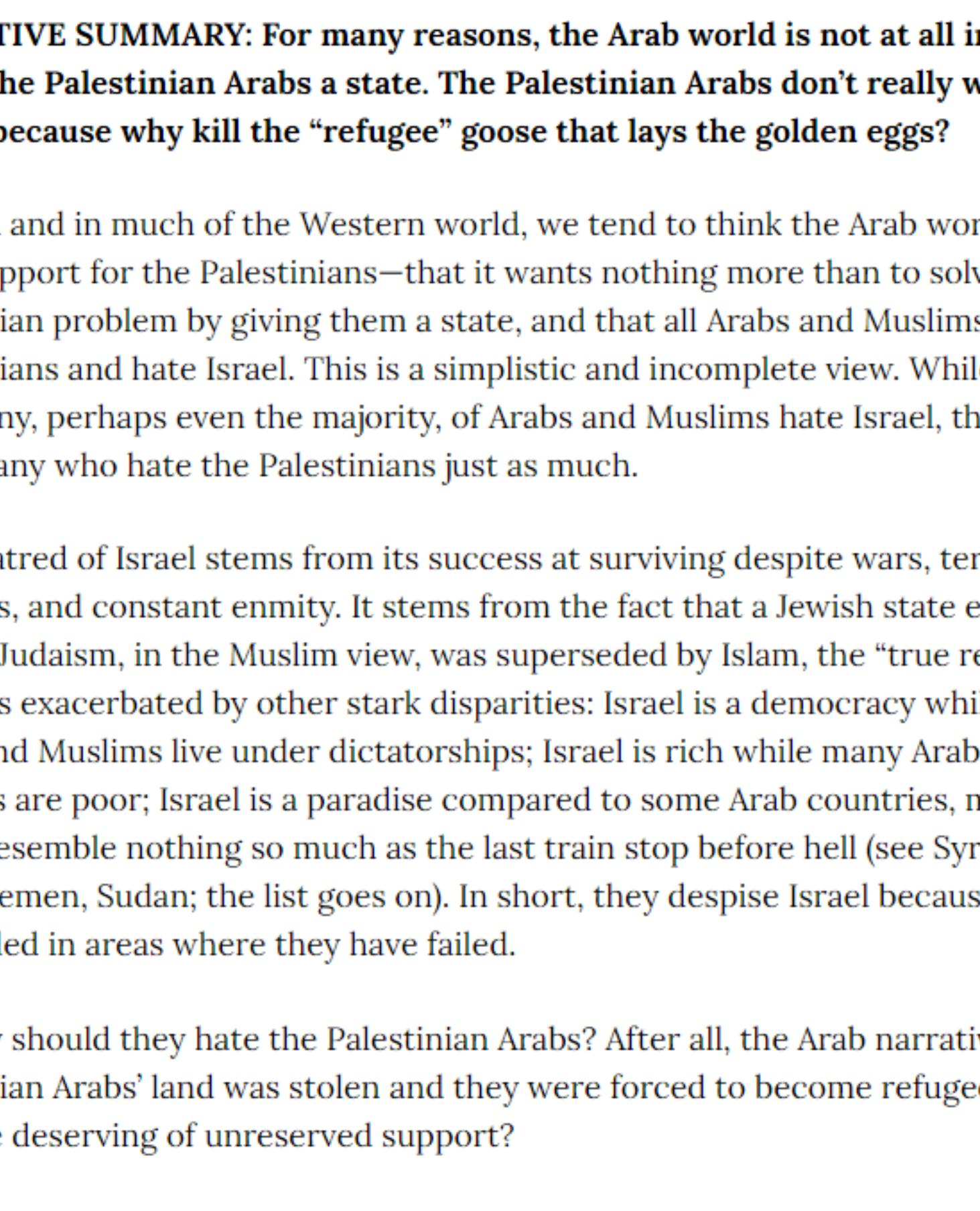


Why Do the Arabs Hate the Palestinians?

By Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Mordechai Kedar | September 24, 2020



Bourj el-Barajneh camp for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, image via Wikimedia Commons

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: For many reasons, the Arab world is not at all interested in giving the Palestinian Arabs a state. The Palestinian Arabs don't really want one either, because why kill the "refugee" goose that lays the golden eggs?

In Israel and in much of the Western world, we tend to think the Arab world is united in its support for the Palestinians—that it wants nothing more than to solve the Palestinian problem by giving them a state, and that all Arabs and Muslims love the Palestinians and hate Israel. This is a simplistic and incomplete view. While it is true that many, perhaps even the majority, of Arabs and Muslims hate Israel, there are a good many who hate the Palestinians just as much.

Their hatred of Israel stems from its success at surviving despite wars, terror, boycotts, and constant enmity. It stems from the fact that a Jewish state exists even though Judaism, in the Muslim view, was superseded by Islam, the "true religion." This hatred is exacerbated by other stark disparities: Israel is a democracy while many Arabs and Muslims live under dictatorships; Israel is rich while many Arabs and Muslims are poor; Israel is a paradise compared to some Arab countries, many of which resemble nothing so much as the last train stop before hell (see Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Sudan; the list goes on). In short, they despise Israel because it has succeeded in areas where they have failed.

But why should they hate the Palestinian Arabs? After all, the Arab narrative says the Palestinian Arabs' land was stolen and they were forced to become refugees. Surely they are deserving of unreserved support?

The answer to this question is complex. It is a function of Middle Eastern culture that neither Israelis nor most Westerners fully understand or recognize.

One of the worst things to experience, in Arab eyes, is to be cheated, fooled, or taken advantage of. When someone attempts to cheat an Arab—and even more so, if that person succeeds—the Arab is overcome by furious anger, even if the person who did the cheating was his own cousin. He will call on his brother to take revenge on that cousin, in line with the Arab adage: "My brother and I against my cousin—and my brother, my cousin, and I against a stranger."

Regarding the Palestinian Arabs, the first point to make is that many of them are not originally Palestinians at all. They are immigrants who came to the Land of Israel from all over the Arab world during the British Mandate in order to find employment in the cities and on the farms the Jews had built. These immigrants still have names like Hourani (from Houran in southern Syria), Tzurani (from Tyre in southern Lebanon), Zrakawi (from Mazraka in Jordan), Masri (the Egyptian), Hijazi (from the Hijaz province of the Arabian peninsula), Mughrabi (from the Maghreb), and many other names that point to their true geographical origins. Why, ask the other Arabs, should they get preferential treatment over those who remained in their original countries?

Starting with the end of the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, the politics in the Arab world began to center on Israel and the "Palestinian problem," the solution to which was to be achieved by eliminating Israel. In order to succeed in that mission, the Arab "refugees" were kept in camps, with explicit instructions from the Arab League that they be kept there and not absorbed into other Arab countries.

UNRWA ensured that they were provided with food, education, and medical care without charge—that is to say, the nations of the world paid the bill, even as the Arab neighbors of these eternal "refugees" had to work to provide food, education, and medical care for their own families by the sweat of their brow. "Refugees" who were supplied with free foodstuffs, such as rice, flour, sugar, and oil, for the use of their families, would often sell some of it to their non-refugee neighbors and make a tidy profit.

Residents in the refugee camps do not pay municipal taxes. This tax exemption has led a significant number of "refugees" to rent out their homes and collect exorbitant sums in comparison with those renting apartments in nearby cities. In other words, the world subsidizes the refugees' taxes, and the refugees line their own pockets.

In Lebanon, several refugee camps were built near Beirut, but they were incorporated into the expanding city and then turned into high-class neighborhoods with imposing high-rise apartment buildings. Someone profited from this change, and it was not the man in the street. He has every reason to feel cheated.

The Palestinian "refugee" camps in Lebanon were taken over by armed organizations, from the PLO to ISIS, including Hamas, the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, and Salafist jihadist organizations. These groups acted viciously toward the surrounding Lebanese citizens, and in 1975 brought on a civil war that lasted for 14 long years of bloodshed and destruction. The war saw hundreds of thousands of Lebanese forced to leave their villages only to enter into lives of horrible suffering in tent camps all over the country. Many took refuge in Palestinian "refugee" camps, but the Lebanese refugees received less than 10% of what Palestinian Arabs received. This too caused much internece jealousy and hatred.

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Meanwhile, in Israel, 20% of the citizenry within the pre-1967 borders is made up of "Palestinian" Arabs who do not rebel or fight against the state. In other words, the "Palestinians" living in pre-1967 Israel enjoy life in the only democracy in the Middle East, while the Arab countries sacrifice their soldiers' blood to liberate "Palestine."

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