

“The Mentality of Brutality”: Islamic State Beheadings and “Civilized Barbarity”

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In Persia almost five thousand years ago, Zoroaster divided the gods into two opposing groups. Two, Ahura Mazda (Illuminating Wisdom) and Angra Mainyu (Destructive Spirit), were personifications of good and evil which, he claimed, were in conflict, and the Earth was described as their battlefield. Many others have described the Earth similarly. That the Earth is a battlefield is obvious. People everywhere have been killing each other for various reasons since the dawn of human history. That the battle is between the forces of good and the forces of evil is dubious.

The barbaric violence of Islamic jihadists is undeniable. Regardless of the merit any reasons they have for attacking Westerners have, none justifies their willingness to brutally kill whole groups of people in genocidal ways. Nothing can justify impaling a child! So that jihadists promote evil is an acknowledged assumption of this piece. But the killing being carried out by Westerners is equally abhorrent.

Two American journalists were recently beheaded by jihadists. The Western press turned these killings into a *cause celebre*. According to that press, two more horrendous murders had never been committed. The jingos pounded the drums of war. But the same week, two other Americans who had joined the jihadists were killed by opposition forces in Syria (perhaps Iraq), but their deaths barely received a notice. The mother of one of the journalists openly pled for the life of her son; no one pled for the lives of the jihadists. Did they not have mothers who grieve?

But some will say, the journalists were beheaded! Ah, yes, they were. Beheading is a horrid crime. No question about it. But let's remember our history.

In the sixteenth century, the English had a king who had six wives. He had two of them beheaded. He is not generally referred to as a barbaric man. Strange! The English are America's allies.

In the eighteenth century, the French had a revolution during which they beheaded numerous members of the aristocracy and even invented a machine to make beheading more humane. The French are America's allies too. Are they horrid barbarians? When does a nation whose people kill others indiscriminately stop being barbaric?

What about the Germans? They lack a history of beheading people, but, according to Zionists, they murdered six million Jews in an attempted genocide. More American allies whose barbaric actions are known but who are never called barbarians. But those jihadists? What barbarians!

The French beheaded Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and other aristocrats by using the guillotine. Was that less brutal than beheading people by sword?

Tsar Nicholas II and his family were executed by bullets during the Russian Revolution. That too was brutal, but was it less brutal than beheading?

ISIS uses swords to brutally behead people. Horrible! Absolutely horrible! Americans use Hellfire missiles fired from drones to dismember people. Isn't that also horrible? Is dismembering a person by means of a missile less brutal than beheading a person by sword? If you believe so, there's something wrong with you.

In America recently, a condemned criminal was executed in a botched procedure that took two hours. An efficient, not botched, procedure would have taken mere minutes. But would it have been less brutal than the execution that took two hours?

According to the Geneva Conventions, it is okay to blow people to bits by bullet, bomb, and missile but not to merely gas them to death. Do you believe the dying really care?

People, it's the killing that's brutally horrible. There are no ways of killing that are less brutal than others. Distinguishing between killings by various means amounts to making distinctions without a difference. The dead don't care! They're dead no matter what.

The President sent a team of assassins to a compound in Afghanistan to execute Osama Bin Laden. The team carried out the mission despite botching the landing because Bin Laden apparently was unguarded. When word of Bin Laden's execution reached the White House, the people waiting for the news, like Romans in The Colosseum watching gladiatorial combat, cheered. No, the cheering was not a sign of barbarity; it was one of kindness and compassion. Sure it was!

The United States launched a humanitarian mission to aid a trapped, obscure Christian sect in Iraq that turned out not to be needed by the time it arrived. But no humanitarian mission was ever even contemplated to aid the children of Gaza who were being killed by Israeli bombs while in their own bedrooms. Apparently the children of Gaza were not worthy of humanitarian aid. If people can pick and choose whom to provide with aid, the aid is not humanitarian.

Westerners seem to believe that when one of them kills an enemy, something honorable has happened, and that when one is killed by an enemy, a dastardly and barbaric crime has occurred. Isn't this hypocrisy run amok? Is it any wonder that a nation that wantonly kills people abroad has police who shoot down unarmed teenagers in its streets at home? No people can be violent abroad and peaceful at home. Brutality is a character trait not an accident. Brutality drives out compassion and kindness; brutality and compassion cannot exist together.

The War of the World does not pit good against evil. There is no army of the good in the fight. The battle pits one evil group against another. No matter which side prevails, no good can ever come of it. If humanity survives, decades from now nothing will have changed. Mothers will still be sending their sons and daughters off to combat adversaries and have them come back in boxes. They will fill hallowed graves in reserved cemeteries which people will visit on Memorial Days. They will have died in vain just as all the warriors of past generations have. Humanity has been here before. Many times! Mothers will someday wail

that cannon fodder is the fruit of their wombs. The war to end all wars is the war without end. This alone is the legacy of the brutality mentality.

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