

# “Don’t Be Fooled by ‘Moral Equivalence’”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website ([churchofgodbigandy.com](http://churchofgodbigandy.com)). It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 21, 2023. (A version of the article was posted at [townhall.com](http://townhall.com) on Oct. 17.)

**By Dennis Prager**

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Moral equivalence has two purposes.

- One is to enable the morally confused to hide their confusion.
- The other is to enable the immoral to hide their immorality.

Here are two examples as applied to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

- One is the assertion we hear regarding the latest Israel-Hamas war by members of the Western Left, by Muslim supporters of the Palestinians and even by a few individuals on the right: “Palestinian babies are as precious as Israeli babies.”

Professor Cornel West, a lifelong progressive running for president as a Democrat: “As I have said for the past 50 years, a precious Palestinian child has the same value as a precious Israeli child.”

David Cronin, an editor at Electronic Intifada, a large pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel website: “Palestinian babies are just as precious as my new daughter.”

- A second example is to avoid condemning Hamas for the wars they start by instead condemning the “cycle of violence.”

Let’s analyze the two statements.

That the lives of Palestinian children are as precious as those of Israeli children is a given. But it is meaningless given that virtually no Israeli or Israel supporter has ever claimed otherwise. Indeed, it is usually worse than meaningless. It is usually a nice-sounding way to attack Israel and its supporters.

Would those who make this assertion have made it during World War II?

After all, it is certainly true that Japanese and German children are as precious as American children.

But what purpose would such an assertion have served?

Would it have meant that Americans should drop no bombs on Japan or Germany?

Presumably not. And if it would have, the statement would have been nothing more than a pro-German or pro-Japanese sentiment.

Or would it have meant that America should avoid gratuitously killing Japanese and German civilians?

If so, it would have served little purpose, since even if American pilots bombed only military and industrial targets inside Japan and Germany, many Japanese and German civilians, including children, would still have been killed. And, to cite the best-known example, the killing of Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war in the Pacific, thereby saving an exponentially greater number of Japanese and American lives.

The reason America, Britain and Canada dropped bombs on Germany, and the reason America dropped bombs on Japan, was *solely* because Germany and Japan started World War II and because they committed horrific evils. Defeating those two countries was as clear a moral imperative as there could ever be. The Germans unleashed the unique slaughter known as the Holocaust and committed a massive number of atrocities against civilians in every country they conquered. The Japanese committed mass murder and Nazi-like atrocities on Chinese, Korean and Filipino civilians (such as grotesque medical experiments on non-anesthetized Chinese and the use of conquered women to be gang-raped on a daily basis by Japanese soldiers).

Therefore, why would someone have noted during World War II that Japanese and German babies are as precious as American or British babies?

If it were to encourage the Allies to avoid gratuitous civilian deaths, and the maker of the statement were clear about the necessity and morality of bombing those terrible countries, no one would have disputed the statement. But, if it were to draw some moral equivalence between the Allies and Japan and Germany, between their bombings and the Allied bombings, the person would be an abettor of evil.

The same holds true for all those who now assert that Israeli and Palestinian children are equally precious.

- Given that the Palestinian regime in Gaza—i.e., Hamas—is dedicated to murdering every Jew in Israel—great-grandmothers down to infants.
- Given that Hamas and all their Muslim and non-Muslim left-wing supporters around the world seek to annihilate the nation of Israel.
- Given that Israel has, almost uniquely among the nations of the world, regularly warned Gaza civilians to evacuate buildings that Israel planned to bomb (thereby losing the advantage of a surprise attack on Hamas operatives).

■ Given that Hamas places its leaders and weapons in schools, hospitals and apartment buildings for the express purpose of bringing death down on women and children, what exactly do those who assert that Israeli and Palestinian babies are equally precious seek to accomplish?

Unless accompanied by a completely unambiguous condemnation of the Hamas attacks on Israel via thousands of rockets and directly on Jewish parents and children, including babies, as war crimes and utter evil; and unless accompanied by a clear moral distinction between Israel and Hamas, the only reason for announcing that Israeli and Palestinian babies are equally precious is to engage in anti-Israel moral relativism.

Indeed, the only context in which this assertion would be useful is if it were directed at Hamas and its Muslim and left-wing supporters. It is they who do not believe that Israeli and Palestinian children are equally precious.

As Al-Monitor, a nonpartisan Mideast news website founded by an Arab-American, reported: "The Israeli medical staff of Tel Hashomer Hospital is fighting for the life of a 6-month-old Palestinian infant abandoned by her parents . . . Cancer-stricken children from the West Bank and Gaza have always been treated there alongside children from Israel."

As regards the "cycle of violence," it is hard to imagine a more anodyne description of the Israel-Hamas war.

Again, did anyone ever use this as a description of World War II? Why not?

There certainly was a cycle of violence. But no one ever used the term, because it would have been an immoral description of what was happening.

The "cycle of violence" was not the problem; Japanese and German violence was the problem.

And that is the case now. The moral problem is not the cycle of violence; it is Palestinian violence.

Without violence from Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, there would be no "cycle of violence."