

Was the Israeli and Hamas Prisoner Exchange a Good Deal?  
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A young Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, was snatched by Hamas raiders across the Israeli border in 2006. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time, not a combatant who had been at war with Hamas. They kept him alive for five years, hoping to exchange this him for one thousand violent Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

In October, the exchange was made\227to the mixed joy and anguish of Israel\227joy for bringing home one of their own and anguish over those they were releasing. Shalit was released, pale, gaunt, and half starved. On the Palestinian side was only joy and triumph. What they fail to see is that Israel regards one of their own worth a thousand of theirs, an unflattering assessment if they think about it, but by today\222s civilized values, quite justifiable.

There were stark differences of values clear in this prisoner exchange. The Israelis value life\227not only the life of their young soldier---but the lives of some horrific multiple murderers held in their prisons who were not only fed, but were not executed. Shalit was the only Israeli captive that Hamas has ever kept alive, albeit abused, in the hope of a prisoner swap.

The Palestinians never coddle prisoners. Palestinians suspected of cooperating with Israel or those Israelis they can snatch are usually killed. There was a grizzly incident in October, 2000, when two Israeli truck drivers lost their way in Ramallah, were beaten by Palestinian police, and then thrown from the police station balcony to a mob below, which tore them apart and posed happily waving bloody hands for the photographer. (See Anthropeotics 12, no. 2, Fall 2006/Winter 2007.)

Mobs are never good news. In most modern states, police intervene in mob scenes because authorities know that mob mentality is poisonous. But how did Muslim society react to the Ramallah mob lynching? Because the authorities failed to stop journalists from taking pictures, the bloodletting had to be justified. Muslim clerics defended the lynching on religious grounds. In February 2005, London-based radical Sheikh Hani al-Siba\222i noted an important precedent: the Prophet Muhammad who, as a punishment for those stealing sheep, \223drove nails and gouged out the eyes of the \221Urayna tribe\205cut off their opposite arms and legs and threw them into al-Hrara to die.\224 The Sheikh further justified the bloody Ramallah slaughter, and he quoted scripture: it can be done not only as a reciprocal act, but also when it serves to \223terrorize the enemy\224 or to \223gladden the heart of a Muslim mujahid.\224

The Israelis, torn as they are by the conflict between the life of one boy and the freeing of some exceedingly violent prisoners, are right to be worried. A few of the worst released prisoners were:

Musab Hashlemon, a Hamas operative who staged a 2004 double suicide attack in Hebron, killing 16 civilians on two passenger busses.

Nasser Yataima, who planned a suicide bombing in March 2002 on a Passover seder i  
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the Park Hotel in Netanya, killing 30 and wounding 140.

Abd al-Aziz Salaha, one of the lynchers at the Ramallah horror described above. H  
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is pictured waving his bloody hands among other lynchers.

Ahlam Tamimi, a female Hamas terrorist involved in the suicide bombing of a pizze  
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in Jerusalem, killing 15 and wounding 130. She is still proud of her action.

Ibrahim Jundiya, who sent a suicide bomber to blow up a bus in Jerusalem, killing  
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and Fadi Muhammad al-Jabaa, who directed the suicide bombing of a Haifa bus, killing  
17.

Israel, unlike the US, has only executed one mass murderer, Adolph Eichmann. Israel follows the European model in distaste for capital punishment. We executed Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma bomber; however, we have not yet executed any Muslim terrorists, an issue not yet resolved.

In Israel, thousands of murderers who profess they will murder again are available

for extortion and exchange. If Israel had capital punishment, they might not have the fuel for such a disgusting prisoner exchange. Mass murderers do not warrant a second chance.

671 words

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