

Does Moral Symmetry Exist Between Israel and Palestine?

Muhammad Abu Khdeir's murder is well on its way to becoming a core building block in the pantheon of anti-Israel propaganda, a central plank in the false argument that Israelis are just as murderous as the Palestinians. That Israelis are no more moral than the Palestinians.

Without being too defensive, or in any way forgiving of the inexcusable kidnapping and gruesome murder of the young Arab boy from east Jerusalem, let it be said loud and clear: Comparisons that place Israeli and Palestinian societies on the same moral plane are evilly intended and utterly untruthful. No parallels can be drawn between Israel and the Palestinians when it comes to ethical standards. This is an asymmetrical conflict in every way: moral, political and ideological.

Israeli terrorists are few and far between. Over 100 years of conflict, they comprise a mere handful: Ami Popper, Jack Teitel, Yehuda Etzion, Baruch Goldstein, Yona Avrushmi and several others. This list of Palestinian terrorists fills fat ledger books across the globe, and the list of their victims fills even more.

Israeli terrorists are denounced roundly and emphatically by Israeli society, caught quickly, and jailed fast. Nor are they released five minutes later. They are skunks, not heroes, of the Zionist movement and the Jewish people.

By contrast, Palestinian terrorists are celebrated widely by Palestinian society and feted by Palestinian leadership, sheltered methodically from justice, and rewarded generously.

And if they're taken into custody, Palestinian terrorists are released just as quickly as international attentions turn

elsewhere—the infamous “revolving door” record of the Palestinian Authority. And if Palestinian terrorists are held in Israeli jails, the Palestinians extort their release via kidnappings of Israelis, which again are celebrated. A perfect circle of perfidy.

Note that Abu Khdeir’s murderers are already under arrest in Israel. They have nowhere to hide in Jewish-Israeli society. Whereas the murderers of Naftali Frenkel, Gil-ad Shaer and Eyal Yifrach are still at large, hiding among their sympathetic and admiring brethren in the West Bank or Gaza.

When it became clear that Jews had murdered Abu Khdeir, for reasons of revenge or just ugly thugishness, the president, the prime minister, the chief rabbis, and all the political and cultural icons of Israelis society expressed deep shame at the killing, and spoke out immediately and without reservation in fierce denunciation of the crime. This killing does not represent the values or path of the Israeli people.

When it became clear that Palestinians had kidnapped the three teenage Israeli boys, there was no shame in the streets of Ramallah, Hebron or Gaza City, only triumphant jubilation and defiance. A new three-finger stick-it-to-the-Israelis salute became the rave, and the pleased mother of one of the suspected kidnappers was lavished with hours of Palestinian television screen time. She told viewers that (“if he did it”) she was proud of her son. Hamas and some Fatah leaders congratulated the kidnappers and promised them safe refuge and rewards, while promising Israel more kidnappings and murders.

The IDF arrested and jailed 10 soldiers last week who posted Facebook messages with calls for revenge. Contrast this with PA television, which broadcast a dozen sermons by local clerics, who get salaries from the Palestinian Authority, glorifying terrorism against Israelis and praising the kidnappers. All the while, the PA continued to pay salaries to the families of Palestinian terrorists in Israeli jails and

large reward stipends to terrorists released from Israeli jails.

My point is that you judge a society not the by crimes of a few, but on the basis of the way that society deals with its criminals and who it celebrates as its heroes. In such a tally, there is no moral symmetry whatsoever between Israeli and Palestinian societies.

Ironically, Palestinian propagandist MK Ahmed Tibi essentially affirmed the basic moral distinction between the two societies when speaking to Israel Radio this week before the killers in Jerusalem were identified.

“Every Jew in this country,” Tibi declared, “is praying that the murderer of Abu Khdeir is not a Jew. But I’m telling you for sure that he was a Jew.”

Tibi meant to curse and spit on Israeli society, yet didn’t realize he was praising it. Indeed, every Jew in this country was praying that the murderer of Abu Khdeir would turn out not to be a Jew, because the very thought was reprehensible.

By stark and very telling contrast, not every Palestinian, not even a few of them, were praying that the kidnappers of Naftali Frenkel, Gil-ad Shaer and Eyal Yifrach would turn out not be Palestinian.

When one widens the lens to consider the political-ideological conflict in this region, the difference between Israel and the Palestinians becomes even clearer.

Despite five wars launched by the Arabs against Israel, thousands of Palestinians terrorist attacks against Israel, and tens of thousands of rockets and missiles fired on Israeli towns and cities by Palestinian and Arab terrorist armies, across seven decades – Israeli society has behaved overall with incredible restraint and responsibility.

It's actually quite amazing, even miraculous, that calls for revenge and actual vigilante action are so infrequent and considered so downright unacceptable.

Again by contrast, Palestinian society has no such inhibitions. Rioting, destruction and mayhem is considered a "legitimate" and "understandable" form of protest and political expression. Cars can be stoned. Israelis can be dragged out of their cars and nearly lynched. Molotov cocktails can be thrown at will. Everything in sight can be destroyed, including the rail lines and bus shelters placed in Arab neighborhoods by local municipalities to serve the local Arab population. That's natural and acceptable.

Imagine the world reaction if masses of Israelis were to regularly act this way after each frequent Arab terrorist attack.

And finally, a central ideological and moral distinction between Israel and the Palestinians is this: Israel seeks conflict resolution, not jihad. Israel wants to resolve the conflict through compromise, not end the conflict by annihilation of the enemy. Israel wishes to live at peace and cooperate with its Arab neighbors, not to conquer the Arabic and Islamic nations from Tunisia to Indonesia.

Needless to say, these modest Israelis goals are not shared by too many Arab or Islamic partners.

So spare me please all the high-minded moralizing about the supposed "brutalization" (not) of Israeli society and the sad symmetry (again not) of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. We Israelis have every reason (still) to claim the high moral ground. (And yes, we also have room to improve).

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