ORIGIN AND IDEOLOGICAL MOORINGS OF HAMAS
[CHAPTER TWO]
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2.1 MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD ROOTS OF HAMAS

Hamas was officially founded on 14 December 1987 but its roots go to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in 1928 by a school teacher Hasan al-Banna¹ with the twin goals of re-Islamizing Egyptian society, and liberating Egypt, and the Muslim world, more broadly, from colonial rule on the eve of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement could be considered to be the ‘mother of all movements that comprises political Islam’ in the Middle East. The Muslim Brotherhood (Jamiat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen) is a religious and political organization founded in the Suez Canal town of Islamiya, Egypt. The Organization opposed the drift toward secularism perceived to be taking place in Egypt and other Arab countries, and sought to counter foreign influence by encouraging a return to an Islamic society based on the original precepts of the Holy Quran.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s activity in Palestinian areas dates back to 1935, when Hassan al-Banna’s brother Abdel Rahman al-Banna, visited the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini.² As a result of this meeting, Hassan al-Banna, who created and personally led the General Central Committee to Aid Palestine, which


protested the British presence there and promoted the Palestinian national cause. Muslim Brotherhood volunteers in 1936, participated in attacks on British and Jewish interests, which is also known as “1936 Revolt”. Officially, the first Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1945 in Jerusalem by a Brotherhood activist Said Ramadan; by 1947 the Brotherhood was running some 25 branches throughout the British Mandate, with a membership ranging from 12,000 to 20,000. When the State of Israel was formed in 1948, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood was physically divided into two parts; one in the West Bank which was annexed to Jordan and where the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood joined the Jordanian branch of Muslim Brotherhood, and one in the Gaza Strip, which was left under Egyptian administration, and thus the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood there became close to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Between 1948 and 1967 the Brothers were weak and kept a low profile. The Movement was under systematic repression by the Nasserite regime in the Gaza Strip, while Jordanian authorities effectively monitored it in the West Bank.

The Palestinian nationalism flourished and the Brotherhood organized more actively after the Israeli victory over Arab armies in the six-day war of June 1967 in which Israeli occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which consequently accelerated Palestinian National and Islamic consciousness. According to Hamas leader Khaled Mishal, “this pushed the Muslim Brotherhood to restructure their organization”. After the war, Palestinian groups in the now-occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank were separated from Egypt and Jordan and were thus forced to focus on their local communities and populations.

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During the years 1967 – 1975 the role of Islamic Movement was characterized by the building Mosques and attracting the young Palestinians by providing them guidance and Islamic education to strengthen their ideology. The Mosque, therefore, were not merely used for the purpose of worship but it also worked as nursery, library, or a place for women’s activities. Religion and Ideology were taught and politics was discussed at clubs, schools and universities, where mosques were often built. As a result of this, the young generation opened its eyes and discovered the realities of Jewish plots against the nation.\footnote{Levitt, Mathew, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the service of Jihad*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 19-21. See Also, Gunning, Jeroen, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 26-28. Also, Hroub, Khaled, *Hamas: A Beginner’s Guide*, (London: Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 6-12. Also, Irvin Jensen, Michael, *The Political Ideology of Hamas: A Grassroots Perspective*, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2009), p. 15.}

2.2 SHEIKH AHMED YASSIN ROLE IN FOUNDING HAMAS

Sheikh Ahmed Ismail Hassan Yassin, a resident of Gaza City on 6 June 1989 accepted his role in founding Hamas due to the torture of his son Abdul Hamid by Israeli jailers. He had been tortured for many days, and this finally compelled Sheikh Ahmed Yassin to accept his role in founding Hamas. He had previously denied being the ‘Father of Hamas’ but compromising statements written by his comrades under pressure, together with the torture of his son, forced him to accept.

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was born in 1938 in the village of Al-Jourah near the coastal town of Al-Majdel which was then Southern Palestine under the British Mandate. Al-Majdel is now the Israeli city of Ashkelon, just North of Gaza. His father Abdullah died when he was just three years old, and became known in the neighborhood as Ahmed Sa’adeh after his mother Sa’ada al-Haboel. This was to differentiate him from the children of his father’s other wives. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin had four brothers and two sisters, who, with their mothers, escaped to Gaza during 1948 conflict which created the State of Israel and became refugees in Al-Shati Camp besides the sea on the northern side of the Gaza City. The Camp was into an area of just under one square kilometer and accommodated 23,000 refugees at that time. In 1952, he was injured while wrestling with one of his friends, Abdullah al-Khatib. Young Yassin was scared to name the boy for fear that it would cause a rift between the two families, so he created a story that his injuries were sustained playing leapfrog
with his school friend on the beach. His neck was kept in plaster for forty-five days and when the plaster was removed, it left him confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.\(^8\)

He had damaged his spinal-cord, which caused several paralyses to much of his body leaving him incapable of walking or even holding anything. He applied to study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo but he was incapable to continue his study due to his deteriorating health. He started studying at home where he read widely, especially on, religion, philosophy, politics, sociology and economics. This made him one of the best speakers in Gaza Strip, drawing large crowds at Friday prayers when he delivered his weekly speech. After years of unemployment, he got a post as an Arabic language teacher at Al-Rimal Elementary School in Gaza. According to Al-Shawwa, the headmaster of the school, Yassin handled children well and his popularity grew, particularly among the more scholarly students. Having a regular job gave Yassin financial stability and he married one of his relatives, Halima Hassan Yassin, in 1960 at the age of 22. Together they produced three sons and eight daughters. Sheikh Yassin’s contribution to the growth of the Islamic Movement in Palestine arose because of his perceived belief that students must have an Islamic education and meaning of Jihad. But he also emphasized to provide all rounded education to the students. He also favored the youth to participate in sports, social and cultural activities besides their religious studies.

Jamal Abdul Nasser, after Egyptian revolution, ordered mass arrest of the members of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and also Gaza Strip which was at that time under Egyptian control. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in 1966 with a large number of Muslim Brotherhood members was arrested. They were accused of trying to overthrow the regime in Egypt. Because of the poor health and disability Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was not sent to the Egyptian prison and Egyptian authority decided that he is not in a position to cause any trouble. Thus, after two weeks of detention he was released and ordered to remain under house arrest. He also signed a guarantee paper that he would not deliver any speeches, especially after Friday prayers. In Al-Shati mosque, when he

went for Friday prayer that was his first prayer after release, on the request of audiences, he broke his promise.\textsuperscript{9}

Israel launched a war in June 1967, which became known as the Six-Day War, for the Palestinians it was referred as Al-Nakbah. This war brought Gaza Strip under the occupation of Israel from Egyptian government and the entire West Bank from Jordan along with Syrian Golan Heights. This war accelerated Yassin activities. He began to visit almost every mosque in the area and appealed for the maximum participation of the people, he started collecting donations and placing small boxes in the mosques. He announced special religious lessons for the females at the mosques which was earlier only for males, proved revolutionary. In the late 1970s, a high-ranking Israeli officer from the Department of Education reached at his school with the news that he was not qualified to teach. Thus, he was forced into retirement. This situation made him to concentrate on Islamic teaching and widening his area of influence.

Yassin had been active in Islamic politics in Gaza since the 1970s. He was influenced by the revolutionary ideas of Al-Ikhwana Al-Muslimeen – the Muslim Brotherhood. After 1967, when Israel captured Gaza from Egypt, the Brotherhood counterparts who were already more active, engaged in spreading their ideology and working towards increasing their independent influence within Palestinian society.\textsuperscript{10}

As a result of the ideas and teachings of Muslim Brotherhood which has a deep impact upon the Sheikh Yassin, established an Islamic Society in 1976. By 1978, the need for bigger and better organized institution was felt by him to promote Islamic values in Palestinian society which will be ultimately bound to resist Israeli autocracies. So he helped to setup another organization Islamic Compound in that year. Yassin first step was to register Islamic Compound with the Israeli authorities. A license was granted within two hours, but barely an hour later, the Israelis came to Sheikh Yassin and withdrew their consent, claiming that it was a mistake. They took Sheikh Yassin and Hajj Ahmed Dalloul, another member of committee, for interrogating, accusing them of collecting donations without permission and setting up an organization.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.,
Sheikh Mohammed Awwad, who was in charge of the Islamic Courts, criticized Israeli for taking back of license. Camp David Agreements were signed between Israel, Egypt and U.S.A. at that time. Sheikh al-Kazandar, who was in favor of Egypt’s peace agreement with Israel planned to send a delegation to Cairo in support of Egyptian government. Sheikh Yassin took the advantage of the situation and sent his fellow activist Sheikh Abd al-Aal, to the Sheikh al-Kazandar to inform him that Israeli authorities are going to imprison us because of the Compound we have established. Sheikh Abd al-Aal together with Kazandar went to the Israeli Civil Administration office in Gaza where Kazandar convinced the Israelis to reapprove the Compound. Israeli authorities promised the Kazandar that approval would be granted and, according to Yassin, “that is exactly what happened”.  

There is another thought that it was a part of officially Israeli policy but unannounced to grant license to the Islamic Compound. Israeli Government presumed that it will act to undermine the activities of nationalists and secular PLO to which Israeli Government considered their staunch enemy. Thus, permitting Islamist rivals to flourish, they believed that they will fight against each other and it will prevent active Israeli involvement on the ground level. “Yasser Arafat’s security adviser Mohammad Dahlan in an interview told that Yitzhak Rabin, Defense Minister in Yitzhak Shamir’s coalition government, was questioned by member of the Knesset about his supposed support of Hamas by funding the Islamic Compound and its activities. Rabin’s answer was that it was tactic ‘to undermine the influence of the PLO’.”

The Islamic Compound’s activities were suppose to focus on sport, to which license was granted but in practice, it was involve in spreading the message of Islam, memorizing the Quran, and building mosques, school and clinics as told by Sheikh Yassin. Israelis began to impose restrictions on Islamic Compound after the realization of the kind of activities it was involved. Later on, Islamic Compound became the largest organization in Gaza.

The founder of Hamas, Sheikh Yassin once told in an interview that his movement development has taken in four clearly defined stages. The first stage was to build its institutions: charities and social committees which would open their doors to the young and old – anyone who could play a role in resisting the Israel. This was a

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11 Ibid.,
preliminary step to their fighting with the Israeli enemy in the Intifada which, according to Sheikh Yassin, instigated single-handed by Hamas, without the involvement of other Palestinian groups. The second phase was to work on strengthening the roots of the resistance within every household in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to bolster its political credibility. The third stage was to develop its military capabilities from rudimentary stone-throwing and launching Molotov cocktails, to using guns, grenades and other explosives. They were willing to do anything which would give the Israelis sleepless nights. The final stage was to look further from Palestinian boundaries to the Arabs and Islamic neighbors. Because for resisting Israel, international support was urgently needed and without international support it could not be possible. So, Sheikh Yassin appealed that Palestinian cause is also an Arab and Islamic cause, the Arabs and Islamic countries must support them.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{2.3 THE FORMATION OF HAMAS}

The Jabaliya refugee camp was a key event which led directly to the formation of Hamas. Jabaliya is the largest refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, just north of Gaza City. At that time it has a population of around 60,000 people, living in a rabbit warren of urban squalor. On 6 December 1987, an Israeli settler was stabbed to death in Gaza’s main shopping district. Two days later on 8 December 1987, ‘Maktura’ incident took place, in which an Israeli civilian truck driver swerved and hit an oncoming vehicle transporting Palestinian workers. Four Palestinian workers died at spot and others were seriously injured. News of accident was broadcasted by Radio. Rumor had taken place like fire in entire Jabaliya that it was a deliberate revenge taken by a relative of the Israeli which was stabbed two days earlier. A crowd of mourners coming from the funeral of the four Palestinians attacked Israeli army surrounding Jabaliya Camp, with the voice of Jihad! Jihad!, Israeli army tried to suppress the crowds with tear gas and warning shot but nothing could stop the Palestinian anger which automatically turned into riots that spread and evolved what became known as ‘Intifada’.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.,

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin on that day of December called an emergency meeting of the General Committee of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza Strip, of which Sheikh was also a member to discuss the events which had taken place in Jabaliya refugee camp. The meeting held at the house of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Islamic Centre and attended by the permanent leaders of the Centre; Sheikh Salah Shehada, a forty year old from Beit-Hanoun working at the Islamic University in Gaza; Issa al-Nasshar, a forty-five year old engineer from Rafah; Dr Ibrahim al-Yazuri, a forty-five year old General Physician from Gaza; Dr Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, a forty year old General Physician from Khan Younis; Abdul Fattah Dokhan, a fifty year old Headmaster from Al-Nsairat camp; and Mohammad Shamhaa, a fifty year old school teacher from Al-Shati camp. 8 December 1987, as described by Salah Shehada, the nominated head of the military wing in Gaza, the evening Hamas was born: ‘The eight day of December is one of the God’s days. It commemorates a new beginning that will shine brightly the history of Islamic Umma.’

During that meeting which was held at Sheikh Yassin house, the members agreed to call the movement Hamas, an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas stands for the original Arabic name Harkat al-Mokwama al-Islamiya meaning ‘Zeal’ which embodies the virtue of Muslim Brotherhood slogan: ‘Rights! Force! Freedom!’ Hamas officially came into existence on 14 December 1987, declaring itself in an official communiqué a few days later the eruption of first Intifada, the Palestinian Uprising, on 8 December 1987. The Brotherhood leaders issued a statement calling on the people to stand up against the Israeli occupation.¹⁴

The formation of Hamas was not an immediate effect because of the occurrence of first Intifada, the Palestinian uprising; rather it was a culmination of the Palestinian plight which evolved overtime. At the time of Intifada, internally within

the organization there were two opposing views. The younger strata of the Brotherhood, especially from the West Bank were in favor to participating in the uprising, while the classical school of thought, especially traditional leaders were in favor of wait and watch policy. They were adhered to the concept of ‘preparing the generations for a battle’ through Islamization of society first.

The question of participation in the Intifada was not merely one of young versus old; which brought a situation before Brotherhood with a real ideological dilemma. The unexpected events taking place in Palestine brought younger strata in a stronger position, claiming that Islamist would suffer a great loss if they would not participate in the Intifada. This made for Yassin and other leaders impossible to keep away the Brotherhood to take part in the Intifada (uprising).

Externally, the hard living conditions of Palestinians due to the Israeli occupation, reached on extreme level. Poverty together with the feeling of humiliation and oppression made unavoidable situation for the Palestinians to revolt against the occupation. The Intifada was a flash-point. The Intifada was the culmination of the past suffering of the people which gave the golden opportunity to the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood to utilize the situation and to lead the Intifada (uprising).

There is another factor which also had its role in formation of Hamas and taking part in the Palestinian Uprising (Intifada). Hamas ongoing and bitter rivalry with PLO factions, especially from Islamic Jihad compelled Hamas to jump in the Intifada. Islamic Jihad Movement was in limelight during few years before Intifada. The incident which led the Intifada itself involved Islamic Jihad members who freed themselves from an Israeli prison and engaged in battle with the Israeli soldiers. This event made Islamic Jihad and its members heroes in the eyes of Palestinians. The Muslim Brotherhood felt danger of losing ground and credibility to its small, yet more active competitor.15

2.4 IDEOLOGICAL MoorINGS

HAMAS ON THE PROBLEM OF ZIONISM, ISRAEL AND THE JEWS: - According to Hamas, the Jewish state is completely built around religious lines as a part of a worldwide Jewish plot against the Islamic Umma in particular and the entire world in general. Thus, it is obligatory for all Muslims to fight against the Zionist enemy on this ground. The existence of Israel is referred as batil in Quranic terms and the formation of an Islamic State of Palestine in its place by liberating Palestine is assumed as haqq.16 The dichotomous character of the worldview advanced by the Quran is thus applicable in confrontation with Israel. As a consequence, it is perceived by the Islamists that the state of Israel is totally based on religious laws, and the unprecedented success achieved by world Jewry in realizing its religious goals not only admired by Islamists but also provided for them a model for a coming Islamic State of Palestine.

The statements often used to describe the Jews are mostly derived from Quranic verses and western sources. In the Quran, Hadith, Tafsir and other theological literature, the Jews are named as Bani-Israil and al-yahud, or the names of Jewish tribes of Medina are mentioned. The term ‘al-yahud’ as well as ‘unbelievers’ (kafireen) is always used by the Palestinian Islamists.17 They also characterized Jews as the people upon whom God’s anger came, which can be found in several places in Quran as well as in the Surat al-Fatiha18 and which are generally highlighted by Islamists for designating the Jews. The Quranic terms batil and haqq are used to describe the two antagonized parties involved in the conflict.

The Jews have made all their efforts in planning and making strategies to destroy the human life since God’s wrath came upon them.19 God’s wrath was due to

16 Mithaq, p.12. These antipodes of God’s ‘truth’ and unbelievers ‘falsehood’ are at the very basis of the Quranic worldview. They contain the core of the Islamic program: to make firm the true (haqq) and to annul the untrue (batil), even though the perfidious might be averse. Quran, 8:8.


18 In the common interpretation of the Surat al-Fatiha, it is the Jews who are seen in the last lines (those upon wrath falls, or those who are perverse). See also, Harkabi,Yehoshafat, Arab Attitudes to Israel, (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co Ltd, 1972), p. 221.

their noncompliance of the original Godly religion sent to them. They modified the original Jewish religion and also killed the Prophets sent by God.\textsuperscript{20} Especially, the Jews tried to dominate and harm the Islamic \textit{Umma} because it was considered as the new international force bringing an authentic civilization and Godly program to the mankind.\textsuperscript{21} These are the basic Quranic ideas. God has sent his message first of all to the Jews among mankind in the form of Torah,\textsuperscript{22} but they turned away\textsuperscript{23} and doubted his signs and denied them.\textsuperscript{24} When they didn’t like the preaching’s of a Prophet, they called him as liar and killed him.\textsuperscript{25} After God sent them the Prophet Moses, they setup a new God in the form of a Golden Calf.\textsuperscript{26} That is why “they were burdened with wrath from God”.\textsuperscript{27} God sent another Prophet Muhammad to bring Jews on the right path who had deviated. Prophet Muhammad repeated the Godly massages previously sent to the Christians and Jews and completed those massages in the form of Islam.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, it was must for the true believers among Jews and Christians to recognize the

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, April 1990, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 24.

\textsuperscript{22}(Quran, 2:47) O children of Israel, remember My favors which I have bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all beings.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 9:76: But when He conferred upon them His bounty they were avaricious with it; and they turned away, swerving aside. See also, Nusse, Andrea, \textit{Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamas}, (Abingdon: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), p. 22-23.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 2:61: That was because they disbelieved in God’s signs. Ibid., 2:75: Are you eager that they should believe in you when a party of them had listened to God’s word, yet perverted it after they had understood, they were well aware.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 2:87: Is it not often so, that whenever a messenger comes to you with that you yourself not desire, you become haughty, then accuse them of lying, and others you slay?

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 2:51: And (remember) when We appointed for Moses forty nights, and you took the calf (to worship) after him, for you were iniquitous.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 2:61.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 5:3: Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed my blessings upon you, and I have approved for you Islam as religion.
message of the new Prophet and him also but as the new Prophet was chosen among the Arabs and not among them; thus they showed their enmity towards him because it was ending the leading role of Jews and Christians.

The “Zionist entity” and the name “Israel” is always used by Islamists to designate the Jewish state that was founded as a religious state. Their religious beliefs based on Torah guides the Zionist thought and decides the way of life in Israel till today. The Islamists finds proof of this “fundamental truth” in the much detail. The name of the state “Israel” is of a religious nature, just as “Knesset” or “Histadrud”. Furthermore, the education of young Israelis is totally based on the religious doctrine. The children are sent to kibbutzim at the age of five to get spiritual and physical education mentioned in Torah, in secondary school, four hours in a week are sanctified for studying Torah, and also one hour given to the study of Talmud. The Hebrew language which was dead for about 2000 years has been revived and all new immigrants are allotted new Jewish name at their arrival in Israel. The tactics used by Israeli army are greatly inspired by the Torah, such as, expulsion, demolition of houses and the policy of scorched earth. In Israel foods are required to obtain conformity with religious rules, and all restaurants are administered by the religious institutions. Israeli military strike has never started on a Saturday. All this proves that how strictly the Jews respect their religious laws.

This alleged strict adherence of Jewish religious rules by Israelis clearly indicates Islamist’s admiration and is viewed by Islamists as a source of inspiration for Muslims that how they should behave. It is believed that the Jews are attaining unprecedented successes because they are the true followers of their religious laws and customs. Hamas has exemplified the successes attained by the Jews for

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29 Ibid., 2:41: And believe in what I have sent down, confirming that which you already have. Ibid., 2:121: Those to whom We have given the book and who read it in the right way, they believe therein.

30 Ibid., 2:109: Many of the people of the Book wish to bring you back to unbelief after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth has become manifest to them. See also, Guillaume, Alfred, The life of Mohammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s Sirat Rasul Allah, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 239.

convincing their own people and repeatedly advocate that they must have a return to the Islam which would guarantee the success.

The success of Jewish state provides an example for Hamas that how an Islamic Palestinian State should be organized. Although Israel has lacked a written constitution, but every law enacted by the Knesset is controlled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs which insures its conformity with the Torah.\(^{32}\) Sometimes, if the state is unwilling and slow to implement religious laws, truly religious people themselves go into the streets to pressurize the government for their implementation and assist their fellow citizens.\(^{33}\)

Moreover, the strength of Israel is not only based on the Jews respect for their religious laws but also lies in their mastery of the modern world and technological inventions. The importance of television has long been acknowledged by the Israel, the most influential contemporary medium that has a direct impact in shaping the mind of individuals.\(^{34}\) Israel’s skilful utilization of this influential instrument provided it with the support of western people for her falsehood. The Islamic media has been criticized for its being incapable of success. Ahmed Abd al-Rahman of Libya is praised for organizing conferences, seminars, discussions, and initiating a communication in society, producing movies, in England. These types of more initiatives are needed to present Islamic point of view.\(^{35}\)

Hamas also realized that strict adherence to their religious laws by the Jewish people is not only the reason for the success of “Zionist entity” but also the unprecedented support of International Jewry in defense of Israel is another reason. Jews have seen to occupy key positions in the whole world which they tactfully use to promote Zionist cause. According to Hamas, even the academic institutions of the western countries are not immune and many Jewish academicians are working there


\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 6.

\(^{34}\) Filistin al-Muslima, July 1990, p. 6.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.,
in order to influence them.\textsuperscript{36} The world’s army has also been seen as being infiltrated by Jews and the Holy Saudi Arabian soil is witnessing the presence of U.S. army which is viewed by Islamists as the more dangerous.\textsuperscript{37} History is full of evidence that the Jews were discerned behind every revolution in the world either it was the French revolution or the Russian one. They have been identified as the manipulators of both the World Wars.\textsuperscript{38} They formed organizations like the Rotary and Lion’s Club whose intention is seen as espionage and whose money dominates the imperialist world.\textsuperscript{39}

The espionage and conspiracies of Jews against the Muslims are clearly mentioned in the traditional theological literatures. In the Holy Quran, it is clearly stated that Jews turned their backs on God’s signs, disobeyed and transgressed; they corrupt on earth.\textsuperscript{40} Mawdudi points out that the Quran informs the Muslims about the conspiracies of Jews against Muslims and their efforts to contaminate the simple and pure-hearted Muslims with the spiritual disease from which they themselves suffered.\textsuperscript{41} The Jews are accused for committing acts of treachery\textsuperscript{42} and the Muslims are warned not to consider Jews and Christians as friends because they are only friends with each other (and not of Muslims).\textsuperscript{43} Hadith contains even more instances of how the Jews attempted to harm the Muslims and their leaders. Once they tried to


\textsuperscript{37} Filistin al-Muslima, September 1990, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{38} Mithaq, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{40} Quran, 2:61 and 2:60; also 5:32.


\textsuperscript{42} Quran, 5:13: You will never cease to uncover treachery on their part, except a few of them.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 5:51: O you who believe, take not the Jews nor the Christians for protectors, for they are protectors of one another. And whoever takes them for protectors shall be one of them.
kill Prophet Muhammad by throwing a rock from the top of a house;\textsuperscript{44} when they failed to do so, thus they came to spy out weakness.\textsuperscript{45}

The Jews are accused of creating confusion among the Muslims by showing to be converted to Islam, without converting their hearts.\textsuperscript{46} Only a few of them are said to have accepted Islam and thus proven their true belief in God but the majority remained unbeliever.\textsuperscript{47} However, the Muslims need not to afraid the Jews because they are cowards who will not fight against you and they can only fight from behind the walls and in fortified towns.\textsuperscript{48} The Jews do not have the power and strength to realize their plots. The characterization of Jews such as traitors, mischief, envy, treachery, falsehood, cowardice, and conspirators are put forward due to the battle of Jewish tribes against the Muslim community in Medina and the misbehavior of the \textit{Bani-Israil}.

The Jewish image of wretchedness and humiliation presented in the traditional Islamic thought, which were preserved by the powerful Islamic civilization till the 15\textsuperscript{th} century,\textsuperscript{49} is now replaced by the powerful Jews, exerting serious threat to the Muslim community and the entire world. The Jews are described as “Jewish Satan”,\textsuperscript{50} the bloodsuckers of mankind,\textsuperscript{51} racists, and criminals of the tribe of Zion.\textsuperscript{52} Hamas


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 458.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 246.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 251.


\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, March 1990, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, November 1990, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, January 1990, p. 1.
justifies its use of the notion “Jewish Nazism” by exemplifying that the expulsion of people from their homeland is a crime equal to ‘a kind of murder’.\(^{53}\)

In this transformation of image of the Jews, we can clearly find the influences of modern European anti-Semitism. The wide circulation of the “\textit{Protocols of the Elders of Zion}” in the Arab world had greatly influenced the masses in the Middle East. These anti-Semitic documents, which circulated in Europe during 1920s to 1930s, were first time translated into Arabic in 1926.\(^{54}\) They are quoted in the \textit{Mithaq} of Hamas as a proof of allegations against Jews.\(^{55}\) The “Protocols” supposed to prove the existence of a Jewish government which controls political parties and governments, press and public opinion, banks and economic development, through a hidden network of agencies and organizations spread worldwide.\(^{56}\) This informs that a number of the secret Jewish government agencies are working throughout the world and “\textit{the Elders of Zion}” which highlighted these Jewish plots and conspiracies is the most influential document in a long series of anti-Semitic forgeries whose roots goes back almost to the French Revolution.\(^{57}\)

The Islamization of Western anti-Semitic ideas are not unknown to the Palestinian Islamists.\(^{58}\) “\textit{The Jews in the Quran}” by Afif Abd al-Fattah Tabbara is one of the most influential contemporary books on the question of Jews whose eleventh edition was published in 1986.\(^{59}\) In this book, Quranic verses are interpreted in the

\(^{53}\) \textit{Mithaq}, p. 22.


\(^{55}\) \textit{Mithaq}, p. 32.


\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 25.

\(^{58}\) Harkabi reveals in ‘\textit{Arab Attitudes to Israel}’ the similarity of ideology between fundamentalists and Arab nationalists concerning the arguments for the struggle against Israel and the Jews as well as their characterization.

\(^{59}\) Afif Abd al-Fattah Tabbara, ‘\textit{The Jews in the Quran}’ (Beirut, 1986)
light of Hadith, which informs about the several Jewish plots against Prophet Muhammad and his followers, such as denial to pay back debts when the creditor converted to Islam,\(^60\) creating confusion among Muslims, and formal conversion without accepting it by heart in order to harm Muslims.\(^61\) Several passages from Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf have been cited to provide more concrete meaning to the Quranic verses.\(^62\) The Quranic accords of the Bani-Israil as liars, ungrateful trouble makers and conspirators are thus confirmed to be eternal and unchanging and these characteristics had also been applied to the Jews residing in the Israel today. These accords provide the idea of the unchangeable nature of human beings which has been a basic feature of the world in the traditional Islamic thought.\(^63\) Thus a link can easily be made to the present Palestinian struggle and what the Quran says about the Jews is absolutely applicable to the Jewish Zionists today.\(^64\)

The establishment of the Jewish state in 1948 and continued military defeats of Arab – Muslims against the Jewish army shocked the Islamic world and caused a serious psychological problem; how it could be possible that the weak and cowardly Jews can humiliate and defeat the Muslims. These developments were totally incompatible with the traditional Islamic view of the Jews. They began to search an appropriate explanation for these developments which brought Islamists closer to the European anti-Semitism and they welcomed it. Thus, they became strong adversary of the Jews and began to demonize and characterize them as the sons of Satan engaged in committing conspiracy against all mankind.\(^65\) Accordingly, the Palestinian Islamist consider the battle between Palestinian people and the Jewish state not merely a struggle between these two rival groups, but also viewed the Zionist as a part of the

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\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 239.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., pp. 26-27.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., pp. 37, 46, 48.


\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 47.

International Jewish-ness and a part of western alliance. On the other hand they consider the Palestinians as a part of Islamic *Umma* and *Dar al-Islam*.\(^{66}\)

The impact of Israel’s superiority and growing Arab anti-Semitism brought one the most important change which was the growing concern of the Muslim academicians and their emphasis in Islamic writing on the Jews. Although, Quran and *Hadith* devoted much attention to the *Bani-Israil* and to the Jewish tribes of Medina, Muslim theologians and polemicist of the past ignored and devoted little attention towards the Judaism in their theoretical and practical work which they viewed as one of the minor significance and posing no serious threat.\(^{67}\) The main political rival of Islam was Christianity for centuries. On contrary, Islamic thought in the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century become obsessed with the issue of Zionism. The Jews became central to the Muslim consciousness and their misdeeds were published in voluminous literature. The Jews became a recognized danger and threat to Islam and anti-Jewish teaching was converted into a comprehensive living philosophy.\(^{68}\)

It is important to distinguish that Islamic anti-Semitism is basically different from its European Christian predecessors. Islamic anti-Semitism is the result of the political conflict over territory. This Islamic anti-Semitism was developed as an instrument to resist the Israel, whose existence is the root cause of the entire conflict. Another major difference between modern European-style and Arab – Islamic version of anti-Semitism is that while the former is totally based on racism but latter is lacking it. The Jewish image of evil in Islamic thought is based on their religion and spiritual character and not due to their race or blood. Thus Islamic anti-Semitism can be outlined as “Superficial” compared with its European counterparts but oriented against a real enemy and danger.\(^{69}\)

\(^{66}\) *Filistin al-Muslima*, July 1990, p. 27.


However, the Islamists use these terms Israelis, Zionist and Jews synonymously and alternately in their writings. Nevertheless, the Islamists tactfully differentiated between “Zionism” and “Judaism”. Judaism is considered a religion which is by nature racist and mentions hostility towards others in its books and provokes to wrongly take the Palestine under the slogan of the Holy Land.⁷⁰ Zionism presents the entity of the enemy (Israel) and is responsible for the shift of Jewish thought into a reality that can be seen today in Palestine. Those Jews are “Zionist” who wants to realize their religious thought on Muslim soil. Non – Zionist Jews are those Jews living outside Palestine and don’t actively support “Zionist entity”. The Jews inside Palestine are perceived as Zionists if they don’t prove that they are against the Jewish occupation of any part of the Palestinian soil.⁷¹ The negative image of Zionism have been legitimized world over when the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution which brought Zionism among racist ideologies.⁷²

Hamas claims that it has redefined the realm of Islamic fiqh which seeks respect towards Jews and Christians as ahl al-kitab. Jews and Christians are called “the people of book” by Muslims as opposed to the “heathens” because the Holy Quran recognizes the divine books, Gospel and Torah, even though they converted them into falsified form. When they submitted themselves to the Islam as a ruling force they were granted protection and free worship in return for the payment of poll-tax. But they violated this defense-alliance which has been considered as an act of perfidy by Muslims.⁷³ Hamas considers Islamic order as the most just and humane organization of society. Hamas advocates that it doesn’t take any action against anybody because of his religious belief and convictions, as long as these are not converted into perceptible hostility towards Muslims and destruction of the rights of Islamic Umma. In Palestine the situation is the same. The Jews in Palestine are occupiers that occupy Muslim land and threatening Islamic Umma, therefore

⁷⁰ Filistin al-Muslima, April 1990, p. 25.

⁷¹ Ibid.,


considered as “war enemies”. Muslims are no longer compelled by Islamic teachings which demands respect for defense-alliance (ahl al-kitab). The Islamists are fighting with Jews because of the hostile actions they take against Muslims.

Hamas justifies their struggle by referring to traditional Islamic teaching which strictly prohibited that nobody can be persecuted due to his religious beliefs and conversion by force and fighting against non-Muslims for this purpose is strictly forbidden. But, Israeli racism has to be fought. Their treatment of Arab citizens as well as their oriental Jews to the ranks of second class citizens provides evidence which proves their racism. Hamas also fights on behalf of the Christians who are also oppressed by the Zionists. The Israel’s racist nature is underlined through regular reports about her intimate relationship with South Africa, whose regime was recognized internationally as racist. This accusation is very common in secular Arabic thought since 1960s.

The evil Zionism has to be eliminated at its root. Hamas pursue this view by proving that Zionists all historical claims to the land of Palestine are false. Firstly, they are not direct descendents of the tribe of Bani-Israil who once resided in Palestine. The European Jews are not of Israelite descendence as revealed by a theory advanced in the beginning of this century which also advocated that actually they are the progeny of a tribe of the Central Asian Turks who were converted to Judaism, called Khazzar. On the other hand, the Quran refutes any historical claim of the Israeli Jews on Palestine. The Islamic history presented Jewish religious and cultural heritage as their part and thereby subordinated to it. This view is taken from the fact that God


75 Ibid.,

76 Quran, 2:256: No compulsion is there in religion, for rectitude is henceforth distinct from perversity.


78 Filistin al-Muslima, March 1990, p. 34.

has sent only one and the same message several times to human being, first in the form of the *Torah*, second in the form of *Gospel* and Islam as the final. History in Islamic term is not a series of events, but the manifestation of religious belief in a system of life and a community.  

Hamas advocates that the establishment of Islamic rule over Palestine under the Calipha Rashida (the rightly guided Caliph) is a mere extension of the Islamic rule of David (Dowd) and Solomon (Suleiman) who ruled according to the God’s program. They were the true Islamic kings. This view is derived directly from the strong belief that every true believer is automatically a Muslim. Abraham is considered as the first true Muslim, and “the father of prophets” as well as the father of Muslims. Quran says that Abraham was a true Muslim *Hanif*, neither a Jew nor a Christian. Thus the Jews cannot claim that they are descendants of Abraham who built the first mosque on the earth, the Ka’ba, as mentioned in the Holy Quran and the several *Hadith*. According to a *Hadith*, Ka’ba and Al-Aqsa both the mosques were built by Abraham and Al-Aqsa is the second mosque built on the earth forty years after the Ka’ba. Thus, history reveals that Islam existed in Palestine prior to the Jewish one and all Jewish claims that Solomon (Suleiman) had first built a temple on the site of the present Al-Aqsa mosque are lies. It is a historical reality that Abraham

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84 Quran, 2:125 (even though the name Ka’ba is not mentioned), And when We made the House a resort for people and a place of peace. Mawdudi includes the name Ka’ba in his English translation of Quran. See also, Mawdudi’s interpretation of Quranic verse 2:146 (Those to whom We have given the book know him (the Prophet) as they know their own children, but a party of them conceal the truth, even though they know.)

lived in Palestine a hundred years before the Solomon (Suleiman). So the historical argument raised by Jews to support their right to live in Palestine is false.  

The Islamists have no problem to incorporate the other historical fact which says that when the Muslims occupied the Palestine there was no Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. The Islamists also accepted that Abraham built the mosque and then only God knows what happened and who, why and when demolished it. It was rebuilt when Muslims entered Jerusalem. Thus, there is no contradiction between the Quranic verse and historical fact.

Accordingly the Jews cannot claim their historical right to Palestine and Israel is an artificial state. The best proof of this fact is evident from Israel’s continued dependence upon outside labor which it needed for their work done and its inability to manage workmen within its own territories. The Israel was creation of world imperialism under the guidance of the U.S. and could only survive as a military state swarming with soldiers. Its survival depends at all levels of support provided by the Jewish ‘bourgeoisie’ all over the world. The Jews assumed that they found a solution to their problem, but in reality they generated a new problem for the Palestinian people and themselves also. The problems of the Jews will not be resolved until Palestinians get back their land. The close link between “Zionist Entity” and the “international Jewish conspiracy” finds its most recent manifestation in the mass immigration of Jews from Soviet to Palestine. The population explosion compelled Israel to expand its borders and thus it was perceived that it brought the Zionists, one step closer to their dream of a “Great Israel”. In the view of Hamas, the obvious goal of the Zionist project is to expand the physical boundaries of Israel in order to dominate the entire region.

In the \textit{Mithaq} the Zionist plan in a general way described as being limitless, aiming to extend their rule from the Nile to the Euphrates. To prove their allegations, the Islamists referred the conspiratorial plans represented in the \textit{“Protocols of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[86] Filistin al-Muslima, April 1990, p. 25.
\item[87] Filistin al-Muslima, July 1990, p. 32.
\end{footnotes}
Elders of Zion".89 In the magazine Filastin al-Muslma, the accusation becomes more concrete. Israel wants to take over the Jordan at the first opportunity, but they will not stop their expansion once they swallow the Jordan. Israel’s offensives of Lebanon as well as her close collaboration with Ethiopia, which enabled her to build up a security belt around the Red Sea, clearly manifested its expansionist nature. Due to this reason peace plans and proposals will only ‘widen the appetite’ of the Zionists, who try to employ their best efforts to win time by any means in order to make stronger and better establish their state.90 “Eretz Israel” is the name often used by Zionists to claim Biblical borders for Israel as well as the steady expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestine is a proof of the expansionist nature of Zionism.91

HAMAS’ ATTITUDE TOWARDS WESTERN COUNTRIES

Hamas perceives the West genuinely hostile towards Muslim countries. The West comprises the capitalist industrial countries as well as the former socialist nations of Eastern Europe. All these countries are united in their common aim to harm Islam as perceived by Hamas and therefore it considers them as enemies of Islamic Umma. Any strengthening of Islam symbolizes a victory against the West. Hamas holds that the West – and particularly Britain; it handled both Zionist immigration in its Mandate period administration and its withdrawal in 1948 – wholly responsible for the creation of Israel. This creation of historically remote Jewish ‘homeland’ in 1948, in the heart of the land that was the Arabic homeland for long centuries resulted in endless troubles and a fierce bloody conflict. Hamas also alleged the West, particularly the United States for its continuous and unconditional support for Israel, at the total expense of the Palestinian people, who are the only one who supposedly

89 Mithaq, p. 32. This expression is frequently used by Arab spokesmen and can even be found in Arab schoolbooks. See also, Harkabi, Yehoshafat, Arab Attitudes to Israel, (London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd, 1972), p. 76. It is frequently used in Arab newspapers and books that there is a map hanging in the Knesset which depicts Israel’s aspiration for Biblical borders. Ibid., p. 77.


91 Ibid., pp. 73, 74, 82.
have no rights in this matter. The West is perceived by Hamas and Palestinians in general, to the staunch backer and protector of Israel.\textsuperscript{92}

Over the decades since 1948 with the support of Western powers, Israel has acquired mightiest power in the region, including nuclear capabilities, the technology that was firstly transferred by Britain and France, then by the United States. Due to the Western support, Israel, which has a population around 6 million enjoyed a vibrant economy, with a GDP of U.S. $121 billion in 2005, which is very close to the total of U.S. $128 billion for the neighboring Arab countries including Egypt, Syria and Jordan, whose total population is more than 105 million. Israel has a per capita income exceeding U.S. $22,000 compared with a mere U.S. $1,100 in the Palestinian case.\textsuperscript{93}

Other wars in the region were seen to have encouraged or led by the West to further weaken the Arabs in the region and maintain a superior position of Israel. The two Gulf wars against Iraq in 1990 and in 2003 reinforced the thinking of Hamas, and many Palestinians and Arabs that the West is and has been stridently against any Arab military power that could ever potentially counter Israel’s military arsenals. Hamas has repeatedly pointed out the influence enjoyed by the Jewish lobbies on the policies of the Western governments, particularly in the United States.

Specifically on the Palestinian issue, Hamas sees the Western countries as never having exerted any pressure on Israel to comply even with the long list of U.N. resolutions on Palestine drafted carefully by the West itself. The list starts with the Resolution 194 of 1948, giving Palestinian refugees the right to return to their lands and compensation for losing their homes and properties, and for being forced out of Palestine by the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. Other U.N. resolutions were also made in the aftermath of the 1967 war. When Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, the United Nations issued Resolution 242 and 338


\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 106.
calling upon Israel to withdraw from ‘lands that is occupied’ and rejecting the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{94}

The Palestinians and Arabs in general have felt dismayed by almost every single U.N. Resolution on Palestine. Hamas has always advocated that these resolutions have been drawn up by the Western powers in a way that have always ultimately secured the interests of Israel in the first place. However, the Palestinians and Arabs have always accepted all these resolutions. But the Western countries have always shown the lack of commitment to pressurize their prodigy Israel to implement these resolutions. Thus, these scenarios shaped Hamas negative perception of western powers. This is not only due to the legacy of past biased Western policies concerning the Israel – Palestinian conflict but also the continued support of Israel and biased policies on the Palestinian question. Despite of all these facts, Hamas does not consider the West to be its enemy and in its declarations Hamas keeps confirming that its sole enemy is Israel, and its battlefield is clearly limited to the boundaries of the historic land of Palestine. This has been a pragmatic position by which Hamas has avoided expanding the line of combat with its foes.\textsuperscript{95}

While reporting the electoral victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in the Algerian elections, \textit{Filastin al-Muslima} emphasized the anxiety provoked in the French government.\textsuperscript{96} This was even discussed in the title of the story, presenting the significance accorded to the response of the western countries. The feedbacks of the several French politicians to the Islamist’s victory were quoted in detail. The Islamists emphasized that the former minister of Foreign Affairs, Michel Jobert even warned the newly elected members by stating that the armed forces had not yet said its last word in this affair; only at the end he stated that France held no powers over Algeria.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p. 107.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Filastin al-Muslima}, July 1990, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.,
These responses by the French politicians led the Islamists to accuse the French of betraying the supreme principles of French Revolution which are Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The French were blamed for not permitting and denying the right to democracy and a multi-party system to their former protectorates and colonies. It was evident that they wish to limit these achievements, which is perceived by them as European, in Europe and trying to withhold them from spreading in the poor countries of the world in order to maintain their superior position and hegemony over them.

While the Western countries promoted the spread of democracy in Eastern European nations, but at the same time they prevented a similar development in the Islamic world. Hamas termed this behavior as ‘racism’. The Western outlook towards the evolution of democratic systems in the Islamic world has been termed as ‘Schizophrenic’. The West was only scared of Islam because they are unaware about the fact that in reality it is the basis of western civilization.

Thus, Hamas obviously accepts the principles of the French Revolution, they only doubted to their European origin. This further provides an example of the Islamists’ ability to assimilate through Islamization.

Another sphere, in which Hamas has shown its evasive feelings towards the West prevail, is the field of media. On the one hand, Hamas states that Western media protect the interests of the west; initially they were silent on the question of mass immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Palestine in order to minimize possibilities of protest from the Arab world. Once they achieved their goal, they began to talk about it in detail, this time planning to make the Muslims hopeless and trying to bring a situation which will compel the Muslims to accept any conditions for a settlement of the Palestinian question.

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98 Ibid.,

99 Ibid.,


THE GOAL OF HAMAS

The goal of Hamas is the liberation of Palestine from occupation by the Zionist enemy and establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state. With the Islamic conquest, Palestine as any other land conquered by Islam had become Islamic patrimonies or *Waqf*\(^\text{102}\) which does not belong to any either a person, party or state. It automatically becomes the property of former, present and future generations.\(^\text{103}\) The people residing on that land have been given usufruct, but not the right to property.\(^\text{104}\) Accordingly, no Arab state or leader or any organization can make any concessions on this land or they have no right to accept the partition of it, because it could perhaps correspond all Muslim generations from the foundation until the Day of Judgment who communally own the soil. The recognition of the Jewish state in Palestine is viewed as *Kufr*, which means infidelity or unbelief.\(^\text{105}\)

It is believed that Palestine occupies a special status in the Islamic faith because the Muslims first direction of prayer had been towards Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa mosque is regarded as the third holy place of Islam. The Prophet Muhammad’s ascension to heaven began from Jerusalem and his night journey took him to Al-Aqsa.\(^\text{106}\) As Palestine and Jerusalem are presented to have a central importance to Muslims, throughout the history their enemies try to win Palestine in order to defeat Islamic *Umma*. The Franks had fought for Palestine about 200 years and this attempt was further repeated by them in the First World War. Then the west chose to divide Palestine and to ensure its lasting presence they created the State of Israel. The Jerusalem has always been the central point of the conflict between faith and unbelief, and will remain the center of this conflict.\(^\text{107}\) It is a clash between civilizations, the west is employing their best efforts to stop the Islamic awakening. It is therefore

\(^{102}\) *Mithaq*, p. 13.

\(^{103}\) *Filistin al-Muslima*, April 1990, p. 25.

\(^{104}\) *Mithaq*, p. 13.

\(^{105}\) Ibid.,

\(^{106}\) Quran, 17:1.

\(^{107}\) *Filistin al-Muslima*, July 1990, p. 27.
individual’s obligation and religious duty to fight for the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine. Thus, Hamas has shown its surety about the advent of the day of liberation which they called \( \text{al-yawn al-Tahrir} \) and whose ideological content is similar to the author of \textit{Mithaq}, who discussed about the Day of Judgment \( \text{al-yawn al-akhir} \).\(^\text{108}\)

These arguments appear to be the most direct manifestation of the Quranic revelation and Islamic tradition in the Hamas thought. But the use of the term \textit{Waqf} for describing the land of Palestine appears to be a new development but the idea underlying represents a long tradition. Any land that is once conquered and ruled by Muslims has to remain ruled by Muslims. As Muslims have to setup an Islamic society on earth, no land can be left to be ruled by non-Muslims.\(^\text{109}\)

The territory has thus occupied an important place in Islam because Muslims have to establish God’s rule over it. This is an important part of the Islamic project on earth. But no land or territory was ever viewed to be of more central or holy nature than another. In the Quran only the holy cities of Mecca and Medina are described. The notion of the holy land or sacred territory is limited to the surroundings of these cities in which non-Muslims are prevented to enter. But after Mecca and Medina if there is any holy place in the world for Muslims that is the Al-Aqsa mosque. It is evident from the several Quranic verses and \textit{Hadith} mentions that before Prophet Muhammad’s arrival Muslims directed their prayers towards Al-Aqsa mosque. This is the reason which makes Al-Aqsa a holy Muslim place and specific territory of Palestine as holy for Muslims.\(^\text{110}\)

On the question of nationalism, Hamas advanced a more innovative and unorthodox move away from the traditional Islamic thought, and abandoned the old inconsistency between Islam based on ideological grounds and the western conception of the nation-state which is based on territorial claims; ‘Fatherland (\textit{Watan}) and Nationalism (\textit{Wataniyya})’ are part of the Islamic faith. If nationalism means that

\(^{108}\) \textit{Mithaq}, p. 16.


certain people are connected through particular material, human and territorial distinctiveness, thus it is applicable in the case of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement. But above all it has a God that breathes soul and life in it.\textsuperscript{111} The use of this Quranic image of the banner of God that connects the earth powerfully to the sky seems to stand here for Islam and Palestine. As Palestinian nationalism is viewed as a part of the Islamic faith, to give up an inch of Palestine would mean leaving a part of the creed.\textsuperscript{112}

The Palestinian question is furthermore notorious in shaping the future of Islamic \textit{Umma}.\textsuperscript{113} The future of Palestine and the future of Islamic \textit{Umma} cannot be separated.\textsuperscript{114} The Palestinian struggle has positive effects in the Islamic awakening\textsuperscript{115} and control over Palestine proclaims the control over the world.\textsuperscript{116} To understand the deepness of this conviction, the role accorded to the history of humankind in the Islamic creed needs to be understood. The relation between the foundations of an Islamic \textit{Umma} in historical perception emanates from the special relationship between the believer and God revealed in the Quran. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith remarked, \textit{“the intercessor between man and God in Islam is righteousness, but on the other hand, in Christianity it is the person of Christ”}.\textsuperscript{117} Man comes closer to God by taking part in the Islamic venture which is the realization of the ideal society on earth. Smith also emphasizes that a Muslim manifests his faith more in practice and less in belief by acting according to the accepted code. Thus, Muslims are burdened with responsibility to make history Islamic according to God’s will.\textsuperscript{118} History is the

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Mithaq}, pp. 14-15.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, August 1990, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Filistin al-Muslima}, July 1990, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.,
showground in which God makes his will demonstrate through believers.\textsuperscript{119} It is obligatory for the Muslims to make the world aware about the validity of the Quranic revelation.\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Mithaq} emphasized this responsibility by quoting Quran, \textquote{you are the best nation (Umma) that come forth to people, enjoining righteousness, and forbidding abomination, and believing in God"}.\textsuperscript{121} Therefore, history cannot be judged by separating it from the domain of the sacred.\textsuperscript{122}

In comparison to Christianity, the formative centuries of Islam were distinguished by conquests and unprecedented successes. The Islamic Empire soon expanded from Asia to North Africa. Since God helps those righteous believers who pursued his plan for human race to victory, redemption could be attained through successes and achievements on earth. The rapid expansion of Islamic Empire confirmed the validation of the whole conception. Smith brought this characteristics feature of Islam into a short quote, \textquote{history confirmed faith}.\textsuperscript{123}

It now becomes obvious that why western supremacy over the Arab–Islamic world since the nineteenth century was felt to be a misfortune and a matter of shame. The inability of Muslims to prevent the creation of Israel in Palestine and continuous Arab military defeats against Israel had deeply demoralized the self-confidence of the Muslims and shaken the basis of their beliefs. The Muslims who are representatives of God’s will on earth losing battle against the non-Muslim enemies. God had withdrawn his favor from the Muslims. Historical events no more corresponds Godly plan given to the Muslims.


\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{121} Quran, 3:110. See also: The explanation of this verse by Mawdudi, \textit{Tafhim}, Vol. 1, p. 278.


Muslims are struggling in Palestine to reconcile history to Islamic convictions and beliefs. Thus the result of the fight over Palestine is decisive for the entire Islamic Umma. A victory in this battle would demonstrate that Muslims are once again on the right path and will proceed to achieve success in the world. This also signifies that the struggle for Palestine can only be won under the banner of Allah, a truth which has already been proved by the historic examples of Muslim victories over the Tartars and the Christian crusaders. Muslims must have to learn lessons from their past experiences. Muslims are also said to use history as an instruction.\textsuperscript{124}

The formation of an Islamic state in Palestine is viewed to be the only possible solution of Palestinian problem; a state which will be a part of Islamic domain that will ultimately embrace the entire world.\textsuperscript{125} Jihad is perceived as the only means of spreading the Islam to the every corners of the world.\textsuperscript{126} Although the struggle is expressed principally in Islamic terms, Hamas surprised the readers through Introduction of Gamal Abd al-Nassir’s three circle theory (dawaer thalath) in a slightly modified form;\textsuperscript{127} the liberation of Palestine has Palestinian as well as Arab and Islamic aspects and all three are vital to the struggle. The Quranic verse referred in support of this paragraph of the Mithaq emphasizes only the significance of Al-Aqsa mosque in religious terms.\textsuperscript{128}

Finally, the goal of Hamas is to establish an Islamic Palestinian State from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. It is evident from various Hamas’ literature and Hamas leaders’ verbal statements. Only the geographical boundary of future Islamic State has been discussed. It comprises Israel and so called occupied territories. Accordingly, there is no distinction between Nablus and Yaffa, Haifa and Einata.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{124} Mithaq, pp. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{125} Filistin al-Muslima, May 1990, p. 35. This is one of the rare allusions to a wider Islamic entity.

\textsuperscript{126} Filistin al-Muslima, April 1990, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{127} Mithaq, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{128} Quran, 17:1: Glorified is He who took his servant by night from the Sacrosanct Mosque to the furthermost Mosque.

\textsuperscript{129} Filistin al-Muslima, May 1990, p. 35.
The Jews born in Palestine will be permitted and will have the right to reside there as they lived earlier in the Islamic states and they will be considered as recognized religious minorities. Every citizen will have to respect the religious laws. Laws formulated by people’s representatives should be administered by a religious committee which will decide their compatibility with religious laws. On the other hand, if governments are delaying and showing their apathy to implement laws and hesitant in ensuring respect for them, then the people have to lead their fellow citizens. Thus Palestine will be governed by Sharia law. However, Hamas has never provided a complete picture of the Islamic state that would be established in Palestine.\textsuperscript{130}

**MEANS AND STRATEGY FOR REALISATION OF THE GOAL**

Faced with the perceived alienation in their struggle with Israel on all levels, the only possible means to achieve the proclaimed goal was Jihad, according to Hamas interpretation of Sharia. It found manifestation in the form of the Intifada. To strengthen this popular uprising was perceived as the only way to effectively fight against the Israeli occupation of Muslim land and the worldwide Jewish plot that was also viewed to be behind it.\textsuperscript{131} It was realized that there is no way of finding a solution to the Palestinian problem and dependence on international conferences with the participation of all parties concerned, was totally rejected. It was evident from the past experiences of the Hamas that the continuous hostility shown by the international community would surely block any arrangement which would be in the favor of the Palestinians. In other words, this type of any conference and arrangement would merely lead unbelievers in the position of mediators over Islamic territory.\textsuperscript{132}

For supporting this argument, certain Quranic ideas and verse has been quoted; “*but neither the Jews, nor the Christians will be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: God’s guidance is the real guidance and if you follow their*
desires, after what has come to you as knowledge, you will not have God as either helper, or protector.” This warning of Quran advanced against the tricks and mistakes of his enemies can be applied exactly to the present day scenario when the Arab – Islamic world finds itself in a defensive position, confronting western culture and political supremacy. Any Palestinian concession in the interests of Israeli state is compared with abandoning faith in Islam by recognizing western (Christian and Jewish) standards. This Sura provides the perfect Quranic support for the denial of western thoughts and interests.

Thus, the Intifada was considered as the only truly Islamic way of taking back Palestine. Hamas proclaimed to have a lead in the uprising that erupted in December 1987 in Jabaliya Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip. It was the members of Hamas who made possible to spread the movement from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank. Hamas was portrayed as the head of the Intifada and hence of the Palestinian people, reflecting and manifesting the will of the people. In several interview, Hamas leaders repeatedly clarified that the organization existed secretly before the 15th December 1987, but it was January 1988 which brought it on the forefront. Thus Intifada was described as an Islamic movement by the Islamists since its beginning. Mahmud Zahhar, who was the spokesperson of Hamas in Gaza Strip, emphasized the tangible growth of the Islamic movement during Intifada, pointing out that in 1990 there were more than 200 mosques in the Gaza Strip.

For Hamas, it was obvious that masses chose Islam as a program for revolutionary change. The Islamic awareness of the conflict signified a way out of impasse at which the struggle was stuck. Hamas thus applied the basic principle that Islam is the only solution for all the problems faced by contemporary Muslim societies. Hamas continuously admitted that since the outbreak of the Intifada the number of Palestinians which had been killed, wounded and arrested by Israelis drastically increased than ever before. However, the Intifada was evaluated as a success because it damaged Israelis straightly and physically. Intifada compelled Israelis to think over a thousand times before deciding to settle or inhabited in the

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133 Quran, 2:120.

134 See interview with Jamal Hamami, one of the leading figures of Hamas in Filistin al-Muslima, June 1990, p. 10.
occupied Palestinian territories. The Israelis should learn that the Intifada was a curse laying upon them until the Judgment Day and that their destruction would surely come through the hands of the young Palestinians.135

This come back to Islam also clarified why the movement could survive successfully for a longer period against a strong and better equipped enemy and ascertained that it would proceed until the final triumph. The Intifada sprang from the awareness of every single Muslim and hence it could not be prevented by anyone or any organization. Hamas spread the real understanding of life among the Palestinians. The Intifada marked the Palestinians return to Islam. The Quranic Godly movement renewed the belief, brought the people closer to Allah and loudspeakers of mosques resumed their true role. Because of this return to Islam, the people once again came back to their true nature and identity after having inspired by various schools of thought. Money and Power no longer remain the central force to guide the Palestinians behavior, but rather it was replaced by Islamic values such as unity and cooperation which could obviously be seen among the families who had been a victim of Israeli autocracies and who had a member of family imprisoned or killed. The evils which brought sorrow to the Palestinians such as egoism, individualism, the lack of belief, the absence of mutual help and the love of material values, were eliminated.136

These evils are actually the characteristics of modern society as such. It is therefore an important aspect of Hamas ideology which is partly directed against the evils of modern society, which entered the Palestinian society. The loss of identity, going along with the suspension of traditional structures and relations also influenced the Arab – Muslim societies. All Western societies went through such a phase of change in their way to becoming a modern industrial nations. But in the case of Palestine, this is undoubtedly worsened by the expulsion of people from their home land, dispersing the population and the continued denial of their identity by Israeli occupying forces. Hamas’ program, promoting the restoration of traditional systems and social relationships, this corresponds directly to the aspirations and needs of the people. Modernity, at the same time can obviously be identified with Israel whose


136 Ibid.,
moral degeneration is portrayed as threatening to the Palestinians. Thus the feelings of insecurity and frustration about these societal changes can easily be channeled into the struggle against the Israel.

The self assertion because of an alleged return to traditional frameworks of relationships and to the Islamic creed bestowed the Palestinian people with confidence in themselves and in their capacity to change their fate. They retrieved hope that the circumstances will not be the same forever and they would not always be the losers. This newly developed will was perceived as the driving force behind the Intifada. The changes initiated in the hearts of the people and hence touched the whole society. The essential characteristics and the strength of the intifada was the participation of every strata of population including children, old men and women. In this sense, the Palestinian Intifada was characterized as an example and living model for all believers of how to deal with a powerful enemy with the simplest weapons. Hamas claimed that the Palestinian Intifada became a source of inspiration for others also and it has been imitated by the Muslim brothers in Kashmir, Azerbaijan and even by the Chinese students.

The Intifada was characterized as a form of Jihad which is believed to be the only means to emancipate Palestine and to bring back the lost glory of Islamic Umma. It is not equal to war, which in Arabic might be interpreted qital. Jihad has wider implications and includes every kind of endeavor in God’s cause. Thus Hamas notion of Jihad is a typically fundamentalist explanation which incorporates struggles like education or writing.

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Hamas validates the armed struggle as a response to Israeli antagonism. In the *Mithaq* we find that ‘the expulsion of people from their homeland (watan) is a kind of killing’. Hamas regularly advocated that it had once been purely a political organization, but as the enemy blocked all ways to a peaceful solution, the only possible means that remained was the use of our hands. Thus, Hamas interpretation of *Jihad* is closer to a modernist’s interpretation which confined it as merely a defensive war than to the account presented by the fundamentalist ideologue Sayyid Qutb, who perceives *Jihad* as an expansionist war in order to expand the Islamic Dawa. He totally rejected the interpretation of modernist thinkers, like Muhammad Abdul, who emphasized the defensive character of *Jihad* and only noticed the duty to fight in case of foreign occupier or aggressor attacking Islamic territory.

This concept of *Jihad* was also advocated by the late Al-Azhar-Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut’s in his treatise on *Jihad*. This piece was obviously written under the impact of creation of the state of Israel in Palestine. The interpretation of the Quranic verse 2:191 was the basis of his arguments, he emphasized the duty to wage *Jihad* against those expelling people from their homes, scaring them while they are secure and preventing them from residing peacefully without fear of their lives or possessions. This type of persecution is worse than persecution by murder or bloodshed.

Thus Muslims are allowed to meet the antagonism in the same manner and retaliate it by the same means. Therefore the modernist and Hamas interpretation of *Jihad* is same on this point. The right to *Jihad* in Palestinian scenario is even acknowledged by the most defensive, apologetic trends in modern Islamic

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143 *Mithaq*, p. 22.


146 Quran, 2:191: And kill them wherever you find them, and eject them from places whence they ejected you, for sedition is worse than carnage.

147 Peters, Rudolph, *Jihad in Medieval and Modern Islam*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), p. 44. This position is based on the Quranic verse 2:194: So, whoever commits aggression against you, attack in like manner as he attacked you.
thought. The defensive facet communicates exactly to the situation prevailing in Palestine today and thus utilized by Hamas as a mobilizing call.

Hamas views the struggle for the liberation of Palestine as an individual religious duty which even permits wives to fight the enemy without the authorization of their husband and slaves without the permission of their master.\(^\text{148}\) According to the Quran; Any Muslim who avoids fight is committing ‘major treason’.\(^\text{149}\) This interpretation contrasts with Sunni mainstream thought in which \textit{Jihad} is traditionally considered by all Jurists, with almost no exception as a collective rather than individual obligation binding entire Muslim community as a collective group.\(^\text{150}\) The obligation is fulfilled when a part of the community fulfils it.\(^\text{151}\) Old men, disabled persons and women are exempted from the responsibility to go to battle.\(^\text{152}\) On the contrary, the Kharijites made the individual duty a pillar of belief. In the classical Islamic \textit{fiqh}, \textit{Jihad} becomes a personal obligation only in some specific circumstances, particularly when the enemy attacks Islamic land.\(^\text{153}\) All residents of the territory including women and slaves are then bound to expel the enemy.

\(^{148}\)\textit{Mithaq}, pp. 14-16.

\(^{149}\)\textit{Mithaq}, p. 32. The Quranic verse 8:16 quoted: And he who turns his back to them (unbelievers) that day, unless maneuvering for battle or intending to join another (part of his) host, he is laden with wrath from God and his abode shall be in Jehennam.


According to Ibn Rushd, “Jihad becomes an individual obligation when there is no one else (no organized state army) to carry it out.”\(^{154}\)

Another side of Hamas notion of Jihad is the fact that Islamic Umma is only wholly united and concentrates all its power when it finds itself in trenches and harbors (war and struggle) and history provides the best proof for this.\(^{155}\) This paragraph signifies that the Jihad for the liberation of Palestine works at the same time to purify the Islamic Umma. It also compels Muslims to put all their efforts into the war, thus automatically ensures their return on the path of Allah and saving them. In other way it could be said that the enemy can only be defeated if the Muslims will fight in the path of Allah, as history has witnessed in the victories over the Tartars and Crusaders. In this way human civilization had been rescued in the past.\(^{156}\)

The importance of Jihad for the purification of Muslim society proves that it is more than just military battle; the initial point for both is the spread of Islamic awareness.\(^{157}\) Thus the intellectuals and scholars are said to contribute the Jihad by writing articles, books and educating Muslims in this awareness. Women play no fewer roles than men as they give birth to new Muslims and instruct them for Jihad.\(^{158}\) Thus the role of women in the Jihad is to be good Muslim mothers who inculcate in their children with religious duties and values.\(^{159}\) The Islamic fundamentalist thought in this century is characterized for its stress on Islamic education. The fundamentalist’s severe criticism of the religious institutions was primarily directed against the failure of the ‘Islamic Ulema’ to assure true Islamic education. Due to this reason, Hamas showed its concern about the closing of schools and universities in the


\(^{156}\) *Mithaq*, pp. 30-34.

\(^{157}\) *Mithaq*, p. 17.

\(^{158}\) *Mithaq*, pp. 19-20.

\(^{159}\) Ibid.,
occupied Palestinian territories. This is viewed specially a serious problem because approximately half of the Palestinian population is under fifteen years old. Hamas always proposed to exclude schools from the strike calls in order to avoid their closer by the Israelis.\textsuperscript{160}

In the realm of Arts, Hamas call for the creation of Islamic Art. Men do not only comprise of clay, but they have a spirit. Islamic art can mobilize feelings and thought.\textsuperscript{161} This very wide vision of Jihad corresponds to the fundamentalist’s foresightedness of Islam as a force covering all areas of life. Thus, the classical rules and guidelines of Jihad marked in the Quran and Islamic law were recognized as binding for Intifada. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, at the same time compared the Palestinian Jihad with Jewish confrontation against the British Mandate force which was not considered by anybody as terrorists. We are not executioners as the western media project us.\textsuperscript{162} Hamas had shown its awareness about the fact that Jihad which can undoubtedly have a mobilizing effect on Arab – Muslim people raises the fear and incomprehension of western community that equalizes it with cruel aggression or terrorist act.

According to Hamas, the Intifada can also provide an example for the other Arab – Muslim states of the region that are free and not occupied by foreign forces, but which are yet weak and shattered. The strength of Intifada was that it had participation of all sections and layers of the population. This proved its Islamic character, since Islam is the true nature and identity of the people. In another way, it manifested the will of the people and therefore was a kind of democracy which the Arab countries needed today.\textsuperscript{163}

Hamas advocates the weakness of the Arab countries and their inner – Arab disputes which prevent them from securing for the Umma the status it deserves on the

\textsuperscript{160} Filistin al-Muslima, June 1990, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{161} Mithaq, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.,

International scene. After having a glance into the future, Islamists are more terrified because they observe a worsening of the situation, a further deterioration of the Islamic Umma. The Gulf crises had again highlighted the gap between the people and governments in the Arab Islamic world. It had also made obvious the extent to which many Arab regimes obey the USA. These two characteristics had a very deep impact in the minds of Islamists.164

Most of the existing regimes are considered as dictatorships which are completely based on the repression and a single party rule. The will of the dictator is supreme law and any opposition is ruled out as ungrateful and is persecuted. The main goal of this type of regime is to maintain the fear of the state and its order, incarnated in the ruling figure.165 The relation between ruler and ruled in this type of regime is “the absence of the will of the people”, the ignorance of their expectations and dreams which the dictatorial governments of the region commands and with which they play.166 The tyranny against the Islamic groups and parties in many Arab states is a further evidence of the dictatorial character of regimes. The Libyan leader, Colonel Kadhafi, was accused harshly for his repression of the Islamic opposition to his rule which undermined human rights. Filastin al-Muslima emphasized that he did not arouse human rights in order to please human rights organizations, rather for the sake of consolidating Muslims faced with external forces. Concerning the problems faced by Islamists in Tunisia and encouraging the beginning of democratization in Jordan and Algeria, it was asserted that democracy is bound to rule in our states sooner or later and that there can be no democracy without Islam.167

Another instance of the dictatorial nature of several Arab regimes is the submissiveness of the Arab media.168 The lack of freedom of the media is condemned

164 Ibid.,


166 Filastin al-Muslima, September 1990, p. 4.


as the missing fact.\textsuperscript{169} The expectations of certain Arabs to be viewed as democratic due to their opposition of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf crisis has been completely rejected.\textsuperscript{170} Hamas announced that they cannot be fooled; the majority of existing Arab regimes are of dictatorial character.\textsuperscript{171} Thus Hamas address themselves straightly to the people. They appeal to the people, responsible Gulf States and Saudi Arabia to accept the Palestinian involvement in the development of their respective countries.\textsuperscript{172}

Undoubtedly for Hamas, the true nature of the Muslim people is the desire for a democratic form of government. Islam is also part of the real nature of Muslims and accordingly a larger participation of the population would lead to an Islamization of the state affairs. This idea of development intimately pursue the classical theory of modern Muslim fundamentalism in stating that the Islamic values first acquire the spirit of the individual Muslim, then an increasing nucleus of true believers will slowly transform the state and society. Thus, the emancipation of people’s will is seen as a major step towards the liberation of the Holy Land. The call for the implementation of the Sharia goes together with the demand for democracy; the successful merger of both is exemplified in the Intifada.\textsuperscript{173}

Algeria is another example where the glorious Intifada of 1988 changed the power-balance in favor of the people and generated a new relationship between society and the state. The threat facing the Arab – Muslim world, such as the mass immigration of Jews or the restoration of diplomatic relations between Israel and East European states can only be faced expeditiously if the relations between governments and people are renewed and based on solidarity and cooperation. In the present scenario this type of relationship between rulers and ruled in the Arab world is practically impossible.

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. p. 3.

One of the most interesting features of the Hamas’ thought is the relation between democracy and Islam. Hamas’ severe attacks on the present Arab regimes were based on the ideological ground prepared by previous fundamentalist thinkers. Sayyid Qutb, the first ideologue of radical Islam, elaborated a complete ideology for Sunni revolt against authority. He reinterpreted the concept of Jahiliyya, emphasized that it does not represent an exact period of history, but a situation that emerges every time in a society which deviates the society from the true Islamic path. It indicates basically the return to human arbitrariness as an absolute source for governance and legislation by suspending the God’s program and legislation. Qutb further advocates that the legislation made by an individual, by a group or class of society and by a group of states, all these practices are Jahiliyya. The answer to this kind of action can only be denial and rebellion. Muslims can only follow their Islam in a Muslim surrounding where Islam is supreme; otherwise they are part of a Jahiliyya society. Consequently Qutb justifies revolt against the ruler in the name of Islam and expressed that whatever form of government is adopted, if it deviates from the true path of Islam it will surely lead to a rebellion.

However, Hamas never uses the term Jahiliyya and only rarely denounces the rulers for not being real Muslims. Rather they denounce the dictatorial nature of the most of the present Arab regimes which repress the people, especially the Islamists factions, and spoil their national resources. Thus the will of the people and not the ruler should govern the state, at least an equal level with the will of the God. This thought is completely incompatible with the fundamentalist Islamic concept as defended by Qutb that popular sovereignty must not be the basis of legitimate authority because all sovereignty belongs to God. Muslims are vice-regents of God on earth, implementing his orders, not representatives of other men.

Syed Ameer Ali in his book ‘The Spirit of Islam’ presents a classical notion of Islamic liberalism defending Islam against western allegations and expressed that

175 Ibid., Qutb thus attacks international organizations like the United Nations.
Prophet Muhammad preached a ‘new democracy’. This argument is particularly based on the Islamic concept of the equality of men. The Islamists’ call for democracy is a tactical plan because in the present political scenario in the Arab Islamic world free elections might bring them the ascendancy to political power. During Intifada, the Islamists genuinely realized that Islam corresponds to the real nature of Muslim people. If Muslims will deviate from their true Islamic path and adhere to other ideologies, this is only a matter of unawareness and it is believed that one day this real nature will regain the upper hand. Thus Islamists can be very sure and sincerely support the concept of free elections. Their concept of democracy seems to comprise free elections which would manifest the will of the people, but not essentially political pluralism and conflict. The will of the people appears to be understood as a monolithic bloc which might not be in accordance with the rulers. The dispute is identified between the ruler and the people, and conflicts within this ‘will of people’ are rarely acknowledged.

Hamas conviction that their understanding of Islam provides that there can’t be any disagreement among the true believers. An obvious example of this thought is the statement of Hamas saying that all Muslims pursuing the Islamic program are automatically part of Hamas and cannot probably adhere to another Islamic faction. At several occasions they emphasized their respect for other Islamic factions as long as their actions remains confined within the certain boundaries of Islam. It means that Islamists are the only ones authorize to define those boundaries of truly Islamic behavior. They also clarified that they won’t accept any challenge or rejection on the part of individuals or the community, because believers never defame nor curse. Thus, Hamas denied the individual’s right to criticize. For supporting this argument they advanced the interpretation of the Quranic verse which quoted: “God

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179 *Mithaq*, p. 25.

180 Ibid.,

181 Ibid.,
loves not public avowal of evil words, save he who has been wronged. If you do good openly, or conceal it, or pardon evil, then God is forgiving, Omnipotent”.

CHANGING STRATEGY OF HAMAS

As Hamas realized that they are fighting with a powerful enemy (Israel), which is economically, militarily and technologically far superior and enjoying unprecedented support from U.S.A. and its allies. Hamas as a movement has no comparison with the state of Israel. In the presence of this reality it was not possible to realize the goal which it has mentioned in its Charter of 1988 that was the liberation of the whole Palestine. Thus, Hamas started to advocate more achievable goals in both short and medium term, to confirm its move out of the realm of far-fetched dreams. It pursued goals that could be comprehended by regional and international audiences and can also bring immediate relief and benefits for the Palestinians. Hamas began to minimize religious language in its use. Its discourse has become more aware, embracing legal jargon and basing itself on the norms of international law. Hamas still struggles to keep alive the principle of the ‘liberation of Palestine’ as a whole but keeping in mind the immediate challenges faced by the movement and Palestinians at large. Hamas strategy after the first Intifada was totally based on the statements mentioned in its Charter of 1988 but in 1993 it issued an ‘Introductory Memorandum’ and under the heading ‘The Movement’s Strategy’, it states:

Hamas constructs its strategy for confronting the Zionist occupation as follows:

(1) The Palestinian people, being the primary target of the occupation, bear the larger part of the burden in resisting it. Hamas, therefore, works to mobilize the energies of their people and to direct them toward steadfastness.

(2) The field of engagement with enemy is Palestine, Arab and Islamic lands being fields of aid and support to our people, especially those lands that have been enriched with pure blood of Islamic martyrs throughout the ages.

(3) Confronting and resisting the enemy in Palestine must be continuous until victory and liberation. Holy struggle in the name of Allah as our guide, and

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182 Quran, 4:148-149.

fighting and inflicting harm on enemy troops and their instruments rank at the top of our means of resistance.

(4) Political activity, in our view, is one means of holy struggle against the Zionist enemy and aims to buttress the struggle and steadfastness of our people and to mobilize its energies and that of our Arab – Islamic nation to render our cause victorious.

In this strategy Hamas confirms the ‘boundaries’ of the armed conflict, stating clearly that it wishes to undertake no military steps outside Palestine and the field of engagement with the enemy is Palestine. Hamas shows this conviction in its strategy to assure the outside world that attacking any western or even Israeli targets outside Palestine is not on the agenda of the movement. These guidelines were outlined 13 years before Hamas came into power and took control of the Palestinian Authority in January 2006.\(^\text{184}\) These proclamations of Hamas’s strategy were drawn keeping in mind the future political and military developments concerning the Israeli – Palestinian conflict would lead the Palestinians. No doubt it was beyond the imagination of the people who drafted the above mentioned strategy that Hamas would one day win free and fair elections.

This new situation brought the cornerstone of Hamas’s strategy – military resistance to Israeli occupation – under close scrutiny. After coming to power, Hamas was burdened with a lot of issues relating to the daily livings of Palestinians. This situation compelled Hamas to set aside its military resistance for a while because it was not fruitful for the Palestinian interest. Hamas pragmatically recognized that immediate welfare of the besieged Palestinian people was as important as anymore long-term ideological ideals. Hamas managed to save face as the party of resistance by adopting the standard line that political activity is itself one of the means of struggle. Hamas leaders often advocated that military resistance is not an end, but a means to an end. Thus, Hamas justified that being consumed in government undertakings and serving Palestinian people on a daily basis can easily be limited to the broad parameters of resistance.\(^\text{185}\)

\(^{184}\) Ibid.,

\(^{185}\) Ibid.,