



CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHEIKH AHMED YASSIN IN THE POLITICS OF PALESTINE

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Abstract

"There is a great deal of misunderstanding throughout the globe about what the term "jihad" signifies. It derives from the Arabic word "juhad," which literally translates as "strive." I am capable of being a teacher, a builder, or a warrior, and I am capable of doing all three at once. Everyone is a participant in the jihad, whether if they are unaware of it or believe they are not." There are many individuals who believe that one of Israel's greatest threats is a man who has been paralysed below the neck and is unable to move at all. It was Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder and religious leader of Hamas, who was responsible for the most significant shift in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a political to a resistance-based one in recent history. Ahmad Yassin worked as a teacher and preacher for many years, specialising in Arabic and Islamic studies. His other activities included social activism, but he is most recognised as the founder and spiritual head of the Palestinian organisation Hamas, which he assisted in founding and running for many years. "Shaykh" is a title



given to someone who has done extensive preaching and has learnt a great deal about Islam. Later, Yassin came to believe in the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood and became a member. Because of this, he became a vocal proponent of the rebirth of Islam as a comprehensive way of life. No one has ever claimed that Yassin committed a homicide or detonated a bomb on his own initiative. However, his organisation, Hamas, has emerged as the primary source of Palestinian resistance to Israeli military and civilian physical force in the Gaza Strip.

Keywords: Muslim Brotherhood, Sheikh Yassin, Palestine, Islam, Gaza Strip.

Introduction

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder and spiritual head of Hamas, was a crippled quadriplegic who couldn't see very well at all in the beginning. His voice sounded weak and thin, like if it were made of straw. Nonetheless, he was gaining in popularity among Palestinians who were fed up with a peace process that was failing to better their lot in life. The announcement that he will respond for the first Israeli attempt on his life, which occurred in September 2003, was met with jubilation by thousands of people. He had "blood on his hands from the blood of hundreds of Israelis, including children, mothers, and newborns," according to a minister. For the Israelis, he was a figure of derision. Because he was the spiritual head of a large Palestinian community that was extremely enraged by Israel's occupation, some in Israel wanted to see Sheikh Yassin killed. (Darwish, 1999)

In the months before to December 1987, Hamas was referred to as the Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was commanded by Yassin. Yassin and a number of other individuals established Hamas as a recognised organisation in December 1987. Egypt was still in control of Gaza in 1965, and Yassin was temporarily jailed by Egyptian officials during that time. The Muslim Brotherhood, of which Yassin was a part, was in power at the time. Even before they adopted the name Hamas, the terrorist organisation was preparing strikes on civilian targets. "We were commanded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin," Khaled Mashal recalls of his first military experience in 1983. "We were directed by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin." When the 1983 group sought firearms, they hoped to equip organisations so that they could prepare for military training and kick off the jihad effort. Yassin and his organisation, according to the Palestinian author Khaled Hroub, are allegedly responsible for a series of attacks against Israeli objectives that took place between 1985 and 1987. The "military cells" of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Muhammad Sharathah's Group Number 101, Yahya al-Mujahideen Ghuoul's Mifraqa Group and Salah Shehadah's Group Number 44 were also listed in the report.



Academic Ziad Abu Amr claims that Yassin's Brotherhood began focusing more on social and humanitarian organisations in 1967 and continued this tendency into the 1980s, according to Palestinians. According to Abu Amr, they were aiming to increase their influence and gather support for the Islamic cause by delivering "alms money, zakat, to hundreds of needy families," as he defines it. Attracting and mobilising Palestinian Muslims through Hamas' "call to Islam," Yassin helped the group successfully integrate into Palestinian society through his emphasis on the Gaza dawa. Dawah groups in the occupied territories were currently involved in efforts to indoctrinate Palestinian society, recruit new members, provide operatives with day jobs, conceal cash and promote resistance against Israel's occupation of Palestine. (Hirst, 2004)

Early Life

Yassin was born in the small town of Al Joura, which was then a part of the Palestine Mandate at the time of his birth in 1936 or 1938. He was the son of a Palestinian woman named Yassin and a Palestinian man named Yassin. The land of Palestine was annexed by the United Kingdom as a result of the Ottoman Empire's breakdown during World War I (1914–18). In the same territory, a number of Jews advocated the establishment of a Jewish homeland, while a number of Arabs desired the establishment of a separate state known as Palestine. (Hroub, 2006)

The Jewish state of Israel declared its independence from the United Nations in 1948. Attacks against the new country began almost immediately by the militaries of Arab countries that were in close proximity to the newly established entity. According to some estimates, a million Palestinian Arabs, including the Yassin family, were forced to evacuate their homes during the conflict. They were transported to the Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, which is located in the northern part of the region (a piece of Egyptian territory on the Mediterranean coast just south of Israel). When the twenty-first century began, just a tiny number of refugees and their children were still staying in the refugee camp. Many attempts to destabilise Israel and establish an Arab Palestinian state were made but were all ultimately failed. Indeed, for a large number of Palestinians, the dream did not come to an end within their lifetime. (Hirst, 2004)

Yassin was playing with pals at the beach when he fell on his head and broke his neck, which occurred in 1952. He was an adult at the time of the incident. A car accident has left him unable to use his arms or legs, and he will be forced to utilise an electric wheelchair to get around the rest of his life. (Hroub, 2006)



Yassin, despite the fact that he was born with a disability, persevered in his studies and went on to become a teacher. On the side, he worked as a math tutor for kids who didn't want to continue their studies in a traditional setting. The following is an example of how one of his pupils appeared in his class: It was the son of the Egyptian governor of Gaza who was suffering from bodily difficulties. The governor's staff has stated that Yassin would be a great lecturer of Islamic studies, and this opinion has been echoed by others. Yassin spent the most of his adult life as a teacher and preacher at mosques (religious meeting places in Islam, like churches). He joined the Muslim Brotherhood, a militant Islamic fundamentalist organisation, as a young guy. A fundamentalist is someone who believes that following to a set of strict moral principles is critical to one's existence and that living without them is impossible. Because the Muslim Brotherhood was well-known for its opposition to Egypt's government, many people thought of them as disgusting persons. This was not the case. Yassin was stopped while travelling through Cairo because he was suspected of being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, according to Egyptian authorities. He was, on the other hand, released after only a brief amount of time. As a recruiter for the organisation, he returned to Gaza after a year away. (McGreary, 2001)

Searching for Motive

To combat Zionism and liberate Palestine, Muslim Brotherhood activists led by Sheikh Yassin organised the first intifada, a series of rallies and strikes. December 1987 and September 1988 were the months in which these demonstrations and strikes were taking place. Hamas is the name given to the movement by its founders. The group's charter, or covenant, was drafted in August 1987 and given out to members in December of that year. To begin with, there were calls for widespread strikes, marches and boycotts of Israeli goods. Attendance at Friday prayers and the recitation of a special prayer for the deceased were also encouraged. The Israelis also urged for rocks to be hurled at and attacked Israeli occupation soldiers. After the Second Intifada ended and the Oslo Accords, which promised peace between Israelis and Palestinians, were implemented piecemeal, Hamas began deploying suicide bombers in 1994. The Palestinian Islamists are a collective. For not admitting Israel's existence or for not committing to discussions with Israelis, Hamas is frequently criticised. On the other hand, after taking over the administration in 2006, Hamas has made a series of more conciliatory overtures to the international community. According to Hamas, "the territory of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf sanctified for future Muslim generations until the Day of Judgment" if you believe that the land of Israel is what God has promised you (Hamas Covenant). (Hroub, 2006)

People in Yasin's country wanted to make peace with Israel after Yasin was released from prison. In exchange for Israel giving up the West Bank and all of its settlements and letting



go of the Gaza Strip, Yasin said that he was willing to make peace with Israel. Israel didn't do what was asked of them, so they didn't do. In January 2004, Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz Rantisi came up with a plan that would give Israel ten years of peace in exchange for Israel giving up all of the land it has occupied since 1967. When Yasin said this, he said that Hamas would be willing to recognise a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Despite the fact that there were very few violent attacks in 2004, Israel has always turned down similar requests, and Hamas has had a hard time convincing its military arm to accept them as well. (Kristianasen, 1999)

Yasin was in prison when the Declaration of Principles (Oslo Accords) was signed in 1993, when the Palestinian Authority (PA) was founded, and when there was a lot of hope and promise after that. After 1997, Yasin was put under house arrest by the Palestinian Authority (PA) on a number of occasions, which led to long and sometimes deadly fights between PA security and Hamas supporters on the Palestinian street. Everyone says that, as Israel and the United States wanted, the Palestinian Authority (PA) tried to show that it had control of the situation. It was during this time of disillusionment that Israel kept taking land, building settlements, and cutting off economic opportunities that he came back to the country in 1997. Yasin, like many others, didn't like the Oslo Accords. It wasn't because he didn't like a negotiated settlement, but because the negotiated agreements didn't lead to an independent Palestinian state. (Hirst, 2004)

Services and Contributions

The Palestinian revolt against Israeli control, known as the Intifada, began in 1987 and lasted for over three years. The Intifada shocked both Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was in the midst of peace negotiations with Israel at the time. Yassin sought to have a greater voice in what transpired during the Intifada, and he intended to challenge the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the entity that represented Palestinians. With the support of his organisation, Hamas, he was able to do so. Hamas is an Arabic word that signifies "zeal" or "great passion" (McGreary, 2001).

This is exactly what happened in Palestine: a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood known as Hamas was established there, and Yassin rose to become the organization's most significant religious figure. Soon after, Hamas discovered a means to fulfil both duties. Another thing it did was to assist Palestinians in organising and training them to carry out acts against Israel, like as suicide bombings, that resulted in the death of civilians. You are known as a suicide bomber if you are the one who ties explosives to your body and then detonates them in the middle of a crowd. You and the people around you will perish as a result of your actions. As a result, Hamas came to be seen as the de facto leader of the



Intifada, which began as a Palestinian uprising of vast proportions. The revolt provided Hamas with a significant amount of political support. (Darwish, 1999)

During the year 1998, Yasin travelled to a number of Arab and Muslim countries, where he gathered millions of dollars in donations for the social services provided by Hamas. It was claimed by the United States and Israel that the funds were used to support terrorism and the military branch of Hamas, respectively. After he came out in 1997, he caught the world's attention and for the first time became known all over the world. Palestinians have seen the Palestinian Authority and the Fatah movement as corrupt and extravagant. Hamas is seen as modest and honest, traits that have helped the movement and its popularity rise. Hamas, on the other hand, was in charge of educational and social programmes, among other things. Some Arab countries, such as the oil-rich Saudi Arabia, were sympathetic to the organisation and generously donated large sums of money to its cause. It also received a large amount of funding from Arab communities in the United States. (Abu-Amr, 1993)

Biography: Since 1948, when Palestinians and Arabs were beaten in battle and half of the Palestinian population was expelled from their homes, Yasin has taught that Palestinians must rely on themselves for strength. This was a lesson that he carried with him throughout his academic and political career. Yasin asserted that "came to battle against the Arab troops Israel took our firearms away from us and said that it was only legitimate to utilise the military's capacity to defend itself. As a result of this deed, they tied their fate to ours, and as a result of their defeat, we also lost. At the period, Zionist gangs were feared and often slain by the general public. We may have influenced the course of events if we had had pistols on us at the time." In this particular instance, I would say that people in the Palestinian community were dealing with a slew of societal difficulties and challenges, which Yasin attempted to assist them with as well. Aiming to help Palestinians in Gaza who were unable to receive proper health and educational facilities from Israeli authorities was one of the main goals of al-Mujamma al-Islami in the 1970s. In spite of this, they were able to take control of religious organisations in Gaza because of their religious beliefs. His supporters came together after his release from prison in 1985. It was designed to dissuade would-be drug smugglers. It was easier for Yasin and other Islamist activists to keep tabs on their opponents because of the social media networks they constructed themselves. Many people have battled against the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the secular national government during this period and up to the current day in an effort to represent the Palestinian people. (Hirst, 2004)

With the establishment of Hamas, Islamists gained a greater presence in Palestinian politics and military affairs. Yasin was widely regarded as the movement's spiritual leader and founder. In addition, he was a highly influential figure in the movement. They were



not affiliated with the PLO. Hamas was not one of the organisations they supported. The Palestine Liberation Organization, on the other hand, sees itself as a viable alternative to and rival to Hamas. Recently, there has been speculation that Hamas would join the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This paper, which was prepared in August 1988, said that the members of Hamas were members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine and that they were a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, according to the document. They consider it to be both religious and nationalist in nature: Muslims think that nationalism is an integral aspect of their religious beliefs. In other nations, nationalism is frequently associated with material possessions and human beings. The nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement, on the other hand, possesses all of these characteristics, as well as the more significant characteristics that give it personality and energy. They raise a banner in the skies over their home nation, forming a powerful tie between the land and the heavens, as a symbol of their unity. It is connected to the source of spirit and the giver of life, and it is a symbol of rebirth. It's referred to as the Hamas Covenant. (Kristianasen, 1999)

At the time of his conviction, Yassin was accused of taking part in an Israeli army-sponsored plot to assassinate Palestinians who had collaborated with the Israeli military. He was sentenced to life in jail without the possibility of parole. He was imprisoned for eight years, but throughout that time he gained increasing international recognition as a symbol of Palestinian resistance. His fame rose as a result of his reliance on a wheelchair due to his inability to move on his own. (McGreary, 2001)

Life after Release

At the end of 1997, Israel had to free Yassin and a lot of other Palestinian leaders who had been held in prison by Israel. In the same year, two Israeli agents tried to kill another Hamas leader in the country of Jordan. He was angry that Israel had sent assassins into his country to kill his people, even though Jordan and Israel had a good relationship before this. As a thank you for not breaking the peace, Israel freed a number of Palestinian resistance leaders, including Yassin, who had been imprisoned for his role in the war. Many people thought that Yassin's release was good for him and good for Hamas because of it. Yassin became a public face for Hamas. On top of all this, it made it clear that Yassin couldn't fight against Israel on his own because he was in a chair. It would be bad for Israel to go after him in person at this point in time. People all over the world watch TV, and the images they see might make them change their minds about certain things. (Darwish, 1999)



Yassin, on the other hand, has changed his mind about the possibility of making peace with Israel. People from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) have cut back on how much money they send to Hamas, which has caused some of the group's humanitarian programmes to be shut down. In the end, Hamas's popularity dropped by a big amount.

Wish for Peace

By saying that he was willing to negotiate with Israel if the latter returned the territory it had expropriated before the 1967 war, Yassin went against Hamas' political and military branches. The PLO held the exact same view. Yassin was urged to quit by other Hamas officials who were appalled by this. We don't detest Jews because they are Jews, Yassin said Al-Jazeera in October 1997. There is no need for us to fight the Jews simply because we ourselves are Jewish. They rob us of our freedoms, land, and most importantly, our residences. What the Palestinians desire most is to return home. As a result, we are prepared to coexist peacefully with Jews in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. (Kristianasen, 1999)

It started in September 2000, when the Palestinians started a second Intifada. This time, it started in occupied land and in Israel itself. In the first year of the uprising, Hamas said that it was behind about half of the counter attacks that Israel did to fight back.

The figure-head leader Yassin had become by 2001 was mostly just a symbol. He had no real power. However, his most significant contribution was to inject a strong religious dimension into what had hitherto been a purely political conflict between Palestinian leaders such as Yasir Arafat and Israel's government. Yassin simplified the Middle East peace process by the use of religion, which many Muslims regard as extremely vital in their lives. (Abu-Amr, 1993)

His Legacy

It has been said that the Islamic movement in Palestine prior to the formation of Hamas was more concerned with the rebirth of Islam than it was with battling the occupying troops on the ground. Yasin was there at both of these points in time. According to Yasin's obituary in the Guardian, prior to 1987, he believed that "the conflict" was primarily a cultural and moral one, rather than a religious one. It was about combating secularism and re-Islamizing Palestinian society, according to the statement. In the early 1980s, an Islamist organisation known as Islamic Jihad took the lead in the battle against the Israeli occupation. Yasin and the other top leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine were staunch supporters of this plan, as was Yasin himself. Their formation of the Palestinian



resistance movement Hamas resulted in the formation of a group that studied political realities and new tactics of resistance to the occupation and integrated their findings into an Islamist ideology that was based on the Quran.

The difficult choice to reach a truce with the Israelis stems from the necessity to maintain Palestinian unity while shifting the focus of the war to the Israelis. Israel would have to evacuate from the occupied West Bank, halt settlement construction, cease construction of the racist separation wall that is destroying Palestinian land, and release political prisoners in order for the truce to be effective. It makes no difference how much of our land has been plundered. We demand a Palestinian state on the entire territory. However, this does not rule out the possibility of obtaining Palestinian territory in the future, no matter how long it takes or how formidable the adversary is. Palestinians who belong to the Islamic movement in Palestine believe that it is impossible to serve in a Palestinian administration while the country is under occupation and without the ability to move freely around the country. Hamas, on the other hand, has stated that it is prepared to participate in municipal elections. It will be made at that time, following careful consideration of the current circumstances and conditions in the legislative and presidential contests, among other factors. (Kristianasen, 1999)

Yasin did not state that he promoted this practise, nor did he state that he did not want it to take place. Following Yasin's death, Hamas shifted their approach. It made the decision to run in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) legislative elections in 2006, which marked a significant shift from previous policy. It was a surprising triumph for them, and they were able to secure the majority of the seats. Following that, they picked Ismail Haniyeh to be the next prime minister. In 2006 and 2007, the Palestinians suffered when the United States, the European Union, Canada and Japan withdrew financial assistance from the Palestinian Authority since Hamas was in control of the administration. In addition, there was internal violence between Hamas and Fatah, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. (Abu-Amr, 1993)

As he grew older, Yasin came to be seen as the spiritual head of Hamas as well as its brainchild. A great deal of information about the organisation is kept under wraps since there are so many threats against its members. As a result, it is difficult to understand how the organisation operates and what each individual's position is within it. "He owed much of his success and renown to chance and the unintended effects of aggressive Israeli tactics rather than to his own political abilities," according to the Independent's obituary for Yasin. (Hirst, 2004)

His Assassination and Global Response



During a raid on a residence in Gaza City on September 6, 2003, an Israeli F-16 fighter jet launched a barrage of missiles at the building. Yasin was able to flee the scene of the crime and call for help. One of the leaders of the beleaguered resistance was a little taken aback. On March 22, 2004, Israel assassinated him along with nine other individuals, bringing him to a close. This was the method by which Israel assassinated the most well-known Palestinian leader. When he was shot by Israeli attack helicopters, he was on his way out of a mosque in Gaza, where he had just finished praying. A squadron of Israeli helicopters fired on him and a number of other civilians, injuring them severely. Yasin's death drew widespread international condemnation and anger. The United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Arab League, and the African Union were all extremely outraged by the incident. Demonstrations were widespread throughout the Palestinian Authority (PA), as well as in many other Arab and Muslim nations on March 30. Three days of national mourning have been declared by Yasir Arafat, the president of the Palestinian Authority. It was one of the most heinous crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli government. Ahmad Qurei, the Palestinian Prime Minister, stated that (Guardian, 22 March 2004). According to Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, "all of us may appreciate Israel's need to defend itself, but it is not allowed to engage in this type of unlawful killing, which we condemn." The White House expressed "great concern," but asserted that Israel had the right to defend itself and that Yasin had been "directly involved in terrorism" in the past. According to a representative for the United States State Department, the killing did nothing to aid attempts to re-establish movement toward peace. (Abu-Amr, 1993)

Conclusion

Ahmad Yasin worked as a teacher and preacher for many years, specialising in Arabic and Islamic studies. His other activities included social activism, but he is most recognised as the founder and spiritual head of the Palestinian organisation Hamas, which he assisted in founding and running for many years. "Shaykh" is a title given to someone who has done extensive preaching and has learnt a great deal about Islam. Later, Yasin came to believe in the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood and became a member. Because of this, he became a vocal proponent of the rebirth of Islam as a comprehensive way of life. He also played a significant part in the establishment of a well-known charity during Israel's invasion of Gaza in June 1967. He was one of the founding members of Hamas in 1987–88 and was widely regarded as the spiritual leader of the organisation, ensuring that it carried out its mandate. Seen as a basic and humble example in the Palestinian society, his life was well-known. The couple had eleven children together; all of them were Palestinian. He was married to a Palestinian woman named Halima, and they had eleven children together. Many Israelis and many other people have criticised him for taking a strong position on



Palestinian calls for independence as well as inciting suicide bombers to carry out their attacks. He was freed from prison towards the end of 1997, and despite the fact that he was nearly deaf and blind, he became increasingly well-known outside of the Hamas movement. The Palestinian Liberation Organization, which had been around for a long time, saw him as a symbol of new forms of resistance to Israeli occupation that were competing with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). His death was carried out by the Israelis in March 2004, and they were the ones who executed it. No one has ever claimed that Yassin committed a homicide or detonated a bomb on his own initiative. Nonetheless, Hamas has emerged as the most effective source of resistance against Israeli cruelty, which is the most effective form of resistance against both military personnel and civilians of Israel.



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