

Origin and Ideological Moorings of Hamas

Dr. Balal Ali*

Assistant Professor, Adigrat University, Tigray, Ethiopia

Abstract – Hamas an acronym for an original Arabic name *Harkat al-Mokwama al-Islamiya*, which means ‘Zeal’ was officially founded on 14 December 1987 but its origins can be traced back to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood which was founded by a school teacher Hassan al-Banna in 1928. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, who has been considered as the founder of Hamas was active in Palestinian politics since 1970s. Greatly influenced by the ideas and teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin formed an Islamic Society in 1976. By 1978, he felt the need for a bigger and better organization to promote Islamic values in the Palestinian society. This thought led him to establish Islamic Compound. However, Maktura incident of Jabaliya refugee camp was an immediate cause for the formation of Hamas.

Hamas adopted its Charter on 18 August 1988, which contains its basic ideological commitments and proclaims its goal, means for the realization of goal and Hamas’ world view. Hamas clearly states that it derives its ideology from Islam and its goal is to liberate all of historic Palestine. This paper is an attempt to discover the origin, roots and the role of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in founding Hamas, and tracing the ideological moorings of Hamas along with its bases. It also aims to find the perception of Hamas on the Jews, Judaism, Zionism, Western countries and ultimately the goal of Hamas.

Keywords: Hamas, Jews, Islam, Ideology, Origin, Muslim Brotherhood

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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-Banna 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. 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.

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.

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. In 1952, he was injured while wrestling with one of his friends, Abdullah al-Khatib. 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.

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. 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.

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in 1966 with a large number of Muslim Brotherhood members was arrested as ordered by Jamal Abdul Nasser after Egyptian revolution. 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.

The Six-Day War in June 1967, 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, he was forced into retirement by Israeli officials on the basis that he was not qualified to teach. Thus, 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. 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.

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. The Islamic Compound's activities were supposed 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. 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 FORMATION OF HAMAS

The Jabaliya refugee camp incident 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 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'.

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, and attended by Sheikh Salah Shehada, from Beit-Hanoun working at the Islamic University in Gaza; Issa al-Nashtar, an engineer from Rafah; Dr Ibrahim al-Yazuri, a General Physician from Gaza; Dr Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, a General Physician from Khan Younis; Abdul Fattah Dokhan, a Headmaster from Al-Nsairat camp; and Mohammad Shamhaa, a 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 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. 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.

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*.

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. 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-Fatiha* 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. God's wrath was due to their noncompliance of the original Godly religion sent to them. They modified the original Jewish religion and also killed the Prophets

sent by God. Especially, the Jews tried to dominate and harm the Islamic *Umma* because it was considered as the new international force bringing an authentic civilization and Godly program to the mankind. These are the basic Quranic ideas. God has sent his message first of all to the Jews among mankind in the form of *Torah*, but they turned away and doubted his signs and denied them. When they didn't like the preachings of a Prophet, they called him as liar and killed him. After God sent them the Prophet Moses, they setup a new God in the form of a Golden Calf. That is why "they were burdened with wrath from God". God sent another Prophet Muhammad to bring Jews on the right path who had deviated. Prophet Muhammad repeated the Godly messages previously sent to the Christians and Jews and completed those messages in the form of Islam. Thus, it was must for the true believers among Jews and Christians to recognize the 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 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 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*. 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.

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. Israel's skillful 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.

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 in order to influence them. 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. 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. They formed organizations like the Rotary and Lion's Club whose intention is seen as espionage and whose money dominates the imperialist world.

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. The Jews are accused for committing acts of treachery 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). 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 *Bani-Israil*. The Jews are described as “Jewish Satan”, the bloodsuckers of mankind, racists, and criminals of the tribe of Zion. Hamas 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’.

In this transformation of image of the Jews, we can clearly find the influences of modern European anti-Semitism. The wide circulation of the “*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. They are quoted in the *Mithaq* (Charter) of Hamas as a proof of allegations against Jews. 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. This informs that a number of the secret Jewish government agencies are working throughout the world and “*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.

“*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. In this book, Quranic verses are interpreted in the 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, creating confusion among Muslims, and formal conversion without accepting it by heart in order to harm Muslims. Several passages from Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* have been cited to provide more concrete meaning to the Quranic verses. 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. 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.

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. The main political rival of Islam was Christianity for centuries. On contrary, Islamic thought in the 20th 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.

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. 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. 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. 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.

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 considered as “war enemies”. The Islamists are fighting with Jews because of the hostile actions they take against Muslims.

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 descendants of the tribe of *Bani-Israil* who once resided in Palestine. The European Jews are not of Israelite descendance and 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. 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 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 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 *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 "*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*". "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.

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. The West is perceived by Hamas and Palestinians in general, to the staunch backer and protector of Israel.

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.

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 calling upon Israel to withdraw from 'lands that is occupied' and rejecting the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem.

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.

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.

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.

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* which does not belong to any either a person, party or state. It automatically becomes the property of former, present and future generations. The people residing on that land have been given usufruct, but not the right to property. 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.

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. 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. It is a clash between civilizations, the west is employing their best efforts to stop the Islamic awakening. It is therefore 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 (*al-yawn al-Tahrir*).

To understand the deepness of this conviction, the role accorded to the history of humankind in the Islamic creed needs to be understood. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith remarked, "*the intercessor between man and God in Islam is righteousness, but on the other hand, in Christianity it is the person of Christ*". 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. It is obligatory for the Muslims to make the world aware about the validity of the Quranic revelation.

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.

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. *Jihad* is perceived as the only means of spreading the Islam to the every corners of the world. 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. 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.

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.

CONCLUSION

Hamas which was officially founded in 14th December 1987 gradually became one of the leading force of the Palestinian liberation movement. Hamas declared its Charter on 18th August 1988 which is its most important ideological document. It comprises the basic ideological commitments of the movement and proclaims its goal, means for the realization of goal and Hamas' world view. Hamas clearly states that the ideological basis of the Islamic Resistance Movement is Islam. It is Islam from which it derives its ideas and fundamental precepts and view of life, the universe, and humanity; and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its mistakes. However, a careful investigation on its ideological foundation also shows that the movement also derived a lot of its ideological percepts from the '*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*' which is a modern European anti-Semitic document has been translated into Arabic and widely circulated in the Arab Islamic world. No doubt, the verses of Holy Quran, *Hadith* and *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has formed the basis of Hamas' ideological moorings and guided its actions. The characterization of the Jewish image of conspirators, falsehood, treason, mischief and cowardice by Hamas are due to its strict adherence to the Islamic and other theological literatures. The role played by the Western countries – especially Britain in the creation of Israel and unprecedented support provided by USA to Israel is the basis of Hamas' negative perception of Western countries. The goal and realization of its means as advocated by Hamas in its Charter is the culmination of all these factors which together shaped Hamas' ideological moorings and its future action plan.

Author's Bio-data

Dr. Balal Ali has received his Ph.D. Degree from the Department of West Asian studies, Aligarh Muslim University, India and is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Civics and Ethical Studies, Adigrat University, Tigray, Ethiopia. His research interest includes political and war histories of Middle East.

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 15. 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.
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 18. *Filistin al-Muslima*, November 1990, p. 7.
 19. *Filistin al-Muslima*, April 1990, p. 25.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
 21. (Quran, 2:47) O children of Israel, remember My favors which I have bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to all beings.
 22. *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, *Muslim Palestine: The Ideology of Hamas*, (Abingdon: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), p. 22-23.
 23. *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.
 24. *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?
 25. *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.
 26. *Ibid.*, 2:61.
 27. *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.
 28. *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.
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 37. Mithaq, p. 23.
 38. *Ibid.*,
 39. Quran, 2:61 and 2:60; also 5:32.

40. Quran, 5:13: You will never cease to uncover treachery on their part, except a few of them.
41. 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.
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Corresponding Author

Dr. Balal Ali*

Assistant Professor, Adigrat University, Tigray,
Ethiopia

E-Mail – bilalaliq786@gmail.com