

The Hamas Movement: Ideology vs. Pragmatism

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Abstract

This study aims to present the Hamas Movement, its ideology and pragmatism. With progress and modernization, the Islamic movements in the Middle East realized that they could not deny progress, so they decided to join the mainstream and take advantage of technological progress in their favor. The movement maintains at least one website in which it publishes its way, and guides the audience. Although these movements seem to maintain a rigid ideology, they adapt themselves to reality with the help of many tools, because they have realized that reality is stronger than they are. In conclusions: the rise of the Islamist movements as a leading social and political force in the Middle East is the result of the bankruptcy of nationalism, secularism and the left in the Arab world, which created an ideological vacuum, which is filled to a large extent by the fundamentalists, ensuring that Islam is the solution. It is not only about the extent of the return to religion, but about the transformation of religion into a major political factor both by the regimes and by the opposition. These are political movements that deal first and foremost with the social and political mobilization of the masses, and they exert pressure to apply the Islamic law as the law of the state instead of the legal systems taken from the Western model. Islam is a belief rooted in the consciousness of the masses and deeply ingrained in Egyptian culture. In Israel, the situation is different, modernization and democracy also affects Israeli Arabs. Therefore, it is possible that Islam is not so deeply rooted in the culture of the Arab citizens of Israel, they are aware of the possibility of a different path other than Islam. The movements have developed over time tools that enable them to cope with reality. The religious law in Islam allows flexibility in organizing community life, Shari'a is adapted to reality because of the ruler's ability to canonize legislation and flexibility in political life according to principles such as sabra and long-term goals, to compromise with reality and find temporary solutions, as well as religious scholars who provide fatwas and commentaries on every subject.

Keywords: Hamas Movement, Palestinian Authority, Israel, ideology, pragmatism.

1. Introduction

Hamas operates in the Palestinian Authority territories in Gaza and the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority is a semi-autonomous political entity that dominates the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Until 2006, the Palestinian Authority was controlled by PLO and Fatah members, and in January 2006 elections were held for the

Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), which held most of the council's seats prior to the elections, and for the first time its main rival, the Hamas movement. The Hamas movement won 76 seats against only 43 seats, and Hamas' victory marked its transformation into the leading political force among the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

In January 2005, after the death of Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, Abu Mazen, was elected to the post of chairman of the Palestinian Authority, and also to his replacement as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, ie the head of the PLO. Haniyeh.¹

Today, the security control of the PA in Judea and Samaria is undermined by the corruption of the Fatah regime. The PA has lost much of the control, and the Gaza Strip is subject to anarchy and the chaos of various gangs. The population is in the middle between PA chairman Abu Mazen and the Fatah movement, and on the other side is the Hamas movement that currently controls the Gaza Strip, and we are witnessing attempts to pressure Hamas to develop a kind of pragmatism to create a dialogue with Israel. In the meantime, the PA is deteriorating to all levels, from the social, economic, employment, and political spheres.

2. The status of religion in the government and the society

Most of the Palestinians are Muslims, mostly Sunni Muslims, and the minority are Christians.

Since the beginning of the days of the Palestinian Authority, the government has been ostensibly secular, because the PA was controlled by the Fatah movement. But it can be seen that the PA has over the course of time imparted many religious characteristics to the population. The image world of the Fatah movement is apparently Muslim in order to bring the religious population closer to its path.

The basic premise on which the Oslo Accords were based was that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not a total religious conflict, but a dispute over border lines that could be resolved. But PA clerics, who are members of the political leadership, preach in public and over the airwaves that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is part of an eternal war between Muslims and Jews. The Jews are portrayed as the enemies of Allah, and the killing of Jews is presented as the will of God. On the political level, Allah forbids accepting the existence of Israel, and it will put an end to its existence.

The Palestinians have redefined the conflict from a conflict over borders, a compromise that could be the way to solve it, a religious war for Allah, where compromise is heresy. The religious view of the PA is expressed in the Friday sermons and religious lessons broadcast on Palestinian television, usually so that the Jews are the enemies of Allah. There is an eternal religious war of Islam against the Jews. The killing of Jews is a religious duty. The Palestinians are the spearheads in the war against the Jews. Islam must help in this war².

All the land of Palestine between the river and the sea is an Islamic sanctuary, a Muslim who gives up part of this land has inherited hell. The agreements with Israel are temporary and signed as a result of the balance of power that temporarily tilts in its favor. Allah will replace the Muslims who neglect the commandment to fight Israel, in others.

All these were expressed in the Palestinian media during the days of Arafat, and even today. This view is very religious, and very similar to Hamas'. It is not clear whether this stems

¹ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), *Palestinian politics after the Oslo accords: resuming Arab Palestine*, University of California Press.

² Forbes, Andrew, and Henley, David, *People of Palestine* (Chiang Mai: Cognoscenti Books, 2012).

from a true religious outlook or whether it is intended to inflame hatred. “The Day of Resurrection will not come until the Muslims fight against the Jews until they hide behind the stone and the tree and say the stone and the tree: Oh Muslim, Abdullah, there is a Jew behind the coming and killing him”

In 2001, a preacher on Palestinian television attacked the leaders of the Arab-Muslim world for refraining from attacking Israel with missiles and tanks, threatening them that “Allah could replace them with other people ... who are fighting for Allah ... to liberate the land from the uncleanness of the Jews.”

It should be noted that this message that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a religious conflict has often been said by PA-appointed clerics, well before the outbreak of violence in October 2000. The preaching is not a response to the wave of violence, Israel as temporary, and the war against the Jews as Allah wishes, contributes to the ideological basis of hatred and acts of violence against Israelis.

Hamas has a special site for children al-fateh.net (the occupier) praising violence, and death for Allah is defined as victory. The death of terrorists as shaheeds in attacks against Israel is presented to children as a joyous event.

Islamic movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad claim that all “Palestine” is a Muslim Waqf, Christian women in Gaza must wear a veil because of their fear of the extremists, and the last store that sold wine in Gaza was bombed, even though it was owned by the international organizations.

The Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority has many Muslim characteristics, from the introduction of Muslim symbols into official Fatah documents, Arafat's statements, and to the Palestinian media at the time. In the days of Hamas, it is reasonable to assume that the spirit will be even more religious, since it is controlled by a religious movement.³

3. The status of the legal system

In order to understand the powers of the government and the law, it is necessary to understand that the Palestinian political arena is polarized and decentralized. The most common distinction among the components of the Palestinian leadership is the distinction between “old guard” and “young shift.” This division mainly overlaps the division between “internal” and “external,” since the establishment of the Palestinian movement there has been no “generational change” in the leadership.

The movement that was supposed to serve as the “ruling party” and to organize itself accordingly remained an amorphous movement whose public support was mainly the nature of a utilitarian relationship with the PA and its apparatuses, but not accompanied by ongoing mobilization, organization, and ideological discussion.

These complaints, which intensified since 1996-1997, focused mainly on the corruption of PA leaders, the poor state of security regarding the preservation of life and property, the violation of human rights, and the arbitrariness and arbitrariness of the judicial system and the enforcement of the law in the event of internal conflicts and the need to protect the weak. This situation is often seen as a result of the proliferation of security mechanisms, their thuggery behavior, and the total absence of coordination between them. The great fragmentation in this area is seen as responsible for prolonged detention without trial and human rights violations and the phenomena of blackmailing businessmen and forced cooperation between them and the

³ Rothstein, Robert L. (1999), *After the peace: resistance and reconciliation* (Illustrated ed.), Lynne Rienner Publishers.

security services, which often represent local and sectoral interests, that is, family. The complaints about the unchecked corruption of Palestinian personalities and institutions and the fierce competition between them over financial resources are reinforced by the paucity of poor services provided by the Palestinian Authority in the social and economic spheres. In fact, there is a continuous regression of the authority from involvement in various areas of life of the population as a result of limitations in the resources at its disposal, but also as a result of the preference for using those resources arbitrarily and according to standards of loyalty and closeness and not according to established procedures or objective needs.

An examination of the centers of power in these arenas should apply to all circles of leadership and control: the traditional families and the economic elite, the various organizations, and individuals of a unique status in the eyes of the Palestinian public. Now that Hamas is in power, there is still not enough information, but it is likely that more Muslim figures will appear in the PA's judicial system, and the status of religion will also rise⁴.

4. Theoretical background – The theory of Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical theory that was raised in the United States at the end of the 19th century. Its founders were Charles S. Pierce, who gave the theory its name and developed its principles: William James, who promoted and disseminated it, and John Dewey, who developed the instrumental aspects of the theory.⁵

The theory of pragmatism is a philosophical idea that emphasizes the connection between theory and practice: the value of the truth of theory depends on the organization and the effectiveness of its application. Pragmatism, says Richard Rorty, is about what are the most effective ways of achieving what we want to achieve.⁶

Pragmatism holds that the truth is measured by practical purposes. The truth of a claim is determined by practical results and the benefit it serves. Pragmatists rely on empirical experiments and practical success and rejecting a-priori assumptions as a source of human knowledge (espousing empiricism). According to pragmatism, thoughts, ideas, and outlooks are merely tools for achieving one's life goals - and have no metaphysical significance.⁷

That is, concepts represent appropriate thinking habits or etiquette; they do not represent metaphysical truths and do not describe the nature of things. Language is not only a means of communication but an expression of the world's consciousness and worldview. Knowledge is guided by the interests and values of users. The subjects establish themselves in a process of empirical experience, rather than as a result of rational and theoretical inquiry.⁸

⁴ Watson, Geoffrey R. (2000), *The Oslo Accords: international law and the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements* (Illustrated ed.), Oxford University Press.

⁵ Bacon, M. (2012), *Pragmatism*, Oxford: Polity Press.

⁶ Bandom, R. (2011), *Perspectives on Pragmatism: Classical, Recent, and Contemporary*, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁷ Kloppenber, T. J. (1996), Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking? Source: *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (Jun., 1996), pp. 100-138. Published by: Organization of American Historians.

https://oconnell.fas.harvard.edu/files/jameskloppenber/files/pragmatism_old_name_for_new_wayas_of_thinking.pdf.

⁸ Menand, L. (Ed.) (1998), *Pragmatism*, New York: Random House.

5. The ideology of the Hamas movement

The name Hamas is the acronym of Harqat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Islamic Resistance Movement). The movement was established shortly after the outbreak of the intifada in 1987.

Since Hamas is deeply rooted in Palestinian life, “speaks its popular language, is sensitive to its local customs and collective image, shares its religious desire, expresses its traditional values, and is attentive to its daily needs and existential difficulties.”

Hamas is a Palestinian Fundamentalist Islamic movement founded by Ahmad Yassin as a religious movement for the sake of the community, and because of the sensitivity that the movement reveals to the needs of the population, it brings many supporters in the name of Islamic faith.

The movement has a political wing that frees messages of Palestinian national value, even though its ideological base is theological-Islamic, conservative and fundamentalist. The movement promotes the idea of territorial nationalism, claiming that this is a stage on the way to Islamic suits. According to her, the state is a framework within the whole, and ideas of nationalism can be promoted as part of the promotion of Islam as a whole. According to the Hamas charter, Article 12, nationalism is connected to the land and is part of the religious faith, and Hamas claims that there is no contradiction between the two, and thus legitimizes Islamic nationalism. In fact, Palestinian nationalism is being appropriated in favor of Islam.

Hamas also has a military wing that works to establish an Islamic Palestinian state instead of the State of Israel, since the center of faith is armed struggle against Israel, and a war based on the principles of religion, namely, Jihad.

There is also the civilian wing that performs welfare activities for the residents, such as operating clinics, giving charity, distributing food, and maintaining schools, and through these welfare activities it mobilizes supporters. Political Islam, of which Hamas is a part, seeks to ensure that the laws of Islam govern all aspects of life, namely, Islamic education, Islamic economics, and Islamic life. Hamas aspires to reform society in the spirit of Islamic values.

The Hamas charter presents the ideology of the Hamas movement as it was shaped and formulated by its founders. The document contains a radical Islamic worldview, which is the school of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, which has not changed in the 18 years since the movement's establishment. With regard to Israel, the covenant expresses an uncompromising position that views Israel as a religious Muslim problem, and in the conflict with Israel a conflict between Islam and the “infidels”. The territory of Palestine is presented in the Covenant as an Islamic holy land, and it is strictly forbidden to waive any of it because no one has the authority to do so.

Hamas targets are derived from the objectives of the Muslim Brotherhood because it is an Islamic movement, but the new concept is the integration of the Muslim faith into the Palestinian national struggle. Hamas claims that the State of Israel is an artificial entity created by flawed colonialism. In Hamas's view, all the land of the Land of Israel is sacred Islamic land, a Waqf land, which should be under Muslim rule. Hamas wants to establish a Palestinian Islamic state over all of Mandatory Palestine. The residents who live on the Holy Land will live as a minority in the Palestinian Islamic state on the condition that they recognize the rule of Islam and live as an inferior minority. In order to achieve its goals, Hamas advocates the use of Jihad, a war of justice, a struggle for power, in order to transfer all infidels. Palestinian Jihad According to Hamas, it means a violent struggle against Israel or any other foreign force that controls Palestine, and in the framework of Jihad, Hamas' clerics also give religious sanction to acts that are forbidden to Muslims, such as suicide bombing attacks, Women and children in the war.

Da'wah is a charitable activity, social assistance and education, and in fact training hearts for the return of the Palestinians to the fold of Islam. This activity brings the Palestinian people closer to Islam and provides popular support for Hamas' ideological views. The Da'wah fits in with Hamas' desire to create an Islamic state with popular support by social change, rather than by a violent coup that forces Islam on the people.

Through Jihad and Da'wah, Hamas is maneuvering, with constant attention to the range of chances and risks facing it. The methods used by Jihad and Da'wah are constantly changing, according to the political situation in which Hamas operates.⁹

6. Hamas maintains four main principles:

(1) Denies the existence of the State of Israel because it is an artificial entity created by defective colonialism. Therefore, the movement does not take steps that imply that it accepts Israel's existence or accepts its future existence. As a result, Hamas will act to wage a violent struggle against Israel, while denying the possibility of renouncing the weapons of the resistance. However, it can be seen that since the beginning of the tahideh, there have been differences of opinion among Hamas leaders regarding Israel and the actual struggle, and there are those who support a cease-fire to postpone the struggle and indirect negotiations with the State of Israel without recognition of Israel. Hamas's political platform is considered more moderate than the basic principles of the movement.

(2) Hamas does not accept the possibility of establishing a secular state identified with the PLO unless it is a step towards the establishment of an Islamic state. From which it derives its ideas, concepts, and understanding of the universe. Hamas emphasizes the Islamic aspect of its activities, and thus draws the Palestinian people closer to the interpretation it gives to Islam.

(3) Hamas cooperates with the other Palestinian forces, since they are part of the Palestinian resistance, and therefore seeks to avoid a civil war. Despite her opposition to secular development, she views her as a partner. "The father, the brother, the rest of the flesh and the friend," is what the PLO calls the Hamas charter.

(4) Another important principle that gives her patience in her activity is the sabra, which means patience and perseverance. Hamas understands that the goals are not attainable in the short term, so the effort must be long-term. This is, in fact, Islamic patience, which speaks of exploiting opportunities only when possible, and until then preparing the ground. This principle is very important to the pragmatist line of the movement. A principle that goes hand-in-hand with the Sabra is the patience required to train the hearts, in effect, the gradual seizure of power by preparing the ground or the patience required for tahadiya, which is usually used as a lull to restore the forces.

Due to the growing corruption in the Fatah movement, Hamas aspires to have a clean image in the eyes of the Palestinian population. Thus, it increases its support and legitimacy, so in most of its moves, the movement takes great sensitivity to internal public opinion and tries not to confront it or bring it into situations of uncertainty. Hamas is able to recruit supporters among the Palestinian community for its public image, as a defender of Islamic values, and Palestinian nationalism for concessions and capitulation to demands and dictates by Israelis.

Hamas creates an alternative system of services available to that of the Palestinian Authority, which makes it very easy to recruit supporters. It can be seen that Hamas is involved in all the various services in the community, as well as the development of an extensive military

⁹ Matthew Levitt (2007), *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, Yale University Press.

network, and its increasing involvement in politics until most of the Palestinian street elects to serve in parliament, point to the fact that the movement is pragmatic and adapts itself to time, even though it is not a religious movement. Behind absolute truths, and collective salvation in one way, and adapts itself to the social framework by being attentive to the needs of the population, to the economic and political framework.^{10, 11}

7. Does Hamas imply Pragmatism in their political activity?

The PLO had the hegemony in the Palestinian political arena, and the growth of Hamas to the point of competing for public support, setting the agenda and controlling the institutions and the bases of power was challenging and surprising for the PLO.

When Israel neglected civilian services in the territories and deepened settlement policy, Hamas focused on building networks of social infrastructure and civilian services, along with building a religious identity. In addition, Hamas objected to the declaration of the establishment of a Palestinian state that could harm the unity of Islam on both sides of the Jordan River, so that Hamas drafted an alternative treaty, published as a basic document in August 1988, about eight months after Hamas was established. Unlike the Palestinian Charter, which is formulated in legal language, the Hamas charter is formulated as sacred and eternal principles and cannot be changed.

The convention established the casting of Palestinian national ideas into the world of faith and concepts of Islam. The land of Palestine is an Islamic sanctity, and indivisible. This is a transition from an Islamic ideology to a national territorial concept. The contradiction between a national idea that sanctifies state sovereignty and a divine law was settled by defining the national struggle in religious terms.

The most significant part is the administration of Jihad against an enemy that tramples on Muslim soil, for Jihad is the only solution to the conflict. Jihad is the personal duty of every Muslim, and any political solution to the conflict is an act against Islam. The Palestinian problem is an Arab-Islamic and not a secular national issue. Three circles are committed to liberating Palestine, first and foremost the Palestinian people, then the Arab states, and the Islamic world.

According to the charter, Hamas is prepared to accept the PLO's burden if it adopts Islam as a way of life, and emphasizes the common national aspect and joint struggle in Israel for the same purpose, even if the PLO remains a secular movement. Hamas aspires to a central political and moral position while striving for long-term strategic goals alongside immediate and practical goals.

The goal was to turn the political and social alternative into the PLO, and therefore a change in the response to the entire Palestinian community was required, ie, shifting from the bottom of an Islamic society to a political action plan, objectives, and means. Become focused on a specific territory and community, and Hamas mobilizes support from the Fatah support groups.

With the PLO's declaration of a Palestinian state in October 1988, Hamas refrained from attacking the PLO, even though by definition this was only part of Palestine, but with regard to further concessions from the Palestinian Authority, Hamas issued a counter-opinion.

¹⁰ Joshua L. Gleis, Benedetta Berti (2012), *Hezbollah and Hamas: A Comparative Study*, Johns Hopkins University Press.

¹¹ Mishal, Shaul; Sela, Avraham (2006), *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hamas recognizes the limits of its power. Therefore, it adopts a policy of non-acceptance and rejection of issues that are incompatible with its principles.¹²

8. How does Hamas promote national Palestinian interests while still adhering to the Islamic ideology? How does Hamas decide between the religious imperative and reality on the ground?

The agreement between Israel and the PLO, and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, required Hamas to be flexible in its attitude towards Israel, which would have allowed the continuation of community activity and strengthening its standing in society, but Hamas would have lost its uniqueness as an opposition fighting for the center stage. The adherence to the religious example and the opposition to the peace process would have undermined Hamas' status, and the principle that guided Hamas in dealing with these dilemmas was the ability to justify the need for a religious example, in a political and official dialogue Cooperate with the PLO as the right action, using the military option from time to time.

The triangular relationship between Hamas, the PLO and Israel, and in effect the separation between a long-term vision and short-term goals and objectives, were resolved by integration into PA institutions and the use of controlled violence. Thus, a combination of basic principles and current political interpretation is expressed.¹³

9. How does Hamas justify the difference between Islamic religious law and decisions in the current reality?

Hamas has behavioral strategies and methods of action that allow activists to live with internal contradictions over time without being defeated by them, even though the movement is fundamentalist and religious, it combines political realism.

The absence of a central religious authority in Islam, along with flexibility in matters of interpretation, creates behavior that is sometimes seen as a moral value, defined by Meshal and Sela as a "dynamic reserve," that is flexible borders and constant negotiations that enable cooperation with existing regimes. Understood that such a way would be beneficial to her, the other side also had needs and norms of behavior, which could eventually lead to compromise.

Over the years, the movement's movements can be seen in accordance with the environment, the Palestinian Authority and the Oslo process on the one hand, and on the other hand, the confrontation with Israel and the middle of the Palestinian population. Hamas operates within a complex framework that dictates ambivalent behavior that combines ideology with reality. The movement manages to be flexible within the complex reality, so that its principles will be preserved.

On the one hand, the movement waged a holy war against Israel, supported an armed struggle, and wanted to establish a Palestinian state over all of the Land of Israel. On the other hand, there are mechanisms of compromise. It allows for a hudna, a temporary cease-fire, or a truce.

Hamas refuses to recognize the legality of the Palestinian Authority on the one hand, while Hamas' members have many operational mechanisms, especially in the local authorities. In

¹² *Hamas and the Terrorist Threat from the Gaza Strip. The Main Findings of the Goldstone Report Versus the Factual Findings*, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center.

¹³ Roy, Sara (2011), *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

addition, there is a partnership in the Palestinian parliament, until in the last elections Hamas received most of the seats in parliament.

According to Shaul Mish'al and Avraham Sela, this is a combination of flexibility and conformity: An Islamic movement with a unique national identity and communal interests, a hierarchical organization alongside local leadership based on personal relations, rhetoric of religious zealotry and interpretation that justifies compromise and pragmatism.

The movement has influence in the Palestinian arena, and therefore has responsibility for the Palestinian population, and since January 2006 it has also been in control of the Palestinian Authority and has governmental responsibility, so it must adopt a more pragmatic worldview in order to achieve clear goals for improving the lives of the population.¹⁴

10. How do these conflicts affect Hamas' behavior?

Hamas is nourished by an Islamic worldview with clear lines. Every deviation requires justification for the movement, the Palestinian population, the clerics, the Fatah movement and even Israel.

Hamas is committed to the extent of the Muslim Brotherhood, both of which have a universal Islamic concept, i.e., an apocalyptic aspiration to share the Islamic states under one Muslim rule according to the past and the regime of exchange. But Hamas adopted another line, Palestinian nationalism that ostensibly contradicts the idea of Pan-Islam.

There is tension between a religious and national worldview and its continued existence as an organization and its public strength, and an additional tension between adhering to the idea of Islam, the war against Israel and the consideration of internal Palestinian political considerations and Israel.

We must understand that according to contemporary political Islam scholars there are two main approaches. The revolutionary approach, which maintains that the society will be assimilated by concentrating efforts to seize power, in effect, is the realization of the goal from the top down, while the reformist approach holds that the establishment of an Islamic state will be possible through gradual and continuous social and political activity.

We can see how both approaches influenced Hamas' activity. Most of the Islamic movement supports the rejection of violent acts against Muslims, but Muslim violence against non-Muslims is possible, especially the conflict against Israel, especially after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, when the ethos of Muslim recruitment against the enemies of Islam again arose. The Jihad for the protection of Islamic lands was once again presented as the top priority.

Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was one of those who adopted the radical interpretation of the individual's Jihad against non-Muslims stealing Islamic lands. This is in fact the protection of all Muslims, and he even tried to formulate his opinion in Fatwa. But the mainstream among Palestinian Islamists, who espouse Jihad, has given priority to Jihad against Israel with Palestinian national emphasis. The main stream of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza adopted a reformist line against violent action, since Israel agreed to Islamic education and the establishment of a social and religious infrastructure under their leadership. In fact, until the intifada, they preferred inner Jihad within the Muslims than an external Jihad against Israel.

¹⁴ Gunning, J. (2007), *Hamas: Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*. King's College London, in Heiberg, M., O'Leary, B. & Tirman, J. (Eds.) (2007), *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts*, University of Pennsylvania Press.

During the 1980s, more frequent battles, accompanied by violence, began against Fatah and other secular organizations. After the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon, it was decided that infrastructure should be prepared as an alternative to the PLO, which was nearing an end. In 1987 there was a trend of young people to engage in armed activity against Israel, which led to the establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement. When the Intifada broke out, it was feared that it would lead to a loss of influence. The establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement reflected recognition of the need to adapt to a new reality, a belligerent reality on the Palestinian street, and a compromise between the reformist line and the activist revolutionary line. With the expansion of the Intifada, Hamas was adopted as an integral part. The establishment of Hamas gave legitimacy to Jihad that allows both national and Islamic redemption. The tension between Hamas and the PLO increased and became a contest for determining the Palestinian agenda.¹⁵

11. What are the mechanisms that allow flexibility and pragmatism to exist?
How does Hamas justify actions that do not conform to its principles?

Hamas operates in complex circumstances, on the one hand, a confrontation with Israel, and on the other hand, Hamas is facing Fatah, which it has refused to join, and in such a situation it must adopt a sensitive policy that is sensitive to its changing conditions.

Hamas is maneuvering among the various elements within the framework. We can see Hamas' flexibility in terms of means of struggle, but it is completely dogmatic about its goals.

The hudna and its rebirth are the main options that allow the movement to compromise. In August 2003, Hamas agreed to a cease-fire for a limited period of time. At that time Hamas removed some political pressure and took advantage of the time for political and military rehabilitation.

Hamas carried out a similar move at the beginning of 2005, when it agreed to the tahdiyya, a lull arrangement initiated by Mahmoud Abbas, while maintaining the right of response.

Islam is a political religion that does not distinguish between religion and state. It is a system of commandments and rules for the behavior of the believer and the many. Today, Islam has a clear political character, since the organizations and movements that were established have a radical world view. The values of Islam allow them to mobilize masses, thereby ensuring public support. Religious belief dictates behavior in the political arena, and the interpretive framework enables them to adapt themselves to reality and time. Fatwa, a religious ruling as a political tool, allows for mass, rapid distribution reaching a wide audience. Fatwa is a religious opinion given by a religious scholar, a person familiar with Muslim law, and is instrumental in interpreting Muslim texts. Fatwa is important for the development of Islamic law, and adapting it to changing time conditions in all areas, especially in the modern era, because of the possibility of regulating radical changes in the Muslim world. Fatwa is, in fact, halakhic argumentation, not a binding interpretation, and its validity derives mainly from the recognition of the authority of the mufti. If the fatwa is accepted by one generation of halakhic scholars who did not dispute it, then the agreement is unanimous, Agamma, and then it becomes a binding rule.

Due to the religious authority and the great popularity of the muftis, fatwas have a great influence on public opinion and on issues on the political agenda. The problem arises when the mufti has no Islamic legal training or training, and he still has influence over public opinion.

¹⁵ *Hamas Rule in Gaza: Three Years On*, Yezid Sayigh, Crown Center for Middle East studies, March 2010.

Religion and state in Islam are one and the same and cannot be separated. Politics served religion from the beginning of the spread of Islam, since it is a political act of unification and confrontation with the opponents. From the days of Muhammad, there was a balance of power between the suit, the political leader, and the cleric who interpreted the religious imperative and the law determined by the Prophet.

According to Sami Zubeida, the political field is an ideological and political arena in which various forces operate and compete with each other for power and resources, and the religious elements are an integral part of the political arena, as they engage in organizing, recruiting, propaganda and struggle.¹⁶

12. How does Hamas rationalize modern ideas of their actions and political activity with religious interpretation?

It can be seen that the stronger Hamas is, the more political it is, and the adoption of modern ideas of action, such as the establishment of political bodies and institutions, and participation in existing institutions. All of these depend on the possibility of creating an interpretation that will be appropriate for action. The more the movement enjoyed charismatic leadership, the easier it was to justify political activity based on religion.

Hamas is careful not to describe the relationship in the political arena as removing the opponent from the political arena, because this is wishful thinking for the long term, it prefers to play the rules of the game and to acquire strength and strength along the way.

Religious law is based on the Koran and the Oral Law, so there is a wide opening to interpretation. This interpretation varies according to the issue and according to the circumstances, and the interpreter himself. In the public arena there is a broad opening to interpretation, interpretation can be designed in a manner consistent with the interest group, and thus halachic scholars give it halachic validity.

Hamas represents a national religious line, opposite which Fatah represents a secular national line. Fatah, which led the Palestinian Authority a short while ago, adopted a political idea and took over a small area of Palestine. Hamas refuses to adopt this line, since the movement is interested in receiving all of Palestine through the armed struggle.

Hamas aspires to bring about a social revolution and then to establish an alternative Islamic order by educational and communal activities that will bring about the correction of the Muslim individual. This is therefore a long-term goal that requires a gradual process of preparing the hearts and returning society to Islam.

There is a tension between the considerations of a declared commitment to a war against Israel and current considerations of maintaining public achievements and political status, while ensuring access to material resources and other resources of power and influence. Far-reaching flexibility is liable to undermine Hamas' credibility, undermine its standing among the population, or create confusion and uncertainty among its supporters. On the other hand, far-reaching adherence may leave Hamas out of the game. It can be seen from Hamas' key decisions that there is a trend to maintain a delicate balance and a combination of final goals and immediate interests and current needs.

¹⁶ Webman, Esther (1994), *Anti-semitic Motifs in the Ideology of Hizballah and Hamas*, Project for the study of Anti-semitism, Tel Aviv University.

Hamas demonstrated flexibility and adaptability to the reality of the distinction between a short-term practical goal of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the long-term vision of establishing an Islamic religious state throughout Palestine.

Hamas regards any political settlement with Israel as a temporary state in Islamic history, which helped it develop tactical flexibility without losing its political credibility.¹⁷

13. How do Hamas maintain an uncompromising image vis-à-vis the supporters while maintaining and expanding existing achievements?

Hamas' political behavior is characterized by a policy of adjustment and adaptation to circumstances, controlled violence with co-existence through negotiation, and conditional participation, which are ways to avoid a decision between conflicting obligations. On the one hand, confrontation with Israel and with the Palestinian Authority, on the other hand, is an adaptation to and acceptance of the political reality. There is a discovery of political realism and pragmatism, a declared failure to accept, and a complete rejection of the agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority following Oslo. Despite the mismatch of the peace process or its results, Hamas has avoided a violent confrontation with the Palestinian Authority, recognizing its inferiority vis-a-vis the PA security forces.

Until Hamas appeared, the PLO took precedence in the Palestinian arena and in the international arena as a representative of the Palestinians, and Hamas remained in a position of inferiority vis-a-vis the PLO and therefore avoided any frontal confrontation at any cost. After the signing of the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho, the risk of a violent confrontation was liable to lead to political destruction and damage to Hamas' image in the eyes of the public. Hamas has learned that preferring a pragmatic approach to adherence to final goals brings it public support. In order to communicate with the population, since its inception, Hamas has been distributing pamphlets since 1987, unequivocally speaking to Israel, that there should be no negotiations on Palestinian soil, with the help of harsh anti-Semitic statements. But on the other hand, in the media, Hamas is raising other solutions, such as a bi-national state, because Islam is a religion based on justice and equality, and Hamas is ambivalent and ambiguous, so that in the future it will be able to compromise.

Sheikh Yassin made it clear in the past how to relate to moderate statements by Hamas: "I take such positions that the other side cannot accept and in such a way succeeds in forcing him to say no, without me having to refuse"

Another example is that in March 2006, Channel 2 News interviewed Snoar, head of the Hamas Shura Council. Hamas has a number of councils in Shura, in the West Bank, in Jordan, and in prisons. Now the Shura, which is in Israeli prisons, is the most influential. Prime Minister Haniyeh, consulted with them frequently and responded to their consultations. Snoar usually refuses to be interviewed, but he makes an effort and interviews the Israeli media, in order to promote his ideas among the Israeli public as well. In my opinion this is clear pragmatism, since before the interview, he received the senior officials' permission to be interviewed. It is reasonable to assume that he was elected, also because he is a senior, but also because he is a screenwriter and has fluent English.

During the interview there is a feeling that the tone has changed since Hamas is in power, the political vision is more practical, and the public opinion in Israel and the world is taken

¹⁷ Halevi, Jonathan, D. (4 August 2014), *The Hamas Threat to the West is No Different from ISIS*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Retrieved 25 August 2014.

into consideration. He says that there is a need for a long-term hudna with the Israeli public, and the supreme aspiration is for the hudna to be passed on to future generations.

In our region a temporary solution is sometimes the most permanent.

14. How do the movement structures and the connection between them enable Hamas to operate in situations of tension and conflict with the PA and Israel?

Hamas uses Islamic values, such as the Sabra, which allows patience, as an ideological justification for deviating from the principles of religion, and thus enjoys moral support. Patience is expressed in the distinction between a final status agreement with Israel that has been rejected altogether, and a temporary arrangement that will allow the struggle to be renewed in time. The value of “sabra” is raised as a means of halachic interpretation that provides maneuverability.¹⁸

15. Conclusions

The rise of the Islamist movements as a leading social and political force in the Middle East is the result of the bankruptcy of nationalism, secularism and the left in the Arab world, which created an ideological vacuum, which is filled to a large extent by the fundamentalists, ensuring that Islam is the solution. It is not only about the extent of the return to religion, but about the transformation of religion into a major political factor both by the regimes and by the opposition. These are political movements that deal first and foremost with the social and political mobilization of the masses, and they exert pressure to apply the Islamic law as the law of the state instead of the legal systems taken from the Western model. The Islamic solution offered by these movements has several distinct advantages over others. First, Islam is presented as a comprehensive system that provides all solutions to the problem of this world and the next. Second, the Islamic solution is presented as an alternative to the realization of Arab and Islamic revival and power. Ideas of Islamic movements tend to be inclusive, which increases their attractiveness. They are radical in that they seek seemingly profound solutions to the fundamental problems of society. Third, it is not an imported solution. The Islamic solution is an authentic one, rooted in local culture and suited to local conditions.

Islamists also use Da’wah to convey their message. In addition, the voluntary activity of the Islamic movements brings them closer to the general public, especially those in need of social services, education and medicine, and places the Islamic societies in an important position of influence. In the depression surrounding the alleys of poverty, Islam appears as a new hope and the slogan “Islam is the solution” does not require proof. The Islamic movements’ main concern is traditional educational activity aimed at preserving and strengthening the character and Islamic character of society. One example of this is the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt at the beginning of its path, which took the approach that the path to achieving the goal, i.e., the establishment of an Islamic state, is a gradual one, emphasizing the Islamic education of the younger generation. How can we explain the fact that the Islamic movements join the government and usually operate within the framework of the law? Most of the Islamic movements in the Arab countries are persecuted by the regime, so they must recognize reality, otherwise the government will not allow them to exist. Islam is a belief rooted in the consciousness of the masses and deeply ingrained in Egyptian culture. In Israel, the situation is different, modernization and democracy also affect Israeli Arabs. Therefore, it is possible that Islam is not so deeply rooted in the culture

¹⁸ Yosif Mahmoud Haj-Yahis; et al. (2009), *Alleged Palestinian Collaborators with Israel and Their Families: A Study of Victims of Internal Political Violence*. Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

of the Arab citizens of Israel, they are aware of the possibility of a different path other than Islam.¹⁹ Every movement as radical as it may be, tries to adapt itself to the changing realities and conditions, since their leaders know that without any support from the government, it will be difficult for them to exist.²⁰

The movements have developed over time tools that enable them to cope with reality. The religious law in Islam allows flexibility in organizing community life, Shari'a is adapted to reality because of the ruler's ability to canonize legislation and flexibility in political life according to principles such as sabra and long-term goals, to compromise with reality and find temporary solutions, as well as religious scholars who provide fatwas and commentaries on every subject.

With progress and modernization, the movements realized that they could not deny progress, so they decided to join the mainstream and take advantage of technological progress in their favor. Each movement maintains at least one website in which it publishes its way, and guides the audience. Although these movements seem to maintain a rigid ideology, they adapt themselves to reality with the help of many tools, because they have realized that reality is stronger than they are.

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¹⁹ Chukov, S. V. (2018), Political and philosophical discourse on the border between the Caliphate and terrorism – ISIS, in T. Vasileva & V. Chukov (Eds.), *2nd International e-Conference on Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences – Conference Proceedings* (pp. 59-74), 21 December 2018, Belgrade, SERBIA. <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.e-conf.02.05059c>.

²⁰ Petkova, T. (2012). The Arab Spring and the Problems of the Schengen Area - in the monographic collection *Borders - Philosophical and Political Readings* [Петкова, Т. „Арабската пролет и проблемите на Шенгенското пространство” – в монографичен сборник „Границите - философски и политически прочити”, стр. 64-74, Изд. „Фабер”, Велико Търново. България.] pp. 64-74, Faber Publishing House, Veliko Tarnovo. Bulgaria. ISBN 978-954-400-645-7.

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