

Did Hamas Ever Want Peace with Israel?

In the midst of the horrors of the last week, it's important to remember that Hamas has never wanted peace with Israel. Instead, the express goal of Hamas since its inception was the destruction of Israel.

As stated in its first charter, published in 1988, "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." It was—and is—the mission of Hamas to obliterate Israel, not make peace with Israel.

As noted in an October 10 article in *The Atlantic*, "A close read of Hamas's founding documents clearly shows its intentions." Accordingly, the headline was titled, "Understanding Hamas's Genocidal Ideology."

Genocidal indeed. As even NPR acknowledges, "The group has vowed to annihilate Israel and has been responsible for many suicide bombings and other deadly attacks on civilians and Israeli soldiers."

And, just as ISIS was a religion-based murder cult, the same holds true for Hamas.

Both groups do what they do in the name of Allah, slaughtering the innocent in the cruelest, most demonic ways while shouting, "Allah Akbar." (Raping women can also be done in Allah's name in their demented form of faith.)

That's why you don't make peace with the likes of ISIS or Hamas. You thwart them.

Put another way, people who proclaim, "We love death more than you love life" are not ready to sit down at the table and

reason together.

As Robert Spencer said with reference to ISIS, “‘We love death more than you love life.’ This is civilization’s ultimate challenge. Will the lovers of death and destruction overwhelm and defeat those who love life and have created great civilizations that celebrate human creativity and achievement? Will all that is left of three thousand years of human civilization be reduced to rubble and a mindless religio-ideological lockstep?

“The Islamic State is not just a challenge to Judeo-Christian Western civilization. It is a challenge to civilization itself—to the very idea of civilization.

“And that is why it is doomed to fail. Life will always conquer death in the end. The human spirit will always prevail against the forces that would subjugate and enslave it.”

Bear in mind that Hamas, an acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (“Islamic Resistance Movement”) was founded as a more religiously based front for resisting Israel. (As a point of clarification, the Arabic word *hamas* means “zeal” and is very close to the Hebrew word *hamas* meaning “violence.” But they are two distinct words, with similar, not identical pronunciations.)

As noted on the website, “Founded in 1987, Hamas opposed the secular approach of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and rejected attempts to cede any part of Palestine.”

And while Hamas engaged in various acts of civil welfare for the people of Gaza, helping the populace in practical ways, it is the military wing of the organization that has made its lasting, deadly mark. It is also the military side of Hamas that absorbs the countless tens of millions of dollars that pour into its coffers from international aid that was intended for humanitarian use. Instead, it is used to build bombs and

terror tunnels and the like. So much for being "for the people."

As far as the religious ideology of Hamas, understand that for a committed Muslim, the world is divided into two segments, Dar al-Islam, the territory of Islam, and Dar al-Harb, the territory of war. The former refers to those countries and lands that have been subjected to Islam (remember that "Islam" means "submission," not "peace"). The latter refers to the rest of the world that has not yet come under the sway of Islam.

And what happens to land that was once under Muslim control but that then breaks free, such as Spain after the Moorish Conquest? This becomes an open wound, a recurring taunt and insult. How much more, then, when the evil Jews now control Jerusalem, considered the third holiest site in Islam, not to mention the rest of former Palestine? Israel must be driven out!

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As stated in Article 12 of the original charter, "Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land."

And so, when you hear that catchy chant, "From the River to the Sea, Palestine must be free," it's important that you understand what it actually means: "No more Jews in the Land! No more Israel!" Is that clear enough?

That's why the original Hamas charter quoted the famous, authoritative Islamic tradition (*hadith*) that stated, "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: 'O Moslem, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.'"

As for the revised charter published in 2017, one that toned down some of the language, the goals remained the same. To quote some relevant lines: "Palestine is a land that was seized by a racist, anti-human and colonial Zionist project that was founded on a false promise (the Balfour Declaration)." (Yes, this is the "softened" version.)

"Yet, it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity." That's why Zionism "must disappear from Palestine."

As for the "armed resistance," that must continue: "Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws. At the heart of these lies armed resistance, which is regarded as the strategic choice for protecting the principles and the rights of the Palestinian people."

We now know, more clearly, than ever, what this "armed resistance" looks like and what the true spirit of Hamas really is. (This has been clear for decades; some are finally waking up to reality today.)

From a Christian point of view, we recognize that even Hamas terrorists are created in the image of God and can be redeemed and transformed through the cross (although those guilty of murderous crimes must still pay for their deeds in this world). I have actually met several former Islamic terrorists who are followers of Jesus today. Not only are they transformed people, but they are also lovers of Israel. Talk about a heart change.

As for any hopes of peace without radical conversion, there is the humanitarian hope, as expressed by Golda Meir, "Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us."

May God hasten the day. {eoa}

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