

Palestinian Culture and the Glorification of Suicide Martyr (Istishhady)**Bassam Yousef Ibrahim Banat & Khitam Ajarma****Abstract**

The study aimed at identifying the glorification of suicide martyr (Istishhady) in the Palestinian culture. The findings revealed that Palestinian culture glorifies the Istishhady. The Istishhady and his family enjoy great respect, admiration, and appreciation in the Palestinian society; the Istishhady is the power of people, the power to revenge on behalf of the victims for the sake of God and homeland. Palestinians consider the Istishhady as courageously sacrificing himself for the sake of everyone. They see him as a symbol of the struggle for freedom, which is what they are fighting for, and life maker for the new generations until the end of occupation, liberation of Palestine, and fulfillment of the wishes of Palestinians. The Istishhady in the Palestinian culture constitutes a social value that brings appreciation and respect to the martyr and his family.

Key words: Suicide martyr (Istishhady), culture, resistance, glorification, life makers.

Introduction

The Palestinian experience under occupation was and is still a most tragic one. This is due to the victims and violence it has left behind as a result of acts of killing, injury, handicap, physical and psychological torture as a result of house demolition, confiscation of lands and water, arrests, raids, pursuits, and other forms of violence. Palestinians have always faced the most brutal occupier that history had ever known. It is certain that Palestinians did not chose this battle; they wished that they were like the rest of the people of the world, paying attention to the development of their independent state and fulfilling their political, economic, and social aspirations. However, they were forced to live with the Israeli occupiers who brought destruction and hatred to this region of the world more than a century ago (Banat, 2010, 2015).

The memory of the crimes of the Zionist terror and the official terror of the consecutive Israeli governments which reached unprecedented degrees of brutality and viciousness, has settled in the collective memory of the Palestinians. Since the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinians have always been fighting and resisting the Israelis. This

resistance evolved over sixty years of struggle and each utilized different techniques and methods till another mode of Palestinian resistance would emerge (Kiyali, 2002; Rimawi, 2005).

Historically, various Palestinian factions had sent fighters on one-way missions involving extraordinary risk. They have tried through different means to shake off the occupation, but to no avail. Before 1993, Palestinians were resisting the occupation of their country through the traditional methods available to them. All they wanted was an end to the occupation, and the establishment of their own state alongside the state of "Israel" (Ateek, 2002).

In the first half of the 1990's, a technique called the "*Al-Amaliyat Al-Istishhadiya*" [Martyrdom Operations] evolved. Between April 1993 and February 2008, the Palestinian resistance factions were able to implement two hundred qualitative martyrdom operations. They utilized explosive, inter alia, cars, belts, and bags that rocked Israel and raised a large scale wave of reaction both locally and internationally. This action constituted a turning point in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At the beginning, these operations used to be individualistic and soon they increased with the start of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000 in a very noticeable manner. It became a general phenomenon spread among the different sectors, groups, youth, and social classes of the Palestinian people (Banat, 2010, 2015).

The Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip took a very important turn with the start of Al-Quds Intifada in September 2015, when Palestinian youth, and more lately women, started to use other struggle tools mostly, shooting, stabbing, and run over operations against Israeli occupation; and were able to implement more than one hundred-fifty operations. These tools are considered an extension of the martyrdom operations.

"Istishhad" Martyrdom is a Palestinian term introduced into the political dictionary to describe the case of self-sacrifice, "sacrifice of life to serve non individual sublime objectives". According to Durkheim (1951) classification, this altruistic sacrifice may occur when a person becomes deeply integrated into a social group, and as such, it becomes a duty for the members of that group.

In spite of the religious significances for this term which are taken from the Islamic religion, the factions of the Palestinian society worked on nationalizing this term to include both religious and non religious Muslims and Christians. The martyr “Istishhady” [Istishhady for male and Istishhadiya for female, and the plural is Istishhadiyin] constituted a social value that brought forth appreciation and respect to the Istishhady and his family (Mustafa, 2003; Sawahil, 2003; AbdelKhalek, 2004; Gearing & Lizardi, 2008; Banat, 2010).

Palestinian Culture

Culture is the total behavioral models that members of a group practice in which they are influenced and they exert influence in it. Their life patterns are formed through it and their personalities interact with it. Through it, they carry out all what is materialistic and non tangible whether those people were organized in the form of a society or a community. One of the important characteristics of culture is that it forms the thought and perception which are linked with the social positions and standards in the society, while what might come out of the elements in some cultures might not appear in other cultures. This is due to the fact that the same historical factors were not repeated in both. Members in the same society who have the same culture differ in their reactions towards sub-culture issues (Banat, 2010).

The society consists of several communities which interact with one another in a systematic manner and share stable and organized social relations. They share joint interests and goals governed by a group of values, customs, traditions, and norms which organize their behavior and relationships to guarantee the survival and sustainability of the society. Every group is characterized by the interest of its members in certain behavioral norms based on their own values so as to distinguish them from members of other societal groups; each group exerts pressure on its members to hold fast to these norms in order to preserve and sustain their group entity (Othman, 1999; Banat, 2014A).

Sociological theories and studies have indicated that humans are sociable by nature and live within groups. Ever since the existence of man on Earth, he moved towards living in social groups. An individual cannot survive and exist for his livelihood without a society; thus, he should be in constant contact with others sharing their lives and everyday activities. By doing so, he can fulfill his different needs within the laid out values, customs, and traditions by the group. Thus, he would be sociably acceptable. In light of this, we realize the big role of the

group and the surrounding social environment in shaping the personality and social behavior of the individual living in them (Banat, 2014B).

A reader, a listener, and a seer of the Palestinian culture with its popular legacy touches the experience of the Palestinian people based on its political, social, and economic aspects. However, one will reveal the values, criteria, standards, customs, and traditions i.e. a life philosophy expressed through its varied cases by the following qualities. They include; directness, spontaneity, presence, and transparency. These qualities have their significance since the achievements of the Palestinian people were gradually exposed to aggression and sabotage before 1948; following the same year with an increasing momentum, the family, which is the legacy preserver and its first carrier to next generations through their relationship with the mother and the elderly in the family was exposed to disintegration and devastation. The Palestinian village that innovates legacy about itself and its peasant culture was also exposed to elimination and destruction. Thus, the larger portion of the Palestinian legacy, especially the tangible one, was lost. As for the other non tangible aspect, most of it was lost because it was kept in the hearts, heads, and behaviors of the elderly who passed away since most of it was not recorded (Haddad, 1987).

Culture in its roles and centers constitutes the cultural structure and the social structure of the materialistic people. Culture is the content of materialistic social upbringing that is transferred from fathers to sons and from one generation to another. Culture is the echo of the past and the loud sound of the present and the future. Values are reflected in the individual's behavioral attitudes and positions. Cultural values can only be understood in the daily behavioral reality of the individuals. On the other side, values are considered to be general rules which the society depends on in the assessment and judgment of the individual's behaviors in the different life positions and contexts. What harmonizes with these values became acceptable and what contradicts them became deviated, exceptional, or abnormal.

One of the most important characteristics of culture is that it is an acquired pattern i.e. the thought and behavior of the people in our society is in accordance with the cultural patterns that they learnt. They follow these patterns so that their behavior becomes sound; if not, then they are considered as abnormal or deviated. This Palestinian cultural pattern becomes clear in several behavioral patterns mainly self sacrifice for the sake of others which is considered to be an old Palestinian cultural and social value. Self sacrifice for the sake of others is a praised behavior that receives a distinguished social behavior in the Palestinian society. If

individuals condemn this value, they will be accused of negligence and inattention; thus, they would weaken their social status. The heroic action is linked with self identification or identity in the society. Identity as seen by the expanded Palestinian family is collective through respect of customs, traditions, and social norms. Individuals are raised from childhood on adapting their wishes and wills in accordance with the collective will of the family. Individuals are always encouraged to view themselves as the others view them and to measure their individual experience according to the scale of collective approval (Muhawi & Kana'na, 2001: 39).

The culture with its technical and literary contents reflects the experience of the Palestinian society in its continuous struggle to preserve its materialistic, social, and cultural existence before the serious challenges which it passed through. These challenges include uprooting, homelessness, compulsory immigration, displacement, and transfer of its culture and homeland by the international force of suppression to a foreign settlement society since 1967 till now. The Palestinian artworks and literary works carry the wealth of this experience quantitatively and qualitatively making it difficult to contain. The continuation of the attempts to uproot the Palestinian people from its land and the continuation of its tracking down from one place to another in this world had distributed arts and literature among places and among cultures and languages making it very difficult to detect, categorize, and highlight its main features (Al-Quds Open University, 2000).

The Palestinian literary works focused on the issue of national self awareness and the resistance of its cancellation in the Palestinians of 1948 through refusal of Israeli laws and taking pride in the Palestinian Arab identity. In 1967, a new spirit was reflected in the Palestinian literature and arts especially with the formation of the PLO; it was a spirit of rage and resistance that reached its climax in the Palestinian and Arab literary journalism inside and outside Palestine. The topics of martyr, prison, and sacrifice preoccupied most of these Palestinian literary works and arts. In addition, there is the call for the preservation and revival of the national culture, emphasis on the role of the woman, political affiliation, and national unity. The Palestinian land constituted the essential core to all Palestinian cultural works regardless of the geographical locations of the Palestinian writers (Anis, 1979).

All forms of popular literature discussed various topics related to Palestinians' daily life which accompanied the Palestinian revolutionary waves. They all participated in general manifestations that overwhelmed the land like martyrdom, captivity, encouragement of

resistance, and the description of the occupiers' suppressive measures which makes the popular art (Folkloric songs) come out of the hearts of the Palestinians based on their tongues as the official spokesperson in the name of their resistance and steadfastness. Palestinian poet Ibrahim Touqan said in one of his national poems; "My heart is for my home land, not for the party or the leader; I did not sell it to a brother, friend or close person; and my end is to serve my people, either through my agony or luxury" (Touqan, 1965).

The Palestinian literature including its different genres has been considered for a very long time as a resistance literature. Poets, in their poems, have praised the need to end occupation, Novelists and playwrights have excelled in this field. Here, we still see that the Palestinian popular literature encourages resistance by all means in order to achieve the sought after national rights of the Palestinian people. Resistance is not through weapons alone. It is through thought and culture. Thus, this means resistance in thought, self-independence, and intellectual creativity. It is the proof of the ego before the proof of the other. When the political identity and the threats against it are involved, culture represents the tool for resistance in facing the attempts of removal, wiping out, elimination, and annihilation. Resistance is some form of memory against forgetfulness; based on this understanding, culture becomes of significant importance in the issue of resistance (Said, 2006).

Glorification of the Istishhady

The culmination of the Palestinian literature was with the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987; the Second Intifada in 2000; and the Al-Quds Intifada in 2015. The topics of homeland, nationalism, national unity, resistance of enemy, Istishhady, and the role of all members of the Palestinian people were prominent in the literature of the Palestinian culture.

Culturally, symbols like Kufia (Head gear), litham (Scarf), victory signs, slingshot, stones, explosive belt, shooting, stabbing, and run over operations, martyrs, martyrdom, and Istishhady were very prominent. Also, the Palestinian society held fast to them in its behaviors and actions; it considered them to be an integral part of a serious attempt to give an honest image of the personality of the Istishhady which is an integral part of his daily life. As a result, he takes pride in it, defends it, and falls under its flag. The Palestinian culture plays a significant role in the emergence of the martyrdom operations. Subsequently, we find that the Palestinian culture glorifies martyrdom for the sake of God and homeland; it calls for the resistance of the occupiers and aggressors by all means. The environment and the cultural

symbols which accompanied the Palestinian revolution in general and the martyrdom operations in particular have reinforced the martyrdom action (Banat, 2010).

The life and memory of the Istishhady considered the most virtuous and purist pages in the history of the Palestinian resistance and it narrates their heroism everywhere in the house, school, mosque, café, and office. As a result, youths rush to join the ranks of the Istishhadiyin. The Palestinian street supports martyrdom operations; even the martyrdom in the face of occupiers has become the highest value of sacrifice and redemption; its essentiality and significance are reinforced by the continuation of the occupation in its practices like brutality and escalation of killing, assassinations, annihilation, and destruction instead of wiping out the reasons that created martyrdom, which are termination of occupation and implementation of UN resolutions (Khanfar, 2002; Sarraj, 2002; Hussien, 2003). Regarding these points, Brym and Araj (2008) conclude that support for suicide bombing is more a function of social solidarity than of a competition within the Palestinian community. In the same context, Yadlin (2006) indicates that a culture of self-sacrifice is constructed with the martyrs as culture-heroes, the Istishhady, and his family. Thus, this result to the enjoyment of great prestige and admiration (not to speak of material reward) within both their immediate surroundings and broader circles informed by the media all over the Arab/Muslim world.

The Palestinian culture shows all respect and appreciation to the Istishhady and his family through a number of activities and ceremonies mainly:

1. Support of Palestinian martyrdom operations (*Al-Amaliyat Al-Istishhadiya*) through conducting popular marches, awesome funerals, and posters carrying the Istishhady's photographs fill all streets, houses, and window shops. Building a condolence/mourning tent which many considers as a national wedding attended by everybody where sweets are offered in celebration of the martyrdom operation in addition to a three day strike in solidarity with the Istishhady and his family. Regarding this point, Sarraj (2002) emphasizes that the Istishhady in the Palestinian society is glorified. The martyr is the power of the people, the power to take revenge on behalf of the victims. They have all these romantic notions. They see the martyr as courageously sacrificing himself or herself for the sake of everyone, as a symbol of the struggle for freedom, because this is what these people are fighting for.

The continuous social support by the society members to the Istishhady family takes place in holidays and national occasions. In this context, the father of the Istishhady Ahmed Kawazbeh executor of Gush Etzion stabbing operation on 5 January 2016 said, “Thank God, solidarity of Palestinians is very strong, our village people look at us with admiration and respect; they believe that we are the most generous people since we contributed to having the Istishhady who offered his soul for the sake of Palestine. The entire village sympathizes with us and they constantly come to show their solidarity with us in feasts and occasions which I will never forget all of my life” (Interview on 27 January, 2017).

The one who walks in the Istishhadiyin funerals and processions which start with friends and expands to include all Palestinians may detect signs of raging fire which encircles all their bodies, hands, and feet as a reflection of the hope of the coming victory; it is not strange that these processions of tens of participants are ready projects for Istishhad (Khanfar, 2002). In this context, the Istishhadiya Ashraquat Qatanani executor of Hawara checkpoint stabbing operation on 22 November 2015, asked her family in her will to show solidarity and steadfastness through celebrating her martyrdom and not to cry over her; she wanted them to refuse any condolences, but rather to open a house of joy to receive congratulators and well wishers on her martyrdom. The Istishhadiya father expressed his pride in his daughter's martyrdom saying, “We cannot but take pride in our Istishhady who raised our heads high and fulfilled her will. She chose the martyrdom path which was her most precious wish and we bless her for that. We do pray to God the Almighty to accept her martyrdom for her sake only. I wished Ahraquat could see better days than we have lived” (Interview on 3 February, 2017).

The support of the Palestinian street of the Istishhadiyin appears in a different image through giving enthusiastic names to the Istishhady like Abdel-Basit Odeh, the executor of the largest martyrdom operation ever launched against Israel since its establishment. The operation took place in Netanya on 27 March 2002 and this has led to the killing of 29 Israelis and wounding 150 others. However, he was called “The Lion of the Holy Revenge”. As for the Palestinian, Istishhady Mohammed stated that Jerusalem operation on 10 October 2015 was called “Knives Commando”.

2. Growing support and appreciation of the Istishhadiyin among the Palestinian people had led them to innovate different ways to treasure names, pictures, and life stories of those heroes to stay alive in the collective memory of the Palestinians. After the posters of the

Istishhadiyin are pasted in different streets, roads, cars and vehicles, new forms of immortalization of their Istishhadiyin have started to appear among the youth; now they decorate their mobiles with the photographs of those Istishhadiyin. They would also inscribe their photographs on medals and keys. Furthermore, they also frame their photographs and hang them in houses, shops, and different places.

3. Palestinian cheers and ovation which have been accompanying and encouraging the Palestinians' martyrdom operations derive their utterances from daily incidents. These cheers have succeeded in expressing martyrdom operations in a more influential manner than others since they are spontaneous and easily adaptable with the incident like, revenge Al-Qassam Brigades; greetings to Brigades because we want the largest martyrdom operation; Qassams don't frown, you need explosive belts; be open; fit me with explosives; do me this favor; be open; blow me up in Dizengov (Dizingov is a street name in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, in which so many martyrdom operations had been implemented).

4. The clear attention of the poets and artists is shown in composing songs about the Istishhadiyin, and their high ranks through embodying the images of the Istishhadiyin heroes and documenting their historical stories through a number of literary works so as to remain inscribed in the Palestinian collective memory through: stories, books, biographies, poems, and movies. Consequently, the latest was a movie called "Al-Karaz" produced by Al-Aqsa TV and it was watched by millions. The film addressed the Palestinian resistance under the on-going Israeli occupation, in order to support the steadfastness of the youth and motivate them to continue the path of resistance and the approach of Istishhadiyin. In addition, one poet said about the Istishhady Muhannad Al-Halabi, Jerusalem shooting and stabbing operation on 3 October, 2015. Oh, Muhannad! Moon of all the rebels, I'd like to say, Jerusalem holds you in her eyes as a glad tiding during the day. And Al-Aqsa puts you up on walls of ancient history, As a banner of pride and a flag of victory. Oh, Muhannad! Sun of Palestine, Oh, knight of Saladin's Army, with powers from the Divine. You've lived a full time among us lurking, A perfume of Hittin, from your breath, is coming. While you are crying out for Jerusalem, Like a river digging the rock, you've been drawing, the course of victory for the knives and martyrdom (Palestine Today TV, 2015).

5. The influential words which some mothers and sons of the Istishhadiyin delivered at the overcrowded funeral of the Istishhady while carrying their bodies were very expressive, emphasizing their determination and steadfastness in the face of the Israeli occupation.

Regarding this point, Evans (1999) indicates that the behavior of mothers of martyrs is a powerful tool as many women have for political action in traditional societies. The power of this tool is contingent upon the concept of martyrdom as a powerful weapon for the survival of the community. In this regard, the mother of the Palestinian Istishhady Khalid Jawabreh, Arroub Camp shooting operation on 26 November, 2015, said, “What Khalid did is an honorable act and it is the most successful response to the daily occupation crimes which are beyond description. She add, “I always teach my children to love others but unfortunately, the occupation practices like the daily killing, demolitions, and imprisonments have changed the way boys and girls think. These conditions have forced us and our children to carry out martyrdom operations, since it has become a duty to resist the occupation”. She add, “Our children don’t need us to explain anything, Khalid didn’t consult me; he saw what was going on to his people and did what was necessary; Israelis seek surrender not peace, the Palestinian people will never surrender; if Khalid is gone, there will be a million other Khalids” (Interview on 20 January, 2017).

As for Malek the son of the Istishhady Mustafa Baradia, Arroub Camp stabbing operation on 19 July 2016 said, “We are living in misery, my people are living in a camp, we have nothing, it is very crowded, your window opens into your neighbour’s window, a street is one meter wide. As refugees we need a solution that gives us our rights, sixty-nine years of the Nakba in more than enough”. He adds; “It has become a duty to resist the occupation, and each person resists the occupation in his own way. You may resist with bullets, with words, by art, or any other way” (Interview on 20 January, 2017).

In a word addressed to the thousands of participants in the funeral procession of her martyred daughter, Kelzar Owaiwi, Ibrahimi Mosque heroic stabbing operation in the city of Hebron on 13 February, 2016, said, “My decision to participate in carrying the body of my daughter and walking in the funeral procession is a message to challenge the usurper, the occupier, and we will continue to follow the course of those Istishhadiyin and upset the occupation by carrying our children and seeing them off to the Gardens of Eternity”. She added, “I wished to see my daughter, who was distinguished in her class and committed to her religion, a bride, whom I would escort to her marital home. As she has been martyred, I have to participate in her wedding procession to Heaven; she is a martyr of whom we are proud, and we will cherish forever” (Interview on 6 February, 2017).

6. Publication and spread of the wills whether written or visual left by the Istishhadiyin to members of the Palestinian people. These wills have positive effects on the intellectual environment which the Istishhady, society, and people represent. These wills are letters written in blood and light; blood to conquer the occupiers and light to light the path of those following the path of resistance and martyrdom. We do find that many Istishhadiyin showed in their wills their continuous desire to be martyred and they called it as part of their inseparable culture. In this context, the Istishhady Muhannad Al-Halabi, Jerusalem shooting and stabbing operation on 3 October, 2015, wrote in his will, “I can see that the third Intifada has just started. What is happening to the Al-Aqsa [Mosque], to our holy places, and to the ascension of our Prophet is so humiliating and disgraceful, and what is happening to the Al-Aqsa women, our mothers and sisters, is so humiliating and disgraceful. I do not think that we [Palestinian people] are the kind of a nation that can accept humiliation! How long will the humiliation and disgrace last? For how long? The [Palestinian] people will rise up”.

In addition, the Istishhadiya Rasha Uwaysi, executor of Qalqilya checkpoint stabbing operation on 9 November, 2015, wrote in her will, “My dear mother, I do not know what is going on; I just know that my road is over, the road that I have chosen [while I am] in full consciousness, in defense of my homeland and the people of my country. I can no longer stand the heinous crimes that I can see perpetrated against our Palestinian people. There is no way other than this road; I'm sorry for this [kind of] departure”.

Addressing his parents, the Istishhady Mohammed Ayyad, Silwad run over operation on 18 December, 2015, and wrote in his will, “My compassionate mother, my dear father, my heart can no longer stand seeing the occupation destroy, arrest, murder, and defile the Al-Aqsa Mosque, so I have decided to offer my soul cheap for the sake of Allah (God). If we, young people, did not go out for jihad in Allah's Cause, then who would!? I hope you'll forgive me and pray for me; this is a jihad of victory or martyrdom”.

Expressing his motive behind martyrdom operation, the Palestinian police officer, Amjad Sukkari, Beit El shooting operation on 31 January 2016, wrote in his will, “[It is said that] On this earth, there is something that makes life worth living, but unfortunately, I do not see anything that makes life worth living as long as the occupation stifles our breath and kills our brothers and sisters. God, have mercy on our martyrs, heal our wounded people, and release our prisoners; you [martyrs] are the forerunners [in becoming martyrs], and we are the successors”.

7. The special commemoration activities to immortalize the memory of the Istishhadiyin took place through a number of activities mostly, national slogans that fill the street walls, and the surrounding neighborhood of the Istishhady house like, “Istishhadiyin are lamps lighting the path of Palestinian resistance and crowns which are placed over the heads of the liberals and notables; glory and immortality for our Istishhadiyin heroes” monument, calling groups of national action by the names of the Istishhadiyin like the Istishhady Moahmmmed Ali Group and the Istishhady Abdel-Hamid Abu Srouf Group. This is in addition to the names of streets after their names, new born babies to Palestinian families, sports sessions, and other contests and activities. In this context, the wife of the Istishhady Fadi Khaseeb, Kfar Adumim, runs over operation on 27 November 2015. She remembers the determination of Fadi to name her newly born male infant by the name of his brother the Istishhady “Shadi” instead of any other name five days before his martyrdom. She added that the names “Fadi and Shadi” have become well known in the town after the families named their newly born boys by these names to immortalize the memory of the two Istishhadiyin (Interview on 10 February, 2017). All of this made the Istishhady a model to follow by the Palestinian people.

8. Focus of the Palestinian media with its different resources on the topics of the Istishhadiyin operations and empowerment of their legitimacy as a useful means in the national struggle to stop occupiers through broadcasting national songs and poems which praise this kind of operations. It broadcasted the live footage of the operation and the losses inflicted on the occupiers; held live meetings with the families of the Istishhadiyin addressing the qualities and lives of their sons and daughters and how they offered their lives for the sake of homeland. Forums and lectures were also held with famous and local thinkers to talk about the reasons for the Istishhadiyin operations, their role and effectiveness in stopping the occupation, and the fulfillment of the Palestinian rights.

9. Some political and religious leaders uttered some signals which reinforce the martyrdom operations and described it as the highest rank of sacrifice for the sake of Palestine and its just cause. The best examples of these emotional words were uttered by the late president Yasser Arafat, while he was under the siege of the Israeli forces in his compound in Ramallah in 2002. Here, he addressed the Palestinian crowds, the Arab world, and the whole world, “They (Israelis) want me to be a prisoner; they want me to be a fugitive; they want me killed, but I say to them a martyr, a martyr, a martyr”.

Moreover, on the fifth anniversary of the establishment of Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual father of the movement addressed a dignified salutation to the Palestinian Istishhadiyin and blessed their efforts. He demanded more qualitative martyrdom operations when he said, “I greet in them this positive spirit and do say that we are all proud of them; however, do not be hasty and carry out an unstudied action with an unwanted outcome for you are not the property of yourself any more but you are the property of God and then your people, so place this trust in its right place” (The Palestinian Information Center, 2002).

Furthermore, Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, one of the leaderships of Hamas movement, stresses that, “Nobody from the Palestinian side especially resistance movements nor the Arab people side can denounce the martyrdom operations justified by Islamic Sharia. However, he describes them as the most sublime martyrdom. He adds that Palestinians make life through the gate of martyrdom. Besides, in impressive words about the martyrdom operations, Dr. Abdel-Aziz Rantissi who is the second man in Hamas movement said two days before his martyrdom, “Rise to homeland and pay your blood, throw away all weakness reasons; death is better than humiliation, since humiliation will never last; the one who drinks the cup of death, it will spread in the whole body; The one, who lives dead, yearns to fight and replies no no no” (The Palestinian Information Center, 2005). In the same context, Abdallah Shami, one of the leaderships of Islamic Jihad Movement said, “The martyrdom operations will remain a strategic weapon for the Islamic Jihad and all the mujahidin because it achieves a balance of horror between us and the enemies until new ways more effective are used” (Aliq, 2004: 27).

Conclusion

The martyrdom operations have been developed within the framework of the Palestinian resistance to defeat occupation. Accordingly, the resistance strategy holds fast to a fixed title which indicates that as long as there is occupation, there is resistance. It is clear that martyrdom operations express the Palestinian people’s determination and readiness to make sacrifices; these operations put the country’s interest before that of the individual who gains his identity from his readiness to be a martyr for the sake of God and home country; therefore, the Istishhad becomes a general social and cultural phenomenon which exceeds the individualistic in order to melt inside the entire society after the Palestinian Istishhady voluntarily and willfully shows determination to sacrifice his/her life for the sake of God, home, and people.

This bravery in sacrifice and this qualitative leap in the level of awareness of the rules of struggle are the fruit of martyrdom and the culture that nurtures it in a manner that breaks barriers of fear, reluctance, weakness, and removes haziness and generates a mature awareness and an original knowledge of the secrets of competition and rules of fighting injustice and formulating a fine vision of the nature of things. With little concentration, we found that the Palestinian people starts from family passing through school and ending with the large society work in developing inside the child an original authentic culture of resistance and martyrdom. This culture grows inside the child and flourishes without any obstacles or the slightest hesitation. In this regard, the mother of the Palestinian Istishhady Khalid Jawabreh, Arroub Camp shooting operation on 26 November, 2015, said, “Our children don’t need us to explain anything, Khalid didn’t consult me; he saw what was going on to his people and did what was necessary; Israelis seek surrender not peace, the Palestinian people will never surrender; if Khalid is gone, there will be a million other Khalids”.

Furthermore, the Palestinian culture deals with martyrs in general and Istishhadiyin in particular from the moment they pass away, and their parents as well is considered to be a sign of tactfulness, spiritual and materialistic support filled with glorification of their great memory. This had made the martyrdom culture a large slogan for anybody who is lost and is looking for a varied culture with vocabulary about heroism, strength, honesty, patience, and self-assured souls which are full of nobleness and chastity until the end of occupation, liberation of Palestine, and the fulfillment of the wishes of Palestinians.

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