

Suicide Martyr "Istishhady" during Al-Quds Intifada: between Sacrifice and Gift Reciprocity

Khitam Ajarma

Abstract

The present study intends to investigate the suicide martyr "Istishhady" during Al-Quds Intifada: between sacrifice and gift reciprocity through the lenses of Marcel Mauss gift theory. This theory is based on three pillars, gift presentation, acceptance, and reciprocating. Also, drawing on Durkheim's theory of suicide.

The study approached the issue of suicide martyr as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The study sheds light on a new social phenomenon, which spread in the Palestinian society in all its groups in general, and among the youth in particular at Al-Quds Intifada. The Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation 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 the Israeli occupation; and were able to implement more than three hundred operations. These tools are considered an extension of the martyrdom operations.

The study attempts to deconstruct the concept of suicide martyr, specifically Durkheim's concept of altruistic suicide to understand how altruistic suicide, which is a self-sacrifice for the group, becomes suicide martyr.

The study adopted the qualitative research approach using the sampling survey method. The questionnaire and interview are appropriate for the exploratory nature of the research. The collected data was statistically analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

The findings of the study indicated that suicide martyr is a complex social process in which the presentation and reciprocation of a gift between the individual and society requires faith and belief in the judgment day. Thus, the society, the religious community and the political group accept and support the act of suicide (Istishahd) on the grounds that it constitutes a

legitimate gift. Thereby, these suicidal acts are transformed into acts of martyrdom exceed the meaning of altruistic suicide in Durkheim's theory.

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. These findings confirm that the Istishhady in the Palestinian culture constitutes a social value that brings appreciation and respect to the martyr and his family. Actually, the Palestinian society considers that as a highly valued act, through a number of materialistic and symbolic responses.

Keywords: Suicide martyr (Istishhady), sacrifice, Palestine, gift reciprocity.

Additional information

Ahmar, Molody. Committee President, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology, Program of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Doha, Qatar.

Alwan, Dana. Internal Examiner, Assistant Professor of Sociology (Women Studies), Program of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Doha, Qatar.

Number of Pages: 122. Number of References: 71. Defense Date: June 08, 2017.

HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

Ajarma, K. (2018). Suicide Martyr "Istishhady" during Al-Quds Intifada: between Sacrifice and Gift Reciprocity. *International Humanities Studies*, 5(2),

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Khitam Ajarma, MA. Program of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Doha, Qatar. khitamajarma@yahoo.com