



Written by [James Heiser](#) on March 11, 2010

A “Son of Hamas” Converts to Christianity

For Mosab Hassan Yousef, the problem for his fellow Palestinians is simple: “The problem is with their God. They need to be liberated from their God. He is their biggest enemy. It has been 1,400 years they have been lied to.” The sentiment is hardly unique among observers of Islam, but it is striking given Mr. Yousef’s background as a former leader of the terrorist organization Hamas.



According to an *Wall Street Journal* article ([“They Need to Be Liberated From Their God”](#)), Yousef’s spiritual pilgrimage out of Islam not only led him to Christianity, but also into the service of the Israeli government:

“I absolutely know that in anybody’s eyes I was a traitor,” says Mosab Hassan Yousef. “To my family, to my nation, to my God. I crossed all the red lines in my society. I didn’t leave one that I didn’t cross. Now 32, Mosab is the son of Sheikh Hassan Yousef, a founder and leader of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. Throughout the last decade, from the second Intifada to the current stalemate, he worked alongside his father in the West Bank. During that time the younger Mr. Yousef also secretly embraced Christianity. And as he reveals in his book “Son of Hamas,” out this week, he became one of the top spies for Israel’s internal security arm, the Shin Bet.

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According to the report in the *Journal*, Yousef has kept “a low profile” the past two years while living near San Diego. However, now that his book, *Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices*, was released in the past few weeks, Yousef is speaking out even more boldly than he has before.

Yousef’s account is gripping: His father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, was among a small circle of men who founded Hamas in 1986. The young Mosab played a role in the first Palestinian Intifada, and speaks of the founding of Hamas as “a noble idea — resisting occupation.” Again, according to the *Wall Street Journal*,

Mr. Yousef traces his awakening to his first sustained exposure to Hamas cruelty. In 1996, he was arrested by the Israelis for buying weapons. He says he was beaten and tortured badly in custody. It was then that the Shin Bet approached him. He says he thought about becoming a double agent. “I wanted revenge on Israel,” he writes. But when he was sent to serve his term at the Megiddo prison in northern Israel, he says he was more shocked by the way the maj’d, Hamas’s security wing, dealt with other prisoners.

“Every day, there was screaming; every night, torture. Hamas was torturing its own people!” he writes. The Muslims he met in jail “bore no resemblance to my father” and “were mean and petty ... bigots and hypocrites.”



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[The Daily Telegraph ran a story](#) on Yousef's conversion, and move to the United States, back in August 2008. At that time, he described his encounter with the Christian faith through a British missionary. Yousef said that as he learned about Christianity.

He found it "exciting," he said, and began secretly studying the Bible, struck by the central tenet "love your enemies."

Nevertheless he does not advocate the "collapse of Islam," but rather for people to acknowledge that after 1,400 years "it's not working any more."

He said: "It's not taking them anywhere. It's making them look ugly."

He hopes that Muslims will begin to question their religion and "fix it" by rejecting the parts that call for "killing others, cutting hands, cutting legs, torturing people and asking for destruction of entire civilisations."

He said that after he converted to Christianity, he decided he had to escape and "live my life away from violence because I couldn't coexist with that situation as a Christian."

Since that time, Yousef's views concerning Islam have taken on a more adamant tone: Time has allowed for more perspective on his experiences. According to the *Wall Street Journal* article,

"I converted to Christianity because I was convinced by Jesus Christ as a character, as a personality. I loved him, his wisdom, his love, his unconditional love. I didn't leave [the Islamic] religion to put myself in another box of religion. At the same time it's a beautiful thing to see my God exist in my life and see the change in my life. I see that when he does exist in other Middle Easterners there will be a change.

"I'm not trying to convert the entire nation of Israel and the entire nation of Palestine to Christianity. But at least if you can educate them about the ideology of love, the ideology of forgiveness, the ideology of grace. Those principles are great regardless, but we can't deny they came from Christianity as well."

Mr. Yousef says he felt burned out and decided to stop working for the Shin Bet in 2006, against their wishes. He made his way to friends in southern California whom he'd met through Bible study.

According to his account, the power of the Christian message not only healed Yousef, it gave him the perspective to see the nature of Islamic ideology for the spiritual slavery that it is. And having learned the difference between the two faiths, Yousef cannot be silent.

Photo of Mosab Hassan Yousef: AP Images



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