

A Young Palestinian Who Found Refuge in Israel

At age 12, Dor Shachar ran away from Gaza to live in Israel. His journey exposed a deep divide

By Oren Shalom

Dor Shachar grew up as Aiman Abu Suboh in a Muslim family of five in the Gaza Strip city of Khan Yunis. At age 7, he was taught in school that he had to kill Jews. At the age of 12 1/2, he ran away from home and lived on a construction site in Israel. In an interview with The Epoch Times in Israel, Mr. Shachar told his story.

Dor Shachar:

When I started school, in first grade, for about a month, they taught us to write letters in Arabic and read. After a month, they began teaching us to kill Jews. They told us at school, “It’s a great commandment to kill Jews because they took your land, and you will fight until the last drop of blood to regain the land.” They explained to us that the land includes Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the entire country of Israel, basically.

I knew Jews who came to the market [in Khan Yunis] to shop. It was a time when there was no intifada, nothing; it was absolute quiet.

They told us in school that Jews have three legs, that they kill children, women, men, and the elderly. That once they were Muslims, but they turned into Jewish infidels, and the biggest commandment is to kill Jews. All the students in the class had to say, “In the name of religion, in the name of God, in the name of Mohammed of Islam—kill Jews.”

I refused to accept this. All the kids in the class say “Itbah al-yahud,” or slaughter the Jews. I asked the teacher to go to the restroom to wash my face because I really didn’t feel well, and I just wanted to get out of that place.

In response, he slapped me and took me to the principal’s room, where he whispered something in his ear about me. The principal asked me to stand facing the wall and hit me on the back with a rubber hose. Then he told me to ask my dad to come with me to school the next day.

The next day, my dad came to school for a meeting with the principal. After about 10 minutes, my dad entered the classroom. He started hitting me and said, “Yes! We need to kill Jews.”

My dad worked in Israel for 27 years.

He made money, bought clothes, bought gifts—and he supported killing Jews.

The Epoch Times:

In 1987, at the age of 12 1/2, you traveled to Israel with your father?

Mr. Shachar:

We traveled on Sunday and returned on Thursday. We slept the whole week in the country, and on Thursday, we would go back home to Gaza.

The Epoch Times:

After three months, you ran away in Israel?

Mr. Shachar:

I found a place to escape to in Israel and started working in security at construction sites at night.

The Epoch Times:

After you ran away, no one knew where you were? They didn’t look for you?

Mr. Shachar:

That’s exactly the point— they don’t care. Children have no value there, in the Gaza Strip. It’s not like a Jewish child, if his mom doesn’t see him for a second, she goes crazy. With

Palestinians, it's different. They bring children into the world to kill Jews. This whole population belongs to terrorists.

The Epoch Times:

You're essentially claiming that a Palestinian parent in Gaza forms a family to kill Jews?

Mr. Shachar:

Absolutely, and we see it now. There are results on the ground.

In the first and second intifadas, they exploded buses, restaurants, and hotels in Israel. And who was it? Not just Hamas and Jihad, but also the PLO, Fatah, Tanzim; all this population belongs to terrorists. This entire population wants to kill Jews.

The Epoch Times:

There are no innocent children in Gaza, in your opinion?

Mr. Shachar:

I'll say this: One must understand that if terrorists have children, they'll become terrorists, too. We must understand that. They're following in his footsteps, and they become even worse terrorists than their father.

In the intifada, they threw stones, then they shot, and after that, they started exploding. The new generation launches missiles.

They tied me upside down. They submerged me in cold water, hot water, electric shocks. For about half a year. Every day the same thing.

Dor Shachar, Palestinian resident of Israel

From generation to generation, it becomes worse. Now they've entered the kibbutzim ... cutting, raping, burning people alive. It isn't just Hamas and Jihad. Clearly seen in footage from Oct.

7, one group was from Hamas with a green headband, another from the Islamic Jihad with a black headband, and a third group had no headband. These are the residents of Gaza—people with flip-flops and sandals. They're civilians. What does the expression “supporters of terror” mean? In a conversation published by the IDF spokesperson from the massacre on Oct. 7, you hear a terrorist who murdered Jews calling his father proudly about his deeds. The father asks him, “Did you kill 10 Jews?” praising him, saying “Thank God.”

Listen carefully to the words: “Thank God, thank Allah. Keep going, keep going.” He talks to his mother, and his mother is happy, telling him, “Too bad I'm not with you. Too bad. They must be eliminated from the root.”

The Epoch Times:

What happened after you ran away from your father?

Mr. Shachar:

After I ran away, I started working in security and later in construction in Israel. I worked in that industry for several years. The place where I worked was a neighborhood of villas in the final stages of construction. One day, a Jewish man came. I greeted him, and he asked me where my father was. I told him I didn't have a father.

He went home and came back with hot soup, food, clothes, games, a stereo system, and a cassette of a famous singer in Israel. I connected with him.

Two weeks before Passover, he moved to the villa neighborhood where I worked. He invited me to the Passover holiday, and I didn't know what that holiday was. He told me that the Jews were slaves in Egypt for 400 years and in the desert for 40 years and that God opened the sea

for them, and the people of Israel crossed the sea, and all of Pharaoh's soldiers drowned in the sea. He said the Israelis are the "chosen people."

After hearing this, what came out of my mouth, even though I didn't know Hebrew, was: "I want to be Jewish" in Hebrew. He couldn't believe it. He asked me, "What do you want?" and then I repeated the same sentence. He told me, "No, no, no. A Jew remains a Jew, an Arab remains an Arab; you can't change your religion, that's how God created the world."

He didn't convince me. I went to the neighbors and asked them. They told me, "Yes, you can be Jewish." I went back to him and said, "Yes, I can be Jewish because I asked the neighbors." He said, "OK, we'll talk to the rabbis and everything will be fine."

The Epoch Times:

You decided to convert to Judaism and went to Rabbi Avior Hai?

Mr. Shachar:

He told me, "OK, I'll convert you. I just need a letter from your family in Khan Yunis agreeing that I can convert you." At that time, I was already 16. I told the rabbi that if I contacted my family, they would simply kill me, so he told me to wait until I was 18.

When I was 17, a Palestinian from Gaza murdered a girl from Bat Yam [a city in Israel]. Following this, there was chaos between Jews and Arabs in Jaffa and Bat Yam.

"The government decided to deport all Arabs working in the country to their homes in the Gaza Strip because there were no permits at that time; they would freely enter. After the murder of the girl, everything became a mess, and the government decided to grant permits to work in Israel only to those aged 40 and above. Anyone below the age of 40 was forbidden to stay in the country. It meant that I became illegal.

The Epoch Times:

What did you do?

Mr. Shachar:

Every time the police came, I ran away so they wouldn't arrest me. When I turned 18, we went to Rabbi Avior Hai in Ramat Gan. The rabbi said: "Now we need approval from the state because there's a new law, and it doesn't suit you because those who receive approval are 40 and older. Anyone below that age, nothing can help him."

At the age of 19, I went to the police and said that I wasn't legal. They arrested me and took me to court. In court, I said that I had been in the country for seven years and that I wanted to convert. My adoptive father brought 250 signatures from the neighbors to show that they knew me and that I truly wanted to convert. But the judge didn't address it. He sentenced me to 45 days in prison plus 10 months of conditional release.

During the hearing before the judge, there were other Palestinians tied to me by our feet. We were linked to each other. They whispered in my ear, "Wait, wait, see what we will do to you."

I knew what they were capable of doing. They have one goal—to kill Jews. They took me to prison in Be'er Sheva [a city in Israel] with the other prisoners.

I suffered severe beatings because the other prisoners were told that I wanted to become Jewish. The prison guards separated me and took me to a cell with the Jews. After prison, they deported me to Gaza.

They deported me toward the Erez Crossing. There, the Palestinian police—at that time it was Fatah, PLO—those who detonated in the first and second intifadas. They received me.

The Epoch Times:

What happened there?

Mr. Shachar:

They interrogated me, asking what I had done in the past seven years in Israel. I told them, “I worked and guarded.” They asked, “What else?” I told them: “That’s it.

That’s what I remember, there’s nothing more. That’s what I know.”

I really didn’t remember anything.

It’s like someone took away all my memory. Before I underwent torture, I didn’t remember anything from my time in Israel. I had no memory, and it was good that way.

They tied me upside down, legs to the ceiling and head down. They submerged me in cold water, hot water, electric shocks, cut my hands, and beat me on the stairs with fists, with sticks, and with kicks with their legs. For about half a year. Every day the same thing.

The interrogators brought a board, placed it under the center, to my throat, pushed me against the wall, and lifted me up. I choked and passed out. They released me. And then again. That’s how it continued over and over.

Only after half a year, they told me that they heard that I was in court in Israel and that I said I wanted to be Jewish and everything that happened in court. At that moment, all the memories came back to me. If I had remembered it earlier, I would have confessed, and they would have given me the death penalty. What I believe is that the Almighty erased my memory during that time.

The solution isn’t to settle scores with everyone.

We need to fix this.

Dor Shachar, Palestinian resident of Israel

Then I told them, “No, I’m Palestinian, I’m proud.” I lied. They decided to put me under house arrest in Khan Yunis, in my family’s house.

The Epoch Times:

At this point, you see your family for the first time in seven years?

Mr. Shachar:

Yes. They told me, “You bring shame to the family, and if you respected the family, you would have killed several Jews.”

They told me that I wasn’t their son.

They accepted me because they respected the Palestinian police, not me.

They told me to sleep on the roof, so I wouldn’t talk to anyone. For a month, I was on the roof.

The Epoch Times:

Did your mom also refer to you like that or just your dad?

Mr. Shachar:

For women there, it’s forbidden to speak, forbidden to interfere.

The Epoch Times:

Meaning, your mom is there and doesn’t say anything to you?

Mr. Shachar:

Nothing. My mom didn’t say anything to me. After a month, they kicked me out of the house. I was homeless in the streets of Khan Yunis.

I encountered the Palestinian police, and they beat me. After a while, I started working at a construction site in Gaza. I saved money and escaped back to Israel.

But after two months, I was arrested again because I wasn’t legal, and there was a conditional arrest against me.

Again, they took me to court. I told the judge my entire life story. She listened and said, "I will release you, and I won't put you under conditional arrest." My adoptive father signed the bail, and they released me.

Since then, it took me seven years to get approval from the state to convert.

After seven years, we applied to the Supreme Court, and they accepted my request. I became a religious Jew who observes Shabbat and fulfills commandments. I got drafted to the army.

Someone interviewed me for a TV program and asked, "If they send you to evacuate Israeli settlers, what will you do?" I answered that I was enlisting in the army to defend the country and its citizens and that I wouldn't evacuate any Israeli settlers or synagogues and I wouldn't remove any women and children from their homes. It's a big mistake to do that. After that, I received a call from the army saying that I was exempt and that they wouldn't enlist me.

The Epoch Times:

I want to go back a bit. You mentioned that there are no innocent people in Gaza. Is that really the case? Are you sure there aren't others like you?

Mr. Shachar:

Where are they? The Jewish people have a very short memory.

Some 150 years ago, before the establishment of the State of Israel, Palestinians murdered Jews and raped women.

Then they developed organizations like Fatah, the PLO, Tanzim, and Islamic Jihad. What about them? Why do we only talk about Hamas? They're all Hamas, but they go by different names.

They all killed Jews.

Now, if you eliminate Hamas, the Islamic Jihad will come. If you eliminate Islamic Jihad, another organization will come. For all these factions, no matter what their names are, they have one common goal, and that's us, the Israeli Jews. They don't know how to distinguish between left and right.

They don't care.

The Epoch Times:

Why do we hear from the IDF spokesperson that there are many Palestinians who want to leave Gaza and Hamas won't let them?

Are they all driven by the goal of killing Jews?

Mr. Shachar:

For the avoidance of doubt I'll say 1 percent. What we're witnessing is a religious war between Islam and Judaism. When we don't believe in Muhammad, we're considered infidels, and the punishment for infidels is death. We've seen where they've reached. They've reached Ofakim and Sderot (cities in Israel). Keep going like this, and within 10 years, they'll also reach Tel Aviv, I believe even less.

The Epoch Times:

I'll ask this from a different angle. Let's say tomorrow Hamas is eliminated. Who will be the citizens left in Gaza in your view?

Mr. Shachar:

Islamic Jihad. It's a different name, but the goal is the same.

The Epoch Times:

What do you think is the solution?

Mr. Shachar:

The solution isn't to settle scores with everyone. We need to fix this, and if we don't, there will be another Noah's Ark, because God will erase those who don't know how to behave or how to be human.

In Israel, when someone dies, like what happened on Oct. 7, the whole country is in mourning. Everyone is crying. Everyone feels the same pain.

But with the people on the other side, it's not like that. They think, "My son is in prison, he is a hero."

Do you see the difference?

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.