

Second Thoughts on Son's Role

Elder Sirhan's New Doubts

By Yuval Elizer
Jerusalem

Beshara Salameh Sirhan, father of the accused assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, has had second thoughts on the late senator and his son's role in the tragedy.

In an hour-long interview, Saturday, he said: "Senator Kennedy would have had more justice in his speeches. You cannot kill Arab feelings deep inside."

When interviewed on Thursday, the day after the fatal shooting in Los Angeles, the short, slight resident of Taibeh Village, 20 miles northeast of Jerusalem, expressed his admiration for the Kennedy family, especially for the late President, whom he saw as a symbol of progress, and for the late Senator.

He said at that time that he could not understand how his son was driven to such an act of violence. Saturday he said that when

he was first told of his son's involvement in the Los Angeles shooting he could not believe it and saw no possible connection between his son and Robert Kennedy.

Since then he has heard about the late Senator's sympathies with Israel. "Justice is above everything," he repeated several times but did not elaborate what he meant by that.

He continued to ask a question: "Tell me, do you think it possible to kill the good feelings you have for your country?"

Sirhan appeared more relaxed. He was hospitable and most eager to talk about everything, especially his youngest son, Sirhan, whom he has not seen for more than eight years.

Sirhan's English is fluent, although from time to time he stops to search for a word. He also does not hesitate to stop you when he does not understand a word. He was meticulously dressed in

a dark gray woolen suit, despite the almost 90-degree temperature, a white shirt with thin blue stripes and a matching gray and blue tie.

Everybody in the clean, mostly Christian village in the foothills of the mountain of Judea is eager to help you find the "celebrity" among them. Reports that Sirhan had disappeared proved to be erroneous.

No Israeli soldiers or policemen were to be seen in the village. From the veranda of Beshara Salameh Sirhan's newly built white stone house, one gets a beautiful view of the dead sea, 15 miles away and about 2000 feet below Taibeh.

As we came in, a delivery boy brought cold beer and soft drinks which Sirhan had ordered from the nearby grocery store.

Talking about his son Sirhan's experiences with Israelis, Sirhan said, that the boy actually had never seen Israeli soldiers. He was not

quite 4 years old when the family moved from their house in St. Paul's street in the Musrara quarter to the walled old city.

They had moved out at the advice of the British mandate authorities who feared that they might be hit in the battle that was raging near Musrara Quarter.

"For two days before that we did not go out of the house," Sirhan said. "The Jews were bombing us all the time. Cannon and mortar shells fell everywhere, all the way against the wall, afraid."

"Later he often said to me: 'Father, do you remember when there was shelling and we were in the house and could not go out?'"

Sirhan said he kept up with

Jordanian Slain In Chicago

Chicago

A South Side grocer who came to the United States from Jordan was shot to death Saturday in his store and police speculated the killing may have been in "revenge" for the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The man charged with murdering Kennedy, Sirhan Sirhan, 24, is a native of Jordan.

Abder Rayyan, 55, the father of nine children, was shot in the head as he bent over a vegetable bin, his daughter, Zahdeia, 22, who

witnessed the shooting, told police.

She said two men entered the store, one of them pulled out a pistol and they walked silently to where Rayyan was working.

The gunman put the pistol behind Rayyan's left ear and fired twice she said. The second shot missed.

Without saying a word, both men then walked out of the store, the daughter related.

Rayyan left Jordan 16 years ago and lived in South America until 1963, when he came to the United States.

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his family in America through his second son, Saed-Alla, with whom he corresponds regularly.

He had not had any mail from Sirhan for many years and did not write him. He heard about him through the

letters of Saed-Alla. He has had no direct information about what Sirhan has been doing or thinking.

What he said about the reaction to Senator Kennedy's speeches was only speculation on his part.