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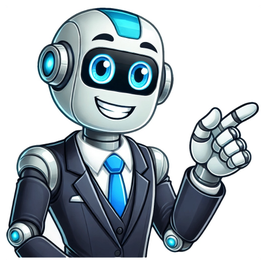

Yahya Hassan (19 May 1995 – 29 April 2020) was a Danish poet and political activist of Palestinian descent, whose poems and public statements criticising both Islam and Danish policies on migration and participation in armed conflict made him a much-debated and controversial figure.[2]

Hassan's poetry, which he self-published at the age of 16, was initially rejected by Danish publishers, but became widely popular after he self-published it online. The poems were later published in a collection titled Yahya Hassan (2013), which became widely popular and sold more than 100,000 copies in Denmark, a country of 5.8 million people. The book was also translated into English and French.[3]

Hassan was assaulted and injured by another Danish citizen of Palestinian descent, one Isaac Meyer, born Abdul Basit Abu-Lifa, who had a previous conviction for terrorism. Meyer had received a seven-year sentence in the 2005 Glostrup case, but had been released on parole in 2012. Hassan was also threatened by Danish Muslims who considered his poetry to be blasphemous and disrespectful to Islam. The threats were made in a video posted on YouTube in November 2013. Hassan was placed under police protection.[1] Defense city library cancelled a planned reading due to the threat of attacks.[13] The cancellation led to a parliamentary debate in the Folketing, on Islamist threats impinging on the freedom of speech in Denmark.[14] Also in November 2013, Hassan was charged with "violation of the freedom of religion" for his poem "Allah" (وَلَدَ, Walada, "Allah begot"), which was considered by some Muslims to be a criminal act.[21] He had converted back to Islam prior to his death.[22] He grew up in a religious environment, but soon abandoned religion. He was institutionalized for juvenile delinquency in Solbaven ifa Feron, where educators first supported his literary talent. At 16, Hassan had an affair with 39-year-old educator Louise Ostergaard, which led to Ostergaard's dismissal and divorced.[23][24] Hassan attended a "Raja Academy" and various workshops for creative writing.[10] He published a first volume with Brøndernes Forfatterskole ([ˈpɔɡˌɑd ɑˈɡɑ̈ˈ]), a good place to do so in 2011