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See also Durham, Martin. *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics*. Routledge, 2007, p.113, where it is mentioned that one of Abdul Aziz ibn Myatt's writings justifying suicide attacks was, for several years, on the *Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades* (the military wing) section of the Hamas website.

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## **Are Martyrdom Operations Lawful (According to Quran and Sunnah)?**

All Praise and All Thanks are for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) to whom we shall all return to be judged on The Last Day.

We praise Him and ask Him for help and forgiveness; and ask His protection from the mischief of our souls and the bad results of our deeds; whomsoever Allah guides, none can misguide; and whom He declares misguided, none can guide to the right path; and I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but Allah: He is Alone, without partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is the Messenger and Servant of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala)

"We emphasize the great importance of martyrdom operations against the enemy - operations that have inflicted great damage on the United States and Israel, which damage is unprecedented in their history, thanks to Almighty Allah." Sheikh ul-Mujahideen Usama bin Laden (hafidhahullah).

## **What Are Martyrdom Operations?**

Martyrdom Operations - sometimes called Fidayee attacks (see Note 1) - are those where a Muslim, a Mujahid, attacks the enemy in such a way that the death of that Muslim is (should Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) so will it) highly likely. The history of Islam is replete with heroes who have sacrificed their own life for the Way of Life which is Al-Islam.

In modern times, many Martyrdom Operations involve the Mujahid detonating an explosive device (attached to themselves or in a vehicle they

are driving) when close to, or among, the enemy.

Not surprisingly, such attacks are feared by the enemies of Islam, and especially by those infidels who are waging war against Islam, those who are oppressing Muslims, and those who are invading Muslim lands.

Such attacks are often incorrectly called "suicide attacks" in the hope of discrediting them. In addition, some Muslims, and some Islamic scholars, have claimed that such "suicide attacks" are forbidden according to the Quran and Sunnah.

### **Are Martyrdom Operations Lawful?**

To understand and answer this question, three things need to be understood:

(1) The criteria used to determine whether such operations are lawful and justified must and can only be a Muslim one. That is, the judgment must be made according to Quran and Sunnah, and them alone. All other criteria or standards of judgment must be rejected. To do otherwise is incorrect, according to Deen Al-Islam. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

"And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the Kafirun." [5:44 Interpretation of meaning]

(2) The intentions of the Mujahid who undertakes the attack is important, as is the fact that there is a likelihood of the attack harming or killing enemies.

(3) In a discussion of Islamic sources - Quran and Ahadith - it is important to refer to the meaning of the Arabic, and not to rely on interpretations of meaning which use modern, and often biased, terms and words such as the English word "suicide".

### **The Unlawful Nature of Killing Oneself**

There is no dispute, among scholars or among the Muslims, that it is forbidden for a person to take their own life, for personal reasons. That is, because one is overwhelmed with grief, or sorrow, or has abandoned all hope when faced with difficulties.

There are many Hadith and Quranic Ayat which make it clear that the Muslim who does such a deed will not enter Paradise because such a deed involves the abandonment of Islam: the belief that one should never totally despair; never be totally overwhelmed with misery, and never abandon trust in Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

### **The Islamic Judgment**

Those - Muslim and non-Muslim - who declare martyrdom operations unlawful, and un-Islamic, consider them to be acts of what they call "suicide", and justify such a declaration by quoting Quranic verses and Ahadith which refer to a person killing themselves.

Quite often, those who denounce martyrdom operations use translations of

Hadith, or interpretations of the Holy Quran which use the word "suicide". For instance, Ahadith similar to the following are often cited:

The Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the Hell-Fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the Hell-Fire." (Sahih Bukhari)

However, as mentioned above, the use of English words such as "suicide" in such translations is often incorrect, for such modern English words often mean and imply different things than are meant and implied by the Arabic, even though, in the West, the term "suicide" is sometimes understood as an "act, malicious or otherwise, of self-murder". That is, as a basically selfish act done for personal reasons. (In origin the word suicide itself derives from a term for "self".)

Perhaps a better interpretation of the above Hadith would be along the following lines:

"The person who commits Intihar by hanging themselves shall keep hanging themselves in the Hell-Fire, just as those who commit Intihar by stabbing themselves will keep stabbing themselves in the Hell-Fire."

We shall consider three Quranic Ayat often cited by those who oppose Martyrdom Operations.

1) One Quranic Ayah which is often cited (see Note 2) is: *laa taqtuluu anfusakum* (4:29). This is often interpreted as meaning: "Do not kill yourselves..." However, considered in context, a more correct interpretation would be along the following lines:

"You who believe: do not unfairly squander your wealth on one another, save it be for some purpose mutually agreed upon among yourselves. Do not ruin yourself, or one another, for Allah is most Merciful toward you."

2) Another Ayah which is cited is 4:93 which is often interpreted to mean: "Whomsoever kills a believer intentionally, their punishment is hell..." The argument used here by the opponents of Martyrdom Operations is that the Mujahid involved in a Fidayee attack is a believer, who - by their Fidayee attack - intends to and does kill themselves. However, this argument is invalid because the context clearly refers to a believer intentionally killing another believer - for instance in 4:92 Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) says that if a believer kills a believer by mistake, then compensation must be paid.

3) Another Ayah often cited by those who imitate the kuffar or who are apostates allied with the kuffar is 5:32 which they interpret to mean: "If anyone kills an innocent person it would as if they had killed all of mankind." However, such an interpretation not only takes the Ayat out of context and refers to the kaffir Taghut of an "innocent person", it also incorrectly renders the meaning.

In respect of the term "innocent", Sheikh Hammoud Al-Uqlaa Ash-Shuaybi

said:

"What many are babbling about and repeating when they talk about "innocent victims", is nothing but the effect of the West and its media, to the extent that many an unwary person repeats the words and expressions of our enemies, which are in direct contradiction with the expressions of Shari'ah."

What should be understood by Muslims is that nowhere, in the Quran, Sunnah or Shariah is there any mention of what the kaffir term "innocent" and "civilian". It must be made quite clear that these are kaffir terms, kaffir concepts, which the kuffar and their apostate allies project onto Islam in order to distort Islam and have Muslims imitate the kuffar. Whoever uses such kaffir terms, in order to try and understand Islam or in order to in their ignorance obtain some kaffir-pleasing principle from Islam, is imitating the kuffar - for they are re-interpreting Islam to please themselves, or the kuffar, or they are so in love with the kaffir way of life, with kaffir ideas and concepts, that have lost or are losing their own Islam. The kaffir concepts of "innocent" and "civilian" have become Taghut - idols, principles, which the kaffir have created and which they make laws about, which laws they seek to impose on Muslims. These concepts are Taghut because they are created without reference to the Quran or Sunnah - *created, by fallible humans, without reference to the Will of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*. In many ways, it is right to think as these things as objects which the kuffar now worship, or which they put their trust in - which they make, as standards, for people to follow and obey. Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) says:

"Their way is to refer matters to a Taghut. " 4:60 Interpretation of Meaning

Some Muslims, however, quote the following Hadith in an effort to show that there is such a thing as the concept of "innocent" in Islam:

Narrated 'Aa'ishah who said that the Nabi (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, "The pen has been lifted from three; from the sleeping until they awake, from the child until they mature, and from the one who is crazy until he is sane."

In this Hadith we have a beautiful expression - "The pen has been lifted..." The question we must ask is - Do we take the context to mean that the three are "innocent" as the kuffar understand innocent? That is, do we project a kaffir meaning into this Hadith? Or do we refer it, for explanation, to what Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has told us, and thus take it in the literal sense to mean that what they are doing, have done, has not been recorded? If we refer to what our Rabb says:

"And over you are Watchers - just, honourable - who know and record [write down] all that you do. Thus shall those who do what is commanded be in bliss while the disobedient will be in the blazing Fire. " [82: 10-14 Interpretation of Meaning]

Thus, understood in the context of the words of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) this Hadith refers not to some kaffir concept such as "innocent" but to the recoding of our deeds. As for the Ayat itself, referred to above and quoted by the opponents of Martyrdom Operations, a better interpretation would be along the following lines:

"We prescribed for the children of Israel that whoever killed someone not in retaliation [for a killing] nor for spreading dishonour, it will be as if he had killed of all the people, and that whoever saved one of them, it will be as if he had saved all of them."

Thus, even if one interprets this Ayat in general so as to refer to other than a past command to the children of Israel, then it is lawful to kill someone in retribution or for spreading dishonour, defined as such retribution and dishonour are by Quran, Sunnah and Shariah.

Thus, not only are the oft-quoted Ahadith and Quranic verses quoted, and translated or interpreted, incorrectly and out of context, but they are in fact not relevant. For what it is important to understand is that killing oneself because of some personal reason - what is often called committing suicide - is quite different and distinct from martyrdom operations. That is, there is a clear distinction between Istishad (martyrdom) and Intihar ("suicide") - in both the intention of the individual, and what results from their act. The person who commits suicide acts out of despair, or for some personal reason, whereas the Mujahid acts out of love for Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) and a desire to please Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala): to do what Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has commanded, which in the specific instance of martyrdom operations is confronting and attacking the enemies of Islam, even if this means, InshaAllah, one's own death.

The intention of the Mujahid is - or rather should be - a pure intention, and if this is indeed the case then Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) may well accept their martyrdom and so admit them into Paradise. A pure intention in this instance is to: (1) harm, humiliate or kill the enemy; (2) to give strength and encouragement to Muslims; (3) to weaken the resolve of the enemy; (4) to seek the reward of martyrdom, which is Paradise.

In terms of results in Dunya, the Mujahid - if their attack is successful - harms, humiliates, or kills the enemies of the Muslims; or weakens their resolve; or gives encouragement to others Muslims to resist oppression, fight injustice, or undertake Jihad Fee Sabillah. That is, the act or actions of the Mujahid benefits Islam. In terms of results, the person who kills themselves (Intihar) does none of these things - their death does not benefit Islam at all. As Sheikh ul-Mujahideen Usama bin Laden (hafidhahullah) said: "We emphasize the great importance of martyrdom operations against the enemy - operations that have inflicted great damage on the United States and Israel, which damage is unprecedented in their history, thanks to Almighty Allah."

It was narrated by Abu Baker Bin Abi Musa, who said: I heard Abu Huraira saying while facing the enemies: "The Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: 'The doors of Heaven are opened through Jihad'.

A poor man asked: 'you heard the Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) saying that?' Abu Huraira said: 'yes'. The man went to his companions, and saying: peace be upon you, broke the sheath of his sword and fought to death". [Muslim]

As Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali wrote in *Ahya-ul-Uloom ud Din*:

"There is no dispute that it is permissible for a single Muslim to launch an attack on a whole battalion of the enemy and fight with them even though he may be certain of his death in the attempt."

Many other scholars - such as Ibn Taimiyyah, Ibn Khuwaiz Mindad and Al-Qurtubi - have sanctioned those who, alone, take onn the enemy even though they know they might die.

Al-Shawkani wrote in *Nayl Al Awtar*:

"When ten Muslims under the leadership of Asem Bin Thabet were sent by the Prophet (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) to a tribe to invite them to Islam, they were surrounded on the road by a hundred of the Unbelievers. They fought well and hard, and seven of them were killed, and one of the three captive survivors, sensing the deception [of the Unbelievers], said: "By Allah, I will not guide you to the Muslims: here, I have wonderful examples in front of me [meaning his martyred brothers]", and so they tried to force him to guide them, and when they failed, they killed him."

Furthermore, and of especial importance, is that the Mujahid who undertakes a Martyrdom Operation puts their trust entirely in Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), for such attacks are not - as opponents of Martyrdom Operations assume - guaranteed to result in the death of that Mujahid. That is, their death is not certain: they may be captured before the attack; they may be injured; their device may fail for one reason or another. The Mujahid is relying on Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) alone because the Mujahid accepts that only Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) can know when and where their own death occur, just as only Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) will decide on how a person will die, and when. The intention of the Mujahid is to harm the enemies of Islam, to obey Allah's commands and so seek Paradise. Thus, the intentions of the Mujahid are pure, unselfish, and Muslim.

### **The Perspective of Deen Al-Islam**

The perspective of Deen Al-Islam (the true perspective) - the basis for the Muslim way of life, the basis for Jihad and the essence of martyrdom operations - is the belief that this mortal life of ours, on this Earth, is but a stage, a test, and that our true life begins after death. According to Deen Al Islam, if we as individuals follow the path of Allah - that is, live according to the Quran and Sunnah - then we have a chance InshaAllah of attaining eternal life in Jannah (Paradise). However, if we do not follow this path, we will be deprived of this eternal life in Paradise. Furthermore, according to Islam, we will all be judged by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) when we die, and

will be rewarded with either Jannah, or the torment of the Fire (Hell). Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) says:

"He [Allah] created life and death that He might put you to the test and find out which of you acquitted himself best." [67: 1-2]

"Every soul shall taste death. We shall try you in good and bad ordeals." [21:35]

Thus, honourable Muslims - those striving to live according to the Quran and Sunnah - consider this life, and such things as personal happiness, as only of secondary importance.

Therefore, if during a martyrdom operation some non-combatants are killed, the belief of honourable Muslims is that those killed will be judged by Allah and may be rewarded with Jannah. Thus, they will have an opportunity which may otherwise be denied to them and thus may achieve the aim of life: be rewarded by Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) with the supreme gift of Jannah.

For Muslims, what is important is the judgment of Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) - and the life in Jannah that Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) may gift us with. What is not important - except as a way to Jannah, a means to earn the favour of, and a good judgement from, Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) - is this brief mortal life of ours.

This Islamic perspective is in contrast to the materialism which holds sway in the West. For the modern West, the purpose of life is to attain happiness now, or in the future, and there is no thought given to life-after-death and being judged by God (or Allah), and no belief in this life as a test.

For the West, the death of what they regard as "innocent civilians" in such attacks is a "crime", an "act of terrorism" - that is, they apply Western concepts and a Western materialistic perspective, to such attacks, as they demand that Muslims also apply these Western concepts and this Western, materialistic, perspective. This demand - led by countries such as America - that Muslims abandon their Islamic perspective, their Islamic way of thinking, the very basis of Islam, for the ways, the concepts, the perspective, of the modern materialistic West, is an arrogant demand: the hubris, the insolence, of the tyrant.

Such martyrdom operations only take place because Muslim land is occupied - as in Palestine - with Muslims being oppressed, killed, tortured and humiliated. The solution is not for Muslims to submit to the demands of America or the Zionists, but for the occupiers to leave Muslim lands and allow Muslims to live, in peace, according to the Way of Islam.

In addition, as Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) says:

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe and harsh with the kuffar, but merciful amongst themselves."  
(48: 29 Interpretation of Meaning)

"Do not feel sorrow for the Fasiqun." 5: 26 Interpretation of Meaning

"Do not feel sorrow for those who do not believe." 5: 68 Interpretation of Meaning

Furthermore, if martyrdom operations are lawful according to Quran and Sunnah, and thus part of Jihad Fee Sabilillah, then when and if they are undertaken by a Mujahid, they are undertaken on the basis of obeying Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). That is, the criteria here is of obedience to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) - being Muslim - and not the criteria of the kuffar or the kaffir way of thinking, which criteria derive from the dunya and the manufactured Taghut of the kuffar, and which are more often than not concerned with "success" or "achievement" or popularity or some such thing measured according to worldly standards, standards which are, or which should be, irrelevant to us, as Muslims.

"You who believe! What is wrong with you that you did not rush forth when called [to aid] the Way of Allah? Or is it that you love this earth so much - that you crave its comforts so much - that you forget the next life where such earthly things are revealed for the insignificant comforts they are?" (9: 38 Interpretation of Meaning)

## **Conclusion**

It is important to understand that the intention of the Mujahid who undertakes a Martyrdom Operation is an Islamic one - that is, to please Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala), to do what Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) has commanded we do, which is to fight, through Jihad Fee Sabillah, our enemies: to harm them, kill them, humiliate them. By doing this, they can InshaAllah attain the goal of this mortal life which is Jannah. This pure, honourable, Islamic, intention, of a Mujahid is quite different from the selfish despair of the person who commits "suicide".

The adillah cited in fataawa by scholars who oppose Martyrdom Operations refer to Intihar not Istishad.

Thus, despite the attempts to discredit Martyrdom Operations by the modernists, by those who seek to pacify and tame Islam, and by those who ally themselves with the kuffar, it is clear that martyrdom operations are justified and lawful, according to Islam. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says:

"And what is wrong with you that you do not fight in the Cause of Allah, and for those weak, ill-treated and oppressed among men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this place whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help. Those who believe, fight in the Cause of Allaah, and those who disbelieve, fight in the cause of Taghut (Shaitaan). So fight against the friends and allies of Shaitaan. " [ An-Nisa' 75 - 76. Interpretation of Meaning.]

"In exchange for their lives and their goods, Allah has given those who believe Paradise. Thus will they fight in Allah's cause, and thus will they



kill, and be killed." [9: 111 Interpretation of Meaning]

Whatever good that may have been written is from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, and whatever mistakes or errors have been made are from me, wa Allahu Alam.

16 Jumaada Al-Thaani 1424  
(Revised Yaumul Arbi'a 3 Rajab 1428)

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*Notes*

(1) Fidayeen derives from fida'i which has acquired several meanings. One is "warrior" (or fighter) - as in qalb fida'i, warrior with a heart (see Quran 26:89), that is, a warrior with a purity of purpose, devoted to Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala). Another is "sacrifice", or rather Istishad (martyrdom), in contrast to Intihar (suicide). The term fidayeen has been used by groups such as Lashker-e-Toiba, and several others. Fida'i was also used to refer to some of those who followed the doctrines of al-Hasan ibn-al-Sabbah.

(2) For example, by Sheikh Ibn 'Uthaymeen in *Kayfa Nu'aalij Waaqi'unaa al-Aleem*.

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