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Theology and power in the Middle East: Palestinian martyrdom in a comparative perspective

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ABSTRACT *Jihad (holy war) and self-sacrifice constituted a formative ethos for Palestinian Islam in its struggle against Israel from the early 1990s onward. They became important components of politics of identity, aimed at infusing metaphysical values into Palestinian life, while also positing a political alternative to the PLO. This paper focuses on a formative manifesto titled 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom' (Qira'a fi Fiqh al-Shahada). Disseminated by the Islamic Jihad in 1988, the manifesto laid down the ideological foundations of martyrdom in Palestine. With the passage of time, Palestinian 'suicide attacks' became unprecedented in scale, distinctive thereby from similar phenomena in other conflicted areas such as Lebanon, Kashmir, Chechnya, Turkey and Sri Lanka. The discussion evaluates the role of the Palestinian manifesto in the radical Islamic orbit. For this purpose, two other formative texts are also examined. The first is 'The Absent Duty', issued in 1981 by the Egyptian Jihad movement, which was responsible for President Sadat's assassination. The second is 'Manual for a Raid', issued by the al-Qa'ida organization, containing instructions for the perpetrators of the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. A comparative analysis of the three texts reveals common themes as well as variations that reflect the particular context in which each Islamic group was active.*

A nation familiar with the art of death, and that knows how to die an honorable death, will be bestowed by Allah a glorified life on earth and eternal pleasures in the hereafter.[1]

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Introduction

Jihad (holy war) and self-sacrifice constituted a formative ethos for Palestinian Islam in its struggle against Israel from the early 1990s onward. They became important components of politics of identity by interpreting the past through the prism of the pressing claims of the present.[2] The very act of martyrdom in the name of a superior moral authority delivered the dramatic message that the conflict in Palestine was as much cultural as territorial. Islamic violence against Israel aimed to infuse metaphysical values into Palestinian life, while also serving as an effective mode of resistance in a period of a search for peace, thereby positing a political alternative to the PLO and the Palestinian Authority (PA). The intertwining of religion and politics as impelling Islamic violence was aptly articulated by the leader of Islamic Jihad, Fathi al-Shiqaqi, in November 1994, shortly after the establishment of the PA: 'Without the martyrs we have no life or history, no past, glory or value. It is they who pave the way for us for the future, and not the cowards who keep silent, defeatists who trade off the homeland and sell off Jerusalem'.[3]

Backed by two scriptural commands—death for the sake of Allah, and the duty to forbid wrongdoing (*nahy 'an al-munkar*)—self-sacrifice became a moral code justifying 'suicide attacks'[4] against Israel. These acts were defined by Islamists and other local observers as 'martyrdom' (*istishhad*), but were perceived by Westerners, who had long since ceased to regard religion as a central priority, simply as fanaticism or, alternatively, as nihilism and self-destruction. The sharpest critics defined the Muslim who sacrifices himself as motivated by a greed for honor, a desire to retaliate, or a thirst for blood, while harboring a fantasy of going to heaven.[5] Other Western observers held that Islamic violence was not the result of blind outrage but was a political act that seeks to reshape the world as more just and equal.[6] Whatever the perceptions in the Western intellectual spectrum, clearly the phenomenon of 'human bombs' captured the attention of the Western world no less than the Arab Muslim world.

This paper focuses on a formative manifesto title 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom' (*Qira'a fi Fiqh al-Shahada*). Disseminated by the Islamic Jihad in 1988, the manifesto laid down the ideological foundations of martyrdom in Palestine. Islamic Jihad was in fact the first movement in the Palestinian arena to turn Islam into a theology of liberation against Israel in the late 1970s, as well as the first to legitimize the ethos of self-sacrifice.[7] With the passage of time, Palestinian 'suicide attacks' became unprecedented in scale, distinguished thereby from similar phenomena in other conflicted areas such as Lebanon, Kashmir, Chechnya, Turkey and Sri Lanka.[8]

The discussion below evaluates the role of the Palestinian manifesto in the radical Islamic orbit. For this purpose, two other formative texts are also instructive. The first is 'The Absent Duty', issued in 1981 by the Egyptian Jihad movement, which advocated armed *jihad* against deviant Arab regimes, laying the foundation for the assassination of President Sadat. The second is 'Manual for a Raid', issued in 2001 by the al-Qa'ida organization, containing instructions for the

perpetrators of the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. A comparative analysis of the three texts reveals a commonality alongside variations that reflect the particular context in which each Islamic group was active.

The essay, or manifesto, under discussion, 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom', appeared as an appendix to a journal published in Nicosia identified with the Islamic Jihad, *al-Islam wa-Filastin* in June 1988.[9] The essay is unsigned. According to Abdulaziz Zamel, an Arabic scholar at Tampa University, Florida, who was associated with Palestinian Jihad circles, the author was Misbah al-Suri and the content was based on lectures he delivered to fellow detainees in an Israeli prison.[10] Al-Suri, a former leftist, became a strict Muslim and thereafter was a key activist in the military arm of the Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip. He was killed in a clash with Israeli forces in October 1987. Another possibility, no less plausible, regarding the source of the essay, is that it was written by one of the two leaders of the movement, Fathi al-Shiqaqi, or Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awda.

The essay was distributed in the early stages of the 1987 Intifada (uprising), with the aim of heightening the momentum of the Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation from civil protest to a military operation. Although the extent of the manifesto's circulation is not clear, the timing of its publication overlapped with the forging of a close link between Islamic Jihad and Iran and its protégé, Hizballah, as a result of Israel's expulsion of the top Islamic Jihad leadership to Lebanon at that time. The revolutionary Shi'a, beyond serving as a source of ideological inspiration, evolved at that point into a logistic arm for Islamic Jihad.[11] This close affinity also engendered new emphases in the rhetoric of the struggle in Palestine, focusing especially on self-sacrifice. These emphases feature prominently in the essay under review.

Martyrdom: Personal and collective salvation

Alternating between defiance and apologetics, the essay aims at molding a new believer imbued with determination and a sense of mission, going beyond ritual to an embrace of revolutionary activism. The essay also seeks to formulate a new agenda for Islamic politics in Palestine and beyond, based on a carefully constructed ethos of death which relies both on judicial arguments and on the critical nature of the conflict in Palestine. The text opens, pointedly, with a discussion of the differences between self-immolation (*intihar*), which lacks any religious purpose and is motivated solely by a desire for relief from personal distress, and martyrdom, which occurs in the battlefield and represents the pinnacle of faith. Self-immolation condemns the perpetrator to endless torment in hell, while martyrdom grants him the pleasures of heaven.[12] Notably, the prohibition of self-immolation is ingrained in the Islamic ethic, which, like Judaism and Christianity, preaches the duty to bear suffering and pain, since life is a gift bestowed by God, with continuity in the hereafter. Since Allah is the sole authority over human affairs, self-immolation by His creatures constitutes a blatant violation of that authority, punishable by excommunication from the

Muslim community.[13] In contrast, martyrdom is deeply entrenched historically in the Islamic judicial and communal consensus.

The need to sharpen the divide between these two types of death, which is reiterated in the text several times, relies heavily on verses from the Qur'an and the hadith (the Prophet's sayings). The focus on this issue reflected the awareness by Islamic Jihad of the sensitivity of suicide in Islam and the fear that such acts would be interpreted as acts of desperation purely as a result of the ongoing occupation. Such an interpretation would detract from the attractiveness of Islam as a theology of liberation and as the sole vehicle for the final victory. To neutralize such a danger, and to keep 'suicide attacks' within the confines of sanctity, the manifesto highlighted two basic elements: the duty of *jihad*, and the acute nature of the struggle in Palestine.

The duty of jihad

The manifesto's reference to the doctrine of *jihad* is deliberate and insistent, based on the central position of the notion of holy war in Islamic theology and law. Jihad is linked to the ultimate goal of reaffirming the moral superiority of Islam over other cultures and sharpening the divisions between Muslims and infidels. Any neglect of military *jihad* is tantamount to a grave sin and to *nifaq*, or hypocrisy, i.e. having weak faith or even undermining the faith of others.[14] In the words of the hadith, 'Whoever dies without fighting or expressing readiness to fight [for Allah] dies as a hypocrite'. An extensive body of literature exalting the idea of *jihad* (*fada'il al-jihad*) developed over the centuries, transforming it into a symbolic code that could be evoked at any given moment, and especially in times of crisis and distress, to awaken fervor for self-sacrifice.[15] The Crusades in the mid-twelfth century provided such an occasion. Another was the Mongol invasion in the mid-thirteenth century. This symbolic element gained vitality and dominance with the declining position of the Muslims *vis-à-vis* the West in the modern era. Once a superior world power, the Muslim community gradually found itself marginalized, lagging behind the progressive Western nations and often subjected to their domination. Yet, the glorified voices of the past, juxtaposed with the acute challenges of the present, combined to produce a political revolution in the form of radical Islamic movements such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Typically, the 1988 essay positions *jihad* as an inspirational model, thereby paving the way to the link with self-sacrifice.

The doctrine of *jihad*, the essay argues, also defines the essence of life on earth, which is not limited to self-preservation and satisfying man's physical needs but includes dedication to spreading the word of Allah, which signifies the victory of truth and justice. The notion of the negligibility of life as compared to total devotion to Allah is aptly expressed in the manifesto by quoting Khalid ibn al-Walid (d. 642), the commander of the Muslim armies which brought an end to Byzantine rule in Syria and Palestine. He observed that the passion to encounter Allah's enemies after a freezing night on the battlefront is much stronger than the passion for the embrace of a young bride on a warm night.[16] Total commitment to an exalted act beyond the mundane realm leads the Muslim martyr to cease caring

about his personal fate and to focus on the meaning of life in relation to a welcome death. In this sense, *jihad* for Allah does not contradict the value of preserving life.[17] Moreover, killing others is proscribed by certain restrictions, the essay emphasizes, quoting the Qur'an: '... you slay not the soul God has forbidden, except by right' (Sura 6: 151). *Jihad* against the infidels, however, is an exception, because it is killing for the purpose of promoting 'a just cause' (*haqq*, which is also synonym for Allah).[18]

The definitive test for pleasing Allah is the intention (*niya*) to become a martyr, according to the essay. This elevates Islam to a higher moral plane than Western philosophies, which justify death and bloodshed only for the purpose of gaining material assets such as imperial expansion, or, alternatively, which sanctify the value of life over the worship of God. The result is tyranny, exploitation and selfishness, which are avoided in Islam precisely because of the balance it dictates between preserving life and martyrdom.[19]

Clearly, Islamic Jihad, as a quasi-military movement that raised the banner of *jihad* in Palestine, was not interested in simply maintaining this balance but in altering it to favor the martyrdom dimension. Martyrdom is exalted in the essay as an act of worship, parallel to a vow or transaction that must be fulfilled as part of belief in Allah.[20] It is placed in the same category as refusing to submit to pressure to speak heresy, or taking a firm stand in the name of holy truth against tyrannical rulers—situations in which the believer knows that such behavior will lead to his death. As an act of worship, martyrdom exchanges transient life for eternal life. It bestows the rewards of paradise, such as purifying the martyr's soul from all sins; bringing him into the company of the prophets, the just, martyrs, and the righteous; and ensuring a place in heaven for 70 of his relatives.[21] Notably, the sexual motivation of marrying 72 black-eyed virgins, which captured Western attention, does not appear in the manifesto, but only in later documents, mainly wills left by 'suicide' bombers. Conceivably, this issue was avoided in the interest of presenting arguments that were more sober and weightier.

Moreover, martyrdom for Allah and for the faith, according to the manifesto, constitutes not only a personal guarantee of rewards in paradise but also collective insurance for the emancipation of the political community. As such, the religious idea was intertwined with pragmatic national considerations, with the martyr becoming a cultural agent—a symbol of revolution and liberation. In this context, the text posits a 'cost-benefit' doctrine (*maslaha*) which holds that the welfare of the public justifies an altruistic personal sacrifice. Ironically, whereas Muslim reformists enlisted the doctrine of *maslaha* to diffuse sectarian and cultural tensions as a response to the challenges of modernity, radical Islamists such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad used this doctrine to reinforce the divisions between Islam and its cultural environment and to promote revolutionary activism.[22]

The nature of the struggle in Palestine

Linking individual salvation to collective emancipation paved the way for the Islamic Jihad to highlight the second element in justifying self-sacrifice, namely

the existential nature of the struggle in Palestine in light of an infidel, suppressive occupier. Depicting the campaign in Palestine as a defensive *jihad* created a sense of urgency. As such, the struggle is less subject to the traditional preconditions of the existence of a caliph; the normative rules of battlefield behavior outlined in Islamic judicial literature; or the imperative of tactical withdrawal in the event of inferior military resources *vis-à-vis* the enemy. Defensive *jihad* imposes the duty of personal enlistment on every believer who is sound in mind and body (*fard 'ayn*),[23] a duty defined by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) as second in importance only to the duty of belief in Allah (*shahada*), and taking precedence over prayer and other rites such as fasting or pilgrimage.[24] This interpretation reflected Islamic Jihad's aim at widening out the battlefront against Israel.

Reinforcing the notion of the *jihad* in Palestine as a personal duty for every believer, the movement quoted extensively from the writings and *fatwas* (legal opinions) of the 'ulama (religious scholars) throughout the years of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a movement forged in the crucible of the late-twentieth-century Sunni revolution in the Middle East, Islamic Jihad essentially viewed the 'ulama as submissive servants of heretical regimes and as distorters of Islam. However, the need to generate broad support for the Palestinian cause, and the awareness of the sustained influence of the 'ulama in the Arab public sphere prompted Islamic Jihad to display a selectively restrained attitude toward them.[25]

Significantly, the manifesto under discussion goes beyond legitimizing acts of self-sacrifice in Palestine on the grounds of defensive *jihad*, whose aim is regaining occupied Muslim territory. It upgrades the status of Palestinian territory as the focal point of the confrontation between the Muslims and their eternal enemies, i.e. the Jews and the Christians. It is a religio-historical confrontation over control of the sacred places, especially Jerusalem and the al-Aqsa mosque, and is even more cataclysmic than the Crusader occupation of the twelfth century. The existence of a Jewish entity in Palestine under the protection of the West constitutes nothing less than the axis of an imperialistic scheme to maintain a state of divisiveness among Muslims. The outcome of the struggle in Palestine, therefore, will determine the fate of the entire mission to revive and unify the Muslim nation.[26]

By elevating the status of Palestine, Islamic Jihad sought first to broaden the Arab-Islamic consensus over the theme of martyrdom, but also to create a strategic depth of human and material resources to back the Islamic agenda in Palestine—a stance adopted by Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) as well. The Islamization of Palestine, however, did not mean rejecting the geographic boundaries of this polity for the sake of a universal, pan-Islamic vision but, rather, injecting metaphysical values into it. As such, Palestinian Islam adhered to a broad thrust in modern Islamic thought incorporating national identity into the religious discourse.[27]

The need in the Islamic Jihad narrative not only for heroes but also for villains is reflected in the demonization of the Zionist presence in Palestine and its global conspiratorial nature. The Zionist enemy, in 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom', is portrayed as the embodiment of evil on earth, standing for:

heresy, tyranny and hatred of both Islam and the Muslims. The Zionist presence in Palestine is tantamount to a cancerous tumor corrupting the entire body of the nation. . . . It is both a local and a world enemy which partly controls Palestine, while its other parts are spread all around the world. [The Zionist entity] constitutes a nucleus causing devastation in the blessed land, while its other arms in the capitals of international imperialism and despotism provide it with endless military, political, moral and intelligence support.[28]

The demonization of the Zionist enemy is accompanied by a delegitimation of those Arab and Muslim elements that neglect the duty of *jihad* or express doubts about its validity in the modern era, especially in Palestine. These elements are silent Satans and even worse. Their avoidance of the struggle against Israel, and their harassment or blocking of *jihad* fighters outside Palestine not only constitute a blatant violation of Allah's commands, but reflect the state of defeatism among Muslims in modern times. Such avoidance in itself is tantamount to self-immolation.[29]

The vociferous attack in the essay against contemporary Arab regimes, inspired by the revolutionary approach of Egyptian Islamist Sayyid Qutb (executed in 1966), left Islamic Jihad without substantial support in the Arab political arena. Moreover, the Shi'ite Iranian bear-hug did not improve the image of the movement among its fellow Sunni in the region. If the Islamic Jihad defined itself as a bridge between Sunna and Shi'a, the movement's critics in the Sunni world perceived it as having become a front organization for Khomeini's Iran.[30]

The essay moves from disappointment with the Arab political elites to a new hope for the Muslim masses, who must be awakened and enlisted in the campaign to liberate Palestine, thereby enhancing their own fragile status in their countries. The essay plays on the sensitivities of Muslim believers everywhere, emphasizing that no one who prays facing the tomb of the Prophet and the sacred places in Mecca and Medina can possibly tolerate what is happening in Palestine. Historical examples of revolt and heroism against Western imperialism are cited, such as that of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri in Algeria, Muhammad Ahmad ibn 'Abdallah (the Mahdi) in Sudan, 'Umar Mukhtar in Libya, 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi in Morocco, and 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam in Palestine. The involvement of the Muslim Brotherhood under Hasan al-Banna in the 1948 war is also mentioned as an antithesis to the current impotence of his reformist followers in the Arab world. If the essay encourages religious fervor, it emphasizes realpolitik no less.

A general enlistment of the Muslim world to join the struggle in Palestine is acknowledged as impractical. The main burden, therefore, at least in the initial phase, must fall on the Muslims of Palestine, the essay points out.[31] They are required 'to display as much [fighting spirit] as they can, standing fast and defending the sacred places and the Islamic identity'. They must adopt varied methods of resistance, both armed and unarmed. Some Palestinians will gather in the streets raising the banner 'There is no God except Allah'. Others—the children, girls and women—will throw stones. The armed men will conduct the military struggle. All this must be carried out with deep faith and conviction in the readiness for self-sacrifice. 'Those who fight for Allah', the essay says, 'are

buying the hereafter in exchange for the worldly life', and, quoting the Qur'an: 'Whosoever fights in the way of God and is slain, or conquers, we shall bring him a mighty wage' (Sura 4: 74).[32]

'The Army of the Shrouds'[33]: Operative and symbolic dimensions

The essay, in addition to laying down the moral justification for sanctifying acts of self-sacrifice in Palestine, defines operative guidelines. While not disqualifying armed attack against the enemy by gunfire or hand grenades, it argues that since the enemy can seal off areas, thereby preventing the return of fighters to a safe place, they must continue fighting until death. Clearly, the essay gives primacy to 'suicide attacks'. The implication in practice is that these acts constitute a vital frontal encounter with the enemy, combining the element of surprise with determination.

Such acts can be accomplished by driving a booby-trapped car, by penetrating a public building carrying arms, or by strapping explosives onto one's body (a 'human bomb'). This type of combat is necessary, and, more important, effective. It causes multiple casualties and creates public demoralization within the enemy ranks, an optimal combination in any strategy for violence. By contrast, using roadside bombs and preparing escape routes exposes an operation to failure, given the high state of alert of the enemy forces. Even if the enemy might not manage to neutralize a planted bomb, it can evacuate people in time. Moreover, the success of the roadside bomb operation does not guarantee maximal damage to the enemy forces. This analysis implies a criticism of the armed struggle conducted by the PLO against Israel, which the Islamic Jihad viewed as a conventional struggle that lacked creative thinking or daring. It was dependent on a continuous supply of weapons and combat materials, and enabled the enemy, with its superior operational capabilities, to neutralize it to a considerable degree. The Palestinian struggle, the essay states, requires rejuvenation, which only the weapon of *jihad* and self-sacrifice has the power to provide.[34] Elsewhere, the Islamic Jihad cited the virtue of self-sacrifice, in causing maximal fatalities in the ranks of the enemy, as transcending the gloomy reality in which Muslims are among the most depressed people on earth, lagging behind badly in the realm of science and technology.[35] Positioning the 'human bomb' as an alternative to the 'conventional bomb' implied the positioning of Palestinian Islam as an ideological and political alternative to the PLO.

In depicting the importance of the 'human bomb' as a product of special circumstances and as compensation for the inferior military capability of the Palestinians, the Islamic Jihad, along with Hamas, sanctified 'suicide attacks' as a means toward an end. Neither movement perceived it as a norm but rather as a circumscribed tactic that could be delayed or postponed in favor of other means of combat when necessary. This operative flexibility was aptly expressed in an internal Hamas document responding to the hard line adopted by the PA against the movement following the wave of suicide attacks in Israeli cities in February-March 1996. The document stated explicitly:

Should we be required to halt the 'suicide attacks' based on the argument that they harm the Palestinian cause, we will be forced to intensify our communal activity, to penetrate all the strata of society and take firm hold of them. ... We will have to heighten our preaching against the Jews and their nature and enhance the praises of death in the service of Allah.[36]

This and other sources revealed the calculated use of the suicide weapon depending on circumstances, a feature that led one scholar to label its dispatchers 'rational fanatics'.[37]

The fact that the perpetrator's fate *a priori* is death with no possibility of withdrawal or survival, so as to ensure the success of the operation, impelled the Islamic Jihad movement to vigorously rebut possible criticism over the suicidal nature of such a measure. The essay argues, first, that there is no escape from death, as stated in the Qur'an: 'Surely death, from which you flee, shall encounter you' (Sura 62: 8). There can be nothing more joyous and fulfilling than to meet death on the battlefield fighting the enemies of Allah.[38] Second, and more importantly, the very preaching of *jihad* entails advocating self-sacrifice. A study of the *jihad* march of the Prophet and of believers throughout Islamic history reveals a distinction between three levels of self-sacrifice when confronting the enemy. The first level is when the chances of dying or of surviving are equal, and 'the combatant earns either martyrdom, or honor as a hero returning from war'. The second level is when the probability of dying is greater than of surviving, due to the material and military advantages of the enemy, which requires fiercer and more unconventional fighting. The highest level is when death is certain and the combatant approaches it imbued with the conviction that he will enter heaven. This last level is the most favorable, in the view of the Islamic Jihad, and the one promoted by the movement within the Palestinian community. It involves an operation in which the combatant or combatants carry out an assault that destabilizes the enemy and engenders hope in the hearts of Muslims. Moreover, the loss of life for the Muslim camp is much less than for the enemy camp.

In this context, the essay cites two heroic historic accounts of self-sacrifice. The first concerns Abu 'Ubyad ibn Mas'ud (d. 635), who threw himself under the feet of the elephants of the Sasanian army to cut their bellies, inspiring other Muslims to follow suit. The second account is about al-Bara' ibn Malik (d. 641), who broke into the gate of a garden where a group of infidels had taken shelter, thereby enabling his fellow Muslims to enter the place and wipe them out. Ibn Mas'ud, ibn Malik and other such martyrs restored the self-confidence of Muslims in times of crisis during the early history of Islam. Their role, the essay argues, is the same as the role of those at present who wear explosive belts and blow themselves up. Both provide the human bridge upon which Muslims march to victory.[39] Their real weapon is faith, and thereby they symbolize what Mark Juergensmeyer has termed 'divine power'.[40]

The influence of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, especially the credo of one of its main ideologists, 'Ali Shari'ati, is also evident in the promotion of conscious death. Shari'ati defined the ultimate category of martyrdom as that in which the believer walks toward death deliberately in order to convey the message of

sacrifice for the faith and for the oppressed on earth in the most effective way possible. In Shari'ati's view, Husayn ibn 'Ali, founder of the Shi'a, was the model for this ultimate death when he faced the superior Umayyad army at Karbala (680).[41]

In modern Shi'ite martyrology and in its exemplar, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the perpetrator is seen as a candle illuminating the darkness of tyranny, thereby serving as a 'pedagogic object' parallel to Christian saints in the medieval period, whose elevated moral status provided an example for the living. In both historical contexts, Christian and Islamic, death was perceived not as a tragedy but as an exalted ideal by which the martyr demonstrates his community's unshakable faith and challenges the superior power of the enemy. However, while the Christian martyr is a hero by virtue of a passive act—death by persecutors and torturers, the Muslim martyr is a hero by virtue of an active, self-initiated act as befitting a victorious religion such as Islam in its formative stage.[42]

The glory of self-sacrifice in classical Islam was highlighted and molded into a contemporary political ethos aimed at arousing loyalty to the Islamic Jihad and its platform. The production of a large body of hagiographical literature entrenched martyrs in the public memory, depicting them as vital to the nation's past and future while paving the way for the martyrs' movement to gain communal influence.[43] A contributing factor was the strong presence of an ethos of self-sacrifice in Palestinian historiography and terminology, including in the secular-leftist factions of the PLO. The religious notions of *jihad* (holy war) and *shahid* (martyr) were closely intertwined with such modern secular symbols of struggle as *thawra* (revolution) and *fida'* (sacrifice), forming a broad semantic reservoir familiar to all Palestinians regardless of ideological inclination.[44]

'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom', while eschewing the claim that martyrdom has the power to drive the enemy out of Palestine, perceives it as offering the Palestinians compensation for their inferior tangible capacities and revealing their moral assets. Symbolic empowerment infuses a weak society under the control of others with the fortitude to ensure its cultural and collective survival by sacrificing individual lives if necessary. Reaching this stage signifies the transformation of the society into an independent entity capable of controlling its destiny.[45] Self-sacrifice creates a social covenant legitimized by blood alongside the expectation of salvation, while at the same time causing humiliation to the enemy. Humiliation, which is one of the goals of war, instills the fear of Islam in its enemies while restoring the dignity of the believers.

Citing a historical proof of such determination and devotion, the essay refers to the successful struggle of the Muslims against the Crusader invaders in the twelfth century despite the imbalance of power and weaponry between the two sides. The modern era, according to the essay, has ushered in even greater difficulties for Muslim fighters, not only because of the strength and cruelty of the enemy (Israel) and its patrons (the West) but also because of the disunity and rifts among the Muslims. Nevertheless, in keeping with the deterministic outlook of the Islamic Jihad (and Hamas), victory is assured even if it takes a long time to come, for it is predestined, as written in the Qur'an. The struggle is essentially a Manichean one

between truth and falsity, with the former destined to gain the upper hand. Until this aspired turning point is reached, the individual must focus on improving collective morality and heightening ongoing sacrifice.[46]

The issue of attacking civilians

A final point regarding the manifesto relates to the issue of attacking civilians, which became the focus of the Palestinian suicide attacks, as well as of the public discourse about them, from the mid-1990s onward. However, the text itself, which was disseminated in the early stages of the first Intifada, deals with 'suicide attacks' against Israeli security forces and settlers. Civilians—women and children—are not mentioned. In one place, the essay actually emphasizes the difference between planting a roadside bomb, which might miss the military target or hurt women and children, and a 'human bomb', which never misses its target.[47] This exclusion of women and children may be attributed to religious constraints but also to the influence of modern Shi'ite martyrology, exemplified both in the Iran-Iraq War and in the Hizballah guerrilla war in Lebanon, which targeted military forces only.

Nevertheless, a theological foundation for the possibility of attacking Israel's civilian sector does exist in the essay: first, in citing the Qur'an that one of the goals of war is to cause demoralization in the enemy's ranks, defined as a vital condition for victory; and, more importantly, in projecting defensive *jihad* and death for the sake of Allah as a norm that applies in any time or place. How *jihad* is implemented in battles against infidels falls into the category of *al-siyasa al-shar'iyya*, that is, subject to political considerations. The original meaning of *al-siyasa al-shar'iyya* refers to the prerogative of the Muslim ruler to run the affairs of state, including in times of war. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, however, shifted this prerogative to the Muslim public at large and to its vanguard, the Islamic movement, in light of the presence of an infidel occupier in the land. They are 'required to defend their land with all the means and the power at their disposal'. The imperative of defensive *jihad*, and the absence of concrete guidelines as to how to conduct it, enabled an expansion of the scope of warfare to include non-combatants within the concept of enemy forces.[48]

This implicit theological basis for attacking civilians allowed for implementation whenever circumstances were deemed to require it. In the Palestinian context, such circumstances were created when the momentum of the peace process reached a peak with the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the PA in 1993–1994. Harming of civilians was justified by the argument that Israeli society was militaristic in essence. Women, the aged, workers, farmers and others take part in Israeli war efforts by incitement, or the provision of material and moral support. Moreover, they inhabit stolen Muslim land and are prepared to defend it. Babies and small children are immune, but the harm that befalls them is part of a necessary calculated risk. Their fate is similar to that of Muslims who serve the enemy as human shields against Muslim attack.

If the possibility of harming a Muslim is permissible, then it is all the more permissible in the case of infidel children.[49]

Even without explicitly touching on the question of attacking civilians, the manifesto transforms self-sacrifice into a moral code that legitimizes 'suicide attacks' and depicts their perpetrators as martyrs to be imitated. A succinct summary of the rationale for such acts is to be found toward the end of the essay:

> ['Suicide attacks'] restore the awe of Muslims after a long period of weakness and slackness and stimulate a growing number of new warriors to seek *jihad* for Allah. This is a blessed grace that empowers one or two fighters to actualize all this in one stroke, thereby reviving the nation's spirit of self-sacrifice and bringing the day of victory closer. ... These acts revive the spirit of Muslims and imbue them with pride in the power of Islam to position Allah's words as supreme. He who charges forward does so not to escape life in desperation in the face of difficulties, or to kill himself. On the contrary, he is a devoted warrior ... who sells his soul to Allah and earns martyrdom for the victory of Islam and the defeat of its enemies on earth. His aspired goal is to enter heaven and be close to the prophets and the righteous.[50]

This revolutionary message was enhanced by other material published by the Islamic Jihad movement, especially its official organs, *al-Islam wa-Filastin* (Nicosia) and *al-Mujahid* (Beirut). These publications revealed that the martyrology concept had widened out to extend beyond the battlefield and into the interrogation rooms of the enemy. In two essays, one published in September 1988 and the other in early 1990, the movement preached sustained endurance to captured Muslim fighters in the face of torture, mental abuse and threat to life, based on the religious concept of patience and fortitude (*sabr*). In the words of the Qur'an, 'and know that God is with the god-fearing' (Sura 2: 194).[51] Captivity, the movement explained, is merely an entry into a new and critical stage in the confrontation with the vicious enemy. Even though the captive does not carry a weapon and is unable to fight physically, he still possesses firm faith and spiritual strength. Spiritual stamina contains the key to victory over the enemy, who by means of intensive interrogations hopes to extract intelligence about the operational secrets of the movement.[52] While the Israeli interrogator is perceived as merely doing his job, the Muslim captive is portrayed as bearing a historic mission inspired by a long tradition of self-sacrifice. He must never surrender or break down. The hereafter is more important to him than the mundane world and his sole aspiration is to be a martyr. For the captive Muslim, Allah, the Prophet and *jihad* are more beloved than his children, women, or the pleasures of life. Therefore, he must never confess.[53]

Ethos and Politics

While by the late 1980s Islamic Jihad had crossed a theological and moral threshold by internalizing martyrdom as a social norm, Hamas remained a step behind, although it had no problem in using violence against Israel as part of its struggle against an infidel occupier. Hamas did not initially adopt the ethos of

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death developed by the Islamic Jihad. The Hamas movement, which sprang from the Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1987, had a strongly communal orientation (*da'wa*). Its covenant, published in August 1988, i.e. two months after the appearance of the Islamic Jihad's 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom', confined itself to a general statement about the duty of *jihad* to liberate Palestine combined with other means of struggle, predominantly preaching and education.[54] The Hamas covenant does not mention the notion of self-sacrifice for Allah. It also contains no reflection of the impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, a vital source of inspiration for the Islamic Jihad, especially on the issue of martyrdom. Apparently, the historic animosity between the Sunna and Shi'a, exacerbated by Khomeini's deviation from his ecumenical and pan-Islamic attitude in the early 1980s, kept Hamas out of the Iranian fold.[55]

Hamas' political rhetoric spoke of the 'revolution of the stones', i.e. using stones, knives and guns to target mainly soldiers and settlers. 'Suicide attacks' were introduced into the movement only in 1993, impelled by the political context—the Oslo Accords. The massacre of 29 Arabs in Hebron perpetrated in April 1994 by Baruch Goldstein, a settler, reinforced religious approval for the phenomenon of 'suicide attacks' and removed the remaining barrier to attacking Israel's civilian population, based on the Qur'anic principle of an eye for an eye, or reciprocity (Sura 2: 194).[56]

Ultimately, the ethos of death was gradually infused into Palestinian consciousness through intensive indoctrination and occasional 'suicide attacks' by both Islamic Jihad and Hamas during the 1990s. It was Hamas that took the lead, by virtue of its organizational ability and its claim to Palestinian leadership. The Islamic Jihad, a small, quasi-underground organization, lagged behind the larger movement. By the time the al-Aqsa Intifada erupted in September 2000, self-sacrifice had become canonized and was a prominent feature of the Intifada, adopted as well by nationalist factions identified with the PA. These factions recognized not only the national tenacity of this ethos, but also its power as a political lever *vis-à-vis* the Islamic elements in the struggle over Palestinian public opinion. 'Suicide attacks' were depicted as the Palestinians' daily bread, and their perpetrators were glorified as writing a new chapter in the history of their nation and restoring its lost dignity with their blood and souls.[57] On a more personal level, the heroic death of the perpetrators also enhanced the social prestige of their families and granted them material support.

An important pedagogic medium for transmitting the legacy of death were the written and video-recorded wills left by the perpetrators, which brought the ideological platform of Palestinian Islam onto the street and into the living rooms of the public. The content of the wills projected a message of power, determination and commitment to the Islamic and Palestinian causes, highlighting the altruistic rather than personal motives of the perpetrator. These motives were aptly summarized by a will left by Jamal 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nasir, a young Hamas activist from Nablus, dated July 2001: 'In the name of Allah, the reasons that impelled me to this kind of act are: first, love for Allah and martyrdom; second, love for the al-Aqsa mosque and Palestine and the will to protect them; and third,

the will to revenge the blood of the martyrs in times when Arab and Muslim leaders have ceased defending Palestine'.[58] Notably, the martyrs' messages often contained exhortations to follow a religious life style and perform the prescribed prayers so as to redeem society of its sins. Their wills thus became instruments of preaching and social purification.

The Palestinian ethos of death gained the blessing of Islamic and other circles in the Arab Islamic world, which provided it with theological depth and moral sanction. The voices of Muslim critics, who deplored 'suicide attacks' as pure violence and unfit for reward in paradise, were also heard, but remained marginal due to their small number.[59]

Self-sacrifice in radical Islam: A comparative analysis

In positioning the Palestinian manifesto under review—'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom' (1988)—in a comparative perspective, two other formative texts in the radical Sunni thought are instructive. The first is 'The Absent Duty' written in 1981 by Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, the ideologist of the Egyptian Jihad group responsible for President Sadat's assassination that year. The second is 'Manual for a Raid', attributed to Muhammad 'Atta, who commanded the al-Qa'ida's hijackers in the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. A comparative analysis reveals common themes as well as variations that reflect the particular historical and political context in which each Islamic group was active.

The Egyptian jihad movement and 'The Absent Duty'

The waves of religious revival that swept over the Middle East in the early 1970s heralded widespread disillusionment with the failure of political elites in the region to attain national viability and to alleviate social distress by such Western formulas as liberalism and socialism. In Egypt, this was reflected in ideological extremism fueled by the broader latitude granted to Islamic activity by President Sadat in order to reinforce his status *vis-à-vis* his Nasserist and leftist rivals. Sadat's emphasis on his commitment to implement religious law (the *shari'a*), and the expansion of religious content in the educational curriculum and the media, fostered expectations for the creation of a new political order based on Islam. Later, Sadat's efforts to retreat from this religious line, and limitations he imposed on the Islamists' activity, antagonized them. Some Islamists turned to violence and established radical organizations. The most prominent of these was the Jihad movement.

The Egyptian Jihad movement was established in 1977, centered primarily in Alexandria, Cairo and Asyut. Its membership consisted mainly of students from marginalized urban sectors of society, as well as a number of non-commissioned army officers. Its ideological platform was inspired at first by Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, and, after he left for a rival group, by Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, largely based on the booklet he wrote in 1981, 'The Absent Duty' (*al-Farida al-Gha'iba*).[60]

An engineer by profession, Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, belonged to the second generation of Sunni radicals who followed Sayyid Qutb, Fathi Yakan, Sa'id Hawwa and other founders of radical Islam in the 1960s. Faraj's booklet, 'The Absent Duty' discusses the obligation of *jihad* and the fact that it is ignored in modern times, a development which resulted in the decline of Islam, in his view. Reaffirming the classical concept of *jihad* against the infidels, Faraj goes one step further—a revolutionary step—in linking external *jihad* to domestic *jihad* against hypocritical rulers who demonstrate only nominal loyalty to Islam and enforce heretical Western laws. Applying history to the present reality, Faraj sees a common link between the Mongols of the thirteenth century and the contemporary Arab rulers in their deviation from Islam, and thereby meriting merciless punishment by armed *jihad.* Neglecting this duty, Faraj asserted, is tantamount to self-immolation.[61]

Moreover, Faraj is not content with defying the Sunni taboo of forbidding revolt against a Muslim ruler, even an unjust one, for fear of civil strife. He also criticizes the modus operandi of other Islamic trends in their efforts to establish the aspired theocratic state, mainly the emphasis on communal activity by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the disengagement from society of the *al-Takfir wa'l-Hijrah* (Atonement and Holy Flight) movement. According to Faraj, an emphasis on communal activity reinforces the legitimacy of a heretical regime, while withdrawal from society results in the extinction of its adherents. The correct strategy is a relentless war from within against the existing order of the state, for example by penetrating the army, as in the case of Sadat's murder.[62]

In Faraj's view, *jihad* for Allah allows the use of various means, to be determined by the judgment and needs of the believers. The violence involved is not sweeping violence but rather is focused and subject to moral restrictions. In special circumstances, such as night attacks, *jihad* allows for the possibility that persons related to the targeted victim might be injured or killed.[63] However, innocent civilians who have no connection to a targeted victim cannot be attacked under any circumstances, especially women, children and the aged.[64] Support for refraining from harming civilians was provided by Faraj's follower, Ayman Zawahiri, who in memoirs published in 2001 stated that the Jihad movement always made sure to warn people close to those in power who were targeted for assassination. In cases where civilians were harmed, he pointed out, his movement offered the payment of blood money (*diya*) to their families.[65]

The perpetrator, Faraj argued, is committed to fight until the death, although his primary mission is to attack and kill without exposing himself to deliberate death. If he dies, his death is considered to be the result of an act of *jihad.* If he has the choice of surrendering or fighting to the end, he must choose the latter option.[66] Based on Ibn Taymiyya, Faraj sanctioned a situation in which a believer penetrates the infidel ranks in the knowledge that he may die, but the act will benefit Muslims.[67] However, Faraj clearly does not refer to the type of 'human bomb' in which the perpetrator deliberately kills himself first, which then causes death to others. His relatively restrained position reveals moral reservations based on the theological prohibitions both of self-immolation and of killing innocent people in

societies that were, after all, Muslim, even if they had strayed from the authentic faith. This largely conformed to the religious principle that a sinful Muslim is still a Muslim: he has reneged on the duty to fulfill Allah's instructions and has failed to resist temptation, yet his sin is less severe than that of a heretic who *a priori* and publicly rejects Allah's path.[68]

Translating these ideas into action, religious violence in such countries as Egypt and Syria in the 1970s and 1980s took the form of conventional armed attacks aimed at symbols of the state (the army, governmental officials, and at times the religious establishment). Underlying this violence was the inherent assumption that taking power begins from above in a political coup d'état.[69] Civilians were excluded from the range of harm. Scattered episodes of Islamic violence against religious minorities in Egypt and Sudan, and against Muslim civilians in Algeria,[70] revealed that domestic *jihad* had become a religious ritual, akin to prayer and fasting, but it was not death worship or indiscriminate killing.[71]

The implications of implementing domestic *jihad* against heretical regimes meant deferring the liberation of Palestine to the distant future. Faraj defined this explicitly by explaining that the battle against the enemy at hand must take precedence over fighting the enemy further away, namely Israel, as stated in the Qur'an: 'O believers, fight the unbelievers who are near to you, and let them find in you a harshness' (Sura 9: 123).[72] This assertion reflected yet again the localization of the Islamic agenda, focusing on enhancing the Islamic character of each separate Arab polity. Significantly, two ideological Islamic movements that ran counter to the localization of the Islamic cause were essentially unsuccessful. One was the Islamic Liberation Party that sprang up in Jordan in the 1950s and called for the restoration of the pan-Islamic caliphate. This movement remained marginal in Islamic politics.[73] The second was the pan-Islamic ideology advocated by Khomeini in the early 1980s, which evoked indifference and even hostility on the part of Sunni radicals. This rejection was attributable not only to the Shi'ite character of Khomeini's revolution but also to the zealous devotion of Sunni Islamists to preserving their status in their respective countries.[74]

An updated version of pan-Islamism, that of al-Qa'ida, was also marginalized in Islamic discourse. This leads to a look at the third radical text, 'Manual for a Raid', which contains instructions for the perpetrators of the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and is attributed to Muhammad 'Atta.[75]

Al-Qa'ida and 'Manual for a Raid'

The emergence of al-Qa'ida in the late 1990s introduced a new dimension in reviving the notion of global *jihad* from the classical period of Islam, combined with the elements of charismatic leadership, operational mobility and a new human reservoir in the Muslim diaspora of Western Europe. Young Muslims there, marginalized both culturally and socially, found in al-Qa'ida a sense of belonging and a mode of self-expression. Western observers aptly described al-Qa'ida as an international holding company with its head office in Afghanistan.[76] Despite its global nature, al-Qa'ida, too, began as a territorial Islamic movement focused on the

Arab countries. Its leader, Osama bin Laden, initially devoted his efforts to Saudi Arabia, while his deputy, Ayman Zawahiri, was concerned with Egypt.

To what extent al-Qa'ida detached itself from the parameters of territorial Islam requires more detailed study. Clearly, however, at a certain point it widened its horizons beyond the Middle East, a reflection of the lack of progress by the Sunni movements in the region in entrenching the Islamic agenda by the familiar means of political violence or communal activity.[77] The fact that Islamists succeeded in taking power in only two states—Iran and Sudan—was proof of the poor Islamist record in the Middle East heartland.[78] The September 11th attacks conveyed a dramatic message by al-Qa'ida that modern Islam was capable of doing more. What better means than by focusing on the 'Great Satan'—the United Sates and the West, symbols of hedonism. The selection of the Twin Towers in New York as a target for mass attack was not accidental. According to bin Laden, 'what were destroyed were not just the towers, but more important, the moral towers in that country'.[79]

Al-Qa'ida's brand of violence was projected as sacred in nature, operating in the name of divine authority. However, it was also calculated. Targeting the 'Great Satan' and exposing its fallibility by means of 'suicide attacks' gave al-Qa'ida maximal exposure in two publics: the West, where the point was to demonstrate the tangible presence of Islam in global affairs; and the Arab world, where the message was to reaffirm the vitality of Islam as a mobilizing, unifying and revolutionary force.

In center-periphery terms, the al-Qa'ida phenomenon reflected a combination of geographical and ideological extremism aimed at illuminating the defects of modern Islamic activity and confronting it with a model that defied existing norms. In this sense, the movement's emigration to Afghanistan did not mean disengagement but a pioneering thrust that would serve as a vanguard for modern Islam, e.g. as a horse pulling a wagon. Such leadership requires daring and extremism, attributes which defined the al-Qa'ida approach.

The choice of Afghanistan as a base was not coincidental. Besides being under Taliban Islamic rule, Afghanistan, located in the backyard of the Muslim world, was remote from the vicissitudes of modernization. In al-Qa'ida's view, such a geopolitical location was advantageous, as it provided a pure environment in which to mold new believers and wean them away from the mundane temptations of the Westernized Muslim centers. According to Zawahiri, the jihadic movement needs an environment which will operate as an incubator, where its seeds will take root and where it can acquire practical experience in matters of warfare, organization and politics. For such a movement, the only ethos is Islam, which also explains the impetus to drive out the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, achieved in 1994. Ideological purity, Zawahiri argued, is blurred in the cosmopolitan Muslim centers elsewhere. There Islam coexists with foreign ideologies such as nationalism and socialism, leaving the younger generation in doubt as to who the real enemy is.[80] In the words of one of the main al-Qa'ida's ideologists, the Palestinian Shaykh 'Abdallah 'Azzam, the Afghan model constitutes 'the start of the historical turning of the whole world toward Islam'.[81] This model was

portrayed as a modern version of the Arabian Peninsula environment during the formative period of Islam, which served as the cradle of Islamic civilization. The Afghan environment, devoid of corrupting foreign influences, could foster the attainment of unity of body and spirit so necessary for bold and effective action on the enemy front. The enemy is to be found in Europe and the United States, but also everywhere else, including the Middle East and Asia. This theme is well articulated in the manifesto, 'Manual for a Raid'.

The essay, which was translated into English, along with commentaries by Hanan Makiya and Hassan Mneimneh, offers a valuable insight regarding the mindset of the al-Qaʻida perpetrators of the September 11th operation. It draws extensively on the Qur'an as well as on moralistic themes derived from Sufism (mystical Islam). These themes emphasize that purity of soul and firmness of intention are necessary preconditions for embarking on the 'greater *jihad*' directed against one's own evil nature, which precedes embarking on the 'little *jihad*' of fighting the infidels.[82] Such a two-step process is supported by the Qur'anic verse, 'and struggle for God as His due' (Sura 22: 78), which is interpreted as *jihad* against both the believer's inner instincts and the infidels. The importance of the inner journey is also referred to by the mystic Abu al-Qasim al-Junayd (d. 910): 'Man cannot fight his visible enemy without first fighting his internal enemies'.[83] Clearly, Sufi culture provided a spiritual stimulus for Islamic activism, even though it was denounced in modern Islamic circles as culturally corrupt and politically passive.[84]

'Manual for a Raid' projects composure, focus and devotion to the mission. It includes two sets of instructions: mental preparation, such as intensive prayer, the recitation of Qur'anic verses, and the avoidance of disagreements in order to entrench discipline; and operational preparations, such as memorizing orders, strict secrecy, and the meticulous handling of the relevant documents and equipment. Every movement by the perpetrator is calculated to insure the success of the mission by confronting the devil's camp with inner calm and a perfected mode of behavior whose ultimate result is the aspired encounter with God and the enjoyment of the pleasures of heaven.[85] Essentially, the focus of the 'Manual' is on the perpetrator and his spiritual purification in the context of the mythical environment of the Prophet. The essay emphasizes that the Prophet established the Islamic order in the seventh century based on a series of military expeditions, not for the purpose of booty or territorial assets but entirely to please Allah, as an offering or sacrifice.

The link between the theological and political dimensions of *jihad* missions goes nearly unmentioned in the essay, except for a general observation about the struggle against the infidel enemy and its technological superiority, and about Muslims who are addicted to the corrupt Western culture. There is no hint of ideological or judicial reservations about such a mission either in terms of its benefits to the Muslim community, on the one hand, or the killing of civilians, on the other. Notably, bin Laden had stated in a *fatwa* in February 1998 that there is no such thing as innocent civilians; they are all soldiers of 'the House of War' (*Dar al-Harb*).[86] The possibility of taking prisoners of war is also nonexistent,

according to bin Laden, in contrast to the classical Islamic view that the purpose of war is to defeat the enemy, not slaughter captives and certainly not harm innocent civilians. In this, bin Laden also deviated from the basic approach of the founders of Sunni activism in the twentieth century, such as Hasan al-Banna, Abu al-A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb,[87] and, more importantly, from his ideological mentor, 'Abdallah 'Azzam. 'Azzam approved of attacking civilians only if they provide moral or material assistance to the enemy. He devoted a long discussion to refraining from harming women, due to their weakness, and children, due to their young age, which prevents them from acting like adult infidels. Other categories of exempt civilians include the aged, the ill, farmers, tradesmen, and monks who are secluded from society.[88] The only instance of killing civilians that 'Azzam allowed (as did Muhammad 'Abd Salam Faraj) was when Muslim fighters cannot attack infidels without harming women and children who are in their proximity, for example, attacks at night in infidel cities or gathering places, or when helpless civilians are used by infidels as a human shield.[89]

Ultimately, 'Manual for a Raid' projects a pure cult of death, described by Makiya and Mneimneh as a form of nihilism or self-destruction; and by other commentators as a 'passion for the real', i.e. making use of violent and spectacular means to regain one's self-identity in a numbingly materialistic society. Still, others viewed the essay in the broader context of al-Qa'ida's violence, as stemming from the paranoia of threatened persons and groups who perceive their culture to be under siege and struggling for survival.[90]

In comparing the three texts chronologically—the Egyptian Jihad's 'The Absent Duty' (1981), the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom' (1988) and al-Qa'ida's 'Manual for a Raid' (2001)—three main points emerge:

1. All three essays deal with what Max Weber defined as the 'ethics of ultimate ends', which, in contrast to the 'ethics of responsibility', is characterized by a monistic mindset intent on total fulfillment and projecting exalted ideas in the name of justice. In such a perception, religion represents the language of ultimate order, thereby enabling the proper handling of the disorder of modern times. Moreover, in this view, religion not only encourages self-sacrifice but demands it, according to anthropologist Clifford Geertz.[91]

2. The revolutionary political spirit of the essays reflects the autodidactic background of the writers, which tends to produce a dichotomous perception of history and culture in order to fortify an exclusive identity, in this case, an Islamic identity.

3. The autodidactic background of the writers also accounts for the scriptural orientation of the texts, which are based mainly on the Qur'an and the Sunna, making only minor and selective use of the judicial and commentary literature produced thereafter. This later body of literature, according to the radicals, detracts from the authenticity of the original legacy and is identified with the establishment 'ulama, who sanctioned political and

social injustices by Muslim rulers over the centuries. The golden age of Islam emerged around the core of the scriptures, or 'the hard religion', in radical terminology.[92] Hence, a direct link may be made between a return to the scriptures and the restoration of the 'textual community', which is characterized by purity, devotion and greatness.[93] The rehabilitation of Islam as a system of governance may take a long time, but it will occur in the end. Every new difficulty is merely a passing episode in the victorious march of truth.[94]

Additionally, all three essays upgrade the status of *jihad* and self-sacrifice in Islam, perceiving them as a vital condition for a correct and intimate understanding of the religion and for the reestablishment of its supremacy. However, it is here that they differ in approach. The Egyptian Jihad's 'The Absent Duty' reveals a measured theology of self-sacrifice subject to moral restrictions due to the nature of the environment in which it is to be implemented, namely, Muslim society. It is directed only against heretical Arab regimes and their spokesmen, and the death of the perpetrator is circumstantial, not deliberate. By contrast, Palestinian Islamic Jihad's 'Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom' reveals an assertive theology of self-sacrifice against an infidel occupier through suicide operations that implicitly target civilians as well. However, the essay reveals an awareness of the problem involved in the affinity between martyrdom and self-immolation and tries to resolve it. Lastly, al-Qa'ida's 'Manual for a Raid' advocates a sweeping, somewhat robotic cult of death against the Crusader West without reservations or apologetics and without differentiating between enemy soldiers, prisoners of war and civilians.[95]

Conclusion

Each of the three essays discussed signified a heightened phase of radicalization in modern Islam. For the Egyptian Jihad and other Sunni radicals in the late 1970s, the historical context was the political and socioeconomic impotence of the post-colonial Arab regimes and the conciliatory stance of reformist Islam as projected by the Muslim Brotherhood. For Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the late 1980s, the context was the relegation of the Palestinian cause to the bottom of the Islamist agenda in the Middle East due to the Islamists' focus on local goals. For al-Qa'ida in the late 1990s, the context was the poor record of achievements by the Sunni Islamic movements and their indifference to the real global enemy, the West. In al-Qa'ida's view, it is the struggle with the West that will determine the success of Islam on the domestic and regional levels.

Of the three narratives, only the Palestinian one gained wide theological backing from the broad center of the Islamic spectrum—the Muslim Brotherhood and the religious establishment. Palestinian *jihad* did not involve internal Muslim strife (*fitna*). Moreover, it targeted a defamed entity, which throughout twentieth-century Islamic historiography was defined as infidel and suppressive, and the *jihad* against it as equal to the one waged by the believers in early Islam.[96] The two

other narrative poles were excluded from the realm of sanctity as advocating mere violence: domestic *jihad*, as espoused by the Egyptian Jihad and other radical movements, was dismissed as constituting a modern version of the Kharijites of early Islam, i.e. outside the consensus; and the global *jihad* of al-Qa'ida was denounced as 'an apostate footnote to the annals of Islamic history'.[97] The renunciation of domestic *jihad* against Arab regimes reflected the primacy of the legalist orientation, which advocated *da'wa*, or communal activity, while the renunciation of cosmic *jihad* against the Christian West reflected the primacy of territorial Islam, which focuses on upgrading its status within a defined political community.

Ultimately, these varied versions of *jihad* reveal the multi-faceted nature of modern Islamic thought, but at the same time confusion and distress in coping with the vicissitudes of modernity.

Acknowledgements

Notes and references

All quotations from the Qur'an cited in this paper are taken from A.J. Arberry, *The Qur'an Interpreted*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). However, I followed the Azhar system of numbering the Qur'anic versus.

1. Hasan al-Banna, 'Risalat al-Jihad' (The Tract of Jihad) in (no Editor) *Majmu'at Rasa'il al-Imam al-Shahid* (Collection of Tracts of the Martyr Imam) (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Islamiyya, n.d.), p. 264. Al-Banna (d. 1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, served as a major inspiration for most of the contemporary Islamic movements, including Palestinian Islam. His orientation was primarily toward educational and communal activity, but some of his followers, mainly in the 1960s and '70s, radicalized his thought and imbued it with revolutionary content. This quotation was widely used in materials published by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is the subject of the present article.
2. See, e.g., H. Arendt, 'On Violence', in idem, *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972), pp. 105–112, 134–146; J.E. Seery, *Political Theory for Mortals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).
3. Al-Shiqaqi quoted in Rif'at al-Sayyid (Ed.) *Rihlat al-Dam al-ladhi Hazama al-Saif* (The March of Blood Which Defeated the Sword) Vol. 2 (Cairo: Markaz Yafa', 1997), pp. 1357–1361.
4. 'Suicide attacks' have become a term commonly used in Western parlance. Putting it in quotation marks is meant to signify this fact without taking a stance on the matter.
5. G. Dulou, *Le Problème Islamique* (Paris: privately published, 2002); S. Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (New York: Verso, 2002); B. Barber, *Jihad vs. MacWorld*, new edition (London: Corgi Books, 2003), pp. 3–20, 205–216.
6. See, e.g., A. Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000); R.L. Euben, 'Killing (for) Politics: Jihad, Martyrdom and Political Action', *Political Theory*, 30 (2001), pp. 4–35.
7. Preliminary indications of the legitimation of self-sacrifice appeared in articles written by movement founders Fathi al-Shiqaqi and Bashir Nafi' during 1979–83 in the monthly organs *al-Mukhtar al-Islami* (Cairo) and *al-Tali'a al-Islamiyya* (London), and especially in the book *al-Jihad fi Filastin Farida Shar'iyya wa-Darura Harakiyya* (The Jihad in Palestine: Religious Injunction and Organizational Necessity) (n.p., 1982). For a historical and ideological profile of the movement, see M. Hatina, *Islam and Salvation in Palestine* (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center, 2001), pp. 17–62.
8. For data on this phenomenon in the wider-content, see e.g., S. Shai, *The Shahids* (Hebrew; Herzliya: The Interdisplinary Center, 2003).

9. Excerpts from the essay were republished in the Islamic Jihad's organ, the Beirut-based *al-Mujahid*, 13, 15 December 1993.
10. A. I. Zamel, *The Rise of Palestinian Islamist Groups* (M.A thesis; Tampa: The University of South Florida, 1991), p. 195.
11. Hatina, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 38–42, 53–57; M. Abedi & G. Legenhausen (Eds.) *Jihad and Shahadat: Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam* (Houston: The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, 1986); H. Ram, *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran* (Washington: The American University Press, 1994), pp. 61–87.
12. *Qira'a fi Fiqh al-Shahada* (Readings in the Laws of Martyrdom), published as an appendix to *al-Islam wa-Filastin*, 5 June 1988, 3–4. R. Israeli, 'A Manual of Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Voilence*, Vol. 14 (Winter 2002), pp. 31–33.
13. The Islamic prohibition of self-immolation is cited (albeit ambiguously) in the Qur'an in a few verses only. The two most prominent are: '. . . and cast not yourselves by your own hands into destruction' (Sura 2: 195). Classical and medieval Muslim commentaries on this verse interpreted it as dealing with refraining from the duty of assisting *jihad* by financial contributions, which is tantamount to self-destruction. This interpretation was also supported by radical commentators in the twentieth century, inter alia to highlight the key role of *jihad* in light of the Western challenge. The second prominent verse is '. . . and kill none one another'. (Sura 4: 29). Here, too, Islamic interpretations (including modern ones) tended to analyze the meaning of the verse as taking the money of others fraudulently or by murdering someone (a relative or a fellow Muslim). The Qur'anic ambiguity about the prohibition of suicide or self-immolation became explicit and absolute in the hadith literature, which cited concrete situations and punishments. F. Rosental, 'On Suicide in Islam', in idem, *Muslim Intellectual and Social History* (London: Variorum, 1990), pp. 239–246; Mahmud Shaltut, *al-Fatawa* (The Legal Opinions) (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, n.d.), pp. 419–422. For modern commentaries, see, e.g., Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shadow of the Qur'an) Vol. 1, new edition (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1986), pp. 191–192, Vol. 2, pp. 638–640; Sayyid Abul A'La Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'an* Vol. 1 (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1990), pp. 154–155, Vol. 2, pp. 31–32.
14. The term *nifaq* in the Qur'an applies to a specific group headed by 'Abdallah Ibn Ubayy which failed to fully support Muhammad's Islamic cause in critical military campaigns against the pagans.
15. The hadith is cited in Abu al-Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (hereafter, Abu Muslim), *al-Jami' al-Sahih* (The Authentic Collection [of Hadith]) Vol. 6 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Halbi, 1960), p. 49. On military *jihad* and its modern versions, see, e.g., M. Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 55–73; F.M. Donner, 'The Sources of Islamic Conceptions', in J. Kelsay & J. T. Johnson (Eds.) *Just War and Jihad* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 31–69; R. Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996).
16. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, p. 8. See also Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent Egyptian Islamist whose influence on Palestinian Islam was (and still is) well known, in *al-Da'wa* (Cairo), May 1977.
17. Preserving life is also embodies in the duty of *taqiyya*, i.e., concealing one's beliefs when faced with oppression. The concept of *taqiyya* had the effect of restraining the religious fervor of the believer, cautioning him to conceal his faith whenever it endangered his life or threatened the survival of his community. *Taqiyya* was stressed particularly by the Shi'a sect, which had been subjected to periodic persecution under Sunni rulers. E. Kohlberg, 'Taqiyya in Shi'i Theology and Religion', in H.G. Kippenberg and G.G. Stroumsa (Eds.) *Secrecy and Concealment: Studies in the History of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 345–380.
18. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 3–4. Other exceptions are killing a murderer, an apostate (*murtadd*), or a married adulterer (for not resisting sexual temptation even though he experiences sex because he is married, in contrast to a bachelor adulterer, whose punishment is only flogging). *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (Al-Jalalayn's Commentary on the Qur'an) (Cairo: Maktabat Misr, 1980), p. 125. See also Ahmad Fathi Bahansi, *al-Siyasa al-Jina'iyya fi al-Shari'a al-Islamiyya* (Criminal Policy in Islamic Law) (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1988), pp. 262–263.
19. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 3–4. On the concept of martyrdom, see E. Kohlberg, 'Martyrs and Martyrdom in Classical Islam', in A. Destro and M. Pesce (Eds.) *Religious and Cultures: First International Conference of Mediterranean* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Global Publications, c2002), pp. 91–120.
20. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 4, 7; also *al-Jihad fi Filastin*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 68–84, 90–91, 95. The essay cites two important verses in this context. The first is: 'Among the believers are men who were true to their covenant with God; some of them have fulfilled their vow by death, and some are still awaiting, and they have not changed in the least' (Sura 33: 23). According to the Muslim commentator Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi (d. 1316), the term 'vow' may be defined as a commitment to fight for Allah until death, as demonstrated by the Prophet's relatives Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib and Mas'ab ibn 'Amir in the Battle of Badr (624). A modern-day commentator, Muhammad Baqir Behbudi, argued that the verse refers explicitly to martyrs. In contrast, Behbudi's colleague, Muhammad Asad, defined a vow more broadly, namely all the efforts

involved in devotion to Allah. The second verse cited in the essay is: 'God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise' (Sura 9: 111). Most of the Muslim commentators noted that this verse deals with holy war and sacrificing one's soul in return for going to heaven. Others, however, ascribed a more general meaning to the verse as dealing with the striving of believers to follow all Allah's commands, including *jihad*. However, there is a general consensus among the commentaries, both classical and modern, that this is an attractive transaction for the believer, albeit one-sided in that the believer is not allowed to bargain over it, but show total obeisance to Allah. Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, and mainly Sayyid Qutb, the prominent ideologists of Sunni radicalism, defined the verse as 'powerful' because it symbolizes the essence of the relationship between man and His creator and the core of allegiance to Islam. Fulfilling this allegiance in worship, but mainly in worldly activism, grants man the title of 'believer'. Refusal turns him into an infidel. Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi, *Tafsir al-Baydaw*i (Al-Baydawi's Commentary on the Qur'an) Vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1996), p. 370; *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 18, p. 127; Mawdudi, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 3, pp. 254–257; Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 3, pp. 1712–1717; M. B. Behbudi, *The Qur'an – A New Interpretation* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997), p. 117; M. Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1980), p. 33, note 26.

21. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 10–11. The various rewards of the *shahid* in heaven are listed in 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani, *al-Musannaf* (The Composition) Vol. 5 (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1970), pp. 263–266. As for the closeness to the venerable figures of Islam (Sura 4: 71), not all Muslim commentators interpreted the term *shuhada'*, cited in the verse, as meaning death in the name of Allah. Al-Baydawi identified the term with those who adhere to Allah's commands and serve as witnesses of Allah and His true revelation. Al-Baydawi, *op. cit.*, Ref. 20, pp. 213–215. Modern radical Islam, however, including in Palestine, highlighted the battlefield interpretation.

22. On the concept of *maslaha* and its modern uses, see M. H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 103ff; M. Khadduri, 'Maslaha', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 6 (1991), pp. 738–740; also D. Abdelkader, 'Modernity, the Principles of Public Welfare (*maslaha*) and the End Goals of Shari'a (*maqasid*) in Muslim Legal Thought', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 14 (2003), pp. 163–172.

23. Also see the writings of Palestinian Shaykh 'Abdallah 'Azzam, who exerted a strong ideological influence on the emergence of Islamic radicalism in Palestine, although his first priority was Afghanistan. He headed the Arab Volunteers office in the Afghan war against the Soviet invasion, and was assassinated in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1989. 'Azzam, *al-Difa' 'un Aradi al-Muslimin* (The Defence of the Muslim Lands) (al-Zarqa': Maktabat al-Manar, 1987); *Fi al-Jihad: Fiqh wa-Ijtihad* (On Jihad: Jurisprudence and Ijtihad) (Pashawar: Maktab Khadamat al-Mujahidin, n.d.), pp. 6–12, 53–54. For a comprehensive biography of 'Azzam, see Husni Adham Jarar, *al-Shahid 'Abdallah 'Azzam* (The Martyr 'Abdallah 'Azzam) (Amman: Dar al-Diha', 1990).

24. 'Azzam, *Fi al-Jihad*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 23, pp 2–4, 1–53; (no editor) *al-Fatawa al-Kubra li-ibn Taymiyya* (The Great Legal Opinions) Vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'arifa, n.d.), pp. 607–610; (no editor) *Majmu' Fatawat Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad bin Taymiyya* (Collection of Ibn Taymiyya's Legal Opinions) Vol. 28 (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyya, n.d.), pp. 7–12. A similar stance was adopted by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who stated that *jihad* and the defense of the lands of Islam from aggressive infidels constitute the preferred way of worship. *Al-Da'wa*, May 1977.

25. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, p. 5. On the perception of the 'ulama in Islamic radical discourse, see E. Sivan, *Radical Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 50–56.

26. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 4–5.

27. Hatina, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 48–53, 130–131, 165–167; M. Litvak, 'The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34 (1998), pp. 148–163.

28. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 4–5.

29. Ibid., pp. 4–5, 11. See also *al-Jihad fi Filastin*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 84–89.

30. M. Hatina, 'Iran and the Palestinian Islamic Movement', *Orient*, 38 (March 1997), pp. 107–113.

31. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 4–6, 12.

32. Ibid., pp. 5–6. See also the ruling of the Shaykh al-Azhar, 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud (d. 1978), regarding defining popular uprisings as a type of *jihad*, and as such the fallen as martyrs, regardless of the circumstances of their death, whether in armed battle or following the bombardment and collapse of a building. *Fatawat al-Imam 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud* (The Legal Opinions of the Imam 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud) Vol. 2, 4th edition (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1996), pp. 109–110.

33. An expression taken from *al-Sabil* (Amman), 3–9 July 2001.

34. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 13–15.

35. No author, *Bi'nwan Ma'arakat al-Mujahid fi Aqbiyat al-Tahqiq* (On the Fighter's Struggle in the Interrogation Room) (n.p., n.d.), pp. 6–7.

36. *Ma'ariv* (Tel Aviv), 1 March 1996.

37. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, p. 12; E. Sprinzak, 'Rational Fanatics', *Foreign Policy*, Issue 120 (September-October 2000), pp. 66–73.

38. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 7–9. See also *al-Jihad fi Filastin*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, p. 93. This argument is a further reflection of Hasan al-Banna's influence. He stated in the 1930s: 'You should know that there is no escape from death, which occurs only once. If you dedicate it to Allah, you will earn the blessings of this world and be rewarded in the hereafter'. Al-Banna, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 264.

39. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, pp. 7–9. Notably, the essay, which relies on early Muslim chronicles, documents both these acts of bravery only partially. Regarding ibn Mas'ud, his act indeed fortified the Muslims' fighting spirit, but when he fell, many of them fled the battlefield with the Sasanians in hot pursuit. Moreover, there is no mention of a statement by 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, one of the Prophet's close associates and later the second caliph, who questioned the very engagement in battle with the Sasanians, as their military superiority in the filed was clear. When news reached him of the searing defeat and the death of ibn Mas'ud, 'Umar declared that if ibn Mas'ud had retreated and not challenged death, 'we would have been among his supporters now'. Regarding ibn Malik, the essay does not mention that he was only wounded. Some Muslim commentators argued that he was denied the privilege of dying a martyr's death because he sought to glorify his name, thereby ruining his chances of dying a pure death for Allah. Moreover, ibn Malik's constant quest for a heroic death in the many battles he fought prompted 'Umar ibn al-Khattab to warn the commanders of the Muslim army not to use his services because of his 'suicide tendency'. The omission of these details by the Islamic Jihad points to a selective reading of Islamic traditions in order to promote the contemporary need for the reinforcement of the ethos of self-sacrifice. Full accounts of ibn Mas'ud and ibn Malik appear in Ja'afar Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk* (History of the Prophets and the Kings) Vol. 3 (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'rif, 1968), pp. 454–455; Abu al-Hasan ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh* (Comprehensive Treatise on History) Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1965–66), pp. 360–366, 438–440; also Khayr al-Din al-Zirkli, *al-A'lam* (Eminent Figs.) Vol. 2, 11th edition (Beirut: Dar al-'lm, 1995), p. 47.

40. M. Juergensmeyer, 'The World-Wide Rise of Religious Nationalism', *Journal of International Affairs*, 50 (Summer 1996), pp. 15–16.

41. 'A. Shari'ati, 'A Discussion of Shahid', in Abedi & Legenhausen, *op. cit.*, Ref. 11, pp. 230–241.

42. A. Kleinberg, *Fra Ginepros Leg of Pork* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Zmora-Bitan, 2000), pp. 28–35; Horbury & B. McNeill (Eds.) *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). For a comparative discussion of Christian and Islamic martyrdom, see M. Ayoub, 'Martyrdom in Christianity and Islam', in R. T. Antoun & M. E. Hegland (Eds.) *Religious Resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity and Judaism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 67–77.

43. See, e.g., no author, *Shuhada' ma'a Sabq al-Israr* (Martyrs with Determination) (n.p., 1993). The martyr's capacity to serve as a moral compass and a source of inspiration for fellow Muslims was defined by radical writers as one of the meanings of the term 'living *shahid*', as in the verse, 'And say not of those slain in God's way, 'They are dead'; rather they are living' (Sura 2: 154). Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 1, pp. 143–144. For literature on memorial rites and their link to politics, see B. Schwartz, 'The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory', *Social Forces*, 61 (December 1982), pp. 374–376; P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1–5, 44–53; G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), mainly Chapters 3, 5; M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 25–26, 84–104, 116–118.

44. N. Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 65–87.

45. S.Z. Klausner, 'Martyrdom', *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 9 (1987), pp. 233–234; M. Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 195–198.

46. See also the movement's pamphlet, *al-Mujahid amam al-Tahqiq wa'l-Ta'dhib* (The Fighter in the Face of Interrogation and Torture), which appears as an appendix in *al-Islam wa-Filastin*, September 1988, p. 16.

47. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, p. 14.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

49. Nawaf Hayil Takruri (Ed.) *al-'Amaliyyat al-Istishhadiyya fi al-Mizan al-Fiqhi* (Martyrdom Operations from the Legal Perspective) 2nd edition. (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1997), pp. 145–179; M. Hatina, 'Ulama' and the Cult of Death in Palestine', *Israel Affairs* (forthcoming).

50. *Qira'a*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 12, p. 14.

51. The concept of *sabr* served as a key component in modern Islamic discourse, namely as a moral and psychological impetus for taking a firm stand in the struggle over the image of society in light of the political suppression and evils of Westernization. See, e.g., Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 2, pp. 141–143; Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-Sabr fi al-Qur'an* (Patience in Islam) (Cairo: Maktabat Wahaba, 1970).

52. *Bi'nwan Ma'arakat al-Mujahid*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 35, pp. 3–18; *Al-Mujahid amam al-Tahqiq op. cit.*, Ref. 46. These two essays constitute a severe indictment of the record of the Palestinian struggle during 1967–87, which failed to instill in its fighters the basic attributes of secrecy, discipline, commitment to the cause, and above all endurance during interrogations by the Israeli security services. The Westernized elements in Arab society were also criticized for disconnecting society from its Islamic cultural roots. The result was the quick breakdown and confession of fighters, stemming from fear and ignorance of the investigative methods of the Zionist interrogators, the essays pointed out. Notably, the two essays provide only one, rather general statement regarding death in captivity. Such a death can result from torture, but can also result from the initiative of the captive himself (an act sanctioned by the *shari'a* as well), provided that the information he possesses is critical to Muslim interests.

53. *Bi'nwan Ma'arakat al-Mujahid*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 35, pp. 33, 48, 105–106; *Al-Mujahid amam al-Tahqiq*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 46, pp. 8–10. The accounts of Muslims who sacrificed their life for their faith during torture are discussed extensively in *al-Jihad fi Filastin*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 7, pp. 111–126.

54. The Hamas covenant (n.p., August 1988), Clauses 7, 15, 19.

55. The momentum of the peace process in the early 1990s, however, engendered a rapprochement between Hamas and Iran. Hamas sought to expand strategic support for the armed struggle in Palestine, while Iran wanted to acquire a foothold in the Sunni world. Nevertheless, the political partnership was limited, mainly due to reservations displayed by Hamas, the product of its Sunni roots and close affinity with the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world, and the fact that it received financial support from the wealthy Gulf states, rivals of Iran. Hatina, *op. cit.*, Ref. 30, pp. 113–119.

56. For the Hamas stance on 'suicide attacks', see Takruri, *op. cit.*, Ref. 49. See also *Filastin al-Muslima* (London), November 1994.

57. *Shuhada' ma'a Sabq al-Israr*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 43; H. Sande, 'Palestinian Martyr Widowhood: Emotional Needs in Conflict with the Role Expectations', *Social Science and Medicine*, 34 (1992), pp. 710–716; N. Hasan, 'An Arsenal of Believers: Talking to Human Bombs', *New Yorker*, November 2001, pp. 36–41. The martyr ethos also took hold in the world of Palestinian children through the educational system, the social environment and even in dreams, as reported by clinical psychologist S. Masalha in his 'Children and Violent Conflict: A Look at the Inner World of Palestinian Children via Their Dreams', *Palestinian-Israeli Journal*, 10 (2003), pp. 64–66.

58. *Al-Sabil*, 3 July 2001.

59. Hatina, *op. cit.*, Ref. 49. See also a special issue published by *al-Sabil* on Palestinian martyrdom, its justifications and virtues, 3 July 2001.

60. The book was also translated and edited by J. J.G. Jansen under the title, *The Neglected Duty* (New York: Macmillan, 1986).

61. The condemnation of the Mongols, which relies on a ruling by the medieval scholar ibn Taymiyya, was based on their retention of a pagan law (the Yasa code) even though they had converted to Islam, and behaved vulgarly and licentiously in public. Muhammad 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, *al-Farida al-Gha'iba* (The Absent Duty) (n.p., n.d.), pp. 7–18, 28–35.

62. Faraj, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–26.

63. Faraj, *ibid.*, p. 46. Faraj's ruling is based on a hadith of the Prophet, who, when asked about children of polytheists who were killed during a Muslim night raid, replied: 'They are from them', i.e., he allowed it. See Abu Muslim, *op. cit.*, Ref. 15, Vol. 5, p. 144.

64. Faraj, *op. cit.*, Ref. 61, pp. 46–47. Here, too, Faraj quotes a hadith in which the Prophet was informed that a woman had been found killed in one of the battles. He denounced the act and forbade the killing of women and children. Abu Muslim, *op. cit.*, Ref. 15, Vol. 5, p. 144.

65. Zawahiri's memoirs, published in *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), 7 December 2001.

66. Faraj, *op. cit.*, Ref. 61, pp. 37–38, 45, 50–51.

67. Faraj, *ibid.*, p. 45.

68. A similar approach can be found in Judaism, Bavli Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin: 'Even though it [Israel] has sinned, it remains Israel'. J. Neusner, *The Talmud of Babylonia* (Atlanta, Georgia: American Scholars Press, 1996), pp. 23, 223.

69. The conventional nature of Sunni violence was reflected in a detailed list of modern weapons that should be in the possession of the Muslim fighter, cited by the Lebanese Islamist Fathi Yakan in an essay in 1981. No mention is made of the explosive belt, or 'human bomb'. Yakan, *Abjadiyyat al-Tasawwr al-Haraki li'l-'Amal al-Islami* (Basic Operational Guides for Islamic Activity) (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 1981), pp. 97–100. See also Muhammad Na'im Yasin, *Athar al-Islam fi Takwin al-Shakhsiyya al-Jihadiyya li'l-Fard wa'l-Jama'a* (The Impact of Islam on the Molding of the Combat Personality of the Individual and the Group) (Kuwait: Dar al-Arqam, 1984), pp. 97–107; Sa'id Hawwa, *Jund Allah* (Soldiers of Allah), 2nd. edition (n.p., 1991), p. 251.

70. The violence against civilians in Algeria was perpetrated primarily by the Group Islamique Armé (GIA), established in 1993 as a conglomerate of several radical groups. The GIA killings, which included women and children, were denounced by most of the Algerian Islamic groups, including the largest body, Front Islamique du Salut (FIS).

71. In this context, see also Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 2, pp. 177–191; idem, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (Milestones) (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, n.d.), pp. 55–82; Yakan, *op. cit.*, Ref. 69, pp. 81–94; and Hawwa, *op. cit.*, Ref. 69, pp. 383–389.

72. Faraj, *op. cit.*, Ref. 61, pp. 27–28. See also Sivan, *op. cit.*, Ref. 25, pp. 16–21.

73. S.T. Farouki, 'Islamists and the Threat of Jihad: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Muhajiroun on Israel and the Jews', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36 (October 2000), pp. 21–46.

74. See, e.g., Sivan, *op. cit.*, Ref. 25, pp. 195–207.

75. Copies of the manifesto, which consists of four pages in handwritten Arabic, were found in the vehicles and luggage of several commanders of the attacks, including 'Atta.

76. On historical and political aspects of al-Qa'ida, see B. Lewis, 'The Revolt of Islam', *New Yorker*, 19 November 2001, pp. 50–63; G. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 313–322.

77. Zawahiri in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 3, 12 December 2001. In Zawahiri's thinking, the movement's global thrust did not mean neglecting the Arab arena. On the contrary, the struggle against the West was aimed as well at weakening their Arab allies. Moreover, creating an Islamic base in the heart of the Arab Middle East, Zawahiri argued, constitutes a precondition to Muslim victory over the 'Western-Zionist alliance'. *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 12 December 2001.

78. Zawahiri held the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the largest of the Sunni Islamic movements, as primarily responsible for this failure. In his view, their conciliatory stance toward the regime and their acceptance of the democratic political process served to heighten the crises of Islam in modern times. Zawahiri, *al-Hisad al-Murr* (The Bitter Harvest) (Amman: Dar al-Bayariq, 1999).

79. Zawahiri in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 12 December 2001; *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), 11 November 2001.

80. Zawahiri in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 3 December 2001.

81. 'Azzam, *Fi al-Jihad (op. cit.,)* Ref. 23, pp. 5–6, 36–37, 156–157; Jarar, *op. cit.*, Ref. 23, pp. 170–171, 182.

82. K. Makiya & H. Mneimneh, 'Manual for a Raid', in R. B. Silvers (Ed.) *Striking Terror: America's New War* (New York: Publishers Group West, 2002), pp. 306–307, 319–320. See also D. Cook, 'Suicide Attacks or 'Martyrdom Operations' in Contemporary Jihad Literature', *Novo Religio*, 6 (2002), pp. 20–24.

83. 'Imad al-Din ibn Kathir, *Tafsir ibn Kathir* (Ibn Kathir's Commentary on the Qur'an) Vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1966), p. 667; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Provision to the Next World) Vol. 2 (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Misriyya, 1970), pp. 39–42. See also *Fatawat al-Imam 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 32, Vol. 1, pp. 320–321.

84. The Sufi influence on Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, was evident, and was even more pronounced in the case of al-Banna's radicalized follower Sa'id Hawwa (d. 1989), the prominent ideologist of the Brotherhood in Syria. Jum'a 'Abd al-'Aziz, *Fahm al-Islam* (Understanding Islam) (Alexandria: Dar al-Da'wa, 1990), pp. 56–63; Hawwa, *al-Madkhal ila Da'wat al-Ihwan al-Muslimin* (Introduction to the Preaching of the Muslim Brotherhood) (Amman: Dar al-Arqam, n.d.), pp. 49–173. Notably, the forerunner of Sunni radicalism, Sayyid Qutb, while rejecting an endless quest for spiritual perfection by the believer, did not disqualify the 'greater *jihad*' against one's temptations as mental preparation for the military 'little *jihad*'. Qutb's follower, 'Abd al-Salam Faraj, displayed even less patience for spiritual *jihad*. Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 71, pp. 75–76; Faraj, *op. cit.*, Ref. 61, pp. 24–25.

85. Makiya & Mneimneh, *op. cit.*, Ref. 82, pp. 319–327.

86. *Al-Quds al-'Arabi* (London), 23 February 1998.

87. Hasan al-Banna, *al-Salam fi al-Islam* (Peace in Islam), 2nd, edition (Cairo: Manshurat al-'Asr al-Hadith, 1971), pp. 59–65; Abu al-A'la Mawdudi, *Shari'at al-Islam fi al-Jihad wa'l-'Alaqat al-Duwaliyya* (Islamic Law on Jihad and International Relations) (Cairo: Dar al-Sahwa, 1985); Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 2, pp. 177–191. Qutb traced the essence of refraining from harming noncombatants to the verse: 'Fight in the way of God with those who fight with you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors' (Sura 2: 190). He defined the first section of the verse as the object of the *jihad*, namely to make Allah's word supreme in the world and to protect the believers from suppression; and the second section as the ethical limits of war, namely avoiding attacking civilians who pose no treat to Muslims or to their community. Qutb, *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, Vol. 2, pp. 177–187. See also Zafir al-Qasimi, *al-Jihad wa'l-Huquq al-Duwaliyya al-'Amma fi al-Islam* (Jihad and General International Rights in Islam) (Beirut: Dar la-'Ilm, 1986), pp. 314–338, 522–529.

88. 'Abdallah 'Azzam, *I'lan al-Jihad* (Proclamation of Jihad) (Pashawar: Maktab Khadamat al-Mujahidin, 1990), pp. 36–37, 110–128.

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89. 'Azzam did, however, cite other legal opinions, i.e., the minority stance of Abu 'Amar al-Awza'i (d. 774), founder of the Awza'i school of law, and Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), founder of the Maliki school of law. Both scholars forbade killing women and children absolutely, even when the enemy uses them as human shields in its bases on land or in its boats at sea. 'Azzam, ibid., pp. 122–123.

90. Makiya & Mneimneh, *op. cit.*, Ref. 82, pp. 317–318; also Žižek, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, pp. 9–15, 51–52; Barber, *op. cit.*, Ref. 5, pp. xii-xiv; J. H. Ellens, 'Jihad in the Qur'an, Then and Now', in idem (Ed.) *The Destructive Power of Religion* (London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 42–43, 48–49.

91. M. Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills (Eds.) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 120–123; C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 126.

92. A phrase coined by Muhammad Abu Halima, who was involved in the World Trade Center explosion in New York in 1993. Cited in M. Juergensmeyer, 'Terror in the Name of God', *Current History* 100 (November 2001), p. 359.

93. The term 'textual community' is taken from B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 90. See also M. Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 21–38; Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 71, pp. 11–19.

94. Historical evidence supporting this determinist outlook was cited by al-Qa'ida's Zawahiri in the form of the Crusader occupation of Syria and Palestine, the French occupation of Algeria, and the British occupation of Egypt, which lasted decades or more but were eventually terminated by the Muslims. Zawahiri in *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 7, 8 December 2001.

95. For a psychological analysis that emphasizes the mechanical nature of suicide attacks deriving from the memorization of mantras and the entrenchment of absolute religious truths, see M. Rotenberg, *From Mikdash to Midrash: Psychology of Fundamentalism and Judaism* (Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 2001), pp. 21–39.

96. See, e.g., the rulings of Shaykh 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud in his *Fatawat*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 32, Vol. 2, pp. 111, 113.

97. *Jedda Arab News*, 29 October 2001; *Le Monde diplomatique* (Paris), November 2001. See also Hatina, *op. cit.*, Ref. 49.