

MARTYRDOM IN ISLAM VERSUS SUICIDE BOMBING!

Indeed, all praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allaah guides, there is none to misguide and whoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allaah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and messenger of Allaah.

To proceed:

Martyrdom in the path of Allah is from the greatest of deeds, the reward of which is no less than Paradise. Suicide, on the other hand, is from the most reprehensible of deeds, the reward of which is no less than Hellfire. In the history of Islam, the learned men and women of the faith have never confused the two. It is only with the proliferation of suicide bombing in our time that the clear distinction between suicide and martyrdom has become marred as the former is being justified with the textual support for the latter. The essay entitled, *The Islamic Ruling on the Permissibility of Martyrdom Operations*, is a famous case in point. Upon reproducing much of it here, one may ask: “How can we argue with the following Islamic evidences?” Our answer is that we

cannot argue with the Islamic evidences. We can, however, point out their complete misrepresentation in the essay.

Perhaps the first most important thing to direct the reader's attention to is the difference between an act of war which involves a suicide (such as a suicide bombing) and an act of war which is apparently suicidal (such is a lone warrior charging the ranks of the enemy in the near-certain knowledge that he will be killed in the process). No scholar disputes the praiseworthiness of the second type of act. It is only the first type of act, the predetermined, intentional taking of ones own life in a clear act of suicide, which remains a subject of contention.

Incidentally, the contention that the term "suicide bombing" is one invented by Zionists to vilify Muslims, and should therefore be abandoned, is rather weak and self-defeating. Suicide bombings themselves are the invention of non-Muslims. For a long while, the only nominally-Muslim groups that utilized the tactic were the heretical *Rawaafid*. It is only very recently that some so-called Sunni Muslims have become famous for suicide bombing.¹ In fact, prior to the suicide bombing of our time, there is no precedent whatsoever in the history of Islam of the Sunni Muslim being praised for wilfully taking his or her own life on or off the battlefield – whatever the intention. Unless I'm mistaken, the actual *isnad* of suicide bombing looks something like this:

Marxist Communists → Rafidhi Shia → Islamic Jihad → HAMAS → Al-Qaeda

Now as to the permissibility of suicide bombings specifically, the scholars have differed. The majority of senior orthodox Sunni scholars, such as Imam Ibn Uthaymeen, hold suicide bombing to be *haram* (i.e. forbidden) in absolute terms because the tactic rests upon something which is itself *haram* in absolute terms (i.e. suicide). This is why Shaykh Abdul-Muhsin al-Abbaad, the author of *According to which Intellect and Religion is Suicide Bombings and Destruction Considered Jihad?*, is under no obligation to judge suicide bombings on a case-by-case basis: as far as he is concerned, suicide can never be permissible in any application or intention.

¹ Indeed, some have fell into *ghuloo* in this regard as they invent a whole culture involving songs and *anaasheeds* which praise blowing oneself up under the pretext of 'martyrdom' and also young children are encouraged as youth centres are even formed around the concept of 'martyrdom' and none of it is based on *'ilm* whatsoever, it is rather based on emotions which have been stirred due to the oppression of the *yahood*.

Then we have Imam al-Albani who is the most notable exception amongst the orthodox Sunni scholars to have permitted suicide bombing or so-called “martyrdom operations” under certain circumstances and prerequisites. However, because those prerequisites are absent - most notably, a single temporal Islamic authority or Khalifah over all the Muslims – Albani also held suicide bombing to be *haram* in this day and age; that is, he held suicide bombing to be *haram* in relative terms, something the poster of the essay, *The Islamic Ruling on the Permissibility of Martyrdom Operations*, failed to mention.

In any case, none of the scholars permit any act of suicidal violence against non-military targets. This is in sharp contrast to the most vociferous proponents of suicide bombing, such as al-Qaeda and other takfeeri-jihadis, who almost exclusively encourage and justify the murder of non-combatants, regardless of their religion, age or gender.²

Furthermore, regardless of which informed orthodox Islamic opinion the reader takes, it should be quite obvious that all of the “evidences” used to justify suicide bombing by way of analogy are rather tenuous.

Firstly, there is not a single narration the essay cites relating to battlefield jihad – whether the ghazawat (the military campaigns of the Prophet) or otherwise - except that it clearly extols the virtue of the mujahid fighting the enemy until he is killed by them. Pay attention here: the narrations are praising the one who fights until he is killed by his enemy – not the one who kills himself in order to fight the enemy. Hence, Allah’s saying:

² This is an important distinction, as many try to assert that “there is a difference of opinion” on this issue, but there is no difference of opinion on:

- a. Targeting the innocent – as for the hadeeth which people try to use as a proof to justify killing the innocent – namely the *hadeeth* of when the people of Taa’if were bombarded by *manjaneeq* (catapults) – then this *hadeeth* is *da’eef* and *mursal* as mentioned in *Subul us-Salam* and other commentaries of *Bulugh ul-Maraam*.
- b. Intentionally setting out to kill oneself is also not permitted, that being one purposefully intending to end one’s life by strapping a bomb to oneself wherein there is no chance of survival whatsoever. None of the scholars, who people try to utilise in claiming the “difference of opinion” on the matter, do not permit this.

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ»

“Verily, Allah has purchased from the believers their selves and their wealth, in return for Heaven being theirs. They fight in the path of Allah and they kill and are killed.”

{*at-Tawbah (9):111*}

That is: “They kill (the enemy) and are killed (by the enemy).” In order for this verse to justify suicide bombing, it would have to mean: “They kill (the enemy) and are killed (by themselves).” So the battlefield martyr, according to the Islamic texts and consensus of the scholars, is the one who fights and then dies by other than his own hand. The only exception to this is the case of the one who kills himself accidentally. Such a person may still be considered a martyr if his intention was not to die by his own hand, but to continue to fight until the enemy kills him.

By their own admission, the strongest evidence the suicide bombing apologists feel they have is the hadith about the boy from the People of the Ditch from the tafsir of Surah al-Buruj. The hadith recounts the steadfastness and sacrifice of the believers of old before the coming of Islam, and how through miracles from Allah, the martyrdom of one believer at the hands of a tyrant caused the onlookers to enter into true faith and also attain martyrdom. Allah inspired the boy with steadfastness in the face of death just as He inspired the baby to speak miraculously and encourage its mother with the same. This hadith is the same “evidence” Ayman al-Zawahiri (Allah guide him or break his back) has publicly used to encourage suicide bombing. Yet, this hadith is the flimsiest of supports for such an act, and for the following reasons:

- ✓ The whole episode of the People of the Ditch is inadmissible as an evidence for the rules of jihad because it is from a previous sharia of pre-Islamic times. The sharia of Muhammad abrogates all that went before it.
- ✓ If a person on death row is given a choice: death by firing squad, lethal injection, hanging or the electric chair, and chooses one, do we say he took his own life or that he simply chose his preferred method of execution? This is the case here. The boy did not kill himself by his own hand. He merely chose his preferred method of execution. Either way, the king was going to kill the boy. So, to outwit the king and have the people believe in Allah, the boy told the king that he could only be killed by an arrow fired in God’s holy name.

- ✓ If the lessons to be learnt from this story could be related to jihad, they would have been recounted in the classical books of jihad. But not only did the martyrs in the story not kill themselves, they never once tried to fight back, harm or kill their enemy. This story has, therefore, no connection whatsoever with the subject of jihad. The jihad of the self, maybe, but not the jihad of the sword.³

In short, the justification of suicide bombing through the hadith of the People of the Ditch is from the weakest of extrapolations, is made by those with no solid grounding in the scholastic sciences of Islam, and is regurgitated only in the cyber-literature of suicide bombing apologists.

A final point, suicide bombing, as espoused by a few Muslim groups today, has proven to be a redundant military tactic at best, and wholly counter-productive at worst.⁴

In essence, suicide bombing relies upon the element of surprise. Once the enemy has become wise to the tactic, it becomes militarily ineffective. Instead, anyone or anything perceived as a potential threat approaching the perimeter of a military target is fired upon. Many innocent civilians have been killed this way, on the mere suspicion that they were suicide bombers.

Hence the overwhelming majority of suicide attacks are carried out against soft targets: women shopping in market place bazaars, commuters waiting at bus stops, employees in their offices, and so on. This is certainly the case in Iraq (and to a lesser extent, Afghanistan) where the

³ For more points to refute the use of the *hadeeth* of the boy and the king see the refutation of Sulaymaan bin Naasir al-'Alwaan one of the promoters of suicide bombings in Saudi, pp.9-14:

http://www.salafimanhaj.com/pdf/SalafiManhaj_AlAwaan.pdf

⁴ Indeed, it is based on flimsy "proofs" that are weaker than a spider's house. Such operations bring about greater harms than good, we only have to look at what has happened to the image of Islaam all over the world as a result of the horrific acts of suicide bombings that have taken place in: Saudi Arabia (in 2004 CE there were about five attacks upon civilian compounds); Jordan (the suicide bomb attack at the hotel in 'Ammaan, killing a whole load of people that had nothing to do with any kind of war and were just at a *waleemah*); Morocco (like the bombings conducted by the *takfeeree* and *jhaadee* youth of Sidi Momin in Daar ul-Baydaa'/Casablanca in 2003 CE); Egypt (such as the Sharm e-Sheikh bombings in 2005 CE); 'Iraq (wherein it has been estimated that around 650,000 Iraqees have been killed largely by *Khawaarij* and *Rawaafid* killing each other and within other Muslim countries). With regards to the effects of such operations upon Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries and how it has affected the image of Islaam, then the treatment against Muslims after such 'operations' have become much more draconian. This increased after 7/7, 9/11 and the Madrid bombings, and the recent attempted suicide bombing at Glasgow Airport on Saturday 30th June 2007. Even if there may be some insidious *kuffaar* involvement in *some* of these examples there are still ignorant expendable pawns that can be utilised due to their corrupted *takfeeree-jhaadee manaahij*.

heretical takfeeri ideology of the bomber makes the blood of innocent Muslim men, women and children worthy of spilling.

As regards to US military losses in Iraq, they have almost all been as a consequence of remotely-detonated or self-detonating roadside bombs and small-arm skirmishes. Incidentally, it was also due to losses incurred from remotely-detonated roadside bombs that the Israelis were forced to give up south Lebanon. Staying with Lebanon, all the fights that were won there against the Zionist state were done so through conventional military means. Last year, for example, Hezbollah inflicted severe losses on the Israelis without offering a single suicide bombing. It's as if the Shia have abandoned the tactic they once championed after they passed it on to the poor Palestinians!

As for Chechnya, during the First Chechen War of 1994-1996 which the Chechens actually won, suicide bombing was not utilized at all. In the ongoing Second Chechen War since 1999, we have seen a proliferation of suicide bombing, but to a ever-diminishing affect and in an increasingly desperate and futile war. Essentially, what we have in Chechnya now is "mujahideen" fighting former "mujahideen" in a war whose allegiances have reverted back to tribal affiliations. Much like the fitna of post-Soviet Afghanistan. Also in Bosnia, Kosovo, the Soviet-Afghan war, and during the pre-9/11 Kashmir insurrection, the Muslims won their victories without ever employing suicide bombing.

There are many other things we could say regards suicide bombing, such as how many of those who sign up to blow themselves up are often complete basket cases who are exploited by their more shrewd commanders; with many so-called human bombs often displaying advanced signs of psychosis, erratic or abnormal behaviour, and even flagrant violations of the sharia in the build-up to their self-sacrifice. But that's another story. Suffice to say, whether or not one sincerely believes suicide bombing is justified in Islam, the evidences cited in the essay, *The Islamic Ruling on the Permissibility of Martyrdom Operations*, certainly do not prove it.