

Abdullah Azzam, al-Qaeda, and Hamas: Concepts of Jihad and Istishhad

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While al-Qaeda and Hamas have become household terms, far less familiar is the man behind the idea of al-Qaeda, the Palestinian sheikh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, who also did much to support the establishment and entrenchment of Hamas. This essay traces the links between Azzam and these two radical Islamic organizations and outlines his major influence on central components of their agendas – jihad (holy war)¹ and *istishhad* (martyrdom).

Abdullah Azzam and al-Qaeda

The Palestinian connection to global jihad began in the 1980s during the war in Afghanistan. It assumed a concrete form long before the establishment of al-Qaeda, as thousands of Muslim volunteers – Arab and non-Arab, including scores of Palestinians – came to Afghanistan to help the Afghani *mujahideen* (holy warriors) fight the Soviet invader and the pro-Soviet Afghani regime. The Palestinian volunteers stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Muslim volunteers of many nationalities and bonded with their comrades-in-arms. At that time, it was Palestinian Sheikh Abdullah Azzam who organized their arrival, training, and dispatch to the battlefield; his aide-de-camp was his reverent pupil and close friend, Osama Bin Laden.

Abdullah Azzam was born in 1941 in the village of Silat al-Harithiyah, northwest of Jenin. Following the Six Day War, he and his family moved to Jordan where in 1969 he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1973,

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he earned his doctorate with distinction in “The Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence” at the religious al-Azhar University in Cairo. In 1981, he moved to Saudi Arabia, and was then released by the King Abd al-Aziz University in Jeddah to teach at the Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan, a move that allowed him to forge closer relations with the Afghani jihad, which greatly interested him at that time. In 1984, Azzam resigned from the Islamic University and together with his family took up residence in the Pakistani border town of Peshawar. There, together with Osama Bin Laden, he established the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen* (*Maktab Khadamat al-Mujahideen*, MAK), providing services for the *mujahideen* and serving as a center for recruiting Muslim volunteers and donations from all over the world on behalf of the Afghani *mujahideen*, as well as providing services in education, health, information, military assistance, finance, and establishment of training camps.²

Abdullah Azzam laid the foundations of al-Qaeda, and from the war in Afghanistan to this day has been Osama Bin Laden’s spiritual mentor. In late November and early December 1989, on the basis of the idea of *al-Qaidah al-Sulbah* (“the solid base”) devised by Azzam and mentioned by name for the first time in an article he wrote that was published in the monthly *al-Jihad* (April 1988), Osama Bin Laden announced in Peshawar the establishment of the organization. The article began with the following paragraph:

Every principle must have its vanguard that will carry it forth. [The vanguard] will pay a steep price and suffer many losses while paving the road for the [Islamic] society. There is no belief, either earthly or heavenly, that does not need such a vanguard, one that will give all it has for its belief to be victorious. This vanguard is the solid base (“*al-Qaidah al-Sulbah*”) of the society we are awaiting.³

Azzam declared that an individual who “sold himself to God” would arise and call out loud to cleave to Allah. An elect group would gather around this leader and provide a solid base for an Islamic society and confront the surrounding *jahiliyyah* (ignorance). The man who would lead the first elect group would start by gathering people and teaching them the bases of belief, namely the unity of God and the unity of God’s names and descriptions.⁴

In the same essay of April 1988, Azzam laid out eight guidelines for cultivating the vanguard of the solid base:

- a. The vanguard would emerge from a furnace of troubles and disasters.
- b. The leadership would have to participate in the journey of blood, sweat, and tears. The leadership would be the hothouse where the saplings would mature in a long period of cultivation and training.
- c. The vanguard would renounce the cheap thrills of this world and be of a different order, marked by asceticism and austerity.
- d. The vanguard must be imbued with strong faith and endowed with great hope in achieving victory.
- e. Tenacity and assertive decision to continue the journey are essential, however long it would take.
- f. Sustenance for the road, one of the critical needs of the journey, consisted of upright character traits, patience, and prayer.
- g. The vanguard had to cleave to “the belief in friendship and abdication of responsibility,” meaning demonstrating loyalty and friendship (*walla’*) towards believers and hatred for “infidels,” and abdicating responsibility (*bara’*) for the latter (by “infidels” Azzam and other theologians mean not only pagans, as stated in the Quran, but also “the peoples of the book” – Christians and Jews).
- h. The vanguard would necessarily uncover the global plans devised against Islam.⁵

In order to instill the vanguard with the desire for *istishhad* (martyrdom), Azzam wrote:

The *shahids* (martyrs) are those who write the history of nations, because the history of nations is written only in sweat and blood. They are the ones who build the palace of glory, because palaces of glory are built only by skulls and limbs severed from the body. They are the ones who keep the tree of this religion from wilting and drying up, because the tree of this religion is watered only with blood. They are the wise ones, because they found their way to Allah, while the others either mourn them or mock their thinking. They are the ones who love death so that they will earn life (after death).⁶

Abdullah Azzam designated the vanguard as the force to implement the global Islamic jihad doctrine that he preached in Afghanistan. The roots of the doctrine stem from two sources. The first is verse 97 in Sura 4 (“Women”) of the Quran: “Lo! as for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask: In what were ye engaged? They will say: We were oppressed in the land. (The angels)

will say: Was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein? As for such, their habitation will be hell, an evil journey's end." The second source is the personal obligation Islam has imposed on its believers since the dawn of the religion – to repel an enemy attacking Islamic territory.⁷

The doctrine of global Islamic jihad is divided into primary and secondary tracks. The bulk of the global Islamic force must be concentrated on one Islamic land where jihad is underway and which provides the best opportunity for vanquishing the attacking infidels and establishing the dwelling of Islam (in Azzam's day it was Afghanistan), liberating it, and afterwards moving to another Islamic territory offering the same conditions (in Azzam's day, Palestine was the preferred location), and so on, culminating in the liberation of all Islamic territory and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate stretching from Indonesia in the east to Morocco and Spain in the west. Until the liberation of all Islamic lands, it is also necessary to conduct jihad on other Islamic territories that will be liberated only in the future (e.g., Egypt and Algeria) and on lands experiencing confrontations between "oppressed" Muslims and their Muslim or non-Muslim oppressors (e.g., the Philippines).⁸ Indeed, Azzam stressed that jihad to liberate Afghanistan actually started against the "infidel" Muslim rulers ("the near enemy") and not against the Soviets ("the far enemy").⁹ This signals to other regimes in the Arab and Muslim world, which do not rule according to *shariah* (Muslim religious law) and as such damage the idea of *hakimiyyah* (God's sovereignty on earth), that being Muslim does not grant immunity to militant jihad and there is legitimacy for toppling tainted Muslim regimes at any time.

Azzam not only renewed the idea of global Islamic jihad but also developed it and instilled it in Muslim consciousness around the world, theoretically as well as practically. He was the first to rule that global Islamic jihad to liberate Afghanistan and other conquered Islamic territory is an individual obligation incumbent on every Muslim. By recruiting thousands of Arab and non-Arab Muslim volunteers under one roof and generating cohesion among them, he and Bin Laden were pioneers in their successful efforts to fashion and implement the notion of global Islamic jihad.

Al-Qaeda was established sometime around the time Azzam was assassinated, i.e., approximately November 1989. The name of the

organization, however, was used officially in Peshawar only after Azzam's death, in late November or early December 1989. Following Azzam's death, Osama Bin Laden continued to adhere to the idea of global Islamic jihad as devised by his spiritual mentor and close friend. It is no coincidence that Bin Laden chose to call his organization "al-Qaeda," a term with symbolic significance that links the two figures.

Jihad in Palestine

Abdullah Azzam was widely criticized for abandoning Palestine in favor of Afghanistan. He was even accused of weakening the jihad in Palestine by drawing Palestinian and Arab youths to Afghanistan. But Azzam, adopting the strategy of "the best defense is an offense," rebuffed the attacks. In early 1989, in a speech given at a summit organized by the National Union of Kuwaiti Students, he attacked his critics scathingly:

Let whoever wants to rebuke me do so. Let whoever wants to look me in the eye with anger...My sovereign said to me, "Those believers who sit there and do nothing do not measure up to the *mujahideen* (the holy warriors) in their wealth and soul. The reward of the latter will be greater than that of the former"...You may say, "Here is a wayward Palestinian who abandoned his problem and went outside his land to be a submissive servant of foreign masters." Say what you will. Regarding jihad, I am the submissive servant of the Afghani jihad because I found the true Islam here... The obligation to fight is an obligation incumbent on every Muslim who can carry a weapon...If we cannot serve God in this land, we must immigrate to another land where we can serve Him, because unless we do so we will merit the death of the weak and be destined for hell...God aroused in my heart the great hope to taste the sweetness of jihad in Palestine in 1969-1970. Afterwards, the activity of sacrifice was eradicated in Jordan, the borders were closed, jihad waned, and jihadist thinking was forbidden. I thought, "Where is the jihad?" I found a parcel of land called Afghanistan, and I tried getting there. God showed me the way there.¹⁰

In his introduction to the book *Dhikrayat Falastin (Palestine Memories)*, Abdullah Azzam explains why he "abandoned" the jihad in Palestine in favor of the jihad in Afghanistan. Azzam describes his fierce desire to liberate Palestine and the al-Aqsa mosque, and links the war in Afghanistan to the Palestinian struggle:

I am a Palestinian, and if only I could find a way into Palestine and the al-Aqsa plaza, I would prefer to fight there ... Whoever thinks that jihad in Afghanistan means the abandonment of the Islamic problem in Palestine is delusional... The bloody story of Kabul is the story of the war of a wounded Palestine... We hereby declare to the Jews and their satellites and the Americans and the Communists: We will not rest until we return to the jihad in Palestine. Indeed, there is a barrier between us and the jihad in Palestine because of the circumstances and because of the guarded borders, but this does not mean we have stopped dreaming about Palestine... Palestine precedes Afghanistan, but now that our hands are in manacles and the borders are closed, we refused to live like that and instead traveled to the land of the struggle – Afghanistan.¹¹

Regarding claims that he was drawing Palestinian youths to Afghanistan and thereby weakening the jihad in Palestine, Azzam countered that Palestinians had to immigrate to Afghanistan because there they would grow stronger religiously and acquire the military and mental experience that would help them liberate Palestine. Speaking at a conference held by the Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP) in December 1988 in Oklahoma City, marking one year since the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada, Azzam said:

Sons of Palestine, the time has come for you to swear allegiance to death. It is good to die with honor... Sons of Palestine, there is no turning back after today. Follow death, the path has been opened for you, the time has come to step up to the stage of preparation and death for the sake of God (*istishhad*)... Sons of Palestine, you have an opportunity to train on every type of weapon [in Afghanistan], this is a golden opportunity, do not miss it.¹²

Like Azzam, Bin Laden was also criticized for abandoning the jihad in Palestine and focusing on Afghanistan, Iraq, and other places. His answer has been identical to Azzam's: the priorities are determined not by which land is more important, rather by which is more urgent and closer to the lives of people. As an example, he has used Afghanistan of the 1980s.¹³

Abdullah Azzam and Hamas

Abdullah Azzam was linked to Hamas from its inception in December 1987. He viewed Hamas as the spearhead in the religious confrontation against the Jews in Palestine and as followers of the Islamic Movement (a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood), in which he himself had been active in the 1960s. In an interview with *al-Jazeera* (December 1998), Osama Bin Laden declared that after the outbreak of the intifada, Azzam maintained close contact with Hamas, and his books were widely circulated in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The fact that Azzam and Hamas were allied with the same parent movement – the Muslim Brotherhood – linked them closely. Even more important, however, was the ideological similarity between them. An examination of Hamas' charter, published on August 18, 1988, alongside Azzam's philosophical teachings illustrates their shared ideological affinities. Paragraph 6 of Hamas' charter states that the movement's loyalty is to God, that Islam is a way of life, and that the movement is working to fly the standard of God over every inch of Palestine.¹⁴ Paragraph 7 of the charter defines Hamas as "a global Islamic movement whose members are scattered around the world, acting to strengthen its influence." In addition, paragraphs 14 and 15 link the problem of liberating Palestine to three circles: the Palestinian, the Arab, and the Islamic, and as such, the liberation of Palestine is an individual obligation incumbent upon all Muslims everywhere. Together, paragraphs 7, 14, and 15 create a direct link between the Hamas charter and Azzam's theory of global Islamic jihad.

Paragraph 11 of the charter defines Palestinian land as holy (*waqf*), which no one has the right to concede or negotiate, not even one square meter. This paragraph further defines all land that ever was – or still is – *dar al-Islam* (the dwelling of Islam) as land belonging to Muslims until the end of time.¹⁵ Paragraph 12 of the charter determines that if an enemy invades Muslim land, jihad becomes an individual obligation incumbent upon all Muslims; furthermore, Muslims are under no obligation to seek permission from any external authority in order to embark on jihad against the invader.¹⁶ Paragraph 13 of the charter defines the confrontation against the Jews for control of Palestine as a religious struggle, while conceding any part of the land is tantamount to conceding a part of the religion. Therefore, this paragraph also rejects out of hand

any peace initiative or international conference designed to settle the Palestinian problem and calls for solving the problem only by means of militant jihad.¹⁷

Paragraph 16 of the charter stresses Islamic education as the first step in liberating Palestine alongside the recognition that it is necessary to study the enemy in depth.¹⁸ Paragraph 22 of the charter casts the Jews (“the enemy”) as those who took over the global media, thanks to their financial clout. The paragraph further points to the Jews as responsible for most revolutions and wars in the world, such as the French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the First and Second World Wars. They were responsible for the Balfour Declaration, which they attained because of their wealth.¹⁹ Paragraph 32 of the charter points to Zionism’s imperialist tendencies, and refers readers to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* for details of the Zionist conspiracy. It declares Hamas to be the spearhead in the confrontation with global Zionism and stresses that the Arab and Muslim nations will fulfill their role in the next confrontation against the Jewish “merchants of war.”²⁰

Even though Hamas’ charter did not always square with Azzam’s philosophy – e.g., in the context of adopting territorial nationalism (*wataniyyah*) on Hamas’ part and including it as part of the religious credo, which opposes Azzam’s rejection of territorial nationalism and adoption instead of Islamic globalism – this was not enough to prevent Azzam from supporting the movement, both financially and ideologically.²¹ Perhaps the understanding that ignoring the national aspect of the Palestinian problem would leave Hamas outside the Palestinian arena is what allowed Azzam to reach a compromise with the movement on the matter.

An issue that clearly would have divided Azzam and Hamas is Hamas’ willingness to agree to a hudna (a temporary long term truce) with Israel, which occurred after the victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections on January 25, 2006.²² Azzam, relying on religious rulings by clerics who preceded him and on verse 36 in Sura 9 (“The Repentance”) of the Quran, which states “However, you may declare all-out war against the idol worshipers (*even during the Sacred Months*), when they declare all-out war against you, and know that God is on the side of the righteous,”²³ determined that it was permitted to maintain a temporary peace agreement with the Jewish “infidels.” This is the case, however, only on condition that it serves and does not threaten Muslim interests

and on condition that it not include certain elements, such as recognition of their right to any part of Muslim land, because Islamic land belongs to no one except God and no one has the right to concede any of it. Because signing a temporary peace agreement with Israel recognizes the Jewish “infidels” right to Palestine, Azzam strictly prohibited signing any such truce as long as the State of Israel was in existence.²⁴ This explains the call on March 6, 2006 to the Hamas government by Ayman al-Zawahiri, Bin Laden’s deputy, not to honor any agreements signed with Israel (which he called “agreements of submission”) and to continue jihad against it until the liberation of Palestine.²⁵

Abdullah Azzam had a great deal of respect for Hamas’ spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, and called him “the symbol of the firm position of the Islamic movement.” At Islamic rallies in the United States to which he was invited as the guest of honor and that were attended by Hamas’ representatives, he would shower Yassin with praise from every podium. At the Oklahoma City rally held in December 1988 by the Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP), Azzam declared: “Now I would like to turn to the paralyzed man who educated an entire generation that stood against the Jews with these stones: Ahmad Yassin – greetings from this podium. The man moves an entire generation, although he himself cannot move.”²⁶

Azzam also honored Sheikh Yassin in his writings, presenting him at the head of the list of Islamic movement members “who since 1948 worked to liberate Palestine and thanks to whom many young people have repented.” Azzam accorded Yassin a central role in rallying the younger members of the Islamic Movement at the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada. He emphasized that although the intifada started with military action carried out by Islamic Jihad and Fatah activists, and although at the start Hamas operated as part of the alignment of the Palestinian jihad against Israel rather than its leader, thanks to Yassin’s organizational skills and the unique Islamic character of the movement, it very soon stood out on the Palestinian arena and earned widespread Palestinian public support.²⁷

The closeness Azzam felt towards Hamas and his familiarity with it were expressed in his book *Hamas: The Historical Roots and the Charter*. In it, Azzam seeks to lead the reader to the final conclusion that he endorses,

i.e., that only Hamas is capable of restoring Palestine into Muslim hands in this era.

Azzam raised funds for Hamas, both in his travels through Arab nations and through the branches of the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen* in the United States. One of the pipelines for funneling money to Hamas ran through various institutions operating in the name of the PLO in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, such as the Palestinian Youth Association and the Palestine Student association.²⁸

Hamas warmly embraced Abdullah Azzam and his call to cleave to jihad and seek death for the sake of Allah (*istishhad*). A letter sent in the movement's name, published in February 1990 in a memorial tribute to Abdullah Azzam, said that Hamas had been greatly influenced by his will, especially concerning jihad and self-sacrifice:

The words you wrote in your will have been seared deeply into our souls...Therefore, it will be our joy to respond so that these words serve as a lamp to light the way to jihad for our youths...When we read in your will, "The love of jihad took over my being, my life, my soul, my feelings, my heart" ...When we read your will to your children, "As God lives, I could not live in my henhouse with you the way a hen lives with her chicks as long as the fire of suffering burns the Muslim hearts" ...And when you repeat the saying of the chosen few who lived before you, "Crave for death and you will reward with life," your sincere words enter our souls. For our young people, they become the fire that shoots at the soldiers of the oppressing enemy, and you would have been pleased with the existence of Hamas and the way that [Hamas] has become a symbol around the world.²⁹

Additional statements expressing the great esteem that Hamas had for Abdullah Azzam and for seeing him as an integral part of the movement are evident in Hamas' declaration of a general strike in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on December 27, 1989, to protest his assassination;³⁰ in the condolence letter published by Hamas after the assassination in the monthly *al-Jihad*, which ranked him at the top of its list of martyrs;³¹ in a letter written by Hamas in his memory in issue no. 90 of the monthly *Lahib al-Maraqah* (February 10, 1990), in which it promise to avenge his blood;³² and in an essay devoted to him in its monthly *Falastin al-Muslimah* (January 1990) under the title "The Distinguished Cleric, Graduate of al-Azhar University, Dr. Abdullah Azzam, in the Caravan of Martyrs."³³ In

the early 1990s Hamas bestowed its greatest honor on Azzam by naming its military wing in the West Bank for him – the Abdullah Azzam Martyrs Brigades. Some years later, the names of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip military wings were combined and the united outfit became known as the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Martyrs Brigades.³⁴ In late 2006, Hamas made another gesture of respect towards Azzam when it named its military academy located in al-Nusseirat in the center of the Gaza Strip in his honor. At the entrance to the academy, there is a plaque reading: “Welcome to the *Shahid* Dr. Abdullah Azzam Academy.” The bottom of the sign cites his words: “A Muslim has the greatest glory when he fulfills jihad for the sake of Allah.”³⁵

Kathim Ayish, formerly a student of Azzam at the Jordanian University and currently in charge of Palestinian affairs in the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, has said that many Hamas leaders, past and present, including more than one hundred Hamas operatives deported to Lebanon in late 1992 and many Izz al-Din al-Qassam Martyrs Brigades activists such as Yusuf al-Surqaji, the Brigades’ former commander killed in the first Palestinian intifada, were all followers of Azzam.³⁶ Muhammad Kathim Sawalhah, chairman of the Islamic League in Great Britain, co-founder of Hamas, and follower of Azzam, noted that Azzam’s influence is greatly felt both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: “There is an entire generation of young propagandists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on whom the Palestinian intifada relied, an entire generation influenced by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and his ideas. His influence on the generation as a whole, not just on individuals, was indelible.”³⁷

A good example of Azzam’s influence on the understanding of jihad and *istishhad* by Izz al-Din al-Qassam Martyrs Brigades activists is evident in the case of Said Hassan al-Hutari, the Hamas terrorist who carried out the suicide attack at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv on June 1, 2001, killing 21 Israelis. Al-Hutari wrote his will before embarking on the attack and quoted Abdullah Azzam:

“I say to the world, which supports the Zionists with money and weapons, what the *Shahid* Abdullah Azzam said before me: ‘If the preparation (*Idad*) is considered terrorism – we are terrorists. If defending our dignity is considered extreme – we are extremists. And if fighting the holy war (jihad) against our enemies is fundamentalism – we are fundamentalists.’”³⁸

Operation Defensive Shield, launched in late March 2002, provided a further example of Azzam's ideological impact on Hamas. During the operation, large numbers of books, essays, videotapes, and audiocassettes, statements by Azzam, and slogans praising him were found in Hamas mosques and institutions and in the homes of Hamas members. During the operation, the IDF entered the Muslim Youth Association, one of Hamas' education and welfare institutions, and found an academic paper written by a student from Hebron about Abdullah Azzam. The paper was dedicated to "the *mujahideen* who are fighting for the sake of Allah, to the *shahids* who have been killed sanctifying the name of Allah, to the children of Abdullah Azzam, and all those who studied his teachings and followed his path in Palestine." This paper in a Hamas educational institution is evidence not only of the great interest Azzam still holds for the movement but also of the importance the movement ascribes to instilling his ideology in the younger generation.

Conclusion

The paths of Abdullah Azzam and Osama Bin Laden crossed in 1984 at a critical juncture in the lives of both men. Azzam, a brilliant, authoritative, charismatic demagogue and world-renowned Muslim theologian well connected to the Afghani *mujahideen* leadership, captivated the young, ambitious Bin Laden, who grew stronger in his religious practice and beliefs and sought to learn more and enter into the heart of the Afghani jihad. Bin Laden extended tremendous financial support to Azzam when the latter moved to Peshawar and started recruiting both Arab and non-Arab Muslims volunteers to the Afghani jihad. Azzam, known as the "patriarch of Arab and non-Arab Muslim volunteers," represented for Bin Laden not only a father figure to replace his own dead father but also a constant fount of religious wisdom and radical Islamic ideology hitherto unknown to him. Azzam was the one who gave Bin Laden his understanding of jihad and *istishhad*, which has continued to guide him and al-Qaeda for over the decades.

The connection between Azzam and Palestine was never severed. He viewed Hamas as the spearhead in the religious confrontation between Muslims and Jews in Palestine and his link to the place he sought to return to. Therefore, he maintained close relations with the movement

and made sure to support it financially and ideologically. Hamas viewed him as its guide and placed him at the top of its list of martyrs.

Although Azzam was the guiding light of both Hamas and al-Qaeda, the two organizations are now estranged from one another for a number of reasons. First, Hamas' willingness to sign a hudna with Israel represented the crossing of a red line for Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. Second, Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri are both opposed to the way Hamas applies *shariah* (Muslim religious law) in the Gaza Strip. Third, according to al-Zawahiri, Hamas and Fatah signing the Mecca Agreement (February 8, 2007) paved the way for abdicating Palestine and ceding it to the Jews. Fourth, the restraint shown by Hamas towards Israel since the end of Operation Cast Lead (January 2009), evident in the drastic reduction of rocket launches, is seen by Bin Laden and his deputy as a show of weakness. Finally, Hamas is worried about the growing strength of al-Qaeda and affiliated global jihad organizations in the Gaza Strip, for two primary reasons – the threat to Hamas' hegemony in leading the Islamic stream in the Gaza Strip and the possible damage to Hamas interests as a result of unrestrained activity of those groups against Israel at a time when Hamas is interested in calm. On one occasion only has al-Qaeda given kudos to Hamas: when Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007. Then, al-Zawahiri congratulated Hamas and expressed his hope that it would rule on the basis of *shariah*.

Notes

- 1 Throughout this essay the word jihad is used in its narrow, militant sense, rather than in its broader sense.
- 2 Asaf Maliach and Shaul Shay, *From Kabul to Jerusalem: Al-Qaeda, Global Islamic Jihad and the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation* (Tel Aviv: Matar Publication, 2009), chapters 1 and 2.
- 3 Abdullah Azzam, "The Solid Base," *Al-Jihad* 41 (April 1988), p. 4.
- 4 Abdullah Azzam, *Words from the Front Line* (no publication information available). See: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/azzam/images/30.zip>, July 11, 2000.
- 5 Azzam, "The Solid Base," pp. 4-5.
- 6 Abdullah Azzam, "Who Are the *Shahids*?" *Lahib al-Maraqah* (Peshawar), 86 (January 13, 1990): 29. The monthly *Lahib al-Maraqah* is published by the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*. Azzam served as its editor in chief until his death.
- 7 Abdullah Azzam, *A Muslim Nation's Jihad*, no publication information available, p. 54; Abdullah Azzam, *In Jihad: Jurisprudence and Intellectual Effort*

- to *Infer Law*, (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, no date), p. 135; Translation of verse 97 in Sura 4 – Women (al-Nisaa) – of the Quran is taken from: <http://islamawakened.org/quran/4/97/default.htm>.
- 8 For more on this point, see Asaf Maliach, “Bin Ladin, Palestine and al-Qaeda’s Operational Strategy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* (May 2008): 362-64.
 - 9 Abdullah Azzam, *In the Sea of Battle* (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, 1989). See: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/azzam/images/32.zip>, July 11, 2000.
 - 10 Abdullah Azzam, *Fulfilling Submission* (Kuwait: Homemade videotape, 1989).
 - 11 Abdullah Azzam, *Palestine Memories* (Peshawar: al-Shahid Azzam information center, no date). See: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/azzam/images/41.zip>, July 11, 2000.
 - 12 Abdullah Azzam, *Abdullah Azzam* (Oklahoma City: Islamic Association of Palestine, 1988), videotape.
 - 13 Osama Bin Laden, “The two explosions in al-Riyadh and al-Khubar are a letter for the Americans who did not get the message. Sudan has sold the Afghanis and Arabs very cheaply. I will never go back there.” *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, 2350 (November 27, 1996), p. 5.
 - 14 Abdullah Azzam, *The Defense of Muslim Lands – the Most Important of Individual Obligations* (Amman: al-Risalah al-Hadithah Library, 1987), p. 70 (long version).
 - 15 Azzam, *The Defense of Muslim Lands*, pp. 70, 73; see also Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan* (Sana: al-Jil al-Jadid Library, 1990), p. 17.
 - 16 Azzam, *The Defense of Muslim Lands*, p. 42.
 - 17 Azzam, *The Defense of Muslim Lands*, p. 73; see also Abdullah Azzam, *A Month among the Giants* (Peshawar, The Shahid Azzam Information Center, 1989). See: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/azzam/images/41.zip>, July 11, 2000.
 - 18 Abdullah Azzam, *The Safety Valve* (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, 1989), videotape. As for educational contents, Azzam stressed the need to provide religious instruction first, and only afterwards teach other subjects such as the fundamentals of social and economic regimes. According to Azzam, flipping the order was the same as “sowing seeds in the wind and expecting the seeds to grow into trees in the air.” See Abdullah Azzam, *Educating for Jihad and Constructing It* (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, no date), p. 20.
 - 19 Azzam, “It is enough for us that the Creator helps us and makes our lives pleasant,” *Al-Jihad*, 61 (November 1989), p. 7.
 - 20 Ibid. See also Abdullah Azzam, *The Axis of the Historical Turning Point* (Peshawar: The Shahid Azzam Information Center, no date), p. 8. The use of the expression “Jewish merchants of war” is common in Azzam’s writings and speeches; he even published a book entitled *The Merchants of War*, referring to the Jews in the title.

- 21 Abdullah Azzam, *Questions and Answers about Jihad* (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, no date). See: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/azzam/images/41.zip>, July 11, 2000. See also Abdullah Azzam, *Hamas: The Historical Roots and the Charter* (Peshawar: the Office of Services for the *Mujahideen*, 1990), p. 128.
- 22 "Mashal Offers Israel Conditional Temporary Truce," *BBC Arabic* (January 31, 2006). See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/middle_east_news/newsid_4665000/4665576.stm.
- 23 <http://www.submission.org/suras/sura9.htm>.
- 24 Abdullah Azzam, *Hamas: The Historical Roots and the Charter*, pp. 90-93.
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- 28 Abdullah Azzam, *Questions and Answers about Jihad*, p. 31.
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- 30 Poster 51 of Hamas entitled, "On the Third Year of the *Intifada*: Our Nation Cleaves to Its Eternal Slogan – Jihad: Victory or Martyr's Death" (December 17, 1989); on December 22, 1989, a correction to the poster was issued in which the date of the strike was changed from December 25 to December 27, ostensibly as a gesture to Palestinian Christians celebrating Christmas.
- 31 Condolence announcement issued by Hamas published in Vol. 63 of the monthly *al-Jihad*, January 1990, p. 54.
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- 33 "The Distinguished Cleric, Graduate of Al-Azhar University, Dr. Abdullah Azzam, in the Caravan of Martyrs," *Falastin al-Muslimah*, 5-6 (January 1990), p. 8.
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- 35 http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/Hebrew/heb_n/html/hamas_073.htm, website of the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (MALAM), June 26, 2009.
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