

'Force is the surest way of implementing the right, and how beautiful it is that force and right should march side by side.' This striving [...] is another religious duty imposed by God on the Muslims just as he imposed fasting, prayer, pilgrimage and the doing of good and abandonment of evil upon them."⁹¹

Islam was the message; violence was the method. Al-Banna's "shewd, even cunning caution" was however not going "to come out into the open too soon," rather it followed his staged doctrine. The Muslim Brothers were more effectively violent than other groups on the Egyptian scene. It had raised militancy and martyrdom to central virtues in its ethos. Military terms permeated its literature and speeches. Again and again Banna told members that they were "the army of liberation, carrying on your shoulders the message of liberation, you are the battalions of salvation for this nation afflicted by calamity." They were "the troops of God."⁹²

The use of the concept of jihad showed the military quality of the movement. It insisted that jihad, properly, was a variant of *ijtihad* ("interpretation") and connoted intellectual effort. As used in the society's literature, it conveyed the sense of *qital* ("fighting" or "violent use of force in confrontation"), leading, if necessary, to death and martyrdom. "*Jihad* is an obligation for every Muslim" – a duty as firmly established as any of the other pillars of the faith. This view, argued al-Banna, was supported in Quranic texts, the Traditions, and the Four Schools of Law. Those who minimize "the importance of fighting [*qital*] and the preparation for it" are not true to the Faith. God grants "a Noble life" to that nation alone which "knows how to die a noble death."

Jihad – war – was the central element. Its physical component went with the possibility, even the necessity of death and martyrdom. Al-Banna extolled death in his famed formula "the art of death" (*fann al-mawt*) or "death is art" (*al-mawt fann*). "The Quran has commanded people to love death more than life. Unless the philosophy of the Quran on death replaces the love of life which has consumed Muslims, they will reach naught. Victory can only come with the mastery of the art of death."⁹³

His organization launched a war of terror in Egypt. Prime Minister Ahmad Maher was assassinated in February 1945 just after reading Egypt's declaration of war on the Axis, against the vociferous opposition of the

⁹¹ Hasan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of al-Banna (1906–1949)*, translated by Charles Wendell, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978, p. 80.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 206–7.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Brotherhood; government minister Amin Uthman was murdered in January 1946; from 1946 on, British soldiers in the Canal Zone were attacked.⁹⁴ Theaters were burned down in Cairo. In March 1948, a respected judge was murdered by two members of the secret apparatus. Two more attempts were made on sometime-Prime Minister Nahhas Pasha. In June, houses were blown up in the Jewish quarter of Cairo, two large Jewish-owned department store were bombed. Cinemas were dynamited, and hotels and restaurants catering to the "infidels and the heretics" were set on fire. Women wearing "inadequate dress" were the victims of knife attacks, and homes said to belong to apostates were raided and ransacked by angry believers gathering for "spontaneous demonstrations."⁹⁵ In December, widespread riots brought the university to a stop. The Cairo police chief was killed by a bomb. Dozens of other officials, businessmen, and intellectuals were likewise killed. Prime Minister Nuqrashi Pasha finally ordered the society dissolved – he was gunned down twenty days later. As al-Banna had said, "The dagger, poison, the revolver. . . . These are the weapons of Islam against its enemies."⁹⁶ The Brotherhood had indeed mastered the "art of death."

The last act in the mastery of the insurrectionary art took place after the government-sanctioned killing of al-Banna in 1949. After a bloody incident in the Canal Zone, when British troops stormed the police headquarters in Ismailiyya in late January 1952,

the heart of modern and Westernized Cairo was left a charred ruin in the wake of the most devastating riot in modern Egyptian history [...] groups, well-organized and well-equipped, began the systematic burning of the center of the city. The fire consumed department stores, cinemas, bars, night-clubs, social clubs, luxury food and clothing establishments, novelty shops, auto-showrooms and garages, airline offices and the like.⁹⁷

The "Arab Street" had been reinvented – none of it through spontaneous acts, all of it painstakingly organized by the Brotherhood. Al-Banna's campaign of terror was to become the model for future fundamentalist movements, notably in Iran and Lebanon but throughout the Muslim world: The "how-to" of an Islamist insurrection had been tested.⁹⁸

A salient feature of the terror campaign was the existence of "a secret committee, headed by [al-Banna] and including two or three other 'judges,'

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁹⁵ Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 43.

⁹⁶ Quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 11.

⁹⁷ Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, pp. 92–3.

⁹⁸ Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 43.

[that] organized the trial *in absentia* of those in prominent position who were 'causing corruption on earth,'"⁹⁹ in the manner of the medieval Vehme in Europe. "A relentless war [was] waged against 'the heathen, the apostate, the deviant' who would, when judged dangerous, be put to death in the name of Allah."¹⁰⁰

In decades to come, the intellectual and political matrix al-Banna established was to shape not only the organization he had created but the face of Egypt and beyond. Indeed, as the Brotherhood grew, it came not only to loom large on the horizon of Egyptian affairs but to cast a long shadow over the entire Arab and Muslim world. "Scarcely a week passed without witnessing the appearance at the headquarters of one or more dignitaries and many lesser personages from all parts of the Muslim world, as official speakers or merely as listeners at the meetings. [It was also] a kind of haven for the many hundreds of "foreign" students at the Azhar and other Egyptian schools."¹⁰¹

In a more specialized vein, "Hundreds of young men from Turkey, India, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq... traveled to Egypt to join the Brothers and learn from them the 'art of eliminating the weed.'"¹⁰² Before the society was banned, the Brothers had trained over one hundred foreign terrorists. The society's section for liaison with the Islamic world had nine subcommittees. This section had, amongst other tasks, to act as a "clearing house for the literatures of the various movements throughout the Muslim world," an *Islamintern* of sorts.¹⁰³

Al-Banna had been forthright: "*Jihad* is a collective obligation of the Muslim *umma* in order to spread the Message and an individual obligation when it is necessary to defend from the aggression of the unbelievers," that is, at all times and at all places.

"What I mean with *jihad* is the duty that will last until the Day of Resurrection and which is the object of these words from God's Messenger...: "He who dies without having fought [*ghaza* = raided] and without having had the intent of going, dies of a

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid. (1) North Africa; (2) East and West Africa (Ethiopia, Somaliland, Nigeria, Senegal); (3) the Fertile Crescent (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq); (4) Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the Gulf; (5) Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan; (6) India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaya, the Philippines, China, the Far East and Pacific region; (7) Islamic minorities in America, the USSR, and Europe; (8) an advisory committee and (9) a unit of uncertain functions called "Islamic divisions."

jahiliyya death." [...] Therewith you shall know the meaning of our motto that you must ever retain: *jihad* is our path. [...] [A]t the stage of execution, our movement is one of a merciless war.¹⁰⁴

After the Guide's death, his intellectual mantle fell upon Sayyid Qutb, whose theories radicalized the master's. The entire world, including all Muslim states and governments, had fallen into a state of *jahiliyya*, the term used to qualify pre-Islamic paganism in Arabia. All the regimes were therefore not only unfaithful to Islam, they were apostates, and worthy of being destroyed, their leaders killed. Jihad was permanent; it was only *qital*, violent, armed struggle. Qutb spread the idea of an "Islamic Revolution" launched by his friend the Indo-Pakistani Abu Ala Maududi. Heavily leaning on thirteenth-century Hanbalite scholar Ibn Taimiyya,¹⁰⁵ Qutb vehemently denied that Islam and its jihad were defensive, and stressed instead the offensive and revolutionary nature of both.¹⁰⁶ Martyrdom was the highest calling. "The death of a believer is in itself an honor."¹⁰⁷ Based on the Quranic verse "Kill the idolaters wherever they are" (9:5), his jihad-*qital* theory demanded "selective" murder (*qatl*).¹⁰⁸ The next generation of Egyptian jihadis, the al-Jihad splinter group led by Abd-al Salaam Faraḡ, made the *badith* "Jihad is confronting your enemy and spilling his blood" into an axiom.¹⁰⁹

Al-Banna's sympathy for the Saudi Wahhabite creed and policy was entirely uncoincidental. After all, Abdul Wahhab himself had reintroduced *takfir* as an active principle in Islamic affairs after centuries of the ulama putting restraints on this divisive and dangerous practice. All relied on the Hanbalite school and ibn Taimiyya's doctrines.

Hassan al-Banna's intellectual father, Rashid Rida, had rallied to the flag of "Amir" Abdulaziz ibn Saud, the future founder of the Saudi kingdom. Rida saw the rise of the Saudi empire as a triumph for a "revival" of true and pure Islam. Al-Banna concurred:¹¹⁰ Saudi Wahhabis and the Brotherhood were to remain close.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ Carré and Michaud, *Les Frères musulmans*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁵ See Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, New Haven, CT, & London, Yale University Press, 1990.

¹⁰⁶ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, translated by S. Barul Hasan, Karachi, International Islamic Publications, 1981, pp. 120-1, 137ff.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁰⁸ In Olivier Carré, *Mystique et politique: lecture révolutionnaire du Coran par Sayyid Qutb, Frère musulman radical*, Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 1984, var. pp. 17, 123, 127.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Youssef, *Revolt Against Modernity: Muslim Zealots and the West*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1985, p. 81. Quran 11:216 was also crucial: "Warfare is ordained to you."

¹¹⁰ Quoted by Carré and Michaud, *Les Frères musulmans*, p. 15.

¹¹¹ Laurent Murawiec, *La Guerre d'après*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003.

Iraq: The "Manufacture of Death"

Al-Afghani's doctrines had two sides – pan-Islamic and pan-Arab. Their believers often slaughtered one another with zest, for turf or doctrine, but the beliefs shared a common core that transcended local or temporary enmity.

In the interwar years, Iraq was the epicenter of modern Arab secularism. In the 1930s, Iraq as an "Arab Prussia" was an Arab nationalist trope. A national "culture" was developed: "Iraqi ex-Ottoman officers... acquired from the Young Turk experience what might be called a culture of conspiracy, lawlessness and violence."¹¹² The oath of the Committee Union and Progress (CUP) committed the member "to kill every person, however near and dear to him, whom [CUP] might condemn to suffer death."¹¹³

These tactics were greatly reinforced from the 1930s onwards through the spread of European radical ideologies which came to be greatly and widely admired. This was most true of nazism in the 1930s. The toughness they preached, the quasi-military discipline it sought to instill in its followers, the ideological indoctrination it systematically pursued, its vision of politics as violent conflict in which winners naturally would "liquidate" the losers, the total renovation of society to which it aspired – all of this seemed to young officers, as well as to the teachers through whose hands they passed as schoolboys, to be supremely worthy of emulation. The founders of the Baath Party... all of them secondary school teachers in the 1930s, did not hide their admiration for the ideology of German nationalism as preached, for instance, by Fichte, or for its modern Nazi version.¹¹⁴

Dr. Sami Shawkat, Iraqi director-general of education in the 1930s, and a future Nazi agent, told secondary-school boys. "The nation which does not excel in the manufacture of death with iron and fire will be forced to die under the hoofs of the horses and under the boots of a foreign soldiery. If to live is just, then, killing in self-defense is also just." He approved of Mustafa Kemal because he "trained 40,000 officers in the Manufacture of death," of Reza Shah Pahlavi for "thousands of officers well-versed in the sacred Manufacture," and of Mussolini for "tens of thousands of Black Shirts well versed in the Manufacture of death. [...] [I]t is our duty to perfect the Manufacture of Death, the profession of the army, the sacred profession."¹¹⁵

Far from this being a lone instance of a senior official's obsessive necromania, the doctrine was spread by schoolteachers; its leading luminary, Sati

¹¹² Kedourie, *Politics in the Middle East*, 282.

¹¹³ Quoted by Pryce-Jones, *The Closed Circle*, 105.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 282–3.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

al-Husri (1879–1968), an ex-Ottoman official, was appointed by King Faisal the first director-general of the ministry of education; he had served with him as minister of education in Damascus and came to Baghdad in his train. He "became the first ideologue of Arab nationalism, whose ideas and influence spread all over the Arab world.... His prominence in Baghdad during the 1920s and 1930s... gave his teaching added prestige and resonance."¹¹⁶ Husri coined the expression "the industry of death" to describe the Arabs' calling.¹¹⁷

In World War II, Iraq was the only Arab country where a pro-Nazi coup succeeded in taking power. After the failure of the 1942 putsch, the British purged the pro-Nazi elements around Rashid Ali al-Gailani and expelled Husri who became Syria's top education official and was then appointed to head the cultural department of the new Arab League, whose secretary-general Abd al-Rahman Azzam, was an old friend and confederate of Hassan al-Banna. "Until his death, [Husri] published a large number of books which spread his ideas all over the Arab world. It is said that it was owing to Husri that Nasser became converted to pan-Arabism and made it an ideological pillar of his regime."¹¹⁸ At the foundation of the Arab League, Husri became the director of the League's Institute of Arab Studies.

Iraq was the geographic and institutional epicenter, but it was Michel Aflaq, a Syrian Christian, and his fellow founders of the Baath Party, who took upon themselves to devise the Mesopotamian and Levantine doctrines of death. Also under the spell of German nationalist doctrines and impressed with the success of both Nazis and Italian fascism, Aflaq's doctrine demanded a complete refashioning of Arab society that would transfigure the life of the Arab. "This requires cultivation of hatred – hatred and annihilation of everyone whose ideas stand in the way of this transfiguration. This hatred, however, is in reality love – love for Aflaq's fellow Arabs."¹¹⁹

Violence was made an article of faith. It was "a priori idolized," Kedourie writes. "In the Arab underground, bearded priest and keyed up youths... celebrate the embrace of the submachine-gun and the Quran," the pro-Nazi former Vichy official Jacques Benoit-Méchin, Charles de Gaulle's Middle East guru, whom Aflaq told in 1958 regarding the founding of the Baath that "Nazism was of great interest to us" except for the race theory.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹¹⁷ Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, p. 316.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

So they added Marxism to their creed, striving for "a general explosion which will sweep everything away like a tornado of fire."¹²⁰

Aflaq's writings have a thinly disguised substratum of raw emotionality. Where those emotions are affixed can be seen as follows: "Any action that does not call forth in us living emotions and does not make us feel the spasm of love, the revulsion of hate, that does not make our blood race in our vein and our pulse beat faster is a sterile action."¹²¹

Psychoanalysts will diagnose the underlying drives; we may merely state that this was a dangerous starting point. Aflaq's rhetoric was relentlessly violent. "An essential condition for being an Arab," he wrote, "is to have faith in belonging to the Arab nation, and any traitor to Arabism is not an Arab," a statement of anathema close to the Islamic *takfir*, one amongst innumerable examples of the essential religiosity of Arab nationalist thought, where the personal God had been replaced by the deified Arabdom.¹²² Aflaq insisted that revolution is "a powerful psychic current... a mandatory struggle," for which reason nationalists "are merciless to themselves, merciless to others," for successful nationalist action leads to

a powerful hate, a hate unto death of those persons who embody an idea contrary to the idea [of the nationalists]... An inimical theory is not found on its own, it is embodied in individuals who must be annihilated so that it too may be annihilated. The existence of an enemy of our ideas vivifies it [the idea] and it sends the blood coursing in us.¹²³

Aflaq further wrote: "In this struggle we retain our love for all. When we are cruel to others, we know that our cruelty is in order to bring them back to their true selves, of which they are ignorant."¹²⁴ The license to kill was exploited *ad libitum* by Aflaq's progeny.

The Blood of "Red Shiism"

Little did Shiites differ in this respect from their Sunni counterparts. The founding hero of the modern Shiite murder cult was Muhammad Navab-Safavi, whose biography exemplified the cooperation of Shia and Sunni radicals: In 1936, an Iranian radical in exile in Cairo, he frequented Muslim Brotherhood mosques and attended their secret meetings; he met Hasan

¹²⁰ Jacques Benoist-Méchin, *Un Prontemps arabe*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1959, pp. 333-53.

¹²¹ Haim, *Arab Nationalism*, pp. 70-1.

¹²² Ibid., p. 69.

¹²³ Michel Aflaq, *Fi sabil al-Bath*, Beirut, 1959, passim, quoted by Haim, *Arabic Nationalism*, p. 70.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear*, p. 206.

al-Banna in 1937. Though they did not like each other, the meeting did nevertheless convince him that Islam, which he described as "a sword in the shape of a faith" needed a dedicated group of fighters prepared to kill and to die.¹²⁵ He set out to establish his terrorist group and called it the "Fedayeen of Islam":

Islam asks us to command the Good and prevent Evil. Now Good and Evil involve men and women and not objects. All we have to do is to ask followers of Evil to stop and cross over to the side of Good. It is only when our advice is not heeded that we have no choice but to take action, including the elimination of men of Evil.

Most radical authors and preachers use the phrase "we have no choice but [kill]" as if the order of the world dictated murder. In the mind of radical Islam, it does. In the mental disposition of all Muslim terrorists, this Orwellian inversion is critical.¹²⁶

As World War II broke out, Navab-Safavi, back in Najaf, tried but failed to organize a pro-Nazi guerrilla group to murder British. In a momentous encounter, he struck a relationship with a young, ambitious mullah, Ruhollah Khomeini. The young cleric had fulminated against a prominent secularist figure, judge Ahmad Kasravi, whose best-selling books were an assault on Islam's influence on Persia. Khomeini had responded with a book of his own, the tenor of which was to call Kasravi a "son-of-a-bitch," "stupid," "bastard," and "cow dung," and then added: "The rules of Islam do not provide a cure for your diseases, which are the love of debauchery and fornication as well as compulsive lying and cheating. The rule of Islam declares your blood to be worthless and shall cut off your thieving arms."¹²⁷

Khomeini used his religious authority to order Kasravi's assassination. Navab-Safavi now had the necessary licence to kill. Kasravi was to become the first of Islam's many "enemies" murdered by this tiny group of "Soldiers of Allah." Probably formed in 1942, the group was in regular contact with Khomeini. The killer for the first "mission" was directed to use a blade, for "shedding the miscreant's blood" was an important consideration.¹²⁸ Through the 1940s and 1950s, the Fedayeen murdered more than a dozen "enemies of Islam" – including a prime minister and a minister of

¹²⁵ Quoted in Firuz Akbari, *Tariq Shohada [The Way of the Martyrs]*, Tehran, 1979, in Taheri, *Holy Terror*, pp. 51-2.

¹²⁶ Muhammad Navab-Safavi, *Jame'eh va Hokumat Islami [Islamic Society and Government]*, Qom, 1980, 71. Cited by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 53.

¹²⁷ Ruhollah Khomeini, *Kashf al-Asrar [Key to the Secrets]*, Tehran, 1980, 232, quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 232.

¹²⁸ Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 56.

education – with complete impunity, as various forces – the Shah's government, the SAVAK, the British, and nationalist leader Dr. Mossadeq among others – all found it convenient to lend him a modicum of help or leeway against their own enemies. Navab-Safavi spoke of his "blood-covered path of courage."

On January 10, 1954, the Iranian terrorist arrived in Cairo, where two days later he spoke at a mass meeting of the Muslim Brotherhood at the university. In the evening, he was the main speaker at the evening meeting at the headquarters of the Brotherhood. Al-Banna had been involved in a cooperative effort with radical Shiite clerics to bring Sunni and Shiites together, an Islamic ecumenicism based on radicalism. Navab-Safavi cared to explain himself. This hero of radical Islam, honored after the 1978-9 revolution, wrote:

We know of no absolute values besides total submission to the will of the Almighty. People say: "don't lie!" but the principle is different when we serve the will of Allah. He taught man to lie so that we can save ourselves at moments of difficulties and confuse our enemies. Should we remain truthful at the cost of defeat and danger to the Faith? People say "don't kill!" But the Almighty Himself taught us how to kill. Without such a skill, Man would have been wiped out long ago by the beasts. Shall we not kill when it is necessary for the triumph of the Faith? We say that killing is tantamount to saying a prayer when those who are harmful [to the Faith] need to be put out of the way. Deceit, trickery, conspiracy, cheating, stealing and killing are nothing but means. On their own, they are neither good nor bad. For no act is either good on its own, isolated from the motivation that motivated it. Look at the kitchen knife. Is it either good or bad? With it a housewife can cut the meat she needs for her daily stew. A miscreant could use it to end the life of a true believer. And a soldier of Islam could use it to pierce the black heart of a harmful one.¹²⁹

Since God exists, everything is permitted! Neither Good nor Bad exist by themselves, Islam states, if they did, their absolute value would bind God's hands, which by definition cannot happen – hence the famous and crucial hadith according to which God "can change good into evil and evil into good, there is no problem." There is therefore no boundary that may not be crossed in pursuit of God's putative Will. Values, again, are negated. What matters is *niyyah*, the believer's intention. To him, Navab-Safavi said, "Throw away your worry beads and buy a gun. For worry beads keep you silent, while guns silence the enemies of Islam."¹³⁰ It was incumbent upon the

¹²⁹ Muhammad Navab-Safavi, *Collected Speeches, Messages and Edicts*, Tehran, 1983, 51; quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 24.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Navab va Yaranash, *Navab and his Companions*, Tehran, 1981, quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 50.

latter's confederate Khomeini richly to elaborate the theology of brutality: "Muhammad was not only instrumental in bringing the Islamic law: he was also its first executor. [...] He cut off hands, chopped off limbs, stoned adulterers to death."¹³¹ Islam, Khomeini avers, is not a religion of peace:

Islam's *jihad* is a struggle against idolatry, sexual deviation, plunder, repression and cruelty. The war waged by [non-Islamic] conquerors, however, aims at promoting lust and animal pleasures. They care not if whole countries are wiped out and many families left homeless. But those who study *jihad* will understand why Islam wants to conquer the whole world. All the countries conquered by Islam or to be conquered in the future will be marked for everlasting salvation. For they shall live under [God's law]. . . . Those who know nothing of Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. Those are witless. Islam says: "Kill the unbelievers just as they would kill you all!" Does this mean that Muslims should sit back until they are devoured by [the unbelievers]? Islam says: "Kill them, put them to the sword and scatter their armies!" Does this mean sitting back until [non-Muslims] overcome us? Islam says: "Whatever good there is exists thanks to the sword and in the shadow of the sword!" People cannot be made obedient except with the sword. The sword is the key to Paradise which can be opened only for Holy warriors! There are thousands of other [Quranic] verses and hadiths urging Muslims to value war and to fight. Does all that mean that Islam is a religion that prevents men from waging war? I spit upon those foolish souls who make such a claim.¹³²

This cult of force cannot go without a cult of blood:

Islam grew with blood. [...] The great Prophet of Islam in one hand carried the Quran and in the other a sword; the sword for crushing the traitors and the Quran for guidance. For those who could be guided, the Quran was their means of guidance, while as for those who could not be guided and were plotters, the sword descended on their heads. Islam is a religion of blood for the infidels but a religion of guidance for other people. We have sacrificed much blood and many martyrs. . . . We do not fear giving martyrs. Whatever we give for Islam is not enough and is too little.¹³³

Killing is good under all circumstances, *fil sabil Allah* ("in the way of Allah") Khomeini avers:

If one allows the infidels to continue playing their role of corrupters on earth, their eventual moral punishment will be all the stronger. Thus, if we kill infidels in order to put a stop to their [corrupting] activities, we have indeed done them a service. For their eventual punishment will be less. To allow the infidels to stay alive means to let them do more corrupting [activities]. [To kill them] is a surgical operation

¹³¹ Quoted in Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York, New York University Press, 1993, p. 440.

¹³² Quoted in Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 29.

¹³³ Speech at Feyziyeh Theological School, Aug. 24, 1979, FBIS, Aug. 27, 1979, quoted in Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, pp. 32-3.

commanded by Allah... those who follow the rules of the Quran are aware that we have to apply the laws of *qisas* [retribution] and that we have to kill... War is a blessing for the world and for every nation. It is Allah himself who commands men to wage war and kill. The Quran commands: "Wage war until corruption and all disobedience are wiped out!" The wars that our Prophet... waged against the infidels were divine gifts to humanity. Once we have won the war [with Iraq], we shall turn to other wars. For that would not be enough. We have to wage war until all corruption, all disobedience of Islamic law ceases [throughout the world]. The Quran commands: "War! War until victory!" A religion without war is a crippled religion... It is war that purifies the earth... Allah be praised, our young warriors are putting this command into effect and fighting. They know that to kill the infidels is one of the noblest missions Allah has reserved for mankind.¹³⁴

This is a Gnostic-Manichean *Weltanschauung*. Likewise, Ali Shariati, with Khomeini the leading ideologue of the revolution, merged the Gnostic version of Shia with the twentieth century's totalitarian ideologies.

Born in 1933, Shariati, "the most ferocious revolutionary among the ideologues of the... revolution" earned his doctorate in Paris, after having worked under Islamologist Louis Massignon, a romantic apologist of Shiite Islam and Sufi mysticism.¹³⁵ The starting point of Shariati's "Islam-Marxism" was a violent rejection of Europe (the West), of European (Western) culture and values. "Come, friends, let us abandon Europe. Let us cease this nauseating apish imitation of Europe. Let us leave behind this Europe that always speaks of humanity but destroys human beings wherever it finds them," Frantz Fanon had written: Shariati repeated.¹³⁶ Shariati's was a Manichean pseudohistory of a world divided between the principles of Good and Evil, from Abel and Cain onward, Prophet Muhammad and the quasi-divine figures of Shia Islam, Ali and Husain stood for "the oppressed," the undifferentiated mass of victims, the poor, the exploited.

Shariati's mythography draws on Frantz Fanon's theory of redemptive violence (expounded in particular in *The Wretched of the Earth*), to which Jean-Paul Sartre gave worldwide renown. For "the colonized man," his 1961 preface states, to kill a white man is a double liberation: It frees the colonized man by allowing him to retrieve his identity stolen by the colonizer, and it

¹³⁴ Quoted in Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 113.

¹³⁵ Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York, New York University Press, 1993, p. 105.

¹³⁶ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, 1968 (*Les damnés de la terre*, Paris, François Maspéro, 1961), pp. 312–13. Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, Berkeley, CA, Mian Press, 1979, quoted in Abbas William Samii, "Origins and Implications of Religious Extremism," Parliamentary Conference on Euro-Atlantic Currents and Future Challenges, Berlin July 6, 1984.

liberates the colonizer by freeing him (in death) of his identity as a colonizer. The Fanon-Sartre doctrine had become an instant hit with the entire intelligentsia of the third world and their Western "anti-imperialist" professors. Shariati's inspirations also included Herbert Marcuse's theory of alienation – he approvingly drew upon the latter's "one-dimension man"¹³⁷ – and French occultist-fascist convert to Islam René Guénon. European fascists and Marxists were perfect to prove that Western culture and society were toxic. Shariati could then present his panacea, avidly imbibed by the urban semieducated of prerevolutionary Iran whose idol he became.

Martyrdom was the path to redemption – Marx's proletarians, Fanon's wretched of the earth, Shariati's dispossessed were of a kind, Shariati's in death only. Husain was not just a martyr, he was a revolutionary martyr. "Red Shiism" was thus invented, also called "Ali's Shiism," as opposed to the "official" Shiism that had become the state religion in Iran in the sixteenth century. In Red Shiism, "the color refers to the Shiite tradition of the gored bodies of Husain and his 72 disciples as much as to 'red' Leftism," as "Shia is the religion of rebellion."¹³⁸ Red Shiism is "the religion of martyrdom," and, writes Shariati, Husain is "the manifestation of the blood revolution."¹³⁹ Drawing upon the legacy of Hasan-I Sabbah's *Assassins* and that of the Gnostic rebellion of the Qarmats, Shariati describes popular uprisings, similar in Persian context to the European *jacqueries*: "The masses have made up their minds. They kill the whole group [of Mongols]. As they know that there is no turning back, as they know that they have already chosen death, they stop wavering. The choice of death gives them such energy that their single-village revolt against that bloodthirsty regime is successful."¹⁴⁰

Shariati's uprising, ascribing his own mythos to the "masses," is a imaginary morality tale, his "culture of martyrdom" is a cult of death: "Do you not see how sweetly and peacefully a martyr dies?" The Christian martyr dies testifying to God's message, the neo-Shiite martyr dies killing others. "For those not fully accustomed to their everyday routine, death is an awesome tragedy, a horrendous cessation of things; it is becoming lost in nothingness. But the one who intends to migrate from himself begins with death. How great are those men who have heeded the command and acted accordingly: 'Die before you die.'"

¹³⁷ Ali Shariati, *Reflections on Humanity: Two Views of Civilization and the Plight of Man*, Houston, Free Islamic Literature, 1974, p. 22.

¹³⁸ Khosrokhavar, *Les Nouveaux martyrs*, p. 72.

¹³⁹ Ali Shariati, *Red Shiism*, Houston, Free Islamic Literature, 1974, p. 8.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

In a bizarre parody of Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," Shariati asserts: "Just as one can only 'understand' a fiery bullet when a fiery bullet hits him, so he can understand a concept precisely when he stand in the current course of the application of that concept. It is in action that truth manifests itself."¹⁴¹

In a text devoted to "the philosophy of the rise of the *mujahid*," he extolled the offensive fighter-martyr whose death is not accident but design: "reaching the absolute by one's own death." The death of the martyr:

brings about the death of the enemy at the hands of the ones who are educated by the blood of a *shahid*. By shedding his own blood, the *shahid* is not in a position to cause the fall of the enemy. He wants to humiliate the enemy and he does so. By his death, he does not choose to flee the hard and uncomfortable environment. He does not choose shame. Instead of a negative flight, he commits a positive attack. By his death, he condemns the oppressor and provides commitment for the oppressed. He exposes aggression and revives what has hitherto been negated. He reminds the people of what has already been forgotten. In the icy hearts of a people, he bestows the blood of life, resurrection, and movement... the blood of a *shahid* is a rescue vessel."¹⁴²

To sum it up, Shariati's "quintessence of martyrdom" was this: "Martyrdom is an invitation at all times and for all the generations: 'If you can, give death. If you cannot, die.'"¹⁴³

The chief clerical theorist of martyrdom, Morteza Mutahhari, was assertive: "Islam is not Christianity... Islam is the religion of agitation, revolution, blood, liberation and martyrdom."¹⁴⁴ In his opus *The Martyr*, he makes the "self-negation" – the self-destruction – of the individual the highest virtue, jihad the highest calling, and killing the noblest action: "In society at large, the issue is quite clear... The factor of violence is necessary... there is no inhibition against the use of violence."¹⁴⁵ Further:

The Holy Prophet had said: "All good lies under the sword and under the shadow of the sword." He has also said: "Allah has honored my followers because of the hoofs of their horses, and the position of their arrows." This means that the Muslim

¹⁴¹ Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, p. 114.

¹⁴² Ali Shariati, "Blood of the Shahid is the Candlelight that Gives Vision," in Adam Parfrey, ed., *Extreme Islam: Anti-American Propaganda of Muslim Fundamentalism*, Los Angeles, Feral House, 2001, pp. 206–7.

¹⁴³ Khosrokhavar, *Les Nouveaux martyrs*, p. 76.

¹⁴⁴ Morteza Mutahhari, *Nebzat Islami dar Sadsal Akhir* [Islamic Movements in the Last Hundred Years], Tehran, 1979, p. 83, quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, p. 201.

community is the community of power and force. Islam is the religion of power. It produces *mujahids*.¹⁴⁶

And

What does a martyr do? This function is not confined to resisting the enemy, and in the process, either giving him a blow or receiving a blow from him. Had that been the case, we could say that when his blood is shed it goes to waste. But at no time is a martyr's blood wasted. It does not flow on the ground. Every drop of it is turned into hundreds and thousands of drops, nay, into tons of blood, and is transferred into the body of his society. That is why the Holy Prophet has said: "Allah does not like any drop more than the drop of blood shed in His way." Martyrdom means the transfusion of blood into a society, especially a society suffering from anemia. It is the martyr who infuses fresh blood into the veins of a society.¹⁴⁷

Based on Ayatollah Khomeini's theology and Ali Shariati's Islamo-Marxist doctrine, Revolutionary Iran has cultivated a systematic worship for blood, death, and killing, to the point of making them a state doctrine, a state religion even. The grip of the doctrine, the object of constant repetition over more than a quarter century, is only matched by its practical implementation, both within and without Iran. The future Supreme Guide Ali Khamenei said in a sermon that "the martyrs are encouraging us, the Quran in one hand and a gun in the other."¹⁴⁸ Khamenei made death the fulcrum and the panacea: "The secret of all this lies in one issue – the secret of the victory of [all prophets] as well as of the victory of the Islamic revolution... is found in one issue, namely, that people among the servants of God are willing to sacrifice their lives."¹⁴⁹ In another sermon, he stated that martyrdom was "by definition" victory because it was better than living in submission. "Remaining alive under the condition of subjugation to the rule of the [evil rulers] is, in reality, death, while [death] through cutting [their] bloody claws is life": life is death and death is life – the Gnostic inversion of reality was perfect. Khamenei had coined the expression of "living

¹⁴⁶ Morteza Motahari [Motah-Hary], *The Martyr*, Houston, Free Islamic Literature, 1980, p. 10.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Haggay Ram, *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran: The Use of the Friday Congregational Sermon*, Washington, DC, The American University Press, 1944, 71. *Khutbah* of March 21, 1980. In a startlingly "Orwellian" formulation, he also said that "remaining alive under the condition of subjugation to the rule of [the tyrant] is, in reality, death while [death] through cutting the bloody claws of the [tyrant] is life," *khutbah* of September 26, 1980.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 138, from a March 20, 1981, *khutbah*.

martyrs."¹⁵⁰ Khamenei also sloganized that the believer should have "the Quran in one hand and a gun in the other."¹⁵¹ His colleague, future president Ayatollah Hashemi-Rafsanjani, preached that those slain in God's way (that is, in jihad) "do not feel any pain when struck by a bullet, an arrow, a spike, [or] a dagger." He also told a story: "The head of a shahid was cut off... we brought the corpse to Isfahan. His father came, wanting to see his child.... He was told that the corpse had no head. He replied: "It makes no difference." Approaching and seeing the corpse, he placed his lips on the separated head and kissed it. There was not even the slightest sign of emotion on his face. He said: "My God! I thank my child, my son, for becoming a *shahid* in the way of God. He became a *shahid* in the same way [Imam] Husayn... was slain."¹⁵²

I hear Ayatollah Fazlallah Mahalati, once one of the main leaders of Iran's international terror apparatus:

A believer who sees Islam trampled underfoot and who does nothing to stop it will end up in the seventh layer of Hell. But he who takes up a gun, a kitchen knife or even a pebble with which to arm and kill the enemies of the Faith has his place assured in Heaven. An Islamic state is the sum total of such individual believers. An Islamic state is a state of war until the whole world sees and accepts the light of the True Faith.¹⁵³

Islamic terrorism has played a constant key role in revivalist movements in the past 150 years. The idea of murdering, maiming, and menacing the enemy for the purpose of hastening the final triumph of Islam has always held a very strong appeal among the Muslim masses. Which explains why "[t]o kill the enemies of Allah and to offer the infidels the choice between converting to Islam and being put to death is the duty of every individual believer, as well as the supreme – if not the sole – task of the Islamic state."¹⁵⁴

The theology of death features a Leninist vanguard, the *mustanbat*, unaware and oppressed masses, the *mustazaf*, and the accursed oppressors, the *mustakbar*. In a companion typology, the Muslim "hypocrites" (*munafeqeen*) refuse to "reform," are warned first, but then "killing a hypocrite who refuses to reform is more worthy than a thousand prayers," or

¹⁵⁰ Ram, *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran*, sermon of September 26, 1980, 318–19, p. 72.

¹⁵¹ Ram, *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran*, p. 71.

¹⁵² Ram, *Myth and Mobilization in Revolutionary Iran*, pp. 73–4, Sermon of September 4, 1981.

¹⁵³ Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

so said Ayatollah Muhammad Muhamadi Guilani, once the Islamic judge at the sinister Evin prison of Tehran, often the scene of great butchery.¹⁵⁵

He who is designated as an enemy of the Faith becomes *mahdur addamm*, one whose blood must be shed. Non-Muslims, straying Muslims, hypocrites and *dhimmis*, Jews and Christians, will be subjected to anathema:

He who points the finger of *takfir* at a person or a group of persons who refuse to see the light of Islam and embrace it sign the death sentence of that individual or community. For the step that must follow *takfir* is known as *tathir*, which means purification. Could a responsible doctor [of medicine] see microbes in a body through a microscope and do nothing about what he sees? The answer is clearly no. The same can be said of true believers, who cannot see agents of corruption acting within the body of the community without seeking to destroy them.

So wrote radical Abdul-Karim Biazar-Shirazi, in echo of the Nazi obsession with alien contaminations of the *Volk's* purity.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, for the "enemies of Islam who shall in no circumstance return to the right Path," they should either be disfigured to a point that "they are recognized by the ugliness of their faces that reflects the ugliness of their souls," or "eliminated," writes another master thinker, Muhammad-Taqi Partovi-Sabzevari, a *hadith* authority: "Kill the troublemaker before he can harm you."¹⁵⁷ He explains:

Our own Prophet... was even more of a revolutionary.... Would he hesitate to put the guilty to the sword? Never, three times never! [...] In the Quran's historic vision Allah's support and the revolutionary struggle of the people must come together, so that Satanic rulers are brought down and put to death. A people that is not prepared to kill and to die in order to create a just society cannot expect any support from Allah... that day [of Islam ruling over the entire world] must be hastened through our *jihad*, through our readiness to offer our lives and to shed the unclean blood of those who do not see the light brought from the Heavens by Muhammad.... It is Allah who puts the gun in our hand. But we cannot expect Him to pull the trigger as well simply because we are faint-hearted.¹⁵⁸

Indeed, as the infamous "killing judge" Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali interpreted it (he had been a member of the Navab-Safavi gang in the 1940s): "Those who are against killing have no place in Islam. Our Prophet killed with his own blessed hand. Our Imam Ali killed more than 700 on a single

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁵⁶ Abdul-Karim Biazar-Shirazi, *Ebadat va Khodsazi [Prayer and Self-Improvement]*, Mashhad, 1986, pp. 118–19, quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁷ *Ayandeh Nebzat Islami [The Future of the Islamic Movement]*, Qom, 1986, p. 63. Quoted in Taheri, *Holy Terror*, p. 23.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 239.

day. If the survival of the Faith requires the shedding of blood, we are here to perform our duty."¹⁵⁹

Martyro-pathology

"Martyro-pathology" is the form taken on by Iranian revolutionary nihilism. "Absent a perspective of self-actualization in the world, [it] offers the possibility of actualizing oneself in death" through a "mortiferous religiosity": The individual acquires an existence in dying:

This disenchanted segment of the revolutionary youth that joins the *basije* [the revolutionary military mobilization] is not fundamentally concerned with life any longer. It profoundly desires to be annihilated, and destroy an important part of enemy forces in the process of its own destruction. [...] Death thus shifts from being an accepted possibility, or risk, to being "a burning desire," "an unquenchable thirst."¹⁶⁰

To describe the psychology of the suicidalists:

In the case of the obsession of death, we are dealing with a state of mind that sees in death a voluptuous embodiment of the ideal, endowed with a value per se, whose accomplishment will fill its adherents with joy... the act of self-immolation and in the process to give death to other humans out of a love for death. [...] In radical Islam... this mortiferous outlook sees life as an inferior level of being compared to the felicity gained by self-annihilation and the annihilation of others – martyrdom. ... Martyro-pathology is a type of behavior that sets up death as the aim, not life.¹⁶¹

The suicidalist's blood must be spilled because it burdens him with life; the victims', because their death is good. "The conversion of blood into a mortiferous principle is expressed by using the cultural schemes of Shia [Islam] where [the] blood spilled in Karbala provide the models for the martyrs."¹⁶² This is an inversion of the traditional Shia outlook whereby Ali, Husain, and their companions had "taken the sins of the world upon themselves": They could be admired, symbolically imitated, but they did not push their followers to become martyrs: the function of the bloody *Ashura* celebrations is cathartic and symbolic. Modern radical Islam – Khomeini and Shariati among others – have made the symbol real.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁶⁰ Khosrokhavar, *Les Nouveaux martyrs*, pp. 84–5.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 160.

The Iranian regime started training *Enteharis* ("suicide-attackers"). One of the the top trainers, Said Shaykh Ragheeb Harb, a "saint" in the Radical Pantheon, told them:

You shall begin to live once you have killed yourself. The "you" in you is none other than Satan in disguise. Kill him and you will be saved. Muslims are lucky because they accomplish this self-annihilation in accordance with divine rules. For Islam has an answer for every imaginable question. All an individual needs to do is to obey the rules without posing questions, without seeking variations.¹⁶³

The early sect of Islamic extremists, the Kharijites, had thought no different: "You, who wish to contend with me in a duel, approach that I may hand you the poisoned beverage of death; there is no shame in passing one another the cup which slays those who put their lips to it: pour it out for me, then, and drink it yourself."¹⁶⁴

The Palestinian Blood Group

The blood-lapping "Black September" assassin was a standard-issue PLO killer. A review of that organization and its components shows that "for Arafat and his Fatah cofounders, violence had assumed from the outset mythic proportions."¹⁶⁵ Like Shariati, the small Palestinian groups that were creating Fatah had been "mesmerized" by Frantz Fanon's notion of "sacred violence." The organization's hymn went:

Farewell, tears and sorrow.
Farewell, sighs and grief,
Our people has come to loathe you,
Welcome, blood and heroic death.¹⁶⁶

Likewise, a slogan in high popularity in the Palestinian movement has been: "With our lives and with our blood we will redeem Palestine."¹⁶⁷ A poem recited at the beginning of a summer camp and broadcast on the television of the Palestinian authority proceeds:

We are your boys, O Palestine
We will flood you with our blood.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ In *Dir al-Islam aqwi* [Islam Is the Strongest Religion], Beirut, 1983, 22, quoted by Taheri, *Holy Terror*, pp. 131–2.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Tilman Nagel, *The History of Islamic Theology*, Princeton, NJ, Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000, p. 43.

¹⁶⁵ Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War: The Man and His Battle for Israeli Conquest*, New York, Grove Press, 2003, p. 23.

¹⁶⁶ Quoted by Karsh, *Arafat's War*, p. 35.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 101.

The desire to kill is sowed early and often, and with it the love of killing. Sheikh Ibrahim Mahdi from the Sheikh Ijlin Mosque in Gaza said in a sermon broadcast on Palestinian television:

A young man said to me: "I am fourteen years old, and I have four years left before I blow myself up amongst the Jews." I said to him: "Oh son, I ask Allah to give you and myself martyrdom." He added: "Blessings for whoever has raised his sons on the education of *jihad* and martyrdom; blessings for whoever has saved a bullet in order to stick it in a Jew's head."¹⁶⁹

Sheikh Ikrimah Sabri, mufti of Irsim, praised suicide-killing, concluding a sermon: "Whereas the enemies of Islam love life, Muslims love death and strive for martyrdom."¹⁷⁰

Arafat himself systematically used that rhetoric: "Oh our pure martyrs. Rest in peace, calm and assured. Our blood is cheap for the sake of the goal."¹⁷¹ He told the family of the June 2001 Tel Aviv disco suicide bomber: "The heroic martyrdom operation [of the man] who turned his body into a bomb [is] the model of manhood and sacrifice for the sake of Allah and the homeland."¹⁷² The bloodlust and the cult of force were congenital to Fatah and the PLO. The Palestinian National Charter (1968) had hammered in its Article 9: "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase."¹⁷³ A slightly different version read: "Armed struggle is the only way of liberating Palestine and is thus strategic, not tactical."¹⁷⁴

When Arafat chanted "We have only one motto: victory or death," this might have been downplayed as a rhetorical device or the inflated emotions of an agitated orator.¹⁷⁵ However, his insistence that Palestine can be recovered only "by blood and iron," that "it is the commandos who will decide the future," shows that this represented an "absolute glorification of violence."¹⁷⁶ The initials of the name of the organization Arafat first cofounded, al-Fatah – *Filistin Tahrir Hezb* – Party of the Liberation of Palestine, spelled the acronym *HTF* or *bataf*, which in Arabic means "death," and had to be inverted to *FTH*, *fatah*, or "victory." He established an organic connection

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 104–5.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Laqueur, *No End to War*, p. 72.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 213.

¹⁷³ Y. Harkabi, *The Palestinian Covenant and its Meaning*, London, Vallentine Mitchell, 1979, p. 114.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted by Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

between violence and identity: "Armed struggle restores a lost personal and national identity, an identity taken by force which can only be restored by force. Palestine has been taken away by fire and steel, and it will be recovered by fire and steel."¹⁷⁷ This was vintage Georges Sorel and Frantz Fanon.

A commando of the Palestine Liberation Front was captured with his cohorts in June 1990 before they could accomplish their mission: They were to land on the Tel Aviv beachfront and shoot indiscriminately. He reported that his orders were: "Don't leave anyone alive. Kill them all... children, women, elderly people."¹⁷⁸

It would be tedious to enumerate the litany of attacks on civilians, children, and passers-by that became the hallmark of Palestinian organizations. Bloodlust suffuses them. Hear George Habash, founder and leader of the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine: "In today's world, no one is innocent, no one is neutral. A man is either with the oppressed or he is with the oppressors."¹⁷⁹ He also said, "The prospect of triggering a Third World War does not bother us,"¹⁸⁰ an echo of sorts to Arafat's own retort to Israeli negotiators: "We can accept a lot of casualties, 30,000 martyrs. Can you accept 500 Israeli soldiers killed?"¹⁸¹ A macabre calculus echoes much later by al-Qaida's Suleiman Abu Gaith: "We have the right to kill (at least) four million Americans."¹⁸²

The same applies whether those organizations are "secular" or Islamic. The Charter of Hamas – self-defined as "one of the wings of the Muslim Brothers in Palestine" (Part 1, Article 2) – explains:

Hamas has been looking forward to implementing Allah's promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: "*The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him! This will not apply to the Gharqad, which is a Jewish tree.*" [cited by Bukhari and Muslim; Part 1, Article 7]

Article 8, "The Slogan of the Hamas," states: "Allah is its [that of Hamas] goal, the Prophet its model, the Qur'an its constitution, *jihad* its path and death for the case of Allah its most sublime belief." Article 15 finally explains:

¹⁷⁷ Al Nahar Arab Report, July 15, 1974, quoted by Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁸ Jerusalem Post and Haaretz, June 6, 1990, quoted by Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 121.

¹⁷⁹ Quoted by Becker, *The PLO*, p. 106.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted by Dobson, *Black September*, p. 31.

¹⁸¹ Quoted by Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 157.

¹⁸² MEMRI Special Dispatch, June 12, 2002.

Dwelling one day in the Path of Allah is better than the entire world and everything that exists in it. [...] I swear by that who holds in His Hands the Soul of Muhammad! I indeed wish to go to war for the sake of Allah! I will assault and kill, assault and kill, assault and kill. (Told by Bukhari and Muslim.)¹⁸³

Encapsulating the movement's mind, a Hamas web site was spotted in December 2002 with this statement: "We will use the skulls of Zion's sons [Jews] to build a bridge to heaven."¹⁸⁴ The state-controlled clergy, in another show of cooperation between laity and religion, was itself not shy in expressing the same view. Palestinian Mufti Sheikh Ikrimah Sabri praises martyrdom in his sermons:

We tell them [the Jews]: in as much as you love life the Muslim loves death and martyrdom. There is a great difference between he who loves the hereafter and he who loves this world. The Muslim loves death and [strives for] martyrdom. He does not fear the oppression of the arrogant or the weapons of the blood-letters. The blessed and sacred soil of Palestine has vomited all the invaders and all the colonialists throughout history and it will soon vomit, with Allah's help, the [present] occupiers.¹⁸⁵

Sheikh Mudeiris stated in a sermon on May 2, 2003:

No preacher or sermonizer has the right to begin his words without blessing all our martyrs. . . . The Jews cannot influence the actions of our youth and children. But for you, Allah has chosen martyrdom. . . . Allah had honored our youth . . . by choosing you and by choosing from among you the martyrs. . . . Is the martyr dead like other dead, which requires us to offer condolences and mourn with his family, friend and relatives? Or is the martyr enjoying virtues and the ability to perform miracles, which gives us the right to congratulate the martyr and his family? [...] We have the right to congratulate the martyrs' families, and not extend condolences and sorrow of our martyrs, if they [sacrifice themselves] to Allah. . . . But the martyr is spared the agony of death. This is one of the miracles of the martyr. Is it not enough that the martyr weds 72 black-eyed [virgins]? [...] When the martyr sees the grace of martyrdom and death for the sake of Allah he will wish to return to this world to be killed in it ten times. . . . The martyr – is it enough for him that he does not feel the blow of the sword or the pain of death or of the killing, rather as one of you feels a [wasp] sting.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ <http://www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/documents/charter.html>.

¹⁸⁴ <http://israel.nct/timetospeak/24.htm>.

¹⁸⁵ May 25, 2001, Mufti Sheikh Ikrimah Sabri, Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, PA Television, quoted by Steven Stalinsky, MEMRI, Special Report No. 25 Palestinian Authority, December 28, 2003, "Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000-3."

¹⁸⁶ May 2, 2003, Sheikh Ibrahim Mudeiris, Sheikh Ijlin Mosque in Gaza, PA Television, quoted by Stalinsky, *ibid*.

Equating suicide with martyrdom provided that "enemies of Allah" (i.e., enemies of the Islamists) be killed in the process. Iran set the tone, especially through the ayatollahs' international "Party of God," Hezbollah. The repeated suicide bombings that killed large numbers of American, French, and Israeli soldiers in Lebanon legitimized suicide-killing. Hezbollah also pioneered the use of "snuff movies," videocassettes of bombings and killings.

A Lebanese organization, Shiite by creed but Arab by membership, Hezbollah played a critical role in transferring and transplanting Iranian-Shiite schemes of martyrdom into its surrounding Sunni territory. In another display of ecumenic cooperation, George Habash, himself the Greek Orthodox leader of an Arab terrorist group, agreed in 1972 to give Shiite groups paramilitary training in the PFLP's facilities. When this stopped, it was Sunni-Muslim Arafat who made his facilities available.¹⁸⁷

Later, the mantle of leadership in Hezbollah fell on the shoulders of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the ideologist of a syncretic blend of Islam, of Marxism, and a fullfledged champion of death. Nasrallah professed: "We have discovered how to hit the Jews where they are the most vulnerable. The Jews love life, so that is what we shall take away from them. We are going to win, because they love life and we love death."¹⁸⁸ In December 2002, addressing Hezbollah military units, he said:

These suicide operations are the weapon that God gave this nation, and no one can take it away. . . . Pay no attention to those who say there are civilians and soldiers in Israel. They are all occupiers and invaders, partners in crimes and massacres. [...] Martyrdom operations – suicide bombings – should be exported outside Palestine. I encourage Palestinians to take suicide bombings worldwide. Don't be shy about it.¹⁸⁹

And in a speech aired by Hezbollah's *al-Manar* television:

How can death become joyous? How can death become happiness? When Al-Hussein asked his nephew Al-Qassem, when he had not yet reached puberty: "How do you like the taste of death, son?" He answered that it was sweeter than honey. How can the foul taste of death become sweeter than honey? Only through conviction, ideology, and faith, through belief and devotion [...] each of us lives his days and nights hoping more than anything to be killed for the sake of Allah.

The most honorable death is to be killed. [...] The most honorable death is death by killing, and the most honorable killing and the most glorious martyrdom is when

¹⁸⁷ Taheri, *Holy Terror*, pp. 65-7.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted from <http://www.templeinstitute.org/archive/02-06-27.htm>.

¹⁸⁹ <http://qrmaps.com/thugburg/thug.asp?PID=103983013>.

a man is killed for the sake of Allah, by the enemies of Allah, the murderers of the prophets [i.e., the Jews].¹⁹⁰

We Love Death

Love of death is ubiquitous in radical Islam. It is one of its defining traits. "Everyone should know that the killing, massacring, slaughtering, expulsion and taking of captives that we do, these are sacrifices for the sake of Allah. [...] Woe, woe, woe to the enemies of Allah. Blood, blood, destruction, destruction," a communiqué issued by the Algerian GIA stated.¹⁹¹ In 1972, after the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics, Voice of Palestine had broadcast: "We will the youth of the Arab nation to search for death so that life is given to them, their countries and their people. Each drop of blood spilled from you and from us will be oil to kindle this nation with flames of victory and liberation."¹⁹²

Indeed, at the burial of a Palestinian leader killed in an Israeli raid on Beirut, the eulogist waxed: "Death is the door to a happy future for our people."¹⁹³ Arafat himself had assured in 1968: "Our road is the door of death."¹⁹⁴ Osama bin Laden's 1996 "Declaration of War" says:

Since the sons of the land of the two Holy Places [Saudi Arabia] feel and strongly believe that fighting [jihad] against the unbeliever in every part of the world is absolutely essential. . . . I say to you: These youths love death as you love life. They inherit dignity, pride, courage, generosity, truthfulness. . . . Our youth believe in Paradise after death.¹⁹⁵

The head of al-Qaida adds: "Yes, we kill their innocents, and this is legal religiously and logically. There are two types of terror, good and bad. What we are practicing is good terror. We will not stop killing them."¹⁹⁶

Osama bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam wanted blood: "The life of the Muslim *umma* is solely dependent on the ink of its scholars and the blood of its martyrs. What is more beautiful than the writing of the *umma*'s history with both . . . such that [it] becomes colored with two lines, one of

¹⁹⁰ MEMRI TV Monitor Project – Hizbullah Leader Hassan Nasrallah: "The American Administration is Our Enemy...Death to America" No. 867, February 22, 2005, <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=jihad&ID=SP86705>.

¹⁹¹ Quoted by Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, pp. 171–2.

¹⁹² Dobson, *Black September*, p. 87.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁹⁴ *Time Magazine*, Dec. 13, 1968, quoted by Rubin and Rubin, *Yasir Arafat*, p. 45.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Rubin and Rubin, *Anti-Americanism*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁶ *National Post* (Toronto), Nov. 12, 2001, p. A9, quoted by Cooper, *New Political Religions*, p. 155.

them black and the other one red?"¹⁹⁷ The same soundbite was heard at the Finsbury Park Mosque in London from Sheikh Abu Hamza Al-Masri:

The common principle of all these operations, which we find even among the Palestinian youth, the girls, the women, and the children who throw stones at the bulldozers just to stop the destruction of their lands or homes – what unites all of these operations is their love of death for the sake of Allah, their burning desire to meet Allah. They easily sacrifice their lives for Allah. [...] Here is [the example of] Abu Dharr [one of the Prophet Muhammad's companions] who was among those who, when asked what they love best in this world, said: "I love death." He said, "I love illness, I love hunger, and I love death." The Prophet asked him: "Why do you love that which by nature other people hate, Abu Dharr?" And he answered: "I love hunger because when I am hungry my heart becomes gentle; I love illness because when I am ill my sins decrease; and I love death because when I die I shall meet my Lord." [...] The believers may ruin their lives in this world for the sake of the world to come.¹⁹⁸

Radicals set the tone in the world of Islam. In a widely noticed turnabout, Sheikh Muhammad Tantawi, the highest jurisprudential authority of the Sunni world as rector of al-Azhar University in Cairo, joined the chorus in 2001 since he had earlier queried the Islamic legitimacy of suicide attacks targeting civilians. An al-Azhar web site reported:

The great Imam of Al Azhar Sheikh Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, demanded that the Palestinian people, of all factions, intensify the martyrdom operations [i.e., suicide attacks] against the Zionist enemy, and described the martyrdom operations as the highest form of *jihad* operations. He says that the young people executing them have sold Allah the most precious thing of all. [...] [He] emphasized that every martyrdom operation against any Israeli, including children, women, and teenagers, is a legitimate act according to [Islamic] religious law, and an Islamic commandment, until the people of Palestine regain their land and cause the cruel Israeli aggression to retreat.¹⁹⁹

Egypt's new mufti, Sheikh Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, also expressed his support for suicide attacks. According to his own web site the reported head of the Muslim Brotherhood's international organization, Sheikh Yussuf Qaradawi

¹⁹⁷ Quoted by Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, 128, from www.azzam.com, Nov. 30, 2001.

¹⁹⁸ MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 762, August 12, 2004, "Sheikh Abu Hamza Al-Masri on Martyrdom and the Love of Death," http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP76204#_ednref5.

¹⁹⁹ MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 363, April 7, 2002, "Leading Egyptian Government Cleric Calls For: 'Martyrdom Attacks that Strike Horror into the Hearts of the Enemies of Allah.'"

has confirmed that the operations carried out by the Muslim youth that defend the lands of Islam and the religion and dignity of Islam are the greatest forms of *jihad* for the sake of Allah. They fall under the definition of legitimate terrorization. . . . "I maintain that it is wrong to consider these acts as 'suicidal,' because these are heroic acts of martyrdom, which are in fact very different from suicide."²⁰⁰

There is complete unanimity amongst Muslim radicals: "Slaughtering is an offering on behalf of God. . . . It is an act of grace conferred by Allah."²⁰¹ Bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam had said, "We are terrorists, and terrorism is our friend and companion. Let the West and East know that we are terrorists and that we are terrifying as well. We shall do our best in preparing to terrorize Allah's enemies and our own. Thus terrorism is an obligation in Allah's religion."²⁰²

Radical, Shiites, Sunnis, Arab and non-Arab radicals, secularists or nationalists and Islamists, each in their idiosyncratic manner recombined aspects of Islam and shards of European totalitarianism to produce a revolutionary creed integrating under the devotion to jihad, the cult of force, the love of death, the enjoyment of killing, and the obsession of blood. Variations exist, but all share a faith in sadistic violence and a necrophiliac vision.

Unbeknownst to its very leaders and theorists, the morbid cult so created merely recreated and repeated – using the cultural idiom of Islam – what vast and bloody insurrections had claimed and done for the better part of a half-millennium in medieval Europe using a Christian idiom. The roots of those insurrections and the belief systems that powered them were Gnostic. Understanding them will vastly enhance our understanding of modern radical Islam.

²⁰⁰ Statement in the Qatari daily Al-Watan, which appeared on Qaradhawi's web site on October 25, 2004, "Martyrdom Operations Are the Greatest Form of Jihad"), in MEMRI, Special Report No. 35, November 11, 2004, http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR3504#_ednref15.

²⁰¹ Laqueur, *No End to War*, p. 95.

²⁰² Quoted in Rubin and Rubin, *Anti-Americanism*, p. 182.

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In the Epilogue of his *The Way of Jih*

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¹ In *Militant Islam Monitor*, <http://www.milit>