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“Osama’s Pseudo-Islamic Scam: The Al Qaeda Apostasy”

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From its inception in the form of unauthorized and un-Islamic *fatawa* (religious edicts) in 1996 and 1998, Osama bin Laden's so-called “*Jihad* Against America and the West” is nothing but a pseudo-Islamic scam. It is no more “holy” or “godly” than the genocidal killers who concocted and are fomenting it. Its more appropriate name is The Al Qaeda Apostasy - a perversion of authentic Islam which (in the name of Allah, of course) threatens to turn that religion into nothing but a perpetual killing machine of all Christians, all Jews and all Muslims who happen to disagree. Beneath its false labels it is a plainly satanic, cultic violation of many of the fundamental precepts of Qur'anic Islam - including such sinful transgressions and such *de facto* desecrations of the Quran as:

- Wanton killing of innocents and noncombatants, including many peaceful Muslims
- Decapitating the live and desecrating the dead bodies of perceived enemies
- Committing and enticing others to commit suicide for reasons of intimidation
- Fomenting hatred among communities, nations, religions and civilizations
- Ruthless warring against nations in which Islam is freely practiced
- Issuing and inspiring unauthorized and un-Islamic *fatawa* (religious edicts)
- Using some mosques as weapons depots and battle stations, while destroying others
- Forcing extremist and absolutist versions (and perversions) of Islam on Muslims, when the Quran clearly says that there shall be “no compulsion in religion”
- Distorting the word “infidels” to include all Christians, all Jews and many Muslims, as well - when the Qur'an calls them all "Children of the Book" (the Old Testament) and “Sons of Abraham, and calls Jesus one of Islam's five main Prophets
- Deliberate misreading, ignoring and perverting of passages of the Qur'an, the Hadith and the Islamic Jurisprudence (the *Fiqh*)
- All of this constitutes a gigantic apostasy (or blasphemy, choose your word) against the “peaceful, compassionate, merciful and just” Allah who is repeatedly so described by the Qur'an. And, of course, the penalty for blasphemy in Islam is death. Ask poor old Salman Rushdie who has been under an Iranian *fatwa* of death for over a decade -for allegedly mistranslating certain verses of the Prophet in his famous book, “The Satanic Verses.”

It is noted at this point that many authentic Muslim Scholars and Jurists - particularly those who participated in the recent anti-terrorism summit sponsored by King Abdullah bin al-Hussein of Jordan – have strongly condemned the excesses of “*takfir*”: namely, the numerous and baseless accusations of apostasy being leveled by al Qaeda and like-minded terrorist movements against any and all of their perceived enemies.

But the mere fact that these “*takfir*” practices might be unIslamic in their extremism, this very well-intentioned "Amman Message" should not be seen as prohibiting truthful and provable charges of apostasy against those whose ruthless transgressions - such as those ten listed above - so clearly identify their godless perpetrators as the “*Abdul-Shaitan*” (the Servants or Slaves of Satan) they truly are.

But, wonder of wonders, Osama bin Laden's multiple perversions of Islam - which are a thousand times worse than Rushdie's alleged offenses - are shielded from valid charges of apostasy by the existing halo of so-called “*Jihad*.” While that halo is a patently false one, it is made to seem true by the fact that so many of us (its intended victims) mindlessly parrot bin Laden in calling it a holy and Godly “*Jihad*.”

Surely, if it were something else, its harshest critics (particularly our Public Diplomacy and Psychological Operations experts on the subject) would be calling it by some other more truthful Islamic term - particularly if that much needed name were the exact opposite of the so-called “holy” and “godly” war it is universally alleged to be. Now, more than four years after the suicide mass murders of September 11, 2001, it is high time that we discover the correct Islamic word for such sinful atrocities and proactively begin using that name - rather than continuing to lip-sync with Osama bin Laden, at the risk of our lives and those of our children and grandchildren.

The Word Is “*Hirabah*”- Forbidden War against Society

Of course, there is a word for the genocidal kind of warfare which violates all of the Qur'anic prohibitions listed above, despite our sophomoric inability to have found it by now.

It is the ancient word “*Hirabah*” (pronounced *hee-RAH-bah*), which the Islamic Jurisprudence (the *Fiqh*) defines as a forbidden “war against society,” or what in modern parlance would be called “genocidal terrorism” or “crimes against humanity.”

In his seminal article on *Hirabah* in the Fall 2001 issue of *Muslim World*, the renowned University of Michigan scholar of Islam, Prof. Abdul Hakim (a.k.a., Sherman Jackson), confirms this interpretation with remarkable clarity as follows:

“In the end, however, *Hirabah* assumes its place as an effective super-category hovering above the entire criminal law as a possible remedy to be pressed into service for the more sensational, heinous or terrifying manifestations of these and other crimes. In this capacity, *Hirabah* appears, again, to parallel the function of terrorism as an American legal category. Its function is not so much to define specific crimes but to provide a mechanism for heightening the scrutiny and/or level of pursuit and prosecution in certain cases of actual or potential public violence. ... In sum, we may conclude that it is terror, or the spreading of fear and helplessness, that lies at the heart of *Hirabah*. From this perspective, *Hirabah* speaks to the same basic issue as does terrorism in American law. As mentioned earlier, however,

Hirabah actually goes beyond the FBI definition of terrorism, inasmuch as *Hirabah* covers both directed and coincidental spreading of fear. ... *Hirabah*, as it turns out, [once was and should be seen again as] the most severely punished crime in Islam, carrying mandatory criminal sanctions.”

But, looking back in history, we discover that the widespread killing and pillaging of entire communities and tribes by ruthless barbarians, brigands and Crusaders gradually subsided in the Middle Ages. And the powerful Islamic word which had been used since the 10th and 11th centuries to condemn such atrocities - but which is not in the Quran - gradually faded from use, as well.

Obviously, it must now be rediscovered and resuscitated. Hand in hand with the root word "*Irhab*" (Terrorism), it must become the keystone of both truth-in-language and truth-in-Islam in the war against al Qaeda-style suicide mass murder and related forms of hatred and violence now posing as "holy."

A powerful step in that rediscovery of the truthful *Hirabah* fame of reference can be found in the September 30, 2005 keynote address to the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) by the distinguished S. Abdallah Schliefer, Professor Emeritus, American University in Cairo:

“Indeed one of the good signs I promised earlier to allude to is the imperative - felt by both many Islamist as well as all traditional Muslims - to unambiguously denounce terrorism. To make it increasingly clear in a series of declarations over the past year that nothing can justify the intentional targeting of unarmed civilians, and that what has been described by extremist Islamists as "*jihad*" is, in fact, *Hirabah*, a classic Islamic legal category that can best be translated as "terrorism.”

In his highly praised essay, "Domestic Terrorism in the Islamic Legal Tradition," which appeared in the Fall 2001 issue of *Muslim World*, Dr. Sherman Jackson noted that in the classic legal literature defining *Hirabah*, it is the elements of intimidation, of the terrorist spreading fear and a sense of helplessness in the community, that is central.”

As Dr. Schliefer explains, "Jackson quotes the 11th century Spanish Maliki jurist Ibn Abd al Barr who defines the agent of *Hirabah* as: "Anyone who disturbs free passage in the streets and renders them unsafe to travel, striving to spread corruption in the land by taking money, killing people or violating what God has made it unlawful to violate is guilty of *Hirabah* ... be he a Muslim or a non-Muslim, free or slave, and whether he actually realizes his goal of taking money, or of killing or not.

“And it is clear, in his extensive review of all of the classic legal sources from all of the schools of Islamic law, that the very impersonality of *Hirabah*, or terrorism, in which there is invariably no personal relationship between the terrorist and his victim, is what makes it more criminal than homicide ... and in the eyes of the classical jurists, it is why the terrorist deserves to be sentenced to death regardless of the status of the victim, be he or she Muslim or non-Muslim.”

Looking to the future, it is only by the assertive and insistent use of this truthful term, along with four or five others which follow from it, that the false and blasphemous language of so-called “Jihadi martyrdom” (which portrays a bunch of holy guys destined for Paradise as a reward for murdering all variety of so-called “infidels”) can eventually be defeated. These other essential words are as follows:

irhab (terrorism) and such derivatives as **irhabi** (terrorist), **irhabist** (terroristic), **irhabism** (terrorism), etc. - all of which are easy alternatives to the *Jibad-jibadi-jihadist-jihadism* misnomers which now so thoroughly distort both the Arabic and English lexicons

mufsidoon or **mufsidin** (evildoers) - the Islamic word for those who are fomenting and waging unholy *Hirabah* and who, therefore, cannot be either the *mujaheddin* (holy warriors) or the “martyrs” they claim to be

jahannam (Eternal Hellfire) - which is authentic, Qur’anic Islam's destiny for unrelenting and unrepentant *mufsidoon* who will not cease their evildoing and who will, therefore, not be destined for Paradise but for Shaitan's Eternal Hellfire

tajdif (blasphemy) and/or **murtadd** (apostasy) - which is what these *Jahannam*-bound *mufsidoon* are engaged in when they ruthlessly kill innocents and noncombatants, foment hatred, commit and entice others to commit suicide, condemn everyone but themselves as “infidels,” etc.

khawarij (outside the religion) - a condemnation which can apply either to individuals or to activities which are so unIslamic, so extremist and so unrelenting as to invite charges and conviction of apostasy or blasphemy

shaitaniyah (satanic) - which is the fundamental character of the willful and mortally sinful Osaman Apostasy described at the beginning of this essay

Logically, now that our scholarly experts, our public diplomacy spokespersons and our national leaders know the word *Hirabah* and the name *mufsidoon* for those who are fomenting and waging this forbidden “war against society,” we should be using these truthful Islamic words aggressively and without fail.

Cold War Parallels

To continue a mindless repetition of al Qaeda's preferred labels of “*Jihad* by *mujahiddin* on their way to Paradise” and to go about condemning al Qaeda sinners as “*Jihadists*” (holy warrior-ists) is as naïve and as self-destructive as it was when we mindlessly parroted such preposterous Soviet, Maoist and Castroite labels as “people's democracies” and “progressive fronts” and so-called “wars of national liberation.”

Truth be known, there were no such “wars of national liberation,” because no liberty was ever involved. And today, there is no so-called “*Jihad*,” because there is neither any holiness nor any “peaceful, compassionate, merciful and just” Will of Allah of the Qur'an involved - but only the al Qaeda Apostasy, Qur'anic Islam's punishment for which is death in this life and *Jahannam* (eternal Hellfire) in the next. As outlined above, this is reminiscent of the subtle but deadly Cold War problem identified in the 1970s and 80s by Dr. Fred Charles Ikle

and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan as “semantic infiltration” which the late Senator defined as follows:

“Simply put, semantic infiltration is the process whereby we come to adopt the language of our adversaries in describing political reality. The most totalitarian regimes in the world would call themselves “liberation movements.” It is perfectly predictable that they should misuse words to conceal their real nature. But must we aid them in that effort by repeating those words? Worse, do we begin to influence our own perceptions by using them?”

Of course, we do! The problem is as real and as deadly dangerous today as it was then. Bin Laden and his murderous ilk say “*Jihad* and Holy War, and we repeat these false words thousands of times over - thus endorsing and confirming their claim to a holy and godly purpose. They say “*mujabiddin*” (holy warriors) and “*shubada*” or “*shabiddin*” (martyrs) on their way to Paradise and we dutifully copy-cat those words, as well. Back in Cold War days, that sort of naiveté was called “useful idiocy” and should still be.

Recall, please, how the perfidious Soviets and their surrogates, Fidel Castro in particular, successfully co-opted the powerfully positive word “liberation” and turned it into a lovely but patently false label for adding colonies - euphemistically known as “satellites,” of course, to the Evil Empire.

Truth be known, those bloody wars of Soviet colonial conquest (properly defined) had absolutely nothing to do with either national independence or personal liberty - no more than today's so-called “holy wars” of al Qaeda, Hamas, Hizballah, Islamic Jihad and their pseudo-Islamic clones have anything to do with godliness or holiness.

In addition to the words of wisdom from Prof. Abdul Hakim of the University of Michigan cited above, here are quotations from three more (of about twenty-five) distinguished scholars of Islam and Middle Eastern affairs who are now embracing this truthful *Hirabah* (unholy war, “war against society”) frame of reference, and sharply rejecting the false and un-Islamic language of so-called *jibadi* martyrdom:”

- **PROF. AKBAR AHMED (Chair of Islamic Studies, American University)**

“Properly understood, this is a war of ideas within Islam - some of them faithful to authentic Islam, but some of them clearly un-Islamic and even blasphemous toward the peaceful and compassionate Allah of the Qur'an. ... As a matter of truth-in-Islam, both the ideas and the actions they produce must be called what they actually are, beginning with the fact that al Qaeda's brand of suicide mass murder and its fomenting of hatred among races, religions and cultures do not constitute godly or holy “*Jihad*” - but, in fact, constitute the heinous crime and sin of unholy “*Hirabah*” ... In its worst excesses, particularly in the wanton killing of innocents - both non-Muslim and Muslim alike - as a method of terrorizing the entire community, such ungodly “war against society” should be condemned as blasphemous and un-Islamic.”

- **DR. AKHTAR EMON (President, Arabic Language Institute Foundation)**

“*Hirabah* represents an Unholy War against innocent civilians. The truth stands clear from falsehood. *Hirabah* can never be confused as “*Jihad*” (Holy War), as much as al-Qaeda would

like to label their heinous acts against humanity as *Jihad*.... *Hirabah* is forbidden and sanctioned not only by the teachings of Qur'an, but also by the Bible and Torah - all three Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) agree on this, and so do also other major faiths such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Bahai's, and the New Age religions addressing "mind, body and soul" ... TrueSpeak efforts are highly commendable in educating the world citizenry with truth-in-language and expanding the lexicon, e.g., to distinguish a good guy with a bad guy (*mufsideen*), a good act with an act of blasphemy (*tajdeef*), etc."

- **DR. ROBERT D. CRANE (Chairman, Center for Understanding Islam, and a convert to Sufi Islam):**

"Today there are many alienated extremists who rely on their own resort to violence in protest against perceived injustice, rather than relying on the jihads of *akbar*, *saghrir* and *kabir* with the help of Allah and ecumenical cooperation in peacefully building a better world. In effect, these extremists rely on and worship themselves. They are exhibiting the most serious crime condemned in the Qur'an, which is the root of almost all the other crimes -namely, arrogance. This leads them to commit the crime of *hirabah* and to justify it in the name of Islam. There can be no greater evil and no greater sin. If there is to be a clash of civilizations, a major cause will be the *mubaribun* [a synonym for *mufsideen*] those who commit inter-civilizational *hirabah*."

A Ticket to Hellfire, Not to Paradise

As these scholarly words of Islamic wisdom suggest, we will be missing the proverbial boat if we continue to focus so much on trying to make America look GOOD in the Muslim and Arab worlds and so on the need to make the "*mufsideen* Saddam and the "*mufsideen* Osama" (Saddam's and Osama's evildoers) look BAD in the eyes of authentic, Qur'anic Islam, namely, like the sinful blasphemers against the "peaceful, compassionate, merciful and just" Allah of the Qur'an who they actually are.

Of course, this antidote to the Al Qaeda Apostasy is best delivered in Islamic religious words - just like the seductive al Qaeda mantra is. As explained above, the latter proposes to impressionable and religiously motivated young Muslims that they "Join the *Jihad*, become *mujahiddin* and martyrs, enter into Paradise."

But imagine, please, how much more difficult it will be for al Qaeda and their ilk to inspire and to sustain the suicidal zealotry of young Muslims -- or the approval of any truly devout "authentic" Muslims whatever -- once they begin to view themselves as *mufsideen* (evildoers) engaged in *Hirabah* (unholy war) and in *murtadd* (apostasy) against Allah and, therefore, on their way to *Jahannam* (eternal Hellfire), instead.

A Good Start - But Much Tougher Fatawa Are Needed

Belatedly, almost four years into the Global War on Terrorism, a major Muslim-American anti-terrorism *fatwa* (religious edict) was finally issued on July 28, 2005 by thirteen highly distinguished Islamic scholars and jurists of the *Fiqh* Council of North America. Although it was well intentioned and Qur'anicly correct as far as it went, it resembled the British Muslim Council's *fatwa* which preceded it on July 15th by simply not going far enough.

Relying on several familiar quotations from the Qur'an, the Council focused appropriately on the wanton killing of innocents by suicide bombers. The following are among these citations"

- "Whoever kills a person [unjustly], it is as though he has killed all mankind. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved all mankind." (Qur'an, 5:32)
- "We made you to be a community of the middle way, so that (with the example of your lives) you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind." (Qur'an, 2:143)
- "Let there arise from among you a band of people who invite to righteousness, and enjoin good and forbid evil." (Qur'an, 3:104)

The edict quite correctly concluded that "Those who commit these barbaric acts [of suicide bombing] are criminals not martyrs." But it then failed to condemn Osama bin Laden or his al Qaeda Conspiracy by name, or to employ the sharp-edged Islamic religious words which were so correctly used in the far tougher Spanish Muslim *fatwa* of March 11, 2005.

That remarkable document by some 40 Spanish Muslim clerics, mostly Sunnis, condemned bin Laden as an **"apostate"** and an **"infidel"** and called him guilty of **"istihlal"** (the arrogant sin of concocting his own self-serving perversion of *Shari'ah*, (Islamic Law.) In addition, while both the British and American Muslims' edicts focused appropriately on the cardinal offense of suicide mass murder (a.k.a. *jihadi martyrdom*), neither *fatwa* went on to specify and to condemn all the other satanic transgressions which constitute the round-the-clock *modus operandi* of al Qaeda-style crimes against humanity - namely, *al-Hirabah*, of course.

These are such *de facto* desecrations of the Holy Qur'an and such personal insults to the "peaceful, compassionate, merciful and just" Allah of the Qur'an as the ten listed at the beginning of this thesis - and probably an equal number more. Taken together, this endless list of sinful transgressions constitutes what should become known as "The Al Qaeda Apostasy" against authentic, Quranic Islam.

And if a succession of anti-terrorism *fatawa* by faithful and peaceful Muslims are now to become a new rallying call against this Al Qaeda Apostasy, these religious edicts must become increasingly tougher and proactive - rather than overly passive and impersonal.

Of course, neither of these outstanding groups of moderate Muslim scholars and clerics should be unduly criticized or "given up on." Instead, they and many others like them in the socio-political organizations should be respectfully persuaded to reconvene, reevaluate and strengthen their respective anti-AQ *fatawa* and their Resolutions of Condemnation.

Excellent models in this regard would be not only the superb Spanish Muslim clerics' *fatwa* of March 11, 2005 but also the following two other sharp condemnations which came soon thereafter, namely:

First, the March 30, 2005 Resolution of the Washington DC-area Free Muslims Coalition Against Terrorism -- which condemned al Qaeda Terrorism as an Apostasy and which (a)

identified its sinful criminality not as so-called “*Jihad*” but as “*Hirabah*” (Unholy War and strictly forbidden "war against society); (b) condemned bin Laden's genocidal killers not as godly “*mujabiddin*” and “martyrs” but as satanic “*mufsidoon*” (evildoers); and (c) proclaimed that these killers are destined not for Paradise but for “*Jabannam*” (Eternal Hellfire), instead.

Second, the little-known May 17, 2005 *fatwa* by 58 Pakistani Muslim scholars and clerics which, according to media reports, a) “declared that suicide attacks in the name of Jihad are *haram* (forbidden) and that its perpetrators will no longer be considered Muslims” and that also sharply b) “censured religious organizations which ‘brainwashed’ potential suicide bombers into believing that such attacks would lead them to Paradise.”

A final observation: the fact that the Fiqh Council's recent *fatwa* received so very little media attention and so little pro-and-con discussion is indicative of how little of it was either new or immediately consequential. Not even al Qaeda's leaders have bothered to complain - simply because neither the British Muslim Council's nor the North American Fiqh Council's very well intentioned but largely insufficient *fatawa* were sharply harmful to them and their pseudo-Islamic scam of so-called “Jihadi martyrdom.”

Had that pseudo-Islamic scam been loudly condemned as an apostasy, rather than as merely “criminal,” bin Laden and his followers would now be screaming their objections. Needed at this point is a series of increasingly tough *fatawa* which convincingly condemn these outside-the-religion (*khawarij*) enemies of Qur’anic Islam as the apostates, the infidels and the *mufsidoon* (evildoers) they really are. Only then will their ungodly *Hirabah* , i.e., their most unholy war and their ruthless crimes against humanity, be seen as leading its practitioners not to Allah's allegedly maiden-filled Paradise but to Satan's demon-filled *Jabannam* (Eternal Hellfire), instead.

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