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London Based Salafi Scholar Issues Fatwa Prohibiting Suicide Operations

Saturday 27 August 2005

By Mohammed Al Shafey

London, Asharq Al-Awsat- A prominent Islamic scholar who specializes in the Salafi doctrine's perspective on Jihad has turned on the Al-Qaeda organization by publishing a fatwa (religious decree) in which he prohibited suicide operations.

Syrian ideologue Abd-al-Munim Mustafa Abu-Halimah, also known as Abu-Basir al-Tartusi, said on his website under the headline "A Word of Warning About Suicide Operations: "I have received 1,000 questions about these operations, which are for me closer to suicide than martyrdom. They are haram (Forbidden) and impermissible, for several reasons." Al-Tartusi, who lives in London, cited in the fatwa that he issued the day before yesterday some of the (Prophet Muhammad's) sayings, among them: "Anyone who harms a believer has no jihad." He said this is for someone who merely harms a believer, so imagine if he kills him, and kills him deliberately." He also cited the saying of the Honorable Messenger: "One who kills a non-Muslim does not find the winds of paradise; its wind is to be found from a 70 years walk." The fundamentalists launched a bitter attack on Al-Tartusi on their websites and accused him of letting down "Al-Qaeda's" supporters. One of them asked, "What do you expect from him when he lives in London?" Another Islamist writing under a false name said, "One should not get attached to

these people because they did not fight before. The rules on jihad are taken from the mujahidin. I never thought of learning about jihad from those sitting who are used to issuing fatwas from London."

Al-Tartusi said in his fatwa dated 24 August and published on his website: "Suicide operations necessarily mean a person killing himself with his own hand. This contravenes dozens of the shariah texts that are well documented and proven and which prohibit a person from killing himself with his own hand, whatever the reason for doing so. God Almighty says (And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah and make not your own hands contribute to (your death) and his Honorable Messenger said: "One who kills himself for something on earth will pay the penalty on the Day of Judgment." Sheikh Abu-Halimah added: "There should not be squandering of or leniency about the nation's greatest resources and embroiling them in a limited and similar action with unforeseen results and consequences." He said: "I was informed that in some battlefields in Iraq that Muslim youths from all countries are going to, the youth arriving there is given two choices only: Either agree to be a suicide bomber whose life is confined to a single action only, which might hit or miss and how many are the operations that miss, or go back to where he came from after facing dangers and suffering to reach these lands." He stressed: "This is wrong according to all considerations and criteria. It is wrong according to sharia because it is coercing the one going to fight to kill himself in his suicide bombing operation when he is not convinced of its legitimacy or has some doubts or suspicion about its legitimacy and permissibility or it is to him rather more of suicide than anything else." One of the most famous writings of Al-Tartusi, the Salafi jihad tendency's theorist, are a group of letters that include: "Rules and Actions That Take One Away From the Group, This Is Our Creed and What We Call for, Refining and Explaining Al-Tahhawiyyah Creed, Refining and Commenting, The Ignorance Excuse, Islam's Rule on Democracy and Partisan Pluralism, Questions and Rules on Emigration." Other writings included "Rule on Regarding as Lawful the Possession of Polytheists Who Come Under Muslims" Protection." He added in his fatwa: "Suicide operations kill innocent persons that are protected under the sharia unfairly, whether these protected persons are Muslims or others. This is forbidden and should not be belittled but one must be much careful about. One's religion remains well as long as he does not shed blood wrongly." According to Islamists in London, the fundamentalist theorist cited many of the Hadiths, including the prophet's sayings: "A Muslim and his blood, possession, and honor are haram to another Muslim", "the Muslim is the one who Muslims are safe from his tongue and hand", and "The Believer is the one that people trust with their possessions and lives."

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