



Selected Questions and Answers from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri – Part 1

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Q.) “You haven’t confirmed yet that you were the ones who destroyed the World Trade Center in New York. Are you the ones who did it? If it was you, do you realize the magnitude of the disasters the Muslims have suffered for this action? And if you were not the ones who did it, why has there not been a clear denial from you?”

A.) “First, we have stated more than once—as clearly as possible—that we were the ones who not only destroyed the [World] Trade Center, but also the Pentagon, praise be to Allah for his benevolence. Secondly, America has suffered successive disasters both before the two attacks and after them. Can Al-Qaida be blamed for the establishment of Israel or the attack on Iraq?”

Q.) “At the beginning of Al-Qaida, people thought that it fought against our military enemies. But, some people say that you are one of those who shifted Al-Qaida towards killing people indiscriminately, and also that you support the killing of what you call ‘the near enemy’ before the far enemy [non-Muslims]. This was evident in how [Abu Musab] al-Zarqawi and his group acted in Iraq, which gave liberal Islam a bad reputation.

They didn’t distinguish between people from humanitarian organizations, which oppose the occupation of Iraq by Western soldiers. Also, everybody knows that—at least in Iraq—you barricade yourself within overcrowded residential neighborhoods. As the American army becomes aware of your presence, you leave the area and leave the innocent local residents to become victims of the Americans bombardments. And this is all aside from the vehicles that crash into mosques, markets, and concentrated groups of people in order to spread killing and devastation—under the pretext of killing a policeman or a mayor! How can the Muslims be convinced that what you are doing regarding jihad is according to Shariah law after this long history of killing innocent people? Secondly, jihad used to have purposes in previous centuries which were accomplished through military warfare. But in this era, does military jihad still have the same influence, or are the results just the opposite? Is jihad only about killing and spilling blood, or are there other ways and means to reach the goals of jihad, without being repulsive? Let us hope that we do not sink to the level of the Americans or others, as we are Muslims and



have to set an example of tolerance and noble causes to the world. Let us not turn into a band of people whose only interest is revenge through bloodshed!”

A.) “You say that Al-Qaida kills innocent people. I’ve answered this before, yet I will add some more here. First, [Abu Musab] al-Zarqawi and his group do not give Islam a bad reputation. Rather, they have spoiled the plans of the crusaders and Iranians in the heart of the Islamic world. The corrupt and evil rulers like al-Saud are the ones who give Islam a bad reputation—they have turned us into the object of international ridicule, and have created an image of Islamic rule of looting and pillaging by a cabal only interested in pursuing lust and pleasures. They fall to the feet of the West, gather their riches, and spend it on immorality and amusements. They are surrounded by corrupt experts in Islamic jurisprudence, calling people to obey them and to surrender to their injustice, misdeeds, and atrocities, without any objection or criticism. After all of this, they refer to all these errors and corruption as ‘the liberal doctrine [of Islam]’. Do I know what society of humanity you are referring to? If you mean the United Nations—they are not humanitarians, but a tool for the biggest criminals against humanity. The Muslims have only witnessed prejudice and transgressions from them. I have said it before. May Allah grant the best of rewards to [Abu Musab] al-Zarqawi for driving them from Iraq.. As for the storming of mosques and markets [by suicide bombers]—this is American propaganda and the Saudi media. Regarding your question about how Muslims can rest assured that what Al-Qaida is doing for the jihad is according to Shariah law—just ask the Americans and NATO, as they have come to recognize Al-Qaida as their biggest threat, thanks to Allah and his power. Your question about the difference between jihad in past centuries and in the present era is a question which ignores basic Shariah rulings and the honest facts... I will make it clear for the person who asked—if a criminal were to break into your house, hurt your family and kill them, steal your furniture, burn down your home, and then moved on to wreck the houses of your neighbors, would you deal with him gently in order to avoid becoming a member of a band of people who only seek revenge through bloodshed?”

Q.) “What is your position regarding the countries that made caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed and insulted him, such as Denmark and Sweden? Why haven’t we seen an actual response from you, at least [in military form], even though the Amir al-Mumineen [of the Islamic State of Iraq] Abu Omar [al-Baghdadi] has offered a reward for this?”

A.) “We ask Allah’s help against them, and call upon every Muslim [to act] against them, so that they will suffer damages which will make an example of them, Allah willing.”

Q.) “I am from Libya. What did you mean in your recent statement when you said that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group has joined Al-Qaida? Has the LIFG changed some of its philosophies, including ‘forgiving the ignorant?’”

A.) “I did not say that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group has joined the Al-Qaida organization. What I said was that a delegation of distinguished members from the LIFG has joined the Al-Qaida organization—and by this, I sought to bring happiness to the Muslims and shatter the morale of the enemies of Islam.”

Q.) “What is your estimation of the current situation in Iraq? What is your position with regards to the jihadist movements in Iraq headed by the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and the Ansar al-Sunnah organization? Why hasn’t either one of them acknowledged the other? Is it true that the Al-Qaida organization has been weakened in Iraq, and that is why it has joined the so-called ‘Islamic State of Iraq? Why doesn’t the Islamic State of Iraq acknowledge the existence of the Al-Qaida organization in Iraq, despite the fact that the leader of the Al-Qaida network, Shaykh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (may Allah have mercy on him) swore allegiance to Shaykh Usama [Bin Laden]? How can this organization have been weakened so easily? Likewise, Shaykh Abu Omar al-Baghdadi has been quoted as stating that the Al-Qaida organization has been weakened, and has joined the Islamic State of Iraq. What is your opinion of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi?”

A.) “First, the situation in Iraq brings news that the victory of Islam and the defeat of the crusaders and those who stand under their banner is near, Allah willing. Second, regarding the distinguished brothers from Ansar al-Sunnah, I have clearly stated my opinion previously. Third, the Islamic State [of Iraq] is a step towards the establishment of the caliphate, and is superior to

the other armed jihadi movements. Thus, it is these groups that are obliged to acknowledge [the authority] of the Islamic State and not vice versa. The Amir al-Mumineen Abu Omar al-Baghdadi—may Allah protect him—is one of the great leaders of the Muslims and mujahideen during this era, and we ask Allah to grant him and us the strength to stand upright, victory, and success.”

Q.) “First, please explain the evidence proving the legality of the recognition of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi (may Allah keep him safe) as the Amir al-Mumineen in Iraq, because there are some who say that we aren’t obliged to acknowledge the authority of some unknown person—so [al-Baghdadi] has no authority, the jihad in Iraq is just a series of attacks and retreats, and it is not yet time for the establishment of the State. Second, why doesn’t Al-Qaida carry out further activities targeting American maritime targets such as the past attack on the ‘U.S.S. Cole’ destroyer?”

A.) “First, here is what Shaykh Usama Bin Laden—may Allah protect him—has to say about those who oppose Shaykh Abu Omar al-Baghdadi on the basis of the claim that he is an ‘unknown man’:

“One of the issues: most of the people don’t know the biography of the leaders of the mujahideen in Iraq. I say, this is due to the conditions of the war and its security consequences. I do not think that being unfamiliar with the leaders of jihad is a cause for harm, so long as honorable and trustworthy people vouch for their integrity—just as the Amir Abu Omar [al-Baghdadi] has been vouched for by honorable and trustworthy people from the mujahideen. He was vouched for by the commander Abu Musab [al-Zarqawi]—may Allah have mercy upon him—and by the Minister of War Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, who themselves have been vouched for by their patient and steadfast brothers confronting the attacking thunderbolts on the peaks of the Hindu Kush. They know your brothers in Afghanistan, so think of them in the same way. Allah is enough—no one is more trustworthy than Allah. Any hesitation in acknowledging the authority of the mujahideen leaders in Iraq after they have been vouched for by honorable and trustworthy people—claiming that their biographies are unknown—will lead to great suffering, such as the obstruction of the foundation of a larger group of Muslims under a single Imam, and that is a mistake.”

“He says about those who object to the Islamic State because it does not seem entirely feasible:”

“...Factors such as complete competence or likelihood [of success] are not considered preconditions for acknowledging the authority of an Imam or to establish an Islamic State. It is not right to tell a person who has been acknowledged as an Islamic leader, ‘We refuse to follow or obey you because the enemy is able to collapse your government.’ It is astonishing that some of those who bring up these issues live in Gulf States like Kuwait, and we haven’t heard any such talk from them about how easily the Baathists brought down their government...”

“I call upon the honorable brother [who asked this question] to read the whole speech by Shaykh Usama [Bin Laden], and in it, he will find answers to many of the criticisms raised about the Islamic State of Iraq, may Allah protect it. Second, regarding our naval operations, we ask you to pray that Allah will pave the way for all of our various operations.”

Q.) “What are the plans of Al-Qaida’s mujahideen for the stage in time following the establishment [of the Islamic State in Iraq]? Especially since we know that there are two separate Emirates right now—one in Iraq, and the other in Afghanistan.”

A.) “If Allah will be so gracious and allow us to establish [the Islamic State], we will strive, Allah willing, to chase out the infidel occupiers from every single Islamic country—and to re-establish the regime of the caliphate, which will include all the Muslims, as best we can.”

Q.) “How do you see the situation of the jihadi movements in light of recent events—such as the massacre in Nahr al-Bared and the arrest of the brothers in the Maghreb [North Africa] for their role in providing help to Al-Qaida, and this larger assault on the ranks of the jihad?”

A.) “This crusader-zionist attack on the jihad is a natural reaction to the growth in the power of the mujahideen, who pose a real danger to the Western crusader regimes.”