The Amit Terrorism and Intelligence Research Institute
At the Israeli Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center

# The Shariah basis for the activities of Hamas' military wing, based on retrieved documents

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## Overview[2]

► During the Gaza Strip War, which started on October 7th,2023 a large number of Hamas publications and numerous documents was retrieved by the IDF and brought to Israel, most of them belonging to the movement's military wing. They include extensive Shariah material (moral, ethical and religious principles and law within Islam) distributed among operatives of the wing, material which has a key role in training them and shaping their consciousness. The materials provide information about the values, beliefs and objectives instilled in the wing's operatives and which motivated them in the October 7, 2023 terrorist invasion and massacre.[3]

► The objectives of the material are to strengthen the motivation and faith of the wing's operatives and to provide religiously valid justification for professional and personal dilemmas arising in various situations.

► The material serves several purposes, which correspond to the stages of the operatives' development. It shapes personal behavior patterns consistent with Islamist values; provides in-depth familiarity with Hamas' ideology based on Shariah principles and incorporates them into the daily conduct of the movement's operatives. It explains how religious law is reflected in the operatives' routine activities; and most importantly, providing *Shariah* guidelines for the conduct required during "operational activities," particularly in confrontations with the enemy.

► The material emphasizes desired attitudes toward the enemy, particularly non-Muslims, including defining all Israelis as enemies, including women, children and the elderly. Much

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[2] Click https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en to subscribe and receive the Amit Institute's daily updates as well as its other publications.

[3] This study is a continuation of a study by Dr. Uri Rosset at the Amit Institute dated October 7, 2026, **Hamas' Religious Ideology Reflected in the Planning and Execution of the Invasion and Massacre of October 7, 2023**.

of the material contains excerpts from the writings of Sheikh Abdallah Azzam, one of the founding figures of the global jih*ad* movement, evidence of the radicalization Hamas underwent before October 7, 2023, and reflected in the atrocities committed during the invasion and massacre.

► **An analysis of the material, which is the conceptual foundation for the activities of Hamas' military wing operatives, helps explain the profound religious fanaticism motivating them, but also explains the movement's continued survival as a dominant force in the Gaza Strip and the functional continuity it demonstrates despite the blows it sustained during the war. The religious content and its importance in Hamas' operational doctrine were not sufficiently understood by many in Israel before October 7, 2023, a gap which made (and still makes) it difficult to accurately decipher the logic of a religious, fanatically ideological organization such as Hamas. That failure also leads to erroneous conclusions, especially that organizations such as Hamas become more moderate when they come to power, or they can be softened through material inducements or that deradicalization can be imposed on the population within which they operate and are deeply rooted, which is the situation in the Gaza Strip today.**

# Introduction

► During the Gaza Strip War, which started on October 7th, 2023 a large number of Hamas publications and documents were retrieved by the IDF and brought to Israel, many of them belonging to its military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. They included extensive professional material on which the activities and training of the military wing's members are based,[4] containing Shariah material written by clerics (Ulamaa`) who are operatives in the military wing, both those who served in combat roles and those who functioned as "spiritual instructors."

[4] The material includes weapons instruction (small arms, anti-tank warfare, artillery, civil defense, explosives, sniping, intelligence and communications) and forms of combat (in urban warfare, raids involving forces of various sizes and coordination between different formations, commando warfare on land and at sea, defensive operations); translations of military material and military history from around the world; numerous instructional manuals about the IDF (including the types of weapons it uses, forms of combat and explanations about units, including their symbols and numbers); guidelines for improving command capabilities (discipline and obedience, improving communication with individual personnel, attending to their welfare and understanding their needs); information security and methods of conducting interrogations (primarily by Hamas' intelligence agencies); and methods of deception at various levels. **Details of the retrieved material mentioned in this study appear in the Appendix.**

► The material published and distributed within the military wing provides a glimpse into the mental training, shaping of consciousness, world values and beliefs instilled in the wing's operatives, which motivated them to carry out atrocities during the October 7, 2023, invasion and massacre. The objectives of the materials are to strengthen the operatives' motivation and faith, to instill fighting spirit and a willingness to make sacrifices and ensure absolute obedience, and to provide religiously valid justification and solutions for professional and personal dilemmas arising in various situations. The operatives are required to memorize *Quran* chapters every day, often at specified times (mainly in conjunction with prayers), and commanders are required to teach their subordinates the material and ensure it has been assimilated, including through the use of examinations.

► The material was compiled by units of the military wing responsible for ideological and religious guidance, especially the military recruitment institute, the military wing's *fatwa* (religious opinion on Islamic law) committee and the departments for leadership development and the dissemination of educational material. The material was distributed throughout the wing's formations and units and among operatives at all levels. The use of the materials was particularly prominent at the Abdallah Azzam "Palestine" Military Academy, which operated in Gaza City until the war and trained commanders of Hamas' military wing. The study of religious law was a central component of the cadets' training and certification examinations, as well as the academic degree they received.

**► An analysis of the material shows the importance of religion in Hamas' activities, particularly of its military wing.** Many of its members are devout but are not clerics by education or training. In their activities in various fields, they rely on justification based on precedents from the Quran or the traditions of the Prophet (***hadiths***). Their objective is to provide solutions for dilemmas, reduce doubts and misgivings, remove moral inhibitions and clarify that even when they commit acts of cruelty, particularly against enemies, or actions that bring disaster upon their own people, as occurred in the wake of the Gaza Strip War, they are in fact fulfilling Allah's command and following in the footsteps of the pioneers of Islam. It is common to find Quranic or ancient Islamic terms in Hamas' discourse at all levels, intended to justify its actions in the present.

► The material also reflects the role of Hamas' consciousness-shaping mechanisms. As in any totalitarian regime driven by a fanatical ideology, such mechanisms encompass every aspect of life from an early age, provide an explanation for an individual's existence and

guide his purpose, particularly in the context of combat. Hamas' Shariah material is meant to instill the understanding that the individual conducts his life in the shadow of a constant confrontation (***jihad***), in which he must demonstrate patience (***sabr***) and a willingness to make personal and collective sacrifices.

► The internal influence on the military wing is part of a broader system intended to instill its ideas in the general public, facilitate the recruitment of new operatives and effectively turn the public into an instrument of the movement's ideology. Hamas instills various emotions and concepts, including profound hostility toward the enemy; membership in Hamas, particularly its military wing, as an exalted goal to aspire to; and the perception of Hamas as the Palestinians' legitimate, authentic leader, representing their collective aspirations and interests.[5]

# The Objectives of Using Shariah Material

► The consciousness of the military wing's operatives is shaped according to the four stages of their development.

## Shaping Patterns of Personal Behavior

► The wing's operatives received a series of booklets explaining the values they were required to adopt. A booklet bearing the emblems of Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood emphasized the most important values, which are loyalty, obedience and willingness to make sacrifices. The booklet had for the operative to check whether he had performed all five daily prayers, memorized Quranic passages, visited the families of shaheeds, observed purification practices or attended religious lessons.[6] Other booklets specified the penalties imposed on an operative if he fell asleep during prayers or arrived for them late,[7] and members were instructed to beware of slander and avoid "rebellious thoughts" and sins.[8] Another publication described "proper organizational behavior," emphasizing secrecy,

[5] For further information, see "The Road to October 7: Education for *Jihad*," MEMRI, December 20, 2023; and Michael Milstein, "Hamas`s Strategy Against Israel: From Information Ops to Influence Ops"' in Ofer Fridman, Vitaly Kabernik, and Francesca Granelli (Eds). *INFO OPS: From World War I to the Twitter Era* (London: Lynne Reinner, 2022), pp. 200-204.

[6] ***Ward al-Muhasaba*****,** Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas/Khan Younis Governorate, year of publication not specified.

[7] ***Salat al-Fajr*****,** Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Preaching and Guidance Committee/Northern Gaza Brigade, year of publication not specified.

[8] ***Kalimat Ma'thura*****,** Gaza Strip: Hamas/Guidance and Counseling Committee/Educational Department, 2010; Adhkar al-Yawm wa al-Layla, Islamic Resistance Movement/Hamas, Khan Younis Governorate, no further details.

compartmentalization and brotherhood toward fellow operatives.[9] Another collection of guidelines contained religious sayings and prayers which the operative was required to recite during every action or in specific situations, such as when donning his uniform, leaving his house, entering a military facility, detecting enemy activity, being wounded by enemy fire, when his commander was killed, when capturing enemy soldiers or when the building in which he was located was shelled.[10] Booklets serving a similar purpose were distributed among the heads of *usar* (families),[11] containing tables the head of the cell was required to complete regarding its operatives, including attendance, performance of prayers, *Quran* memorization (tracking which *Suras* he had learned and his degree of proficiency in them), sports training and visits to the public library.[12]



**Hamas military wing operatives participating in Quran memorization (Filastin al-An, April 16, 2023)**

## Familiarity with Hamas Principles

► The next stage in mental conditioning is a thorough familiarity with Hamas' fundamental principles, particularly those concerning combat against Israel. A book popular among the military wing's operatives is entitled ***What Does My Membership in al-Qassam Mean?*** [that is, being an operative in Hamas' military wing], written by Dr. Ahmed al-Bashiti and published in 2017. It was published by Hamas' ministry of culture in cooperation with the movement's military wing and includes introductions by Fathi Hamed (Abu Mus'ab), a member of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and Ra'ed Sa'ad (Abu Mu'adh), head

[9] Younis al-Astal, ***Mudawwanat Qawa'id al-Suluk wa al-Ma'ayir al-Akhlaqiyya***, Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas/Department of Planning and Administrative Development, 2019.

[10] ***Dalil al-Qa'id al-Ta'bawi*****,** Gaza; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Mobilization and Guidance Department/Human Resources Division, 2023.

[11] The term for the basic organizational cells of the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

[12] ***Dalil Idarat al-Usra*****,** Gaza; Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas/Educational Department/Recruitment and Follow-up Committee, 2011.

of the military wing's operational headquarters (eliminated by Israel in December 2025). It is a kind of guide to the fundamental values which obligate the wing's operatives, both professionally and religiously. It explains where they fit into Muslim existence (part of the process of contemporary "Islamic awakening and revival"), what their main missions are and the nature of the enemy (explaining that the campaign against the Zionist movement and Israel, "the only enemy of the Palestinian people," is an existential struggle and not one over borders, and a cultural and fateful confrontation which must end with the complete liberation of "Palestine"). In addition to comradeship, patience and moral integrity, the wing's operatives are required to engage in physical exercise and maintain proper nutrition to preserve operational fitness.[13]

## Routine Military Activity

► The objective of ideological training is providing Shariah explanations for daily military activities. Some of the instructional manuals are tailored to the operatives' specific professional duties. A manual of the military engineering unit contains an extensive Shariah discussions of questions and dilemmas, such as safety procedures and maintaining health during weapons production, assembling weapons or positioning them near residential areas or inside civilian homes, producing weapons during *Ramadan* (whether the use of respiratory equipment constitutes breaking the fast), private use of engineering equipment belonging to the military wing, using animals for military purposes (for example, sending them into tunnels to determine the presence of gas); causing panic through explosions, including the danger of causing pregnant women to miscarry; using farmland for military purposes (primarily burying weapons) and the question of whether it is permissible to lie to merchants when purchasing equipment intended for weapons production (to conceal plans and intentions).[14]

► Other books provide detailed Shariah explanations regarding the possibility of working outside the military wing, the duration of stays at military facilities and the possibility of leaving them, as well as accepting gifts from companies or individuals. They discuss using military equipment without authorization or removing it from military facilities and allowing

[13] Ahmed al-Bashiti, ***Madha Ya'ni Intima'i lil-Qassam***, Gaza; Ministry of Culture/General Administration of Libraries and Manuscripts, 2017, pp. 54, 124–125.

[14] ***Fiqh al-Jihad****, Gaza*; Military Engineering Institute, Military Engineering Diploma Program, 2021, pp. 94–107.

unauthorized persons to use it; making use of orchards and fruit trees near military sites and proper conduct during operations inside civilian homes in the course of combat (including using food and equipment); trimming beards for operational purposes; and Shariah prohibitions against browsing enemy websites or posting information on social media.[15]

► An instructional manual of Hamas' military intelligence provided Shariah justifications for the agency's specific missions, such as how spies or individuals suspected of espionage should be treated (distinguishing between Muslims and non-Muslims), the importance of intelligence gathering (with examples from the early days of Islam, particularly actions of the Prophet Muhammad) and explanations of methods of espionage which are permitted or prohibited under religious law (for example, to identify candidates for recruitment into the military wing or to expose criminals).[16]

► The centrality of the Shariah foundation is also reflected in the military wing's book of laws and judicial procedures. It provides detailed definitions of crimes and punishments, for example, those relating to insulting Allah, Islam or the prophets, violating Islamic principles, apostasy (***ridda***, punishable by execution), leaving prayers before they have ended, breaking the *Ramadan* fast without Shariah justification (at least three months' imprisonment and expulsion from the military wing), engaging in prostitution and engaging in homosexual intercourse (punishable by one hundred lashes, one year of solitary confinement and expulsion from the military wing).[17]

## Conduct during Operational Activities

► The final and most important part of shaping consciousness concerns conduct during operational activities, particularly in confrontations with the enemy. Those are the conditions in which the most difficult dilemmas are encountered, and therefore the most detailed possible response is required for every situation, one with a precedent or one which is theoretical. The chapters providing Shariah justification for conduct during military operations are based largely on questions raised by operatives in the military wing, together

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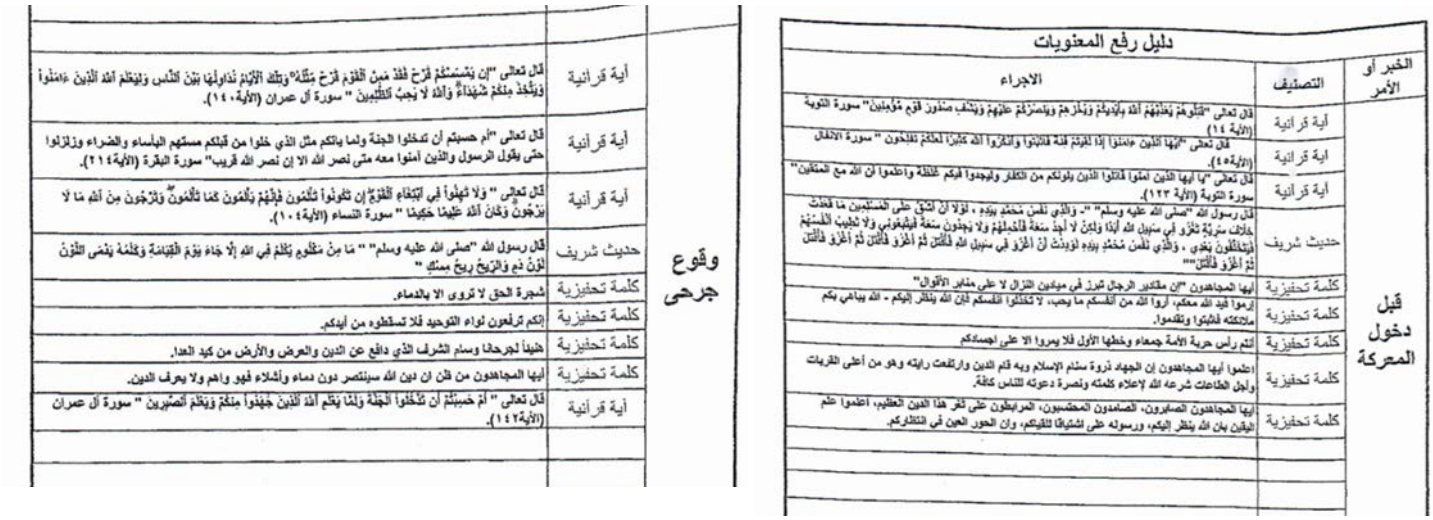
[15] ***Fiqh al-Jihad wa Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Palestine Military Academy, Curriculum and Courses Center, 2018, pp. 33–46, 61–88, 137–147, 159–171, 267–270, 299–301, 326–350; ***Fiqh al-Siyam: Ahkam wa Adab***, Gaza; ***Shariah* Committee**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2022, pp. 47–48; see also ***Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, Gaza; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Fatwa Committee, 2023, pp. 23–179, 205–222, 248–265, 271–287.

[16] ***Fiqh al-Jihad wa al-Amn***, Gaza; Intelligence Institute/Military Intelligence, 2015, pp. 80–85, 137–165.

[17] ***Al-Qawanin al-Askariya li-Kata'ib al-Shahid Izz al-Din al-Qassam***, Gaza; Military Judicial Authority/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2021, pp. 211–213, 220–222.

with answers provided by Shariah scholars, with each answer supported by Quranic verses and references to the traditions of the Prophet.

► The popular booklet *Guide to Raising Morale* (***Dalil Raf' al-Ma'nawiyat***) was found in the possession of many Hamas operatives who invaded Israeli territory during the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. It contains instructions for conduct in various situations related to the attack, accompanied by Shariah authorization for each action, for example upon entering battle, when one of the terrorists dies and becomes a *Shaheed*, in cases of injury ("the blood of those who participate in the battle will give off the scent of musk on Judgment Day") and upon military success. It also details the status of a shaheed killed by mistake and methods of compensating the families of shaheeds, as well as an examination of the best way to achieve ***shahada*** (martyrdom), the fate of debts left behind by a shaheed and how a shaheed should be commemorated, whether with mourning or joy. A recurring text states that according to Islam, death is a transition from one kind of life to another, and the shaheeds who fall in battle in the name of Allah and Islam embody the highest human status after the prophets. Their place in Paradise is assured, the angels will carry them on their wings, they will feel no suffering at the moment of death but will become green birds circling Allah, they will return to this world in another incarnation on His mission, and their death guarantees them forgiveness, as well as marriage to the virgins of Paradise and health for their families.[18]



دليل رفع المعنويات

| الخبر أو الأمر | التصنيف | الاجراء |
|---|---|---|
| قبل دخول المعركة | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى "قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبْهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ" سورة التوبة (الآية ١٤) |
| | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ " سورة الأنفال (الآية ٤٥). |
| | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى "يا أيها الذين آمنوا قاتلوا الذين يلونكم من الكفار وليجدوا فيكم غلظة واعلموا أن الله مع المتقين" سورة التوبة (الآية ١٢٣). |
| | حديث شريف | قال رسول الله "صلى الله عليه وسلم" "- والذي نفس محمد بيده ، لولا أن أشق على المسلمين ما قعدت خلف سرية تغزو في سبيل الله أبدا ولكن لا أجد سعة فأحملهم ولا يجدون سعة فيتبعوني، ولا تطيب أنفسهم أن يتخلفوا بعدي ، والذي نفس محمد بيده لوددت أن أغزو في سبيل الله فأقتل ثم أغزو فأقتل ثم أغزو فأقتل ثم أغزو فأقتل"" |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | أيها المجاهدون "إن مقادير الرجال تبرز في ميادين القتال لا على منابر الأقوال" |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | إرموا قيد الله معكم، أروا الله من أنفسكم ما يحب، لا تخذلوا أنفسكم لئلا الله ينظر إليكم - الله يباهي بكم ملائكته فاثبتوا وتقدموا. |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | أنتم رأس حربة الأمة جمعاء وخطها الأول فلا يمروا الا على اجسادكم |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | اعلموا أيها المجاهدون إن الجهاد ذروة سنام الإسلام وبه قام الدين وارتفعت رايته وهو من أعلى القربات وأجل الطاعات شرعه الله لإعلاء كلمته ونصرة دعوته للناس كافة. |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | أيها المجاهدون الصابرون، الصامدون المحتسبون، المرابطون على ثغر هذا الدين العظيم، اعلموا علم اليقين بأن الله ينظر إليكم، ورسوله على أشواقكم للقيكم، وان الحور العين في انتظاركم. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| وقوع جرحى | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى "إِن يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ " سورة آل عمران (الآية ١٤٠). |
| | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى "أم حسبتم أن تدخلوا الجنة ولما يأتكم مثل الذي خلوا من قبلكم مستهم البأساء والضراء وزلزلوا حتى يقول الرسول والذين آمنوا معه متى نصر الله الا إن نصر الله قريب" سورة البقرة (الآية ٢١٤). |
| | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى " وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِن تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا " سورة النساء (الآية ١٠٤). |
| | حديث شريف | قال رسول الله "صلى الله عليه وسلم" " مَا مِنْ مَكْلُومٍ يُكْلَمُ فِي اللهِ إِلَّا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَكَلْمُهُ يَدْمَى اللَّوْنُ لَوْنُ دَمٍ وَالرِّيحُ رِيحُ مِسْكٍ " |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | شجرة الحق لا تروى الا بالدماء. |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | إنكم ترفعون لواء التوحيد فلا تسقطوه من أيديكم. |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | هنيئاً لجرحانا وسلم الشرف الذي دافع عن الدين والعرض والأرض من كيد العدا. |
| | كلمة تحفيزية | أيها المجاهدون من فان ان دين الله سينتصر دون دماء وأشلاء فهو واهم ولا يعرف الدين. |
| | آية قرآنية | قال تعالى " أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ " سورة آل عمران (الآية ١٤٢). |

**From the *Guide to Raising Morale***

[18] Rosset, The Hamas' Religious Ideology, pp. 14–15.

► Other books provide instructions for observing the laws of purification of the dead and the performance of prayers and the preliminary purification required before prayer (using water, ***wuddu*** `, or dirt, ***tayammum***) during battles, prolonged stays in tunnels, while occupying positions or swimming underwater at sea. There is also a discussion of observing the fast (particularly during *Ramadan*) under restrictive conditions (for example, during battles or tunnel excavation), how prayer times should be determined (primarily through communication with the commanding echelon) and whether it is permissible to impersonate others and engage in deception during operations to abduct or assassinate an Israeli military figure (the Shariah scholars naturally permit this, relying on precedents from the time of the Prophet, such as the assassinations of Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf and Abu Rafi' al-Yahudi, Jewish poets from the early days of Islam who mocked the Prophet and were consequently murdered by his followers with his knowledge).[19]

## How to Treat the Enemy

► The military wing's *Shariah* material extensively addresses the question of how to treat the enemy, particularly non-Muslims. **All Israelis are defined as enemies, including women, children and the elderly.** A 2021 book of Shariah rulings published by the Hamas Shura Council, headed by Ahmed Bahar, deputy speaker of the Palestinian parliament and chairman of the regional general Shura Council (eliminated at the beginning of the war), highlights a Shariah ruling by the preacher Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi,[20] according to which the Zionists are an "armed society based on the theft of land, the defilement of holy places and bloodshed." According to al-Qardawi, most young Israelis, including women, are conscripted into compulsory military service, and therefore all Jews are combatants, except for infants and the mentally ill, who are of no value; there is no difference between men, women, the young and the elderly, and all should be regarded as targets for killing or as prisoners of war if and when they are captured alive.[21]

► A book published by the Hamas military intelligence agency presents a variety of Shariah positions on the question of how to treat the enemy's women and children. It explains that there is a difference between ancient times and the modern era, but offers no clear ruling

[19] ***Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, pp. 41–114.

[20] A key religious authority for Muslim Brotherhood movements.

[21] ***Al-Dirasat wa al-Fatawa wa al-Rasa'il al-Shar'iyya al-Sadira 'an al-Lajna al-Shar'iyya – Qita' Ghazza*****,** Gaza; Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas/Shahid Mazen Fuqaha Course, 2021, p. 286 [hereafter**: *Al-Dirasat wa al-Fatawa***].

between positions that strictly prohibit harming them, primarily on the grounds that doing so would provoke retaliation against Muslims, and positions maintaining that it is permissible, particularly if the women and children are involved in or assist the fighting.[22]

► The chapters dealing with treatment of the enemy devote considerable attention to the laws governing captivity, including how a captive may or must be treated. A 2023 book of Shariah rulings issued by the *Shariah* committee of Hamas' military wing asks if it is permissible to murder an enemy captive in one's custody. The answer is that it is preferable to keep him alive for a prisoner exchange, but if circumstances arise, such as an attempt to rescue him, he may be killed.[23] According to a Shariah book studied at Hamas' military academy, Muslims are obligated to treat non-Muslim captives humanely and provide for all their needs, but at the same time are permitted to torture them to extract information. It also notes that if the enemy ignores international conventions concerning prisoners, as the Crusaders [the American forces] did in Iraq, Muslims are likewise released from such obligations.[24]

► One of the collections of Shariah rulings relates to a dilemma raised by an operative of the military wing, who asked what should be done during an operation to abduct a soldier in which Hamas operatives are also wounded, that is, who should be given priority in receiving medical treatment. The Shariah response makes a clear distinction between the ***mujahid*** (Muslim fighter), whose life is sacred and must be saved, and the enemy soldier, whose life is of interest for the purpose of prisoner exchanges but whose value will always be less than that of a Muslim. The Muslim is defined as ***ma'sum al-dam***, meaning protected from harm, as opposed to a non-Muslim, toward whom the Shariah approach is more lenient and whose blood may be shed, ***mubah al-dam***. Under combat conditions, if it serves the interests of the Muslims, a wounded enemy captive may be murdered, but that is religiously prohibited in the case of a Muslim captive. In any event, the decision rests with the commanders in the field during the incident.[25]

► In Shariah discussions concerning the capture of enemies, considerable attention is devoted to the treatment of women, referred to as ***Sabaya*** ("female spoils of war"). The

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[22] ***Fiqh al-Jihad wa al-Amn***, pp. 86–103.
[23] ***Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, pp. 260–265.
[24] ***Fiqh al-Jihad wa Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, pp. 135–142.
[25] ***Al-Dirasat wa al-Fatawa***, pp. 281–282, 298.

argument is that abducting a female soldier is similar to abducting a male soldier, but that movement operatives must be wary of "malicious, cunning" attempts at seduction by Israeli women to facilitate their escape while corrupting the moral values of Muslim fighters. In addition, female soldiers may be "touched" if necessary and captive soldiers, including women, may be stripped of their uniforms lest they are equipped with tracking devices.[26]

► The treatment of enemy bodies is also discussed in the military wing's Shariah books and booklets. Many of them prohibit the public display or mutilation of enemy bodies lest such actions arouse the desire for revenge against Muslims and damage Islam's image. However, some rulings permit the display of bodies if done in response to harm inflicted on Muslims[27] (in practice, the atrocities and mass massacre on October 7, 2023 was accompanied by the abduction of bodies by many Palestinian terrorists who believed they were "profitable assets," and by the mutilation and desecration of the bodies of murdered Israelis). Regarding the discrepancy between the widespread prohibition against mutilating and abducting enemy bodies and the atrocities committed on October 7, 2023, Sagi Polka suggested that Hamas operatives relied on unofficial rulings, not necessarily issued by qualified Shariah scholars holding defined positions, or that the operatives had seen ISIS videos and sought to imitate them.[28]

## Manifestations of ISIS Influence

► The brutality and inhumanity demonstrated by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023 drew considerable inspiration from ISIS influence, which became prevalent in Hamas' military wing in the years preceding the war. One manifestation was the relatively large number of young Gazans who joined ISIS' Sinai Province (***wilayat sina'***), some of whom were former members of Hamas' military wing.[29] One of them was Mus'ab Mutawa' (aka Abu Jamil al-Ghazawi), the son of Yahya al-Sinwar's sister, who had served in Hamas' naval commandos before joining ISIS and was killed in fighting with the Egyptian army in March 2022.[30]

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[26] ***Fatawa al-Mujahidin***, pp. 237–238.

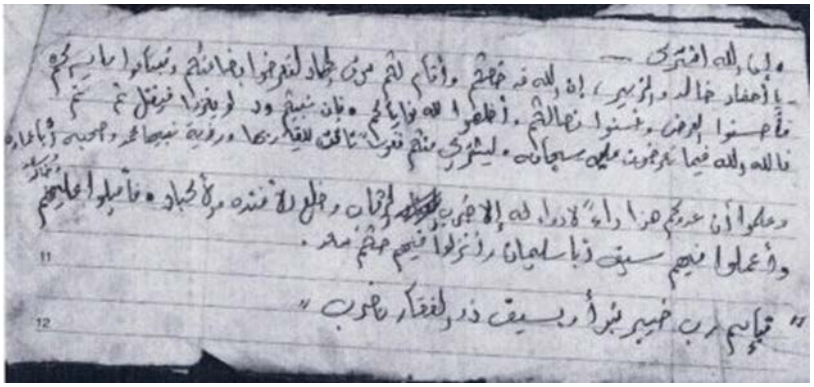
[27] ***Fiqh al-Jihad***, p. 74.

[28] Sagi Polka, "The Mental Preparation and Shaping of the Spirit of Hamas' Military wing Operatives for Carrying Out Jihad," ***Ma'arachot*****,** February 25, 2024. (Hebrew only)

[29] See an article on this subject on the ***Nabd al-Watan*** website, January 9, 2018. www.nnpress.com

[30] Ashraf Abd al-Hamid, Surprise: The Palestinian ISIS Member Killed in Egypt Is the Son of al-Sinwar's Sister, *al-Arabiya*, March 26, 2022.

►Hamas frequently expressed concern over the influence of ISIS within its ranks, particularly when it reflected a weakening of internal discipline, but the movement itself promoted measures in this spirit, which to a large extent were mental preparation for the massacres and atrocities of October 7, 2023. Among the living and dead terrorists captured in the area surrounding the Gaza Strip were written Shariah rulings permitting ISIS-inspired acts of brutal murder. A handwritten note found on the body of one of the military wing's commanders, apparently also distributed to his subordinates and intended to foment enthusiasm, stated, "Know that the enemy is an incurable disease, except through beheading and the removal of hearts and livers. Attack them and do to them as the sword of Abu Sulayman [the nickname of Khalid ibn al-Walid, a prominent military commander from the early days of Islam and a companion of the Prophet who is considered a key figure in the establishment of the Muslim empire] did [...] In the name of the Allah of Khaybar, we begin and will strike with the sword of *Dhu al-Fiqar*" [a sword which according to Muslim tradition was given by the Prophet Muhammad to Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth *Caliph*, and became a symbol of Islam's victory in battle; according to Islamic tradition, Muhammad appointed ibn Abi Talib to command the Muslim army in the Battle of Khaybar, where he used the sword].[31]



**The note in which an Izz al-Din Brigades commander called on his operatives brutally murder Jews**

►The Shariah material used by Hamas' military wing extensively quotes the teachings of Sheikh Abdallah Azzam, a radical Islamic thinker from northern Samaria who was one of the founding figures of the global *Jihad* movement and profoundly influenced Osama bin Laden.

[31] See the January 2024 ITIC report, **Documents brought back from the Gaza Strip indicate that Hamas premeditated its atrocities against Israelis and to kidnap and maltreat them**; Shay Levy, "ISIS Flag Found Among Equipment of Hamas Fighters Who Infiltrated a Kibbutz Near the Gaza Strip," Mako, October 12, 2023; Itay Ilnai, "The Terrorists Tell Us Themselves: Hamas Have Become Human Beasts, They Have Become ISIS," ***Yedioth Ahronoth***, November 3, 2023.

His writings enjoy great popularity in the Middle East, particularly among the younger generation, and emphasize ***Istishhad*** (martyrdom) and the mental preparations (***i'dad ma'nawi***) which Muslim operatives are required to undertake before a confrontation, including a willingness to sacrifice themselves, and the need to wage an indiscriminate war of annihilation in accordance with Allah's command against those defined as modern incarnations of the Crusaders and Tatars.[32] Azzam, who was eliminated by a car bomb in 1989, lived to witness the establishment of Hamas (1987), frequently described it as the spearhead of the Islamic "struggle" against the Jews in "Palestine," raised funds for it and even dedicated a book he wrote to the movement.[33]

► Over the years, Hamas appropriated Azzam's image. The military wing's academy was named after him and his writings were distributed among members of the military wing (primarily a collection of small pocket booklets containing sermons and key messages, foremost among them the blood of the shaheeds as a means of shaping and fostering Islam; "History Is Written in Blood and the Magnificent Palace Is Built Only with Skulls;" "Islam Can Only Be Understood Through *jihad* for the Sake of Allah;" death as the way of life of Muslims and the centrality of "Palestine" in the "struggle" of all Muslims against their enemies, particularly the Jews).[34] Some of the documents found in the possession of Hamas terrorists bore his portrait and prominent sayings attributed to him, for example, an instructional booklet dealing with IDF forces found on the bodies of *nukhba* [Hamas' elite terrorist force] operatives from the Gaza City Brigade/al-Shati Battalion.[35] Meir Litvak wrote that Hamas' appropriation of Azzam results from the movement's lack of prominent thinkers, which compelled it to rely on authoritative figures outside its ranks, particularly with regard to justifying *jihad* against Israel.[36]

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[32] See Assaf Maliach, "Abdallah Azzam and the Influence of His Ideological Teachings on al-Qaeda's and Hamas' Conceptions of *Jihad* and *Istishhad,*" ***Military and Strategic Affairs***, Vol. 2, No. 2 (October 2010), pp. 65–77.

[33] Assaf Maliach and Shaul Shay, *From Kabul to Jerusalem: Al-Qaeda, Global Islamic Jihad and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Tel Aviv: Matar, 2009, pp. 173–179.

[34] See Mahmoud Azzam (ed.), *Khamsun Risala fi Dhikra al-25: Min Kalimat al-Shahid Abdallah Yusuf Azzam*, Gaza; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Mobilization and Guidance Department, 2014

[35] *Mudhakkirat al-Mujahid fi Maydan al-Qital*, Gaza; Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades/Gaza Brigade/First Battalion-al-Shati, 2022.

[36] Meir Litvak, "Jihad and Sacrifice in the Doctrine of the Hamas Movement," in Joseph Kostiner (ed.), *Jihad: Ideological Roots*, Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2012, p. 163.

# Conclusion

**► The Shariah material accompanying the activities of Hamas' military wing illustrates the importance of religious guidance and justification for every action taken by movement operatives. The materials reflect how their worldview, values and the logic guiding them at all levels are shaped, particularly in the confrontation with Israel.**

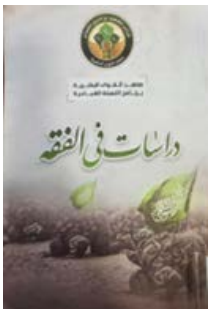
► An analysis of the sources can help explain the fanaticism inherent in Hamas operatives and the movement's survival as a dominant force in the Gaza Strip despite the blows it sustained during the war. Their sense of mission and ardent faith enable functional continuity, preservation of a hierarchical structure and strict discipline and obedience within the movement. Therefore, it is also understandable why Hamas continues to emphasize controlling the mechanisms for shaping consciousness (education, media and the religious establishment), often giving them priority over addressing the public's daily needs.

**► The Shariah foundation guiding Hamas' activities was not sufficiently understood in Israel before October 7, 2023,** a gap reflected in the prevailing conception that a fanatical ideological organization could be "influenced by material inducements," and militant declarations expressing a yearning for Judgment Day were merely boasts to inflame the masses, rather than reflecting practical plans for immediate future. That was compounded by Israel's excessive self-confidence in its ability to deradicalize the Palestinian public, without understanding or while ignoring the fact that that objective (whose importance is beyond dispute) cannot be achieved as long as Hamas controls the Gaza Strip, enabling the movement to continue shaping the collective consciousness in the area, as it has done since becoming its sovereign authority two decades ago.

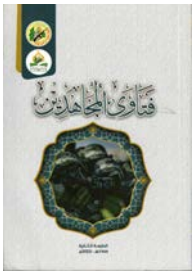
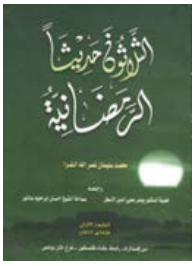
# Appendix: Shariah Publications Used by Hamas' Military Wing[37]

| No. | Front Cover | Name and Name of Author | Bibliographic Details | Contents |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | *Fiqh al-Siyam, Ahkam wa Adab* | Gaza; *Shariah* Committee, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2022 | A guide issued by the military wing's *Shariah* committee concerning observance of the fast, accompanied by questions from operatives regarding observance under complex operational conditions and *Shariah* answers. |
| 2 |  | Ahmed al-Bashiti, *Madha Ya'ni Intima'i lil- Qassam* | Gaza Mobilization and Guidance Department/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2017 | A book issued by the recruitment and guidance department of Hamas' military wing describing the fundamental characteristics required of military wing operatives in various areas: behavior, faith and patterns of activity. |

[37] The documents are accessible for inspection at the Amit Institute Library.

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| 3 |  | *Masaq Dirasat fi al-Fiqh (Ibadat, Ahwal al-Shakhsiyya, Mu'amalat)* | Gaza; Military Mobilization Institute, Leadership Mobilization Program, Curriculum and Courses Department/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2018. Another edition: Gaza, Human Resources Institute, Leadership Mobilization Program/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2023 | A book issued by the military mobilization institute (curriculum department, commanders' training program) containing instructions on the observance of basic religious obligations by military wing operatives, alongside guidance on required patterns of behavior toward family members, relatives and spouses. |
| 4 |  | Jum'a Amin Abd al-Aziz, *Fiqh al-Da'wa* | Gaza; Military Mobilization Institute, Leadership Mobilization Program, Curriculum and Preparation Unit/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2021 | A book originally published in 1988 by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt describing *da'wah* activities within Muslim Brotherhood organizations. Published by the military mobilization institute of Hamas' military wing (curriculum and |

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| | | | | training unit, leadership development program). |
| 5 |  | Muhammad Ahmed al-Rashid, *Manhajiyyat al-Tarbiya al- Da'wiyya* | Gaza; Military Mobilization Institute, Leadership Mobilization Program, Curriculum and Courses Department/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2019 | A book originally published in 2004 outlining the main social activities required within the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Published by the military mobilization institute of Hamas' military wing (curriculum and training unit, leadership development program). |
| 6 |  | Mahmoud Nahid Ajjur and Osama Abd al-Latif Radwan, *Fiqh al-Jihad* | Gaza; Military Training Preparation Institute/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, year of publication not specified | A book issued by the military wing's training preparation institute containing instructions on the nature of *jihad* and how to fulfill its obligations, including the laws governing the capture of enemies and patterns of |

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| | | | | conduct toward them. |
| 7 |  | *Fatawa al-Mujahidin* | Gaza; Fatwa Committee/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2023 | A book issued by the *Shariah* rulings committee of Hamas' military wing containing rulings essential to the wing's operatives in various areas (observance of daily religious obligations and conduct in operational situations), accompanied by a chapter containing questions from operatives concerning various dilemmas and the *Shariah* answers provided by the military wing's fatwa department |
| 8 |  | Younis Muhyi al-Din al-Astal and Ihsan Ibrahim Ashour *The Thirty Ramadan Hadiths* | al-Thalathun Hadithan al-Ramadaniyya \| Khan Younis: Association of Palestinian Religious | An instructional book issued by the Association of Palestinian Religious Scholars [Hamas' principal *Shariah* |

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| | | | Scholars/Khan Younis Branch, 2017 | institution] concerning proper conduct during *Ramadan* |
| 9 |  | *Qadaya Fikriyya Mu'asira* | Gaza; Military Mobilization Institute, Leadership Mobilization Program, Curriculum and Preparation Unit/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2021 | A book issued by the military mobilization institute of Hamas' military wing (curriculum and training unit, leadership development program), providing enrichment on various subjects: the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, Shi'ism, analysis of the terms terrorism and apostasy. |
| 10 |  | Muhammad ibn Fawzi al-Shafi'i, *al-Aqida al-Jihadiyya wa Atharuha ala al-Mujahid* | Gaza; Ministry of Culture, General Administration of Libraries and Manuscripts, National Program for Palestinian Publishing Houses, 2021 | Instructional *Shariah* book issued by the ministry of culture of the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip concerning ways to strengthen Islamic faith, particularly with regard to promoting *jihad*. |

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| 11 |  | *al-Dirasat al-Islamiyya* | \| Gaza; Palestine Military Academy/ Curriculum and Courses Center/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2015. Another edition: Gaza, Palestine Military Academy/Authority of Military Colleges and Institutes/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2022 | An in-depth book on the meaning of *jihad* and the various ways of carrying it out. Published by the "Palestine" Military Academy, curriculum center/authority of colleges and institutes of Hamas' military wing. |
| 12 |  | *Fiqh al-Jihad wa Fatawa al-Mujahidin* | Gaza; Palestine Military Academy/ Curriculum and Courses Center/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2018 | An in-depth book on the meaning of *jihad* and the various ways of carrying it out. Published by the "Palestine" military academy, curriculum center of Hamas' military wing. |
| 13 |  | *Dirasat Islamiyya* | Another edition of the publication: Gaza; Palestine Military Academy/Training Division/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2019 | A study issued by the "Palestine" Military Academy, training headquarters of Hamas' military wing, concerning diplomatic relations and attitudes toward the international |

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| | | | | community from an Islamic perspective, relations with non-Muslim entities and their perceptions of Muslims |
| 14 |  | *Dirasat fi al-Tarikh* | Gaza; Military mobilization institute, leadership mobilization program, curriculum and courses department/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2020 | A book issued by the military mobilization institute, commanders' training program/curriculum department of Hamas' military wing, discussing political and strategic lessons drawn from the experiences of early Islamic leaders. |
| 15 |  | *al-Jihad wa al-Ribat fi Sabil Allah* | Gaza; Mobilization and Guidance Department/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, 2010 | A publication issued by the recruitment and guidance department of Hamas' military wing intended to strengthen the morale of military wing operatives, with instructions concerning various activities, including |

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| | | | | recruiting other operatives, assault operations, defense and guard duty. |
| 16 | <br> | *Adhkar al-Yawm wa al-Layla (Hamas/Khan Younis District); Du'a al-Murabit (al-Bureij Battalion of Hamas' military wing); Adhkar al-Sabah wa al-Masa' (Mus'ab ibn Umair Battalion, Company A, Platoon 1)* | Adhkar al-Sabah wa al-Masa' (Personnel Headquarters of Hamas' military wing, Guidance Department) | A series of pocket booklets distributed among the various units of the military wing containing instructions and reminders concerning the observance of religious obligations (primarily prayer times), blessings to be recited during various daily activities, Quranic passages to be memorized and guidelines regarding patterns of personal behavior |