

Dots on the Letters, as-Sahab's 2nd Interview with Sheikh Abu Yahya at-Libi, Two Years After His Deliverance from Bagram Prison

September 9, 2007

[Please note: Images may have been removed from this document. Page numbers have been added.]

Interviewer: All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and peace and prayers be upon the Chief of the Messengers, our Chief Muhammad, and on his family and companions. As-Sahab Media is pleased to again welcome Shaykh Abu Yahya al-Libi, in its second interview with him since his deliverance from Bagram Prison 2 years ago.

To begin, we ask him: Honorable Shaykh, after the passing of this period since your deliverance from captivity and after rubbing shoulders with the Mujahideen and living among them, what is your evaluation of the course of Jihad in general and Afghanistan in particular?

al-Libi: In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah and on his family, companions and allies.

Before answering, I thank As-Sahab Media for the major effort it is making to spread Islam's true methodology and clear picture far removed from the patching and fabrication and methodologies of adaptation and compromise whose adoption has become one of the characteristics of the age and perhaps something to boast about.

As for the answer, my noble brother, it can be divided into two parts. The first deals with the scientific/ methodological/ideological progress - as it were - which the Mujahideen have achieved and continue to achieve day after day, whether from the perspective of those who carry the methodology inside the Islamic Ummah to which they belong, or from their perspective of the imposition and spreading of their vision throughout all nations and peoples and their entrance into the field of the battle of ideas and clash of methodologies with strength, confidence, insight and understanding, for the Jihadist methodology to say in the midst of this tumult, "Here I am, so where's the challenger?"

By the grace of Allah, the Glorious and Great, we notice with great clarity a distinction and progress being achieved by the Jihadist methodology in all theoretical scientific directions, through its legal foundations, its analyses of the state of affairs, its outlook on events, its depiction of the issues and its according of specific and clear legal visualizations to many of the major issues which affect the Islamic Ummah at home and abroad.

And we have begun to see and feel the Islamic Ummah's anticipation of the position of the Mujahideen in most of the events which take place today, and the Jihadist voice has become its preferred voice and the one which expresses its opinion and outlook. And the Jihad as a comprehensive methodology is no longer buried among the rubble of ideas or hidden under various other methodologies.

No, by the grace of Allah first and last, it has begun to confront all the methodologies, ideas and deviant concepts; to meet argument with argument and eloquence with eloquence; to discuss treatises and rebut misconceptions; to remove misguidance, correct mistakes and rectify deviation; and to deliver its speech with clarity and pureness and without fearing in that the blame of a blamer.

And the effects of the well-founded scientific presentation of the methodology of Jihad have begun to appear on many of the Islamic movements whose members used to be like those on drugs with concepts and ideas bearing mere resemblance to hallucinations than to anything connected with Law and the state of affairs.

This is as far as the Islamic Ummah is concerned.

If, however, we were to expand the field of sight and move on to the extent of the reach and effect of the voice of the Jihad throughout the world, whether at the level of the governments or the peoples, then we would hear the echoes of this voice resonating from the depths of the infidel world, in Europe and elsewhere.

And as the saying goes, for every action there is a reaction. So this fierce information attack which the people of infidelity are waging in various and disparate forms against the Jihad and Mujahideen is only because of the earthquake caused by the way the Mujahideen analyze and treat the major issues which there [infidels] refuse to look at in a proper, logical fashion far removed from the deception, deceit, distortion and falsification.

And in general, the Jihad, as an Islamic worship and rite which has its rules, manners, regulations and fundamentals, has begun to spread, expand, increase, strengthen and develop, and thus the attempt of the infidel states and behind them their agents in the region to kill the Jihadi spirit in the Ummah, reverse its progress and strangle it with various ropes of constriction is nothing but a kind of futile desperation, and all those efforts they make and that money they spend will be a curse for them and a cause for regret, and the Jihad will continue to prosper, climb and expand, in spite of their dislike of it, in corroboration of Allah's statement,

"They seek to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths; but Allah refuses but to perfect His light, though the disbelievers may resent it" (9:32), and of His statement, "Verily, those who disbelieve spend their wealth to turn people away from the way of Allah. They will surely continue to spend it; but then shall it become a source of regret for them, and then shall they be overcome. And the disbelievers shall be gather unto Hell." (8:36)

As for the second of the two parts, it concerns the practical achievement represented by the armed Jihad being waged today by the Islamic Ummah in many arenas, in which the Mujahideen - who are part of our Ummah - have proven that challenging the enemies in the arenas of combat is a hope which they have long wished for and shown eagerness towards because they knew that the breakdown of the enemy military and the dispersal of his strength will mean without a doubt his decline ideologically, as it is in people's nature to imitate the stronger one, and the battle which they are waging is against the strongest world power. America, which is one the major evil spirits of the age, was only a few years ago bragging about its power and boasting of its army and materiel, at a time when everyone was subordinate to it and submissive to its resolutions: so no criticism, objection or review, but rather, begging, supplication and kissing the steps of the White House and the shoes of its politicians.

But today, where is America. And where is its strength and sham splendor? Where are the slogans of "whoever is not with us is against us"? Where are the threats and warnings? Where is the vanity and arrogance of the American army and its police-makers? And moreover, where is the value of the American soldier, whose killing used to make headlines in all the media, but who today is dragged in the streets of Baghdad, hung on the bridges of Fallujah, rolled on the rocks of Afghanistan and burned to coals in the middle of its capital, Kabul, yet his news passes

quickly without interest or analysis, assuming that it was even mentioned by the media and not considered by them to be marginal news for which there was no room in their newscasts or programs.

And here we must ask a frank question: who is it that sent the American forces into this abyss? Who is it that distinguished between the meat and the tumor, and put America on the balance and showed everyone its real weight and value?

You will doubtlessly reply to me - after the grace and guidance of Allah, the Great and Glorious - that they are indisputably the Mujahideen, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia or in the heart of America.

If the military gains of the Jihad and Mujahideen were limited to this, it would be enough for them as a source of pride and as a victory. So how about when the matter is much bigger than that and the gains - by the grace of Allah and His aid - are continuing one after the other, and the direction of the battle - Allah willing - going according to the plans and wishes of the Mujahideen?

And Afghanistan is one of the rings of these confrontations, and in fact, is the mother arena in terms of seniority, and its heroic people have become experienced in confronting the forces of Kufr and are well-versed in tearing apart empires, one after the other, of which we ask Allah that America be the latest of them.

So it is possible to compare the previous state of the Mujahideen from our brothers the Taliban and their helpers with their present state.

The first year after the fall of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan - may Allah restore it - was a year of despair and depression for everyone except those whom Allah steadied with the light of conviction, power of faith and confidence in Allah's promise. As for today - and the credit is Allah's alone - the Mujahideen have become the pursuers, not the pursued, and for the most part, the strikers, not the struck. The various types of military operations have begun to strike the depths of Afghan cities, and moreover, the hearts of fortified military bases.

The Mujahideen have taken control of huge, wide swathes of the land of Afghanistan and these areas are now under their authority.

There is now a new generation of Mujahideen pouring by the thousands onto the battlefields, after they discovered the falseness of the propaganda and were delivered from the alarmism which was one of the weapons which the enemy used against them at the beginning of the battle. And the enemy has begun to bumble in his decisions and hesitate even in the resupplying and reinforcement of his forces.

And all praise is for Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Interviewer: OK, you have painted for us a bright picture of the Jihad and Mujahideen ideologically and militarily, but there are those who differ with you in this assessment and believe that the picture is somewhat exaggerated or that the truth is perhaps the opposite of what you stated.

On the military front, for example, many of the Mujahideen's commanders and scholars have been arrested or killed, while on the ideological front, you aren't unaware of the retractions

which have been published or attributed to some of the Jihadist symbols and even some of the Jihadist groups. What do you say to that?

al-Libi: It goes without saying that when we say we are in Jihad, combat and defense, this of necessity means that there are sacrifices which these Mujahideen must make, and when we describe ourselves as being in a battle and on differing and open fronts, that means that the battle needs fuel, provision and energy with which to move its wheel. And I didn't say in my previous answer that we haven't offered any sacrifices in the ferocious and heated confrontation between us and our enemies, the Crusaders and the underlings. We have never said this and we can't possibly say this.

But is Jihad anything other than wounds and injuries, killing and combat, and war with its ups and downs?

Everyone whom Allah has guided to observe the worship of Jihad has by that paved the way for himself with a general rule in which he deals with every step he takes in his Jihadi journey: that rule which the Quran had clarified with utmost clarity, saying, "Say, 'You do not await for us aught save one of the two good things' (9:52), which is victory or martyrdom.

And He, the Great and Glorious, said, "Let then those fight in the cause of Allah who would sell the present life for the Hereafter. And whoso fights in the cause of Allah, be he slain or be he victorious, We shall soon give him a great reward." (4:74)

So the balance and measure by which Islam assesses things is not a purely worldly balance disconnected from the hereafter. The greater part of its scale with which we weigh the value of Jihadi actions is connected to the world of the hereafter, the world of recompense, rewards and the greatest prize from the Generous Giver.

As for the remaining part of this scale, it is the part connected with the world and its interests, and the part in which the sweetness of victory and empowerment is placed. And accordingly, it is with this proper visualization of how to deal with profit and loss, victory and defeat, and success and failure that we must look at our Jihadi actions.

Consider with me the Hadeeth related by Imam Muslim and others from Abdullah bin `Amr bin al-'Aas (with whom Allah was pleased) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'There is no raiding party or squadron which raids, takes booty and returns safely that won't have taken two-thirds of their reward in advance. And there is no raiding party or squadron which fails and is afflicted that doesn't receive their full reward.'

This is why Allah (the Glorious and Great) has forbade the believers to deal with the affairs of the Jihad in this fashion, and has replied to those who think that the path of prudence is by seeking out safety, distancing themselves from risks and withdrawing, saying, "O you who believe! Be not like those who have disbelieved and say of their brethren when they travel in the land or go forth to war, 'Had they been with us, they would not have died or been slain.' They say this so that Allah may make it a cause of regret in their hearts. And Allah gives life and causes death and Allah is mindful of what you do." (3:156)

And He (the Exalted) also said, "It is these who said to their brethren, while they themselves remained behind, 'If they had obeyed us, they would not have been slain.' Say, "Then avert death from yourselves, if you are truthful." (3:168)

And because of this, Allah (the Glorious and Great) severely reprimanded the group which attempted to abandon the battle and lay down their swords at the mere rumor during the Uhud expedition of the killing of the Prophet (peace be upon him), which is without exception the greatest misfortune the Muslims could possibly be afflicted with until the Day of Resurrection, and he explained to them that the death or killing of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his absence doesn't mean going back, nor does it mean loss on the balance of Jihad, nor is turning on one's heels acceptable because of it. He (the Exalted) said, "And Muhammad is but a Messenger. Verily all Messengers have passed away before him. If then he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels shall not harm Allah at all. And Allah will certainly reward the grateful." (3:144)

Take, for example, the incident of the Red Mosque in Islamabad, which I consider to be a major step forward in contemporary Jihadi life - by all standards. If we wanted to place this incident on the scale of the balance of worldly gain and loss, which its proponents often camouflage with labels like prudence, profound understanding and dealing with reality with wisdom and composure, then its heroes would no doubt be described as reckless, foolhardy and inexperienced individuals who embroiled themselves in a battle they couldn't win, and thus killed themselves and caused the wasting of promising efforts which were in the interest of Pakistan and so on.

But if we were to put this event on the proper Islamic balance which is tied to the world of the hereafter you will find that something similar occurred in the era of the Prophet (peace and prayers of Allah be upon him), when 70 of the `Ulama [men of knowledge] of the Companions were killed at the Well of Ma'oonah. And pay attention to our statement, "the 'Ulama of the Companions": i.e., in familiar contemporary terms, the cadre of the state, and the highest-ranking ones as well. IF this were to happen in our era, it would be considered a disaster, policies would be changed because of it, retractions would be made, and bitter criticism would continue from all sides.

But look at what was said by the Companions (with whom Allah was pleased): they considered it to be one of the virtues of the Helpers, as Qatadah said, "We don't know of a neighborhood of the Arabs with more martyrs more honorable on the Day of the Resurrection than the Helpers. Anas said, '70 of them were killed on the day of Uhud, 70 on the day of the Well of Ma'oonah, and 70 on the day of Yamamah during the reign of Abu Bakr.'"

And even greater than that is to receive the pleasure of Allah, as Anas (with whom Allah was pleased) said, "A verse of the Quran was revealed concerning those who were killed at the Well of Ma'oonah, which we read, then it was abrogated: 'Inform our people that we have met our Lord, and He was pleased with us and we with Him.'"

So this eternity-related part is the part lost in the equation of appraising gain and loss in our battle with our enemies.

Of course, this doesn't mean - neither rationally nor legally - neglecting to take precautions; being negligent in taking those which can be taken; not making an effort to correct flaws, remove deficiencies and benefit from experiences and examine them; and not taking the negligent to account. But this is one thing, whereas turning the Mujahideen's sacrifices - however costly they might be - into obstacles and barriers with which we prevent the continuation of the march is something else altogether.

Therefore, the killing of those leaders of the Mujahideen who have had the greatest of impacts

on Islam's contemporary battle between the party of the Most Merciful and the party of Satan is part of the sacrifices whose makers were the people most eager for and desirous of them and most appreciative of their value. And even if the killing of these great leaders has some negative effects on the Jihadi groups, these negative effects are nearly equaled or perhaps overshadowed by the positive aspects, among the greatest of which is the proving of the strength of the loyalty of the people of this religion to their Creed and Law, and that they are prepared - in the interest of realizing, establishing and empowering [the Law] - to give up everything, even their souls and lives.

- From those positive aspects as well is the definite proof that our Shari'ah and our Jihad in particular isn't bound to any individual, however high his value and apparent his impact. No, it is a Creed here to stay and a Law preserved which is further strengthened and empowered in proportion to the blood its people expend for it.

Doesn't the Quran say, "And many a Prophet there had been beside whom fought numerous companies of his followers. They slackened not for aught that befell them in the way of Allah nor did they weaken, nor did they humiliate themselves before the enemy. An Allah loves the steadfast" (3:146)?

And let me give you some examples of that.

Before the killing of the Mujahid Shaykh Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (may Allah have mercy on him), who is more or less the most prominent of the leaders of the Jihad which the area has lost, the American media machine was trying to convince its miserable people that its victory in Iraq will be achieved with the mere killing or capture of this champion, to the extent that it turned the issue of Iraq into the story of Abu Musab (may Allah have mercy on him), and portrayed him as being like the string of the rosary, whose cutting causes its beads to fall one after the other.

But did the dreams and fantasies of the Bush Administration in this regard come true? The answer is in what we see today in Iraq and the major and continuous progress being achieved by the Mujahideen there and the daily heavy losses being taken by the Americans and their underlings.

And similar to that is the martyrdom in Afghanistan of Commander Dadullah (may Allah have mercy on him): the media inflated the issue of his killing and considered it to be a turning point in the course of the Afghan Jihad, claiming that his martyrdom will lead to the breakdown of or a decline in Jihadi activities, especially martyrdom operations. But the daily reality and what is being suffered by the Crusader forces and the government of treason in Kabul clearly gives the lie to those claims.

Today, martyrdom operations strike in the heart of the Afghan capital, Kabul, in Kandahar, Khost and indeed, in all Afghan provinces, and no effect has been seen on the Jihadi field work in Afghanistan, and for Allah is all praise. And this is why the Americans themselves have begun to realize that the movement of the Jihadi march doesn't hinge on the presence of any single commander and cannot fall apart in his absence, and their dealings with the Jihadist groups have started to be based on this conviction, and thus they have gone and knocked on other doors in the hope of winning this round of the match: for example, what they call the "battle of ideas" and so on.

So to summarize this issue, we say: yes, the Mujahideen have presented - with pride and honor - a number of their heroic commanders. They presented Khalid al-Shaykh, they presented Abu

Anas al-Shami, they presented Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, they presented Abu Umar al-Sayf and before him Khattab, they presented Mullah Dadullah, they presented Abd al-Aziz al-Muqrin, and most recently, they presented Shaykh Abdul Rashid Ghazi. May Allah have mercy on them all. And they don't hide this, nor do they consider this - in accordance with the balance of Shari'ah - a loss because of which they must stop their Jihadi work. Rather, they consider the blood of these leaders to be an instigator and motivator for them to stay firmly on their path, follow them and make every effort to avenge them. And the Ummah is full of champions who will fill these gaps, and just as the school of Jihad produced them, it will produce others, and just as they have led, others were lead, with Allah's permission.

If one of our chiefs passes, another arises in his stead He says and does what the honorable said and did

As for the story of the retractions, which some are attempting to portray as an ideological defeat for the Jihadist methodology and a crushing deathblow for it, it is one of the rings of the conflict created by the leaders of infidelity in the halls of the Egyptian security organs, who have advertised it as a fine new prescription who might help in treating the serious plight in which they and their masters find themselves as a result of the Jihadi tide flooding the region and world. And some of the Arab states have rushed to snap it up, like the governments of Al Saud, Libya, Jordan and others.

So this is why we don't look at the retractions which have been published or might be published here and there in a restricted fashion, i.e. that so-and-so has abandoned the Jihadist/fighting methodology which he used to carry, lest we fall with them into the merry-go-round of detailed rebuttals and debates, unless it was to remove a misunderstanding, not to debate a fundamental.

Instead, we look at the issue of retractions as being a completely new idea which is part of the system of the battle of ideas which is one of the fierce fronts of the confrontation between us and our enemies, the Crusaders and their underlings. So let us deal with this phenomenon on this basis. Otherwise, we safeguard for those to whom the retractions are attributed their precedent, their Jihad, their status and their worth, and we also take account of the circumstances of many of them in the unusual ideas which emanated from them or might emanate from them, ideas which oozed from the darkness of the prison cells and under the whips of the lashers and the policy of repression and compulsion.

And perhaps you will agree with me that with ideas produced in circumstances like this, you cannot attribute true conviction to their producer.

Interviewer: So what do you consider to be the proper way to deal with this issue?

al-Libi: It is possible for me to summarize for you the way - as I see it - to deal with this critical issue in several points.

First: the conditions being experienced by these captive brothers to whom the retractions are attributed are conditions of compulsion and suppression, extraction of statements by force and pressuring and blackmailing them with dirty methods to lend a foundation to ideas and methodologies which anyone with the least bit of understanding realizes couldn't be farther from having a connection to legal evidence and scientific foundation.

Thus, fairness demands of us that we refrain from considering these newly-proposed ideas and methodologies as being in line with the convictions of their proposers until they speak them and

adopt them in complete freedom and of their own accord.

If Law has permitted the Muslim to speak the word of infidelity - which is the most enormous thing that can be said - in a state of compulsion with the serenity of the heart with faith, then what about saying something less than that?

Allah says, "Whoso disbelieves in Allah after he has believed - save him who is forced to make a declaration of disbelief while his heart finds peace in faith - but such as open their breast to disbelief, on them is Allah's wrath; and for them is decreed a severe punishment." (16:106)

Second: we tell those who want to turn the issue of the retractions into a conspicuous title reading, "Here are your brothers, so be like them": it is imperative that a distinction be made between [on one hand] deriving lessons from experience and taking account of what has happened and [on the other hand] turning these experiences into the just judge and final word in issues of dispute and matters of disagreement, because judgment, decision and submission of disputes is only for the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and with them alone the statements and actions of the slaves are weighed and to them alone their disputes are submitted.

Allah says, "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you. And if you differ in anything, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers in Allah and the Last Day. This is best and most commendable in the end." (4:59)

Thus, it is never right for us to consider the retractions of the retracting ones and the experiences of the experimenters - whatever their rank - to be legal evidence for us to refer to in disputes.

So if someone comes to us and says, "You're still insisting on your way and methodology and holding on to your ideas although so-and-so and so-and-so have gone back on them, and they're who they are in knowledge and precedent," we tell them: yes, they're from the people of knowledge and precedent, but that doesn't accord their statements a sacredness which makes them indisputable, with no room for critique, refutation and objection. Our legal and religious obligation is to measure the statements of everyone who has retracted with the minute legal balance which doesn't oppress in the least, and to gauge those unusual ideas by the evidence, to see the extent of its nearness or farness from the truth. And then - and only then - we can rule any idea emanating from here or there as being mistaken or correct.

As for the total acceptance, complete surrender and random ruling by experiences and retractions without referring them to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace be upon him), this is a slippery slope and pitfall with which one's religion is not safe and which can't possibly be the path of one who seeks the truth and aspires to know and follow it.

Third: we ask Allah to steady us on the truth and steady our Muslim brothers inside the prisons and outside of them.

Even if we suppose that those retractions which are attributed to some emanated from them of their own free will and conviction, then the reasons for backtracking are not always limited to going from blatant error to blatant truth, so that every backtracker can be made a role model for those behind him

No there is also the changing of hearts and their abandoning of guidance.

Don't we read in the Book of Allah (the Glorious and Great) the supplication of the people of fear, apprehension and anxiety: "Our Lord, cause not our hearts to become perverse after You have guided us, and bestow on us mercy from Yourself; surely, You are the Great Bestower" (3:8)?

And the supplication most often made by the Prophet (peace be upon him) was, "O Charger of hearts, steady my heart on Your religion."

He was asked about that, and his reply was, "There is no human whose heart is not between two Fingers of Allah's Fingers, and he sets right whomever He wills and causes whomever He wills to deviate."

And it is narrated that Abdullah bin Mas'ud, with whom Allah was pleased, said, "Whoever follows someone should follow one who has died, for the living is not safe from temptation."

We ask Allah to protect us and our Muslim brothers from temptations, open and hidden.

Interviewer: You indicated previously that the issue of retractions is part of the system of the war of ideas being waged against the Mujahideen.

Can you elaborate on the most important pivots of this war and some of the techniques being used in it?

al-Libi: The Crusader, let by America and its underlings, have come to realize that the Jihad is not what they had imagined. It's not merely short-lived military operations which are no more than a reaction to the bitter reality which the Mujahideen see in their Ummah, nor is it merely an attempt to lift economic, social or political suffering, in which case it would be possible to absorb that agitation with some reformist patching to anesthetize the Ummah before returning to performing the surgical operations with which its limbs are amputated without it feeling a thing.

No! And since they have arrived at this truth, they have become active in opening new fronts against the Mujahideen, fronts which employ two pivots.

The first is the pivot of internal disassembling of the Jihadist groups and indeed, the entire Jihadist methodology. After their coming into contact with the Mujahideen and their becoming privy to many of the details of their ideas, which they arrived at through the Mujahideen's literature and communiques or through the discussions which place now and then inside the interrogation centers behind bars, they realized that the matter is larger and deeper than being just atmospheric crackle, temporary reactions or mere reflections of interlinked suffering. They realized that the greatest part of the battle lies in the well-founded convictions and doctrinal-methodological bases which the Mujahideen adopt and through which they work and which represent their real motivational and mover in the actions they carry out against these infidel states and their allies.

And thus, they reflected and calculated, then looked around, then reflected and calculated, then came to the conclusion that a large part of the battle depends on shaking the convictions on which the Mujahideen build their march and cast doubt on the doctrinal bases they consider indisputable, in which case there will occur a splitting or

perhaps collapse of the basic foundations and fundamentals on which the Jihadi methodology stands. And we know that practical vacillation, hesitation and confusion is a reflection and expression of doctrinal and methodological vacillation, detachment and darkness.

So this is the first pivot from which is launched the concept of the war of ideas directed against the Mujahideen, which has become an intrinsic part of the sweeping Crusader battle.

As for the second pivot, it is the attempt to isolate the Mujahideen from the Ummah and besiege them in its midst, and consider them to be an alien body growing inside Islamic society which must be removed, because we know that the Mujahideen are no more separable than an inseparable part of the Islamic Ummah in terms of religion, doctrine and affiliation.

The continuation of this visualization and the practical issues which stem from it means the continuation of the flooding of the Jihadist tide and its resurgence through the Ummah's embracing of it and its feeling and conviction that [this tide] is an extension of its efforts and backing physically, morally and economically.

Thus, the Crusaders want to put in place obstacles and barriers which would come between the Muslim peoples and this understanding and feeling, so that all the issues which the Mujahideen raise would no longer be an expression of the conscience of the Ummah, the creed of the Ummah and the outlook of the Ummah, but instead would be deviant, outcast ideas confined to a small group which would act in random and impulsive fashion, in which case the Mujahideen would be hemmed in and start to erode from the inside, and it wouldn't be long before they would fade out and come to an end.

Interviewer: And according to your outlook, what are the methods which the Crusaders might use to achieve this goal?

al-Libi: First, I say - and with full faith and confidence - that this goal will never be fully and comprehensively achieved, and we are convinced of that and haven't the least doubt about it, because what are called convictions or bases are in fact legal fundamentals and foundations built on pure, shining legal evidence which is part of the Islamic religion which Allah has guaranteed to preserve and protect, even if the infidels hate that. And they are also the fundamentals of the victorious group manifest against its enemy until the Last Hour.

Yes, this ideological war might have an effect on some individuals and perhaps groups, and might cause some confusion and disarray in one place or another, but that it might lead to the total annihilation of the Jihadist methodology and its permanent killing: this will never happen, Allah willing.

And to return to your question about the methods our enemies use in their ideological war, I say: these enemies have no morals at which they might stop in their war, and therefore, they don't have - in their attempt to attain victory - a single method to which they stick and don't overstep.

Thus, lying, fabrication, spreading rumors and committing the dirtiest and most despicable of acts are for them all methods completely inseparable from their war. But when talking about the ideological war, it seems to me that [the methods] can be listed in a number of fundamental points.

First, announcing the backtracking of some of the Mujahideen's leaders in prison, their deeming themselves mistaken in what they used to believe and do and their advising their brothers to abandon the path which they are on.

The media is present in force in this operation to run interviews, print articles and books of the retractions and blow them up out of all proportion and portray them as axioms which aren't open to discussion and giving and taking.

And I spoke about this issue previously and mentioned to you the proper bases on which to deal with it.

Second, fabricating some repulsive lies or exaggerating and blowing up some mistakes from

which no field of Jihad is free and considering them to be deviations glued to the Jihadist methodology and an inseparable part of it, and widening their circle to make them a general rule covering all Jihadi groups in all fields of Jihad.

Interviewer: Could you give us an example, Shaykh?

al-Libi: Like the allegation that the Mujahideen deem the Ummah and its `Ulama to be infidels and legalize the spilling of their blood and taking of their wealth, and the portrayal of them as being a small group outside the law and deviating from the path of the Believers whose ideas are ideas of extremism, militancy, isolation and harshness with no connection to the mercy of Islam and its tolerance and leniency.

nor do they tread aimlessly in their march; rather they base their methodology on clear legal evidence, well-founded Islamic fundamentals and definite doctrinal constants, and anyone can see the milestones of their journey, on one condition: that he be unbiased in his search for the truth and facts and not be blinded by hostility, jealousy or sheer ignorance.

And among the amusing things I have heard in this regard is what some of those who are called analysts and experts in Islamic groups said: that the constitution of al-Qaida Organization calls for the killing of anyone who breaks away from it!

We tell these slanderers who aren't ashamed to spread blatant lies, "Produce your proof, if you are truthful."

Also from the methods which we indicated is concentrating on interpretive issues followed by the Mujahideen on the basis of legal interpretation and actual need and making them the central focus of criticism and considering them to be categorically flagrant mistakes which can't be accepted or rectified, and moreover, moving by way of these ["mistakes"] to pass unfair judgments without verification, deliberation or proof.

Show us this constitution in which you found this passage, and we guarantee to you that we will distribute it at the widest level and on all fronts. Al-Qaida Organization and its leaders are too noble and pure to descend to the rotten level of such nonsense.

And the most prominent example of this is the bombings with which the Mujahideen target dens of infidel legislation, centers of criminal intelligence, military barracks and elsewhere, as occurred in Algeria and before that on the Arabian Peninsula.

They're not committers of random deed and impulsive acts or callers to imaginary temporal interests,

These blessed acts are portrayed as having targeted first and foremost -if not solely - the general public and the powerless, and the criminality and compound apostasy which was targeted hides behind a scene which moves emotions and whips up storms and is carried by the media.

Third: among the greatest methods used in the ideological war is the issuing of fatwas - or rather, the procuring of fatwas - which criminalize Jihad and the Mujahideen and describe them with well-known, repulsive legal terms like "bandits" and "Kharijites" and even "Qaramites," "extreme fanatics" and the like, and paint them with allegations of treachery and treason.

These muftis have become experts in perverting the source texts and are accustomed to bending their necks and don't even see anything wrong with occasionally breaking them if they refuse to be flexible.

In fact, states now form special committees of Shaykhs to debate the Mujahideen repressed behind the prison bars, like what is happening on the Arabian Peninsula, where they are following the tradition of the Egyptian government.

Tell me, what do you expect from someone who sees the sword above him, the rug in front of him and the Shaykh dictating to him the proof and evidence for the obligation of obeying the ruler? For so long the Mujahideen and their qflama have called for open, public debate without conditions or restrictions, so why didn't these `Ulama accept the offer and confront evidence with evidence before the hands were placed in shackles?

And in a further attempt by the region's traitors to besiege the Jihadist methodology, there are

rapid and continuous attempts to codify the sources of the fatwa and prohibit and criminalize deviation in the issuing or requesting of fatwas from the channels which they will specify. And the mission of those official channels will be to chant the praises of the tyrants, beat the drum for them and justify their hideous deeds while at the same time slandering the Mujahideen, stirring up misconceptions about their actions and issuing stringent fatwas against them. Fourth, strengthening and backing some of the methodologies adopted by Islamic movements far removed from Jihad, especially those with a democratic approach and those groups which melt and bend the source texts and iron them out so that they agree with the civilization, culture and methodologies of the West, and portraying these groups as the moderate, balanced, reasonable and civilized alternative, and accordingly, pushing these groups into ideological conflict with the Jihadist groups, feeding that conflict and busying the Mujahideen with it. This is one of the steps meant to isolate the Mujahideen inside their societies and place them in front of a torrential flood of ideas and methodologies which find backing, empowerment and publicity from numerous parties.

And finally, when those groups' mission is over, a cold shoulder will be turned to them, upon which they will realize they were only used to harm their brothers.

Fifth: killing, capturing, incapacitating or defaming the guiding Jihadi symbols, isolating them and preventing their voice from reaching the people, and emptying the arena of them or restricting them as much as possible, after which the Mujahideen will be without an authority in which they can put full confidence and which will direct and guide them, allay their misconceptions, and regulate their march with knowledge, understanding and wisdom, which in turn will lead to the intervention of some of those who have not fully matured on this path or are hostile to them in the first place, to spread whatever ideas and opinions they want to cause disarray and darkness in the proper outlook which every Mujahid must have.

Sixth: blowing out of proportion some of the minor, interpretive disputes which might occur among the Mujahideen, and considering them to be doctrinal/methodological disputes, and inventing new names and descriptions for those groups on the basis of these disputes, and making it an inroad for them to fan the flames of differences, bandy about allegations and spread rumors, to be able - by way of that - to turn minor interpretive disputes open to discussion into something portrayed as being deep, contradictory methodological differences on the basis of which groups are categorized as being moderate, middle- of-the-road or extreme. And without a doubt, the atmosphere that reaches this degree of tension become a protected incubator and safe have for rumormongers, deserters and demoralizers, and the door is thrown wide open for defamation, casting of doubts, making of accusations and slander.

And at that point, however much the Mujahideen try to explain the truth, remove the misconception and reply to the accusations, their voice will be like the voice of someone with a hoarse throat in the middle of thousands of people shouting with one voice, a voice which is today represented by all the media without exception.

And Allah we ask for help.

And I say that what these enemies call the "war of ideas," and consider to be something new invented by their minds, is a type of war pursued by the minds of infidel Quraysh's champions and those hypocrite serpents who followed in their footsteps from the outset of the call of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and it is a war which we might call "the war of defamation, casting of doubts and distortion."

After they were beaten by argument and overcome by clear proof and were unable to confront it and their weakness in front of it became clear, they impugned its carrier and preacher, saying about him, "a sorcerer, a great liar," or "tutored, a man possessed," or "a soothsayer," as the Quran related from their predecessors: "In the same way there came no Messenger to those before them except that they said, 'A sorcerer or a madman.'" (51:52)

And when this argument didn't succeed and they found themselves the objects of derision due to their making of it - because everyone bore witness to the truthfulness of the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) and his trustworthiness, the integrity of his intellect, the clarity of his diction and the comprehensiveness of his call - they used the police of incitation, interference, shouting and abuse to prevent the people from listening to his voice and hearing his arguments, which is the argument of the bankrupt every time and is identical to what is perpetrated by the lowly media - whatever their inclinations and techniques.

"And those who disbelieve say, `Listen not to this Quran, but make noise during its recital that you may have the upper hand.'" (41:26)

Interviewer: What do you mean by the methodology of melting and bending which you mentioned?

al-Libi: This methodology is one of the things with which our Islam-is Ummah has been afflicted in this era and with which many of those who are described as thinkers, enlightened ones or moderates have been seduced.

The essence of this methodology is the melting of the facts of the religion and their bending and subdual to agree with personal understandings, outlooks and convictions, especially with regard to the issues which are felt to oppose or clash with some of the issues which the Westerners have publicized.

Thus, we find these benders sparing no effort and leaving no stone unturned to prove the agreement of Islam with what these Westerners believe and the identicalness of its rules to it and even its spreading of it. And regrettably, this virus has afflicted many of the Muslims"Ulama and callers, and they have become the heads of this school; the same `Ulama upon whose shoulders Allah placed the preaching of the Message and its dissemination among the people as is without distortion or fraud and 'without them being deterred from that by temptation or intimidation, as Allah said, "Those who deliver the Messages of Allah and fear Him and fear none but Allah. And sufficient is Allah as a reckoner." (33:39)

So this school of melting and bending has turned all issues of religion into legitimate territory for their intellects to trespass on, their ideas to lick and their research to tackle, and no deterrent or barrier comes between them and that.

And this is a major disaster from our modern disasters, and the Quran has explained this truth and revealed the innermost thoughts of its people and their motivations for what they do, i.e. perversity and deviance of the heart, which we summarize here in being seduced by the culture of the West and being pulled by the temptation of thought and speculation.

Allah, the Glorious and Great, says, "As for those in whose hearts is perversity, they pursue that of it which is susceptible to different interpretations, seeking to cause discord and seeking wrong interpretations of it." (3:7)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and the blessing of Allah be upon him) recited this verse, then said, "If you should see those who pursue that of it which is susceptible to different interpretations, then those are the ones who Allah named, so beware of them."

Thus, the Muslim - in order to save his religion and protect himself from perversity and being lost in the wilderness of misguidance - must beware of them and warn against them and not be deceived by the names, titles, fame and so on, because what they are engaged in is the polluting of our Islamic sources and the desecration of our unique and pure concepts, which Islam has been keen to preserve with their independence in their terms, meanings and content, to prevent the leaking of any impurity to cloud this pure spring. And in this regard is the story of the Prophet (peace be upon him), when Umar (with whom Allah was pleased) came to him and said, "We hear from the Jews Ahadeeth which we like. Do you permit us to write down some of them?"

He replied, "Are all of you also confused like the Jews and Nazarenes were confused? I have brought it to you pure and white, and were Moses alive, he would have no choice but to follow it."

And today, you see that no sooner has a Western thinker or intellectual opened his mouth and

praised something which Islam brought than it is turned into proof of the credibility of Islam, as if we are in

need of these sorts of testimonies. And even worse and more dangerous than that is that these who have these loose ideas have started to bend Islamic concepts for these concepts to be a true witness to the correctness of many facets of the Western culture which clashes totally with Islam in meaning as well as in terminology.

I believe that we are in need of a sufficient, comprehensive study of the basics and foundations of this school of perversity and falsification in order to pull it up by the roots and make clear the danger it poses to the axioms of the religion, the extent of its corruption of Islamic concepts and its total opposition to the path of surrender of the heart and regulation of understanding taken by the predecessors and the well-versed `Ulama after them.

I also bring to the attention of those who have shouldered the sin of strengthening the notions of this school and have spread corruption in the facts of the religion to curry favor with the infidel West, that this will not make them pleased with you, and that the day of your really big loss is when you hear the applause of the infidel West for your ideas and its satisfaction with your culture.

They want us to get closer to them by compromising on our religion one thing after another and untying its knots one by one, and they see nothing wrong with exuding for that - even if temporarily - some flexibility and open-heartedness, but without compromising in reality on any of their doctrines, constants and ideas, as Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "They wish that you should compromise so that they may also compromise." (68:9)

And He (Exalted is He) said, "And neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their creed." (2:120)

So we tell these benders who melt the facts of the religion what our Lord (the Glorious and Great) said: "Say, 'Verily, Allah's guidance alone is the true guidance.' And if you follow their evil desires after the knowledge has come to you, you shall have [against] Allah no friend nor helper [to protect from Him] ." (2:120)

Interviewer: You mentioned in the first pivot of the ideological war that Jihad is built on fixed bases and firm foundations, and that it is these which the Crusader enemy and his underlings are trying to undermine.

Can you explain to us the most important of those fundamentals and pillars?

al-Libi: The first of these foundations and most important of them, in my view, is the definite belief that Jihad is a legal act of worship, and in fact, is one of the greatest acts of worship commanded by Allah in His Book and by His Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) in his Sunnah.

Understanding this concept deeply and correctly automatically makes a person treat Jihad in the same way he treats prayer, fasting, the Hajj and other rites of Islam. Jihad isn't an option equivalent to other options to be picked from among them. And Jihad isn't an alternative to other independent means which have their own identity and boundaries.

Interviewer: Excuse me for interrupting, but isn't Jihad a means and not an end?

al-Libi: This phrase is correct if it is correctly understood.

However, many of those who repeat it error in appreciating its substance, perhaps intentionally. Jihad is a means to the greatest of ends

120

and goals, which is unifying Allah (the Glorious and Great) and achieving His worship on earth, which will only completely and comprehensively happen through Jihad, and the nobility of the means is on proportion to the nobility of the end.

Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "And fight them until there is no Fitnah [polytheism], and religion is wholly for Allah." (8:39): i.e. unless you fight them, there will be Fitnah, and Fitnah is

infidelity and polytheism, as the interpreters have said.

And in the agreed-upon Hadeeth from the Ibn Umar (with whom Allah was pleased), he said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "I have been ordered to fight the people until they testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" to the end of the Hadeeth.

And Jihad is also a means to rescue the weak and oppressed and lift tyranny and repression from them, as Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "And what is the matter with you, that you do not fight in the path of Allah and of the weak and oppressed men, women, and children whose cry is, 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this village whose people are oppressors, and raise for us from You one who will protect, and raise for us from You one who will help.'" (4:75) However, despite Jihad being a means through which these noble ends and others are reached, Allah the Most High has made it an end in and of itself, when looking at it from another perspective: with it the people of faith are purified, the bad is separated from the good, the status of the truthful and sincere is raised and the lights of guidance and paths of success are opened for the believer in the affairs of his religion.

Allah (the Glorious and Great) says, "And We will, surely, try you, until We make manifest those among you who strive and those who are steadfast. And We will make known the true facts about you." (47:31)

And He said, "Do you suppose that you will enter Heaven while Allah has not yet caused to be distinguished those of you that strive and has not yet caused to be distinguished the steadfast." (3:142)

And He said, "And as for those who strive [and fight] for us, We will surely guide them to Our ways. And, verily, Allah is with those who do good." (29:69)

And since establishing the religion and empowering the Law and removing the humiliation which the Muslims are suffering is by no means whatsoever possible except through Jihad in the Path of Allah, and since it is the only way to achieve these ends, what is the point of the continuous droning about making Jihad a means and not an end, while using an erroneous definition of "means" in this context?

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "No people abandon Jihad without Allah covering them with torment."

And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Whoever dies without raiding or hoping to raid dies on a branch of hypocrisy."

When the jurists (may Allah have mercy on them) divided acts of worship into "those intended in and of themselves" and "those intended for others," they never even imagined the definition of "means" which is held up by many contemporaries, who have made this phrase a cushion from which to abandon

Jihad, shirk its burdens and search for alternatives with which they claim they will reach the same goal the Jihad will reach.

Regrettably, would that they had protected that goal from desecration and being disturbed by the minds and desires, but instead, they corrupted the end in the same way they perverted the means, and were negligent with the objective just like they took lightly what leads to it, and that is only because of their stripping Jihad of its devotional meaning and cutting it off from the world of the hereafter.

And the fact is, there is no act of worship which isn't an objective in and of itself from one perspective and a means from another perspective.

Prayer, for example, is a means to prevent indecency and evil, as Allah the Exalted says, "And observe Prayer. Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil." (29:45)

But let no one say, "I've obtained my desired amount of refraining from indecency and evil in another way not involving prayer," and so abandon it because of that, because we say that prayer is an act of worship which Islam ordered, forbade its abandonment, warned against taking it lightly, threatened the one negligent in performing it, and laid down etiquette and rules

concerning it.

And the same goes for every act of worship: it is a means to win the pleasure of Allah (the Glorious and Great) and win His Gardens and affection and be endowed with fear of Him, as Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "O people! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you, that you may guard [against the Fire]." (2:21)

And at the same time, it is meant in and of itself, whether as an obligation or a desirable deed, and Jihad is one of these acts of worship, and in fact, is at their peak and at the top of their pyramid, as he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "And the pinnacle of its hump is Jihad."

Interviewer: Let us return to the issue of the pillars on which the Jihadi methodology stands.

al-Libi: Yes. I said that the first foundation and main base in this issue is complete faith and definite belief that Jihad is a divine devotion to which we have been commanded and that we must make every effort to discharge it. in the same way we discharge prayer, fasting, Haj and other devotions.

And many of the groups which took the path of Jihad first were beset by blemishes and flaws because of their confused understanding of this fact, as Jihad was - or became - in their imagination a mere dry means, like other earthy means by way of which strive to establish states.

So when darkness permeated this concept, it was easy for them to abandon Jihad and jump to the ballot boxes as another option equal to the devotion of Jihad, and therefore an alternative to it.

Thus, we see in contemporary terminology the popularization of terms like "the option of Jihad," "the option of resistance" (by which they also mean Jihad), "the option of arms," "the option of combat," "the option of struggle," and so on to the last of this disgusting modern series. As for us, we say "the devotion of Jihad," and when we add "devotion" to Jihad, this makes it spring from submission, obedience, surrender and abandonment of choice when ordered.

As for the second pillar on which the Jihadist methodology stands, It is that this devotion which we perform and which we make every effort we can to bring to life has as its first objective the establishment of the religion, rule of the Law and making the Creation worship their Creator. So it is a noble means to a great end which is not dirtied by the pollution of patriotism, the filth of nationalism, the stain of rationalism or the rigging of whims.

And it is the lofty concept which the Quran and Sunnah express with the phrase "in the path of Allah": i.e. in obedience to Allah. (the Glorious and Great).

And this motive must be clearly defined in the depths of the soul, just as it must be active and tangible in practical pursuits.

This is why it is related in the authentic Hadeeth from Abu Musa that he said: "A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'One man fights for booty, another man fights for fame, and another fights to show off, so which of them is in Allah's path?'

He replied, 'The one who fights for the supremacy of Allah's Word is in Allah's path.'" And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "He who fights under an ambiguous banner out of partisan anger or calls to partisanship or aids partisanship and is killed, is one killed in the Time of Ignorance."

And on the basis of this fundamental, we caution some of the Islamic groups, among them HAMAS, which are risking the blood of their members and pushing them into battles which have reins or bridles, and we call on them to cleanse and empty their Jihad of contemporary Jahili pollutants and of the terms which Satan made to appear pretty to them but which are like wind in the desert on the balance of Law: e.g. patriotism, nationalism, shared destiny, the supreme interest and the other slogans which are repeated many times daily on the tongues of their officials and commanders.

None of this has any place in the religion of Allah (the Glorious and Great), and it is one of the major catastrophes resulting from the failure to appreciate this genuine pillar of the Jihadist

methodology.

Therefore, let our intent be clear, our target defined and our objective declared: the establishment of Allah's religion in its complete and comprehensive sense which is articulated by the statement of Allah, "and religion is wholly for Allah." And it is an objective for which we make sacrifices and for whose establishment we pour out our blood and give of our efforts, and everything else, whatever its value, is less than it.

And that's why we don't accept the least compromise regarding it, nor do we agree to make it the subject of research, review and giving and taking, even if holding on to it leads to the total annihilation of our groups.

We aren't better in that regard than the People of the Ditch.

So there is no room for respecting international legality, nor for observing the charters of the United Nations, nor for referring to the resolutions of the Security Council, nor for sanctifying the charter of the League of Arab States.

All of these organizations with everything and everyone in them aren't worth an ant to us.

As for the third pillar on which the Jihadist methodology stands, it is loyalty and disloyalty, in doctrine and concept and behavior and action.

This deep Imani concept which is the strongest knot of Iman, as the authentic Hadeeth says, is among the most important and greatest of the things on which the Jihadist methodology is founded. And any scratching or playing with it means to shake and disturb the Jihadi March from the inside and liquefy it in an ugly way by giving precedence to imaginary so-called interests with which the fundamental of the religion and its mainstay is destroyed.

Loyalty, from which branches out

- the right of help, aid, love and affection, must be based on one foundation as firm as the mountains: Iman.

The Muslims are one Ummah, from their east to their west and from their north to their south, and equal in that are the red and the black, the Arab and the non-Arab and the near and the far. Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "And the believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another." (9:71)

And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "The parable of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and sympathy is that of the body: if one of its limbs falls ill, the rest of the body responds to it with sleeplessness and fever."

So there is no consideration given to color, not to race, nor to tribe, nor to borders, nor to farness or nearness, and it is the same whether he is in Africa or Asia or Europe or America or Australia. Rather, [the differentiator] is faith and piety, and the one who is pulled back by his deeds is not pushed forward by his affiliation.

And the rooting of this concept in our hearts obligates us to adopt the causes of the Muslims and have the real feeling which leads to action that their happiness is our happiness, their sadness our sadness, their tragedy our tragedy and their security our security.

' And there is nothing connected with the Muslims which we could possibly call an internal issue and thus shirk our duty of helping when we are able, declaring our loyalty and discharging the rights of faith-based brotherhood.

So the general rule which stems from this deep-rooted concept is what the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) made clear with his statement, "Help your brother, be he the oppressor or the oppressed."

A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, I can help him when oppressed, but how can I help him when he is the oppressor?"

He replied, "Prevent him from oppressing, and by that you have helped him "

And the Hadeeth is agreed upon.

As for the concept of disloyalty, which implies unending hostility and continuous hatred between faith and its people on one side and infidelity and its party on the other, then the

infidels - all the infidels - are our enemies, and we neither are loyal to them nor befriend them nor love them.

How can we love or be friendly with those whom Allah has made His enemy?

No, we treat them as the Imam of the Haneefs and father of the Prophets, Abraham (peace be upon him) said, "We have nothing to do with you and with that which you worship beside Allah. We have rejected you [i.e. your religion and way], and there has begun between us and you enmity and hatred forever, unless you believe in Allah Alone." (60:4)

So we don't distinguish between a patriotic infidel and an alien infidel, nor between a local infidel and foreign infidel, nor between an invading occupier and an apostate helper.

Accordingly, we are not of those who make the ties of allegiance nationality, citizenship, relationship or so on.

The believer is our brother, even if he be the farthest of the far in his dwelling and affiliation, while the infidel is our enemy, even if he be the nearest of the near in his district and connections.

Allah (the Glorious and Great) says, "O you who believe! Take not for allies your fathers and your brothers if they prefer infidelity to faith; and whoever of you take them as allies, they are the wrongdoers." (9:23)

And He (the Exalted) says, "You shall not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day lov-

ing those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they be their fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their clan." (58:22)

And He (the Glorious and Great) says, "Your allies are Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, those who establish regular prayers and pay Zakat and bow [in worship]." (5:55)

We are also not those who divide the Jihad and allow, support and call to it against the Jews in Palestine but forbid, criminalize and prevent and deter it in Iraq or Afghanistan or Chechnya or Algeria or elsewhere. Jihad, which is the highest and the greatest form of disassociation, is against the Jews in the exact same way it is against the Nazarenes, Magians, Hindus and apostates, because the type of relationship we have with all of these sects is one: total separation, complete disassociation and open animosity.

And as long as the matter is thus, we will not prefer one infidel to another because of his patriotism or nationalism or his noble descent or affiliation.

We fight the polytheists one and all as they fight us one and all, and we don't stop in that at any boundary, or limit ourselves to one type, or confine ourselves to any territory.

This is our path until everyone submits to the religion of Allah (the Glorious and Great) and complies with its rules and surrenders to its authority.

Interviewer: Does this mean that you will open battlefronts with all of these sects which you mentioned at the same time?

al-Libi: No, that's not what I mean, nor is it legally or rationally desirable. I haven't been talking about the issue of fighting from the perspective of when we should begin, and with whom we should begin and how we should begin.

That is a legal question subject to legal policy, based on the predominant interest and dependant on ability.

And it is a question of arranging priorities which Islamic Shari'ah has made clear, as Allah (the Glorious and the Great) has said, "O you who believe! Fight the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find harshness in you; and know that Allah is with those who fear Him." (9:123)

Jihad, like other acts of worship, is contingent on capacity and capability, as "Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity." Rather, my talk dealt with the nature of the relationship on which Islam is founded, between its people belonging to it and between those other than them from the people of the other religions, that relationship which, whenever it is on the correct, clear doctrinal basis, the Jihadi march is disciplined and free of the methodology of melting and bending, which now has its callers, thinkers and theorists.

Yes, we believe that all of earth must be under the rule of Islam, with no exception made for the smallest part of it, because our Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sent to all the people without exception.

But this in no way means that we will fight all of the peoples of the earth at one go to subjugate them to Islamic Shari'ah. Islam didn't order us to do that, but rather, ordered us to fight the nearest, then the next nearest of those who refuse to submit to Islamic rule and begin with the closest, then the next closest.

And in this way, the circle widens until all submit to the rule of Allah.

And we are now at the first step and beginning of the road, as we are striving to recover our territories taken over by the infidels: the Jews and Nazarenes and their apostate helpers, the traitorous rulers.

And this is the duty of the Muslims today, to find for themselves a foothold where they can establish their state which will rule them by Islam and under which they will be shaded and in whose justice they will bask.

Interviewer: Speaking of the issue of priorities in fighting, there are some who propose beginning with fighting the apostate governments, due to them being the enemy closest to the Muslims, instead of the Americans and the other infidel coalitions.

al-Libi: Without a doubt, the original confirmed ruling laid down by the noble verse and attested to by the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and practiced by his Companions after him is that we begin fighting the nearest, then the next nearest, as Allah (the Glorious and Great) said, "O you who believe! Fight the unbelievers who are near to you." (9:123)

But this is when the situation is uniform and regular, i.e. when things are going normally, so that the Mujahideen move in their conquests from the nearest to those adjoining them. And this is one of the strongest proofs that Jihad is not stopped by borders nor limited to the defensive form alone, as many modern defeatists try to establish.

In any case, the jurists who spoke about this issue and clarified its ruling stipulated that there are numerous situations in which it is better to start by fighting the farther enemy and giving priority to him over the others.

And among those situations is if the farther enemy is more harmful and dangerous to the Muslims and their religion, and assessing this is the job of the commanders of the Mujahideen, who decide - after consultation and review - which of the enemies were more deserving of beginning with, in light of any of the accepted legal considerations.

So the issue isn't a definite textual issue not open to discretion, study and preference according to reality, need, ability and interest. Rather, Law has given a free hand in it and given consideration to interest and assessment.

In addition, the question of special nearness and farness in our modern era doesn't have the same significance it once had when we look at the facts, because the type of weapons used - aircraft, missiles and so on - have penetrated borders and broken through barriers and now cross continents and oceans and target the Muslims as they sit in their houses with their families.

And the relations which tie the major infidel states to the statelets and their apostate governments are close, overlapping relations on all fronts: political, economic, military and even cultural.

So in general, they are a single entity, a single enemy and a single army, and they are a single hand against us and the battle they are waging against us is a single battle which either the infidel Crusader states adopt themselves or is taken up by their traitorous proxies who reign over the Muslim peoples.

This is in addition to the heavy military presence of those states

- foremost among them America
- on the soil of the Muslims, killing sabotaging and destroying, and violating their sanctities, plundering their treasures and imposing on them their policies and laws.

And these apostate regimes with these states are like troops with their commander, or rather, like slaves with their master: making not a sound and speaking not a whisper.

And all of us know that smashing this modern idol and inflicting defeat on it automatically means the weakening of these emaciated regimes of treason, which will be buried with their god to whom they were devoted and be thrown with him into the trash heap of history, without being mourned.

So the Mujahideen today are in the situation of repelling the enemy and stopping his fierce attack on the Muslim lands, and thus the option of beginning fighting with this enemy or that doesn't really have much meaning now. And even the one who wants to begin by fighting the apostate regimes dominating the Muslim lands will find himself after a little while - if not from day one - confronting in one way or another the Crusader forces, foremost among them America. And thus he will stand face-to-face with the enemy he used to consider and suppose to be the farther and avoided fighting first.

130

So with our enemies today, their near is near and their far is near, and the part the Mujahideen play in choosing the time of the confrontation is to try and aim as much as they can to enter the decisive battle which suits their abilities, has the factors for success, saves them from a lot of effort and leads to the elimination of the greater enemy which spreads corruption ad ruin and under whose wings the regimes of tyranny and torture develop and prosper.

Interviewer: You indicated previously that it is obligatory on the Muslims in general and the Mujahideen in particular to bring into being a place or state which will be their primary base for spreading the religion of Islam all over the world. And as you know, the Mujahideen in Iraq have announced the setting up of the Islamic State of Iraq.

So what is your perspective on this step taken by our brothers there?

al-Libi: The fact is, I consider the venturing of our brothers, the Mujahideen in Iraq, to declare the setting up of the Islamic State to be pure God-given success and to be part of the guidance which Allah has guaranteed for His worshippers the Mujahideen in His statement,

"And as for those who strive [and fight] for us, We will surely guide them to Our ways." (29:69)

In fact, I have no doubt that it is from Allah's defense of the believers who help His religion and Book, as He (the Glorious and Great) says, "Verily, Allah defends those who believe. Verily, Allah does not love every unfaithful, ungrateful one." (22:38)

So the Jihad in Iraq before the declaration of the State was moving toward a dangerous, deadly slide, but stealthily and secretly. And what revealed this slide and uncovered that lethal abyss was the announcement of the setting up of the State.

And as a result, the enemy occupier fell into an unenviable dilemma, as this step upset all his calculations and shuffled all his cards, because the plan which the enemy was going on before the declaration of the State was the creation of a puppet government of Sunnis which would be somewhat acceptable and recognized by the neighboring weevil states, especially the states of Al Saud and Jordan, both of which played the largest part in this conspiracy and began to blow the trumpet of defending the Sunnis in Iraq and pretended to be concerned for their lives, and the media began to enlarge this issue and produce it in various forms.

And we don't mean that our brothers, the people of the Sunnah in Iraq, weren't - and aren't - suffering the ugliest forms of both Rejectionist and Crusader criminality

No, what I mean is that the constant droning about this issue by states audacious in their hypocrisy and criminality was part of a major conspiracy being hatched against the Jihad and Mujahideen in Iraq.

After the torture and killing of the people of the Sunnah had reached its utmost degree and

everyone in Iraq and outside it had been convinced that they had reached the pinnacle of suffering, a political drama would be fabricated for them to produce a government with a Sunni majority, and the states of the region would rush to support and strengthen it and polish its picture, for it to be said to the people of the Sunnah in Iraq, "Here, you've got what you wanted and won what you were asking for, and you've been saved from the abattoirs of the Rejectionists and the massacres of the Crusaders, so enjoy a secular puppet government for which near and far have beaten the drum."

And whoever would object to that so-called "Sunni" government would find himself an eccentric outcast, as he would be trying with his actions to destroy this big palace won by the people of the Sunnah in Iraq and under whose umbrella and protection they live.

And in this way the curtain would fall on the sacrifices of the champions, tears of the windows and suffering of the orphans, to be blown away by the storm of celebration, support, polishing and artificial heroics with which that hypothetical government would appear.

But Allah saved and rescued the Iraqi Jihad from a crushing blow which would have brought it back to square one, with the declaration of the setting up of the Islamic State of Iraq.

Interviewer: But as you know, many of the Mujahideen inside and outside of Iraq believe that this step wasn't in the interest of the Jihad and Mujahideen.

al-Libi: As far as I can see - and Allah knows best - the objection by these virtuous ones to the declaration of the Islamic State of Iraq had been blown out of proportion. What our brothers embarked on in terms of the declaration is a step the least that could be said about it is that it is the discretionary judgment of a large group and wide slice of the Mujahideen, and it should be dealt with on this basis and we should move on from this stage to the stage of direction, guidance, backing, strengthening, closing of ranks and constant striving for what is better and fuller, instead of us stopping at the point of the declaration and portraying it as if it is the deathblow for the Jihad in Iraq, even though the facts on the ground demonstrated otherwise and reveal the major positive aspects which have appeared one after the other after the declaration of the state.

And we shouldn't close our eyes to the biggest gain of this declaration, which is the rescuing of the Jihad in Iraq from an eradication program which would have destroyed its foundations, and this is the fact which the enemy appreciated before the friend.

So to say that this step was not in the interest of the Jihad and Mujahideen isn't correct at all, and is a feigning of ignorance which clashes directly with the reality in which the caravan of Jihad in Iraq is moving. And the fact is, when we want to assess anything and arrive at a correct and fair result, we must weigh the positive and negative aspects which this act or that includes.

"They ask you concerning wine and games of chance. Say, 'In both there is great sin and harm and also some advantages for men, but their sin and harm are greater than their advantage.'" (2:219)

So it may be that one positive aspect, due to its weight, strength and predominance, downs hundreds of negative aspects in its wake, and vice versa.

And those who talk about the great project of Islamic civilization and cling to the model form of it and make it their gauge in the success or failure of any work have not really gone down to the realistic field of work, and haven't come into contact with the details of events, and have not looked deeply at the degree of plotting, deception and intrigues which the minds of the chiefs of infidelity produce day after day.

Tell me, for the sake of Allah, will this project of civilization which the minds enjoy imagining and swim in the seas of its fantasy be born overnight, complete and strong and filling the horizon with its prosperity, civilization and vigor? Or will the goings-on of reality and the directions of events be totally reflected on it in its strength, size and expanse, except that it will resist and be resisted, will do its best and will get stronger and ascend until it approaches slowly but surely the stage of perfection, which will only be after a period of decades and not in a day or

two?

Interviewer: In your view, what is the most important of the dangers which the brothers in the Islamic State of Iraq face at this stage?

al-Libi: As I told you, the announcement of the State was a huge surprise to the enemy occupier by all standards, as the automatic conviction of the Iraqi people became that the State is the immediate and only replacement which will succeed the occupier when he pulls out, Allah permitting.

And with the consecutive blows taken by the Crusaders at the hands of the Mujahideen there and the increasing internal pressure for the Bush administration, and with the severe threat they feel from the Muslims' setting up a state with full independence at all levels, the concern of the occupier has become

making this project fail and burying it alive in the cradle in any way possible, including pulling out this conviction which has settled in the hearts of the Iraqis with the declaration of the State, to create for them after that any replacements they wish.

And the most successful method in this regard was spreading and feeding internal differences among the Mujahideen; exploiting some of the points on which their outlooks differ, enlarging them and deepening the rift through them; attempting to infiltrate the ranks to play with the Jihadist methodology from the inside; and committing some ugly actions and attributing them to the Mujahideen to repel people from them. And with that, the Mujahideen will become preoccupied by themselves and busy with the endless chain of their own problems, and their energies will be depleted and their efforts wasted and the trust between them will disappear. This is why I liken the situation of our brothers in the Islamic State of Iraq to that of someone walking in a minefield in pitch-black darkness, and this requires of them total alertness, constant probing of the danger spots, comprehensive awareness of the types of conspiracies and insight which reveals to them the way of the criminals. And it requires that their decisions spring from a comprehensive view of events, independent treatment of issues, sensing of responsibility at every step and total aloofness from the policy of reactions and responding to provocation, because this is an extremely critical and delicate stage, and emerging from it safely means full victory and total empowerment, with the permission of Allah, the Most High.

Interviewer: The fact is, there are many hot issues which we wanted to take up in this interview, like the issues of Palestine, Algeria, Somalia, the Arabian Peninsula and others. And perhaps another opportunity will be had for the talk to be more comprehensive and complete. But do you have a closing word to direct to the Mujahideen in particular and the Ummah in general?

al-Libi: I say that the stage which the global Jihad is passing through is one of the most critical stages, and the methods of confrontation used by the two camps aren't the least bit equal, but what worked to our advantage - after taking the accepted precautions - is our honesty with Allah (the Glorious and

Great), and our deep and unqualified faith that Allah is with us, and this requires from us submission to Allah and humbleness in front of Him and distancing ourselves from arrogance, vanity and conceit.

This is the most important of the things with which we advise our brothers the Mujahideen in all arenas of Jihad.

And their trust in Allah should be great and their conviction of the correctness of their methodology firm, and they should put in front of their eyes the statement of Allah (the Most High) in which He reminds the noble Companions of His favoring them by aiding them on the Day of Badr despite their fewness and weakness: "And Allah had already helped you at Badr when you were few. SO fear Allah so that you may be grateful." (3:123)

And they of all people should be the most fearful of disobeying Allah, because is it logical for us to disobey our Lord (Exalted is He), then ask Him to help us?!

I also advise them to close their ranks and unite and bulldoze every obstacle which comes

between them and that, because all dispute is evil, even if we imagined that there is benefit in it and we claimed through it "reform."

This is with preservation of the safety of the methodology and clarity of the objectives and cleansing them from any stain which sullies their purity, like Jahili fanaticism, nationalism, patriotism and the like.

If the infidels, who have contradictory religions and inharmonious hearts, have come together and agreed and compromised with each other and formed coalitions in consideration of their supreme interest represented by the elimination of Islam, then how about us, the Muslims, when our religion is one, our creed is one, our Lord is One, and our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is one: aren't we more deserving of this honor and this virtue? As for the Islamic Ummah, I tell it: rejoice, for by Allah, the darkness of tyranny and repression is about to fall away, and the suns of truth have begun to send their rays slowly but surely. And that wouldn't have happened with servility, submission and surrender and by fleeing from the places of danger and risk; no, this cloud began to lift through the sacrifices of your righteous sons, sacrifices which mixed the blood

of the martyr with the sweat of the weary and the tears of the bereaved. SO have the patience, our beloved Ummah, for victory is an hour of patience, "and on that day the believers will rejoice in Allah's help. He helps whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Merciful." (30:45)

Interviewer: As we close this interview, we thank Shaykh Abu Yahya, and we ask Allah to benefit through his knowledge and reward him well of behalf of Islam and Muslims.

al-Libi: And you too: may Allah reward you for your effort and striving, and we ask Allah to bless it.

And peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.