

Abdullah bin Muhammad, and his Defense of Muslim Lands  
RR 20

**Azzam defines two obligations for jihad (fard kifaya and fard'ayn), how accepted are his explanations of the obligations in the umma or Muslim community today?** It would be important to understand how important his "teaching" of jihad is. If this teaching is a fatwa, is that only in Saudi Arabia? In addition, if these are not generally accepted descriptions of the obligation(s) of jihad, what is generally accepted among...American Muslims?

**Reports state that Azzam was killed by a car bomb in 1989, is there a particular group (other than the Pakistani and Saudi intelligence services) that could have contributed to his death?** It would be interesting to consider who could be behind his death. In addition, to understand what the motives would be behind his assassination.

## Calvert; The Striving Shaykh: Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad

- I. John C. M. Calvert gives a glimpse of the life of charismatic Muslim leader Abdullah Azzam
  - a. Azzam created a large amount of the Islamist ideology underpinning the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets
  - b. Azzam recruited Arab fighters
  - c. Azzam joined the MB in 1967 and began tutelage under Hasan al-Banna
  - d. Between the years of 1967-1969, Azzam engaged in guerilla operations against the Israelis
  - e. Azzam befriended several of Qutb's disciples, of whom led jihadist attacks in the 1990's against the Egyptian government
  - f. Azzam believed Qutb's stance that "western aggression in the Islamic world should be met and challenged, violently if necessary"
  - g. Azzam moved to Saudi Arabia where he would later combine the teachings of al-Banna and Qutb
  - h. Azzam believed the Afghanistan war was an opportunity to reach the "beleaguered Muslim population" Azzam began to personally participate in Jihad in 1984
  - i. Osama bin Laden helped Azzam as he instructed bin Laden to believe that it was the belief in jihad that could bring unity to Muslims
  - j. Azzam honored the canon of jurisprudence and viewed contemporary events as sanctified events addressed in ancient scripture
  - k. Azzam included his vision of jihad in his two treatises: Defending Muslim Lands and Join the Caravan
  - l. Azzam distinguishes between two types of obligation to jihad:
    - a. Fard kifaya – collective obligation, and where the Kuffar are not gathering to fight Muslims
    - b. Fard'ayn – individual duty
  - m. Azzam was killed in 1989 by a car bomb

### Abdullah Azzam, and his Defense of Muslim Lands

- II. Defense of Muslim Lands – The first obligation after Iman
  - a. Azzam writes that "Defense" has filled many pages in the Qur'an
  - b. Fighting is one of the most important "lost obligations"
  - c. Offensive Jihad – where the enemy is attacked in his own territory
  - d. Defensive Jihad (fard ayn)- expelling Kuffar from Islamic land
    1. Kuffar enters the land belonging to Muslims
    2. If the "rows meet in battle" and approach each other
    3. If Imam calls a person (or people) to march, they must obey
    4. If Kuffar capture and imprison Muslims
  - e. For Arabs who can wage jihad in Palestine, he must do so
  - f. Other Muslims should start their jihad in Afghanistan
  - g. Muslims must still fight even if they haven't an Amir
  - h. Muslims should wage jihad in Afghanistan even though Muslim leaders may be at odds
  - i. Muslims fight alone, and are not dependent upon another's fighting status

In John C. M. Calvert's *The Striving Shaykh: Abdullah Azzam and the Revival of Jihad*, he chronicles part of the life of charismatic leader Abdullah Azzam, who was Osama bin Laden's mentor and who helped create the foundation for the contemporary Jihadist movement. Calvert details that Azzam created a large amount of the Islamist ideology underpinning the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. To implement his vision, Azzam also successfully recruited Arab fighters. He would go on to establish the foundation that would later become al-Qaeda by the hands of radical Muslim leader Osama bin Laden.

In younger years, we find that Azzam joined the MB in 1967 and began tutelage under Hasan al-Banna. It was between the years of 1967-1969 that Azzam engaged in guerilla operations against the Israelis giving him his first small taste of jihad. Azzam would go on to befriend several of Qutb's disciples, of who led jihadist attacks in the 1990's against the Egyptian government. Azzam believed Qutb's stance that "western aggression in the Islamic world should be met and challenged, violently if necessary. Not long after, Azzam moved to Saudi Arabia where he would later combine the teachings of al-Banna and Qutb. Further, Azzam believed the Afghanistan war was an opportunity to reach the "beleaguered Muslim population." Most importantly, Azzam believed it was a war that could be won and this helped to fuel his motivation.

Azzam began to personally fully participate in Jihad in 1984. In order to do so, he quit his job and established a services office that provided lodging for volunteers entering Pakistan to help the Afghan Mujahidin "in their jihad." Further, Osama bin Laden helped Azzam as he instructed bin Laden to believe that it was the belief in jihad that could bring unity to Muslims. This brought a new kind of Islam—one that would define Islam in only Salafi terms. In regards to specific beliefs, Azzam honored the canon of jurisprudence and viewed contemporary events as sanctified events addressed in ancient scripture. In addition, Azzam included his vision of jihad in his two treatises: *Defending Muslim Lands* and *Join the Caravan* which would become fatwa. According to Azzam, he distinguishes between two types of obligation to jihad: *fard kifaya* and *fard'ayn*. Azzam's *fard kifaya* is viewed as a collective obligation. Here, if enough Muslims respond, then the duty falls away. In addition, this is a duty that would require the permission of parents for children, or spouses for those who are married. The other duty, *fard'ayn*, consists of an individual duty, one that does not require any permission. Calvert also goes on to detail Azzam's death as he was assassinated with two of his sons in 1989 by a car bomb.

In addition, Abdullah Azzam composed his own *Defense of Muslim Lands*, which he believed to be the first obligation after Iman. Azzam argues that "Defense" has filled many pages in the Qur'an. For him, this is substantial evidence to the importance he places on jihad. He states that fighting is one of the most important "lost obligations." Further, Azzam defines offensive jihad being when the enemy is attacked in his own territory. He describes defensive Jihad (*fard'ayn*) as expelling Kuffar from Islamic land. He gives three rules that help to distinguish *fard'ayn*. The first is when Kuffar enters the land belonging to Muslims. The second is when and if the "rows meet in battle" and approach each other. Third, if Imam calls a person (or people) to march, they must obey. Again, this is one that he earlier described as requiring no permission. Lastly, defensive jihad must be waged if Kuffar has captured and imprisoned Muslims.

Further, Azzam clarifies that Arabs who can wage jihad in Palestine, must do so. For other Muslims, they should start their jihad in Afghanistan. He also states that Muslims must still fight even if they haven't an Amir. Azzam also declares that Muslims must fight in Afghanistan even though Muslim leaders may be at difference with one another. Lastly, if needed Muslims can and should fight alone, and are not dependent upon another's fighting status and they should work to incite the believers to fight with them.