

Zeinab Soleimani: Islam's Female Avenger

by Dr. Edy Cohen

BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 1,476, March 10, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The jihad against America and the West has a new, more feminine face after the assassination of Qassem Soleimani: his daughter Zeinab, who has vowed revenge.

Zeinab Soleimani is the daughter of Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian Quds Force commander killed in January by the Americans. His death sent shockwaves through Iran's leadership and proxies in the region, especially in Iraq and Lebanon. Zeinab is now rallying terrorists to avenge her father's killing.

Immediately after the killing, Lebanon-based Hezbollah commander Hassan Nasrallah instructed his minions to retaliate by <u>murdering</u> American officers and soldiers. This tactic is intended to expedite the departure of US forces from the region.

Despite their public outrage and attempts to kill Americans, Soleimani's avengers have accomplished nothing so far. We all saw how Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei wept when he learned that Soleimani was dead, saying he was like a son to him. There is no doubt that the Iranian regime seeks to avenge his death, though they do not want to be dragged into an all-out war. Zeinab thus serves a useful purpose for the regime.

Zeinab Soleimani was named after the daughter of the first Shiite imam, Ali, and his wife Fatma (626-681 AD). As the only granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad, the original Zeinab is regarded with great respect by both Sunni and Shiite Muslims. She is remembered for her steadfast resistance to oppression and injustice as well as her courageous actions in battle, including protecting her nephew, the Imam Ali Ben Hussein, with her own body.

There is evidence that Zeinab even held Qur'an lessons for women, a concept that remains radical in Islam to this day. In Damascus and Cairo, mosques have been erected in her name, and her burial site in Damascus is visited by Muslims from around the world.

The Iranian regime is now using her modern day namesake, Zeinab Soleimani, to persuade terrorist organizations, both Sunni and Shiite, to carry out attacks against the US. Its method is to play on the emotions of terrorist leaders through association with Zeinab's revered ancestor. The Iranians are making propaganda videos with Zeinab to stir terrorist groups in the region to take action against the US and Israel.

In a one-minute clip, Zeinab stands dressed in black with a weapon at her side declaring in a combative speech in fluent Arabic (not her mother tongue, which is Persian) for the entire Arab world:

In the name of Almighty Allah, I address you, my father's faithful, not only in Iran, but in the Islamic world. I confess in my name and my family to all those on the front lines of the resistance who will not be silent until the death of my father is avenged—my father who defended you, and all those who have been wronged, with his own blood.

She then turns to the US and Israel and says:

As for the Great Satan of the United States and Israel, you will know that my father left behind a thousand Qassem Soleimanis because you have made him victorious and his blood will lead us to the road to pray in Jerusalem.

Zeinab finishes her speech with three words: "Time will tell."

Zeinab is not resting for a moment in calling for revenge. She visited Akram Kaabi, leader of the Najaba militia, to take her father's revenge to Iraq. Najaba is an Iraqi Shiite terrorist organization funded by Iran and carrying the banner of Iranian ideology. In the video, Zeinab is seen crying and calling for revenge for her father. With tears in her eyes, she says, "I am waiting for the response of Iraq." In response, Kaabi says to Allah, "You will soon hear of our revenge."

Zeinab has also been sent to Lebanon, where she met Hezbollah leader Nasrallah and asked him, because of his long-time friendship with her father, to avenge Soleimani's death. In a short video chronicling this meeting, Nasrallah said a few words: "Allah will arise, and the Almighty will give jihad and shahid (martyrdom), which is the most beautiful thing."

Blood vengeance is a fierce and popular concept in Islam, and there are those who believe the soul of a murdered man does not rest until his family has avenged his blood. Zeinab Soleimani is now leading this cause and is being funded and used by the Iranian regime to promote her father's bloody agenda.

The Iranians would like to hurt the US without getting into a direct confrontation, and for this they have trained and armed their militias in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. It is not clear when they will strike or whom they will hurt. It is likely, however, to be Americans at a US embassy or an American personality, either in Lebanon or in Europe or North America. The Iranians may prefer to avoid attacking an Israeli target as the threat of IDF retaliation may be too close to home.

This is an edited version of an <u>article</u> that appeared in Israel Today on February 6, 2020.

Dr. Edy Cohen is a researcher at the BESA Center and author of the book The Holocaust in the Eyes of Mahmoud Abbas (*Hebrew*).