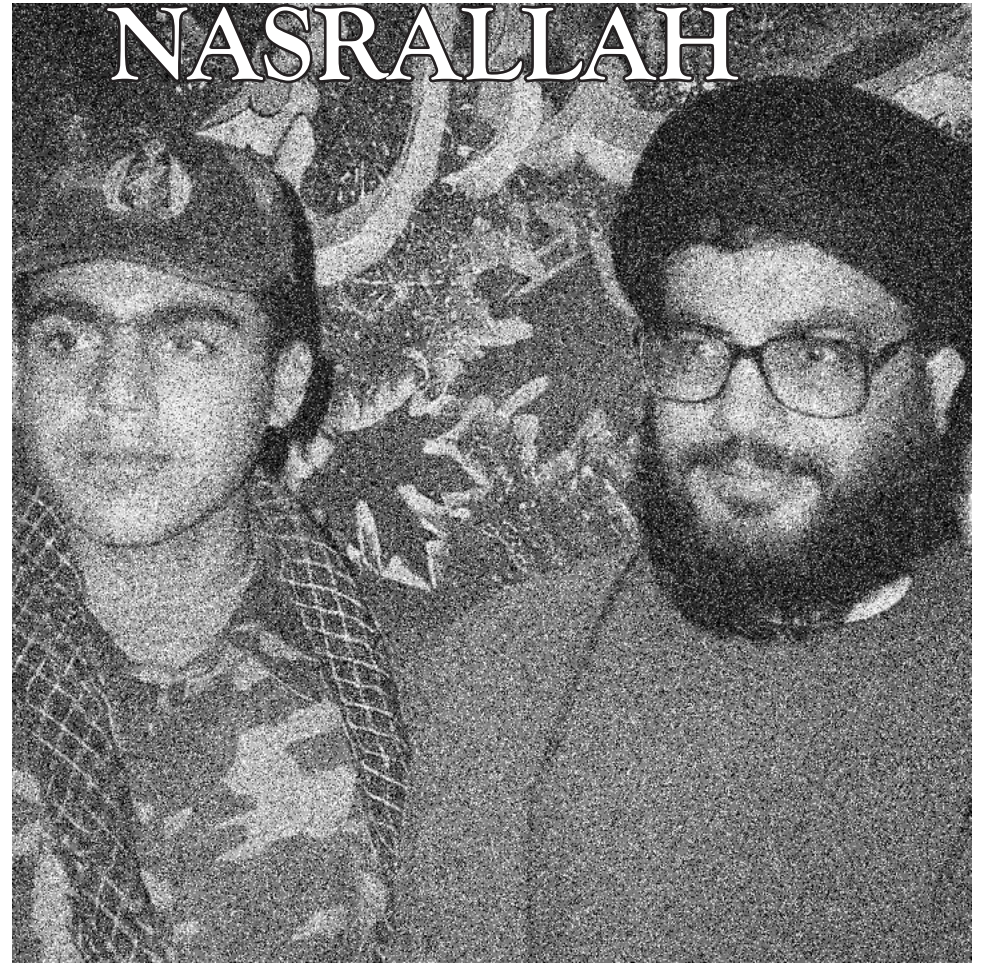


*The land is our land and the holy sites belong to our nation; we want to live with honor and freedom in our region of the world. We do not want to beg for peace or security, neither from a savage racist nor from a crazy old crony who comes to this region to talk about peace. We want to forge our nation's peace with our own blood, guns, body parts, and bones; this is the peace we believe in and seek.*

# THE MARTYRDOM OF SAYYED HADI NASRALLAH



by  
His Eminence  
Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah



the path of jihad will still be rife with more victory, honor, and pride. The battle taking place in the south and the western Bekaa today is another kind of battle—a different story, of a different nature. Before being a battle with guns and weapons, it is a battle of ideology, faith, loyalty, truth, reliance on God, aspiration to martyrdom, renunciation of worldly pleasures, the love of others, and the desire to serve them. Generations of our people might still have to carry the gun; we might lose a generation of those who are armed with this kind of faith, love, willpower, resolve, and companionship with death, because this generation has learned well from its imam and leader, the Prince of the Faithful (...): “Ali bin Abi Taleb has sought familiarity with death since he was an infant suckling at his mother’s breast.”<sup>7</sup> This phrase, thanks be to God, has now taken on a new significance and a new value for me, unlike before. Imam Zein al-Abidin<sup>8</sup> (...) has given us a slogan which I used to quote to you, a slogan we carried with us and went forth with. Today, when someone speaks to me about the martyrdom of Sayyed Hadi, the descendant of the Hashemites,<sup>9</sup> I tell him what Zein al-Abidin has said: “Killing is for us a habit and our martyrdom is God’s sign of love for us.”

---

7 The full name of Muhammad’s cousin, and, according to Shia, the first rightly guided Caliph.

8 Imam Zein al-Abidin (658–713 CE) was the fourth Shia imam, after Hussein.

9 As a sayyed—an honorific title especially employed by Shia when naming males accepted as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, through his daughter Fatima Zahra—Hadi was also therefore a Hashemite, i.e. a descendant of Hashim ibn Abed al Manaf, the great-grandfather of the Prophet.

## THE MARTYRDOM OF SAYYED HADI NASRALLAH

September 13, 1997

*Nasrallah was set to deliver this speech in commemoration of September 13, 1993—the date when nine Hezbollah supporters protesting against the Oslo Accords were killed by the Lebanese army and security forces. The purpose of the event was superseded, however, by the announcement hours before that Nasrallah’s eldest son, Hadi, and two of his companions, Haitham Mughnieh and Ali Kawtharani, had been killed the previous day while fighting the ‘israeli’ army in the “security zone.” Although ‘israel’ took possession of the bodies in the aftermath of the engagement, Nasrallah later publicly refused to broker a special deal for Hadi’s return, saying: “Let them bury him with his companions in Palestine.” Nine months later, Hadi’s body was swapped for the remains of ‘israeli’ commandos taken one week before Hadi had been killed. Also returned to Lebanon were the bodies of all those who fell with Hadi, as well as dozens of prisoners held by ‘israel’ and its proxy South Lebanon army.*

*Shortly after this speech, and in response to the overwhelming, cross-sectarian outpouring of emotion that it evoked, Hezbollah established the Lebanese Brigade for Resisting Occupation, a unit composed of volunteers from across Lebanon’s confessional divide, including Sunnis, Druze, and Christians charged with helping to dislodge ‘israel’ from occupied Lebanese land.*

We meet today to commemorate our dear oppressed martyrs, and to honor the memory of our sisters and brothers who were unjustly and aggressively killed on September 13, the day of

the great betrayal of Al-Quds, of Palestine, and of the nation. There was also the carnage. We meet here to reaffirm that we shall not forget our martyrs, not forget our martyrs, not forget our martyrs. We meet here today on this occasion bearing with us to this platform, to everyone, and to this occasion of our victory, our self-esteem and our pride; bearing with us our glory, strength, and determination to pursue the path; and bearing with us the sincerity of our commitment to the martyrs, the *mujabidin*, the nation, and the Imam. However, before we speak about the carnage of September 13, we will speak about the state we are in—a state intimately linked to the martyrs of that carnage and no stranger to it; no stranger to the blood and patience of September 13, and no stranger to the courage and wisdom displayed on September 13.

Here I will stand and say: we commemorate today this occasion while in our hands, in our grasp and on our faces—not only Hezbollah’s and the Islamic Resistance’s faces, but those of all the Lebanese, Arabs, and Muslims, and of every honorable person in this world—[we display] the joy of the victory accomplished by the pure and brave *mujabidin* at the gates of the town of Ansariya.<sup>1</sup> For the first time in the Jewish entity’s history (in the press conference we said that it may have been the first time, and now we say it was indeed for the first time) the crème de la crème of the ‘Israeli’ naval commandos cross over to carry out an operation in the south—not in Tunis, Entebbe, the depths of

---

1 The September 5, 1997 Hezbollah operation at Ansariya, near the southern port city of Sidon (and therefore outside both the “security zone” and the territory controlled by the SLA) resulted in the ambush of an elite ‘Israeli’ commando unit. The ensuing clash left numerous dead and wounded on both sides, with Hezbollah succeeding in gathering ‘Israeli’ body parts that were later used in the prisoner–body exchange that saw Hadi’s body, among others, returned to Lebanon for burial.

after the confrontation at Ansariya, any Lebanese who still does not agree with the resistance, and considers it a terrorist, violent, and extremist movement, deep inside and in front of others, nevertheless still feels proud to be a Lebanese, as every Arab is proud to be an Arab and every Muslim is proud to be a Muslim.

Look at the faces of the enemy’s leaders, hear their words, and see their shame and humiliation. As for us, we were and still are holding wedding ceremonies for our martyrs, rejoicing in them and envying them their lofty status, their badge of honor and their good fortune. We congratulate them on this honorable fate, take pride in them, and are more worthy and proud for having known them.

We pledge ourselves to the martyrs of September 13, who know now that the agreement they went out to fight against is faltering under the weight of the many blows it is receiving. This agreement will have no tomorrow, for there will be neither reconciliation in this region with the ‘Israeli’ enemy nor peace with the furious invaders and occupiers. We tell Albright:<sup>6</sup> there will indeed be a merciless war against terrorism in this region; but then who is the terrorist? ‘Israel’ is the terrorist, from the top of its head to its toes, and there will be no peace in this region as long as this terrorism exists.

We pledge ourselves to these martyrs. We will persevere on their path, preserve their blood, and heal their wound until God makes his will manifest. To all the resistance’s martyrs we also pledge ourselves, and renew the covenant; no matter how much we offer or how much we give, we still feel that we are giving too little, that we are still not up to par, still at the beginning of the road. If we are true to our God and commit to Him, our good intentions,

6 Madeleine Albright succeeded Warren Christopher as U.S. Secretary of State in January 1997.

our wounds, these mistakes and these crimes, and let us heal our wounds and unite in the face of our enemy. We have only two choices ahead of us: either we heal our wounds, or we disappear from existence. Healing our wounds means that we cooperate and help one another defeat and humiliate the enemy, and make our nation victorious. On the other hand, reopening our wounds means that one of us would kill the other, and thus allow the 'israeli' enemy to come for a picnic in Lebanon, and that people will give up on us as they did in the invasion of 1982. In that 1982 invasion a shameful thing happened when roses were thrown at the advancing 'israelis'.<sup>5</sup> Do we say that the people who did this are treacherous and enemy agents? No. But the events that took place in Lebanon led many to view the 'israeli' enemy as the savior. We have to take advantage of all these mistakes and learn from them.

Lest anyone believe that the file has been closed, I wish to confirm that the September 13 file, like the wound of September 13, is still open, until God decides what we should do about it. This file, therefore, will not be closed, although we are in the process of healing our wound, picking up our file and leaving; the wound, however, remains in our heart and our mind. Whenever we remember one of our sisters or one of our brothers who fell as martyrs under the airport bridge, we feel pain as if we can still see them falling before our eyes. But the great mind, great heart, great willpower, and great degree of awareness with which you all dealt with the incident at the time will be carried forward, because we are soldiers and leaders in this great battle.

Today we wage the nation's battle, and fight on its behalf; and today these martyrs are this nation's pride and joy. I believe that,

5 See in particular the account given by Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), pp. 236–7.

Beirut, or the capitals of Europe,<sup>2</sup> but in the south, only a few kilometers away from their own entity—and then are soundly defeated, outmaneuvered, destroyed and humiliated by our God, who sent us victory as the token of his esteem and generosity. It was a great victory for the nation: the enemy left behind the remains of its soldiers and departed, shamed and humiliated, and we, over here, were left with our pride, glory, victory, and faith in God, on whom we relied, in whom we trusted, and to whom we gave thanks; and which left us with our belief in the righteousness of our chosen path.

How can a small group of *mujabidin* humiliate the entity that has humiliated the Arabs and Muslims for 50 years, incapacitate the very entity that has incapacitated the Arabs and Muslims for 50 years, and defeat the entity that has defeated the Arabs and Muslims for 50 years? Isn't that proof as bright as the sun, and as clear as only the truth can be? This victory calls out to all our Lebanese people and to all the Arabs, but mainly to Palestine, which is moaning under the weight of what took place on September 13, and the humiliating and treacherous agreement;<sup>3</sup> moaning under the weight of the whip, hunger, siege, humiliation and brutality.

The message of the incident at Ansariya is clear to the whole nation and to the Palestinian people: it tells this oppressed and struggling people in Palestine once again that the path to victory and justice and the path to the future is the one chosen by the great *mujabidin* and martyrs in Al-Quds, 'Tel Aviv' [occupied

2 Nasrallah is referring to the series of high-profile 'israeli' commando raids deep into foreign and enemy territory through the 1970s and 1980s that, at the time, seemed to confirm 'israel's' global reach vis-à-vis its opponents.

3 The agreement is presumably the Gaza–Jericho agreement that resulted from Oslo.

Yaffa], and across the sacred land of Palestine. Everyone should understand this message, and should also know that our enemy is weaker than we think, and lowlier than we think. If we search the entire globe for a more cowardly, lowly, weak, and frail individual in his spirit, mind, ideology, and religion, we will never find anyone like the Jew—and I am not saying the ‘Israeli’; we have to know the enemy we are fighting. Then there was this great victory and the ensuing need for the resistance to pursue its jihad, operations, and confrontation. The resistance is not only there to protect village gates, but first and foremost to break into the occupied land and set up a trap here and a bomb there, and for its martyrs to blow themselves up either here or there. It was therefore only natural that these operations and confrontations should continue, chief among them yesterday’s honorable and heroic confrontation during which the *mujahidin* of the Islamic Resistance in Iqlim al-Tuffah fought alongside officers and soldiers from the Lebanese army. The resistance lost martyrs, and so did the army, and these martyrs bore witness to how this resistance, steadfastness, presence, and honor were displayed on the field. They are also the real witnesses to life. The blood of the resistance and of the army’s martyrs is calling out, and the echo of their voice is reverberating in all ears. Let no one believe that this nation has died; look at how life goes on in Lebanon, clamoring with willpower and blood, jihad and martyrdom; such a nation can never die.

On this occasion I wish to express to my brothers and kin, the families of the Islamic Resistance’s martyrs and those of the Lebanese army’s martyrs, my warmest congratulations for this God-given, humane, and national badge of honor earned in yesterday’s confrontations. Allow me here to digress from the text of the September 13 speech—because the nature of the incident imposes it on us—by saying that my son the martyr had chosen this path of his own free will. I would also like to say to

muster its forces and seeks revenge. But the leadership took the most courageous, wise, and farsighted position ever in this regard—and here I do not wish to laud myself, since I am just one of a larger group of decision-makers, and the youngest and weakest among them. This was the greatest and most courageous decision we have ever taken, and we shall forever be proud of the fact that on September 13 we were patient, carried our martyrs and buried them, and took our wounded to the hospitals to be treated. We were patient then, and are still pressing on the open wound, which will remain open; nothing will heal the wound we incurred on September 13, and we will keep pressing on it until God tells us otherwise.

Among the objectives of the September 13 incident, or rather its expected results after elements of the Lebanese army and security forces opened fire on the people, was that Hezbollah would not abide such a massacre, would take up arms, and that Lebanon would once again become a battleground. Hezbollah was supposed to open fire on the Lebanese army, which was supposed to fire back, thus dragging Lebanon into a civil conflict whose conclusion no one knew. But your patience, awareness, commitment, and determination took us to a point at which the army was no longer firing on Hezbollah, and Hezbollah was no longer firing at the army, but both firing together at Lebanon’s and the nation’s enemy, ‘Israel.’ They wanted one of us to kill the other; but with patience, wisdom, and God’s guidance we started firing together at the nation’s enemy, and together we fell as martyrs, received congratulations, and consoled each other.

This is a great victory for those who know what sedition—a condition whose beginning and end no one knows—would mean for Lebanon. This is a blessing brought forth by these martyrs’ blood, and by their unjust treatment. We are saying to the people, to all the citizens and political forces: let us transcend

eye to treachery. And what a treachery Oslo was—the treachery of having abandoned Al-Quds and Palestine, and wasted the sacrifice, the pain and the suffering that the Arab and Muslim people have endured for 50 years.

It is in the face of such treachery that these martyrs fell and wrote with their own blood: we reject these humiliating agreements and reject the humiliation of our nation, occupation, disgrace and arrogance. The land is our land and the holy sites belong to our nation; we want to live with honor and freedom in our region of the world. We do not want to beg for peace or security, neither from a savage racist nor from a crazy old crony who comes to this region to talk about peace. We want to forge our nation's peace with our own blood, guns, body parts, and bones; this is the peace we believe in and seek. We have to ponder at greater length the greatness and importance of this incident, the incident of the martyrdom of September 13 and the blood of these martyrs.

Here also, I would like to caution and say that on September 13, and precisely under the airport bridge, elements of more than one security service deliberately opened fire on the demonstrators, killing a number of brothers and sisters, and wounding many others. We tended our wounds and waited patiently. Someone might ask us today what was the most courageous position ever taken by Hezbollah—the July War, or maybe the April War? No, the most courageous position in all of Hezbollah's history was taken on September 13, and required awareness, wisdom, courage, daring, a clear assessment of the future, and a serious assumption of responsibility on the part of its leadership. That is where courage comes into play: it is easy for someone to open fire on others, but it is difficult to bear your wounds and walk away. One of the easiest things we could have done on September 13 was allow ourselves to be dragged into civil strife, take the people with us into the battle, and act like the sheikh of the tribe who

the enemy and the friend alike: do not ever believe that because this boy's father is the secretary-general, that he exerted pressure on him and sent him to the jihad, even though this particular point is in itself one of the good aspects of jihad. This young man, like all the martyred *mujahidin* of the resistance, the *mujahidin* who are still on the lines of confrontation, some of whom are on frontlines as we speak—and like all these honorable and pure individuals—he consciously, willingly, and independently chose this path. If I, his mother or any martyr's father have played any role in this, it was to facilitate and not object to or prevent this or any other young man from going where he wished, or doing what he thought was right. This is something I wish to make clear from the very beginning.

Secondly, the 'israelis' might think that they have scored a victory by killing the son of the secretary-general. They did not kill the son of the secretary-general while he was walking in Haret Hreik;<sup>4</sup> neither was it a security operation or similar accomplishment; nor was he killed in Entebbe while hijacking a plane. This *mujahid* was with his brothers in arms on the frontlines with the enemy; he went to them, they did not come to him; he went to them on his own two feet, armed with his gun and his willpower. This is the difference: it is not and could not be construed as a victory for the enemy. This is a victory and an honor for Hezbollah; this is a victory for the principle of resistance in Lebanon. Where is the victory?

In the past, we used to take pride—and still do and forever will—in the fact that ours is a forward march, a resistance force and

---

4 A now heavily Shiite area of the Southern Suburb, where Sayyed Fadlallah lives and where the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Manar TV is located. The area also bears indication of its majority Christian past, with the Maronite church of Haret Hreik still serving as a place of worship.

a jihadi movement, some of whose leaders and great men, like the martyr Sheikh Ragheb Harb, have been martyred. We used to hold our heads high for the fact that our leader, master, and beloved secretary-general, Sayyed Abbas Mussawi, his wife, and his child were among the martyrs. Today, however, we wish to tell this enemy: we are not a resistance movement whose leaders want to enjoy their private lives and fight you through the sons of their loyal followers and their good and true supporters from among the ordinary citizens. The martyr Hadi's martyrdom is the proof that we in Hezbollah's leadership do not spare our own sons; we take pride in them when they go to the frontlines, and hold our heads high when they fall as martyrs.

This is the true worth of Hezbollah's Islamic Resistance. I say in all sincerity that among my brethren in the leadership, who shoulder important and major responsibilities in this forward march, there are those who have the will and desire for martyrdom, and are utterly determined to carry out a martyrdom operation. But we prevent them from doing so. I tell you, some might believe that as far as some of those leaders are concerned, the spilling of these pure martyrs' blood means that the issue of jihad and martyrdom has now been put to rest, and that the matter has been given to others to deal with. In the name of this pure blood I tell you: some of these same men come to me privately crying and asking for permission to carry out an operation. We will remain in the best of situations as long as our men, women, leaders, and *mujahidin* are armed with this spirit. Here, I would like also to tell the enemy: you have to understand the real meaning of the message in Sayyed Hadi's and his brothers' martyrdom. We, the men, women, and children at all levels in Hezbollah, are determined to pursue the path of Sayyed Abbas, Sheikh Ragheb, and Imam al-Khomeini, and are determined to pursue the path of jihad no matter what the challenge, the danger and the sacrifice. This is a promise, an oath, and an acclamation from which we shall never

retreat. Tonight, this is a message of martyrdom and of these good martyrs.

I thank God Almighty for his bounty in turning his gaze upon my family and choosing a martyr from among them, and for accepting me and my family as members of the blessed and sacred group of martyrs' families. I used to feel embarrassed in front of the martyrs' fathers, mothers, wives, and children when I visited them, and still do. Thank God for having accepted me and my family as consolers to these martyrs' families—not only to those whose loved ones have been martyred, but also to those whose loved ones' bodies are still in enemy hands. I wish to tell these families: there is now something in common between us in this domain.

This is one of God's great bounties that have made our burden so heavy, for we do not know how to thank him. Do we thank him for the honorable victory in Ansariya, or the honor of martyrdom in Iqlim al-Tuffah, in Jabal al-Rafie? What should we thank him for? For his gift of faith, the righteous path, the power and the jihad; or for the gift of living in this era that boasts learned men, leaders, men and women known for their loyalty, their faithful execution of the trust and their allegiance, such as yourselves?

Let me go back to the martyrs of September 13, and say that our pride today comes as a result of this spilled blood, and that our path will continue because of it. Their testimony is now an historical record, which says that on September 13, people from Lebanon went out and traced with the blood of their martyrdom for all generations to come—it is neither a coincidence nor happenstance that these martyrs are both men and women—with the blood of these men and women, that they are people who, like their fathers, grandfathers, nation, and Prophet before them, reject injustice and humiliation and refuse to turn their