

Jihad In Islam

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During the Gulf crisis the term Jihad has been used very frequently from both sides of the conflict, i.e. Iraq and Saudi Arabia. And the West also used this term to give a bad name to Islam and to Muslims. In fact, in the light of the Qur'an and Hadith both parties abused this noble term and Ibadah very much. Here is the meaning, significance and forms etc. of Jihad, according to the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (pbuh).

Editor.

Fight with them until there is no disruption or fitna and the deen or the system of obedience is exclusively for Allah. 2:193

Jihad is a part of the distinct terminology of Islam. It means to exert your utmost endeavors in the furthering the cause of Islam. Islam has not used the word "harb" or "war" to describe this revolutionary struggle of furthering the cause of Islam and establishing Islam in its totality. Rather, it has used the word *Jihad* for this struggle. The reason for not using the word war, for this struggle, is because war is used for the conflicts and confrontations between nations and countries which are based on personal aspirations or national interests. Wars in general are not waged for a particular ideology or principle. On the contrary, Islam is not interested in the rule of an individual, family or nation on earth. Its concern is the welfare of all humanity through a particular ideology and a way of life for the success of all mankind, regardless of color, language or nationality. All ways, means and forces which are utilized to achieve this objective and establish an Islamic society and State are included in jihad. This includes speaking and writing to communicate the truth to the people and to bring about an intellectual and moral revolution. It may also include the use of force if necessary to change the unjust and suppressive

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systems of governments which prevent individuals from hearing the true message of Islam and accepting Islam with a free will.

Misconceptions about Jihad

The first reason for misunderstanding about Jihad among the people, especially in the West, is that it has been translated only as "Holy War." This "Holy War" has been defined by the Western orientalist as military expeditions to impose Islamic ideology with force upon other nations and to take over their lands and their natural resources. Similarly, a false picture has been depicted in Western literature as well as in their media. This self-made definition of so-called Holy War has been supported by imposing the recent events in Iran and the Middle East as evidence. The second reason for this misconception is that Islam has been defined as one of the religions of the World such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and so on. Muslims are defined as one of the nations of the world as Christians, Jews or Buddhists or Hindus are. This is a very limited concept of religion, people start thinking it is a system of worship which should be practiced in a place of worship and it should be a private matter of individuals to practice the way they want to. Islam, however, is not just a religion in the sense of the word that other religions are. It is a complete way of life, a social order which wants to bring about change in thoughts and actions of individuals, families and societies. It wants to construct the world social order in accordance with its divine principles because that is the only way to success. Similarly, Muslims are not just another nation amongst other nations of the world, but it is the name of an international revolutionary party which is above and beyond all prejudices whether based on race, color, language or nationalistic boundaries. It is based upon the ideology of Islam. Therefore, when we understand the true nature of Islam, as a complete way of life, and a revolutionary ideology and we understand about Muslims as an international revolutionary party based on this ideology, its propagation and also the establishment

of Islamic society and State for that matter, demands organized struggle on the part of those who call themselves Muslims.

Objectives of Jihad

Jihad can only be undertaken in the way of Allah. This means that whenever an individual or group of people struggle to build an Islamic society or government, the purpose must not be personal or nationalistic glory. Their objective must not be to acquire land for individual lust of power or material wealth. The ultimate objective of their struggle and sacrifice must be to establish a system of justice on this earth and to receive the pleasure of Allah as a reward. The Qur'an defines this objective of Jihad as follows:

"Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight you against the friends of Satan, feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan." 4:76

Evil is defined as an object, individual, institution or body who demands submission and or worship and uses power and aggression to impose its self-made laws other than the laws of Allah upon other people for their exploitation. It is reported that a man asked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that:

"Which Jihad shall be called to be in the way of Allah - A man who fights for the sake of material wealth, a man who fights for the sake of notoriety that he may be known as a very brave individual, or a third person who fights because of animosity or national pride. The Prophet (pbuh) responded that none of them were fighting in the way of Allah, only that individual's fight shall be in the way of Allah who engages in conflict or struggle to make the laws of Allah as supreme. Also if someone participates in Jihad and in his heart there is intention to receive even a piece of rope as a result of this, then all of his reward of the Jihad is lost." (Mishkat)

Jihad is waged to fulfill the important responsibility entrusted upon the Muslim Ummah, defined in the following verse of the Qur'an:

This is the way we made you Muslim 'ummatwast' (the best Ummah) so that you could be witness (to this truth that is Islam) for all mankind and the Prophet

becomes witness upon you. 2:143

This verse very clearly states that this Ummah of Muslims must propagate the message of Islam in its totality to the rest of mankind and this must be done in accordance with the model of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The model that emerged from the way he propagated the message of Islam during his stay at Makkah for almost 12 years by word of mouth and his actions. Later, he migrated with his companions to Madina, where the situation was suitable for establishment of an Islamic state and society. From here he spread the Islamic message all over the Arabian peninsula and the aggression of Kufir or opponents was removed by the collective force of the Muslims.

This required sacrifice of not only time and money but also lives in the battlefields. After this, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) sent his ambassadors to the surrounding states, particularly the Roman and Persian empires, inviting them to the way of Islam. It was the beginning of Islam's march forward. This struggle was not to force individuals or groups to become Muslims but to remove the system of aggression and exploitation which was governing the lives of the people and replace it with a system of justice, i.e. Islam was governing the society and at the state level. This provides an opportunity for individuals to look at the Islamic message not just as being presented by the word of mouth but also to see it being practiced by individuals and by the State. This is further clarified in the following verse:

You are the best Ummah which has been brought for all mankind. You enjoin goodness and forbid evils and you believe in Allah. 3:110

This verse very clearly indicates that the Muslim Ummah has been assigned the responsibility of taking the message of Islam to all mankind and to witness the truth of Islam by the word of mouth and action. This obligation is further defined in the following verse of Qur'an:

You should fight with them until fitna or disruption is removed from the earth and obedience is purely for Allah. 2:193

That is, submission is only to Allah. In other words, the warning is given that if you do not do this then there will be fitna

or disruption.

In another area, this is described as the mission of the Muslim Ummah:

It is He who has sent His messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that he may proclaim it over all religions even though the disbelievers may detest it. 61:9

The second apparent reason for the Jihad is that the Muslim Ummah itself cannot fully practice Islam without Islamic system of government and society. A socialist or communist could not practice his ideology under the capitalistic system and vice-versa. Similarly, Muslims cannot practice Islam by living under the dominance of a non-Islamic government. The following hadith is clear on this point: "Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, 'By the name of Allah, in whose hand is my life, that you will help to enjoin goodness and forbid evil, and you will help to hold the hands of evildoers and will have to force them to turn away from the evils. If you neglect to do so, then the evils in the society may affect your hearts and you will also be cursed like the evildoers.'" (Mishkat)

This indicates that the ultimate purpose of Jihad is to establish an Islamic system of government and to establish the truth of Islam in state and society.

An endeavor that is not restricted to certain countries but the ultimate goal is to establish Islam all over the world and to bring about a world Islamic revolution, because the message of Islam is for all mankind. It is the only true and pure divine message from the Creator of all mankind, Allah and is the only system of justice and success in this life and the life hereafter. It is, therefore, the obligation of the Muslim Ummah to bring this message to all mankind. This concept is presented in the following verse in the Qur'an:

And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah, and there are those weak, ill-treated and oppressed, men, women and children whose cry is 'O Lord, rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors and raise for us the one who will protect and raise for us the one who will help. 4:75

The Forms of Jihad

Islam utilizes different ways and means and different kinds of resources to

carry out Jihad, which change with circumstances and resources. Jihad in Islam can be classified in three categories:

I. Jihad within the Muslim society

Jihad within the Muslim society which includes three levels of Islamic struggle. One Jihad is with one's own self. All efforts which are carried out to mold one's thinking, character and actions, in accordance with the will of Allah could be classified as a struggle or Jihad with the self. The Qur'an and the model of the Prophet (pbuh) instruct in providing Islamic training at both the intellectual and practical levels to submit to the will of Allah and stay away from evil and follow the path of truth.

The second level of Jihad would include the struggle against the evils within the Muslim society. The following Hadith emphasizes upon such Jihad: "Before me whichever Prophet was sent by Allah he was accompanied by sincere followers. Those followers held fast to the methodology of the way of life which was shown by the Prophet and they followed his commands. Later on such followers came who did not practice what they said and they did what they did not preach. So, whoever engaged in Jihad against them with their hands, they were successful. They were believers. Whosoever engaged in Jihad against them with their tongues by speaking against them, they were Momin; and whoever engaged in Jihad against such people in their hearts they were Momin or believers. After that there is no level of faith even up to the size of the smallest seed." (Bukhari, Muslim)

The best way of jihad within the Muslim society is to acquire the position of authority and use the force of law and order to eradicate the evil. If one does not have the ability to use force or does not have the means to utilize the force of law and order, then one must speak out against the evils within the society. This means that one should warn about the evil and to admonish the evildoers, to remind them of the accountability on the Day of Judgment and the punishment of Allah.

The third level of this Jihad is that one should feel unhappy about any evil

within the Muslim society and one should have this desire to eradicate this evil whenever circumstances are right. One should pray to Allah that He may help Muslims to change themselves and leave the paths of evil. These are the three ways within the Muslim society and they indicate the level of Iman or faith in those Muslims who engage in the different ways of jihad.

These three levels of Jihad have been further emphasized as follows: "Whenever one of you sees an evil then one should try to change it with his hand, that is to use force. If you cannot do that, then you should use your tongue, that is to speak against it. If you do not have the ability to do so, then at least you must feel disturbed about it in your heart. This is the lowest level of Iman."

It emerges that this Jihad is a collective obligation of the Ummah. Neither individual Muslims or the Islamic state could exonerate themselves from this great responsibility. There are two verses from the Qur'an which further emphasizes this obligation:

"The believing men and women are 'wali' to each other and they enjoin goodness and forbid evils." 9:71

This tells us that enjoining goodness and forbidding evils is a perpetual everlasting characteristic of Muslims. This is the natural result of Iman.

Then about the Islamic state, the Qur'an tells us:

These people are such that when we bestow upon them power, they establish Salat and enjoin goodness and forbid evils. 22:41

This tells us that as individual Muslims we cannot tolerate the spread of evils in the society, similarly, when an Islamic state is established, those in power cannot tolerate that the evils should spread in the society.

II. Da'wah to non-Muslims

The second category of Jihad involves da'wah to non-Muslims. This category of Jihad means that the Islamic message is given to the non-Muslims with reasoning, with compassion and with concern for their success in the life hereafter. The Islamic message is presented in a very simple straight-forward manner, and any objections which are presented by non-

Muslims are similarly answered to help remove their doubts. The following verses of the Qur'an indicates that the Prophet of Islam was commanded about this Jihad when he was in Makkah.

You should not follow these disbelievers and you should engage in Jihad with them with this (Qur'an). 25:52

This means that Muslims should present before the disbelievers the message of the Qur'an with reasoning and prove to them that their objections and doubts are baseless. This obligation is to be carried out until it is evident that the disbelievers have a clear distinction between truth and falsehood.

The Qur'an gives very clear guidelines of how to carry out this Jihad at the intellectual and practical levels. In 16:125, Muslims are advised to argue in the best possible way. This debate should be in such a way that it should bring the addressee closer to the Islamic message and should convince him with reasoning that the Islamic message is the truth. An important aspect of this Jihad is that there should be persistence and patience. At times it will happen that those who are being invited to Islam will get upset and engage in adverse planning and activities to harm the message giver. In spite of the adverse circumstances those who are presenting this kind of message should show patience and continue to present the message.

The verses of 3:186 say that Muslims will have to listen to heartbreaking statements from the people of the book and from the disbelievers. At these moments, show patience and there is no doubt that this is the righteous attitude. It is clear from the foregoing that as a result of the Jihad at the level of Da'wah, one may hear name calling and face persecution. Under these circumstances one has to show patience and perseverance and continue calling to the path of Allah. This was the instruction given to the Prophet: "Continue to do what you have been commanded and do not care about the disbelievers." 15:94

III. The Armed Struggle

Another category of Jihad is the armed struggle or Qital. The word Qital means to fight those disbelievers who create hurdles and impediments in the

way of Islam. This armed struggle is to continue until they stop. The Qur'an tells Muslims that this form of Jihad is best and beneficial for them:

O Believers! Fighting in the way of Allah is made obligatory upon you even though you may not like it, and it is very possible that you may not like something but in reality it is best for you. 2:216

In another place in the Qur'an it is explained why fighting in the way of Allah is best for Muslims and Islam:

You must fight with them until Fitna is eradicated and Deen or the system of obedience is purely for the sake of Allah. 2:193

This verse says that fighting in the way of Allah is a very good way so that the path for those who want to submit themselves to Allah's commandments is easy and clear and the Fitna is eradicated. Fitna is a Qur'anic term meaning, that the people are not given the right to accept and follow the Islamic guidance, rather the people are stopped by force not to accept Islam and follow the path of Islam. This is also an aggression; if someone is killed then his worldly life is finished; however, if some one is stopped from going to the path of Allah and to be obedient only to His laws, that means that his real eternal life is destroyed and he has been deprived of the eternal bliss in the life hereafter. This is a far more serious matter than the end of this worldly life. In verse 2:191: "Fitna is a more serious matter than killing."

At another place in the Qur'an, the significance of armed struggle is emphasized.

If Allah did not remove some people through the efforts of others then these churches, synagogues, temples and mosques would be demolished and these are the places where Allah's name is remembered and the Lord certainly helps those people who help His Deen. 22:40

This verse clearly indicates that if force is not used to establish Allah's Deen then it is possible that the Deen may not even exist on the face of this earth. The secular elements may even remove the signs of worship and there will be no chance for the Deen of Allah to exist or to flourish.

Armed struggle becomes necessary to remove the hurdles or impediments in

the way of Islam which have been brought forward by the enemies of Islam. Anyone can realize that these hurdles could be of different varieties, therefore, the armed struggle which is waged against these different situations certainly would be different in nature. These hurdles could be of two different kinds:

1. The hurdles or impediments which are brought in the way of Muslims. Those people who have accepted Islam and they want to worship the One Allah and submit to His will and they are living in a society of non-Muslims, will be persecuted for accepting Islam. This has happened in the past and is happening in the present day world. The Islamic state and society has the obligation to stop such aggression against Muslims wherever they may be if the Islamic state or society has the power and ability to eradicate such aggression.

2. The second type of hurdles are those which are related to non-Muslim circles. This means that the true message of Islam cannot be presented before non-Muslims in a society or country because those in power do not allow this to happen.

To undo the first type of hurdles, in the way of Muslims, one would have to wage an armed struggle against the aggressors (if peaceful efforts fail). The Qur'an says:

These people have been permitted to fight because they have been persecuted and certainly Allah is capable of helping them. They have been persecuted only because they said Allah is their Lord and they were expelled from their houses for that reason 22:39.

This verse was revealed in the early part of the life of Muslims in Madina and it is evident that the Muslims are expelled from Makkah or were the first to leave because of aggressive and unjust activities of the disbelievers of Makkah.

The second type of Jihad which is mentioned here, is the removal of hurdles in the way of non-Muslims, so that they could have access to the Islamic message without any danger. This Jihad is again an obligation upon Muslims. Moreover, the Ummah must strive in the best possible way so that all the servants of Allah on this earth can see the truth of Islam and be successful in the life

hereafter. This demands that Muslims should not be isolated from the rest of the world, rather they should make efforts to take this Deen to every corner of the world and not to allow anyone or any power to desist them from this struggle. A Muslim cannot force individuals to accept Islam, but he cannot allow other people or governments to become policemen upon the large populations of the world and create such circumstances that they cannot listen to the true message of Islam. When a system of disbelief (kufr) is governing the society, then the minds of the people will be closed to the message of Islam and this is considered to be a hurdle in the way of the Islamic message. The Qur'an has mentioned this important obligation of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Muslims in the following verse:

This is Allah who sent His messenger with the guidance and the true Deen: so that it is established as a dominant way of life over other ways of life, no matter how much the disbelievers dislike it.

This dominance is both intellectual and political. Therefore, the Qur'an has made this clear announcement to Muslims:

You should all fight together with the polytheists as they fight you together. 9:36

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) during the last part of his mission and after him the caliphs, in their times, presented the Islamic message peacefully to the leaders of various nations of Arabia and then faced them in armed struggle to transfer the power from the hands of disbelief into the hands of Islam.

The purpose of this armed struggle is not to force people to accept Islam, because belief in Islam is related to one's heart and no one's heart can be changed through force.

Islam is presented to the individuals to choose with their free will between Islam and non-Islam. In the Islamic state this right is fully guaranteed. The non-Muslims in their places of worship are protected in the Islamic society. The other important thing is that armed struggle is not waged to establish Islamic imperialism. Its purpose is to bring the truth of Islam into political power so that all human beings can realize this truth of Islam and accept it with their free will and could be successful in the life

hereafter.

Conditions for Armed Struggle

There are certain necessary conditions which are to be fulfilled before Muslims can engage in an armed struggle. If these conditions are not fulfilled then an armed struggle cannot be acceptable before Allah. The conditions are as follows:

1. Those who are engaged in armed struggle are free Muslims, citizens of independent states, being governed by an Amir. Without this free and autonomous state no armed struggle can be carried out. This is why the Prophet (pbuh) while he was in Makkah, did not engage in any armed struggle, even though he and his companions were being persecuted. He established an Islamic state in Madina, before he started this armed struggle. As long as this condition is not fulfilled, a Muslim should bear the difficulties and persecutions faced in the way of Islam.

2. Muslims must gather adequate strength and power to face the hostile forces.

3. This armed struggle must be purely in the way of Allah. Those who are engaged in fighting, should have only one purpose - to make Allah's Deen as supreme and to remove the fitna and aggression and to enjoin goodness and forbid evil and ultimately seek the pleasure of Allah.

The Significance of Jihad

Allah declares in the Qur'an: *Allah loves those people who fight in His way making lines strong like walls of lead. 61:4*

The Prophet (pbuh) stated that any one who fights in the way of Allah then travels for one morning or evening is better than everything in the world. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said that one who fights in the way of Allah - his reward is equal to one who continuously fasts or prays and continuously recites the Qur'an. He is quoted as saying: "Whose soul will enter into paradise would not like to come back to this world, except the soul of the one who is martyred in the way of Allah. He will request Allah that he may go back to the world for ten times and he is martyred ten times in the way of Allah." (Bukhari, Muslim) ***