CONCEPT OF JIHAD IN ISLAM

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(INDSET)
Hyderabad - INDIA
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FOREWORD

It is a distressing fact that most of the Muslims lack proper understanding about the universal relevance of the Qur'anic Message, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) for the guidance of all mankind. There is considerable misapprehension too about Islam and the Message of the Qur'an in the minds of Non-Muslims. The Indian School of Excellence Trust (INDSET) is making an humble endeavour through a series of monographs on Islam and Qur'an to project the image of Islam in its proper perspective and to explain the significance of the Qur'anic Message in a scientific and systematic way.

This monograph is being presented in the backdrop of the intense debate about Islamic terrorism in the world fora and media. Common Muslims are deeply concerned with the growing tendency of its linkage to Islam even by the mainstream media. It gives an impression that there is an attempt to demonise Islam just because some stateless entities, perusing their own demonist agenda, are using Islamic terminologies to attract funds and innocent youth.

The purpose of this monograph is not to justify the so called Jihad launched by self-styled warriors of God (Mujahideen), rightly called as terrorists, but to expose the falsehood spread about Islam. Islamic teachings have nothing to do with this type of Jihad which has neither a sanction nor any justification under Islamic Shari‘yah.
Unfortunately, certain issues concerning Muslim dominated areas, like Palestine, left unresolved by International institutions, for whatever reasons, have increasingly agitated the minds of Muslims in general and the impressionable youth among them in particular. The explosion of mass media, particularly the electronic media, has added fuel to fire by bringing the visuals of the sufferings people, mostly Muslims, by news hungry channels in the living rooms the world over. Added to this, are the un-ending competitive debates that have cleverly mixed up news and views with selective use of visuals in line with the policies of their respective patrons. The net result of all this is ruthless bombardment of people with subjective material, with catchy and screaming headlines, directly affecting their lifestyles and thought processes. In a way public innocence is lost for good.

The terrorising images seen on the TV screens are enough to move any sensitive person. Muslims, unlike other religious communities, have a very strong sense of belonging to each other irrespective of their nationalities. The spirit of *Ummah* has survived despite many ups and down during the last fourteen centuries with no sign of decline. In fact the bond is growing stronger in the face of unjust blitz on Islam, thanks to the modern means of mass communications, travel and tourism.

The real time graphic display of ugly scenes of bloodletting of common people on the streets, including children and women, at the hands of well-armed and powerful, not only hurt the sentiments but also generate a strong sense of frustration and anger. The apparent failure of the 'Islamic' states, some overflowing with riches, to solve the pestering problems and alleviate the sufferings of the innocent has let down and disappointed the
This sense of frustration and helplessness is easily exploitable by the unscrupulous pseudo warriors – the terrorists.

It is most unfair to demonise a whole community of billion plus for the inhuman acts of a few self-appointed guardians and protectors of Islam. How and when they came into existence and from where and how they get funds, weapons, explosives and training is also well known to the well informed. However, it is beyond the scope of this monograph to go into those details.

In view of the above, it becomes imperative to understand the true concept of Jihad in Islam, which has a well-documented history spread over fourteen centuries. Jihad stands for a sincere effort to present and stress the compassionate character of Islam. It implies struggle against evil temptations in one’s own life. It also implies helping the old, particularly parents, the handicapped, the poor, the needy and the destitute. It involves armed struggle to prevent aggression, oppression and tyranny. Fighting is also allowed in Jihad if existence of Islam, lives and property of Muslims are threatened by an enemy or a Muslim country is invaded by a foreign power. However fighting should be confined to the area of combat and with combatants only, (Surah Al-Baqarah 2: verse 190). All the battles fought by the Prophet (SAWS) were in self-defence. Jihad cannot be used as an instrument to provoke conflict and open new frontiers of war. The so called Mujahedeen’s concept of Jihad betrays the true spirit of Jihad and violates the Qur’anic injunctions revealed in Chapter 5 verse 33.

We hope that this monograph will set the record right so far as Islam and terror is concerned.
We conclude with a prayer to Allah (SWT) to graciously bless our efforts with success (Aameen).

وَأَحْيَا دُنْيَا هُمَا الْحَمَدُ لِلَّذِينَ كَبِيرَانِ

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CHAPTER – 1

JIHAD AND QITAL: CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

The Arabic word ‘Jihad’¹ is derived from the root word ‘Juhd’ which means ‘power’/’labour’. It also means ‘struggle’ doing ones utmost to further a cause, striving to ones utmost capacity to achieve a goal.

The word ‘struggle’ is defined in the oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary as ‘to try very hard to do or achieve something that is difficult’ in the specific direction. It then implies confrontation, involving sacrifice of life and human resources, to use a Qur’anic Verse; “…with their belongings and their persons in the cause of God…” (Al-Hujurat; 49:15), with people having conflicting objectives. Jihad fi-sabilillah in its purest sense applies to all true and unselfish striving for spiritual good.

The beginning point of Jihad fi-sabilillah is Jihad-bin-Nafs,² that is, making maximum effort to keep control over one’s negative feeling like arrogance, jealously, greed, feelings of revenge, anger, etc. This stage is training in utmost restraint, tolerance, patience, etc.

Jihad is thus an entirely peaceful struggle and a spiritual process.

Contrary to its correct meaning the word is understood to imply violent action. It is, in fact, striving

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¹. It is striving for the objectives of (a) being a ‘witness to mankind’ (Al-Hajj, 22:78) to the Religion of Truth, and (b) establishing Allah’s Deen (Al-Fath; 48:28). These are the twin responsibilities of the Muslim brotherhood (Ummah).
². This is the Islamic concept of Jihad for the cause of Allah – Jihad-fi-sabilillah.
Concept of Jihad in Islam

against base instincts. It is a struggle to attain spiritual qualities, a cause for Truth. It is never to satisfy one’s selfish passions or greed for power or wealth.

Jihad is a noble concept. It has, in recent years, been distorted by extremists and terrorists for their terrorist and un-Islamic activities to give it respectability.

Jihad is struggle for a just cause, in which are hidden the secrets of welfare of mankind. In Islamic Jihad, there is no place for any persecution of the innocents.

Forms of Jihad

The obstacles in establishing an Islamic way of life, as ordained by Allah (SWT), which is the end of Jihad may assume two forms, namely obstructions faced by the Muslims, they are not permitted to follow their religion; secondly, obstructions to preach Islam to the non-Muslims. Corresponding to these two forms of Jihad such obstructions can be eliminated either by force, that is, armed Jihad — Jihad bil-Sinan or by Dawah (invitation), Jihad bil-Lisan (dalael) or reasoning. In other words, there may be physical Jihad or Juhd through preaching and reasoning.

Jihad by Dawah (Communication of the Message of God)

One form of Jihad – a peaceful struggle – is Dawah. It is done with “wisdom and beautiful reasoning”: “...arguing (with them) in ways that are best and most gracious...” (An-Nahl; 16:125). This is known as Jihad by argumentation and reasoning. A person who accepts Islam as his way of life by force of his conviction and understanding of Islamic precepts is to be preferred to a

3. SWT stands for Subhanuhu wo Ta’la meaning Pure and Exalted
person who is forced to embrace Islam or who has no knowledge of Islam. It is also against the Qur’anic teaching, “Let there be no compulsion in religion...” (Al-Baqarah; 2:256). In Surah Yunus (10), Verse 99, Allah (SWT) says: “If it had been thy Lord’s Will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! Will thou then compel mankind against their will to believe?”

It is not Allah’s will to force a person to accept Islam; would you force him?

Amir al-Muminin Farooq ibn Al-Khattab (RA) granted freedom of option to his bondman Ansub to accept or reject Islam.

Force is not permitted to be applied. During the long Mughal rule in India, there was no attempt at forcible conversions by the Mughal Emperors.

The Prophet’s (SAWS) Makki period was an example of Jihad by invitation; it was prominently and exclusively spent in inviting people to the belief in the Unity of God by argumentation in ways that were best and most gracious in inviting them to Way of God with wisdom and beautiful preaching; to stop idol worship and association of any kind with God; to tolerate the mischief and inhuman persecutions by the unbelievers with patience. There was no permission to engage with them in armed struggle.

The command for Jihad in the Makki period of 13 years was one with the help of Qur’an. “…strive against them with utmost strenuousness (with the Qur’an).” (Al-Furqan; 25:52).

4. RA stands for Raziallah Anhu meaning ‘May Allah be pleased with him/them.
5. SAWS stands for Sallallahu 'alaihi wo Sallam, meaning ‘May Allah’s Blessings and Peace be upon him.'
Performing Jihad with the help of Qur’an implied an ideological struggle to win people’s heart and mind through Islamic philosophy.

_Dawah_ form of Jihad is to preach the message of the Holy Qur’an. In fact, the first Verse on Jihad is *Surah Al-Furqan; 25:52* says: “Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness (with the Qur’an).”

It should be noted that the first thing which is being said is that do not engage with the pagans physically; secondly, face them non-violently with argument, with admonition and noble words.

All those who embark upon such a course must first of all study the Holy Qur’an as well as the *Sunnah* (Prophet’s Traditions) thoroughly. Jihad through Qur’an means presenting the concept of *Tawheed*, God’s Oneness, belief in second life, that is, life Hereafter and living a life oriented to the second life.

Ibn Rushd maintains that the believer may continue this struggle in four ways:

a) By his heart; implying that nothing evil should find its way either in his mind or his heart;

b) By his tongue; the Holy Qur’an shows how the power of expression should be used in inviting people to the straightway of Allah;

c) By his hand.

d) Invite (people) to your Lord’s Way with discretion and kindly expression and discuss with them in the politest manner.” (An-Nahl; 16:125)

The preaching must be convincing, not self regarding, and not offensive. It should be polite and most courteous.
Jihad by Force

But after migration it was Jihad with physical might, that is, Qītal but in self-defence only when Truth (Haqq) was clear and Falsehood (Batil) became evident. Moreover, the political control in Madinah bestowed power and courage with it to fight against a ferocious and mischief-loving people. It was a fight for the existence of the Faith in One True God. Qītal (fight), as is clear, is the last stage of Jihad.

The Arab pagans and the Jews settled there were firmly determined to wipe out the few Believers from the Arab land. When matters came to unbearable stage, Allah (SWT) permitted fighting in defence but not in offence, as said in Verse 39 of Surah Al-Hajj (22): “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged – and verily Allah is most powerful for their aid.”

Even this permission was conditional; fighting was allowed only against those who initiated fighting.

There were thus stages and gradations in the injunctions relating to Jihad as conditions changed. There was an evolutionary course of Jihad in its various connotations, though the word remained the same.

The two forms of Jihad viz. Jihad bil-Sinan and Jihad bil-Lisan have their own significance and relevance. The selection of the form of Jihad will depend upon the situation prevailing and which form will produce more durable result and which form will inflict less harm - economic, social and political - to the Muslim Ummah, a sensible choice between relative gain and loss for the Cause of Allah (swt).
It must be made clear that compelling non-Muslims to accept Islam is not the objective behind armed Jihad (Qital). Acceptance of faith is a matter of the heart and hearts cannot be forced. It is a matter of free will. God does not force anyone to become a Believer; then why should believers force a non-believer to accept Islam!

The intent and purpose behind armed Jihad (Qital) has never been to downgrade others to the position of subjugation and to establish Muslims as their masters. War was permissible in self-defence and under well-defined limits. It should not be pushed relentlessly but to establish peace and freedom for the worship of Allah (SWT). The strict limits must not be transgressed. Jihad does not have imperialist ambitions of conquering a land or capturing of markets for goods produced in their land or exploiting the resources of a conquered country for the benefit of the mother country – social or economic exploitation, but in the words of Qur’an: “(They are) those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayers and give Zakaat, enjoin the right and forbid wrong, with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.” (Al-Hajj; 22:41).

The Prophet (SAWS) spoke about another form of Jihad - Jihad al-Akbar - constant struggle against one’s own self, always prone to evil deeds, headstrong, passionate self - Nafs al-Ammara. This fleshy animal and carnal instinct in Man prods him to commit base acts. This self is our greatest enemy, leading us to the fire of Hell. The Prophet (SAWS) called this struggle against one’s baser instincts as Jihad al-Akbar. While returning from one of the battles (Ghazwat), the Prophet (SAWS) observed that we have to do the biggest Jihad, (Jihad al-Akbar) now that we are free from smaller Jihad. This was so because a Muslim has to constantly, throughout his life, struggle against his self, animal self, to elevate himself to the position of Nafs
al-Lawwama and ultimately attain the stage of Nafs al-Mutmainna (total peace and satisfaction) which his Lord is happy to bless him and deliver him from Hell.

**Jihad and Qital**

It is by now clear that the word Jihad in its meaning is not Qital. It is confused with the word Qital in common journalistic parlance. It is not a synonym of Qital. Even fighting is in the cause of Allah (SWT). It is not for amassing wealth, expansion of territories or adventurism. Islam disowns the worldly goods. It holds human life as sacred. Qur’an says: “he who slays any person unless it be by way of punishment for murder or for spreading chaos in the land, is as if he slew the whole mankind; and if one human life is saved, it would be like the saving of the whole mankind.” (Al-Maedah; 5:32)

Further, in Surah Al-Isra (17) Verse 33 it says: “Do not kill any soul whom God has forbidden you to, except through due process of law...”

Qital has been assigned a special place in Islam and in other religions as well. Occasions arise when armed action becomes an absolute necessity, when slight show of weakness may lead to disastrous results. Islam has stressed the need to rise on such occasions and has exhorted its followers to face the situation bravely.

Qital is, however, not an end in itself, but a means to some higher and nobler end – the welfare of mankind. Islam exhorts its followers to raise arms not in a spirit of brutality but in a spirit of love for humanity, for the good cause of humanity. Use of force is essential in certain conditions in order to maintain the sanctity of human life and to preserve the moral fibre of society. Islam sanctioned Qital when there were full moral justifications for it, as we shall see in Chapter 2. The believers were
oppressed and driven unjustly from their homes. The aim and objective of armed action in Islam is neither acquisition of wealth nor land, nor power and privilege. It is neither passion of hatred nor revenge.

Permission for armed action was accorded to the believers because their very existence was made difficult due to persecutions by the pagans of Arabia. They were subjected to unspeakable tortures for 13 years.

Qur’an explains the purpose behind armed actions as a moral necessity. It is with the help of force that hardships and atrocities in human life are curbed. Many political revolutions occurred only to put an end to the excesses of the ruling regimes.

Having explained the concepts of Jihad and Qital their relation requires some elucidation.

It needs to be understood that the starting point in Jihad fi-sabilillah is Jihad bin-Nafs; struggle against ones baser instincts, to reform one’s own self which is prone to committing evil deeds (Nafs al-Ammara). Its next obvious stage is Dawah – preaching, admonition etc. In this task of preaching, whatever means of communication are available at hand will be used effectively. The preaching may be at personal/individual level, group level or mass gathering level, as was the way in the Prophet’s (SAWS) time. This method of preaching will surely need capable and devoted preachers. We are told that Abu Bakr (RA) did not resume his business after he joined Prophet’s (SAWS) companionship.

The argument must be driven home through Dawah and preaching to God’s creation, so that man has no excuse (uzur): “O my Lord! No one told me what your Deen was!” This was, in fact, the aim of all Apostles and so was the aim of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and his
The ultimate goal of Jihad is to establish Divine Rule on this earth whose sovereignty belongs to Allah (SWT). The struggle to establish Divine Rule is bound to cause extremely serious conflict of interests and bloody struggle. So long as it is limited to Dawah, there will be no conflict. If Dawah aims to establish Divine system of governance, peace and justice, it will not be tolerated by the Establishment.

Establishing Allah’s (SWT) Deen and domination of the True Religion (Deen al-Haqq) over every other religion, for which the Qur’an says: “…That He make it prevail over all religion…” (As-Saf, 61:9)

This will necessarily lead to bloody and long-drawn conflict. The stage of Dawah has passed. Stage of Qital has arrived. This is the last stage of Jihad fi-sabilillah.

It has now become common to equate Jihad with terrorism. Those who term their terrorist activities as ‘Jihad’ are wrong; and those who call terrorist activities by Muslims as Jihad are equally wrong. There is no unanimous and agreed definition of terrorism. Attempt to define it by security agencies have failed. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, terrorism is a “systematic use of terror, an unpredictable violence against governments, public or individuals to attain a political objective.” The word is used politically and journalistically.

Activities which are subsumed as terrorism, such as killing the innocents, taking revenge from other than those who have harmed, committing violence to draw public attention have no Islamic sanction.

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6. This line of argument has been taken by Dr. Asrar Ahmed, Anjuman-e-Khuddam-ul-Qur’an, Lahore.
Religious terrorism is not sanctioned by Islam. In fact it is against the principles of Islamic and Islamic history testifies to this fact.

**End Purpose of Jihad**

The end purpose of Jihad in the words of Qur’an is: “(They are) those who, if we establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give Zakaat, enjoin the right and forbid wrong...” (Al-Hajj 22:41).

**Reward for Jihad**

Qur’an offers a bargain to the believers. It says: “O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Chastisement?” (As Saff; 61:10).

Deliverance from this punishment was entirely dependent upon Jihad with the self (Jihad bin-Nafs) and was promised in return for our belief and action; “That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your wealth and your persons: that will be best for you, if ye but know.” (As Saff; 61:11)

The reward for this is: “He will forgive you, your sins and admit you to Garden... and to beautiful mansions in Garden of Eternity. That is indeed the Supreme Triumph.” (As Saff; 61:12).

And in Verse 111 of Surah At-Tawbah, Allah (swt) says: “Allah has purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods; for their (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise).”

At the end, some general remarks about Jihad may not be out of place to elucidate further its meaning.
Abdullah Ibn Mubarak observed that Jihad is exerting against the base desires of self.

To exert with the Purity of Faith and with ones full might, physical and mental, in worshipping God as a matter of routine and in abeyance of God’s injunctions is Jihad.

A Muslim’s life is and should be an unending Jihad. (Allama Iqbal)

Jihad is Fardh al-Kifaya, mandatory for the community; not Fardh al-‘Ain (mandatory on every individual).

Great movements of liberation – economic, political, and social – are called rebellion, terrorism or Jihad by political Establishment. Jihad is fundamentally different from rebellion and terrorism in the sense that it lays down well-defined conditions and pre-conditions and aims and objectives: prevalence of belief in the Oneness of God and establishment of His Deen and Shari’ah – which, however, are not liked by the West. It has serious objection to Islamic principles and values because it has no alternative but to accept the existence of Islam and tolerate the Muslims rather reluctantly. It, however, is not prepared to discard its secular and permissive way of life and will not tolerate any attempt to overthrow this system. The West, therefore, takes a blinkered view of Jihad and equates acts of terrorism with Jihad.
CHAPTER – 2

QU’R’ANIC VERSES ON JIHAD AND QITAL

Makki Verses: Qur’anic Verses on Jihad Revealed During Prophet’s Stay in Makkah

This chapter is devoted to the study of Qur’anic Verses on Jihad and Qital. The previous chapter examined the two concepts, its meaning and the misconceptions surrounding it.

We begin this chapter with Verse 52 of Surah Al-Furqan, 25 which belongs to the middle group of Makki period revelations. It states: “Therefore, listen not to the Unbelievers but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness (with the Qur’an).”

In this Verse, the Prophet (SAWS) is asked to pay no attention to the carping critics who reject Faith. There is no indication of taking any retaliation whatsoever even in the backdrop of the harsh conditions of tortures and persecutions prevailing in the middle Makki period. His mission is to spread the message of the Qur’an with the utmost endeavour. He wages the biggest Jihad of all - Jihad-al-Akbar with the weapon of Allah’s Revelation i.e.

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7. The divine scripture of Islam, namely the Qur’an, can be studied from many angles: one angle is to approach its study according to its revelation during the Makki and Madani stages of Islamic preaching because the hurdles and challenges in Makkah and Madinah were different in nature and the two types of Surahs and Verses have special characteristics of their own. The Verses in this chapter have therefore been arranged and explained accordingly. Further, Makki and Madani Surahs/Verses have been arranged according to their sequence of revelation, not according to the traditional order of recitation. This has been so done because the order of its revelation marks the evolutionary stages of refinement and progress in the preaching and teachings of Islamic religion. As Verse 3 of Surah Al-Maedah (5), states: “This day have I perfected your religion for you….. And have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”
by *Dawah* or communicating the message of the Qur’an through reasoning and logic in a peaceful manner.

How to undertake this *Dawah* has been indicated in Verse 125, *Surah An-Nahl* (16) in an elevated thought: “*Invite (people) to your Lord’s way with discretion and kindly instruction and discuss (things) with them in the politest manner.*”

This late Makki *Surah* is supplemented by several Verses (73:10,11; 72:23; 45:14 and 16:35) followed by Madani *Surahs* to preach Islamic teachings peacefully without using force when the Prophet (SAWS) was at the head of a large army and at the height of his power. (Refer to 3:20, 103, 104; 22:67, 68; 9:6, 11). The Qur’an enjoins persuasion in pleading and forbids force and violence. This is the spirit behind Jihad al-Akbar.

These principles of religious teaching are good for all time, expounding and spreading God’s Universal Message as revealed in the Qur’an with prudence and persuasion.

Verse 25:52 has been interpreted in other ways also. First where no effort is spared to communicate; secondly, effort on a massive scale where man invests all his resources for the cause of Allah (SWT).

The meaning of the word ‘Jihad’ in 25:52 is simple, has no scope for ambiguity or double meaning. It must not be equated with the word ‘Qital’. It refers exclusively to an ideological battle, on a philosophical plane, with the Qur’anic teachings to win the hearts and soul of those who do not have faith in the Oneness of God. The stress is on admonition. In *Surah Qaf* (50), Verse 45 it is said: “...and thou art not one to compel them by force. So admonish with the Qur’an such as fear My Warning.”
His mission was to deliver the message of the Qur'an. He was simply an admonisher.

The leaders of the Quraysh community in Makkah were, day and night, bent on persecuting the Muslims relentlessly. The Prophet (SAWS), along with his followers, migrated to Madinah after thirteen years of torture. It was avoiding the path of confrontation; a peaceful way of preaching Islam.

Admonitions and argumentations have been the chosen and preferred methods of preaching Islam with the messengers of Allah. Conflict of belief in the Oneness of God and disbelief in Faith has occurred since the time of Noah: he faced opposition from his people for nine hundred and fifty years! Abraham had faced opposition from his father and people; had an argument with Nimrud about the existence of God – known as Hujjat-e-Ibrahimi. Moses fought with the Pharaoh; these were not physical confrontations. Using a Qur’anic term, these were peaceful struggles between Truth and Falsehood – Jihad. Qital or armed struggle was ruled out

Verse 33 of Surah 17 (Bani Israel), which declares innocent life as sacred and forbids its killing, states: “Nor take life – which Allah has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority to demand Qisas*, or to forgive: but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life, for he is helped (by the Law).”

Verse 6 – another Verse on Jihad – of Surah Al-Ankabut (29), which belongs to the middle Makki period states: “And if any strive (with might and main) they do

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8. The Qur’an says: Qisas is life. Qisas is compensation for the murder – (ed victim). There is (security for) life in such compensation.
so for their own souls; for Allah is free of all needs from all creation.”

If we strive, we strive for our own good; it ensures our spiritual gain. When we serve the cause of all, we do not do any favour to Him, for He does not require any sustenance from His creatures nor does He needs them to feed him. In conforming to His Will, we are seeking our own good. In saying so, Allah (SWT) rouses us to strive hard, for if we keep our spiritual good before us our striving becomes psychologically easier. But what should we strive for? This is made clear in the next Verse: Belief in the unity of God and striving for righteous deeds; “Those who believe and do righteous deeds from them shall We blot out all misdeeds that they have committed.” (Al-Ankabut; 29:7).

Striving is a comprehensive term; it is an all embracing struggle. One has to struggle against mischief and evil forces and with his self also, which is slave to his lusts. He has to grapple, fight against viewpoints, tendencies, principles, morals, traditions, lifestyles, laws, social and economic ways, which are in conflict with God’s Commandments. One has to fight against a state, which instead of enforcing Divine Laws frames legislation that are counter to those Laws, which promote evil forces instead of human welfare and a just order. This sort of striving is not a short-term process but a life-long process and a day and night process. It involves every aspect of human life. As Hasan Basri remarked: “Such a man struggles in the way of Allah (SWT) even though he has wielded sword, not once.”

Allah (SWT) ordains us to undertake Jihad and to establish His Kingdom on this earth, not in order to establish our suzerainty on this earth without which His Kingdom wouldn’t be established but because therein lies
our reward and salvation. He wants us to be a member of the Khair al-Ummum (the best of the people on earth) for the benefit of mankind and for ourselves as well.

**Surah Al-Ankabut** ends with a passage on the duty of Jihad or striving for God’s sake; Verse 69 proclaims: “We shall guide the ones who strive for Us along our Ways. God stands by those who act kindly!”

**Surah Al-Hajj** (22) was partly revealed in the later Makki period and partly in the early Madani period. Verses 52-55 revealed on the road between Makkah and Madinah during the Prophet’s (SAWS) Hijrah (migration) to the latter city in year 622 A.D. deal, among other subjects, with the subject of striving (Jihad) and fighting (Qital) in defence of Truth when attacked and other acts that make for unselfishness.

Verse 39 of this **Surah**, revealed in the first year of Hijrah only grants permission to wage Qital in the cause of Allah (SWT). It states: “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; and verily Allah is Most Powerful for their aid.”

The wrong is indicated: driven from their homes unjustly. This was the first time when fighting back in self-defence was permitted, since Allah (SWT) is able to support them.

The Verse following it states the reasons itself: “(They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right (for no cause) except that they say, ‘Our Lord is Allah. Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength. Exalted in Might, (able to enforce His Will).”
The small Muslim community in Makkah was not only fighting for its own survival against the Makki Quraish but for the very existence of the Faith in the One True God. They had as much right to be in Makkah and worship in Kabah as the other Quraish, but they were exiled for their Faith. The principle involved was that of all worship – Jewish, Christian as well as Muslim; and of all foundation – monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques – built for pious uses.

Verse 78 of the Surah states: “And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive (with sincerely and discipline)....”

The above words are perfectly general and apply to all time and unselfish striving for spiritual good.

The magnificent spiritual purpose of true and unselfish striving (jihad) or fighting (qital) is stated in Verse 41: “(They are) those who, if we establish them in the land establish regular prayer and give Zakaat (welfare tax, poor tax) enjoin the right and forbid wrong...”

This is an essential duty of the Muslim Ummah and one of the main purposes for which it has been raised. This, in fact, is the one and superior purpose of Islamic governance.

**Madani Verses: Qur’anic Verses on Jihad Revealed During Prophet’s Stay in Madinah**

And now we take up Madani Verses one after the other in order of their chronological revelations, only to show the gradations of the revelations. Verse 190 of Surah Al-Baqarah states: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors.”
War is permissible in self-defence and **under well defined limits**. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah (SWT). Arms are to be used only against actual combatants in the battle-filed. In any case, strict limits must not be transgressed: women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms. Verse 193 of the same Surah states: "And fight them on until there is no more persecution and the religion becomes Allah’s. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression."

The word ‘religion’ in the above Verse properly translated in Arabic is Deen. It is very comprehensive word and is, in fact, the English word ‘religion’ is a very poor translation of the Arabic word.

*Deen* implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, judgement, justice, faith, religion, customary rights, etc. The clause ‘and the religion becomes Allah’s’ means until there is *Deen* for Allah (SWT).

The Verse states that ‘if they cease’. It implies that if the opposite group cease, your hostility ends with them as a party. You should not become friends to oppression. Your fight is against wrong. There should be no rancour against them.

Verse 190 does not say to wage *Qital* against every non-believer but only against those who wage wars against the believers. Moreover Qur’an stresses to fight for Truth only. Use force where it is unavoidable to use and only to that extent where it is necessary. If these conditions are not fulfilled it would be a transgression of Qur’anic injunctions; waging *Qital* for no reason other than Truth and Justice. The biggest rider in *Qital* is ‘for the cause of Allah’ (fi-sabilillah). Qur’an does not permit *Qital*
for any other cause. If injustice and mischief are given a free hand, not checked, the earth will abound with mischievousness and excesses; social, economic and political exploitation of the weak. They would not get peace and security. A true religion must ensure peace and security of life and property. Allah’s plan to protect all is universal. In Verse 251 of Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah says: “And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief.”

Allah (swt) will route the mischievous people. In the history of Israelite David routed Goliath by the will of Allah (swt). He is full of bounty; “And slay them whenever you catch them. And turn them out from where they have turned you out; for persecution is worse than slaughter…” (Al Baqarah; 2:191)

The revelations of the Surahs in the Qur’an are steps, in the sense of gradations in the teachings of the Qur’an. This Surah was revealed shortly after the battle of Badr9 in the second year of Hijrah. We are studying Jihad and Qital in this light.

Verse 65 of Surah Al-Anfal (8) on Qital states: “O Prophet! Rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred; if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the unbelievers for these are a people without understanding.”

The urging for fight is only for a just cause. The ratio of 20:200 does not daunt the Believers because they have divine aid and those take up arms against truth and righteousness are but broken reeds.

The reward for sincerity for God’s purpose and sincerity among the believers while fighting for the cause

9. Badr is place few kilometers south-west of Madinah.
of Allah (SWT) is stressed in Verse 65 of Surah Al-Anfal (8). God stands alongside the righteous, disciplined and the sincere.

The Madani Surah, An-Nisa (4) dating from the fourth year A.H. deals with the social problems which the Muslim Ummah faced immediately after the battle of Uhad in the third year A.H. It takes up the subject of orphans left after the battle.

Verse 74 states: “Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fights in the Cause of Allah—whether he is slain or gets victorious—soon shall We give him a reward of great (value).”

Men, women and children who are considered helpless say: ‘Our Lord lead us out of this town whose people are so oppressive and grant us a patron from your presence.’ Fighting for the cause of the helpless and particularly for the cause of the orphans, in the aftermath of Uhad, is fighting for the cause of Allah (SWT). Such people are promised reward from Allah (SWT).

It is a privilege to sacrifice all their interests in this life and this life itself. It is a sacrifice of something fleeting for the sake of something everlasting.

Verse 75 reasons out why the believers must fight for the cause of Allah (SWT), for it is Allah’s cause to fight for the helpless who invoke particularly their Lord’s help: “And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who being weak are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men, women and children, whose cry is: ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors. And raise for us from Thee one who will protect and raise for us from Thee one who will help.’”

10. Uhad is a place on the outskirts of Madinah surrounded by hillocks.
The cause of Allah is the cause of justice. Surah Al-Hujurat (49) is a Madani Surah, revealed about 9 A.H. Though a Madani Surah yet its stress is on Jihad bin-Nafs, purification of one’s self, not on Qital. It teaches the manners to be observed by the growing Ummah, quarrels among the members of the community are unseemly; the Ummah should be composed; manners should spring from morals which are universally recognized by human conscience; mutual respect and confidence are a duty and a privilege in Islam which itself is a precious privilege. Verse 15 states: “Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones.”

Verse 9 of Surah Al-Tahrim (66), a Madani Surah, revealed in 7 A.H., states: “O Prophet! Strive hard against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites and be harsh with them. Their abode is Hell – an evil refuge (indeed).”

This has been stated exactly so in Surah At-Tawbah (9), verse 73.

Surah As-Saff (61) was revealed shortly after the battle of Uhad. Its subject matter is the need for discipline practical work and self-sacrifice in the case of Ummah. It stresses the need to help the Cause, which will be supported by Allah’s help. Verse 10 says: “O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Chastisement?”

Everybody covets to gain hugely in the bargain transacted by him. It is an extremely gainful bargain: escaping form a “grievous chastisement.” What we are asked to give is so little. Verse 11 indicates what we are asked to give: “That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of
**Allah with your wealth and persons: that will be best for you, if ye but know.**

If your plain commonsense could know and understand the comparative value of things: the sacrifice of our fleeting advantages in order to earn divine forgiveness, love of Allah (SWT) and eternal bliss. Verse 12 promises additional reward for belief in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAWS): “He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Triumph.”

Favours upon favours are being promised. In the next Verse, 13, the Qur’an states: “And another (favour will He bestow), which ye do love, help from Allah and a speedy victory. So give the Glad tidings to the Believers.”

In short, striving for a righteous cause, in the path of Allah (SWT), is rewarded by Allah’s unbounded bounty and munificence.

Verses 5, 13, 14 and 29 of Surah At-Tawbah (9) were a notable declaration of State policy promulgated in the month of Shawwal 9 A.H. This Surah, among other matters, deals with the question: what is to be done if the enemy breaks faith and is guilty of treachery? No party can abide by a treaty if the other agreeing party violates it at will. If such a situation leads to war it must be fought with utmost vigour.

Verse 5, states: “But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them. And seize them, beleaguer them. And be in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them; for Allah is oft forgiving, Most Merciful.”
This injunction was given only for those who openly violated the agreement for peace. These people did not accept the *Dawah* for Truth; instead they forced the Prophet (saw) and his followers to leave their birthplace. Verse 13 of this *Surah* insists that violation of treaty persecution of Muslims must be resisted with force: “Will you not fight folk who have violated their trust and intended to exile the Messenger? They attacked you first! Are you afraid of them? You ought to be even more afraid of God if you are true Believers.”

Verse 14 continues in the same strain: “Fight them and Allah will punish them by your hands, and disgrace them, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of Believers.”

If the war is for the right cause Allah (swt) will glorify the Muslims with victory and will disgrace the non-believers.

Verse 29 (of the *Surah*) states: “Fight those who believe not in Allah, nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, from among the people of the book until they pay the Jizyah\(^{11}\) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.”

Verse 111 states: “Allah hath purchased of the Believers their persons and their goods for theirs (in return) is the Garden (of Paradise); they fight in His Cause and slay and are slain: A promise binding on Him in Truth, through the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur’an; and who is more faithful to His Covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded; that is the achievement supreme.”

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11. The *Jizyah* was only symbolic tax that conferred equal rights of citizenship upon non-Muslim subject except heading the state.
The time of revelation of Surah Al-Mumtahana (60) is about 8 A.H. when the Pagans had broken the Treaty of Hudaibya. The two Verses, 8 and 9, lay down rules for determining social relations with the disbelievers.

Verse 8 of the Surah states: “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them. For Allah loves those who are just.”

Islam asks its adherents to deal kindly and justly with the disbelievers who do not harass the Muslims and do not fight with them. Armed struggle should be conducted only against those who drive you out of your homes and want to destroy your faith; “Allah only forbids you, with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith and drive you out of your homes and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong.”

Qur’anic injunctions are clear and categorical that Muslims should be kind and generous even to the non-believers who are good and kind to Muslims and do not attempt to destroy their faith.
CHAPTER – 3

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AHADITH (TRADITIONS) IN GENERAL AND THOSE ON JIHAD IN PARTICULAR

The objective of this chapter is twofold: one to reiterate the significance of the sayings of the Prophet (SAWS) in the Islamic Shari’ah, without which Deen-e-Islam can neither be understood, nor practised correctly. This section is addressed particularly to those who deny the Traditions (Munkirin-e-Ahaadith). Secondly, to highlight some Ahaadith on Jihad and draw attention to rewards associated with it, which are not mentioned in the Qur’an. It is important to understand clarifications furnished by the Prophet (SAWS) in order to understand the true nature, character and importance of Jihad.

It is well known that there are two sources of Islamic Shari’ah, namely the Qur’an and the Sunnah. It is a fact that the Qur’an only outlines the Islamic practices without giving details of their modalities.

The Farewell Pilgrimage of the Prophet (SAWS) (Hajjatul-Wida) rightly called the First Charter of Human Rights, said, among other matters: “Verily, I have left among you that which if you hold fast shall never go astray, i.e. the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.”

Holding fast implies carrying out their injunctions.

Scholars of Ahaadith like a’imma Bukhari, Muslim and Tirmidhi have observed “Faith descended at the roots of the hearts of men (and) then came down the Qur’an and (people) learnt from the Qur’an and from the examples of the Prophet (SAWS).” The above two observations indicate
a profound relation between the Qur’an and the Traditions.

The significance of Ahaadith is extremely important for learning and practising the basic tenets of Islam. The Ahaadith elucidate, clarify and explain the Verses of Qur’an. The commandments enshrined in the Qur’an cannot be put into practice without the knowledge of the Sunnah. The Holy Qur’an, together with the Ahaadith is the true guidance for conducting social, political and economic matters, home life and market-place. In fact, the whole structure of Islamic society is governed and guided by the Qur’an and Sunnah. In brief, Deen-e-Haqq (True religion) is complete only with the fusion of Sunnah with the Qur’an and only then a perfect Islamic system of social life can blossom.

The Prophet (S.A.W.S), on many occasions, guided his Companions (Sahaba) how to say prayers perform Hajj correctly. He said “Learn from me the modalities of Hajj, as I may not be with you at the next Hajj.”

Imam Shatbi in Al-Muvaqqiqat, v.4, page 1, observes that Ahaadith/Sunnah (Traditions of the Prophet) have the status of being an explanation of the Qur’an. The same opinion was expressed by Hafiz Ibn Kaseer when he said “You have to follow the tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.S) because they are explanations of the Qur’an.

Having underlined the significance and place of Ahaadith generally, in the total life of the Believers (along with the Qur’an) from the mosque to the market-place (Soq) a few Ahaadith relating to the importance of Jihad in particular are mentioned below. The objectives and purposes of Jihad and the rewards for those who participate in Jihad are only briefly out-lined in the Qur’an. They have been amply elaborated in Ahaadith. As for instance while explaining the significance of armed
struggle, which is called “Qital”, in the cause of Allah (swt) the Prophet (saws) stated:

“He who fought with the intention to establish Allah’s authority and suzerainty and proclaim His Truth, only his fight is the fight for the cause of Allah.” (Bukhari),

“Only that fight will be a fight in the cause of Allah, which is to proclaim His signs.” (Bukhari & Muslim),

“Two drops are extremely endearing to Allah (swt): one, the drop of tear shed in the fear of Allah; the other, the drop of bloodshed in the fight for the cause of Allah.” (Bukhari),

Abu Amamah (ra) narrated the tradition that a person asked the Prophet’s (saws) permission for undertaking pilgrimage. The Prophet (saws) said “My Ummah’s pilgrimage is Jihad in the cause of Allah (swt).” (Abu Dawood)

Maaz bin Jabal (ra) narrated that, while on the way to Tabuk, he asked the Prophet (saws) as to which deed in Islam is topmost. The Prophet (saws) replied that among exalted deeds in Islam, the topmost one, after the canonical Prayers, is Jihad in the cause of Allah. “I have been ordained that I should continue fighting till people offer prayers, give Zakaat (poor due), till people worship God and He alone, don’t associate anybody anything with Him. No deed, whose objective is attaining a position in the Heaven, is equal to Jihad, except the canonical Prayers. (Ibn Majah, Nisai, Tirmidhi)

Abu Huraira (ra) said that the Prophet (saws) observed that the Mujahid fighting in the Cause of Allah is like one who keeps fast consecutively, worships and recites Qur’an; is like one who is never
tired of keeping fast, worshipping Allah and recites Qur’an till he is back from Jihad. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Sahal bin Saad (RA) said that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that a day’s watchman-ship in the cause of Allah (SWT) is better than this world and all the worldly interests. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Abdullah Ibn Abbas (RA) related that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that fire of Hell will never touch the feet which became dusty in the cause of Allah (SWT). (Bukhari)

Abu Huraira (RA) related that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that the infidel will never be together in the Hell. (Muslim)

Zaid bin Khalid (RA) related that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that one who helped a Mujahid in fighting is as if he himself did Jihad; and he who looked after the Mujahid’s family is like one, who himself did Jihad. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Abu Masood Ansari (RA) related that a person came to the Prophet (SAWS) with a bridled she-camel and offered it in the cause of Allah (SWT). The Prophet (SAWS) observed that he will get 700 she-camels on the Day of Judgment and all will be bridled. (Muslim)

Abu Saeed (RA) said that the Prophet (SAWS) planned to mobilize an army to Bani Lehyan – a branch of Muzail tribe – and observed that one person for every two persons should go to the army. Every body will be rewarded equally. (Muslim)

Jabir bin Samurah (RA) said that the Prophet (SAWS) assured that Islam will hold its sway forever and a group of Muslim will always undertake Jihad till the Last Day of Judgment. (Muslim)
Abu Huraira (RA) related that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that he who gets wounded for the cause of Allah – and He surely knows who is injured for His cause – will come before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment in a condition that blood will ooze from his wound. The oozing blood will be red in colour but it will smell like musk. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Anus (RA) related that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that no one would wish to return to this world after entering the Heaven to enjoy this world’s good things, but the martyr (a Mujahid is a martyr!) would wish to return to this world and wish to be killed ten times because he knows the reward and greatness of Jihad. (Muslim)

Verse 154, Surah Al-Baqarah (2) says: “And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah ‘they are dead.’ Nay, they are living, though ye perceive (it) not.”

Abdullah bin Umair bin Al-Aas (RA) narrates that the Prophet (SAWS) said that being slain for the cause of Allah, efface every sin except debt. (Muslim)

Sahal bin Hanif (RA) says that the Prophet (SAWS) said that he, who asks for martyrdom with a sincere heart, Allah (SWT) favours him with martyrdom even if he dies on his bed. (Muslim)

Abdullah bin `Umr (RA) says that a person came to the Prophet (SAWS) and sought his permission to undertake Jihad. He enquired of him if his parents were alive. He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet (SAWS) told him to stay with them and do Jihad. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Anus (RA) says that the Prophet (SAWS) said: “Fight the polytheist with your body, wealth and tongue (i.e. argument).” (Abu Dawood & Nisai)
Khurem bin Fatik (RA) says that the Prophet (SAWS) said that a person who spends something on Jihad, is rewarded 700 times. (Tirmidhi & Nisai)

Abu Huraira (RA) says that the Prophet (SAWS) told that the martyr suffers the pain of ant bite only when he is killed. (Tirmidhi & Nisai)

Abu Malik Ashari (RA) says that he heard the Prophet (SAWS) saying that one who set out in the cause of Allah and died or was killed or was trampled by his horse or by his camel or was bitten by a poisonous insect or died on his bed or death by any cause, he is a martyr and has a place in the Heaven. (Abu Dawood)

Abdullah bin ‘Umr (RA) says that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that returning from Jihad after Jihad is like Jihad. (Abu Dawood)

Abu Ayyub (RA) says that he heard the Prophet (SAWS) saying that soon your large towns will be conquered and armies will be mobilised against you. But a person will not like to go on Jihad without remuneration. Beware! He is not a Mujahid but a wage-earner and will remain a wage-earner till the last drop of his blood. (Abu Dawood)

Abu Huraira (RA) says that a person said: O! Prophet (SAWS) a person plans to undertake Jihad but desires worldly goods. He (SAWS) observed that there is no reward for him. (Abu Dawood)

Abu Huraira (RA) said that the Prophet (SAWS) observed that for him who saddles his horse in the cause of Allah (SWT), has complete faith in Allah (SWT) and has trust in His promises, even the dung and urine of the horse will carry weight in his Book of Deeds and will get reward for it. (Bukhari)
Abu Huraira (RA) reported the Prophet (SAWS) as saying: “By Him in Whose hand is my life, I love to be killed in the way of Allah (SWT), then to be revived to life again, then to be killed and then to be revived to life, then to be killed and then to be revived to life and then to be killed.” (Agreed Upon)

Virtuous Momin undertakes Jihad both with his sword and tongue. (Bukhari)

The Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: “He who fights for chivalry, heroism, fame or worldly gain merits no reward from Allah (SWT). He is doomed to eternal perdition.” (Tirmidhi)
CHAPTER 4

“BE YE HELPER OF ALLAH” (61:14)

In this chapter, we propose, first to give our views on the subjects treated in the foregoing chapters; then we propose to examine the implications, by way of the responsibilities cast upon the Ummah, of going through the lifelong process of Jihad bin-Nafs – the best and the highest form of Jihad, yet the most difficult one; then we would study the educational desiderata, both religious and secular; the former to cultivate and nourish and practise the virtues required of the Muslims, persistently and earnestly, at the social level. As for the secular education, the community must promote education of science and technology, along with other branches of modern education, among themselves, to contribute their share in the national progress.

We have made a modest attempt to explain the concept of Jihad in the light of Qur’anic Verses and Ahaadith; the strict conditions and preconditions of Jihad and Qital; the philosophy of wars/battles in Islam.

We proceed to state our perception and our interpretation of the subject and how should we go about to promote our cause – Jihad bin-Nafs, the biggest of all Jihad and “to make the religion of Truth to prevail over all religions.” (Al-Fath; 48:28)

True Jihad

After having gone through the various Verses and Ahaadith, it is not difficult to judge which action – armed or otherwise – by Muslims as an individual or as a group can be termed as Jihad, for, one and the only one objective
of Jihad, as already stated, is establishment of Islam (Iqamat-e-Deen). “They are those, who if we establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give Zakaat (poor tax), enjoin the right and forbid wrong.” (Al-Hajj; 22:41).

So, whatever action does not conform to this Divine injunction cannot be termed Jihad. Muslims who term their armed actions as Jihad but for ends other than those stated in Verse 41 above, or try to effectuate Divine injunctions by force cannot be termed Jihad. They are misguided, ignorant of the teachings of the Book and the Sunnah on the subject. As for the West and the media controlled by it, either they are ignorant as the misguided Muslims are or they are mischievously motivated and do so as fitna (anarchy).

Jihad no Holy War

Contrary to the general misconception, Jihad is no holy war. It is a struggle in the Way of God and does not necessarily have to resort to force. It is in fact spiritual journey in the spiritual development of Man towards purification of his Nafs (soul, self). This is what the Prophet (SAWS) called Jihad al-Akbar – the greatest of all Jihads – fostering of virtues “with which God desires to beautify His world.” It is an attempt to attain the closest possible proximity to God, the highest stage of his spiritual development. It is going beyond the stage of Taqwa (fear of God/heedfulness) to the point of Ehsan (love of God). Jihad is thus a whole life struggle for a Muslim, a twenty-four hour endeavour for righteous deeds: Jihad during the day-time and Zikr-Allah (remembering God) during a part of the tranquility of night: “for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.” (Al-Rad; 13:28) and verse 191 of Surah Al-e Imran, 3 says: “The prudent persons remember
God while standing, sitting and (lying) on their side and meditate on the creation of Heaven and Earth.”

It is an endeavour to seek nearness to God.

Jihad and Endeavour to Seek Nearness to God

The end purpose of Jihad is, so to say, inculcation of Islamic values, its way of life at the individual level and working for it at the larger – social – level by adopting peaceful, morally good, methods by moderate Muslims, who are opposed to the dictum “ends justify means.” Means must also be good and commendable for a noble and commendable end. “Islam is a commitment to live in peace.” (Al-Maeda, 5:3)

Militancy is anathema to Islam.

Futility of Armed Struggle

Some recent armed efforts at capturing political power for Nifaz-e-Islam (establishment of Islamic rule) need mention to indicate the lack of wisdom and futility of such a course of action. In Syria, attempts were made to capture power in 1982. It failed and involved a casualty of 30,000. An unsuccessful attempt was made in Egypt by Ikhwan and by the Islamic Front in Algeria.

Invitation to Islam – Dawah – is calling non-Muslims to “Straight Path of Allah.” As the name suggests, Dawah is peaceful, showing no element of force and compulsion, done with patience and tolerance. This course is wise and sensible, not because the armed attempts referred to above were unsuccessful.

Making Use of Modern Mass Media
Modern means of communication - mass media like T.V. and newspapers offer immense scope to preach Islam; publications brought out by Islamic centres the world over, and institutions publishing journal on Islamic issues are efforts having this objective before them. Programmes on T.V. and seminars are being organized to preach Islam by scholars, proficient in Islamic learning, because religious learning occupies a central position in the Muslim educational system; and modern secular education as well, experts in comparative study of religions to prove the superiority of Islam to “make it prevail over all religions”; communicating in English to reach non-Arabic population, to present high level of religious discourses by scholars like Dr. Asrar Ahmad, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Al-Qadri, Dr. Zakir Nayak etc. to educate Muslims and non-Muslims and to remove doubts and misgivings and to answer to their inquisitions about Islam effectively. This course is more productive of results.

Preaching and Reasoning

So, the Jihad of greater importance is Jihad through preaching and reasoning, which has no preconditions imposed by time and environment. It is a ceaseless endeavour. “The real aim of preaching the religion and bearing witness of Islam is to make people alive to the Infinite Greatness of Allah (SWT) and infuse faith in them.” (Islahi, p:207). Conveying the religion of Allah to the people is helping Allah (SWT). They are “His helpers” (Ansar-ul-Allah) (61:14). Such a Mujahid is a helper in the Cause of Allah because such endeavours constitute real Jihad. It means “help of Allah’s religion.”

Witness of Islam

We mentioned ‘witness of Islam’ above. Islam as a system has suffered from neglect and remained unfulfilled
in practice for centuries. So, it is of vital and of much
greater importance that our life as a Muslim be a witness
of Islam. Our outward appearance has little, in fact, no
meaning. Our actions, behaviour as Muslims has real
meaning to the people around us. Islam must be presented
in the image of the Qur’an and the Sunnah to those who
profess a different belief and creed, follow different
religions. Islam has been acknowledged as the best
religion. So, its followers must be a true witness of Islam.
And the best witnesses to Islam are those who show its
light in their lives.

Being ‘witness of Islam’ is an onerous task and a
difficult endeavour. To be a witness of Islam requires
cultivation and display of certain virtues – Islamic virtues
– described profusely in the Qur’an and the Sunnah.
These are the ladders of spiritual ascent.

**Uswah Hasana of the Qur’an**

Briefly the virtues are: true servants of Allah (SWT)
are humble and forbearing; are moderate in all things; are
constantly in touch with Allah (SWT) – “...He is with you
wheresoever ye may be...” (Al-Hadid; 57:4).
They avoid treason to Allah (SWT), to themselves and to
fellow-creatures; give a wide berth to futility and
falsehood; their ambition is to lead in all good and to bring
up their families in righteousness. They have before them
a fine code of individual and social ethics.

**Rasool (Messenger): An Excellent Exemplar**

We take pride and are nostalgic of the best times of
Islam – Khilafat al-Rashida – of the value of the Madani
society of those days and muse on Minhaj ar-Rasool (Way
of the Messenger), talk of revival of Islam as believed and
practised in the times of the Prophet (SAWS) and later in
the days of Sahaaba (Companions). This is thinkable to a degree only and only if we regard the Qur’an as a Divine guide, mould our life after Sunnah, because: “Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the Final Day...” (Al-Ahzab, 33:21)

and after Sahaabas’ life as model of our life; and the Madani society of those days as the norm of comparison with the society of any period.

In Surah Al-Tagabun (64) Verse 8, Allah (SWT) instructs us thus: “Believe, therefore, in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light which we have sent down...”

Again, in Surah Al-e Imran (3) Verses 31 and 32 Allah (SWT) says: “Say (O Muhammad) ‘If ye do love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you, and forgive you your sins, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’ Say, ‘Obey Allah and His Messenger...’”

Therein rests the hope for the renaissance of Islam.

Qur’an: To be Meditated and Acted Upon

As to the Light which is a guide and admonition, Allah (SWT) says: “...The Guidance of Allah – that is the (only) Guidance...” (Al-Baqarah; 2:120).

As a direction, it sums up the highest philosophy of the inner life, it’s simple directions for conduct are plain and easy to understand and act upon. This point is made in Surah Al-Qamar (54) Verse 17 and repeated four times: “And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember (as an admonition). Then is there any that will receive admonition?”

As to the Guidance, Allah (SWT) promises: “...And if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear,
nor shall they grieve.” (Al-Baqarah; 2:38) and repeated in Surah Taha (20), Verse 123 “…but if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, whosoever follows My Guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery.”

Alas, we, generally, have lost our way and fallen into misery, as warned by Allah (swt) in Verse 124 of Surah Taha (20): “But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment!”

The Believers have been enjoined to hold the Qur’an firmly and steadfastly to save them from disunity – a need transcending time and space. In Surah Al-e-Imran (3) Verse 101, Allah (swt) assures: “…Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown a Way that is straight.” Again, in verse 103 of the same Surah, it is said: “And hold fast, all together by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves…”

The Benevolent Providence stretches out a strong and unbreakable rope of rescue – “the Firmest Handle” for those people who are struggling in deep water.

Neglect of Qur’an

It is tragic that today, even the educated Muslims, leave apart the uneducated Muslim mass, have generally neglected the study of Qur’an and are therefore, ignorant of its significance as a supreme Book of guidance to the path of piety and righteousness. For the non-Arabic knowing persons, translations of the Qur’an in many languages are now easily available for study. In Surah Al-Furqan (25), Verse 30 the Prophet (saw) lamented about his people (Quraish): “Then the Messenger will say: ‘O my Lord, Truly my people treated this Qur’an with neglect.’”
This is equally applicable to the present day Muslims as well. The neglect is expressed in a Hadith by Anas (RA).

The Prophet (SAWS) said: “Someone who recited the Qur’an, then closed it and hung it by the wall, neither was he regular in its Tilawat (recitation), the Qur’an hanging by his neck on the Day of Judgment, will complain to Allah that this servant of Yours had neglected me. Now decide our case.” (Muslim)

**Sunnah: A Practical Translation of Islam**

The Sunnah of the Prophet (SAWS) is the second source and guide of Islamic law of social and personal behaviour and is the only valid explanation of the Qur’anic teachings. The Book was not to be used independently of the system of Sunnah which means no more and no less than the teachings of Islam translated into practice. The Prophet’s words, actions and behaviour are regarded as the best examples for us to emulate: “Verily, in the Apostle of God you have the best example for everyone...” (Al Ahzab; 33:21)

And in Surah Al-Qalam (68), Verse 4, the Prophet (SAWS) is spoken of as: “And surely thou (Khuluqin Azim) hast sublime morals.”

He was the symbol of a “great spiritual dignity.”

The Qur’an and Hadith lay down not only the fundamental principles of Islam as a matter of belief but also stress, with equal emphasis, on the performance of righteous deeds, as the Qur’an says: “Each will have rank according to whatever they have done, so He may repay them for their actions...” (Al Ahqaf; 46:19)
It is thus supremely important that we should adhere to Qur’anic injunctions and abide by the Prophet’s teachings.

**Qur’an and Sunnah as Norm**

Principles of Qur’an and the Sunnah are the normative and immutable part of the Muslim heritage. They are the touchstone for judging what the Muslims did, what they are doing and what they will do in times to come.

**Poor Understanding of Islam**

We, the Muslims generally and the younger generation particularly, have a vague and distorted understanding of Islam, nurture innovative concepts (Bid’at), owing to living with people for centuries together in the subcontinent, who have different creeds and beliefs; are far away from “capturing the full message of Islam.” This is the result of a general apathy on our part to understand it at the individual level; secondly, a result of the indifferent environment in the family to bring up the children in accordance with the Sunnah; and thirdly, the influence of the Western culture and education, based on its experience, political exigencies and culture which is inherently anti-Islamic. Ignorance about Islamic culture and values does not help to have a comparative idea of Islam vis-à-vis Western culture. This lack of understanding about Islam creates an apologetic frame of mind for the religion and develops an inferiority complex. The young Muslims are dazzled by modern Western civilization. This is not congenial to the propagation of Islam ideologically.

Islam was under siege before and is today much more dangerously from the enemies of Islam who are
under fear psychosis. There is a dire need to reform ourselves from within (the community), to unite together, no matter even if we are adherents of differing schools of jurisprudence. A greater need is for political unity – as the European nations united against Islam during the Crusades – to bulwark against onslaughts on Islam, dubbing it and its followers ‘terrorist,’ ignoring that the so-called terrorism is a reaction to the unjustified political and economic exploitation of Islamic states by the Western powers.

**Protection of Islam is also Izhar-e-Deen**

Defence of Islam politically and protection of Islamic values, Islamic beliefs and its way of life is no less than Jihad.

In *Surah As-Saff* (61), Verse 14, Allah (SWT) says; “O ye who believe! Be ye helpers of Allah.”

We all seek, at all time, Allah’s help. We must first help Allah’s Cause. The Cause is establishment of Allah’s Deen, “to make it prevail over all religions” peacefully with patience and perseverance highlighting the righteousness and virtues of Islam without denigrating other religions and societies. Let the Truth shed its own light and speak for itself eloquently and emphatically through our precepts and practices.
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THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF JIHAD IN ISLAM

By
Michael G. Knapp

“All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on God, his Messenger, and Muslims. . . The jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries. . . . As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty. . . . On that basis, and in compliance with God’s order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.”


The word “jihad” means “struggle” or “striving” (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination; it does not mean “holy war” (war in Arabic is harb and holy is muqadassah). Unlike its medieval Christian counterpart term, “crusade” (“war for the cross”), however, the term jihad for Muslims has retained its religious and military connotation into modern times. The word jihad has appeared widely in the Western news media following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on

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the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, but the true meaning of this term in the Islamic world (it is sometimes called the “sixth pillar” of the faith) is still not well understood by non-Muslims.

In war, the first essential is to know your adversary—how he thinks and why he thinks that way, and what his strategy and objectives are—so that you can attempt to frustrate his plans and protect the lives of your fellow citizens. Understanding how radical Muslims see jihad and are employing it asymmetrically against us can provide us with that kind of perspective.

This article will trace the development of jihad through early Islamic history into the present day, and will focus on how jihad in concept and practice has been appropriated and distorted by Muslim extremists as part of their violent campaign against the West and their own governments. Jihad as a centerpiece of radical thought is illustrated by examining the doctrines of prominent extremist groups such as Hamas and Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Misuse of the term by prominent extremist leaders, such as by Osama bin Laden and others in the quote above, is also addressed.

The Classical Concept of Jihad

_Qu’ranic and Early Legal Perspectives_

Muslims themselves have disagreed throughout their history about the meaning of the term jihad. In the Qur’an (or Koran), it is normally found in the sense of fighting in the path of God; this was used to describe warfare against the enemies of the early Muslim community (Ummah). In the Hadith, the second most authoritative source of the Shari’ah (Islamic law), jihad is used to mean armed action, and most Islamic theologians and jurists in the classical period (the first three centuries)
of Muslim history understood this obligation to be in a military sense.¹

Islamic jurists saw jihad in the context of conflict in a world divided between the Dar al-Islam (territory under Islamic control) and the Dar al-Harb (territory of war, which consisted of all lands not under Muslim rule). The inhabitants of the territory of war are divided between “People of the Book” (mainly Jews and Christians) and polytheists. This requirement to continue jihad until the entire world is included in the territory of Islam does not imply that Muslims must wage non-stop warfare, however. Although there was no mechanism for recognizing a non-Muslim government as legitimate, jurists allowed for the negotiation of truces and peace treaties of limited duration. Additionally, extending the territory of Islam does not mean the annihilation of all non-Muslims, nor even their necessary conversion: jihad cannot imply conversion by force, since the Qur’an (2:256) states that “There is no compulsion in religion.” More than a religious aim, jihad really had a political one: the drive to establish a single, unified Muslim realm justified Islam’s supercession of other faiths and allowed for the creation of a just political and social order.²

Jihad was generally understood not as an obligation of each individual Muslim (known as Fard ‘ayn) but as a general requirement of the Muslim community (Fard kifaya). Only in emergencies, when the Dar al-Islam comes under unexpected attack, do all Muslims have to participate in jihad. Under normal circumstances, therefore, an individual Muslim need not take part so long as other Muslims carry the burden for all of defending the realm.³
Other Philosophical Perspectives

This consensus view of a restricted, defensive version of jihad was contested by Muslim legal philosopher Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). He declared that a ruler who fails to enforce the Shari’yah rigorously in all aspects, including the conduct of jihad (and is therefore insufficiently Muslim), forfeits his right to rule. Ibn Taymiyya strongly advocated jihad as warfare against both the Crusaders and Mongols who then occupied parts of the Dar al-Islam, and most important, broke with the mainstream of Islam by asserting that a professing Muslim who does not live by the faith is an apostate (unbeliever). By going well beyond most jurists (who tolerated rulers who violated the Shari’yah for the sake of community stability), Ibn Taymiyya laid much of the groundwork for the intellectual arguments of contemporary radical Islamists.4

Islamic law condemns all warfare that does not qualify as jihad, specifically any warfare among Muslims. Thus, military action against Muslims is justified only by denying them the status of Muslims (e.g., classifying them as apostates or rebels).5 Islamic juristic tradition is also very hostile toward terror as a means of political resistance. Classical Muslim jurists were remarkably tolerant toward political rebels by holding that they may not be executed nor their property confiscated. This tolerance vanished, however, for rebels who conducted attacks against unsuspecting and defenceless victims or who spread terror through abductions, rapes, the use of poisoned arrows and poisoning of wells (the chemical warfare of this period), arson, attacks against travellers, and night attacks. In these cases, jurists demanded harsh penalties (including death) and ruled that the punishment
was the same whether the perpetrator or victim was Muslim or non-Muslim.\textsuperscript{6}

Three main views of jihad thus coexisted in pre-modern times. In addition to the classical legal view of jihad as a compulsory, communal effort to defend and expand the \textit{Dar al-Islam}, and Ibn Taymiyya’s notion of active jihad as an indispensable feature of legitimate rule, there was also the Sufi movement’s doctrine of \textit{greater jihad}. The Sufis (a mystical sect of Islam) understood the greater jihad as an inner struggle against the base instincts of the body but also against corruption of the soul, and believed that the greater jihad is a necessary part of the process of gaining spiritual insight. To this day, most Muslims see jihad as a personal rather than a political struggle, while physical actions taken in defence of the realm are considered the \textit{lesser jihad}. It is not surprising, then, that disagreement over the meaning of jihad has continued into the modern era.\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{Origins of Radical Ideologies}

Muslim reform movements in the Middle East first acquired a sense of urgency with the arrival of European imperialism in the latter part of the 19th century. The end of colonialism and acquisition of independence by most Muslim countries after World War II accelerated this drive. However, the massive social changes that accompanied these reforms and the simultaneous introduction of new ideas that were alien to classical Islamic tradition—such as nationalism, popular sovereignty, and women’s rights—disrupted traditional ways of life and caused traumatic dislocations in these societies.\textsuperscript{8}

Disillusionment with the path Muslim societies have taken in the modern period reached its height in the
1970s. Increasingly widespread rejection of Western civilization as a model for Muslims to emulate has been accompanied by a search for indigenous values that reflect traditional Muslim culture, as well as a drive to restore power and dignity to the community. The last 30 years have seen the rise of militant, religiously-based political groups whose ideology focuses on demands for jihad (and the willingness to sacrifice one’s life) for the forceful creation of a society governed solely by the Shari’ah and a unified Islamic state, and to eliminate un-Islamic and unjust rulers. These groups are also reemphasizing individual conformity to the requirements of Islam.9

Militant Islam (also referred to as political or radical Islam) is rooted in a contemporary religious resurgence in private and public life.10 The causes of Islamic radicalism have been religio-cultural, political, and socio-economic and have focused on issues of politics and social justice such as authoritarianism, lack of social services, and corruption, which all intertwine as catalysts. Many Islamic reform groups have blamed social ills on outside influences; for example, modernization (e.g., Westernization and secularization) has been perceived as a form of neo-colonialism, an evil that replaces Muslim religious and cultural identity and values with alien ideas and models of development.11

Islamic militancy is still not well understood by Americans. This is partly due to the secrecy which radical Islamic groups practice to protect themselves from the authorities and from outsiders who do not share their views and aims, but also because Western public communications media frequently tend to marginalize such groups. They are dismissed as religious fanatics, anti-Western hooligans, or mindless terrorists, without making an attempt to comprehend the deep discontents that have produced these Islamic groups’ violent actions or the logic
of their radical cause which compels them to behave as they do.12

**Differences in Sunni and Shi’a Interpretations of Jihad**

Sunni and Shi’a (Shi’ite) Muslims agree, in terms of just cause, that jihad applies to the defence of territory, life, faith, and property; it is justified to repel invasion or its threat; it is necessary to guarantee freedom for the spread of Islam; and that difference in religion alone is not a sufficient cause. Some Islamic scholars have differentiated disbelief from persecution and injustice, and claimed that jihad is justified only to fight those unbelievers who have initiated aggression against the Muslim community. Others, however, have stated more militant views which were inspired by Islamic resistance to the European powers during the colonial period: in this view, jihad as ‘aggressive war’ is authorized against all non-Muslims, whether they are oppressing Muslims or not.

The question of right authority—no jihad can be waged unless it is directed by a legitimate ruler—also has been divisive among Muslims. The Sunnis saw all of the Muslim caliphs (particularly the first four “rightly guided” caliphs to rule after the Prophet Muhammad’s death, who possessed combined religious and political authority) as legitimate callers of jihad, as long as they had the support of the realm’s Ulama (Islamic scholars). The Shi’a see this power as having been meant for the Imams, but it was wrongly denied to them by the majority Sunnis. The lack of proper authority after the disappearance of the 12th (“Hidden”) Imam in 874 A.D. also posed problems for the Shi’a; this was resolved by the Ulama increasingly taking this authority for itself to the point where all legitimate forms of jihad may be considered defensive,
and there is no restriction on the kind of war which may be waged in the Hidden Imam’s absence so long as it is authorized by a just ruler (this idea reached its zenith under Iran’s Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini).

Both sects agree on the other prerequisites for jihad. Right intention (Niyyah) is fundamentally important for engaging in jihad. Fighting for the sake of conquest, booty, or honour in the eyes of one’s companions will earn no reward; the only valid purpose for jihad is to draw near to God. In terms of last resort, jihad may be waged only if the enemy has first been offered the triple alternative: accept Islam, pay the jizyah (the poll tax required for non-Muslim “People of the Book” living under Muslim control), or fight.  

Conditions also are placed on the behaviour of combatants in jihad: discrimination of non-combatants from warriors is required, along with the prohibition of harm to non-combatants such as women, children, the disabled, monks and rabbis (unless they are involved in the fighting), and those who have been given the promise of immunity; and proportionality, meaning that the least amount of force is used to obtain the desired ends in combat.  

**Ideas on Jihad in the Modern Era**

Sayyid Abu al-A’la Mawdudi (1903-1979) was the first Islamist writer to approach jihad systematically. Warfare, in his view, is conducted not just to expand Islamic political dominance, but also to establish just rule (one that includes freedom of religion). For Mawdudi (an Indo-Pakistani who agitated for Pakistan’s independence from India), jihad was akin to war of liberation, and is designed to establish politically independent Muslim states. Mawdudi’s view significantly changed the concept
of jihad in Islam and began its association with anti-colonialism and “national liberation movements.” His approach paved the way for Arab resistance to Zionism and the existence of the state of Israel to be referred to as jihad.15

Radical Egyptian Islamist thinkers (and members of the Muslim Brotherhood) Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) took hold of Mawdudi’s activist and nationalist conception of jihad and its role in establishing a truly Islamic government, and incorporated Ibn Taymiyya’s earlier conception of jihad that includes the overthrow of governments that fail to enforce the Shari’yah. This idea of revolution focuses first on dealing with the radicals’ own un-Islamic rulers (the “near enemy”) before Muslims can direct jihad against external enemies. If leaders such as Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, for example, are not true Muslims, then they cannot lead jihad, not even against a legitimate target such as Israel. Significantly, radical Islamists consider jihad mandatory for all Muslims, making it an individual rather than a communal duty.16

The Use of Jihad by Islamic Militants

Regional Islamic Militant Groups’ Perceptions

Classical Islamic criteria for jihad were based on the early unified Muslim empire. The imposition of the modern nation-state on Middle East societies, however, has made such ideas no longer applicable; this can be seen by examining contemporary Muslim militant groups’ ideologies.

The Islamic Resistance Movement (commonly known as Hamas) sees its situation as similar to that of the Muslim ruler Saladin in his struggle against the Christian Crusaders, as can be seen by examining portions of its
Charter. The goal of Hamas is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel, through both violent means (including terrorism) and peaceful political activity. Hamas argues that the current situation of the Palestinians, living under Israeli control or dispersed from their homeland, is part of an ongoing crusade by Christians to take the Holy Lands out of Palestinian hands. The loss of Palestine and the creation of Israel, the Charter continues, were brought about by the great powers of East and West, and taken together constitute a great tragedy not only for the Palestinians but for the entire Islamic community. This, Hamas proclaims, requires jihad not in the sense of expanding the territory of Islam, but of restoring it, and to recover land rather than conquer it. Nor is it a rebellion in the classical sense; rather, this is a struggle to regain a lost portion of the territory of Islam. The Hamas Charter thus provides a uniquely Islamic rationale for al-intifada, the “shaking off” of illegitimate rule. This language thus seems to suggest defensive jihad, rather than an offensive struggle.

Since Hamas is not acting on behalf of an established government, it must find authorization elsewhere for its struggle against not only external enemies but also so-called “Muslim” governments that collaborate with the non-Muslim powers (by cooperating with Israel or allowing the basing of Western troops on their soil). The group considers Muslim governments that cooperate with the West as ignorant of the non-Muslim nations’ true intentions, or corrupt. Hamas argues that it obtains its authority to declare jihad in another way: the Western powers’ invasion of Islamic territory has created an emergency situation where Muslims cannot wait for authorization other than that given directly by God, so jihad is a required duty for all conscientious Muslims. This exceptional situation suspends the usual lines
between parties in a relationship so that every Muslim can participate in the struggle. Hamas' Charter thus relates the current situation of Muslims to the classical period, but also marks a break with that classical past. This extraordinary situation also means a change in the nature of Muslim obligation under jihad, from a collective responsibility to extend the Dar al-Islam to a duty for each individual Muslim to restore that territory.19

The same pattern of thinking is present in “The Neglected Duty,” a pamphlet produced by Egyptian Islamic Jihad (or EIJ, the group that assassinated Anwar Sadat in 1981). This pamphlet, the group’s announced “testament,” is also a clear expression of the Sunni Islamist perspective on political violence as jihad. It argues that jihad as armed action is the heart of Islam, and that the neglect of this type of action by Muslims has caused the current depressed condition of Islam in the world. EIJ attempts to communicate a sense of urgency to Muslims, who are being victimized and whose territory is being divided and controlled by non-Muslim powers. The document also seeks to justify jihad against other Muslims who, because they are ignorant of this situation, actively cooperate with the unbelievers in the name of “modernization,” and are worse than rebels—they are Muslim traitors and apostates. Furthermore, fighting such unbelievers without the limits imposed if they were rebellious Muslims is justified, since they are worse than other unbelievers.20

“The Neglected Duty” defines the current rulers of the Muslim world (as Sadat was defined) as the primary enemies of Islam and apostates, despite their profession of Islam and obedience to some of its laws, and advocates their execution. This document is explicitly messianic, asserting that Muslims must “exert every conceivable effort” to bring about the establishment of truly Islamic
government, a restoration of the caliphate, and the expansion of the *Dar al-Islam*, and that the success of these endeavours is inevitable.  

“The Neglected Duty” cites a different historical analogy for this struggle than does Hamas’ Charter, however: more appropriate than the threat posed by the European Crusaders was the struggle of Muslims against the Mongol invaders.

EIJ is raising an important issue connected with irregular war: the group is advocating mass resistance against an established government, and such revolution can be justified in Islam only where the ruler becomes an unbeliever through public displays of unbelief. The most significant of such acts is introduction of an innovation (*bid’ah*), which is a policy, teaching, or action that violates precedents in the Qur’an or Hadith. The leadership thus loses its divinely given authority when it commits apostasy, and Muslims not only must no longer obey such a ruler, but are required to revolt and depose him.

This reference to the obligation to God for the creation and maintenance of an Islamic state and the responsibilities of Muslims serves to answer the question of authorization for militant Islamic forces.  “The Neglected Duty” provides further justification for armed action by arguing that Egypt, like most of its neighbours, is not an Islamic state because its constitution and laws are a mix of traditional Islamic judgments and European law codes. Imposition of such a mixed legal system (non-Islamic laws that are an “innovation”) by Egypt’s leaders on their subjects thus means that the nation is not part of the territory of Islam, but part of the territory of war or unbelief.

Shi’a radicals have a similar perspective to their Sunni extremist “brothers in arms.” Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) contended that Islamic jurists, “by
means of jihad and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rouse the people so the universal movement of all alert Muslims can establish Islamic government in the place of tyrannical regimes.” The proper teaching of Islam will cause “the entire population to become mujahids [literally “strugglers for God”].” Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari (1920-1979), a top ideologue of the Iranian Revolution, considered jihad a necessary consequence of Islam’s content: by having political aims, Islam must sanction armed force and provide laws for its use. Mutahhari deemed jihad to be defensive, but his definition includes defence against oppression and may require what international law would consider a war of aggression. For example, he endorses an attack on a country of polytheists (some Muslims see Christians as polytheists due to Christianity’s belief in a God who can exist in three manifestations) with the goal simply to eliminate polytheism’s evils, not to impose Islam.24

Another radical Shi’a perspective on the justification for jihad can be found in the words of Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual leader of Lebanese Hizballah. In a 1986 interview, he stated that although violence is justified only for defensive purposes and as a last resort, the contemporary situation of the people of the Middle East, in particular of Muslims, creates a scenario that breeds violence. The establishment of Israel, the dislocation of the Palestinians, and the interference of a great oppressive power (in other words, the United States) in Arab-Islamic political, economic, and social affairs leads some Muslims (e.g., militant groups) to consider themselves justified in using force to achieve their goals, and this can even sometimes lead to extreme behavior.25 Fadlallah does clarify that terrorism (hudna, or violence in Arabic) is not legitimate or justified in Islam, to
include the destruction of life, kidnapping, or the hijacking of airliners or ships, and suggests that militants have gone too far in the conduct of their struggle when they employ such means. Nevertheless, he concludes by informing the American people that it is up to them to improve the situation by pressing for reforms in the policies of their government.26

How should the West respond to Islamic militant groups? Shaykh Fadlallah suggests that the West should listen to the anger expressed by such groups. While stressing that the way to peace is through dialogue, Fadlallah said that the West must first recognize that Muslims who act in ways that are harmful to Western interests are responding to pain of their own. Islam, he added, should not be thought of as uncompromisingly hostile to the West, since militant groups do not speak for all of the community. Fadlallah adds that if the West does listen to these groups, however, it will understand that the concerns these groups have (for justice, human rights, and self-determination) are legitimate, even if their methods are excessive.27

Al Qaeda and Trans-National Jihad

A New Twist on Old Complaints

Before his emergence as the prime suspect in the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden had described his goals and grievances and the tactics of his trans-national al Qaeda network in great detail in a series of statements and interviews. Taken together, these statements provide insight into an ideology that may seem abhorrent or crazy to Americans but has been carefully crafted to appeal to the disgruntled and dispossessed of the Islamic world.28 Bin Laden’s ideology, however, is really more political than religious.
At the heart of bin Laden’s philosophy are two declarations of war—jihad—against the United States. The first, his Bayan (statement) issued on 26 August 1996, was directed specifically at “Americans occupying the land of the two holy places,” as bin Laden refers to the cities of Mecca and Medina that are located in his native Saudi Arabia. Here he calls upon Muslims all over the world to fight to “expel the infidels . . . from the Arab Peninsula.” In his fatwa of 23 February 1998, titled “Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders,” which he issued along with the leaders of extremist groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, bin Laden broadened his earlier edict. In the fatwa, he specifies that the radicals’ war is a defensive struggle against Americans and their allies who have declared war “on God, his Messenger, and Muslims.” The “crimes and sins” perpetrated by the United States are threefold: first, it “stormed” the Arabian peninsula during the Gulf War and has continued “occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places”; second, it continues a war of annihilation against Iraq; and third, the United States supports the state of Israel and its continued occupation of Jerusalem. The only appropriate Muslim response, according to the fatwa, is a defensive jihad to repulse the aggressor; therefore, borrowing from classical and modern Islamic scholars (because it is defensive), such a war is a moral obligation incumbent upon all true Muslims.

Bin Laden’s anger at the “American crusader forces” who are “occupying” his homeland stems from an injunction from the Prophet that there “not be two religions in Arabia”; the presence of foreign forces on holy soil is thus an intolerable affront to 1,400 years of Islamic tradition. In his 1996 statement of jihad, bin Laden blamed the serious economic crisis then gripping Saudi Arabia (due to falling oil prices and widespread corruption) on
the presence of these Western “crusader forces.” Two years later, in his 1998 fatwa, bin Laden charged that the United States was not only occupying and plundering Arabia, but was “using its bases in the peninsula as a spearhead to fight against the neighbouring Islamic peoples.” In bin Laden’s war, the goal of expelling the “Judeo-Christian enemy” from Islamic holy lands should occur first on the Arabian peninsula, then in Iraq (which for 500 years was the seat of the Islamic caliphate), and third in Palestine, site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (which is sacred to Muslims as the place from where Muhammad ascended to heaven).31

Although the initial attacks associated with bin Laden occurred in Saudi Arabia, Somalia, East Africa, and Yemen, he increasingly made clear that he would bring the war to the American homeland. Al Qaeda is believed to have aided the first attack against the World Trade Centre in 1993, and bin Laden told an ABC News reporter in May 1998 that the battle will “inevitably move . . . to American soil.”32 Although he appears to be fired by the religious zeal of Saudi Arabia’s puritanical Wahhabi movement, bin Laden’s targets have not been offending religious and cultural institutions, but political, military, and economic targets. Additionally, though he quotes selective (but incomplete) passages from the Qur’an to establish the basis for the jihad, bin Laden’s motivations are really not that different from the anti-imperialistic doctrines that sustain religious and nonreligious extremist groups all over the world.33

In return for joining the jihad against America, bin Laden has promised his followers an honoured place in paradise, in accordance with a statement in the Qur’an that “a martyr’s privileges are guaranteed by Allah.” Bin Laden and many of the other Islamic militant groups in the Middle East are able to draw on large numbers of
enthusiastic and waiting recruits for their war against the United States—impoverished youths who are ready to die simply for the idea of jihad.

“Jihad Factories”: An Enduring Legacy of Hatred

It is estimated that more than one million young men from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the Muslim parts of China are attending Madrasahs, or private Islamic religious schools, every year in Pakistan. Madrasah students spend most of their day in rote memorization of the Qur’an in Arabic (this is not their native language, so few understand what they are reading) and interpreting the Hadith. Only theology is taught; there is no math, science, computer training, or secular history. The young men at these schools are drawn from the dire poor of the societies they come from, kept in self-contained worlds that are isolated from outside influences, and indoctrinated with a powerful, not-so-academic radical message: their highest honour and duty is to wage jihad to defend Islam from its attackers, and the United States is the chief enemy of Islam.

Madrasahs, which have a tradition in Pakistan that dates from colonial days of promoting political independence along with their religious teaching, fill a significant gap in the under funded public school system by offering free tuition, room, and board. Madrasahs received state funding during the Afghan War when they were used to groom the mujahedin who were being sent to fight the Soviet invaders. Many of these schools were emptied in the 1990s when the Taliban needed assistance in military campaigns against its Northern Alliance foes, and many students sent to the front did not return. The graduates of these Madrasahs have also turned up in places like Bosnia, Chechnya, and the Kashmir, and the survivors
of those conflicts have taken their battlefield experience back to their home countries where it is being put to use in jihads against their own not-Islamic enough governments and societies.

The readiness of millions of young men trained in these schools to sacrifice their lives for Islam—and their unquestioning acceptance of anti-American and pro-Islamic extremist propaganda—will continue to be a powerful and enduring weapon against the US-led global war on terrorism, and one that bin Laden and other militants who are bent on attacking the United States and its allies can call on in the years ahead.

Acceptance of Militants’ Ideas and Methods Is Limited

The thrust of the entire jihad tradition which Islamic radicals have “hijacked” makes it clear that not everything is permissible. Although the language in the Qur’an and Hadith and in other classical Muslim sources is overwhelmingly militant in many places, this is a reflection of the Muslims’ world in the seventh century, which consisted initially of resistance to a variety of more powerful non-Islamic tribes and then successful military campaigns to spread the faith. Besides containing exhortations to fight, however, Islamic sacred texts have also laid out the rules of engagement for war, which (as mentioned earlier) included prohibitions against the killing of non-combatants such as women, children, the aged, and disabled. These texts also require notice to the adversary before an attack, require that a Muslim army must seek peace if its opponent does, and forbid committing aggression against others and suicide. Those who are unfamiliar with the Qur’an and Hadith can miss
these points when confronted with the propagandistic calls to jihad of militant Islamic groups.

The actions of rebels in the classical period of Islam encountered widespread resentment and condemnation, and this strong sentiment against rebellion remains in modern Islamic thought. Most Muslims agree with the presumption in Islamic teachings on war that individuals are innocent and therefore not subject to harm unless they demonstrate by their actions that they are a threat to the safety or survival of Muslims. On this basis, the overwhelming majority of Islamic scholars have for centuries rejected indiscriminate killing and the terrorizing of civilian populations as a legitimate form of jihad.38 Also, at no point do Islamic sacred texts even consider the horrific and random slaughter of uninvolved bystanders that is represented by the 9/11 airliner attacks; most Muslims throughout the world were as shocked by those attacks as Americans were.

The radical message in works such as Hamas’ Charter, “The Neglected Duty,” and the writings of Khomeini and his fellow revolutionary Iranian Shi’a clerics nevertheless finds a lot of acceptance with contemporary Muslims. The reason is simply because of the poor socioeconomic circumstances and lack of human dignity that many Muslim peoples find themselves subject to, brought about by secular failures to attend to their problems.39 Militant Islamic groups, exemplified by Hamas and the Palestinian branch of Islamic Jihad, have been able to use such poor conditions to their advantage. They provide social services (such as operating free or low-cost schools, medical clinics, sports clubs, and women’s support groups), many of which the Palestinian Authority itself often cannot provide, to build public support and attract recruits in the occupied territories.40
Public statements over the last several months by some moderate Muslim religious authorities and commentators that Islamic extremists are corrupting a peaceful religious faith for their own twisted ends are encouraging. Equally positive is the growing recognition in the Muslim world both of bin Laden’s lack of proper religious qualifications to issue any religious edicts that promote jihad, and his lack of success, on a strategic level, in forcing the United States to withdraw its military forces completely from Saudi Arabia or to give up its campaign against Islamic terrorism. A few prominent Muslim scholars have not only condemned the terrorist attacks upon the United States, but have declared the perpetrators of these attacks to be “suicides,” not martyrs. This is significant, since Islam forbids suicide and teaches that its practitioners are sent not to paradise but to hell, where they are condemned to keep repeating their suicidal act for eternity.41

Conclusion

As described herein, jihad in Islamic thought and practice possesses a range of meanings, with Muslim radicals focusing on the physical, violent form of struggle to resist what they see as cultural, economic, military, and political assaults from outside the Ummah and oppression and injustice within. So long as societal conditions within many Muslim states remain poor, with unrepresentative governments (which are seen to be propped up by the United States) that are unwilling or unable to undertake meaningful but difficult reforms, then militant Islamic groups will continue to attract recruits and financial support. In spite of logical fallacies and inconsistencies in the doctrine of jihad of radical Islamic groups, and the fact that most of the broad constituency they are attempting to appeal to does not buy into their ideology or methods,
such groups nevertheless remain as significant threats to US interests everywhere in the world.

The challenge for the US government over the next several years will be to encourage and support lasting reform by Muslim states who are our allies in the Middle East, while maintaining a more balanced and fair-minded foreign policy toward all key regional players. We must also do a better job of countering the Islamic extremists’ widely disseminated version of jihad, while being more persuasive that our own government—and our society—are truly not anti-Islamic. Such actions will do much to deny a supportive environment to our radical Muslim foes. For its part, the US military needs to better understand the religious and cultural aspects of our adversaries’ asymmetric mindset—in this case, how Islamic militants conceive of and use jihad—to be successful and survivable in its global campaign against terrorism.

NOTES


2. Streusand, p. 2.

3. Ibid.


5. Fred M. Donner, “The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War,” in *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in*


7. Streusand, pp. 3-4.


9. Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

10. The term “fundamentalism” is also used incorrectly in conjunction with Islam to describe this phenomenon, but this concept is really more appropriate to American Christian thought, whence it originated.


15. Streusand, p. 5.

16. Sivan, pp. 16-21 and 114-16, as quoted in Streusand, p. 5.


20. Ibid., pp. 100-01.


23. Ibid., p. 102.


29. Ibid.

32. Ibid.
33. Hashmi.
36. Ibid.
38. Hashmi.
Osama bin Laden, who is widely assumed to be the force behind the September 11 hijackings in the United States, cites the Koran, Islam’s most holy book, as the inspiration for terrorist attacks. But Muslim scholars around the world who are reviled by such actions explain that the Koran preaches peace.

“The Koran is saying to humans, this is the final guidance from your Creator, for the specific purpose of worshipping him and creating a civil society where you can live in peace with one another,” says Muslim scholar Imam Sulayman S. Nyang of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Muslims around the world rely on the Koran for guidance, says Nyang. Devout followers heed the call to prayer five times each day and recite passages from the holy book. Muslims believe that the Koran is God’s unfiltered message—teaching them how to lead a good life and become a better, more moral person.

“The Koran is very specific with regard to the nature of human struggle, because in order for a human to be at peace with himself, they must control their baser instincts,” says Nyang.

The quest to control base instincts such as greed, lust, and cruelty and to seek spiritual purity is known by Muslims as the ‘great jihad.’ Featured widely in the Koran, the ‘great jihad’ is a person’s most important internal struggle.

Nyang quotes Chapter 3, verse 172, of the Koran: “Of those who answered the call of Allah and the messenger, even after being wounded, those who do right and refrain from wrong have a great reward.”
But also in the Holy Scripture is a reference to ‘lower jihad,’ a more earthly and physical—and controversial—struggle. “To those against whom war is made, permission is given [to fight] because they are wronged; and verily, God is most powerful for their aid,” quotes Nyang.

This verse speaks of combat or war to be waged against one’s oppressors—a struggle sanctioned by God. But the Koran also states in Chapter 2, Verse 190: “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.”

The essence of the verse, Nyang says, is to fight back “if you are attacked by your persecutors, but don’t fight back indiscriminately. Follow the rules of engagement.” According to mainstream Muslim clerics, those ‘rules of engagement’ are explicit: women, children, and innocent civilians are off limits.

**Perversion of Text**

Muslims believe the prophet Mohammed received these revelations directly from God some 1400 years ago. It was at a time when he and other Muslims were being driven from their homes, persecuted, and killed. But although the Koran advocates self-defence, its most prevalent message is one of peace and brotherly love.

“If people are intent on using religion to motivate terror or violence, they'll find an excuse there no matter what the actual text says,” says David Rodier of American University in Washington, D.C., who is an expert on the world’s religions. Like the Koran, he says, most holy scriptures are filled with stories of war and warriors, and these images have been used throughout history by some members of every faith to justify bloodshed.
WHAT DOES "JIHAD" REALLY MEANS TO MUSLIMS
Brian Handwerk for National Geographic News

‘Jihad’ is a loaded term—and a concept that illustrates a deep gulf of miscommunication between Islam and the West. There are those in each community who see jihad as a clash of civilizations—and act on those beliefs. But jihad literally means "exerted effort" to most Islamic scholars and Muslims, and represents a range of activities.

Maher Hathout, author of Jihad vs. Terrorism, believed there was a twofold need to set the record straight about jihad. “Number one was the discovery that everyone is defining us except us, everyone is explaining jihad except for Muslims,” he said. “Second, I noticed that some Muslims needed to brush up, to review the issue on their own for clarity and understanding of their own religion. This is why I made the book very textual. I tried to use verses from the Koran, from the Prophet... It includes personal opinion of course, but the backbone is textual.”

Hathout concluded that jihad, as projected in the Koran, is not a single concept.

“It's a range of activities all based on the Arabic meaning of the word 'exerted effort.' In the Koran it's projected as exerting effort to change oneself, and also in certain situations physically standing against oppressors if that's the only way.”

Which Jihad?

The concept of jihad as a struggle for self-improvement is little known among non-believers. Yet
Noha Aboulmagd-Forster, who teaches Arabic at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, stresses that it may be the most common interpretation of the term.

“Something widely quoted by the Muslim 'man on the street' is that the most difficult jihad is the one of the soul,” she said. “The biggest trouble is not with your enemy but with yourself.”

While inner struggle is one meaning of jihad, many others evidently use it to describe engagement with external enemies. It is there that the concept encounters the notions of other faiths.

“Religiously, jihad is the expending of utmost effort in upholding and defending justice,” said Sheikh Jaafar Idris, of the Saudi Arabian Embassy. Idris explained that he recognizes two kinds of jihad because there are two kinds of violations of justice: jihad with words against false beliefs, and jihad with the sword against acts of injustice. “The first is the basic and continuous jihad,” Idris said. “It was mentioned in the Qur'an very early in the history of Islam and at a time when Muslims were weak and even persecuted. God said to His Prophet, ‘Do not obey the kafireen (those who reject the truth) but wage jihad with it (the Qur'an) against them. [25:52]’”

**Jihad of the Sword**

But it is the jihad of the sword that has received the lion's share of global attention. The concept began when early Muslims were driven from their land by enemies, said Idris, and were first given permission and later ordered by God to fight those enemies. They were not, Idris stresses, given permission to fight non-believers or those who rejected the faith—only those who transgressed against them. Idris references the following verses: "God
does not forbid you, regarding those (non-Muslims) who
did not fight you because of your religion, and who did
not drive you out of your land, that you be good to them
and treat them justly. Allah only forbids you regarding
those who fought you because of your religion and drove
you out of your homes, and came to the help of those who
drove you out, that you should befriend them. Any of you
who befriend them (and be their allies) are transgressors.
[60:8-9] But even this kind of military jihad is not
necessarily a clash of religions. It can also be waged
against transgressors who are themselves Muslim.

Hathout adds: “It is quite clear that if there is any
other option to resolve an issue without violence it is
preferred no matter what.”

While that may be the letter of the scripture,
however, there is no escaping the violent contexts within
which some extremists wage what they consider jihad.
Responding to calls for jihad, fighters leave their own
lands to fight in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.
Terrorist groups adopt the term and frame their cause
under its auspices.

One of many examples is Al-Jihad (also known as
Islamic Jihad and Egyptian Islamic Jihad), the group
responsible for the 1981 assassination of Egyptian
President Anwar Sadat, and committed to the overthrow
of the Egyptian government, the establishment of an
Islamic state, and attacks against U.S. and Israeli interests.
This group has merged with Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda
organization, another terrorist faction that has employed
the language of jihad.

Hathout notes that extremist fringes in Islam, as in
other religions, have long used religious philosophies to
justify their actions. “It’s really the onset of technology, the
ability for small numbers of people to wreak significant
destruction, and have those acts widely publicized, that has led to the increased attention on them.”

“It's categorically mentioned, in clear Arabic language, that you only fight those who fight,” Hathout continued. “You don't harm civilians, children, or even infrastructure. And you don't exceed that, you don't transgress. That's the limit. I was startled by the difference between what the Koran is saying and what some self-claimed experts are saying and what other Muslims are saying. I wanted to set the record clear by quoting the highest authority for a Muslim (the Koran).”

Yet quoting the Koran to promote one's own agenda is a game played by extremists. “In the East extremists with their own agendas truncate verses that are talking about rules of engagement of a conflict, and take them out of context to justify their agendas, spread hate, and recruit resistance,” Hathout said.

“Both sides have been putting a spin on the text and using it out of context to justify their agendas,” he said. “It needs Muslims to speak out and say ‘let's go the authority, to the source.’ Osama bin Laden or any imam in a small mosque can say whatever they want, but there is no authority for them to talk of jihad.”

Aboulmagd-Forster sees an interesting paradoxical correlation between how jihad is defined by extreme political Islamists and by some people who are not Muslims. “They agree on the (incorrect) use of the word, while in the middle you have the huge billion-person-strong Muslim community, people who certainly don't believe that there is some duty to go and fight Christians or Jews.”
A GERMAN’S VIEW ON ISLAM

This is an explanation of the Muslim terrorist situation. His references to past history are accurate and clear.

The author of this email is said to be Dr. Emanuel Tanay, a well-known and well respected psychiatrist. These are not my views, but I feel it is food for thought.

A man, whose family was German aristocracy prior to World War II, owned a number of large industries and estates. When asked how many German people were true Nazis, the answer he gave can guide our attitude toward fanaticism. ‘Very few people were true Nazis,’ he said, ‘but many enjoyed the return of German pride, and many more were too busy to care. I was one of those who just thought the Nazis were a bunch of fools. So, the majority just sat back and let it all happen. Then, before we knew it, they owned us, and we had lost control, and the end of the world had come. My family lost everything. I ended up in a concentration camp and the Allies destroyed my factories’.

We are told again and again by 'experts' and 'talking heads' that Islam is the religion of peace, and that the vast majority of Muslims just want to live in peace. Although this unqualified assertion may be true, it is entirely irrelevant. It is meaningless fluff, meant to make us feel better, and meant to somehow diminish the spectra of fanatics rampaging across the globe in the name of Islam.

The fact is that the fanatics rule Islam at this moment in history. It is the fanatics who march. It is the fanatics who wage any one of 50 shooting wars worldwide. It is the fanatics who systematically slaughter Christian or tribal groups throughout Africa and are gradually taking over the entire continent in an Islamic
wave. It is the fanatics who bomb, behead, murder or
honour-kill. It is the fanatics who take over mosque after
mosque. It is the fanatics who zealously spread the
stoning and hanging of rape victims and homosexuals. It
is the fanatics who teach their young to kill and to become
suicide bombers. The hard quantifiable fact is that the
peaceful majority, the 'silent majority,' is cowed and
extraneous.

Communist Russia was comprised of Russians
who just wanted to live in peace, yet the Russian
Communists were responsible for the murder of about 20
million people. The peaceful majority were irrelevant.
China's huge population was peaceful as well, but
Chinese Communists managed to kill a staggering 70
million people.

The average Japanese individual prior to World
War II was not a warmongering sadist. Yet, Japan
murdered and slaughtered its way across South East Asia
in an orgy of killing that included the systematic murder
of 12 million Chinese civilians; most killed by sword,
shovel and bayonet. And, who can forget Rwanda, which
collapsed into butchery. Could it not be said that the
majority of Rwandans were 'peace loving'?

History lessons are often incredibly simple and
blunt, yet for all our powers of reason we often miss the
most basic and uncomplicated of points.

Peace-loving Muslims have been made irrelevant
by their silence. Peace-loving Muslims will become our
enemy if they don't speak up, because like my friend from
Germany, they will awaken one day and find that the
fanatics own them, and the end of their world will have
begun.
Peace-loving Germans, Japanese, Chinese, Russians, Rwandans, Serbs, Afghans, Iraqis, Palestinians, Somalis, Nigerians, Algerians and many others have died because the peaceful majority did not speak up until it was too late.

As for us who watch it all unfold, we must pay attention to the only group that counts; the fanatics who threaten our way of life.
Jihad

As stated earlier besides the ‘five pillars’ we find references to other righteous deeds ordained in the Qur’anic verses; and the Ahadith of the Prophet (SAWS), which have been called ‘Ibadat’ (or rights of Allah) and (purity in) Mu’amalaat (dealings and transactions) in socio-economic aspects of life in the widest sense of the terms. It may, however, be noted that in the Islamic way of life, there being no separation between the material and spiritual, all righteous deeds are to be rewarded with His blessings and besides their material benefits and advantages. Muslims are, therefore, advised to work hard and earn their livelihood, using all lawful means to attain prosperity. It is for this reason that we find in Hadith and Fiqh works, detailed chapters on buying and selling (Bayoo’). A well-known Hadith of the Prophet (SAWS) transmitted on the authority of A’isha (RA) says that the best and nicest thing you could eat was from what you earn (kasb). In another Hadith earning for sustenance (kasb) is referred to an obligation after obligatory forms of worship. Thus the Muslims are encouraged, in fact, ordained, to work for their prosperity and happiness which undoubtedly will enable them to fulfill their role in the progress of civilization. But as in other phases of human activity the main conditions attached to earning wealth are that it should be secured by lawful methods and should be spent in attaining commendable objectives.
Jihad may specifically be mentioned because it is generally understood (or perhaps misunderstood) to mean only in its restricted sense of fighting in the path of Allah (SWT). The reason is that fighting (*qital*), after its permission, became the most effective method of defence for the Faith under the pressure of circumstances following the *Hijrah* of the Prophet (SAWS); and the Prophet (SAWS) had to dispatch a series of expeditions against hostile tribes and enemies of Islam. Besides these expeditions some of which were dispatched in the form of scouting missions to gather information about the movements of the enemies – the Quraysh of Makkah and the tribes in alliance with them in the earlier years and the Jews and Christians in later stages – the Muslims had to defend their city, al Madinah, against the attacks and sieges planned and carried out by the former, Badr, Uhud and the Battle of the Ditch being the most formidable of these attacks. Besides these major battles a fairly large number of expeditions have been recorded by the *Muadditheen* and historians. It is for this reason that in popular parlance the term Jihad came to signify only fighting in the path of Allah (SWT), which of course is only one method of striving hard for one’s spiritual elevation by making sacrifices for Islam. It may be mentioned that Muslims who lay down their lives in the path of Allah (SWT) (*Shuhada*) are not counted among dead persons but they are to be considered as alive: “*And say not of those who are slain in the way of God: ‘They are dead.’ Nay they are living, though you perceive not.*” (Al Baqarah; 2:154)

Permission to fight even in self-defence was given to the Muslims in 2 H, through the revelation of verse 39 of *Surah Al-Hajj* according to which, “*to those against whom war is made, permission is given to (fight), because they are wronged...*”
And they were promised Divine help in the adjoining clause; “...and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid.” (Al-Haji; 22:39)

Jihad, being a form of ‘Ibadat (service to God), had to be regulated within the frame-work of Divine commands and sayings and Sunnah of the Prophet (SAWS). This is why we find detailed chapters on Jihad in works on Hadith and Fiqh in additions to verses of the Qur’an. They contain guide-lines for the Mujahideen on the minutest possible details necessary for conducting Jihad. The most important aspect of the ethics of Jihad as conceived and ordained by Islam is the effort to humanize it and stop the Muslim Mujahid from committing excesses and resorting to inhuman and barbarous methods: “Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loves no transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them, such is the reward of those who suppress faith.” (Al-Baqarah; 2:190, 191)

Of course those who participate in Jihad with purely religious intentions and observe the restrictions imposed on them are promised rewards and high ranks: “Do you make the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque, equal to (the pious service of) those who believe in God and the Last Day, and strive with might and main in the cause of God? They are not comparable in the sight of God; and God guides not those who do wrong. Those who believe and suffer exile and strive with the might and main, in God’s cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank
Jihad (fighting in the path of Allah) has been the target of criticism not only by hostile writers on Islam but also a number of non-Muslims scholars who have failed to appreciate its essence and true spirit, and also because a number of Muslim rulers and fighters have referred to all their wars as Jihads, ignoring the conditions prescribed by the Shari‘ah. “There are,” as an eminent Muslim scholar has briefly described, “two prerequisites: it should be for the sake of God, and not for worldly ambitions, and that it should be against those who attack. The defence alone is the lawful ground of waging a war for Muslims. To prevent an imminent attack forms part of the defence wars. No other kind of war is known in the life of the Prophet (saws). We have seen above, how humane and bloodless have been the ‘wars’ of the Prophet of Islam (saws); not even 300 enemies are killed to conquer three million square kilometer of territory.” (M. Hamidullah)

By way of conclusion it may be remarked that Jihad, fought ‘in the path of Allah’ and in accordance with prescribed conditions, is regarded as one of the important forms of worship. Those who are killed in these wars are known as Shuhada and as has been stated, have been referred to in the Qur’an as those who have not died but are ‘living’. They are counted with the prophets, sincere lovers of Truth (Siddiqueen) and the righteous (Salibeen) among those who are gifted with the grace of Allah (swt):

“All who obey God and the Apostle are in the company of those whom is the Grace of God, - of the Prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of Truth), and Witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good); Ah! What a beautiful Fellowship!” (An-Nisa; 4:69)
The conquest of Makkah, victory *par excellence*, may be mentioned as the best example of the practical demonstration of Jihad. As events turned out, this glorious victory was obtained without bloodshed and the entire people of Makkah who had for thirteen years perpetrated inhuman and barbarous cruelties on the Prophet (SAWS) and his followers were granted amnesty and freedom. The result of this benevolent measure to which we find no parallel in history was that a large number of people embraced Islam: "*When comes the Help of God, and victory, and you see the people enter God's religion in crowds.*" (An Nasr; 110:1,2)

**Jihad Akbar**

Besides war against enemies to defend Islam and the Muslims, the adherents of the Faith have been ordained to fight against the evil tendencies of their own *Nafs* or rather their desires and passions which stand as hurdles in the path of righteousness. A complete control over one’s desires to enjoy life by committing immoral deeds and indulging in sordid pleasures, is absolutely necessary to enable one lead a virtuous life and become *Muttaqi*, that every follower of Islam is expected to be. It cannot be doubted that it requires firmer faith in Truth and Righteousness to control one’s desires to indulge in the comforts and pleasures than join a war fought for a right cause. The *Shuhada* (martyrs) and the *Salihin* (pious men) are both gifted with the grace of Allah, but the struggle of the latter against evil desires to attain this exalted rank is a continuous process lasting for life. This is why the Prophet (SAWS) referred to the struggle against *Nafs* (evil desires) as Jihad *Akbar* (the greater Jihad). In Makkah Surahs, the term *jaahadu* is used in the sense of fighting (striving) against (i.e. controlling) one’s evil
desires "...for verily Allah is with those who do right." (Al-Ankaboot; 29:69) The Sufi doctrine of Mujahadah an-Nafs is based on this concept of war against evil desires. In fact it covers the entire field of moral discipline, which is necessary for building and purifying one’s character and disposition. An idea of the significance of the purification of character can be formed from the Hadith of the Prophet (SAWS), which says that he was raised to complete the purification of the noble habits.

Besides these references to the prominent aspects of Jihad there are a number of Ahadith emphasizing the various kinds of efforts and sacrifices which have been referred to as Jihad, as for example subscriptions for war expenditure. In the earlier days of the mission these contributions were sources of great help to its cause. By way of example we may cite the case of the Jaysh al-‘usrat on the occasion of the Tabuk expedition, when, to quote Irving’s words, ‘some of his (the Prophet’s) devoted adherents manifested their zeal ....Omar, al-Abbaas and Abda’l Rahman, gave large sums of money, several female devotees brought their ornaments and jewels. Othman delivered one thousand, some say ten thousand, dinars to Mahomet ...Abu Bakr gave four thousand drachmas; Mahomet hesitated to accept the offer, knowing it to be all that he possessed. “What will remain,” said he, “for thee and thy family?” “God and His Prophet” was the reply. In a way Jihad in the form of contributions is more important that participation in actual fighting for the obvious reason that even those who are unable to fight can contribute to the war effort. Moreover, contributions in the form of money can and have to be made in Jihad (i.e. efforts) other than fighting. There are several verses in the Qur’an referring to participation in Jihad (effort), by monetary contributions (Amwaal) are mentioned first.
Another commendable form of these efforts, to which the Prophet (SAWS) refers as great Jihad is speaking what is just and true (Kalimah ‘Adl) before a tyrant (Sultaan Jaabir) that is, an absolute ruler who uses his power in an arbitrary and oppressive manner.

In short, Jihad in its widest and the most comprehensive sense is a continuous process of the discipline and sacrifice in doing what is good and upright. Referring to this Daa’imi Jihad (continuous striving) an eminent Muslim historian says:

It is incumbent on every follower of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) to remain engaged in doing what is necessary to support the Faith (Himaayat-e-Deen) and in contributing to the spread of religious knowledge and truth, helping the poor and the weak, trying to guide the evil-doers to do what is lawful and avoid what is unlawful (establishing justice, resisting the forces of oppression and carrying out the commands of Allah, so that every) movement and moment of rest in his (Muslim’s) life becomes a continuous process of Jihad (striving in the path of Allah). The last verse of Surah Al-e Imran says: “O ye who believe, persevere and excel in perseverance and be ever ready (with your bodies to face the enemy, and with your soul to face the inner foe) and fear Allah that haply ye may thrive.” (Al-e Imran; 3:200).

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the moral code of Islam (referred to in religious literature as ‘Amaal Saaleh) is very extensive.
RELEVENCE OF JIHAD & QITAL FI SABILILLAH IN MODERN TIMES AND THE WAY FORWARD

By
A.F.M.A. Muqsith

In order to draw objective conclusions about the relevance of Jihad & Qital (fi-sabilillah), a broad comparison between the geo-political and theological situations of past and present will be of great help.

Era of the Prophet (SAWS)

The Islamic state that took birth in Madinah with Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) as its first head and a charter called ‘Mithaq al-Madinah’ was no bigger than the outer perimeter of the Masjid an-Nabi at present. The population did not exceed a few thousands that comprised mostly of Muslim migrants of Makkah called Mohajirs, local Muslims called Ansar, the Jewish tribes and other non-Muslim tribes. The Prophet (SAWS) ruled the first Islamic state with Madinah as its capital for 10 years. It is called the era of the Nabi and treated as the true model of Islamic state. Some of the distinguishing features were:

- Islam was the only binding element among all Muslims cutting across all possible distinctions and differentiations among them. Islam was the only identity and all other identities carried no weight in any matter. In contrast, these days Muslims carry many additional identities of birth,

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13. Author of this article is a retired army officer now engaged in study and research of the message of Qur’an and Islamic society.
14. For full text please see App. 1 of our Monograph No. 13 – The Battles of the Prophet (SAWS).
race, tribe, caste and so on which override the main identity of Islam while dealing within the community.

- Compared to one truly Islamic state – Dar al-Islam whose doors were wide open for any Muslim to migrate and settle down, there are now over 50 Islamic countries and none of them permits Muslim to immigrate, within and without their states, to settle down in their countries. Even free movement is strictly regulated. The modern concept of nation states has completely destroyed the concept of a unified Muslim Ummah as conceived in Islam.

- The Prophet (SAWS) was the sole leader combining the role of temporal and spiritual head. Now there are many leaders in almost all fields exercising their own influence.

- Muslims pledged complete allegiance to the Prophet (SAWS) as their spiritual and temporal head. Presently loyalties are divided among various factions and religious schools of thought.

- Common language and race was an additional binding factor that did facilitate easy assimilation. These days Muslims speak many diverse languages. Majority of Muslims do not know Arabic, the language of Qur’an and Ahadith.

- Unlike these days, socio-economic situation in those days was very simple.

**Khilfat ar-Raashidah**

After the passing away of the Prophet (SAWS), his immediate followers carried forward his legacy to the best of their ability. The rule of the four able and distinguished companions of the Prophet (SAWS), the Khulafa ar-
Raashideen (Rightly-guided Caliphs), was brief lasting less than 30 years. The amazing rapid expansion of Islam also ironically brought about un-expected changes in all walks of life, posing many new challenges. The style and system of the governance could not cope with them and collapsed in tragic manners. Of the four rulers, the last two were assassinated by Muslim rebels. Thus, the era of Khulafa-ar Raashideen came to a tragic end. It was followed by dynastic monarchies that continue even now in many Arab countries despite onset of democracy in most parts of the world. This rightly attracts a cynical remark from the critics that Islam and democracy cannot go together barring an odd country outside the Arab world.

The true spirit and ethos of Islam, which was the hallmark of the companions of the Prophet (SAWS) gradually declined as their number shrunk. The new generation of Muslims and the new entrants to the faith did not possess the same degree of passion and commitment to the Islamic values.

**Dynastic Era**

During the long era that followed after the era of Khulafa-ar-Rashideen, vested interests did not encourage political reforms. One dynasty followed the other with courtiers and court culture taking over the simple and transparent rule of Khulafa-ar Raashideen. Passion for name, fame and luxuries swiftly replaced the simplicity and fear of accountability on the Day of Judgement. Inevitably, clashes of interests between individuals, families and clans led to bloody battles amongst fellow Muslims. The jungle laws of ‘might is right’ and ‘survival of the fittest’ dominated the long medieval history.
Knowledge Development

Amazingly, on a parallel track, art, literature and science thrived with Muslim scholars showing an insatiable thirst for knowledge. The unique and precious treasure of Greek knowledge, which was about to go extinct, was painstakingly retrieved and revived by Muslim scholars. It was translated into Arabic with exceptional zeal and improved upon further. This was an outstanding achievement and priceless contribution to mankind, which, regrettably, remains un-acknowledged by modern society.

Jurisprudential Orders

Simultaneously jurisprudential orders too emerged and monopolized the interpretation and practical application of Islamic Shari’yah (Jurisprudence). The first generation of Muslims knew Islam well and faced no problems in its practical application. They had the benefit of the presence of Prophet (SAWS) and his close companions who were readily available to clarify doubts, if any. They freely consulted each other and applied their mind whenever faced with a new issue.

However, with the passage of time and expansion of Ummah, this mechanism did not work. New entrants to Islam and second generation Muslims faced many issues without clear precedence. They did not have the benefit of consulting the Prophet (SAWS) or his immediate companions. They had to rely on the traditions of the Prophet (SAWS) as narrated by those who had the benefit of hearing him. At best it was second hand information with all possible pitfalls. Every narrator gave his own wording thus multiplying the traditions. Thus a large number of narrations came into being with different wordings from different narrators. Inevitably, unreliable
narrations too found their way making it extremely difficult to distinguish the fake from the authentic. Unscrupulous elements exploited the situation creating a lot of confusion adding fabricated traditions.

Ultimately the task of collection, collation, verification and sifting the *Ahaadith* was undertaken by scholars in right earnest. This was almost 100 years after the Prophet (SAWS) by which time almost all his companions, the direct listeners, had passed away leaving the next generation to pass on their narrations. Since no written record was kept officially, the task became extremely difficult. It was carried out over a long period of time by many scholars who dedicated their lives for it. Inescapably, they differed in gradation and acceptance of traditions considered authentic from a huge collection.

**Rise and Role of Clergy**

A natural consequence of this unique work was the emergence of detailed codification (*Shari’yah*) of Islam covering almost all spheres of life, going well beyond factual to hypothetical issues. In the process, numerous jurisprudential schools of thought (*Madhahib* and *Masalik*) emerged. Thus Muslims got categorised according to the preferred *Madhahib* and *Masalik*.

Within a couple of centuries Muslims lost their intellectual dynamism and Islam became a frozen concept for them. Muslims got used to just reciting the Qur’an on various occasions seeking guidance for each and everything from priests who were to dominate and calibrate the spiritual progress of Muslims.

Over-emphasis on trivialities overshadowed more important aspects of Islam while dealing with fellow citizens, especially the non-Muslims. Humility, compassion, justice, tolerance, helpfulness, and such
attributes, which go a long way in image building and attracting non-Muslims, got relegated. As a result the communication gap between Muslims and non-Muslims kept widening with harmful results.

**Present Situation**

The present situation as regards Muslims and Islam can be summed up as follows:

- Politically the world of Islam does not present a united face.
- Muslims are spread all over the globe. A large number of them live in non-Muslim states as full-fledged citizens pledging loyalties to the respective constitutions.
- There are groups who are at loggerheads with government on various issues within Muslim states. Some groups are even banned and hence operate underground.
- Islam is now a monolithic entity in name but fragmented on various grounds with no chance of getting back to the Islam of the era of Prophet (SAWS) – except as God may will.
- Islam is no more a simple straightforward religion. It is now mired in many controversial issues. The grand display of unitary concept and unity of Muslim *Ummah* on the occasion of Hajj pilgrimage and congregational prayers in mosques is temporary. It does not represent the real fabric which is almost in tatters barring emotional attachment found in the Indian sub-continent.
- Islam is no more a facilitator of progress as it was in the early phase of its development but a hindrance to it with self-imposed artificial obstacles in almost all spheres of modern life.
Islam is now an obscurantist dogma unconcerned with the ground realities instead of a progressive and tolerant way of life.

- Qur’an, the only verbatim record of divine revelation, which strongly asserts that it is simple and easy to understand even by the layman, is now merely a book of respect and reverence.

Relevance of Jihad fi-Sabilillah in the Modern Era

The aim of this detailed review of the developments in Islam and Muslims was to emphasise the sea-change that has taken place during the last fourteen centuries of its existence. Average non-Muslims will judge Islam on the basis of their experience with common Muslims they come across in day to day dealings, not by studying the Qur’an devotedly.

In the context of the changes within Islamic societies as enumerated above and changed temper and ethos of Muslims, the role and relevance of Jihad and *Qital fi-sabilillah* needs to be examined afresh.

**Individual Level:** Jihad *fi-sabilillah* at a personal level never ceases. It is a life long struggle against odds that have now become tougher than ever before. The most urgent and compelling need of the hour is to adopt Islamic values in personal life and thus help in rectifying the distorted image of Islam. Every Muslim is a mirror of Islam. Hence, it is the personal responsibility of each Muslim to present a true face of Islam.

**Community Level:** At the community level nothing less than a revolution will help turn the tide. Muslim *Ummah* is not even a shadow of the *Ummah* that impressed and attracted whoever came in contact with it.
Islam spread because of the benign face and moral character of the *Ummah*. The least that can be done at present is to initiate a change to restore the real image of Islam. Nothing less than Jihad *fi-sabilillah* will do. It is more relevant than ever before. There is so much to do within the community to free the *Ummah* from the clutches of ignorance, intolerance, vainglory and self indulgence. It has to be woken up from the deep slumber and dreams of the past to the realities of present.

**Educational Reforms**

Segregation of spiritual and secular education is the root cause of the unfortunate situation. Seminaries held the privileged position in educational system in Muslim societies till recently. Secular learning was discouraged and relegated to non-Muslims’ attention. Students of ‘secular schools’ knew next to nothing of Islamic subjects. Similarly the privileged graduates of *Madrasahs* knew nothing of the secular subjects.

Secular stream progressed in a systematic way in European countries drawing upon the gifted knowledge from none other than Muslims of middle ages. On the other hand evolution of *Madrasahs* was on an ad-hoc basis barring a few exceptions. The problem was further compounded by uncontrolled proliferation of these institutions. The key element like courses, durations, curricula, standard of faculty, system of assessment and examination etc. are absent from the seminary system of education. As a result the huge population of ‘scholars’ passing out of these autonomous institutions have hardly any employment potential except either getting back in the *Madrasahs* as faculty or become prayer-leaders in ever growing number of mosques, completely ignorant of
modern education and rendered irrelevant for other fields of human activities.

Unfortunately these ‘scholars’ command the ears of the Ummah through Friday sermons. They mostly dwell either on trivial details of religious rituals or wholesale condemnation of the present social environment attributing it to the evil influence of the western civilization. Some of them even launch a tirade against non-Muslims and even against their states. In their misplaced zeal they go to the extent of praising activities of outlaws and criminals, perhaps under the notion of ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’.

It is a real bizarre situation that is having a devastating effect on the Ummah. Nothing less than a Jihad al Akbar is required to set it right. This can be accomplished only by adopting an integrated education system in which religious as well as secular knowledge is imparted in a balanced and scientific manner.

Reforms in Shari’yah

Another area of reform is the Shari’yah that has stagnated and progressively become outdated to deal with the new issues facing the Muslims of the world. For reasons best known to the Muslim theologians, the doors of Ijtihad (contemplation and adaptation), have been shut for good, although this is contrary to the fundamental principle in Islam. No less than a well known authentic tradition of the Prophet (SAWS) provides clear guidance in this regard, apart from the investigative and contemplative ways, which the Qur’an adopts extensively, while inviting its readers and listeners to ‘observe’ and ‘think’ for better understanding.

Contrary to that spirit of investigation and contemplation, the Ummah is supposed to blindly follow
(Taqlid) their respective clerics seeking Fatwas (theological rulings) from them on every issue they face. Based on the frozen concepts and codes, these Fatwas, many a time, are confusing and even contradicting, creating undesirable impression on Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Madrasah graduates of all hue consider themselves competent to issue fatwa on all issues even those that are well beyond their qualifications.

So much has changed over the last millennium, particularly in the last century, that a deliberate effort in the form of a high power commission composed of competent scholars, drawn from relevant fields of knowledge, to review and recommend reforms, revisions and updating of Islamic Shari’ah – the sooner the better.

Reforms in Charity System (Zakaat)

Charity (Zakaat) in Islam is raised to the level of worship by including it as one of the pillars of Islam. Unfortunately it is the most neglected of them all. The letter and spirit guiding Zakaat enjoins upon Muslims to organise its calculation, collection and distribution on the lines of any tax in the modern system of governance. Its true model was set up by the Prophet (SAWS) and reasserted vehemently by the first Khalifah when some Muslim tribes attempted to avoid it after the passing away of the Prophet (SAWS).

As things stand now, this key institution is all but defunct. The all important task of correct calculation, honest collection and accounting; and proper utilisation for the deserving poor and deprived section of Muslim society is left to the good sense of individuals. In due course of time, many NGOs mushroomed to mop up this wealth and use it at their discretion. There is no systematic
check or audit on the utilisation of this huge amount collected year after year.

*Zakaat* has the potential to play a significant role to mitigate problems of hunger, poverty, and disease etc, from neighbourhood to the global level, if it is organized properly in the true spirit. There is enough wealth within the community to take care of all the monetary concerns of the poor and needy with something to spare for deserving non-Muslims to demonstrate the ethos of empathy and redeem the lost glory of Islam.

**Political Unification**

Unity is strength and disunity reflects weakness. Unity of Muslim *Ummah* is totally shattered. It is ridden with discord and differences that have destroyed the fabric of Islam. At this critical juncture in the history of Islam, these differences should be ignored in order to present a unified face of Islam to the world. The concept of One God, One Book and One *Ummah* should be on full display in the spirit displayed on the occasion of Hajj. Intellectuals and religious scholars should join hands towards achieving this goal. Arab League and Islamic Organization Conference offer initial impetus in this direction.

In the present geo-political situation in the Middle East, one of the noblest acts of Jihad *fi-sabilillah* shall be to unify the fragmented Arab League. It should convert itself into a confederation of states with common market, monetary system, foreign policy, defence, and communications to begin with. Other Muslim states can be co-opted with observer status. The Arab League in due course of time should emerge as a single unified Islamic state. If the European Union could be formed despite diversity in languages and ethnic composition of the
constituent states, there is no reason why the Arab League countries cannot form a single unified state. They have the tremendous advantage of common language, religion and culture. It will be a source of strength and inspiration to the entire Muslim world. It will forcefully demonstrate the Islamic concept of One God, One Book and One People to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Moreover the voice of this unified state will be much louder than the collective voices of fragmented ones.

**Relevance of Qital fi-Sabilillah**

*Qital fi-sabilillah* was permitted with many restraining riders for defence of nascent Islamic faith and its only state. Consequently, three wars between the attacking pagans of Makkah and their allies and Muslims of Madinah were fought in quick succession resulting in hopeless defeats to the attackers. A peace treaty between the adversaries brought relief to the Muslims of Madinah who could practice and preach Islam in peace.

The Prophet (SAWS) lead an expedition to Khaybar (northwest Arabia) to deal with the Jewish tribes who had committed treason during the battle of *Khandaq* (Trench) by secretly aligning with the pagan Quraish despite being signatories to the treaty of Madinah.

However, the growing strength of Islam, despite unfavourable terms of the treaty, unnerved the pagans of Makkah who indulged in conspiracies for downfall of Muslim state — a clear violation of the treaty. Unlike the present practice of sudden and surprise attacks, the Islamic state issued clear warnings followed by a 120 days ultimatum to the violators of the treaty, at the end of which the Prophet (SAWS), for the first time, lead an army of over ten thousands to Makkah. His brilliant tactics prompted quick capitulation, without shooting a single
Concept of Jihad in Islam

arrow, of the pagan Quraysh who had by now seen the writing on the wall. Thus the House of Allah (SWT) was liberated and cleansed of all false gods restoring its sanctity.

After the peaceful liberation of Ka’bah and surrender of Makkah, the conflict between the pagan Quraysh and Muslims ceased. The remaining tribes of Makkah and surrounding region accepted Islam voluntarily. It was great moment in the history not only for Islam but also the very Divine Mission of God.

Islamic state gained strength within no time. The super powers of Persia and Byzantine visualized a serious threat to their empires in the rise of the infant Islamic state. They launched unprovoked attacks in order to eliminate the emerging danger. However, they were beaten on the battlefields.

The reputation of the newly founded Islamic state spread in the surrounding areas quite rapidly. Impressed by the excellent character and conduct of Muslims in dealings with non-Muslims and their peaceful approach to Dawah, a large number of non-Muslims embraced Islam and joined the Ummah. Thus the spectacular spread of Islam in population and area was scripted.

The Prophet (SAWS) breathed his last in the year 10 A.H. (632 A.D.) leaving behind a well-established Islamic state as a role model of real secular governance.

The departure of the Prophet (SAWS) did cause rebellion by the tribes who had, perhaps, accepted Islam to sail with the tide. They were dealt with firmly by the first Khalifah Abu Bakr (RA) whose short rule of two years of a half is known for stabilising the Islamic state. During the rule of the second Khalifah ‘Umar (RA) many military campaigns were necessitated for further consolidation of
the Islamic state to protect from hostile neighbours. Inevitably, the boundaries of the state extended much beyond reasonable distance to despatch battalions of army to deal with emerging situations. He appreciated the need of creating a permanent force for stationing near the borders as a deterrent against possible mischief mongers. Thus the professional armed forces took shape. Participation by general public in *Qital fi sabillallah* became restricted. However, it was considered a matter of privilege for able bodied Muslims to join the armed forces to take part in *Qital fi sabillallah* with a view to earning rewards in the Hereafter.

Salahuddin Ayyubi’s valorous fights with aggressive Crusaders of Europe in the years following the fall of *Khilafat-e Abbasia* (Abbasid Caliphate) at the hands of Mangol hordes in 13th Century A.D., was the last example of legitimate *Qital fi-sabilillah*. The situation however completely changed with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the nation states in the Muslim world in the post colonial period. These states, whose emergence was the largess distributed by victorious European patrons as reward for their support in World Wars against Ottoman Empire, are subservient to their respective colonial powers. Thus the Islamic state, which could defend Muslims against tyranny and aggression by non-Muslim states ceased to exist and with that the role of *Qital fi-sabilillah* too ceased.

Creation of a racial state for Hitler-persecuted Jews of Germany in the middle of secular and peace-loving Palestinian people, created a humanitarian problem when Zionist terrorists drove away the locals to forcibly occupy their land. When the world failed to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, non-state organizations like Palestine Liberation Organization came into being to resist Israeli aggression and fight for the recovery of their
lands. Similarly the unprovoked American military action against Iraq and Afghanistan gave rise to indigenous resistance movements to liberate their respective lands from foreign occupation.

These liberation movements against the foreign occupiers do qualify as *Qital fi-sabilillah*. But, unfortunately, their cause got undone by many non-state organizations that sprung up in solidarity of the Palestinian people, whose sufferings became a real-time live experience thanks to the electronic media controlled by the west. This was the direct result of the disappointing performance of the Western Democracies who were perceived to be the real defence against the atheist USSR attempting to spread its tentacles post World War II. But the open and unabashed partisan policies favouring their sworn enemy turned the adoration into intense frustration, anger and hatred. Western Democracies sacrificed the golden chance of reshaping the Muslim world for the sake of a small but fascist people planted in the middle of peace-loving Palestinians.

Though supportive of these resistance movements, the non-state organisations that managed to mobilise resources and recruits cashing on the wave of anger among the Muslim people, strayed from their real cause by indulging in unprovoked acts of violence outside the conflict zone killing innocent people, including Muslim women and children, in gross violation of Qur’anic injunctions.

**The Way Forward**

Is there a way forward leaving behind this unfortunate mess without resorting to blame game? This is the question which should agitate the minds for every
responsible person – Muslim and non-Muslim - who is honestly interested in restoring order and peace.

‘War or terror’ is perhaps a good slogan to impress captive crowds at home fed by a legend of invincibility. Considering the high status of people who coin such slogans sober people prefer a dignified silence. Those who desire to share the glow hail them. But such swagger slogans do not solve issues. In fact they blur them. In the instant case it amounts to aping the vary slogan used by the Jihadist organisation for they too have used the slogan of ‘Jihad on infidels’ ‘Jihad for defence of Islam’ and so.

Sobriety and honesty are needed to find practical ways and means to restore peace and harmony in the world. Planet earth does not belong to one people or one dogmatic group. It is the gift of God in which all living people have equal share.

Mujahideen

It will be naive to think that Mujahideen will pay heed to any view other than their own. Jihad had now become an excuse to run their business. The core group among them has no hope of returning to the normal life after all that has happened. Their enterprise, notwithstanding its genesis, has become a self-serving corporate house. Their existence is now firmly hinged to their continuing the nefarious business as long as possible. Notwithstanding the brag and bravado, they are caught in the vicious cycle.

They have their own strategy for achieving their proclaimed goal of forcing the west to take their hands off the Middle East and Muslims. Their view that these alien powers, intoxicated by their military prowess, and vice-like hold on world economy to sub serve their selfish interests, will not budge but further consolidate their hold
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on Muslim lands by permanent military presence, has many buyers thanks to the self-defeating policies of the Western Democracies for the last half a century. Added to it is the promise of ‘Khilafat’ and application of ‘Shari’yah’, a time tested tool to touch the emotional chord of common Muslims who hardly have an idea of the real issues involved.

The obvious tactics of Mujahideen, having learnt the art of modern warfare with the latest weapons of destruction and exploitation of the tools of propaganda, ironically under the able tutelage of these very Western Democracies, is to shake the public confidence in the arrogant Western Democracies by hitting at their economies and their collaborators denying them a free run in their military endeavours. Thanks to the thriving drug markets in the west and the insatiable appetite of their arms industry, there appears to be no dearth of funds to pay for arms and explosives. The growing disenchantment of Muslim youth with the west and their allies for dragging their feet in promoting reforms in all spheres of their lives and propaganda with liberal use of Qur’anic verses by Mujahideen and their sympathisers, has taken care of crucial human resource. Apparently it is a win-win situation for them.

Mujahideen seem to be convinced that it is just a matter of time before the luxury-loving, morally corrupt ruling structures of the Western Democracies cave in taking with them their associates in the Middle East. They will have no option but to abandon their ventures in ignominy. The world will then see volumes written about them, their ideologies, their tactics, and their legendary heroics and so on. Khilafat rule with the Shari’yah will be established to bring back the glory of Islam. All this sounds very romantic and appealing in the light of the
hypocritical policies of the powers controlling the political, economic and military affairs of the world.

But, unfortunately for the *Mujahideen* - as well as the Western Democracies, the epoch-making events of the last two decades in the Middle East have evoked unprecedented interest in Islam and its scripture, the Holy Qur’an! Gradually, the sober minds in the west are realising how they have been kept in dark about Islam, its creed, its ethos, its land, its history and people. The education system of the US, deemed to be the model for the rest of the world, surprisingly ignored history and geography of one of the major religions of the humankind. This is not only working against the political leaders of those countries, but also against the *Mujahideen* as they stand exposed. The gross misuse of Qur’anic verses to mislead Muslim youth, heavy casualties suffered by non-combatant innocent Muslims, including women and children, many times more than the combatants and non-combatants of their declared enemies, are making an impact. Martyrdom, their best promise to their recruits is already losing its appeal.

The clergy, that appeared to be confused and hesitant initially, is also coming out with declarations like ‘Islam is against terror’, ‘suicide bombing is haraam’ etc. With the financial crunch in the western world drug peddling may not be a reliable source of funds in future. So will be case with donations from their sympathisers. World is also seriously considering to ban free trading in arms. All these developments do not augur well for *Mujahideen*. The time is running out for them.

What are the options available to them other than continuing the un-Islamic Jihad? Assuming that they are not in connivance with those very powers they are engaged with, declare an unconditional and immediate
ceasefire and stop their militant activities all over the world against all adversaries forthwith. Decommission all fighters and release them into the mainstream to face whatever punishments are meted out to them in the spirit of penance relying on the forgiving nature of Allah (SWT).

It must be remembered that Islam ordains blood for blood unless the victims of close relatives accept blood money or forgive altogether. Are they willing to submit to the Shari’yah justice, if so, will they be able to identify and approach these people seeking their forgiveness? They have committed sins beyond this simple sin – they created Fitnah and Fasad in the name of Jihad. Offering own blood to wash the sinful stains is too small a price, yet may be enough to redeem their sins and earn the pleasure of Allah (SWT) – Insha Allah Ta’la.

**Muslim Ummah**

There is no need for Muslim Ummah in general and youth in particular to feel slighted and humbled. It is better to repose faith in the All-Wise and Ever-Merciful Allah (SWT) and look ahead with hope. To err is human, but forgiveness is divine; and Allah (SWT) is Most Forgiving. Death here is inevitable but it is the prerogative of the Life-Giver to take it back. Eternal life thereafter is of greater concern where only the faith and deeds would be useful not the acclaim and false martyrdom.

Factually, by the Grace of God, Muslims around the world enjoy more religious freedom than in many of the so-called ‘Islamic States.’ The bogy of not being able to follow Shari’yah is a myth. What is, perhaps, meant is the Taliban style moral policing! There are some crucial questions that need to be pondered upon:
How many Muslims – mostly by accident of birth – study Islam with honesty of purpose when they become adult?

How many Muslims make it a point to study or simply read with understanding at least some portion of Qur’an on daily basis?

How many Muslims make it a point to offer mandatory Salaat with congregations in the nearest mosque at appointed time, or at least offer it within specified time bracket or, at the very least, offer them as defaulted (Qadha) before going to bed?

Similarly, how many Muslims are serious to calculate Zakaat honestly and get it cross checked by competent amongst them to ensure nothing remains due?

How many Muslims take critical view of their deeds of the day with a view to undoing the bad ones, thanking Allah (SWT) for the good ones before going to bed?

How many Muslims are willing to use social boycott as means to dissuade fellow Muslims from committing un-Islamic acts.

There are many more such questions a common Muslim must ask oneself and answer them honestly if one is indeed interested in knowing about the strength of their Imaan (Faith) before clamouring for state enforcement of Shari‘yah, for it is not merely public flogging or capital punishment alone.

The way forward for Muslim Ummah is a continuous self-examination, introspection and fear of Aakhirah (Hereafter), which will take care of Islam
adequately for the time being. Islamic rule and governance by Shari’yah will follow soon – if they have faith in Allah (SWT) and teachings of His Prophet (SAWS). Construction takes time whereas destruction is instant. Ummah has taken centuries to decay; therefore, it will take a lot of time and effort to regain its glory again. There are no short cuts. The model left behind by the Prophet (SAWS) was wounded grievously when its third Khalifah ‘Usman (RA) was stabbed to death in public in his own house in the capital of powerful and vast Islamic state within three decades after his passing away. It has still not recovered from that.

One of the most distinguishing features of Islamic creed is to stand up against injustice, falsehood and oppression without fear or favour, regardless of religion, relation, status and lineage of the people who are committing the sin against people. There is nothing like agreeing in private and shying away from public pronouncements when called upon to do so. Muslim Ummah still looks up to the religious scholars, jurists and spiritual leaders for guidance and direction in all matters. This is a matter of pride for them, but also a great responsibility. Silence is no option for it is treated as approval. Failure to act on the part of those who matter is by itself an act for which the concerned people are answerable to Allah (SWT). The luminaries of Muslim Ummah belonging to all walks of life and all schools of jurisprudence (Masalik and Madhahib) should convene a meeting at the earliest to discuss and issue a clear cut declaration (fatwa) that all violent activities in the name of Islam being indulged by various groups among the Muslims outside the established and recognised governments are illegitimate, illegal and un-Islamic. This is perfectly in line with the teachings of Qur’an, Traditions of the Prophet (SAWS) and international laws.
It is for the recognised governments and established authorities to take up the issues of oppression or denial of justice either with the concerned governments or through diplomatic channels or raise them in UNO. There is nothing more that can be done under current international protocols and procedures. If these efforts do not bear fruit in reasonable time, allow immigration of victimised Muslims in the vast Muslim land gifted by Allah (SWT), if not permanently (recommended), at least temporarily till the issues are resolved. Abandoning them as a lost cause is not an option. Unfortunately that is what was done by surrounding rich Arab states in the case of fellow Arabic speaking Palestinians with disastrous consequences. That is a separate matter beyond the scope of this Monograph.

It is now for the enlightened people of Islam to prove that Islam is not an outdated dogma but a dynamic concept that can still lead the world to a peaceful and prosperous existence with justice and human dignity for all. In fact this may be the best chance of showcasing Islam to the troubled world. They need to draw appropriate lessons from the peace treaty signed by Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) with which most of the companions did not agree. It was signed on seemingly un-equal terms favouring the opponents of Islam after almost six years of warfare with them. Yet it was called ‘a victory manifest’ ‘fatahan mubeenan’ (manifest victory). (Al Fath; 1:48) He also issued charters of privileges protecting the legitimate rights of the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt Sinai. (628 AD) covering all aspects of human rights including freedom of worship, movement, appointment of own judges, owning of properties, exemption from military service and protection during war etc. In 631 AD, he received a delegation of Christians from Najran in Masjid an-Nabi with permission to pray in the mosque
facing east as per Byzantine rites. After mutual exchange of views on Islam they decided to remain Christians within the land of Islam. A charter similar to the one referred to above was issued. These traditions of the Prophet (SAWS) indicate the true spirit of mutual respect and accommodation and gestures of goodwill. What is Islam if not a magnanimous, compassionate and tolerant concept?

Muslims need to remember that they are bound by the message of Qur’an and the example of the Prophet (SAWS) if they indeed believe to be Muslims. A serious reading of Qur’an and the biography of the Prophet (SAWS) will leave no doubt in mind about the ethos and ethics of Islam. The real question that is crying for answer is ‘are we Muslims at heart?’ For a Muslim cannot create chaos in the land. Muslims are in danger of losing their identities facing the onslaught of evil culture of suicide bombings killing mostly innocent fellow Muslims.

Muslim children are in danger of becoming pseudo Muslims if things carry on like this. It is also true that trial is intrinsic part of a Muslim’s life. Are we to modify this divine scheme? Are we to ignore the un-ambiguous assertions of Iblis to do anything and everything to mislead Man at every step? Are we to ignore the example set by the Prophet (SAWS) and his companion who accepted much tougher challenges in more adverse conditions than the present Ummah that is a sixth of the world population? Or follow the example of suicide bomber – kill more Muslim in the name of saving them from vices of the west? Commit the major sin of suicides-cum-murder and glorify it as martyrdom putting to shame the real martyrs buried at Uhad? Justify naked arrogance as national pride? What exactly is the demand of Muslim Ummah? A life of luxury in which the camel grazing Arabs of yesteryears are now excelling and others following
gleefully throwing away precious God-gifted resources? Has the Muslim *Ummah* ever been told about the ‘Ushr (one tenth of revenue) that is due on oil pumped out and its disposal?

It is time for Muslim *Ummah* to get serious with the true understanding of their religion. They had enough of blind following which has brought them to this state where they are being ruled by people who care less for Islam than their own luxuries. Their sole concern is how to perpetuate the dream-like realities. They can’t even distance themselves from those who care less about Muslims and their culture and tradition. They are openly defying the clear verses of Qur’an.

Neglect of serious study of religion in general and Qur’an in particular is one of the main causes of Muslims at large falling prey to emotional slogans raised from time to time by self-seeking pseudo leaders. There is an urgent need to revitalise the study of Islam with modern techniques as part and parcel of educational curricula. Muslim *Ummah* can do with a couple of standard seminaries for each of the mainstream schools (*Madhahib*) under the control of recognised boards with relevant and updated versions of old text books.

**Western Democracies**

As already mentioned the partisan policies of the industrial nations lead by the US, neglect of many issues concerning Muslims in the Middle East, are the main causes of discontent and frustration that turned into desperation and anger. The respect they commanded due to their democratic ways of governance, modern education, industrial power, political clout and military strength was undone by their partisan policies.
The great British philosopher and Nobel Laureate Bertrand Russell (1872~1970) had very wisely suggested converting the international body into a world government with its own multinational force for peace keeping in conflict zones to promote ideas of democratic global governance. He championed the cause of disarmament and nuclear disarmament, which he saw as a threat to the very existence of the world. His suggestions coming at a ripe age were dismissed as utopian ideas of an aging man! One of his many quotes is worth reproducing here: “The prospect for the human race is sombre beyond all precedent. Mankind are faced with a clear-cut alternative: either we shall all perish, or we shall have to acquire some slight degree of common sense. A great deal of new political thinking will be necessary if utter disaster is to be averted.”

Winning elections seem to have corroded the idea of democracy. Now all is fair in love, war and politics. No wonder, if the present generation of politicians, in almost all democratic countries, are using the tool of fear psychosis to influence their electorate. Once elected, they are focused on amassing personal fortunes by keeping the electorate engaged with self-created issues. Otherwise, they will have to answer for their failures.

Notwithstanding the true character of organisations like Al-Qaeda, some of the issues raised through innumerable tapes are not disputable. When abhorrence towards immorality, obscenity, and breakdown of social order based on families is expressed it finds approval even among those who hate them for their evil deeds. Which decent society would like their teen-aged daughters to become single mothers, or
fatherless children, or drugs addicts and children with fire-arms? One can rest assured that the moment such issues, coupled with some political ones, are addressed effectively, their sole selling point will disappear rendering them irrelevant. Who does not likes to be part of a decent society? These organisations will cease to attract resources and recruits, without which they count for nothing. It is a wise and time tested approach that one should go for the root causes rather than waste precious time and energies on removal of symptoms if one is indeed interested in lasting cure.

Unfortunately two World Wars reduced the European Democracies to the status of client states of USA the real victor. USA may be highly industrialised, phenomenally rich and hence powerful but lacks the character of a mature nation, which is reflected in its arrogant behaviour in international politics. It is the youngest nation in the world but considers itself as an exceptional nation that cannot commit any wrong. It certainly aspires to dominate the world. The mess, that the world finds itself in, is the direct result of its unbridled ambition for global dominance and control, particularly of the Middle East oil resources.

Logically, the way forward lies in applying course correction in the international diplomacy. The acts of omission and commission have to be honestly identified and owned up. Ethics and morality has to be brought back in international dealings. Peaceful co-existence with mutual respect for national traditions and political cultures must be supported. Non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations and cooperation in promoting human welfare will be conducive to world peace. It is equally important that all indecencies and
obscenities that are morally degrading and corrode human character should be condemned and eliminated. Hunger and disease kill individuals, immorality kills humankind. Recently the Pope lamented publicly that the western societies are losing identity taking God as dead. Death of God means death of morality, the only distinguishing feature of humankind.

The task is tough, especially for those who believe in wars at the drop of a hat as the ultimate solution to all ills. When loss of human life is dismissed as ‘collateral damage’ it reveals a sick and sadist mind. Human being is not a commodity. It should have shocked even an atheist. But the followers of Jesus, the most compassionate and humane prophet, Christians, remained unmoved. People spending billions and trillions in charity around the world should tolerate such an outrageously arrogant statement not once but repeatedly, is indeed puzzling.
CONCLUSION

The new millennium has begun with much sound and fury. Sadly, it is not about celebrating the marvellous achievements of the previous one, for which man should be truly and sincerely thankful to the Almighty, but it is about the ongoing ‘War on Terror’, being fought between the mightiest of the world and stateless and illegal entities that seem to be operating from the wilderness of rugged mountainous region of Hindu Kush with amazing ability of reach and survivability.

It is evident from the well researched presentation by Dr. Muhammad Zahir and Mr. Abu Nazim, and the views expressed by even non-Muslims including Michael G Knapp, that the Islamic concept of Jihad is quite different from the slogan of Jihad raised by both the stateless fringe elements as well as those who claim to be fighting terror. Both are pursuing their narrow and selfish agenda with deceit and dishonesty.

The rogue elements are using simple Arabic words for conveying the impression as if they are fighting, killing and getting killed, for the sake of Islam and Muslims. Truth is far from it. Islam, as has been brought out does not permit a Jihad that spreads Fasad (tumult), and “...Allah does not like the Mufsideen (mischief mongers).” (Al-Maedah; 5:64)

While concluding this study on concept of Jihad in Islam it may be stressed that the Mujahideen, called Jihadists in the western media, totally perverted and distorted the concept of Jihad by their intolerant attitude and violent action. They contravene its basic principles and fundamental objectives as enshrined in the Qur’an and explained in the Traditions of the Prophet (SAWS). This has considerably tarnished the compassionate and
tolerant image of Islam. It may, however, also be emphasized that the misguided and prejudiced policies of the West, particularly that of the United States, and the callous attitude of the ruling elite in Muslim countries have been largely responsible for this violent turn to an otherwise peaceful movement of political Islam. The United States of America, in order protect Israel or its own economic interests, supported dictators, monarchs and autocratic rulers in their brutal action to suppress democracy in the Middle East and North Africa. The ruling elite in Muslim countries invited violent reaction because of their significant deviation from the basic principles of governance as codified in the Qur’an. In order to contain violence in political Islam the West must reorient its policies in the Middle East, based on justice and fair play, to promote peace and amity in that troubled region. Similarly the ruling elite in Muslim countries ought to return soon and genuinely to their Islamic moorings if they want to end intolerance and violence, which has crept into the fabric of political Islam. The situation is critical and demands prompt action by the United States of America and ruling and religious elites in Muslim countries otherwise world peace and Muslim societies will be gravely imperilled.