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UNDERSTANDING JIHAD: FROM A TERM TO MISCONCEPTION

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Abstract

In fact, Islam is a religion of peace, love and forgiveness. The Quran and Hadith prohibit the unjustified use of violence and force against any human being. "You shall not take life, which God has made sacred, except by way of justice and law." (Quran 6:151). Muslims are forbidden from killing others unless it is for a legal and just cause. Another verse that forbids unjust killing of others says: "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 [retribution] or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the law)." (Quran 17: 33). Human life is sacred in Islam and should never be taken wrongfully by anyone. Islam strictly outlaws killing or causing harm to innocent people - regardless of their religion and beliefs. Manipulating certain verses in the Quran as well as quoting them out of their historical and textual context, by both Muslim extremists and anti-Muslims, are the major causes behind the ongoing controversy in understanding some Islamic principles. Killing innocent people is a grave sin in Islam. Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) warn Muslims who commit heinous killings of severe punishment. "Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." (Quran 5:32). The sin of killing one human being in Islam is considered equal to killing all mankind. Prophet (PBUH) prohibited killing innocent non-Muslims and emphasized the grave consequence of such action. "Anyone who kills a non-Muslim will not*

smell the fragrance of the Paradise, even though its fragrance can be experienced at a distance of forty years.” (Al Bukhari). The paper is an attempt to discuss the real meaning and condition under which JIHAD is permitted and allowed. It also gives insight why in Indians should never ever think about Jihad.



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Whenever a bomb blast happens all the Muslim youths are rounded by the police. Whenever a person wearing a skull cap and a salwar is seen, he his interrogated separately under the assumption of being terrorist. In the city of Mumbai if a surname KHAN, SHAIKH, BEG,ANSARI you will not be allowed to rent a property in certain areas and they are not allowed to buy property in other than a Muslim ghetto. Now the Question is why this happens? Why is that a patriot, a citizen, a law abiding human being, a normal common man is always being examined through the lens of doubt? Why is that every Muslims is labelled as TERRORIST?

No I am not saying that the terrorist are not Muslim, but not all of them. In this country we have Muslim who have being an ideal citizen, they have fought the battle of independence with other counterpart with the same gusto and zest. They have been Social Workers. Lawyers, Supreme Court Judges. Doctors, Industrialists, Teachers who have been Muslims and have done exemplary work. Then why is it that Muslims are always doubted? A lot of the Muslims are to be blamed for this and no one else. They have been blinded and mislead by a five letter word called JIHAD. This dreaded word has broken trust of years, created a rift between neighbors, separated friends for ever, gave birth to violence and disharmony. The question is that will the situation of suspicion, hatred and animosity remain the same forever or will it be subsided, removed and clarified? Again the question is who will bell the cat?

I think the onus lies on the shoulders of people who are learned and are supposed to be little more courageous and can take a stance and articulate the correct things. I know the situation is volatile but never mind someone needs to have the courage to voice the problems. Now let's understand the JIHAD in a very common and simple language and interpret it in a layman's perspective. Also let us understand it from the religious point of view and understand what is written in the text and what the interpretation of it by the followers is. Jihad literally means **"to strive or to struggle."**

In Islam there are three types of Jihad. Jihad of the **heart**: means when your hearts struggle to differentiate between right and wrong Jihad of the **tongue and hands**: be cautious to use word and tongue so as not to hurt others Jihad of the **sword** Since the first two Jihads concern only the spiritual side of Muslim beliefs and have no external interference, I will directly come on to the third kind of Jihad. The basic rule about Jihad (of the sword) is that it is only allowed when **non-Muslims initiate it**. It is **NOT** to be **initiated by the Muslims at all**. Muslims are **not allowed to raise their swords** and start **killing every non-Muslim** in their community, whether in majority or minority, to force them to accept Islam. God says in the **Quran**: -"**There is no compulsion in religion**"

And in another place He says: -

"If it had been your God's Will, they would all have believed, all who live on this earth. Will you (the Muslims) then compel mankind against their will to believe?"

Islam permits fighting in self-defense, in defense of religion, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes. It lays down strict rules of combat that include prohibitions against harming civilians and against destroying crops, trees and livestock. As Muslims see it, injustice would be triumphant in the world if good people were not prepared to risk their lives in a righteous cause.

One reads in the Qur'an: "**Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors.**" (Qur'an 2:190)

"And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for God. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrongdoers." (Qur'an 2:193)

"If they seek peace, then you seek peace. And trust in God for He is the One that hears and knows all things." (Qur'an 8:61)

War is therefore **the last resort**, and is subject to the rigorous conditions laid down by the sacred law. The often misunderstood and overused term jihad literally means "struggle" and not "holy war" (a term not found anywhere in the Qur'an).

Jihad, as an Islamic concept, can be on a **personal level--inner struggle against evil within oneself; struggle for decency and goodness on the social level; and struggle on the battlefield, if and when necessary.**

In Islam therefore, Jihad is allowed only in these **three** conditions: -

1. Muslims of a certain community or country are being denied religious freedom. They are not allowed to conduct their religious practices nor can they pray freely.

The question is that why then in India should people resort to JIHAD. In this country all the Muslims are allowed to practice and profess their religion. They are allowed to celebrate their religion. In fact every Friday the Mumbai Police safe guard all those who pray the Jumma Prayers. Whether other people get Police help or not but the followers of Islam are protected. There are thousands of Mosque being built in India every year and they are given special concessions as far as land and loan is concerned. The Holy Quran is printed and distributed in thousands in this country. There had been special subsidy provided to all those who go for HOLY pilgrimage HAJ every year. Think of one situation where Muslims are not allowed to profess and practice their religion, than why is the thought of JIHAD ever occur to Indian Muslims?

2. Muslims are being oppressed and ill-treated in a certain community or country.

In a country like India where democracy is vibrant each citizen is treated on the equality. The rules and regulation is same for everyone. The legal and the justice system has a blindfold on the eyes so that when rendering justice it can only feel the situation not see the person. In India like all its counterpart every Muslim is being equal chance of education, election, opportunity and freedom. I would like to reiterate that we have the biggest population of Muslims in the world, and the kind of freedom Muslims enjoy here we don't find anywhere else in the world. Let it be made very clear that Muslims residing in India are more equals to any other religious group in India. Thank You Almighty for making me taking birth in this country which has allowed me to be ME. Then where is the question of ill-treatment? Where is the question of oppression? Don't mind a few stray incidents where Muslims are subjected to ill-treatments but that is rendered out to person from other communities too. Do not forget the incidents of Sikh people been subjected to ill-treatment, or Christians subject to ill-treatment. Remember friends these few stray incidents allows the enemies to brain wash you and make you see the entire issue in a different perspective.

3. A non-Muslim community starts collecting its army for the intention of launching an attack against a Muslim community.

Now as far as this point is concerned in a democracy no one except the State is allowed to collect army. In that army everyone including Muslims are allowed to join the army. Let us not forget

that we had Colonels, Air chief Marshals, Wing Commanders, Chief of Army alof them who were Muslims and shall be Muslims. We have thousands of Police officers who are Muslims and lakhs of Army Jawans who are Muslims. Then why should there be JIHAD in India? One more thing in today's situation no country will ever launch attack on a country just because the country has Islam as a state religion. If at all a country attacks another country it is for a hidden agenda and motive which might be economic and political rather than religious, So why we should think of JIHAAD at all. We have International Laws which control this kind of phenomena where countries are bounded by laws and regulation. UNO has been very active in making countries follow disarmament policy.

In all three conditions the common factor is that Jihad is allowed only for defence purposes and not for any territorial expansion/dictation. And even when Jihad becomes compulsory for defence purposes, Muslims strictly have to abide by the following rules

- 1) They are not allowed to burn down property and houses
- 2) They are not allowed to attack women, children and old people
- 3) They have to respect places of worship (churches, monasteries etc.)
- 4) They are not supposed to cut down trees or destroy the harvest
- 5) They are not supposed to mutilate the bodies of their opponents
- 6) When the enemy surrenders and is helpless they have to stop fighting

Here I may mention that those who do not abide by these rules and follow their self-made rules by killing innocent people **DO NOT** follow Islam. The rules of Islam are what I have mentioned and anyone who disobeys, and does wrong things in the name of Islam, in fact spoils its name. Islam is a religion of peace. Muslims have to respect the rights of the non-Muslims in their community and respect their places of worship. Those who don't, do not follow Islam at all.

This is what Islam has always been working for, and the relations of Muslims with others are primarily based on peace and confidence. Islam refuses the killing of people merely because they embrace a different faith, nor does it allow Muslims to fight against those who disagree with them on religious questions.

It urges its followers to treat such people kindly: "God 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. God loved those who are just" (60:8).

In another place, God says: "If they withdraw from you and fight you not, but (instead) send you (guarantees of) peace, then God allowed no way for you (to war against them)" (4:90).

We also have: "If the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God" (8:61). Instructions like these pave the way for the establishment of peace, and go in harmony with the present tendency to set down principles that call for the abolishment of war.

Islam, in fact, makes of peace a special greeting which Muslims exchange whenever they meet by saying, "Peace be unto you" (Assalamu 'Alaykum). The Muslim also utters this statement at the end of every prayer; he concludes his prayer by addressing those praying with him with the words: Peace be unto you with God's Mercy!

I hope this removes the misconceptions about JIHAD.

I was so moved by the issue that penned a poetry, hope you like it.

मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ.....

नहीं जानती हूँ कि क्यों कर हुआ

मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ

दिलों में खिंचावट सी आने लगी

बगावत अदावत बढ़ाने लगी

पड़ोसी जो दो जिस्म एक जान थे,

अचानक ही दुश्मन, क्यों कर हुआ?

नहीं जानती हूँ कि क्यों कर हुआ ?

मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ ।

भरोसे की दीवार, टूटी ही क्यों ?

बगल वाली दादी, रूठी ही क्यों?

दिवाली की रातें जलाती है क्यों ?

रिश्तों का व्यापार, क्यों कर हुआ ?

नहीं जानती हूँ कि क्यों कर हुआ?

मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ ।

आँगन में दीवार उठवा दिया,

त्योहारों को भी तो बटवा दिया,

बच्चों को नफरत में लिपटा दिया,

सच्चाईयों से है खेला जुआ,

नहीं जानती हूँ कि क्यों कर हुआ?

मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ,

अभी भी समय है संभल जाओ सब,

रास्ता दिखा दो इन्हे नेक रब,

समझे सियासत के ये दाँव अब,

यही मेरी ख्वाहिश यही है दुआ,

नहीं जानती हूँ कि क्यों कर हुआ
मगर हादसा ये यकीनन हुआ.....

Sabiha More

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