

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD IN ISLAM

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Abstract

Keywords:

Jehad;

Terrorism;

ISIS;

US;

Quran.

The current World is facing severe challenge of terrorism. The new edition terrorism is in institutionalized form which is based on misinterpretation of Islamic ideology. Great countries like US, India, Europe and Russia are victims of brutal terrorist attacks. Recently in France deplorable terrorist attack shook the entire world. Though, terrorism is not associated with any religion, but it is the matter of great concern that most terrorists are belonged to a particular community. Perhaps the concept of jihad is controversial and highly misinterpreted by shrewd politicians and religious leaders to use in their own interest. After Al Qaida, ISIS is emerged as a major terrorist challenge in Middle East. The main legitimacy it gained from wrong interpretation of Islamic religious ideologies, especially jihad which misled thousands towards terrorism. In this research paper I would try to find out actual meaning of jihad mentioned in Qura'anto reinterpret the the term.

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Introduction

Islam emerged as a result of revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi WA Sallam in the month of *Ramadan*. Muslims believe that every word in the Qur'an is the actual word of the God as revealed to Mohammad by the Angel *Gabriel* over a period of 23 years; 10 years in Mecca and 13 years in Medina. No one is authorized to make any change in the original text of Qur'an. * The revelation of the Holy book has happened not at once, but gradually, throughout the life of the Prophet. The Qur'an deals with the Divine nature, God's intervention in history, and spiritual lessons learned from observation of nature, from life, and from history. Basically, it is verses of God and supposed to be infallible especially by Muslims believers. Yet, the Qur'an did not exist in book form at the time of Muhammad's death in 632 CE. There is agreement among scholars that Muhammad himself did not drop a line down the revelation†.

Religion is self-realization of the divinity and the truth by an individual. Collectively, these divine attributes are called God or Godliness. In India, Seer says it's the state of enlightenment, when one can be able to realize the truth. This phenomenon of realization of the truth is called 'Darshan'. *Darshan* is to encounter the reality. This encountering of reality makes the person able to be dissolved into almighty like a drop poured into the ocean.‡ The enlightened one has an urge naturally to make others knows what has happened to him and what the truth is? This happens out of compassion. This way a community gathers around that enlightened one and a particular religion takes shape. By the time, after the demise of the founder of the particular religious sect, this request becomes only the religious practice and ritual in the hands of unrealized preachers of the religion and gets deteriorated. This is what the deterioration of religion. These contractors of religion prove to be the destroyer of the authenticity of it. This is what has happened with religions down the ages.

*Dr. Mohammad Shafi , *The QUR'AN - How it was Revealed and Compiled*

<http://www.daralislam.org/portals/0/Publications/TheQUR'ANHowitwasRevealedandCompiled.pdf> (Accessed 11 September 2014)

† Ahmad von Denffer, *Ulum al-Quran: An introduction to the Sciences of the Quran*, Leicestershire: Islamic Foundation, 1985, p. 37.

‡Kabir, *Navneet* .

http://www.bhavanaustralia.org/bhavan_navneet_1_2/digest_1_2.pdf (Accessed at 11 August 2014).

Islam and Jihad

The Qur'an revealed to the Prophet in different time intervals and in different circumstances as well. Therefore the action texted in the Qur'an for the same situation varies. Due to its poetic approach one can interpret Qur'an in different ways. The Qur'anic language is poetic and seems to have several meanings of the same verse. It is like a mirror which shows the own attitudes and thoughts of the interpreter. The sense of Jihad appears in 164 verses in the Qur'an[§] and 199 times in the standard collection of hadith.^{**} Jihad literally appears only twice in the Qur'an^{††}. Jihad literally stands for 'Struggle' and Jihadi is called 'mujahedin'. The Struggle is not inevitable to be violent as Qur'an shows in its texts that this struggle should be graceful and cordial. Some Qur'anic texts related to Jihad are following

About patience

"Bear, then, with patience, all that they say, and celebrate the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun and before (its) setting."^{‡‡}

About forgiveness

"We created not the heavens, the earth, and all between them, but for just ends. And the Hour is surely coming (when this will be manifest). So overlook (any human faults) with gracious forgiveness."^{§§}

About convincing non-believers by beautiful preaching

[§]YoelNatan, "164 Jihad Verses in the Quran", *answering Islam.org*.

http://www.answering-islam.org/Quran/Themes/jihad_passages.html (Accessed at 11 August 2014).

^{**} Muhammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, *The Translation of the Meaning of Sahid al- Bukhari*, Trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 8 vols., Medina: Dar al-Fikr, 1981, 4:34-204. Quoted in 'what does Jihad Mean?' By Douglas E. Streusand, *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1997, 9-11.

^{††}*The Holy Qur'an*, UK: Islam Internal Publication Limited, 2004, 60:1 and 9:24

^{‡‡}*The Holy Qur'an*, UK: Islam Internal Publication Limited, 2004, 50:39

^{§§}*ibid*, 15-85

*“Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord know the best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.”****

About Oneness of God and non-disputes with anyone

“And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except with means better (than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, “We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam)”†††,‡‡‡

The other popular interpretation of Jihad is ‘The Holy War’ §§§ According to JavedGhamidi, there is consensus amongst Islamic scholars that the concept of jihad will always include armed struggle against persecution and oppression.**** Others have given the word wider implications and interpretations. Many observers – both Muslim and non-Muslim†††† – talk of jihad’ having two meanings: an inner spiritual struggle—the "greater jihad"—and an outer physical struggle against the enemies of Islam—the "lesser jihad."†††† This may take a violent or non-violent form. Among saying of the Islamic prophet Muhammad involving jihad are

"The best Jihad is the word of Justice in front of the oppressive Sultan [ruler]."

Another saying cited by Ibn Nuhaas and narrated by Ibn Hassaan, The Messenger of Allah was asked about the best jihad. He said:

*** *The Holy Qur’an*, UK: Islam Internal Publication Limited, 2004, 50:39

††† *Ibid*, 29-46

‡‡‡ [Jeremiah Bowden, *Jihad and the Qur'an: The Case for a Non-Violent Interpretation of the Qur'an*](https://www.academia.edu/621299/Jihad_and_the_Qur'an_The_Case_for_a_NonViolent_Interpretation_of_the_Qur'an)[https://www.academia.edu/621299/Jihad and the Qur’an The Case for a NonViolent Interpretation of the Qur’an](https://www.academia.edu/621299/Jihad_and_the_Qur'an_The_Case_for_a_NonViolent_Interpretation_of_the_Qur'an) (Accessed at 10 August 2014)

§§§ Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Medieval Islam*, Leiden: Brill Acedemic Publishers, 1977, 3

**** JavedGhamidi, “The Islamic Law of Jihad”, *Mizan*, 8 July 1992, p.6.

†††† Rudolph Peter, *Islam and Colonialism: The doctrine of Jihad in Modern History*, Berlin: Mounon Publishers, 1979, P. 118.

†††† Diane Morgan, *Essential Islam: A Comprehensive Guide to Belief and Practoce*, SantaBarbera: ABC- CLIO, 2010, P. 87.

"The best jihad is the one in which your horse is slain and your blood is spilled."^{§§§§}

Jihad is treated as an important religious duty for Muslims. Sunni scholars sometimes refer this duty as 'the sixth pillar of Islam' though it occupies no such official status.^{*****} However, Jihad is one of the ten Practices of the Islam.

Actual Jihad

There are different interpretations of jihad among Islamic scholars. Some scholars are in support of violence to establish a religious rule and state based on *Sharia*, whereas some are against the violent interpretation of jihad. The definition of jihad varies in different Muslim traditions and schools, i.e. Ahmadiya, Qur'anic, Sufic etc. Here the most appropriate definition of jihad comes from Sufism. The Sufic view classifies "Jihad" into two parts: the "Greater Jihad" and the "Lesser Jihad". Muhammad puts the emphasis on the "Greater Jihad" by saying, "Holy is the warrior who is at war with himself".

Greater jihad is to keep struggling with your own atrocities which lies within. Jihad is nothing to do with the outer world. The outer struggle may not be a religious approach to maintain peace and brotherhood. Today world is facing the hazardous form of jihad due to its misinterpretation. Lesser jihad is the misinterpreted form of jihad. If the entire community comes in favor of Greater Jihad than only the brutal killings and homicides i.e. terrorism, may come to its end.

Victims of Jihad

There are many assessments of the killings in the name of jihad are available, but the estimate of Thomas Sowell seems nearer to the reality. Thomas Sowell estimates that 11 million slaves were shipped across the Atlantic and 14 million were sent to the Islamic nations of North Africa and the Middle East. For every slave captured many others died.^{†††††} Jesus the Christ is considered as one of Nabi or the Prophet in Islam and he is mentioned in Holy Islamic texts.^{†††††} But it is the misfortune of the history that millions of Christian got killed by jihadis in the name of ideological differences. It is roughly estimated that the number of Christians martyred by Jihadis

^{§§§§} Ibn Nuhas, *Book of Jihad*, Berlin: Mouton Publisher, 1979.P. 107

^{*****} John Esposito, *Islam : The Streight Path*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 93.

^{†††††} Thomas Sowell, *Race and Culture*, New York: Basic Books, 1994, p. 188.

^{†††††} Mohammad Ata Ur Rahim and Ahmad Thomsan, *Jesus Prophet of Islam, rev. ed.* London: Ta-Ha Pub., 1995,p. 265

is 9 million.^{§§§§§} A rough estimate by Raphael Moore in *History of Asia Minor* is that another 50 million Christians died in wars by jihad; however, this figure is not easy to digest.

The Hindu, the idol worshipers stand on the next ideological edge of Islamic religious doctrine. The Hindus are most vulnerable to be fit in the definition of ‘Kafir’. In India, since the medieval period to the modern age, the Hindu majority had been ruled by the Muslim rulers of foreign origin. The estimate of killing Hindus by jihad is gorgonian. KoenardElst gives an estimate of 80 million Hindus killed in entire jihadi activities in India. Even the scholar like KoenardElst claims that the territory of India remains today is only half of the size than that of earlier India was, this happened due to jihad.^{*****} He further claims that the mountains near India are called the Hindu Kush, meaning the “funeral pyre of the Hindus.”

The reign of Ashoka and Kushana provides ground for the expansion of Buddhism in India and around, especially in Central Asia and South East Asia. In Central Asia, before the advent of Islam, Buddhism flourished on its full swing and had become the integral part of Central Asian culture^{†††††}. In Kushana Dynasty Buddhism got split in Heenyana and Mahayana. The Mahayana Buddhism adopted Bhakti practices and idol worship. The main clash with Islamic extremist started here after the advent of the Mahayana sect of Buddhism. According to hardcore Jihadi doctrine, everyone else had to convert to Muslim or die. Jihadis murdered the Buddhists in Turkey, Afghanistan, along the Silk Route (Central Asia), and in India. The total toll is roughly 10 million.^{†††††} It has been estimated roughly that about 270 million are killed due to jihad from all the ethnicities and religions till the date.

^{§§§§§}David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200*, CA: William Carey Library, 2001, p. 230, table 4-10

^{*****}KoenardElst, *Negationism in India*, New Delhi: Transaction Publishers 2002, p. 34.

^{†††††}LudmilaPolonskaya and Alexei Malashenko, *Islam in Central Asia*, Reading, MA: Ithaca Press, 1994

^{†††††}David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200*, CA: William Carey Library, 2001, p. 230.

Worldwide Terrorism

The destructive incident of 9/11 was a breakthrough in the history of terrorism. Here is the estimate of killings of radical throughout the world from 2001 to 2009. The record of terrorist killing and brutality, from 2001 to now (2017), must have exceeded both in number and the extent of brutality from 2001 to 2009.

Table 1: The table depicts the data of brutal terrorist killings took place worldwide after 9/11
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\$\$\$\$\$ [online] http://islamthreat.com/isis_beheading_children_and_women_-after_stripping_naked-_parallels_hindu_story.html (accesed at 12 August 2014)

Country	Killed by Radicalists	Injured by Radicalists
<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>5121</i>	<i>5771</i>
<i>Algeria</i>	<i>1696</i>	<i>1525</i>
<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>1535</i>
<i>Chechnya</i>	<i>965</i>	<i>1048</i>
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>482</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>4298</i>	<i>9835</i>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>512</i>	<i>1456</i>
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>38405</i>	<i>54396</i>
<i>Israel</i>	<i>957</i>	<i>4715</i>
<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>795</i>	<i>1335</i>
<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>6460</i>	<i>11211</i>
<i>Philippines</i>	<i>1027</i>	<i>1963</i>
<i>Somalia</i>	<i>2602</i>	<i>3978</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>1852</i>
<i>Sudan</i>	<i>2892</i>	<i>1639</i>
<i>Thailand</i>	<i>2034</i>	<i>2341</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>751</i>
<i>United States, (including 9/11)</i>	<i>3033</i>	<i>6558</i>

Brutal face of Extremism

Radicalism is the outcome of misconception among believers and proved hazardous for humanity. Jihad is one of such ideology which is misunderstood generally. The history of mankind is colored bloody red by the Radical believers around the world. In India, it is a historical fact that Aurangzeb alone destroyed 10,000 Hindu temples. ***** . It has been also

***** see Fact India exhibition from Aurangzeb's own diktats

argued that the Taj Mahal was the Hindu Temple named Tejo- Mahalya of Lord Shiva.^{††††††} Durant acclaimed how Ghazni could not find enough carts to carry the enormous wealth of just one Somanth temple after slaughtering 50,000 Hindu priests. The once great country with a 25 % world GDP was brought to its feet, a country of skeletons as Vivekananda put it in 1890s by Islamic and European conquests.^{††††††} The estimate is Radicals killed 80 million in Indian Subcontinent and 220 million worldwide. The UK rapper Muslim convert, who beheaded American Journalists Foley and Steven Sotloff, was brainwashed by Indian UK Muslim Anjem Chowdhary.^{§§§§§§} On September 2, 2014, ISIS released a video purportedly showing their beheading of Sotloff. In the video the executioner says, *"I'm back, Obama, and I'm back because of your arrogant foreign policy towards the Islamic State, because of your insistence on continuing your bombings and on Mosul Dam, despite our serious warnings. So just as your missiles continue to strike our people, our knife will continue to strike the necks of your people."*^{*****} India is the most affected by terrorism after Middle East, but radicals are doing its job where 150,000 were killed since 9/11 itself in Kafir lands, obviously, half million slaughtered in the Middle East itself where one Muslim wing considers other as Kafir!! The World slowly recognizes the only manner to destroy destructive people is to revolve them on themselves.

Conclusion

The Muslim community must be educated and advanced upto the level of modern science and development. It is an axiom that no religion, cult, sect or community would stand in favor of violence. Qur'an is a holy book with humanitarian values and religious teaching of love and peace. Infact, Islam literally stands for 'submission' to God. Islam as a religion teaches nothing like what are happening in the name of Islam. Religion is all about transforming the self. Self

^{††††††} Dr. V.S. Godbole, *Taj Mahal, Analysis of a great deception*, Thane: ItihasPatrikaPrakashan, 2007,p. 97.

^{††††††} [online]

<http://newageislam.com/interfaith-dialogue/was-swami-vivekananda-anti-islam/?d/13346>

^{§§§§§§} [Online]“ IS Jihadists demanded ransom to free Foley”. *Middle East News. Net*,

<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/70-people-killed-iraq-mosque-1591715332> (Accessed at 21 Aug. 2014)

^{*****} [Online]

“ IS jihadi group beheads US journalist Steven Sotloff “ *Big News Network.com*,

<http://ibnlive.in.com/newsttopics/steven-sotloff.html> (2 Sept. 2014).

transformed person can not force others for anything. Self transformation means to get dominance over our weaknesses, grievances and desires. Jihad actually stands for the practices of self development. Jihad is an introvert act for self attainment. It is similar to 'sadhana' of Hinduism or Vedanta. A true Jihadi is self oriented and self concerned. If Jihadi would have become other oriented that just out of compassion and welfare. Actually, Jihad is a sacred phenomenon which unfortunately misunderstood thoroughly. Terrorism emerges out of misconception about Jihad. Jihad and other Islamic doctrines are highly spiritual in nature but have been practices for socio-political reasons.

Political and social reasons are always concerned with others. Jihad is something concerned with self. Terrorism and radicalism can be stopped if the believer may be able to learn the actual meaning of Jihad. Qura'an and Hadith as a sacred books are the sources of salvation. It is the dire need of time to spread awareness among the believers about true meaning of Islamic concepts. Government and NGO's must come forward to teach people not to be misinterpreted and misguided. The true education and relevant interpretation of Islam can lead the world again towards the path of humanism.

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http://www.answering-islam.org/Quran/Themes/jihad_passages.html