

ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF JIHAD

A Conceptual Clarification on concept of Jihad, Nov 2001

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The killing of innocent people is terrorism irrespective of the fact whether they are Muslims or not. It is also terrorism to murder the peaceful people regardless of their being in state of war even if they are not fighting a war with you directly. Victimizing the children, the old, the women and also targeting the worship-places and hospitals fall in the domain of terrorism. It also includes the efforts aimed at spreading harassment, creating disturbance, staging sit-ins, forcing people to go on strikes and targeting the worship-places of other religions. Attacking human, religious, political, social and cultural rights is also terrorism.

Jihad and terrorism have no relation with each other nor is there anything in common between them. On the other hand Jihad stands for the eradication of terrorism. Jihad-bil-qital is characterized by ending terrorism. But if threats are posed to human life, property and honour, fighting for defending these areas is called Jihad.

It is not meant for grabbing wealth. Expansionist designs have nothing to do with the Islamic concept of Jihad. Every Charter of Human Rights terms taking up of arms against injustice and unwanted blood-letting, crushing down of rebellion and revolt, uprooting of conspiracies, violence and mischief-mongering as not only being legal but also making it binding. All that is done with a view to making the earth safe. When any individual or party transgresses its limits and encroaches upon others' rights, only in that case the Holy Qur'an enjoins upon believers to wage Jihad, so that mischief-mongering is halted and peace comes to our planet, earth.

The concept of Jihad is one of the highly misunderstood Islamic concepts. Unfortunately the West sees it as mere fighting against disbelief and the West. While some extremist religious groups who declare their activities as Jihad, are presenting Islam in a fanatic and emotional way giving a distorted picture of Islam. So the West has wrongly conceived terrorist activities as Islamic Jihad. Islamic concept of Jihad has absolutely no link with terrorism, extremism or barbarism. Jihad means struggle for good and elimination of evil. The spiritual struggle for self-purification of the soul is the greatest Jihad declared by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). This is known as Jihad-e-Akbar. According to the Prophet's tradition this is an exclusive struggle for moral excellence, ethical perfection and spiritual purification of mankind.

Another form of Jihad is for the promotion of knowledge. Similarly spending wealth for the poor is "Jihad bill maal". Providing jobs, economic stability and prosperity falls in the same category. Humanitarian activities are also fighting for "Haq". Haq means truth and lawful rights. The armed Jihad doesn't allow killing of the innocent, women, aged, children and patients. Moreover Jihad does not allow destruction of property and inhuman acts of cruelty. Jihad is not allowed without the permission of Islamic government. And if there is no Islamic government at least there should be consensus of Ummah. So there should be a Shoorah or a national meeting.

If Ule'ama and religious organizations, without adopting proper legal and juristic way, start declaring Jihad on their own this would just create "Fitna", disintegration and disruption. Then there will be no limits and the followers of various scholars and religious leaders can start fighting against one another

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on any point. This undisciplined and unorganized way is neither recognized by Islam nor accepted and supported by any authentic Islamic source.

That is one of the reasons why majority of the Muslims around the globe has not accepted this form of call for Jihad by religious extremists and fanatics. They understand that they cannot be caught away with the Mulla's emotional speeches and that it is more a political game rather than saving faith and faithful.