

What is Jihad? Part 1

The understanding of the Islamic tenant of Jihad has been confused intentionally. The Colonialist powers and their agent rulers have been on the forefront in this conspiracy. The so-called intellectuals and scholars were also utilized through the media to disseminate false ideas about jihad and its rulings, such that the Ummah became confused about this rule. Therefore, it is a dire need of the time to explain this important Islamic rule in the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

Although the word jihad literally means “to exert effort”, but under Islamic jurisprudence, the term jihad means “the fighting or killing, i.e. violence carried out in order to raise and uphold the word of Allah”. Similar to the meaning of Shaheed being “witness” if taken literally in linguistics, but the same term holds an altogether different meaning of “martyr” under Islamic jurisprudence. Same is the case for the term “Hudood”, which linguistically means limits, but in Islamic Jurisprudence, it refers to a set of punishments for seven specific crimes. Similarly, jihad is also an Islamic legal term which correctly needs to be taken in its legal meanings rather than its linguistic meaning. The legalistic meaning of Jihad in the way of Allah is what which Muhammad (saw) mentioned in the following hadith. It was asked from the Prophet (saw): **“What is killing in the way of Allah? The Prophet (saw) replied, «من قاتل»** “Whoever killed to raise the word of Allah, that is in the way of Allah”. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Definition of Jihad:

Famous scholar Ibn Abideen says, (الجهاد هو بذل الوسع في القتال في سبيل الله) “Exerting possible efforts of fighting in the way of Allah (swt) is Jihad”. Imam Ibn abi Zaid Al-Qairwani defines it as, (وهو قتال الكفار لإعلاء كلمة الله) “This (jihad) is killing (war) against non-Muslims to raise the word of Allah (swt)”. Therefore, according to Islamic Sharia, Jihad is striving and exerting effort in carrying out fighting in order to raise the word of Allah, whether this Jihad is direct (i.e. physical fighting) or through wealth (i.e. funding to carrying out fighting) or through speech (i.e. encouraging people to fight physically or to fund it). Therefore, it is Jihad if it is carried out through physical effort, wealth and speech, but if this effort is not directly against fighting the non-Muslims, then according to Sharia it can't be categorized as Jihad, irrespective of the difficulties faced in doing so. Similar is the case for speech and writing i.e., they have to be directly linked to Jihad. Merely stating what is moral or raising the word of truth in front of rulers is not termed as Jihad under the Shariah. Therefore, inspiring armies and the Ummah for jihad, encouraging them, mentioning the rewards of attacking the enemy in front of them etc. are considered Jihad by speech. The political struggle carried out for the sake of the deen and the accountability of rulers are indeed very rewarding actions and the Ummah benefits from them greatly; however, they don't fall within the definition of Jihad according to the Shariah. Moreover, this clarification is also necessary here because we observe efforts against cancer, polio and pollution all being labelled as jihad, which are certainly not so. Also, attributing the term jihad with them is not only forbidden but also dangerous, because doing so weakens the correct understanding and legal terminology of jihad in the society. Similarly, jihad against self (nafs) or sticking to the truth in the current difficult era is also not jihad although these are all rewarding actions indeed. According to a hadith by Sayyeda Ayesha (ra), the mother of the believers, this reality is explained quite clearly, when she (ra) asked the Prophet (saw) whether there is jihad for women? He (saw) said: «نعم عليهن جهاد لا قتال فيه، الحج والعمرة» **“Yes! Jihad is also for them but it does not include fighting, (it is) Hajj and Umrah”** (ibn Majah). A similar hadith is also reported by Bukhari. Therefore, it is established that “Jihad” consists of actual fighting. The sole exclusion was for women, as mentioned by the Prophet (saw) that their jihad does not include fighting; rather, women can get reward equal to jihad through Hajj and Umrah.

(swt) with their wealth and their lives. Allah (swt) has raised the ranks of those who fight with their wealth and lives, over those who sit, and to each, Allah (swt) has promised good.” [An-Nisa: 95]

In this ayah, Allah (swt) has not admonished those who do not carry out Jihad; rather, they are also “promised good”. If such type of Jihad had been individual obligation, the people who didn’t go would have been promised punishment. Similarly, another ayah also proves the combined obligation of Jihad. ﴿وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ﴾ **“It is not (necessary) for all believers to go forth. So why should it not be, that a group from every section of them goes forth, so that they may acquire flawless understanding of the Deen, and so that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may take due care (of Sharia rules).” [Al-Tauba: 122]**

This ayah informs that all Muslims need not go for offensive Jihad. As it is not an individual obligation, not all Muslims are ordered to go for it. However, if Muslims are not engaged in offensive jihad against any nation or country at any point in time, then all the Muslims are considered sinful, but if this obligation is being fulfilled through the participation of a few Muslims, then it is taken as the collective obligation being fulfilled from the remaining Muslims as well.

Although the rules of Jihad are absolute and not conditional to anything else, but as offensive jihad is carried out in order to expand the boundaries of the Islamic Land (Dar ul Islam), therefore the existence of an Islamic Land is a prerequisite for jihad. That is why only an Islamic authority can carry out offensive jihad in an effective manner.

As far as defensive jihad is concerned, it is an individual obligation upon the Muslims of any region under attack by the adversary. For the remaining Muslims, it becomes a collective obligation. This obligation will remain until the enemy is expelled and the Islamic land is cleansed of the presence of non-Muslims. This obligation also starts from nearest Muslims first and then expands to eventually encompass all Muslims of the world. Therefore, to eject the US from Afghanistan and Iraq, it is first obligatory upon the Muslims of Afghanistan and Muslims from Iraq then it becomes obligatory upon the nearest Muslims, for example, the Muslims of Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arab, and especially their armies. They need to physically participate in jihad, and this effort needs to be exerted until they have the ability to eject the US completely from the land. The defensive jihad does not require Muslims to seek permission from a leader, a ruler or even the Khalifah, so much so, that even a slave does not require the permission of his master, neither a wife requires the permission of her husband (if she has the ability to fight), nor a son requires the permission of his parents.

In the event of an attack on a Muslim land, some points need to be clarified:

1. When a Muslim land comes under attack of an enemy, its armies are first to defend it. If they are able to halt the enemy’s attack and defend the land, it still remains obligatory upon others to support them. Imam Al-Mawardi said, “Since this is defensive jihad, therefore this obligation will remain on each and every able bodies Muslim in the region”. For example, in the 1965 war, citizens were supporting armies through all possible means on the Lahore front.

2. The fact that this is individual obligation upon all Muslims in the region means that it is an individual obligation upon capable Muslims like their armies or other armed groups, and upon individuals or tribes who possess military capabilities. This is because the existence of capability is, by default, a requirement for the application of any Shari’i rule, because Allah (swt) said, ﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ **“Allah does not burden someone beyond one’s capability” [Al-Baqara: 286].**

This applies on all matters. Therefore, it is not correct to say, by altering the definition, jihad is only individually obligatory upon armies, organized fighting groups and strong tribes, because the word, Muslim, is general and it is clear in its meaning that this is obligatory on

those Muslims who are capable and those who carry the capacity and capability to perform jihad as required by Sharia. Today, practically the armies of all Muslim countries are being utilized as cheap mercenaries for the colonial interests by the agent rulers. Hence, this responsibility falls upon the sincere people in the Ummah that they carry out a political struggle to liberate the armies from this slavery, so that they can be used for jihad once again by eliminating the colonial political influence. This objective can only be achieved by establishing the Khilafah state on the method of the Prophethood. It is only the shield of the Khilafah which can organize jihad and can practically liberate all occupied Muslim lands. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ يُقَاتِلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيَنْقَى بِهِ» **“Khalifah is a shield, behind whom the Muslims fight and seek protection”** (Muslim).

3. Jihad has a specific objective and this war is not for the purpose of war, and neither for killing Non-Muslims. Allah (swt) says in Quran, وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ **“Prepare against them whatever force you can, and the trained horses whereby you frighten Allah’s enemy and your own enemy”** [Al-Anfal 60]

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عِشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِئَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ * الْآنَ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِئَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ **“O Prophet! Rouse the believers to fighting. If there are twenty among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred, and if there are one hundred among you, they will overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand. Now Allah has lightened your burden, and He knows that there is weakness within your ranks. So, if there are one hundred among you, who are patient, they will overcome two hundred, and if there are one thousand among you, they will overcome two thousand by the will of Allah and Allah is with the patient.”** [Al-Anfal 65-66]

In the first ayah, the objective of preparation is to strike fear in enemy which is necessary for defeating the enemy. Similarly, in the second and the third ayaat, Allah (swt) is informing us of the numbers required for overcoming the enemy. Hence, jihad is carried on for an objective, not merely for fighting. Similarly, it is narrated in Sahih Muslim from Suleman bin Bareed from his father that whenever Messenger of Allah (saw) appointed an Ameer of an army or a unit, he specially advised him to fear Allah and to treat fellow Muslims well. He (saw) used to say, «...ولا تغلوا، ولا تغدروا، ولا تمثلوا، ولا تقتلوا وليدًا، وإذا لقيت عدوك من المشركين فادعهم إلى... ثلاث خصال، فأيتهن أجابوك إليها، فاقبل منهم، وكف عنهم: ادعهم إلى الإسلام، فإن أجابوك فاقبل منهم... فإن هم أبوا فاسألهم...don’t do corruption in booty, do not break promises, do not mutilate the dead, do not beat the children, when you face the Non-Muslim enemy, invite them to three things, if they agree to any, then you should also commit to it, and do not harm them. Invite them to accept Islam, if they accept it, then you also accept this from them and refrain from fighting... If they do not accept Islam then invite them to pay Jizya. If they accept it then you also accept this and refrain from fighting...” (Sahih Muslim 4294). This hadith is another evidence of the objective of Jihad. Hence jihad has some objectives, like the objective of offensive jihad is to convert an area into the Islamic Land by removing system of Kufr and establishing the system of Islam. Therefore, if achieving that objective is not possible, then this war is not started; rather, preparation is made to acquire the required capability so that the objective can be achieved. Similarly the objective of defensive jihad is to liberate the Muslim land from foreign occupation. Hence if only guerilla warfare is not enough to achieve this objective, then it is necessary to come up with ways to achieve this objective. Muslims have been witnessing since decades that they have been sacrificing their lives for this Deen, for the oppressed Muslims and against foreign occupation; however, all these sacrifices are in vain due to the treachery of the agent rulers of Muslims. They stab them in their backs, similar to what was done to the resistance in Kashmir or what was done to the Taliban or what is being planned against the current Afghan resistance. That is why it is necessary that Muslims remove these treacherous rulers and establish the Khilafah State; otherwise (Allah forbid) the objective of Jihad will never be realized in spite of the Muslims continuing to give sacrifices!!!

4. If the enemy establishes its rule on an area such that they are able to practically dominate the Muslims, then Muslims are like war prisoners in this situation although they are not prisoners of war in real terms and jihad does not remain an individual obligation upon them, because they do not have the capability to liberate that area. This is the situation currently in Gaza and in Kashmir, and was as such on the majority of Indian subcontinent after the 1857 War of Independence. In this scenario, this obligation is shifted to the surrounding- Muslims that they wage jihad in order to liberate these Muslims from non-Muslim occupation. Allah (swt) says in Quran, **﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنَ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل لَنَا مِنَ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا﴾** **“What has happened to you that you do not fight in the way of Allah, and for the oppressed among men, women and children who say, Our Lord! Take us out from this town whose people are cruel and make for us a supporter from Your own and make for us a helper from Your own”** [An-Nisa: 75]

Whenever the ruler, Imam or Khalifah of Muslims announces Jihad, it becomes individual obligation on all except those exempted by himself. This rule is for both offensive and defensive Jihad, because Allah (swt) said, **﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اتَّقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ﴾** **“O you who believe! What is wrong with you that when it is said to you, Come out in the way of Allah, you turn heavy (and cling) to the ground. Have you become happy with the worldly life instead of Hereafter? So (remember that) the enjoyment of the worldly life is but trivial in (comparison with) the Hereafter”** [Al-Tauba: 38].

﴿انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“March forth (in the way of Allah) no matter whether you are light or heavy, and carryout Jihad in the way of Allah with your wealth and lives. That is good for you, if you were to realize”** [Al-Tauba 41]

And according to Sheikhain, Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **«وإذا استنفرتم فانفروا»** **“When it is asked of you to move forward, then move forward.”**

This place is suitable to mention this important point that the Shari'i cause of the rule of Jihad is the existence of such non-Muslims who rejected this dawah. Similarly the Shar'i cause to stop jihad is the payment of Jizya from non-Muslims after been overcome. Therefore, till the existence of non-Muslims in this world who rejected the dawah of Islam presented to them, offensive jihad will remain a collective obligation on Muslims and Muslims will be answerable to Allah (swt) for this obligation in all times. Allah (swt) says in Quran, **﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ﴾** **“Fight them until there is no fitnah anymore and deen remains for Allah”** [Al-Baqara: 193]

﴿قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ﴾ **“Fight those people of the book whose do not believe in Allah, not in the last day and do not take as unlawful what Allah and His messenger has made unlawful and do not profess the faith of Truth, (fight them) until they pay Jizya with their own hands while they are subdued.”** [Al-Taubah: 29]

﴿إِلَّا تَنْفِرُوا يُعَذِّبَكُمُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا﴾ **“If you do not march forth (in the way of Allah), He will punish you with a painful punishment”** [Al-Taubah: 39]

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً﴾ **“O you who believe! Fight those disbelievers how are near you and let them find severity in you”** [Al-Taubah: 123]

Bukhari and Muslim have narrated this hadith, فإذا «أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله، فإذا فعلوا ذلك عصموا مني دماءهم وأموالهم إلا بحقهم» **“I have been ordered to fight all humans until they proclaim that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, and establish Salah and give Zakah. If they do so, they would secure their life and wealth from me, except Shari'i right”**.

These ayaat and hadith clarify that Shari'i cause of jihad is the existence of non-Muslims who rejected Islam; however, the Shari'i cause of stopping jihad is their paying Jizya and accepting the authority of Islam.

Jihad is not only Defensive:

This is another conspiracy of the secular West and its machinery in order to limit jihad to defense only. This is why every Muslim country has a Ministry of Defence, but none have ministries of war or Jihad. Although the West also named their ministries as defense but in reality, their ministries are of war, not defense.

Quran, Hadith, the life of Messenger of Allah (saw) and the consensus of companions define offensive and defensive jihad in a definite manner. Allah (swt) says in Quran, ﴿وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ﴾ **“Fight them until there is no fitnah anymore and deen remains for Allah”** [Al-Baqara: 193]

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These are absolute rules and no Ayah has abrogated or restricted them, meaning these ayahs do not specify fighting to an attack on Muslims or non-Muslims waging on Muslims; rather, these Ayahs oblige the Muslims to fight “till there is no fitnah remaining”. Moreover, they are commanding Muslims to continue waging jihad till the Non-Muslims submit to the authority of Muslims and the Islamic rules by paying jizya. Bukhari and Muslim have narrated this hadith, «أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يشهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله، فإذا فعلوا ذلك عصموا مني دماءهم وأموالهم إلا بحقهم» **“I have been ordered to fight all humans until they proclaim that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger, and establish Salah and give Zakah. If they do so, they would secure their life and wealth from me, except what is a right under Shari'iah”**.

This hadith has been narrated by Ibn Umer, Abu Huraira, Jabir bin Abdullah, Aus bin abu Aus, Abn Abbas, Sehl bin Saad, Noman ibn Bashir, Tariq ibn Asheem, Abu Bakrah, Muaz ibn Jabl, Samrah bin jundub. Hence this hadith is Mutawatir, which is the highest category of hadith. In this hadith also, he (saw) did not condition jihad with the aggression of Non-Muslims. The actions of Messenger of Allah (saw) and Righteous Khulafah also verify offensive jihad. The Battles of Badr, Hunain, Mota and Tabook were all initiated by the Messenger of Allah (saw), and similar is seen in the era of Righteous Khulafah, which is consented upon by all companions.

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