

TERRORISM
&
JIHAD

AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

by DR ZAKIR NAIK

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and

JIHAAAD

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Dr Zakir Naik had delivered the lecture, 'Terrorism and Jihaad - An Islamic Perspective' on October 04, 2002 at the Kamaraj Memorial Hall, Chennai, India.

INDEX

CHAPTER	1	Prologue	06
CHAPTER	2	Who is a 'Fundamentalist'?	07
CHAPTER	3	Differing Perspectives Lead to Different Labels	10
CHAPTER	4	The meaning of 'Jihaad'	13
CHAPTER	5	'Jihaad' does not mean 'Holy War'	16
CHAPTER	6	Which is the best 'Jihaad'?	18
CHAPTER	7	Follow not the footsteps of the devil	20
CHAPTER	8	The Best 'Jihaad' in today's times	22

CHAPTER	9	Attack by the Media	24
CHAPTER	10	Deceit – Quoting Scriptures Out of Context	26
CHAPTER	11	Fighting for a Just cause has been Prescribed by all major Religions	29
CHAPTER	12	The Truth about Jihaad	33
CHAPTER	13	The ‘Sword’ of Islam	36
CHAPTER	14	The Truth of Islam shall Prevail	38

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All Praise is due to Allah, whom we thank and from whom we seek help and forgiveness. And Peace and Blessings of Almighty Allah be upon His Last and Final Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)¹, and upon all His righteous servants until the Last Day. I testify and proclaim that there is no god except Allah and that there is none worthy of worship and total obedience except Allah. I testify and proclaim that Muhammad (pbuh) is His servant and messenger.

Today, there is virulent propaganda about Islam in the international media, whether it is in international newspapers and magazines, or on radio broadcast stations and satellite TV channels.

Today the media is attacking Islam, and this has reached epidemic levels more so after the eleventh of September 2001. The international media is painting a wrong picture of Islam. Two major misconceptions that we face today, especially after eleventh of September 2001 are:

- (i) “Muslims are fundamentalists and terrorists”
- (ii) Concept of Jihaad in Islam

InshaAllah, we shall try to clarify these misconceptions in this treatise.

The media in a subtle, and sometimes in not-so-subtle a manner states that we Muslims are ‘fundamentalists’, and that we are ‘terrorists’. Let’s ask – what is the meaning of the words ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘terrorist’?

WHO IS A 'FUNDAMENTALIST'?

2

A 'fundamentalist', by definition, is a person who follows the fundamentals of a particular subject or a particular field. For example, if a person wants to be a good doctor, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of Medicine. Unless he is a fundamentalist in the field of Medicine, he cannot be a fundamentalist doctor i.e. he cannot be a good doctor. For a person to be a good Mathematician, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of Mathematics. Unless he is a fundamentalist in the field of Mathematics, he cannot be a good Mathematician. For a scientist to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practice the fundamentals of science. Unless he is a fundamentalist in the field of science, he cannot be a good scientist.

One should not paint all fundamentalists with the same brush stating that all are bad or that all are good. Depending on the field and nature of application in which the person is a fundamentalist, we have to label him or her accordingly. For example, if a person is a fundamentalist robber, whose choice of profession or vocation is to rob, then such a fundamentalist is not a good person for the society – he is a bane for the society. On the other hand, if we have a fundamentalist doctor, who saves hundreds of human lives, he is a boon for the society, and hence he is a good fundamentalist. Hence, based on the field a person is a fundamentalist, based on the nature of the impact of the fundamentalist's actions on society, we should label him or her accordingly.

As far as I am concerned, Alhamdulillah (i.e. Praise be to Almighty Allah), I am proud to be a fundamentalist Muslim, because I know, I follow and I strive to practice the fundamentals of Islam and because I know that each and every fundamental of Islam is in favour of humanity.

I challenge any person to point out a single fundamental teaching of Islam which is against humanity as a whole. There may be certain teachings or fundamentals of Islam, which certain non-Muslims may feel, are against humanity because of their own ignorance and lack of knowledge of the background of that teaching of Islam and of its benefits to human society. They may not be aware of the statistics of the world on that aspect of Islam. But the moment you respond to their queries and misgivings and give them the logical reasons behind that teaching or fundamental of Islam, they appreciate the beauty and practicality of that Islamic teaching. There is not a single person on the face of the earth who can point out a single fundamental of Islam which is against humanity as a whole.

THE TERM ‘FUNDAMENTALISM’ AND THE MISCHIEF PERPETRATED BY THE OXFORD DICTIONARY:

The Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English language (published by Konemann) says that ‘fundamentalism’ was a movement which was first used to describe the Protestant Christians in America in the early part of the 20th century. Earlier the church believed that the complete message of the Bible was from God. But Protestant Christians protested and said that not only is the message of the Bible from God, but every word, every letter of the Bible is from Almighty God. If any person can prove that every word and every letter of the Bible is from Almighty God, then this movement of ‘fundamentalism’ of the Protestant Christians is a good movement. On the other hand, if someone can prove that the Bible is not the word of God, then this movement of ‘fundamentalism’ of the Protestant Christians is not a good movement.

So initially, this word ‘fundamentalism’ was used to describe a group of Protestant Christians in the early part of the 20th century in America, who protested against the Church and said that the complete Bible, verbatim, is the word of Almighty God.

According to the earlier edition of the Oxford Dictionary, “a *‘fundamentalist’* is a person who strictly adheres to the ancient teachings of any religion.” But the second edition of the Oxford English

Dictionary (published by Clarendon Press) has changed the definition. This second edition says that *“a ‘fundamentalist’ is a person who strictly adheres to the ancient teachings of any religion, especially Islam!”*

So the word Islam has been added in the revised edition of the Oxford Dictionary to describe the word ‘fundamentalist’. This implies that the moment any person hears the word ‘fundamentalist’, he or she starts thinking of a Muslim as a ‘fundamentalist’ or a ‘terrorist’.

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES LEAD TO DIFFERENT LABELS

3

Many a time, we find that two different labels are given to the same activity of the same individual. For example, all of us are aware that before India got its independence in 1947, there were many Indians who fought for the freedom of our beloved country. These Indians who fought for the freedom of India were called ‘terrorists’ by the British Government and by the Britishers, but the same Indians have been called ‘patriots’ and ‘freedom fighters’ by us Indians. So here you have the same people and the same activity, but two different labels given to the people, based on two different viewpoints.

If you agree with the view of the British Government that it (the British Government) had a right to rule over India, then you have to agree with their view that our freedom fighters were ‘militants’ and ‘terrorists’. But on the other hand, if you agree with our view that the Britishers who came to India for trade and business had no right to rule over us then you have to agree with our view that these Indians were ‘freedom fighters’ and patriots. So it’s a question of viewpoints and perspectives – same people, same activity but two different labels.

Hence, before giving a label to any particular individual we should first try to ascertain and find out the reason for which that person is striving. For what reason is the person struggling or fighting?

Let’s take another example. Nelson Mandela, the former President of New South Africa, was called a ‘militant’ and a ‘terrorist’ by the earlier White Apartheid regime and government. He was imprisoned in Robben Island for more than 25 years.

If you agree with the view of that Apartheid South African Government that the colour of the skin makes one superior – that the white colour of one's skin makes one superior, and it is wrong to fight against this so called 'white supremacy', then you have to agree with their view that Nelson Mandela was one of the biggest militants and terrorists. But if you agree with our view and also of that of the indigenous South Africans that the colour of one's skin does not make one superior, then you also have to agree that Nelson Mandela's striving was for a just cause and he was not a terrorist.

The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Al Hujurat 49:13

*"O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female, and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."
[Surah Al Hujurat 49:13]*

The Qur'an thus clearly states that the criterion for assessing nobility in the sight of Allah (swt) is not wealth, nor colour, nor caste, nor gender but it is 'taqwa' i.e. God consciousness, piety and righteousness.

Hence if you agree with the view of the indigenous South Africans and/or the view of Islam and the Qur'an, then you will also agree that Nelson Mandela struggled and fought for a just cause. The former white Apartheid Government called Nelson Mandela a 'terrorist' and imprisoned him for several years, but later on the world gave him a Nobel Prize for Peace! Isn't it an irony that the 'terrorist' of yesterday becomes a Nobel Prize Winner of today?

Let us take another case in point – the former Prime Minister of Israel, Menachim Begin, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1978 even though he was responsible for the killing of thousands of Palestinians. Imagine a winner of the Noble Prize for Peace killing thousands of innocent human beings!

So it's a matter of perspective and viewpoint. The media plays a major role in the formation of impressions, viewpoints and perspectives. Once a person is branded a terrorist, then he becomes a Nobel Prize winner. Hence before we brand a person or give a label to any individual, first we have to find out the reason and the cause for which he or she is striving.

One of the greatest misconceptions about Islam, not only amongst the non-Muslims but even amongst the Muslims, is concerning the concept of Jihaad. Non-Muslims as well as Muslims think that any war fought by any Muslim for whatever purpose, be it good or bad, is Jihaad. They think that any war fought by any Muslim, whatever be the reason for it, whether it is for personal gain, or for language, or for political reasons – whatever be the reason they consider any war fought by a Muslim to be 'Jihaad'.

'Jihaad' comes from the Arabic word 'Jahada' which means 'to strive' or 'to struggle'. For example, if a student is striving and struggling to pass his examination, in Arabic we say that the person is doing 'Jihaad'. If an employee is striving and struggling to satisfy the employer irrespective whether the work that he is doing is good or bad, in Arabic it will be said that he is doing 'Jihaad' – he is striving and struggling to satisfy his employer. So 'Jihaad' basically means 'to strive', it means 'to struggle'.

A common misconception that exists today is regarding the word 'Jihaad'. Let us clarify that any war fought by any Muslim is not 'Jihaad'. Only one of the several forms of Jihaad is fighting. There are different types of Jihaad i.e., striving. One of the types is striving is fighting in the battlefield against oppression and tyranny.

In the Islamic context, 'Jihaad' means:

- (a) To strive against one's own evil inclination.
- (b) To strive to make the society better. To enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong.
- (c) To strive to give Da'wah and to propagate Islam.
- (d) To fight in self-defence or to fight in the battlefield against oppression and against aggression.

Many people have a misconception that 'Jihaad' can only be done by Muslims. However, if you read the Glorious Qur'an, it has several verses which say that even the non-Muslims do 'Jihaad'.

Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Luqman Ch. 31, V. 14:

*"And We have enjoined upon man (care) for his parents. His mother carried him, (increasing her) in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the (final) destination."
[Surah Luqman 31:14]*

The next verse of Surah Luqman Ch. 31, V. 15 continues and says:

*"But if they endeavour or strive (do Jihaad) to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in (this) world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me (in repentance). Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do."
[Surah Luqman 31:15]*

Here the Qur'an speaks about non-Muslim parents who do 'Jihaad' and strive and struggle to make their children worship somebody else besides Almighty God. If your parents force you and they strive to make you worship somebody else besides Allah (swt), do not obey them, but yet live with them with compassion, companionship, justice and kindness.

A similar message is repeated in Surah Al Ankaboot Ch. 29, V. 8. Allah (swt) says:

"And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavour or strive (do Jihaad) to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do." [Surah Al Ankaboot 29:8]

Here the Qur'an speaks of non-Muslim parents doing 'Jihaad' and struggling to force their children to do 'shirk' i.e. to associate partners with Almighty God.

Furthermore Almighty God says in the Qur'an in Surah An Nisa Ch. 4, V. 76:

*"Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah,
and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of Taghut."
[Surah An Nisa 4:76]*

The believers are those who strive in the way of Allah (swt) and those who reject faith are those who strive in the way of the evil one. Here Allah says that the believers i.e. the Muslims, are doing '*Jihaad Fi Sabeelillah*' which means striving in the way of Allah (swt) and those who reject faith are doing '*Jihaad Fi Sabeelish-Shaitaan*' i.e. they are striving in the way of the evil one, in the way of satan.

So from the Qur'an we come to know that 'Jihaad' basically means to strive, to struggle. There can be a good 'Jihaad' and there can be a bad 'Jihaad'. If you are doing '*Jihaad Fi Sabeelillah*', i.e. striving in the way of Allah (swt), it is good, but if you are doing '*Jihaad Fi Sabeelish-Shaitaan*' i.e. striving in the way of the evil one, in the way of Satan, it is not good. So 'Jihaad' is of various types but in Islamic context if it is not specified, it is taken for granted that when a person says 'Jihaad', it means '*Jihaad Fi Sabeelillah*', i.e. Jihaad in the way of Allah.

‘JIHAAD’ DOES NOT MEAN ‘HOLY WAR’

5

There is another misconception regarding the meaning of the word ‘Jihaad’. Many people translate the word ‘Jihaad’ as ‘holy war’. However, if you translate the words ‘holy war’ into Arabic, it is *‘Harbum Muqaddasah’*. Nowhere in the Qur’an or in the Hadith do the words *‘Harbum Muqaddasah’* appear. Nowhere does Islam speak about holy war’, nor in any of the verses of the Qur’an nor in the Hadith.

This term ‘holy war’ was first used by the orientalist to describe the crusades, when the Christian crusaders, attacked and conquered different lands in the name of religion. It was called ‘holy war’. These orientalist, once when they used ‘holy war’ for the crusades, they used it for the word ‘Jihaad’ and unfortunately even many Muslim ‘scholars’ translated the Arabic word ‘Jihaad’ as ‘holy war’.

The word used for fighting in Qur’an is *‘Qitaal’* which means ‘to fight’ and ‘to kill’. There are two types of *‘Qitaal’*: *‘Qitaal Fi Sabeelillah’* i.e. fighting in the way of Allah (swt), and *‘Qitaal Fi Sabeelish-shaitaan’* i.e. fighting in the way of Satan.

There are various types of ‘Jihaad’ as per the Qur’an and the Sahih Hadith. The Qur’an mentions:

*“And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him.
He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the
religion any difficulty.” [Surah Al Hajj 22:78]*

We should strive in the way of Allah (swt) as we ought to strive – with sincerity, consistency and discipline. He has chosen us and has not laid any difficulties in our religion.

Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah At Tawbah:

“The ones who have believed, emigrated and striven in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives are greater in rank in the sight of Allah. And it is those who are the attainers (of success).”
[Surah At Tawbah 9:20]

Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Al Ankaboot:

“And whoever strives only strives for (the benefit of) himself. Indeed Allah is free from need of the worlds.”
[Surah Al Ankaboot 29:6]

All those who do Jihaad in the way of Allah (swt), they do Jihaad for their own good and for their own benefit, for Allah (swt) is free of any wants. Allah (swt) does not require you and me; he is giving us an opportunity. If we strive, it will be for our own benefit; it is not going to benefit Allah (swt) in any way as he is free of all wants.

There are various Sahih Ahadith of the beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), where he has described the meaning of the word 'Jihaad'.

Narrated Abu Huraira (r.a.) that he heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) saying, “The example of a 'Mujaahid' in Allah's Cause – and Allah knows better who really strives in His Cause – is like a person who fasts and prays continuously. Allah guarantees that He will admit the 'Mujaahid' in His Cause into Paradise if he is killed, otherwise He will return him to his home safely with rewards and war booty”. [Sahih Al Bukhari Book of Jihaad Vol. 4 Hadith 2787]

So Allah says that a Mujaahid is a person who strives in Allah's way and Allah knows best who truly strives in His Way.

It is mentioned in Sahih Al Bukhari:

Narrated Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that she stated, "O Allah's Messenger! We consider Jihaad as the best deed. Should we not fight in Allah's Cause?" He said, "The best Jihaad (for women) is Hajj Mabroor (i.e. Hajj which is done according to the Prophet's tradition and is accepted by Allah)." [Sahih Al Bukhari Book of Jihaad Vol. 4 Hadith 2784]

Further it is mentioned in Sahih Al Bukhari:

Narrated Abdullah bin Amr (r.a.) that a man asked the Prophet (pbuh), "Shall I participate in Jihaad?" The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Are your parents living?" The man said, "Yes". The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Do Jihaad for their benefit." [Sahih Al Bukhari Vol. 8 Book of Good Manners Hadith 5972]

It is also mentioned in Sunan An Nasai:

A person asked the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), "Which kind of Jihaad is best?" He said: "A word of truth spoken before an unjust ruler." [Sunan An Nasai Hadith 4214]

It is further mentioned in Sahih Ibn Hibbaan that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"A Mujaahid is a person who strives against his own self in the way of Allah (swt) and the Muhaajir is a person who migrates from evil to good." [Sahih Ibn Hibbaan Vol. 11 Hadith 4862]

So when we read the Qur'an and the various Sahih Ahadith we come to know that the best of Jihaad keeps on changing depending upon the situation.

On one occasion the Prophet (pbuh) said that the best Jihaad is to perform Hajj while on another occasion when he realized that the parents of a Sahaabi required him, he said that the best Jihaad for him was to serve his parents, and yet on another occasion the Prophet (pbuh) said that the best Jihaad is to speak a word of truth against a tyrant ruler. So the best of Jihaad depends upon the specific situation and its circumstances.

FOLLOW NOT THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE DEVIL

7

Allah (swt) says in the Glorious Qur'an:

*“O you who have believed,
enter into Islam completely (and perfectly)
and do not follow the footsteps of Satan.
Indeed he is to you a clear enemy.”
[Surah Al Baqarah 2:208]*

What does Allah mean when he says that do not follow the footsteps of the devil? In the Qur'an, there is a different meaning of the words “do not follow the satan” and there is a different meaning of the words “do not follow the footsteps of the Satan”.

Let me give you an example – suppose there is an average 'Muslim' i.e. an average 'believer' – if the Satan comes directly to him, he will abstain from him and the temptation offered by him. For example if a young lady comes to a young Muslim, with average EEMAAN (faith) and tells him, “let's spend the night together”, he will say “No, it's Haraam” because he realizes that it is satan who is tempting him; hence he will not agree.

But the same Muslim person if he receives a phone call from a young lady, he will say that there is no problem in speaking to a young lady on the phone. Later on when the lady says, let's go out to tea or let's have some burgers may be in 'McDonalds' or in 'Kentucky Fried Chicken', he will say that there is no problem in going out with a lady just to have a burger. Then she suggests that let's go and have dinner, so they go to a restaurant to have dinner. He will say that there is no problem in having dinner with a young lady in a restaurant. Then she says, “Let's spend the night together”, and he succumbs to the temptation and he says “no problem”.

So this is “*khutuwaatish-shaitaan*” – the footsteps of the devil. When the satan comes in front of you directly and if you have little faith, you will immediately object. But if the devil approaches you in a subtle manner by a step-by-step approach i.e. the footsteps of the devil beckon you, you will not realize that how you sway towards the devil.

The person thinks that there is no issue or no problem in speaking to a ‘*Na Mahram*’ lady on the phone. ‘*Na Mahram*’ means a person (in this case this lady) who is an absolute stranger to you or a person with whom marriage is permissible. There are some limits of Hijaab in Islam. So the person starts speaking, then goes out with her to have a burger or for dinner at a restaurant, then eventually sleeps with her.

So beware of the footsteps of the devil. In several places in the Qur’an, Allah (swt) cautions us about the “*khutuwaatish-shaitaan*”, or the footsteps of the devil. Anyway this is just an example, to make you understand what Allah means when He says “*Khutuwaatish-Shaitaan*”. The same applies to a girl when a boy comes and calls her, the same example can be used.

We Muslims have to obey Allah (swt) in all spheres of our lives. All our words, acts and deeds have to be in accordance with His Commands. This requires one to strive to constantly prevent oneself from succumbing to various temptations that surround us and to strive to make one’s baser self, one’s basic instincts to submit to the will of Allah. This striving too is Jihaad.

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“He who amongst you sees something abominable should modify it with the help of his hands; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not the strength to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of faith.”

[Sahih Muslim Vol. 1 Book of Faith Hadith 79]

That means a Muslim, whenever he sees any evil, if he can he should strive to stop it with his hand. If he cannot stop it with his hand, he should at least open his mouth to strive to prevent that act or to warn or dissuade. If he is even afraid to open his mouth, the least he can do is to curse that evil deed in his heart, and if he does that, he is on the lowest level of a believer.

THE BEST 'JIHAAD' IN TODAY'S TIMES

8

Seeing the scenario that we have today throughout the world, the best form of 'Jihaad' today according to me is 'Da'wah' i.e. conveying the message of Islam to non-Muslims and removing the misconceptions about Islam from their minds. Allah knows the best.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

*Say, (O Muhammad): "If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and Jihaad (i.e. striving) in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people."
[Surah At Tawbah 9:24]*

Allah asks - what is your consideration? Is it your father, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, husbands or wives, your relatives, the wealth you have accumulated, the business in which you deal, the house in which you live – Allah asks "what is your consideration?" and Allah continues, "... if you love all these things more than Allah, His Messenger and doing 'Jihaad' in the way of Allah, striving and struggling in the way of Allah (swt), then Allah says you wait until He brings His decision upon you, until Allah brings His destruction on you and Allah guides not the 'Faasiq' people, the perverted transgressors.

Allah says in Surah Muhammad:

*"And if you turn away (i.e. refuse), He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you."
[Surah Muhammad 47:38]*

If you turn away from the path, if you do not do your duties which Allah has assigned you, Allah will substitute in your place another people and they will not be niggardly, disobedient, lazy and negligent (of duties to Allah) like you.

Allah says in Surah Ale Imran:

“You are the best nation produced (as an example) for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” [Surah Ale Imran 3:110]

Allah (swt) is giving us an honour by calling us Muslims the best of people. Whenever there is honour, it is always followed up with a responsibility. There is no honour without responsibility. When Allah calls us the *“Khaira Ummah”*, he is giving one of the highest honours to us, and don't you think we have a responsibility? The responsibility is mentioned in the same verse. Allah continues and says because we should enjoin what is good, we should forbid what is wrong and we should trust and believe in Allah.

Allah (swt) calls us the *“Khaira Ummah”* (the best of people) because we are supposed to enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If we do not enjoin what is good, if we do not forbid what is wrong, we are not fit to be called *“Khaira Ummah”*, we are not fit to be called the best of people, and we are not fit to be called Muslims.

It is a *faradh*, an obligatory duty, on every Muslim to convey the message of Islam, to remove the misconception from the minds of non-Muslims so that they understand Islam. According to me, the best form of 'Jihaad' in today's times is 'Da'wah'; it is conveying the message of Islam and removing the misconceptions about Islam.

Today we find virulent propaganda about Islam in the international media, whether it is in the international newspapers or magazines, on satellite channels, on radio stations, on the internet – the enemies of Islam are attacking Islam.

According to an article published in the TIME magazine issue of 16th of April 1979, there were 60,000 books written against Islam in a span of only 150 years, between 1800 and 1950. Imagine 60,000 books have been written only against Islam! That means more than one book is written against Islam everyday. Moreover, we find in the media today, the Muslims are being attacked.

The same media, whenever it speaks about women and Hijaab, when they are properly covered, they paint a picture that Islam subjugates women. On the other hand, at the same time, when they show a Christian Nun on the television, and these nuns too are covered in a similar dress, they say “Ah! Such a pious woman”. When the Christian nuns wear a similar dress by which the complete body is covered except the face and the hands up to the wrists, they portray them as religious women. On the other hand, if a Muslim lady is covered they portray that Islam subjugates her.

On one hand, when they show a Sikh wearing a turban and sporting a beard, they say he is proud of his identity. On the other hand, when a Muslim gent wears a cap and sports a beard, he is referred to as a fanatic, a militant or a terrorist.

In 1990 in Canada, a Sikh gent had fought for his right to wear a turban while on duty in the Canadian army. This was not as per the uniform rules and regulations of the Canadian Army. Here was an Indian who migrated to Canada and became a citizen of Canada. But he fought and

he won the case, and they showed his photograph in the front page that a Sikh Indian who became a Canadian fought for his rights and he was appreciated and permitted to wear his identity.

So for the media to make black into white is very easy, for it to make day into night is very easy, for it to make a hero into villain is very easy and to make a villain into hero is very easy.

The common non-Muslims throughout the world, whether in India or a European country, whether in America or UK, they are becoming victims of the media and its propaganda. You cannot blame common non-Muslims if they are against Islam unless we Muslims clarify their doubts and remove the misconceptions. It is the job of the Muslims to know how to reply and remove the misconceptions.

Frequently, many of the skeptics and critics of Islam pick up the verses of the Qur'an and they say that the Qur'an says we should kill the Non-Muslims and they quote the verses. One such famous verse which is quoted by most of the critics to attack the Qur'an is verse 5 of Surah At Tawbah (i.e. Ch. 9 V. 5) in which Allah (swt) states:

“And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give Zakah, let them (go) on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” [Surah At Tawbah 9:5]

This verse is even used by Arun Shourie, one of the staunchest critics of Islam. Even he quotes this famous verse in his book “The world of Fatawas”. In his book, Arun Shourie has inserted the word ‘Hindu’ next to the word ‘Kafir’ in the translation of this verse. Please note that meaning of the Arabic word ‘Kafir’ is ‘one who rejects faith’, a disbeliever. Arun Shourie gives the translation of this verse as follows:

“Whenever you find a Kafir (Hindu), you kill him and wait for him in every stratagem of war.”

In this manner Arun Shourie is trying to show the world that this book of the Muslims, this word of Almighty God, the Glorious Qur'an, asks the Muslims to kill the non-Muslims (and in brackets the word ‘Hindus’) whenever and wherever you find them. Furthermore after quoting Verse No. 5 in this book of his, he jumps to Verse No. 7 of the same Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an.

If anyone quotes any text out of context, you may not understand the meaning of that text. However, if you read the context you will

understand the meaning of that text. The first few verses of Surah At Tawbah Ch. 9 speak about the peace treaty between the Muslims and the Mushriks of Makkah.

This peace treaty was unilaterally broken by the Mushriks of Makkah. So it is in this context that Almighty Allah states in Verse No. 5 that “whenever you find the enemy in the battlefield – kill him.”

Allah is telling to the Muslims don't get scared in the battlefield, whenever the enemy comes to attack, fight them, and kill them if required; wait for them in every stratagem of war. This verse of the Qur'an is in the context of a battlefield. When the enemies who have broken the peace treaty, when they attack you, don't get scared in the battlefield, fight them, if required even kill them.

Now any Army General, any President of any country, or any Prime Minister, to boost the morale of his soldiers, he will use these words. For example, a few decades earlier, there was a war between America and Vietnam. If the American President or Army General tells the American soldiers in the battlefield that they should not get scared and wherever they find a Vietnamese, they should kill him.

Now if we were to quote the American President and say that he said that wherever you find a Vietnamese kill him, we will make him sound like a butcher. Such a statement is appropriate in the battlefield, to boost up the morale, when two opposing forces are arrayed against each other. In a similar manner, the Qur'anic verse refers to the situation in the battlefield, when the enemies had broken a peace treaty.

Arun Shourie, after quoting Verse No. 5, jumps to Verse No. 7. Any logical person will understand that there is something in Verse no. 6 which he has not quoted.

Verse 6 of Surah At Tawbah states:

“And if anyone of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah (i.e. the Qur'an). Then deliver him to his place of safety.”
[Surah At Tawbah 9:6]

I ask you, which Army General in the world today, even if he may be the best human in the world, which Army General will make such a statement as that made in this Verse 6 – “deliver him to his place of safety”? The maximum he will say, if he is a good human, is that let the enemy go. No Army General today will instruct his soldiers or his forces to escort the enemy to a place of security. But then this is what the Qur'an says – that if any of your enemies seeks peace, do not fight them but instead escort them to a place of security. Such a gesture is one of magnanimity, of forgiveness and of reciprocation of peace. And this is the verse that is deliberately skipped by Arun Shourie in his book.

When the enemies of Islam and the Islam-baiters attack Islam, it is the duty of the Muslims to clarify doubts and remove the misconceptions.

FIGHTING FOR A JUST CAUSE HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED BY ALL MAJOR RELIGIONS

11

I am a student of comparative religion. Please read the scriptures of all the major world religions – fighting has been prescribed in all religious scriptures. Yes. All the major religions of the world have prescribed fighting, at sometime or the other, especially in self-defence or for fighting against oppression and injustice.

Let's first analyse the Bible:

"(The Lord said) "Go ye after him through the city, and kill: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:"

[Book of Ezekiel 9:5, NIV]

"(Moses said): Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men."

[Book of Exodus 32:27-28]

"Then said he (Jesus) unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."

[Gospel of Luke 22:36]

Jesus Christ (pbuh) told the Apostles, his followers, to take up the sword and fight, and one of the Apostles, chopped off a person's ears.

"And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear."

[Gospel of Matthew 26:51]

So if the Christians read their scriptures, what does the scripture say?
That you have to fight!

I ask the Hindus: Have you read Mahabharata? What is the Mahabharata? The Mahabharata, an epic and religious scripture of the Hindus, talks about the fight between two families of relatives, between the cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Bhagavad Gita is the essence of the Mahabharata. If you read the Bhagavad Gita, it contains eighteen chapters that talk about fighting.

In the battlefield Arjuna prefers not to fight and be killed rather than having his conscience burdened with the killing of his relatives. At this moment, Krishna advises Arjuna in the battlefield and this advice is contained in the Bhagavad Gita.

There are several verses in the Bhagavad Gita where Krishna advises Arjuna to fight and kill the enemies even though they are his relatives.

The Bhagavad Gita is advice given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna when Arjuna is depressed in the battlefield and says, “how can I kill, how can I fight my relatives and my cousins?”

“O Krishna, maintainer of the people, I have heard by disciplic succession that those who destroy family traditions dwell always in hell.”

“Alas, how strange it is that we are preparing ourselves to commit greatly sinful acts. Driven by the desire to enjoy royal happiness...”

Better for me if the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, were to kill me unarmed and unresisting on the battlefield.”

“Arjuna, having thus spoken on the battlefield, cast aside his bow and arrows, and sat down on the chariot, his mind, overwhelmed with grief.” [Bhagavad Gita 1:43-46]

So Lord Krishna gives advice to Arjuna that he should fight for the truth even if it be against your father, against your relative – do not hesitate, fight them, kill them says that Lord Krishna.

“My dear Arjuna, how have these impurities come upon you? They are not at all befitting a man who knows the values of life. They lead not to higher planets but to infamy.

“O son of Partha, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy.” [Bhagavad Gita 2:2-3]

Krishna further says:

“Considering your specific duty as a Kshatriya, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting on religious principles, so there is no need for hesitation.”

“O Partha, happy are the Kshatriya to whom such fighting opportunities come unsought, opening for them the door of the heavenly planets”

“If, however, you do not perform your religious duty of fighting, then you will certainly incur sin for neglecting your duties, and thus lose your reputation as a fighter”.
[Bhagavad Gita 2:31-33]

All verses of religious scriptures are to be understood in their respective contexts. The context is that even if it is your own relatives that are against the truth, you have to first follow the commandment of Almighty God. For the truth you can and should fight anyone who obstructs truth and justice or anyone who perpetuates wrong doing, falsehood and injustice, irrespective of whether it is your father, or any of your other relatives.

The same message is even given in the Qur’an. Allah (swt) says in the Qur’an:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both.” [Surah An Nisa 4:135]

You have to fight for justice even if it is against your own interests. You have to stand out for witnessing Allah (swt) and for witnessing the truth of Almighty God even if it is against yourself, against your parents and against your relatives.

I ask people throughout the world – why don't you read your own religious scriptures first? There is more fighting mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita than in the Qur'an. That does not mean that what the Bhagavad Gita states is wrong.

The Quran says:

*“Come to a word that is equitable between us and you
- that we will not worship except Allah...”*
[Surah Ale Imran 3:64]

I ask the critics of Islam – “Have you read the scriptures of the other religions?” Almost all the major religions in the world have prescribed fighting at one time or the other – for the truth – whether it is Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism or Islam. So why are you selectively picking up Islam, targeting it and doing false propaganda against it?

The Qur'an says in Surah Al Baqarah:

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”
[Surah Al Baqarah 2:190]

The Qur'an says, you can fight those who fight you but do not transgress limits, for Allah (swt), Almighty God, does not like those who transgress.

Allah continues:

“Fight them until there is no (more) Fitnah (tumult and oppression) and (until) religion (i.e. worship) is (acknowledged to be) for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression (i.e. assault) except against the oppressors.”
[Surah Al Baqarah 2:193]

If you study Islamic history you will come to know the truth. There is a book written by Prof. Ramakrishna Rao on the Life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). In it he states that there were about 22 encounters in the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in which about one thousand and eighteen human beings were killed.

Compare this to the casualties of World War II, in which ten million civilians were killed and ten million soldiers were killed – twenty million dead – and thirty four million were injured. Imagine the magnitude of human suffering caused by such wars!

One can easily realise the difference between the casualties of these wars. Yet people talk about Islam and state that Islam was spread by the sword and killing is prescribed in Islam. Tell us, who talks about World War I and World War II, and criticizes the nations and its leaders that led to these wars and fought in them?

It is a common misconception that the religion of Islam was spread by the sword. 'Islam' is an Arabic word, which comes from the root words 'SALAAM' which means peace and 'SILM' which means submitting your will to Allah, the one and only Almighty God. Hence Islam means 'peace acquired by submitting your will to Allah (swt)'. Anyone who submits his will to Almighty God to acquire peace is called a 'Muslim'.

If you translate 'Islam was spread by the sword' it means 'peace was spread by the sword'.

Islam propagates spreading and maintaining peace in the world. Its teachings state that as far as possible, an individual or the state should not fight, should not be violent, and should not use the sword – except as a last resort. Islam gives permission that force can be used to eliminate tyranny and oppression and to achieve and sustain peace – to let peace prevail.

Every country in the world, every government in the world, has a police force and the police use force against criminals who try to disrupt peace. We praise the police when it uses force against criminals in order to let peace and justice prevail.

Similarly, Islam gives permission to use force only as a last resort, when some people create FITNAH (meaning oppression and injustice) and FASAAD (meaning corruption, mischief, and nuisance) in the world. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

"...Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption (done) in the land - it is as if he had slain humankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved humankind entirely." [Surah Al Ma'idah 5:32]

So Allah tells us in the Qur'an that if any human kills any other human, whether it be a Muslim or Non-Muslim, unless it be for murder or for creating mischief in the land or for creating FITNAH or FASAAD in the land, it is as though as if he killed the whole of humanity. (Allah doesn't say that only if you kill a Muslim, it is as though as if he killed the whole of humanity).

And if anyone saves any other human being, whether Muslim or Non-Muslim, it is as though as if he saved the whole of humanity. This is what this Glorious Book proclaims, and people allege that it is the source of violence, the source of disruption of peace! Those who wish to continue with and perpetuate their injustice, tyranny, oppression and falsehoods say such a monstrous lie and calumny.

The Glorious Qur'an provides guidance on how peace can prevail. Check it out! Obtain a copy of the translation of the Qur'an. Read it. You will be pleasantly surprised. Discover the truth about all these issues by yourself, directly by reading the translation of the Glorious Qur'an.

Was Islam spread by the Sword? Let's examine this issue.

The best reply to the allegation that Islam was spread by the sword, is given by De Lacy O'Leary, a very famous historian in the book 'Islam at the Crossroads' on page no. 8: "History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."

We Muslims ruled Spain for about 800 years and we did not use the sword. Later on the crusaders came and wiped out the Muslims – there was not a single Muslim who could openly give the Adhaan. The Muslims did not use the sword.

Muslims ruled India for about 1000 years. The Muslims had the power, but they did not use force. As a whole, no Muslim ruler forced the non-Muslims in India to accept Islam. Today, more than 80% of the Indians are non-Muslims. These 80% non-Muslims in India, are giving Shahaadah, they are bearing witness, that Islam was not spread by the sword. If the Muslims had wanted, they could have forced each and every Indian to accept Islam at the point of the sword. They did not do so. Today these 80% non-Muslims in India are giving Shahaadah, they are bearing witness, that Islam was not spread by the sword.

The Muslims ruled the Arab land for 1400 years. They were the lords and the rulers of the Arab land for 1400 years. The Britishers and the French came and ruled for a few years. But as a whole, the Muslims have been the rulers of the Arab land for the past 1400 years. Yet today, there are 14 million Arabs who are Coptic Christians. Coptic Christians means that they are Christians since generations. These more than 14 million Coptic Christians, they are giving Shahadah, they are bearing witness that Islam was not spread by the sword.

Indonesia is the country which has the maximum number of Muslims. Let me pose you this question: Which Muslim army went to Indonesia?

Malaysia has more than 50% of its population as Muslims. Which Muslim army went to Malaysia?

Which Muslim army went to the East Coast of Africa? Which sword are we talking of?

Thomas Carlyle gives the reply. In his book “Heroes and Hero worship”, he says, “The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting is precisely in a minority of one. In one man’s head alone. There it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it, there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and tries to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can.”

He is talking about the 'sword of intellect'. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best.”
[Surah An Nahl 16:125]

The Qur'an speaks of the 'sword of intellect' which conquers the hearts of human beings. We have to find the correct sword.

An article had appeared in “The Plain Truth” Magazine. It was a reproduction of the Reader’s Digest Almanac year book 1986. It gave a report of the increase in the major world religions in a span of 50 years, between 1934 to 1984. It stated, 'In this span of 50 years between 1934 and 1984 the religion that grew the maximum was Islam. It grew by 235%, while Christianity grew by a mere 47%'.

Let me once again ask a simple question: which war took place between 1934 and 1984 which forced human beings to accept Islam? Which war?

Today, the fastest growing religion in America and also in Europe is Islam. Who is forcing these Americans at the point of the sword to accept Islam? Who is forcing the Europeans to accept Islam at the point of the sword? Who?

Do you know that after 11th September 2001, the CNN relayed a news in the month of June 2002 that said that after 11th September 2001 in a span of approximately ten months, 34,000 Americans accepted Islam? The more they attack Islam, the more the truth of Islam will prevail.

As Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an:

*And say, "Truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, (by nature), ever bound to depart."
[Surah Al Israa' 17:81]*

The more you try and suppress the truth, the more the truth will prevail. Imagine, with all the media that they have at their disposal – the CNN, the BBC, other news channels; and everyone attacking Islam, yet the bestseller in America today is the "Bible" of the Muslims – they don't even know the Qur'an by its name!

The translation of the Qur'an is the bestseller. People want to know what kind of religion Islam is, and when they read the Qur'an, it opens up their hearts. The sword conquers their hearts and they accept Islam.

This is a fulfillment of a promise given by Almighty God in the Qur'an in no less than three different places. Almighty God says:

*"It is He who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allah dislike it."
[Surah At Tawbah 9:33 & Surah As Saff 61:9]*

And Allah repeats the message for the third time where He says:

"It is He who sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to manifest it over all religion, And sufficient is Allah as a Witness." [Surah Al Fath 48:28]

Allah's promise is – the more they attack this 'deen' of Haq (the truth), the more the truth of Islam will prevail. And you will find that Allah has his own ways of making this happen.

As Allah says in the Qur'an:

*“And they (i.e. the disbelievers) planned, but Allah planned.
And Allah is the best of planners.” [Surah Ale Imran 3:54]*

I would like to end this treatise with the following quotation of Dr Joseph Adam Pearson:

“People who worry that nuclear weaponry will one day fall in the hands of the Arabs, fail to realize that the Islamic bomb has been dropped already – it fell the day Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was born.”

And all praises are for the One and Only God and Creator Allah, who alone is worthy of devotion, complete submission and worship.

References

(a) The English translation of verses of the Glorious Qur'an is taken from the translation published by Saheeh International.

(b) The English translation of the verses of the Bible is taken from the King James Version

(c) The English translation of the verses of Bhagawad Gita is taken from 'Bhagawad Gita As it is' by Swami Prabhupada.

Please view Dr Zakir Naik's lecture on 'Terrorism and Jihaad - An Islamic Perspective' held on October 04, 2002 at the Kamaraj Memorial Hall, Chennai, India. Video tapes of this lecture include the Question and Answer session on the topic of this book.



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