

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ



إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

FRIDAY SERMON

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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on:

WHICH JIHAD ?

Jihad is a religious duty, an act of faith, prescribed by the Holy Quran for every Muslim. Alas, Islamic teachings are, on the one hand, so little known by Muslims, and on the other, so vilified by non-Muslims, that many false conceptions have settled in people's minds.

For many people, it seems convenient and legitimate to cover under the term *jihad* (holy war) any struggle to settle a dispute where their interests are at stake (and thus, all means, even the most reprehensible, seem to be good). For the non-Muslim *jihad* has long been equated with the holy war against non-believers, for the spread of Islam. It seems to me necessary - through this series of sermons on *jihad*, terrorism and Islamophobia - to return to the sources of Islam, through the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) to explain what *jihad* really is, for the objective minds.

The term *jihad* is derived from *jahada* which means making intense efforts to the ultimate limit (Al-Ankabut 29: 7). *Jihad* is such an important injunction for Muslims that it is mentioned in no less than 36 occasions in the Holy Quran.

In fact, it is of such importance that all the acts of faith prescribed for the believer (prayer, fasting, zakah, and pilgrimage to Mecca) are spiritual exercises designed to overcome the weaknesses of the individual and prepare him for the accomplishment of *jihad*. *Jihad*, as it appears from the reading of the the Holy Qur'an, denotes three types of fighting:

- 1) The fight against oneself (*nafs*).
- 2) The fight against evil in all its forms.
- 3) Armed combat against the visible enemy.

We can differentiate between the three types of *jihad* by calling them respectively *Jihad-i-Akbar* (greatest *jihad*), *Jihad-i-Kabir* (the great *jihad*) and *Jihad-i-Saghir* (the little/ lesser *jihad*). The Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh) considered that *Jihad-i-Akbar* is the supreme, noblest combat and he said, when his troops returned from the Tabuk expedition: "*You have accomplished the minor jihad now there remains the supreme jihad.*"

DJIHAD-I-AKBAR:- it is the tireless fight against oneself, against one's bad tendencies and inclinations. It is not therefore a fight of the State (the Country/ State/ Government, especially the Islamic One), but a struggle peculiar to the individual against his weak instincts/ carnal desires, such as infidelity, adultery, lies, dishonesty and materialism. However, the State has the obligation to help the citizen in this fight, creating the conditions conducive to his internal purification. It is the duty of the State to rid the social environment of any obstacle that may hinder the path of the individual to inner purity (e.g. the sale of alcoholic beverages, drugs, the practice of debauchery and games of chance).

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, "*Purity (or Cleanliness) is half of faith.*" This purity denotes the purity of the spirit. According to my analysis, a soul encumbered with unhealthy desires remains hermetically closed to divine grace. By purifying one's soul of every bad inclination, the individual accomplishes this supreme *jihad* and reaches half of the faith by becoming fit to receive the grace of his Creator and to follow the path of spiritual progress.

DJIHAD-I-KABIR:- This is the fight against everything that is harmful and unhealthy, and is foreign to the individual. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) was ordered

to engage in this *jihad*: **“O prophet! Fight against the disbelievers and the hypocrites. And be severe towards them.”** (At-Tauba 9: 73).

This verse is an unequivocal appeal to *jihad*, but does not mention the taking of arms. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) certainly engaged in defensive wars against the non-believers of Mecca, but he never took up arms against the hypocrites of Medina, even after their betrayal at the Battle of Uhud. It is therefore clear that the *jihad* which I just mentioned is not the armed *jihad*.

“Do not obey the unbelievers, but engage in a great struggle against them by means of the Qur’an.” (Al-Furqan 25: 53).

In this verse, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is commanded to fight with the most powerful weapon, that of the word of Allah, and this demonstrates the true purpose of *Jihad-i-Kabir*. It is a noble struggle, which consists in explaining the beauty of the teachings of the Holy Qur’an and inviting people to Islam. At the level of the individual, it is a battle that cannot be successfully engaged until the *Jihad-i-Akbar* (struggle against the self) has been accomplished.

Incidentally, and contrary to a widespread belief among non-Muslims, believers have never been asked to resort to armaments for the propagation of Islam. Islam is rich in convincing arguments and it would be diminishing it to think that it needs to be propagated by force and coercion. Moreover, the Qur’an itself guarantees freedom of worship: **“There shall be no compulsion in religion.”** (Al-Baqara 2: 257).

DJIHAD-I-SAGHIR:- It is the minor *jihad*, and it concerns mainly the State. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an: **“Permission (to fight) is given to those against whom fighting is launched, because they have been wronged, and Allah is powerful to give them victory.”** (Al-Haj 22: 40).

“Those who were unjustly driven out of their homes, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’.” (Al-Haj 22: 41).

There is consensus among the exegetes (critics) that verse 40 is the first verse in which permission was given to Muslims to use weapons in their defence. There are firm indications that this verse was revealed shortly after the forced

emigration of the Prophet (pbuh) to Medina (*Hijrat*). Verse 41 supports this hypothesis, since it confirms that permission to fight was granted after the Muslims had been expelled from their homes.

Verse 40 dictates the principle that a defensive war can be waged, and it was this principle that led a handful of poorly equipped Muslims into conflict with a well-organized Meccan army: because they were unfairly treated and assaulted/persecuted.

Verse 41 gives the second reason they were allowed to take up arms: because they had been unjustly driven out of their homes, their only fault being that they had a faith that was different from that of their oppressors. They had been harassed and tortured by intolerance (for their faith). A third verse allows Muslims to continue fighting to restore freedom of worship and opinion.

“And fight them until there is no more persecution and religion is (professed) only for Allah.” (Al-Baqara 2: 194).

To summarize, it can be said that the supreme *jihad* metamorphoses man into an elected one of Allah, the great *jihad* leads him, for love of his fellow men, to invite them in the way of Allah and the little *jihad* allows him to preserve what he acquired in terms of property, rights and freedoms. The most noble one is to fight against our low instincts and to spread the word of Allah and in cases of extreme urgency, as self-defence, to fight against the oppressors and armed combat has been rightly called a small (the lesser) *jihad*.

As for the armed conflict, Islam only allowed it to defend its property, its country and its freedom of worship, and nothing else. No other war is tolerated. Is it still possible to tax Islam as a religion that advocates violence? It is necessary to make the dichotomy between what Islam preaches and what the Islamists practice, and these are two different realities. This brings us to another question: do the pseudo jihad that are launched from time to time fit into the parameters of Islamic teaching? Did Iraq's aggression against Iran have a defensive purpose against the oppressor?

In my humble opinion, only the *jihad* of the peoples of Palestine, Bosnia and Kosovo, the Muslims of Myanmar - the *Royingyas* - would be valid today; because

they have been driven out of their homes and countries and persecuted. So, all Muslims who are oppressed because of their faith, there is permission to do *Jihad-i-Saghir* to defend their lives, their rights and their freedoms. With the Karadzic and Milosevic of this world, there can be no other dialogue than that of arms. Again, it is necessary, in an Islamic configuration, that the permission to engage in a holy war be given by the supreme authority, which cannot be other than a Messenger of Allah (through the divine instructions). Could one imagine at the height of Islam, the launching of armed *jihad* without the permission of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) or that of his rightly-guided caliphs?

It must be admitted that the Islamic world can only function half-way without a Messenger of Allah. Either the Community (*Ummah*) is led by a Messenger of Allah - [There must be the belief – by all Muslims – that the door of the coming of the prophets (non-bearers of laws) is not closed, neither this nor that of divine revelation, and that Allah will always protect His religion and the *Ummah* from His beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by sending one of His chosen servants] - who makes the decisions imposed upon him by the requirements of the hour. And thus, many things, including armed conflict, are simply forbidden in his absence (and without his permission). This is food for thought for those who want to think carefully/ to reflect.

May Allah have mercy on Muslims and all of humanity and help us all to understand the well-foundedness of Islam and may Allah inspire us with faith and help us to always walk on the right path. *Ameen*.