

Misconceptions on *JIHAD* and *IRHAB*: An analytical study from Islamic Perspective for Peace and National Development

by

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Abstract

Jihad is not terrorism and terrorism is not jihad, jihad means effort, struggle or striving to live a virtuous life while terrorism means inculcating phobia, terrifying, frightening and threatening the lives and properties of innocent people. The two words Jihad and Terrorism remain a heated topic of debate and the most misconceived words around the globe which have attracted the attention of local and international communities after the scenerio of 9/11. The so-called media plays a strong role in the incessant circulation of the misconceived words. Jihad has been misconceived as holywar or terrorism and terrorism has been labelled and stamped on Muslims. It is very vital to understand that terrorism has no religion, tribe, ethnicity or nation and no religion teaches or preaches terrorism. It is the action of some Individuals irrespective of their backgrounds who pertakes in such criminal activities. Therefore, the kernel of the paper is to clarify the misconceptions on Jihad and Terrorism for peace and national development.

INTRODUCTION

The inability to distinguish between *Jihad* (effort) and *Irhab* (terrorism) and the misconceptions of the two words by the media makes it very intricate for people to understand their meaning. The wisdom behind *jihad* is effort to crush injustice, protect lives, properties, intellect, family lineage and religion. It also connotes repelling evil and aggression, to protect the soul from the evil deception of the devil, to promote righteousness and maintain peace and justice for national security and development, (Jabeer El-Jazaery 2008). Any group that wants to divulge its grievances and grudges or voicing its selfish and un-Islamic ideologies do hide under the nomenclature of Jihad. A good example of this is the *jama'atu Ahlussunnah Lidda'awatu wal-Jihad* meaning (people committed for the propagation of the Prophet Teachings and *jihad*) which is popularly known as **Boko Haram**. It is very clear that their action has no connection to *Jihad*. The noble Prophet S.A.W sets forth lengthy rulings on rules of conduct in war, including the fact that women and children should not be targeted, that proportionality of force must be used, that civilian structures should not be gratuitously destroyed, that

Jihad must be declared by a legitimate ruler or head of state, and that warfare outside of the rules of *Jihad* is not legitimate. The Prophet is on record for ordering his soldiers to ‘avoid harming women, children, the elderly, or people at temples and monasteries. (Graham, 2012). In view of the nefarious activities that have been associated in recent times with the concept of *Jihad* it became necessary for proper interpretation to be advanced on this premise. This is the problem that this research resolved. The methodology is analytical.

TERRORISM

The concept “Terrorism” is a very difficult one to pin down to a strait-jacket definition essentially because the term or concept has come to refer to a gamut of inter-locking variables and trends so much so that once the term is mentioned, it evokes a lot of passion and emotion. The difficulty in defining “terrorism” is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is legitimate. These perceptions are at once geographical, ideological and academic. Even the UN has no internationally-agreed definition of terrorism. However, the UN General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994), titled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," contains a provision describing terrorism as:

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them.

In the absence of a legal definition, attempts have been made since the 1980s to reach agreement on an academic consensus definition. The latest outcome is the Revised Academic Consensus Definition of Terrorism (2011). It is the result of three rounds of consultations among academics and other professionals. According to this revised consensus definition,

Terrorism refers, on the one hand, to a doctrine about the presumed effectiveness of a special form or tactic of fear- generating, coercive political violence and, on the other hand, to a conspiratorial practice of calculated, demonstrative, direct violent action without legal or moral restraints, targeting mainly civilians and non-combatants, performed for its propagandistic and psychological effects on various audiences and conflict parties” (Schmid, 2011).

These definitions are very illustrative. They pointed out that: Terrorism involves violence or— equally important—the threat of violence that can cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages. Terrorists attempt to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective. Terrorism is

therefore designed to have psychological effects that reach far beyond its impact on the immediate victims or object of an attack.

JIHAD

In the Qur'an and Hadith, *jihad* has many meanings. The basic root of the word *jihad* in Arabic means 'effort' or 'struggle'. It is widely used to refer to the struggle of the individual to live a virtuous life, to uphold religious values in one's personal life, to help propagate Islam through personal effort by way of personal example and promoting the faith. In that context the word *jihad* for Muslims retains quite positive religious connotations of personal devotion toward betterment. It is also routinely used in colloquial Arabic simply to mean 'I'll make an effort, do my best.' That is the 'great *jihad*' or personal *jihad*, as defined by the prophet.

'Lesser *Jihad*' as defined originally by the Prophet, came to refer to military efforts in a context of military struggle in which the key obligations were defense and preservation of Islam and the society. Since the fledgling Muslim community in Medina was under siege from pagan forces from Mecca over repeated years of battle, the defense of the community was central to many Qur'anic revelations and personal concerns of the Prophet. But as the early Muslim community stabilized, it moved into a phase of military expansion. As Islam spread, it encountered other states and empires with which it fought for control over vast region (Graham 2012)

HISTORY OF JIHAD AND TERRORISM

JIHAD is as old as man, which connotes calling people to what is good and to abstain from all evils (*Al-amru bil Ma'ruf wal Nahyi anil munkar*). With the advent of time the word suffers continuous changes, corruptions and innovation which serves as detriment to its genuine meaning. The essence of Jihad is not to kill but rather to save lives, the effort of a medical doctor in saving lives is *jihad*, the struggle of a soldier or policeman to protect people from rapist, kidnappers and armrobbers is *jihad*, the struggle of the head of a family to cater for his family in a lawful way is *Jihad* and the effort of a student to read and pass his examination is *Jihad* among other lawful efforts.

The noble Prophet and his companions spent 13 years in Mecca under extreme persecution of the Pagans to the extent that the pagans even killed some of his companions and attempted to kill him also, but there was never a time when the Prophet commanded his companions to fight the pagans. (Ibn Kathir 2007) Life is very sacred in Islam that it cannot be taken unnecessarily. The protection of human life is equally stated in the following verse:

Do not kill a soul which Allah made sacred except through the due process of law... Q17:33

... whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption done in the land it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one it is as if he had saved mankind entirely... Q5:32

The emergence of Shayh Uthman bn Fodio who was born on 15th December 1754 and his effort to reform the good teachings of Islam through teaching, preaching and writing is Jihad, fighting in most cases is the last resort which has ethics as enshrine in Qur'an and Hadith. (Usman 2011)

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. Q2:190

The noble Prophet said:

...O you people, do not wish to meet the enemies. You just pray Allah for health. And if you happen to meet the enemies bear patience...(Abdul-Ganiyy 2011)

It is the nature of man to defend himself and his properties against attacks or enemies, man cannot fold his hands and watch his defeat his struggle, striving and effort to protect himself is Jihad.

A man came to the Prophet and said: Oh Prophet what should I do if a man tries to hijack my properties, the Prophet said don't give it to him. The man said what if he fight me, the Prophet said fight him back. The man said what if he kills me; the Prophet said you died as a shaheed (martyr). The man said what if I kill him; the Prophet said he dies as a dweller of hellfire. (Muslim n.d)

TERRORISM the word terrorism is one of the most commonly used words in the media today. Terrorism has been in existence for a long time now though it firstly appeared during the french revolution in the 18th century, between 1787 and 1799 (Harrison 1984:123). The clear fact about terrorism is that it has no nation or nationality; it does not belong to any religion, culture or civilization. It cannot be attributed to a civilization nor blame its sins on one (World Book Encyclopedia 2001:178).

Terrorism has taken place in different countries of the world along the history of man. The Ku Klux Klan was a group in the USA, which was violently, terrorizing the blacks in the US. Their activities were not only against the blacks alone but also against their supporters in the late 1800's and 1930's (Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affair, 2004:13)

Adolf Hitler of Germany, Benito Mussolini of Italy, Joseph Stalin of Soviet Union, as many as other dictators that ruled in their respective countries had at one time use violence and forces to threaten and terrorize their subject and oppositions. This terrorism did not stop with politician alone; the Roman Catholic against the Protestant in the Northern Ireland also used it. A group described as BASF in Spain bombing several government agencies and buildings used it. From the foregone, it is clear that different groups regardless of their political, cultural differences use terrorism. Even in Nigeria, some groups in the Niger Delta, the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Herds men and Boko Haram are using terrorism to achieve their financial goals and political objectives. The recent genocide in Burma also demonstrated the act of terrorism.

POSITION OF ISLAM ON JIHAD (EFFORT) AND IRHAB (TERRORISM)

Jihad is lawful in Islam only if it is done in conformity with the scope and ethics of *Jihad* as enshrine in Qur'an and Hadith as follows:

- 1- *Jihad* is done by the hand, tongue and heart purposely to bring about good changes and to transform the society for speedy development.

The Prophet said: whoever among you sees and evil action, let him change it with his hand (by taking action); if he cannot, then with his tongue (by speaking out); and if he cannot, then with his heart (by hating it and feeling it is wrong), and that is the weakest of faith. (Abdul-Malik 2011)

- 2- *Jihad* is done through teaching, preaching and writing: meaning a teacher who teaches student is doing *Jihad*, a preacher who calls people to the way of the Lord is doing *Jihad*, and an author who writes books for the purpose of teaching and preservation of knowledge is also *jihad*. Calling people to what is right and to abstain from evil can only be achieved through teaching, preaching and writing.

Allah said:

And let there be from you a nation inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful Q3:104

- 3- *Jihad* is done against one's own self to protect himself from the evil deception of shaytan (devil).

Allah said:

Donot follow the footsteps of Shaytan (devil). In another verse Allah said: "Indeed Shaytan (devil) is your enemy hold him as an enemy"

- 4- Any lawful action that could serve as helping, saving and strengthening people e.g teaching, security, medical service and catering for the orphanage, widows and poors etc. or any philanthropist service is counted as *Jihad*.

- 5- Students who strives and study hard to pass his examination is *Jihad*, a father who struggle to cater for his family in a lawful way is *Jihad*. Infact a woman who strive to protect her dignity from sexual abuse or harrassment by rapist, even if she dies in the course of that is *Jihad*.

- 6- The last resort of *Jihad* is fighting enemies that aimed at devastating the peace of the land or serve as a threat to national security. In that case physical combat and the use of weapons are applied to salvage the lives, properties, religion and dignity and freedom of the people. Which should be done in line with islamic ethical standard:

- Women and children should not be targeted or kill.
- Proportionality of force must be used.
- Civilian structures should not be gratuitously destroyed.
- The *Jihad* must be declared by a legitimate ruler or head of state.
- People worshipping in the temples and monasteries should not be harm.

- Women should not be use as an object of rape or fornication because the two are prohibited in Islam.
- Women and children should not be captured as booty of war or use as a shield.
- No one should be compelled to accept or enter Islam.

Terrorism has no position directly or indirectly in Islam, Islam is the religion of Peace and Mercy, and it does not teach, preache or permit terrorism. Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. used to prohibit soldiers from killing women and children.

And he would advise them:

“Do not betray, do not be excessive, do not kill newborn child” (Bukahri and Muslim).

And he also said:

“whoever has killed a person having a treaty with the Muslims shall not smell the fragrance of paradise, though its fragrance is found for a span of forty years”. (Bukhari and Muslim). He also forbidden punishment with fire (Abu-Dawood)

He listed murder as the second of the major sins, and he even warned that on the Day of Judgment.

He said: *“ the first case to be adjudicated between people on the Day of Judgment will be those of bloodshed”* (Bukhari and Muslim)

Muslims are even encouraged to be kind to animals and are forbidden to hurt them talk more of human beings. Once the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W said:

“a woman was punished because she imprisoned a cat until it died. On account of this, she was doomed to hell. While she imprisoned it, she did not give the cat food or drink, nor did she free it to eat the insects of the earth” (Bukhari and Muslim)

He also said:

“ A man gave a very thirsty dog a drink, so God forgave his sins for his action. The Prophet was asked: “Messenger of God, are we rewarded for kindness towards animals? He said: “there is a reward for kindness to every living animal or human” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Additionally, while taking the life of an animal for food, Muslims are commanded to do so in a manner that causes the least amount of fright and suffering possible.

The Prophet said:

“when you slaughter an animal, do so in the best way. One should sharpen his knife to reduce the suffering of the animal”. (Muslim and Tirmidhi)

According to Doi (1984) human being can only be killed in the following situations:

- Law of equality (Qisasa) applied for a criminal who killed someone intentionally.
- In the war of defence against the enemies
- Punishment of death to the traitors who try to overthrow Islamic government
- A married (Muslim) man or woman who committed adultery and those who commit highway robbery (Hirabah).

Beside the above, homicide has been declared by the Noble Prophet (SAW) as the greatest sin only next to Polytheism (Shirk). He said:

“The greatest sins are to associated something or someone with Allah and to kill human being”

The Noble Prophet (SAW) also said:

“Who so kills intentionally shall be handed over to the relations of the killed (Maqtul). If they like, they may kill him; and if they like, they may take bloodwit; and that is 30 she-camels of 4 years old, 30 she-camels of 5years old, 40 pregnanat she-camels; and there is for them what they compromise upon.

Who so kill intentionally shall be handed over to the relation of the killed. Similarly when the camels have become very scared, it should be substituted with 1000 dinars of gold: 12,000 dirhams of silver: 200 cows, 2000sheep or goats; 200 suits of clothing.

The philosophy behind this is to eliminate or drastically reduce murder in the society, because if people are aware of the consequences such illegal act would be reduced. In fact not only killing, Islam stipulates retaliation or compensation for different injuries to the body, purposely to safeguard people from harming one another. If the injury is deliberate, and not accidental, retaliation is necessary. According to Bambale (1933) where retaliation has not taken place, the following compensation is payable.

- a. 100 camels (full blood money)**
 - i. When the nose is cut from the root
 - ii. When all the teeth are removed
 - iii. When two lips are removed
 - iv. When the two eyes are destroyed or removed
 - v. When castrated by removing the two testicles
 - vi. When there is injury to the backbone
 - vii. When the ears are removed, or hearing is impaired
 - viii. When the two breast of a woman are removed
 - ix. When the two hands or feet are removed
 - x. When the tongue is removed
 - xi. When the beard or hair of the head is removed
- b. Half of blood money**
 - i. When one leg is removed
 - ii. When one hand is removed
 - iii. When one eye is removed
- c. One third blood money**
 - i. When there is a wound on the skin of the head
 - ii. When there is wound in the belly
 - iii. When the eye-sight is gone but the eye is not removed or pluck out
- d. One-tenth blood money**
 - i. When there is the loss of a finger or toe**
- e. One twentieth of the blood money**
 - i. When a tooth is removed

ii. Every wound lays bare a bone ‘‘third degree bone’’

The wisdom behind this is to ensure full protection of human life, human being will not be rampantly killed, terrorists group or act of terrorism will be drastically reduce or eliminated, there will be more safety on the road because drivers will drive with care and they will not drink or take any intoxicant before they drive, there will be peaceful co-existence among various religion and ethnics group, and peace and harmonious co-existence will be achieved for national development.

The law of Qisas (Retaliation) is not firstly introduced by Islam, it was known before Islam to the followers of Judiasm in the Old Testament as one of the Ten Commoandement of Moses. ‘‘*that shall not kill. Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death*’’ Exodus 20:13 and 21:12. Similarly, the detailed law of Qisas for injuries which was laid down in Qur’an 5:45 ‘‘*We ordained therein for them: Life for Life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal*’’. The same statement is also found in the Old Testament. The law is also known to the Christians because it was part of the Law of Moses which Jesus came to fulfill. For this Jesus was reported to have said: ‘‘*Think not that I have come to abolish the law of the Prophets: I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them*’’ Mathew 15:17

In light of these and other Islamic texts, the act of inciting terror in the hearts of defenseless civilians, the wholesale destruction of buildings and properties, the bombing and maiming of innocent men, women and children are all forbidden and detestable acts according to Islam and the Muslims. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy and forgiveness, and the vast majorities have nothing to do with the violent events some have associated with Muslims. If an individual Muslim were to commit an act of terrorism, this person would be guilty of violating the laws of Islam.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the fact that *jihad* is an Arabic word is not a yard stick for it to suffers changes, corruptions and misconceptions by the west, media and some individuals. The implication of that simply means that medical doctors who struggle and strive to save peoples lives, security personels who strives and struggles to protect people and teachers who struggles to impart knowledge are all terrorist. This is very wrong, because effort, struggling and striving to achieve lawful and standard goals for human and national development is *Jihad*. Labelling Muslims as terrorist is also injustice because terrorism has no nation or nationality and it does not belong to any religion, culture or civilization. The action of any group that claim and hide under *jihad* to perpetrate evil should be thoroughly scrutinize to see if their action is in line with human reasoning and ethics of jihad in Islam which forbids killing of women, children, newborns, destroying worship centres, sexual abuse and punishment using fire among others.

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