

# Jihad and Terrorism: A Comparative Study

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## Abstract

*Man has always longed for peace: war per se has never been his cherished ideal. Yet wars have always been an undeniable fact of life. Notwithstanding the human desire for peace, at times wars do become indispensable. However, opinions differ as to when wars could be justified on moral grounds and when they are just a matter of sheer transgression. In tune with its claim to universality, both in terms of time and space, Islam has propounded its own everlasting concept of war, based on Divine wisdom and consideration of human welfare. Unfortunately, however, over a period of time, Islam's position on war has been shrouded in confusion and misguided misinterpretations. To make matters worse, more often than not, Jihad has come to be equated with terrorism something which runs counter to the spirit & substance of Islam. This has more to do with the actions of a few misguided religious zealots than the intellectual handiwork of even fewer iconoclastic elements. Nevertheless, decidedly an overwhelming majority of Muslims, not only the intelligentsia but also the common believers, are and have always been averse to waging wars beyond the strict limitations prescribed in Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).*

*Although a lot has been written on Jihad, scarcely anything of substance is available in terms of a comparative study of Jihad and terrorism in today's context. Much of the literature available on the subject of jihad has limitations of one kind or another. Therefore this research article attempts to offer a comparative analysis of Jihad and terrorism based on authentic sources. The paper will underscore significant points of divergence between Jihad and terrorism, besides expounding their respective meanings, objectives and character. Presumably this paper will serve as a stimulant for further research by academicians, students, scholars and jurists.*

**Keywords:** Jihad, Terrorism, Islam

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## Introduction

The September 11, 2001 attack on Pentagon and the twin towers in New York has proved a momentous event indeed: it has transformed the world in many ways. Not only has it led to reshaping of various international laws, concept of justice, human rights and even changes in geographical frontiers and liquidation of national sovereignty, it has also led to the emergence of new trends, terms and concepts in international politics. Outstanding among such concepts is that of terrorism. Rather than being an objectively defined and clearly understood concept, this term has often been used, and misused, to serve political objectives. More importantly, the term 'Jihad' has also been muddled with 'terrorism' in a way that the common perception, particularly in the non Muslim world, tends to equate Jihad with terrorism.

What is 'jihad'? Is it equivalent to terrorism and war-mongering? Is jihad synonymous with holy war? What is terrorism and the difference between jihad and terrorism? Is there any difference between the concepts, laws, principles, modus operandi, purposes and results of jihad and terrorism? Questions like these and, indeed, many more have cropped up ever since the fall of the twin towers and subsequent American response, particularly in the Middle East and Afghanistan. However, hardly any comprehensive answer has come up in response to these questions. There is need for an impartial and intellectually stimulating discussion in this regard as much work so far has either been confined to historical contexts or plagued by subjective propositions and personal opinions. Our objective in this paper therefore is to define and explain the true meaning and concept of jihad in the light of basic sources of Islamic jurisprudence; to clarify the basic aims and objectives of jihad; to highlight the key principles and cardinal conditions of jihad;

to try and alleviate misgivings and apprehensions regarding jihad; to explain what is terrorism and what are its characteristics, objectives and implications; to compare and differentiate between jihad and terrorism as mutually exclusive and fundamentally divergent in essence and execution

### **Review of literature**

Quite a few writers, both in distant and in recent past, have written extensively on jihad. Besides the original compendiums of Ahaadith, chiefly the 'Sihah-e-Sitta', and a few luminous writers of the early days of Muslim civilization, there are a few modern writers who have left valuable works on jihad to posterity. One such name is late Molvi Chiragh Ali whose book "A critical exposition of the popular jihad" appeared in 1884 was a commendable response to the negative propaganda and objections of Orientalists like William Muir, Dr. Samuel Green and Benjamin Bosworth Smith, to name but a few. However, in the process, jihad has been confined mostly to defensive purposes only and a few Quranic verses regarding jihad have been presented in a different sense. Maulana Abul Aala Maudoodi's *Al Jihad Fil-Islam in 1927* was another landmark work on jihad by a man who was destined to be the leading Muslim thinker and reformist of the twentieth century. The book written at the behest of Maulana Muhammad Ali Jaohar and much appreciated by Allama Iqbal, the poet philosopher of international standing, is considered a masterpiece in its own right. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, an Arab scholar-cum-Jihadi leader Abdullah Azzam wrote *Al Aadaab Wal Ah-Kaam Fil Jihad* in 1983 with focus on the war then raging in Afghanistan, although the book did briefly highlight the salient features of Jihad. Maulana Khalil Ahmed Haamidi also wrote a book titled, *Jihad-e-Islami*, in which obligation of jihad and

its importance were discussed in a motivational manner for the Muslims. Fazal Muhammad's book *Dawaat-e Jihad, fazaail, masaail, aor Waaqiáat* was published in 1999, followed by Hafiz Mubashir Husain Lahori's *Islam main Tasawwar-e Jihad aor Daor-e Haazir main Amali Jihad* in 2003 in which the author has deliberated upon the practical forms of jihad in modern times. In 2005, Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan's work *Jihad, Qitaal aor Aalam-e Islam* appeared in which the author touched upon the mandatory conditions of jihad, including the primary prerogative of the state to wage jihad. He has also discussed relations with non Muslims as well as the issues of Kashmir, Palestine and a few contemporary Jihadi outfits. Dr. M.A Salami wrote *Innocent victims in the global war on terror* in 2007 containing a research-oriented debate regarding some affected Muslim institutions and organizations, particularly NGOs. However, very important questions that have emerged in the wake of the 'war on terror' and reaction to it by numerous militant organizations, have not been fully addressed as yet.

### **Jihad and Terrorism: A Comparative Analysis**

Although there have always been misunderstanding, particularly in the non-Muslim world, about Jihad, lately it has often been equated with terrorism and both have been interpreted to mean more or less the same thing. This trend has further been augmented by the multi-dimensional war, involving media as well as war front, against terror. Nothing could be farther from the truth than to arrive at such false and frivolous conclusion. Despite some seemingly similar features such as loss of human life and other forms of collateral damage, there is and has always been fundamental difference between Jihad and terrorism, exactly the way there is difference between an act of culpable homicide and judicial execution in consequence of an order from a court of law: both cases

involve loss of human life but no sane person can equate the two situations. Homicide is an unjust, unlawful and forbidden (Haraam) act.<sup>1</sup> The murderer is declared punishable with death by law not only in the Divine laws but also most man-made laws.<sup>2</sup> According to Islamic system 'Qissas' (talion) is lawful execution for a heinous crime like homicide, genocide, and is not only legally permitted but also socially acceptable and considered useful for the common welfare of humanity.<sup>3</sup> Similar is the case between Jihad and terrorism, two mutually divergent and exclusive concepts.

### **Jihad: Meaning and Implication**

The word 'Jihad' is primarily an Arabic word which mean 'vastness', 'might', 'struggle' and 'optimum effort'<sup>4</sup> although it also implies 'motive' or 'intention' such as used in the verse, "They swear their strongest oaths by Allah".<sup>5</sup> Thus 'Jihad' and 'Juhad' literally mean a man's optimum effort to acquire something or achieve some objective.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the people take Jihad only in the meaning of war. But the fact of the matter is that for the war itself, the Holy Quran has not always used the word Jihad: instead, it has used words like 'Fitna', 'Fasad' and 'Qital' or war as such, while for an armed struggle for the cause of Islam, Quran has used the term "Qitaal Fi Sabeel-e-Allah" which means that such a war is not for any personal agenda but for the nobler cause of establishing a just and equitable order for the pleasure of Allah Almighty. The word 'Qitaal' has been used 54 times in the Holy Quran<sup>7</sup> while the Jihad and its related matters have been mentioned in 29 verses,<sup>8</sup> each time in a broader sense than mere military action. Similarly, in common parlance and in Islamic jurisprudence, Jihad has two connotations, one a broader one and the other of limited and specific application. In the former sense, Jihad means every effort that is

undertaken for the supremacy or security of Islam. In the latter, it means an armed struggle or 'Qitaal' for the same purpose. This implies that 'Qitaal' is one form of Jihad but neither is every 'Qitaal' Jihad nor is every Jihad necessarily 'Qitaal'. Another important implication of this distinction is that while Jihad is obligatory for all Muslims all the time, 'Qitaal' is neither mandatory for all nor all the time: it becomes so under specific circumstances and that too not upon all individuals such as the disabled, the sick, the young and the aged. The responsibility for Jihad in this latter sense is basically the responsibility of the state.

The Holy Quran uses Jihad in both these meanings separately but by and large in Makki verses Jihad has been used in its wider sense. For instance in Sura Al-Furqan, it says: "Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with it (the Qur'an)".<sup>9</sup>

Again in 'Sura Ankaboot', the Quran says:

"And those who strive (in Our cause), We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right".<sup>10</sup>

However, the word Jihad has been used, more often than not, to mean 'Qitaal' in the Madani Suras. For instance in Sura Tawba Allah says, "When a Sura comes down, enjoining them to believe in Allah and to strive and fight along with His Messenger, those with wealth and influence among them ask thee for exemption, and say: 'Leave us (behind): we would be with those who sit (at home)'"<sup>11</sup>

Explaining this broader meaning of Jihad Imam Ibn-e-Taimiya says that Jihad is either carried out through one's heart such as determination for Jihad; or through invitation to Islam and its commandments; or through manifesting the truth from falsehood before those gone astray; or through explaining and clarifying of doubts

regarding the right path; or through thinking and planning for acts of benefit for the believers; or else through the act of war itself. Whatever way it may be possible, Jihad is obligatory.<sup>12</sup> The discussion thus far leads us to the point that in its broader sense Jihad encompass self-disciplining as well as performance of the duties and obligations towards Allah and fellow human beings. In that sense then helping the poor, the needy, spreading education in society, preventing people from wrongdoing and enjoining upon them to do the right, and struggling for the establishment of a just and equitable social order is as much, if not more, Jihad as is fighting an armed war for the sake of Allah. All these actions constitute '*Jihad Fi Sabil-Allah*'.

### **Terrorism: Meaning and Implication**

The word "Dahshat Gardi" is a blend of Urdu and Persian words meaning to spread fear and harassment.<sup>13</sup> In Arabic its synonyms are 'Rahbat ', "Rahba " and "Rahbaa."<sup>14</sup> A ruler who terrorises the masses is termed " Al Arhaabi" and an order to terrorize is known as 'Al Hukmul-Arhaabi'.<sup>15</sup> The corresponding word in English for 'dahshat' is 'terror' while the word for 'dahshat gardi' is 'terrorism'. The Oxford dictionary defines terrorism thus:

*"The use of violence for political aims or to force a government to act especially because of the fear it causes among the people; appalling acts of terrorism."*

<sup>16</sup>

In almost every world language there is some word for 'terror' and 'fear'. There are also related laws, defining acts of terror and prescribing punishment for the perpetrators. Despite all this, the way the term terrorism is being used around the world these days, there is neither any agreed definition of terrorism nor the definite contours of terrorism clarified. It seems this lapse, if it is taken as such, is rather deliberate.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Politics there is no agreement on the definition of terrorist among governments and scholars. The term is used in negative sense, but when we talk about the struggle of Mărculești to destabilize the Vichy Government of France then it is used more positively and in friendly terms. As such the terrorist for one is the freedom fighter for another. Sometimes the violent activities of government agencies such as Gestapo and KGB are also criticized and taken in negative sense as these agencies used to intimidate citizens and were involved in crimes against minorities. Sometimes states with different ideologies criticise each other for actions which they themselves perpetrate. During the Ronald Regan's presidency, the USA was critical of countries like Libya for acts of terrorism but was supporting terrorists against Nicaraguan Government. Interestingly the American dollar bears the image of Gorge Washington who was involved in violent activities for political aims, hence a terrorist for the regime in power but freedom fighter for the American nation.<sup>17</sup>

The crux of this excerpt is that there is no universal and clear cut definition of terrorism. That is the reason why the same action is an act of terrorism to some people but an act of heroism and welcome relief to others. One person is termed as a terrorist and outlaw by one group of people but the same person is celebrated as a patriot, a brave soldier and a leader by others. That is why Nelson Mandela, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly, rightly pointed out that no one can differentiate between terrorist and freedom fighter as at one time I was dubbed a terrorist and now I am head of state.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly the term terrorism itself is an invention of modern times but that does not mean that terrorism is not a unique and independently explainable phenomenon. As a matter of fact, terrorism is

not only a distinct phenomenon but can and should well be defined and distinguished from Jihad. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica terrorism is the systematic use of terror and unpredictable violence against governments, public or individuals to attain a political objective. Terrorism has been used by political organizations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and ethnic groups, by revolutionaries and by the armies and secret police of governments themselves.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly according to World Book Encyclopaedia terrorism is the use or threat of violence to create fear and alarm. Terrorists murder and kidnap people, seal off banks, hijack aeroplanes, set fires and commit other serious crimes but the terrorists differ from those of ordinary criminals. Most criminals want money or some other form of personal gain. But the terrorist commits crimes to support political causes.<sup>20</sup>

Strangely enough, at times opposition to policies of the United States and its allies are confused with terrorism. Professor Noam Chomsky gave a lecture regarding terrorism in 2001 which has been summed up by 'The Frontline'. According to 'The Frontline', Noam Chomsky has differentiated the formal meaning of terrorism and its meaning underpinning propaganda. The formal meaning is adopted by US official document which states that, "the use of force, or threat to use it, for attaining political, religious or ideological goals". But Chomsky has admitted that America has used the term in the sense of propaganda and accordingly those who are opposing America or its allies are also dubbed terrorists.<sup>21</sup> This partly explains why some view the so called war on terror as a fraud war, waged by the neo-imperialists for their nefarious designs. FBI defines terrorism as the illegal use of force against people, destruction of property, pressurising government or population or acts of

violence for achieving political or cultural aim from a group or person.<sup>22</sup> Professor Yonah Alexander, a well known expert on terrorism, opines that terrorism is the Illegal use of force against person, property, Government or civilian or to pressurize it to attain political or social aim from a group which deals with powers.<sup>23</sup> This definition limits acts of terrorism to common people only, although some operations against combatants also constitute terrorism. However, the positive aspect of this definition is its emphasis on the general sense of fear resulting from acts of terrorism.<sup>24</sup> Another Western scholar dilates on this fear aspect of terrorism and says that terrorism is in fact a show whose object is not the victim but the onlookers, the general public. He further elaborates the point by saying that the use of violence against civilians or installations for attaining political aim is terrorism. An old Chinese proverb explains it well: kill some in such a manner to frighten a thousand others.<sup>25</sup>

According to a former judge of the International Court of Justice the term terrorism is used for those activities in which either the methodology is wrong or the targets have legal protection or both, whether such activities are perpetrated by the state or individuals.<sup>26</sup> This is indeed quite a useful definition in that it covers two very important characteristics of terrorism: firstly, the illegality of the way force is used by the terrorists, such as burning, decapitation, amputation, torture, using chemical weapons, nuclear bombs; and secondly the legally protected status of the victims, that is to say targeting those who are innocent and have not harmed the terrorists in any way. That means for an act to be classified as an act of terrorism it must involve the use of illegal and inhuman ways against the targeted victims and that such act must be against the legally protected and the innocent. But the flaw in this definition is that it cannot be used to clearly distinguish ordinary crimes

and acts of terror because in many ordinary crimes one can find that the victim was both legally protected and innocent but still subjected to inhuman torture.<sup>27</sup> According to Brian Michael Jenkins a leading Western legal expert, terrorism involves the use of force or threat of using force for achieving certain objectives. It targets mostly civilians for some political aims. Attack is carried in such a way that attracts great attention. Perpetrators are members of armed group and own the attack. The attack has a psychological impact much more than the physical damage caused.<sup>28</sup> According to this view point, there are some specific and some general features of terrorism. Specific features of terrorist acts include: firstly, they constitute crimes; secondly, they involve the use, or threat of the use, of force; thirdly, they are underpinned by political motivations; fourthly, they cause optimum attention; fifthly, they leave a lasting psychological impact, more lethal than the physical damage. On the other hand the general characteristics of terrorist activities comprise breach of norms of war, targeting innocent armless citizens, claiming responsibility for the acts and perpetrators belong to armed organizations.<sup>29</sup> It is evident that this perspective highlights some key aspects of terrorism but then its drawback is that it has also covered those aspects of terrorism which are common to ordinary crimes; as such, it also does not offer a conclusive definition of terrorism. There are, however, two important things to keep in mind in this regard. Firstly, it is not necessary that the terrorist must always belong to an organized group: terrorist acts can be carried out by individuals in their own capacity as well as by the states. Secondly, it is also not necessary that the terrorist or terrorist organization may claim responsibility for their acts. There have been many cases of terror-related crimes where no one ever claimed responsibility and in many cases false claimants came

forward or fictitious names were used by terrorists while claiming responsibility, even though the terrorist acts were actually carried out by spy agencies. In all cases where responsibility for terrorist acts was genuinely claimed, the claimant organization, group or individual actually wanted to invite attention to some issue and objectives inducing such acts. Moreover, they also wanted to demonstrate to the general public and the government(s) their group dynamism, authority, power and resolve. However, this practice is getting out of fashion by the day, primarily because this way public opinion actually turns against the perpetrators of such acts. Moreover since the most obvious objective of terrorist acts is also to discredit the regime in power and to instil fear and awe in the hearts of the masses, this objective can well and easily be achieved without claiming responsibility and carrying out acts of terror as unknown terrorists.<sup>30</sup> International Law Commission had drafted a legal code for the peace and security of human beings in which terrorism was declared as a form of aggression. The document says that even acts of officials of one state instigating or encouraging acts of terrorism against another state also fall within the ambit of terrorism.<sup>31</sup>

It would be useful if the views of various Muslim writers on terrorism are also put in perspective to arrive at a fair conclusion. In the opinion of Professor Khurshid Ahmed, it (terrorism) is a way of use of force, in response to deprivation and hopelessness, not for some personal benefit but for attracting the enemy's attention. Terrorists carry out such a shocking act that causes not only damage but also gains attention of the rival to the cause for which such terrorist act is committed. That is why it has been termed as the weak's weapon against the mighty.<sup>32</sup> There is difference in the normal use of force in human interaction and use of force as violence per se or as terrorism. The use of force can be for the

right and the wrong, the just and the unjust and for justice or for injustice. Peace, security, justice, equity, discipline and rule of law are essential for the progress of a society. That is why at each stage of authority the use of force becomes necessary at times. The state itself cannot exist without coercive power and in order to avoid anarchy in society, use of force, now for punishment of the criminals and now against external aggression, is indispensable. Of course the use of force should always be circumscribed by certain rules, regulations, specified objectives and set principles. The legitimate use of force for the welfare of the people is a blessing but the use of force becomes a curse when it no more remains bridled by the norms of religion and morality and serves only personal interests. Such use of force results in killing, destruction, terrorism, loot, plunder and injustice. That is why such excessive use of force is a crime and liable to accountability. Terrorism is therefore fundamentally different from normal use of force or violence.<sup>33</sup> Dr. Muhammad Farooq Khan has also given his point of view by saying that terrorism is an act in which non combatant common people are deliberately killed through armed military action.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's perspective on the issue of terrorism is reflected in his saying that undeclared attack on the life, property and honour of non combatants will also constitute terrorism.<sup>35</sup> In Ghamidi's view even undeclared attacks against armed forces which have not participated in the war (against the terrorist who carries out attacks) would constitute terrorism.<sup>36</sup> This opinion would imply that acts of terrorism can be carried out against declared enemy combatants; and that undeclared attacks would be acts of terrorism whether carried against combatants or non combatants. For these reasons, Dr. Ghamidi does not consider US invasion of Afghanistan an act of terrorism. He adds that common

populace is not deliberately targeted in this war. However, unintentional collateral damage is a feature of every war in the world. No guarantee can be given regarding 'no danger' to the life and property of common people in such wars. What matters is that civilians should not be deliberately targeted.<sup>37</sup> This postulation of the scholar is of course open to debate, more so because if accepted, it would also exclude US Invasions of Iraq and Indian's state terrorism in Kashmir outside the scope of terrorism, although many, including Western writers and intellectuals, believe all these to be very much acts of terrorism.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, if surprise criminal acts against non combatants are terrorism, then pre-announced criminal acts against such people should also be terrorism in the first place and likewise surprise attacks against combatants would also be seen at times as acts of terrorism.<sup>39</sup>

The above concept of terrorism has been further qualified by Mr. Manzoor Ul Hassan by saying that even in the word "declared" some points will be considered integral: firstly that the enemy should be first given clear cut warning followed by actual action only when the enemy does not comply with the warning; secondly, if the enemy is combatants, they should be given ample opportunity to lay down their arms and if the enemy is non combatants, they should be provided the opportunity to submit or escape for the safety of their life, property and honour.<sup>40</sup> However, despite this clarification Professor Mushtaq Ahmed opines that this is still not a comprehensive definition of terrorism.<sup>41</sup> For instance, if a few activists of an organization enter a girls college and threaten the staff and students that if they do not vacate the college immediately, they will be blown to pieces; and later the activists actually carry out aerial firing and a few bomb blasts, even though with no casualty, will this not constitute terrorism? On the same analogy if there is a pre-announced

military operation in which some combatants and non combatants, stationed far away in schools or hospitals and distributing food and medicine, are targeted, will this also be outside the ambit of terrorism? Of course such acts are and will be construed as terrorism. The critical issue in use of force against non combatants is not whether such act is un-announced or pre-announced but whether it is deliberate or unintentional, legitimate or illegitimate. The question of how to determine whether such an act was in reality deliberate or unintentional, legitimate or illegitimate can always be determined on the basis of various factors, such as the methods and demeanour of the attacker as well as the facts and circumstances of the particular case. This question can always be probed into by independent bodies, particularly under the UN mandate, such as is done in case of many world issues and is in accordance with numerous national and international laws.<sup>42</sup>

Professor Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmed, a noted expert of Islamic disciplines, while deliberating on the meaning and implications of terrorism says that terrorism is an act involving unlawful use of force, or threat of such force, or an act of which the procedure itself is lawful but the target is those people who are legally protected from such an act, whether such people are combatants or non combatants. However, such an act, whether done by a group of people, or their organization of the government, must invariably result in fear in society or a particular segment of society.<sup>43</sup> Apparently this definition is quite comprehensive but it has been criticised that it also does not differentiate between terrorism and an ordinary crime.<sup>44</sup> In response to this criticism, Professor Mushtaq Ahmed asserts that it is not mandatory for ordinary crimes to always involve force and torture but every act of terrorism is invariably characterised by use of force or its threat. With regard to crimes where

force is actually used, the distinguishing character between criminal acts constituting terrorism and ordinary crimes would be presence or absence, respectively, of the objective of spreading sense of fear among the masses.<sup>45</sup>

Although there is no consensus-based international definition of terrorism, there are some forms of attack which have been classified as terrorism. They help in understanding what action does and what does not constitute terrorism.<sup>46</sup> These are: attacking civilian population and civil infrastructure; hijacking aeroplanes of civil aviation; kidnapping civilians or combatants; attacks on combatants in civil get up; use of poisonous gases and chemical weapons against combatants.

To sum up the discussion so far it can be safely said that terrorism is the illegitimate use of force and violence for achieving political objectives through spreading of fear and insecurity among common citizens as well as combatants by targeting people and public or private installations, buildings and infrastructure and even committing indiscriminate killings, kidnapping and tortures, physical and mental, in the process.

### **Difference between Jihad and Terrorism**

As referred to earlier on, Jihad and terrorism are essentially two divergent, mutually exclusive concepts. Jihad is primarily meant for the reformation of unhealthy trends and developments in society while terrorism leads to destruction and obliteration of the whole fabric of society. Terrorism involves calculated perpetration of crimes against humanity, including physical and mental torture of soldiers as well as non combatant civilians, destruction of public and private property, and destroying civil and military infrastructure to instil fear and harassment among the masses. None of these things are brooked in Jihad. In fact

Jihad is itself obligatory against such actions. Unlike terrorism, Jihad is never initiated for the fulfilment of any human desire or objective: it aims only at the establishment of an Islamic social order in accordance with Allah's commandments as revealed through his Messenger. Jihad seeks to resist all those forces which destroy the peace and prosperity of in humane society, whether such forces operate apparently for political ascendancy or other material gains. There is nothing that narrows the gap between the two, no matter how one may try to drag the actions of a few misguided individuals and groups into the fold of Jihad. It would be highly unjust and misleading to equate the wrong actions of a few with the noble concept of Jihad. Jihad can and should be seen in the light of the teachings of Quran and Sunnah, and not on the basis of the actions of this or that outfit.

Maulana Maudoodi has elucidated the true essence of jihad in *Al Jihad Fil Islam*. According to him, leaving aside all established terms of the time, Islam coined the phrase 'Jihad Fi Sabil-e-Allah' which testifies truthfully to its name and completely distinguishes it from concepts of barbarian wars. Lexically, Jihad means making optimum effort for the achievement of an objective: it has nothing to do with mere destruction, loot and plunder so typical of the wars of the time, nor with the usual brutality and excessive use of force as often seen in wars. Instead, a Mujahid's objective remains confined to the removal of the cause of evil and employs only proportionate use of effort, including force if warranted. But since the word 'effort' was not enough to convey full meaning, as effort can be both for the good and for the bad objectives, therefore the term Jihad was qualified with 'Fi Sabil-e-Allah', to exclude any element of personal revenge, mere ambition for territorial expansion, fulfilment of lustful desires, acquisition of wealth and property, winning

fame and popularity or gaining political supremacy. Jihad Fi Sabi-e-Allah therefore means only such effort and struggle which is undertaken for seeking the pleasure of Allah and which is channelized for achievement of objectives enjoined by Allah Almighty.<sup>47</sup> [And these objectives are the establishment of a just Socio-moral order in this world]

### **Sanctity of Human Life in Islam**

Islam prohibits war and bloodshed per se. What to talk of killing on a mass level, Islam has forbidden the unlawful killing of even one human being and unlawful murder has been equated with the killing of entire human race.

“ On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. Then although there came to them Our apostles with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.”<sup>48</sup>

The Prophet of peace and mercy, Muhammad (May Allah be Pleased with Him) is reported to have said:

*“O people! do not aspire for a war with the enemy and pray to Allah for peace and security in the world. If perforce you have to fight the enemy, then adopt patience and perseverance and then remember that Paradise is under the shadow of the sword”.*<sup>49</sup>

### **Objectives of Jihad**

Human society always remains vulnerable to the emergence and spread of undesirable trends and activities that adversely affect the collective interests of human life, in this world and in the Hereafter. Islam, the religion of peace, prosperity and salvation, therefore, does not brook

such things and enjoins positive efforts for ensuring the common good of all. For instance, when injustice, inequality, lawlessness and sedition break out, and the use of force becomes indispensable, Jihad is waged. Imam Sarakhsi writes that the purpose of jihad is to enable Muslims live in peace and help them achieve betterment in their worldly and religious affairs.<sup>50</sup> However, it does not imply that Jihad is waged only for the benefit of the Muslims alone: in fact the fruits of Jihad are guaranteed for humanity at large, irrespective of religious affiliations. As the Quran clarifies:

*“Did not Allah check or repel one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure”.*<sup>51</sup>

As evident from this verse of the Holy Quran, it is evident that had the hand of the unjust and the miscreants not been stopped through Jihad, their criminal actions would not have spared places of worship of any community of believers. It has also been underscored that the worst form of sedition is to destroy places of worship. Moreover, it has further been proclaimed very discretely that one group which indulges in such acts is resisted and stopped by another group from these acts. Similarly, in ‘Sura-e-Baqara’, Allah (Say with Thanks) mentions animosity and war-mongering among nations:

*“Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah doth extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth. And Allah loveth not those who do mischief”.*<sup>52</sup>

It is against evils such as terrorism, lawlessness, sedition, hatred, nepotism, injustice, immorality and similar other trends and practices which no society consider useful for the welfare of humankind and therefore Islam enjoins that if peaceful and lenient means such as

negotiations, persuasion and counselling fail to deliver, then force may be resorted to as an ultimate option.<sup>53</sup> Simultaneously Islam also forbids its followers from crossing limits or committing excesses, even if it is a situation of war with an enemy.

*“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors”.*<sup>54</sup>

It is thus evident that there is no room in Islam for killing by torture, and imputation or taking up arms against the weak, the aged, the weaker sex, non combatants not associated with the war, diplomatic staff. Nor is there any permission for destroying the places of worship, crops, cattle and other assets meant for the consumption of masses.<sup>55</sup> The use of chemical weapons or biological weapons, for that matter, resulting in mass killings and diseases, is also inimical to the teachings of Islam regarding Jihad-Fi Sabil-e-Allah.

The objectives of Jihad Fi Sabil-e-Allah include: prevention of terrorism, sedition and lawlessness;<sup>56</sup> preventing injustice and supporting the wronged;<sup>57</sup> defence of nation and state against aggression;<sup>58</sup> disciplining of conspirators and violators of peace treaty;<sup>59</sup> regaining of territories illegally occupied by enemy;<sup>60</sup> maintaining internal peace and security;<sup>61</sup> These are the situations in which military action becomes necessary, hence Islam allows Jihad of the Qitaal type, although Jihad in its broader sense is always permitted and enjoined against these and all other major and minor evils.

### **Objectives of Terrorism**

The objectives of terrorism include achievement of worldly political and other material gains which in turn may take the shape of geographical expansion, political influence, economic dividends, subjugating certain

people or coercing them to serve as agents and proxies, gaining military supremacy or political sovereignty.<sup>62</sup> If some misguided individuals and group misuse the concept of 'Jihad' as a conduit for pursuing their extremist agenda, one must not be misled by their actions to confuse Jihad with terrorism. Whatever be the objective of an individuals or a group, if their actions are in conflict with the injunctions of Islam regarding Jihad-e-Fi Sabil Allah, such would only qualify as acts of terrorism, plain and simple.

The basic difference between the two sets of objectives is that in case of Jihad, the objectives are centered around elimination of social evils such as injustice, exploitation, lawlessness and sedition aggression, to mention but a few, while terrorism fosters these very evils. As such clearly, while Jihad is a virtue and a commendable concept, terrorism is essentially harmful for humanity. Secondly, Jihad is never for man-made objectives and personal aggrandizement of whatever kind: it is solely launched for the supremacy of the Will of Allah in the form of Allah's commandments, enjoining the noble and forbidding the ignoble. Thirdly, in case of terrorism, there is no limit, no restriction, no scruple, no discrimination between what is innocent and what is not: it is a brute application of pressure tactics, including the use of arms and torturous measures even against the innocent civilians. In case of Islam, these are neither allowed in theory, nor tolerated in practice. According to Islam combat-based Jihad is allowed only as a last resort in situations where any civilized culture or system in modern world would also allow such an option.<sup>63</sup>

### **Conduct and Principles: Comparison between Jihad and Terrorism**

While permitting the limited use of force as a last option in certain conditions on the one hand, Islam also does not allow Muslim forces to

let loose a reign of terror and brutality like the case of many ordinary wars. It has prescribed proper code of conduct and principles for the Muslims to follow during military engagements. Much of man-made laws and conventions related to the conduct of war and treatment of civilians and soldiers are still far behind in this regard. Many nations still continue to show no respect to even those man-made regulations of war. However, Islam had prescribed governing principles of war many centuries ago.

Some of the basic tenets of Islam, constituting mandatory pre-conditions of war, comprise: abstention from worldly aims and objectives (Jihad must be for the pleasure of Allah alone);<sup>64</sup> avoiding breach of a treaty (strictly honour all peace treaties signed with other countries);<sup>65</sup> prohibition of waging war for personal glory, popularity or show off;<sup>66</sup> invitation of Islam and peace to the enemy;<sup>67</sup> no permission to launch surprise attacks;<sup>68</sup> honouring International conventions and agreements;<sup>69</sup> building a strong moral and material strength;<sup>70</sup> accepting peace proposals of the enemy in keeping with the situation;<sup>71</sup> prohibition of initiating war during the holy months;<sup>72</sup>

There are certain other requirements of Jihad as well. Outstanding among them is the mandatory compliance of Islamic state itself. Declaration of jihad is the exclusive prerogative of the state and all are required to comply in order to remain united and organized. If the decision is left to the judgment of each individual or group, there will be chaos, anarchy and disunity, resulting in catastrophe for the Muslims. Islam does not desire such a scenario. That is why obedience to the commandment of the Muslim ruler is indispensable otherwise no war will remain Jihad Fi Sabil-e-Allah.<sup>73</sup> Again Islam strictly ordains prohibition of: killing non combatants;<sup>74</sup> killing combatants by deception

after truce;<sup>75</sup> burning enemies in fire;<sup>76</sup> killing by torture;<sup>77</sup> loot and plunder;<sup>78</sup> destruction and spreading sedition;<sup>79</sup> killing emissaries;<sup>80</sup> taking personal revenge;<sup>81</sup> declaring war and then avoiding war through deception;<sup>82</sup> exceeding limits beyond corrective action.<sup>83</sup> Similarly Islam has prescribed guidelines for the actual war theatre and post-war situation as well. These are briefly summarized thus: abstain from mass killings and rioting;<sup>84</sup> be grateful and submissive before Allah Almighty;<sup>85</sup> never desecrate dead bodies<sup>86</sup> nor indulge in looting or embezzling booty of war;<sup>87</sup> respect the honour and chastity of women;<sup>88</sup> no destruction of places of worship of any religion.<sup>89</sup>

From the discussion so far it emerges crystal clear that as are the concepts, so is the difference between the way Jihad and terrorism operate. Jihad, being for much nobler objectives, aimed at improvement and betterment of human society, cannot brook inhuman conduct and strictly follows civilized norms of warfare. However, for the terrorist, the golden principle is, “everything is fair in love and war”, and that mindset does not believe in any respect for higher human values such as justice, equity, fair play, moderation, and respect for the fair sex, the weak and the innocent. Without any doubt terrorism is a heinous crime against humanity and should not find justification no matter who indulges in it. For the terrorist “the end justifies the means” but for the Mujahid, both the end and the means have to be justified and lawful. Jihad, unlike terrorism, is not a blind, brute, violent and unbridled use of force against anyone and everyone: it focuses its disciplined use of force on the targeted recalcitrant elements only and once such elements are handed down a befitting treatment in accordance with the norms of war, there is no a further war mongering, revengeful act or persecution, even of the combatants and their relatives, what to talk of common citizens. In order

to ensure adherence to the prescribed code of ethics of war, Islam has conditioned reward for Jihad with observance of its war ethics.<sup>90</sup>

### **Comparative Results of Jihad and Terrorism**

As a result of Jihad, the honour, life and property and places of worship are protected.<sup>91</sup> It eliminates injustice, oppression, fear and harassment, savagery and lawlessness and terrorism<sup>92</sup> and the wronged gets relief. Although some blood is shed in the battlefield but this blood actually guarantees prevalence and supremacy of justice, equity and peace in society at large. That is why the blood of the martyr is so sacred that on its first drop falling on the battlefield, Allah forgives all the sins of the martyr.<sup>93</sup> Those who die in this cause are not deemed dead but alive before Allah Almighty.<sup>94</sup> And those who migrate, sacrifice wealth or gives ultimate sacrifice for this cause get entitled to Allah's special blessings.<sup>95</sup>

Terrorism, on the contrary, leads to sheer destruction, disorder, fear, chaos and insecurity in society. Large scale populace is wiped out, properties are destroyed, and even flora and fauna bear the brunt at times. Business and social activities are adversely affected. In short life comes to a standstill and the world becomes a hell. Terrorists are, therefore, like a cancerous part of the body, the sooner it is chopped off, the better for the rest of the body. Jihad is a means of eliminating those cancerous parts of human society in the interest of peace and prosperity of mankind at large.<sup>96</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Wars date back to the very inception of human race and so are the efforts to avoid wars, remove mutual differences and remain peaceful. However, most wars are fought in pursuit of fulfillment of some mundane objective

rather than for any sublime revealed ideal such as the many enunciated by Islam. Such wars are fought ostensibly under a wide range of motivations such as establishing one man's rule over another, acquisition of lands and booty of war, self-projection, revenge and a myriad of other man-centered dynamics. These wars also do not strictly adhere to the otherwise internationally accepted laws and norms of warfare. More often than not inhuman tactics are employed, tactics which really are unbecoming of human beings as the vicegerent of Allah Almighty. Even in some cases where the warring parties outwardly proclaim to be acting in consonance with various International Conventions related to the conduct of war and treatment of prisoners of war, instances of stark breach of such laws and conventions do take place, sometimes clandestinely, sometimes blatantly. Killing and torturing non combatants, burning the beleaguered people, tying innocent people to bombs and exploding them, meting out inhuman and insulting treatment to the captured and the besieged, surprise invasions, breach of peace treaties and similar other dirty tactics are adopted by the warring sides, now collectively, now in individual capacity.

However, wars in Islam, called Jihad Fi Sabil-e-Allah, are fought not under this or that carnal desire but for the divine mission of establishing and maintaining a just, equitable and peaceful social order for the mankind, irrespective of any discrimination of colour, language, culture or ethnicity. Moreover, there are certain conditions and guidelines under which wars are to be fought and not otherwise. And all these things were propounded by Islam hundreds of years ago when there was hardly any civilised rule or code of war. The so called International conventions related to wars and prisoners still fall far short of the ideals which Islam had introduced centuries earlier. Islam also does not

approve of war-mongering per se. It believes wars and bloodshed to be a sinful act as such and should be avoided whenever possible. But when it becomes evident that injustice, oppression, lawlessness, insecurity is posing greater threat to the very existence of a peaceful, just and law abiding human society, then war becomes indispensable to ward off the impending danger. Since Islam is a religion of peace and human welfare in this world and in the Hereafter, therefore it chalks out rights and obligations of the individuals and the state for the realization of these ideals. It would therefore be totally inimical to very basics of Islam if lawlessness, injustice, oppression and exploitation are allowed to flourish, hence the need for Jihad.

In short Jihad has absolutely nothing to do with terrorism at all and the two are poles apart, in theory and action. Terrorism is an evil, Jihad is a blessing; terrorism the cause of human sufferings and destruction whereas Jihad is an antidote against suffering and destruction. Terrorism has no civilised norms and knows no bounds, Jihad is a measured and disciplined response to the challenge posed by anti-social and anti-state elements, be they in the form of invading armies or morally depraved within the same society. Terrorism jeopardises the very fabric of society and obliterates noble human values while Jihad aims at restoring justice, equality, rule of law, respect for human beings, peace and tranquillity. There never was, nor will ever be, any common ground between the mutually antithetical concepts of terrorism and Jihad.

**End Notes:**

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- <sup>3</sup> Al Baqara 2:179
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- <sup>7</sup> Al Mujum Al Fehrast Bailfaz Quran, Word Kital
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid Word Jihad, Jehd
- <sup>9</sup> Al Furqan 25/52
- <sup>10</sup> Al Anqoot 29/69
- <sup>11</sup> Al Toba 9/86
- <sup>12</sup> Ibn-e-Teemia, Majmua Fatawa Ibn-e-Teemia, Berut Dalfeqar, 1981,vol: 5/38
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- <sup>26</sup> Alex-Obot-Odora (WWW.Mudroch-Edu-Au).
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- <sup>28</sup> Op-Cit.
- <sup>29</sup> Ahmad Mushtaq, Jihad, Muzahimat aur Baghawat,P-566
- <sup>30</sup> Rafiuddin, Ahmmad Eld (ed), Terrorism, Islamabad, Policy Research institute, 2001, P-28
- <sup>31</sup> Alex-Obot, Oora, Difinins, Terrorism (WWW.udroch-Edu-au)
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- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Muhammad Farooq Doctor, Jihad, Kital aur Alem Islam, Darul Tazkeer, Lahore, 2005,P-100.
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- <sup>60</sup> Al Baqara 2/191,246
- <sup>61</sup> Al Maida 5/33-34 Sura-e-Tauba 9/23, 47,48-56-57, Al Ahzab 33/60,61,12,14 Nisah 4/81,91 Bukhari Muhammad Bin Ismail, Al Jamia-us-Sahi Bukhari, Istambul Darul Tabbat Al Aamira 1993 Kitab Istibatul Murtadeen, Bab Qatal- Ila Qabool
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