

Is Jihad a Living Tradition in Islam?

The word "jihad"¹ has been making an international career for decades. Nevertheless, the most meaningful moment of its reappearance in media has been the period since right after the WTC attack - starting from Osama bin Laden's fatwa² on jihad (although its legality is doubtful as only a khalifa³ can call for such) to the events in Istanbul inspired by jihad ideology as understood by the terrorists, not necessarily by Muslims.

Journalists, social scientists, orientalist, and the most interested group - the people of Islam - have crucial difficulties with the interpretation of jihad. Most dictionaries present only a definition known to nearly everyone who tries to follow the news, i.e., "holy war," naturally interpreted by Westerners as a religious war aimed at conquering the world of non-believers. Nevertheless, in contact with Muslims living in Europe, the definition seems to be more complex than that, demonstrating great discrepancies among the most interested group as well as pointing to problems connected with linguistic aspects of the term. Watching the evening news, being bombarded with jihadi actions (as nearly all killings are presented as a result of a holy war being undertaken), Westerners come to the conclusion that Islam promotes violence, hatred, and intolerance and no deeper, positive values. Since there have not been clear and loud protests by Muslim countries against bin Laden's fatwa and since suicidal killings have doubled, citizens of European countries have come to fear all Muslims, believing that,

¹ Jihad (Arabic) - derived from jahada; to strive, to put effort into something.

² Fatwa (Arabic) - legal decision, verdict.

³ Khalifa (Arabic) - caliph

according to the religion of the latter, it is possible and even required to die in the name of Allah while wounding or depriving innocent people of their lives. A consequence of all the events reported is a series of questions: Is Islam a dangerous religion? Are Muslims a threat to so-called civilized society? Are the other religions jeopardized? What exactly is jihad? Can answers to all these questions be found? The author of this article attempts to show not only the historic background of the jihad phenomenon, but also to analyze why a holy war may be differently comprehended by different groups and to look closer at the reasons for spreading the most violent conception of the holy war.

Sources of Islamic Law

In order to understand the specificity of Islam as a political, sociological, and finally religious system, one must take into consideration its legal background, i.e., the sources of Islamic law. As Islamic law determines all actions and predicts their consequences, its role cannot be underestimated. It may, however, be very difficult to comprehend for Westerners whose laws and rights stem from social consensus and normative secular solutions.

Firstly and undeniably, the most important source of Islamic law is the Quran, *ius ex scripto*, a legal code regulating all aspects of a Muslim life, beginning with rites and rituals and ending with very casuistic articles concerning civil, criminal, and family law. Since it was divinely imparted to the prophet Muhammad, but written down many years after his death (being earlier transmitted orally by his followers),⁴ the question of possible interpretation of the

⁴ About the year 650 AD, the text was finally standardized owing to Caliph Uthman who had established a special body responsible for preparation of a unified version of the Quran which had been fragmented heretofore and

verses (i.e., God's words) has been spurring many debates for over a thousand years. On the one side, the majority of Muslims, the Sunni, take the stand that the Quran cannot be interpreted as "the gates of ijtihad⁵ were closed in the tenth century." On the other, the Shi'a believe that ijtihad is a practical tool which helps in understanding divine law and God's commandments and thus is indispensable in encompassing the complexity of Quranic norms, often in opposition to one another.

The next source of Islamic law is the sunna,⁶ authentic precedents laid down by the Prophet and first caliphs, resembling (to some extent) English common law. The sets of examples of Muhammad's behavior under certain circumstances, or his opinions on some issues, are believed to be indicators as to the required conduct and recommended actions expected of Muslims. Their authenticity is proved by the credibility of the isnad,⁷ and one may argue which hadith⁸ are to be considered valid, and therefore a gradation is implemented depending on the quality of the transmitters. The sahihan ahadith⁹ constitute those accounts perceived as very good and leaving no doubts as to their reliability; the hasan refer to those ahadith which are relatively good, but may sometimes raise objections; and the last, the zaif, refer to the weakest, those whose transmitters are neither reliable nor proven to have existed. Naturally, the most binding are thus functioned solely in the common memory. Only then, on the basis of a consensus, the final version was accepted by the Muslim community.

⁵ Ijtihad (Arabic) - to exercise one's own opinion; this leaves room for interpretation of the existing laws contained in the Quran.

⁶ The Sunna was finally collected between the 8th and 9th centuries AD. There are two main sets of ahadith regarded as sahihan - Al Bukhari's and Abu Muslim's.

⁷ Isnad - the transmitters descended from the direct witnesses of the behavior of the Prophet or his own expressed opinions on any matter.

⁸ Hadith (Arabic) - tradition, custom; plural form: ahadith

⁹ There are two main sets of ahadith regarded as sahihan - Al Bukhari's and Abu Muslim's.

the sahihan. If the Quran does not regulate a particular case, then an Islamic lawyer must look for the answer in the remaining ahadith in order to solve a legal problem. When such a hadith does not exist (since the Sunna was elaborated in the 9th century, it must be stressed that life was different then and hence principles which emerged from that reality cannot always be applied to contemporary situations), a solution must be found elsewhere.

Hence, a qijas¹⁰ is needed, meaning reasoning a maiore ad minus and a minore ad maius. An analogy is made allowing one to construe already existing norms into new ones. The perfect example is the ban on alcohol consumption in Muslim countries. The Quran contains a regulation that forbids drinking wine and stresses that praying under the influence of alcoholic beverages is not permitted; however, there are no set punishments and vodka is not mentioned. Nevertheless, per analogiam, Muhammadan jurists came to the conclusion that the regulation should be implemented in extenso, prohibiting the use of any alcohol and, moreover, its production which is generally banned throughout the Islamic world. There are also other sources of law, however the above mentioned play an important role in understanding and interpreting jihad, as often referred to by theologians.

The Jihad is a topic frequently analyzed in the legal sources, particularly as far as the Quran and sunna are concerned.

Jihad in the Quran and its Historic Context

Islam emerged and spread on the Arab Peninsula, apart from being revealed to Muhammad, as a response to social inequality; it brought long-awaited answers to the spiritual

¹⁰ qijas (Arabic) - analogy

questions of the inhabitants of the region. Beduins who had formerly seen gods in trees and stones and had feared them, were all of a sudden informed that there was no other god but Allah; this facilitated the consolidation of their spiritual life, and consequently the creation of a political system as they devoted more time to establishing umma¹¹ than to worshipping an endless number of gods and goddesses.

Since they were eager to follow the revelation and at the same time to defend the new religion against its enemies - those who did not want to come to terms with the fact that all people are equal and maintained that angry pre-Islamic idols would be enraged by having been neglected - Muslims accompanied Muhammad during all his raids and acts of warfare.

Historically, Muslims were first ordered to express patience towards their persecutors as most inhabitants of Mekka did not accept the new faith. After the hijra¹² they were encouraged to defend themselves in case of direct danger and, furthermore, to answer with force when force was used against them, as *vim vi repellere licet*. The last stage was permission to attack enemies, provided that they were obviously intimidating and their bad intention apparent. Here one should keep in mind that the Quranic verses were revealed gradually, thus the concept of the jihad was unfolding and being adjusted to a shifting reality.

The Jihad which appears in the Quran, however, means something different than it is commonly understood now. For the careful reader, fluent in Arabic, nearly all references to fighting non-believers omit the word "jihad"; they use the word "qital."¹³ Thus, when Allah orders battle against non-believers, the word "qatala" (not "jahada") is employed (surat

¹¹ umma (Arabic) - muslim community

¹² hijra (Arabic) - the year when Muhammad and his companions left Mekka

¹³ qital (Arabic) - derived from qatala; to fight, mainly in the defense.

Al-Taubah, verse 12).¹⁴ However, in translation into other languages the word "to fight" appears, thus becoming an illustration for the jihad recommendation.¹⁵ Again, the historically substantiated command was to qital, not jihad and a holy war. Much more significantly, jihad comes up when God tells his followers to put effort into leading a good life (surat Al-Taubah, verse no. 88). Qital becomes a duty, when a Muslim is attacked in the sense intended in the Quran, whereas the term jihad materializes in two aspects: when God calls for internal development of all believers (by observing the rituals and arkan ad-din)¹⁶ and a struggle. When "to fight" is included, the word "jihad" is rather (though not always) replaced by "qital."

As is evident, translation can pervert the meaning or abuse the semantic context of the word. In the Quran, jihad conveys a more general picture of recommended actions: "fil-sabil-Allah" (i.e., "in the way of God") is applied more when Muslims are asked to fulfill the duties and commandments of the religion than when someone is to fight anybody. Nevertheless, one must admit that recommendations to fight and to kill enemies may indeed be found in the Quran - interchangeably employing the two words. Therefore, the jurist must resort to other sources of law in order to work out the rules of jihad and qital.

Chronologically, the verses which were revealed later, especially those manifested after Muhammad had decided to enlarge its umma, show that the concept of jihad as a duty inevitably and unmistakably turns into one to fight

¹⁴ The Holy Quran, trans. Abdullah Yousuf Ali, Libya 1973.

¹⁵ For instance, in most Polish newspapers, in the aftermath of the WTC tragedy, these verses were quoted in an attempt to prove that jihad ideology was deeply rooted in the Quran.

¹⁶ Arkan ad-din (Farsi), also usul ad-din (Arabic) - the five pillars of Islam.

nonbelievers. In fact, radicals tend to recall legal derogation theory, employing so-called historical reasoning which suggests that subsequently revealed verses derogate previous ones if the historic situation has changed. This means that, in order to arrive at any conclusion, one should first check when exactly the particular verses were revealed to Muhammad, and then decide if they may be implemented in life.

This applies to jihad as well. The ideologist who finally formulated the concept of jihad-as-war was As-Shaybani.¹⁷ Since then Muslim lawyers have resolved that jihad might be carried out by means of the tongue, hands, heart, and the sword. The former kinds imply reparations of damages, forgiveness and being patient and understanding, while the latter became the one which involves military actions. Osama bin Laden, being a zealot and a terrorist adheres to legal derogation theory and, therefore, will interpret the commandments sequentially and literally. So did Said Qutb (1906-1966, executed in Egypt for his radical political theology).¹⁸

In contrast, the majority of Muslims rather tries to point out that the Quran, although recommending battle, simultaneously takes care to detail the sole conditions under which fighting is permitted. Most Muslims also keep in mind the actual situation and particular time in which this concept was conveyed to the Prophet. Although the Quran is timeless, it was being communicated at a very specific point in time. Hence, it cannot be analyzed separately, because the process of its formation was inextricably connected with history, and thus its verses reflect the circumstances and conditions faced

¹⁷ Danecki J., *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, vol. I, Warsaw 2002.

¹⁸ Qutb spent two years (1948-1950) in America which changed his life. Although his first books were of a moralistic tone, after his return from America he became increasingly radical, expressing all his views in a revolutionary book, *Milestones*, which brought him a death sentence.

by believers then. Biased interpretation of the words "strive in the name of Allah," taken out of context, may lead to criminal actions no matter whether the term jihad or qital is used. In fact, the Quran states clearly who should be exempted from jihad understood as a war in defense and who must take part in it. In any case, it does not encompass an order to kill the innocent - the same will be addressed in the ahadith - as such an action constitutes a grievous and mortal sin for the murderer.

The Quran, being the most important source of law, determines all aspects of Muslim life, regardless of the interpretation or misinterpretation. As Islam does not comprise a hierarchical institution,¹⁹ every believer may interpret the law within the framework of the sources. Without knowledge of the historical background and the real mission of Muhammad who, like every prophet, wanted to create a better world, the reader will find any and all arguments for or against nearly anything he wants. That is why it is essential to expand the knowledge of both Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam in order to avoid misconceptions and misunderstandings.

Jihad in the Ahadith

As presented earlier, the sunna and ahadith play a crucial role in every Muslim's life as they are the direct teachings of God - Muhammad's life was a model one and thus should be emulated by believers. Consequently, those ahadith which are proven to be sahihan are binding and become obligatory laws to obey. The idea of jihad was naturally discussed by Muhammad and his companions.

¹⁹ Iran, a Shi'a country, is an exception. Here a hierarchical "church," with its more or less authoritative staff, holds a very strong position sanctioned by the constitution. See *Qānun-e-āsāsi, bā ākherin-e-eslāhāt* (The constitution with the last amendments), Teheran 1375.

Muhammad, asked about participation in a jihad, said that it was mandatory for the healthy and the able. The ill and disabled were exempted, although if they were wealthy enough to support fighters financially, then the law treated them on a par with mujahidin.²⁰ He maintained the teachings of the Quran, therefore he promised paradise for all those who fought in the name of Allah, stressing the defensive nature of war. In fact, a convention appears which states that killing children or women is a sin unless it is done by chance or at night²¹ or when a killer is able to determine with certainty that the child is going to become a non-believer in the future. Martyrs were the noblest men and deserved any award imagined by man. The concept of martyrdom began to develop in the Quran and was later dealt with in detailed manner in the ahadith. Suicidal killing was not mentioned, because, in fact, it is prohibited in Islam. As hadith by Bukhari stresses: "The Holy Prophet [...] said: The martyrs are of five kinds: one who dies of diarrhea (or cholera), one who is drowned, one who is buried under debris and one who dies fighting in the way of Allah, the Great and Almighty."²² So, a shahid²³ is also a Muslim who, while performing all his duties, meets his end, not necessarily dying from injuries inflicted by the enemy.

There are many ahadith on jihad, mostly collected by Abu Muslim, but not only. They constitute a continuation of the Quranic indications, sometimes being perhaps more casuistic. The most important one is the hadith quoting Muhammad's words - expressed by the Prophet after returning from a victorious battle: " Now it is time to switch from jihad al-asghar²⁴ to

²⁰ mujahid (Arabic) - a warrior.

²¹ Abu Muslim, hadith 4457, Book 019, www.udc.edu/dept/msa/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/muslim

²² Bukhari, 019, www.sacred-texts.com/isl/bukhari/bh1-104k

²³ Shahada (Arabic) - to see, to witness, to play a role model.

²⁴ Jihad al-asghar (Arabic) - the smallest jihad.

jihad al-akbar."²⁵ These words meant the end of fights and wars, per se, or perhaps the desire to end them and a willingness to turn to more divinely and difficult jihad, i.e., *jihad al-nafs*,²⁶ fighting the ego and one's bad inclinations. This hadith is very often brought up by Muslims in order to show the emphasis put by Muhammad on self-development "*fil-sabil-Allah.*" Fundamentalists, however, will not agree with it. Said Qutb, a renowned member of the Muslim Brotherhood as of 1950, claimed this hadith was *zaif* (weak, provided by an invalid *isnad*) and should therefore not be cited when discussing jihad.²⁷ Moreover, he said that orientalist and Muslims who quote it have created a distorted vision of Islam and jihad. This issue will be discussed later herein.

As far as all the rulings on jihad are concerned, one should be aware of the fact that the Quranic and Sunna-based regulations are to be strictly followed. Although Islamic schools of law allow interpretation of the content to some extent (by applying reasoning *per analogiam*), its vagueness may cause serious dissonance. The hadith ruling on the exceptional permissibility of killing a child, if a Muslim recognizes a potential non-believer therein, carries a highly controversial load and can leave room for abuse.

Mujahada - Jihad as a Spiritual and Mental Struggle in Sufism

²⁵ *Jihad al-akbar* (Arabic) - the greatest jihad.

²⁶ *Jihad al-nafs* (Arabic) - a jihad with oneself.

²⁷ See Said Qutb, *Milestones*, American Trust Foundation, 1990.

Sufism, Islamic mysticism, introduced the further development of *jihad al-nafs*²⁸ understood again as *jihad al-akbar*. Significantly, *jihad al-asghar* meant fighting injustice and maltreatment. The adepts saw many perils in the outer and inner world, hindering the soul in its advancement. They distinguished two meanings of a soul (*nafs*)²⁹: the evil attributes of a person who wants to suppress the ego, and the human being itself. Every person is faced with sexual passion and anger, two so-called "soldiers" which are sometimes strong enough to take control of the heart. However, as al-Ghazali³⁰ states, God has also created other soldiers in charge of defending the soul against losing its internal battle: knowledge, wisdom and reflection. Tirmidhi³¹ (9th century) put an emphasis on the fact that people are always torn between their passions and divinely given powers, thus proper measures should be taken in order to conquer Satan, the evil side of human nature. As self-development was the aim of Sufism, all its believers called for internal fights with the *nafs* in order to become one with God, in order to fulfill *tawhid*.³²

The mystics did not concentrate on external perils, stressing rather the difficulties and obstacles produced by the human soul itself. The idea of spreading Islam was of little importance for historical reasons - Islam was a

²⁸ Sufism (Arabic: *tassawwuf*) - a religious movement which was born in 8th century in Persia, having absorbed some elements from gnosticism, yoga, and shamanism. At first a marginal movement, a sect within Islam, it later (in the 9th century) gained a large number of followers, offering spiritual development leading to unification with God through ascetic practices, repetition of God's names (Arabic: *dhikr* - recitation) and contemplation. Teachers (Arabic: *murshid*) educate neophytes (Arabic: *murid*) to discover their paths (Arabic: *tariqa*) leading to God. Presently, there are over 70 Sufi orders around the world.

²⁹ See Abu al-Ghazali, *The revival of the religious sciences* (Arabic: *Ihya ulum ad-din*), transl. Fazlul Karim. 2003.

³⁰ Abu Hamud al-Ghazali, 1058-1111, philosopher, theologian and outstanding sufi.

³¹ H. Tirmidhi, *Rules of conduct for the Seekers of God*, ed. Abdulfattah Abdullah Baraka, Cairo 1976.

³² *Tawhid* (Arabic) - faith in the unity of god

powerful religion which did not need advocates at the time. Hence, Sufi identified many kinds of the term jihad, enriching them with their own considerations and cogitations. Needless to say, jihad became an indispensable tool, enabling, as we could dub it nowadays, a spiritual psychotherapy, aimed at repudiation of all worldly ties known to be a source of frustration. Efforts have to be made to rid oneself of human inclinations, such as the desires to have a comfortable, wealthy life, to sleep, or to live in a luxurious environment. Asceticism was the only answer and mujahada³³ - the deepest work on one's personality.

Kabbani, a contemporary sufi who is enhancing inter-religious dialogue, is working under different circumstances than when Islam started to experience difficulties resulting from secularization and fundamentalist campaigns. He has noticed that Muslims have to fight first with themselves; only if the internal battle succeeds can the outside world be challenged. Kabbani is a Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of America which aims at helping Americans understand Islam after the WTC events and stressing the need for gender equality which was, as he says, given by God to both sexes.³⁴ It is worth emphasizing, however, that Sufi orders still attract many adepts all over the world, but they do not have a great impact on local and global Muslim policies because they are regarded as a heretical movement by some.

Jihad as a Resistance Movement

The Islamic view of the world may be perceived as very controversial, taking into consideration that, according to it, the world is divided into two parts which are always at

³³ Mujahada (Arabic) - spiritual fight.

³⁴ H. Kabbabi, *Liberating the soul: A Guide for Spiritual Growth* (Sufi Wisdom Series), Islamic Supreme Council of America, July 2003.

war: dar as-salam (where Islam rules) and dar al-harb (the rest of the globe).³⁵ There are many discrepancies as to how to comprehend this division. Should it be seen as a clear indication that dar as-salam will emerge victorious one day, but only after a long, hard fight with dar al-harb at a cost of the lives of the innocent whose only crime was to be born non-believers? Does it mean, as a result, that people must be killed or religiously reeducated to join the fold of the real faith?

There is no simple answer to these questions. Again, the attitude towards the dichotomic split depends on the particular group of Muslims and the period in history. When Muslim societies were living their life undisturbed, ignorant of the West, and uninterested in barbarians,³⁶ all they had to solve were domestic problems. Having conquered the vast majority of the Near East, the division of the world was of less significance. Muslims focused all their energy on developing art, philosophy, and science. Nevertheless, this period did not last too long and was repeatedly interrupted, for example, by the Crusades. This, in turn, resulted not only in the extermination of many Muslims but also in the creation of very negative stereotypes of Christians, Christianity in general, and, in extenso, the West. Then the Islamic world, being reluctant to adopt bid'a³⁷ and associating all such phenomena with "them," slowed down its development. This did not happen intentionally, but was rather the consequence of a superiority feeling and impression that the West could not offer anything valuable or really revolutionary. The opinion was that every solution to every kind of problem lay within

³⁵ Dar as-salam (Arabic) - the gate of peace; dar al-harb (Arabic) - the gate of war.

³⁶ B. Lewis, *The World of Islam*, London 1994.

³⁷ Bid'a (Arabic) - novelty

Islam itself. This view would be shared by fundamentalists in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In 13th century jihad was made possible to be waged against believers and the new ideology was elaborated, thanks to ibn Taymiyya and his war theology³⁸, which enabled to carry out so called "jihad at home"³⁹ in order to purify Islam from the novelties and strange influences. Mongols, who converted into Islam, for Ibn Taymiyya were the worst evil, therefore he claimed that in spite of the fact that they observed five pillars, could not be real Muslims as they also followed their customary laws, violating shariat, thus constituting apostates. Apostasy is a subject of death penalty, so jihad was a perfect tool to perform the judgement. The understanding of jihad is presently widely accepted by radicals, such as the fastest developing salafi movement and its jihadi section, supported by Osama bin Laden.

When world power distribution changed dramatically (in the 19th century), the Islamic world, seen as relatively backward, found itself between forces which did not approve of the Islamic way of life and demonstrating that in many ways. Nearly all Islamic countries fell prey to their own ignorance of Western ways and the growing interests of world empires, such as France, Great Britain, and Russia.

Then the division into dar as-salam and dar al-harb gained a new dimension - namely the Islamic world, being more or less controlled and subordinated by non-Islamic powers, and challenged by different lifestyles and values, started to feel directly threatened by the new order. British and Russian

³⁸ Jansen J.G. Johannes, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism*, Cornell University Press, 1997, p.34

³⁹ Wiktorowicz Q., Kaltner J., *Killing in the name of Islam: Al Qaeda's justification for September 11*, Middle East Policy, Volume X, summer 2003, No2, also see: Wiktorowicz Q., *The new global threat, Transnational Salafis and Jihad at groups.colgate.edu/aarislam/wiktorow.htm*

interest groups played their influence games in Afghanistan and Iran; Iraq (or rather the territory of present-day Iraq) became a battlefield for the rivalry between Great Britain and France; and Egypt was controlled by the English. New movements emerged, trying to combine technological progress with traditional values (reformism), gaining many aides and members, but, at the same time, lower and uneducated layers of society felt excluded from the development and modernization. The faster the modernization, the stronger became the tendencies aimed at preserving the old order and culture. To some extent, imposed Westernization was successful; however, after reaching some critical point, it turned against itself.

And then the Ottoman empire collapsed between 1922-24, the last bastion of the Islamic world and the fully-fledged political entity which, in the Muslim's mind, had been the symbol of the Muhammadan system introduced on Earth. The ideology of Kemalism⁴⁰ which ensued thereafter opened a new chapter in the history of the region - one of official secularization and separation of religion and state. This was seen, however, by many (but especially radical) Muslims as a violation of Muhammad's laws and recommendations.

It was under these circumstances that the most radical conception of jihad was awoken. Following Abu al-A'la Maududi (1903-1979) in Pakistan who understood jihad as a war of liberation justified in establishment of independent states, Imam Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949)⁴¹ in Egypt formed the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, a very radical organization initially aimed at executing social and moral reforms based upon Islam. The philosophy of the movement was as follows: "Allah is our objective. The Messenger is our leader. The Quran is our law.

⁴⁰ Named after Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who forcibly secularized and Westernized the Turkish state and society.

⁴¹ Mitchell Richard P., *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope." Al-Banna decided to follow Ibn Taymiyya's thought and called for engagement in a holy war against not only the non-believers, but also the People of the Book, i.e., Jews and Christians who had been heretofore protected by Islam thanks to explicit recommendations in the Quran and ahadith. Rejected now, too, was any distinction between offensive and defensive jihad. Significantly, as Said Qutb would also declare, al-Banna claimed that the ahadith mentioning the importance of jihad al-akbar understood as an internal struggle with the ego and bad inclinations were not sahihan as that would imply that jihad al-ashgar could be less meaningful for believers. The dearest form of dying was to be killed in combat and abandoning warlike jihad could lead to dishonor. Thus, war should be annually declared by the Imam (in the absence of a khalifa) in order to spread Islam all over the world and finally establish an Islamic government throughout.

Al-Banna was also pointing his accusing finger at Muslims and modern umma, stating that political conflicts dividing the Islamic world, an increasing attachment to luxury goods, and an interest in philosophy instead of natural sciences had led to internal corruption of the believers and general deterioration of the Islamic world. In the West he saw two major threats: atheism and secularization. As Muslims become fascinated with Western civilization, they forget the real values of their own culture, and thus without jihad the critical situation cannot be solved. A holy war "on all fronts" had to be undertaken to remove all obstacles standing in the way of the jihad of dar as-salam. As can be seen, modern fundamentalists tend to understand "holy war" as a war of liberation from "evil" influences and the way to reestablishing or rebuilding their own, neglected culture.

Said Qutb went even further. The jihad proposed by him was even more radical than al-Banna's. He noticed the fallacy of social and political reforms and tendencies in Egypt (and then in all the Islamic world) and identified the reasons. One of them was the fact that believers had fallen into jahiliyya⁴² due to their religious ignorance and the strong influence of the atheistic and immoral West. Jahiliyya, consuming people's minds, fed on catchy slogans, such as gender equality, sovereignty of the people,⁴³ or freedom from religion. Qutb, having read the works of contemporary orientalist and scientists, accused them of spreading the misconception of the term "jihad." Because of their ignorance, he said, jihad appears to be a peaceful way of self-disciplining the ego, but how can one discipline the ego of the enemy? It would be naïve to think that through conversation and reasoning people could learn how atrocious are the systems they create. Islam provides all the necessary answers to social injustices, and so should be accepted by everybody as people live in slavery and must be freed.⁴⁴ His views were received very gladly, especially by the lower classess of Muslim societies, since he clearly pointed out to the persecutors what, understandably enough, could be a very useful method in casting responsibility for people's lives on "outsiders," i.e., either those who corrupted Islam by misinterpretation of its rules, or atheists who were an easy and simple target.

Qutb evidently and repeatedly stated that if the jihad was to be understood as a defensive war, then should the word "defensive" not be redefined? The Muslim world needed defense because it is oppressed by different systems - the political, religious and economic. Muslims tended to be subordinated to

⁴² Jahiliyya (Arabic) - obscurantism, pagan ignorance.

⁴³ Fundamentalists cannot comprehend the idea of democracy as, in their opinion, it cannot exist concurrently with God's sovereignty on earth.

⁴⁴ S. Qutb, Milestones, American Trust Foundation, 1990.

other peoples instead of being truly "Islamic" - meaning submissive only to God, as Allah said in the Quran and ahadith. The purification of the world was the essential goal, as God could not control every human being. If he had been able to do it, then churches and synagogues would have disappeared right from the beginning; priests and rabbis who called themselves mediators committed the greatest sin in trying to haggle with God, thus, unconditionally, they must be either converted or killed. Physical jihad in the name of God, persistent and never-ending, should be the aim of every able-bodied Muslim.

Qutb also divided jihad into some natural phases linked with history. Upon the emergence of Islam, God's order was directed to Muhammad, so that he recited and learned the sacred words. This was already a jihad of the heart, an internal effort to understand and remember the Quranic messages. The second stage came when Muhammad started to share the Quran with relatives and neighbors, then Arabs, and finally all contemporary people. Neophytes were expected to spread the call for accepting Islam, and to show leniency and patience towards enemies so their adversaries could appreciate the peaceful face of the new religion.

The last phase was the order to migrate - "traveling jihad." Since then history has theoretically verified jihad and adjusted it to its meanderings. When violence occurred, violence had to be applied as the final object was to introduce Islam all over the world. No wonder that Qutb's thinking gained him many followers, but also opponents. His ideas, ruthless, but very logical, showed the distinct directions in which Muslims should go - Islam at all costs. As the Islamic world was still shaken by internal and external conflicts, poverty and economic problems, Qutb's opinions were

received very enthusiastically. Such argumentation provides frustrated people with a satisfactory explanation; needless to say, the less educated they are, the easier they stick to a reasoning blaming outer forces for problems which cannot be faced by puppet governments.

Jihad in Iran as a Reaction to Anomie and Terror

Shortly before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, when it was obvious that the Shah's regime could not continue and an end had to be put to America's influence since it was linked with the cruelty of the Savak and the failures of the reforms undertaken by the Shah. Fundamentalism appeared as a natural consequence to imposed secularization and persecutions. The term "gharbzadegi"⁴⁵ was coined, introduced by Jalal-e-Ahmad, showing the moods of Iranians, tired of being treated as second class citizens in their own country, manipulated and removed from all important sectors of industry and the economy. The Shah's reforms resulted from suddenly gained wealth (oil) and were not consulted with anybody, because the Shah did not possess domestic experts persecuting students and intelligentsia in the fear of revolts. He employed foreigners that were not emotionally tight to Iran and therefore could not impose any danger and sent Iranians sent to Western universities - and they were not prone to return, realizing the perils awaiting them in Iran.

Mullahs during sermons in mosques, and merchants in the bazaars (the two most politically-oriented places in Iran) were the vigilant seismographs of the oncoming times. Terrorized and often sent to prison for advocating Islam as the only way to save fallen Iran - they prepared the foundations for the Revolution. The most known rebellion was,

⁴⁵ Gharbzadegi (farsi) - "Westoxification," the state of being contaminated by Western ideologies, values.

of course, that of Ayatollah Khomeini (1903-1989), the "author" of the first multimedia revolution initiated by recordings sent from Iraq and Paris to Iran.

Khomeini had a difficult task - to make frightened people fight against the regime. In the absence of moral norms and values during the Shah's times, he needed to remind Iranians that only Shi'a Islam possessed them. Hence the concept of jihad was applied. Khomeini distinguished two sorts of wars: *jehad* and *defa'*.⁴⁶

The defence (*defa'*), in his interpretation, was the ideological war whose purpose was to protect Iran from the influence of the West. The materialism of the West and lack of any spiritual values had to be fought by Muslims. *Jehad* has its roots in the Quranic verses and so may be undertaken in order to fight the ego and its negative proclivities (*jehad al-nafs*), as well as to defeat the external perils aimed at destroying Islam and the *umma*. Khomeini stressed the role of *jehad al-nafs* repeatedly while lecturing at universities (soon after the Revolution). He stated that a human soul was contaminated with evil, but since a good element was also given, then a battle against destructive forces should also be declared.

Muslims are obliged to fight the ego and to suppress all the vices deeply rooted in their souls. As the Quranic teachings show every man is ordered to take up the fight in the name of Allah (*fil-sabil-Allah*) and with due effort he may expect the highest reward for his strivings. Ayatollah Khomeini⁴⁷ did not reject the hadith on the supremacy of the *jihad al nafs* (*jihad al-akbar*) over *jihad as-asghar*. *Jihad al-nafs* for him was a sort of spiritual training and preparation

⁴⁶ *Jehad* (Farsi) - equivalent of *jihad*; *defa'* (Farsi) - defense.

⁴⁷ R. Khomeini, *The Greater Jihad*, trans. G. Legenhausen, A. Sarvadir, *At-Tawhid*, 1986

for the further steps that should also be taken by Muslims, i.e., the protection of Islam.⁴⁸ For Iran, in the eyes of its clergy and the majority of Iranians, the greatest dangers came from the West (particularly America and Israel) as these two countries were charged with the hardest accusation which could be imagined in Islam: polytheism, atheism, cultural manipulation and violation of Islam. Additionally, there were the countries which supported the West because they were adopting Western philosophy (e.g., Iraq, pre-Revolutionary Iran). Khomeini dubbed them: *Sheitan-e-bozorg*.⁴⁹ The Western image was presented in a very negative way. So the necessary war was against the materialism, Westernization, and secularization. Again, Islam was said to have all the remedies against the maladies of the contemporary world. The struggle should be started first with the soul, and then be continued on the territory of Iran. Khomeini did not encourage any attacks since he respected the rule that *jihad* (war) could not be waged in the absence of a *khalifa*. However, Islam was attacked, so defence (*defa'*) was made urgent and the need for purification of Persian soil immediate. The ideological war is still a very current issue in Iran.

Is Jihad a Living Tradition in Islam?

After the WTC tragedy this question is still being raised. As *jihad* may be explained in many ways, it is crucial to analyze those issues which can lead to interpretations such as those of fundamentalists like *ibn Taymiyya*, *Wahhab*, *Maududi*, *Qutb*, etc. The *Ayatollah Khomeini* who the changed lives of 50 million Iranians did not spread the war outside the borders of

⁴⁸ S. Surdykowska, *The spiritual Aspect of Jihad and Khomeini's Doctrine*, *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, No 13, 2000.

⁴⁹ *Sheytan-e-bozorg* (Farsi) - the great Satan.

the country; there are assumptions connecting him to some terrorist actions in the West, but unproven, and hence the author of this article shall not deal with them here.

What are the conducive grounds for the awakening of a jihad al-asghar? Anomie is one of them, ignorance is another. Therefore, Talibans could be successful until the intervention of America, as they introduced quasi-Quranic laws to keep Afghanistan in relative order. It is very important to realize that this state, after finally freed of the presence of Soviet soldiers, and after years of occupation or unwilling participation in the political and financial games of the USA and the USSR, was left alone, impoverished and destroyed. Unemployment, hunger, and accessibility to drugs turned the country into a dead-end place. The Talibans, children (orphans) of mujahedin, were trained to take over the country (enthusiastically helped by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia). When it was finally possible, they were welcomed by the Afghans, exhausted by a high rate of criminality on the streets, corruption, drug trade, etc. Similarly, in Central Asia, former republics of the Soviet Union are in a similar situation - they have gained independence, but cannot deal with the freedom they have achieved. For a short time they were within the range of interest of the United States (due to the oil industry), but presently they are sinking into chaos - the next very easy prey for infiltrating groups of radicals from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Anomie and ignorance are two factors which inevitably contribute to the emergence of perverted ideas of jihad. Then jihad arises, as in the great years of Muhammad's rule, yet it is not the same struggle as it used to be. The war is more dangerous, because it is fed by clichés and slogans, provoking

inter-religious hatred which cannot be identified with Islam but with desperation and manipulation.

Those educated Muslims who live comfortably in a peaceful Europe will not exercise jihad al-asghar, as they are intellectually ready for the challenges of the contemporary world. Their traditional jihad is to study, to overcome the difficulties of everyday life. This concerns less the Muslims in Central Asia or the Middle East who suffer from humiliation and a lack of the means of leading a normal life. The jihad they know and understand is a war against a non-defined "Them" who may be called "Americans," "infidels," "materialism," or anything that matches the temporary interests of the local puppet authorities or well-trained terrorists taking advantage of the situation.

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