

UNDERSTANDING JIHAD

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Islam is a religion of peace

Indeed, peace is the basis for the existence of the universe, including the world and all its inhabitants. If we were to observe the galaxy with its clusters of stars, planets, and even each individual atom that makes up the units of the universe, we will be able to fully appreciate the meaning of peace and harmony. This is because without peace and orderliness, the harmony of the universe will be severely disrupted.

Islam, which brings the message of the existence of the Al-Mighty God who administers the entire universe, places the value of peace as a basic value in its worldview.

Peace in the Islamic worldview context includes:-

- a. The word Islam comes from the root word 'salam' which means peace and tranquility.
- b. As-Salam is one of the 99 beautiful names of Allah (Asmaul- Husna).
- c. Almighty Allah gives salutation of peace (salam) to Prophet Muhammad, and to all His messengers and to those entering His paradise.
- d. 'Salam' (Peace) is the first word uttered by the Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad when he met Allah, The Al-Mighty at Sidratul Muntaha during the Night of Ascent.
- e. The concept of salam (peace) is a natural instinct in each human being.
- f. Salam is obligatory in solat (prayers)

In the Holy Quran, the meaning of peace is emphasized. The concept of peace as enjoined by the Holy Quran is all-encompassing. Peace is a right not only for Muslims but for each and every human being. This is clearly stated in the Holy Quran, Chapter 5 (Al-Maidah), verse 32:

"On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one killed a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole mankind. 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.

Clearly, the word 'mankind' in the Quranic verse above is used to refer to the whole of humanity and is not just for Muslims. More importantly, Islam enjoins that each Muslim live a peaceful life by promoting the spirit of tolerance. Almighty Allah states in the Holy Quran, Chapter 109(Al-Kafirun) which means:

"Say: O ye that reject Faith! I worship not that which ye worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been wont to worship, Nor will ye worship that which I worship. To you be your Way, and to me mine. "

What is Jihad ?

Jihad should be practiced in Islam. The question is, what kind of *jihad* should Muslims perform?

The meaning of *Jihad* is to exert and expend energy, effort and strength to attain success and excellence as well as to overcome obstacles and challenges that threaten peace and tranquility needed to in order to glorify Allah's religion.

Jihad terminology according to language

The word '*Jihad*' from the language point of view means 'utmost striving to achieve a desired goal or to abstain from despicable acts'. Jihad can also mean a particular effort to achieve goodness and avoid evil.

Jihad according to Islamic law as explained in the Holy Quran

The word '*Jihad*' is repeated a total of 41 times in various forms in the Holy Quran.

Imam Raghیب Al-Asfahani, an expert Islamic scholar on Quranic interpretation, in his dictionary of the Holy Quran, Mu'jam Mufradat Alfadzh Al-Quran, categorizes Jihad as mentioned in the Holy Quran into three meanings:

- 1) Struggle against a clear enemy,
- 2) Struggle against Satan and
- 3) Struggle against Nafs (Oneself)

In his book, Za'd al-Ma'ad, Ibnul Qayyim al-Jauziah, a renowned scholar from the Hambali school of thought, explains that jihad has four statuses:

- 1) *Jihad* against self
- 2) *Jihad* against Satan
- 3) *Jihad* against non-believers
- 4) *Jihad* against the hypocrites

Divisions of *Jihad*

Stages of *Jihad*

Imam Ibnul Qayyim has mentioned in his book *Zad Al-Ma'ad* that there are 13 kinds of *Jihad* that are categorized into four categories.

a) *Jihad An-Nafs*

This stage requires a Muslim to make efforts to educate and mold himself/herself to become a person who is disciplined, well-bred and able to serve and contribute to self, family, community, nation and religion. *Jihad* against oneself is divided into four steps:

- 1) LEARN- Studying Islam and all other knowledge linked to it
- 2) PRACTICE- After learning with conviction, the knowledge should be applied
- 3) PERFORM MISSIONARY WORK- The struggle to spread the knowledge to the rest of the community
- 4) SINCERITY AND PATIENCE *Jihad* in being patient with the difficulties in performing missionary work and doing it sincerely only for the sake of Allah

b) *Jihad* against Satan

This type of *jihad* is of two levels / categories;

- 1) *Jihad* to reject the call of Satan who incites one to commit sins and instills doubt in the faith.
- 2) *Jihad* to reject evil desires, temptations and lust.

c) *Jihad* against oppressors, evil-doers and heresy is of three levels:

- (1) *Jihad* with the hand¹, and if one is not able;
- (1) *Jihad* with the tongue², and if one is not able;
- (2) *Jihad* with the heart³.

¹ Hand means power or authority. It is not limited to arms and does not mean force e.g by legislation, law enforcement.

² Tongue means good advice, counseling, preaching, sermons etc.

³ Heart means to reject by heart e.g one tell to himself his displeasure.

d) Jihad against disbelievers

Struggle to fight those who reject God and make clear enemies of Muslims.

It can be done via four ways:

- (1) FORTIFICATION OF THE HEART (SPIRIT)-To fortify their faith from being easily swayed by charm and charisma of disbelievers
- (2) VIRTUE OF TONGUE- To engage in meaningful debates or dialogue sessions to eradicate ignorance and address accusations
- (3) WEALTH- To stabilize the wealth and economy of the Muslims so that poverty cannot be used as a tool for disbelievers to manipulate their faiths
- (4) PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE-To gain knowledge as a lifelong effort to upgrade the knowledge and technological capabilities of the Muslims.

Ibnul Qayyim warned that disbelievers who show animosities to the Muslims should be challenged accordingly -economic challenge with economic challenge, education with education, law with law and strength with strength.

On the other hand, hypocrites should be subdued by striving to elevate Muslims to a relatively higher position of knowledge and morality together with an ability to debate convincingly to uphold Allah's religion.

Henceforth, Ibnul Qayyim said:

"If humans have mastered all of the four stages, they can be admitted in to the group of Rabbaniyyin (God-Conscious Men), because indeed the Salaf scholars are agreed that the people of knowledge do not deserved to be called Rabbani (God-Conscious) till they know the truth (Al-Haq), practice it and spread it to others. Hence, whosoever has acquired the truth, practiced it and taught it to others, he will be exalted among the Kingdom of Heavens."⁴

Objectives of Jihad

Jihad must be performed solely for the sake of Allah and not for the sake of getting recognition, praises or personal agenda and gain

Types of Jihad

a) The Lesser Jihad and the Greater Jihad

⁴ Translated from 'Encyclopaedia of Islamic Law', Vol 4-War by Dahlan Abdul Azis

Jihad is divided into two, i.e. the lesser Jihad and the greater Jihad. Jihad on the battlefield (Al-Qital) is in reality the lesser Jihad. The Holy Quran has decreed that defensive wars can only be declared by governments or those with the highest authority and not individuals. In history, defensive wars only took place after the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) has already established a government in Madinah. In the Prophet's time, defensive wars were only launched on disbelievers or hypocrites who openly show their animosity towards Muslims.

Jihad against one's lower self is a huge struggle for every Muslim. The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was sent by Allah to be a 'mercy for all the worlds' and his mission was to perfect the human character. Hence, the greater jihad is to strive to better ourselves with virtuous deeds and to avoid evil ones.]⁵

Classical Jihad

1) Jihad performed during the period of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) preached the message of Islam for years through peaceful means and without any aggression. He endured heavy persecutions inflicted by the Arabs in Makkah, as well as that of the Jews in Madinah. Even though he was in a state of danger, the prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) persevered to spread the message of Islam without retaliation. At that time, he had no permission from God (through the Qur'an) to fight back. Events then developed and polytheists used different methods to inflict harm on Muslims. Finally, they decided to kill the prophet! When he (pbuh) learned of the intention, he immigrated to Madinah and was warmly welcomed by its people, who pledged allegiance to him in the cause of Islam.

The atheists were not content with the attempt to kill the prophet, but also provoked non-Muslim tribes against him, in order to put an end to his Message. When the violent situation reached its climax, God gave permission to Prophet Muhammad to fight back.⁶ Upon examining closely the Qur'anic passages in which God requests Muslims to fight back, we find them clarifying that war should be a means to drive away aggression and tyranny. God says in Chapter 22(Al-Hajj), verses 39 - 40 which means:

⁵ Taken from 'Encyclopaedia of Islamic Law', Jihad by Dahlan Abdul Azis

⁶ Islamonline.net, Ask About Islam-Permit to Fight by Reda Bedeir accessed from <http://www.islamonline.net/askaboutislam/display.asp?hquestionID=3961>

"Permission is granted to those who are being persecuted, since injustice has befallen them, and God is certainly able to support them. They were evicted from their homes unjustly, for no reason other than saying, "Our Lord is God." If it were not for God's supporting of some people against others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and masjids [mosques] - where the name of God is commemorated frequently - would have been destroyed. Absolutely, God supports those who support Him. God is Powerful, Almighty."

The biographers of the Prophet have put the number of *ghazwa* (battle) at more than 80. This gives the impression that the Prophet of Islam in his 23 year Prophetic career waged an average of four battles per year. But this impression is entirely baseless. The truth is that in his entire Prophetic life, he engaged in war only on three occasions. All the other incidents described as *ghazwa* (war) were intact examples of avoidance of war, and not instances of involvement in battle.

For instance, in this books of *Seerah* (Biography) the incident of *Al Ahzab* is called a *ghazwa* (battle), where as truth is that on this occasion, the armed tribes of Arabia, twelve thousand in number, reached the borders of Madina for waging war, but the Prophet advised his Companions to dig a trench between them. This successfully prevented a battle from taking place. The same is the case of with all the other incidents called *ghazwa*.

The opponents of the Prophet repeatedly tried to get him embroiled in war, but on all such occasions, he managed to resort for some such strategy as averted the war, thus defusing the situation invariably.

There are only three instances of Muslims really entering the field of battle. Badr, Uhud and Hunayn. The events tell us that at all these occasions, war had become inevitable. The prophet was compelled to encounter the aggressors in self-defence. Furthermore, these battles lasted only for half a day, each beginning from noon and ending with the setting of the sun.⁷

Islam continued to spread rapidly to other countries even after the death of Prophet Muhammad through the leadership of The Righteous Caliphates (Khulafa' Rashidin) and other Muslim leaders. Contrary to popular belief, Islam spread not to force humankind to embrace Islam but rather, to erect Islamic laws and preserve stability.

- **Conditions for *Jihad***

⁷ 'Understanding Jihad' by Khanam, Farida 4 July 2000 accessed from www.jammu-kashmir.com/insights/insights20000704a.html

Jihad cannot be carried unless it meets several criteria. *Jihad* to go to war can only be carried out under these conditions:

- a. To defend the religion and not for conquest purposes;
- b. To restore peace and freedom to practice the religion;
- c. To be free from oppression and cruelty;
- d. To eliminate a cruel and powerful leader
- e. To stop fighting once the enemy lay down their arms.
- f. To spare women, children, old and sick people from harm and to preserve trees and plants.⁸

Modern Trends

- **Application of *Jihad* in our daily lives**

Without realizing it, each human is in a constant state of *jihad*, since *jihad* means striving with our best efforts without hoping for any forms of gratification and by avoiding things that are prohibited. This daily jihad can be classified as such:-

a) Jihad in Acquisition of Knowledge

Knowledge is the most important mission in life. Without knowledge, mankind cannot progress because everything happens with man's effort and with All-Mighty Allah's permission. Hence, knowledge is the starting point for everything. With knowledge, we can better study and thus better appreciate the beauty and perfection of Allah's creation. However, the pursuit of beneficial knowledge is important since no education or the wrong education will create problems in the social, moral or economic spheres for the community. Hence, we constantly need to upgrade our knowledge both for the betterment of our worldly affairs and the hereafter.

b) Social Jihad

Social problems, especially those pertaining to family matters, have risen among the Muslim community. While drug abuse rates have come down in recent years, other social problems in connection with teenagers have cropped up. Divorce and teenage pregnancy rates are continue to rise and become more widespread. If divorce is identified to be the main source of these social problems, then parents should re-evaluate the values they wish to instill in their family.

⁸ 'Jihad' accessed from www.chaplian.navy.mil/attachments/jihad_dli.pdf

c) Jihad in Economy

The work that we do every day contributes to the economy. In the Holy Quran, Allah reminds mankind to constantly strive to fulfill their worldly needs, including performing jihad to elevate their economic status. Allah's decree in Chapter 28(Al-Qashash), verse 77 which means:-

"But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee, and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land: for Allah loves not those who do mischief."

d) Moral Jihad

One should strive to adorn oneself with good character and a pleasant disposition, so as to be respected and loved by many.

Misunderstanding of Jihad

- **Jihad is not a holy war**

Many Muslims and non-Muslims alike misunderstand the true meaning of jihad. Even from the Islamic and Quranic point of view itself, there is no mention whatsoever of a war being considered as holy, even though the particular war may be carried out solely for the sake of Allah and in any kind of situation . Should a war break out, due to reasons that cannot be avoided, the Muslims are required to respect their enemies and treat them with compassion and humanity as cruelty and injustice are strongly prohibited in Islam.⁹ Allah has decreed in Chapter 16 (An-Nahl), verse 90 which means:

"God advocates justice, charity, and giving (of help) to the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed."

Differences between Jihad and Qital

'War' is only one of many meanings of *jihad*. The word that is synonymous with it is *qital*, accompanied by the phrase *fi sabilillah*, which means, in the way of Allah. This shows that the sole purpose of war in Islam is to uphold the word of All-Mighty Allah and not for purposes other than that. A combination of either of these two words (*al-jihad* or *al-qital*) followed by the phrase *fi sabilillah* can be found in 50 places in the Holy Quran.

⁹ 'Ask About Islam-Jihad, not a Holy War!' by Reda Bedeir accessed from <http://www.islamonline.net/askaboutislam/display.asp?hquestionID=3802>

On the other hand, the word *al-harb* is mentioned four times in the Holy Quran. It refers to war waged for personal gain and not in the interest of elevating Allah's religion.¹⁰

Declaration of war against non Muslims

Islam is not a religion that actively encourages or instructs its followers to go to war with people of other faiths. There is not even a single verse or saying of the Prophet (Hadith) that instructs Muslims to attack followers of other religion. This is because Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate desires that all His creations live in peace and harmony. Hence, His laws that are transmitted through His messengers teach us about justice, mercy and love. This is the true Islam, a religion of goodwill and peace. Muslims are permitted to fight in situations of self-defense, oppression and injustices.

Permission to go to war is granted only as a last resort. This means that war becomes permissible only when all other avenues have failed.

Achieving Martyrdom

Jabir ibn `Ubayk once reported that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

"There are seven kinds of martyrs besides those killed in wars, defending the cause of Allah:

- *A person who is killed in an epidemic*
- *A person who is drowned*
- *A person who has bedsores, causing fever and cough resulting in his death*
- *A person who dies of a stomach disease*
- *A person who dies in fire*
- *A person who dies under falling debris [in a disaster]*
- *A woman who dies during childbirth."*¹¹

Also, Sa`id ibn Zayd reported that the prophet (pbuh) said: *"He who is killed while guarding his property is a martyr, he who is killed while defending himself is a martyr, he who is killed defending his religion is a martyr, and he who is killed protecting his family is [also] a martyr."*¹²

"Islam is a religion of Justice and Impartiality. Irrespective of the region, any injustices that can be addressed will be addressed and problems will be resolved.

¹⁰ Translated from 'Encyclopaedia of Islamic Law-War' pg 1395 by Dahlan Abdul Azis

¹¹ Ahmad, Abu-Dawud and Nasa'i report this *hadith*, based on sound authority

¹² Reported by Ahmad and Tirmidhi. The latter considers it a sound *hadith*.

War will not solve the existing problems by itself; it only sets the terms for any subsequent negotiations for a fair resolution of conflict.”¹³

Terrorism as a current threat

The world currently faces a dilemma in managing the threat of terrorism. This is because terrorism is not limited to the act of a single individual against others, but also the collective actions of organizations and even states. Long before historians and terrorist experts began tracing its causes and effects and generate theories regarding the origins of terrorism, Ibn Khaldun in his celebrated literary work, *Muqaddimah* has explained the inclinations of humans towards negative and evil traits. As a thorough analyst who has held the highest office in government, including a stint as Prime Minister in Northern Africa, Ibn Khaldun found that the most important element in life is justice.

When justice is neglected, humans become violent as an automatic reaction to regain justice. However, justice cannot be bought with transgression (violence). The concept of justice (*qist*) is highly valued in the Quran. There are various aspects of justice ranging from the question of weight and measurement, treatment of both leaders and citizens, treatment of the poor, orphans, widows and the unfortunate to providing for the basic needs of the people, and protecting the earth and its inhabitants. Justice forms the foundation for the *Syariah* or Islamic law which protects 5 elements: lives, properties, trust, faith and freedom. In fact, Allah has firmly stated that on the Day of Judgment, the unjust leaders will be the first to be punished. This is featured in the story of Prophet Moses and the Pharaoh. In every community, there will be a handful of those who are inclined to violence. Their aim is to inculcate fear, hence strengthening their power and reach. Before Islam, the Arab community underwent an Age of Ignorance (Jahiliyah) which among others, promotes violence as a way of life. War between the tribes frequently broke out because of this. However, the presence of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as the messenger of Allah changed all this. He laid the foundations of goodwill in all aspects of life, including that of war.

Terrorism, which has haunted humans throughout history, is motivated by aggressive modes of thinking. This is because any act is driven by the specific thoughts behind it. Aggressive thinking is the backdrop for acts of

¹³ 'Ask about Islam', Islamonline.net-Who is a Martyr? By Daud Matthews accessed from <http://www.islamonline.net/askaboutislam/display.asp?hquestionID=4050>

violence even though it is not yet programmed for specific acts like killing, suicide, detonating bombs, etc. The characteristics of aggressive thinking includes:-

- a) A sense of righteousness and exclusivity while showing disrespect for others
- b) Considering any act is a permissible means to an end (objective).
- c) Showing animosity and suspicion towards those outside the group
- d) Considering aesthetic value and high morals unimportant in the pursuit of an objective or desire.
- e) All areas of life can be penetrated by aggressive thinking including its religious or cultural aspects.

Aggressive thinking prevalent in the Muslim community is a result of deviant teachings and other violent elements even though it may not necessarily mean attacking, killing, destroying or oppressing. As an example, there are certain groups of Muslims who sever neighbourly and community ties due to differences in religious or political views. They do not permit marriages with people considered outside their group, refrain from handshakes or greetings, do not pray in the mosques or with the congregation, do not perform prayers for the dead and do not attend feasts or wedding invitations. In short, they choose to dissociate themselves from any social discourses in the community.

Differences of opinions in religious and political matters should not be an excuse for such feelings of animosity. This occurs because the aggressive thinking mode has been firmly planted in them. The problems that arise are actually a result of this aggressive thinking. This leads to a person or a group to go astray.¹⁴

Types of terrorism

Experts have identified several types of terrorism, which can be broadly divided into four main categories, though there may be occasional overlaps between them. They are:

- (1) Nationalist terrorism which has connections with freedom struggles and establishment of a separate government;
- (2) Terrorism that is linked to religion;
- (3) State-sponsored terrorism; and
- (4) International terrorism

¹⁴ Translated from 'Reasons for The Occurrence of Violence' by Dr Syed Hussin Alattas

- **Nationalist Terrorism**

This form of terrorism aims to establish a separate nation for a particular group. The groups involved employ acts of violence to draw the world's attention to their cause. Experts say that terrorists with nationalistic interests often intensify their violent efforts till they are able to gain the world's attention. However, this strategy is usually insufficient to attract international attention. Nationalist terrorism is hard to define since many of them claim to be freedom fighters.

- **Religious Terrorism**

Religious groups conduct violence from time to time to expand their circle of influence and frequently target bigger enemy groups in the hope of precipitating broader changes. The assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt by Muslim extremist groups in 1981 and the 1995 assassination of Israeli President Yitzak Rabin by Yigal Amir, a member of a Jewish militant group are examples of terrorism in this category. This type of terrorists come from a multitude of religions, beliefs or deviant teachings and is the quickest to spread. Dr Bruce Hoffman, from a think tank organisation , RAND¹⁵ said that in 1995, almost all of the 56 international terrorist groups listed are motivated by religion.

According to Dr Hoffmann, terrorist groups from this category "...are capable of any type of violence without limits against any targets outside their group". Experts include into this category groups like the Hamas movement in Palestine, Hizbullah group in Lebanon, (GIA) in Algeria, Jewish militant group led by Rabbi Meir Kahane in Israel and the deviant teaching group Aum Shinrikyo in Japan.

- **State-Sponsored Terrorism**

At times, certain governments assist groups of terrorists for their own self-interest. Terrorism sponsored by certain government means government who bribe terrorists to act as its 'invisible' army. The US Department of State listed a country as a sponsor for terrorism if it actively assists or renders help to terrorists, protect them or refuse to condemn terrorism on a basic level. Terrorist groups are often manipulated by radical nations to achieve their foreign policy objectives. This tactic, according to Dr Hoffmann, is the most cost-effective way to launch a secret war. In return, the

¹⁵ Acronym for Research and Development, whose headquarters is in the United States with bases in UK, Europe, Germany and Qatar

support of a government is valuable for terrorist organizations because they are the source of weapons, money and shelter until it becomes a terrorist group that poses a serious threat. Sponsorship from governments also enable terrorists to utilize diplomatic, military and intelligence sources of sponsor country to execute training, planning and operations that are more effective.

Global Terrorism

The term 'global terrorism' means "terrorism that involves territories or citizens from more than one country". The best example of this is the terrorist attacks said to be carried out by the al-Qaeda network around the world. This includes the twin attack leveled at the American embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania on 7 August 1998 which killed 301 people and injured 5,000 others. The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 were unprecedented in history. These attacks show the level of patience and sophistication of terrorists groups today. The hijackers of the planes shocked the world with their resolve to sacrifice themselves along with hundreds of passengers and thousand more workers and members of the public that were in the twin towers of the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York and Pentagon in Washington.¹⁶

The war on terror

Terrorism ought to be effectively countered and defeated. It is not just a problem of a particular group or community. It is a global problem that should be fought together. The world is shrinking rapidly with the increasingly sophisticated technology. Now, we do not require much time to reach other places or other countries -with the advent of the internet, we can explore a variety of places and access a wide-ranging plethora of information. With the ready availability of these amenities, it is no surprise that terrorist groups take advantage of them for their own evil purposes. However, to counter terrorism, we cannot afford to wait for the destruction of lives, properties and infrastructure. It should be managed from its early stages, that is, by employing preventive measures.

In an article entitled "How social science can reduce terrorism" dated September 10, 2004,¹⁷ it has stated that behavioral research has found only

¹⁶ Translated from 'Terrorism as a Current Threat' Inabah Magazine, Isu 15, March 2003 by Abdul Hamid Besih

¹⁷ The Chronicle Review, Vol 51, Issue 3 pg 89 by Scott L. Plous and Philip G. Zimbardo

one psychological attribute that reliably differentiates terrorists from non-terrorists: a propensity toward anger. It is here that we should perform *Jihadun nafs*, which as has been previously explained, involves striving to control our basic instincts, including anger. It can be safely said that anger is the source of all the destructive elements in the world.

Research also indicates that at least three priorities are of paramount importance: reducing inter-group conflict, creating incentives for the reduction of terrorism and socializing young people to reject violence as a means of problem solving.

The Singapore government has responded quickly since 9/11 by continuously conducting inter-racial dialogues. However, it is insufficient for only the government to be involved and each community should play their role in preserving the peace and security of self, family, neighbours and the whole community. It is even better if these elements of peace begin at home as it will be easier for these elements to be accepted by our children when they interact with the community later.

Global Impact Towards Islam & Muslims

Their misunderstandings of Islamic concepts and ideologies have caused great calamity to the Muslims today. Their violent acts are continuously affecting Muslims globally. Let us look at several incidences that have affected Muslims since the episode of Sept 11.

1. The state of Muslims in America after 9/11:
 - Islam being accused as religion of terrorist
 - Mosques in Texas were shot at
 - Businesses of the Arabs were destroyed
 - Muslims were threatened, small scale bombs were directed at Muslims, they were humiliated
2. The state of Muslims in Spain after the **Madrid** Bombing on 3 April 2004:
 - Prayers time were shortened, not everyone was allowed to enter mosques due to security concerns
 - After 9/11, eggs were thrown into mosques
 - Muslims were sacked from their jobs
 - Businessess were threatened, Arabs and Islam were villified
3. The state of Muslims in London, after **London Bus Bombings** on 7 July 2005;

- Muslims in Britain faced prejudice
- Racial issues were raised with anti Islam messages.
- Increase in number of Asian men being checked by the Police
- Mosques were attacked
- Faith hate crimes increase as much as 566%

These examples portray fear, uncertainties, and worries. Disturbances disturb everyday lives and religion is being scrutinised. These are the result of a small minority that uses Islam for their own distorted agendas, not only disrupting the real image of Islam but also to the lives of Muslims. Muslim's progress disturbed - uncertainties and doubts have arisen.

Implication to Singapore

If these violent acts were allowed to happen in Singapore, it will affect Singapore in 2 aspects:

- 1) Singapore as a small republic needs to constantly compete to stay relevant. Such endeavour could be hampered. Singapore's economy will suffer, foreign investors will stay clear from our coast, and chaos will erupt.
- 2) The status of Muslims as a minority could be threatened. Muslims will be looked at suspiciously. Trust and friendship could be affected and lost. Jobs could be hard to find for Muslims.

Muslims must accept the fact that we are a MINORITY COMMUNITY, we will be at a loss if the non-Muslims community would take us lightly and retaliate against us, if such incidents happen.

We Muslims are still lagging in many aspects of life such as:

- EDUCATION
- ECONOMY
- RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING
- THOUGHTS
- SOCIAL LIFE (High divorce rate, juvenile delinquencies and others.)

We must understand that Islam does not allow a Muslim to land themselves in sufferings. The Prophet said:

"In Islam, it is not permissible to engage ourselves in difficulties and it is not permissible that we cause difficulty to others." (Narration of Ibnu Majah)

We should join hands in improving our lives in all areas that life could offer. We should live together and appreciate one another as one people. The most important thing is that we must understand Islam in its proper context and return back to the teachings of authentic Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah. Allah says:-

*"O mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and then rendered you nations and tribes so that you might know one another. The most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious. Allah is indeed Knowing, Aware."*¹⁸

Solutions Found Within Islam To Curb Terrorist Trends

- **Return to authentic Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah**

We must firstly grasp Islam with its spirit of universalism. Islam is based on the revelations in the form of the Quran and the words, actions and agreement of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. brought to us by scholars famously known as al-Hadith. Islam has a rich tradition and civilisation. Mainstream Islam has been moulded under the banner of the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah. We need to return to the true understanding of the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah.

According to Syekh Abu Mansur Abdul Qahir Bin Tahir Bin Muhammad Al-Baghdadi Al-Isfaraini At-Tamimi, in his book entitled '*Al-Farq Bayn Al-Firaq*' (passed away on 429H/1073M, Al-Baghdadi is a knowledgeable person, mastering 17 types of learning fields) the school the AHLUS SUNNAH WAL JAMAAH is divided into 8 different sciences and categories. They are :

- 1) Islamic Scholars who possesses a thorough knowledge of the problems of Unity, Prohpecy, Dogmas of Promises and warnings, Rewards and Retribution and the necessary pre-requisites for *Ijtihad*, the imamate and the exercise of Authority. They declare themselves free from anthropomorphism as well as from divesting God of His attributes. (Tauhid)
- 2) Chief Jurists of both systems: Those who apply the method of analogy and those who adhere to traditions. (Fiqh)
- 3) Scholars of Tasauf
- 4) Scholars of Hadith
- 5) Scholars of Adab, Nahu & Saraf
- 6) Scholars of Qiraat, Tafsir & Ta'wil
- 7) People who take care of Muslim frontiers.
- 8) General Population of the cities who practices the teachings of the Scholars of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah.

¹⁸ The Holy Quran, Surah Al Hujarat, verse 13

- **Muslims must be equipped with good moral values**

We Muslims must also embrace good moral qualities. In our zest to acquire greater heights in our lives, we need to emulate the Prophet's conduct. We must be equipped with good moral qualities. Let us portray to the world our excellent qualities. Let us portray the beauty of Islam. The Prophet said:

"Those possessing perfect faith are those having best conduct. Those possessing good conduct are those who is best to his family, and I am best towards my family."

- **Inculcate love towards one's country**

Another important quality that we as Muslims need to understand and embrace is towards inculcating love to our own country and nation. We must understand that God has ordained where we are born and where we will die. Thus appreciating our place of birth, the nation that has become the means of providence of our lives, our family's lives. This is the abode where we find a source of income, procreate and also for the world to prosper, it needs peaceful messages. This is the place, the abode where our generations and children will strive to build a better future. We must inculcate this feeling of love in ourselves and our children towards our own country.

Loving one's country is a responsibility demanded by religion. Allah swt mention in Surah Saba' verse 15 :

"(Your country) is a good abode and (Your God) is The Most Merciful."

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. said when he was on his Hijrah out of Medina to Mecca. He exclaims :

"There's no land better than yours (for me) and you are dearest to me. And if not for my tribe ousting me out from you, surely i will never choose an abode other than you." (Narrated by Tirmizi).

If we allow instability in our homeland, it will result in failure of our dreams and aspirations. Everyone is responsible towards the peace and harmony of our multi races and religions. Muslim community will have to prove that Islam is a religion and a centre of life which is surrounded by justice, peace and security throughout time and place. Respect will not be given to a particular community until that community respects other communities.



Brief Biodata of Ustaz Hj Ali Hj Mohamed PBM

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