

INSIGHT

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta Combats Extremism


ISSUE # 4



TERRORISTS and
the VERSES of

Jihad

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TERRORIST Organizations and their **ERRONEOUS** UNDERSTANDING of the **VERSES** of **JIHAD**

Many extremist terrorist groups call for waging jihad against all non-Muslims without exception. While armed jihad is merely one of countless other forms of jihad – all of which are peaceful – it is undoubtedly the exception and not the rule.

This form of jihad is disliked and, when undertaken, is considered a necessity that must be measured by its proper proportions. God the Almighty says, “Fighting has been enjoined upon you though you dislike it” (Quran, 2:216).

It is impermissible to resort to armed jihad except in defense of freedom of religion and homeland freedoms without which it is impossible to establish religious beliefs in the way God intended them.

The religion of Islam embodied these values from the very beginning when the Muslims of Quraysh were attacked for their beliefs and their faith was jeopardized. They suffered so much oppression that they were forced to flee Mecca, their homeland. To escape persecution, many of them migrated first to Abyssinia and then to Medina. It is against this backdrop that God granted Muslims permission to fight against their oppressors.

The verses in the Quran that permit fighting mention expulsion from one's homeland and jeopardy of faith as the reasons behind this permission

The first verse that legislated fighting was, **"Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged— God has the power to help them—those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, 'Our Lord is God.'** If God did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where God's name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. God is sure to help those who help His cause— God is strong and mighty" (Quran, 22:39-40).

When permission to fight later became a command, the Revelation mentioned expulsion from one's homeland as the reason behind this command- **"Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not transgress: God does not love those who transgress. Kill them wherever you encounter them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, for persecution is more serious than killing. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they do fight you, kill them— this is what such disbelievers deserve— but if they stop, then God is most forgiving and merciful"** (Quran 2:190-2).

The ordinance here is a defensive fight against those who drove Muslims from their homeland and threatened their faith – a defensive fight to liberate the land of which the polytheists deprived them, “... drive them out from where they drove you out.”

There are numerous verses in the Quran that call for mercy, compassion, justice and calling to the way of God with wisdom and good advice. These include, but are not limited to, **“There is no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error” (2:256)**, **“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided” (16:125)**, and **“God does not forbid you from being righteous and just to those who do not fight you because of your religion and do not expel you from your homes - Indeed, God loves those who act justly” (60:8)**.

Despite these verses, the organizations of darkness those who love bloodshed and deny basic human dignity follow their own sick understanding and inane interpretations of the verses on fighting to distort the religion of Islam for Muslims, incite the hatred of non-Muslims against both Islam and Muslims, and even foment war against the Islamic world from all sides. As such, it is they, and not the foreign enemies of Islam, who present the primary threat to Islam.

Violent organizations and terrorist groups that claim affiliation to Islam – though the

religion is truly innocent of them and their actions – selectively cite the verses on fighting, taking them out of their proper contexts and ignoring the verses that come before and after them. By so doing, they aim to create confusion in the minds of people and prevent Muslims from understanding the purport and provisions contained in these verses. The conclusion ultimately drawn from their distorted approach to interpreting scripture is that these verses encourage unjustified fighting.

Jihad is Not an Individual Obligation

Jihadists and excommunicating groups are resolute in their attempts to use those verses to demonstrate that jihad is an individual obligation at all times. They consistently make incorrect inferences and deductions from equivocal verses and thereby misunderstand the true meaning of scriptural texts, which suits their motives and agenda.

However, to decontextualize scriptural texts and treat them as standalone verses to be understood in isolation of their dynamic context is to commit to a literal rendering of equivocal verses. Examples of such Quranic verses include, **“Those believers who stay at home, apart from those with an incapacity, are not equal to those who commit themselves and their possessions to striving in God’s way. God has raised such people to a rank above those who stay at home— although He has promised all believers a good reward, those who strive are favored with a tremendous reward above those who stay at home” (4:95)** and **“But God has promised a good reward to all of them” (57: 10)**.

Special Edition

These verses promise that paradise is the eventual handsome reward and indicate that jihad is not an individual but a collective obligation- when conditions call for it (as mentioned above).

Had it been impermissible to refrain from jihad when there are enough people to perform it God would not have promised a reward to both those who participated and those who did not.

The nature of jihad as a collective obligation is evident from the Prophet's approach to jihad and the military expeditions he mounted. Had it been a collective obligation at all times, he wouldn't have refrained from setting out on the expeditions he ordered his companions to engage in, nor would he have permitted others to refrain from participation. Furthermore, if jihad were a perpetual obligation upon every Muslim there would be no time to devote to anything else, like earning living or seeking knowledge.

Jihad cannot possibly be accomplished when all people abandon all enterprise. Based on this, jihad is not an individual obligation but a general and collective one on the Muslim community as a whole. Since the objective of fighting is to exalt the religion and vanquish the polytheists, jihad ceases to be obligatory when a part of the Muslim community fulfills this obligation. However, if all Muslims refrain from undertaking this duty or if part of the community fails to fulfill it, all able members of the community continue to be guilty of sin for its nonperformance until this collective obligation is sufficiently realized.



Sound Interpretation is Based on a Holistic and Contextual Approach

A correct understanding and interpretation of the Quranic verses on jihad can only be realized when reading it in light of the totality of the Quran's message, not by selectively citing verses and isolating them from their context. However, this is precisely the approach of those groups that seek to sow sedition by acting upon their egregious interpretations of equivocal verses. God the Almighty says, **"It is He who has sent this Scripture down to you [Prophet]. Some of its verses are definite in meaning these are the cornerstone of the Scripture and others are ambiguous. The perverse at heart eagerly pursue the ambiguities in their attempt to make trouble and to pin down a specific meaning of their own: only God knows the true meaning. Those firmly grounded in knowledge say, 'We believe in it: it is all from our Lord' only those with real perception will take heed"** (Quran, 3:7).

It is therefore necessary to understand the Quranic verses in light of the entire scripture. Following this approach undoubtedly leads to the conclusion that the verses of jihad only legislate fighting against combatant non-Muslims, and only within the framework of rules governing it.



Extremist groups, whose ideology is violence and whose religion is terrorism, claim that the verse of the sword has abrogated over 100 verses of the Quran. This inevitably leads them to conclude that Muslim relations with non-Muslims are governed by the sword and warfare and that everything mentioned in the Quran about ethics, forgiveness, patience, kindness, justice, and tolerance with others has been abrogated by this verse.

Abrogation means to cancel a legal ruling by a subsequent legal ruling. In light of their approach, the Quranic verses enjoining just and tolerant interaction with non-Muslims and guaranteeing freedom of faith would be effectively cancelled. Therefore, the only alternative for them is enmity, oppression, violence, and religious coercion, which inevitably leads to a perpetual incitement of fighting.

Only through their deceitful approach have the fallacious and misguided interpretations of the verses of fighting advanced by terrorist organizations gained prominence and overshadowed the verses of religious freedom, kindness, justice, and fulfillment of covenants. There is no doubt that extremists promote a distorted understanding of the concept of jihad, giving rise to confusion about how Islam instructs Muslims to interact with non-Muslims.

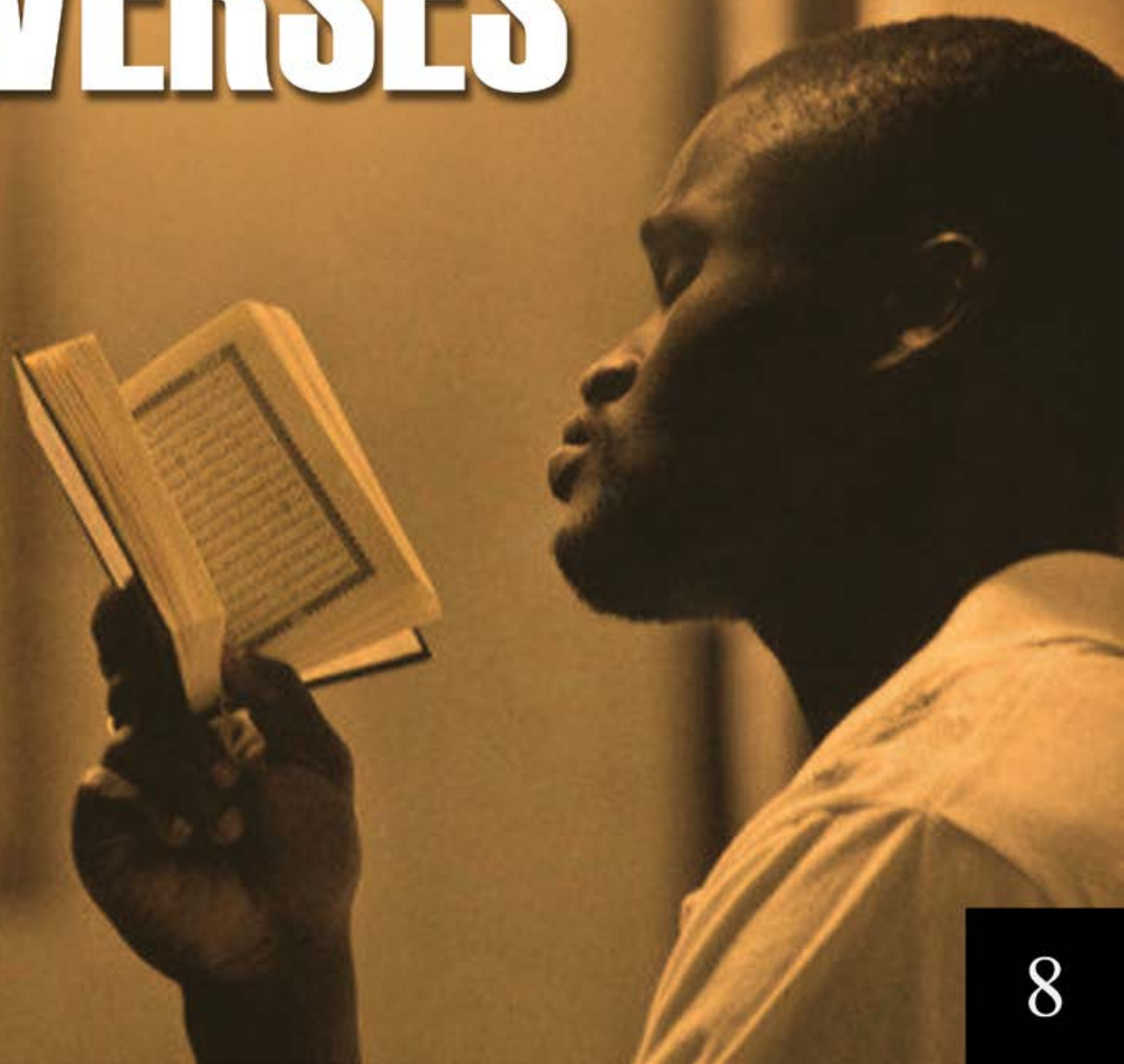
Conversely, there are others who adhere to the straight path and exercise their faculties to infer the objectives of Islam through a sound, moderate methodology, guiding them to the healthy relations prescribed by God the Almighty in the Quran and by His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) in his

Traditions. It is this latter group that is saved from deviant scriptural interpretations of the verses of fighting. They are those who follow the Prophet's example by adhering to the truth. They will not be harmed by those who oppose them until the command of God comes to pass.

Approaching the verses of fighting through this moderate approach fighting is correctly frames jihad as justified and obligatory in defending the freedom of one's homeland and fellow citizens. Preservation of religion is the principal objective of Islamic law while the preserving freedom of homeland is a necessary condition for establishing religion and administering the earth.

What follows is an exposition of the verses most widely invoked by terrorist groups in their sick methodology that calls for violence and destruction. Through this exposition, we will bring to light their erroneous understanding of these verses followed by the correct explanation in accordance with a moderate Islamic methodology.

Exposition of **JIHAD** VERSES



1) “And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed – then it is those who are the disbelievers”
(Quran, 5:45)

Misconception

Terrorist and radical groups believe that this verse denotes the disbelief and absolute excommunication of every person who neglects any rulings set by God the Almighty. Consequently, they accuse Muslims all over the globe of disbelief. Their misunderstanding of hakimiyyah (sovereignty) is the foundation of their twisted doctrine and distorted understanding of jihad, which has led them to fight other Muslims- even their own countrymen.

Refutation

Whoever repudiates what God the Almighty has revealed while believing that that alternative, manmade laws are better undoubtedly commits disbelief. On the other hand, whoever believes in and acknowledges the wisdom, justice, and guidance contained in the revealed law but contradicts it on the basis of inclination, laziness, or a perceived impediment remains within the fold of Islam, though he is considered disobedient to the extent of his neglect. This was the unanimous

opinion of the luminary imams of Islamic law; they understood the above verse accurately, within the wider context of scripture. Ibn ‘Abbas said, **“This is not disbelief that takes one out of Islam; [whoever] does this is a disbeliever but of a lesser degree than one who disbelieves in God and the Day of Judgment.”** This was also the opinion of Tawus, while ‘Ataa said, **“It is disbelief of a lesser degree, injustice of a lesser degree, and iniquity of a lesser degree.”**

Challenging this view, Sayyid Qutb posited that the above verse reflects a categorical, universal and comprehensive ruling. He argued that to interpret it beyond its literal meaning is tantamount to circumventing the truth. According to him, any such attempt is nothing short of distorting God’s words.

As such, Qutb rendered the opposing opinions of the imams and scholars of Islam an attempt to decontextualize the verse; this is precisely the takfiri interpretation advanced by the Kharijites who adopted the literal meaning of the equivocal verses of the Quran. Those who adopt Qutb’s position excommunicate rulers on the basis that those

who replace divine injunctions with man-made laws are guilty of committing shirk, citing the verse, **“the disbelievers set up equals to their Lord!” (Quran, 6:1)**. Moreover, Qutb concluded that the entire Muslim community is guilty of shirk. Consequently, extremists ascribing to this ideology deviate from the path of the majority of Muslims and commit crimes against Muslims based on their misinterpretation and aberrant understanding of scriptural sources to suit their personal motives and agenda.

From this, it becomes evident that all excommunicating groups, from the Khawarij through to the Hashasheen, Takfeer wal Hijrah and Daesh and its branches, evolved from a single premise that suspending God’s rulings is tantamount to disbelief. The ensuing consequences not only included misinterpreting Quranic verses and prophetic traditions but extend to erroneous understandings of concepts like hakimiyyah, as well as considering all Muslims comparable to the people of jahiliyyah (the pre-Islamic era) in their ignorance and disregard for Divine precepts, among other misguided ideas.

However, what is apparent from the different interpretations of exegetes and Muslim scholars is that the soundest interpretation of this verse is that disbelief in this context refers to major disbelief that takes a person out of the fold of Islam.

They argued that the verse primarily refers to the Jews and those who follow their line of action by suspending, scorning, or favoring other than God’s revealed law or believing in its non-obligatoriness.



2) Several Verses from Surat al-Tawbah

“But if they break their oath after having made an agreement with you, if they revile your religion, then fight the leaders of disbelief— oaths mean nothing to them— so that they may stop”

[Quran, 9:12]

“Fight them: God will punish them at your hands, He will disgrace them, He will help you to conquer them, He will heal the believers’ feelings”

[Quran, 9:14]

“Believers, those who ascribe partners to God are truly unclean: do not let them come near the Sacred Mosque after this year. If you are afraid you may become poor, [bear in mind that] God will enrich you out of His bounty if He pleases: God is all knowing and wise”
[Quran, 9:28]

“Fight those of the People of the Book who do not [truly] believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit”

[Quran, 9:29]

Misconception

Many terrorists claim that these verses call upon Muslims to fight and attack every non-Muslim in sight. They likewise claim that the verses exhort Muslims to indiscriminately kill and terrorize non-Muslims without any moral deterrent, disregarding the Prophet's precepts regarding jihad.

Refutation

Terrorist groups neglect the solid truths revealed in these verses of surat al-Tawbah which clearly distinguish between three groups of non-Muslims:

First: Those who have entered into a treaty with Muslims and respect their oaths. The verses call upon Muslims to continue to be bound by their treaty. God says, **“As for those who have honored the treaty you made with them and who have not supported anyone against you: fulfil your agreement with them to the end of their term. God loves those who are mindful of Him”** (Quran, 9:4).

Second: Neutrals who remain undecided as to whether they are with or against Muslims and wish to learn the truth to determine their position. The verses enjoin Muslims to grant them protection and an opportunity to hear the Word of God as well as the freedom to

decide for themselves whether or not to accept Islam. In addition, they should be escorted to a place where they could be safe and determine their own position. The verses say, **“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know”** (Quran, 9:6).

Third: Those who actively fight Muslims and breach their treaties with them: **“Where believers are concerned, they respect no tie of kinship or treaty. They are the ones who are committing aggression”** (Quran, 9:10).

The above verses in no way permit indiscriminately fighting all non-Muslims, contrary to the views of those who portray Islam as a religion of murder and terrorism allege. The injunctions contained in these verses are not applicable to all non-Muslims or offenders. They are merely a response to the aggression of those who broke their covenant with Muslims and expelled the Messenger and believers out of their homes, **“How could you not fight a people who have broken their oaths, who tried to drive the Messenger out, who attacked you first? Do you fear them? It is God you should fear if you are true believers”** (Quran, 9:13).

The default in Islam and within an Islamic state is peaceful coexistence between Muslims and others.

Muslims should maintain kind and equitable relations with non-Muslims unless the latter are out to destroy them and their faith or turn them out of their homeland. Regarding the relations between Muslims and those who repudiate Islam, God the Almighty says, **“God may still bring about affection between you and your present enemies— God is all powerful, God is most forgiving and merciful— and He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: God loves the just. But God forbids you to take as allies those who have fought against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and helped others to drive you out: any of you who take them as allies will truly be wrongdoers”**

(Quran, 60: 7-9).



3) The Verse of the Sword

“When the [four] sacred months are over, wherever you encounter the polytheists, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn [to God], maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful” (Quran, 9:5)

Misconception

Excommunicating and terrorist groups use this verse to support their claim of the obligation to fight disbelievers wherever they are. They therefore kill non-Muslims who are members of protected communities, ambassadors, and messengers for the sole reason that they are not Muslims. They maintain that it is incumbent to attack and kill every non-Muslim in sight after the sacred months pass.



Refutation

By their indiscriminate attacks against non-Muslims, they directly contradict the principles and rulings of Islam that are meant to preserve life. God the Almighty says in the Quran, **“Fulfil any pledge you make in God’s name and do not break oaths after you have sworn them, for you have made God your surety: God knows everything you do”** (Quran, 16:91).

However, to examine the verses on fighting polytheists as if they existed in a vacuum is nothing but distorting the meanings of equivocal verses and misrepresenting the broader message of Islam.

Terror organizations who promote violence deliberately misinterpret the verse of the sword and claim that it alone has abrogated more than 100 verses of the Quran. By doing so, they provide for themselves scriptural grounds for unjustified warfare, maintaining this as the central principle in their relations with non-Muslims. Not only this, but they allege that the verse of the sword has abrogated everything that has been mentioned in the Quran on forgiveness, tolerance, patience, justice, and tolerance in dealing with the other.



4) “You who believe, fight the disbelievers near you and let them find you standing firm: be aware that God is with those who are mindful of Him”
[Quran, 9:123]

Misconception

Terrorist groups use this verse as evidence to justify committing atrocities against those who have different convictions from their own, beheading and slaying them in the most vicious manner.

Refutation

In reality this verse was revealed to psychologically prepare Muslim soldiers who were fighting a just war to protect the Muslims, staving off the enemies of Islam and resisting injustice and oppression. It served to strengthen their resolve and boost their morale through the words of God the Almighty. God therefore commands Muslims to follow an organized plan by fighting the enemy nearest to them first, then the next and so forth; this is the meaning of the words of God “fight the disbelievers near you.” The verse warns the Muslim army against falling for the enemy’s tactics and rushing to fight the distant enemy, thereby allowing the near enemy to mount a surprise attack against them.



5) “God does not like bad words to be made public unless someone has been wronged: He is all hearing and all knowing” (Quran, 4:148).

Misconception

Some have mistakenly understood that this verse permits those who suffer injustice to make public scandal of evil in whatever way they wish and that Islamic law absolves them of any blame.

Refutation

This is a fabrication against Islamic law as its code of ethics is centered around a coherent framework of morals. It does not permit Muslims to discard religious observances under the pretext of religious license and exceptions, especially in ethical issues that form the foundation of Islamic law. This is a fabrication against Islamic law as its code of ethics is centered around a coherent framework of morals. It does not permit Muslims to discard religious observances under the pretext of religious license and exceptions, especially in ethical issues that form the foundation of Islamic law.

Here is a brief look at how the exegetes, whether from the Prophet's companions or the generations that succeeded them, understood the divine discourse. The major scholar and interpreter of the Quran, Ibn Abbas, explained the verse to mean, “God does not like anyone to invoke Him against anyone unless he is wronged. In such a case, God gives His permission to invoke Him against the offender. Yet, it is better for him to exercise patience.” Hence, ill speech against anyone in public is strictly impermissible except by invoking God against the offender. If Ibn Abbas were to learn that some people in our present time interpret the verse as granting permission to the oppressed and to speak the most offensive and harmful words, he would have fainted at the atrocity of such a misinterpretation and fabrication against God. In the same context, Qatada said, “As you have heard, God excuses those who have suffered injustice and [permits] them to invoke Him [against those who have wronged them].”

Mujahid said this verse was revealed on the occasion of a man who sought hospitality from another but was denied his request. So the verse “except by one who has been wronged” was revealed to give the man dispensation to do no more than complain.

The eminent exegetes of the Quran strictly condemned audacious misinterpretation of the words of God to justify indecency, slander and obscenity. Imam Tahir Ibn Ashoor said in his commentary *Al-Tahreer Wal Tanweer* (6/4) that this verse permits all kinds of verbal



public rebuke, remonstrance, or complaint of a wrong done to a person. However, such a public expression of grievance must be free of any malice. This may be by saying, ‘You have wronged me’ or ‘you are unjust,’ or by telling the people, ‘he is unjust’. Alternatively, a person who suffers an injustice may publicly invoke God against the person who wronged him, the reason being that this constitutes a public announcement of the offender’s wrongdoing and committing the matter to divine justice.

Verses expressing similar purport are replete in the Quran, though they do not justify defamation. Evidence and proof for the prohibition of slander and tarnishing reputations and backbiting abound in Islamic scripture.

Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Beware of obscenity for God does not like the obscene and immoral”**(Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad, Ibn Hibban in his Saheeh [al-Hakim declared it authentic] and al-Bayhaqi in Shu’ab al-Iman).

Abu Al-Darda narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“There is nothing that will weigh heavier in the scale of a believer on the Day of Judgment than good manners. Verily, God hates the shameless obscene person”** (Abu Dawud [and Al-Tirmidhi authenticated it], Al-Bazaar, Ibn Hibban, and Al-Baihaqi in Al-Asma’).

Abdullah Ibn Amr narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“God does not love those who are shameless and indulge in obscenity. By He in whose hands is the life of Muhammad! The Hour will not come until the emergence of indecency and [people] indulge in obscenity”** (Abdul Razzaq in his Musannaf, Ahmed in his Musnad, and Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak). Aisha narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“God does not love the obscene and those who indulge in obscenity”** (Sunan of Abu Dawud).

6) “When you meet the disbelievers in battle, strike them in the neck, and once they are defeated, bind any captives firmly—later you can release them by grace or by ransom—until the toils of war have ended”
(Quran, 47:4)

Misconception

Extremists use this verse as evidence to decapitate people. They consequently behead unarmed individuals and captives to carry out the command included in the verse.

Refutation

This is a repugnant misinterpretation of the verse, providing an unsound foundation to which terrorists cling. The verse speaks of killing the enemy during military engagement and taking prisoners of war during conflict as well as of other actions that occur on the battlefield. It is explicit in demonstrating that Islam cannot be firmly established except by protecting Muslims from the evils of their enemies. Muslims should therefore defend themselves against these evils to preserve the essence of their faith.

A contextually-grounded study of this verse and others illustrates that attacking people of other faiths is strictly prohibited. All of the

Prophet’s battles were defensive in that they sought to preserve the lives and property of Muslims. Even the preemptive military campaigns that occurred during his lifetime were launched to eliminate clear enemy threats before they reached Muslim territory.

A sound understanding of this verse indicates that when war is declared, a Muslim may kill the enemy only during an actual military encounter. The command to strike their necks does not suggest decapitation but rather encourages fighting with one’s utmost ability, as attested by the words of God, **“Your Lord revealed to the angels: ‘I am with you: give the believers firmness; I shall put terror into the hearts of the disbelievers— strike above their necks and strike all their fingertips.’”** (Quran, 8:12).

Terrorist groups use this verse as evidence to behead and cut off the hands of those they excommunicate on account of them having different convictions.

As for those who have formed terror groups or organizations, those who kidnap the innocent, wreak terror upon peaceful individuals, excommunicate all Muslims and not only take up arms against them but kill them, and declare those they capture war captives and execute them by decapitation, they have strayed far from the straight path.

They decontextualize this verse and use it as proof for their own twisted understanding. They are, therefore, among those for whom punishment is prescribed by the Quranic verse, **“Those who wage war against God and His Messenger and strive to spread corruption in the land should be punished by death, crucifixion, the amputation of an alternate hand and foot, or banishment from the land: a disgrace for them in this world, and then a terrible punishment in the Hereafter” (5:33).**



7) “Fight in God’s cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits. Kill them wherever you encounter them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, for persecution is more serious than killing. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they do fight you, kill them— this is what such disbelievers deserve— but if they stop, then God is most forgiving and merciful. Fight them until there is no more persecution, and worship is devoted to God. If they cease hostilities, there can be no [further] hostility, except towards aggressors”
 [Quran, 2:190-193]

Misconception

Terrorist groups and extremist organizations have a perverted understanding of the above verses and erroneously use them as evidence to commit their heinous crimes of burning, slaughtering, and shedding blood in the name of Islam and jihad in the cause of God.

Refutation

Ibn ‘Abbas who interpreted the above verse to mean, **“Do not to kill women, children, the elderly or whoever comes to you in peace and restrains his hand from fighting; for if any of you did that, he would certainly have transgressed.”**

Abu Ja’far said, **“This is the more authentic of the two opinions from the Prophetic Traditions and speculation/reasoning/linguistic interpretation.”**

Evidence from the Prophetic Traditions

Abu Ja'far reported: "Ibn Umar said, 'The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) saw the corpse of a woman who had been killed in one of the battles he fought in. He disapproved of this and prohibited the killing of women and children.'" It was also reported that 'Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz (may God have mercy on him) wrote to his generals, "Do not kill women, children, or monks in non-Muslim lands or you will be transgressors for God loves not the transgressors."

The word 'fighting' generally implies duality in participation, necessitating an attacker and a defender. Traditionally neither women nor children have been deemed to fit this description. Moreover, monks are included among the non-combatants. It is for this reason that some jurists said, "Monks should not pay jizyah as per the words of God 'Fight those who do not believe in God or in the Last Day ... [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled' (Quran, 9:29)." According to this, the verse means, 'Fight in the cause of God those who attack you and do not transgress by killing women, children and monks.'

The above verses include a set of criteria and restrictions on fighting, tying them closely to refined Islamic values that protect life from unjustified killing.

The verses likewise affirm that armed jihad must be void of unjustified aggression and achieve the objectives of Islamic law. The ultimate purpose of fighting should be to lift oppression, protect homelands and provide security to people; it should not devolve into the criminal acts of killing and terrorizing people.

The words of the verse "those who fight you" point to a defensive jihad in response to aggression. It therefore forbids Muslims from initiating fighting, killing, and destruction. The fighting legislated by God the Almighty cannot be based on erroneous ideas, retaliation, or political differences nor is it founded on monopolizing Islam and excommunicating others and killing them in the name of jihad for the sake of God. On the contrary, the true jihad that God the Almighty legislated is never dictated by personal goals and whims. Jihad should only be waged in the cause of God to defend Islam and Muslims.

Islam prohibits unjustified aggression and transgressing known limits. It therefore warns against deriving gratification from killing and forbids mutilating corpses or decapitating people. If compelled to fight, a Muslim should do so only to the extent of warding off aggression without excessiveness. A Muslim should abide by the Prophet's ethics and values which he exhorted Muslims to observe when fighting against their enemies.

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