

# **The True Islamic Jihad**

**Address Delivered by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aba</sup>  
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All distinguished guests present here, Assalamo Alaikum Wa Barakatohu, peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Our local administration has requested me to give our distinguished guests a brief introduction to the teachings of Islam. In particular, with reference to an important subject toward which the attention of the world is focused, and as a result of which the non-Muslim world believes that Islam is the religion of extremism and terror. Indeed, some people declare that through terrorism, Islam is destroying their peace of the world. It is most unfortunate that there is a group that has a clear understanding of the teachings of Islam, but this fanning the flame of this erroneous concept persists. Indeed, some educated non-Muslims have connected the concept of life after death and heaven and hell to be Muslim extremists, terrorists and suicide bombers. So, the result is that the fatalist desire to enter paradise has awakened the peculiar concept of Jihad and of dying in the name of Allah, which has caused them to take up the sword and cause mayhem.

These terrorist groups today are, in reality, the byproduct of this teaching and concept. In any case, while I admit that the acts committed by certain ignorant and over-enthusiastic Muslims have no doubt given a totally wrong impression of the teachings of Islam, I must also point out that the literature written against Islam without the proper understanding of Islamic teachings has presented an erroneous concept about Islamic Jihad. Not only that, but also this literature that is in great circulation denies the very existence of God and considers religion and God to be responsible for this disorder and chaos.

Be that as it may, it is a topic to which justice cannot be done in such a short time. However, I will try to present the true teachings of Islam, as they have been expounded by [Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,] the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community who we consider as the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, according to his understanding of the Holy Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> and the history of Islam.

First of all, I will explain the true concept of Jihad in words of the Messiah of the time. It has been one hundred years since the founder of the Ahmadiyya Community passed away. Therefore, no one can say that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, having made up a fanciful reply in response to the wrong impression created in the world today, is now presenting something new. On the contrary, they are the very same teachings that are set out in the Holy Quran. The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says the prevailing practice found amongst Muslims of attacking people of other religions and which they call Jihad is not a lawful war for it is clearly against the commandment of God and the Prophet<sup>saw</sup> and constitutes a grave sin. What do the words "lawful Jihad" used by the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community mean? In order to understand this, we have to very briefly glance at the conditions existing in that part of Arabia where the founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>, proclaimed his divine mission and invited people to Islam. Remember, those people were illiterate and uncivilized. Animosity was borne out of ridiculous and petty matters, over which they would continue to kill each other for years. The sacred house, the Kaaba, in Mecca, that Prophet Abraham<sup>as</sup> had built in the name and for the worship of the one true God contained, by that time, no less than 360 idols for worship. The Meccans were certainly not ready to accept any God in the place of those idols.

When the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> made his claim and invited the Arabs toward the one and only God, the intelligent amongst them, some of whom were his relatives, poor people and slaves, embraced Islam. When this movement grew, the disbelievers of Mecca increased their suspicion. Cruelty reached such heights that the believers were made to lie on the burning sands of Arabia while baking hot stones were placed on their chests. They were whipped. Their limbs were tied to camels and the camels were then driven in opposite directions, rendering their bodies apart. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> and his group of believers

were banished to a valley and an embargo was placed on them. Neither food nor water was allowed to be delivered to them. His companions used to say that they would die in any case, so, 'Why not go down fighting?'. After all, these Muslims too came from among those who were ready to kill and cause bloodshed over the most trivial of matters, but when anyone said, "Permit us to fight," the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> would say that he had not been commanded by Allah the Almighty to fight.

At last, the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> allowed some oppressed ones to migrate and then, after some time, he too migrated to Medina. By that time, there were some inhabitants of that town who had become Muslims. On his arrival, a large number of people embraced Islam in Medina. The Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> entered into a covenant with other tribes and faiths and amongst them there were also Jews. He established a state in which all subjects were granted freedom. If anyone was punished for some crime, that punishment was given according to their own religious jurisprudence. Nevertheless, the subjects of the state, all of them had equal rights. Despite all of this, the allegation leveled against the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> is that (God forbid) he spread terror. The question is that when it is known that the Muslims were in such a condition of helplessness and were being so cruelly oppressed, why is such an allegation being made against the Prophet and the Muslims?

I have briefly mentioned the conditions which prevailed at the time. Even in such conditions when the Muslims migrated to Medina and began to live in a relative peace, there also the Meccans hounded, pursued, and attacked them. The first battle was known as the Battle of Badr. At the time, it was such a condition that they had little resources, nor equipment for battle. Whereas confronting them was a fully equipped army. These circumstances are not hidden from anyone and are recorded in history. What could those unskilled and inexperienced people have done? Some of them were only teenagers, however, when the enemy wanted to annihilate the Muslims, Allah the Almighty instructed them to fight back, so the following verse of the Holy Quran was revealed and according to historians, it is the first commandment that deals with fighting. But I invite you to look at its beauty and the purpose for which the permission to fight was granted. It says: "Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is waged because they have been wronged. Allah, indeed, has the power to help them. Those who have been

driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said our Lord is Allah and if Allah did not repel some men by means of others they would surely have pulled down cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques where in the name of Allah is often commemorated. Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed powerful, mighty” [chapter 22, v. 40-41].

God says that if permission had not been given for defense then the peace of society would have been destroyed. Even today, any sane person, irrespective of his or her religion, would say that the rationale is indeed valid. The first reason is that if someone is attacked, he has the right to defend himself. Secondly, if as a result of tyranny, people are forced to migrate or they are driven out of their homes unjustly and even then they are hounded and are not allowed to live in peace in a state governed by them, then it is quite reasonable that they be allowed to retaliate for the injury caused to them. Thirdly, oppressors do not confine themselves to their first targets. Indeed, their greed does and will continue to increase. Not caring about who belongs to what religion, they will try to segregate everyone. So, enough is enough. Thus it becomes important to nip this evil in the bud. In order to arrest the cruelty contained thereby. So, this permission for war was for defense and for security. Then drawing attention to the people with whom you are allowed to fight, Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran, “And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely Allah loves not the transgressors” [chapter 2, v. 191]. So it is clearly expressed here that the commandment of Jihad was only against those people who fought in matters of faith and wanted to convert them by the sword as had happened in Mecca, where the disbelievers of Mecca had attacked and tried to end Islam.

Now, the allegation that the Islamic concept of paradise has made Muslims become belligerent and has incited them to do Jihad is also unjust. In the words that I have just quoted, Allah the Almighty has clearly said that he does not like transgressors. If Allah does not like a person, there can be no question of him entering paradise.

What are the standards of dealing with transgression? This also is a unique teaching. Unless one believes in Allah the Almighty and unless one has this fear in one's heart, one cannot reach high standards. Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran, "O ye who believe, be steadfast in the cause of Allah bearing witness in equity and let not peoples' enmity incite you to act otherwise and with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness and fear Allah. Allah is aware of what you do" [chapter 5, v. 9]. This verse tells us if you are a true believer, then acting on the commandments of God Almighty you must be just and steadfast in them.

What are the requirements of justice? Firstly, make your deeds in accordance with the teachings of Islam and become a role model for others. Can a terrorist be a role model or an example for others? In this age, it is not only non-Muslims but also a majority of Muslims who do not like terrorists or suicide bombers. So it is only good deeds which will attract others and not evil deeds. Also in this verse, amongst the many good deeds that a Muslim has been asked to do, one good deed toward which our attention has been drawn with regards to the enemy, I have briefly mentioned the conditions that prevailed before the migration and then those that existed after it. Now in that context, consider this commandment whose teachings are meant for the establishment of justice. If there are wars, they should conform to the law. For example, it is commanded that if you take prisoners, treat them kindly. Then, if the enemy lays down their arms, justice demands and moreover, it is necessary for the establishment of peace, that hostilities should cease immediately. By contrast, in this civilized age, if two parties are meeting and you are ending the war between them, then at the last moment one party strikes so much terror into the hearts of the others by non-stop bombardment, the stronger party then will be able to force the weaker party to agree to all the conditions they impose. Allah the Almighty guides the Muslims, declaring "if they incline towards peace, you should also incline towards it and put your trust in Allah, surely it is He who is All Hearing, All Knowing" [chapter 8, v. 62].

So, the teaching is that if the enemy is inclined toward peace, then you should also be inclined toward it. The teaching is to put your trust in Allah, because it may well be that the enemy is extending his hand only to regain his strength and is not doing so with good intentions but despite this, you are ordered to extend your hand in peace and place your trust in Allah and withdraw from war immediately. You are not allowed to give precedence to military strategy, hence, during the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, despite the insistence of companions and despite having the upper hand the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> agreed to the conditions of the disbelievers of Mecca. Even the invasion of Mecca was because the disbelievers had violated a treaty. But despite the fact that the Muslims were now the victors, whosoever did not raise arms against them was allowed to live in peace as disbelievers, even the bittersweet enemies were forgiven. These facts are not hidden; they have been witnessed by history. Alas, in spite of all of this, some western media and politicians have not refrained from making Islam, the Quran and the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> their targets. The cartoons depicting the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> in certain newspapers and the statements made by an MP of Holland, who made a film also targeted the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup>.

The Muslims consider any prophet, peace be upon them all, mentioned in any religious book as a true prophet. Therefore, no Muslim and for that matter, no Ahmadi Muslim who believes in the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> of this age can be expected to resort to slander. We have been taught in the Holy Quran that as prophets of God, all the prophets are equal. Furthermore, God says I have sent prophets to all people, therefore we accept any Prophet without hesitation who was sent to any nation that claims the Prophet came amongst them. Incidentally, according to us, this is the only way to maintain the peace in the world at the moment. The feelings and sentiments of every religion and people should be respected. I have already told you in what situation and in what conditions war has been permitted. But the question is: Are such religious wars permitted in this age, and if not, what is the significance of Jihad? And what is the interpretation of Jihad according to Ahmadis?

This, I want to say in passing, that the wars of the last few centuries were mainly political and geographical in nature and rarely waged because of religion. Moreover, in the last century, two world wars were fought in which the Muslims played no major role. They were exclusively because of political interests. Before accusing Islam of being a religion of terrorism, justice requires that those who make allegations should also consider the cause of the wars in questions. In any case, I want to briefly present the definition of Jihad as given by the founder of Ahmadiyya Community and to say how one can engage in this present age.

In the developed world of our time, everybody has the right to practice, to preach and to profess his faith. In other words, the conditions for war that I had mentioned do not exist, then what is the uproar about Jihad? I therefore want to explain the kind of Jihad our community believes in, in the present age. More than a hundred years ago, in response to an objection related to Jihad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community stated a critic has mentioned the Jihad found in Islam and thinks that the Quran incites to Holy War unconditionally. There cannot be a bigger fabrication. The Quran only permits fighting against those who prevent the people of God from believing and entering His religion and from abiding by God's commandments and from worshipping Him. God permits fighting against those who fight Muslims without reason and who drive believers from their homes and from their lands and who force God's creation to enter into their religion and who want to annihilate the religion of Islam and prevent persons from becoming Muslims. Then Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> says, "Islam says the fact of the matter is that the government (he is mentioning the British Government) does not interfere with the religion of Islam and religious customs, nor does it use the sword to promote their religion, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran, it is unlawful to fight against such a government because it does not engage in any religious war."

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Community also declared some wild and savage Muslims named the cruel shedding of blood Jihad and they know not that to confront a just ruler is rebellion and not Jihad.

Moreover, a person who makes a covenant of peace and who commits war instead of doing a good deed and who punishes the innocent is a tyrant and not a victorious general. So, this is the true Islamic teaching explained to us by the Messiah of Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> of this present age, who has established peace on a strong footing and was to enrich the world with an atmosphere of love and affection. Suicide attacks are carried out to inflict wounds on soldiers of another army. But, in reality, it is the innocent who are killed. This is wrong. Any act committed by a person who is not part of army, is not Jihad, but rebellion. The question I raised was the significance of Jihad and the response is that in this age, the Jihad accepted by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the reformation of self. This is not a recent idea. It was mentioned 1,400 years ago by the founder of Islam<sup>saw</sup> upon his return from a battle, when he said that we are moving from a minor Jihad to a greater Jihad and the greater Jihad is the Jihad of reforming one's self and that is never ending and forever. The state of war does not last forever. True Jihad is the reformation of the evils which are borne in the times of relative peace and comfort. Serving mankind is a real Jihad. In the 120 years of our history, there is testimony to it. We are engaged in this Jihad. Whereas we are trying to bring mankind nearer to his Creator, our schools and hospitals, our plans for water wells and pumps in countries of Africa, Asia, and other poor countries and in far-flung areas of the world are continuing. We are also helping those affected by natural disasters. Guiding us in this direction, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community says, "that at this time, I specifically instruct my Jama'at (Community) that accepts me as the Promised Messiah that they should always stay away from foul efforts. God has sent me as the Promised Messiah and has clothed me with the garment of the Messiah, son of Mary. I therefore admonish you to refrain from evil and be truly compassionate towards mankind. Cleanse your hearts of malice and spite for you will become like angels through this habit. It is a filthy and unholy religion that is devoid of sympathy for humanity and polluted is the path riddled with rancor based on selfish desires. Be compassionate towards all for the sake of God, so that you may be shown mercy in the heavens. Come and I will teach you a way that will cause your light to prevail over all other lights. Abandon all lowly spites and jealousies. Be compassionate for making and lose yourself in God.

I have come to you with an order, Jihad with the sword has ended from this time forward, but the Jihad of purifying your souls must continue. I do not say of this on my own accord. This is indeed, the will of God. According to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him, when the Messiah comes, he will put an end to religious war. Accordingly, I command those who have joined my ranks to refrain from such thoughts, to purify their hearts, to foster sympathy and to be compassionate towards the suffering. They should spread peace on earth because that will cause their faith to spread in return,"(British Government and Jihad)

So, if we are engaged in such a Jihad without hindrance it is because of this spiritual system we are linked as a chain. The leadership or bridge is in the hand of Khilafat or the succession of the Messiah of Muhammad<sup>saw</sup>. The attachment that members of the community have with Khilafat compels them to follow the teachings that had been brought by the Messiah of Muhammad<sup>saw</sup> and that teaching is to honor and discharge the rights we owe to God Almighty and His creations, to pull down the walls of hatred and spread the fragrance of love and affection. Though, through the excerpts that I have read before all of you sitting before me, you who are educated, now that I have made you aware to some extent of the true message of Islam, you should decide for yourselves, whether Islam teaches terrorism or peace and security. It is neither right nor fair to condemn a religion merely because of the actions of a group or a few individuals. So, I request you to speak out for justice in your respective circles, so that an atmosphere of love and peace is created for each of you. Your country is also among those who enjoy a political and social superiority. Therefore, higher level of justice is required from you.

I now end this subject with the prayer that Muslims and non-Muslims carry the fear of their Creator in their hearts so that they can have good feelings for His creation. Allah help us all. I am grateful to you for having taken part in this function and for having encouraged us in our endeavors. Thank you very much. Thank you.