

Jihad as an Essential Principle of Human Life An Understanding from the Qur'anic Perspective

Israr Ahmad Khan*

Abstract

Many a Qur'anic concept has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by both protagonists and antagonists. *Jihād* is one such Qur'anic term. Today its meaning, purpose, and application appear confusing. The most popular import of this term is war against the enemies of Islam. Does this meaning of *jihād* commensurate with its Qur'anic usage? Or have Muslim scholars and commentators of the Qur'ān imposed their own idea of *jihād* in the minds of the people? To resolve this entangled and misunderstood Qur'anic usage of *jihād* in an objective manner is a big challenge to the Muslim scholars of the post-modern era. The word *jihād* has occurred in the Qur'ān forty one times, eleven times in Makkan revelations and the remaining thirty times in Madinan revelations. It has been used in both noun and verb forms. In order to understand, and interpret the concept of *jihād* in the Qur'ān, one has to read it within the contexts it has occurred. To read a statement in isolation of its context is in sheer contrast with universally established rule of justice. If the word *jihād* in the Qur'ān is read and deliberated over within the given context, it may appear that *jihād* is not an act of Islamic life like *solāh*, *zakāh*, *hajj*, *nikāh* etc but rather it is an underlying principle of life to be applied in every walk of life. It is like the other Qur'anic principles of life such as *ihsān*, *taqwā*, *'adl* etc. The word *jihād* denotes doing the best everywhere, whether in devotional matter, social life, economic undertaking, political struggle, cultural activity, educational endeavor, or military expedition. It is suggested here that all the forty one verses where the word *jihād* has occurred in the Qur'ān should be interpreted by applying coherent methodology. The writer of this paper hereby proposes to do his part of *jihād* with intellectual honesty to interpret the word *jihād* as used in the Qur'ān. For that purpose, he will, wherever it is possible, refer to scholars' views and evaluate them critically so as to unfold the truth concerning *jihād* in the Qur'ān.

Abstrak

Kebanyakan konsep al-Quran telah disalah faham dan disalah tafsir oleh kedua-dua protagonis dan mereka yang menentang. Jihad adalah salah satu contoh istilah al-Quran itu. Hari ini maksud, tujuan dan penggunaan jihad menimbulkan kekeliruan. Kefahaman yang paling popular istilah ini adalah peperangan untuk menentang musuh-musuh Islam. Adakah makna jihad ini sepadan dengan penggunaan di dalam al-Quran? Atau adakah Ulama-ulama Islam dan pengulas al-Quran mengenakan idea jihad mereka yang tersendiri ke dalam minda orang? Untuk menyelesaikan penggunaan yang kusut dan disalah faham bagi istilah jihad di dalam al-Quran secara objektif, adalah suatu cabaran yang besar kepada para ulama Islam di era pesca-moden ini.

* Professor, Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: israr53@yahoo.com, Tel: 603-6196 5538 (office); 6017-680 1375

Perkataan jihad disebut sebanyak 41 kali, sebelas kali dalam ayat-ayat Makkah dan baki 30 dalam ayat-ayat Madinah. Ia telah digunakan dalam kedua-dua bentuk kata nama dan kata kerja. Untuk memahami dan mentafsir konsep jihad dalam al-Quran, seseorang itu harus membacanya dalam konteks yang ia telah berlaku. Untuk membaca pernyataan secara asing dengan konteksnya, ia memang bertentangan dengan kaedah keadilan universal. Jika istilah jihad dalam al-Quran dibaca dan dibincangkan dalam konteks yang diberikan, ia mungkin akan kelihatan bahawa jihad bukan merupakan satu perbuatan hidup seorang Muslim, seperti solat, zakat, haji, nikah dan lain-lain tetapi ia adalah satu prinsip asas kehidupan yang hendaklah diaplikasikan di setiap lapisan hidupan. Ia adalah seperti prinsip-prinsip hidup di al-Quran yang lain seperti ihsan, taqwa, 'adl dan lain-lain. Istilah jihad menandakan kelakuan yang terbaik di mana-mana, sama ada dalam amalan, kehidupan sosial, pengusahaan ekonomi, perjuangan politik, aktiviti budaya, usaha pendidikan atau ekspedisi ketenteraan. Adalah dicadangkan di sini bahawa semua 41 ayat di mana istilah jihad disebut di dalam al-Quran perlu ditafsirkan menggunakan kaedah koheren. Dengan ini, penulis karya ini mencadangkan untuk dirinya berjihad dengan kejujuran intelek untuk menterjemahkan perkataan jihad seperti yang digunakan di dalam al-Quran. Bagi tujuan itu, beliau akan di mana-mana jua yang mungkin, merujuk kepada pandangan ulama dan menilainya secara kritikal untuk terungkap kebenaran mengenai jihad di dalam al-Quran.

Introduction

The Qur'ān invites man to pattern his life on certain values and principles related to faith and actions. For that matter, it has outlined the desirable pattern of life by using several categories of terms. One such category of Qur'anic terms is that of underlying principles such as *ihsān* (excellence), *taqwā* (God consciousness), *'adl* (justice), and *jihād* (utmost endeavor). In this paper our concern is about *jihād*. The most popular meaning of *jihād* in both Muslim and non-Muslim circles is war and battle against the enemies. It is this reason that has led international community today to view *jihād* as terrorism and its actors as jihadist (terrorist). The Muslim community itself seems to be divided over the usage of the word *jihād*, one group confirming its meaning as crusade against enemies and the other contesting this approach. This controversy is to be resolved in a reliably academic manner. This paper represents a humble attempt to deliberate over the Qur'anic usage of the word *jihād*.

Occurrence of the Word Jihād in the Qur'ān

The word *jihād* has occurred in the Qur'ān forty one times, eleven times in Makkan revelations and thirty times in Madinan revelations. The Makkan chapters in which the word *jihād* has been used are six: *Sūrah al-An'ām* (6), *Sūrah al-Naḥl* (16), *Sūrah al-Furqān* (25), *Sūrah*

al-'Ankabūt (29), *Sūrah Luqmān* (31), and *Sūrah Fāṭir* (35). And Madinan chapters where the word *jihād* has occurred are thirteen: *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2), *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* (3), *Sūrah al-Nisā'* (4), *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5), *Sūrah al-Anfāl* (8), *Sūrah al-Tawbah* (9), *Sūrah al-Ḥajj* (22), *Sūrah al-Nūr* (24), *Sūrah Muhammad* (47), *Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt* (49), *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah* (60), *Sūrah al-Ṣaff* (61), and *Sūrah al-Taḥrīm* (66).

Understanding the Word *Jihād* from Semantic Angle

The Qur'ān has used Arabic language of its first addressees. The meaning of the Qur'anic words and sentences are to be determined in the light of the meaning of the words and sentences concerned as developed by the Arabs of the time when the revelation came down. The word *jihad* was not coined by the Qur'ān anew. This word in its different variants was available in Arabic classical poetry and orations of *jāhili* period. It would be highly unwise to ignore the meaning of the word *jihad* available in Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Qur'anic revelation. According to al-Ṭabarī (d.310 A.H.), *jihād* denotes a situation in which one has to strive hard.¹ Al-Rāzī (d.606 A.H.) says that *jihād* is derived from *juhd* which implies hardship.² Al-Farāhīdī (d.175 A.H.) states that *jihād* has two imports: (1) something very hard and (2) doing one's best to achieve a particular target.³ Al-Asfahānī (d.502 A.H.) stresses that *jihād* connotes defense from three enemies, known human enemy, Satan, and evil-self.⁴ Al-Qurtubī (d.671 A.H.) is of the view that the root word *jahd* gives birth to several words such as *jihād*, *mujāhidah*, *ijtihād*, *al-tajāhud* which denote making endeavor to the best of one's ability and strength.⁵ According to al-Firozabadi (d.817 A.H.), *jihād* refers to exertion and hardship.⁶ Al-Shawkānī (d.1250 A.H.) traces the

¹ Al-Ṭabarī, Muhammad ibn Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 2, p. 218.

² Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1997), vol. 2, p. 394.

³ Al-Farāhīdī, al-Khalīl ibn Ahmad, *Kitāb al-'Ayn* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 2001), p. 160.

⁴ Al-Asfahānī, Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad al-Rāghib, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1998), p. 108.

⁵ Al-Qurtubī, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, *al-Jāmi' li Ahhkām al-Qur'ān* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2000), vol. 2, part 3, p. 34.

⁶ Al-Firozābādī, Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1997), vol. 1, p. 404.

meaning of *jihād* as doing something to the best of one's capacity.⁷ According to lexicon and the views of Muslim scholars, the root *jim* (j), *ha* (h), and *dal* (d) has the import of hardship and exertion, and gives birth to several words such as *juhd* (hardship), *jihād* (making utmost endeavor), *ijtihād* (doing best to reach a conclusion), *mujāhidah* (defending oneself from something), *mujāhid* (the defender) etc.

Understanding the Word *Jihād* in Makkan Revelations of the Qur'ān

There is no reliably reported controversy over what is Makkan revelation and what is Madinan revelation. The unanimous definition of these two categories of revelations is that what came down before *hijrah* is Makkan and what came down after *hijrah* is Madinan revelation. In Makkan revelations the word *jihād* has occurred eleven times. An interpretation of the relevant verses from Makkan chapters is given here below.

Now they swear by God with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle shown to them, they would indeed believe in this divine writ. (Sūrah al-An'ām 6: 109)

The Arabic text for the underlined words in the translation is *jahda aymānihim*. The second word literally means "their oaths". The first word *jahda* is from the same root word which serves as basis for words *jihād*, *Juhd*, *mujāhid* etc. The word *jahda* when used with any noun gives the sense of strongest act. In the above translation Muhammad Asad has translated it as "most solemn". In the word *jahda* there are two components, consciousness and utmost endeavor. *Sūrah al-An'ām* was revealed in one single piece towards the close of Makkan period of Prophet Muhammad's mission.⁸ It consoles the Prophet (s.a.w.) that his mission will ultimately be accomplished, cautioning him against the opposition that they would not pay heed to his message for the time being. In the above verse the promise of opposition has been quoted that if they were given any miracle from God they would not hesitate to accept the Prophet's message. As shown in the above verse this promise was not a passing remark but as it appeared it was a strongly solemn

⁷ Al-Shawkānī, Muhammad ibn 'Alī, *Fath al-Qadīr* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1998), vol. 1, p. 243.

⁸ Mawdūdī, Syed Abul Ala, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān* (Markazi Maktabah Islami, Delhi, 2000), vol. 1, p. 520.

oath. To express this strength of their statement the Qur'ān has used the word *jahda* (in the strongest sense).

As it is, they swear by God with their solemn oaths, "Never will God raise from the dead anyone who has died. (Sūrah al-Naḥl 16: 38)

As in the previous verse (6:109), within the context of this above verse the underlined translated version serves the same meaning for *jahda aymānihim*.

And yet, behold, your Lord (grants His forgiveness) unto those who leave their homes after trials and persecutions and who thenceforth strive hard and are patient in adversity. (Sūrah al-Naḥl 16: 110)

The Arabic word for the underlined translated part is *jāhadū*, which if translated in literal English is "who made jihād". This *sūrah* (chapter) was revealed a few months before the Prophet's emigration to Madinah.⁹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan have both translated the word *jāhadū* as "those who strive and fight".¹⁰ It is highly strange that they inserted in their translation "fight". There is no controversy among Muslim scholars over the meaning of *jihād* in Makkan revelations. That is why Syed Mawdūdī translated *jāhadū* as 'those who braced hardships in the cause of Allah'.¹¹ Syed Mawdūdī further explained that the immediate targets mentioned in this verse were the believers who due to their persecutions at the hands of Quraysh had emigrated to Abyssinia.¹² Most of the commentators of the Qur'ān interpreted the word *jāhadū* in the above verse as *qāṭalū* (they fought war). Al-Biqā'ī interpreted the word *jāhadū* in the above context as those who fought unbelievers with the Prophet (s.a.w.).¹³ It is highly strange that al-Biqā'ī forgot that *Sūrah al-Naḥl* is a Makkan revelation;

⁹ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980), p. 393.

¹⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Qur'ān: English Translation* (King Fahd Complex, Madinah, 1413 A.H.), P. 765; Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Noble Qur'an: English Translation* (King Fahd Complex, Madinah, 1417 A.H.), P. 364.

¹¹ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 576.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Al-Biqā'ī, Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar, *Nazm al-Durar fi Tanāsub al-Āyāt wa al-Suwar* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1995), vol. 4, p. 315.

and that in Makkah there was no war against anyone. This verse gives glad tidings to Makkan emigrants to Abyssinia who had left their homes, braced difficult situations, and remained patient with no complaints. If the translation of *jāhadū* is made as ‘those who strove and fought’, it will be hard to bring any evidence to prove that the Makkan emigrants to Abyssinia were involved in any kind of warlike struggle to maintain their identity in Makkah or Abyssinia. During the Makkan period of the Prophet’s mission the Prophet and his followers were strictly prohibited to engage in any kind of fight against the opposition; and Abyssinia was a foreign land where they entered as victims of their own people and where King Negus had granted them full liberty to live, profess and practice their Islamic faith. There may not be much problem to translate the word *jāhadū* as ‘those who fought’ but with the interpretation that ‘those who fought against their own evil-self, against the temptations around them, and against satanic forces’.

Therefore listen not to the unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness, with the Qur’ān. Sūrah al-Furqān 25: 52

The underlined words are the translation of the original sentence in Arabic “*wa jāhidhum bihī jihādan kabīran*” The literal rendering of this Arabic statement will be “*and make big jihād against them with the Qur’ān*”. It should be born in mind that *Sūrah al-Furqān* was revealed in the 5th year after the Prophet Muhammad claimed his divine apostleship.¹⁴ In this verse the Prophet was advised not to pay heed to harsh criticism of the people and keep making utmost effort to convey the message of God as revealed in the Qur’ān. The weapon of *jihād* referred to in this verse is not the sword but the Qur’ān. Syed Mawdūdī while interpreting this verse says:

Big *jihād* (*jihādan kabīran*) has three meanings: utmost endeavor without any kind of slackness therein, struggle at a large scale devoting all of one’s means, and comprehensive striving leaving no fronts unattended, devoting his energy against opponents’ forces, and doing all that is required to be done in order to let the truth prevail. Within the context of

¹⁴ Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 549.

this striving is the *jihād* of the tongue and pen, that of life and wealth, and also that of gun and sword.¹⁵

This interpretation of *jihād* as occurred in the above verse (25:52) is a general interpretation of the concept of *jihād*. This is not the interpretation of *jihād* in the context of Makkan revelation. Abdullah Yusuf Ali interprets *jihādan kabīran* in its context in these words: “He (the Prophet) wages the biggest *jihād* of all, with the weapon of Allah’s revelation. Here instruction to make *jihād* against the enemies implies respond to their criticism in the light of advices given by Allah. The whole *Sūrah al-Furqān* mentions negative comments of Quraysh against the Prophet—the Qur’ān is a lie created by Muhammad himself with the help of others; the Qur’ān is jumble of false ancient stories; the Prophet should not be an ordinary person eating and drinking and walking at the market places; he should rather possess treasures and orchards; and also the revelation of the Qur’ān should not come down in stages. In this situation of Quraysh’s hostility the Prophet was advised to continue waging *jihād* against the enemies. Here *jihād* does not denote physical warfare but academic and rational response to the comments advanced by the opposition. Al-Rāzī (d.606 A.H.) while interpreting the above verse (25:52) says that some considered *jihād* in the above context as striving hard in communicating the message of Allah to others, while others claimed that it refers to warfare and fighting, and some others were of the view that both striving hard to convey the message of Allah as well as fighting can be included in the word *jihād*. Al-Rāzī criticizes this approach and says that since *Sūrah al-Naḥl* was a Makkan revelation, the concept of fighting here is not applicable.¹⁶

Hence, whoever strives hard does so for his own good. Sūrah (al-‘Ankabūt 29: 6)

The Arabic words for the underlined are *jāhada* (he made *jihād*) and *yujāhidu* (he makes *jihād*). Syed Mawdūdī maintains that these two words denote struggle against any hostile force; it is a comprehensive struggle spreading over the entire life of a believer and covering each and every aspect of life. To support his claim he quotes al-Ḥasan al-Baṣarī’s statement on *jihād*: “Verily, man remains engaged in *jihād* even

¹⁵ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 457.

¹⁶ Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 474.

though he never uses sword”.¹⁷ Syed Mawdūdī’s interpretation and al-Baṣārī’s approach make it very clear that *jihād* is not an act but a principle to be manifested everywhere in the life. Al-Ṭabarī (d.310 A.H.) takes the phrase *wa man jāhada* (and he who made *jihād*) as *wa man yujāhidu ‘aduwwahū min al-mushrikīn* (he who fights his enemy from among the idol worshippers).¹⁸ Strangely enough, al-Ṭabarī ignored the fact *Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt* is a Makkan revelation where there was no concept of or reference to fighting the enemies. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī describes the background of the revelation of this *sūrah* in these words: “The *sūrah* begins with an address to those who were persecuted merely due to their faith in the Prophet particularly those youth and slaves who were persecuted at the hands of their fathers and masters.”¹⁹ Historically, sons who accepted Islam and slaves who embraced new faith were tortured only in Makkah, not in Madinah. If al-Ṭabarī’s suggestion is accepted as valid, it will mean that Allah encouraged those who suffered at the hands of Quraysh to hit back at their persecutors. There is no evidence of such fight between the persecutors and the persecuted in Makkah. Absence of such information bears witness to the fact that *jihād* in this *sūrah* was not to fight but to brace all the difficult situations and persecutions. Iṣlāhī interprets the phrase *wa man jāhada* as “he who believes and forbears all kinds of hardships in that cause.”²⁰

And those who strive in our cause, We will certainly guide them to Our paths. (Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt 29: 69)

The original word for the underlined is *jāhadū* (they strove hard). This *sūrah* came down before the believers’ emigration to Abyssinia.²¹ This verse as translated above is the last verse of the chapter *al-‘Ankabūt*. The followers of the Prophet were being persecuted mercilessly by the Quraysh. In that situation, they were advised to remain firm on their faith. For that matter the word *jihād* has been used. The verse as translated above says that those who make *jihād* in the cause of Allah i.e. with sincerity to Allah deserve grace from Allah. None can claim here that believers were commanded to fight against the enemies on the battlefield. Striving to prepare oneself as a true believer

¹⁷ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 377-378.

¹⁸ Al-Ṭabarī op. cit., vol. 10, p. 122.

¹⁹ Iṣlāhī, Amīn Aḥsan, *Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān* (Taj Company, Delhi, 1997), vol. 6, p. 11.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

²¹ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 672.

is *jihād*. Al-Ṭabarī says that the above verse refers to those who fight non-believing Quraysh.²² Al-Rāzī says that *jāhadu finā* (made *jihād* in Our cause) denotes those who develop insight into Allah's arguments and obtain deep knowledge of that.²³ Al-Shawkānī says that the people referred to in the above verse are those who strive hard to seek the pleasure of Allah.²⁴ Iṣlāhī says that the statement in the verse is that those who are bearing all kinds of hardships in the path of Allah will certainly get some ways opened for themselves.²⁵ As mentioned earlier, this *sūrah* is Makkan revelation hence the use of the word *jihād* here will mean bearing hardships and remaining patient in all adverse situations whatsoever. Any interpretation of the above verse suggesting fight and war as al-Ṭabarī has done is untenable.

Should they endeavor to make you ascribe divinity, side by side with Me, to something which your mind cannot accept, obey them not. (Sūrah Luqmān 31: 15)

The Arabic word for the underlined is *jāhadā* (they both made endeavor). *Sūrah Luqmān* is unanimously a Makkan revelation.²⁶ The above verse is part of the advice given by the legendary sage Luqmān to his son. It says that man should not succumb to the pressure of the parents to worship idols and associate partners with the Supreme God. The act of parents putting pressure on the children to make them do something has been referred to in this verse as 'doing *jihād*'. The word *jāhadā* in the above context refers to all kinds of tricks and means to persuade the subjects to accept a particular message. The two persons (parents) to whom *jāhadā* is related has to put in all efforts and suffer hardships in achieving their goal.

They swore their strongest oaths. (Sūrah Fāṭir 35: 42)

The original Arabic words for the underlined are *jahda aymānihim*. As deliberated earlier on that in 6:109 and 16:38 the word *jahda* implies application of full strength in performing anything whatsoever hence when used for oath it means strong oath, and not

²² Al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 10, p. 161.

²³ Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 9, p. 77.

²⁴ Al-Shawkānī, op. cit., vol. 4, p. 229.

²⁵ Iṣlāhī, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 66.

²⁶ Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 627.

casual kind of swearing. In this context *Jahda aymānihim* means making *jihād* in swearing, that is, doing one's best to keep up the promise.

Understanding the Word *Jihād* in Madinan Revelations

The total number of occurrence of the word *jihād* in its various forms in Madinan revelations is thirty one (31).

Verse 2:218

In the existing order of the Qur'ān, the first occurrence of the word *jihād* is mentioned in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*: 218. It reads:

Those who believed and those who suffered exile and made jihād in the path of Allah,-they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah: and Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (Sūrah al-Baqarah: 218)

The context of this verse can easily be determined by reading the preceding two verses (216-217). Verse 216 declares that fighting in the cause of the truth is binding on the true believers. For that matter the word *qitāl* (war) has been used. In the verse 217 believers have been warned against the impending war to be waged aggressively by the enemies who are bent upon defeating the Prophet's mission. In verse 218 believers are given a very clear picture of those who deserve the grace of Allah. Three conditions have been stated for such people: (1) sincerity of faith, (2) emigration from the place where they are persecuted at the hands of the enemies, and (3) making *jihād* in the cause of Allah. Here the third condition may be interpreted as war in the path of Allah. It is because the context suggests that. Yet, it should be debated why Allah did not use the word *wa qātalū fī sabīl Allah* (and fought in the path of Allah). The use of the word *qitāl* would not have left any room for controversy. Syed Mawdūdī, while interpreting the word *jihād* in 2:218 says:

Jihād signifies making utmost endeavor to achieve a goal. This is not merely synonymous with war. For war the word *qitāl* is used. *Jihād* is wider than that. It includes all kinds of struggle. A *Mujāhid* is one who is always engaged in thinking about how to achieve his goal; his mind ponders over various possible ways; his speech and writings are devoted to that cause; his physical strength is dedicated to that objective; he

spends all his possible resources for that very purpose; and puts resistance to all the hurdles in the way to his goal to the extent that if required he lays down even his life. This is *jihād*. And *jihād* in the path of Allah means that the entire struggle should be made for the sake of Allah.....²⁷

Syed Mawdūdī claims that *jihād* is synonym of war. It is not justified. As he himself explains, *jihād* denotes making utmost struggle to achieve a goal. In the above verse 2:218 the message is that believers must do their best whether in the battlefield or in the time of peace. Syed Mawdūdī is suggesting that *jihād* is a principle yet he views it as an act (*jihād*). If the word *jihād* has wider application, it must not be an act but only a principle.

Verse 3:142

Did you think that you would enter Heaven without Allah confirming who are those among you who made jihād and those who remained steadfast?

Generally, the translation of the Arabic phrase—*al-Ladhīna Jāhadū*—as available in the above verse is made as “*who fought*”. The apparent reason for this rendering is that in the background there exists a situation of war initiated by Quraysh against Islamic city-state of Madinah. Undoubtedly, the context of the above verse is that of war. But if the preceding and succeeding verses are read minutely, it will appear that the context is not of wartime but after the wartime is over. The above verse (3:142) is part of Allah’s comment on the performance of the believers in the battlefield. It says that the ultimate success of the believers lies in fulfilling two conditions, *jihād* and *ṣabr*. To claim that here the first condition is fighting is untenable because the verse came down after the fight was over and Muslims entered normal phase of life from that of emergency. Therefore the translation of *jihād* here in this context should be struggle. Insisting that the context is of war and hence the meaning of *jihad* is fight, is not really justified. The translation should be this “*who did their best*”. Doing best in the battlefield denotes sincerity of commitment to the cause of Allah and demonstration of bravery to meet the enemies.

²⁷ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 166-167.

Verse 4:95

In this verse the word “*mujāhidūn*” two times and the word “*mujāhidīn*” only once have occurred. These two words are the plural of *mujāhid* which means performer of *jihād*. The whole verse may be translated as: “*Not equals are those believers who stay back home, except those who are disabled, and those who strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive hard with their wealth and their lives than to those who stay at home. Unto each Allah has promised good: but those who strive hard has He distinguished above those who stay at home by a great reward.*”

Translators of the Qur’ān translate the word “*mujāhidūn*” as “those who fight”.²⁸ The reason is very simple. In the above verse (4:95) two categories of believers have been described, *al-Qā’idīn* and *al-Mujāhidīn*. The first category is of those who stay back home; the second one is therefore of those who go out to fight against the enemies. This approach to the Qur’anic terms must be considered erroneous. Muhammad Asad explains meaning of both *al-Qā’idīn* and *al-Mujāhidīn* in these words: “*al-Qā’idīn* means who do not participate in the struggle in God’s cause, be it physical or moral. The term *Mujāhid* is derived from the verb *jahada*, which means “he struggled” or “strove hard” or “exerted himself”, namely in good cause and against evil. Consequently *jihād* denotes “striving in the cause of God” in the widest sense of the expression: that is to say, it applies not only to physical warfare but to any righteous struggle in the moral sense as well; thus, for instance, the Prophet described man’s struggle against his own passions and weaknesses (*jihād al-naḥs*) as the greatest *jihād*.”²⁹

Almost all the commentators of the Qur’ān right from al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Samarqandī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah to Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, al-Jazā’irī, and Iṣlāḥī have devoted their energy to interpret the difference in rewards of those who stay back home and those who go out for *jihād*. As for the meaning of *mujāhidūn*, hardly a commentator has paid

²⁸ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, *The Holy Qur’an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (King Fahd Complex, Madinah, 1413 A.H.), p. 244; Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language* (King Fahd Complex, Madinah, 1417 A.H.), p. 125.

²⁹ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur’an* (Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980), pp. 123-124.

attention to it. It is because the term *mujahidun* is, to them, exclusively for the fighters in the path of Allah.

The context in which the above verse occurs is related to both war and emigration. That is why the two terms—*al-Qā'idīn* and *al-Mujāhidīn*—may belong to both the situations. There is no strong reason to translate the term *al-Mujāhidīn* as fighters because by doing that it will get isolated from the situation of emigration. The translation and interpretation of the term *al-Mujāhidīn* must therefore reflect both the situations. In that case it will be far more reasonable to translate it as those who strive hard in any situations whatsoever.

Verses 5:53-54

The two verses in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* read:

And those who believe will say: Are these the same people who swore by God with their most solemn oaths that they were indeed with you? In vain are all their works, for now they are lost. O you who believe! If you ever abandon your faith, God will in time bring forth people whom He loves and who love Him—humble towards the believers, proud towards all who deny the truth, who strive hard in God's cause, and do not fear to be censured by anyone who might censure them. Such is Allah's favor, which He grants unto whom He wills. And Allah is infinite, all-knowing.(5:53-54)

The two underlined phrases are the translation of *jahda aymānihim* and *yujāhidūna fī sabīl Allah* respectively. The word *jahda* is also derived from the same root *jahada* (striving hard). In the above verse this word is related to taking oath where it makes the oath a very strong and conscious act. The second phrase—*yujāhidūna fī sabīl Allah*—has been translated and interpreted by most of Muslim scholars as “those who fight in the way of Allah”. It may not be justified. The immediate context in which the above verse occurs is related to insincere elements in the society. Insincerity towards Islam makes people passive; they do not do what they are required to do; and they do not strive in the cause of Allah physically and morally. In the above verse the picture of sincere people has been drawn in which one of their features as mentioned therein is that they are active; they do what they are required to do; and they strive hard in the cause of Allah.

Verses 8:72, 74-75

Those who believed and adopted exile and strove hard with their properties and their persons in the cause of Allah as well as those who gave asylum and aid—these are friends and protectors, one of another.... (8:72).

Those who believe and adopt exile and strive hard in the cause of Allah as well as those who give asylum and aid—these are truly believers..... (8:74)

And those who accept faith and subsequently adopt exile and strive hard in your company—they are of you.... (8:75)

These are last verses of *Sūrah al-Anfāl*. The original Arabic word for the underlined portion in all the three above quoted verses is *jāhadū* (literally, they made *jihād*). There are two categories of commentators, those who did not interpret the meaning of *jihād* in the above context, and those who interpreted it as fighting the enemies. Al-Ṭabarī says that *jāhadū* here in the above context denotes those who were extremely exhausted in war against the enemies of Allah, the disbelievers.³⁰ Al-Rāzī interprets “*jihād* with properties and persons” as mentioned in the verse 8:72 in these words: “As for *mujāhidah* (making *jihād*) with property, it refers to loss of their homes and hearth and pastures.....and also their spending of wealth in military expeditions. As for *mujāhidah* with person, it denotes that in the battle of Badr believers did not have weapons because of which they had to strive hard in the war”.³¹

Sūrah al-Anfāl was revealed in the 2nd year after *hijrah* immediately after the first major battle of Badr. The whole *sūrah* comprises description of the battle in which the enemies had invaded the Islamic city-state of Madinah. When faced with the handful of followers of the Prophet, the enemies suffered a humiliating defeat.³² The immediate context of the above-quoted verses (8:72 & 74-75) is historically related to the battle of Badr hence the first import of the word *jāhadū* is “those who participated in the war”. But one may raise a question here why the word *qātalū* (who fought) was, then, not used. The replacement of the word *qitāl* with *jihād* must have some

³⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 294.

³¹ Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 5, pp. 515-516.

³² Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 118.

significance. The word *jihād* is a universal term which does not necessarily denote in every situation war and fighting; it signifies sincere devotion to a higher cause and striving hard to further it. The above three verses describe Makkan emigrants' three chief characteristics, belief (*īmān*), emigration (*muhājirah*), and striving hard (*mujāhidah*). Muhammad Asad views emigration as a provision of general law, applicable to all times.³³ It, then, may also be claimed that like emigration *jihād* as mentioned in the above three verses constitute a general law, valid for all times. In that case *jihād* may not necessarily be construed as war and fighting but rather it will be taken as striving hard in any situation to achieve excellence in Islamic life.

Verse 9:16

Do you think that you will be spared unless Allah takes cognizance of your having striven hard. (9:16)

The Arabic word for the underlined portion in the translation as given above is *jāhadū* (who made *jihād*). This *sūrah* is composed of three main revelations on three different occasions. First, verses 1-37 came down in the second lunar month of the year 9 after *hijrah*. Second, verses 38-72 came down in the middle of the year 9 after *hijrah* at a time when the Prophet was making military preparations to march towards the borders of the Roman Empire. Third, verses 73-129 came down after the Prophet came back from his military expedition to the Roman Empire.³⁴ The above verse belongs to the first part of the *sūrah*. This part of the *sūrah* speaks volumes of the background in which the verses came down. The background was that of war between the believers and non-believers; the Prophet had just conquered Makkah and annexed it to the newly established Islamic state; the Quraysh had been subdued but other Arab tribes were looking at the new Islamic forces menacingly. This situation demanded that believers should remain mentally and physically prepared for any hostility demonstrated by the enemies. Defense of a nation is the sacred duty of the people of the nation. It should be born in mind that before the above verse (9:16) four times the word *qitāl* (verses 5, 12, 13 & 14) has occurred. This word gives in an unequivocal manner message that believers should take military steps to strengthen the security of the Islamic state. But when in the above verse (9:16) the word *jihād* has been used; it must be different from *qitāl*. The

³³ Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 252.

³⁴ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 166.

term *jihād* is comprehensive in its import and application, whereas the term *qitāl* has limited significance and application. It would be injustice on the part of the interpreters of the Qur'ān to equate *jihād* with *qitāl*.

Verse 9:19

Do you consider the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque equal to the service of one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives hard in the cause of Allah? (9:19)

The original Qur'anic word for the underlined is *jāhada* (who makes *jihād*). The background of the revelation of this verse is the same as of the above verse (9:16). It should be noted that this verse along with other verses until 8:37 came down immediately after the conquest of Makkah. In the conquest of Makkah there was no war in the real sense of the word. Yet the term *jihād* was used to describe the contribution of the believers. It makes it very clear that *jihād* is wider than war and fight against the enemies. In this verse there is a comparison between the devotional services and *jihād*. Naturally, as declared in the verse the latter is greater than the former.

Verse 9:20

Those who believe, emigrate, and strive with might and main in Allah's cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah....(9:20)

The Arabic word for the underlined part in the translation of the above verse is *jāhadū* (who make *jihad*). As has been seen in the discussion of verse 9:16, this verse belongs to the same background hence the same message. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the word *jāhadū* as "those who strive with might and main" indicates its comprehensive significance, not merely confined to the battlefield. The meaning of *jihād* in this verse appears to be the same as in the verse 9:16.

Verse 9:24

Say: if your fathers and your sons and your brothers and your spouses and your clan, and worldly goods you have acquired, and the commerce whereof you fear a decline, and

the dwellings in which you take pleasure are dearer to you than Allah, and His Apostle, and struggle in His cause, then wait until Allah manifests His will.....(9:24)

The original Arabic word for the underlined is *jihād*. The immediate context is related to the battle of Ḥunayn which took place in 8 A.H. shortly after the Prophet's conquest of Makkah. In this battle the Muslims- particularly those who were newly converted after the fall of Makkah - had shown weakness against the enemies.³⁵ They were advised in the above verse that they should keep the cause of Allah (*jihād*) far above everything including their own relatives and riches. Soldiers in any army are required to do their best in the war against the enemies. The Muslim army was also required to show its strength against the enemies. For that matter, it is interesting to note that the word *qitāl* was not used but the word *jihād* was used. The term *jihād* is far wider than *qitāl*.

Verse 9:41

Go you forth lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and persons in the cause of Allah.... (9:41)

The original word for the underlined is *jāhidū*. It is in imperative form. Here believers have been commanded to make *jihād*. As said above, this verse belongs to the part of the *sūrah* which came down during the Prophet's military preparations meant for Roman Empire. To understand the significance of this imperative word in the context concerned it is to be checked what took place in the history of this military expedition. When the Prophet reached the Roman borders with his huge army, there was no war between the Prophet's army and the Roman troops. The Prophet's military expedition did not climax into battle. It means that the word *jāhidū* (strive and struggle) was not for fighting but for making all necessary preparations, and sacrifices for the cause of strengthening the Islamic state further. Had the imperative been *qātilū* (fight and kill), there would have been a different scenario. The Roman border was thousands of kilometers away from Madinah; the Muslim army was not heavily equipped; majority of the soldiers were on foot; it was the summer season with unbearable heat; yet the Muslims were invited to make *jihād*. Making *jihād* here means doing one's best in

³⁵ Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 260.

the given situation and not feeling demoralized. Historically, the Prophet's military expedition against the Roman Empire was *jihād*, and not *qitāl*. That is why the word *jihād* in the above context (9:20) is not synonym of *qitāl*. It rather refers to 'struggle and striving hard' in a given cause.

Verse 9:44

Those who believe in Allah and Last Day do not ask you for exemption from struggling with their goods and persons....(9;44)

The original word for the underlined is *yujāhidu* (who make *jihād*). This verse is part of the revelation on the occasion of the Prophet's military preparations meant against the Roman Empire. As has been said in the discussion related to verse 9:41, the military expedition of the Prophet did not take the form of war. The word *yujāhidu* means all kinds of required struggle in the cause of Allah. It is known that the objective of that military expedition against the Roman Empire was to ensure the security of the Islamic state. The soldiers in that expedition suffered all kinds of sufferings such as unbearable exhaustion, injury, hunger, loss of wealth and crops at home. All these sufferings constitute *jihād*. The believers who are mentioned in the above verse were not afraid of making any kind of sacrifice and bearing any adverse situation for the cause of Islam. They did not yet participate practically in the military expedition, yet they were referred to as wanting to struggle (*jihād*). What does it mean? It means that *jihad* is not the name of any particular act but an 'approach and principle' which is valid for all kinds of cause, be it physical, mental, or moral.

Verse 9:73

O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them... (9:73)

The original Qur'anic word for the underlined is *jāhid* (make *jihād*). This is in imperative form. The Prophet has been commanded to make *jihād* against the enemies, unbelievers and hypocrites. This verse belongs to the third revelation in the *sūrah* which came down after the Prophet's return from his military expedition against the Roman Empire. The message in the verse is that the Prophet should now pay attention to

the local enemies after censuring the foreign enemies. There is no historical evidence that the Prophet waged war against the insincere elements in the society of Madinah. So in relation to *jihād* against hypocrites means something other than war. Syed Mawdūdī while explaining practical manifestation of *jihād* against the hypocrites says that *jihād* against hypocrites does not mean war against them but it means exposing them to the society at large as to their insincere behavior, condemning them in public, not letting them to enjoy honorable position in the society, severing social relationship with them, isolating them from collective consultation, declaring their testimony in the courts of justice as unreliable, closing the doors for them from holding high positions in the state and government, boycotting them in social gatherings, and punishing them for their open treachery and rebellion.³⁶ As for *jihād* against unbelievers, it does refer to war but only when there is really any danger to the security of the state. In a situation of peace *jihād* against unbelievers will mean ‘communication of Islamic message’ in the most effective manner, as advised in the verse 25:52 (“*And make jihād against the unbelievers with the Qur’ān*”).

Verse 9:79

Those who slander such of the believers as give freely to charity, as well as those who find nothing beyond their toil—and throw ridicule on them—Allah will throw back their ridicule on them...(9:79)

The original Arabic word for the underlined is *juhdihim* (literally, their labor). This word is derived from the same root as *jihād*. Here in this context it is not a reference to any kind of warfare but rather a mention of the hard labor some believers did to earn their livelihood as well as something to spend in the path of Allah.³⁷ It is noteworthy that the verse appreciates the hard labor for any reasonable and desirable cause.

Verse 9:86

When a surah comes down enjoining them to believe in Allah and to strive hard together with His Apostle.....(9:86)

³⁶ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 215.

³⁷ Ibid., op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 218-219.

The Qur'anic word for the underlined is *jāhidū* (who make *jihād*). The immediate context is related to the military expedition against the Roman Empire. When the Prophet made it compulsory for every able-bodied person to register in the expedition, there were people who came willingly to register and also those who were interested in being exempted from military service. It is the second category of people who have been referred to in the above verse, condemning their approach. In time of need believers are required to sacrifice their possessions and their persons for the sake of some greater cause.

Verse 9:88

But the Messenger and those who believe with him strive hard with their possessions and with their lives: for them are all good things.....(9:88)

The original word for the underlined is *jāhadū* (they made *jihād*). The background of this verse is the same as of the above verse (9:86). Here in this verse the believers who willingly participate in military expedition have been admired. Their *jihād* is to be understood in the light of the practical manifestation of the Military march of the Prophet to the Roman Empire border. There was no war in that expedition, yet the Qur'ān terms sincere believers' contribution as *jihād*.

Verse 22:78

And strive in His cause as you ought to strive.....(22:78)

The original Qur'anic words for the underlined portions in the translation of the verse (22:78) are *jāhidū* and *jihād*. In this verse the believers have been advised to do their best in performing their assigned duties whatsoever. Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his commentary of the above verse says that the words are perfectly general and apply to all true and unselfish striving for spiritual good.³⁸ Abd Allah ibn al-Mubārak interprets *jihād* in the above context as *mujāhidah al-naḥs wa al-hawā* (*jihād* against one's own self and low desires). He further says that the Prophet upon his return from military expedition to Roman border said: "We have returned from a small *jihād* to a big *jihād*."³⁹ Al-Rāzī says that

³⁸ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Amanah Corporation, USA, 1992), p. 842.

³⁹ Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 255.

jihād in the above context refers to making utmost effort in keeping away from all that has been forbidden and in observing all that has been commanded.⁴⁰ Syed Mawdūdī explains the above verse that *jihād* is not merely war but this word is used in the sense of struggle, and striving hard. He quotes a statement of the Prophet that the big *jihad* is a struggle against one's own desires.⁴¹ The above translation is only for part of the verse (22:78). If the whole verse is read, the message concerning *jihād* will become crystal clear.

The whole verse reads: “*And strive in His cause as you ought to strive. He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the religion of your father Abraham. It is He who made you Muslims, both before and in this revelation; that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you be witness for mankind! So establish regular prayer, give regular charity and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector—the best to protect and the best to help.*” It should be noted that some important manifestations of *jihād* have been described in the verse: (1) communication of the message of Islam to others in a way that people understand it clearly, (2) performing the prayers regularly and punctually, (3) helping the poor and needy in the society regularly and (4) being sincere to the cause of Allah. If a believer communicates the message of Islam in the best possible way, if he performs his prayers on a regular basis, pays charity dues, and remains sincere and loyal to Allah, he actually carries out *jihād*.

Verse 24:53

They swear their strongest oaths by Allah.....(24:53)

The original word for the underlined is *jahda aymānihim*. Making utmost effort with full consciousness of the implications in swearing is *jahda aymānihim*. Its explanation has already been made in 5:53, 6:109, and 16:38. The word *jahda* is derived from the same root word as *jihād*, which carries the meaning of ‘making one’s utmost endeavor’.

Verse 47:31

And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience.... (47:31)

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 253-254.

The original word for the underlined is *mujāhidīn* (those who make *jihād*). *Sūrah Muhammad* deals with the necessity of defense against external foes by courage and strenuous fighting; it was revealed in the first year after *hijrah*, when Muslims were under threat of extinction by invasion from Makkah.⁴² The preceding verses (47:29-30) mention hypocrites in Madinan society. They were insincere to the Prophet and his message; hence they were very passive in proving beyond doubt that they were Muslims. The verse concerned (47:31) as translated above refers to a situation where it was not easy to recognize sincere and insincere faces in Islamic society. In order for the sincere elements to be recognized Allah willed that Muslims should be tested to see who were the *mujāhidīn* (active in their Islamic life), and who were the *sābirīn* (those who persevere in patience).

Verse 49:15

Only those are believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their possessions and their persons in the cause of Allah: such are the sincere ones (49:15)

The original words for the underlined are *wa jāhadū bi amwālihim wa anfusihim*. The immediate context is that of comparison between sincere believers and Bedouin Arabs who also claimed for equal treatment as Muslims. In the verse (49:14) it was said that the desert Arabs did submit politically to the Prophet's authority but true belief did not enter their hearts. Immediately after that the true believers' main features have been referred to in the verse as translated above.

In his interpretation of this verse al-Shawkānī says:

Jihād includes good deeds (*al-a'māl al-ṣāliḥah*) which Allah commanded. This is, among other things, a person struggles for, performing and accomplishing it exactly as Allah has commanded.⁴³

Verse 60:1

⁴² Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, *The meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, p. 1314.

⁴³ Al-Shawkānī, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 73.

O you who believe! Take not My enemies and yours as friends, offering them love, even though they have rejected the truth that has come to you, and have driven out the Messenger and yourselves simply because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you come out striving in my way and to seek My Good Pleasure (take them not as friends).(60:1)

The Arabic word for the underlined is *jihādan* (*jihād*). The background of this verse is related to a secret letter written by a Muslim to the people of Makkah, informing them about the plan of the Prophet. The letter was intercepted and the truth was revealed. In the verse the believers were told very clearly that they should not be on terms of secret intimacy even with the enemies of their faith and people.⁴⁴ The verse teaches the believers that the concept of *jihād* necessitates that no secret intimacy should be maintained with enemies. This is quite natural. That is why secret intimacy with enemies and passing on to them secrets of the nation are considered serious offence in every law which carries mandatory death penalty.

Verse 61:11

That you believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you strive your utmost in the cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: that will be the best for you, if you but knew. (61:11)

The original word for the underlined is *tujāhidūna* (you strive hard). *Sūrah al-Şaff* was revealed after the battle of Uḥud in which some Muslims showed some traits of carelessness. The above verse encouraged believers to be engaged in future battles against enemies with the spirit of *jihād* i.e. doing best in accordance with their capacity.

Verse 66:9

O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and hypocrites and be firm against them... (66:9)

The original Qur'anic word for the underlined is *jāhid* (make *jihād*). The same statement has occurred in *Surah al-Tawbah:73* which has already been discussed. Al-Ṭabarī in regard to practical

⁴⁴ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, p. 1452.

implementation of *jihād* against unbelievers and hypocrites suggests that *jihād* against unbelievers is with the sword (*al-sayf*) and against hypocrites with the execution of the stipulated law (*al-ḥudūd*).⁴⁵ Muhammad Asad in his interpretation of the above verse says:

The imperative “*jāhid*” is obviously used here in its spiritual connotation, implying efforts at convincing both the outspoken unbelievers and the waverers, including the various types of hypocrites.....Although the imperative is addressed in the first instance to the Prophet, it is considered morally binding on all believers.⁴⁶

Muhammad Asad’s approach seems to be more logical than al-Ṭabarī’s.

Qur’anic Condition for *Jihād*

In most of the verses on *jihād* (such as 2:218, 4:95, 8:72, 74-75, 9:16, 19, 20, 24, 41) one can see a condition for *jihād*. That condition has been conveyed through the term *fī sabīl Allah* (in the cause of Allah). It is a very comprehensive term referring to the nature and form of *jihād*. Al-Ṭabarī interprets “in the cause of Allah” as “*fī dīn Allah*” (in the religion of Allah).⁴⁷ Al-Ālūsī construes “in the cause of Allah” as “*li i’lā’ dīnihi*” (for the dominance of His religion).⁴⁸ Syed Mawdūdī interprets *jihād fī sabīl Allah* as struggle for the sake of Allah and with the only objective that the law of Allah is established on the earth.⁴⁹ When seen together al-Ṭabarī, al-Ālūsī, and Mawdūdī appear to be suggesting that *jihād fī sabīl Allah* (*jihād* in the cause of Allah) refers to three conditions: (1) it should be for the sake of Allah only, (2) the immediate target of *jihad* should be domination of the law of Allah on the earth, and (3) it should be performed in accordance with the rules and provisions revealed from Allah. As for the pleasure of Allah, it is the ultimate goal of every Islamic act, big or small. *Jihād* must be initiated, performed and accomplished with a view to seeking the countenance of Allah. There cannot be any other goal higher than this. Domination of

⁴⁵ Al-Ṭabarī op. cit., vol. 12, p. 160

⁴⁶ Muhammad Asad, op. cit., p. 273.

⁴⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 294.

⁴⁸ Al-Ālūsī, al-Syed Maḥmūd, *Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī* (Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, 1999), vol. 1, part 2, p. 690.

⁴⁹ Mawdūdī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 167.

Allah's law on the earth signifies providing justice to the people of the land concerned. No *jihād* can ever be allowed for mere political domination of a certain people and the land. Political domination will mean political slavery of the people. Allah declares man His '*abd* (slave) hence *jihād* is for bringing man back to the slavery of Allah, and not to the slavery of another man. *Jihād fī sabīl Allah* refers to certain principles to be followed by those carrying out *jihād*.

The Prophet Muhammad's *Sunnah* represents the practical and methodological interpretation of the Qur'anic commands. He always observed certain higher principles in war and always advised his men in the army to follow those regulations of war. He made it very clear that civilians should not be harmed in a war; that women, children, and elderly people should not be touched; that the property of the vanquished should at no cost be plundered and burned; that the dead bodies in the battle front should not be mutilated unlike the dominant military culture during those days; that offer of the peace treaty from enemies side should be welcomed; and human rights of all the parties involved should be honored. Any *jihād* in the sense of war which ignores these principles and objectives cannot be referred to as *jihād* because *jihād* does not mean free for all against the enemies.

Applicability of Qur'anic Precept of *Jihād*

There is no denying the fact that the Qur'anic injunctions are not limited to historical instances and situations against which revelations came down; they are of general nature, applicable in all situations and to all believers across all the limitations of time and space. Qur'anic instructions on *jihād* are no exceptions to this rule. Social set-up and governmental system are both now different from the emphasis stated in the Qur'ān. During the Prophet's period there was no standing army to defend the nation; hence during emergency soldiers from the general public were drafted to raise a small or huge army. Today when hundreds of departments are working in a nation, people are already associated with them in one or another capacity. The army, the air force and the navy are playing their role in the defense of every nation in the modern world. The *jihād* related command is still valid for all working in any field whatsoever. People working in security forces will have to implement *jihād* in their capacity but other people working in education, economy, media, factories would not be required to apply the concept of *jihād* exactly as the army men do. Since *jihād* is a principle applicable

everywhere and every time, military forces will strive hard to achieve their goal and others will strive hard in their different capacities to excel in their task. *Jihād* is applicable to both situations of war and that of peace in the same form i.e. striving hard to the best of one's ability and capacity.

Conclusion

The term '*Jihād*' has spiritual and moral connotation, applicable to all situations and times. The term *jihād* is not synonym of *qitāl* (war). *Jihād* is wider in its meaning and application, whereas *qitāl* is limited to warfare. *Jihād* is a principle and *qitāl* is an act. Qur'anic verses where the word *jihād* in its various forms has been used unequivocally speak about the meaning of *jihād*. As for the command or concept of *jihād* in Makkan revelations, there should not be any controversy as to its spiritual and moral connotation. Occurrence of the word *jihād* in Madinan revelations do refer to a situation of war but the word *jihād* can in no way be used as a synonym of war. The Qur'ān uses the word *jihād* in the sense of striving hard in every field of life. When the Qur'ān instructs individuals to make *jihād*, it does not certainly refer to warfare. Instruction of *jihād* to society connotes military as well as spiritual striving. *Jihād* in the sense of war is conditioned with "*fī sabīl Allah*" (in the cause of Allah) which means that war must have the objective of providing justice and peace to the people concerned, and must be based on certain principles such as honoring human rights. A *jihād* devoid of the condition of *fī sabīl Allah* is not *jihād* but terrorism which must be condemned as highly despicable act and bane for human existence.