

"In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West" — Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)



Concept of Jihad: In the Words
of The Promised Messiah (as)

06

True Islamic Jihad - Address by His Holiness
Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba)

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What are the Regulations of Fighting in Islam?

20

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY WORLDWIDE

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (may peace be upon him)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by his Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (the Mahdi and Messiah).

The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam: peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God in its pristine purity.

His Holiness Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed in the commentary of Verse 6 of Chapter 98 of the Holy Qur'an: "[Islam] is the religion of the people of the right path."

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love

and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qura'nic teaching:

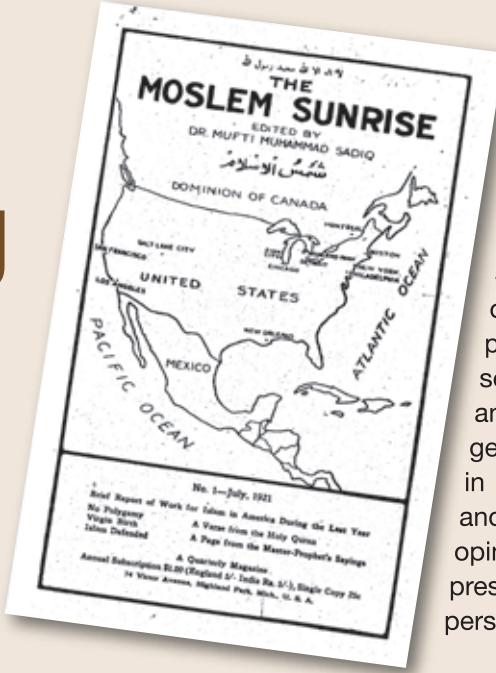
"There is no compulsion in religion"
(The Holy Qur'an: 2:257)

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been led by the elected successors of His Holiness Hazrat Ahmad (as). The present Head of the Community, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul-Masih V (aba) or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah (as).



One of the longest-running Muslim publications in America



In 1920, the first Ahmadi Muslim missionary, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra), arrived in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as one of the longest-running Muslim publications in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics related to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society and provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues while presenting solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The Muslim Sunrise welcomes letters to the Editor, questions, and submissions.

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Library of Congress Call Number:
BP195.A5 M8

The Muslim Sunrise

Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer 'Alaihis-Salam' or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.'

Companions of prophets who have passed away are salutated by Radiyallahu 'Anhu/a or 'may God be pleased with him/her.'

While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text in order to facilitate reading, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

The Muslim Sunrise is published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, under the auspices of US Ameer (National President), Dr. Mirza Maghoor Ahmad.

Headquarters:

15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905
Phone: 301-879-0110, **Fax:** 301-879-0115

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

sa:	Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
as:	'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)
ra:	Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh:	Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
aba:	Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful" at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

The Muslim Sunrise is a monthly publication of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, Inc.
Editorial and Executive Office: 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905
Single copy: \$4.00. **Subscriptions:** \$40.00 per year in USA.



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Rizwan Khan

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dr. Wajeeh Bajwa
editor-in-chief@muslimsunrise.com

SENIOR EDITOR

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From The Holy Qur'an

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِلِينَ ⑤١

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

The Holy Qur'an 2:191



Saying of Prophet Muhammad

(Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Anas (ra) narrates Allah's Messenger (sa), who said:
"Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed one."

They said: O Messenger of Allah, we support him when he is oppressed, but how can we support him when he is an oppressor?"

He (sa) said: "By preventing him from oppressing others."

(Sahih al-Bukhari 2444)



Editorial

There is no truth in the claim that the use of lethal weapons of violence, such as swords and guns, is necessary to forcibly spread true religion and righteousness. Resorting to violence diminishes the beauty and excellence of truth and casts doubt upon it. Those who hold such views are not friends of Islam but rather its enemies. They have ulterior motives and narrow minds, and their beliefs cast a shadow on the purity of Islam's name. A religion that can establish its truth and superiority through rational arguments, evidence, and testimony does not need to use force to coerce people into acknowledging its truth. Religion should align with reason, and if it fails to do so and resorts to violence, it only proves its falseness. Islam, in particular, prohibits compulsion in matters of faith and explicitly states: "There should be no compulsion in religion."(1)

The use of the sword in early Islamic history was not to forcibly spread the faith but to preserve life. This issue of the Muslim Sunrise features Islam's perspective on war and its teachings on the treatment of prisoners of war.

References:

1. The Holy Qur'an 2:257



In The Words of His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)



“ PROMISED MESSIAH ABOUT JIHAD —

“I have already written books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, in which I have proved that the popular concept of Jihad prevalent among Muslims, such as the expectation of a bloodthirsty Imam and cultivation of malice for others, are no more than false notions harboured by shortsighted clerics. Islam, on the contrary, does not allow the use of the sword in religion except in the case of defensive wars, wars which are waged to punish a tyrant, or those which are meant to uphold freedom. The need for a defensive war arises only when the aggression of an adversary threatens one's life. Except for these three kinds of Jihad permitted by the Shari'ah, Islamic Law, no other kind of war is allowed by Islam in support of religion. To highlight this concept of Jihad, I have distributed books in this country and in Arabia, Syria, and Khurasan, etc., at great cost.

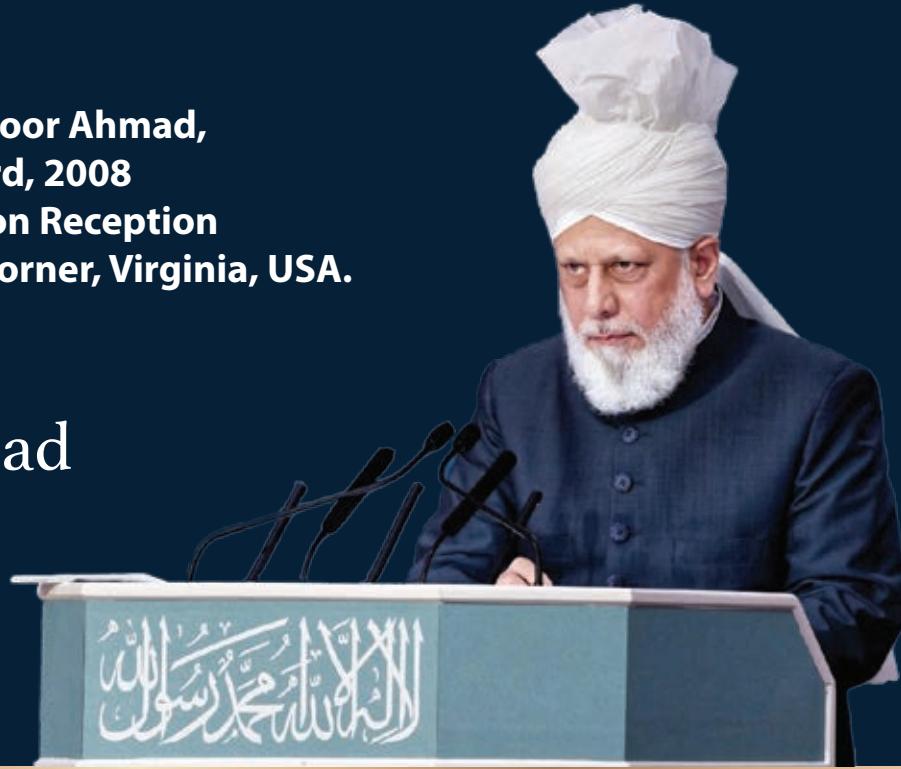
Reference:

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, "Jesus in India," Page 2-3,
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**Address by His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V (aba) on June 23rd, 2008
at The Khilafat Centenary Celebration Reception
and Dinner, Hilton McLean Tysons Corner, Virginia, USA.**

The True Islamic Jihad



All distinguished guests present here, Assalamo Alaikum Wa Barakatohu, peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Our local administration has requested that I 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 the peace within the world. It is most unfortunate that there is a group that has a clear understanding of the teachings of Islam, but this fanning of 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 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 undoubtedly 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 this literature that is in great circulation also 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 [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad], the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community whom we consider the Promised Messiah (as), according to his understanding of the Holy Qur'an, the traditions of the Holy Prophet (saw) 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 Qur'an. The Promised Messiah (as) says the prevailing practice found amongst Muslims of attacking people of

other religions, which they call Jihād, is not a lawful war, for it is clearly against the commandment of God and the Prophet (saw) and constitutes a grave sin. What do the words "lawful Jihad" used by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community mean? 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 (saw), proclaimed his divine mission and invited people to Islam. Remember, those people were illiterate and uncivilized. Animosities were borne out of ridiculous and petty matters, over which they would continue to kill each other for years. The sacred house, the Ka'aba, in Makkah [Mecca], that Prophet Abraham (as) 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 Makkans [Meccans] were certainly not ready to accept any God in the place of those idols.

When the Holy Prophet (saw) 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 Makkah [Mecca] increased their suspicion. Cruelty reached such highs 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 (saw) 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 (saw) would say that he had not been commanded by Allah the Almighty to fight.

At last, the Holy Prophet (saw) allowed some oppressed ones to migrate, and then, after some time, he too migrated to Madīnah [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 Madīnah [Medina]. The Holy Prophet (saw) 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 (saw) 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 Madīnah [Medina] and began to live in relative peace, there also the Makkans [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 Qur'an 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 wherein the name of Allah is often commemorated. Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed powerful, mighty" [The Holy Qur'an, 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 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 Qur'an, "And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely Allah loves not the transgressors" [The Holy Qur'an, 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 Qur'an, "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" [The Holy Qur'an, 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 that 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 regarding 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 establishing 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 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" [The Holy Qur'an, 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 Hudaybiyya, despite the insistence of companions and despite having the upper hand, the Holy Prophet (saw) 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 Qur'an, and the Holy Prophet (saw) their targets. The cartoons depicting the Holy Prophet (saw) in certain newspapers and the statements made by an MP of Holland, who made a film also targeted the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet (saw). 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(as) of this age can be expected to resort to slander. We have been taught in the Holy Qur'an 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 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 question. In any case, I want to briefly present the definition of Jihad as given by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim 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, if 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 had mentioned the Jihad found in Islam and thinks that the Qur'an incites to Holy War unconditionally. There cannot be a bigger fabrication. The Qur'an 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(as) 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 Qur'an, it is unlawful to fight against such a government because it does not engage in any religious war."

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim 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 (saw) 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 (saw) 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 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 (saw). 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 (saw) 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 political and social superiority. Therefore, a 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.

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Mirza Masroor Ahmad (June 23, 2008), "The True Islamic Jihad,
"Taken from: <https://www.alislam.org/articles/true-islamic-jihad/> [Accessed August 3, 2024].



Comparative Religious Teachings on War and Peace



Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (1889-1965)

Second Successor to His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as)

TEACHINGS OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY ABOUT WAR

The question arises: Can it ever be right to fight for a faith? Let us, therefore, turn to this question.

The teaching of religion on the subject of war takes different forms. Moses was commanded to enter the land of Canaan by force, defeat its population, and settle his people in it (Deut. 20:10-18). Despite this teaching in the Book of Moses and its reinforcement by practical examples of the Prophets Joshua, David, and others, Jews and Christians continue to hold their Prophets in reverence and regard their books as the Books of God.

At the end of the Mosaic tradition, we had Jesus who taught: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39).

Christians have often cited this teaching of Jesus and argued that Jesus preached against war. But in the New Testament, we have passages that purport to teach quite the opposite. One passage, for instance, says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matthew 10:34).

And another passage says: "Then said he unto them. But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his

scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." (Luke 22:36).

Of the three verses, the last two contradict the first. If Jesus (as) came for war, why did he teach about turning the other cheek? It seems we have either to admit a contradiction in the New Testament, or we have to explain one of the contradictory teachings in a suitable manner. We are not concerned here with the question whether turning the other cheek can ever be practicable. We are concerned only to point out that, throughout their long history, no Christian people have ever hesitated to make war. When Christians first attained to power in Rome, they took part in wars both defensive and aggressive. They are dominant powers in the world today, and they continue to take part in wars both defensive and aggressive. Only now the side which wins is canonized by the rest of the Christian world. Their victory is said to be the victory of Christian civilization. Christian civilization has come to mean whatever tends to be dominant and successful. When two Christian powers go to war, each claims to be the protector of Christian ideals. The power which wins is canonized as the true Christian power. It is true, however, that from the time of Jesus to our time, Christendom has been involved-and indications are that it will continue to remain involved-in war. The practical verdict of the Christian peoples, therefore, is that war is the real teaching of the New Testament, and that turning the other cheek was

either an opportunist teaching dictated by the helplessness of early Christians, or it is meant to apply only to individuals, not to States and peoples.

Secondly, even if we assume that Jesus taught peace and not war, it does not follow that those who do not act upon this teaching are not holy and honored. For Christendom has ever revered exponents of war such as Moses, Joshua and David. Not only this, the Church itself has canonized national heroes who suffered in wars. They were made saints by the Popes.

THE QURAN ON WAR AND PEACE

The teaching of Islam is different from both these teachings. It strikes a mean between the two. Islam does not teach aggression as did Moses. Nor does it, like present-day (and presumably corrupt) Christianity, preach a contradiction. It does not ask us to turn the other cheek and at the same time to sell our clothes to buy a sword. The teaching of Islam fits into the natural instincts of man, and promotes peace in the only possible way.

Islam forbids aggression, but it urges us to fight if failure to fight jeopardizes peace and promotes war. If failure to fight means the extirpation of free belief and of the search of truth, it is our duty to fight. This is the teaching on which peace can ultimately be built, and this is the teaching on which the Prophet based his own policies and his practice. The Prophet suffered continuously and consistently at Mecca but did not fight the aggression of which he was an innocent victim. When he escaped to Medina, the enemy was out to extirpate Islam; it was, therefore, necessary to fight the enemy in defense of truth and freedom of belief. We quote below the passages in the Qur'an which bear on the subject of war.

(1) In Chapter 22, verses 40-42, we have:

Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged-and Allah indeed has 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, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty.-Those who, if We establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and enjoin good and forbid evil. And with Allah rests the final issue of all affairs.

The verse purports to say that permission to fight is given to the victims of aggression. God is well able to help the

victims-those who have been driven out of their homes because of their beliefs. The permission is wise because, if God were not to repel the cruel with the help of the righteous, there would be no freedom of faith and worship in the world. God must help those who help to establish freedom of worship. It follows that fighting is permitted when a people have suffered long from wanton aggression-when the aggressor has had no cause for aggression and he seeks to interfere with the religion of his victim. The duty of the victim, if and when he attains to power, is to establish religious freedom and to protect all religions and all religious places. His power is to be used not for his own glorification, but for the care of the poor, the progress of the country and the general promotion of peace. This teaching is as unexceptionable as it is clear and precise. It proclaims the fact that early Muslims took to war because they were constrained to do so. Aggressive wars were forbidden by Islam. Muslims are promised political power, but are warned that this power must be used not for self-aggrandizement, but for the amelioration of the poor and the promotion of peace and progress.

(2) In Chapter 2 verses:191-194 we have:

And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not transgressors. And kill them wherever you meet them and drive them out from where they have driven you out; for persecution is worse than killing. And fight them not in, and near, the Sacred Mosque until they fight you, then fight them: such is the requital for the disbelievers. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is professed for Allah. But if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors.

Fighting is to be for the sake of God, not for our own sake or out of anger or aggrandizement, and even fighting is to be free from excesses, for excesses are displeasing to God. Fighting is between parties of combatants. Assaults on individuals are forbidden. Aggression against a religion is to be met by active resistance, for such aggression is worse than bloodshed. Muslims are not to fight near the Sacred Mosque, unless an attack is first made by the enemy. Fighting near the Sacred Mosque interferes with the public right of pilgrimage. But if the enemy attacks, Muslims are free to reply, this being the just reward of aggression. But if the enemy desists, Muslims must desist also, and forgive and forget the past. Fighting is to continue so long as religious persecution lasts and religious freedom is not established. Religion is for God. The use of force or pressure in religion is wrong. If the Kafirs desist from it and make religion free, Muslims are to desist from fighting the Kafirs. Arms are to be taken up against those who commit

excesses. When excesses cease, fighting must cease also. Categorically, we may say, the verses teach the following rules:

1. War is to be resorted to only for the sake of God and not for the sake of any selfish motives, not for aggrandizement or for the advancement of any other interests.
2. We can go to war only against one who attacks us first.
3. We can fight only those who fight against us. We cannot fight against those who take no part in warfare.
4. Even after the enemy has initiated the attack, it is our duty to keep warfare within limits. To extend the war, either territorially or in respect of weapons used, is wrong.
5. We are to fight only a regular army charged by the enemy to fight on his side. We are not to fight others on the enemy side.
6. In warfare immunity is to be afforded to all religious rites and observances. If the enemy spares the places where religious ceremonies are held, then Muslims also must desist from fighting in such places.
7. If the enemy uses a place of worship as a base for attack, then Muslims may return the attack. No blame will attach to them if they do so. No fighting is allowed even in the neighborhood of religious places. To attack religious places and to destroy them or to do any kind of harm to them is absolutely forbidden. A religious place used as a base of operations may invite a counter-attack. The responsibility for any harm done to the place will then rest with the enemy, not with Muslims.
8. If the enemy realizes the danger and the mistake of using a religious place as a base, and changes the battle-front, then Muslims must conform to the change. The fact that the enemy started the attack from a religious place is not to be used as an excuse for attacking that place. Out of reverence Muslims must change their battle-front as soon as the enemy does so.
9. Fighting is to continue only so long as interference with religion and religious freedom lasts. When religion becomes free and interference with it is no longer permitted and the enemy declares and begins to act accordingly, then there is to be no war, even if it is the enemy who starts it.

(3) In Chapter 8, Verses: 39-41 we have:

Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past will be forgiven them; and if they return thereto, then verily the example of the former people has already gone before them. And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Watchful of what they do. And if they turn

their backs, then know that Allah is your Protector. What an excellent Protector and what an excellent Helper.

That is to say, wars have been forced upon Muslims. But if the enemy desists, it is the duty of Muslims to desist also, and forgive the past. But if the enemy does not desist and attacks Muslims again and again, then he should remember the fate of the enemies of earlier Prophets. Muslims are to fight, while religious persecution lasts, and so long as religion is not for God and interference in religious matters is not abandoned. When the aggressor desists, Muslims are to desist also. They are not to continue the war because the enemy believes in a false religion. The value of beliefs and actions is well known to God and He will reward them as He pleases. Muslims have no right to meddle with another people's religion even if that religion seems to them to be false. If after an offer of peace the enemy continues to make war, then Muslims may be sure of victory even though their numbers are small. For God will help them and who can help better than God?

These verses were revealed in connection with the Battle of Badr. This battle was the first regular fight between Muslims and disbelievers. In it Muslims were the victims of unprovoked aggression. The enemy had chosen to disturb the peace of Medina and of the territory around. In spite of this, victory went to the Muslims and important leaders of the enemy were killed. To retaliate against such unprovoked aggression seems natural, just and necessary. Yet Muslims are taught to stop fighting as soon as the enemy ceases it. All that the enemy is required to concede is freedom of belief and worship.

(4) In Chapter 8, Verses:62-63 we have:
And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers.

That is to say, if in the course of a battle the disbelievers at any time incline towards peace, Muslims are to accept the offer at once and to make peace. Muslims are to do so even at the risk of being deceived. They are to put their trust in God. Cheating will not avail against Muslims, who rely on the help of God. Their victories are due not to themselves but to God. In the darkest and most difficult times, God has stood by the Prophet and his followers. So will He stand by them against cheats. An offer of peace is to be accepted. It is not to be rejected on the plea that it may only be a ruse with which the enemy seeks to gain time for a fresh attack. The stress on peace in the verses is not without significance. It anticipates the peace which the Prophet

signed at Hudaibiya. The Prophet is warned that a time will come when the enemy will sue for peace. The offer is not to be turned down on the ground that the enemy was the aggressor and had committed excesses, or that he cannot be trusted. The straight path inculcated by Islam requires a Muslim to accept an offer of peace. Both piety and policy make the acceptance desirable.

(5) In Chapter 4, Verse: 95 we have:

O ye who believe! when you go forth in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, "Thou art not a believer." You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty. Such were you before this, but Allah conferred His favor on you; so do make proper investigation. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.

That is to say, when Muslims go out for war, they are to make sure that the unreasonableness of war has been explained to the enemy and that he still wants war. Even so, if a proposal of peace is received from an individual or a group, Muslims are not to turn it down on the plea that it is not honest. If Muslims turn down proposals of peace, they will not be fighting for God, but for self-aggrandizement and worldly gain. Just as religion comes from God, worldly gain and glory also come from Him. Killing is not to be the aim. One whom we wish to kill today may be guided tomorrow. Could Muslims have become Muslims if they had not been spared? Muslims are to abstain from killing because lives spared may turn out to be lives guided. God is well aware of what men do and to what ends and with what motives they do it.

The verse teaches that even after war has begun, it is the duty of Muslims to satisfy themselves that the enemy is bent upon aggression. It often happens that no aggression is intended but that out of excitement and fear the enemy has started preparations for war. Unless Muslims are satisfied that an aggressive attack has been planned by the enemy, they are not to go to war. If it turns out, or if the enemy claims, that his preparations are for self-defense, Muslims are to accept the claim and desist from war. They are not to argue that the enemy preparations point to nothing but aggression; maybe he intended aggression, but his intention has changed. Are not intentions and motives continually changing? Did not enemies of Islam become friends?

(6) On the inviolability of treaties the Quran says clearly:

Excepting those of the idolaters with whom you have entered into a treaty and who have not subsequently failed you in anything nor aided anyone against you. So fulfill to these the treaty you have made with them till their term.

Surely, Allah loves those who are righteous (9:4).

Pagans, who enter into a pact with Muslims, keep the pact and do not help the enemy against Muslims, are to have reciprocal treatment from Muslims. Piety requires that Muslims should fulfill their part of a pact in the letter as well as the spirit.

(7) Of an enemy at war with Muslims who wishes to study the Message of Islam, the Quran orders:

And if anyone of the idolaters ask protection of thee, grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of Allah: then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are a people who have no knowledge (The Holy Qur'an 9:6).

That is to say, if any of those at war with Muslims seek refuge with Muslims in order to study Islam and ponder over its Message, they are to have refuge with Muslims for such time as may be reasonably necessary for such a purpose.

(8) Of prisoners of war, the Quran teaches:

It does not behoove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in a regular fighting in the land. You desire the goods of the world, while Allah desires for you the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise (The Holy Qur'an 8:68).

That is to say, it does not become a Prophet to make prisoners of his enemy save as a result of regular war involving much bloodshed. The system of making prisoners of enemy tribes without war and bloodshed practiced until-and even after-the advent of Islam, is here made unlawful. Prisoners can be taken only from combatants and after a battle.

(9) Rules for the release of prisoners are also laid down. Thus we have:

Then afterwards either release them as a favor or by taking ransom-until the war lays down its burdens (The Holy Qur'an 47:5).

The best thing, according to Islam, is to let off prisoners without asking for ransom. As this is not always possible, release by ransom is also provided for.

(10) There is provision for prisoners of war who are unable themselves to pay, and who have none who can or will pay, for their release. Often, relations are able to pay, but do not, because they prefer to let their relations remain prisoners-possibly with the intention of misappropriating

their property in their absence. This provision is contained in the Quran:

And such as desire a deed of manumission from among those whom your right hands possess, write it for them, if you know any good in them; and give them out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon You (The Holy Qur'an 24:34).

That is, those who do not deserve to be released without ransom but who have no one to pay ransom for them-if they still ask for their freedom-can obtain it by signing an undertaking that, if allowed to work and earn, they will pay their ransom. They are to be allowed to do so, however, only if their competence to work and earn is reasonably certain. If their competence is proved, they should even have financial help from Muslims in their effort to work and earn. Individual Muslims who can afford to do so should pay; or, public subscription should be raised to put these unfortunates on their feet.

The passages from the Quran which we have quoted above contain the teaching of Islam on the subject of war and peace. They tell us in what circumstances, according to Islam, is it right to go to war and what limits have to be observed by Muslims when they make war.

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (sa) PRECEPTS ABOUT WAR

Muslim teaching, however, does not consist only of precepts laid down in the Quran. It also includes the precepts and example of the Prophet. What he did or what he taught in concrete situations is also an essential part of the Islamic teaching. We append here some sayings of the Prophet on the subject of war and peace.

- Muslims are forbidden altogether to mutilate the dead (Muslim).
- Muslims are forbidden to resort to cheating (Muslim).
- Children are not to be killed, nor women (Muslim).
- Priests and religious functionaries and religious leaders are not to be interfered with (Tahavi)
- The old and decrepit and women and children are not to be killed. The possibility of peace should always be kept in view (Abu Dawud).
- When Muslims enter enemy territory, they should not strike terror into the general population. They should permit no ill-treatment of common folk (Muslim).
- A Muslim army should not camp in a place where it causes inconvenience to the general public. When it marches it should take care not to block the road nor cause discomfort to other wayfarers.
- No disfigurement of face is to be permitted (Bukhari and Muslim).

- The least possible losses should be inflicted upon the enemy (Abu Dawud).
- When prisoners of war are put under guard, those closely related should be placed together (Abu Dawud).
- Prisoners should live in comfort. Muslims should care more for the comfort of their prisoners than for their own (Tirmidhi).
- Emissaries and delegates from other countries should be held in great respect. Any mistakes or discourtesies they commit should be ignored (Abu Dawud, Kitab al Jihad).
- If a Muslim commits the sin of ill-treating a prisoner of war, atonement is to be made by releasing the prisoner without ransom.
- When a Muslim takes charge of a prisoner of war, the latter is to be fed and clothed in the same way as the Muslim himself (Bukhari). The Holy Prophet was so insistent on these rules for a fighting army that he declared that whoever did not observe these rules, would fight not for God but for his own mean self (Abu Dawud).
- Abu Bakr, the First Khalifa of Islam, supplemented these commands of the Prophet by some of his own. One of these commands appended here also constitutes part of the Muslim teaching:
- Public buildings and fruit-bearing trees (and food crops) are not to be damaged (Mu'atta).

From the sayings of the Prophet (sa) and the commands of the First Khalifa of Islam it is evident that Islam has instituted steps which have the effect of preventing or stopping a war or reducing its evil. As we have said before, the principles which Islam teaches are not pious precepts only; they have their practical illustration in the example of the Prophet and the early Khalifas of Islam. As all the world knows, the Prophet not only taught these principles; he practiced them and insisted on their observance.

Turning to our own time we must say that no other teaching seems able to solve the problem of war and peace. The teaching of Moses is far from our conceptions of justice and fair play. Nor is it possible to act upon that teaching today. The teaching of Jesus is impracticable and has ever been so. Never in their history have Christians tried to put this teaching into practice. Only the teaching of Islam is practicable; one which has been both preached and practiced by its exponents, and the practice of which can create and maintain peace in the world.

In our time, Mr. Gandhi apparently taught that even when war is forced on us we should not go to war. We should not fight. But this teaching has not been put into practice at

any time in the history of the world. It has never been put in the crucible and tested. It is impossible; therefore, to say what value this teaching may have in terms of war and peace. Mr. Gandhi lived long enough to see the Indian Congress attain to political independence. Yet the Congress Government has not disbanded either the army or the other armed forces of India. It is only making plans for their Indianization. It also has plans for the reinstatement of those Indian officers who constituted themselves into the Indian National Army (and who were dismissed by the British authorities) during the Japanese attack on Burma and India in the last stages of the recent World War. Mr. Gandhi has himself, on many occasions, raised his voice in extenuation of crimes of violence, and urged the release of those who committed such crimes. This shows at least that Mr. Gandhi's teaching cannot be put into practice and that Mr. Gandhi knows it as well as all his followers. No practical example at least has been offered to show the world how non-violence can be

applied when armed disputes arise between nation and nation and State and State, or how non-violence can prevent or stop a war. To preach a method of stopping wars, but never to be able to afford a practical illustration of that method indicates that the method is impracticable. It would, therefore, seem that human experience and human wisdom point to only one method of preventing or stopping war; and that method was taught and practiced by the Prophet of Islam.

Reference:

Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, "Life of Muhammad," pp. 168-186, Islam International Publications, U.K., 2005.

From the Archives

Universal Message to All Mankind



Muhammad's mercy and beneficence travelled far beyond the confines of Arabia. His followers carried the torch of light to every corner of the globe and dispelled the darkness of ignorance. They gave to the nations of the earth a high culture and civilization and elevated them to the summit of glory.

Alfred W. Martin remarks:

"By lifting to a higher moral and religious plane the communities of his day and Place; by welding into a harmonious religious unity the conflicting creeds of Arabia, Muhammad achieved that which neither the Judaism nor the Christianity of Medieval Arabia could accomplish. Nay, more, in the successful fulfillment of his civilizing work and in the realization of his supreme religious aim. Mohammed rendered invaluable service, not only to Arabia but to all the world." (The World's Great Religions by Alfred W. Martin)

It is a matter of utmost significance that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) gave to mankind a compendium of laws, which is far ahead of any code of laws that we can find in

the twentieth century. The present generation is confronted with many tangled and vexed problems such as economic problems, international relations, marriage and divorce problems, and many others which apparently have no solution. If the principles as promulgated by this Savior of humanity were to be applied, how quickly and beautifully they would be solved. And peace would cover the earth even as waters cover the seas. "Most successful" says a German Scholar Noldecke, concerning Muhammad "of all prophets and religious personalities." (Enc. Britt. Koran).

Taken from "The Moslem [Muslim] Sunrise," Vol. XI, January 19, 1939, No: 1, p 17

Islamic Teachings on Prisoners of War



Mubasher Ahmad

In the history of Islam, the first armed conflict between the Muslims and non-believers of Makkah (Mecca) was the Battle of Badr. In this battle, there were 313 Muslim fighters and more than 1000 enemy warriors. The Muslims won this battle and captured 70 enemy combatants as prisoners of war. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) instructed his companions to keep them in safe places in Madinah (Medina), and to observe good treatment towards them. The companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) followed the instructions, kept them in their homes, and treated them very well. Some prisoners who had lost their battle dress while fighting were given clothes to wear. They were given better food than the food that the Muslims ate themselves.

Those prisoners who accepted Islam were released immediately. Others were required to arrange for ransom to be paid by Makkans. The literate prisoners, who could not pay the ransom, were given the option to teach ten Muslim children to read and write and thus earn their freedom. In addition, some prisoners were granted freedom without any ransom. Among them was Abu-al-A'as, the son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (sa). He was asked to let his wife Hazrat Zainab (ra), daughter of the Holy Prophet (sa), migrate to Madinah, and he agreed. Some of the prisoners were exchanged with Muslim captives in Makkah. Among them was Hazrat Sa'd bin Na'man (ra), who was imprisoned by the Makkan leader Abu Sufyan. A son of Abu Sufyan, A'mru, was among the

prisoners of war, and he was released in exchange for Hazrat Sa'd bin Na'man's (ra) freedom.

In the Holy Quran, among the characteristics of the virtuous, it is stated: "And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphans and the prisoners" (1). The Holy Quran's instructions about war and the prisoners of war are as follows: "And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, by causing great slaughter among them, bind them fast the fetters – then afterward either release them as a favor or by taking ransom – until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. And if Allah had so pleased, He could have punished them Himself, but He has willed that He may try some of you by others. And those who are killed in the way of Allah – He will never render their works vain (2)."

The footnotes on the above verse of the Holy Quran state: "Prisoners are to be taken from the enemy only after regular and pitched battle has been fought, and the enemy is decidedly and positively beaten. Thus regular war is declared to be the only reason for taking prisoners; for no other reason free men can be deprived of their liberty. When war is over, the prisoners should be released, either as an act of favor, or on taking ransom from them or by negotiating mutual exchange. They should not be held permanently in captivity or treated as slaves (3)."

Sir William Muir, in his book *Life of Mahomet*, writes an interesting note on prisoners of war in Islam: "In pursuance of Mahomet's commands, the citizens of Medina, and such of the Refugees as already had houses of their own, received the prisoners and treated them with much consideration. 'Blessings be on the men of Medina!' said one of these prisoners in later days: 'they made us ride, while they themselves walked: they gave us wheaten bread to eat when there was little of it, contenting themselves with dates.' It is not surprising that when, sometime afterwards, their friends came to ransom them, several of the prisoners who had been thus received declared themselves adherents of Islam; and to such the Prophet granted liberty without ransom. It was long before the Coreish (tribe of Quraish) could reconcile themselves to the humiliation of visiting Medina to arrange for the liberation of their relatives. Their kindly treatment was thus prolonged, and left a favourable impression on the minds even of those who did not at once go over to Islam. Eventually the army of Bedr was enriched by the large payments made for the prisoners; for some paying a thousand, and others as much as four thousand dirhems. Such as had nothing to give were liberated which shows how far Mecca was in advance of Medina in learning. To each prisoner were allotted ten boys, who were to be taught the art of writing; and their tuition, when completed, was accepted as full ransom" (4).

In his Urdu book *Seerat Khatamun-Nabien*, Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad (ra) summarizes the Quranic instructions concerning the prisoners of war:

- Emphatic command was that no prisoners should be taken unless there is a regular battle in action. It is not that you see the enemies and find them weak; you start catching prisoners (5).
- Command was that once the prisoners are captured, later on, according to the circumstances they should be released as an act of benevolence; but if it is necessary to keep them imprisoned, they can be kept as prisoners as long the war is going on, or the burdens caused by the war are not removed. After that no prisoners of war be kept (6).
- The commandment was to treat the prisoners with extreme kindness and affection. Thus the Companions gave preference to the comfort of the prisoners over their own repose. The Holy Prophet (sa) had also instructed that among the prisoners, close relatives should not be separated from each other.
- As far as obtaining ransom, it was not persisted to get it only in the form of money. That's why some of the

prisoners got their freedom by teaching Muslim children reading and writing. At times the non-believing prisoners were exchanged with Muslim prisoners.

Sometimes, an objection is raised that a few prisoners of war were ordered to be killed. But the historical fact is that they were killed because of their earlier crimes committed before the war that demanded death sentences. For example, Uqbah ibn Mu'ay was sentenced to death when he was caught at the Battle of Badr because of his bloody crimes against Muslims in Mecca. Another man by the name of Abu 'Azzah al-Juma was also captured at the Battle of Badr and set free on the condition that he would never fight against Muslims. But he broke his promise and took part in the Battle of Uhud. Once he was caught there, he was executed. A Muslim by the name of Abdullah bin Khatal had killed a slave and defected to the enemy. He was executed when he was captured at the conquest of Mecca. As mentioned above, these individuals faced the death penalty because of their earlier crimes committed before the war that demanded death sentences.

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What are the Regulations of Fighting in Islam?

Khaled Ahmad Ata



War is a state of open and declared hostile armed conflict between states or nations (1). Conscious efforts to mitigate human and capital losses have been made over time by implementing some regulations. Modern-day treaties between nations to protect those not involved in combats have only partially succeeded, as harrowing accounts of brutality are still rampant.

This article focuses on the Islamic teachings and practices introduced over 1400 years ago to regulate armed conflicts. However, a brief reference to the pre-Islamic Holy Scriptures and the modern-day treaties may also be relevant.

In the Old Testament, Moses (as) is commanded to enter the land of Canaan by force, defeat its population, and settle his people in it (2).

One passage from the New Testament says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (3). According to another, 'Then said he unto them. But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (4).

The story of the modern rules of war, also known as the Geneva Convention, began in the Italian village of Solferino in June 1859, where allied forces of France and the Kingdom of Sardinia fought against Austria in the Second Italian War of

Independence, leaving tens of thousands of dead and wounded.

Briefly, the Geneva Convention protects civilians during war. It also protects wounded and sick soldiers, medical and religious personnel, medical units and medical transports, and shipwrecked military personnel at sea. The Convention establishes that prisoners of war shall be treated humanely and released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities (5,6,7).

ISLAMIC GUIDELINES:

The following is a set of Islamic guidelines to regulate armed conflicts in light of Qur'anic injunctions, traditions, and practices of the Prophet of Islam (sa) explained by His Holiness Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad (ra) (8).

According to the Holy Qur'an: 'Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has 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, there would surely have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty. Those who, if We establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and pay the Zakat and enjoin good and

forbid evil. And with Allah rests the final issue of all affairs (9).

WHO CAN MUSLIMS FIGHT AGAINST?

- Muslims can go to war only against those who attack them first.
- Muslims can fight only those who fight against them.
- Muslims cannot fight against those who take no part in warfare.
- Muslims are to fight only a regular army charged by the enemy to fight on his side. Muslims are not to fight others on the enemy side.

Fighting is to continue only so long as interference with religion and religious freedom lasts. When religion becomes free, interference is no longer permitted, and the enemy declares and begins to act accordingly. There is to be no war, even if the enemy starts it.

Muslims must keep warfare within limits even after the enemy has initiated the attack. Extending the war, either territorially or in terms of weapons used, is wrong.

SANCTITY OF RELIGIOUS ENTITIES:

- In warfare, immunity is to be afforded to all religious rites and observances. If the enemy spares the places where religious ceremonies are held, then Muslims also must desist from fighting in such places.
- If the enemy uses a place of worship as a base for an attack, then Muslims may return the attack. No blame will be attached to them if they do so. No fighting is allowed even in the neighborhood of religious places. To attack religious places and to destroy them or to do any harm to them is forbidden. A religious place used as a base for operations may invite a counter-attack. The responsibility for any harm done to the place will then rest with the enemy, not with Muslims.
- If the enemy realizes the danger and the mistake of using a religious place as a base and changes the battle-front, then Muslims must conform to the change. The fact that the enemy started the attack from a religious place is not to be used as an excuse for attacking that place. Out of reverence, Muslims must change their battle-front as soon as the enemy does so.

ACCEPT THE OFFER OF PEACE DURING THE WAR:

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, 'And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And if they intend to deceive thee, then surely Allah is sufficient for thee. He it is Who has strengthened thee with His help and with the believers (10).

If, in the course of a battle, the disbelievers at any time incline towards peace, Muslims are to accept the offer at once and to make peace. Muslims are to do so even at the risk of being

deceived. They are to put their trust in God. Cheating will not avail against Muslims, who rely on the help of God.

PRECEPTS OF THE HOLY PROPHET OF ISLAM ABOUT WAR:

Apart from the precepts laid down in the Qur'an, Muslim teaching also includes the precepts and examples of the Holy Prophet of Islam. What he did or taught in concrete situations is also essential to Islamic teaching. Some sayings of the Prophet (sa) on war and peace are as follows.

- Muslims are forbidden altogether to mutilate the dead.
- The Holy Prophet (sa) generally arranged that the Muslims should give the enemy dead a decent burial.
- Children are not to be killed, nor women.
- Priests, religious functionaries, and religious leaders are not to be interfered with.
- The old, women, and children are not to be killed.
- The possibility of peace should always be kept in view.
- When Muslims enter enemy territory, they should not strike terror into the general population. They should permit no ill-treatment of ordinary folk.
- A Muslim army should not camp in a place where it causes inconvenience to the general public. When it marches, it should take care not to block the road or cause discomfort to other wayfarers.
- No disfigurement of the face is to be permitted.
- The least possible losses should be inflicted upon the enemy.
- When prisoners of war are guarded, those closely related should be placed together.
- Muslims are forbidden to pillage or plunder.
- If anyone of the enemy declared his acceptance of Islam, even in the course of the fighting, he was to be spared as he no longer presented the danger.
- Ambassadors and delegates from other countries should be held in great esteem. Any mistakes or discourtesies they commit should be ignored. The Holy Prophet (sa) forbade any interference with the emissary of the enemy or harming or inflicting any injury upon him.
- By ancient custom among the Arabs, a spy was liable to be executed. The Holy Prophet (sa) maintained this penalty.
- The Holy Prophet (sa) was so insistent on these rules for a fighting army that he declared that whoever did not observe these rules would fight not for God but for his mean self. Abu Bakr (ra), the First Khalifah of Islam, supplemented these commands of the Prophet (sa) by some of his own. One of these commands also constitutes part of the Muslim teaching: "Public buildings and fruit-bearing trees (and food crops) are not to be damaged."

PRISONERS OF WAR

- Of the prisoners of war, the Holy Qur'an teaches: 'It does not behoove a Prophet that he should have captives until he engages in a regular fighting in the land. You desire the

goods of the world, while Allah desires for you the Hereafter. And Allah is Mighty, Wise' (11).

- The Holy Qur'an further says: 'Then afterward either release them as a favor or by taking ransom-until the war lays down its burdens' (12).
- Prisoners should live in comfort. Muslims should care more for the comfort of their prisoners than for their own.
- If a Muslim commits the sin of ill-treating a prisoner of war, atonement is to be made by releasing the prisoner without ransom.
- When a Muslim takes charge of a prisoner of war, the latter is to be fed and clothed in the same way as the Muslim himself.
- The best thing, according to Islam, is to let off prisoners without asking for ransom. As this is not always possible, release by ransom is also provided.

There is a provision for prisoners of war who cannot pay and have no one who can or will pay for their release. Often, relations can pay but do not because they prefer to let their relations remain prisoners - possibly intending to misappropriate their property in their absence. This provision is given in the Qur'an: 'And such as desire a deed of manumission from among those whom your right hands possess, write it for them, if you know any good in them; and give them out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon You' (13). Those who do not deserve to be released without ransom but who have no one to pay ransom for them, if they still ask for their freedom, can obtain it by signing an

undertaking that, if allowed to work and earn, they will pay their ransom. However, they are to be allowed to do so only if their competence to work and earn is reasonably certain. If their competence is proven, they should even have financial help from Muslims in their effort to work and earn. Individual Muslims who can afford to do so should pay, or public subscription should be raised to put these unfortunates on their feet.

It is evident from the above that Islam has instituted steps that have the effect of preventing or stopping a war or reducing its evil. The invisible wounds of humiliation suffered on the battlefield fuel future bloodshed. If practiced in letter and spirit, the Islamic guidelines can minimize or even overcome feelings of hatred and vindictiveness and help promote peace.

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Poetry Corner

Season of Light



Taken from: "Selections from the Writings of The Promised Messiah" (Urdu text with English Translation), pp 93-94, Islam International Publications Ltd. 2016

O God, O Maker of things, Who protects me from being exposed;
Thou art the Provident, O my Beloved, my Benefactor, my Sustainer.

It is sheerly out of grace that Thou hast chosen me;
Otherwise, there was no dearth of servants in Your court.

Those who used to profess friendship turned into enemies;
But Thou hast never abandoned me;
O friend in need, O Friend who fulfills every need.

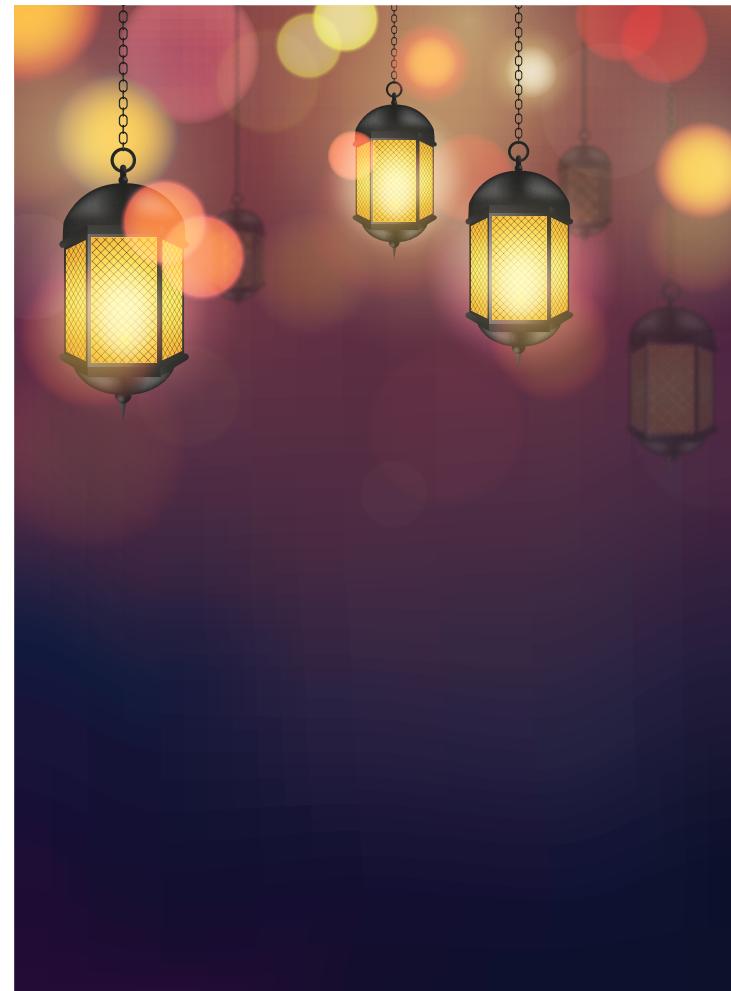
O Beloved Who has no equal,
The refuge of my life;
Sufficient for me are You - without You, I am naught.

But for Your kindness,
I would have turned to dust; Then how and where
that dust is thrown away only Allah knows.

O how I yearn that in Your path, my life,
My body and my heart be sacrificed.
I don't see how anyone could ever love like You do.

I have spent my early days, under Your benign shadow.
You carried me in Your lap like a suckling infant.
I never witnessed such fidelity in the human race, as You possess.
There does not exist a friend, who can commiserate like Thee.

They say that none is accepted without merit. Lo, being without merit,
I have been granted a station in Thy court.
You have overwhelmed me with such favour and kindness
as cannot be recounted Till the end of time.



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Bait-ul-Hameed Mosque - Chino CA



Yousuf Mosque - Tucson AZ



Ahmadiyya Mosque - Pico Rivera LA



Bait-ul-Aman Mosque - Hartford CT

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2035 W Elliot Rd, Chandler, AZ 85224-1717

AZ - Tucson - (Yusuf Mosque)

1111 N Queen Ave, Tucson, AZ 85705-7320

CA - Bay Point - (Bait-us-Salaam Mosque)

520 Pacifica Ave, Bay Point, CA 94565-1330

CA - Los Angeles (Chino) - (Bait-ul-Hameed Mosque)

11941 Ramona Ave, Chino, CA 91710-1661

CA - Los Angeles (Pico Rivera) - (Ahmadiyya Mosque)

7419 Passons Ave, Pico Rivera, CA 90250-6107

CA - San Diego Salat Center

7576 Trade Street, Suite D, San Diego, CA

CA - Silicon Valley - (Bait-ul-Baseer Mosque)

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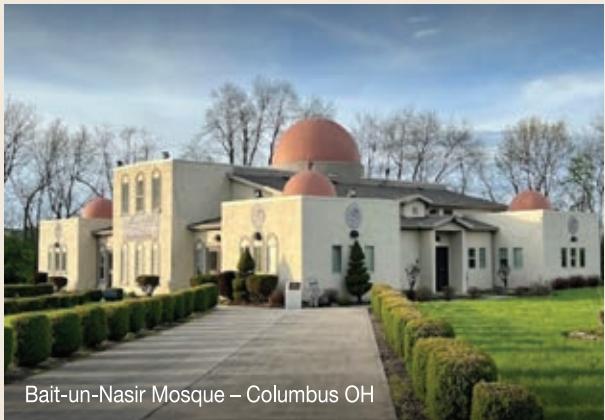
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TX – Dallas - (Bait-ul-Ikram Mosque)
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Bait-un-Nasir Mosque – Columbus OH



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NY – Queens - (Bait-uz-Zafar Mosque)
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WI – Milwaukee
10401 W Oklahoma Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53227

10 Conditions of Bai'at (Oath of Initiation)



When his Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) was divinely instructed to take the Oath of Initiation and start a Jama'at, he published an announcement on 1 December 1888, paraphrased below:

"Another message that I wish to convey to the people at large, and to my Muslim brothers in particular, is that I have been commanded to take an oath of Initiation [bai'at] from seekers of truth who wish to acquire true faith and purity; who yearn to find the path to Allah's love..."

01

That till the last day of his life, he shall abstain from **Shirk** (associating any partners with Allah).

03

That he shall offer Prayers (**Salat**) five times daily

05

That he shall bear every hardship for the sake of Allah

07

That he shall discard pride and haughtiness, live in humility and meekness

09

That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare

02

That he shall keep away from falsehood, cruelty, adultery, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil

04

That he shall not inflict injury on any of Allah's creatures

06

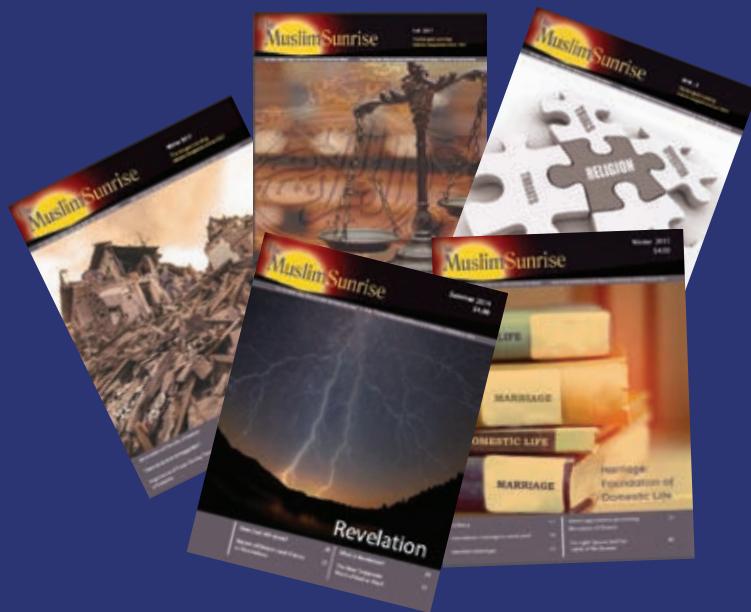
That he shall not follow vulgar customs, and shall guard against evil inclinations

08

That he shall hold his faith, dignity, and the welfare of Islam dearer than his own life, wealth and children

10

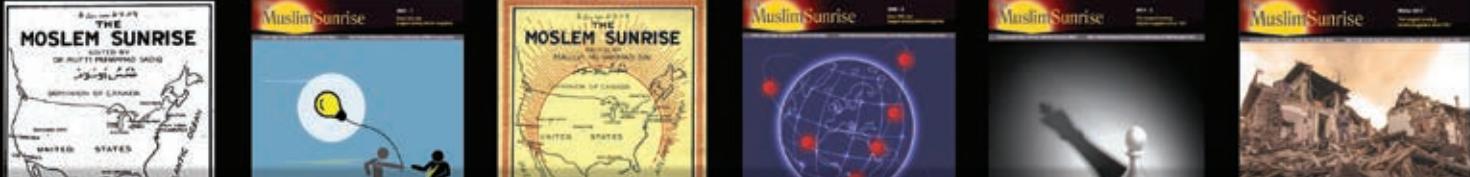
That he shall establish brotherhood with him (i.e., Ahmad), obeying him in all good things, and firmly adhere to these rules until the last breath of his life



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