

Suicide Bomber: In the Light of the Shariah

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This article is dedicated to Pakistan Army

Synopsis: *It is the intolerant clergy of Madaris who are creating radical-militant-nature, the suicide bombers being the end product. Role of Madaris (seminaries) is very important in this regard. Frequent mental-health checkup of each and every faculty member of Madaris, Masjid-Imam and his immediate staff along with a vigilant eye on the activities of the suspicious clerics cannot be emphasized enough. Moreover, the media can play an important and constructive role if they stop inviting clerics who promote hate speeches and sectarian violence and hatred instead provide a platform to the enlightened scholars of international repute who have the ability to change the existing narrative.*

In order to combat terrorism, it is important to first understand the enemy. Meaning that whatever is committed in the name of religion has never been prescribed and nor does it enjoy any legal basis. The Qur'an neither supports persecution nor terrorism. Thus it becomes a matter of triumphant ignorance when suicide bombers and the like are referred to as Muslims. Indeed, what can the rest of us do when those who wreak terror do so under the false banner of Islam to promote their self-serving agenda? We can begin by recognizing it as the manmade phenomenon that it is.

It is important to study Islam from the canon sources. Talim of "Nahj ul Balagha" represents the primary source of interpretation of the Qur'an to counter forces inimical to Islam or the flawed policies practiced by those who may rule over us. And unless those around us, especially the clergy, understand and promote the true spirit of Islam — a violent irregularity claimed by those seeking to present themselves as the most enlightened will do unparalleled damage. It is a bitter irony, therefore, that several religious wings of particular groups, which justify acts of murderous violence against the innocent, continue to be sheltered.

Today, various militant outfits are battling it out with our armed forces. They believe themselves to be Allah's representatives on earth. There is, it must be noted, a great difference between terrorism and guerrilla warfare. The latter resists institutional oppression whereas the former focuses on the unleashing of horror upon non-combatants. Murder can never be confused with an act of spirituality. Those who use religion to justify their acts of greed or their quest for

power lie outside the fold of Islam. Too often is 'jih'ad' translated to mean holy war, whereas the Arabi word for war is al-Harb. Jih'ad, on the other hand, has several meanings, including struggling or striving. It may refer to internal as well as external endeavours to become a true or good believer; as well as efforts to inform people about the Aqidah of Islam. If "Jih'ad bil Saif" (military action) is required to protect Muslims from non-believers — the means to do this can take the form of anything, from legal, diplomatic and economic to the political.

If no peaceful alternative exists, Islam does allow for the use of power, but there are strict rules of engagement to be adhered to. Including refraining from harming innocents, such as women, children or invalids. In addition, any proposals for peace coming from the enemy camp must be accepted. Thus the notion of military operation comprises just one element of jih'ad's true meaning, and it remains the one of last resort. To highlight this point, upon returning from a military campaign, Rasulullah(S) instructed his followers:

"This day we have returned from the minor Jih'ad to the major Jih'ad."

The Nabavi instruction means returning from armed battle to peaceful battle for self-control and betterment.

Thus we can say that the ongoing military operation "Radd ul Fas'ad" waged by the Pakistan Army against well-equipped terrorists was undeniably necessary. All leading Ulama therefore issued a fatwa in support of the above. The officers and soldiers comprising our brave forces have sacrificed not only their precious lives but also the familial peace of their loved ones in order to deliver the innocent citizenry of this country from the bloodthirsty barbarians. The concept of Jih'ad has been hijacked by these militant radical groups who use it to justify the various forms of violence committed by them. In fact, these terrorist groups invoke Jih'ad to fight against the innocent people and don't even spare schools and hospitals. According to legitimate scholars, this misuse of Jih'ad contradicts the Talim of Islam. Furthermore, let's be clear about another point: Jih'ad is not a declaration of war against other religions, according to what militants might try to feed you.

No scholar of Islam with sound mind deems suicide attacks to be legal. It is perhaps unsurprising that an overwhelming majority of suicide bombers come from impoverished backgrounds. This makes them easy prey for those who operate the militant nurseries that are run under the guise of the Madrasah that provides for them. Then begins the process of indoctrinating these young impressionable minds, thereby, reducing them to nothing but criminals in someone else's game. This includes notions of self-sacrifice as being the ultimate manifestation of a glory so divine that at least 70 virgins would be offered in exchange. By the time they reach this point, so desensitized have they become that they find nothing unpleasant about slaughtering innocent folks. Indeed, in the run-up to an attack, the handlers isolate the "chosen one" from the outside world. And just as an extra precaution, they often record footage of the process that transforms him into a suicide bomber; thereby ensuring that there is never any point of return. These videos also serve an additional function: namely, as a propaganda tool to further terrorize the broader population.

It is pertinent to clarify a myth about the origin of these suicide bombers or assassins. It was not the Shia Ismaili Nizaris who invented this methodology but the Crusaders who practiced it at large to achieve their "Promised Land". Credit goes to the Missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church who used innocent minds for their political-religious goals in Muslim dominated areas. Outside the traditional army, a single "sacrificial-person" achieved what a large force couldn't. In fact, the Arabic and Persian word Hashishin's origin was not the medieval Shia Ismaili Nizari Muslims but the Roman Catholic Church. Church champions used drugs and women to seduce important Muslims to achieve their goals. The Christian Missionaries were involved from the beginning of the Muslim empire to create hatred among different Muslim sects through their politics of divide, effectively exploiting the Muslims two weakest points, wealth and women. The top hierarchy of the Christian Church introduced tactics to control minds and for this they promised Paradise to the Christians. Ergun Caner criticizes the Pope for promising: "If you go and kill the infidel (Muslims), you will be forgiven immediately — Paradise," He concludes that: "There is fundamentally, no difference between Jih'adis, in that case, and the Crusades." This is a gross misrepresentation.

Such self-sacrificing zealotry is also found in Indian history. India too had its set of suicide bombers. Way back in the 11th century, a Chera ruler used suicide bombers called Chavers (a term still in use for suicide bombers in Malayalam) against Chola ruler. Qualified Nair warriors from four reputed families in Valluvanad fought on behalf of their king against the mighty Samuthiri (Zamorin). Their aim was regaining the full authority for conducting Mamankam, an impressive festival that was held every twelve years and lasted around twenty eight days on the banks of Bharatapuzha. European travelers, Chinese, and merchants, all of them would be at the venue, Thirunavaya, when the fight started. Even though the festival was started by Chera rulers, bloodshed began after the Zamorin invasion in to Valluvanad and continued until the 18th century.

It is then an injustice to label the Shia Ismaili Nizaris as the founding fathers of the suicide bombers. What they did however was to adopt a strategy for their survival and take it to the next level for their defense. As British author and religious commentator Karen Armstrong briefly puts it:

"There is nothing in the Islam that is more violent than Christianity. All religions have been violent, including Christianity. There was nothing in the Muslim world like anti Semitism: that is an import of the modern period. The missionaries brought it over, and then came the state of Israel. Judaism has become violent in the modern world, thanks to the nation state."

Taliban, and their likeminded are not the sole representatives of Islam, but product of the cursed cult of Khaw'arij, the bunch of rascals who support militant ideology for achieving their goals, political and religious. Therefore, it is totally unjust to handle the entire Muslims community accordingly. The contemporary Muslim political view and policy of international relation is quite dynamic, in every aspect. It is not peace loving Muslim countries but foreign masters who fund these terrorist groups and when such groups ignore their commands and act according to their own will, these fund providers cry foul. One must remember that poisonous snakes in the

backyard won't always harm the neighbor; these snakes will eventually turn on their owners. It is necessary to examine the issue under the following points:

- i. How Rasulallah(S) and his Ahl al Bait (as) dealt with the people of divergent faiths?
- ii. When and from which source violence entered into the doctrine of Islam and who ignored war laws set by Rasulallah(S)?
- iii. This will allow the texts and history of Islam to speak for them as much as possible. The honest and bright minds will appreciate the need of dialogue. A question must be asked: Why are hate articles and propaganda against Muslims and Islam sponsored by our non-Muslim friends? It is better if we conclude the point as it is because Muslims are weak, apparently, so forces inimical to Islam can do whatever they wish. It is the Qur'an alone that spread light in the darkness and announced the divine instructions regarding forbiddance of terrorism. When Rasulallah(S) taught the Qur'an, (in the 7th century A.D.), there was no United Nations or Amnesty International to keep peace or expose injustice. Inter-tribal violence and vengeance was commonplace. However, the Qur'an repeatedly urges forgiveness and restraint, and warns believers not to "transgress" or become "oppressors". The following Ay'ah may explain the divine policy of Islam in clear terms. Sentence of death is allowed only through the process of Justice, but even then, forgiveness is better. Qur'an says:

"Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause..." (17:33).

Religion cannot be spread through force but righteousness and beauties and excellence of truth. Those who wish to command through sword are not the friends of Islam but its deadly enemies. It is they who widely open the door of criticism against Islam, the validity of which cannot be questioned. It is, however, true that the radical clergy is solely responsible in defaming Islam and its real Talim. The short sighted preachers of Islam, whose canvas is very narrow, try to spread Islam with the help of mythological tales to the rational minds. These malicious Mullahs poison innocent minds and inject hatred against other Muslim communities by using methodology of systematic brain washing, the advanced product of which is suicide bombers.

Terrorism cannot be defined as an act supported by Islam for religious purposes. If Muslims at large are charged due to their political history as barbarians or terrorists, the Jews and Christians are more deserving of this label. How can the modern western world ignore the atrocities committed by the Crusaders in the name of religion? Reprehensible role played by the Church clerics cannot be ignored in history. A close scrutiny of the Roman Catholic Church exposes the horrible face of terror. The Christians and Jews both need to improve their image before branding Muslims as the worst lot.

Today, we must recall the words of Salafi scholars such as Sheikh al-Fawzan when he says: "Those who claim to be engaging in Jih'ad for the sake of Allah by killing themselves as "committing suicide" and "Mujahideen for the sake of Shait'an. Those who have fallen into this Fitnah (trial or temptation) have not asked the Ulama, nor have they gained religious Talim from them. Instead they isolated themselves from other Muslims and turned to people considered human tyrants who brainwashed them, and so they deviated from the right path followed by the majority. They consider other Muslims to be infidels, in what is known as

“Takfir”. They kill them; blow up buildings and other facilities. They kill the young and old, male and female, and Muslim and non Muslims, due to this deviant belief. These are the consequences for whoever inclines towards evildoers”.

By considering suicides bombing as the product of multiple factors we can better understand why it has ended in particular areas in the past and develop strategies that are likely to curtail its use in the future. At the very least, by understanding it as an organizational fact in which the human tendency for self-sacrifice on behalf of others has been reduced from a noble character to a tool, we can strip away the secrecy that still seems to make suicide bombing mysterious and intimidating, and begin undoing the psychological damage of suicide attacks.

To control production of suicide bombers, some suggestions are presented:

Latest devices of Bomb detection should be installed in all important areas.

Every family should supervise their children as lack of attention or neglect causes involvement in destructive activities, the end result of which can sometimes be bombers.

It is the clergy who wrongly interprets Islam and creates an army of fanatic radicals. Madaris (seminaries) are very important in this regard. It is the intolerant clergy of Madaris who are creating radical-militant-nature, the suicide bombers being the end product. Role of Madaris (seminaries) is very important in this regard. Frequent mental-health checkup of each and every faculty member of Madaris, Masjid-Imam and his immediate staff along with a vigilant eye on the activities of the suspicious clerics cannot be emphasized enough. Moreover, the media can play an important and constructive role if they stop inviting clerics who promote hate speeches and sectarian violence and hatred instead provide a platform to the enlightened scholars of international repute who have the ability to change the existing narrative.

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