

Holy War, Symbol of Eternal Life

In Islam Holy War (Jihad) is another important exception for depriving oneself of life for the sake of God. The persons, who take part in Holy War in order to materialize, establish and defend divine ideals, voluntarily endanger their lives, wellbeing or physical health.

Actually, for mankind Holy War is one way to achieve perfection. It is also the loftiest and most important path toward his transcendental life.

Giving away the life and belongings for the sake of heightening the word "Islam", maintaining the limits of the school of thought, freedom, defending life and property of the oppressed ones, has a high advantage. The Holy Quran has stressed this in many verses.

God expresses such an advantage in the following verse:

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۖ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى ۗ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Allah has preferred the mujahideen through their wealth and their lives over those who remain [behind], by degrees. And to both Allah has promised the best [reward]. But Allah has preferred the mujahideen over those who remain [behind] with a great reward. (Quran, 4:95)

The rank of a person who takes part in Holy War is so lofty in Islam that the Prophet (S) said: "Higher than any goodness is goodness where an individual is killed for the cause of God, and there is no goodness or advantage higher than that."¹

Imam Ali (a.s) refers to Jihad (Holy War) as one of the doors to heaven. This door has been opened by God to his friends, his followers and to special people.²

Not only Islam does not consider the deed of the person who takes part in Holy War as "jumping into the valley from the edge of a cliff,"³ but also considers itself the buyer of his life and property, and says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۚ يُفَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۚ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ۚ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۚ فَاسْتَبَشِرُوا بَبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۚ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which the great attainment is. (Quran, 9:111)

Holy war (Jihad) against atheists and hypocrites,⁴ Jihad against the pagans,⁵ Jihad aimed at expansion of Islam and eliminating enemies intrigue,⁶ Jihad aimed at fighting against oppression,⁷ Jihad aimed at defending (the country) against the non-Muslim's invasion⁸ and finally Jihad due to breach of contract signed by non-Muslims with an Islamic state.⁹ Not only it is every Muslim's right but also in the eyes of Islam it is a religious duty and Muslims (except those having a justifiable excuse) cannot ignore this religious responsibility. ¹⁰

Undoubtedly the warrior for Islamic purpose will enjoy eternal spiritual life, although his destiny may be termination of his worldly physical life.

- ^{1.} Political Theology in Islam, p. 14.
- ^{2.} Nahj al- Balaghah, Sermon 24.
- ^{3.} Quran, 2: 195.
- ^{4.} The Holy Quran, Chapter Al- tawbeh , verse: 73.
- ^{5.} The Holy Quran, Chapter, Al- tawbeh , verse: 36.
- ^{6.} The Holy Quran, Chapter, Al- Anfal, verse: 39.
- ^{7.} The Holy Quran, Chapter, Al- hajj , verse: 39.
- ^{8.} The Holy Quran, Chapter, Al- Bacharach, verse: 190.
- ^{9.} The Holy Quran, Chapter, Al- Tawbeh, verses: 12 and 13.
- ^{10.} Quran, Chapter, Al- Tawbeh, verse: 81.

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