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## Jihad

*Jihad* (struggle for the sake of Almighty Allah) is one of the most significant divine precepts and devotional acts discussed in the Holy Qur'an on many occasions including the following:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ (78)

***Strive hard in the way of Allah as is due to Him. He has chosen you (to convey the message of Monotheism) and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion. (This is) the faith of your father Abraham (‘a). He named you Muslims before and in this (the Qur’an), that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and you be witnesses to the people; therefore, keep up prayer, pay the poor-rate, and hold fast by Allah. He is your Guardian. How excellent a Guardian and how excellent a Helper is He! (22:78)***

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ (10) تَوَمَّنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (11)

***O you, who believe. Shall I lead you to a commerce which can deliver you from a painful chastisement? You should believe in Allah and His Messenger and struggle hard in Allah's way with your property and your lives. That is better for you, did you but know. (61: 10-11)***

The word ‘*jihad*’ has a vast meaning in Islam and in the Holy Qur'an, because it is derived from the Arabic root *j-h-d*, which means capacity and scope. In view of this, *jihad* means to exert all possible efforts to defend and struggle for Almighty Allah and to spread and defend Islam.

Consequently, any effort, suffering, endeavor, or sacrifice made for the sake of Almighty Allah, is *jihad*,

be it mental or material. It can be in the form of reporting a tradition, authoring a book, seeking religious knowledge, learning any other advantageous field of science, setting aright matters of difference among disputing parties, enjoining the right, or forbidding the wrong in addition to self-sacrifice and fighting for the sake of Almighty Allah.

In Muslim jurisprudential terminology, the word *jihad* usually means fighting for the sake of Almighty Allah with weapons and readiness to embrace injury, death and martyrdom.

Almighty Allah has imposed *jihad* in this sense on every Muslim (male) individual under certain conditions. Therein it becomes obligatory upon such individuals to expose themselves to death in defense of themselves, Islam, and persecuted people.

In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states:

(كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ) (216)

***Fighting is enjoined upon you, and it is an object of dislike to you. It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you. (2:216)***

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ (39) الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهْدِمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدٌ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا رُبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (40)

***Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed and, most surely, Allah is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, "Our Lord is Allah." Had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered. Surely, Allah will help him who helps His cause. Most surely, Allah is Strong, Mighty. (22:39-40)***

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا (75)

***What reason do you have that you should not fight in the way of Allah and the weak among men, women, and children, for those who say, "Our Lord, cause us to go forth from the town whose people are oppressors. Give us from You a guardian and give us from You a helper." (4:75)***

These holy verses entail that the reason for passing the law of fighting was originally for the sake of self-defense, especially after the polytheists, atheists, and enemies of Islam used all means of repression,

persecution, oppression, transgression, pursuit, banishment from hometowns, economic and social siege, torture, and assassinations against Muslims in order to force them to give up their faith.

In addition to the last two verses, the following verse sheds light on this fact:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (190) وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ  
وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ  
قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (191) فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ  
وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (193) الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ  
(فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (194)

***Fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits. Surely, Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. Kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out. Persecution is severer than slaughter. Do not fight with them in the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them. Such is the recompense of the unbelievers. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Fight with them until there is no persecution and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors. The sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are under the law of retaliation. Whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you. Be careful of your duty to Allah and know that Allah is with those who guard against evil. (2: 190–194)***

From these holy verses, we can understand that such fighting is based on self-defense and warding off aggression. Therefore, such fighting is stopped when aggression is warded off.

## **Significance and Merit of Jihad**

*Jihad* entails great merit for man and striving nations and involves great significance in achieving the sacred goals that Almighty Allah has put before man in his advancement towards perfection—a march that cannot be consummated except by undergoing various sorts of “distress” and “affliction”. Exegetes have interpreted distress to be fighting.

In many verses like the following, the Holy Qur'an has revealed this fact:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْمِ الْبِاسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ  
(الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِنْ نَصَرَ اللَّهُ قَرِيبٌ (214)

***Do you think that you would enter heaven while yet the state of those who have passed away***

**before you has not come upon you. Distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, “When will the help of Allah come?” Now, surely, the help of Allah is nigh. (2:214)**

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (12)  
(وَأُخْرَى تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) (13)

**He will forgive you your faults and cause you to enter into gardens, beneath which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetuity. That is the mighty achievement. Yet, another blessing that you love: help from Allah and a victory near at hand. Give good news to the believers. (61: 12–13)**

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ (169) فَرحينَ بما آتاهمُ اللهُ من فضله  
وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (170) يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ  
(وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) (171)

**Reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they are alive and are provided sustenance from their Lord—rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace. They rejoice for the sake of those who, being left behind them, have not yet joined them that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and His grace and Allah does not waste the reward of the believers. (3: 169–171)**

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسَنَى وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْفَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا (95) دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
(عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا) (96)

**Allah shall grant to the strivers, above those who hold back, a mighty reward—high degrees from Him and protection and mercy. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (4:95–96)**

(يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُقِيمٌ (21) خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (22)

**Their Lord gives them good news of mercy from Himself, His good pleasure, and gardens wherein lasting blessings shall be theirs, abiding therein for ever. The reward with Allah is great indeed. (9:21–22)**

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا  
يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْنُونَ مَوْطِنًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ

(لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ 120)

***It did not beseem the people of Madinah and those among the dwellers of the desert to remain behind the Messenger of Allah, nor should they desire anything for themselves in preference to him. This is because there afflicts them not thirst or fatigue or hunger in Allah's way, nor do they tread a path which enrages the unbelievers, nor do they attain from the enemy what they attain, but a good work is written down to them on account of it. Surely, Allah does not waste the reward of the doers of good. (9: 120)***

Besides these verses and many others, traditions that are reported from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) demonstrate emphatically the significance and great role of *jihad* in preserving Islam, human dignity and poise, and the strength of the Muslim community in addition to achieving the goals of the individual and collective progression of man towards perfection.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

الْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي السَّيْفِ وَتَحْتَ ظِلِّ السَّيْفِ. وَلَا يُقِيمُ النَّاسَ إِلَّا السَّيْفُ. وَالسُّيُوفُ مَقَالِيدُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ.

*All goodness lies in swords and under their shadows. Nothing amends people except swords. Swords are verily the keys of Paradise and Hellfire. [1](#)*

The following sermon of Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported in both Shaykh al-Kulayni's *al-Kafi* and al-Sharif al-Radhi's compilation of *Nahj al-Balaghah*:

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ الْجِهَادَ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ لِخَاصَّةِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ، وَهُوَ لِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى، وَدِرْعُ اللَّهِ الْحَصِينَةِ، وَجَنَّةُ الْوَثِيقَةِ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ ثَوْبَ الذُّلِّ، وَشَمَلَهُ الْبَلَاءُ، وَدَيْتَ بِالصَّغَارِ وَالْقَمَاءِ، وَضُرِبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ بِالْإِسْهَابِ، وَأَدِيلَ الْحَقِّ مِنْهُ بِتَضْيِيعِ الْجِهَادِ، وَسِيمَ الْخُسْفِ، وَمُنَعَ النَّصْفَ.

*Now then, surely jihad (i.e. striving for Almighty Allah's sake) is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His special friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armor of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it, Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him. [2](#)*

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

لِلْجَنَّةِ بَابٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ بَابُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ، يَمْضُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ مَفْتُوحٌ وَهُمْ مُتَقَلِّدُونَ بِسُيُوفِهِمْ، وَالْجَمْعُ فِي الْمَوْقِفِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ تُرْحَبُ بِهِمْ. فَمَنْ تَرَكَ الْجِهَادَ أَلْبَسَهُ اللَّهُ ذُلًّا وَفَقْرًا فِي مَعِيشَتِهِ وَمَحَقًّا فِي دِينِهِ. إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعْنَى أُمَّتِي بِسَنَابِكِ

خَيْلُهَا وَمَرَكَزِ رِمَاحِهَا.

*Paradise has a gate that is called “the Gate of Strivers.” The strivers will walk to this gate, which is open wide before them, holding their swords (i.e. weapons) while crowds will be halted in the field of interrogation, and the angels will be welcoming them. So, he who abandons jihad will be dressed by Allah in the garb of humility, poverty in livelihood, and destruction in religion. Almighty Allah has ended my people with dignity through the hooves of their horses and the handles of their spears.*<sup>3</sup>

Shaykh al-Saduq in *al-Khisal* and Shaykh al-Tusi in *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* have reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) on the authority of his fathers that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

فَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي بَرٍّ حَتَّى يُقْتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، فَإِذَا قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ بَرٌّ، وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عُقُوقٍ حَتَّى يُقْتَلَ أَحَدٌ وَالِدَيْهِ، فَإِذَا قُتِلَ أَحَدٌ وَالِدَيْهِ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ عُقُوقٌ.

*Over everyone that is possessed of devoutness there is one even more devout, except over those martyred for the sake of Allah. When one is martyred for the sake of Allah, there will be no devoutness greater than his. Likewise, over everyone undutiful there is one even more undutiful except for those who kill one of their parents. When one kills one of his parents, there will be no impiety greater than his.*<sup>4</sup>

In his other book entitled *‘Iqab al-A’mal*, Shaykh al-Saduq, with regard to the rewards of the strivers for the sake of Allah, reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said:

وَمَنْ خَرَجَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مُجَاهِدًا فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ سَبْعُمِائَةَ أَلْفٍ حَسَنَةً، وَيَمْحَى عَنْهُ سَبْعُمِائَةَ أَلْفٍ سَيِّئَةٍ، وَيُرْفَعُ لَهُ سَبْعُمِائَةَ أَلْفٍ دَرَجَةً، وَكَانَ فِي ضَمَانِ اللَّهِ بِأَيِّ حَتْفٍ مَاتَ كَانَ شَهِيدًا، وَإِنْ رَجَعَ رَجَعَ مَغْفُورًا لَهُ مُسْتَجَابًا دَعَاؤُهُ.

*For every step that a striver takes, forsaking his home in the way of Allah, seven hundred thousand rewards will be recorded. Seven hundred thousand of his evildoings will be effaced, seven hundred thousand ranks will he be raised, and he will be, under the assurance of Allah, regarded as martyr no matter what sort of death he dies. If he returns back home, he will be forgiven and his supplication responded to.*<sup>5</sup>

According to another tradition, Mansur ibn Hazim has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) to identify the best of all deeds. The Imam (‘a) answered:

الصَّلَاةُ لَوْقَتِهَا، وَبِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، وَالْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.

*(They are) performing the prayers in their times, acting piously towards parents, and striving in the way of Allah.*<sup>6</sup>

In *al-Khisal*, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) said:

مَا مِنْ قَطْرَةٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ قَطْرَتَيْنِ: قَطْرَةٍ دَمٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَقَطْرَةٍ دَمْعَةٍ فِي سَوَادِ اللَّيْلِ لَا يُرِيدُ بِهَا عَبْدٌ إِلَّا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

*No drops are dearer to Almighty Allah than two drops: a drop of blood that is shed in the way of Allah and a teardrop that is shed in the darkness of night intended for nothing save Almighty Allah.* [7](#)

Shaykh al-Tusi, in *al-Amali*, has reported Imam 'Ali ('a) as saying:

الْمَوْتُ طَالِبٌ وَمَطْلُوبٌ، لَا يُعْجِزُهُ الْمُقِيمُ وَلَا يَفُوتُهُ الْهَارِبُ، فَاقْدِمُوا وَلَا تَتَكَلَّمُوا، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ عَنِ الْمَوْتِ مَحِيصٌ. إِنَّكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ تُقْتَلُوا تَمُوتُوا. وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ عَلِيٍّ بِيَدِهِ لَأَلْفُ ضَرْبَةٍ بِالسَّيْفِ عَلَى الرَّأْسِ أَهْوَنُ مِنْ مَوْتٍ عَلَى فِرَاشٍ.

*Death is a greedy pursuer. As for the pursued, neither one who stays at home will be able to weaken it, nor will one who flees be able to escape it. Therefore, go forward into battle and do not shrink away since there is no escape from death. Even if you are not killed in battle, you will die. By Allah, in Whose hand is the life of 'Ali (I swear), a thousand sword blows on the head are easier than death in bed.* [8](#)

Shaykh al-Saduq, in *al-Amali*, reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

أَشْرَفُ الْمَوْتِ قَتْلُ الشَّهَادَةِ.

*The most honorable death is to be killed as a martyr.* [9](#)

In each of the abovementioned traditions, we have attempted to display different merits of *jihad* and *mujahids* (i.e. performers of *jihad*).

## Categories of Jihad

*Jihad* is classified into two categories: struggle against the enemy and struggle against the self (i.e. self-strife or self-purification).

The Holy Prophet (S), in an authentically reported tradition, has expressed self-purification as 'the major *jihad*' and struggle against the enemy as 'the minor *jihad*'.

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, and Shaykh al-Saduq, in *al-Majalis* and *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, have reported the following:

On seeing the returning armies from the battlefield, the Holy Prophet (S) said, “Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad, and have yet to perform the major one.” When asked what the major jihad was, the Holy Prophet (S) replied, “It is the jihad of the self (struggle against one’s self).”<sup>10</sup>

The topic of self–strife has already been discussed in a previous book of this series.<sup>11</sup>

In the most reliable reference books of hadith, chapters comprising many sections have been dedicated to discussing this topic.<sup>12</sup>

The most important point in this regard is that one should not assume that self–strife can substitute for struggle against the enemy or that one who practices self–strife is not responsible for *jihad* against enemies because self–strife, in its capacity as a category of *jihad*, is considered to be more important than struggle against the enemy. To understand the relationship between these two categories of *jihad*, we should say that self–strife is more comprehensive and broader than struggle against the enemy, but the latter is still a branch of the earlier. In view of this, the major *jihad* cannot be attained unless its qualifications are met.

## Laws Appertaining to Jihad

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al–Bayt (‘a) are reported to have classified *jihad*, in terms of its laws, into several classes.

Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al–Tusi reported Fudhayl ibn ‘Ayyadh and Hafs ibn Ghiyath to have narrated the following:

As he was asked whether *jihad* is obligatory or recommended, Imam al–Sadiq (‘a) answered:

الْجِهَادُ عَلَى أَرْبَعَةٍ أَوْجُهُ، فَجِهَادَانِ فَرَضٌ، وَجِهَادٌ سُنَّةٌ لَا تُقَامُ إِلَّا مَعَ الْفَرَضِ، وَجِهَادٌ سُنَّةٌ. فَأَمَّا أَحَدُ الْفَرَضَيْنِ فَمُجَاهَدَةُ الرَّجُلِ نَفْسَهُ عَنِ مَعَاصِيِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَهُوَ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْجِهَادِ، وَمُجَاهَدَةُ الَّذِينَ يُلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ فَرَضٌ. وَأَمَّا الْجِهَادُ الَّذِي هُوَ سُنَّةٌ لَا يُقَامُ إِلَّا مَعَ فَرَضٍ، فَإِنَّ مُجَاهَدَةَ الْعَدُوِّ فَرَضٌ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأُمَّةِ وَلَوْ تَرَكَوا الْجِهَادَ لِأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ، وَهَذَا هُوَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْأُمَّةِ، وَهُوَ سُنَّةٌ عَلَى الْإِمَامِ وَحْدَهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الْعَدُوَّ مَعَ الْأُمَّةِ فَيُجَاهِدُهُمْ. وَأَمَّا الْجِهَادُ الَّذِي هُوَ سُنَّةٌ فَكُلُّ سُنَّةٍ أَقَامَهَا الرَّجُلُ وَجَاهَدَ فِي إِقَامَتِهَا وَبُلُوغِهَا وَإِحْيَاءِهَا فَالْعَمَلُ وَالسَّعْيُ فِيهَا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ الْأَعْمَالِ؛ لِأَنَّهَا إِحْيَاءٌ سُنَّةٌ. وَقَدْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُنْقَصَ مِنْ أَجْرِهِمْ شَيْءٌ.

*Jihad is of four kinds—two are obligatory, one recommended but performed only along with the obligatory, and one that is only recommended. One of the two obligatory jihads is self–strife; that is, struggle against committing acts of disobedience to Allah. It is surely the greatest form of jihad. The other obligatory jihad is fighting disbelievers. The jihad that is recommended but performed only with the obligatory is fighting the enemy. It is obligatory upon all the individuals of the (Muslim) nation. If they*

*abandon fighting against the enemies, chastisement will befall them. In fact, the torments they are now suffering is part of this chastisement.*

*Meanwhile, fighting against the enemies is recommended under orders from the Imam, who is permitted to fight the enemy with his people. The jihad that is only recommended is every excellent practice of man and his efforts in instituting, achieving, and enlivening that practice. Activities and efforts that are exercised for achieving such traditions are the best deeds, because they represent restoration of excellent traditions. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, “He who introduces an excellent traditional practice will gain the reward of doing that practice in addition to the rewards of everyone who practices it up to the Day of Resurrection without any decrease in the reward. [13](#)*

The second form of *jihad* that is obligatory represents the defensive *jihad* that is obligatory upon all Muslims, men and women, under all circumstances, with or without the existence of a just ruler. The third form of *jihad* represents the preparatory *jihad* that is obligatory upon men under certain conditions, the most important being the command and power in the hand of a just leader and promulgation for Islam preceding the fight.

In this connection, Shaykh al-Tusi has reported Talhah ibn Zayd as saying:

I asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) about the ruling concerning a Muslim who lives peacefully with non-Muslim people, but when other non-Muslim people invade them, he wages a war against the invaders.

The Imam (‘a) answered:

عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ أَنْ يَمْنَعَ نَفْسَهُ وَيُقَاتِلَ عَلَى حُكْمِ اللَّهِ وَحُكْمِ رَسُولِهِ، وَأَمَّا أَنْ يُقَاتِلَ الْكُفَّارَ عَلَى حُكْمِ الْجَوْرِ وَسُنَّتِهِمْ فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُ ذَلِكَ.

*It is obligatory upon such a Muslim individual to avoid engaging himself in such a war because he is required to fight in line with the laws of Almighty Allah and His Messenger (S). He is therefore disallowed to fight against non-Muslims under the power of unjust rulers. [14](#)*

Confirming the validity of this tradition, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, has reported that Abu-’Amr al-Zuhri, once, asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a), “Is inviting to the religion of Allah and fighting in His way permissible to certain individuals in the situation that no one else is permitted to undertake these missions or are they allowable to every one who believes in Almighty Allah as the One and Only God and in Muhammad (S) as His Messenger?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

To undertake these missions is not allowed except for certain people and none should do this job except one from their circle.

“Who are these people?” al-Zuhri asked.

The Imam (‘a) answered:

مَنْ قَامَ بِشَرَائِطِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي الْقِتَالِ وَالْجِهَادِ عَلَى الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فَهُوَ الْمَأْذُونُ لَهُ فِي الدُّعَاءِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ قَائِمًا بِشَرَائِطِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي الْجِهَادِ عَلَى الْمُجَاهِدِينَ فَلَيْسَ بِمَأْذُونٍ لَهُ فِي الْجِهَادِ وَالِدُّعَاءِ إِلَى اللَّهِ، حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ فِي نَفْسِهِ بِمَا أَخَذَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ شَرَائِطِ الْجِهَادِ.

*They are those who meet the qualifications that Almighty Allah has specified for fighting and struggling against the enemies. Only those are permitted to invite others to the religion of Allah. Thus, those who cannot meet these qualifications of fighting against the enemies are not permitted to practice jihad and promulgate the religion of Allah until they find themselves capable of meeting the qualifications that Almighty Allah has specified for jihad. [15](#)*

About the condition of inviting to Islam before waging war against the enemies, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported, in *al-Kafi*, that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) quoted Imam ‘Ali (‘a) as saying:

*Before the Messenger of Allah (S) sent me to Yemen, he said to me:*

لَا تُقَاتِلَنَّ أَحَدًا حَتَّى تَدْعُوهُ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ. وَأَيُّمُ اللَّهِ، لَأَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى يَدَيْكَ رَجُلًا خَيْرٌ لَكَ مِمَّا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ وَغَرُبَتْ، وَلَكَ وَلَاؤُهُ يَا عَلِيُّ

*Do not fight anyone before inviting him to Islam. By Allah, if He guides a single man (to the true faith) at your hands, this will be better for you than possessing whatever is under the sunlight. The loyalty of that man will be yours, O ‘Ali. [16](#)*

Many verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that it is obligatory to invite everybody to the way of Allah by means of wisdom and excellent preaching (16:125), while others instruct emphatically on steadfastness in conveying the divine mission. Likewise, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) reveals that Muslims did not fight against any of their enemies before all other peaceful means had been used. Thus, when Muslims maintained all conclusive arguments against their enemies and nothing prevented these enemies from accepting Islam except psychological obstacles, Muslims would start fighting them to break such obstacles that represented infidelity and deliberate rejection of the truth.

We thus can understand the condition of obtaining the just ruler's authorization for waging war against the enemies because identifying the proper conditions as precisely as is required entails thorough experience, cognizance, and acquaintance with social conditions, in addition to a high level of piety and perfect justice.

Many laws pertaining to *jihad* have been enacted in the religious code of Islamic law. These laws

discuss aspects such as the following:

- The means of killing, such as by poison or burning
- Killing techniques
- Those for whom *jihad* is obligatory including men who are not feeble and women under certain circumstances.
- Spoils of war, and the ways of distributing them and paying their one-fifth tax
- Ways of dealing with the prisoners of war and the conditions under which these prisoners are taken as slaves, given unconditional freedom, released upon payment of ransom (when they are routed), or killed (before they are routed).
- Circumstances and conditions of granting the enemy immunity
- Differentiation between polytheists, the People of the Book, and invaders.
- Fleeing the battlefield

More details are available in books on Muslim jurisprudence and practical laws of Islam.

In addition to these laws, *jihad* has special manners to be followed including etiquettes of attacking the enemy, etiquettes of private fights (between two people), and the methods of dealing with prisoners of war.

In this respect, Malik ibn A'yun has reported the following:

Imam 'Ali ('a), rousing the people to fight in Siffin, said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ دَلَّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ، وَيَشْفَى بِكُمْ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ الْإِيمَانَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْجِهَادَ فِي سَبِيلِ  
اللَّهِ، وَجَعَلَ ثَوَابَهُ مَغْفِرَةً لِلذَّنْبِ، وَمَسَاكِينَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَاتِ عَدْنٍ. وَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي  
سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَرْصُوصٌ" (4) "فَسَوْوُوا صُفُوفَكُمْ كَالْبُنْيَانِ الْمَرْصُوصِ فَقَدِمُوا الدَّارِعَ، وَأَخْرُوا الْحَاسِرَ،  
وَعَضُّوا عَلَى النُّوْاجِذِ، فَإِنَّهُ أَنْبَى لِلسُّيُوفِ عَلَى الْهَامِ، وَالتَّوَوُّوا عَلَى أَطْرَافِ الرِّمَاحِ، فَإِنَّهُ أَمُورٌ لِلْأَسِنَّةِ، وَعَضُّوا الْأَبْصَارَ  
فَإِنَّهُ أَرْبَطُ لِلْجَاشِ وَأَسْكَنُ لِلْقُلُوبِ، وَأَمِيتُوا الْأَصْوَاتَ فَإِنَّهُ أَطْرَدُ لِلْفِشْلِ وَأَوْلَى بِالْوَقَارِ، وَلَا تَمِيلُوا بِرَايَاتِكُمْ وَلَا تَزِيلُوهَا  
وَلَا تَجْعَلُوهَا إِلَّا مَعَ شُجْعَانِكُمْ؛ فَإِنَّ الْمَانِعَ لِلذِّمَارِ وَالصَّابِرَ عِنْدَ نَزُولِ الْحَقَائِقِ هُمْ أَهْلُ الْحِفَاطِ. وَلَا تُمْتَلُوا بِقَتِيلٍ، وَإِذَا  
وَصَلْتُمْ إِلَى رِحَالِ الْقَوْمِ فَلَا تَهْتِكُوا سِتْرًا، وَلَا تَدْخُلُوا دَارًا، وَلَا تَأْخُذُوا شَيْئًا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ إِلَّا مَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِي عَسْكَرِهِمْ،  
وَلَا تَهْجُوا إِمْرَأَةً بَأْدَى وَإِنْ شَتَمْتُمْ أَعْرَاضَكُمْ وَسَبَبْتُمْ أَمْرَأَتَكُمْ وَصَلَحَاءَكُمْ؛ فَإِنَّهُنَّ نَاقِصَاتُ الْقُوَى وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْعُقُولِ،  
وَقَدْ كُنَّا نُؤْمَرُ بِالْكَفِّ عَنْهُنَّ وَهُنَّ مُشْرِكَاتٌ، وَإِنْ كَانَ الرَّجُلُ لِيَتَنَاوَلَ الْمَرْأَةَ فَيَعِيرُ بِهَا وَعَقِبَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ  
أَهْلَ الْحِفَاطِ هُمْ الَّذِينَ يَحْتَفُونَ بِرَايَاتِهِمْ وَيَكْتَنِفُونَهَا، وَيَصْبِرُونَ حَفَافِيهَا وَوَرَاءَهَا وَأَمَامَهَا، وَلَا يُضَيِّعُونَهَا. لَا يَتَأَخَّرُونَ  
عَنْهَا فَيَسْلَمُوهَا، وَلَا يَتَقَدَّمُونَ عَلَيْهَا فَيُفْرِدُوهَا. رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِمْرَأَةً وَاسَى أَخَاهُ بِنَفْسِهِ، وَلَمْ يَكِلْ قَرْنَهُ إِلَى أَخِيهِ فَيَجْتَمِعَ عَلَيْهِ  
قَرْنُهُ وَقَرْنُ أَخِيهِ فَيَكْتَسِبَ بِذَلِكَ اللَّائِمَةَ، وَيَأْتِيَ بِدَنَاءَةٍ. وَكَيْفَ لَا يَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَهُوَ يُقَاتِلُ الْإِنْتِنِينَ، وَهَذَا مُمَسِّكٌ يَدَهُ قَدْ

خَلَّى قَرْنَهُ عَلَى أَحْيِهِ هَارِباً مِنْهُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ؟ وَهَذَا، فَمَنْ يَفْعَلُهُ يَمُقْتَهُ اللَّهُ، فَلَا تَتَعَرَّضُوا لِمَقْتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ مَمَرَكُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: " قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوْ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تُمْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا (16) " وَأَيْمُ اللَّهِ، لَئِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنْ سَيُوفِ الْعَاجِلَةِ لَا تَسْلَمُونَ مِنْ سَيْفِ الْآجِلَةِ، فَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصِّدْقِ، فَإِنَّمَا يَنْزِلُ النَّصْرُ بَعْدَ الصَّبْرِ، فَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ، وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

*Verily, Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, has shown you a trade by which He will grant you an escape from dreadful punishment and bring you great good. It is faith in Allah and striving on His path. He has made their reward for it forgiveness of sins and blessed dwellings in gardens of Eden. He, the Almighty and Majestic, said, "Surely, Allah loves those who fight on His path in ranks like a tightly-packed building." Arrange your ranks, thus, like a tightly-packed building. Bring forward the man clad in armor and keep back the unarmed. Bite hard on the teeth, for this makes swords stronger on the head. Twist the edges of spears, for this makes the stabs of spearheads more piercing.*

*Lower your glances, for this increases confidence and raises the spirit. Deaden your voices, for this dismisses feelings of failure and detains despair. As for your standard, do not allow it to incline (towards the ground) and do not desert it. Only put it in the hands of the brave among you. Those who defend honor and are steadfast in their revelation of truth are the defenders who are right in their opinions. Do not mutilate any killed person. When you advance for the spoils of the (other) party, do not tear any veil, do not break into any house to seize their property, take only things that you find in their camps. Do not incite a woman by any harmful means even if they verbally attack your chastity and revile your commanders and the righteous amongst you because women are of deficient power, souls, and minds.*

*We were ordered to eschew them while they were polytheists. Whenever a man has harmed a woman, he as well as his descendants have been imputed to dishonor because of it. Be it known to you all, only the sagacious defenders among you will honor and protect your standards. They should thus surround them from behind, front, and all sides. They should never fail to keep them raised. They should not hold them behind them, so that they are easily surrendered, nor leave them behind, lest they remain unprotected.*

*May Allah have mercy on any man of you who comforts his brother with his own life and does not flee, leaving his opponent with his brother so that his own opponent and his brother's opponent gather against his brother. For, by that, he will acquire blame and inferiority will come upon him. How should he avoid it if he fights the two when he refrains from supporting his brother and gives him up to the opponent, fleeing and looking at him?*

*Whoever does so will be loathed by Allah. Therefore, do not expose yourselves to the loathing of Allah, for you will eventually pass by Him. Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, has said, "Say: Flight will never benefit you. If you flee from death or being killed, then you will only enjoy it a little." I swear by Allah that if you flee from the swords of this world, you will not be safe from the sword of the next world. Therefore, seek help in steadfastness and honesty, for victory comes only after showing steadfastness. So, strive*

hard in the way of Allah such a striving as is due to Him. There is no power save with Allah. [17](#)

## Circumstances for Jihad

As deduced from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet's traditions, we can list the situations when fighting with weapons is permissible:

**1. Defense of Islam:** When the religion is endangered by polytheists or apostates of Islam, it becomes obligatory to defend it by means of *jihad*.

**2. Self-defense:** In addition to warding off dangers and defending one's property and chastity, self-defense includes defending the Muslim community when exposed to killing or persecution.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ قُتِلَ دُونَ مَظْلَمَتِهِ فَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

*He who is killed defending himself against wrongdoing is a martyr. [18](#)*

Another tradition holds that being killed defending oneself against wronging includes being killed in defense of one's family members, property, and the like. [19](#)

**3. Resistance of Oppression and Tyranny:** When the nation is exposed to unbearable extents of oppression and tyranny at the hands of despotic rulers who violate all human values and confiscate man's freedom, dignity, and basic rights, struggle against such rulers becomes obligatory. In this respect, the Holy Qur'an declares:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضَعِفُ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (4) وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعَفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ (5)

***Lo! Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. He oppressed a tribe among them, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! He was of those who work corruption. We desired to show favor to those who were oppressed in the earth, to make them examples, and to make them the inheritors. (28:4-5)***

**4. Liberating the oppressed and the weak from the tyrants and the oppressors:** Referring to this sort of *jihad*, the Holy Qur'an states:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ

(الْقَرِيَةَ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلِهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا 75)

**What reason do you have that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men, the women, and the children who say, “Our Lord, cause us to go forth from this town whose people are oppressors. Give us from You a guardian and give us from You a helper.” (4:75)**

With regard to the same issue, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

مَنْ سَمِعَ رَجُلًا يَقُولُ: يَا لِمُسْلِمِينَ، فَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْلِمٍ.

*He is definitely not a Muslim who hears a man calling for the help of Muslims but he refrains from responding to him.* [20](#)

**5. Fighting a Transgressing Muslim Faction:** Jihad is obligatory in situations where a faction of Muslims violate the law and wrongfully rebel against a qualified, just ruler. Three factions broke away and transferred their allegiances from Imam ‘Ali (‘a), led by ‘A’ishah, Talhah, and al-Zubayr, the supporters of Mu’awiyah who challenged Imam ‘Ali’s authority, and the apostates who abandoned their faiths (known as Khawarij) all mutinied against the government of Imam ‘Ali (‘a), forcing him to fight against them in defense of the Muslim community and government in the three famous battles led by him during his reign.

*Jihad* is also carried out against Muslim parties that make inroads upon other Muslims. In such cases, the community of Muslims is required to first make peace between these two Muslims parties, but if one party refuses and goes on assaulting and transgressing the other party, it will then be necessary for all Muslims to fight against this transgressing party in order to withstand transgression and oppression.

Another example of fighting against the transgressors, which is a sort of *jihad*, is to fight against the Muslim tyrannical rulers who subjugate the Muslim community by means of injustice, discrimination, and despotism.

This category of *jihad* was practiced by Imam Husayn (‘a) in his great uprising against the tyrannical rule of Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah. Explaining his attitude to the tyranny of Yazid, Imam Husayn (‘a) is reported to have said:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، قَالَ: مَنْ رَأَى سُلْطَانًا جَائِرًا مُسْتَحِلًّا لِحَرَامِ اللَّهِ، نَاكِثًا لِعَهْدِهِ، مُخَالِفًا لِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، يَعْمَلُ فِي عِبَادِ اللَّهِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ، فَلَمْ يُغَيِّرْ عَلَيْهِ بِقَوْلٍ وَلَا فِعْلٍ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَدْخِلَهُ مَدْخَلَهُ. أَلَا وَإِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَدْ لَزِمُوا طَاعَةَ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَتَوَلَّوْا عَنِ طَاعَةِ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَأَظْهَرُوا الْفَسَادَ، وَعَطَلُوا الْحُدُودَ، وَاسْتَأْتَرُوا بِالْفِيءِ، وَأَحْلَوْا حَرَامَ اللَّهِ وَحَرَّمُوا حَلَالَهُ، وَإِنِّي أَحَقُّ بِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ

*O people, Allah’s Messenger (S) said, “If one realizes that an unjust ruler is violating the prohibitions of Allah, breaching his pledge with Him, opposing the traditions of His Messenger (S), and treating His servants with sinful and aggressive means, but does not try to change that by a deed or a word, then Allah will definitely join him with that ruler.” Verily, those rulers abided by obedience to Satan, abandoned obedience to the All-beneficent God, made mischief openly, infringed upon the provisions of Allah, seized booty, violated the prohibitions of Allah, and prohibited that which Allah had deemed lawful. Most certainly, I am worthier than anyone else to stand against them.*[21](#)

In the same manner, we can understand why the Holy Imams (‘a) defended the uprising of Zayd ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, which was based on the same understanding of *jihad*. About this uprising, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

فَإِنَّ زَيْدًا كَانَ عَالِمًا وَكَانَ صَدُوقًا وَلَمْ يَدْعُكُمْ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ، وَإِنَّمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَى الرِّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. وَلَوْ ظَهَرَ لَوْفِي بِمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَيْهِ.

*Verily, Zayd was knowledgeable and honest. He did not call you to accept him as your leader; rather, he called you to revolt for the sake of attaining the pleasure of Muhammad’s Household (S). Had he succeeded (in his revolution), he would have certainly fulfilled his pledge and the slogan to which he had called you.*[22](#)

Similarly, Imam al-Ridha (‘a) is reported to have said to al-Ma'mun, the ‘Abbasid ruler:

لَا تَقْسُ أَخِي زَيْدًا إِلَى زَيْدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ، فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنْ عُلَمَاءِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، غَضِبَ لِلَّهِ فَجَاهَدَ أَعْدَاءَهُ حَتَّى قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ. وَلَقَدْ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي مُوسَى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَاهُ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَمِّي زَيْدًا، إِنَّهُ دَعَا إِلَى الرِّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَلَوْ ظَفَرَ لَوْفِي بِمَا دَعَا إِلَيْهِ، لَقَدْ اسْتَشَارَنِي فِي خُرُوجِهِ فَقُلْتُ: إِنْ رَضِيَتْ أَنْ تَكُونَ الْمَقْتُولَ الْمَصْلُوبَ بِالْكُنَّاسَةِ فَشَأْنُكَ... إِنْ زَيْدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ لَمْ يَدْعَ مَا لَيْسَ لَهُ بِحَقٍّ، وَإِنَّهُ كَانَ أَتَقَى لِلَّهِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ. إِنَّهُ قَالَ: أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الرِّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ.

*Do not compare my brother Zayd*[23](#) *to Zayd ibn ‘Ali. Zayd ibn ‘Ali was one of the scholars of the Household of Muhammad (S). He was angry for the sake of Allah. He therefore strove against His enemies until he was killed following His path. My father Musa ibn Ja’far narrated that he had heard his father Ja’far ibn Muhammad saying, ‘May Allah bless my uncle Zayd! He was inviting the people to attain the pleasure of Muhammad’s Household (S), not towards himself. He would have fulfilled what he had said if he had become victorious. He consulted with me about his uprising and I told him, ‘O uncle! Do it if you are pleased to be killed and your corpse be hung up from the gallows in the al-Kunnasah neighborhood.’ Zayd did not make any unrighteous claims. He was much more pious than that. He invited the people to attain the pleasure of Muhammad’s Household (S).*[24](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have also extolled the revolution of Husayn ibn ‘Ali *Sahib Fakhkh*, describing it as

the most astounding misfortune after the tragic saga of al-Taff (i.e. Imam Husayn's martyrdom).[25](#)

Of course, the first, third, fourth, and fifth situations of *jihad* apply to fighting against non-Islamic powers that govern Muslim countries although apparent power is in the hand of Muslim rulers.

Resistance, fighting, and use of weapons are permissible only when all other means—like inviting to the way of Allah with wisdom and excellent preaching—fail to achieve the goals. Hence, when rulers prevent Muslims by force from conveying the divine mission, impose upon them laws that are incompatible to the laws of Islam, or deprive them of the freedom of expressing their opinions or choosing for themselves, only then will armed resistance and fighting be legal to make the required changes.

However, Muslims must have the power to fight as a means of self-defense or defense of their religion. If not, they must wait for the appropriate opportunity. It is also necessary that such fighting be under the supervision of a decent, well-versed jurist who enjoys all the qualifications of the political leadership as ordained by the code of Islamic law.

## Ribat (Taking up Positions on the Borders)

Another category of *jihad* is to take up positions on the frontiers of the Muslim countries in order to safeguard them from probable invasions by the enemy and be ready to defend border territories, especially when these borders are common with the country of an enemy.

Taking up positions on the frontiers is obligatory only when the Muslim country anticipates an attack by a non-Muslim enemy; otherwise, it is not obligatory although it is encouraged by the code of Islamic law.[26](#)

In this regard, Muhammad ibn Muslim and Zurarah have reported Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

الرِّبَاطُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ، وَأَكْثَرُهُ أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا، فَإِذَا جَاوَزَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ جِهَادٌ.

*Ribat (guarding the borders) is three days at least and forty days as a maximum. If it exceeds this period, it is then jihad.*[27](#)

## Conclusion

The objectives of *jihad* according to Islam can be summarized in the following points:

1. *Jihad* is one of the most significant devotional acts through which Islam and the Muslim community are protected; tyranny, corruption, and transgression are dealt with; and the dignity and esteem of Muslims are maintained.

2. *Jihad* is one of the means of spreading the Islamic mission under certain circumstances and in an exceptional way. When all other means of invitation to the religion of Islam are exhausted, and nothing prevents the acceptance of Islam except psychological obstacles (that represent infidelity and deliberate rejection of the truth), only then is *jihad* carried out, in order to break these obstacles.

3. *Jihad* is based on the right of self-defense in the face of direct aggression against Islam and the Muslim community. *Jihad* is a protective means against such threats. Such *jihad* is called protective *jihad*. Whenever indications of such threats and dangers are experienced, it becomes necessary to be in a state of preparation to confront them.

4. *Jihad* is taking up arms against Muslim rulers that swerve away from the path of Islam and is carried out only when such rulers use power to prevent the Muslims from conveying the mission of Islam or impose upon them a non-Islamic system of rule, without giving them the freedom to express their opinions or to choose for themselves. Once again, such *jihad* must be preceded by exhausting all the other peaceful means, such as preaching, advising and the like.

5. Fighting is obligatory only when there is sufficient capability to do so or to achieve the purposes sought after, even if this achievement requires a long time. It is necessary to prepare the required power and wait for the most appropriate opportunity although it is impermissible to miss a suitable opportunity or surrender in the face of despotic power.

6. Fighting must be under the supervision of a just leader. In the present time, a just leader is represented by the well-versed and experienced jurist who takes on the political and social leadership, who has full acquaintance with the political and social circumstances, and who is courageous and competent enough to identify the situations and take proper decisions according to religious law.

1. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:5, H. 1.

The authenticity of this tradition is corroborated by other traditions that are mentioned in the same chapter of this reference book.

2. – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 27.

3. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:5, H. 2.

4. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:10, H. 21.

5. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:12, H. 27.

6. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:12, H. 28.

7. – `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:10, H. 16.

8. – Shaykh al-Mufid, Kitab al-Irshad, pp. 238.

9. – `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 74:8, H. 4.

10. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:122 & 124, H. 1 & 9.

11. – Self-strife or self-purification has been discussed in the principles and rules of Islam, (the moral principles).

Moreover, some details of this topic have been discussed in the book of social relations of the virtuous community (control over emotions and excellent example and distinctive behavior).

12. – See, for instance, al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:122-392.

13. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:16, H. 1.

14. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:16, H. 3.

- [15.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:23, H. 23.
- [16.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:30, H. 1.
- [17.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:71, H. 3.
- [18.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:92, H. 8.
- [19.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:92, H. 9.
- [20.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:164, H. 5.
- [21.](#) – Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa'l-Muluk (known as Tarikh al-Tabari) 4:304; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 4:48 (with a slight difference).
- [22.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah, 11:35–36, H. 1.
- [23.](#) – Zayd ibn Musa, known as Zayd al-Nar.
- [24.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:39, H. 11.
- [25.](#) – Al-Mamuqani, Tanqih al-Maqal 1:337, biography of al-Husayn ibn `Ali (Sahib Fakhkh)
- [26.](#) – Sayyid al-Khu'i, Minhaj al-Salihin, pp. 376.
- [27.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:19, H. 1.

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