

Definition and Ruling of Jihaad

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The Literal Definition Of Jihad

The word Jihad is derived from the word 'Juhd', which means **"To Make Substantial Effort."** Jihad itself has been defined in the Arabic dictionary as: **"To make the utmost effort to attain something beloved or to save oneself from something disliked."**

The Explanation Of Jihad In Shari Terms

The Scholars of Fiqh (jurisprudence) have agreed that Jihad in Shari terms means: **"To fight in the path of Allah or anything aiding this course."** A more detailed understanding of the term Jihad has been explained by the four major Schools of Fiqh as follows:

Hanafi Fiqh

a) **Jihad means to be involved in fighting in the path of Allah by one's life, wealth, and speech.** (al-Badai us-Sanai)

b) **It is further explained to call the unbelievers towards the true Religion of Islam and to fight against them, if they are unwilling to accept this true Religion.** (Fathul Qadeer)

Maliki Fiqh

a) **The Muslims are to with the Kuffar (disbelievers) to advance Allah's Religion.** (Hashiyatul Adwi/Ash Sharhus Sagir)

Shafi'ee Fiqh

a) **The meaning of Jihad in Shari terms is to make utmost effort infighting in the path of Allah.** (Fathul Bari)

Hanbali Fiqh

a) **Jihad means to fight against the unbelievers.** (Matalibe Ulin Nuha)

The Ruling Of Jihad

Imam Saraksi states: **"Jihad is obligatory and commanded by Allah. Any person who denies Jihad is a kaafir (disbeliever) and people who doubt the obligation of Jihad have gone astray."** (Fathul Qadeer, V.5, p191)

Sahibul Ikhtiyar states: **“Jihad is an ordained obligation (Fareedah). One who denies it, is a Kafir. The obligation of Jihad has been clearly substantiated in the Quran and Sunnah and by the Consensus of the Ummah (ijma’).”** (Fathul Qadeer V.5, p191)

Different Types Of Jihad

There are two types of Jihad against the Kuffar:

1- Offensive Jihad

2- Defensive Jihad

1- Offensive Jihad is when the Muslims launch an offensive attack. If this attack is on the Kuffar who have previously received the message of Islam, then to call them towards Islam before commencement of the attack is considered preferable. If the message of Islam has not reached them, then the kuffar will be invited towards Islam. If they reject this true faith, then they will have to pay Jizyah (Kufr Tax). If they refuse to submit to the payment of Jizyah then the Muslims are to fight against them.

With this type of Jihad the Kuffar who plot against the Muslims are repelled and their hearts are filled with fear, so that they do not succeed in their plans. The offensive Jihad is Fardh Kifayah (collective duty) the purpose of which is to ensure the Kuffar remains terrorized and away from mischief, thereby, allowing the message of Islam to be conveyed without any obstructions.

If one group of Muslims fulfil this obligation then it will be sufficient on behalf of all Muslims, but if there are no Muslims fulfilling this obligation then everyone is considered sinful.

It is stated in Fatawa Shami: **“It is required of the Imam (leader) of the Muslims to dispatch the army routinely once or twice a year towards the kufr countries. It is also the duty of the Muslim public to assist the Imam in this noble cause. If the Imam does not send an army, then he will be considered sinful.”**

The majority of Jihad undertaken at the time of our Prophet Muhammad (salallahu ‘alayhi wasallam) was within the category of offensive Jihad.

The Quran has called upon the Muslims to undertake the offensive Jihad and when this obligation is satisfactorily fulfilled there would be no apparent need for the Defensive Jihad. When Muslims neglect this important obligation then they are subjected to the defensive Jihad and this has become, with regret, widely common in our time.

2 - Defensive Jihad is when the Kuffar enemy attacks, the Muslims, forcing them into a defensive position. This is one of the most important obligations upon the Muslims. In researching and studying the Jihad work of our predecessors, we understand that Jihad is considered Fard Ayn (individual obligatory duty) under the following conditions:

a- When the unbelievers attack upon a Country or City belonging to the Muslims or if they gain control of a Muslim Country.

b- When the unbelievers take Muslim captives.

c- When a Muslim woman is held by the Kuffar, to ensure her freedom is fardh upon the whole Muslim Ummah.

d- When the Imam (leader) of the Muslims orders the Muslims to go for Jihad.

e- When the Kuffar and Muslims face each other in the battlefield and the battle takes place.

The explanation of Fard Ayn is that every person will go for Jihad to such an extent that the son will march forth without the permission of his father, the wife without the permission of her husband, the debtor without the permission of the creditor.

The Jihad becomes fardh, firstly upon all the Muslim in the area being attacked. If the Muslims are not sufficient, or they do not fulfil this Jihad, then it is obligatory upon the Muslims in the next town or country to assist. If they too are not sufficient, then it will be Fard upon the next country until the Fard extends from the East to the West.

In discussing the issue of Defensive Jihad, Imam ibn Taymiyyah (rahmatullahi alaih) writes: **“The Defensive Jihad means to fight to defend our Religion and our honour, it is the most important obligation. There is no obligation after Iman (faith) considered more necessary to implement than the fighting against an enemy who has attacked to corrupt our world and our Hereafter. There is no condition for this Jihad, not even the necessities to travel or wealth, infact every individual will confront the enemy according to his ability.”**

We also understand from the writings of our scholars that Jihad does not only become Fard Ayn when the enemy attacks, but also when the enemy is at a distance of a Shari journey (48 miles). (Nihayatul Muhtaj, V.8, p58)

(The Virtues Of Jihad)