

# From Criticism to Extrimism: An Analysis of Boko Haram's Approach to Modernism

Akilu Aliyu Muhammad<sup>1\*</sup> Mu'azu Abdullahi Saulawa<sup>2</sup>

1.Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Art and Education, Bauchi State University P.M.B 65, Gadau, Bauchi-Nigeria

2.Faculty of Law, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, P.M.B 2218, Katsina-Nigeria  
aawaliy82@gmail.com

## Abstract

Nigeria is a country which is full of ethno-religious and political conflicts. Many groups emerged and are, in one way or the other, causing unrest in the country especially: Oduduwa Peoples' Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Igbo Youth Congress (IYC), Igbo Peoples' Congress (IPC), Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), Niger Delta Resistant Movement (NDRM), Movement for the Survival of the Izon Nationality of the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and others. However, in recent time, an Islamic group under the name of Boko Haram came into scene, and based their arguments on political and theological issues, claiming the revival of the Muslim community and restoring its caliphate nature. Their methods in confronting problems, their ideologies and their philosophical and political views can be compared with those of Islamic State (IS). This phenomenon has further thrown the entire northern parts of Nigeria into chaos and tumults. Many innocents, men and women, children and adults have been killed. This study therefore, attempts to explore the ideologies, the political and philosophical views and the aims and objectives of the Islamist movement with special reference to the movement of Boko Haram in the federal republic of Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

Pointing accusing finger at and direct challenge to Western modernism have been a global phenomenon today. Western modernism, therefore, can be considered as the root cause of chaos, mayhem and cruelty in the Muslim world. Many Muslim writers failed to address this ground properly. However, it is necessary to call a spade a spade. Without Modernism there would not be fundamentalism. On the other hand political reading of the Islamic texts, ideologization of Islam and replacing the Prophet's method of *da'wah* with direct challenge are the fundamental reasons and the root causes of the Islamists' coming into scene. This pattern of direct challenge and ideological understanding of Islam has made the world to turn against Islam. This study therefore, attempts to explore the ideologies, the aims and objectives of the Islamist movement with special reference to the movement of Boko Haram in the federal republic of Nigeria. It also points out that Islam did not come to create chaos among the humanity, but rather, it came to establish peace and bring harmony and provide a comprehensive development for humanity and that if Muslims would adhere to the Prophet's method of *da'wah* and apply it sincerely in their *da'wah* exercise, there would not be turbulence and unrest in the Muslim world.

## 2. The Concept of Modernism

Generally speaking, Modernism in its widest scope covers western thoughts, practices and characters, or simply western worldview. A very special aspect which is seriously connected with modernism – as a philosophy- is that, it rejected the existence of Ultimate - Compassionate, the Creator, or simply God.<sup>1</sup> One of the clearest, although not comprehensive, definitions of modernity is that Modernity is the Enlightenment project, with its certainties of reason and progress; it is the detraditionalizing of the traditions which preceded it.<sup>2</sup> Modernism aims at expelling the spiritual aspect of life and giving human being an absolute freedom of reasoning based on his understanding of this material world. It does not consider religion as a source of true knowledge, but rather, the scientific method or empiricism is the only way of acquiring the real meaning of this world. Therefore, expelling revelation and giving reason an absolute supremacy can be considered as the salient feature of modernity. However, this salient feature is, indeed, against the actual teaching of Islam. Islam considers reason as one of the ways of acquiring knowledge, but it must be controlled by revelation, and that was the essence of sending messengers upon messengers.

## 3. Muslim's Earliest Encounter With Modernity

Generally speaking, the Muslim's earliest encounter with modernity was as a result of European penetration into the Muslim's land through the military power. Through this imperialism the modernity was introduced to the

<sup>1</sup> Pericles Lewis, *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel* (London, Cambridge University Press, 2000). pp 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> Smith David, *Hinduism and Modernity*, (USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003). P7.

Muslim lands. However, as a result, Muslims had no choice but to respond to these challenges. Shireen T. Hunter explains this phenomenon:

Muslims' first encounter with modernity was a consequence of the European power's imperial expansion into their lands, often following some form of military defeat at the hand of the Europeans. This coincidence between Europe's imperial expansion and the introduction of modernity to the Muslim world has profoundly affected Muslim's collective psychology and shaped their responses to modernity and its challenges.<sup>1</sup>

Hunter elaborates that Muslim's first responses was to try to obtain the know-how necessary to solve the military discrepancy with the European powers; hence the focus on military reform and instruction. This played a vital role in reformation. As a result, modern educational schools were established in the Ottoman Empire consisting of different military schools, namely: naval engineering school (1773), military engineering (1793), and military science (1834).<sup>2</sup>

The reformism, later, fell under three groups. The first group is that of Westernizers who tried to totally embrace western modernity and ultimately came to promote secularism in the Muslim society, which contains in its philosophy, separation of religion from education politics and so on. The second group rejected Western modernity in totality and believed that nothing good can be found there-in western modernity, while the third group tried to make a synthesis and held the opinion that Muslim' can borrow from the West and mold it in the way that it can be in conformity with Islam.

#### 4. From Reformism to Islamism

At the very outset of this discussion, it is important to point out that, the term Islamism is the simplest word used by the Western writers to refer to the modern-era phenomenon of Islamic resurgence. Apart from this word, there are several words which are used by them to describe such phenomenon like: Islamic fundamentalism, Islamic extremism and so forth. At this juncture John Calvert points out:

Western observers have used several terms to refer to the modern-era phenomenon of Islamic resurgence. One of the most widely used of these is Islamic fundamentalism. Other terms include political Islam, Islamic revivalism, Islamic extremism and (more controversially) Islamofascism. Although all of these terms succeeded in denoting an aspect of the phenomenon none covers its entire meaning. A better term, one increasingly employed by scholars and journalists...is Islamism.<sup>3</sup>

In this research the researcher also prefers to use Islamism instead of fundamentalism. Many Western observers defined Islamism based on their understanding towards the phenomenon. But the definition which suggests that Islamism is "Synonymous with Islamic activism, the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws or policies that are held to be Islamic in character"<sup>4</sup> is more congenial and closer to the concept of the movement.

Nowadays The idea that Islam is *dĒn wa dawlah*: a religion which is based on religious and political orders marked the beginning of emergence of Islamism in the Muslim world. However, the main aim of Islamists is pursuit of Islamic *sharĒÑah* state for making a solution to the Muslim *Ummah, al-Īal al- IslĒmĒ*. In other words, the Islamists' aim is to unite religion and state. Moreover, it is only through this consideration that a proper understanding of Islamism and its concept could be grasped. In his discourse, Bassam Tibi identifies Islamism as: "An ideology that connects *dĒn* (religion) with *dawlah* (state) in a *sharĒÑah*-based political order"<sup>5</sup> and he further, claims that "this is a religionized political agenda, not a spiritual one...it is not local, restricted to countries of Islamic civilization, but also global, as Islamists propose a remaking of the world at large."<sup>6</sup> However, it is fair to say that every Islamist claims Islam but not every Muslim claims Islamism. Therefore, political order and politicization of Islam is the most important feature of Islamists' movements today. This also leads to the conclusion that Islamism is a political ideology of the formation of Islamic state.

Sincerely speaking, without imperialism there would not be modernism, and without modernism there would not fundamentalism, extremism or Islamism. Therefore, the fundamental cause of Islamism is modernity which was imposed on the Muslim societies through imperialism. S. Khan in his *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity* explains that:

...throughout the period of Western imperial intrusion, the majority of people in the Muslim world had watched as no-Muslim influences eroded their religion, culture, values and polity... thus the basis for anti-Western Islamic fundamentalist mass movements, motivated not only by religion, but also by

<sup>1</sup> Hunter T. Shireen, *Reformist Voices of Islam*, (USA: M.E Sharpe, 2009), P.10

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* PP. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> John Calvert, *Islamism*, (London: Greenwood Press, 2008) P.1

<sup>4</sup> "Understanding Islamism," *Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report*, 37, no 2 (March 2005), 1

<sup>5</sup> Bassam Tibi, *op.*, cit. P.2

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

cultural and economic issues. He concluded that, the process of realizing Islamic fundamentalist mass movements began in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Further, in most of the Muslim countries nowadays, different groups emerged and started pointing accusing fingers to Western modernity militantly. They, therefore, set up a direct challenge to the secular systems of their various states, be it educational, moral or political. In some states they succeeded while in others they failed. The first significant Islamist revolutionary victory was in 1979 when Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the shah of Iran and forced him to flee. This revolution of Iran reflected the recurrent tensions between Islamic activists and the West. This success of Khomeini brought a great motivation to other movements in the entire Muslim worlds.<sup>2</sup>

## 5. Boko Haram: The Islamist Group in Nigeria

### 5.1 Boko Haram: The Name

The name Boko Haram is a combination of two words. 'Boko' in Hausa language generally means Western education. But, sometimes, it is used to mean deception, maneuver, adulteration, fraud and trick.<sup>3</sup> However, the word Haram is, originally, from Arabic language, which Hausa language borrowed. In both Hausa and Arabic, the word Haram means any unlawful act, or any forbidden thing in the Islamic law.

Furthermore, the followers of this sect denied the name and claimed that it was given to them by their enemies. They attempted several times and in many ways to eliminate this name, but they have already become popular by it. For example, in their messages in form of poems they point out that their name is not Boko Haram but Muslims and *Ahl al- Sunnah*. They say:

*Ba fa 'yan Boko Haram Sunanmu ba 'yan Najeriya,  
Mu Musulmi ne AhlulSunnah Ku gane gaskiya<sup>4</sup>*

The above poem is in Hausa language and it can be translated as: "O Nigerians! Our name is not Boko Haram, but rather, we are Muslims and *ahl al-Sunnah*. Therefore, you should know the truth".

Boko Haramists, like other Islamists, believe that, Islam is *dĒn wa dawlah*, religion and state, and on that basis, Nigeria should be based on the Islamic political system. Nonetheless, the Nigerian leaders who are the products of Western secular system should be replaced by Islamically oriented ones. To achieve this goal, as they argue, blood must be shed. On this basis, they declare a war against the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, so as to establish a pure Islamic state ruled by *sharĒĀa* law.

### 5.2 Boko Haram: The History and The Origin

As regard to the origin of Boko Haram there are many versions. One of the narrations emphasizes that Boko Haram's origin lies in a group of Islamist youth who worshipped at the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri a decade ago. At that time, they were known as Taliban. In 2002, a branch of the group declared that the society is now corrupt and therefore, there is an urgent need for establishment of a pure society which is free from immorality and corruption. Eventually, the group moved from Maiduguri to a village called Kanama, Yobe state, near the border with Niger to establish an environment which is based on the Islamic SharĒĀa. Its first leader, Muhammad Ali, advocated anti-state ideology and therefore, called on all Muslims to join them so as to join hands in reviving the Islamic society which is based on the actual and true teachings of Islam.<sup>5</sup>

The group started getting conflicts with police since in December 2003, when they disputed over fishing in a local pool. In that conflict, the group members defeated the police and ran away with their weapons. The conflict was intervened by the Nigerian army and lasted until the New Year, when it ended up by killing most of the group members including their leader Muhammad Ali.

Those who survived in the conflicts rejoined their members in Maiduguri. The Maiduguri group leader was known as Muhammad Yusuf, he, thence, decided to establish the group's mosque where they would carry on their activities based on their perception and understanding. The mosque was named after a very renowned Muslim classical scholar ibn Taymiyyah. The mosque was built on a land donated to the group by Baba Fugu, Muhammad Yusuf's in-law. The group, later on, expanded and penetrated into other northern states of Nigeria like: Yobe, Bauchi, Adamawa, Niger, Gombe and Kano.

However, most of the Nigerian prominent scholars are against the ideology and the movement of Boko Haram. As a result, many intellectual debates were held between Muhammad Yusuf and other Muslim scholars. Some of the debates were face-to-face, while others were through recorded voices. For example, Sheikh Isa Ali

<sup>1</sup>A. S. Khan, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity*, (India: Aavishkar Publishers, Distributors, 2005), P. 11.

<sup>2</sup>A. S Khan. P.14

<sup>3</sup>Paul Newman and Roxana Ma Newman, *Modern Hausa-English Dictionary*, (Nigeria: University Press Plc. 1997), P.14

<sup>4</sup>Video cassette of Boko Haram's Bauchi prison break.

<sup>5</sup>Adagba Okpaga1, Ugwu Sam Chijioke2, Eme, Okechukwu Innocent3, *Activities of Boko Haram and Insecurity Question In Nigeria, Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter) Vol. 1, No.9; (April 201), 82*

Pantami, an indigene of Gombe state, but settles in Bauchi state held a debate with Muhammad Yusuf on whether the claim of Boko Haram is justifiable and relevant to the Muslim *Ummah* in this age. The debate took place after having another debate with Sheikh Idris Abdul-Aziz in Bauchi State also. No a direct debate took place between Muhammad Yusuf and sheikh Ja'far Mahmud Adam, who was then, the voice of the northern sunni Muslims, but there were messages sent to Muhammad Yusuf by him through recorded voice challenging him on his claim. Sheikh Ja'afar also declared that he gave him a personal advice when they met one day in Saudi Arabia. Sheikh Ja'far claimed that he convinced him and eventually Yusuf assured him of relinquishing the Movement.

Notwithstanding, one day before the 2007 presidential election, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam was brutally assassinated through shooting with gun in his mosque at the so-called area Dorayi Karama while offering *fajr* prayer. The assassination at that time was very complicated and mysterious. Many groups and individuals were suspected. But with the ongoing phenomenon of Boko Haram in the northern Nigeria, the assassination is now seriously linked with the movement. Many reasons were given for this allegation. The clearest one is that, Sheikh Ja'afar had begun criticizing the group and their ideology, which, however, they consider as an obstacle to their movement. Let the other reasons unsaid, the movement of Boko Haram developed rapidly and seriously after the assassination of Sheikh Ja'afar.

Further, on 11 June 2009 an encounter with the police escalated to conflict. Nigerian government made the use of motorcycle helmets mandatory upon all Nigerians, which was perceived by some of Nigerians as depriving them their rights and making life harder for them. Boko Haram was no exception. During a funeral exercise of their members who died in a car accident, Boko Haram members refused to adhere to the helmets law. This, however, was perceived by the police as a rebellion against the Nigerian law. As a result, a serious conflict transpired. During the conflict, 17 members of Boko Haram were shot, and later on they were taken to the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital, and none had died. The conflict and its sequel led to a deadly uprising between the sect and the Nigerian government which ended up with a great loss of lives and serious injuries. Nonetheless, in the uprising, their leader, Muhammad Yusuf, was arrested by the Nigerian army and handed over to police who finally killed him in that very day, and claimed that, they did shoot him when he was trying to escape. The other members who were not killed ran away from their places, and some of them were said to have run away from Nigeria to the neighboring countries.<sup>1</sup>

After those episodes had past, the Nigerian forces comprising police and army started investigating those who remained and their supporters with the assistance of traditional rulers and *ulamÉ*<sup>2</sup>. This phenomenon angered the members of Boko Haram, to some extent. Therefore, when they reappeared in 2010 their first targets were not only police, the traditional leaders and the *ulama*<sup>3</sup> were also involved. Many attacks on banks and churches were attributed to the group.<sup>2</sup>

### 5.3 Boko Haram's Ideologies

Boko Haram members are very strict to their perceptions and understandings, whoever refuses their ideology they consider him as a *kafir* or *fasiq*. Boko Haram is an Islamist movement which strongly opposes secular system of government. Their main concern is to abolish the secular system of government and establish Islamic political system which is based on Islamic *SharÉÑah* law in Nigeria. In another word "the ideological goal of Boko Haram is to establish an Islamic state that implements a strict interpretation of *SharÉÑah* or Islamic law throughout the entirety of the Nigerian state."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, they are strictly against everything western, whether it is positive or negative. West, as they believe, is the biggest challenge to Islam, and therefore all their activities are value- loaded. Due to this, they rejected western education in its entirety and launched war against it in Nigeria, especially in Maiduguri, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe and Bauchi which are, miserably, always under attack.

The group, like other Islamists, strongly believes that Islam is *dÉn wa dawlah*, religion and state. Although they do not involve in the secular politics, their movement is intricately interwoven with the Islamic political system. In other words, the group has political goals and so far it is working as a recruiting ground for jihadists to fight the secular state and establish Islamic government. The group comprises members who came from neighboring countries: Chad, Cameroon and Niger.<sup>4</sup>

As now is their ongoing methodology, it is only through armed jihad Islamic political system could be

<sup>1</sup> Oluwaseun Bamidele, Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism -An Albatross to National Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Nigeria, *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* Vol.14, No.1, ( 2012) pp. 34-37

<sup>2</sup> Eme, Okechukwu Innocent, The Cost of Boko Haram Activities in Nigeria, *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review OMAN Chapter* Vol. 2, No.2, (Sep 2012) pp. 16-18

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed S. Hashim, Gregoire Patte and Nathan Cohen, Western Ways Are Evil': The Emergence and Evolution of Boko Haram, International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis*, vol. 4, Issue. 7, (2012) p. 5

<sup>4</sup> *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (OMAN Chapter)* Vol. 2, No.2; Sep 2012

established. Whoever becomes obstacle to their mission, regardless of his religion, deserves death. Their attacks have become very much confusing and complicated because; none escapes it. Muslims and non-Muslims, civilians and military all are involved.

A. F. Ahokegh addresses the issue saying: "Its focus in the most recent time appears confusing as it kills innocent Nigerians instead of attacking the corrupt officials in government. But generally speaking, it is a resistance against bad government".<sup>1</sup>

Many groups and individuals as well as traditional leaders and *ulamÉ*' castigate the movement and pointed out that it is against the true Islamic teachings, and, therefore, called upon them to break it off. For example: The Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'adu Abubakar, has called the sect "anti-Islamic" and, as reported by the website AllAfrica.com, "an embarrassment to Islam". Also the Coalition of Muslim Clerics in Nigeria (CMCN) has called on them to disarm and embrace peace. Further, the Islamic Circle of North America, the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, The Muslim Council of Britain, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council on American Islamic Relations have all condemned the group and called upon them to embrace peaceful methods.<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Relationship Between Boko Haram and Other Islamists: An Ideological Perspective

There are different arguments on whether Boko Haram has connection with other Islamists. However, since in 2003 Osama Bin Laden mentioned Nigeria as one of the countries which need liberation, and hence he suggested that if Nigerians would make any effort to affiliate to al-Qaeda, they will be welcomed.<sup>3</sup> This invitation that offered by Bin Laden made many analysts to start arguing whether Boko Haram has a serious connection with al-Qaeda. Taking al-Qaeda's methods of attacks into consideration, it can be seen that Nigerian Boko Haram shares the same methods. James J.F. Forest points out the similarities between Boko Haram and other Islamists in their ideological concepts. He says:

On an ideological level, there is certainly some general alignment with al-Qaeda. The grievances that animate their violent attacks are similar in terms of portraying Western globalization and the status quo as inherently disadvantaging Muslims. Both groups promulgate the view that politicians and wealthy elites have destroyed the purity of Islamic societies by allowing vices like prostitution, pornography, and alcohol to corrupt mankind. Boko Haram and al-Qaeda members also share a belief in the superiority of governance by Sharia law instead of secular laws, and claim to be defending Islam against Western influences that constrain or prevent a Muslim from fulfilling his or her religious duties. Al-Qaeda's core ideology of "think globally and act locally" is intended to inspire the kinds of attacks against authorities that Boko Haram has become known for.... Islamist extremists in Nigeria have also been inspired by the example of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The combination of these things suggests an ideological framework for collaboration between Boko Haram and al-Qaeda.<sup>4</sup>

Further, currently, Boko Harams are seen attaching Abubakar al-Baghdadi's photo to their videos which they release on YouTube. This unprecedented phenomenon has again created another argument among analysts whether the sect has correlation with Islamic State (IS). However, the report recently released by BBC News on (7 March 2015 last updated at 23:09) may justify that they are connected. BBC News gathered that, Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic State. It elaborates that, the message, which has not been verified, was posted on Boko Haram's Twitter account and is believed to be by the group leader, Abubakar Shekau.<sup>5</sup>

Further, in less than one week after the allegiance of Boko Haram, BBC News released another report on (12 March 2015 Last updated at 22:51) that Islamic State (IS) has accepted a pledge of allegiance from Nigeria's militant group Boko Haram, according to an audio message. It elaborates that, in the tape, a man - who describes himself as IS spokesman Mohammed al-Adnani - says: "We announce to you the good news of the expansion of the caliphate to West Africa because the caliph... has accepted the allegiance of our brothers of the Sunni group for preaching and the jihad."

The spokesman also urges Muslims to join militants in West Africa, rejecting suggestions that Iraqi forces and the US-led coalition have recently had a series of victories against IS in Iraq and Syria.<sup>6</sup> However, whether Boko Haram has a connection with other Islamists or not their sharedness of ideological perspective is undeniable. Their methods of dealing with the challenges facing Muslims are parallel. They also share the goal

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Ahokegh, Boko Haram: A 21st Century Challenge in Nigeria, *European Scientific Journal* Vol. 8, No. 21(September 2012) p.50

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Charlie Szrom and Chris Harnisch, *Al Qaeda's Operating Environments: A New Approach to the War on Terror* (Washington DC: The American Enterprise Institute, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> James J.F. Forest, *Confronting the Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria*, (Florida: JSOU Report, 2012) p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/>. Retrieved on 8/03/2015

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/>. Retrieved on 14/03/2015

and objectives in establishing the Islamic political system and making Islamic religion superior over all other religions. Most of the Islamists, Boko Haram is no exception, rely, firmly, on selective reading of the Qur'anic verses in justifying their claims. One of the most quoted verses is the saying of Allah: "It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth in order that He shows its superiority over all other religion, even if the idolaters detest it."<sup>1</sup> Those verses are politically interpreted and theologially ignored by most of the Islamists. Such selectivity and interpretation may divert the spiritual notion of the Qur'an and confine the Qur'anic texts to a narrow political ideology, and, eventually, the Muslims will lose their Islam and end up in the battlefield of ideologies. Imam Zaid Shakir warns Muslims against politicized reading of the *Qur'Ēn* and argues that:

...the "dominion" mentioned in the verse is not applicable immediately, but rather, it is assigned to the end of life. He says: "Such a reading tends to reduce verses of clearly theological or eschatological import to statement of political doctrine. The implications of this for understanding and action, again, are profound. Events whose unfolding is confined to the end of time are assigned immediacy that begs their applicability here and now."<sup>2</sup>

He continued saying that: "Reducing Islam to an ideology threatens to subordinate those laws and principles to political imperatives that have little to do with Islamic teachings. If this happens consistently enough, the social foundation of our religion may be lost".<sup>3</sup>

## 7. Recommendations

Muslims, wherever they are, should understand that Islam is a religion of peace, the misrepresentation of Islam by some of the Muslims themselves is what makes their community to be seen as caricatured and to be portrayed as cruel and bloodthirsty which uses war as a means of propagation and conversion.

The Muslims should also understand that, Islam came to develop humanity not to destroy it. It came to bring solutions to the humanity's problems not to jeopardize it. It came to strengthen the relationship between the different communities of faith not to dichotomize them. It came for mercy not brutality.

However, the *jihĒd* in the Islamic teachings is not refuted, but Muslims should know that, Islam as an organized religion makes it obligatory upon Muslims when they are attacked or oppressed or deprived of their rights and their properties and derived out from their homes and families. Regarding this Allah says:

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for Allah loves not transgressors, And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; For tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; . . . And fight them on until there is no more tumult and oppression and there prevails justice and faith in Allah. But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.<sup>4</sup>

Further, it is also obligatory upon the Muslims to undertake *jihĒd* if unbelievers cause obstacles to propagation of Islamic religion and prevent Muslims from conveying the message of Allah.

*JihĒd* in Islam is an organized exercise, it therefore, has its conditions and dos and don'ts. As regards to this, warning against transgression and going beyond the limit must be emphasized. In many places Allah warns the Muslims against transgressing the limits. Some of the Qur'anic verses are as follows:

1- "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for Allah loves not transgressors. And slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the sacred mosque unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you slay them such is the reward of those who suppress faith"<sup>5</sup>

2- "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts) lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do."<sup>6</sup>

3- "But if the enemies incline towards peace, do you (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God: for He is the One that hears and knows (all things)" [Quran 8:61]

4- "And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against the oppressors." [Quran 2:193]

5- "Allah does not forbid you respecting those who have not made war against you on account of (your) religion, and have not driven you forth from your homes, that you show them justly; surely Allah loves the doers of justice. Allah only forbids you respecting those who made war upon you on account of (your) religion, and drove

<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'an SĒrah al-Tawbah, 9:33

<sup>2</sup> Imam Zaid Shakir, Islam: Religion or Ideology? *Zaytuna Institute*, (July, 25, 2006) p. 2

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>4</sup> SĒrah al-Baqarah (2):190-193.

<sup>5</sup> SĒrah al-Baqarah (2):190

<sup>6</sup> SĒrah al-NisĒ (4):135

you forth from your homes and backed up (others) in your expulsion, that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them, these are the unjust. [Quran 60:8-9]

6- “And if you chastise [O you who believe], then chastise with the like of that which you were afflicted. And if you show patience, then it is better for those who are patient. [Qur’an 16:126]

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