

## The Falsehood of Defensive Jihad

The enemies of Islam are attempting to generate among the Muslims the idea that Jihad is a defensive war and not offensive and that initiating war against the enemies contradicts the meaning of Jihad in Islam. They justify their allegation by referring to Allah's (swt) saying: "But if the enemy incline towards peace, do also incline towards peace." [8-61] and also His saying: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors." [2.190]

They also refer to Allah's (swt) saying: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid." [22-39].

They argue that these verses denote defensive fighting and that the verse of initiating war does not abrogate the verses denoting that Jihad is for defensive situations.

The whole of this allegation is refuted from three aspects:

First: The evidences of Jihad are general and unrestricted; they encompass defensive war and initiation of war against the enemy; they also encompass limited war, unlimited war, and preventive war and so on. These evidences include all types of fighting against the enemy because they are general and unrestricted. To specify them or restrict them to being in reference to defensive war requires a text to either specify or restrict them; and there are no texts as such either from the Book or from the Sunnah; hence they remain general in their evidential aspect and they include all types of wars and all types of fighting against the enemy. Let us review the verses of Jihad in Surat al-Tawbah because this Surah is the last of what was revealed on fighting, thus ruling out any claim of specification or restriction or abrogation. Allah (swt) says: "Fight those who believe neither in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." [9-29]

Allah (swt) also says: "And fight the polytheists altogether as they fight you altogether and know that Allah is with the pious." [9- 36]

Allah (swt) also says: "O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed." [9-73]

Allah (swt) also says: "Allah has indeed purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah. Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme." [9-111]

Allah (swt) also says: "O you who believe, fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him. [9-123]

The order to fight has come in these five verses in a general and unrestricted manner: "fight those who do not believe in Allah...", "fight the polytheists all together..." and so on. The denotation of the order is included and from the five verses, the generality and unrestrictive denotation can be clearly deduced; hence, they are proof that Jihad is fighting the Kuffar, be it initiating the fight, or defending the Muslims or the lands of Islam. They include defensive war, offensive war and all types of war, without any

specification or restriction due to the non-existence of any specification of the general rule or any restriction of the unrestricted rule.

As for the verses: “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do also incline towards peace” , “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors”, “To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged; and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid” and other similar verses, these cannot indicate specification of the verses in Surat al-Tawbah, nor can they restrict them, because they had all been revealed before Surat al-Tawbah; it is well known that the former does not specify nor does it restrict the latter. This is so because specification amounts to an abrogation of a section from the general rule, since it moves the rule away from its generality by nullifying it in some part and placing another rule instead. Hence, since specification of a rule amounts to abrogation, and since abrogation stipulates that the abrogating rule must come later than the abrogated, these verses cannot specify the verses of Jihad because they had been revealed earlier. The verses in Surat al-Tawbah were the last of what was revealed on Jihad, thus specification cannot be established. Likewise, the same applies to restriction. The restricting text must come after or accompany the unrestricted in order to act as a restriction for it or for the referral of the unrestricted text to a restricting rule to be sound. In this context, the aforementioned verses and their like had been revealed before the verse of Surat al-Tawbah, thus they are invalid in terms of restriction and the unrestricted text cannot be attributed to a restricting rule because the unrestricted was revealed later. Therefore, these verses can neither specify nor restrict the rules of Jihad and consequently, their use as a proof that Jihad is a defensive war becomes redundant and non-applicable. The general rule maintains its evidential aspect due to the absence of any text that may specify it and the unrestricted rule maintains also its evidential aspect due to the absence of any text may either restrict it or make reference to it possible. Therefore, Jihad is fighting the enemies in an unrestricted manner and in a general manner: it includes offensive, defensive, preventive, limited, unlimited and all types of wars.

It is also wrong to claim that the Ayat of al-Tawbah have abrogated the other Ayat that preceded them, simply because they do not denote any abrogation whatsoever. The mere materialisation of a contradiction between two texts is insufficient pretext to claim that an abrogation has occurred; rather, Shari’ah evidence must be established to indicate that such and such text abrogates a given text; otherwise, it cannot be considered as an abrogating text. It is imperative to have a Qarinah (conjunction) that denotes abrogation. Hence, the mere materialisation of a contradiction between the two evidences does not necessarily mean that one abrogates the other, because it is possible to reconcile the two and dispel the alleged contradiction. This is in fact the case with most of the evidences which some individuals claimed that they had abrogating attributes, only to discover later the error of their claim when the evidences are reconciled. Certain texts may share the same topic but their circumstances, conditions and the like may differ. The Ayat they claimed that had been abrogated are in fact different either in respect of circumstances or conditions or themes. It was alleged that the ayah of “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do also incline towards peace” had been abrogated by the ayah of “the sword”, namely Allah (swt)’s saying: “Fight those who believe neither in Allah nor the Last Day”. In fact, there is no abrogation between them because each one of them describes a different reality to the other; the first is related to a peace situation and the second is related to a war situation. Peace and war are permanent situations, thus the rules of each one of them are also permanent and none of them has been abrogated. Al-Zamakhshari wrote in al-Kishaf, interpreting the saying of Allah (swt) “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do also incline towards peace”: “What is sound is that the matter depends on what the Imam deems as beneficial to Islam and its people, in terms of war or peace; surely it does not mean that they should fight forever or that they should incline towards a truce forever.” Al-Sadi and Ibnu Zayd said: “The meaning of the ayah: If they invite you to peace, then respond; there is no abrogation in it.” Ibnul Arabi said: “Hence, the answer to this is different; besides, Allah (swt) says: “Be not weary and faint-hearted, crying for peace, when ye should be uppermost: for Allah is with you, and will never put

you in loss for your (good) deeds.” [47-35]. Therefore, if the Muslims are mighty, redoubtable and well protected with a huge army, there shall then be no truce.”

The Muslims are allowed to initiate a truce if they deemed that it would bring them a benefit or repel harm. Hence, the ayah does not explain the situation of Jihad but rather the situation of truce, for it tackles the issue of truce. Allah (swt) is saying if they invite to a truce then do respond to their request and do not worry about their treachery; the verse that follows it confirms this. The sequence of the verses is as follows: “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do also incline towards peace, and trust in Allah. For He is the one who hears and knows all things. Should they intend to deceive you – verily Allah suffices you: He it is who has strengthened you with His aid and with the company of the Believers; And He has put affection between their hearts.” Therefore, there is no contradiction between this ayah and the ayat of the sword because their topics are different.

As for the ayah “Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors.” [2-190], it deals with the issue of not extending the fight beyond those who fight the Muslims, namely the women and children who do not fight; thus this ayah has not been abrogated by Allah’s saying: “Fight the pagans all together” because the ayah ordering the Muslims to fight the polytheists is specifically related to that topic; it is a command to perform Jihad, whereas this ayah denotes a command to restrict the fighting against those who fight the Muslims and to refrain from fighting those who are not involved in the fighting – the Muslims should fight those who are effectively involved in fighting them, to the exclusion of the elderly, women, children and monks. Allah’s saying “but do not transgress limits” denotes the prohibition of fighting those who do not fight us from among the women, children and elderly. However, if they fought the Muslims, they would be fought back even if they were monks, women and children. The prohibition of fighting them is because they do not usually fight. Hence, the prohibition of transgressing in this ayah is related to those who do not fight from among the aforementioned, and the prohibition of transgressing in other ayat is related to those we have been forbidden from fighting through other evidences, such as the killing of women, children, the elderly and the covenanters, as well as mutilating or killing by surprise before inviting people to Islam first and the like. The Qur’an has prohibited transgression in several ayat; this denotes an order to refrain from the actions that the Legislator has prohibited during the battle and does prohibit the initiation of war, because the ayat of al-Tawbah are conspicuous in requesting the initiation of war. As for the Ayah in which Allah (swt) says: “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid” , it also denotes an unrestricted command to fight and not only when the Muslims are wronged, because His saying “because they are wronged” is not an Allah (Shari’ah reason) for fighting but rather a description of reality: – the polytheists of Quraysh used to inflict grievous harm on the Muslims, who used to come to the Messenger of Allah (saw), some of them beaten and others with head injuries, and complain to him; he would say: “Be patient; I have not been ordered to fight”. This went on until he (saw) migrated to Medina and this ayah was revealed ordering the Muslims to fight after they had been forbidden from doing so. Al-Dahhak wrote: “The companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw) sought permission to fight the Kuffar as they harmed them in Makkah, thus Allah revealed “Verily, Allah loves not any that is a traitor to faith, or show ingratitude.” [22-38], and when the Messenger of Allah (saw) migrated, Allah revealed “To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged.” Hence, the ayah was revealed to remove the restriction imposed on the Muslims, allowing them to repel the harm inflicted on them by resorting to force and fighting, and ordering them to fight those who had been harming them, namely the Kuffar of Quraysh; it also denotes a command to fight. In other words, the Muslims had been prohibited from repelling the harm of Quraysh by way of fighting, thus when the ayah was revealed the restriction was lifted. This is the topic of the ayah; it denotes therefore a specific situation and not the situation of war in general. It deals with repelling the harm of Quraysh by fighting Quraysh. However, the ayah denotes also the command to fight by way of suggestive indication, whereby the speech is patterned to explain a rule

or to indicate a rule, yet a rule other than the one for which the speech is patterned is perceived. The speech in this context is patterned to indicate the lifting of the restriction imposed on repelling the harm by fighting and to grant the Muslims a permission to repel harm by fighting; however, another rule is deduced from the speech, namely the order to fight. Hence, there is no contradiction between this ayah and the ayat of “the sword” because the topics are different and this ayah does not necessarily serve as evidence for fighting; it was rather legislated to repel harm – it is not a command to fight but a permission to respond to the harm of the polytheists by force. This becomes clear when all the ayat are conjunctionally discerned: “Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe: verily, Allah loves not any that is a traitor to faith, or show ingratitude \* To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid \* (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,- (for no cause) except that they say, “Our Lord is Allah.. Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure”. Hence, the ayah indicates a specific situation that was existent, namely repelling harm by fighting i.e. meeting force with force. The ayah does not indicate the legitimacy of fighting for the sake of Allah to make the word of Allah supreme; it rather indicates the legitimacy of fighting to repel harm, whereas the ayat of “the sword” indicate the legitimacy of fighting for the sake of Allah, i.e. Jihad to make the word of Allah reign supreme. Hence, they are two different topics and there is no contradiction between them; thus it is wrong to claim that the ayah has been abrogated by the ayat of the sword. Also, it is not an ayah that denotes Jihad for the sake of Allah so as to claim that Jihad is a defensive war. It is rather an ayah on a specific topic, namely the permission to repel harm by fighting after the Muslims had been forbidden from doing so. Consequently, it becomes evident that there is no abrogation whatsoever in any of the ayat of Jihad and that the ayat of Jihad are general and unrestricted; there are no texts that either specify or restrict the ayat of Jihad and there are no instances where the unrestricted is overridden by a restrictive text; thus the ayat maintain their general and their unrestrictive attributes: Jihad therefore is fighting the enemies and it includes all types of warfare, be it defensive, offensive or other, according to what the Khalifah deems favourable to the Da’awah and to the Muslims.