

SAFINAH TOUGH QUESTIONS TALK

- Jihad Jargon –

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Introduction

- Presentation based on 9 questions posed by Safinah
- A tough task – some of the questions need a presentation, can be a topic of the book by itself
- For practical reason – all answers are based on and for Singapore Muslim contemporary context
 - need to sidestep classical and historical viewpoints
 - may be different from classical viewpoint due to changing of context
 - may be different from other contemporary views due to different context
- Apology for the condition of the lecture notes

Question 1

- What are the goals of Jihad - purpose, aim, objectives?
- Two meanings of jihad;
 - general, to strive
 - specific, to wage war against non-Muslims
- Many forms of jihad – armed jihad is just one of them
- Many purposes of jihad – fighting non-Muslims is just one of them

- Reason for fighting non-Muslims
 - 3 mazhabs (Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali), for self defence against hostility (2:190, 22:39)
 - 1 mazhab (Shafi'ii), for disbelief (9:5)
- All jihad verses must be understood together, in holistic manner
 - verses on unconditional jihad is limited by verses on conditional jihad, the latter over rules the former
 - no evidence of the former abrogates the latter
- Basis of Muslim-non-Muslim relation is peace, not war
 - see 60:8-9
 - prohibition of killing women, children, old men, pows
 - not all non-Muslims are alike (2:62, 3:113)

Question 2

- What is the link between Jihad and Syahid?
- Two types of syahid
 - major, killed in legitimate jihad (most honourable syahid)
 - minor, died because of disease i.e. plague or accident i.e. drowned
- Different is in the treatment of the body and reward
- Some contemporary scholars view major syahid can be attained via non-armed jihad i.e. person died against injustices or for truth via peaceful means

Question 3

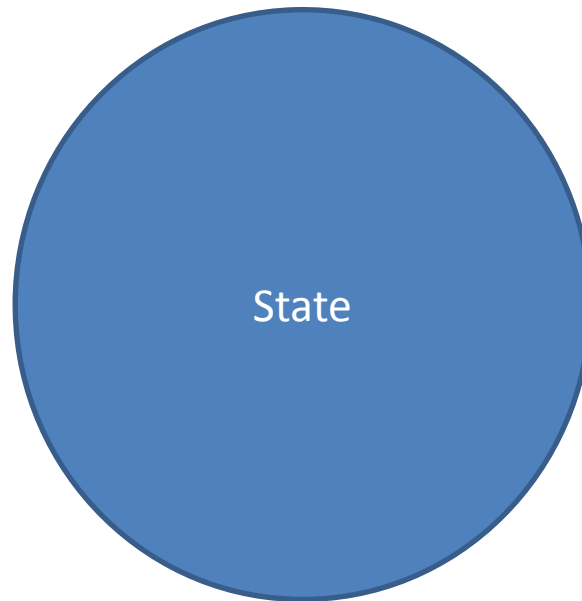
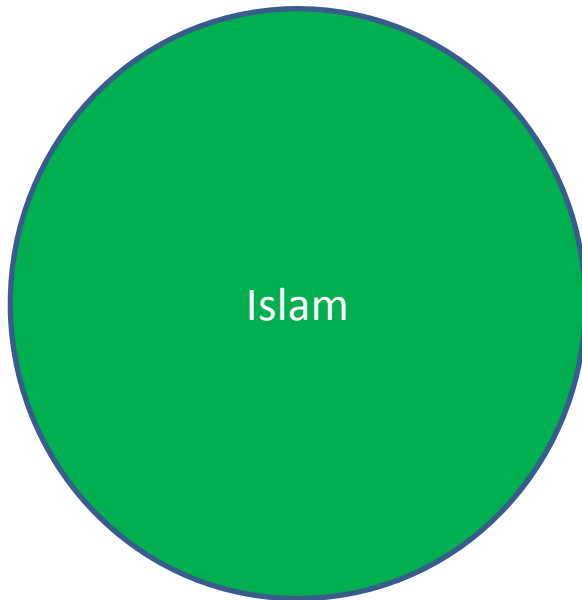
- How do we fight our own jihad?
- First, begin with self
 - intellectually
 - spiritually
 - physically
 - psychologically
- Second, understand - types of jihad depends on
 - different needs, situations of Muslims
 - different location
 - may differ/change from one place to another

- Jihad as pinnacle of Islam
 - in general, as a matter of principle
 - > requires great sacrifice, the most challenging to carry out
 - does not mean the only and most preferred solution for all problems concerning Muslims, in all kinds of situations and locations
 - proper evaluation and prioritisation needed
- Armed jihad cannot be an obligation for every Muslim community in all parts of the world
 - each area have their own unique set of problems, differing order of priorities
- Based on wide meaning of jihad, recognised
 - jihad against poverty, educational jihad, economic jihad etc
 - not to replace armed jihad, obscure its meaning

- At practical and personal level, Muslim needs to make analysis by answering the following questions:
 - In view of the wider meaning of jihad, what are the challenges or problem faced by Muslims here? List then in accordance to level of priority.
 - In view of the multiple means of jihad, what are the available means?
 - In view of Islam's preference of peace, choose all non-violent means and list them in accordance to level of priority (most needed and effective for the most important challenge/problem, matched with capability)
 - In view of Islam's preference of order, choose legal means only.
 - Identify area that we are most effective and then acquire necessary skill, knowledge and technology.

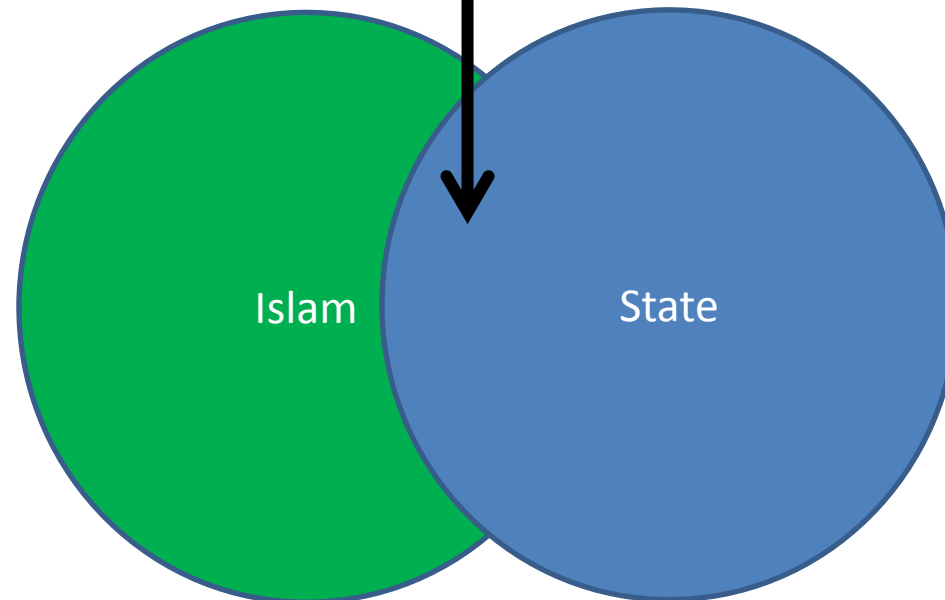
Question 4

- Which comes first, Islam before country or country before Islam?
- Problematic question, presumes Islam and country as two distinct and separate entities



- Islam and state share common spaces

- preservation of life and property
- preservation of peace and security
- establishing justice
- eliminating injustices
- welfare for citizens etc.



- No need to choose if both share common good
 - Islam is for all that are goods, even if they come from non-Muslims (2:269)
 - Islam is against injustices, even if they are from Muslims (5:8)
- Jihad is not for defence of Muslims only
 - for truth, justice etc.
 - the first jihad verse 22:40
- If state is for no good
 - correct, reform with hikmah via legal means
 - conscientious objector
 - resignation
- Armed rebellion is strongly discouraged

Question 5

- How can Muslims all over the world contribute and help to those in Syria, Iraq, Mogadishu and Palestine?
- Wide meaning of jihad means, many forms of contribution are possible
 - legal & peaceful
- No participation and direct contribution to armed conflict
 - lots of problem
 - against the greater maslahah
 - extra fighter/manpower not needed
- Note, Palestinian resistance of Israeli occupation is internationally recognised
 - no need to be apologetic

Question 6

- Is Jihad a fardhu ain for Muslims? Then what about ISIS, Boko Haram and Taliban?
- Original rule, armed jihad is fardhu kifayah
 - an obligation which if carried out by a section of the Muslim community, the other Muslims are not required to carry out
 - see 9:122, 4:95
- Fardhu ain when
 - the country in which a community resides has been attacked illegally
 - right Islamic authority makes general or specific mobilisation
 - someone becomes a professional in the army or security forces

- When under attacked
 - fardhu ain for the people of the land
 - scholars differ on people who live far away or not citizens of the invaded country
- The preferred position for Muslims living in lands that are far away = fardhu kifayah because
 - Muslims are needed in these lands too
 - there are interests of Islam that need to be protected too
 - Muslim can still contribute in other ways

Some scholars view that jihad is encouraged (sunnah) only in this situation

- Mecca was under “occupation” of Pagan Quraisy, the Prophet did not make jihad fardhu ain to all

- ISIS' "jihad" is not jihad
 - condemned by hundreds of Muslim scholars all over the world across all major schools and orientations
 - see <http://haniff.sg/en/short-articles/an-analysis-of-muslim-voices-against-is/> , also www.lettertobaghdadi.com
- Boko Haram is not dissimilar from ISIS
 - all the arguments against ISIS are applicable to Boko Haram
- Taliban has a record of excesses in waging "jihad"
 - is armed insurgency necessary?
- Syrian people may have legitimate grievances against Assad regime i.e. unjust and authoritarian regime
 - the issue is, why armed revolution to achieve regime change?
 - listen to <http://haniff.sg/odio/audio-ceramah-konflik-syria-faham-sejarah-sikap-yang-saksama/>

Question 7

- If we don't enjoin jihad in helping our fallen brethren, does it mean that we are a munafiq?
- Must not link the issue of non-participation in jihad with nifaq, kufr or fisq
 - must not be judgmental on this issue because:
 - > The issue of jihad is contentious at many levels; the right cause, the right means, fardhu ain or kifayah etc. as mentioned above and below
 - > ruling a person as munafiq, fasiq or kafir is a serious matter in Islam
 - see 49:11, see various hadiths in note

- Jihad is contentious at many levels
 - prudence requires not to make ruling of nifaq, fasiq and kufr when facing differences on the issue
- Debate it as a branch of jurisprudential issue
 - a khilafiyah matter
 - can make a stand, but cannot be absolutist
 - absolutism is due to politics – the need for mobilisation to achieve political goals require framing the issue in absolute term

Question 8

- Why do non-Muslims associate Jihad with terrorism?
- There are Muslims who commit terrorism in the name of Islam
 - Egypt in 1970s, 80s and 90s, even today
 - by groups that later on be part of Al-Qaeda
 - cannot be in denial, factually wrong
- Role of Islamophobes
 - institution
 - individual
 - media
- First requires reflection and correction
- Second requires organised effort to counter-Islamophobia and mitigate its effect on other non-Muslims at large

Question 9

- How can Muslims say that our religion was never spread by the sword when Muslims enjoin battles?
- Shariah of jihad is not an argument for Islam as the religion of sword
 - similar injunction can be found in Christian and Jewish Bible
 - > Deuteronomy, Joshua
 - the same image is not attributed to Christianity and Judaism (except by secularist and atheist)
- No doubt that there were Muslim rulers in the past that sought power and conquest in the name of religion
 - no denial on this

- Distinction between conduct of Muslims and the teachings of Islam
 - the latter is known from the scriptures (the Quran and the Prophet's tradition)
 - to a certain extent, the intellectual traditions left behind by Muslim scholars over one millennium and a half
- With regard to the scriptures, few important notes
 - at most, they are ambiguous, on Islam should be spread by sword
 - they could be interpreted both ways
 - Islamic scriptures contain much less violence than Christian and Jewish Bible, yet regarded as more pacifist religion

- Factors that give greater weight to Islam the religion of peace understanding

a) violence and armed jihad were forbidden in the first thirteen years of the prophethood despite intense persecution

> why in the face of persecution violence was forbidden? Why the restraint when God promise to protect His servants and victory?

b) only one (Shafi`ii) out of four major mazhab holds that disbelief is a legitimate cause of armed jihad

> the other three (Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali) view self-defence as the only legitimate cause

> why would three major mazhabs view otherwise if it is very clear that Islam seeks to convert people with sword?

Note: Pre-emptive attack for self defence is a different issue, a controversy even in international and strategic studies

c) Islam in Southeast Asia and China not by military conquest

- > covers large area of lands and millions of people
- > Indonesia is the largest Muslim country (approximate: 87% of 202 million Indonesians are Muslims)
- > China has about 20 million Muslims based on official number, unofficial number could be greater
- > the number of Muslims in China could be more than the number of Arab Muslims.
- > if not because of conviction, would millions of people convert to Islam and continue to remain so for hundred years?

d) Mongols who conquered Muslims (Mongol) became Muslims and later on became protectors of the religion

- > why would Mongols who defeated Muslims by sword accepted Islam and abandon their long held traditional faith?

e) Muslims' conduct of war was more exemplary than their opponents (read history of crusade)

> welcomed by people of the conquered lands

> the treatment of non-Muslims in Muslim empires was much better than Muslims living in non-Muslim lands (read history of Spanish Reconquista)

- Factors that influence Muslims to justify armed jihad for the purpose of spreading Islam:
 - nature of man - follow desire, absolutism etc.
 - context - context that tilts balance towards force, open door for abuse of text
 - the influence of Satan

- Conclusion
 - the factor tilts the balance for Islam the religion of sword viewpoint not located primary in the scriptural texts
 - factors that shape the image of Islam and Muslims are not inherent in Muslims only
 - there are forces outside of Muslims that cannot and do not want to see other image of Islam, intentionally seek to paint negative image of Islam
 - non-Muslims who misunderstood and misrepresent Islam out of ignorance
- Islam does not view all non-Muslims are alike – hostile, stubborn, extremist or seek to destroy Islam
 - see 3:113-5, 60:8-9
- Basis of Muslim-non-Muslim relation is peace, not war