

Great and Little Jihad

Zhumabai Ikilas, representative Imam of the [Committee of]
Religious Supervision of the Muslims of Kazakhstan, Pavlodar region.
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(Notes: In order to preserve the sense which Kazakh readers themselves understand, quotes from Qur'an are translated from the Kazakh text of the article directly into English; they are not based on any standard English editions. All embolding and italics are from the original.)

Allah the Most High has said in the Qur'an Karim: "**The religion which Allah the Most High accepts is Islam.**" Islam is a religion of peace, and the word for peace in Arabic is *siyam*. One of Allah the Most High's 99 names is "*As-salem*" ["the one of peace"], which is to say that Allah the Most High is describing himself as one who loves peace. There is a great deal of agreement between the concepts of Islam and peace. For these two words are [both] coming forth from one root, the root of "*As-salem*." The greetings of "*assalomagalaykum*" ["peace be upon you"] which Muslims give when they meet show their desire toward one another for peace, [and] calm, [and] safety-wellbeing. Therefore, we do well to bear this in mind at all times. In our daily prayers five times, we offer salutations of peace five times toward our right side and five times toward our left. Thus, we find that when we offer them to our right and to our left, we wish peace [and] calm to [one] half of the world and [then] to the remaining second half. All of this is proof of the natural essence of the religion of Islam. In Islam no place is given to aggression and extremism, terrorism and the spilling of blood, to the terrorizing of people and the causing of damage [or destruction] to their lives [or] property. The primary aim of the religion of Islam is found to be the protecting of the souls, lives, dignity, wisdom, religion and property of people. Allah the Most High has said in the Qur'an Karim ("Tin" sura, v. 4): "**Truly we have created humankind in beautiful form.**" Allah the Most High issued laws in order that these beautifully created people may in life walk on the straight path, be far from sin, live a happy life, without encountering evil, and tomorrow in the judgment enter into happiness. In order to protect man's dignity, a prohibition has been placed on fornication, that is the joining together of a man and woman who are not married; to develop his mind alcohol and narcotics have been banned; in order that goods not be stolen theft has been outlawed; [and] in order to protect the lives of the offspring of humankind an [uncrossable] boundary-line has been set for violence and blood-spill.

In our religion to endanger the life of one man (and here there is no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims) is counted as enmity which has been perpetrated against the whole of mankind. Allah the Most High has given severe warning in the Qur'an Karim ("Maida" sura, v. 32): "**The man who kills a person who himself has never killed anyone before, and who is innocent, having not caused trouble on the face of the earth - [he] will be a sinner equivalent to one who has killed all people.**" That is, the religion of Islam sees the murdering of one innocent person to be the same with the murdering of the entire human race. Therefore it strives to protect the lives of people, and requires the general showing of respect for their rights. It does not uphold blood-spilling or aggression, it only grants permission to Muslims for going to war with enemies who have attacked them, that is, it commands the protecting of one's land, country and fatherland.

Allah the Most High has commanded in the Qur'an Karim ("Bakara" sura, v. 190): "**War in the way of Allah the Most High with those who war with you, but do not go beyond the**

boundary," which is to say that, though permission has been granted to go to war, it is forbidden to go beyond the limit and take over [another people's / nation's land] in conquest. Only to a war [conducted] in the purpose of thwarting / repelling aggression is permission given, which is to say that "jihad" expresses [the idea of] a war [conducted] in the purpose of protection. Let's consider the general meaning and significance of jihad. **"Jihad" communicates the two meanings of zeal and aspiration. One of them is the struggle of a person with his own lusts, the second of them is a righteous war conducted for religion.** The wrestling of the Muslim with his own lusts is called the great jihad. Our prophet Muhammed (p.b.u.h.) while returning from one war said: "We won in this war, but there is an even greater war that this before us." Then the colleagues [i.e. followers] asked: "Yes, Prophet of Allah, what kind of war is it?" Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: **"It is the struggle with your own lusts."**

People must restrict themselves from strange ideas, from inappropriate habits and envy, from jealousy and pride, from speaking slander and telling lies, from spreading gossip, and other acts similar to these, and [thereby] overcome their lusts. Only then will they not fall away from the straight path. We usually are not mindful of these evil actions. We think "If we keep the fast, rehearse the namaz [prayers], and go on the hajj, we have fulfilled the requirements of Muslim [faith]. But all of the evil actions just spoken of are great sins which destroy the merit of good people, for harm from the neither the hand nor the tongue of an earnest Muslim should touch another [person].

The second form of jihad is the little jihad. It is a righteous war conducted for religion. The war for religion within Islam expresses only standing against attack. In the second year of the hijra Allah the Most High granted permission for jihad to Muslims so that they could protect their own country and put a halt to unrighteousness and wickedness. In a situation where their enemies express the intention of mutually enacting a peace treaty or of stopping the war, Muslims are obliged to accept their desires and come to a peace treaty. Allah the Most High has commanded in the Qur'an Karim ("Anfel" sura, v. 61): **"If they acclimate themselves toward the peaceful side, you also be on the peaceful side, [and] depend upon Allah Most High."**

Our religion desires a peaceful life, and speaks of being in friendly relations with all peoples. And if there are [any] actions of a person who says 'I am a Muslim' which are strange and contrary to Islam, it is because of his ignorant deep misunderstanding of the religion. [We] must break the joint between (or, discern the faction / disagreement between) the religion of Islam and the contrary actions of certain Muslims. Allah the Most High has said in the Qur'an Karim ("Anbiya" sura, v. 107): **"(Muhammed p.b.u.h.) We sent you into the whole world only to produce gratitude."**

If we say the conclusion [of the matter], the purpose of the religion of Islam is found to be establishing peace, teaching forgiveness, awakening a sense of love among people, forming good relations for their good, happiness and peace, and protecting the rights of each individual person.