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Interpretation of War in Islam

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"And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors. And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And al-fitnah is worse than killing..." (al-Baqarah 190-191)

Abstract: The language of religion is not simple, its symbols and meanings are permanent; understanding it needs not only knowledge but also wisdom and God's mercy too. Every word has many "faces" of its understanding; in the Islamic tradition it is distinguished with seven kinds (sab'atu awjuhin). Words kital, harb and jihad in the Qur'an are words that need to be studied within the integrity of the Holy Book, where they disclose to us their full meaning and point out that the goal is to defend, establish and practice the right as the most precious and universal thing. Followers of celestial religions are called to make a hermeneutical turn that would enable the review, re-reading and re-interpretation of the personal and common religious tradition and history, so as to transform the differences into mutual enrichment, and common values to contribute for the building of a more humane world and better future.

Key Words: Kital, harb, jihad, Holy Scriptures, tradition..

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The religious language of the Holy Book is symbolic – a weighty[1] language that "makes one think", a language whose richness of meanings never ceases of being discovered, a language concentrated on the transcendental reality which, at the same time, makes human personality aware of the complicated (*muteshabih* and *gayri muteshabih*[2]) and deep dimensions of its being. By turning to the symbolic language we are not turning to the naïve pre-critical phase, which considered that the symbolic language can be literally translated into a uniform and understandable language that could be easily deconstructed. The repeated preemption of the symbolic language in the interpretation of the holy text and of the human world, means giving a new chance to the human experience for the narrative self-understanding. By entering into a passionate, though critical, relation with the genuine value of each symbol (*ayah*), man enables second "naive ness", the new imaginative conquering of human self-understanding: he can no longer accept the meaning through faith, but he can *listen* it by the repeated interpretation. "Faith is a position of the one who accepts to be interpreted at the same time when he is interpreting the world of the text".[3]

This exegetic circle is methodological. By accepting this circle, as readers we exceed the limitations of personal capacities of understanding, i.e. of existing, and achieve new ones: the cathartical outputs of narrations (the historiographic as well as the fictional, and in our case, particularly of those of Holy Scriptures) of our culture intermediate for us this world's openness, both its and our own transformation.[4] The subject that has put himself in question – since it understands himself as opportunity to put itself as well as everything else in question – is being self-realized through radicalism that surpasses the Cartesian doubt of the wounded *cogito*. With

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[1]   *Al-Muzemmil* 5.

[2]   *Ali Imran* 7.

[3]   Ricoeur, Paul, "Philosophy and Religion Languages", in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination*. Fortress, Minneapolis 1995, p. 46.

[4]   Karic, Enes, *Hermeneutika Kur'ana* ("Hermeneutics of the Qur'an") HFD Zagreb 1990, p. 17-43.

the interpretation – reading, writing, translation, and experience – through the confusion of the inter-subjectivity, the subject by necessity opens the mystery of being's secondary. The decentralized subject attains the acceptance of the Other.[5]

The capacity for understanding and interpreting/translating the word is a capacity dedicated to making the boundaries that divide languages and cultures more tolerable, with the aim of solacing their inter and trans-disciplinary communication. This doesn't include only the knowledge of the issue and the methodology of the interpretation/translation, because it also requires the knowledge of literary theories, of philosophy, history of religions and of the history of culture in general. Interpretation/translation of the holy texts and tradition must not be burdened with dogmatic and biased interpretation, as they should be free of the dictionary dictatorship and static interpretations of the meanings.[6] The majority of interpreters and translators instead of following closely the message they convey, more likely tend to integrate it in the weaving of the personal culture and its ideology, thus not caring about the consequences of such lingual or exegetic egocentrism on the genuine human communication. Hence, the interpretation and translation aiming at bringing closer the cultures, often build insurmountable walls.[7] The symbolic language of Holy Scriptures

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[5] Bardhi, Ismail, *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu dhe ekzegjeza e tij* ("Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu and his exegesis"), Logos-A, Skopje 1998, p. 15-35.

[6] Regarding the interpretation of the holy text and prophetic tradition many scholars indicate that this issue has often been abused, so far as there are even some departures from the essential sources of the texts, like the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet a.s. It is sufficient to mention here a remark that can be found in the tafseer literature regarding some tafseers, that is that "anything can be found there, except tafseer". Also, according to one of the best knowers of the tradition of the Prophet a.s., there are facts that some 14.000 sayings have been "imputed" to the Prophet a.s. only regarding the issue of halal and haram (the permitted and the prohibited).

[7] It is important for the new methods of interpretation/translation to enrich the language with new values, by harmonizing their global meanings. The new approach towards interpretation/translation, based upon the analysis of the nature of language, upon the caring for the etymology, tries to exceed the problems and bring us closer to the day when people in their true life would again integrate the clarities of what is born in the calmness of contemplation. Such approach towards the work of interpretation/translation of the Holy Scriptures,

gathers in itself the cosmic energy of the good. And that is universal. Universal symbols appear as structures of the human soul, represent the symbiosis with the world and overall universe, and yet remain unspoken.

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War as a brutal means and a way of use of force and violence for solution of problems in inter-human relations, continuously follows man since the first days of his existence and his entry into history. The Bible too has noted that children of the first man in this world, Adam, fought among themselves and Cain killed Abel. The war is not necessarily waged for religious matters although, in one of its initial stages, it can assume certain religious dimension. The importance of the religious dimension of certain conflict increases proportionally with the dimension in which religious structures correlate with the structures in power in a given country. The relation between war and religion has been and still remains present during the entire history, but it will be fully disclosed only with the monotheistic religions: the Judaism, Christianity and Islam. With or without reason many slanders of exclusion, intolerance and war-waging fell on the religious monotheism, which in general are continuous reasons for war and fighting. It is not strange why it is precisely the war that has remained much more affiliated to monotheism rather than to polytheism.[8]

In a deeper level, the historical exclusiveness of monotheism comes with the presentation of the category of truth in the area of

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in fact, means the return to the sources, which at the same time means the return to the universality of the message, an universality that preserves the embroidery of the individual and the general, the local and the global. In this direction the criticism made often against the mufessirs and muhadiths in the Islamic milieu, due to many shortcomings, is not unfounded.

[8] Polytheism doesn't even recognize the typical monotheistic notions, like: nonbelievers, renegades, schismatics, converted and converting wars. Equalizing the nonbelievers with enemies is in a strong relation with the imagination of God as the warlord. Here we notice very important moments: wars in the early times based on various myths, or the strict presentation of polytheism (*shirk*) in many Qur'anic verses, like for instance: *an-Nahl* 35, *al-Baqarah* 96, *al-An'am* 81 etc. Regarding the word *shirk* also see: al-Esfahani, Ragib, *Mufredatu el-Fadhil Kur'an*, "Daru-l-Kalem", Damascus 1992, p. 451-452.

religion, something that as a notion is not so familiar to polytheism, because for polytheism there are only stronger and weaker gods, not true and false ones[9], while the discussion about the truth instantly presents certain possibility for an ideological result with long-term consequences for the social order. Since the religious belief includes the conviction for the existence of one single truth, people can hardly keep it only for themselves and intend to present the same to others as well.[10]

Prior to entering into explaining and interpreting the phenomenon of war in Islam, we will throw a glance to the words used in the Qur'an when describing this phenomenon, like: *harb*, *kital* and *jihad*, though in continuation we will mainly address to *jihad*.[11]

From the beginning we must mention that in the most general sense *jihad* means an overall spiritual and material effort for attaining the realization of Allah's s.w.t. law – the *Sunnetullah*. *Jihad* can be literally translated as any effort oriented towards a specific goal. *Jihad* is the obligation of an individual and a society in their efforts to realize any given duty that results from specific obligations determined by the Islamic law. Since means used to achieve that goal – depending on social, economic and political circumstances – may be peaceful or by force, personal or common, spiritual or physical, it becomes clear that *jihad* embraces a large number of various contents.[12] Islamic jurists and scholars by *jihad* imply in particular the

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[9]   Eliade, Mirche, *Istorija vjerovanja i religiskih ideja*, ("History of belief and religious ideas"), "Prosveta", Belgrade 1991. (Chap. 9, 10, 12).

[10]   Of course this has to do with believers in general, while as far as the prophets are concerned, they were ordered to do so. See: al-Esfahani, Ragib, *Mufredatu el-Fadhil Kur'an*, p. 352-353 (*resele*).

[11]   It's not possible to directly accept the notion "holy war" as a synonymous of *jihad*, because this can not be found in any professional dictionary, be it classical or contemporary, except in the secular terminology where by all means this meaning is being attached to that notion. This, of course, doesn't mean that Islam "undresses" Muslims from the regular war, necessary for protection of human nature. See: *at-Taubah* 41, 79; *an-Nur* 53; *al-Hajj* 78; *al-Anfal* 22, etc.

[12]   Al-Esfahani, *Mufredat*, p. 208; an-Nadwi, Dr. Abdullah Abbas, *Kamus-u el-Fadhl Kur'ani Kerim*, Chicago 1986, p. 115; *Glasnik*, RIZ BH, Sarajevo 1998, No. 5-6, "Dzihad kao zalaganje za mir i napredak" ("Jihad as an effort for peace and progress"), (Balic, Smail), p. 603.

war against those who, coming among the adversaries of Islam, oppress the people and create disorder on earth.[13]

During the emerging period of Islam – called the Makkan period – *jihad* primarily meant moral effort, while in the latter history of Islam it assumes the form of a collective effort (striving) and armed fighting[14]. Contrary to this, advocates of the more moderate interpretation of the role of *jihad* in Islam often support their view by the fact that the notion of war – *harb* – in Qur'an is mentioned only 6 times.[15] Beside the above mentioned the word *harb* in Qur'an is also used as *mihrab* and has the meaning of "sanctuary", because "it is a place where the Satan and lust are fought against"[16]. Another translation of this word means *synagogue*.[17] As for the other word mentioned above, *kital*, beside of its primary meaning of "killing" it also means "death"[18]. Apart from the mentioned meanings, other meanings for the same words can be found in the holy text, which do not imply only physical, but spiritual death too.[19]

A closer textual review of the Qur'an gives much support to the more precise determination of the notion of *jihad*, which appears as armed fighting or war. In the Islamic literature the *ayah* that clearly states that *"there is no compulsion in religion"*[20](*al-Baqarah* 256), is very often quoted, with the remark that this is the main proof for freedom of belief in the Islamic society. In another place the Qur'an orders: *"And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly Allah likes not the transgressors. And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they*

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[13] Balic, Smail, *ibid*., p. 608.

[14] *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, TDV, Istanbul 1993, v. 7, p. 527-531 (Jihad).

[15] *al-Baqarah* 279; *al-Maidah* 4; *al-A'raf* 57; *Muhammad* 4; *at-Taubah* 107; *al-An'am* 23.

[16] *Mufredat*, p. 225.

[17] an-Nadwi, Dr. Abdullah Abbas, *Kamus-u el-Fadhl Kur'ani Kerim*, Chicago 1986, p. 127.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 501. This word in the Qur'an can be found in several verses, like: *an-Nisa* 29; *al-Anfal* 17; *Ali Imran* 144; *adh-Dhariyat* 10; *al- Mudaththir* 19; *Abasah* 17 etc.

[19] *Al-Baqarah* 85; *al-Muddaththir* 19; *'Abasa* 17; *al-Taubah*:30. For more see: an-Nadwi, *ibid*, p. 501-503.

[20] *Al-Baqarah* 256.

have turned you out. And fitnah is worse than killing…" (*al-Baqarah* 190-191). This verse orders Muslims to wage war against their attackers. So, only a just and defensive war is permitted. Thus *jihad* is limited by two essential conditions: the forbiddance to transgress the limits in armed fighting and the possibility to fight only those who attack. Hence *jihad*, when it appears in the form of armed war, is closer to the European and Christian concept of the just rather than "holy" war.

The Qur'an often equalizes *jihad* with fight or engagement in war, expressed through the Qur'anic words: *"And fight in the Way of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower"* (*al-Baqarah* 244). Above all, Muslim theologians consider that in fact it is about war against personal lust and for self-defense. But, many other Qur'anic texts, in particular from the Medinian period, are not so reserved any more. War is now being understood as a religious duty that doesn't foresee any exemptions.[21] In line with this, the Qur'an orders: *"Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those! They are the truthful."* (*al-Hujurat* 15). Ever more determined is the following ayah: *"O Prophet! Strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be harsh against them, their abode is Hell, - and worst indeed is that destination"* (*at-Taubah* 73), though Muslim theologians take it as a metaphor for spiritual war.

In continuation with these interpretations, some exegetes propose three meanings of *jihad*: war against the self and the spirit who wishes bad[22]; war for spreading of Islam or war against the nonbelievers; and finally war among own ranks against not good Muslims.[23]

The initial military conquests of Muslims had not as their purpose the Islamization of the people of those countries, but en-

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[21] *Al-Baqarah* 216, 244; *an-Nisa* 84; *al-Maidah* 35; *al-Anfal* 39, 57-66; *at-Tahrim*:9.

[22] *Yusuf* 53.

[23] Djozo, Husein, *Izabrana djela*, ("Selected Works"), v. II, El-Kalem - FIN, Sarajevo 2006, p. 541-557.

suring the survival, peace and security of the new state. Apart from the fact that *jihad* in some cases assumed the features of Islamization and military missionary (*da'wah*), one can't accept the saying that Islam was spread only by "fire and sword".[24]

The notion of *jihad*, in its space determination, has found in some theological schools its true explanation in the division of the world in *Daru-l-Islam*, the House of Islam, and in the area of war or yet non-Islamized part of humanity, called *Daru-l-Harb*, or the House of War. This distinction expresses the effort and will one day the entire world to accept Islam's teachings. In Islam this was supported, according to social circumstances, with state reasons which, for a Muslim, are always the same with the religious reasons. Here it should not be forgotten that nevertheless the Jews and Christians, as a protected minority, belonged to the "House of Islam", and not to the territories that were about to be Islamized in the future.[25] Also it should be noted that any armed conflict, in the sense of "minor *jihad*" is poured into the "greater *jihad*", which is entirely of spiritual nature and of religious content.[26]

The Islamic terminology determines the meaning of the holy only according to the Qur'an and the tradition of Muhammad a.s. Thus Islam uses this word very "avariciously".[27] Today *Jihad* has become an overall philosophy of the Islamic view on war, because a Muslim cannot live in an era of ideological wars without his personal defensive worldview.[28] In the contemporary circumstances

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[24] Djozo, Husein, *Izabrana djela*, ("Selected Works"), v. I, El-Kalem - FIN, Sarajevo 2006, "Islam – Jihad", p. 486.

[25] Balic, Smail, *op.cit*, p. 608.

[26] Esposito, John L., "Muhammad Iqbal i Islamska drzava", ("Muhammad Iqbal and the Islamic State"), in *Suvremena ideologijska tumacenja Kur'ana i Islama*, ("Contemporary ideological interpretations of the Qur'an and Islam"), p. 111-120.

[27] *Ibid.* p. 604.

[28] Islam as an universal religion and fulfillment of the Revelation in general calls upon its believers to be careful, both from the individual as well as collective aspect, towards the appearances that fight the naturality and cause disorder on Earth: today we have the case of abuse with fetuses in China for instance; severe family planning; official marriages among homosexuals of both genders; marriages with animals; huge and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and

jihad has assumed various forms, like the boycott of alien worldviews, ideologies and cultures, boycott of those ideas that are contrary to Islam and that cast doubt on Muslim beliefs and values of the Islamic civilization.[29]

Earlier we pointed out some of the meanings of the words *jihad, kital* and *harb*, except for those who are known only to Allah s.w.t. But *jihad* is a highly pure religious word directly addressing the individual to be always in the service of the pure monotheism and prepared for creating a sound society or *Ummah*, and to be permanently aware of this meaning of *jihad* for continuous fighting of evil, because "the goal of *jihad* is peace on earth; this is its desired end".[30] On the other hand the *Ummah* itself or the society can decide on *harb* and *kital*. As for *kital*, or murder/killing, in the way of Allah as a Qur'anic order for the believer, it has been decreed in such a manner for man to be precautiously prepared in his sub consciousness that when he strikes, it is not him who does the killing, but it is Allah s.w.t. that does so.[31]

Some of the above verses are revealed in Makkah and some in Madina. The Makkan verses call for improvement of individuality, strengthening of belief, permanency of monotheism, while the Medinian are their practice or implementation in societal sense. It is true that for giving an assessment regarding the interpretation of the Qur'anic verses one has to master its disciplines. But the full meaning of the verses comes to surface when taking the Qur'an in its integrity, which enables the understanding of the decree and its meaning. Otherwise human mind and the logic of understanding are put on test.[32] It is clear that main war presented in the above

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domination of the science without morals. Islam is a religion with strong defensive system, and it enables its development only upon such tracks.

[29] Uwais A.H., *"Xhihadi në Islam – në të kaluarën dhe sot"*, ("Jihad in Islam – in the past and present"), "Sharq-al-Awsat" 1982, November 19, p. 13.

[30] Balic, Smail, *op.cit*, p. 606.

[31] See *al-Anfal* 17.

[32] Like any other science, the tafseer too has its necessary methodology, without which it would have been very difficult to reach appropriate results of getting to know the text. Since it is about the Holy Scripture, first of all come the belief, sincerity, and love and then mastering of the language, causes for the revelation

verses is God's *tawheed*. Thus, anyone who dares to intervene in God's nature, by abusing his "political" mission and causing confusion, as well as going so far as declaring war at a venture, those verse call to reflect and correct himself, as well as to return to his God. Politics as power and aim to rule over the others throughout the history has misused all religions, systems and ideologies. We can't say that politics has not waged occupying and enslaving wars in the name of Yahweh, Jesus or Allah. The same goes for ideologies too. Politics has also waged imperialistic wars in the name of socialism/communism. We can't and we shouldn't deny that there were no occupying wars in Islam's history. Yet, it is a fact that Muhammad a.s. has led wars, but only defensive, with the sole purpose of securing the religious freedom. He has fought to create conditions for people absolutely free, without any danger to determine themselves. Who wants can believe, who doesn't can do as he wishes. There is not and there cannot be compulsion in religion. This is an intangible Qur'anic principle. Muhammad a.s. strictly obeyed to this principle. He forbid, because Allah s.w.t. orders so, to make any compulsion in one's embracing Islam.[33] Unfortunately, very early the Islamic governance turned into politics and ruling. This begun immediately after the period of *hulefai-rashidin*.[34]

The Qur'an in everything starts from man. In him, in that egotistic, animalistic, narrow and closed lay down the reasons of war and all other evil. Hence, the Qur'an persistently insists that every action, every deed, including the war, to be done in the name of God and on God's way. This means nothing else but that the motives of war, its means and goals should not be assessed and their rationale to be accepted only on the basis of narrow personal interests, whether of a class, national or ideological. In the name of God and in God's way means to fight for general human values, for

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of verses, *nasih-mansuh*, as well as the time and the place. See: Bardhi, I., *Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu*, p. 145-161.

[33] Djozo, Husein, *op.cit*, v. II, p. 547.

[34] *Ibid*, p. 544.

man as such, not for man with this or that distinction, of this or that orientation.[35]

First of all one should see the man in man. The enemy is also a man. Even while fighting against him, one should behave and act in a humane manner. We must know this because the Qur'an doesn't allow initiation of wars. In defense it strictly forbids to go beyond the necessary defense. The Qur'an punishes only the one who has done wrong; it doesn't allow and strictly forbids the punishment of the innocent in every respect, regardless of their faith and national, religious or cultural identity. The right – *adalah*, is the main balance for man's and society's full peace, stability and freedom.

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As we could see, there are many views about the interpretation of war that contradict each-other and give the opportunity to choose the one that suits for the given moment to the interpreters in power. Problems often do not result from the principle, but from the fact that who will interpret and implement those principles, namely who will lead or rule in the name of principles. The important one is the interpretation of the religious teachings in accordance with the universal principles, in whose center stands free life and equality of all men. While interpreting the "holy texts" it's not sufficient only to understand the text itself, but its context too. This is why religions, in spite of considerable parts of their teachings with messages for peace, love for the fellow men, forgiveness and similar messages, in the past, but to a large extent even today, have remained possible sources and responsible ones for conflicts.

Today, as in the past, the abuse of faith can cause great damages. Often it happens that those who do not believe or who do not observe the principles of the religion they preach to do evil in the name of religion. It takes a lot of self-criticism to observe in practice certain great principle, and there are many challenges that estrange in practice people and religious organizations from this

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[35] *Ibid, p.* 544-545.

principle. Besides, each and every principle can be very resiliently interpreted according to practical needs, and there are so many principles that can't be put together in harmony.

As believers we have great responsibility in preserving the faith and in presenting it. Holy texts are the main warranty for human peace and stability. We learn from them how to believe in God, how to guide ourselves and which are the values that do not estrange us from the *Sunetullah*. There can be no contradiction in that. If we agree to listen and accept what was given to us in the messages that prophets received on our behalf, they could guide us beyond ourselves, so we could again and again choose life.

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İslam'da Savaşın Yorumlanması

Özet: Din dili basit değildir; dini anlatının kullandığı sembolleri ve anlamları her zaman geçerlidir. Dinin anlaşılması bilginin yanı sıra hikmete ve Allah'ın inayetine ihtiyaç duyar. Her kelimenin kendisine has anlam veçheleri vardır. Bu çerçevede Kuran'daki kital, harb ve cihad gibi kelimelerin, bize bütüncül anlamlarını ifşa eden ve savunduğu hedefi işaret eden kitabın (Kuran-ı Kerim) bütünlüğü içerisinde ele alınması gerekir. Kur'an hakikati / hakkı en kesin ve en evrensel esas olarak tesis eder ve tatbik eder. Semavi dinlerin takipçileri, özel ve genel dini geleneği ve tarihi yeniden okumayı, yorumlamayı, gözden geçirmeyi sağlayacak hermenötik bir yönelimin peşindedirler. Böylece ortak çabanın ürünü olan zenginleştirmeyle farklılıkların ve ortak değerlerin dönüşümü, daha insani bir dünyanın ve daha iyi bir geleceğin inşasına katkı sağlayabilir.

Kur'an'ın sembolik anlatımı içinde yer alan kavramlardan birisi de "savaş"tır. Savaş, insan ilişkileri arasındaki sorunların çözümünde güç ve şiddet kullanma tarzını ifade etmektedir. Savaşın pek çok kurumun yanı sıra özellikle tek tanrıcı dinler olan Yahudilik, Hıristiyanlık ve İslam çerçevesinde din ile de yakın ilişkisi söz konusudur. Savaşın politeizmden çok monoteizm ile ilişkilendirilmesi de oldukça ilginçtir. Muhtemelen bu ilişki monoteizmin sunduğu hakikat doktrini çerçevesinde tarihsel bir dışlayıcılık eğiliminden kaynaklanmaktadır. Politesit dinlerde ise ilahi kategoriler çoğulcu bir form halinde gerçek ya da sahte değil daha güçlü ya da daha zayıf tanrılar şeklinde tezahür etmektedir. Ancak monoteist dinlerin hakikat hakkındaki bu tartışmalarının zamanla sosyal düzen için ideolojik sonuçlar doğurması söz konusudur.

İslam perspektifinden savaş konusunu ele almak için Kur'an'da dile getirilen en önemli kavram harb, kital ve cihad'dır. Ancak cihad, üzerine çok detaylı anlamların yüklendiği bir kavram olarak daha öne çıkmaktadır. Örneğin Mekke döneminde cihad temel olarak ahlaki çabayı ifade etmiştir. Fakat daha sonraki dönemlerde topluca savaşa hazırlık ve silahlı savaş olarak tanımlanmıştır. Esasen cihad oldukça soyut bir kavramdır. Bu kavram insanlar sürekli olarak saf monoteizmin hizmetinde çalışmayı telkin eder. Bunun için de güçlü bir toplum ya da ümmet oluşturmayı bu ümmetin de sürekli bir cihad içinde olmasını yani kötü ile savaşmasını önerir. Zira cihadın hedefi yeryüzünde barış ve huzurun sağlanmasıdır. Bununla birlikte ümmet harb veya kitala yani silahlı çatışmaya karar verebilir. Ancak Allah'ın gerekli durumlarda inanan insanlara yüklediği bu emir yine Allah'ın çizdiği ölçüler dahilinde gerçekleştirilir. Bu ölçülerin başında da savaş halinde haddi aşmamak gelir. Cihad bağlamlı ayetlerin bir kısmı Mekki bir kısmı Medeni'dir. Mekki olanlarda bireysel olgunlaşma, inancın güçlendirilmesi ve monoteizm vurgusu ön plandadır. Medeni olanlarda ise bu ayetler çerçevesinde sosyal bir duyarlılık oluşturulması hedeflenmiştir. Fakat şurası çok açıktır ki bu ayetlerde ifade edilen asıl savaş Allah'ın birliği üzerinedir.

Savaş meselesine tamamen insani bir gözle bakmak gerekir. Nihayet

düşman da bir insandır. Düşman da olsa insana yönelik her savaşın yine de insani bir tarz içinde yapılması gerekir. Bu nedenle savaş halinde zaruri savunma önlemlerinin ötesine geçmemek gerekir. Kur'an sadece suçlu kişiyi cezalandırmayı önerirken dini, milli ve kültürel kimlikler sebebiyle masum insanların cezalandırılmasını yasaklamıştır. Esasen insanların ve toplumun barış, istikrar ve özgürlüğü için temel denge noktası adalettir.

Bütün bunlara ragmen savaş yorumları hakkında birbiriyle çelişen pek çok görüş bulunmaktadır. Bu durum güçlü olan tarafın durumuna uygun olanı seçeneği seçme fırsatı vermektedir. İslam geleneği söz konusu olduğunda sorunlar genellikle prensiplerden kaynaklanan bir sonuç olmadığı görülür. Sorunlar, daha ziyade, bu prensipleri kim yorumlayacak ve uygulayacak, yani prensipler adına kim liderlikte ya da uygulayıcılıkta bulunacağıyla ilişkilidir. Burada önemli olan husus, dini öğretilerin, merkezinde özgür bir hayat ve bütün insanların eşitliği ilkesinin olduğu evrensel prensiplerle uyum içinde yorumlanmasıdır. Kutsal metinleri yorumlarken bu metinlerin kendisini anlamak yeterli değildir; aynı zamanda metinlerin bağlamlarının da anlaşılması gerekir. İşte bu durum barış, sevgi ve merhamet gibi mesajlara dayalı öğretilerine rağmen geçmişten günümüze kadar dinlerin çatışmaların kaynağı ya da sorumluları arasında sayılmasının nedenidir.

Geçmişte olduğu gibi günümüzde de dinin suiistimal edilmesi büyük zarar ve yıkımlara sebep olmaktadır. Sıklıkla inanmayan ya da dinin prensiplerini yerine getirmeyen kişiler kötülüğün din adına yapıldığını ileri sürerler. Uygulamalar sırasında dinin telkin ettiği temel prensiplere uyma konusunda pek çok zaafiyete rastlanmaktadır. Ayrıca yine uygulama esnasında insanları ve dini organizasyonları bu prensiplerden uzaklaştıran meydan okumalar da söz konusudur. Esasen her prensip pratik ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda oldukça esnek bir şekilde yorumlanabilir. Hatta uyum içinde bir araya getirilemeyecek pek çok prensipten dahi söz edilebilir. Bu durumda inanan kişiler inancı korumak ve onu temsil etmek adına ağır bir sorumluluk sahibidirler. Kutsal metinler insanlığın huzur ve istikrarının temel güvenceleridir. Biz bu metinlerden Tanrı'ya nasıl inanacağımızı ve bizi sünnetullahtan ayırmayacak değerlerin neler olduğunu öğreniriz. Eğer peygamberler aracılığıyla bize ulaştırılan mesajları dinleyip onaylarsak bu mesajlar bizim kendi zihnimizin de ötesine geçerek bize rehberlik eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kital, harb, cihad, kutsal metinler, gelenek.