

View on suicide bombing involving British Muslims

Muslim scholars are often asked regarding the involvement of British Muslims in suicide bombing overseas. Are those who are killed in carrying out these operations classed as Martyrs? Dr Musharraf Hussain presents his thoughts on this issue.

God has blessed mankind with numerous gifts; of all these, life is the most precious. Every human life is precious. The taking of a single life is likened to killing the entire humanity, and saving a single life to saving the entire humanity. (Maida: 32). The glorious Quran urges man to protect himself against danger and never to intentionally walk into danger.

“And do not kill yourselves, surely Allah is most merciful to you. And whoever commits that through aggression and injustice, we shall cast him to the fire and that is easy for Allah” (An-Nisa 29-30).

Ibn Kathir narrates in his commentary the story of Amar Ibn Al-As. The messenger sent him on an expedition, one night when it was very cold he needed to do the obligatory ritual bath before he could offer morning prayer however Amar mentions that he remembered the divine command “And do not kill yourselves” so he performed Tayammum instead and lead the p-prayer. On his return, he reported this to the messenger who smiled at him and said nothing. (Ahmed). This stresses the importance of protecting ones life against even perceived danger in this case the danger of a cold bath. Ibn Kathir goes onto quote three Ahadith in which the messenger strongly condemns suicide and describe the horrific punishment that will be meted out to those who commit this evil deed. The messenger vigorously rejected such an atrocity when he declared, “Whoever intentionally kills himself will certainly be punished in the fire of hell where in he shall dwell for ever”. (Agreed upon) **“And do not cast yourself into destruction. And do good. Allah loves good doers (baqara: 195).**

Suicide bombing is the most violent form of terrorism (Fasad). The perpetrator deliberately blows himself up as well as other people (usually innocent people). It is compounded evil. Several organizations worldwide sadly employ this blunt and shocking weapon to achieve their “strategic goals” however; such preposterous means have achieved nothing but increased the cycle of violence and counter violence. The long running conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is fuelling the anger of the young people and unfortunately some fall into the hands of terrorist organisations, which use them as human time bombs. This is deeply tragic and a worrying development.

It must be made absolutely clear that suicide bombing, as a strategy will not succeed in liberating the Palestinians. The evil of Israel’s occupation should not be countered by the evil of suicide bombing; two wrongs don’t make a right. It must be tackled rationally and not only blind passion to die. The passion should be to live, serve and liberate the Palestinians.

The suicide bombing is born out of a defeatist mentality and sense of helplessness and despair (Iyas). God Almighty says, **“Do not despair of God’s mercy for only the Kafirans despair”** (Yusuf: 87) the messenger of God was a mercy for the entire world. He said “when you see evil stop it with your hands if you can. If you can’t do that, speak out against it. If you can’t do that then hate it. That is the weakest form of Iman. (Bukhari). Here three ways of attacking evil are mentioned. [Israel with its brute force (nuclear missiles and formidable air power) cannot be tackled by suicide bombing].

Even if it did achieve its strategic goal (the freedom of Palestinians), suicide bombing still remains reprehensible since ends do not justify means. The means to an end must also be fair and just. Israel’s weakness is unjust occupation of Palestinians’ homeland. The suicide bombing distracts people from seeing the real issue. Instead with every suicide bomb, Israel wins sympathy worldwide, as they are perceived to be victims, and Palestinians aggressors who kill children and innocent civilians. What a topsy-turvy world have we created! The Palestinians must stop suicide bombing and win the sympathy of the world. Which undoubtedly the world will support the Palestinians’ cause and American people back the Palestinians once they sort their home out Israel is not the darling of America.

I am aware that some people see suicide bombing as a self-sacrificing mission, for example Sheikh Al Azar and Yusuf Qaradawi. This is another view. However, as Muslims living in the west, we have a different perspective on this issue.

Suicide bombing is not Jihad for British Muslims

Muslims are expected to be constantly engaged in Jihad, which means to struggle and exert oneself in good works:

“O believers fear Allah and seek means to him and struggle in his path” (Maida: 35), “and do Jihad for Allah with the Jihad due to Him” (Haj: 76)

However Jihad takes many forms:

- § Charity is the Jihad against love of wealth
- § Teaching is Jihad against ignorance and evil
- § Fighting in the battlefield is another type of Jihad, but this Jihad is legitimately defending of the Muslims under the authority of the state
- § There are two groups of Ulama those who believe fighting should be only be for defending the Muslim land, the second group believe inoffensive strikes as long as they are for the protection of the Muslims’ interest (see Yusuf Al Qaradawi on the priorities of the Islamic movement)

Should Muslims in the west take part in Jihads overseas?

My answer is that they are not obliged to do so but if they do respond to a declaration of war then they will have to renounce their citizenship in the West in order to fight in Jihad. However in consequences of such actions inevitably will be further marginalisation of the Muslims in the West and an increase of

Islamaphobia. Long-term effects on the image of Islam and further generations of Muslims would be catastrophic.

An individual cannot himself declare war against a country or a people. Islam allows Muslims to fight war, but between armies on the battlefield only. It strictly forbids the killing of civilians even in wartime. The rules of engagement are very strict.

“ Do not kill women or children or non combatants, and do not kill old people and religious leaders”
(Hadith)

§ The greatest Jihad of all, the Messenger (saws) declared, is against mans own evil tendencies. In this Jihad, to overcome anger, carnal pleasure, lust, jealousy and deceit and embrace moral qualities of compassion, honesty and love for others.

British Muslims are in a unique position to support the Palestinians in a variety of ways, lending them political support by lobbying politicians to support their cause, by donation to rebuilding the schools and hospitals and orphanages. British Muslims must put pressure on the Palestinian Authority to reform itself, become open and democratic and show effective leadership (based on Taqwa and Birr).

Finally, in light of the above Islamic teachings, suicide bombing is forbidden and its perpetrators are not martyrs. (Allah knows Best)