

# The Discourse of Jihad of the Islamic State for the Post Khilafah Period

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## An Analysis of the evolving Discourse of Jihad of the Islamic State

In response to the collapse of the Khilafah the Islamic state is investing in via its English language publication Rumiya the creation and dissemination of a Salafi Jihadi discourse of Jihad that is rooted in mainstream Sunni discursive methodology. The strategy calls for a change in the nature of the discourse of articles where the discursive components are validated by exhaustive references to the Quran, the Hadith of the Prophet (uwbp) and the opinions of the scholars. Islamic State is then moving to the mainstream to create and disseminate a mainstream variant of its discourse of the primacy of war with the kaffirun and the apostates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Islamic State is raising the threshold for engagement with its discourse making it even more difficult for those armed with platitudes at best to engage with and counter this new post Khilafah strand of Islamic State's discourse. What must be noted is the resonance of the methodology of the London 2017 attackers with this new discourse of the Islamic State.

This deconstruction is focused on two articles published in Rumiya: "The Siyahah of Jihad" in Rumiya 5 and "The Pledge to fight to the Death" in Rumiya 4. In the Siyahah of Jihad the Islamic State presents its discourse which insists that siyahah is not the tourist experience of Muslims nor is it adopting a practise of exclusion from the world through monasticism. Siyahah is the Muslim methodology of hijrah and jihad where a Muslim undertakes hijrah for the sole purpose of waging jihad and this practise distinguishes and differentiates Muslims from all other religions of the world. Jihad is then the tourism of Muslims. The article states: "Therefore, whoever wishes to be from among those who practice the siyahah of the Sunnah, as understood by the Salaf, must perform hijrah and jihad, must strive against himself for Allah's sake by adhering to zuhd and dhikr in the course of his ribat and combat as much as he can, and must abandon what Allah dislikes of wrongs and sins..." The basis of entry into the space commanded by the siyahah is hijrah and jihad which has to be driven by the reconstitution of the Muslim in keeping with Allah's (swt) blueprint. Islamic State is therefore insisting that those Muslims who undertake hijrah for the purpose of Jihad are then a vanguard of Islam providing they fulfil the agreement reached by pursuing personal reclamation simultaneously with engaging militarily with the enemies of Islam. For Islamic State the methodology of the siyahah of the Sunnah is

compulsory towards building a Muslim fighting force that is capable of defeating the kaffirun and the apostates in battle in spite of the military disadvantage belabouring the Muslim military. But is the product of the methodology of siyahah of the Sunnah abrogating the terms and conditions of the siyahah of the Sunnah when it embraces the Takfiri methodology to wage war on the enemies of Islam? When does the moral, value and motivational reconstitution of the Muslim necessary to the methodology of siyahah of the Sunnah become subservient to making war on the enemy of Islam? The Islamic State is silent on these issues. For the Islamic State the siyahah of the Sunnah is the methodology that realises the birth and development of the special elite group of mujahidun which is demarcated from all others by hijrah to wage jihad. Those who have not made hijrah but have embraced jihad are simply not in this elite category thereby calling for hijrah first or globalised jihad as the entry point to the elite group as seen in Mindanao, Philippines. The key discursive concept utilised by IS in their discourse of siyahah with reference to the methodology of siyahah is ribat but in this article the concept is not defined for this key definition a search of the content of issues of Rumiya is necessary. Muslims adept at the methodology of the siyahah of the Sunnah for Islamic State are outfitting themselves for a unique and glorious death which exemplifies the condition of being in submission to Almighty Allah (swt). A death and hereafter promised to and attained by Muslims of this vanguard with the key to this condition being the existence and nature of the covenant between Allah (swt) and Muslims. Islamic State to this end in the article quotes Sura 9 111-112 which is quoted to shore up the discourse presented where a covenant exists between Almighty Allah (swt) and Muslims binding on both parties. Muslims as possessions of Almighty Allah (swt) are expected to make themselves worthy through transformation in keeping with the blueprint of Allah (swt) with the promise of Paradise being immutable. In this covenant Muslims fight in the way of Allah (swt), kill and are killed. Islamic State insists that the fighting, killing and being killed is the paramount activity demanded of Muslims under the covenant hence the vanguard devoted to hijrah and jihad. This construct is the basis of its discourse of jihad constant through its stages of evolution from Dabiq 1 to Rumiya 5. Why then in verse 112 the imperative: "So rejoice" does not encompass, when enumerated, those who fight, who kill and have been killed? Only those of specific regenerated moral fibre and illustrating specific values in action are enumerated. The Quranic lesson is obvious that the moral and value

order that drives choice, action and worldview of a Muslim is the paramount component of the covenant binding on all Muslims as this is the instrument of transformation and regeneration of the blueprint/discourse of Allah (swt). Fighting, killing and being killed is subservient to this moral and value order. The meaning of the Quranic verbs translated fight and kill are then most important to this study. In the verse “they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed;” the words fight, kill and killed are all from the same root verb \* Q T L. QATALA the level 1 verb is translated to kill, to slay, (the perfect participle) May he be slain, Perish he, May death seize him, (verbal noun) the act of killing, slaying. In the verse kill is yaqtulu the imperfect action form of qatala. Qatala the level three verb form of \* Q T L is translated to fight, (qatalahum Allah God assail them), (verbal noun) the act of fighting. In the verse fight is yuqatilu the imperfect action of the verb. The question then for Islamic State posed by the verb used in the Quran for fight and kill is: why in the Quranic verses that are cited to insist that the discourse of siyahah and jihad is valid and correct the verb \* J H D from which Jihad is derived and its forms were not used? These verses are addressed to Muslims and the nature of the covenant with Almighty Allah (swt) but \* J H D and its forms are not used to express the ideas fight, kill and killed. This indicates that there is no special condition of fight, kill and killed for Muslims existentially the condition is the same for all humans the difference with Muslims is then the condition of transformation and regeneration that is launched before death that ensures a specific condition of existence after death summed up with the concept of Paradise. The discourse of Jihad that insists jihad is fighting, killing and being killed is not supported by the Quranic text cited by Islamic State it’s in the Quran the discourse of \* Q T L not \* J H D.

In this article the Islamic State presents its discourse of siyahah in keeping with the methodology of Sunni Islamic scholarship by presenting the citation from the Quran, selections from the Hadith which included statements of weak and strong Hadith and selections from the works of a range of companions of the Prophet (uwbp) and Islamic scholars of widely recognised merit. This is then an attempt to take its discourse into the Sunni mainstream in preparation for life after the Khilafah as the credibility of its discourse and worldview has to be regenerated given the collapse of the Khilafah project. In the absence of the physical Khilafah as an expression of its discursive potency and connection to the Will of Almighty

Allah (swt) the Islamic State has then to appeal to its audience via its connectedness to the Sunni mainstream and the necessity of its hegemony over Islam as a result of its specific manhaj.

In Rumiya 4 the article “The Pledge to Fight to the Death” was presented driven by a discourse that flows with the discourse of siyahah of the article “The Siyahah of Jihad” of Rumiya 5. Taken together both discourses combined complete the discourse of jihad of the Islamic State for the post Khilafah period which demands that it must be deconstructed and understood for already the London June 2017 attack reflects the impact of this discourse on field operations. The discourse of the “The pledge to Fight to the Death” is stated as follows: “turning away on the day of battle is one of the greatest sins”, “to give bay’ah (a pledge) to be patient during encounters with the enemy and to be steadfast in battle until they were to be killed or granted victory by Allah.” “Pledging to abide by a virtuous Deed indeed, fulfilling covenants is an obligation, whether the pledge is to Allah or to one of His slaves.” “Permissible deeds include making a covenant to be steadfast during combat. If that combat is in obedience to Allah, like a Muslim fighting the kuffir, Khawarij, or bughat (Muslims who wrongly fight other Muslims), then it is an obligation to fulfil this covenant.” “Pledging to fight to the death is a tradition preserved in numerous books of hadith.” “the intended meaning of all the reports is that to pledge to not flee means to have patience until we defeat our enemy or we are killed-and that is the meaning of pledging to die, i.e. we remain steadfast, even if that causes us to die-not that death in and of itself is what is intended.”

Islamic State has now unfurled a discourse that deals with fighters fleeing the Islamic State to evade battle against the enemies of Islam thereby contributing to the ranks of the returned fighters. Islamic State presents a detailed discourse utilising Sunni mainstream methodology of the science of the Sunnah which insists that all those who came to the Islamic State have made the pledge to fight to the death to the leader of the Islamic State. Since the leader of the Islamic State is a slave of Almighty Allah (swt) the bay’ah to Baghdadi was in fact to Almighty Allah (swt) and it is incumbent on all Muslims to fulfil their covenant with Almighty Allah (swt). The grave sin committed when the Muslim under the obligation of a covenant refuses to fight and die, flees the Islamic State, attempts to flee the Islamic State and is involved in rebellion against the Islamic State enables/empowers the Islamic State to kill that Muslim for the grave sin

committed. Which means that those who fled the Islamic State and returned to their countries of origin are targets of the Islamic State in these countries as only fighters sanctioned by Islamic State can leave the State without being fingered as apostates/an enemy of Islam. To leave the Islamic State as a sanctioned fighter therefore means that you are on a journey to make war that shall end in your death. The message is not only for those on the battlefields of the Islamic State to hold firm until death it is a global message that impacts the order of battle globally. The message insists that all actions undertaken globally especially in the West are driven by the pledge to death and the death of the attacker is not mandatory. Which raises the question if the returning fighters are making the reverse journey to honour their pledge to death as we saw with the Manchester 2017 bomber? Then there is the lesson of London 2017 where the three attackers ensured their death by cop thereby honouring their pledge by wearing copies of bomb vests which convinced the police that the London attackers were in fact suicide bombers. In addition, the mobilisation of the local support network of Islamic State to stress upon the nature of their pledge and their need to honour it to unsanctioned returned fighters is a reality and action to punish and make examples of unrepentant, unsanctioned returned fighters are realities of the threat horizon.

Of the nine references to the Quran made in the article “The Pledge to Fight to the Death” by the Islamic State eight specifically dealt with the concept of the covenant in the Quran and the root verb \* ‘ H D was used in the said eight Quranic references. ‘AHIDA the level 1 verb is translated: to stipulate, to make a covenant, ‘AHD is the masculine noun translated: a covenant, a promise and ‘AHADA is the level 3 verb translated: to make a covenant. In the references of the Islamic State as follows: 2:40, 2:177 and 16:91 ‘AHD is used and translated covenant or promise. In 48:10 ‘AHADA the perfect action is used therefore the meaning is that a covenant was made. In the Quran the primary and overarching covenant is made between Almighty Allah (swt) and Muslims in which the only party that is certain to abide by the terms of the covenant is Almighty Allah (swt) hence the surety of the promise made by Almighty Allah (swt) but there is no such surety forthcoming from Muslims as they are humans. The root verb used carries the meaning of stipulation, covenant and promise which illustrates the range of meaning of the verb. A covenant then encompasses stipulation/s and promise/s

between the All-knowing (swt) and Muslims where hegemonic power is wielded by Allah (swt) alone and this power relation expressed formally in a covenant that defines and interrogates all other covenants and power relations that Muslims enter into. Islamic State wants to introduce the concept of the bay 'at ar-Ridwan as the pledge to fight to the death into this covenant but is there a stipulation against cowardice and refusing to be a combatant rather than a stipulation where fighting to the death is compulsory for all combatants? Islamic State presents a case which fails to prove that fighting to the death is a Quranic stipulation where the stipulation is clearly stated against cowardice and pacifism. Islamic State has then to utilise a convoluted pathway that infers that it is so which is an attempt to deceive towards adherence to its strategy. Sura 8:15-16 quoted in the article illustrates this Quranic reality as it rejects cowardice as accepted Muslim behaviour on the battlefield but stipulates strategic retreat and reconfiguration of the order of battle as plausible responses to battlefield realities. Quranic pragmatic realism then falsifies the position that fighting to the death is stipulated in the covenant between Almighty Allah (swt) and Muslims.