

Muslim Militant's Mindset and Quranic Verses: A Comparison of Narratives from Pakistan¹

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Abstract

Since last decade, the world has been facing Muslim militancy as the most tough challenge and threat. Activities of global Muslim militant groups like Al Qaeda and Taliban have engulfed a large number of human lives have cost dollars in billions. The militants as a base, cite different verses of the holy Quran related to dominancy of Islam over all religions, Islam as the only acceptable religion to God, Killing Polytheists and people of the books a religious obligation and thus making an Islamic state. It is argued in this study that they (militant) are not alone in basing their militant activities on divine obligations. Some very prominent, well learned Muslim scholars (of which Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani and Maulana Syed Mawdudi are the focus of this study) are also projecting and promoting the same concept and ideology. The study highlights how these scholars interpret these specific verses of the Holy Quran and how their concepts and explanations are countered by scholars like Ameen Ihsan Islahi and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Upon comparing both the groups' interpretations, the study found that these verses which are the base of Muslim Militants agenda mean something very different from militant's narrative. This profound counter narrative can remove the base provided to militants and can serve as a soft tool to handle them ideologically, and thus reducing any further militancy in the name of Islam and Quran.

Keywords: Militancy, Quran, Counter-Narrative,

Introduction to the topic

Islam came to the world about 1400 years ago. It is the last revealed religion (as Quran testifies). It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (the last Prophet) in Makah of Arabia from 610AD till his death in 632AD. Quran, which was the revealed book to Prophet Muhammad, is since then considered as a divine way of life shown to Him by God. The debate within the Muslim scholarship, even is that to take it as a complete religion or way of life, needs volumes to be discussed, however it is clear that Quran (to Muslims) is the most authentic book of knowledge.

As stated above, Muslims believe Quran to be a divine and most authentic source of knowledge, that is the reason many religious movements (social, religious and political) have inspirations from the Holy Quran. Jihad (Muslims holy war) is also an inspiration and interpretation of Quranic verses. To Muslims, the wars fought by Prophet Muhammad against the non believers (*Mushrikeen*) were based on divine directives

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explained in the verses of the Holy Quran. Jihad through time of Islamic history has taken different forms. At times it has been in the form of movements in series by non state actor groups or individuals. And Sometimes a Muslim state's aggression on a non-Muslim state is termed as *Jihad*.

The wars of previous century like those against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan or those against US forces today in Afghanistan are summed in the name of Jihad (the holy war). The wars started by groups like of Mujahedeen, Taliban, AL Qaeda etc are all considered (by them) as Jihad. Pakistan since last decade or so has fallen prey to extremist's militant activities. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the extremist anti-government Muslim militant organization has emerged and created havoc among the masses by suicide bombings and target killings. There is a debate going on in academic circles (religious as well secular) about the causes, operation and motives of this group. The debate is as dense as the group's fast threatening activities against the state of Pakistan and in general against the Muslims of the world.

These Militants (extremists) are quoting Quranic verses for legitimizing their actions and getting popular support. For them every verse having direction for *Jihad* and *Qital* and dominancy of Islam is having the same directives and for all times i.e. not contextual. But in academic circles, the concepts of *Jihad*, *Qital* and dominancy of Islam are different things based on specific context. This difference has been elaborated by many scholars in different studies but *War and Jihad in Islam* by Khan (2010) is worth reading.²

Muslim Militancy in Pakistan in the present era

This section, presents a brief overview of Muslim militancy in Pakistan in the past one and a half decade. The act of Al Qaeda and its allies in New York on 11th of September 2001 has a chain of subsequent terrorist activities throughout the world. Though the hardcore fundamentalists were present across the globe (as Al Qaeda emerged in 1988-89) but Pak-Afghan region has become the focus of the world after 9/11. Taliban's government and their strict imposition of Shariah in Afghanistan posed a fundamental threat to the free world.

Militant organizations were present in Pakistan before 9/11, and were friendly until then to the state. It was US attack on Afghanistan and Pakistan's U-turn in her Afghan policy and joining hands with global war against terrorism that aggrieved these fundamentalist militants. Subsequently they organised and formed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Tribal Areas of Pakistan and Southern of Punjab in 2007, under the leadership of Baith Ullah Mahsud. They intensified their activities with strict implementation of their version of Shariah Law in Swat and FATA. They declared war against US, NATO and its allies (including Pakistan). Since then the war has cost more than 50,000 citizens, 5000 security personnel, destruction of infrastructure, internal migration of millions of people from parts of north western Pakistan, and caused material damage to the Pakistani economy of over totaling more than US \$ 67 billion by the IMF and the World Bank.³

The devastating war by TTP in the name of Islam has caused more harm to Islam and its peaceful teachings. It has destroyed the peace, stability and unity of Pakistan as a nation

and has been one of the main hurdles in economic, political and democratic progress of the country. The use of Quranic verses and teachings for legitimizing terrorist activities is an issue of great concern. Many scholars have presented counter narratives in their exegesis and explanations of the divine text to cope with the problem of Muslim militancy. This present study identifies some important verses, mostly used as argument and base by the militants and terrorists to justify their war against states and others.

Significance of the study

Muslim militants⁴ (extremist fighters) have a world view (Shariah) which (according to them) includes laws for all ways of life. Their activities since last one and a half decade in Pakistan, seems to be a fountain of this worldview, which they think is their religious duty and a composite part of faith. They draw their arguments from religious texts i.e. Quran and Hadith. An analysis of their arguments and the respective religious (Islamic texts) is important to understand them and counter them. The counter argument also significantly shall be from Quran and interpreted by religious scholars. A detailed study of their narrative argument (dominant one) based on verses of the Holy Quran, along with a counter argument based on a different explanation of these verses is of greater significance. There is a dire need to compare this dominant and traditional interpretation of these verses with the non dominant and counter interpretation of these verses. It is equally important to use this second narrative to present a soft and peaceful image of Islam (which means peace). There is a need to counter Muslim militancy ideologically through this counter narrative.

Methodology

This study does a comparative analysis of both the narratives of these verses of the Holy Quran. Explanations of these verses of holy Quran by Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani and Maulana Mawdudi are discussed in one group and by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Amin Ahsan Islahi is discussed in the other group. The effects of both these narratives are evaluated in the study.

Limitation of the Study

It is very clear that Militancy is a very complex issue and problem; specifically, in Pakistan it has become more complicated with having many faces. At the same time, it is having a financial face, an ideological one (deriving from Quran as well Hadith) and a political face. The study limits only to the discussion of the ideological sources of Muslim Militants. In that, it focuses and limits only to the specific verses of Holy Quran usually used and quoted by the Militants. Furthermore, it is limited to the explanations drawn from indigenous scholarship i.e. Maulana Mawdudi, Maulana Ameen Ahsan Islahi, Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi.

Verses of Holy Quran selected for the study.

Some important verses quoted by militants are studied, interpreted and compared by taking help from Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani's Tafseer e Usmani,⁵ Maulana Abu Al Ala Maududi's Tafseer Ul Quran,⁶ Maulana Ameen Ihsan Islahi's Tadabur e Quran⁷ and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi's Al Bayan⁸. Narratives and counter narratives from this exegesis are studied comparatively. These verses are the following.

Surah 9 (Tawbah) verses 33, Surah 61 (As-Saff) verse 9, and Surah 28 (Al-Fath) verse 28, Surah 2 (Al-Baqra) verse 193 and Surah 42 (Ash-Shurah) verse 13. These verses talk about the dominancy of Islam and Muslims over all other religions. Surah 5 (Tawbah) verses 5, 29 and 123, talking about Islamic Jihad to kill and clear polytheist and also to subjugate Jews and Christians. Surah 98 (Al-Baiyyinah) verse 6 declaring *Kafirs* (Infidels) as the worst creatures of God. Surah 3 (Al-Imran) verses 19 and 85, declaring Islam as the only acceptable religion to God. Surah 5 (Al-Maida) verses 51, which states that Jews and Christians cannot be made friends. Surah 9 (Tawbah) verses 111, the most powerful that God has promised paradise to only those who fight in his way.

Dominancy of Islam and thus Muslims over all others

Different verses of the Holy Quran carry this message. We discuss it one by one.

Surah 9 (Tawbah) Verse No 33, Surah 61 (As-Saff) Verse 9 & Surah Baqra Verse 193 (2:193),

Surah 9 (Tawbah) Verse No 33

“He (Allah) has sent his prophet, And has guided him (by giving him ‘*din*’ religion Islam), which is true, so that it shall dominate all other religions, and ‘*mushrikeen*’/idolshippers, don’t like it.”(Usmani, Volume 1:863-864)

In the very explanation of the verse, Usmani has given a heading “The promise of domination of Islam”, where he is arguing that Islam as a light has finished the false lights of other religions and idolshippers. These people (the idolshippers), let them try to do whatever they want, but the fact is that once Islam came to the world, it dominated. He has differentiated the religious dominancy of Islam and the political/state level dominancy. He clarifies that as a Religion it has always been dominant, no matter. As a political force or as a state, when Muslims or *Momineen* follow Islam completely, they will be strong in faith and piousness and they will do pure *jihad e fi sabilullah* (war in the way of Allah) and thus will dominate. To him at that time (of the prophet) Muslims were pious and pure/complete in faith, so they got dominant and after the coming back of Hazrat Isa A.S, (near the doomsday), they will be same(pious) again and Islam will dominate all religions and all other religions will be diminished (2003:863).

Connecting Religious dominancy with political dominancy and declaring political one as a sign of completeness and pureness of the Muslims is an interpretation which has severe consequences. Muslim militants strive for the political dominancy of Islam as a religious obligation and as a sign of their completeness as well as piousness of faith. They argue that once they are successful in making Islam dominant in politics over others, their faith will be complete. They do so by force, as Usmani is arguing that Prophet did it by force (*jihad e fi sabilullah*). That is pushing them hard to work and establish an Islamic empire and to root out all religions from the surface of the earth, to make Islam dominant one. To them it’s a message and order of the Quran, the divine book. Mawdudi (n.d) has deduced almost the same arguments from the translation of this verse in his exegesis, *Tafheemul Quran*. (English version: 189)

However, there is a different translation and argument presented by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, in his exegesis. He translates this verse as

“He is the one, who has sent his Prophet with *Hidayat* and the right *din* (Religion), so that it becomes dominant on all the religions (of this land), though idolshippers dislike it”⁹

The word in the brackets ‘of this land’ makes his argument significant and different from others. He signifies this in the explanation and explains the terms and conditions for that that dominancy. He argued that this dominancy was meant and related to those idolshippers who were present at the time of the prophet in Arabia and cannot be used generally. He has also given the explanation that it is proved from the history that the prophet with a divine religion dominated Arabia’s all religions at the time. It is because God wanted to show these *Kafirs* of Muhammad’s time a mini doomsday and his force and authority. And to show them the authenticity of what is in the Quran. Thus Ghamidi rejects any such claim of dominancy after that time and out of Arabia, ruling out any war in the name of Islam and its dominancy.¹⁰

Surah As-Saff Verse 9 (61:9)

This verse has replicated the same message again as (9:33) and Usmani has presented the same argument and same translation here as well, he has referred to his explanation of the previous verse 9:33. Usmani and Mawdudi have given almost the same translation and explanation and argue for a pious war (jihad) to have a dominancy of Islam (rule of Shariah) over other religions (Manmade laws). However, Amin Ahsan Islahi is trying to be different from them both. His translation is as,

“It is He who has sent forth His Messenger with guidance and the true religion so that he may make it prevail over all religions, much as the Idolaters may dislike it.” (English version, p.314) He is probably trying to argue that the domination is a religious (or say spiritual) one and is never a political one. This can also be supported by the argument that Islam is a religion and not a polity. Also that it has to be accepted irrespective of time and space (and thus state etc). This can help in countering the Militant’s argument of political (or say military) domination of Islam/Muslims over all others. If it is a religious domination, it has to be decided by God (or it has been decided). Thus it rules out any probable political or military domination over Non-Muslims and their countries.

Yet a more different, explanatory and supplementary explanation has been added by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, to this debate. In the explanation of the verse he argues that many of our scholars have mis-interpreted the verse and it never means what they think of. The verse simply points to a principle God follows, first through his Prophet he showed the people his right path i.e. *did Itmam e Hujjat* (the Conclusive evidence), second they were allowed freely to follow the Prophet or leave him and oppose him like Jews of their time, who told their Prophets to fight alone for their God. After this, God showed them a mini Doms day and punished them. Islam dominated the region and what God had promised Muhammad PBUH, was fulfilled. Through this, they were given the practical argument

of the faith of dooms day and the region was like a *laboratory*. He also clearly states that it is not related to any ‘revolution’ of our times or any such movement of our times, as has been argued by many scholars of political icons (Ghamidi, 2014).

Last verse in this connection is Surah Baqra Verse 193 (2:193).

Translation of the verse is,

“And fight them, till that there remains no *fasad* and only God’s orders prevail.
And then if they refrain, there is no compulsion except on those who are cruel”
(Usmani, UrduVersion: 163-164).

In the explanation Usmani (2007) argues that this fight is for three causes. The first one is to subjugate Tyranny (Cruelty) and second is to stop idolshippers from deviating people from Religion and third one is, that order of God prevails only. He asserts that it is ordered to kill those who spread civil strife and do Idolatry with eagerness. He has not given any time or space specification thus militants apply it today and for all times and all regions. This kind of explanation is the dominant narrative we have and the consequences, we see today are disastrous. When you say this order is for all times and all regions, for a common man or for those who need a base for their extremist warlords, you provide them what they need.

Mawdudi has translated this as,

“You fight them, until no civil strife remains and religion is only for Allah”.
(Mawdudi, n.d:31)

A very important point that has been explained by Mawdudi here is that he is referring to two types of *Fitna*. The one quoted in the verses ahead of it has a different dimension and meaning and the one in this verse is different (Mawdudi, n.d:31). While Ghamidi has combined verses with others ahead of it i.e. 190 and 193. Mawdudi retains that here its meaning is attached with religion (Din). He explains that Din in Arabic language means obedience and obedience to God (not to humans) is the one acceptable to God. He further asserts that if one cannot live a life on the laws or rules given by Allah, it means the situation is of civil strife and needs to be abolished. The ruling of human over human in the essence is civil strife (Fitna), while the ruling of Laws of God is not. ‘Islamic War’ again he asserts, is to abolish such a situation and make people subdued (obedient) to Allah’s orders and Laws. In turn they are to implement Shariah Law (as it is the Law of God to him). This provides a logical base for Militants across the globe to abolish political systems, based on principles other than Shariah/Islamic and replace them with Islamic/Shariah. Also turning it to be the essence of ‘holy religious war’.

However, let us return to Ghamidi, a counter narrative is presented by him. He translates this verse as, “And fight them continuously like this, till the time *Fitna* does not prevail anymore and religion (in this land) only is the one of Allah. If they stop their *kufar*, remember this fighting as only against cruel” (2014).

He has written a lengthy explanation to this verse. To summarise it, we present his main arguments. The very first thing is that he connects and contextualizes this verse with the previous ones. He starts this from the ‘discussion of months and particularly of Hajj’. He argues that dis-believers (of prophet’s time) have rejected the message of God, after the completion of conclusive evidence. They tortured and forced Muslims to leave Makah, because they have left the religion of their forefathers i.e. idolshping etc. Then, Muslims were going for *Hajj* (Pilgrimage) and were not allowed, and lastly that they were doing this in the months of respects (in which fighting is forbidden by Allah). These were the reasons, that limits were crossed by these people and Muslims were ordered by God, to fight them and expel them from where Muslims were expelled. He argues that this situation was of civil strife (Fitna) and in response Muslims were ordered to fight till the *Fitna* is uprooted. His explanation has some very different consequences. This, at first negates the idea of waging war against other people of other religions irrespective of times and space. Secondly civil strife (Fitna) does not refer to, accepting religion other than Islam. Thirdly, civil strife (Fitna) is defined here clearly, by these four conditions. So if a war is to be waged it can be waged after these conditions.

Civil Strife (along with other elements) encompasses the use of force against someone because of their accepting any other religion. Javed Ghamidi discusses that as God has made this world ‘for a test of human’, to do good or bad, thus human must be allowed to accept any religion by wish and thus be part of the test. Thus it can be argued that Christians, Jews or any religious group if targeted by anyone (Muslim militants) because of being a non-Muslim, falls in the spreading of this civil strife.

This discussion on agenda and argument of militants to fight until Islam dominates the world and romanticising the ideal stems from the explanations of scholars like Shabeer Ahmad Usmani and Maulana Mawdudi who, at points have not taken care of the consequences for common man and for people like these militants. They project *Jihad* and *Qital* as holy, for all times, all spaces and politico-military dominance of Islam as a dream and sign of completeness of faith. The translations and explanations they have presented, at times argue Muslim militants to fight and at time provide many with a base of arguments. Also very important is that, no clear negation of some points provided a good academic support to these militants. This has consequences for the world, for Muslims and Islam, which are not welcoming, violent, devastating and negative.

Scholars like Amin Ahsan Islahi and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi presents with a more elaborative, contextualised meaning of these verses and the idea of dominance of Islam. The clarification of ‘Time Space and context’, rule out the use of these verses for agendas like militants has. To them Islam dominated all religions of the Arab region of the time and God showed non-believers a practical test of dooms day, his authority and authenticity of His message, sent to Prophet Muhammad.

Islamic Jihad to kill and clear polytheist and to subjugate Jews & Christians.

Surah Tawbah Verse 5 (9:5), Surah Tawbah Verse 29(9:29) & Surah Tawbah Verse 123(9; 123)

These verses are usually quoted in the line of arguments presented by militants.

Khan in the last part of his booklet *War and Jihad in Islam*, under the heading of Osama Bin Laden's concept of War, has highlighted some points of the edict (fatwa) by bin laden. To him the derivation of a war against USA (and other Non-Muslims) is based on these verses of the holy Quran. (2010)

Surah Tawbah Verse 9(9:29)

Translation

“Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who don't believe in Allah or in the last day; who don't make unlawful that which Allah and His messenger have made unlawful, and don't adopt the Right way as their way. (Fight with them) until they pay fine (Jizya) with their own hands and are humbled.” (Mawdudi, n.d:183)

Mawdudi (in his Urdu Version of Holy Quran) has explained the verse by putting references in the explanations as 26, 27 and 28. Looking into them, one realizes that his argument is clear in the start, that faith in God is not only accepting it by saying but by practice and deeds. Likewise, faith in the Day of Judgment is also to prove it by practice and to accept, that authority will only be with God on that day and that no one can help anyone, except his practice and deeds in this world. The people of the books (according to Mawdudi) have violated these and now they must accept *Islam* as a way of life. They will be protected in the 'Islamic state' only if they are obedient and they pay fine (*Jizya*). They must be obedient and lower in position to Muslims. To Mawdudi, later on the Prophet took it from *Majos* and his companions took it from all nations (he may mean religions) other than Muslims of the Arab. Running through the debate, he argues that even in the 19th and 20th century there is people (rulers and scholars from Muslims) who are misguided in this and are misguiding others. They think that a Muslim state is not entitled to take *Jizya* in this modern world and are thus mislead and utterly wrong (36-37).

Islahi (n.d) connected this verse with other same verses of the Holy Quran. Here he referred to verses of Surah Baqra, Aal e Imran, Maida and Anfal, where too the same message has been explained. He asserts that after crossing all the limits (Negating God, treating Muslims harshly, expelling them from Makah, and not allowing them to come for Hajj etc), it was ordered to kill them, wherever you (the Muslims at that time) find them(524-526&557-561).He has given the list of charges (mentioned in the Holy Quran) against the people of the Book of Prophet time. These are,

- They claimed to be faithful
- They claimed to be the only custodians of God's Shariah and Faith
- This faith was not in reality (was only to show)
- Actually they were not faithful of God
- They were not faithful of Doomsday
- They were not faithful of *Shariah*
- They rejected God by making idols parallel to him

- Did what the Prophet of God *stopped them from*.
- They rejected God’s message and his Prophet (Though in their books they were promised of this last message).
- They put all their efforts and planning’s against God’s last message.

Thus conclusively, he is stating that after all these charges, these people are to be charged (fined) and punished. Punishment is killing them, wherever they are found and fine is *Jizya*. This argues that *Qital* and payment of *Jizya* were subjected to these atrocities. It simply puts that after the time of Prophet other Christians, Jews and non-Muslims cannot be killed or subjected to pay *Jizya*. Because it is God who knows about the inner self of a person, and it is He who communicated all these to the prophet through revelation. Today no one can claim about anyone rightness or wrongness. It is God who has to decide and after Muhammad he is not communicating any human (like He did with Prophets).

Surah Tawbah Verse 123(9; 123)

Translation

“O! People of the faith; fight those who reject the right path, who are near you. And they must find you tough and hard. And remember that God is with those who are *Muttaqqen* (who fear Him)”. (Mawdudi, Urdu version: 141)

In the explanation Mawdudi links this verse with the previous one but points out that here the word ‘*Qital*’ is to stress to fight them and not be soft towards them and that it’s against all the non-believers. Again he focused that a region of non-Muslims near ‘darul Islam’ i.e. Islamic state must be attacked by those Muslims who are geographically near them (Mawdudi, Urdu version: 142).

Islahi has added a piece to the explanation of this verse, which is appealing and significant, in the sense that it is restricting this fight/war to specific time and space. He argues that, the verse is spelling clearly to fight after the ‘conclusive evidence in the presence of the Prophet’ and also to fight those non-believers who are near. It means that only those non-believers will be targeted, who are in Arabia. It also rules out any possibility after the time of Prophet and out of Arabia, shattering the argument of Militants, of waging war against all Christians and Jews of all the times and all places (Islahi:664-665).

Declaring *Kafirs* (Infidels) as the worst creatures of God.

Al-Baiyyinah Verse 6(98:6)

Translation

Usmani translated the verse as,

“And those who have rejected (the message), the people of the book and *mushrikeen* (idolshippers), will be in the hell fire forever, these people are the worst of all creatures” (volume 3, p.900).

This verse is linked with the next one by Usmani and compared people who are faithful and those who are not. Those who are faithful are better than angels even and will reside in heaven. Those who are not faithful are worst than animals and worst of all creatures and will reside in hell fire. In the explanation on page 901, under the caption of “Kufar (those who rejected the message) are worst among the creatures”, he argues that they are worst than all those creatures created by God. Neither Usmani nor Mawdudi have cleared or referred this verse to specific people of time and place. They both declared that all non-Muslims will go to hell and will abide there forever. However, Islahi (n.d) and Ghamidi (2014) have presented different explanations and have argued that this penalty was only for specific people. Ghamidi translates this verse as, “Among the idol shippers and the people of the book, those who rejected Quran with bigotry, surely they will be in the fire of hell and will reside there forever, and surely these are the worst creatures.” (Usmani, 2007, Volume 4:506).

In the explanation, he argues that this very hard penalty and these very hard words have been used for only some of the people of the book and idolaters. He has explained that characters due to which this penalty was announced by the Holy book are, those people were proud, they wanted to see revelation and then be faith full, making fun of Muslims and showing disrespect for the Prophet and claiming themselves very pious and high. This very hard attitude, disrespect, being proud and making fun of Muslims at the time when prophet was there and that they knew the message clearly but still rejected it because of their selfish pride, has declared them worst of the creature and hosts of hell forever.

Jews and Christians cannot be made friends.

Surah Al Imran Verse 19 (3:19)

Translation

“Religion (Din), for God (or by God) is only this Islam (no doubt).and people of the book, differed only due to their jealousy and obstination among themselves, after they came to know. And those who rejects Allah’s orders, so Allah will do accountability very soon” (Usmani, 2007:254).

Usmani, in the explanation under a heading “religion (Din) before God is only Islam” explains the term “Islam” and argues that these Christians and Jews have made changes to their Books and thus their religions, which are not acceptable to God. This creates a general perception, among common people that Christianity and Judaism, along with all other religions (except) Islam has been cancelled. They call it *mansokh* in Urdu, simply meaning ‘cancelled’.

However, JavedGhamidi has tried to explain the verse in depth with a technical explanation. He says “(If this is the fact, then there is no doubt in it, that) Islam is the Only religion (Din) accepted to God, (because only this call people towards God) and those who were granted Book, they differed in the factualness of this knowledge (sent by God) due to mutual rivalry, though they knew it. (This is a clear refusal), and those who

refuse God’s messages as such, (they will not be safe from God’s grip), because Allah is making us accountable very soon” (Ghamidi,2014: 328-329)

He in the explanation further argues that, Jews and Christians were given the same religion (Din) by God. Religion is the same, i.e. message is the same, to accept the authority of God but due to their ignorant behaviours these Christians and Jews (of Prophet Muhammad S.W.A time) have created and crafted differences in their Religions. The religion sent by God is the same to all his Prophets, from Christianity, Judaism to Islam, but Jews and Christians have polluted it due to their ignorance. It can be deduced; from this that Islam has no such dominancy and is the same as Christianity and Judaism. (Ghamidi, 2014:329).

Conclusively, it seems that Ghamidi is spelling out that God has sent a single message through all revealed religions and Islam here refers to the message rather than the religion. This position, thus, argues that Christianity and Judaism and all other revealed religions are equally acceptable, if one follows the message. If someone doesn’t follow the message, let him/her be a Christian, Jew or even Muslim, his religion (thus faltious) will not be accepted from him. It rules out Militants argument of negation of other religions. That argument, give them base to kill and clear all, other than Muslims or convert them to Islam, thus producing very different consequences than the interpretations of Ghamdi and Islahi.

God has promised paradise to those only who fight in his way.

Surah Tawbah Verse 111 (9: 111)

“Allah has bought lives and wealth from Muslims in reward for *Jannat* (Paradise), They fight in the way of Allah, they kill and are killed, They have been promised truly in Torah, Bible and Quran, and Who is more right in his saying (than God), so be happy on what has been decided and given to you, indeed this is a great success” (Usmani, 2007:45-46)

In the explanation he has highlighted two things of our interest here. First that he believes that this prize of paradise is only for Muslims and more importantly, that it is specific for those who fight in his way and second for those who kill and are killed i.e. those who do *Qital* in his way. Thus arguing that only Muslims generally, and particularly those who fight in his way, will find paradise in reward.

Mawdudi has debated and discussed this verse heavily. We will go through his thick arguments here that this is a transaction between God and his believers. The crux, to him lies in the subjugation to God and his authority and to have faith that He is the custodian of life as well positions of people and thus fight in His way. Spending life according to this principle in socio cultural, political as well as religious contexts is what give believers (obviously Muslims) Paradise in reward. Also it can be deduced that those who did not do so and who are not Muslims are not to be rewarded with paradise. (Mawdudi, n.d:236-39)

However, Islahi's Explanation of the words 'Faithful' is different, it means those who are having faith in God and refers to all humans (not specified for Muslims). He argued that there are two groups of human, those who have faith in God, spend their lives, wealth for God and those who don't have faith, do not spend their lives, and wealth for God. The former are given the good news of paradise, while the latter group is given bad news of hell fire. Be these from Jews, Christians, Muslims or any religious group. This has been stated in all divine books i.e. Torah, Bible and Quran etc. The reference of *Qital* (killing) here has been mentioned because here the former group is fighting the war for God and spending their wealth. (644-645)

The militant's argument that they are fighting in the name of God in his way, to win paradise, seems irrelevant, in Islahi's explanation. However, when one has a look at the explanation by Mawdudi and Usmani, it seems like war and *Qital* are pre Requirements of Paradise. This is because to them all Muslims will go to paradise, especially those who fight with sword in God's way. Also that all other i.e. Christians, Jews etc will go to hell as they don't fight in God's way.

However, Islahi (n.d) is arguing that fighting was only a manifestation of acceptance of God's message and orders. It also means having faith in him and spending life and wealth according to his wishes, irrespective of the divine religion, one is following. At the time of prophet, He and his companions accepted the order of fighting by God in His way, so they were promised paradise. All individuals, following His orders have been promised paradise by God

Conclusion

After the whole debate and discussion in relevance to scholars and experts of Holy Quran from the indigenous soil and also having a view at Muslim militancy in Pakistan, it can be concluded that mis-interpretation of Quran by militants and traditional Muslim scholars is one of the most important source, pushing militants towards terrorism. It is argued that though it is not the only ground for militants of the region or of across the globe, it is one of the most important. We argue that these misinterpretations of Quranic verses provide them with a solid base. Likewise, those soft supporters of militants who are indirectly involved in the battle are also using and justifying their attitudes through these verses.

Scholars like Mawdudi and Usmani provides the base to this base. The interpretations they give are usually hard closed and detached from the whole message and context. Translating Quran without a context and using these verses for eliminating all Christians and Jews along with establishing an Islamic state is an incomplete portrayal and interpretation of the message of Quran and Islam. These verses must be contextualized and then understood as we elaborated it through the discussions of Ameen Ihsan Islahi and Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. We argued that this counter narrative can help to a great extent people, scholars and governments to deal Islamic militancy in the region. Likewise, it can prove better in the sense to remove at least one base from militants' view. We also argue to have a look into different sources while understanding Quran and its message.

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Notes

¹We acknowledge Dr Khalid Zaheer, as the study is based on his thought provoking presentation, which he did in September 2014, during the international summer school of Political Science Department, University of Peshawar, held in Bara Gali.

²Jihad is a broader term used for struggle and thus struggle in the path of Allah is called *Jihad e fi Sabilillah* or Jihad in the path of Allah. It has been used in Quran in 29 verses. While, *Qital* refers purely to fight, in its hard terms. This word has come in about 16 verses or even more.(see Khan, 2010)

³ Different sources have given different statistics and there has been a lot of research carried out on the topic. See http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_11/Special%20Section_1.pdf<http://costsofwar.org/article/economic-cost-summary>, "Growing Terrorism in Pakistan". Peace Kashmir. Accessed 20/11/14; Hamid Mohsin, *Why they get Pakistan wrong*, NYRoB 29 September 2011; Abbas (2004); Ali (1983)& Hussain (2007).

⁴We don't prefer to use the word 'Islamic Militancy' as many use. The reason is very clear, as the study will make it clearer, is that Islam never has been militant as is understood in this sense. Rather we argue that these are some Muslims who are militants. So throughout the study, we use the word Muslim Militant and argue this as well.

⁵Maulana Shabeer Ahmad Usmani was a theologian, writer, public orator and politician and was born on 7th Muharram 1304A.H. (1885 A.D.) in U.P India, to a well known Usmani family. He was a student and khalifa of Mahmud ul Hasan, the sheikh ul Hind. He attended the world famous traditional Islamic education institution (Madrassa) of Deoband and then remained as *Ustaz* there. His speeches were reproduced in his famous Book *AI-Muslim* in three volumes. Unfortunately this Book could not be completed due to his most busy life. He has written an exegesis of the Holy Quran in three volumes known as "Tafseer e Usmani". He belongs to the traditional school of Muslim scholarship. (<http://www.al-islam.edu.pk/tusmani/Index.htm> & http://www.cybercity-online.net/pof/allama_shabbir_ahmad_usmani.html)

⁶Syed Abu Al Ala Mawdudi was a great Islamic scholar, thinker and political leader of the previous century. He worked as a journalist in his early life. He studied Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Usul, English and many other subjects from the famous scholars of that time. In 1928, he wrote his first magnum opus, a noble masterpiece on the subject of Islamic War, namely, *Al-Jihad fi al-Islam*, a book, which though written by Mawdudi in his 20's, was acclaimed by great scholars like Muhammad Iqbal. He wrote extensively on issues related to Islam, as Islamic state, Islamic culture, and Islamic politics, and is widely debated and acknowledged. He has written a long commentary and exegesis of the Holy Quran in the name of "Tafheemul Quran". Though a reformist, his writings have proved to be more consequential than fundamentalists or hardcore traditional writers. Especially his concepts of Jihad and Islamic state have generated a lot of criticism towards him and many scholars link the impacts of his writings even for Muslim

militancy across the globe. He is the founder of a political party, Jamat E Islami, which is still a significant Islamic political party in Pakistan. [See Sawlat Sarwar (1979), Hamidi, Khalil. Hassan, Masudul (1984), Chowdhuri Abdur Rahman (1988), Mawdudi (1990), Ushama Thameem and Noor Mohammad Osmani (2006), Nasr (1994), to name a few sources]

⁷ Amīn Ahsan Islahi was born in Azamgarh (U.P, India) in 1904. In 1922 he completed his early education from Madrassa Al-Islahi. From this time (or 1921) till 1930 he was with Al-Farahi (an Islamic Scholar of the time), from whom he learnt the skills of understanding Holy Quran. He founded Dā'irah-i-Hamidīyah, an institute to spread and teach the thought of Al Farahi. Al-Islāh, a monthly journal was started in which he translated many portions of al-Farāhī's treatises written in Arabic. He also launched a monthly journal Mithāq in which portions of this commentary, Tadabur Qur'an, were published. In 1961, he established a small study circle Halqah Tadabur Qur'an for college students. He completed this exegesis of the Holy Quran in 1980. Later in 1981, Islahi founded the Idara Tadabur Qur'an o Hadīth, of which he remained head until his death (15th December 1997) the centre of his intellectual activities. A quarterly journal Tadabur was taken out in 1981 as its organ. Besides the Tadabur Qur'an, Islahi authored a number of books in Urdu on various topics of Islam. They include Tazkiyah-inafs (Purification of the Soul), Haqīqat-i shirk-o tawhīd (The Essence of Polytheism and Monotheism), *Da'wat-i dīnawr us ka tarīqah-ikār* (Islamic Message and the Mode of its Preaching), *Islāmīriyāsāt* (The Islamic State), *Mabādī tadabbur-i Qur'an* (Principles of Understanding the Qur'an), *Mabādī tadabbur-i Hadīth* (Principles of Understanding the adīth), *Islāmīriyāsāt mayn fiqhū khtilāfāt kā hal* (Solution of Juristic Differences in an Islamic State) and *Islāmīqānūn kītadwīn* (Codification of Islamic Law). He also translated al-Farāhī's commentary consisting of fourteen *sūrah*s of the Qur'an, as well as his following books from Arabic: *Fī man huwa al-dhabīh* (Which of Abraham's son was sacrificed?) and *Aqsām al-Qur'an* (Oaths of the Qur'an). He died in 1997 [See www.amin-ahsan-islahi.com & Saleem (2010)].

⁸ Javed Ahmad Ghāmīdī was born in 1951 in a village of Sāhīwāl, Pakistan. He studied English Literature from the Government College, Lahore and Islamic disciplines in the traditional manner from various teachers and scholars throughout his early years. In 1973, he came under the tutelage of Amīn Ahsan Islahi (d.1997), who was destined to have a deep impact on him. He was also associated with the famous scholar and revivalist Abū al-A'lā Mawdūdī (d. 1979) for several years. Ghāmīdī has written and lectured widely on Quran, Islamic law and various other aspects of Islam. He is the founder-president of Al-Mawrid Institute of Islamic Sciences and is the chief editor of the Urdu Monthly "Ishraq" and the English Monthly "Renaissance". He is also the founder of the Mus'ab School System. He has drawn heavily from the Qur'anic thought of his two illustrious predecessors, Hamīd al-Dīn al-Farāhī and Amīn Ahsan Islahi presenting many of their views in a more precise manner. However, many of his contributions to the Islamic thought are original. Both these features can be witnessed in his ongoing annotated translation of the Qur'an, *al-Bayān*. Ghāmīdī has tried to unfold the meaning of the divine message by taking into consideration these devices within the text of the translation. Another original contribution of Ghāmīdī is his categorization of the contents of religion. According to him, the Qur'an itself divides the contents of Islam in two categories: *al-Hikmah* and *al-Sharī'ah*. Likewise The *Sharī'ah* of Worship Rituals, The Social *Sharī'ah*, The Political *Sharī'ah*, The Economic *Sharī'ah*, The *Sharī'ah* of Preaching, The *Sharī'ah* of *Jihād*, The Penal *Sharī'ah*, The Dietary *Sharī'ah*, Islamic Customs and Etiquette, Oaths and their Atonement. His views on the specific nature of the preaching mission of Abraham's progeny, the punishment of apostasy, the testimony and *diyā* of women, the etiquette of gender interaction, slavery in Islam, the requisites of citizenship, inheritance laws and the general and specific directives of *Jihād* are

new to Islamic studies. Ghāmidī has also presented an integrated framework of the concepts and terms of Islam in his essay *Haqiqat-idīn* (The Essence of Religion). *Burhān* and *Maqāmāt* are two of Ghāmidī's other books. [See (www.ghamidi.net), (www.almawrid.org), (www.ghamidi.net/Ishraq.html), (www.monthlyrenaissance.com), (www.usab.edu.pk), (www.tv-almawrid.org)]

⁹<http://www.javedahmadghamidi.com/quran/89/P20> Accessed 22/11/14