

10845 - Should we adopt a gradual approach when applying the rulings (of sharee'ah)?

the question

What

is the difference between the gradual approach in the forbidding of alcohol, and the command of jihaad, whereby we are required to abide by the final ruling on alcohol (i.e., total prohibition) but are told to do of jihaad only as much as we are able?

Detailed answer

After the religion was perfected and the rulings of sharee'ah took their final shape by the time the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died, the rulings of Islam are to be accepted in their entirety and it is not permissible to take a gradual approach in applying the rulings – unlike the case at the beginning of Islam. In the case of alcohol, for example, every Muslim is obliged to believe that it is haraam to drink it. Whoever believes otherwise – when he is aware of the prohibition – is a murtadd (apostate), because he is denying something which is well known to be forbidden in Islam, from the evidence of sharee'ah, and by scholarly consensus.

With regard to the commandments of sharee'ah, the extent to which one is obliged to do them is connected to the extent of one's ability to do them. One is not obliged to do that which one is not able to do or that which will cause one undue difficulty or harm. Everyone will be held accountable according to his own circumstances. Whether or not jihaad is obligatory on an individual or on the ummah as a whole depends on the situation. We cannot say that this is the matter of a gradual approach in legislation (sharee'ah). Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can” [al-Taghaabun 64:16]

And it was reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“Whatever I have commanded you to do, do as much of it as you can, and whatever I have forbidden you, avoid it.”