

198486 - Comparison between jihad and seeking knowledge

the question

Is one who study in a islamic university a Mujahid?

If he die but not join jihad is he shaheed or not?

Which is more ajr do jihad or become alem and give fatwas and make mujahideens?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Seeking Islamic knowledge by means of which the Muslim may know the limits prescribed by that which Allah sent down to His Messenger, and thus know what is lawful and what is prohibited, and know the rulings on contracts and interactions of various kinds, and what he must believe, and other matters in all the various areas of Islamic knowledge, is one of the noblest and most sublime of aims and goals, especially if he acquires this knowledge then teaches it to people.

Seeking knowledge is a kind of jihad for the sake of Allah, especially at the present time when there is a great deal of ignorance, innovations are widespread and unqualified people are in positions to issue fatwas.

Please see the answer to question no. [20092](#)

At-Tirmidhi (2685) narrated – and classed the report as saheeh – from Abu Umaamah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Verily Allah, His angels, and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, even the ant in its hole and even the fish, send blessings upon the one who teaches the people good things.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi.

If a person studies Islamic knowledge, according to the way of Ahl as-Sunnah, in Islamic universities, with the intention of acquiring knowledge and teaching it to people, seeking reward with Allah, and hoping for the ultimate reward, is undoubtedly one of those who strive in jihad for the sake of Allah, especially if he is in a country where there is a great deal of innovation, little knowledge, and widespread ignorance. Seeking knowledge in that country is one of the greatest kinds of jihad for the sake of Allah.

Secondly:

If the one who strives in jihad attains the status of martyrdom by being killed for the sake of Allah, he will not necessarily attain a higher status than the seeker of knowledge. The seeker of knowledge may become prominent in knowledge and become a scholar, by means of whom Allah may benefit the entire ummah in a way that cannot be achieved by means of jihad and being killed for the sake of Allah.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Becoming a martyr by being killed for the sake of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, does not necessarily bring a greater reward than that of the seeker of knowledge, and it does not mean that the martyr is better than the seeker of knowledge in all respects.

This issue was referred to by al-'Allaamah Ibn al-Qayyim in an-Nooniyyah: If a man is distinguished in a particular way, that does not necessarily mean that he is superior in all respects.

Although the martyr is distinguished by having attained martyrdom for the sake of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, the interests of the ummah may be served and the call of Islam may be spread at the hands of the seekers of knowledge and the scholars in ways that cannot be achieved by the martyrs.

Do you not see how Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) benefitted the ummah? If we look at many of the martyrs, we will see that they did not bring as much

benefit to the ummah as was brought by the knowledge of Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on all of them).

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa wa Rasaa’il al-‘Uthaymeen (25/306-307)

Thirdly:

The difference between jihad for the sake of Allah and seeking knowledge varies according to circumstances. In cases in which jihad is an individual obligation, then jihad is better than seeking knowledge; in fact it is an obligatory duty to opt for it.

But in cases where jihad is a communal obligation, then seeking knowledge is better.

It also varies from one person to another. If a person has the characteristics of bravery, courage and the ability to inflict harm on the enemy, then in his case jihad is better, especially if his understanding of various issues of knowledge is weak.

But if a person is serious about seeking knowledge, is quick to understand, has a good memory and is well-known for brilliance in that field, then in his case seeking knowledge is better, especially if he is physically weak and does not have sufficient ability to learn the skills of war and fighting.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Undoubtedly seeking Islamic knowledge is one of the best righteous deeds, and in fact is equivalent to jihad for the sake of Allah, as Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And it is not (proper) for the believers to go out to fight (Jihad) all together. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may get instructions in (Islamic) religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware (of evil)”

[at-Tawbah 9:122].

So Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, explained that the believers cannot all mobilise in jihad for the sake of Allah, because that would lead to losing out on other benefits that are essential for Islam.

So seeking Islamic knowledge is undoubtedly equivalent to jihad for the sake of Allah.

But the scholars differed as to which of them is better: knowledge or jihad? Undoubtedly the benefits of knowledge are more far-reaching than the benefits of jihad, because the benefit of jihad, if it is achieved, only affects a particular part of the earth, whereas knowledge benefits all people. So in terms of benefit, knowledge is better than jihad, but despite that, we may say that for some people jihad is better in their case than seeking knowledge, but to others we would say that seeking knowledge is better in their case than jihad. This may be explained further by giving examples: if there is a brave and strong man who has knowledge of the arts of war, but when it comes to seeking knowledge he has a poor memory, knowledge is difficult for him and his understanding is weak, then in his case we would say that jihad is better because it is more beneficial.

And if there is another man who is not so courageous, and does not have knowledge of the skills of war, but he has a strong memory and is able to understand well and come up with strong arguments that convince people, then in this case we would say that seeking knowledge is better for him.

So to sum up:

- seeking knowledge is equivalent to jihad for the sake of Allah
- which of them is better varies from one person to another. For some people we would say that jihad is better, and for others we would say that seeking knowledge is better, according to what the situation dictates.

End quote from Liqa' al-Baab al-Maftooh (2/164)

For more information, please see also the answer to question no. 128163

Fourthly:

The reward for the one who strives and the extent to which it is multiplied is known only to Allah. It will be in accordance with the individual's intention, sincerity, adherence to the Sunnah, and the extent of the beneficial impact and good consequences of his deeds. The mujaahid may attain a greater reward because of his ability to inflict harm and defeat on the enemy, and because of his courage and strong resolve, combined with his good intention, his eagerness to make the word of Allah supreme, and his willingness to sacrifice his wealth and his life for the sake of Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is prayer and its pinnacle is jihad."

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2616) and others; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Irwa' al-Ghaleel, no. 413

But the scholar may earn a greater reward for teaching people sound 'aqeedah, beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds – including jihad – as well as his spreading the Sunnah and refuting the followers of bid'ah (innovation).

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever calls others to guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow it, without that detracting from their reward in the slightest." Narrated by Muslim (2674)

For more information, please see also the answer to question no. [10471](#)

And Allah knows best.