



EXPLOITATION OF
RELIGION BY A TERRORIST
ORGANIZATION:

DAESH



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**The terrorist organizations
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youth.**

One of the terrorist organizations of our age that entraps the youth by exploiting the religion, and uses religion as an instrument for their attempts to gain strength and ideological benefit is DAESH. Located in Syria and Iraq, this organization aims at the youth in Turkey as the neighboring country to recruit manpower. The first and the most important step in fighting against DAESH and similar organizations is to understand Islam correctly, and to know which Islamic values are used by these organizations for exploiting people. The study in your hands has been prepared to raise public awareness, warn against exploitation of religion, and emphasize the importance of learning our exalted religion from authentic sources.

What is Exploitation of Religion?

“Exploitation” means misusing and abusing the good intentions of a person or a group. “Exploitation of religion” means abusing religion, obtaining material or non-material benefit by deceiving people by means of religious concepts and values, in other words, using religion for their own interests.

The covert policies implemented in the region after the invasion of Iraq; nonstop violence, imprisonment and torture; and thousands of people driven out from their homeland gave the radical organizations the opportunity they wanted.

Throughout history, many people and groups have tried to obtain various profits by using the influence of religion on people; they did not hesitate to be religion-mongers. These people and groups sometimes distorted the meanings of Qur'anic verses and hadiths and used them at irrelevant situations while sometimes explaining them to the society by



misinterpreting in a way to justify their evil intentions. Some other exploiters of religion aimed at religion itself directly, and adopted rendering religious concepts meaningless as their method.

The masjid built in Madinah as an alternative to Masjid al-Nabawi when our Prophet (saw) was still alive, and the

discrimination made among Muslims are of the typical examples of exploitation of religion. Called “Masjid al-Dhirar”, this construction is explained in the Holy Qur'an as follows: *“And [there are] those [hypocrites] who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, ‘We intended only the best.’ And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars.”* (Tawbah, 9/107) Allah the Almighty (swt) warned our Prophet (saw) as, “*Never stand (to pray) there!*”, and explained us as an example that we must always be on the alert for the movements of exploitation and unrest that can emerge any time until the doomsday. Our Prophet's (saw) strong reaction against those who built this masjid indicates us how to behave towards those who attempt to exploit our religion today.

In Islamic history, one of the most tragic examples of exploitation of the Holy Qur'an was experienced during the Battle of Siffin. Called the Kharijites, this violence-based movement appeared to be so-called “defenders of the Qur'an” while actually setting the fire of unrest. Similarly, extremist Shiite factions called Ghulat try to support their deviant ideology with the verses as well. Other groups that have recently emerged in the Islamic

world such as Qadianism, Babiyya, Bahaiism, or the Druze also do not hesitate to exploit religion.

It should never be forgotten that the opportunists that abuse not only the Qur'an but also Hadith narrations, the examples from the lives of the Companions (ra) and historical figures, Islamic values and concepts exist today as well. Many individuals and groups that appear to talk about Islam under different names, publications, and discourses actually serve their own interests. These frauds claim to invite people to religion while in fact abusing the pure feelings of Muslims. They deceive people with fallacies, stories, dreams, and fake promises of *thawab* (spiritual rewards) that contradict with the basic sources of Islam, reason, and logic; and steal people's money, children, time, and even lives.

Exploitation of religion have also become a serious security issue today that threatens the unity and solidarity of the Muslim ummah. The terrorist organizations that create dissension and shed blood by claiming to be religious and representing Islam such as FETO, DAESH, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram inflict the greatest damage to Muslim societies, our unity and solidarity, our future, and our youth.

As a matter of fact, DAESH is, in a sense, a “puppet structure” created by the international struggles for power, and arms and petroleum trade. From another point of view, it is a psychological tool used to put up a wall between Islam’s message of mercy and the young generations living particularly in western societies.

How did DAESH Emerge?

The rise of DAESH and similar terrorist organizations in recent years, and Muslim youth's falling into the trap of these organizations result from not religious but economic, political, sociological, and cultural reasons. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, September 11 Attacks, the imposed deadlock on the Palestine issue, the anti-democratic suppression of the democratic demands of the Arab Spring, and the world's silence towards the oppression in the Islamic world have all caused despair and helplessness in the Muslim countries. People who are oppressed, deprived of their basic rights, and forced to live under pressure become prone to abuse because of their feelings of anger and revenge. Especially those who cannot receive a healthy religious education can easily be deceived with the effect of the pain of not being able to change their conditions, and being alone in fighting against injustice. The covert policies implemented in the region after the invasion of Iraq; the practices that divided people and set them against each other through races and sects; nonstop violence, imprisonment and torture; and thousands of people driven out from their homeland gave the radical organizations the

opportunity they wanted. Extreme poverty on the one hand and insatiable need for power on the other formed the basis for the emergence of the barbarous organization called DAESH.

As a matter of fact, DAESH is, in a sense, a “puppet structure” created by the international struggles for power, and arms and petroleum trade. From another point of view, it is a psychological tool used to put up a wall between Islam’s message of mercy and the young generations living particularly in western societies. Behind it exists a cunning, ruthless, and barbaric alliance based on deep relations of interest. DAESH is fed by faithless and remorseless channels just like any other terrorist organization that exacts a heavy toll on all humanity regardless of race, color, religion, gender, and nation.

Introducing themselves as the dauntless warriors of religion and Allah, a handful of people persecute humanity with the fierce battle they continue. Ignoring all human and moral values, and having no conscience or sacred values, these people vandalize and destroy in an ideological conditioned manner without noticing that they are in fact used as pawns.

It is not coincidental that such a blood-shedding organization emerges and uses

Islamic elements in a region where Muslims live. The fact that the organization can reach all human and financial resources although they have issues with all governments of the surrounding countries prove that it is part of a deeper structure that serves for hunting Muslim societies and youth.

It is beyond any doubt that if DAESH and similar organizations had emerged in a region populated by the followers of another religion, they would have used that religion. Therefore, these organizations can never be described as the product of a religious understanding, or the outcome of misinterpreting Islam. Because the so-called religious discourse they use is the instrumentalization of religion for violence with several purposes.

Who Joins DAESH?

The manpower of the organization mainly consists of young people who can be listed under four categories:

The first group consists of people who have grown up in a war zone in shadow of violence and savagery, suffered poverty seriously, and could not live under conditions befitting human dignity. These people are known to be illiterate, never received religious education, and suffered oppression and tyranny.



The second group consists of the children of immigrants, called “colonial immigrants”. Born and grown up in Europe, these kids are ostracized, otherized, insulted, and therefore, their self-confidence is damaged. Their need to express themselves and be appreciated is not met. In addition, they are devoid of religious education, and known to be easily deceived through radical religious expressions as they go through a crisis of faith.

One of the groups that join the organization consists of young people who are called “colonial immigrants”. Born and grown up in Europe, these young people are ostracized, otherized, insulted, and therefore, their self-confidence is damaged.

The third group that joins the organization is made up of the recently-converted young Muslims that did not have the opportunity to learn Islam from authentic sources, or from well-meant and well-equipped people. They cannot comprehend that Islam is the religion of mercy. Due to their lack of religious knowledge, they are known to fall into the traps of terrorist organizations quickly.

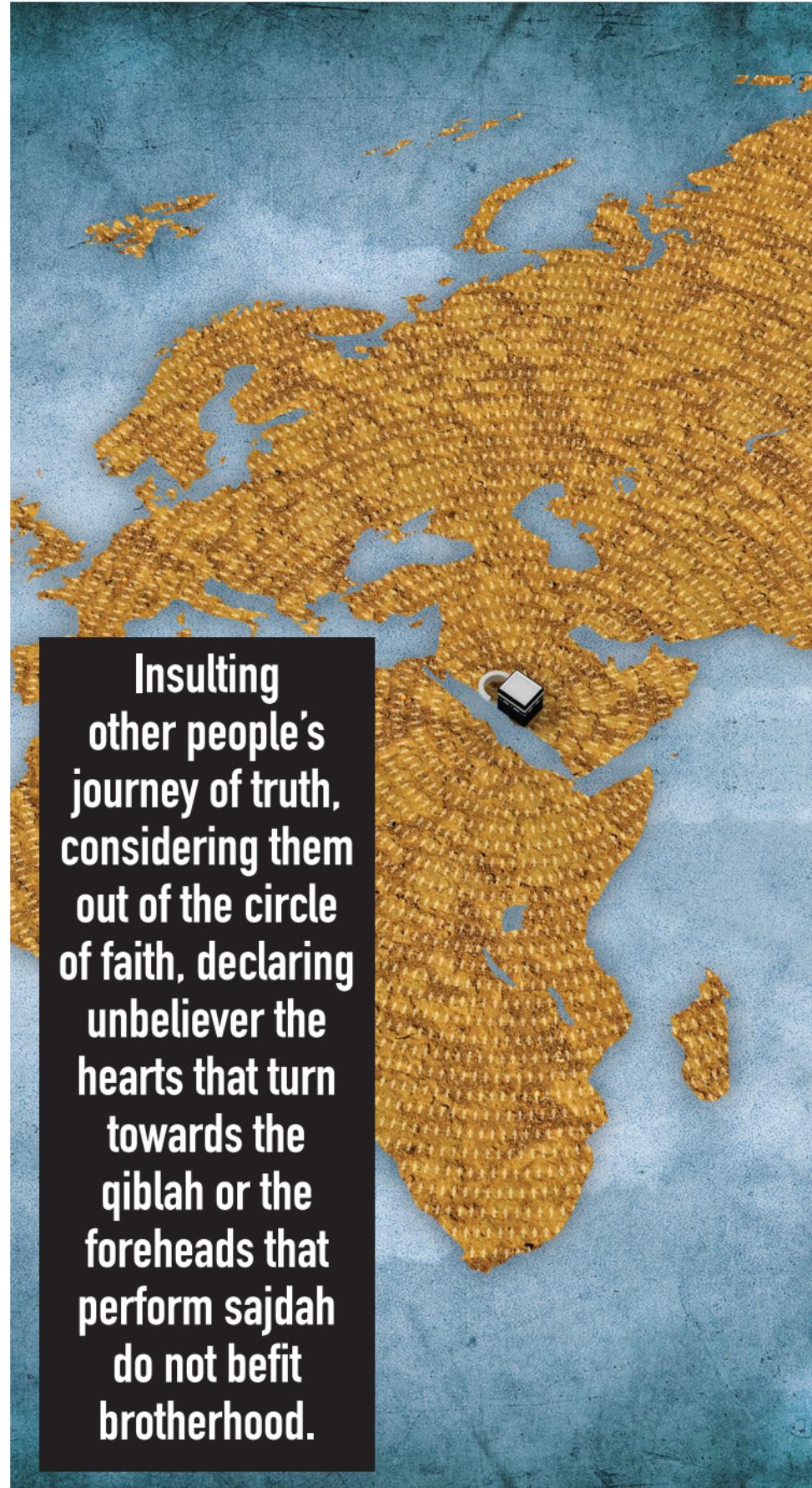
The fourth group consists of young people who do not get involved in the hierarchical structure of the organization; they are convinced that they will realize the lofty aims of Islam such as jihad, martyrdom, and heaven through the expressions and actions of this organization. The organization abuses the religious sensitivity and excitement of these young people, and tries to control and motivate them through the texts they form with Islamic concepts. After seeing their true intentions, those who are included in the organization in such a way are prevented from leaving by this savage structure they have fallen in even if they want to.

The common characteristic of these four groups, all of which are under oppression and in emptiness, is that they could not learn Islam from correct sources, that they were not introduced with the simple, balanced, embracing and encompassing approach of Islam, and that they do not know the basic

concepts of Islam. They did not learn that faith should be reinforced by good morality and acts of worship, and that a believer is “the one from whose hands and tongue people are safe”. They do not know the essence of Islam, which enjoins goodness and beneficence, prohibits persecution and torture, and calls out to people as, “*O you who have believed! Come, all of you, to peace.*” (Baqarah, 2/208)

How does DAESH Abuse Religious Texts?

While teaching the principles of Islam, our Prophet (saw) also taught how to understand and practice them in daily life correctly, in other words, he (saw) adopted a methodology. Accordingly, Muslims adopted some rules based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah in order to determine both the fundamentals of faith and rulings about daily practices. This field of knowledge, which is closed to random thoughts, arbitrary interpretations, and irregular practices, was regulated by our Prophet (saw) and taught to the Companions (ra). The Companions (ra) passed on the religious rulings, commentaries of verses, and implementation of the Sunnah to the following generation, which is called the Tabi'un. By passing on this accumulation of



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perform sajdah
do not befit
brotherhood.**

knowledge from generation to generation, Islamic thought has become a quite consistent, sophisticated, and sound understanding.

Other attempts of understanding and interpreting that are outside the borders of aforementioned correct understanding, and attempts of ideological interpretation that disregard the intention and purpose of Islam have always existed. Today, DAESH also abuses religious texts with the aim of producing support for their claims and practices under which lie betrayal and rebellion. The important point here is that any methods and principles are not taken into consideration while using the so-called religious arguments, and a structure is created that turns towards wherever its interests are present. DAESH decontextualizes the verses and hadiths without paying regard to the previous and next ones, tampers with other related evidences, and interprets them without taking into account the primary goals of religion. Examples to this kind of exploitation will be specified below.





The excessive and cruel approach of DAESH exploits the lofty concept of “jihad”, and approves murdering of any opponents of the organization, Muslim or non-Muslim, even if they are women, children, or elderly.



What does “The Literalist and Salafi Style of DAESH” Mean?

DAESH and similar groups are in quest of attaining legitimacy and gaining value by relating themselves to al-Salaf al-Salihun (the first generations of Islam). They pick the literalist tendencies among the salaf that they think will serve them as a basis. Although they try to legitimize themselves with that kind of a salafi style, their main source of influence is the Wahhabi movement which took shape in the 18th century around the ideas of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and later turned into an ideology of the modern times behind its religious appearance.

The references DAESH uses in their network of printed and visual media show that they are close to the Wahhabi style. Leaving aside the wisdom aspect of religion and attaching importance to wording and shape only, DAESH’s mentality fuels bigotry and enmity. This mentality is “partialist” as they cannot see wisdom beside knowledge, morality beside deeds, and etiquette beside rulings. They are not realist, deep, and constructive but prejudiced, superficial, and destructive.

For instance, the verse “*Surely, His is the creation and commandment.*” (A’raf, 7/54) was

shown in their articles as the basis for the verdict to stay away from the elections in Turkey.¹ However, this verse describes the domination of Allah the Almighty (swt) over the universe. Shaping life on earth in accordance with His countenance will be done by humans, and there are many verses in the Qur'an that gives human the responsibility of execution and management with the attribute of being "khalifah (vicegerent)".

In another example, it can be seen that the organization suggests that their militants read the Qur'an superficially and eclectically without any prior knowledge or experience. This is a striking example demonstrating lack of principles in their strategy. It is a great mistake to read the verses about jihad alone without knowing under which conditions and among which verses they were revealed, and without learning the words and practices of the Prophet (saw) concerning jihad. But, Abu Bara al-Hindi, a member of the group, uttered the following words in a footage: "Open the Book and read the verses on jihad. It will be all clear. All scholars tell me 'This is lawful; that is unlawful; that is not the time for jihad.' Leave

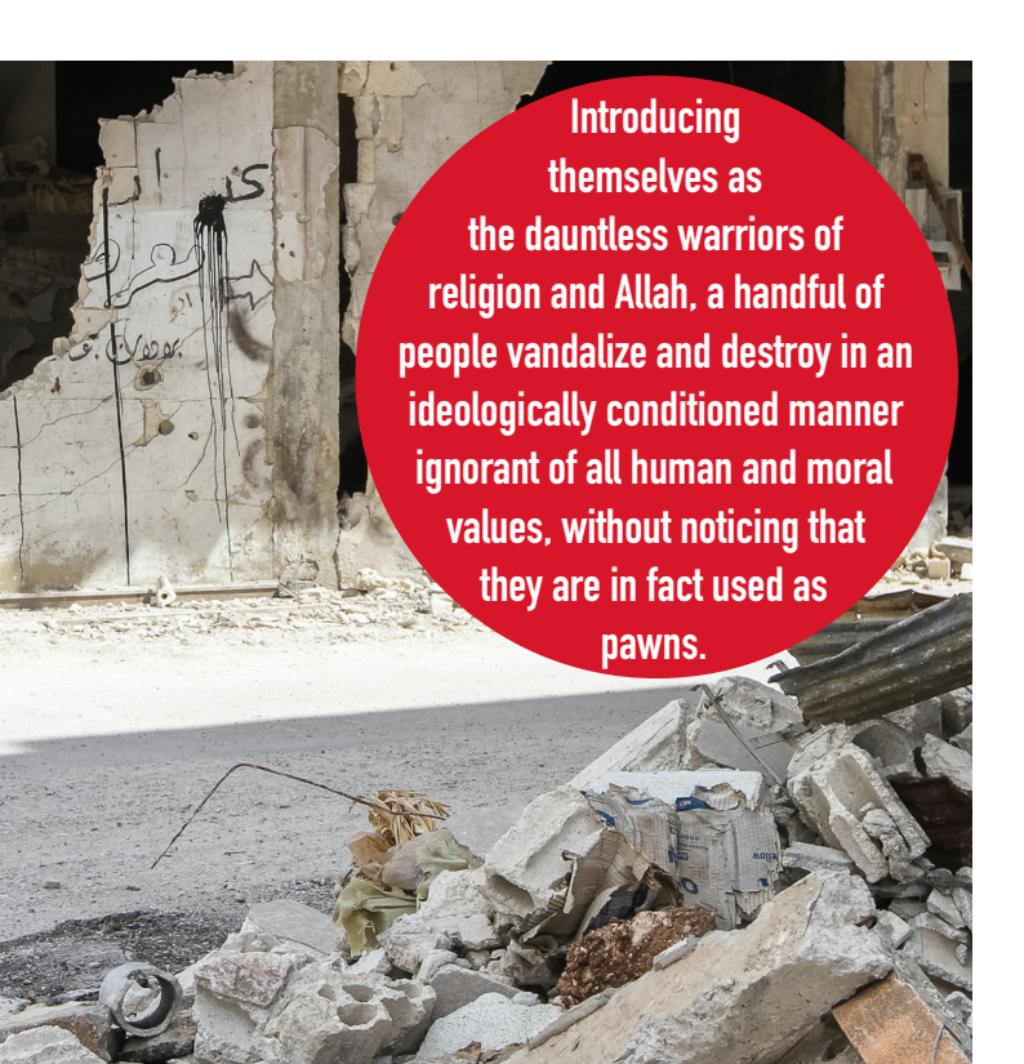
1 Konstantiniyye, 1437/4, p. 62.



all these aside and read the Qur'an. You will find out what jihad is!”²

As jihad is one of the acts of worship that has been made obligatory (*fardh*) for ensuring that people live in peace, using it for the purpose of deceiving people easily and turning them into living weapons can only be the product of a deviant understanding of interpretation.

2 Risâle Meftûha ile'd-doktor İbrahim Avvâd el-Bedrî el-Mulakkab bi “Ebû Bekr el-Bağdâdî”, p. 4-5 (<http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/14/arabic-v14.pdf>).



Introducing themselves as the dauntless warriors of religion and Allah, a handful of people vandalize and destroy in an ideologically conditioned manner ignorant of all human and moral values, without noticing that they are in fact used as pawns.

How does DAESH Define a Muslim?

To answer this question with one sentence, according to the organization, a Muslim is someone who obeys DAESH or lives in regions controlled by them. DAESH's attitude towards other Muslims is dismissing, otherizing, and declaring unbeliever (*takfir*). It means that those who do not obey the organization, accept the radical expressions of them, and who have deficiencies in acts of worship are not Muslims according to DAESH. Because according to the ideology

of the organization, “Faith is the affirmation by heart, acknowledgement by words, and the performance of deeds. Absence of one of them will make a person non-Muslim.” DAESH’s this wrong understanding of believer and Muslim causes them to declare someone with deficiency of deeds as non-believer, and even kill them.

However, according to the schools of Maturidiyya and Ash’ariyya, which represent the majority of Ahl al-Sunnah, what actually matters in faith is affirmation, which means sincerely accepting in heart the existence and oneness of Allah (swt), and the basic principles of faith. All people who utter the kalimah al-shahadah as “There is no god but Allah, the Prophet Muhammad is His servant and messenger.” are believers. Acknowledgement, in other words, explicitly stating it, is not part of faith, but it is a must for a person to be considered Muslim in this world. Deeds, i.e. worships and good actions, are a necessity and complement of faith. Therefore, one does not become a non-Muslim and cannot be declared a non-Muslim even if they are sinners unless they do not deny our religion’s principles, particularly tawheed, or insult or ridicule them. Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah express this principle as: “Ahl al-Qiblah cannot be declared unbelievers.”

What does DAESH Gain with the Mentality of Takfir?

Takfir means claiming that a Muslim, or someone known to be a Muslim, is an unbeliever. This claim has been used as a weapon in various periods of history; many groups have tried to defame and marginalize their opponents by this way. However, our Prophet (saw) stated that he was commanded to fight against people until they testified that “there is no deity but Allah and he is the Messenger of Allah”; that the lives and property of those who uttered the kalimah al-tawheed were taken under protection; that those who prayed facing the qiblah gained the assurance of Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) and therefore could not be declared unbelievers; and informed that those who declared a Muslim unbeliever would be blasphemous themselves. (Bukhari, Iman, 17, Salat, 28, Ayman, 7; Abu Dawud, Jihad, 95)

DAESH practices takfir on anyone whom they consider to be political enemies, especially the groups that are against them and that reveal their real face. Reasons for takfir include issues related to the social life such as participating in elections, working as a public official, applying to court, or going to a school. Those who practice takfir on Muslims

irrationally go beyond the limits of Ahl al-Sunnah, and apparently damage the unity and brotherhood of the ummah. Aiming at millions of Muslims, the mentality of takfir in fact increases the organization's radius of action, and forms the so-called religious basis for destruction and oppression. Their aim is not to introduce faith to people and endear it to them but contrarily to legitimize violence and terror.

How does DAESH Destroy the Historical Heritage with the Claim of Shirk?

“Shirk” means associating partners with Allah (swt), Who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. One of the most incorrect beliefs of DAESH is to relate visiting tombs and cemeteries with shirk. They include those who visit tombs and pray through the beloved servants of Allah (swt) in the category of shirk, and do not hesitate to consider that the verses on idolaters refer to those people.³

Turning the tombs into worshipping places and wishing things from those lying in the grave push people to shirk. But a visit performed in accordance with the Sunnah of

3 Konstantiniyye, 1436/2, p.4-8.

our Prophet (saw) by greeting and praying for them is legitimate. Every rational person knows the difference between them. Every Muslim believes that Allah the Almighty (swt) is One in His being, attributes, and actions. They only invoke Him (swt), ask for their wishes only from Him, and only with His grace and help the wishes can be obtained. Therefore, a tomb visit that is performed accordingly with the aim of drawing a lesson and remembering death cannot be considered shirk.

A reflection of the relation DAESH made between tomb visits and shirk manifests itself in destroying the historical heritage and showing animosity towards culture. The most apparent example of this attitude is the destruction of historical artifacts and especially the graves related to prophets. Judging the hadiths on the issue out of their historical and social context, DAESH uses them as an excuse to their actions of destroying graves.

In addition to them, the statues and historical artifacts like temples are destroyed by them. The members define destroying the heritage of ancient nations and cultures as “knocking down the idols”, and reflect it as a religious act.⁴ The Holy Qur'an, however,

4 Konstantiniyye, 1436/1, p. 25-27; 1436/3, p. 68-69; Dabiq, 1436/8, p. 22-24.



By destruction of the cultural heritage and works of art with so-called religious reasons, DAESH aims at spreading the image in the public opinion that Islam does not include culture, art, and elegancy.

recommends to travel around the earth and draw lessons from the traces of history as: “*So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.*” (Hajj, 22/46)

Destroying the historical heritage and wiping away the signs that show the attitudes of humankind about the divine trials in various periods, DAESH is in a state of complete lack of foresight. However, the distinguished companions of our Prophet (saw), Umar (ra) being in the first place, did not demolish buildings considered to be the tombs of prophets when they conquered Damascus and Bayt al-Maqdis; neither did they harm the churches and synagogues. The prominent Salaf al-Saliheen such as Abdullah ibn Umar and Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib (ra) prayed by the minbar (pulpit) of the Prophet (saw). It is pathetic that while the Salaf had such an approach towards religious historical memories, these partisans of terror who define themselves as “neo-salafis” destroyed the memories in the cities where the Islamic civilization had been initiated and developed.

Destruction of the cultural heritage and works of art with so-called religious reasons

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completely fit the purposes of the playmakers that have designed this organization. By this way, they aim to spread the image in the public opinion that Islam does not include culture, art, and elegancy; and to instill in the minds of the youth the slander of barbarity taking place in the western sources.

What is the Relationship between Fitan Narrations and DAESH?

Narrations on fitan (instances of sedition) are hadith reports about the incidents claimed to happen as the Doomsday approaches, and some signs of the approach of the Doomsday. Throughout history, many groups clashing with each other tried to benefit from the Prophet's (saw) authority to solidify their own position, and many hadith narrations were interpreted in this context and used by them. Fitan narrations concerning the social conflicts and battles originating from various religious and political reasons are among them as well.

DAESH also predicates their discourse of undertaking a divine mission on a massive war to take place between Muslims and Christians near the Doomsday. Narrations about this war, which is called “al-Malhama al-Kubra” in our

sources, is decontextualized by DAESH as well and transformed into a tool of propaganda. According to the hadith narration that DAESH uses as basis, the Day will not come until a big war breaks out between Muslims and Christians in A'maq or Dabiq, which are in the borders of Syria today. The Muslim army that will face Christians will set off from Madinah and consist of the best people on earth. Muslims will emerge victorious in this fierce battle, and then they will conquer Istanbul. As the warriors distribute war booty while resting their swords on olive trees, a rumor will be spread that Dajjal has appeared and remaining families are not safe. When Muslims go back to Damascus and prepare for war, the Prophet Jesus will come and kill Dajjal (Muslim, Fitan, 34).

DAESH introduces itself as the army of Islam, tries to legitimize itself based on this narration, and invites volunteers to Syria to fight on their side claiming that the time for the battle of Dabiq has come. However, those who are persecuted and killed, whose property is looted, whose cities are destroyed are Muslims. The Prophet of Islam (saw), however, advised a virtuous attitude even in the battle against the enemies; prohibited killing the civilians, women, children, the elderly, and the

religious officials, and he (saw) never allowed inhuman actions for taking revenge.

Does the Proclamation of the Islamic Caliphate State by DAESH have any Real Grounds?

Acting with the claim of being the sole legitimate representative of all Muslims around the world, DAESH named itself as the “Islamic State” and declared their leader as the so-called caliph. Later, the organization carried out heavy propaganda to ground the legitimacy of al-Baghdadi’s caliphate upon classical Islamic literature, and published books and brochures. Attributing significance to being a member of the Quraysh Tribe, which is considered to be one of the conditions of being the caliph, a fake family tree was made up that traced Baghdadi’s lineage back to the Prophet (saw) through his grandson Husayn (ra), which is later proved by evidence to be fake.

DAESH’s struggle for reviving a so-called model of caliphate only stems from the intention of abusing its prestige and value in Muslim societies for centuries. The aim of the emphasis placed on caliphate and imamah is to consolidate their structure by benefitting

the historical charisma of these concepts. From this point of view, it is senseless even to discuss whether or not the structure of DAESH meets the conditions of caliphate. Because the purpose of using these concepts for their interests is to damage the principles of unity, solidarity, and brotherhood in Islamic civilization.

How does DAESH Distort the Concept “Dar al-Islam”?

“Dar al-Islam” refers to countries under Muslim rule, and “dar al-harb” refers to countries under non-Muslim rule. They are judicial and political terms. The interstates order shaped by these two concepts in the early centuries of Islam has gradually changed over time and terms like dar al-suh, dar al-‘ahd, and dar al-zimmah have developed for the countries that had agreements with Muslims.

It is quite wrong to bring these concepts, developed with the aim of explaining the inter-community relations and determining legal principles at specific periods in history, to the present day as they are and use them as a screen to reflect their understanding of takfir. These concepts are handled and interpreted by scholars of Islam in different ways depending on time and geography. The

concepts in question must be reconsidered from the aspects of current international legal, political, and commercial relations with the rich interpretation experience of the scholars of Islam, and the concepts that take into account the current political structures of Islamic countries must be preferred.

Claiming to be the sole legitimate representative of Muslims under the name of “Islamic State”, DAESH uses the concept of dar al-Islam for the territories under its rule. It declares all countries, including the Islamic countries, as dar al-harb; and invites all Muslims to immigrate to the so-called lands of caliphate under their rule which is the only place in the world where the rulings of Allah (swt) are implemented. This situation is undoubtedly the exploitation of a fiqh concept for fortifying their own strategy.

How does DAESH Defile the Concept of Jihad?

“Jihad” means exerting maximum effort to fight against one’s nafs (self) and external enemies in the path of living a life in accordance with Islam, and teaching and inviting people to our religion. Therefore, its meaning includes any kind of struggle against evil people and the evil, and all effort made

for the sake of goodness and knowledge. The verse “*Strive for Allah (practice jihad) as you are supposed to.*” (Hajj, 22/78), and the hadith “*Strive (practice jihad) with your wealth, your hands, and your tongues.*” (Nasa’i, Jihad, 48) are the examples of this inclusive meaning.

DAESH aims to match the word “jihad” with inhuman meanings that never exist in the religious literature including persecution, oppression, bloodbath, and death exhibitionism. Beyond the meaning of fighting against the enemy, this excessive and cruel approach approves murdering of any opponents of the organization, Muslim or non-Muslim, even if they are women, children, or elderly. According to DAESH, jihad as a Qur’anic concept only symbolizes war, and the only way to fulfill the obligation of jihad is to be under the command of them and actively participate in their acts of violence.

In our religion, on the contrary, jihad is the name of not killing but reviving, bringing peace, tranquility and prosperity to humanity, and providing the opportunity to hold onto life. It is the struggle exerted in the path of Allah (swt), it means striving for the sake of the truth. It means protecting the sacred values, and showing determination with our bodies, tongues, thoughts, and hearts in order

to stop the injustice in the world. Those who arm themselves and blindly murder innocent people are not mujahid just as the savagery and murdering committed by the crime rings without conscience or mercy is not jihad. Today, the exploitation of the concept of jihad by the terrorist movements that have no concern of the real jihad understanding of Islam harm Muslims most by making people fear Islam.

Description of the attacks directed at innocent people, Muslims and civilians as jihad by DAESH is a crime committed against Islam. Ascribing the brutal murders to Islam indicates how the concept of jihad is abused by the organization in line with their interests. People are prevented from developing a healthy perception of jihad while at the same time the sunnah of the Prophet of Mercy (saw), who was sent as a mercy to the worlds, and who has taught humanity that even war has an etiquette, is violated; and the verses of the Book which state *“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing.”* (Anfal, 8/61) are ignored.

It is not possible to call the act of killing oneself for an action that will cause the death of innocent and sinless people, women, and children as “martyrdom”. Organizing an attack to any person or group regardless of their religion is not permissible.

Whom does DAESH Victimize with the Lie of Istishhad?

“Istishhad” means walking towards death with the intention of becoming a martyr, but refers to suicide attacks in the literature of the radical terrorist organizations. According to DAESH, the suicide attacks, in which people take part as a suicide bomber, are among the virtuous and permissible actions. The reason for defending these actions is that they serve for their expansion strategy. With their own words, *“Istishhadi operations have opened the door for most of the conquests of the Islamic state. Islamic State is the only state in the world that has this unprecedented quality. Thousands of the lions of caliphate are waiting for their turn to perform this deed in both the Islamic State and other countries.”*⁵

Safety of life is one of the basic immunities of humans according to Islam. It is stated in the Qur'an that killing someone deliberately without a lawful reason is like killing the whole mankind. The punishment of this act is to abide in Hell forever. The wrath and

5 Konstantiniyye, 1436/3, p. 43.

the curse of Allah (swt) are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him (Nisa, 4/93). Similarly, nobody can end their own life, which has been entrusted to them. Therefore, many people who believe to be fighting for Allah (swt), who have lost their foresight and prudence, who act according to the thoughts of others instead of thinking themselves are walking towards the evil while saying “I am walking towards the good”, and going towards the Hell while saying “I am going to Heaven”.

Abuse of the concept of martyrdom by DAESH closely resembles with the group called “the Assassins”. Hassan al-Sabbah also made his followers believe that he was a chosen person; tried to show the Qur’anic verses as evidence to the fictions of his imaginary world; sent the armed young people who were intoxicated by the promise of heaven into the society; and made Muslims kill Muslims.

It is not possible to call the act of killing oneself for an action that will cause the death of innocent and sinless people, women, and children as “martyrdom”. Organizing an attack to any person or group regardless of their religion is not permissible. Calling the suicide bombing attacks as “an attempt to be a martyr” instead of “suicide” is nothing but

exploiting the lofty concept of “martyrdom”. Because martyrdom is an exalted rank attained by those who die while fighting in the battlefield against the enemies of Islam and Muslims, or who are killed under oppression. Killing innocent people is not “martyrdom” but “murdering”.

What are the Inside Facts of the Violent Videos Serviced by DAESH?

DAESH’s use of torturing while executing their victims, and sharing the terrorizing videos on media has the aim of intimidation and propaganda. Terror is a phenomenon fed by fear, and it strengthens by threat and oppression. The more they scare people and the more they grow the extent of devastation, the more successful they will deem themselves. But the main objective by these practices is to cause uneasiness all around the world about Islam, its prophet, and its values.

Announcing such videos especially through social media aims at preventing the youth from tending towards the atmosphere of Islam that gives the feelings of safety, trust, and compassion. Another striking aspect of the issue is that the internet service providers who

hold the authority to delete the mentioned videos of savagery contrarily keep them open to public access.

Beheading is undoubtedly neither a humanistic nor an Islamic act. Our Prophet (saw) forbade torturing even animals, prevented exceeding the limits even during wars, and commanded to the army before going to the war to *“fear Allah, not to exceed the limits, to avoid torturing and revenge, not to touch the elderly, women, children, and clergymen, and not to cut the trees”*. (Muslim, Jihad wa Siyar, 138) Therefore, publishing the footage of torture and savagery on social media can never be associated with good intention or Islamic principles.

How can We Fight against Violence-Based Exploitation of Religion?

- First of all, we should review our education order, especially our religious education and upbringing method. When teaching religion to our new generations, we should explain them the reasons of revelation of verses, the wisdom of hadiths, their aims, and place among other verses and hadiths. We should introduce them with authentic Islamic sources that attach importance to the integrity of religious texts, that neither corrupt their meaning nor allow arbitrary interpretations. We should never allow the negligence of the techniques and methods of reading, understanding, and interpreting the religion, which have been formed in Islamic tradition of over 1400 years.
- We should not neglect our children in the rush of everyday life and earning livelihood. We should not forget that deprived of our love, care, and guidance, young people have high risk of being deceived by the channels that present distorted religious knowledge, and being allured by radical groups.
- We should teach to the young generations that a Muslim attains perfection by their

belief, behaviors, and morality; and that the practices that include nothing beyond form and appearance will avail us nothing. We should instill in their minds that a life limited only to worldly gains such as rank, power, authority, or money does not befit a Muslim, and that Islam pursues the gains of both this world and the next.

- We should be aware that Islam offers mercy and justice for not only Muslims but also all human beings, and even all creatures that share the universe. We should tell that Islam is not the religion of fear and violence but the religion of mercy and welfare. We should in every sphere stand against the Islamophobia caused by DAESH and similar terrorist organizations. We should not tolerate that people explain Islam with a dismissive and marginalizing style. On the contrary, a polite, inclusive, and gentle style should prevail in religious speeches as in the unique model of our Prophet (saw).
- With the expression of our Exalted Book, we should strive for being a “justly balanced ummah” (Baqarah, 2/143). We should be a society that does not drift to the extremes, protects the balance without departing from the true path, and avoids all kinds of immoderation. We should keep in mind

that such a society only consists of well-balanced individuals that obey the rules of Allah (swt), performs each act properly, and pays attention to not go astray.

- We should be away from bigotry and any kind of unrest it may cause. Bigotry means adhering to something without judging or questioning, keeping adherence to that thing without examining if it is right or wrong, and declaring all thoughts and understandings against that thing enemy. Adopting a religious understanding and then considering it as the sole representative of the truth is bigotry as well. The mentality that says “the only thought to find the truth and attain salvation is ours” drags both people and groups into a disaster. Insulting other people’s journey of truth, considering them out of the circle of faith, declaring unbeliever the hearts that turn towards the qiblah or the foreheads that perform sajdah do not befit brotherhood.
- Apart from the essential unchangeable principles of Islam, there are new solutions and suggestions based on the Book and the Sunnah concerning the changing and developing needs of individual and social life. We should not let some

concepts be brought to today with their historical meanings, or the semantic of them be shifted and wasted for the sake of ideological interests.

- We should see the denominations, which help us to more easily understand and practice Islam, and other interpretations which do not contradict with the essential principles of Islam, as a cause of richness. We should know that those who exalt a denomination and do not give the adherents of other denominations the right to think differently, especially those who struggle to dictate their thoughts to others by force, are trying to set Muslims against each other and divide them.
- We should protect the Islamic wisdom that keeps our religious life alive for centuries. We should pay attention that our Islamic tradition is fed by sound and authentic sources far from false beliefs. We should highlight the virtues, good morals, and immaterial depth of Islam; and should stick to our unity, solidarity, and brotherhood.