

Research Article

Verdicts (Fatawa) of Contemporary Islamic Scholars on Suicide Bombing: a Jurisprudential Analysis

AbdulHameed Badmas Yusuf¹, AbdulWaheed Olarewaju Yakub²

1. Department of Religions, Islamic studies Unit, University of Ilorin, Ilorin;

yusuf.ab@unilorin.edu.ng

2. epartment of Religions, Islamic studies Unit, University of Ilorin, Ilorin;

Olawajuabdulwaheed2017@gmail.com

Copyright © 2024 by Authors, Published by AL-IKHSAN: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies. This is an open access article under the CC BY License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Received : January 18, 2025

Revised : February 14, 2025

Accepted : March 16, 2025

Available online : April 28, 2025

How to Cite: AbdulHameed Badmas Yusuf, & AbdulWaheed Olarewaju Yakub. (2025). Verdicts (Fatawa) of Contemporary Islamic Scholars on Suicide Bombing: a Jurisprudential Analysis. *AL-IKHSAN: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(1), 81–95. <https://doi.org/10.61166/ikhsan.v3i1.91>

Abstract. Suicide bombing, a tactic employed in the contemporary time during war period, has generated intense debates among contemporary Muslim scholars across the globe as regards its permissibility in Islamic law. Because of the utmost important nature of issues involved, diverse legal verdicts (*fatawa*) have been issued by some of these Muslim scholars; some of them oppose the act, while some others accept it as a means of resistance, with both groups premising their positions on specific textual evidences as well as legal principles. Hence, this study aims at critically examining and analyzing legal verdicts (*fatawa*) of prominent contemporary Muslim scholars on the permissibility and otherwise of suicide bombing, exploring the jurisprudential underpinnings of their opinions. Utilizing a qualitative research, these verdicts shall be discussed to understand different

perspectives of selected scholars on the issue. Also, primary sources employed for this research are Islamic jurisprudence texts, scholarly articles and *fatawa* collections. Findings reveal divergent opinions among scholars due to the variety in the interpretation of relevant texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Muslim scholars with the moderate perspective, generally condemn suicide bombing, citing Quranic prohibitions on taking innocent lives. But those with the radical perspective accept it, justifying it as a means of resistance. This study highlights the complexities of Islamic jurisprudence on suicide bombing. While divergent opinions exist on the issue, the most preponderant opinion is the outright rejection of suicide bombing in Islamic law. This research emphasizes the need for proper understanding of the texts and context in addressing very sensitive issues like suicide bombing which is associated with extremism.

Keywords: Fatawa, Contemporary scholars, Extremism, Suicide Bombing, Islamic Jurisprudence

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of suicide bombing has become a pervasive and contentious issue in the modern time, sparking intense global debate and scrutiny. Within the Islamic scholarly community, the issue has provoked varied and often conflicting verdicts (*Fatawa*) regarding its legitimacy and compatibility with Islamic principles. In recent decades, extremist groups and terrorist organizations have exploited Islamic symbolism and rhetoric to justify suicide bombing, perpetuating violence and alien worldview.

In response, contemporary Islamic scholars have grappled with the challenge of reinterpreting classical Islamic texts and principles to address the legitimacy of such acts and examine its conformity to the Islamic teachings on the sanctity of human life and the preservation of human dignity. This endeavor has yielded diverse verdicts and different juristic rulings began to surface among these contemporary jurists, reflecting diverse jurisprudential interpretations.

Through a critical examination of contemporary Islamic scholars' *fatawa* on suicide bombing, this article seeks to expose the jurisprudential disparity surrounding this contentious issue, shedding light on the ongoing debates within the Islamic scholarly community. This study focuses on the verdicts of prominent Islamic scholars, providing valuable insights into the ongoing struggle to define Islamic positions on this critical issue and contribute to a deeper understanding of the Islamic scholarly discourse on suicide bombing.

The Exordium of Suicide Bombing

Suicide bombing involves individuals intentionally killing themselves and others using explosives, typically worn or carried. This act combines murder and self-

destruction.¹ This concept of self- sacrifice for a cause dates back to ancient times. Examples include Samson's biblical story (Judges 16:28) and Japanese kamikaze pilots.²

Modern suicide bombing emerged during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Hezbollah and other groups employed this tactic against Israeli and Western targets.³ In the 1980s, Islamist groups like Hamas and Al-Qaeda popularized suicide bombing as a "martyrdom" operation. This ideology emphasized self-sacrifice for Jihad.⁴ In the same vein, The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) used suicide bombing extensively in their conflict against the Sri Lankan government.⁵ Suicide bombing became a prominent war tactic in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, particularly during the second Intifada(2000-2005)⁶ Similarly, Al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks in 2001 marked a turning point, demonstrating suicide bombing's global reach and devastating impact. The Iraq War(2003-2011) and ISIS's rise led to increased suicide bombing incidents, targeting civilians and security forces.⁷ Nonetheless, the Global Terrorism Index submitted that suicide bombing has occurred in various countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Nigeria and Europe.⁸

The researchers have identified psychological and social factors motivating individuals to carry out suicide bombings as including radicalization, mental health and social pressure.⁹ In attempt to curb this, governments and organizations implement countermeasures, such as intelligence gathering, security checkpoints, and deradicalization. Despite this, the menace of suicide bombing has continued to have devastating effects on civilians, causing fear, trauma and loss of life.

Islam and Sanctity of Human Life

The sanctity of life is a fundamental and universal principle that transcends all religions, cultures, and communities worldwide. Across humanity, life is regarded as both precious and inviolable, to the extent that it cannot be taken away even with

¹R.A. Pape. *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of SuicideTerrorism*. New York, USA: Random House,2005. p.3

² M. Bloom. *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*. New York, USA: Colombia University Press, 2005, pp 15-20

³ R. Hassan. *Life as a Weapon: The Global Rise of Suicide Bombings*. London: IB Tauris,2001. Pp45-50

⁴ G. Kepel . *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. United State of America: Harvard University Press, 2002 p.100-120

⁵ M.R.N. Swamy. *Inside an Elusive Mind*. London: Vijitha Yapa Publications,2006150-170

⁶ R.J. Brym. Radical Islam and the State: The Case of Hamas. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(1), 31-53 D01:10.1177/0022002715590965.

⁷M. Weiss. *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*. New York: Regan Arts, 2015, p 155

⁸*Global Terrorism Index*. Australia: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019. pp 10-20

⁹ J. M. Post. *The Mind of the Terrorism: The psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to al-Qaeda*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp50 -65

voluntary consent. In this context, Islam, as a comprehensive and universal religion governed by divine guidance, places immense emphasis on the sanctity and value of human life, considering it both sacred and invaluable. Protecting human life is among the core principles and objectives of Islamic law (Shari'ah). Al-Qarafi asserts that the purpose (*Maqasid*) of Islamic law is only valid when it achieves the fulfillment of good (*Maslahah*) and the prevention of harm (*Mafsadah*), ensuring the welfare and ethical balance of society.¹⁰ The enhancement and safeguarding of life (*Nafs*), health, and security hold a vital position in Islamic law. The sanctity of life is repeatedly emphasized in the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah affirms that the authority over life and death belongs exclusively to Him, and life cannot be taken except by His divine will.

[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving" (Q67:2)

Relevant textual evidences supporting this objective include the verse: "If anyone saves a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind" (Qur'an 5:32). The establishment of equitable retribution (*Qisas*) for bodily harm or murder, as mentioned in Qur'an 2:178-179,

O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment. And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous. (Qur'an 2:178-179)

and the provision of blood money compensation (*diyya*) for injury or loss of life, as outlined in Qur'an 4:92, further reinforce this principle Allah says:

And never is it for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake - then the freeing of a believing slave and a compensation payment presented to the deceased's family [is required] unless they give [up their right as] charity. But if the deceased was from a people at war with you and he was a believer - then [only] the freeing of a believing slave; and if he was from a people with whom you have a treaty - then a compensation payment presented to his family and the freeing of a believing slave. And whoever does not find [one or cannot afford to buy one] - then [instead], a fast for two months consecutively, [seeking] acceptance of repentance from Allah. And Allah is ever Knowing and Wise. (Qur'an 4:92)

These and other Qur'anic verses unequivocally affirm that the enhancement and preservation of life, health, and security are fundamental objectives of Shari'ah. The sanctity of human life is further emphasized in many prophetic

¹⁰Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi. *Al-Dhakirah* (Beirut: Dar al-Arab, 1994) vol.5, p. 478.

traditions such as the following: everything about Muslim is inviolable: his blood, his money, and his dignity"¹¹

Islam regards human life as so sacred that the unlawful taking of another person's life is considered one of the most heinous and destructive crimes, ranking second only to *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) and sorcery in severity. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

Beware of the seven destructive sins. The companions asked: what are they, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Associating others in worship with Allah, Practicing sorcery, Taking a life that Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, Consuming *riba* (usury), Embezzling the wealth of an orphan., Fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting, Accusing chaste women, who never even think of committing illicit sexual intercourse, of immorality.¹²

The primacy of human life is so valued in Islam that it relaxes some laws in extreme circumstance just to ensure its safety. Thus, it permits a Muslim to conceal or deny his faith or consume prohibited food or drink in situations of duress or coercion where his life is seriously threatened. Islam obligates Muslims to strive to their utmost ability to protect their lives from danger. A key legal maxim in Islamic law states: "*Necessity makes prohibitions lawful*."¹³ This law permits a Muslim in a precarious, life-threatening situation to consume forbidden items such as pork, dog, or alcohol if no lawful alternatives are available, in order to preserve their life. This aligns with the Qur'anic verse which states:

He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Q2:173)

Also,

Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah, and for them is a great punishment(Q6:106)

Islamic law (Shari'ah) enforces strict punishments against those who unlawfully take the lives of others, reflecting its commitment to protecting life. It also implements various rules and regulations to prevent harm and abuse, ensuring the sanctity of life. To achieve this objective, Shari'ah establishes a comprehensive structure of criminal laws aimed at safeguarding life. This fact is contained in the following verse:

¹¹ Imam Ahmad: *Musnad Imam Ahmad*. (Cairo: Dar al- Hadith, 1995) Vol, 1 No 1458

Muhammad bn Ismail: *Sahih Al Bukhari*. (Beirut: Darut Turukin Najat, 1422 A.H,) vol.2 284

¹³Dawah Institute of Nigeria: *Shari'ah Intelligence: The Islamic Principles and Objectives of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Minna: Islamic Education Trust, 1436/2015) 190

And We ordained for them therein a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is legal retribution. But whoever gives [up his right as] charity, it is an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. (Q5:45)

The above verse establishes a principle of justice and proportionality in punishment. In pre-Islamic Arabia, punishment was often brutal and disproportionate to the crime most especially the crime relating to human life. So, this verse introduced a just measure and appropriate approach, where the punishment is commensurate with the crime.

Islam not stipulates penalty against the unlawful termination of life to protect it, it also places great emphasis on the importance of seeking cures for illnesses, in order to ensure sound and healthy life. This concern is evidently obvious in several prophetic traditions. One notable example is the emphasis on quarantine, including the prohibition of entering or leaving areas affected by epidemics. "If you hear of an outbreak of plague in a land, do not enter it; and if the plague breaks out in, do not leave that place"¹⁴ Other principles include the prohibition of suicide, the consumption of dead animals, and encouragement toward maintaining adequate hygiene.

The above textual evidences and principles affirm the immense value Islam places on human life, highlighting its sanctity and significance. They also establish that the enhancement and preservation of life, health, and security constitute one of the primary objectives of Islamic law.

Contemporary Fatawas (Verdicts) on Suicide Bombing

Many contemporary scholars have raised concerns about suicide bombing through their legal verdicts. Some argue that it is un-Islamic because it contradicts fundamental Islamic principles. Among those who hold this opinion are Shaykh Al-Qaradawi, Shaykh Wahbah Zuhayli, Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Usmani, Muhammad Said al-Ashqar, Shaykh Uthaymeen, and others. Similarly, several Islamic organizations have denounced and ruled against suicide bombing, emphasizing that such acts are inhumane. These include the Muslim World League (MWL), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), among others.

Conversely, some individuals, such as Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and Sayyid Qutb, have expressed their opinions supporting or justifying suicide bombing in certain contexts. Groups like Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Al-Qaeda have also aligned with this perspective. From

¹⁴ Muhammad bn Ismail: *Sahih Al Bukhari* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997) vol., Book 52, No 266

the above, it can be observed that scholars and organizations are divided on the issue of suicide bombing, into two distinct positions, namely its impermissibility and its permissibility.

Scholarly Views on Impermissibility of Suicide Bombing

The majority of contemporary scholars, including Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a prominent Egyptian Islamic scholar, have expressed views on suicide bombing. Shaykh al-Qaradawi stated that it is not permissible for Muslims to kill themselves, even in the midst of battle. He further emphasized that suicide operations are prohibited (*haram*) in Islam, as they involve taking one's own life, which is explicitly forbidden in Islamic teachings.¹⁵ In another discussion, Qaradawi emphasized the importance of distinguishing between suicide operations as a war tactic and the principle of self-defense. While Islam permits self-defense, it strictly prohibits suicide. He stressed that the protection of human life is paramount in Islam and highlighted the necessity of harming non-combatants. Qaradawi has also outlined specific conditions for legitimate resistance, including: the presence of an occupier, the inability to resist through conventional means, and the approval of qualified Islamic scholars.¹⁶

Similarly, Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuhayli, another reputable contemporary jurist, stated that suicide operations are *haram* and constitute a form of self-killing, which is explicitly forbidden in Islam. He emphasized that suicide bombing is not a form of jihad recognized by Islam but rather a sinful act that contradicts Islamic teachings.¹⁷ Zuhayli noted that jihad must be conducted under the leadership of a legitimate Islamic authority, with pure intentions, and without causing harm to innocents. He emphasized the importance of proportionality and the necessity of avoiding harm to non-combatants: military actions must be proportionate to the threat and must not target civilians. Zuhayli further distinguished between suicide bombing and martyrdom. He stated that martyrdom in jihad is acceptable as it involves fighting against oppression, while suicide bombing is not, as it involves taking one's own life and the lives of others unjustly.¹⁸

Shaykh al-Uthaymeen, a prominent Saudi Islamic scholar, also distinguished between suicide bombing and martyrdom, considering the latter permissible under certain conditions.¹⁹ He outlined the conditions for legitimate jihad, which include

¹⁵Qaradawi, Yusuf. *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. (America: American Trust Publications ATP, 1981) 259-263

¹⁶Qaradawi, Yusuf. *Fiqh al- Jihad*. (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 2003) 123-135

¹⁷Al- Zuhayli, Wahaba. *Al -Fiqh al- Islami wa Adilatuhu*. (Damascus: Dar Fikr, 2002) Vol.4, p 283

¹⁸Al- Zuhayli, Wahaba. *Al- Qawl al-Mufid fi Sharh Kitab al-Tawhid*. (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2004) p. 290

¹⁹M.S. Uthaymeen.. *Fatwa Jahiliyah*, (Dmascus, Syria: Dar al- Fikr, 1996) Vol.2, p 290

the presence of a legitimate Islamic authority, clear objectives, and proper intentions. He emphasized the importance of avoiding harm to non-combatants. By considering suicide bombing prohibited, classifying it as a form of self-killing, he stated that Islam forbids causing harm to oneself and others.²⁰ Similarly, this view aligns with the position of Ibn Baaz, a renowned Saudi jurist, who stated that suicide bombing is not in accordance with Islamic principles of warfare. He emphasized that targeting civilians during war is strictly prohibited (*haram*).²¹ In the same vein, Shaykh Ali Jumu'ah, a notable Egyptian jurist, strongly asserted that suicide bombing is a form of self-killing, which Islam strictly condemns. He submitted that causing harm to oneself or others is prohibited in Islam.²² Interestingly, Shaykh Muhammad Said al-Ashmawi, another Egyptian jurist, held strong views against suicide bombing, deeming it prohibited, as he rejected the concept of martyrdom operations, considering them un-Islamic. He argued that such actions contradict the Islamic principles of preserving human life.²³ Islamic Fiqh bodies such as Islamic Fiqh academy has unequivocally condemned suicide bombing as a violation of Islamic principles regarding the war. They stress that suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam and taking one's own life is not permissible, even in the context of warfare.²⁴ Similarly, Dar al-Ifta al- Misriyyah in Egypt Issued a fatwa condemning suicide bombings and considered it as *haram* (unlawful) emphasizing the position and sanctity of human life in Islam and taking it unjustly is major sin in Islam.²⁵

Scholarly Views on the Permissibility of Suicide Bombing

Certain scholars and some Muslim organizations, considered a minority, hold the view that suicide bombing is permissible as a means of resistance. Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, has made various statements on the subject. He initially justified martyrdom operations (suicide bombings) against Israeli targets, viewing them as a legitimate tactic of resistance.²⁶ Subsequently, during one of his TV speeches, he emphasized the importance of distinguishing between civilian and military targets.²⁷ Similarly, in Al-Qaeda's perspective of jihad, it is permissible to

²⁰ M.S. Uthaymeen. *Sharh Riyad Salihin* (Dmascus, Syria: Dar al-Fikr, 1997) Vol.3, p 225

²¹ Ibn Baaz. *Majmu Fatawa wa maqalat*. (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 2003) Vol. 5, p310

²² (Al-Ahram, 2003, Cairo.

²³ Al- Ashmawi. *Islam and the Polemics of Violence*, (Cairo:: Dar al-Shorouk, 1992) pp 123-125, and *The Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, (Cairo:: Dar al-Shorouk 1993, p215-220)

²⁴ See *Resolution on Suicide Bombings*. Retrieved from [www.Islamic Fiqh Academy of Muslims](http://www.Islamic_Fiqh_Academy_of_Muslims) World views on suicide bombing on 20th December 2024

²⁵ Dar al-Ifta al- Misriyyah (Egypt). *Fatwa on Suicide Bombings*. Cairo: Dar al-Ifta al- Misriyyah, 2005

²⁶ Nasrallah's Speech on the 4th Anniversary of the 2006 War at Al-Manar TV, Beirut. August 14, 2010)

²⁷ (Nasrallah's Speech on the 4th Anniversary of the 2006 War at Al-Manar TV, Beirut. July 25, 2016)

defend Islam through violent means, including suicide bombing. In various statements and videos attributed to Al-Qaeda leaders, suicide attacks have been justified as a legitimate tactic against the enemies of Islam. Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of the organization's leaders, outlined Al-Qaeda's ideology in his book *Fāris Tahta Rayāt al-Nabiyy*, where he justified suicide bombings as a war tactic.²⁸ Similarly, Ahmed Yassin, the founder of Hamas, justified suicide bombings as a legitimate form of resistance but condemned harming civilians. Likewise, Ramadan Shalah supported suicide bombings against Israeli targets.²⁹

Evidently from the above views, prominent Islamic scholars, including Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuhayli, Shaykh al-Uthaymeen, and Shaykh Ali Jumu'ah, have condemned suicide bombing, deeming it *haram* and a form of self-killing, which Islam forbids. They emphasized that jihad must follow strict conditions, including the protection of non-combatants and the leadership of a legitimate authority. In contrast, figures like Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Ahmed Yassin, and Ramadan Shalah have justified suicide bombings, viewing them as legitimate resistance tactics.

Jurisprudential Analysis of the Opinions

The majority of scholars who deem suicide bombing *haram* base their rulings on evidence from the Quran and Hadith. Their emphasis is on the prohibition of self-killing, the importance of preserving life, and the protection of civilians—principles central to Islam's view on life.

Regarding the prohibition of self-killing, both the Quran and Hadith emphasize this prohibition. One key Qur'anic verse states, "And do not kill yourselves, for Allah has been to you Most Kind" (Quran 4:29). Ibn Kathir asserted that this verse forbids self-killing, whether individual or collective.³⁰ Al-Qurtubi explained that the above verse prohibits self-killing, mutual killing, and harming others. Similarly, a narration from the Prophet, reported by Abu Hurairah, states: "Whoever kills himself with something will be punished with that very thing on the Day of Judgment."³¹ These clear and unequivocal evidences from the Quran and Hadith strongly emphasize the sanctity of human life, highlighting the prohibition of self-killing, mutual killing, and causing harms to others. Such rulings explain Islam's fundamental respect for life and the severe consequences for violating this principle as earlier discussed.

²⁸ Ayman Al-Zawahiri, *Fāris Tahta Rayāt al-Nabiyy*, 2001 Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, London 1-10)

²⁹ An excerpt from Ayman Al-Zawahiri's interview with Al-Jazeera, 2002

³⁰ Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. (Beirut: Dar-fikr, 1993) Vol.2, p345

³¹ Muhammad bn Ismail: *Sahih Al Bukhari* (Beirut: Darut Turukin Najat, 1422 A.H,) vol.8, Book 73, No 445

Islam places great importance on the preservation of life, as reflected in the opinions of scholars who have condemned suicide bombing. For instance, Qaradawi's condemnation of suicide aligns with Islamic law's emphasis on safeguarding human life. While Islam permits Jihad when necessary, the regulations of Jihad emphasize protecting human life and avoiding harm to non-combatants. Allah says:

Whoever kills a person, it is as if he has killed all mankind. (Q5:32)

The above-quoted verse highlights the preservation of life, declaring the taking of a soul without Shari'ah ordainment as the gravest of sins. Al-Tabari asserted that the verse emphasizes the seriousness of taking a life without legitimate justification.³² Similarly, Muhammad Asad, in his work *The Message of the Quran*, commented that the verse explains the universal value of human life.³³ This is evident in the view of al-Ashmawi, who opined that suicide bombing is *haram*. He argued that such actions contradict Islamic principles of preserving human life. Similarly, it is recorded that Prophet Muhammad said:

Preserve the sanctity of life, for it is a trust from Allah.³⁴

Evidently, the position of scholars who prohibit suicide bombing, based on their interpretation of the relevant verses of the Qur'an and prophetic traditions on the preservation of human life, is concerned with the social implications of unjust killing. This view aligns with Islam's stance on the sanctity of human life and the severe consequences of unjust killing. The scholars' prohibition of suicide bombing, grounded in their interpretation of the Quran and Hadith regarding the preservation of human life, aligns with Islamic jurisprudence, which upholds the sanctity of life and condemns unjust killing. This perspective highlights the legal and ethical consequences of taking life without justification in Islam. It is believed in Islam that "life is inviolable"³⁵. This maxim emphasizes the sanctity and inviolability of human life, indicating that every human life is precious and must be protected and respected.

However, those scholars who argue that suicide bombing is a legitimate form of jihad (struggle) against the perceived oppressors anchored their argument on the very legitimacy of jihad in Islamic law. However, this assertion does not hold, as the concept of jihad as grounded in the Quran and practiced by the Prophet is essentially about making efforts to live a righteous life, defend faith, and promote justice—none of which can be achieved through bombing. Moreover, the Qur'an condemns any form of terrorism, including killing innocent lives on the battlefield without Shari'ah justification. As Allah says:

³²Al- Tabari. *Tafsir al-Tabari*. (Beirut: Dar-al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1984) Vol. 5, p 150

³³. M. Asad. *The Message Of the Quran* . (Gibraltar: Dar-al-Andalus, 1980) 201

³⁴Ibn Majah al-Qazwini. *Sunnah Ibn Majah* . (Beirut:Dar al- Fikr, 2013) Vol.2, Book 12, No. 1764

³⁵ Ibn Nujaym. *Al- Al-Ashbah wa Al-Nazair*.(Beirut: Dar-al-Fikr, 2009) 134

Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors. (Q5:32)

Prophet Muhammad warned against taking a life unjustly, saying: "Do not harm Muslims or non-Muslims unjustly."³⁶

However, the position of Ibn Taymiah on the concept of *Inghimas* (plunging into the enemy) as referenced by those who permit suicide bombing is misinterpretation. The concept has constituted a controversial issue among scholars as some Jihadists often misinterpret this concept and often take it out of the context to justify suicide attacks. According to Ibn Taymiah "*inghimas*" refers to a situation where a soldier plunges in to the enemy's ranks, knowing they will likely be killed.³⁷ However, this concept is strictly limited to conventional warfare and battlefield scenarios, not civilian populations or non-combatants. Ibn Taymiah emphasized that such actions must be done with the intention of benefiting Islam and repelling the enemy's damage. He also stressed that Muslim and non-Muslim non-combatants must not be harmed and collateral damage should be avoided.³⁸

Moreover, the permissibility of suicide bombing, as opined by a minority of scholars, seems to overlook key Islamic prohibitions. They ignore or downplay the prohibitions against harming innocent lives and taking one's own life, which Islamic law strongly condemns. Imam Malik regarded suicide as a major sin, with the perpetrator condemned to punishment in Hellfire.³⁹ This view also aligns with the position of the Hanbali school.⁴⁰ The misinterpretation of certain Quranic verses, by minority scholars to justify suicide bombing has been debunked as fallacious by the majority of contemporary exegetes such as:

Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which the great attainment is. (Quran 9:111)

³⁶ Muhammad bn Ismail: *Sahih Al Bukhari*. Vol 2 (Beirut: Darut Turukin Najat, 1422 A.H.), 284

³⁷ Ibn Taymiyya. *Al-Ubudiyya (The Book of Servitude)* ed. Ahmad Hijazi al-Saqqā. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Turath al-Islami, 1984), p. 243-244

³⁸ Ibn Taymiyya. *Majmū' al-Fatawā (Collection Fatawas)*, ed. Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muhammad ibn Qāsim, (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1995), vol. 28, p. 216-217

³⁹ Abd- Abd-ar-Rahman Ibn-al-Qasim: *al-Mudawwanah al-kubrā li-Imām Malik*. (Beirut: Dar Sader, 1999) Vol. 14, p 168

⁴⁰. Qudamah: *Al-Mughni*. 3rd ed (Kuwait: Dar Alam al-Kutub, 1997) 74.

And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision,(Q3:169)

Regarding Quran 9:111, Shaykh Tantawi, in *Fiqh al-Jihad*, explained that Quran 9:111 emphasizes jihad as a sacred duty, where believers sacrifice their lives and property in exchange for paradise, not justifying suicide bombing.⁴¹

From a jurisprudential standpoint, suicide bombing is overwhelmingly viewed as *haram* by Islamic scholars. It contradicts key principles in Islam, such as the sanctity of life, the prohibition of self-killing, and the ethical conduct of warfare. Jihad, when conducted, must adhere to strict rules set out in the Quran and Sunnah, including the protection of non-combatants and the avoidance of indiscriminate violence. Therefore, suicide bombing, as a tactic, is not compatible with Islamic law and ethics.

CONCLUSION

The menace of suicide bombing has sparked intense debates among contemporary Muslim scholars, prompting a re-examination of Islamic jurisprudence. This study has analyzed contemporary *fatawa* on suicide bombing, revealing a consensus among majority of Muslim scholars representing different schools of law that condemn such an act as un-Islamic and morally reprehensible. The jurisprudential analysis reveals that suicide bombing violates fundamental Islamic principles, including the sanctity of human life, prohibition of killing innocent civilians, and the importance of preserving public safety. Majority of contemporary scholars, including Saudi and Egyptian notable scholars, have unequivocally denounced suicide bombing as a form terrorism that contradicts Islamic teachings. The *fatawa* issued by prominent scholars, such as Shaykh Qaradawi, Shaykh Wahab Zuhayli, Shaykh al-Uthaymeen and a host of others, provide a clear and authoritative guidance for Muslims. These verdicts emphasize the need for a correct understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, distinguishing between legitimate self-defense and illegitimate violence.

For the sake of emphasis, suicide bombing as a war tactic is intrinsically connected with Jihad which is an essential concept in Islam. It is a physical struggle by Muslims against non-Muslims with the utmost goal of establishing the religion of Allah by removing all obstacles in the way. Like every concept in Islam, Jihad is regulated with some principles which must be observed before it is undertaken. As a rule, any Jihad endeavor must be defensive, and not offensive. This rule was faithfully observed by the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions in all battles fought against the unbelievers. Despite its tenacious nature, the Jihad process must be defined by justice with regard to the latent human dignity in every human being,

⁴¹Al-Azhar University's Islamic Studies Series. *Fiqh al- Jihad*. Cairo :Al-Azhar University press, 1997) p.215

Muslim or non-Muslim. Allah has commanded the Muslim warriors to refrain from injustice even while pursuing the right and just cause. The retaliation must be proportionate to the mischief caused by the enemies; the vulnerable such as children and women must not be harmed; and religious places and plantations should not be destroyed. More importantly, the Prophet (SAW) prohibited the Muslim warriors from mutilating the enemies and burning them with fire. The aforementioned etiquettes of Jihad cannot be achieved with suicide bombing which destroys indiscriminately,

This research highlights the significance of contextualizing Islamic texts and the importance of considering the broader ethical implications of every action undertaken by human beings. It is crucial for Muslim scholars and leaders to continue articulating Islamic values of compassion, justice, equity, and peace, countering extremist narratives that distort Islamic teachings. This research therefore, reaffirms the imperative of promoting Islamic scholarship that upholds human dignity, peaceful coexistence and well-being of all individuals, regardless of religious and cultural background.

REFERENCES

- Abd- Abd-ar-Rahman Ibn-al-Qasim.(1999), *al-Mudawwanah al-kubrā li-Imām Malik*, Beirut: Dar Sader, Vol. 14, p 168
- Al-AzharUniversity's Islamic Studies Series.(1997), *Fiqh al- Jihad*. Cairo :Al-Azhar University press, 215
- Al- Ashmawi (1992), *Islam and the Polemics of Violence*, Cairo:: Dar al-Shorouk, 123-125.
- Muhammad Asad. (1993), *The Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, 215- 220)
- An excerpt from Ayman Al-Zawahiri's interview with Al-Jazeera, 2002
- Al- Tabari.(1984) *Tafsir al-Tabari*, Beirut: Dar-al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, Vol. 5, p 150
- Asad, M.(1980), *The Message Of the Quran*, Gibraltar: Dar-al-Andalus, 201
- Al- Zuhayli, Wahaba.(2002), *Al –Fiqh al- IslamiwaAdilatuhu*, Damascus:DarFikr, Vol.4, 283
- Al- Zuhayli, Wahaba.(2004), *Al- Qawl al-Mufid fi Sharh Kitab al-Tawhid*, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 290
- Ayman Al-Zawahiri. (2001), *FārisTahta Rayāt al-Nabiyy*, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Newspaper, London (1-10)
- Bloom, M.(2005), *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*, New York, USA: Colombia University Press, 15-20
- Brym, R.J.(2015), "Radical Islam and the State: The Case of Hamas." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 61(1), 31-53 D01:10.1177/0022002715590965

- Dar al-Ifta, al- Misriyyah. (2005), *Fatwa on Suicide Bombings*, Cairo: Dar al-Ifta al-Misriyyah.
- Dawah Institute of Nigeria (2015), *Shari'ah Intelligence: The Islamic Principles and Objectives of Islamic Jurisprudence*, (Minna: Islamic Education Trust, 190
- Global Terrorism Index* (2019). Australia: Institute for Economics and Peace, 10-20
- Hassan, R.(2001), *Life as a Weapon: The Global Rise of Suicide Bombings*. London: IB Tauris, 45-50
- Ibn Baaz.(2003), *Majmu Fatawa Wamaqalat*, Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk, Vol. 5, 310
- Ibn Kathir.(1993) *TafsirIbnKathir*, Beirut: Dar-fikr, Vol.2, 345
- IbnMajah al-Qazwini.(2013), *SunnahIbnMajah*, Beirut:Dar al- Fikr, Vol.2, Book 12, No. 1764
- Ibn Nujaym.(2009), *Al- Al-Ashbahwa Al-Nazair*, Beirut: Dar-al-Fikr, 134
- Ibn Taymiyya.(1984), *Al-Ubudiyya(The Book of Servitude)*ed.AhmadHijāzī al-Saqqā. Cairo: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islami, 243-244
- Ibn Taymiyya.(1995), *Majmū' al-Fatawā(Collection Fatawas)*,ed. Abd al- Rahmānibn Muhammad ibn Qāsim, Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, vol.28, 216-217
- Imam Ahmad.(1995), *Musnad Imam Ahmad*. Cairo: Dar al- Hadith, Vol.1 No 1458
- Kepel, G. (2002), *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, United State of America: Harvard University Press, 100-120
- Muhammad bn Ismail.(1999) *Sahih Al Bukhari*, Beirut: Darut Turukin Najat, vol.2, 284
- Muhammad bn Ismail (1997) *Sahih Al Bukhari*, (Riyadh: Darussalam, vol.1, Book 52, No 266
- Nasrallah's Speech on the 4th Anniversary of the 2006 War at Al-Manar TV, Beirut. August 14, 2010)
- (Nasrallah's Speech on the 4th Anniversary of the 2006 War at Al-Manar TV, Beirut.July 25, 2016)
- Post, J.M.(2007) *The Mind of the Terrorism: The psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to al- Qaeda*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 50 -65
- Pape, R.A.(2005), *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York, USA: Random House. 3
- Qaradawi, Yusuf.(1981) *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, America: American Trust Publications ATP, 259-263
- Qaradawi, Yusuf. (2003), *Fiqh al- Jihad*, Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk,123-135
- Qudamah.(1997), *Al-Mughni*. 3rded (Kuwait: Dar Alam al- Kutub, 1997) 74.
- Swamy, M.R.N. (2006),(*Inside an Elusive Mind*. London: VijithaYapa Publications, 150-170
- Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi. (1994) *Al-Dhakirah* Beirut: Dar al-Arab, vol.5, 478.
- See *Resolution on Suicide Bombings*. Retrieved from www. Islamic Fiqh Academy of Muslims World views on suicide bombing on 20th December 2024
- Uthaymeen, M.S. (1996),*Fatwa Jahiliyah*, Dmascus, Syria: Dar al- Fikr, Vol. 2, 290
- Uthaymeen,M.S (1997), *SharhRiyadSalihin* , Dmascus, Syria: Dar al-Fikr, Vol.3, 225

Weiss, M. (2015) *ISIS Inside the Army of Terror*. New York: Regan Arts, 155