CHAPTER 2
JIHAD AND SHAHADATH

The idealization of war in terms of *jihad* (holy war) and glorification of death in terms of *shahadath* (martyrdom) is the distinguishing feature of Shi’i Islam. The deep conviction the Iranian people had in the ideals and principles of the Shi’ism helped to develop the institutions of *jihad* and *shahadath* as an integral part of Iranian social life. The *Ashura* processions to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hosein at Karbala and the mourning ceremonies for those killed in the encounter with the Shah’s forces played a significant role in mobilizing the masses during the Revolution. The revolutionary leaders employed these concepts as the most suitable tools to create political awareness in the people and as weapons against the autocratic regime. Employment of these ideals gave the movement a religious colour, which was later acclaimed as an Islamic Revolution.

In idealizing *jihad* and *shahadat* in Iranian society, the leaders as well as the intellectuals of the Revolution had a prominent role. In fact, the intellectuals were not constructing a new ideology, but interpreting and re-reading the ideals which already existed in the sub-conscious mind of the people. Throughout the history of Iran, especially from the early nineteenth century onwards, martyrdom had been a recurring phenomenon in Iran's socio-political life. The commemoration of the battle of Karbala in which Imam Hosein, the grandson of the Prophet was murdered by the forces of the then Caliph Yazid, was the occasion and pretext to rouse the sentiments of the people against the rulers. Here the leaders were cleverly equating Mohammed Reza Shah with Yazid and Khomeini with Imam Hosein. Scholars like Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleqani and Ayatollah Mutahhari were the prominent among the intellectuals who wrote and
celebrated *jihad* and *shahadath* as the ideals of twentieth century political scenario. Their writings and thoughts were very crucial in shaping the political destiny of the country. Mutahhari's views on these principles are distinct from those of others and deserve more attention.

**The Karbala Paradigm**

The history of Iranian Revolution of 1979 is incomplete without a reference to the battle of Karbala, a battle fought in A.D. 680, in which Imam Hosein and his followers were martyred. Along with imamate, martyrdom is the central theme of Shi’i Islam. During the course of the Revolution, the Iranians used the myth of Karbala as a tool to mobilize popular support against the Pahlavi regime. To the revolutionaries, the insurrection against the Shah was a *jihad* as Hosein had waged against Yazid, and in course of *jihad*, martyrdom is a natural outcome. The various rituals on the day of *Ashura*, the tenth day of Muharram on which Hosein was martyred, *taziyeh, rowzeh*, self-flagellation and weeping for Hosein were frequent scenes in Iranian streets in the 1970s. The mass mobilization with the help of these popular religious traditions helped Khomeini to shatter the invincibility of the Shah's regime and establish the Islamic state. Thus, the Islamic Republic of Iran has an organic relationship with the sublime principles of *jihad* and *shahadath*.

The Karbala affair and its commemoration every year imply certain factors: one is pietistic and second religious. It was pietistic in the sense that identification with Hosein's dignified act of self-sacrifice protects one against the pitfalls of wretchedness that await the individuals in their lives. As Hosein redeemed the sins of his community through his suffering and martyrdom, those who weep for him and share his sufferings would be rewarded on the Day of Judgement and those who do not must expect the punishment of strict justice with no mercy (Dorraj 1997:496). Thus Hosein
is expected as an intercessor and he will recommend the mourners to purify their sins. However, modern scholars find another element in the commemoration. They hold that Hosein's martyrdom was not because of his attempt to get the throne, rather it was considered as part of the religious obligation to fight against social injustice and uphold the noble ideal of justice. Mutahhari believed in this version of interpretation. According to him, the Imams directed believers to commemorate the martyrdom of Hosein in order to keep his ideology alive (Mutahhari 1996a:62). Then the question arises, what is the ideology of Hosein to be enlivened and celebrated? Mutahhari quotes some traditions of Hosein to construct his views.

a) "Don’t you see that what is right and true is not acted upon, and what it wrong and false is not forbidden? [In such conditions] the man of faith should long to meet his true Lord" (Bihar al Anwar quoted in Mutahhari 1996a:62).

b) "Death is better than a life saddled with indignity"(Al-Manaqib quoted in Mutahhari 1996a:62).

c) "to meet death is nothing but felicity, and life with oppressors is nothing but disgrace"( Bihar al Anwar quoted in Mutahhari 1996a:62).

Based on these traditions, it is drawn that the ideology of Hosein was to enjoining what is commanded by the Prophet and to stop what is not permitted. These traditions illustrate that for a true believer it is undesirable to endure oppression and disgrace and hence it is incumbent upon him to uphold truth and forbid the evil. Hosein’s mission was considered as an attempt to establish a just and righteous society where tyranny, oppression and injustice are uprooted and the messages of the Prophet and Imam Ali were esteemed. Hamid Algar refers to these arguments when he says that the
commemoration of Karbala is not merely a matter of pietistic commemoration, it is not a question of remembering a certain event in human history, it is a self-identification with Hosein and the determination to participate in a struggle for justice against the powers of tyranny (Algar 1988:12).

Mutahhari considers martyrdom at Karbala as the outcome of the Quranic principle of enjoining good and forbidding the evil (*amr bi al-ma'raf va nahl az monkar*). According to him, out of the three factors for the battle of Karbala1, *amr bial-ma'raf* was the most significant for Hosein to take the initiative (Mutahhari n.d.h:13). *Amr bi al-ma'raf wa nahl az -munkar* means commanding what is permitted by Islam and preventing what is rejected in the religion (Mutahhari 1370d:143-44). It is the responsibility of all believers and those who refrain from it cease to be a true Muslim. It was the conviction of this principle that led Hosein to meet the huge army of the enemy with the support of a handful of his supporters. Politically-minded preachers believed that Hosein knew that his forces were outnumbered and he was sure that they would lose the battle and be killed. He engaged in the uprising and rejected any compromise in order to teach his followers a lesson and to set a record that there should be no compromise between right and wrong and believed that one must defend the right, even though blood may be shed (Salehi 1988:51). Hosein considered himself as a reformer set out to regenerate the corrupt society of his grandfather, the Prophet. He taught the lesson that if the situation is not favourable for commanding good and to stop what is wrong, the believer has only one option before him: embracing martyrdom. He points out to the traditions of the prophet and Imam Ali. He quotes the words of Ali that, "[D]on't you see that rightousness is not acted upon and vice grows unforbidden. In such a situation, the man of

1 The other two are not relevant here.
faith yearns for the meeting with his Lord.... I see death as nothing but felicity and life under oppressors as nothing but disgrace" (Mutahhari 1969b:63). Thus, Hosein's concern was to reform the society corrupted by the new political order. Consciously he was ready to sacrifice his life for a noble cause- the reign of truth, justice and righteousness. His opposition was to the social injustice and usurpation of political power from its legitimate holders. To realize this objective life’s desires were not constraints before him, because for him a “life of eating, drinking and sleeping only, and living with oppressors and submitting to many abjections is a thousand times worse than death” (Mutahhari n.d.h:15).

The Karbala affair has a lasting influence on Shi’i societies. The slogan 'Every day is Ashura and every place is Karbala' during the course of Iranian Revolution indicates the influence of the battle of Karbala on the revolutionaries. The memories of the martyrdom of Hosein reminded them that wherever the Muslim is, he/she is in a field of struggle where the forces of justice and legitimacy are confronted by the force of tyranny and every day of his/her life is a day of battle in which he/she should seek either triumph or martyrdom (Algar 1988:12). Thus, it set a new mindset to confront the forces of the Shah that resembled to them the forces of Yazid. As Michael Fischer pointed out, the lamentation on the tragic plight of Hosein was a pertinent identification with the people of Kufa who first invited him to lead them in revolt against Yazid and then sold out to Yazid, leaving Hosein to be martyred. The identification was intended to produce a re-dedication to the ideals of Hosein and Islam, to the ideals of a just society, to forswear selling out to tyrants as the Kufans did in the past. The morale of the lamentation should be a good feeling of quiet determination and willingness to struggle against even overwhelming odds for moral needs (Fischer 1980b:104).
The same line of thought is reflected in the words of Mutahhari. He sympathizes with the rowzeh preachers who present the death of Hosein as a life lost in vain at the hands of power-hungry and selfish ruler. Mutahhari says that those preachers have little analytical insight into the question of martyrdom. They could not understand the message and spirit of the event, they rather look on things in their outward appearance. No doubt, Hosein was killed out of the selfishness and power-hunger of Yazid, but the noteworthy aspect is that he consciously chose the path of martyrdom (Mutahhari n.d-c:12). Mutahhari described the events thus: "[H]is [Hosein's] opponents wanted him to pledge his allegiance, but he, knowing fully well the consequences, chose to resist their demand. He regarded it as a great sin to remain quiet at the juncture" (Mutahhari n.d-c:12). Hosein considered the allegiance to an usurpatory government as a great sin, hence he fought against the enemy, knowing well that he would be killed, to teach the believers that it is the obligation to fight against unjust and oppressive rulers at any place and at any time. Thus, it can be drawn that, according to Mutahhari, for a believer the commemoration of Karbala is not for the prayer and mourning for Hosein, but to teach the people that they should sacrifice everything in their disposal, including their life, for an Islamic socio-political order. This is the message of Karbala and martyrdom of Hosein.

The Significance of Jihad

The Islamic principles of jihad and shahadat were the moving spirit behind the Revolution of 1979. Hence, a comprehensive analysis of these concepts becomes relevant to understand the nature of the Iranian Revolution. Generally, jihad is conceived as the holy war the Muslim wage against the unbelievers. Since it is perceived as the fight against those who does not believe in Islam, it is termed, as a crusade against non-Muslims, hence is a
controversial issue. The word *jihad* is derived from the Arabic term ‘jaheda’, *which* means ‘to strive’. And *jihad* has the literal meaning 'effort', 'striving' or 'struggle'. On the whole, *jihad* is the effort the believer has to undertake with their selves and possessions for God’s sake. One who strives so is a *mujahid*.

There are different kinds of *jihads* in Islam. The effort a person takes to improve his/her spirit and mind is the most important of them. It is a war one fights against his/her own vices. Many scholars treat this as more important than the fight against the enemies. Hence, this is called *jihad al-Kubra* or ‘greater *jihad*’. Mutahhari explains that a *mujahid* is one who combats the self and fights against his or her carnal desires. To support his argument, he quotes Imam Ali who says that “the bravest person is who conquers his own desires” (Mutahhari 1983a:105). The conflict with the enemies of Islam is much holier, but it is ‘lesser *jihad*’ or *jihad al-sughra*. However, from the sociological point of view armed conflict is more important. That is why more interpretations and explanations of *jihad* pertain to wars and attacks. Besides, because in the Quran and the traditions the term is followed by the words "in the path of God" (*fi sabil illah*), it has usually been understood as meaning to wage war.

According to Mutahhari, *jihad* is directing others to do what is laid down by the religious laws (*amr bi al-ma'ruf*) and enjoining others not to do what is unlawful (*nahy az munkar*). It means that “if existing conditions are undesirable and inhuman, one should not surrender and stoop. He should use his utmost efforts to reject and oppose this order in favour of the establishment of a desirable and idealistic one” (Mutahhari 1985b:46). In short, if there are elements in the society which violates the religious and humanistic values, it is the duty of the believer to fight against them. There are over one hundred verses in the Quran directly dealing with *jihad* and
Out of them Mutahhari identifies two kinds of verses—unconditional and conditional. Unconditional verses are those, which demands to fight against the unbelievers unconditionally. The verse 9:29 is the example of this kind which reads as, "Fight those who believe not/ In God nor the Last Day,/ Nor hold that forbidden/ Which hath been forbidden/ By God and his Apostles,/ Nor acknowledge the Religion / Of Truth, (even if they are)/ Of the People of the Book,/ Until they pay the Jizya/ With willing submission,/ And feel themselves subdued."(9:29). This verse means that the people who are not ready to accept the principles of Islam should be fought and defeated. The conditional verses restrict fighting only against those people who are in an aggressive state against the Muslims. The verse 2:190 is an example for this kind, which says, "Fight in the cause of God those who fight you"(2:190). Here fighting is allowed provided that the other group is encroaching into the rights and privileges of the community. It is a kind of defence against aggression.

By analyzing these verses, Mutahhari affirms that the Islamic *jihad* is only defence against aggression, not initiating war. He reached this conclusion by combining the spirit of these two verses. On the basis of the general rule among the *ulama* that any command given at one place with no conditions, and in another occasion the same command is given with a condition attached, then the unconditional should be interpreted as the conditional, meanings that the aim of unconditional is exactly that of the conditional (Mutahhari 1981c:10-11). Here the first verse (9:29) should be understood in connection with the second (2:190), and be read as fight the enemies of Islam if they commit any aggression against the Muslims. In this sense, considering different Quranic verses about *jihad*, Mutahhari draws the conclusion that waging war is permissible only if enemies themselves initiate hostilities or if they try to conspire against Muslims. Initiating war is not permissible for them.
Generally, there is a belief in modern world that war is an evil and no religion should advocate fighting, rather it should stand for peace. Mutahhari says that it is just an allegation that since Islam has rules, regulations and principles of war, it is a religion of war and imposes its faith on the people by using force. He denies this allegation and asserts that Islam is a religion of society and community and of responsibilities of the society, and for this reason the Islamic jurisprudence includes a law of *jihad* (Mutahhari n.d.i: 91). That is, a religion that has a vision on human life and purports to reform the world cannot neglect war; rather it must contain principles and strategies of combat also. Mahmud Taleqani also shares the views of Mutahhari that war is natural and instinctive in humans and they cannot do without it, and secondly a perfect religion cannot condemn it as unnecessary evil. He says that, “if a Prophet or lawgiver decrees that war and defence is to be nullified in a nation, it is the same as decreeing that because lustful passion causes unfavourable social conditions, men and women have to cut off their procreative organs” (Abedi 1986:53). Mutahhari theorizes this point, "[W]ar that is transgression is utterly bad, while war that is standing up (*giyam*) in the face of transgression is utterly good and one of the necessities of human life" (Mutahhari 1981c:21). Here he not only sanctifies war, but also defends it as a measure to withstand transgression by the enemies.

Parallel to laying down the principles of war and advocating its relevance, Mutahhari treats peace as the soul of Islam. Commenting on the Quranic verses 2:208 and 8:61, he says that these clearly show that the soul of Islam is peace (Mutahhari 1981c:40). But peace is not surrender or accepting humiliation, but is honourable co-existence. In a society if one power is transgressing the rights of another power, and the latter becomes

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2 2:208 read as 'O ye who believe! Enter into Islam Whole-heartedly'
8:61 says 'But if the enemy Incline towards peace, Do thou (also) incline Towards peace, and trust In God'.
passive in the name of peace, Mutahhari says that it is not peace but surrender, and a matter of absolute humiliation. It is a situation which is absolutely dishonourable on both sides, as on one side the dishonour is aggression, and on the other side it is the dishonour of surrender in the face of injustice and oppression (Mutahhari 1981c:21). If one group is of aggressors and the other group accepts restraint on the pretext of war being bad, this is not peace, but willing acceptance of humiliation and misery. This is humiliation because the aggression is imposed on the latter group in the name of peace. According to him, peace is co-existence by respecting the rights and sentiments of others. He explains,

[I]f one power is faced with another power and both advocate peace, both of them desire...to live in peaceful co-existence without this side wishing to aggress that side or that side intending to aggress this side, but both of them wishing to live in a state of peace with reciprocal rights and mutual respect, then this is called peace and is good and essential (Mutahhari 1981c:32).

In short, peace is the ideal of Islamic view of society. Nevertheless, if any power disturbs that peace, to fight against the perpetrator of disturbance is not only permissible, but the obligation of the community.

Lack of strength or inability to confront the enemy is not an excuse to refrain from participating in *jihad*. If one is not able to resist the enemy, he/she should not accept the corrupt or oppressive system at any circumstance, but should migrate from his/her home to settle down at another destination in order to save his/her religion and faith (Mutahhari 1983a:103). The environment and living conditions are not excuses for accepting abasement, dejection and tyranny. Mutahhari believes that there is no excuse to say that the enemy leaves no alternative, but only subjection and
abasement. In such conditions, persons are to migrate to a position of strength, and then give the enemy the same treatment once the former had received from the latter (Mutahhari 1983a:117). He attaches great significance to \textit{jihad} and migration. He remarks that: “a person who has never fought or never thought of fighting will in his death pass away in a kind of hypocrisy while those who cherish the intention to migrate or fight in a jihad under necessary conditions may attain the rank of emigrants and crusaders” (Mutahhari 1983a:107). Thus, a believer has only two options before an oppressive socio-political system: either to resist it or to migrate from that land. Being adjusted with the system is not acceptable at any cost. Generally, \textit{jihad} is obligatory only on men, but rarely does it becomes the duty of women. It is obligatory for women if a city or area of Muslims has been attacked and the \textit{jihad} had a very defensive state (Mutahhari 1372/1993:111).

\textbf{The Aims of Jihad}

According to the classical Islamic view, there are two domains in the world: \textit{dar al-Islam} (the domain of Muslims) and \textit{dar al-harb} (the domain of non-Muslims). The expansion of Islam was considered the obligation of Islamic societies. This was the aim of \textit{jihad} in the early period of Islam. The Shi’i scholars added the concept of \textit{dar al-iman} (the house of faith-where the Shi’is reside) to the traditional dictionary of \textit{dar al-Islam} and \textit{dar al-harb}, and permitted to wage a non-violent \textit{jihad}, a struggle of persuasion, aiming at the conversion of \textit{dar al-Islam} into \textit{dar al-Iman} (Arjomand 1984:61-64). But in Shi’i view, the obligation of \textit{jihad} is conditional upon the manifest presence of the \textit{Imam}, and hence the doctrine has lost its practical significance after his Occultation. However, defence against enemy's aggression or defensive \textit{jihad} is permissible. Mutahhari says that "[T]here are two types of \textit{jihad}: \textit{ibtidai} (to be begun by Muslims) and \textit{defai} (defensive). In the view of Shi’i jurisprudence, \textit{ibtidai jihad} can only take shape under the
direction of the twelve Immaculate Imams, otherwise it is forbidden" (Mutahatri n.d.i:91). While war of expansion is forbidden, the defensive jihad does not require the command of the Imam. It is the duty of the Islamic society whenever the conditions demand. According to Mutahhari, jihad is one of the principal duties (furu'e din) of Islam along with prayer, fasting, haj, zakat, khoms etc (Mutahhari 1981c:17). Shariati expressed the same idea in beautiful words:

[I]f you are not in the battlefield of truth and falsehood, it makes no difference where you are. When you are not a witness in the battlefield of truth and falsehood of your time, be anywhere else you wish. Stand for prayer or sit down for wine. Both are the same (Abedi 1986:249).

This is about defensive jihad, and all the reasons for jihad mentioned by Mutahhri and other Shi’i scholars come under this category.

Mutahhari lists three major reasons for waging jihad against the enemies. None of them is aimed at conversion of non-Muslims to Islam or imposition of the Islamic faith. All come under social, economic or political category that comes under the comprehensive framework of Islam. The first reason is derived from the Quranic verse 2:190 which reads as 'Fight in the cause of God/ Those who fight you,/ But do not transgress limits;/ For God loveth not transgressers'. Mutahhari explains the verse as follows:

it is those who are fighting us that we are to fight and not anyone else, and that it is on the battleground that we are to fight, meaning that we are to fight with a certain group of people and that group is the soldiers that the other side have sent, the men of war whom they prepared for war with us and who are fighting with us (Mutahhari 1981c:35).
Thus, it is drawn that war is permissible only against those who fight, and even then, it is limited to against soldiers of the enemy force, not the civilians. Besides, the women, children, the old and the sick should not be targeted. Destruction of the enemy's economic resources also is prohibited, because such things are counted transgression (Mutahhari 1981c:35). Khomeini emphasizes this aspect in detail in his ‘Islam and Revolution’ (Khomeini 1981:439-40). Mutahhari emphasizes the morality of the jihad that if the enemy puts down his weapon and surrenders, fighting should be stopped against him. Besides women, children and the old are not to be targeted. There should be no aggression against those who have left the battlefield also (Mutahhari n.d.a:96)

The second reason for promulgating jihad is the cause of defence of the oppressed. Citing the Quranic verse "why should you not fight in the way of Allah, and the abased men, women and children" (Quran 4:75), Mutahhari states that defending the oppressed is the obligation of Muslims, and hence war is permissible for that cause (Mutahhari 1981c:36,41). Here the opposing side is not at a state of aggression, however it does not give excuse to keep away, because when the oppressor transgressed the rights of other group of people and the Muslims have the power to save them from the aggressor, to fight the oppressor is a religious duty. "If we do not save them", Mutahhari says, "what we are doing in effect is helping that oppressor's oppression against the oppressed" (Mutahhari 1981c:36). He presents the idea in the form of a command that,"[I]f a people are bearing the oppression of a certain group, it becomes permissible for us to fight to free those people"(Mutahhari 1981c:40). If the oppressed are Muslims, observes Mutahhari, war is not only permissible but also obligatory. However, if they are non-Muslims the condition is different. If there is no freedom for propagation of Islam and the government restricts freedom of belief, jihad is
permissible against the government, but is forbidden against the people who are blameless and unaware (Mutahhari 1981c:37).

While Islam as a defensive strategy permits *jihad*, scholars have given a broad meaning to defence. Mutahhari holds the view that defence is not only counter-attack against aggression, but defence of life; defence of wealth, property and lands; defence of the independence of territory; defence of principles; all are lawful defence (Mutahhari 1981c:50). Its scope is so wide that, he explains:

> [I]f someone wants to take away one’s property by force, Islam does not permit passive surrender on the pretext that material things have no value. Similarly in the case of an assault on person’s honour (wife and daughter), Islam does not allow him to keep silent on the pretext that such sexual acts are natural. Islam regards self-defence as a duty (Mutahhari 1997:140).

Generally, fighting for one's life, property and for the protection of political aims is considered material aspects and not pertains to the fold of religion. But Mutahhari sanctifies these aspects by attaching religious significances to them and makes the dimension of *jihad* more this-worldly.

The third reason for waging holy war is the violation of human rights. It is generally considered that human beings have certain fundamental rights, rights they deserve in the capacity as human beings. If these rights are transgressed and denied, it is permissible and even obligatory to defend those rights, even though the oppressed are in another corner of the world or not directly related to them. Mutahhari considers the defence of these human values ‘the holiest form of *jihad*’ (Mutahhari 1981c:52). About the preferential order in the nature of jihad, Mutahhari writes that,"[I]f it is in self-defence it is holy. It is in the defence of one's nation, it is more holy…
and if the cause changes from being a national one to humanitarian one, it again becomes a degree more holy" (Mutahhari 1981c: 54).

Mutahhari gives a new dimension to the defence of human rights by adding a new aspect—spiritual right. He says that it is incumbent on all Muslims to practice *amr bi al-ma'rif va nahy az-munkar* i.e. "[I]f one sees that the good", he elaborates, "the recognized, the accepted has been relegated to the place of the bad, the rejected and the rejected had taken the place of the recognized, then enjoining good and forbidding evil is defending a particular right—spiritual right" (Mutahhari 1981c:55). It is spiritual right because it is not particular to any individual or station, but to all human beings of the world. To defend this right, in other words, enjoining what is commanded and preventing what is forbidden, is a major reason for promulgating *jihad*. He again elaborates the scope of defence that transgression against universal human values are to be counted as aggression and such values are to be defended. He summarized his entire ideas about the meaning of defence as:

[S]o when we say that the basis of *jihad* is defence, we do not mean defence in the limited sense of having to defend oneself when one is attacked with the sword, gun or artillery ball. No. We mean that if one's being is aggressed against, or one of one's material values, or one of one’s spiritual values, or , in fact, if something that mankind values and respects and which is counted as a condition of mankind's prosperity and happiness is aggressed against, then we are to defend it (Mutahhari 1981c:77).

Thus, it is conceived that not only the defence of one's individual rights and national independence but promoting the rights of human beings world-wide are to be the concern of the warriors of Islam.
**Jihad for Proselytisation**

A common and serious criticism levelled against Islam is that it justified war against non-Muslims until they abandon their faith and get converted to monotheism (*tawhid*). The Quranic verse 9:29 (quoted earlier) is being cited to substantiate this argument. Commenting on this verse, many scholars view that the purpose of Islamic *jihad* is the establishment of an Islamic society by uprooting all the non-Islamic ideologies. Mutahhari considers this view an allegation against Islam and believes that the verse is unconditional. It should be treated conditional because there are other verses in the Quran with the same meaning but with certain conditions attached to. If it is treated as conditional, the meaning is to fight against the people who are opposing you. However, there is another twist to the issue: whether *tawhid* is a universal human right or a personal affair of an individual. One section of the scholars believe that if *tawhid* is considered as a human right, since fighting for a human right is legitimate in Islam, a war for the enforcement of Islam can be legitimated. Another group expresses the opposite view that *tawhid* pertains to individual right and has nothing to do with the rights of humanity and, accordingly, none has the right to enforce it on others.

Mutahhari treats the issue pragmatically and argues that the crux of the question is not whether *tawhid* is a universal right or an individual right, but whether imposition of a particular faith is permissible or not. In his view, imposing an ideology on the people without their consent is unethical. Embracing of Islam should be carried out willingly, and it cannot be coerced, because the Quran proclaims "Let there be no compulsion/ In religion : Truth stands out/ Clear from Error " (Quran2:256). This verse means that there is no place for use of compulsion in religion, no one must be obliged to accept the religion of Islam (Mutahhari 1981c:42). At the same time Mutahhari takes a reverse turn to justify war against non-Muslims. He writes that though the
faith or \textit{tawhid} cannot be imposed on people who are polytheists, however, it is permissible to commence war with them for the sake of the access of \textit{tawhid}. He says that:

\begin{quote}
[I]f... we consider \textit{tawhid} to be a universal issue, one pertaining to the rights of humanity and one of the conditions for humanity's general prosperity and welfare, then we see it as permissible to commence war with the mushrekin [polytheists] for the sake of the access of \textit{tawhid} and in order to cast out the root of the iniquity, even though war for the sake of imposing the \textit{tawhidic} belief is not permissible (Mutahhari 1981c:62).
\end{quote}

However, if a government puts any barrier on the way of the propagations of Islam, the Muslims can fight against that government (Mutahhari 1981c:63). It is explained in another way that “if belief in the Unity of Allah which is the greatest asset of humanity is in danger then a fight is naturally lawful” (Mutahhari 1361:33). Thus, he considered \textit{tawhid} among the eternal human rights. Of course, he knew that \textit{tawhid} and faith are not the measures that could be enforced. It is not possible to make the polytheists Muslims through \textit{jihad}, rather \textit{jihad} in such cases is carried out to subdue governments and institutions that are obstacles in the ways of promulgation of Islam and to create the favourable platform for people to willingly choose Islam.

In other words, fighting against all types of aggression against humanity is considered by Mutahhari as defence, and war for defence is permissible in Islam. Furthermore, as \textit{amr bi al-ma'\textasciitilde{ruf} va n\textasciitilde{ahy az munkar} is one of the principles of religion (\textit{furu'\textasciitilde{e din}}, fighting for the oppressed and the aggressed is obligatory on all Muslims. If one cannot oppose the oppression, he/she should leave that land of injustice and find a suitable place to live. At any pretext, it is not permissible to accept tyranny, oppression, dejection, slavery and abasement.
The Significance of *Shahadath*

*Shahadath* (martyrdom) is the final station of the believers that is to be realized through the path of *jihad*. There is an organic relationship between the two concepts and the former is not possible without the latter. *Jihad* is the means and *shahadath* is the goal. Both are complementary to each other. *Jihad* is the holy war a believer has to undertake against oppression and injustice, and it is aimed to establish a virtuous and righteous society based on truth and justice. In the course of the war, the combatant does his/her best to defeat the enemy but he/she may be killed in the attempt. In Islamic terminology, such a death is called *shahadath*. The Prophet developed the concept of martyrdom and he encouraged his followers to attain that position which ensured them paradise in the Hereafter. The Quranic verse “Think not of those/Who are slain in God’s way of/As dead. Nay, they alive,/Finding their sustenance/In the Presence of their Lord” (3:169), points out the high stature the martyr (*shahid*) has in Islam. Islam treats martyrs the friends of God and promises easy entry to heaven through one of the eight doors reserved for them (Mutahhari n.d.c:14).

Martyrdom is giving up one's life voluntarily in the attempt to defend the cause of humanity. Here the martyr receives death willingly and consciously. But the willingness and nature of voluntariness does not put it as suicide or self-annihilation. Though suicide and martyrdom are seemed to be the same, there are many differences between them. One is a crime, the result of cowardice and a matter of shame whereas the other is the symptom of courage and valour and hence a matter of pride. It is sacrificing the life of a person in the path of God. It is the death of a *mujahid*, in his course of *jihad* against the enemies. Since he has initiated the war, which is sure of either victory over the enemy or death by the enemy, death is expected and he is willing to accept it. Mutahhari defines martyrdom as “the death of a person
who, in spite of being fully conscious of the risks involves, willingly faces them for the sake of a sacred cause” (Mutahhari n.d.c:11). Here two elements distinguish martyrdom from other kinds of death: voluntary acceptance of death and death for a sacred cause. The voluntary acceptance is the feature of suicide also, but here the life is wasted for silly matters. But in martyrdom the death is chosen for a noble cause, and this nobility and sacredness of the cause for death makes martyrdom a holy act in human society. In Mutahhari's words it is the only type of death that is "higher, greater and holier than life itself” (Mutahhari n.d.c:12). Shariati also emphasizes the same idea through the words that "[B]ut in our culture, shahadath is not a death which is imposed by an enemy upon our warriors. It is a death which is desired by our warriors, selected with all of the awareness, logic, reasoning, intelligence, understanding, consciousness and alertness that a human being can have" (Abedi 1986:194).

According to Islamic Philosophy, shahadath is the highest stage a man can aspire in his life. Longing for martyrdom was the distinctive feature of the Muslims of Prophet’s period. It was the longing and a kind of craze for martyrdom that enabled the Prophet to defeat his enemies in various battles. In the battle of Badr, the small band of Muslims could defeat the strong army of the Prophet’s enemies who were equipped with more weapons and resources. Here, the yearning for death gave a psychological strength to the followers of the prophet over the enemy, who were fighting to maintain their power and prestige, which they feared to lose if the prophet establishes his hegemony over the land. Promises of special rewards for martyrs in the Hereafter and entry of paradise without interrogation tempted the people to wage the war. To them it was a ‘do or die’ battle, whereas to their enemies it was a battle ‘to live’. During the Prophet’s lifetime, the Muslims fought around thirty battles and in almost all of them, they were victorious. The concept of martyrdom was a major factor for these victories. Shariati says
that martyrdom is invitations to all generations, in all ages, ‘if you cannot kill your oppressor, then die’ (Abedi 1986:214).

During the course of the Iranian Revolution, martyrdom was the major topic widely discussed in public. The revolutionaries considered the movement as a *jihad* against the regime of the Shah. In their reading, the Shah resembled Yazid and Khomeini Imam Hosein. Throughout the Revolution, many activists donned white gowns and marched in the streets, indicating readiness to become martyrs (Dorraj 1997:489). Many carried shrouds in their hands during protest marches. The Revolution has become an Islamic Revolution mostly through the metaphors of *shahadath* and *jihad* and the commemoration of the tragedy of Karbala. The concept of *shahadath* was the crucial factor that mobilized the people against the regime. The revolutionaries who were killed in the encounter with the government forces were hailed as martyrs, and rituals on seventh and fortieth days of their death were further occasions for encounters with the government. Thus as a cycle, *shahadath* and commemoration of *shahadath* became the moving spirit of the Revolution. In the light of these factors, the discussion of *shahadath* and its impact is noteworthy.

Mutahhari says that the function of the martyr is not confined to resisting the enemy, giving him either a blow or receiving a blow from him. Had that been the case, his blood goes waste. But the martyr’s blood is not wasted, it does not flow on the ground. Every drop of it is turned into hundreds and thousands of drops, may into tons of blood, and is transfused into the body of his society (Mutahhari n.d.c:24-25). Thus, the function of the martyr is to enliven and purify the decadent, corrupt and dejected society to withstand the vices, oppression and social anarchy. His sacrifice would encourage other people to follow his example and fight against the evils in the society. He should sacrifice his blood for the establishment of a just and
mutahari philosophizes the point that “[M]artyrdom means transfusion of blood into a society, especially a society suffering from anaemia. It is the martyr who infuses fresh blood into the veins of the society” (Mutahhari n.d.c:25).

Mutahhari reports that there is a tradition, which says that there are three classes of people who are allowed for intercession with Allah on the Day of Judgement. After the prophets and the Imams, the martyrs are the third group who can intercede (Mutahhari n.d.c:20). By referring to this tradition, though he does not mention its source, Mutahhari elevates martyrs to the rank of the prophets and the ulama including Imams. The prophets are the noblest human beings in the world, according to Islamic traditions. In nobility and escalated position they are followed by the Imams and the ulama who are the inheritors of the Prophet. They are accorded the privilege for intercession due to the high status they deserve before God. Given the same right to the martyrs means that they are the only group after the prophets and ulama who can save others on the Day of Judgement, a day on which intercession is the only assistance a person can expect from others. They secure this privilege because they lead people into the right path. To show the high station of the martyrs on the Day of Judgement Mutahhari cites a tradition of Imam Ali which reads as, “Allah will bring forward the martyrs, on the Day of Judgement, with such pomp and splendour, that even the Prophets if mounted, will dismount to show their respect for them”( Mutahhari n.d.c:27).

Islam gives utmost importance to jihad and martyrdom. It is a jurisprudential law that the dead body of every Muslim is to be washed, and covered in clean sheets. Thereafter prayers are to be performed and then be buried. This is an obligation on the Muslim community. But in the case of martyrs there is an exception that the body is neither to be washed nor is to be shrouded in fresh clothes. He is to be buried in those very clothes, which he
had on his body at the time of his death. This is an exception only for the martyrs, and even the Prophets and Imams cannot claim it. According to Mutahhari, this exception has a deep significance. He explains that, “the spirit and the personality of a martyr are so thoroughly purified that his body, his blood and his garments are also affected by this purification. The body of martyr is spiritualized, in the sense that certain rules applicable to his spirit, are applied to them. The body and the garments of a martyr acquire respectability because of his spirit, virtue and sacrifice” (Mutahhari n.d.c:9). The same idea is echoed by Shariati who says that shahadath is a process where an individual throws his inferior being to the fire of love and faith and turns it into a light and divine being. It is for this reason that a martyr does not require a ritual bath and has no need of shroud (Abedi 1986:214).

Mutahhari believes that all human beings are indebted to martyrs and all have a sentimental attachment to them. Different sections in the society, like teachers, philosophers, scholars and inventors, require a conducive atmosphere to render their services, and it is the martyr who provides that atmosphere. He calls martyrs the ‘candles’ of the society (Mutahhari n.d.c:8). A candle is to burn out and get extinguished, in order to shed light for the benefit of others. Similarly, martyrs shed light and illuminate the society. He explains that:

[A] man who works in the light of the sun during the day, and in the light of a lamp or a candle at night, pays heed to everything, but his attention is not drawn to the source of light, while it goes without saying, that without that light he can accomplish nothing. The martyrs are the illuminators of society. Had they not shed their light, on the darkness of despotism and suppression, humanity would have made no progress (Mutahhari n.d.c:8).
Shariati also conveys the same idea when he says that “the blood of the shahid is a candle light which gives vision and serves as the radiant light of guidance for the misguided who wander amidst the homeless caravan on mountains, in deserts along by-ways and ditches”(Abedi 1986:241). At another occasion, he writes that: “[A] shahid is the heart of history. The heart gives blood and life to the otherwise dead blood-vessels of the body. Like the heart, a shahid sends his own blood into the half-dead body of the dying society, whose children have lost faith in themselves, which is slowly approaching death, which has forgotten its responsibility, which is alienated from humanity, and in which there is no life, movement and creativity”(Abedi 1986:243). Thus, the martyrs are the only group who set the stage for others to live peacefully and comfortably in the world. They give life, blood and light to the society by sacrificing their lives. Hence, all the people of different sections of the society is indebted to them, and they are indebted to none. Mutahhari comments that a “martyr often scarifies his life, to create fervour, to enlighten the society to revive it and to infuse fresh blood into its body” (Mutahhari n.d.c:47). All kinds of progress and achievements the present society enjoys is the result of the sacrifices made by the martyrs. Hence, their ideas, principles and sufferings should be emulated by the succeeding generations.

**Lamentation for Martyrdom and its Morals**

All the religions and ideologies would have martyrs in their history, but they are not admired and commemorated in the way Shi’ism does. In Shi’i terminology, Hosein is the Doyen of Martyrs (Sayed al-Shuhada). Commemoration of martyrdom of Hosein and his family and weeping, lamenting and sympathizing for them has been a holy ritual of Shi’i Islam. Mutahhari analyzes the philosophy of the lamentation and points out its relevance in the social and political spheres.
Generally, Islam forbids lamenting the death of a person after the third day of his/her death. But Mutahhari applies this principles to ‘ordinary man’ and specifies that Islam tends to want the people to weep for a martyr (Mutahhari n.d.c:28). The logic of this weeping is that a “martyr creates the spirit of valour, and weeping for him, means participation in his valour and in conformity with his longing for martyrdom” (Mutahhari n.d.c:28). That is, lamentation and weeping for martyrs equip the people to imbibe their spirit, valour and willingness to sacrifice. This enables them to dedicate themselves for the cause the martyr had sacrificed his life – to question the social injustice, political tyranny and oppression of the people by the rulers. The wide practice of weeping, lamentation, self-aggrandizement and mass demonstrations with the slogans against Yazid, during the course of 1979 Revolution, justifies the argument of Mutahhari. It is said that “[T]he Imams gave the most judicious direction, when they resorted to weeping for him, for it is weeping that has firmly rooted his movement in the hearts of the people” (Mutahhari n.d.c:39).

The commemoration of martyrdom should have certain impact on the people. It should not aim only for atonement of sins on the Day of Judgement. But it has certain lessons to teach the people, and the people get certain morals from them. Mutahhari identifies certain morals of martyrdom. The foremost is that they should not allow similar situation to develop in the future. The idea of mourning is to project the tragedy as an event which should not have happened. Emotions are expressed, to condemn the villains of oppression and the killers of the martyrs, with a view of restraining the members of society from following the example of such criminals (Mutahhari n.d.c:37-38). These words serve as a code of conduct for the believers in their worldly life. Martyrdom is the weapon in his possession to meet the vices in the society and jihad will serve as a medium in this endeavour. The martyrs should be the role models for the people and they should follow their spirit
and message throughout their lives. Then only they can realize the visions of
the Prophet and the infallible Imams and establish an Islamic society.

To sum up, Jihad and shahadath are the cardinal principles of Islam
that distinguish it from other religions. While many consider war as an evil
and condemns deliberate perpetration of violence, Islam treats it as a necessity
in certain times. However, it does not consider war as an absolute necessity,
but only if the religion of God is aggressed, one's personal, economic and
political rights are denied, one’s life is threatened and human rights and
values are violated. In fact, in modern language, jihad is permitted for
establishing and regaining political rights more than religious rights. It should
be stressed that Islamic jihad is not perpetrating violence, but defending the
rights and privileges of the people by obliterating oppression, injustice and
social evils.

Sanctifying martyrdom is a unique system of Islam. No other religion
gives importance to martyrdom as Islam does. Against the general notion that
martyr is the warrior who died for the exaltation of Islam, Mutahhari
illustrates that not only the death for the cause of religion, but death on the
course of defence of one’s life, properly, national rights and even for the
protection of human values are to be considered as a ‘martyr’. He
unequivocally asserts that war for imposing Islam on non-Muslims is not
jihad, and those who die in that attempt is not a martyr. Here he clears a
widely accepted notion about jihad and shahadathand portrays them as the
tools of Islam for the establishment of an ideal human society.