

## Appendix I: Jihād and Expulsion of Non-Muslims from Islamic Countries

Is expulsion of non-Muslims from countries conquered by Islam a tenet of jihad? The question is important, for a whole chapter of the Koran is concerned with this very topic. Sûrah 59 of the Koran is entitled Hashr which in plain English means 'banishment'. The sûrah refers to the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nazir from Medina in early 625 AD. As mentioned earlier, the Jewish tribes of Medina were the first victims of early Islam's plundering expeditions. Banu Kainuka was despoiled and banished in 624 AD. The next year (625 AD) saw the banishment of Banu Nazir. Banu Kuraizah was exterminated in 627 AD. These acts of spoliation and mass-slaughter are celebrated in the Hadis literature with unbounded pride and exultation.

Sahih Muslim devotes a whole chapter to this topic. According to this work, The Jews of Banu Nadir and Banu Quraiza fought against the Messenger of Allah who expelled Banu Nadir and allowed the Quraiza to stay on and granted favour to them until they too fought against him. Then he killed their men and distributed their women, children and properties among the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah turned out all the Jews of Medina - Banu Qainuqa and the Jews of Banu Haritha and every other Jew who was in Medina. (No. 4364).

The same work cites another hadîs according to which the Prophet is supposed to have declared, I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and will not leave any but Muslims (No. 4366).

This practice of expelling non-Muslims gets added confirmation from the example of Umar, the second Caliph, who expelled the non-Medinese Jewish tribes of Khaibar on the strength of this very hadîs. The reader would remember that this tribe had been conquered in 628 AD, and the Prophet had spared their lives and habitations by compelling them to pay jizyah. Their subsequent expulsion during the rule of Umar is thus narrated by Gibbon: Under the reign of Omar, the Jews of Chaibar were transplanted to Syria and the caliph alleged the injunction of his dying master, that one and the true religion should be professed in his native land of Arabia. 1

It would thus seem that expulsion of non-Muslims from lands conquered by jihād is sanctioned by both the Koran and the Sunnah. But I have not included this activity as an ingredient of jihād as the Prophet never expelled idolaters from Arabia, nor does the Koran sanction this practice except as an act of retribution. Drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, says the Koran (2/191), and Muslims over the centuries have not been slow to point out, on the strength of this very verse, that jihād does not mean aggression. This of course is nonsense, as I have endeavoured to show by analysing very many passages of the Koran that preach aggression with a vengeance. But the point of the above passage is simply this - the Koran does not expressly sanction expulsion of the generality of non-Muslims from Islamic countries except in special circumstances, and even Jews and Christians outside the limits of Arabia are absolved from any general ban. Also, the scriptural practice of jizyah would lose all meaning if any such general ban was ever intended.

Nevertheless, the practice of expelling non-Muslims, sporadically if not systematically, has all along been a time-honoured practice in all Islamic countries. Such expulsion should more properly be called squeezing out, as Muslims, wherever they reside in large numbers, are prone to squeeze out their non-Muslim neighbours by the sheer pressure of their numbers. Even such an arch-secularist as Mustafa Kemal started his secularist career only after a wholesale expulsion of the Greek population of Turkey. In fairness to Kemal, he did admit a proportionate number of Turks from mainland Greece. But no such plea can be held up in the case of the other Christian population of Turkey, which has gone on being squeezed out from the secularist regime over all these years, slowly but inexorably.

Coming to the Indian subcontinent, Hindus started being squeezed out, right from 1947, from the erstwhile East Pakistan, now going by the name of Bangladesh. The process started simultaneously with the holocaust in Punjab where hundreds of thousands of Sikhs as well as mainstream Hindus were butchered in one clean sweep by the marauding mujāhids of the newly created state of Pakistan. It has been suggested that Bengali Muslims being of a gentler stock were incapable of such mass slaughter. This may be true to a certain extent, but the exodus of Hindus from East Bengal, sometimes in trickles and sometimes assuming the proportions of a flood, has been a spectacle no less heart-rending in the interminableness of its duration than the wholesale and instantaneous butchery of Punjab. In truth, it has been a tragedy of greater dimensions, showing at once the utter helplessness of the Bengali Hindus in their passive acceptance of their fate and the heartless unconcern of the Hindu-dominated secular state of India. Between them, these helpless Bengali Hindus and the callous Indian State have crowded out the basic feature of this long-drawn-out exodus. That the gentler Bengali Muslims, while flinching at outright mass-slaughter, have never shrunk from their jihadic practice of continuous plunder of Hindu property and consistent dishonour of Hindu women, making the said exodus inevitable, is a story which has remained practically unknown to the world at large.

Indeed, the expulsion of non-Muslims from Islamic countries, while not a positive tenet of jihād, has always remained an accessory to it. Not being a positive tenet it cannot form a part of any theoretical exposition of the doctrine of jihād. But it has been a fact of Islamic history during the fourteen hundred years of Islam's existence, and it is a poor testament to the historians of the world that not one of them has thought fit to chronicle this Islamic phenomenon in a systematic and chronological form, embracing the whole length and breadth of Islamdom.

Footnotes:

1Gibbon on Islam is not always a trustworthy chronicler. But the expulsion of the Jews of Khaibar, is attested by all historians of early Islam.