

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore (UK)

Study 30: Jihād —

Freedom of religion in Islam

- This topic comes under *jihād* because of the misconception that *jihād* in Islam consists of waging war against non-believers to convert them to Islam.
- Islam recognizes **complete freedom of religion and belief for every human being**, and does **not** prescribe any punishment to be inflicted in this world upon a person who leaves the religion of Islam to adopt some other faith. The Quran declares:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ ...

“There is no compulsion in religion —
the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. ...” — 2:256

- Again, the Quran says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ^{تَفَا} فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ...

“And say: The Truth is from your Lord;
so let him who please believe and let him who please disbelieve. ...”

— 18:29

- The Quran teaches that the duty of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and, following him, the duty of every Muslim, *is only to deliver the message* of truth. It is said to the Holy Prophet in the Quran:

فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا^ع وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ^ط ...

“If they accept Islam, then indeed they follow the right way; and if they turn back, your duty (O Prophet) is **only to deliver the message**. ...” — 3:20

فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ

“...your duty (O Prophet) is **only the delivery**, and Ours (that is, God’s) is to call (people) to account.” — 13:40

... وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ^{تف} فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ^ع

“...and you (O Prophet) are not one to compel them. So remind by means of the Quran him who fears My warning.” — 50:45

- The Quran further says that it is in the natural order of things that while some people believe, others do not, and no human being can, or should, apply compulsion to others in this regard:

﴿٩٩﴾ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَأَمَنَّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلَّهُمْ جَمِيعًا ۖ أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾

“And if your Lord had pleased, all those who are in the earth would have believed, all of them. Will you then force people till they are believers?” — 10:99

- Further, the Quran says that as all religions preach the doing of good, their followers should try to outdo each other in virtuous deeds. The religious differences between us will always remain during our life on earth.

...بِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا^ط
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ^ط
إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

“... for every nation among you We appointed a law and a way.

And *if Allah had pleased* He would have made you (i.e., all humanity) one religious community, but He wishes to try you in what He has given you.

So, *try to outdo one another in virtuous deeds.*

To Allah you will all return, and then He will inform you about your differences (i.e., as to who was right or wrong).” — 5:48

- Allah instructs Muslims to say to others that there should be no dispute between them because everyone will be judged by their deeds. According to the Quran, Muslims should say to others:

...أَللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ط نَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَتَكُمُ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ط
 لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ط اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ط

“... Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds.

There is no contention between us and you.

Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the eventual coming.” — 42:15

- The words *“For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds”* occur twice more in the Quran, in 2:139 and 28:55.

- ***So-called Apostasy:*** Several times the Quran speaks of people going back to unbelief after believing in Islam, but never once does it say that they should be killed or punished. What it says is, for example:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ
فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ...

“O you who believe, should anyone of you turn back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him. ...”

— 5:54

- In one place the Quran, referring to the war being made upon Muslims by their opponents based in Makkah, says:

...وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا^ط
وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ
فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ^ع ...

“...They will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. And whoever of you turns back from his religion, then he dies while an unbeliever — these it is whose works go for nothing in this world and the Hereafter. ...”

— 2:217

- This verse clearly speaks of a person as continuing to live after turning away from the religion of Islam until he dies while still an unbeliever. This verse also shows that force was being used *against Muslims* by their enemies to make them leave Islam, rather than being used by Muslims to keep the followers of Islam within its fold.
- There is *no punishment prescribed by Islam whatsoever* to be inflicted by any Muslim law, state or body, or by any individual Muslim, on someone who chooses to leave the religion of Islam.

- It is also important to make clear that a person can only leave the religion of Islam *by his or her own decision, choice and declaration*. It is *not by* a determination or judgment made by any other Muslim individual, or any Muslim scholar, religious body, court or political state, that a certain person has left Islam.
- On a related, separate issue, we should stress that it is *entirely wrong and unjustified* to suggest that Islam teaches Muslims to murder anyone who verbally abuses their religion, mocks it, or offends their feelings towards their faith.

- Islam requires that any criticism of it must be answered by means of *words and speech only, not violence*. The Quran teaches that when Muslims feel *offended* by people who abuse and ridicule Islam, they should respond by:
 - remaining patient under provocation,
 - ignoring the abuse,
 - forgiving the ignorant.
- Let us quote the Quran on this point:

تُبَلَّوْنَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ^ت وَلْتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا^ط أَذَى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٧٨٢﴾

“You will certainly hear much abuse from the followers of previous books and from the idol-worshipping people. And if you are patient and keep your duty — this is surely a matter of great resolution.” — 3:186

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ...

“So bear patiently what they say...” — 20:130

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٧٠﴾

“And bear patiently what they say and withdraw from them in a decent manner.” — 73:10

*END OF STUDY 30
AND THE RAMADAN DAILY QURAN STUDIES
FOR THE YEAR 2026*

*Lastly, Eid Mubarak to all readers of these Quran Studies,
And thank you for reading and listening!*

The narration of these studies was done by:

Aayisha Ahmad – Humaira Ahmad – Habiba Anwar – Zahida Niazi

The Quran recitations were by: Mishāry bin Rāshid Al-Afāsy مشاري بن راشد العفاسي

taken with thanks from the website: www.everyayah.com