

CHAPTER III

ROBERT SPENCER'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD WAR

3.1 Introduction

Discussions on Islam evolved widely in the West, pioneered by the classical and contemporary orientalist who lead to a critical analysis that mostly influenced by their purposes and interest in learning about Islam as mentioned before in the chapter one. Their study on Islam covers a wide range of discussions from theological, Islamic laws, on Prophet Muhammad PBUH and many more. To name a few they are Samuel Marinus Zwemer (d. 1952), Samuel P. Huntington (d. 2008), and Bernard Lewis (d. 2018).

Undeniably, Islamic studies conducted by orientalist contributed to the development of this knowledge. However, their discussions on Islam need to be examined to ensure that they are not against the real Islamic teaching¹⁶⁴. Therefore, this chapter presents viewpoints from Robert Bruce Spencer; a contemporary orientalist on the issues of jihad war correlated with the involvement of Prophet Muhammad PBUH in combative jihad to achieved the second objective of the study. As clarified in the first chapter, this study limits itself to Spencer's perspectives in the chapter 10: Muhammad's Legacy as the main discussion in his *The Truth about Muhammad*.

In essence, war on terror is one of the greatest political agenda and current affair with continued actions and reactions. The Muslims and the concept of jihad are still

¹⁶⁴ Vitkus, D. J. 1999. "Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century Europe". In: Blanks D.R., Frassetto M. (eds) *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York. <http://link.springer.com/10.1057/9780312299675_12>. p. 207.

viewed negatively by the international community especially in the West. A considerable number of people, still believe that jihad is linked to terrorism initiated by the Muslims. This view is very rampant, particularly by those who adhere to Robert Spencer writings in the West.

Various writings, publications are concern about the principle of jihad both in the positive and negative manners. The understanding and definition of jihad has been narrowed to the acts of war, physical fighting, military forces and commonly perceived as terrorism. Whereas the connotation of jihad is diverse and even prescribed for women¹⁶⁵. Thereby, it should not be misused as a basis to justify such brutal actions.

However, many news media coverages often reflect on violent and aggressive images of Islam. Consequently, these have crippled peace building effort and conflict resolution by Muslim scholars and practitioners in the formulation of a systematic peacebuilding approach like respect for diversity (such as racial, ethnic, tribal, national etc.), brotherhood in humanity, involvement and social empowerment of community members to take action to transform the conflict¹⁶⁶.

The world community is often exposed to the cruel acts of jihad such as self-killing in public places, killing innocent lives and labelled Muslims as terrorist, or any religious people as mischievous. To the worst, these actions have been recognized by a handful of Muslim jihadists as an act of jihad in their way to the submission of Islam.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Asqalāniyy, Ibn Hajar. 2003. 'Kitāb al-Jihād'. *Bulugh al-Marām min Adillati al-Ahkām*. (Trans) #1300. Egypt: Dar al-Manarah. p. 472.

¹⁶⁶ Mohammed Abu-Nimer. 2006. "Framework for Non-Violence and Peacebuilding in Islam." *Contemporary Islam: Dynamic, Not Static*. Routledge: New York. p.131; Kadayifci-Orellana S.A., Abu-Nimer M. & Mohamed-Saleem A. 2013. "Understanding an Islamic Framework for Peacebuilding". *Islamic Relief Worldwide*. United Kingdom: Birmingham. pp. 8-9.

3.2 Spencer's Perspectives on Jihad in Chapter 10: Muhammad's Legacy

It is pertinent to note that jihad concept has been contaminated with misguided practices and being distorted. For this reason, there are two points of views when it comes to the people perspectives on jihad. First and foremost, the understanding of jihad as it is espoused by the so-called "terrorist jihadists" and afterward by some Westerners like Spencer¹⁶⁷.

The first is the perspective held by terrorists who hijacked Islam and integrated into the various national ideologies which has been replaced by a trans-national jihadist group. They move around the world on the basis of an ideological-religious cleavage¹⁶⁸. The trans-national jihadist networks like ISIS and al-Qaeda had taken religion in order to make the challenge seem ideological and tied to some Islamic religious tenets. In other words, terrorism is a transnational phenomenon with ideological elements, and as such, it must be combated with the same tools, which are ideologies elements on both the local and global stages¹⁶⁹.

Subsequently, ISIS and other terrorist groups has transformed much of their theological and ideological discourses as they overlook the context of Islamic jihad proposed by Prophet Muhammad PBUH. They focused solely on the textual interpretation of religious text to wield political influence, tried to turn into the *syarī'ah* rulings while attempts to convert the entire people to Islam. So that, jihad war is used to legalize their actions in correspond with their economy and political interest, besides

¹⁶⁷ Ramlan, Tengku Erwinsyahban & Nurul Hakim. 2016. "The Concept of Jihad in Islam". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. Vol. 21. Issue 9. Ver. 7. p. 35.

¹⁶⁸ Svensson, I. & Nilsson, D. 2022. "Capitalizing on Cleavages: Transnational Jihadist Conflict, Local Fault Lines and Cumulative Extremism". *Taylor & Francis Online*. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2058350>>. p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ Sayed Khatab. 2011. *Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism: The Theological and Ideological Basis of al-Qa`ida's Political Tactics*. Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press. p. 24.

the spirit of nationalism they possessed. Wherefore, religion is just a medium and justification for them to legalize their movement and terror actions¹⁷⁰.

While the second perspectives on jihad is from some of the Westerns. For this study, the researcher only focuses on the viewpoints from the contemporary orientalist namely Robert Spencer. Reflecting upon the current terror issues done by jihadists during their years of attacks, Spencer believes that jihad is a violent action that would endanger human life and society.

The mass incidents on 11 September 2001, makes the narrative on Prophet Muhammad PBUH more controversial and centred on his teachings, deeds and actions. Concerning on the jihadists' acts of violence on the 9/11 and the aftermath, makes Spencer tries to uphold the idea that the jihadists' acts of violence are connected to Islamic historical events, which are seen as the primary spiritual inspiration for them to combat. Furthermore, Spencer believes to support the claims and activities for their jihad movement and inspire their supporters, religion and Islamic historical aspects like the Prophet Muhammad's battles are utilised¹⁷¹. This situation perhaps incites stronger evidences for Spencer to hold tightly on his ideas.

Albeit focused on this research book, the researcher also refers to another reference in order to find the repetitive ideas. Therefore, referring to Spencer's another published book, *The History of Jihad from Muhammad to ISIS* shows that he sustained to the same idea that jihad as many people believe, a war against non-Muslims which contained in the Prophet's deeds and words. His statement as follows:

'Nor is jihad in Islamic theology primarily, or even prominently, anything but warfare against unbelievers. The Qur'ān contains

¹⁷⁰ Mohd Khairul Naim Che Nordin. 2017. "Kajian Kritis Hubungan Agama dan Pemikiran Terorisme". *Afkār*. Vol. 19. No. 2. p. 73

¹⁷¹ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. pp. 185 - 191.

*numerous exhortations to fight against the infidels, as do all the hadith collections of Muhammad's words and deeds*¹⁷².

Spencer's judgement and viewpoint regarding the Islamic jihad could also be found in his sharing with David Wood, an active Christian apologist who streamed live on YouTube on April 7, 2022¹⁷³. Even though he does not reject the literal meaning of jihad which is the strive of struggle along with the connotation in the Qur'ānic verses to strive in the way of Allah SWT. But in the same time, he also strongly holds on the ideas that the primary meaning of jihad in Islamic theology is a warfare to the unbelievers in order to subjugates them under the rules of Islamic Law.

To simply put, Spencer clearly against the jihad ideology which embark from the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH combative jihad. He classified the acts of jihad as acts of terror when they cause terror to innocent people.

Aside from that, Spencer's views on jihad not only stated in his publications, talks but also contained in his website entries. Nusairah binti Ramli has compiled related views on jihad in her master's dissertation namely *Projection of Jihad in Jihadwatch.org: A Critical Study* particularly on jihad. Spencer highlights in his website as follows:

*Here we go again. Despite the fact that the Muslim killer invoked the Qur'an and made specific reference to the Islamic doctrine that one must fight against those who fight against Islam, the media and government elites in Britain are working in overdrive to exonerate Islam and prevent any serious discussion of the elements of Islamic teaching that incite to violence and encourage Islamic supremacism...*¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷²Spencer, B. R. 2018. *The History of Jihad from Muhammad to ISIS*. United States: A Bombardier Books Book. p. 11

¹⁷³Wood, D. 2022. *This Week in Jihad! (LIVE WITH Robert Spencer, 8:00pm ET)*. (video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62Jh2-Ey6eg>. United States: YouTube.

¹⁷⁴ Nusairah Ramli. 2016. *Projection of Jihād in Jihadwatch.org: A Critical Study*. (Master Thesis). International Islamic University Malaysia. p. 60.

The issues of violent extremism are reported and elucidated at many levels. In other words, violent extremism is being investigated and under prevention by many organizations and countries includes Malaysia in various ways. This involved keeping an eagle eye on any movements which perhaps could taking up weapons thus incite to violent and encourage supremacy. Due to the various conditions, extremism has facilitated especially Europe as a 'hub' of global jihad with the large pool of potential recruits and the freedom to operate with few restrictions¹⁷⁵.

Instead of highlighting the misunderstanding of some people on jihad to both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, Spencer suggests a contradict strategies. As working against the jihad ideology, Spencer suggested few ideas especially for the non-Muslims government. Among of the ideas are to stop insisting Islam as a religion of peace or any declaration about the nature of Islam in the first place. This is the nucleus of his suggestions; to stop insisting Islam as a religion of peace. Because to him by making such pronouncement it could lead into imposing the Islamic *shari'ah* rule upon the countries and world especially in the Western countries¹⁷⁶.

Aside from that, he proposed that Western countries could provide conditional help to governments who aggressively reject the teachings of the jihadists, in exchange for their renunciation of the jihadist ideology¹⁷⁷. In simple words, the aids were given to such country who generally profess to reject the jihadists teachings in proportion to the jihad practice of Osama bin Laden and alike in mosques and Islamic schools.

These notions according to Spencer came about in order to stop any major incidents due to the jihad movements. Besides, creating Islamic school programs and,

¹⁷⁵ Neumann, P. R. 2006. "Europe's Jihadist Dilemma". *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*. Vol 48 (2). July. p. 71.

¹⁷⁶ Spencer, B. R. 2006. *The Truth About Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 192.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

more importantly, explain why the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH injunction against war and domination is no longer relevant in both today and tomorrow's world, might assist the nation reject the harmful ideas¹⁷⁸. Clearly from these suggestions, the idea of jihad and the trajectory on the Prophet's battle are opposed by Spencer and no longer relevant to teach to people from the young age.

Spencer's suggestions went on as he also calls upon Muslim advocacy groups to work against the jihad ideology. This call perhaps could help to enforce comprehensive programs in the American mosques and schools to teach against the jihad ideology or even confront the elements of Prophet Muhammad's PBUH life that are said to fuel the jihadist violence and subversion¹⁷⁹.

To some extent, Spencer evaluates that the historical story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH has been referred by jihadists in preaching that the violent Islam as the pure Islam and calling for the full observance. And that full observance involves accepting warfare against non-Muslims in order to establish the hegemony of the Islamic social order¹⁸⁰.

This situation gains significant in the eye for numbers of organization like *Jihad Watch* to oppose some of the Islamic teaching like jihad due to jihadists believe and actions by carrying terror in the name of Islam. Moreover, it causes curiosity among the majority of people especially non-Muslims in the West who wants to know about the Prophet PBUH. Nevertheless, some of the Westerners consider that the teaching of Prophet PBUH and some aspects of his PBUH life are problematic which breeds fanaticism and violence. They think that the law of Islam and the form of jihad

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 192 - 193.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 193.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 9 - 10.

indiscriminate their notion of human right and the dignity of the person¹⁸¹. In addition, Spencer posits that the Prophet PBUH still owns the greatest attentions from Muslims and complete observance from them in light of this horrible situations.

Notably, in the early foundation of jihad movement, jihadist have been in conflict with their foes. The conflict between them is essentially ideological. Yet, it also relates to the power of sovereignty where the foreign occupation, humiliation and the repression at the hands of foreign regimes becomes the important underlying cause toward violence¹⁸². Therefore, is the form of jihad envisaged by jihadists being in line with the tenets of the Islamic faith or not? As it has been claimed that Muslims now must wage war involving “killing Americans and their allies, civilian and military”¹⁸³.

This encouragement and the actions committed by jihadists are contrary to Islamic principles and the pillars of jihad. Their declaration in making lawful the indiscriminate killing of civilians clearly violates the limit of warfare in the Islamic sources which will be discussed further the principles of war in the next chapter.

In relation to jihad concept, Spencer makes attempts to devote to the Islamic sources; the Qur’ān, Hadith and Sīrah which he determines as the bases of Islamic practice and piety. Therefore, in regard Spencer’s perspectives and its relations with Prophet Muhammad’s PBUH legacy on war, this study describes his notions further in the following sub chapters.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁸² Sayed Khatab. 2011. *Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism: The Theological and Ideological Basis of al-Qa`ida's Political Tactics*. Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press. p. 21.

¹⁸³ Dakake, D. 2007. “The Myth of a Militant Islam”. *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition*. Joseph E. B. Lumbard (ed.). Pakistan: Suhail Academy. p. 24.

3.2.1 Jihad War as The Key Force for The Jihadist's Terror

The aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy gives a great impact on Western conceptions on jihad. The term 'jihad' in Islam is a broad concept. It has numerous significances and notions which will be discussed later in chapter four. Besides the jihad concept is rooted in the al-Qur'ān and Sunnah, it is also seen in the historical and pragmatic experiences of Muslims.

Interpreting 'jihad' also depends on the interpreter's manner and his intention to construe its meaning. This is to say that the term jihad has a good quality side of the construed meaning that were defined by the scholars. On the contrary, it is also interpretable as an awful sense significantly in the usage of the jihadists like al-Zawahiri and Bin Laden, which considered jihad war as the only means in achieving their ideological goal.

Even though in recent years, the terror has been dominantly employed from other different ideologies like the far-right terrorist by non-Muslims; the group of people with the most conservative political ideals located particularly in the West¹⁸⁴. But the dread on terror still continued to be centred on some of the Muslims regardless of the fact that it has been more than 20 years since the attack happened.

As statistic shows that in March 2022, 38% of the U.S people are still worried on the possibility of future terrorist attacks in the US. While a poll in February 2022 shows 71% of international terrorism still form a critical threat to the US¹⁸⁵.

More than 200 researches were done to study on the trigger catalysts of terrorism either by individuals or groups¹⁸⁶. There are factors that ignite to the terrorist activities

¹⁸⁴Coolsaet, R. Renard, T. 9 Jun 2022. "What the Zeitgeist can Tell us about the Future of Terrorism". *International Centre for Counter-terrorism*. <<https://icct.nl/publication/zeitgeist-future-of-terrorism/>>.

¹⁸⁵n. a. 2022. "Terrorism". *Gallup*. <<https://news.gallup.com/poll/4909/terrorism-united-states.aspx>>.

¹⁸⁶Tinnes, J. 2017. "Bibliography: Root Causes of Terrorism". *Perspectives on Terrorism*. Vol. 11. (4). <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26297900>>.

to the worldwide as mentioned earlier in the previous chapter one. Albeit many factors arise, however, in the humble view of this study, the researcher views that Spencer is preoccupied with the religion factor due to violence and physical conquest happened shown to be from the Muslim religious fanatics that were attacking the West.

Concerning on jihad violence, Spencer observes that many “jihadist” commanders have adopted the war in Islam as their tenet of fundamental Islamic discourse. This tenet is used in motivating their followers toward a bigger purpose. This includes on how they are treating the hostages. For example, the decapitation of the US hostage, Nicholas Berg by the jihadist’s militants. And this act was reported as a revenge for the abuse toward Iraqi detainees by the US troops¹⁸⁷.

This assertion has been done by al-Qaeda. As Spencer quoted Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi that invoking the battle at the decapitation of the enemies correspondingly with the exhortations in the Qur’ān chapter 8 *surah al-Anfal* verses 9 and verses 12-13.

Following this, Spencer believes these verses become one of the main grounds of motivation in dealing with the hostages and prisoners of war as happened to the Nicholas Berg. As well, they invoke Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the embodiment of the attributes they are attempting to put into practice¹⁸⁸.

The beheading enemies practice is believed grounded from the Qur’ān, *surah al-Anfal*, verses 8:12-13, which Allah has commanded to the angels to behead those who oppose Allah and His Messenger PBUH during the Battle of Badr. This fact incites al-Zarqawi to his view as below:

“Is it not time for you [Muslims] to take the path of jihad and carry the sword of the Prophet of prophets? ...The Prophet, the most merciful, ordered [his army] to strike the necks of some prisoners in

¹⁸⁷Whitaker, B. Harding, L. 2004. “American beheaded in revenge for torture”. *The Guardian*. <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/12/iraq.alqaida>>.

¹⁸⁸ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 185.

[the battle of] Badr and to kill them... And he set a good example for us¹⁸⁹.

This illegal act however, misrepresent the permission to act upon the enemies. Since each and every action in the battlefield must correspond for the sake of Allah and in complete compliance with the law and humanism, not to revenge, retaliation or for any other motives.

3.2.2 Jihadist's Acts of Terror upon The Prophet Muhammad's PBUH Deeds

For the most part in his book, Spencer notes that the Prophet Muhammad PBUH appears to be the model followed by the majority of Islamist jihadists carrying out the jihad war. In Spencer's word he says, "...Islamic jihadists are already well aware of the elements of Muhammad's life that they can use to support their actions. They are invoking Muhammad in this way all over the world".

Notably, Spencer refers to the al-Qur'an, Hadith and *Sirah Nabawiyyah* particularly on the prophetic life after *hijrah* which contained in this published book. Likewise, he also certifies that Islamic sources are the main sources that jihadists refer to in jihad war¹⁹⁰.

It is unexpectedly that Spencer referred the jihadist acts of terror upon the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH deeds. In relation to this, he shows few evidences in showing the Islamist jihadists actions were rooted from the deeds and action of Prophet Muhammad PBUH along with the verses of al-Qur'an.

Among of the jihadist conduct is their faith in motivations through prayers. For example, Spencer has been recorded plea of Palestinian on March 23, 2003 which

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 107-108.

¹⁹⁰Ibid. p. 188.

pleading for help to avoid the Iraqis for being Americanized. And seeking help to protect the religion, the Qur'ān, and the teaching of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. “*Allah, make their possessions a booty for the Muslims, Allah, annihilate them and their weapons, Allah, make their children orphans and their women widows...*”. Due to this, Spencer views that when someone prayed in this way, the violent aspects would be eliminated by the Qur'ān and the Prophet's message¹⁹¹.

In discussing the massacre happened, Spencer brought up another instance. This example, demonstrates how the jihadists was made aware of the Prophet's battle to the world. This notion was brought up by one of the *imāms* when speaking of the Iraq war¹⁹². It is the Battle of Tabūk where Muslims dealing with powerful opponents like Rome Byzantines at that time. Following this, some of the Muslims regarded that the history repeats itself again. Now, it is between the America. Thus, this is the standpoint of the spiritual strength and inspiration for Islamist jihadists to defeat the America.

Not only that, but also numbers of *'ibrah* (lesson) could be gained through this battle. Verse 8:60 of the Qur'ān indicates that one should be prepared in accordance with the cost and strength that are available. “*And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows.*”¹⁹³. The marching of the Muslims' army in the Tabūk shows their strong determination and courage to defend Islam and faith despite facing many challenges. It thus terrified the Byzantines to retreat, and bloodless battle won¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 186.

¹⁹² Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 186.

¹⁹³ Al-Qur'ān. Al-Anfāl 8:60.

¹⁹⁴ Al-Mubarakfuriyy. 2007. *Al-Raheeq al-Makhtum*. Qatar: Idārah al-Syuūn al-Islāmiyyah. pp. 429-439.

This historical battle, therefore, reminds the contemporary jihadists to strengthen themselves upon the strong and facilitated opponents. However, through the battle of Tabūk which also known as *Ghazwah al- 'Usrah* means the hard war that took place in the month of Rajab, in the 9th year of Migration, shows more than that. Through the battle of Tabūk, Muslims could gain lesson of how strong the faith toward Allah SWT and the Prophet PBUH. The faith that kept Muslims to stayed with Prophet PBUH to fight and preserved the religion and Islamic nation. Without any hesitating, they were willing to donate all their belongings to aid the Islamic army.

This is the sweetness of *imān* experienced by the Muslims. Mustafā al-Sibā'ī (d. 1964 AD), added the *halāwah al-Īmān*, the sweetness of faith could be gained through the qualities they have despite challenges and exhaustion for the sake of Allah and to win His favour¹⁹⁵. As the Prophet PBUH once says, the sweetness of faith is possessing with the three qualities, 1) who makes Allah and His Apostle dearer than anything else, 2) who loves a person only for the Allah's sake and 3) who hates to revert to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the Hellfire¹⁹⁶.

Next evidence quoted by Spencer in shows the sources of faith of jihadists is the selective verses of the Qur'ān as the permission for them to fight just like Rasulullah did. Jihadists relied on to one of the famous verses to fight which is verse 9:5 in the chapter al-Taubah: "*Hit the infidels wherever you find them*". The so-called "Verse of Sword" in the Qur'ān, 9:5, has allowed jihadists like the Iraqis to use it as justification for waging war against the United States. The Iraqis believe the "*religious principle is that we cannot live with infidels*" has explained and strengthen the reason for them to

¹⁹⁵Al-Sibā'ī, Muṣṭafā. 2004. *The Life of Prophet Muhammad PBUH: Highlights and Lessons*. Nasiruddin al-Khattab (trans.). Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House. p. 118.

¹⁹⁶Al-Bukhāriyy, Muhammad ibn Ismail. n.d. *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhāriyy*. (Internet) Kitāb al- Imān. Bab Halāwah al-Imān. #16. <<https://shamela.ws/book/735/38#p1>>.

fight against the American troops¹⁹⁷. Relying to this verse perhaps strengthen their spiritual motivation to fight during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

This self-defence action, however, have misused the permission to fight. Because it has been revealed that it is permissible to fight, out of a feeling of hostility, *surah al-Baqarah*, verse 2:190, the second decreed rule regarding fighting that were revealed in Madinah makes clear exactly how this permission should be used¹⁹⁸.

Allah SWT has ordained in verse 2:190 that “*fight in Allah’s cause against those who fight you, but do not commit aggressions...*”¹⁹⁹. This verse is a proof that Muslims should only combat foes who oppose Islam, threaten peace and security to the extent of harming Muslim without aggression actions. This verse allows the Muslims to fight back those who fought Rasulullah PBUH and the Muslims in the first place. With this revelation, al-Ḍahhak says has abrogated every agreement of peace, treaty and term have been made between the idolaters and the Prophet PBUH²⁰⁰.

Next, Spencer quoted a massacre cause by extremist that happened on May 29, 2004, which was done in accord with Prophet Muhammad’s PBUH wishes for Arabia. It is “*to purge the Arabian Peninsula, according to the will of our Prophet Muhammad, of the infidels and the polytheists who are killing in Afghanistan and Iraq... We began to comb the site looking for infidels... that same day, we purged Muhammad’s land of many Christians and polytheist*”²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁷ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 186.

¹⁹⁸ Al-Rāzīyy, Muhammad bin Umar. *Tafsir al-Kabir Aw Mafātihu al-Ghaib*. Juz. 5. Lubnan: Dar al-Fikr. p. 137.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Qur’ān. Al-Baqarah 2:190.

²⁰⁰ Al-Ḍahhak, Ibn Muzāhim. 1999. *Tafsir al- Ḍahhak*. Juz 1. Kaherah: Dar al-Salām. p. 399.

²⁰¹ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 188.

Spencer cited the militarism terror that happened in Khobar, Saudi Arabia which had killed 22 foreign workers including, 10-year-old children²⁰². This massacre had been carried out in a discriminatory spree, which killing non-Muslims while leaving Muslims alone. Besides, they initially plan to blow up a car in a suicide bombing but refrained to do so due to the weak resistance they encountered.

The ongoing injustices give rise to legitimate protests and hatred. But there is no place in Islam that justifies the killing or injuring civilians, nor perpetrating any excess actions as a result of hatred even the hatred is based on legitimate grievances²⁰³.

The above actions not only distorted the essence of jihad by misrepresenting several statements and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, even also does the maltreatment towards innocent civilians including non-Muslims and children who are non-combatant. Non-Muslims were not made by Allah SWT to be battled because of their unbelief. The Almighty allows them to survive because He SWT does not want to exterminate His creatures. However, when there is compulsion, though, they can be fought²⁰⁴. Same goes to Muslims who have shown aggression, they can be punished based on the provided Law of Allah for justice.

Apart from that, Spencer believes the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is one of the reasons toward the jihadist's acts. He certifies that the excessive devotion some of the Muslims toward the Messenger of Allah grassroot from the numerous exhortations contained in the Quran to obey and imitate him PBUH.

²⁰² Abdul Hamid Bakier. 2006. "Lessons from Al-Qaeda's Attack on the Khobar Compound". *Jamestown Foundation*. Vol. 4. (16). <<https://jamestown.org/program/lessons-from-Al-Qaedas-attack-on-the-khobar-compound/>>.

²⁰³ Reza Shah Kazemi. "Recollecting The Spirit of Jihad". *Islam Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*. Pakistan: Suhail Academy. p. 131.

²⁰⁴ Al-Qaradhāwiyy, Yusuf. 2009. *Fiqh al-Jihad: Dirāsah Muqāranah li Ahkāmihī wa Falsafatihī fi Daw' al-Qur`ān wa al-Sunnah*. Kaherah: Maktabah Wahbah. p. 9.

Spencer confines the excessive expression in praise and expressing the love and longing toward the Prophet PBUH, particularly pronounced among the mystically inclined²⁰⁵. He even quoted the saying of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazālīyy, that the key to happiness is by following the *sunnah* and imitating the Prophet PBUH in all aspects of life ranging from the Muslims' daily task like eating, talking, sleeping and others²⁰⁶. He also quotes from Mansūr al-Hallaj²⁰⁷ (d. 922) to support his views. He quoted that says Allah "has not created anything that is dearer than Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his family"²⁰⁸.

Even so, every religion indeed nourish love. And the true love in Islam is the act of glorifying and respecting Allah's Messenger. In addition to the modest yet fervent dedication by a pure heart²⁰⁹. Not meant to be tyrannical in the practice of devotion and defending Muslim's identity. Thereby, loyalty to the Messenger of Allah PBUH became a moral and spiritual value shared by all Muslims, and Islamist jihadists alike. Muslims are embraced by the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH with a feeling of oneness and unity²¹⁰.

Typically, every act that Islamist jihadists commit is commonly motivated by his or her beliefs which is puritanical in nature. It is imposing Islamic ideology through physical intimidation and coercion. Such conduct has been done to retaliate against people who disrespect the Messenger of Allah PBUH without adhering to the guidelines

²⁰⁵ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. pp. 184-185.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 185.

²⁰⁷ Abū al-Mughīth al-Ḥusayn ibn Mansūr al-Ḥallāj, an Iranian and poet. He had been arrested due to the accusation that he had claimed to be divine through the statement "Anā al-Haqq (I am the Truth). He in the ecstasy moment as he used the extravagance words in describing the ultimate reality. <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Hallaj>>.

²⁰⁸ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 185.

²⁰⁹ Arnold, T & Guillaume, A. 1931. *The Legacy of Islam*. London: Oxford University Press p. 218.

²¹⁰ Chandra Muzaffar. 2011. *Exploring Religion in Our Time*. Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia. p. 54.

of Islam. The prophet's jihad is utilized and applied with the desire to uphold Islam. Furthermore, inside the jihadists mind, imitating the prophetic methodology is the essential components in the system of ideas and motivations which construct one of the jihadists standards of behaviour²¹¹.

With the believes emulating the Prophets' PBUH practice contributes to the reason for violent attacks. Spencer offers Muslims to do rethinking is the example of Prophet still normative to follow to these days? Because to Spencer, the ideology of jihad and the elements of Prophet's PBUH put the world in massacre.

Therefore, he proposed few suggestions in order to confront the attacks in the first place. This is the pivotal suggestions made by him. As he suggested for Muslims to emulating the Prophet PBUH in a new way or withdraw the proposition that the example of Prophet PBUH is normative and spare good example to humankind.

This is necessary actions to take into account for people worldwide concerning that the violence of Islamist jihadists is somehow motivated and related to the aspects of the Prophet's life that teach jihad violence particularly on the preoccupation of Prophet PBUH in the military and the booty as the reward during his PBUH lifetime²¹².

In the other words, the *sunnah* of the Prophet PBUH should be pulled out from the daily basis of Muslims' life. So that he believes, Islam could maintain its peace from the teaching that incite terror and thus affect the world's peace. Otherwise, the bloodshed perpetrated in the name of Islam will continue for the cause of imitating the Prophet PBUH²¹³.

²¹¹ El-Badawy, E., Comerford, M. & Welby, P. 2015. *Inside the Jihadi Mind: Understanding Ideology and Propaganda*. London: Tony Blair Faith Foundation. p. 33.

²¹² Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. pp. 177 & 191.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 176

However, the ideas to prevent the violence by pulled out the example or *sunnah* of the Prophet PBUH from Muslims is not a good idea. To thwart the acts of violence cannot solely contained the religious teaching itself as many other factors drivers the violent actions.

3.2.3 Spencer's Perspectives on the Involvement of Prophet Muhammad PBUH on Jihad War

Next, regarding on the life of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH that being a main attention in the West, specifically on the involvement of the Prophet PBUH in the combative jihad and his treatment toward people especially non-Muslims. For Spencer, he confesses in this book that says '*this Muhammad is not altogether fictional*'. In other words, this human being who possesses the qualities that ordinary human being cannot embody existed and garnered attention especially after 9/11. However, the image of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in the Spencer's eyes is not more than a historical figure who continues inspiring his PBUH followers through his PBUH deeds and words²¹⁴.

Spencer admits that all the elements described by the Companions concerning on Prophet Muhammad's PBUH personality are real. For example, that the Prophet PBUH is neither rough nor harsh, nor returns evil for evil to people²¹⁵. Along with the loyalty he PBUH receives are comes from the key characteristics he PBUH has; a characteristic with great personal magnetism and charm among his followers.

However, Spencer added that the beauty and the charm of the Prophet Muhammad's PBUH life could not be preserved longer in the Islamic tradition. One of the reasons he claims is due to the multifaceted attitude the Prophet PBUH has. In

²¹⁴ Ibid. p. 194.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 183.

Spencer's word, he says that *'the Muhammad who emerges from Islamic tradition was, like all men, multifaceted. He was many things to many people at many different times.'*²¹⁶ Therefore, the charm he PBUH has was typically kept for believers exclusively and exhibited ambiguity towards unbelievers.

For instance, Spencer posits that based on the declaration made by Rasulullah PBUH that emphasized those who rejected his prophethood would burn in hell. This declaration takes place due to the refusal of Jews to accept his prophethood along with the punishment they will received²¹⁷. Besides that, he even quoted from the Qur'an which emphasized that *'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves.'*²¹⁸ This perspective is also developed from the hadith of funerals that says: *"that bier of a Jew passed before the Messenger of Allah and (the members of his family) were wailing over him. Upon this he said: You are wailing, and he is being punished"*²¹⁹. These arguments are taken into account on the unfairly prejudiced that Spencer thinks existed in Islam.

While concerning on the Prophet's PBUH involvement on the jihad war, Spencer insists that the outburst of jihad movement with radical actions toward non-Muslims, were coming from the instances of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Clearly, he thinks that the Prophet PBUH's incitement to battle Jews and Christians, along with jihadist copying of these attitudes, would later eliminate the validity of Judaism and Christianity as the two Abrahamic faiths that have existed in this world²²⁰.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 184.

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 184.

²¹⁸ Al-Qur'an. Al-Fath, 48:29.

²¹⁹ Muslim bin al-Hajjaj. 1334. *Sahih Muslim*. Kitāb al-Janāiz. Juz' 3. p. 41. #968. <<https://shamela.ws/book/711/2524#p1>>.

²²⁰ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 180.

The Prophet's image become exacerbated following the Spencer's conviction to the Prophet PBUH. He believes that the attitudes of the Prophet not only restricted from being kind and gentle only. On the contrary, he claims that the attitude of the Prophet of who joyed in the assassinations of his enemies that he PBUH himself ordered were hidden by the Islamic apologists who quote the instances of the Prophet PBUH²²¹.

Correspondingly, the involvement of the Prophet PBUH in the battles and raids like the battle of Khaybar and Badr along with the violent tendencies in exhortation to fight Jews and Christians becomes the references for jihadists today. Generally speaking, the jihadists were inciting and maintaining this behaviour. Even though with the violence sides from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, Spencer adduces that radical jihadist would still commit violence in emulating the elements of his PBUH teachings especially in waging war as their motivation and spiritual faith. Whereas, for Spencer his PBUH teachings and actions are the unpleasant elements to emulate²²².

According to Spencer, the military command given by the Prophet PBUH is believe as the occasion for the Prophet PBUH to avenge from the past years of frustration, resentment and hatred toward the people who had rejected him²²³. Throughout the years, Spencer views that the Prophet's PBUH treatments against the Jews and Christians has made the Islamic world persisted with the unease situations. Moreover, with the open contempt and hatred toward the Jews and Christians²²⁴ could later precipitate in thwarted the idea of tolerance among religious adherent.

Nevertheless, even though the deeds of Prophet Muhammad PBUH were adduce showed hostility toward the unbelievers, Spencer believes it still bearing in Muslim's

²²¹ Ibid. p. 184.

²²² Ibid. p. 184.

²²³ Ibid. p. 105.

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 182.

mind to continue regard the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as “an excellent example of conduct. Eventually with this regard, it would continue in moving Muslims to commit acts of violence”²²⁵.

In relation to this, the sharp demarcation between Islam and other faiths constantly pulls Muslims in a different direction and incites Muslims to convince and subjugate them into Islam. Persisting in the same vein, he adds that the tolerance in Islam could be a myth if the Prophet’s hatred toward Christians and Jews always brought Muslims in a different direction. In his words, he says that “*the myth of Islamic tolerance could have gained such currency in the teeth of Muhammad’s open contempt and hatred for Jews and Christians...*”²²⁶.

Chiefly, from this situation, arise the issues of tolerance among another religious adherent which could incite disagreement and conflict. In fact, tolerance is necessity in avoiding future conflict.

Moreover, the demarcation between Muslims and other faith also due to the contradiction in the Qur’ānic texts. Spencer notes that the verse *al-Baqarah*, 2:62 always been quoted by the Muslim spokesmen in the West to emphasize the commonality between Islam and these two Abrahamic faiths. They disclosed that people who have faith from the Abrahamic religion would also enter paradise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصْرَى وَالصَّبِيْنَ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (62)

Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabaeans (before Prophet Muhammad) - those (among them) who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have

²²⁵ Ibid. p. 194.

²²⁶ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 182.

their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve²²⁷.

In the other hand, Spencer questioned the other verse which is in chapter *al-Mā'idah*, 5: 51, that command to not befriend with Jews and Christians. In his words, he says, “*is the Qur’ān from modern notions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence that it even warns Muslims not to befriend Jews and Christians apparently including those who “feel themselves subdued” and are the paying jizya*”²²⁸.

However, this acknowledgement of tolerance and commonality between the Abrahamic faith with the verse *al-Baqarah*, 2:62 have gone amiss. Because this verse described the conditions of the adherents of whoever believe in Allah alone, obey His teaching includes believe on the Prophet Muhammad, the last messenger, will have their reward.

In justifying the views on Prophet Muhammad PBUH behaviour and actions toward non-Muslims, Spencer also refers to the other multiple Qur’ānic verses that support the imbalance treatments between Muslims and non-Muslims. This perhaps become the basis of the negative treatment toward non-Muslims which jihadists explicitly linking them to the Prophet’s example. One of them as follows:

- a) Prophet Muhammad weaves his charges to Jews and Christians who have rejected Allah and His Last Messenger.

Spencer’s translation on verses 5:12-16.: *Allah did a foretime take a covenant form the Children of Israel... But because of their breach of their covenant, We cursed them, made their hearts grow hard; they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the message that was sent them... From*

²²⁷ Al-Qur’ān. Al-Baqarah, 2:62.

²²⁸ Ibid. pp. 177-178.

those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a covenant, but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them: so, we estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other, to the day of judgement.

Besides that, Spencer also examines that the Qur'ān had frequently repeated the characteristic of Jews and Christians as the implacable belief and wrongdoers. For this reason, Spencer cited one of the Qur'ānic verses that regards Christians and Jews as disobedient. Stated in the verse 110 chapter *al- 'Imrān*, he spotted on the verse وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ الْفَاسِقُونَ which means “*but most of them are defiantly disobedient*”²²⁹. Conversely, compared to Muslims who believe of no rival and absolute truth. He cited this comparison in the same chapter (chapter *al- 'Imrān*) verse 19 that the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam²³⁰.

Reflecting upon these verses, Spencer arouses that the Qur'ānic teaching implies Jews and Christians as apostates due to their faith in rejected His last Messenger and Allah's command to accept Islam²³¹. Thereupon, the Qur'ān warns not to befriend with the Jews and Christians who strongly opposed Islam and the Prophet. Thus, permission was given to Muslims to wage war upon them.

With the involvement of the Prophet in battle which regards teach the jihad violence along his understanding upon few verses of al-Qur'ān, makes Spencer continues inspire his followers and readers to keeps questioning the notions of tolerance and peaceful coexistence that were resound in Islam beneath the jihadist violent actions.

²²⁹ Al-Qur'ān. Al- 'Imrān 3:110.

²³⁰ Spencer, B. R. 2001. *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*. United States: Regnery Publishing, Inc. p. 177.

²³¹ Ibid. p. 178.

3.2 Conclusion

In the chapter 10: *Muhammad's legacy*, Spencer has stated few perspectives on jihad which are proven from the actions of the jihadists. This chapter is in correlation with the second objective to portray Spencer's perspectives. For him, jihad war that happened in this 21st century and worsened on the collapse of the World Trade Center twin tower in the New York City significantly is influenced from the Islamic teaching.

For this, the researcher further describes his notions that he thinks motivated the jihadist actions in the armed combat. He believes jihadists faith and actions are based on the main sources in Islam besides the Prophet Muhammad PBUH himself. Additionally, his perspective on jihad war also includes Prophet Muhammad's PBUH treatment toward the non-Muslims. Through jihad, jihadists eagerly combating people both Muslims and non-Muslims. This situation has incited doubt on Spencer toward the idea of social justice and tolerance in Islam.

Above all, these perspectives, and the misuse of jihad in the acts of terror could despond other Muslim's faith on Islam. Thus, what does prominent Muslim's scholars says about jihad? Are the arguments brought by Spencer true? Does jihad violate the relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims? These questions will be delineated in the next chapter.