

JIHAD – A BIRD’S EYE VIEW

KARIM DOUGLAS CROW

Jihād is a complex and multi-faceted religious phenomenon with crucial ramifications for Muslim life and society, especially in its formative period. It has become one of the most burning issues now facing Muslims, provoked by the rise of militant Jihadist ideologies and aggravated by the rising hegemony of the United States pursuing its ‘Global War on Terrorism’. *Jihād* has always been understood to be a **moral, religious and socio-political obligation** upon the Muslim community (more precisely, a ‘collective obligation’/ *farḍ kifāyah*), as well as a **faith-commitment** requiring the ultimate sacrifice of wealth, property and of life itself.

“The source of real power in any nation is unity, cooperation and the will to sacrifice one’s life and possessions for a cause or ideal without any ulterior motive.”¹ *Jihād* was precisely such an ideal that spurred Muslim armies to great conquests and selfless service for their faith. It is also true that *jihād* embodied not only a religious and spiritual ideal of sacrifice, struggle and service, but functioned to serve the political and ideological needs of Muslim rulers and polities. *Jihād* continues to have existential significance for the life of the Muslim community today, as it becomes reconciled to the loss of its former glory and power with its slow decline and eventual domination by alien or hostile powers. The conscious or unconscious aim of recovering this important role for *jihād* has kept it as a primary focus of contemporary religious and political thought among Muslims.

In Islamic experience *Jihād* embraces two conjoined primary meanings:

- ♦ **Peaceful Striving** inviting to revealed truth—namely, the *jihād* of *da‘wah* /‘inviting to the truth of divine guidance’—as an individual **inner spiritual**

¹ Mahmoud Ayoub, “*Jihād: A Source of Power and Framework of Authority in Islam,*” in *Bulletin of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies* [International University of Japan] vol.6 (1992) p.205–232, on 216.

discipline requiring self-sacrifice and suffering (*ṣabr*) in witnessing to truth by moral example and peaceable persuasion.

♦ **Combative Struggle** being the **external social and political manifestation** of this primary interior attitude, most often in the form of organized communal martial activity to repel or avert aggression, to defend freedom of faith and property, or to rectify injustice and oppression.

This basic distinction between the primary interior **spiritual struggle** at the individual level, and its external expression as a **social, political and martial struggle** at the communal level, provides the ideal goal for Muslim religious striving in all its forms. Islam understands this 'striving' to be of the essence of its Faith and a crucial key for attaining human individual and communal welfare and salvation or ultimate happiness. In the unfolding of Muslim history when *jihād* became an important source of revenue and of military might in the service of the ruling power-possessors, its primal spiritual purpose often became compromised.

THE QUR'ĀN – MAKKAN PREACHING

The concept of *jihād* was born out of the Prophet Muḥammad's long bitter conflict with pagan opponents from his own tribe of Quraysh in Makkah lasting over twenty years until the Muslim Conquest of Makkah in Ramaḍān 8 AH / December 629 CE. The Qur'ān distinguishes clearly between *al-qitāl* / fighting, and between *al-jihād fī sabīli llāh* / *striving in the Way* [cause] *of God*. More significantly, it also makes a still finer distinction between *al-jihād fī sabīli llāh*, and between *al-jihād fī-llāh* / *striving In God* [better translated as: *striving purely for the sake of obtaining nearness to God and His good-pleasure*]. While there is a definite continuity of meaning and purpose between these two conjoined principles, '*striving In God*' undoubtedly constitutes a higher moral and spiritual struggle, being a mark of divine election and faith-identity, as the following verses revealed at Makkah clarify:

“*Strive In God with a true striving / jāhadū fī llāhi ḥaqqa jihādihī, for He has especially chosen you and has not laid any undue hardship upon you in regard to your faith.*”

[Q *al-Ḥajj* 22:78, & see *al-‘Ankabūt* 29:69].

This expression ... *In God/fī llāhi* should be construed in parallel with several other Qur’ānic phrases denoting: ‘*desiring to obtain God’s countenance-favor-approbation*’ /*li-wajhi llāhi & yurīdūna wajha llāhi*; ² as well as ‘*seeking only God’s good-pleasure*’ /*ibtighā’ wajhi llāhi* ³ & *ibtighā’ marḍāti llāhi*.⁴ The connection with *jihād* is explicit in Q *al-Mumtaḥanah* 60:1 – ...*If you have come forth to strive in My Way and seeking My good-pleasure /jihād^{an} fī sabīlī wa ibtighā’a marḍātī...*

In his home-town of Makkah during the first thirteen or so years of Muḥammad’s prophetic mission (ca. 610–622), Muslims were instructed to actively contend with the Arab pagans by **inviting to the truth** of divine revelation brought by the Prophet through preaching with peaceful persuasion and firm admonition against the falsity of idol worship and evil social customs then prevalent among Arabs:

*So obey not the unbelievers, but **contend with them** [by peaceably inviting to the truth with sincere persuasion] with the **utmost exertion** /jāhidhum bi-hi jihād^{an} kabīr^{an}!*

[Q *al-Furqān* 25:52]

² Eg. Q *al-Rūm* 30:38–39; & see *al-Insān* 76:9 – ‘*We feed you, for the sake of God alone; we wish for no reward nor thanks from you*’.

³ Q *al-Baqarah* 2:272.

⁴ See Q 2:207; & *al-Nisā’* 4:114 – ...*him who enjoins almsgiving and deeds-of-kindness and peace-making between people (iṣlāḥⁱⁿ bayna l-nās)*; *Whoever performs that seeking purely God’s good-pleasure, We shall bestow upon him a great reward!* Consult the authoritative *Tafsīr* works for all of these verses; and traditions in Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-Jihād*, ed. Nazīh Ḥammād (Beirut: Dār al-Nūr, 1971) reports §§9, 10, 12, 42, 129, 227.

See also: Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, “Justifications of Violence in Islamic Tradition,” in J. Partout Burns, ed., *War and Its Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996) p.122–160; & Sachedina, “The Development of *Jihad* in Islamic Revelation and History,” in James Turner Johnson & John Kelsay, eds., *Cross, Crescent, and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1990) p.35–50.

The Muslims in Makkah were exhorted not to abandon their peaceful striving of summoning to true belief and upright conduct, and to remain steadfast by enduring all provocations and hostility without employing coercive force (the important ideal of *ṣabr*), even while the pagan Quraysh severely abused and persecuted them, eventually leading them to migrate to other lands in order to practice their faith freely:

...for those who became fugitives after they had been persecuted, and then fully strove and were steadfast /jāhadū wa ṣabarū — after that, thy Lord is (for them) indeed Forgiving, Merciful. [al-Naḥal 16:110]

So in its original Makkan context, the intent and practice of *jihād* possessed an activist yet peaceable character without employing coercion or violence,⁵ namely this ‘**great striving**’/*jihād kabīr* or utmost exertion of ‘summoning to revealed truth’⁶ involving long-suffering steadfastness /*ṣabr* and endurance of persecution and suffering for the cause of truth.

The primary essence and core of *jihād* was and remains: **inviting to God’s truth through sincere example and ‘peaceable persuasion’** (known as *al-jihād bi-l-da‘wah*), while upholding the principles of **freedom from persecution and freedom of faith.**⁷ Closely allied to this ‘summoning’ is the key Islamic imperative of ‘Enjoining the Right and Forbidding the Wrong’ /*al-amr bi-l-ma‘rūf wa l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*, promoting the individual’s struggle for the good of Muslim society and opposing corruption, immorality and error.⁸ This primary meaning of *jihād* constitutes the

⁵ For one treatment of these verses, see R. Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1999) on p. 51–53, 69–73, 90 & 113.

⁶ In this connection, recall the significance of *al-da‘wah* as individual moral persuasion; and compare the Qur’ān’s concept that only *al-balāgh al-mubīn* /‘lucid notification’ is incumbent upon the Prophet (Q *al-Mā’idah* 5:92 & 99, *al-Naḥl* 16:82, *al-‘Ankabūt* 29:18).

⁷ This is persuasively emphasized by the leading Syrian religious authority Shaykh Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī in his work *Al-Jihād fī l-Islām*, (2nd revised edition, Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1415/1995) p.19f.; abbreviated English translation by M. Adel Absi, *Jihad in Islam: How to Understand and Practice It* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1995) p.15ff. For al-Būṭī’s response to his critics, see appendixes in the 2nd ed., p.251–319.

⁸ There were differing views among Muslims over whether *jihād* falls under Commanding the Good or under Forbidding the Reprehensible. For orientation on this key Islamic principle, see the

most basic Islamic duty of peaceably **summoning** and **persuading** people to follow divine guidance by joining the fold of Islam. *Da‘wah* is a ‘collective obligation’ upon Muslims to be achieved by commending right conduct and discouraging reprehensible conduct to the best of one’s knowledge and means; it does not require explicit authorization from the leader of the community. *Da‘wah* must be conducted wisely and discretely in the form of voluntary sincere advice, never exceeding the limits of non-coercive admonishing, reminding, persuasion and appeals to conscience. On their part, those who are so ‘invited’ remain free either to respond positively to Islam, or to insist upon their denial of its revealed truth by adhering to their previous beliefs — *Let there be no coercion in religion!* [Q *al-Baqarah* 2:256].

Such peaceable *jihād* must be performed with compassion and sympathy towards the one being summoned, free from any violence, anger or harshness. It is a selfless and courageous deed of faith performed purely for God’s sake, manifesting objective love and self-respect toward others, and characterized by a readiness to suffer harm or injury to one’s own person. In truth it is a triumph of peaceful means for attaining a sacred end. The Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) counseled:⁹

“The Merciful One shows mercy to those who are themselves merciful toward others; so do you show mercy to whatever is on earth, then He who is in heaven shall show mercy toward you.”

In this most profound meaning, peaceable *Jihād* enshrines the practice of conscious or active suffering—a willingness to sacrifice personal and material resources and endure unjust persecution, harm or injury to oneself for the sake of a divine cause—meriting a special mark of distinction in the Hereafter: *Whoever performs that purely seeking God’s good-pleasure, We shall bestow upon him a great reward!* [*al-Nisā’* 4:114]. It demonstrates that an Islamic society may grow only by minds willingly accepting truth without coercion or violence, and by hearts sincerely turning to God in humility, awe and understanding.

comprehensive study by Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁹ This *ḥadīth* is cited in the canonical collections of Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī.

When their efforts at peaceful persuasion were met by the Arab pagans of Makkah with scornful rejection, harsh humiliation, and severe torture of individuals (including many women and even some children), the Prophet counseled his small group of associates to practice *ṣabr*: to **steadfastly suffer** their provocations and to **forebear from any violent retaliation**. Several early Muslims died while being tortured, including Sumayyah¹⁰ mother of ‘Ammār b. Yāsir (she was known as ‘*the first martyr in Islam*’), while others were imprisoned, dispossessed, or banished. The Prophet then bid his followers to **migrate** to lands where the Muslims could find freedom to practice their faith without persecution—first overseas to the Christian land of Abyssinia on two separate occasions; and finally north to the oasis-town of Yathrib, later known as ‘Madīnat al-Nabī /the City of the Prophet’ or simply as al-Madīnah. Migration (*hijrah*) as a form of non-cooperation and withdrawal is an effective strategy of non-violent response. The adamant opposition of Quraysh led to a total social and economic boycott being enforced against the Prophet’s own clan of the Banū Hāshim, who endured almost three years of harsh deprivation from 616–619 confined to a small barren area in upper Makkah, during which time the Prophet’s wife and mother of his children Khadījah bint Khuwaylid died under extremely trying circumstances. On the very eve of his departure for Yathrib in June 622, the leaders of Quraysh attempted unsuccessfully to assassinate Muḥammad in his own bed.

THE MADĪNAN COMMUNITY

¹⁰ **Sumayyah** was a slave of the Makkan nobleman Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī, who had wed her to his client **Yāsir** al-‘Ansī and then made their sons ‘**Ammār** & ‘Abdallāh his freedmen. Sumayyah, her husband and sons were among the very first Muslims; the Banū l-Mughīrah tortured her entire family to force them to abjure Islam. The Prophet would pass by in the midst of their ordeal and exhort them to endure their suffering: “*Be Steadfast! Ṣabr^{an}! O Family of Yāsir, Ṣabr^{an}!, your rendezvous shall be Paradise!*” The Prophet’s fierce opponent Abū Jahl helped in this grisly sport, killing the elderly Sumayyah by thrusting a spear into her private parts; see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah* (Cairo: al-Sa‘diyyah, 1328) IV §585, III §9208 [cf. p.648 *via* Ibn al-Kalbī’s *Tafsīr*], II §5031 & §5704; and H. Reckendorf, “‘Ammār” *E.I.*² I p.448. Other forms of torture included suspension over a fire while being fumigated (as with the twelve-year old youth al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām), or large stones pressed upon one’s chest under the merciless sun (as with Bilāl the Abyssinian freedman).

The Prophet maintained the conduct of this primary peaceable *jihād* until he and his associates achieved the most appropriate atmosphere and conditions for the second form of *jihād*, the Combative Struggle. There is frequent mention in the Qur'ān of *jihād* in the context of **fighting/qitāl** against unbelievers. Q *al-Hajj* 22:39–41 is traditionally held to be the first verses dealing with fighting unbelievers, revealed late in 623 before the event of the first battle between the pagan Quraysh and the Muslims at Badr two years after the *hijrah* to Madīnah:

*Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is indeed able to help them—who were expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: ‘Our Lord is Allāh’ ... those who, if We give them **power in the land**, establish worship and pay the alms-tax and enjoin good and forbid evil; and unto God belongs the issue of all affairs.* [see also *al-Nisā'* 4:84, *al-Tawbah* 9:5]

It is clear that the aim at first was solely one of **defense and retaliation against aggression**: Muslims were enjoined to repulse any attacks on their life and property, but not to initiate fighting, nor to act treacherously or continue hostilities after their enemy had desisted. The main goal in authorizing martial activity was to remove any cause of sedition, persecution or discord (*fitnah*) that could tempt the Muslims from their faith. For the Qur'ān asserts that *fitnah* /persecution & oppression is more grievous than killing [Q *al-Baqarah* 2:190–194 & 217].¹¹

There is a long-standing debate among Muslim scholars, both in the past and today, over whether during this later Madīnan phase of the Prophet's mission the Combative *Jihād* originated as primarily: **‘an armed struggle against unbelievers’**

¹¹ An in-depth study of Islamic notions of *fitnah* (pl. *fitan*, ‘trials, temptations’—later connoting ‘civil disturbances, revolts’) in all aspects and domains is very much needed; see for orientation the work by M. Hashim Kamali, *Freedom of Expression in Islam* (2nd ed., Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1997) p.190–212; and the remarks by Fred M Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998) p.184–190. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt (former Rector of al-Azhar) observed of the verses Q 2:190ff. – “they point out that expelling people from their homes, frightening them while they are safe and preventing them from living peacefully without fear for their lives or possessions is persecution worse than persecution by means of murder and bloodshed. Therefore those who practice or provoke these things must be fought just like those who actually fight;” from his *al-Qur'ān wa l-Qitāl* [*The Qur'ān and Fighting*], trans. R. Peters in *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996) p.74.

[namely, the pagan Arabs] under all circumstances — ‘terminating pagan idolatry’ /*al-qaḍā’* ‘*alā l-kufr*; or whether it originated primarily as: ‘repelling armed belligerency’ /*dar’ al-ḥirābah* — as a defense against armed aggression or intended attack & hostile provocation towards the early Muslim community in Madīnah. The consensus of classical jurists and scholars agreed that in the Qur’ān’s ‘Fighting verses’ (eg. Q 9:5 & 2:216) revealed during the Prophet Muḥammad’s mission in Madīnah, *jihād* meant a concerted effort to **avert or repel an opponent’s armed aggression** on the lives, property, and freedom of faith of the Muslims.¹² A dissenting minority view among some Shāfi’ī and Zāhiriī jurists upheld the primacy of the *jihād* against unbelievers.

The earlier Qur’ānic verses stressing Peaceful Striving, revealed mainly during the previous Makkan and the early Madīnan periods before the battle of Badr in 2 AH, became the focus of a related debate. Classical Islamic Qur’ān interpreters as well as many jurists generally regarded the ‘Fighting verses’ as having **abrogated** (*nāsikh*)¹³ all previous Qur’ān verses revealed concerning defensive war and peaceful relations with non-Muslims (in all about seventy verses), since they were viewed to be incompatible with verses legitimating fighting unbelievers; this view was upheld particularly by the Ḥanafī legal school. However, contemporary modernist thinkers and the current Islamic establishment normally accept the legitimacy of the ‘non-fighting verses’, and stress the **purely defensive nature** of ‘combative struggle’ as a necessary means for self-preservation in the face of aggression and belligerency.

During the almost ten years of the Prophet’s later mission in the Madīnan commonwealth—where Islam’s first religious socio-political order (*ummah*) was

¹² For more details of this controversy among the *fuqahā’*, see eg. Abū l-Walīd Ibn Rushd (d.1198), *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1960) I p.369–372. A well-informed discussion of the classical juristic sources concerning this important distinction is given by al-Būṭī, *Al-Jihād fī l-Islām* p.94f.

¹³ The doctrine of *naskh* maintains that the legal validity of particular verses in the Qur’ān were cancelled (*mansūkh*) by other abrogating verses revealed later (*nāsikh*); many jurists even held that certain verses whose texts are no longer found in the Qur’ān are yet deemed valid for particular legal rulings (eg. the famous case of posited ‘stoning verses’ as legal pretext of punishment for adultery).

fully realized—the Combative *jihād* emerged not only as a measure for self-defense and self-preservation in the face of belligerent hostility from their Makkan opponents, but also as an expression of love and loyalty to God and His Messenger (ﷺ) through a commitment to this new order. The first Muslims often had to confront, capture, or even kill in battle some of their nearest relatives—including their brothers or fathers—and faced internal threats within the Madīnan Community itself from the ‘hypocrites’/*munāfiqūn* and from those Jewish tribes who broke their binding pact with the Muslims by colluding with the Quraysh of Makkah. The Qur’ān exhorts Muslims during this critical period to cooperate with a unanimous resolution and act together in unison and solidarity for the welfare of their newly created *ummah*.

Just as with the original Peaceful *Jihād*, its corollary the Combative *Jihād* was understood as a **faith-commitment** requiring the ultimate sacrifice of one’s possessions and one’s own life—*bi-amwālihim wa anfusihim* as the Qur’ān frequently states. Only fifteen years after the start of the Prophet’s mission was Combative *jihād* authorized for the Muslim *ummah* in order to defend their newly established Islamic society and territorial domains. In other words, during the first two-thirds out of the almost twenty-three years of his prophetic mission, the Prophet and his associates operated entirely by conducting a Peaceful *Jihād*. This significant truth must not be ignored: the original Islamic ‘state’ of the Madīnan *ummah* established by the Prophet Muḥammad after his migration from Makkah was realized and established solely by peaceable means; only **after** this had been achieved was combative or martial struggle deemed valid for defending its security and very existence. This confirms the reality that martial struggle of Combative *Jihād* had its original legitimacy and reason-for-being in defending and securing an already established social-religious-political entity—an entity that itself was created and set in place by means of the Peaceful *Jihād*.

LEGAL DOCTRINE

Over several centuries the Muslim jurists (*fuqahā'*) evolved their legal doctrine of *jihād* as a **source of state military power and financial revenue**, and the basis for the international relations of the Islamic Caliphate or commonwealth. The concern of the jurists was above all the regulation of the conduct of the second *jihād* or Combative Struggle in spreading the Islamic polity. During the thirty years period of the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs' who succeeded the Prophet (11–41 AH /632–661 CE), *jihād* was pursued intensively by the Prophet's Companions and extensive conquests were undertaken until Egypt and the Eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire as well as the entire Sasanian empire in Iran and parts of Central Asia came under the political authority of Islam. The following dynastic power of the Umayyad state centered in Damascus (41–132 / 661–750) exploited the conduct of *jihād* as its driving force and as a necessary means for securing revenues to meet the financial needs of empire, since the populations of newly conquered territories were subject to payment of the poll-tax */jizyah* as non-Muslim protected communities.¹⁴

The legal doctrine of *jihād* became fixed only by the second-half of the 2nd Islamic century (late 8th century CE) under the early 'Abbāsid dynasty centered in Baghdad, after the initial period of Muslim expansion and conquest. The earliest specialized legal works on the rules for *jihād* (first known as *Siyar* or 'laws for war') were written during the 2nd century AH by the Syrian jurists al-Awzā'ī (d.157) and al-Awzā'ī's pupil Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī (d.185);¹⁵ as well by the Iraqi (Ḥanafī) lawyers the Judge Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm (d.192),¹⁶ and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d.189).¹⁷ The jurists laid down a legal doctrine of *jihād* as being one of the primary

¹⁴ This has been clearly shown in the study by Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State: The Reign of Hishām Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), who brings out the reciprocal relationship between the conduct of military *jihād* and fiscal policies of late Umayyad administration.

¹⁵ Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī al-Kūfī al-Maṣṣīṣī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, ed. F. Ḥamādah (Beirut: 1987).

¹⁶ al-Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Siyar al-Awzā'ī*, ed. A.W. al-Afghānī (Cairo: 1355/1938–39). al-Awzā'ī's *Siyar* work is known mainly through Abū Yūsuf's rebuttal.

¹⁷ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, ed. Mājid Khaddūrī under the title of *al-Qānūn al-Duwālī al-Islāmī: Kitāb al-Siyar li-l-Shaybānī* (Beirut: 1975). Translated by M. Khadduri as *The Islamic Law of Nations, Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: 1966).

obligations of Islam, basing themselves on the Qur'ān, the Prophet's career as well as that of the first Caliphs, and on the materials recorded in the *ḥadīth*.

The jurists made of *jihād* the **primary framework for military and administrative authority of the ruler** (Caliph, and later Sulṭān) and his representatives in the conquered territories.¹⁸ It also functioned to **enhance the legitimization of a ruler** following the loss of political unity after the early 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, from the 3rd/9th century onward. Jurists usually found cause to label the enemies of the ruler either as rebels or as heretics so as to justify fighting them (see the legal discussions on *aḥkām al-bughāt*). Their rationale for de-legitimizing rebellion against 'legitimate' authorities was that it bred internal sedition and civil discord (*fitnah*)—which they viewed as harmful or worse than the harm caused by the ruler's oppression or corruption, and as leading to schisms endangering the purity of faith.

The jurists conceived of a territorial division of the world into the domain ruled by the Islamic polity called the '**abode of Security**'/*dār al-Islām*, where both Muslims and non-Muslims mutually cooperate beneath the umbrella of the larger Islamic society; and the external area controlled by non-Muslim powers termed the '**abode of War**'/*dār al-ḥarb* being the proper sphere for conducting *jihād*. We must point out here that the term «**al-islām**» as the self-denomination of the Faith strictly connotes: 'resignation-submission' (to revealed truth of the Oneness of God and the authority of His Messenger), as well as 'safety-security' (flowing from such submission). In the conceptual polarity *islām* ⇔ *ḥarb*, the notion of *islām* should be understood in this latter sense as referring specifically to the **security** enforced by the governing polity and social order upheld by the Faith. We may further observe that this underlines the integral association of the Islamic conception of '**peace**' with '**security**'—a point lost in the common translation of *dār al-Islām* as 'abode of

¹⁸ For the following discussion of juristic doctrine we have relied on the comprehensive historical review of Islamic legal precepts & policies dealing with war and fighting by Muḥammad Khayr Haykal, *al-Jihād wa l-Qitāl fī l-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyyah / Jihad and Combat in Islamic Legalist Polity* (Beirut: Dār al-Bayāriq, 1993, 3 vols.); and Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Āthār al-Ḥarb fī l-Fiqh al-Islāmī / The Influence of War upon Islamic Jurisprudence* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.).

Peace'. In most other contexts, the antonym of *ḥarb* /'war' is most accurately represented by the Qur'ānic term *al-silm* or *al-salm* /'peace-making'—rather than the term often met with in popular Arabic discourse: *al-salām* /'mutual exchange of peaceful salutations & assurances of security'.

This **juridical doctrine of *Jihād*** also provided a set of rules governing the relationship with non-Muslim enemies and regulating the conduct of warfare, truces, and non-belligerency. Leaving aside numerous details and passing over points of contention, the basic outlines of the Sunnī legal doctrine includes:

- ♦ There is **one single Islamic state**, governing the entire *ummah*. The members of the Muslim Community have a duty to expand the territory of this state with the ultimate aim of bringing the world under the rule of Islam within the *dār al-islām*, and do away with unbelief (*kufī*).
- ♦ Combative *jihād* requires the presence of a **legitimate Caliph** or valid Muslim ruler authorized to organize the struggle, indeed it is one of his chief tasks. When there is no clear ruler or leader /*imām*, there will be *fitnah*; thus a legitimately authorized ruler is necessary to prevent schisms and civil disturbances within the community.¹⁹
- ♦ The Caliph or ruler may **conclude a truce** with the enemy when he deems it in the interest of the *ummah*; some law schools held that a truce may not be concluded for longer than ten years. The area wherein an arbitrated agreement for cessation of hostilities is in effect, is termed by the jurists the '**abode of arbitrated-peace**' /*dār al-ṣulh*.
- ♦ Combative *jihād* is a **collective duty** (*farḍ 'alā l-kifāya*) which may be fulfilled by a section of the community; however if a sufficient number of people do not take part in it, then the entire community is deemed to be in error.
- ♦ Combative *jihād* may become an **individual duty** (*farḍ 'ayn*) when the Caliph appoints certain persons to participate in a raiding expedition, or when an individual Muslim takes an oath to fight the unbelievers. *Jihād* also becomes an individual duty obligatory upon all Muslims

¹⁹ The Twelver Shī'ah required that *jihād* be waged only under the leadership of the rightfully designated *imām* from the Family of the Prophet; they placed the eschatological ideal of *jihād* among their 'six pillars' of faith, as did the Ismā'īliyyah Shī'ah historically. Yet the Zaydiyyah Shī'ah (who are closer to Sunnī teachings in doctrinal aspects) from their beginnings in the early 2nd/8th century advocated combative *jihād* as a legitimate means of installing their *imām*, one of whose main qualifications was leading an armed uprising (*al-qā'im bi-l-sayf*/One who arises with the Sword) to remove illegitimate usurpers of power and inaugurate a reign of justice. Today all the groupings of the Shī'ah comprise roughly 13% of Muslims worldwide.

capable of fighting in a particular region, when this region is attacked by an enemy; in such a situation *jihād* is deemed defensive.

♦ **Defense against attacks by non-Muslim forces remains obligatory**, especially when Muslim lives, property or territory have been taken. According to the consensus of jurists, Muslims should not make peace with an aggressive enemy who occupied Muslim territory by force and retains hold of it. The task of restoring all the occupied territory of the Islamic polity remains valid as long as there is an occupied land (for example, in the past the jurists held this to apply to Andalusia).

♦ Fighting non-Muslims may not be initiated without **first summoning them to accept Islam** before any attack; they must either convert to Islam, or submit to the authority of the Islamic polity and pay the poll-tax (*jizyah*) imposed upon the *ahl al-kitāb* (Jews, Christians; and/or Zoroastrians). **Surprise attacks are not legitimate**, since it is clearly stated in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* that opponents should be invited to Islam, and even if they do not accept after repeated invitations, they should at least be forewarned and not attacked unawares.

♦ **Enslavement is permissible** of all non-Muslim captives during the time of combat, save for Christian monks, until the truce tax (*jizyah*) is fixed, after which enslavement is not permitted. Yet a Muslim may provide a 'promise of security'/*amān* to any non-Muslim during the actual conduct of combat.²⁰

♦ ***Jihād* may not be conducted by Muslims against fellow Muslims.** After the erosion of the Muslims' initial political unity, when two Muslim states were at war, the jurists usually found cause to label the opponents of their ruler either as rebels or as heretics, in order to justify fighting against them.

♦ **Armed revolt against a legitimate Muslim ruler** (the Caliph; later Sulṭān or Amīr) **is illegal**—except when he becomes an apostate who openly renounces his faith—even when the ruler is personally corrupt or immoral and perpetrates injustice.²¹ Rather, Muslims must speak truth to

²⁰ Professor Mahmoud Ayoub observes that many jurists resorted to sophisticated arguments and forced interpretations of Prophetic *ḥadīth* in order to narrow the scope of *amān* or to alleviate the clear precept of forewarning attack. He points out that the jurists "...have always shown a preference for total and uncompromising warfare controlled not by moral principles, but by national interest and political circumstances;" see his "*Jihād: A Source of Power...*" p.238. It appears that the Umayyad dynasty gave a significant impetus in shaping this trend among Sunnī jurists.

²¹ Thus, the Cairene scholar Ibn Jamā'ah (d.1333) held that if a king usurps power by force in a Muslim territory, the central authority (Caliph, or Sultan) should delegate control of that territory to him to avoid *fitnah* /'civil disorder' and to preserve Muslim unity. For a penetrating assessment of this whole issue, see the detailed study by Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

power, and forbear and restrain (*ṣabr*) their righteous anger in the certainty that not only shall God reward them for their long-suffering steadfastness, but that He has His own ways of punishing such a ruler.

The juristic rationale for de-legitimizing rebellion against authorities is that it fosters civil discord and violent socio-political upheaval (*fitnah*) being more injurious than the ruler's injustice, and yielding schisms endangering the unity of faith and tearing apart the fabric of social and economic stability. However, over the course of Islamic history, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, radical religious movements seeking to establish a puritanical Islamic society proclaimed *jihād* against their opponents—both Muslims and non-Muslims—branding their Muslim adversaries as unbelievers (*takfīr*) for neglecting to strictly uphold the laws of Islam (eg. the Wahhābiyyah in Arabia).

♦ The jurists additionally laid out many **practical rules on warfare**: exemptions from the obligation to fight, the protection of the lives of noncombatants, regulations for the lawful methods of warfare, treatment of prisoners of war, safe-conduct granted to representatives of the enemy in negotiations, and the division of spoils. Other details include the conditions that a Muslim may participate in the *jihād* only after taking his parents' permission and discharging all his debts.

Historically this Islamic legal doctrine served several functions, foremost being that ***jihād* mobilizes and motivates Muslims** to participate in wars against non-Muslims by fulfilling a religious duty. This function is clearly seen in the later *jihāds* waged against colonial powers in the 19th century, such as Algerian resistance to the French led by Amīr ‘Abd al-Qādir from 1832–1847, the movement of the Sudanese Mahdī against the British in the late 1800's, or the Acehnese resistance against Dutch invasion and occupation of Sumatra from 1873–1903.

SPIRITUALITY

Parallel with this emergence of legal doctrine, a coherent model for activity was elaborated by individuals and groups promoting *jihād* as the **highest expression of personal piety**. “*Every community has its form of monasticism,*” the Prophet is said to have asserted, “*and the monasticism (rahbāniyyah) of this community is jihād in*

the cause of God."²² This became a slogan for the first Muslim generations. It brings to mind the description given to the Byzantine Emperor by his scouts during the first Muslim advance into Palestine and Syria, that the Muslim troops were "warriors by day and monks by night." In early *ḥadīth* traditions, *jihād* was considered to be as meritorious as the observance of regular prayers, fasting, or even the annual pilgrimage /*ḥajj* to the Ka'bah in Makkah. The Kufan jurist Abū Ḥanīfah (d.150/767) stated:²³ "A military expedition (*ghazwah*) after one has performed the prescribed pilgrimage is better than fifty additional pilgrimages." Yet this spiritual aspect remains little studied, and the texts available for understanding it are scattered in various genres of Islamic literature.²⁴ A good orientation to this topic is found in the early collection of *ḥadīths* by the ascetic-*mujāhid* 'Abdallāh Ibn al-Mubārak (d.181 AH), *Kitāb al-Jihād*—containing 262 narrative reports.²⁵ (Ibn al-Mubārak also

²² Transmitted on the authority of the Companion Anas b. Mālik, in Ibn al-Mubārak, *K. al-Jihād* p.35–36 §16; and with a variant text in the *Musnaḍ*s of Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Ya'lā. Another version transmitted on the authority of Abū Umāmah occurs in the later collections by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bayhaqī and al-Hākim al-Naysabūrī, with the term *siyāḥah* /'journeying to pursue devotions in uninhabited places' instead of *raḥbāniyyah*: "*inna siyāḥata l-ummatī al-jihād fī sabīli llāhi 'azza wa jalla* [the *sā'ih* was a wandering ascetic or hermit who sought remote places for undertaking religious disciplines]. Such archaic reports mirror the early ideal of *jihād* as a spiritual discipline.

²³ Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo: 1949) p.378. Yet there were other views on the merits of *jihād* over *ḥajj*: the Madīnan authority Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d.765) discouraged his followers from participating in state-sponsored military *jihād*, preferring that they perform the *ḥajj*. Normally, the pilgrimage is deemed an individual obligation binding upon Muslims, while *jihād* is a collective obligation that an individual need not be required to fulfill.

²⁴ Two studies may be mentioned here, each from a different perspective: Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihād and the Arab–Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1996); and John Renard, "Al-Jihād al-Akbar: Notes on a Theme in Islamic Spirituality," *The Muslim World* 78 (1988) p.225–42.

²⁵ On Ibn al-Mubārak's *K. al-Jihād*, see M. Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War*, p.119–125; & M. Bonner, "Some Observations concerning the Early Development of Jihād along the Arab–Byzantine Frontier," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992) p.5–31, on 19–28.

One detail in Ibn al-Mubārak's book (see reports §§81, 98, 104) that clearly indicates a spiritual dimension of early *jihād* may be mentioned here: the bodies of certain early martyrs slain in combat exhibited the grace of physical incorruptibility, remaining moist in the grave for years exuding a sweet scent. The phenomenon of **bodily incorruptibility** as a mark of sanctity is accepted in Islam regarding the bodies of Prophets and of certain saints; it is well known in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, as well as among certain Yogis and Buddhists.

compiled an important collection of ascetic-ethical traditions in his *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa l-Raqā'iq / On Renunciation and Softening-the-Heart.*)

In a famous utterance, the Prophet Muḥammad proclaimed upon returning from one of his military campaigns: “*We have returned from the minor combat to resume the Major Combat.*” This influential idea of the ‘Major Combat’ / *al-jihād al-akbar* being ‘the struggle against one’s own base-self’ or *jihād al-nafs* (with the Devil being one’s internal enemy; thus *jihād al-shayṭān*²⁶) was one of the chief legacies of the early pious combatants and warrior-ascetics, termed *mujāhid* and *murābiṭ*, who congregated in the frontier forts during the seasonal *jihād* campaigns. Islamic anthropology views the human person as an arena of contest between good and evil forces, represented in the ancient idea that every person has both an angel and a devil fighting over possession of their soul. Early ethical teachings developed this insight in a spiritual direction, flowing into the emergence of later Ṣūfī *Adab* (character-training) as a distinct discipline wherein the ‘struggle with one’s base-self’ to attain purity, uprightness and cognitive-insight was the chief concern.

The true *jihād al-nafs* by dedicating one’s property, life, and self-struggle in God’s Way begins not on the battlefield but in one’s **Heart**, being the struggle against our human attachment to worldly life and material comforts, and demands sacrificing our vanity and self-love. The ‘struggle against one’s own base-self’ was a highly developed practical discipline in Islamic experience, stressing the function of *jihād* as a means for **penance** and **expiation of sin** (*kaffārah*) based on utter sincerity of intention, while warning against base motives such as greed for plunder, self-glory or power. An utterance of the Prophet (ﷺ) preserved by Ibn al-Mubārak includes the

²⁶ The parallels with the ‘invisible warfare’ against ‘the unseen Enemy’/Devil, cultivated by Christian ascetic-mystics (the so-called “athletes of God”) is obvious, and is clearly reflected in archaic Muslim *ḥadīths*.

statement that for the faithful, "...the sword is a means of erasing one's sinful-transgressions..., but the sword does not wipe out one's hypocrisy."²⁷

Many leading Muslim ascetics and religious personalities of the first three centuries of Islam regularly participated in *jihād* as a spiritual activity combining self-sacrifice and struggle with service to their community. They set the model for the spiritual-combatant or *mujāhid* as one who desires the Hereafter above all else, is altruistic and pure in conduct and motives, selflessly serves his fellows and is utterly reliant upon God. It is known that many proto-Ṣūfī circles in the 2nd/8th century congregated in these frontier outposts (*thughr* or *ribāṭ*) from where seasonal *jihāds* were conducted, often making these forts their permanent abode to pursue their devotional and spiritual exercises. In the early period *mujāhid* and *murābiṭ* were often interchangeable terms for those undertaking martial *jihād*; while *ribāṭ* and *murābaṭah* refer to 'frontier service' or being on guard duty at the frontier protecting the life of Muslims.²⁸ *Ribāṭ* later assumed the meaning of a Ṣūfī hospice or convent for the 'poor'/'*fuqarā*' (namely, mendicant Ṣūfīs).

Taking their cue from the primal meanings of '**striving – self-sacrifice – service**' which *jihād* possessed from its inception, Muslim spiritual practitioners systematized the activity of *jihād al-nafs*, at first in the abundant ethical teachings of popular *akhlāq*, and later in Ṣūfī handbooks imparting guidance for the spiritual training of disciples. The Ṣūfīs thus made the interior *jihād* a framework for the social, moral and spiritual authority of the *Shaykh* or *Pīr* (spiritual master) over his disciples. The concept of *jihād* was further interiorized and elaborated in various domains of human endeavor, embracing intellectual and material striving for justice and equity in society and for establishing security, morality and mature understanding to benefit

²⁷ *Kitāb al Jihād* p.30–31 §7: *inna l-sayf maḥā' um li-l-khaṭāyā ... al-sayf lā yamḥū l-nifāq*; and the Companion Abū l-Dardā' stated (ibid, p.30 §6): "Slaying in the cause of God cleanses one's impurities.../ *al-qatlu fī sabīli llāhi yaghsilu l-daran*."

²⁸ For an overview of the history and evolution of the *murābiṭ* in Islamic experience, especially with regard to the movement of the *Murābiṭūn* in North Africa and Andalusia, see the enlightening study by Fritz Meier, "Almoraviden und marabute," *Die Welt des Islams* 21 (1983) 80–163; English translation by J. O'Kane, "Almoravids and Marabouts" in F. Meier, *Essays on Islamic Piety & Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) p. 335–422.

the entire community.²⁹ In the modern era the venerable spiritual association of *jihād* with the highest human activity—the war against one's lower self—has been revived in a somewhat diluted sense by promoting the Major Combat as being more relevant to contemporary needs and conditions than the combative *jihād* espoused by classical jurists as a basis of political power and state revenues—including such categories as *jihād al-qalam* /the pen, *jihād al-tarbiyah* /education, or *jihād bi-l-māl* /financial contributions supporting civic initiatives.

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

Just as there are two basic dimensions of *jihād* in the Qur'ān and in Islamic historical experience, today at least two major tendencies are at work in contemporary Muslim societies when interpreting and applying *jihād*: the **modernist-reformist** and the **militant-jihadist** trends. This is a simplification and generalization that needs to be qualified and nuanced, since a third trend that revalidates the primacy of Peaceful Striving may be discerned. When placed within their contemporary contexts, these two main trends in effect represent differing reactions to corrupt, oppressive or overtly secular ruling cliques that fail to meet the rising expectations of their own people for social and economic equity and for political transparency, accountability and representation; as well as differing responses to pervasive globalizing economic, political and cultural pressures on the other hand. (We must bear in mind that the ongoing Islamic revival exemplifies the 'relativizing' effect of globalization in which the universalization of Western cultural preferences forces particular traditions to find legitimation from within the dominant Western framework of values and terms of reference. All major religions today are now being forced to 'relativize' themselves to these global forces—if not by adjusting to them or accommodating them, then by rejecting them and attempting to revive or reinvent original traditions.)

²⁹ For more details see A. Morabia, *Le ġihād dans l-islam médiéval : le « combat sacré » des origines au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993) p.480–563.

Muslim writings on *jihād* in the modern period serve two basic aims: (1) to **mobilize** Muslims for a specific purpose such as a revolt, a national war, or the struggle against colonialism or foreign invasion and occupation;³⁰ and (2) to **instruct** Muslims on the doctrine of *jihād*, often with the aim of defending Islam from the ideological attacks and distortions of Western powers, or to promote needed changes and reforms within a society. The consensus of modern interpretation stresses the **defensive** aspect of *jihād*, or connects the peaceful forms of *jihād* with fighting by emphasizing the necessity of spiritual and moral struggle as a necessary **prerequisite** and **precondition** for 'fighting in the Way of God'.³¹ Peaceful Striving is frequently viewed as being more relevant to contemporary needs and conditions than the combative *jihād* espoused by the classical jurists that formed the basis for their theory of political power & authority and for international relations. This contemporary normative emphasis on social and intellectual struggle for reforming Muslim societies, opening and training minds, removing poverty and ignorance and uplifting hearts is connected to the primary significance that *jihād* always possessed from its beginning in Makkah.³²

Two events in 1979 and their aftermath ushered in a new phase in Islamic activism: the Islamic revolution against the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran in 1978–1979, and the brutal Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Their combined impact upon the strategies and organization of militant Islamist projects has been profound—though it may now have peaked. The Iranian revolution led by Āyatullāh Khomeini (1902–1989) also awakened many Sunnī activists to the political potential of Islamic ideology and power, both for removing repressive ruling cliques as well as for confronting Western exploitation and domination. Āyatullāh Khomeini, along with

³⁰ An interesting example of *jihād* in a specific national context is the sophisticated work by the Lebanese Shī'ite scholar Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍlallāh, *al-Islām wa Manṭiq al-Quwwah / Islam and the Language of Force*, (1st ed. Beirut: 1976; 2nd ed. 1981).

³¹ For example, the work by the leading Syrian Sunnī scholar Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *Al-Jihād fī l-Islām*.

³² For an overview of Muslim thinking about *jihād* in the 2nd half of the 20th century, see R. Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, chapter on 'The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern Islam' p.103–148.

many leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, evoked grievances and appealed to Islamic sentiments and teachings that resonated among Muslims worldwide. The reforms ushered in by the original leadership of the Iranian revolution during its early years resulted in a progressive democratic constitution unparalleled in the Middle East at that time. Yet their efforts for genuine progress were stymied at first by the assassinations of key leaders by extremists opposed to the revolution; then by Saddam Hussein's calculated aggression resulting in the long and bloody Iraq–Iran war; and currently by an arch-conservative clique in the 'Council of Guardians' / *shūrā-ye negāhbān*.

After the end of European imperial occupation of Islamic lands, Muslim activists sought ideological inspiration and support for radical interpretations of *jihād* in writings by certain theorists, notably by the Egyptian activist Sayyid Quṭb³³ (hanged in 1966) and the Indian-Pakistani ideologue-politician Abū l-A'ālā al-Mawdūdī (d.1979). These thinkers laid the foundations and much of the superstructure of a worldview shared in common by militant Muslim activists today. This worldview essentializes and idealizes a **naïve vision of a utopian unchanging 'Islam'** irrevocably in conflict with un-faith (*kufī*), often advocating alienation from contemporary Muslim societies deemed 'pagan' (*jāhiliyyah*). Some of their followers have espoused the doctrine of *takfīr* (declaring certain Muslims to be unbelievers), inspired by two *fatwās* of the Ḥanbalī polemicist Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328) who urged Muslims to resist the Mongol invasion of Damascus in the 14th century CE. Ibn Taymiyyah had asserted that Islam was indeed spread by the sword against non-Muslims, that *jihād* was never viewed as merely defensive warfare but refers solely to obligatory fighting (*qitāl*), and he emphasized that the 'Fighting Verses' indeed abrogated all other verses concerning relations with non-Muslims.

³³Mohammad Shah Bin Jani, *Sayyid Quṭb's View of Jihād: An Analytical Study of his Major Works*. Doctoral Dissertation, CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS – Selly Oak Colleges [Birmingham, UK], 1998. For one assessment of Quṭb's political discourse and worldview, see the remarks by Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton University Press, 1999) p.49–92.

An Egyptian engineer Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj (the founder and “amīr” of a small political commune ‘Islamic Jihād’ in 1979 that had united three militant groups into one by the early 1980s called *Tanzīm al-Jihād* /‘The Jihād Organization’³⁴) produced a manifesto for militant Islamists entitled *al-Farīdah al-Ghā’ibah / The Absent Duty*.³⁵ In his booklet ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj recycled Sayyid Quṭb’s claim that certain Muslims could be declared *kāfirūn*—including those rulers who abuse Islam for political legitimacy (the doctrine of *takfīr*). Faraj built on this to establish the status of rulers as that of apostates deserving death, and urged immediate internal *jihād* against the government as an ‘individual obligation’ upon all Muslims capable of fighting. The goal was to establish an Islamic regime by violent means. Faraj argued (invoking Ibn Taymiyyah) that Islam was indeed spread by the sword against non-Muslims; that *jihād* was never viewed as merely defensive warfare, but refers solely to fighting /*qitāl* which is obligatory; and he stressed that the Fighting Verses (Q 9:5 & 2:216) did indeed abrogate all other verses concerning peaceable relations with non-Muslims—ie. Peaceful Striving, or the *jihād al-da‘wah*.

▫ ***Kalashnikov Islam***. Today’s militant Jihadists emphasize the need to establish a truly ‘Islamic’ polity and to struggle against tyranny and oppression coming from an internal enemy: **unrepresentative governments or corrupt ruling cliques in particular Muslim societies**. Calls for *jihād* are issued by small radical groups or militant movements who magnify the ‘struggle by the sword’ as primary, while marginalizing both the defensive aspects of Combative *Jihād* as well as any forms of Peaceful *Jihād*. They re-interpret the notion of *jihād bi-l-nafs* /‘struggling with one’s

³⁴ For a taxonomy of militant groupings during the 1980s, see Rif‘at Sayyid Aḥmad, *Tanzīmāt al-Ghaḍab al-Islāmī / Organizations of Islamic Wrath* (Cairo: 1989); and As‘ad Abū Khafīl, “Jihād Organizations,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. J. Esposito, II p.373–376.

³⁵ Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj, *al-Farīdah al-Ghā’ibah / The Absent Duty*; text in *al-Aḥrār* for 14th December, 1981; & in *al-Fatāwā l-Islāmiyyah min Dār al-Iftā al-Miṣriyyah*, X (Cairo, 1403/1983) p.3762–92; English translation by Johannes J.G. Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat’s Assassins and Islamic Resurgence in the Middle East* (New York & London: Macmillan, 1986) on p.129–230. See also the rebuttals by Shaykh Jādd al-Ḥaqq ‘Alī (former Rector of al-Azhar), in *al-Fatāwā l-Islāmiyyah* X, p.3726–61; and by Jamāl al-Bannā’, ‘*al-Farīdah al-Ghā’ibah*’: *Jihād al-Sayf am Jihād al-‘Aql? / ‘The Absent Duty’: Struggle by the Sword or Struggle by the Mind?* (Cairo: Dār Thābit, 1404/1984).

soul' to mean **violent struggle** by putting one's life at stake, and they view armed *jihād* as a militant strategy for propagating an ideal monolithic Islam in pursuit of their political and ideological goals. This facilitates the mobilizing of people for political action employing violent methods—including the killing of both non-Muslim and Muslim innocents.

This radicalized militant wing among today's Jihadists are now being inspired and led by Arabs who fought in the Afghan anti-communist *jihād* of 1979–1992. Their leadership has selectively recycled portions of the classical juristic *jihād* doctrine recasting it into a utopian program for socio-political change opposed to unrepresentative Muslim regimes and their perceived main backer America. They are conducting a worldwide 'Jihad' against "Jews and Crusaders" using indiscriminate violence against innocents (both non-Muslim and Muslim) and suicide terror-tactics involving spectacular outrages on an unprecedented scale. The Jihadists have plunged our global scene into a morass of banal bloodshed, provoking in response arrogant militarist interventions for "regime change" and widespread fear and paranoia.

Such an exclusivist violent interpretation of *jihād* has spread among a certain segment of Muslims across a number of societies, primarily due to the fact that **Jihadists evoke grievances and appeal to Islamic sentiments and perceptions that resonate among Muslims worldwide**—such as liberating Jerusalem from Zionist occupation, offering ideological and material support to Muslims victimized by repressive regimes (Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir...), or expelling American military forces from Muslim nations. Jihadists effectively exploit the political potential of Islamic ideology and power, both for removing unjust ruling cliques as well as for confronting Western exploitation and domination. They also accuse Muslim reformists of defeatism and complacency for espousing the defensive and peaceful aspects of *jihād*, and they are suspicious of those thinkers they deem to be overly influenced by Western secularist culture and ideology or who are perceived as serving the interests of autocratic unrepresentative rulers.

It is the responsibility of all thinking Muslims who care for the future well-being of Islam, to strive with total sincerity to redirect misplaced energies along the proper path, since Jihadists wreck more harm upon Islam than on anyone else. However, peace-loving Muslims may take an important lesson from them on possible avenues for legitimate Islamic Action to work toward just ends by bypassing unresponsive state governments or unrepresentative ruling cliques; such avenues include self-reliance, discipline and cooperation, effective local and transnational organizing, and willingness to sacrifice.

▫ ***Peaceful–Striving***. Despite the violent path pursued by certain Jihadist groupings or individuals, there has emerged over the twentieth century an alternative mode of action for *Jihād* that emphasizes committed struggle and self-sacrifice as a path for negating or neutralizing bloodshed and violent conflict and for transforming society in harmony with revealed principles, consonant with the primary intent and practice *jihād* always possessed. This trend is little noticed or spoken about in Western circles, nor is it always well understood or appreciated among many Muslims today. For example, it is generally ignored—both by Muslims and those outside the Islamic world—that the Iranian revolution itself was in the main conducted as one of the most remarkable non-violent peoples' movements of the 20th century, or of any century. Tens of thousands of people demonstrated peacefully in the streets as the Shah's troops shot them down in cold blood, until finally the Shah lost all legitimacy and authority and fled.³⁶

This is one of the most dramatic examples of Islamic peaceful *jihād* since the movement of the *Khudai Khidmatgarān* /'Servants of God' from 1929–1938 led by the great Pathan nobleman Abdul Ghaffār Khān (d.1988) against British imperial rule

³⁶ David H. Albert, ed., with intro., *Tell the American People: Perspectives on the Iranian Revolution* (new revised ed., Philadelphia, PA: Movement for a New Society, 1980); and the day-by-day account by the British diplomat Desmond Harney, *The Priest and the King: An Eyewitness Account of the Iranian Revolution* (London & New York: British Academic Press, 1998).

in what was the North-West Frontier province of India.³⁷ He initiated a profound movement of social transformation and resistance to the British. Khan arrived at his original understanding of Peaceful *Jihād* based on his study of the Qur'ān and the Prophet's *Sunnah*, as well as the model of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (the grandson of the Prophet, martyred at Karbalā' in 61/680). Khan's followers were dubbed the 'Red Shirts' due to their readiness to be shot to death in the thousands by British troops while protesting peacefully. Today, Muslims outside of South Asia are almost totally ignorant of Khan's nonviolent ideas and his uplifting reform movement among his own people. Ironically, it was descendants of these Pathan (ethnic Pashtun) tribesmen whom Khan trained and led in his extraordinary non-violent campaign, that several generations later were indoctrinated as young warriors into the ranks of the Taliban fighting for the now defunct 'Islamic Emirate' in Afghanistan.

Another instructive instance of Islamic Peaceful Action was demonstrated by the remarkable career of the gifted Turkish intellectual activist Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960).³⁸ During the years 1925–1956, he endured thirty-five years of internal exile, inhumane imprisonments, poisonings, constant harassment and torment from the RPP (Ataturk) regime, including four dramatic public trials. In order to combat the attacks of those inimical to Islam, Nursi taught the necessity for what he termed '**Positive Action**': the patient, silent struggle to strengthen faith stressing mutual consultation, cooperation & consensus, brotherhood of faith, and **cultivating the collective personality of the faithful with shared aims of self-sacrifice and service**. His non-violent campaign of *çihad-i mânavî* / 'moral-spiritual Jihād' for renewing

³⁷ Khan was not Gandhi's disciple, but his colleague and collaborator whom Gandhi treated as an equal. See the comprehensive documentary study by D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith is a Battle* (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967); and the well researched article by Robert C. Johansen, "Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no.1 (1997) p.53–71. Khan spent a total of fifteen years in British prisons, and a further fifteen years under house arrest by Pakistani officials who feared his authority over the Pathans.

³⁸ Şukran Vahide, *The Author of the Risale-i Nur: Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Istanbul, Sözlük Publications, 1992); and Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

faith and refreshing the centrality of the Qur'an for the religious life of modern Turks was manifested through the literary device of his stream of essays, epistles, letters, and treatises written over the period of 1925–1945 in Ottoman Turkish and known collectively as *Risale-i Nur / Epistle of Light*.

Nursi's *Risale-i Nur* campaign consisted of hand-copying and privately distributing through informal networks thousands of copies of his writings. A large number of pieces of the *Risale-i Nur* were written out by children, women and the elderly; and copies would be smuggled to him for his review and corrections. His followers were continuously watched by the authorities and their homes searched for any traces of his writings, possession of which brought imprisonment. This campaign contributed to the preservation of Islamic awareness and faith-practice in Republican Turkey, and his message of non-violent peaceful resistance, self-sacrifice and service has left an indelible legacy working itself out within the current politics of the country. Arabic, Urdu and English translations of his writings are having a quiet ripple effect within many Muslim circles worldwide—sometimes assuming the dimensions of a cult among certain followers.

These instances of mature Islamic leadership through peaceful striving for individual and communal transformation exemplified by Khan and Nursi could be multiplied by a number of other examples drawn from other Muslim societies, many of them humble and prosaic local or community efforts that are often overlooked. The crucial lesson to be gained from them is the pro-active positive model for peaceful 'Islamic Action' they offer Muslims today. They teach us that authentic Islamic teachings when properly understood and acted upon provide a genuine foundation for selfless service to others, for implementing badly needed social, economic and political reforms, and ultimately for transforming human society in harmony with divine purpose.

THE FUTURE

The conscious or unconscious aim of recovering the important role of *jihād* has kept it as a primary focus of contemporary religious and political thought among Muslims. *Jihād* possesses real existential significance for the life of Muslims in today's world, forming a mirror for Islam's self-understanding. The legacy of the classical juridical doctrines of *jihād* for contemporary Muslims represents both a **heavy burden** as well as an **important resource**. Selective exploitation of particular elements of the juristic theory is a prominent feature of current debates among Muslims over the continuing relevance and applicability of combative *jihād*: **when** does *jihād* become an 'individual obligation'; under **what conditions** is an uprising against the (nominally Islamic) ruling power valid; what are the **legitimate means** or weapons to be employed; **who has the true authority** to call for and initiate *jihād*; and **who is the true 'enemy'** to be fought within and/or without the Muslim *Ummah*?

However, these ongoing debates generally do not adequately address the prevalent assumption widespread among many Muslims today that *jihād* primarily connotes Combative Struggle by means of armed force. This is partly a consequence of the recent historical experience of Islamic societies, and partly due to awarding a privileged position to Islamic legal discourse and thought among most Muslims, who take it to represent the most normative and relevant resource when seeking solutions to their problems.³⁹ The great Andalusian jurist and philosopher Abū l-Wafīd Ibn Rushd (d.1198) long ago observed that: "*jihād* can be divided into four different types: *jihād* by the heart, *jihād* by the tongue, *jihād* by the hand [ie. the pen], and *jihād* by the sword."⁴⁰ The order in which he presented these four means of striving is significant, placing peaceful *jihād* as primary (heart, tongue & pen), while the combative *jihād* (the sword) comes last.

³⁹ See Karim D. Crow, "Divided Discourse: Muslim Discussions about Islam and Peace," *The Diplomat* [London] v.2 (Nov. 1997/*Rajab 1418*) p.32–34, & Arabic text 28–30.

⁴⁰ Ibn Rushd, *Muqaddimāt* p.259; he was known to the Latin Fathers as Averroes. Recall the maxim, 'The pen is mightier than the sword.'

What is most needed at this moment in history is the ‘Struggle by the Mind’ (*jihād al-‘aql*) or creative conceptualization and fresh thinking on the part of Muslims.⁴¹ This crucial task has the necessary pre-condition of sincerity and purity of motive or uprightness of intent (the striving of the heart), and it employs the tongue and the pen or computer keyboard as instruments and means of expression for motivating others. The most effective method of arousing fresh thinking and energy is undoubtedly imaginative education at early years in state schools, and more importantly in local community centers of mosque, athletic club, youth organizations, and private initiatives involving family and neighborhood, as well as initiatives for national awareness through a variety of media. However, anyone familiar with the contemporary state of education in a number of Muslim societies may feel a genuine sense of foreboding. This is something that Muslims need to address themselves, and not for the West to prescribe or impose changes.

Yet the understanding of Peaceful Striving as the primary and essential *jihād* and its promotion as the most important requirement and effective resource for present and future social and political reforms, is increasingly being recognized and addressed by creative and spiritually alive thinkers. Among them we must mention the seminal work by the Syrian thinker *Ustādh* Jawdat Sa‘īd, *Madhhab Ibn Ādam al-Awwal: Mushkilat al-‘Unf fī l-‘Amal al-Islamī / The Doctrine of the First Son of Adam: the Problem of Violence in ‘Islamic Action’* (1st ed. Damascus: 1966; 5th ed. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 1993); and writings by his associate Dr. Khālīṣ M. Jalabī, including his *Sikūlūjiyyat al-‘Unf wa Istrātijiyat al-‘Amal al-Silmī / The Psychology of Violence*

⁴¹ Examples of such attempts are: the papers published in Ralph E. Crow, Philip Grant, & Saad E. Ibrahim, eds. *Arab Nonviolent Political Struggle in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990 [Arab Thought Forum International Dialogues Series]), + Arabic edition by Sa‘d al-Din Ibrahim, ed. *al-Muqāwamat al-Madaniyyah fī l-Niḍāl al-Siyāsī [Civil Resistance in Political Struggle]* (‘Ammān: Muntadā l-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1988); Chaiwat Satha-Anand, “From Violent to Nonviolent Discourse,” in Elise Boulding, Clovis Brigagao & Kevin Clements, eds., *Peace Culture and Society: Transnational Research and Dialogue* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991) p.124–132; Sohail H. Hashmi, *The Islamic Ethics of War and Peace*, PhD – Harvard University, 1996; and Taysīr Khamīs al-‘Umar, *al-‘Unf wa l-Ḥarb wa l-Jihād / Violence, War and Jihad*, introduction (p.9–18) by Ahmad al-Ḥajjī al-Kurḍī & Jawdat Sa‘īd (Damascus: Dār al-Āfāq wa l-Anfus, 1996).

and the Strategy for 'Peaceful Action' (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1998).⁴² While these two thinkers address broad issues with large brush strokes, they exhibit an uncommon originality and exemplary social-intellectual engagement. Others working within regional contexts have been making real contributions by addressing specific problems facing their nation and peoples, including the scholar-educators Chaiwat Satha-Anand [Hajji Qadir Muhyidin] in Thailand, Chandra Muzaffar in Malaysia (President, International Movement for a Just World), Nagasura T. Madale in Mindanao (Philippines), and the Palestinian Mohamed Abu Nimr (Washington D.C.).

The highest Islamic values affirm the unity and sacredness of all human life, and are in harmony with a courageous peaceful activism that liberates and empowers. These values summon Muslims to travel a path different than violent bloodshed, hatred or revenge. This is the path marked by intelligence and faith supporting bold action for change by selfless sacrifice through peaceful conduct. As Muslims seek to refresh and enliven Islamic values and teachings within the constraints of changing conditions within their own societies, they may effectively contribute to the betterment of all peoples. When intelligently understood and practiced, Islam may make a more powerful contribution to peace and reconciliation than to violence and bloodshed.



NOTES

⁴² Concerning the thought of Jawdat Sa'īd and Dr. Khalis Jalabī: see Karim D. Crow, "Nurturing an Islamic Peace Discourse," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 17 (2000) pp.54–69.

