

Introduction

Jihad has been propagandized in the West as a spiritual striving against evil. Some liberal Muslims have adopted this theme for jihad but they are closing their eyes to the reality of the Qur'an which calls Muslims to battle.

The majority of regional conflicts in the last decade took place in Islamic parts of the world. Many were Muslim *jihad* declarations against unbelievers. What is jihad? How must this religious fighting be understood?

Historical Perspective

The polytheists in Mecca bitterly resisted Muhammad's new revelation that Allah was the only God and there were no other gods besides him. Their boycotts turned into persecution of Muhammad and his companions. In 622 AD the Muslims migrated to Yathrib (now Medina).

In Medina, Muhammad formed a multicultural administration, but only allowed it to function until he had enough power to impose an intolerant religious-political state. The growing poverty of the one hundred migrant families caused tension within his religious community. To care for their needs Muhammad ordered his Muslim refugees from Mecca to raid the Meccan caravans of their relatives but they refused (Qur'an - Sura 4:73-80). He coerced them with more "revelations from Allah" (Sura 2:216-218), and 83 Muslim refugees from Mecca and 231 Medinan Muslims went with him to raid the Meccan caravans. This Battle at Badr (624 AD) ended with triumph for the Muslims and brought the turning point in Muhammad's jihad.

Muhammad's success with the sword brought about the expulsion of the Jewish tribes from

Medina and an "inheritance" of Jewish land, homes, wives and daughters for the refugees from Mecca (Sura 33:26-27; 59:1-7).

Muhammad himself took part in 29 campaigns of war. Robbery, booty and taking slaves had increasingly become part of the driving force of these unholy wars.

Muhammad emphasized that war is nothing but *deceit*. And he was a master deceiver. He could cunningly sow strife among his enemies, negotiate cease-fires when in trouble, and compromise with his enemies when it would benefit his cause in the end.

The Term "Holy War"

The expression "holy war" never occurs in the Qur'an! This English translation represents an idealized conception of the Arabic word *jihad*. To understand jihad and the context it is used, let's look at some Arabic words used in the Qur'an that designate strife, battle or war.

- ◆ **Jihad** literally means "to exert oneself by striving for Allah with effort and sacrifice." This term became the *Islamic technical term* for the striving of Muslims against unbelievers and includes armed conflict. It occurs in the Qur'an 41 times in various forms.
- ◆ **Qital** designates fighting with a weapon to defeat the enemy by force—killing and being killed. This is a major part of jihad. The word appears in variations 67 times in the Qur'an.
- ◆ **Hiraba** or **Harb** designates an attack against Allah and Muhammad, or an Islamic declaration of war (*as in jihad*) against people who oppose Islamic law. It occurs 6 times in the Qur'an. It is used in Sura 5:33 in which Muhammad sentences grave punishment on every enemy of Allah and Muhammad.

- ◆ **Fi Sabil Allah** is an expression meaning "in the way of Allah" or "for the cause of Allah". It is often used together with the above words summarizing Allah's call to fight—19 times with *qital* and 9 times with *jihad*.

Qur'anic references: 2:190,191,193,195,216,217,218,236,244,246, 275; 3:13,132, 167,195,246; 4: 74,75,76,84,90,95; 5:33,35,54,64; 8:1,6,29, 57,65,72,74,75; 9:12,13,14,16,19,20, 24,29,36,41,44,73,81,83,86,88,107, 111,123; 16:110; 22:78; 25:52; 29:6,69; 33:20, 25 47,4,20,31; 48: 16; 49:15; 57:10; 60:1; 61:4,11; 66:9 et.al.

These findings show us that jihad in the Qur'an is not a "holy striving" but a *bloody conflict*.

The Enemies of Islam?

Part of a Muslim's jihad is bloody fighting (*qital*) against the **enemies** of Islam. This has been **predestined** for them (Sura 2:216, 246; 4:77).

'The believers fight for Allah, the unbelievers fight for their devil! So fight against the friends of Satan! Satan's deception is weak.' (Sura 4:76)

'Make your jihad (i.e. strive wholeheartedly) in Allah and fight his battle. He has chosen you!' (Sura 22:78)

Following are various enemies of Islam:

- ◆ **Those who Attack**
'If someone attacks you, then retaliate with the same measure with which he attacked you.' (Sura 2:194)
- ◆ **The Unbelievers**
'The unbelievers are our certain enemies' (Sura 4:101)
- ◆ **The Polytheists and the Idolaters**
'When the waiting time of the holy months is over then kill the polytheists wherever you find them. Take them, surround them and lure them into a trap wherever possible' (Sura 9:5). This so-called *verse of the sword* and its echo in 2:191-192 abrogates over 100 verses of the Qur'an that call for tolerance, equality and freedom of religion.
- ◆ **The People of the Book**
'You will certainly find that the most dangerous enemies of the believers are the Jews and the polytheists. And you will certainly find that those

(enemies) who are the most friendly to you are the Nasara (Christians), for there are pastors and monks among them. And they are not proud. (Sura 5:82)
“The Jews say: Ezra is the Son to Allah! The Nazarenes say: Christ is the Son of Allah! But they only say this with their lips. In this way they imitate the talk of those who were unbelievers before them. May Allah strike them dead! How they have become liars!” (Sura 9:29-30)

◆ **Muslim Hypocrites, Cowards, Traitors, Troublemakers and Apostates**

See Suras 9:68; 33:60-61; 48:16-17; 3:86-87

◆ **Missionaries**

“Fight against them until there is no more any temptation (to fall away from Islam) and Allah’s religion rules everywhere.” (Sura 2:193; 8:39)

All verses that recommend cooperating with non-Muslims only apply as long as the Muslims are a minority, as was the case when Muhammad was still in Mecca. But as soon as Muslims are the majority, religious tolerance ends. The goal of Islam in every case is to establish an intolerant religious state as Muhammad did in Medina. Human rights do not apply because the law of Islam is considered to be directly revealed by Allah. And no one may ever amend his laws.

Reward for Fighters

One of the driving forces for the Muslim attacks was *collecting booty!* “Anyone who has killed an enemy and has a proof of that, will possess his spoils!” (Hadith Bukhari Vol. 4 No. 370). The core of the laws on booty involve the keeping and treatment of slaves—a practice that is not unheard of today in Islamic countries. Muhammad’s teaching on booty drove the Muslims to their first wave of conquest (AD 632-732) which reached the gates of Paris and Geneva in the west and Samarkand and the Indus River in the east. Verses from the Qur’an shape the Islamic law regarding booty.

“Allah has promised you that you will collect much booty. He allowed part of it to reach you quickly and kept people from you (so that they could not stop you). The booty is a sign for the Believers that he, Allah, would lead them in the straight path.” (Sura 48:20)

In addition to the fighter’s reward of booty, those who take part in jihad are given the hope of eternal rewards. Muslim fighters expect to be able to enter *paradisiacal gardens with earthly delights*. Every follower of Muhammad who is killed in a holy war is in reality not dead, but alive with Allah! (Sura 2:154; 3:169; 4:74; 47:4 et al.). The Qur’an confirms the false hope that the forgiveness of sins can be obtained by dying in battle or a suicide raid for the cause of Allah (Sura 3:157-158, 169-171, 193-195; 4:100; 61:9-12).

“Allah bought the Believers’ souls and their money (property), so that they might buy paradise. That is why they must fight in Allah’s way (armed) and in this way kill or be killed, according to a promise in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur’an.” (Sura 9:111)

There is a bit of truth in the above verse; God has purchased the believers’ souls—with the precious blood of Jesus. And as believers in Christ, “we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men” (1 Timothy 4:10). May our Lord strengthen His people to take the good news of great joy, which shall be for all people, to the Muslim world.

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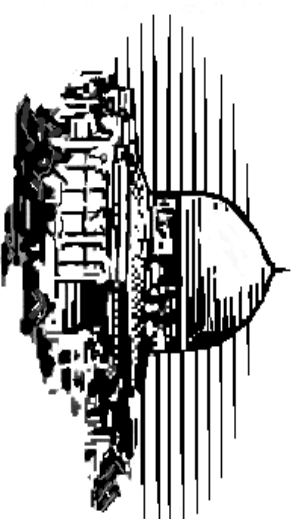
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Jihad

What is the Meaning
Of this Islamic Term?



**O prophet, jihad against the
unbelievers and the hypocrites,
and be brutal to them –
their abode is hell
(Qur'an - Sura 9:73)**

**But I say to you,
love your enemies,
and pray for those
who persecute you.
(Bible - Matthew 5:44)**

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