**Jihad**

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**Jihad** (English pronunciation: [/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English)[dʒɪˈhɑːd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English#Key)[/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_English); [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): جهاد‎ *ǧihād* [[dʒiˈhæːd]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AIPA_for_Arabic)), an [Islamic term](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Islamic_terms_in_Arabic), is a religious duty of [Muslims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim). In [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language), the word *jihād* translates as a noun meaning "struggle". *Jihad* appears 41 times in the [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) and frequently in the idiomatic expression "striving in the way of God *(al-jihad fi sabil* [*Allah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah)*)*". A person engaged in jihad is called a [*mujahid*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahid); the plural is [mujahideen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen). Jihad is an important religious duty for Muslims. A minority among the [Sunni scholars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni_Islam) sometimes refer to this duty as the sixth [pillar of Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam), though it occupies no such official status. In [Twelver](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelver) [Shi'a Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shi%27a_Islam), however, Jihad is one of the 10 [Practices of the Religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Practices_of_the_Religion).

There are two commonly accepted meanings of jihad: an inner spiritual struggle and an outer physical struggle. The "greater jihad" is the inner struggle by a believer to fulfill his religious duties. This non-violent meaning is stressed by both Muslim and non-Muslim authors.

The "lesser jihad" is the physical struggle against the enemies of Islam. This physical struggle can take a violent form or a non-violent form. The proponents of the violent form translate jihad as "holy war", although some [Islamic studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_studies) scholars disagree. The *Dictionary of Islam* and [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom)-American [orientalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_studies) [Bernard Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) both argue jihad has a military meaning in the large majority of cases. Some scholars maintain non-violent ways to struggle against the enemies of Islam. An example of this is written debate, often characterized as "jihad of the pen".

According to the BBC, a third meaning of jihad is the struggle to build a good society. In a commentary of the hadith [Sahih Muslim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih_Muslim), entitled al-Minhaj, the [medieval Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Golden_Age) scholar [Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yahya_ibn_Sharaf_al-Nawawi) stated that "one of the collective duties of the community as a whole (fard kifaya) is to lodge a valid protest, to solve problems of religion, to have knowledge of Divine Law, to command what is right and forbid wrong conduct".

**Origins**

Main article: [List of expeditions of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_expeditions_of_Muhammad)

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| [**List of expeditions of Muhammad**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_expeditions_of_Muhammad) |
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* [Waddan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Waddan)
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* [Qurayza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Banu_Qurayza)
* [2nd Lahyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Banu_Lahyan)
* [Mustaliq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasion_of_Banu_Mustaliq)
* [Hudaybiyyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Hudaybiyyah)
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* [Dhat al-Riqa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Dhat_al-Riqa)
* [Baqra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault_on_Banu_Bakra)
* [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conquest_of_Mecca)
* [Hunayn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hunayn)
* [Autas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Autas)
* [Ta'if](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Ta%27if)
* [Tabouk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tabouk)

**Sariyyah (expeditions which he ordered)*** [Nakhla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nakhla_raid)
* [Nejd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nejd_Caravan_Raid)
* [1st Asad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Qatan)
* [1st Lahyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abdullah_Ibn_Unais)
* [Al Raji](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Al_Raji)
* [Umayyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mission_of_Amr_bin_Umayyah_al-Damri)
* [Bir Maona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Bir_Maona)
* [Assassination of Abu Rafi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_%27Abdullah_ibn_%27Atik)
* [Maslamah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Muhammad_ibn_Maslamah)
* [2nd Asad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ukasha_bin_Al-Mihsan)
* [1st Thalabah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Raid_on_Banu_Thalabah)
* [2nd Thalabah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Raid_on_Banu_Thalabah)
* [Dhu Qarad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Dhu_Qarad)
* [Jumum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Zaid_ibn_Haritha_%28Al-Jumum%29)
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* [3rd Thalabah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Raid_on_Banu_Thalabah)
* [Hisma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Zaid_ibn_Haritha_%28Hisma%29)
* [1st Qura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Zaid_ibn_Haritha_%28Wadi_al-Qura%29)
* [2nd Jandal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abdur_Rahman_bin_Auf)
* [1st Ali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Fidak)
* [2nd Qura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Expedition_of_Wadi_al-Qura)
* [Uraynah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Kurz_bin_Jabir_Al-Fihri)
* [Rawaha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abdullah_ibn_Rawaha)
* [Umar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Umar_ibn_al-Khatab)
* [Abu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abu_Bakr_As-Siddiq)
* [Murrah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Bashir_Ibn_Sa%E2%80%99d_al-Ansari_%28Fadak%29)
* [Uwal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ghalib_ibn_Abdullah_al-Laithi_%28Mayfah%29)
* [3rd Fadak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ghalib_ibn_Abdullah_al-Laithi_%28Fadak%29)
* [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Bashir_Ibn_Sa%E2%80%99d_al-Ansari_%28Yemen%29)
* [Sulaym](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ibn_Abi_Al-Awja_Al-Sulami)
* [Kadid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ghalib_ibn_Abdullah_al-Laithi_%28Al-Kadid%29)
* [Banu Layth](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Raid_on_Banu_Layth&action=edit&redlink=1)
* [Amir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Shuja_ibn_Wahb_al-Asadi)
* [Dhat Atlah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Ka%E2%80%99b_ibn_%27Umair_al-Ghifari)
* [Mu'tah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mu%27tah)
* [Amr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Amr_ibn_al-As)
* [Abu Ubaidah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abu_Ubaidah_ibn_al_Jarrah)
* [Abi Hadrad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abi_Hadrad_al-Aslami)
* [Edam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abu_Qatadah_ibn_Rab%27i_al-Ansari_%28Batn_Edam%29)
* [Khadirah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abu_Qatadah_ibn_Rab%27i_al-Ansari_%28Khadirah%29)
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* [Jeddah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Alqammah_bin_Mujazziz)
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* [Abu Sufyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Abu_Sufyan_ibn_Harb)
* [Jurash](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Surad_ibn_Abdullah)
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* [Army of Usama (Final Expedition)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expedition_of_Usama_bin_Zayd)
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The beginnings of Jihad are traced back to the words and actions of Muhammad and the Quran. This encourages the use of Jihad against non-Muslims. The Quran, however, never uses the term Jihad for fighting and combat in the name of Allah; qital is used to mean “fighting.” Jihad in the Quran was originally intended for the nearby neighbors of the Muslims, but as time passed and more enemies arose, the Quranic statements supporting Jihad were updated for the new adversaries. The first documentation of the law of Jihad was written by ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Awza’i and [Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Shaybani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_al-Hasan_al-Shaybani). The document grew out of debates that had surfaced ever since Muhammad's death.

**Usage of the term**

In [Modern Standard Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_Arabic), *jihad* is one of the correct terms for a struggle for any cause, violent or not, religious or [secular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism) (though كفاح *kifāḥ* is also used). For instance, [Mahatma Gandhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi)'s [satyagraha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyagraha) struggle for [Indian independence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence) is called a "jihad" in [Modern Standard Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) (as well as many other dialects of Arabic); the terminology is also applied to the fight for [women's liberation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism).

The term 'jihad' has accrued both violent and non-violent meanings. It can simply mean striving to live a moral and virtuous life, spreading and defending Islam as well as fighting injustice and oppression, among other things. The relative importance of these two forms of jihad is a matter of controversy. A poll by [Gallup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Gallup_Organization) showed that a "significant majority" of Muslim [Indonesians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Indonesia) define the term to mean "sacrificing one's life for the sake of Islam/God/a just cause" or "fighting against the opponents of Islam". In Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, and Morocco, the majority used the term to mean "duty toward God", a "divine duty", or a "worship of God", with no militaristic connotations. Other responses referenced, in descending order of prevalence:

* "A commitment to hard work" and "achieving one's goals in life"
* "Struggling to achieve a noble cause"
* "Promoting peace, harmony or cooperation, and assisting others"
* "Living the principles of Islam"

**Distinction of "greater" and "lesser" jihad**

In his work, *The History of Baghdad*, [Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Khatib_al-Baghdadi), an 11th-century Islamic scholar, referenced a statement by the [companion of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahaba) [Jabir ibn Abd-Allah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabir_ibn_Abd-Allah). The reference stated that Jabir said, "The Prophet... returned from one of his battles, and thereupon told us, 'You have arrived with an excellent arrival, you have come from the Lesser Jihad to the Greater Jihad—the striving of a servant (of [Allah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah)) against his desires (holy war)." This reference gave rise to the distinguishing of two forms of jihad: "greater" and "lesser". Some Islamic scholars dispute the authenticity of this reference and consider the meaning of jihad as a holy war to be more important.

According to the Muslim Jurist [Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Hajar_al-Asqalani), the quote in which Muhammad is reported to have said that greater Jihad is the inner struggle, is from an unreliable source:

"This saying is widespread and it is a saying by Ibrahim ibn Ablah according to Nisa'i in al-Kuna. Ghazali mentions it in the Ihya' and al-`Iraqi said that Bayhaqi related it on the authority of Jabir and said: There is weakness in its chain of transmission." Hajar al Asqalani, Tasdid al-qaws, see also Kashf al-Khafaa’ (no.1362)

**The best of jihad**

During the [Arab Spring](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring), many peaceful demonstrations in [Arab countries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_countries) faced violence and gunfire by their government's [regime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regime). The gunfires encouraged the protests and fed them to revolutions, based on their strong faith of what is called "the best of jihad". The best of jihad was encouraged by their prophet, [Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad), saying:

"The best Jihad is the word of Justice in front of the oppressive Sultan [ruler]."

In a battlefield context, when *jihad* is used to denote warfare, [Ibn Nuhaas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Nuhaas) cited the following [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) to explain the meaning of the "best Jihad":

Ibn Habbaan narrates: The Messenger of Allah was asked about the best jihad. He said: “The best jihad is the one in which your horse is slain and your blood is spilled.”

In a similarly worded Hadith to the one above, [Ibn Nuhaas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Nuhaas) cited a [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) from [Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musnad_Ahmad_ibn_Hanbal), where it states that the highest kind of Jihad, is "“The person who is killed whilst spilling the last of his blood.”[Ahmed 4/144]

It has also been reported that Muhammad considered performing [hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj) to be the best jihad for Muslim women.

**Spiritual struggle**

Muslim scholar Mahmoud Ayoub states that "The goal of true *jihad* is to attain a harmony between *Islam* (submission), [*Iman*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_%28concept%29) (faith), and [*ihsan*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ihsan) (righteous living)."

In modern times, [Pakistani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) scholar and professor [Fazlur Rahman Malik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fazlur_Rahman_Malik) has used the term to describe the struggle to establish "just moral-social order", while President [Habib Bourguiba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habib_Bourguiba) of [Tunisia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunisia) has used it to describe the struggle for economic development in that country.

**Warfare (Jihad bil Saif)**

*Further information:* [*Mujahideen*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen)*,* [*Jihadism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihadism)*, and* [*Jihad fi sabil Allah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_fi_sabil_Allah)

Within classical [Islamic jurisprudence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiqh)—the development of which is to be dated into the first few centuries after the prophet's death—jihad is the only form of warfare permissible under [Islamic law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia), and may consist in wars against unbelievers, [apostates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy), rebels, highway robbers and dissenters renouncing the authority of Islam. The primary aim of jihad as warfare is not the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam by force, but rather the expansion and defense of the [Islamic state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_state). In later centuries, especially in the course of the colonization of large parts of the Muslim world, emphasis has been put on non-militant aspects of the jihad. Today, some Muslim authors only recognize wars with the aim of territorial defense as well as the defense of religious freedom as legitimate.

Whether the Quran sanctions defensive warfare only or commands an all-out war against non-Muslims depends on the interpretation of the relevant passages. This is because it does not explicitly state the aims of the war Muslims are obliged to wage; the passages concerning *jihad* rather aim at promoting fighters for the Islamic cause and do not discuss military ethics.

In the classical manuals of Islamic jurisprudence, the [rules associated with armed warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rules_of_war_in_Islam) are covered at great length. Such rules include not killing women, children and non-combatants, as well as not damaging cultivated or residential areas. More recently, modern Muslims have tried to re-interpret the Islamic sources, stressing that Jihad is essentially defensive warfare aimed at protecting Muslims and Islam. Although [some Islamic scholars have differed on the implementation of Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_of_Islamic_scholars_on_Jihad), there is consensus amongst them that the concept of jihad will always include armed struggle against persecution and oppression.

**Debate**

Controversy has arisen over whether the usage of the term *jihad* without further explanation refers to military combat, and whether some have used confusion over the definition of the term to their advantage.

Middle East historian [Bernard Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) argues that "the overwhelming majority of classical theologians, jurists, and traditionalists (specialists in the hadith) understood the obligation of jihad in a military sense." Furthermore, Lewis maintains that for most of the recorded history of Islam, from the lifetime of the Prophet [Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) onward, the word jihad was used in a primarily military sense.

Bernard Lewis' interpretation on Jihad is partially correct according to *Fiqh Made Easy: A Basic Textbook of Islamic Law* which describes Jihad as being "divided into four types:

1. Jihad against the soul: Struggling against the soul to yearn for the Religion, act upon those teachings, and call others to them. (Paraphrased)
2. Jihad against Shaytan: Struggling against Satan without doubts or desires.
3. Jihad against the disbelievers and hypocrites: this is done with the tongue, hand, heart and wealth.
4. Jihad against heretics, liars, and evil folk: This is best done with the hand, if not the hand then the tongue, if that's not possible then the heart."

**Views of different Muslim groups**

**Ahmadiyya**

Main article: [Ahmadiyya view on Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya_view_on_Jihad)

In [Ahmadiyya Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmadiyya), jihad is primarily one's personal inner struggle and should not be used violently for political motives. Violence is the last option only to be used to protect religion and one's own life in extreme situations of persecution.

**Sunni**

See also: [Opinion of Islamic scholars on Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_of_Islamic_scholars_on_Jihad)

Jihad has been classified either as *al-jihād al-Akbar* (the greater jihad), the struggle against one's ego or self ([*nafs*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nafs)), or *al-jihād al-asghar* (the lesser jihad), the external, physical effort, often implying fighting (this is similar to the Shiite view of jihad as well).

[Gibril Haddad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibril_Haddad) has analyzed the basis for the belief that internal jihad is the "greater jihad", *Jihad al-Akbar*. Haddad identifies the primary historical basis for this belief in a pair of similarly worded [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith), in which Mohammed is reported to have told warriors returning home that they had returned from the lesser jihad of struggle against non-Muslims to a greater jihad of struggle against lust. Although Haddad notes that the authenticity of both hadeeth is questionable, he nevertheless concludes that the underlying principle of superiority internal jihad does have a reliable basis in the Quran and other writings.

In contrast, the [Hanbali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanbali) scholar [Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Qayyim_Al-Jawziyya) did believe that "internal Jihad" is important but he suggests those [hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) as weak which consider "Jihad of the heart/soul" to be more important than "Jihad by the sword". Contemporary Islamic scholar [Abdullah Yusuf Azzam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Yusuf_Azzam) has argued the hadith is not just weak but "is in fact a false, fabricated hadith which has no basis. It is only a saying of Ibrahim Ibn Abi `Abalah, one of the Successors, and it contradicts textual evidence and reality."

Muslim jurists explained there are four kinds of *jihad fi sabilillah* (struggle in the cause of God):

* **Jihad of the heart** *(jihad bil qalb/nafs)* is concerned with combatting [the devil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_devil) and in the attempt to escape his persuasion to evil. This type of Jihad was regarded as the greater jihad (*al-jihad al-Akbar*).
* **Jihad by the tongue** *(jihad bil lisan)* is concerned with speaking the truth and spreading the word of Islam with one's tongue.
* **Jihad by the hand** *(jihad bil yad)* refers to choosing to do what is right and to combat injustice and what is wrong with action.
* **Jihad by the sword** *(jihad bis saif)* refers to *qital fi sabilillah* (armed fighting in the way of God, or holy war), the most common usage by [Salafi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi) Muslims and offshoots of the [Muslim Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood).

Some contemporary [Islamists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamists) have succeeded in replacing the greater jihad, the fight against desires, with the lesser jihad, the holy war to establish, defend and extend the Islamic state.

**Sufic**

The Sufic view classifies "Jihad" into two; the "[Greater Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Jihad)" and the "[Lesser Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_Jihad)". Muhammad put the emphasis on the "greater Jihad" by saying that "Holy is the warrior who is at war with himself". In this sense external wars and strife are seen but a satanic counterfeit of the true "jihad" which can only be fought and won within; no other Salvation existing can save man without the efforts of the man himself being added to the work involved of self-refinement. In this sense it is the western view of the [Holy Grail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Grail) which comes closest to the Sufic ideal; for to the Sufis Perfection is the Grail; and the Holy Grail is for those who after they become perfect by giving all they have to the poor then go on to become "[Abdal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdal)" or "changed ones" like Enoch who was "taken" by God because he "walked with God". ([Genesis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis):5:24) here the "Holy Ones" gain the surname "Hadrat" or "The Presence".

**History**

Age of the [Caliphs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph)

Expansion under [Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad), 622–632/A.H. 1-11

Expansion during the [Rashidun Caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun_Empire), 632–661/A.H. 11-40

Expansion during the [Umayyad Caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad_Caliphate), 661–750/A.H. 40-129

**Early Muslim conquests**

Main article: [Muslim conquests](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquests)

Two years after the death of the Islamic prophet Muhammad in 632, Muslims under the leadership of caliph [Umar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar) began military campaigns against the [Byzantine empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_empire) and the [Sassanian empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sassanian_empire). In the [Battle of Yarmuk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Yarmuk) in 636, Muslims defeated the Byzantine army, forcing the empire to withdraw from Syria. The Byzantines surrendered near Cairo in 641. The conquest of [Alexandria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria), then capital of Egypt, took longer. Muslims faced little resistance from the locals as they had suffered under Byzantine rule. In the [Battle of al-Qadisiyya](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Battle_of_al-Qadisiyya&action=edit&redlink=1) in 637 where the Persian army was defeated. In 642, Muslims defeated the Persians at the [Battle of Nahāvand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nah%C4%81vand), opening up the plateau to Muslim conquest. Within 15 years Iran had been conquered. Muslims later pushed into [central Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia).

Often called "the Great conquests", the role of Islam in them is debated. Medieval Arabic authors said that the conquests had been commanded by God. They were presented as orderly and disciplined, under the command of the caliph. Many modern explanations dispute the idea that jihad was a motivating force in the conquests. They hold that Arabs on the eve of the conquests were poor and desertification in the Arabian peninsula had reduced local resources. These explanations cite material causes as opposed to religion as the fundamental cause of the conquests. Some recent explanations cite both material and religious causes in the conquests.

**Muslim brotherhood**

Main article: [Muslim brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_brotherhood)

In 1928, Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood, a rigidly conservative and highly secretive Egyptian-based organization dedicated to resurrecting a Muslim empire ([Caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate)). According to al-Banna, "It is the nature of Islam to dominate, not to be dominated, to impose its law on all nations and to extend its power to the entire planet." The Muslim Brotherhood, also called Muslim Brethren (jamiat al-Ikhwan al-muslimun, literally Society of Muslim Brothers), it opposes secular tendencies of Islamic nations and wants return to the precepts of the Quran, and rejection of Western influences. Al Bana was born out of the extreme Muslim right wing's desire to counter the ideology of modernization, the Brotherhood's platform included a strict interpretation of the [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) that glorified suicidal violence. Along with Al Banna, the grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj-al Amin Al-Husseini was also an enormously influential Muslim leader of the time. Together, the two created a powerful and popular Islamist party by classically appealing to fundamentalist Islamic principals while blaming the world's problems on the Jews. Al-Banna also gave the group the motto it still uses today: "Allah is our purpose, the Prophet our leader, the Quran our constitution, jihad our way and dying for God our supreme objective." The 9/11 Commission Report states the Brotherhood's influence on [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden) and on Sheik [Omar Abdel Rahman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Abdel_Rahman) responsible for the 1993 attack on the WTC. An important aspect of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology is the sanctioning of Jihad such as the 2004 fatwa issued by Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi making it a religious obligation of Muslims to abduct and kill U.S. citizens in Iraq.

It advocated a war of Arabism and Islamic Jihad against the British and the Jews.

The Muslim brotherhood waged a "Holy war" against [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria) after the [Hama massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hama_massacre).

The [BBC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC) explains how the roots of Jihad and the origins of [Bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bin_Laden)'s concept of jihad can be traced back to two early 20th century figures, who started powerful Islamic revivalist movements in response to colonialism and its aftermath. al-Banna blamed the western idea of separation between religion and politics for Muslims' decline. In the 1950s [Sayed Qutb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayed_Qutb), [Muslim Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood)'s prominent member, took the arguments of al-Banna even further. For Qutb, "all non-Muslims were infidels - even the so-called *people of the book*, the Christians and Jews," he also predicted an eventual clash of civilizations between Islam and the west. "Qutb inspired a whole generation of Islamists, including Ayatollah Khomeini." The Muslim world widely accepted his ideology post Arabs' defeat in the 1967 war.

The [Muslim Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood) has been involved in violent attacks. From its Islamic theme in its symbolism: on its flag there's a brown square frames a green circle with a white perimeter. Two swords cross inside the circle beneath a red Quran. The cover of the Quran says: "Truly, it is the Generous Quran." The Arabic beneath the sword handles translates as "Be prepared." A reference to a Quranic verse that talks of preparing to fight the enemies of God. It is among 17 groups categorized as "terrorist organizations" by the [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) government, as well as in [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt), where they started to perform terrorist attacks, now banned by that government.

Scholar states that in "The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe," its real goal is to extend Islamic law [Sharia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia) throughout [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) and the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States).

Contemporary Islamism holds that Islam is now under attack, and therefore -experts explain-

Jihad is now a war of defense, and as such has become not only a collective duty but an individual duty without restrictions or limitations. That is, to the Islamists, Jihad is a total, all-encompassing duty to be carried out by all Muslims – men and women, young and old. All infidels, without exception, are to be fought and annihilated, and no weapons or types of warfare are barred. Furthermore, according to them, current Muslim rulers allied with the West are considered apostates and infidels. One major ideological influence in Islamist thought was Sayyid Qutb. Qutb, an Egyptian, was the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. He was convicted of treason for plotting to assassinate Egyptian president Gamal Abd Al-Nasser and was executed in 1966. He wrote extensively on a wide range of Islamic issues. According to Qutb, "There are two parties in all the world: the Party of Allah and the Party of Satan – the Party of Allah which stands under the banner of Allah and bears his insignia, and the Party of Satan, which includes every community, group, race, and individual that does not stand under the banner of Allah."

In the "Holy land foundation" case of the [Palestinian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_people) Arab [al-Arian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Arian)'s involvement in funding terror organization, the Muslim Brotherhood's papers detailed plan to seize U.S. The Group's takeover plot emerged when revealed a handful of classified evidence detailing Islamist extremists' ambitious plans for a U.S. takeover. Terrorism researchers said "the memos and audiotapes, many translated from Arabic and containing detailed strategies by the international Islamist group the Muslim Brotherhood, are proof that extremists have long sought to replace the Constitution with Shariah, or Islamic law," paving its way via a plot to form "a complex network of seemingly benign Muslim organizations whose real job, according to the ([US](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States)) government, was to spread militant propaganda and raise money." The [Muslim Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_Brotherhood) created some American Muslim groups and sought influence in others, many of which are listed as unindicted co-conspirators in the Holy Land case, such as [CAIR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_on_American%E2%80%93Islamic_Relations).

On a website devoted to Ramadhan, the Muslim Brotherhood posted a series of articles by Dr. Ahmad 'Abd Al-Khaleq about Al-Walaa Wa'l-Baraa, an Islamic doctrine which, in its fundamentalist interpretation, stipulates absolute allegiance to the community of Muslims and total rejection of non-Muslims and of Muslims who have strayed from the path of Islam. In his articles, the writer argues that according to this principle, a Muslim can come closer to Allah by hating all non-Muslims -Christians, Jews, atheists, or polytheists - and by waging jihad against them in every possible manner.

Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood has a long-standing war on the West. From 1948 until the 1970s it engaged in assassinations and terrorism in Egypt, and has indoctrinated many who went on to commit acts of terror. Muslim Brotherhood's supreme guide issued the statement that [Al Qaeda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Qaeda)'s "Bin Laden is a Jihad Fighter."

The accused mastermind of the [9/11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11) terror massacre, [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalid_Sheikh_Mohammed) was raised in [Kuwait](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait) and joined the Muslim Brotherhood at age 16.

**Warfare in Muslim societies**

Main article: [Islam and war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_war)

The Fulani Jihad States of West Africa, c. 1830

The major imperial Muslim dynasties of [Ottoman Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Turkey) ([Sunni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni)) and [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persia) ([Shia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia)) each established systems of authority around traditional Islamic institutions. In the Ottoman empire, the concept of [ghaza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghaza) was promulgated as a sister obligation to jihad. The Ottoman ruler [Mehmed II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehmed_II) is said to have insisted on the conquest of Constantinople (Christian Byzantium) by justifying *ghaza* as a basic duty. Later Ottoman rulers would apply *ghaza* to justify military campaigns against the Persian [Safavid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavid) dynasty. Thus both rival empires established a tradition that a ruler was only considered truly in charge when his armies had been sent into the field in the name of the true faith, usually against *giaurs* or heretics — often meaning each other. The 'missionary' vocation of the Muslim dynasties was prestigious enough to be officially reflected in a formal title as part of a full ruler style: the Ottoman (many also had Ghazi as part of their name) Sultan [Murad Khan II Khoja-Ghazi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murad_Khan_II_Khoja-Ghazi), 6th Sovereign of the House of Osman (1421–1451), literally used [Sultan ul-Mujahidin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_ul-Mujahidin).

The so-called [Fulbe jihad states](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fulbe_jihad_state) and a few other jihad states in [western Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Africa) were established by a series of offensive wars.

The commands inculcated in the Quran (in five suras from the period after Muhammad had established his power) on Muslims to fight those who will neither embrace Islam nor pay a poll-tax ([*Jizya*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jizya)) were not interpreted as a general injunction on all Muslims constantly to make war on the infidels (originally only polytheists who claimed to be monotheists, not "People of the Book", Jesus is seen as the last of the precursors of the Prophet Muhammed; the word infidel had different historical uses, notably used by the Crusaders to refer to the Muslims they were fighting against). It was generally supposed that the order for a general war can only be given by the [Caliph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph) (an office that was claimed by the Ottoman sultans), but Muslims who did not acknowledge the spiritual authority of the Caliphate (which is vacant), such as non-Sunnis and non-Ottoman Muslim states, always looked to their own rulers for the proclamation of a jihad; there has been in fact no universal warfare by Muslims on non-believers since the early caliphate. Some proclaimed Jihad by claiming themselves as [mahdi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahdi), e.g. the Sudanese [Mahommed Ahmad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahommed_Ahmad) in 1882.

**Non-Muslim opinions**

The [United States Department of Justice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_Justice) has used its own *ad hoc* definitions of jihad in indictments of individuals involved in terrorist activities:

* "As used in this First Superseding Indictment, 'Jihad' is the Arabic word meaning 'holy war'. In this context, jihad refers to the use of violence, including paramilitary action against persons, governments deemed to be enemies of the fundamentalist version of Islam."
* "As used in this Superseding Indictment, 'violent jihad' or 'jihad' include planning, preparing for, and engaging in, acts of physical violence, including murder, maiming, kidnapping, and hostage-taking." in the indictment against several individuals including [José Padilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Padilla_%28prisoner%29).

In her book [*Muhammad: a Biography of the Prophet*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%3A_a_Biography_of_the_Prophet_%28book%29), B.A. Robinson writes:

"Fighting and warfare might sometimes be necessary, but it was only a minor part of the whole jihad or struggle."

[Maxime Rodinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxime_Rodinson), an [orientalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_studies), wrote that "Jihad is a propagandistic device which, as need be, resorts to armed struggle – two ingredients common to many ideological movements."

In English-speaking countries, especially the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), the term "jihadist" has been used in Western media as a synonym for [*mujahid*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahid), and frequently used to describe [militant Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant_Islam) groups, including but not restricted to [Islamic terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_terrorism).

David Cook, author of *Understanding Jihad*, said "In reading Muslim literature — both contemporary and classical — one can see that the evidence for the primacy of spiritual jihad is negligible. Today it is certain that no Muslim, writing in a non- Western language (such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu), would ever make claims that jihad is primarily nonviolent or has been superseded by the spiritual jihad. Such claims are made solely by Western scholars, primarily those who study Sufism and/or work in interfaith dialogue, and by Muslim apologists who are trying to present Islam in the most innocuous manner possible." Cook argued that "Presentations along these lines are ideological in tone and should be discounted for their bias and deliberate ignorance of the subject" and that "it is no longer acceptable for Western scholars or Muslim apologists writing in non-Muslim languages to make flat, unsupported statements concerning the prevalence — either from a historical point of view or within contemporary Islam—of the spiritual jihad."

**See also**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | [***Islam portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3AIslam) |

* [Islamic military jurisprudence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_military_jurisprudence)
* [Opinion of Islamic scholars on Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_of_Islamic_scholars_on_Jihad)
* [Itmam al-hujjah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Itmam_al-hujjah)
* [Jihad in Hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_in_Hadith)
* [Jihad satire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad_satire)
* [Mujahideen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujahideen)
* [Ijtihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ijtihad)
* [Militant Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant_Islam)
* [Islam and war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_war)
* [Love Jihad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Jihad)

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