A HEURMENUTICAL UNDERSTADING OF *JIHĀD* THROUGH ITS HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES

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2019

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Thought and History

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences

International Islāmic University Malaysia

OCTOBER 2019

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to critique existing academic hermeneutic models for understanding the concept of jihād in Islāmic tradition and to propose a new model that accounts for the entirety of the historical data - the Qur'ān, the Aḥādīth, the Sīrah, and early Muslim views on jihād. The research begins by presenting three models for interpreting jihād: 1) jihād as praxis, 2) jihād as modality, and 3) jihād as theme. The praxis and modality models are analyzed with reference to their notable proponents, and they are determined to be unable to sufficiently explain important sets of historical texts. The theme model is further divided into two types: 1) Muslim supremacy, and 2) Jus ad bellum ("justice to war"). The study rejects the model of Muslim supremacy and instead favor the model of jus ad bellum. This model is then applied to the primary source material - the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth, and Sīrah. The research concludes that Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) understood that the justification for war in Islām is intended to be as a response to aggression and protection of fundamental rights, and proposes the definition of jihad as 'the struggle for the self-preservation of Islām.' Following sections consider this model as it relates to two significant historical figures: 1) Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymīyah, who lived in a turbulent moment of the classical period, and 2) Abū al-A'lá Maudoodi, who likewise experienced the unrest of the colonial and post-colonial transitions. The final section offers concluding remarks, suggesting possible uses of this research in future studies and socio-political analyses. Special attention is focused on resolving contemporary European and American Islāmophobia, as well as extremist-thinking, through re-education on the concept of jihād and its practical applications.

خلاصة البحث

يهدف هذا البحث الى نقض بعض الاطروحات الاكاديمية المعاصرة التي تتناول مفهوم الجهاد في التاريخ الاسلامي, كما أسعى الى طرح نموذج جديد لإدراك مفهوم الجهاد بشكل اشمل اخذا بعين الاعتبار جميع المعطيات التاريخية من عدة مصادر: منها القران ثم الحديث والسيرة و مفهوم المسلمين الاوائل للجهاد - بدأت بعرض ثلاثة نماذج (او ثلاثة مدارس فكرية) لتفسير الجهاد:
الجهاد من الناحية العملية (١
الجهاد كوسيله (2
الجهاد كغاية (3
بعد دراسة النموذج الذي يتناول الجهاد من الناحية العملية بالإضافة الى النموذج الذي يتناول الجهاد كوسيلة, قمت بأسنادهما الى مصادرهما المعتبرة: اتضح ان هذين النموذجان (المدرستان) غير قادرين على شرح مجموعة من النصوص التاريخية. اما بخصوص المدرسة التي تتبني مبدأ الجهاد كغاية, فترجع الى سببين: ١) سيادة المسلمين و٢) العدالة في الحرب. لقد رفضت السبب الأول الذي يتناول سيادة المسلمين لصالح السبب الثاني وهي العدالة في الحروب, وهو السبب المثبت في المصادر الاصلية – القران والسنة والسيرة النبوية. خلصت إلى ان النبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم خاض الحروب ردا على العدوان و حمايا للحقوق الاساسية, واقترحت أن يكون تعريف الجهاد هو "الكفاح من أجل الحفاظ على الإسلام".
تتناول الفقرات التالية الشرح التفصيلي لهذا النموذج وعلاقته مع شخصيتين تاريخيتين: ١) تقي الدين ابن تيمية, الذي عاش في فترة تاريخية متصفة بالاضطراب – و٢) أبو العلا المودودي, الذي عاش فترة مماثلة من اضطرابات الاستعمار وما بعده.
تشير الملاحظة الختامية الى امكانيه استخدام هذا البحث في الدراسات الاجتماعية, او السياسية او حتى في دراسات أخرى, كما ابدي اهتماما خاصا حول ظاهرة الرهاب من الإسلام المنتشرة بين الأمريكان والأوربيين المعاصرين او ما يعرف بظاهرة الـ"اسلاموفوبيا", كما يعالج ظاهر التطرف الفكري من خلال توضيح مفهوم الجهاد وتطبيقه العملي.

APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Omar Suleiman has been approved by the following:

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Supervisor

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Name 3

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, it is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my dear parents and my family, who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal: thank you for your support and patience.

My whole adult life has been an attempt to live out the beautiful qualities that my mother, May Hashem Suleiman, inspired me with, and to live up to the lofty example of my father, Dr. Ahmad Suleiman. May Allah accept this work on behalf of both of them.

Thank you to my dear wife Esraa who has stood by me as I worked late nights on this, and to my dear kids May, Abdullah, and Khadijah who are the joy of my life.

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to those who provided their time, effort and support for this project. To the members of my dissertation committee, thank you for sticking with me.

Finally, a special thanks to Professor Dr. Elmira Akhmetova for her continuous support, encouragement and leadership, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Jihād, an Arabic word which root linguistically means 'to endeavor, to strive,'[1] has become the basis of highly contentious debates in both religious and secular circles regarding its intended role in Islām, resulting in a vast array of misinterpretation, misuse, and confusion in our times. Among the most erroneous opinions heard and amplified in society today is that Islām sanctions unprovoked warfare as a means towards salvation. Case in point, Raymond Ibrahim, a widely published author and public speaker stated:

> Whereas first-century Christianity spread via the blood of martyrs, first-century Islām spread through violent conquest and bloodshed. Indeed, from day one to the present—whenever it could—Islām spread through conquest, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of what is now known as the Islāmic world, or Dar al-Islām, was conquered by the sword of Islām. This is a historic fact, attested to by the most authoritative Islāmic historians.[2]

Ibrahim's opinion is partly reactionary and stems from the emergence of many post-9/11 extremist groups who have hijacked the term jihād to justify their egregious violence in response to oppressive regimes and socio-political conflicts. The most recent obvious example of this being the rise of the Islāmic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which – beginning in 2013 – took over large swathes of Iraq and Syria and has committed some of the worst human rights violations in recent history.

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[1] Hans Wehr and J. Milton Cowan, *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (English and Arabic Edition)*, 4th ed., (Urbana: Spoken Language Services, 1993), 168.
[2] Raymond Ibrahim, "Are Judaism and Christianity as Violent as Islam?" *Middle East Forum*, 1 June 2009. http://www.meforum.org/2159/are-judaism-and-christianity-as-violent-as-islam (accessed 15 October, 2019).

However, on the other side of the spectrum are equally reactionary interpretations by some Muslims of what jihād stands for. In response to the negative portrayals offered by figures like Ibrahim, many have taken a revisionist approach that removes most historical and doctrinal context from jihād and defines it away from its literal meaning. The resulting interpretation is that jihād is exclusively an inner struggle that does not necessitate physical warfare of any kind. An example of this understanding being widely adopted can be seen in Lima Sanneh's land mark study of the West African Sufi tradition of *jihād* entitled, *Beyond Jihad: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islām*.[3]

That said, there have also been efforts outside of these extremes to define a doctrine of jihād, but unfortunately no coherent or objective methodology has been reached or widely-accepted, resulting in further confusion among laypeople.

To resolve the dilemma of these equally erroneous extremes and lack of clarity, jihād must be understood and explained in light of its original context as it was applied at each moment by the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) himself as the founder of Islām. Furthermore, the relevant departures in Islāmic history from the Prophetic understanding of jihād must also be given due consideration. The Qur'ān states that the religion was completed with the Prophet (P.B.U.H) indicating that all evolving concepts had reached their final pristine forms. Islāmic tradition eschews 'innovations' in religion, which is to make arbitrary changes to core religious practices and concepts. Yet like many other complex subjects of creed and jurisprudence, jihād took on radically different forms in each of the first three centuries following the departure of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); almost all subsequent framings of the concept had its own share of biases implanted by the apparatus

[3] Lima Sanneh, *Beyond Jihād: The Pacifist Tradition in West African Islam,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

of state power, Islāmic legal schools of thought (*madhā'hib*), and debates among Qur'ānic exegetes (*mufassirūn*). As David Cook notes:

> The juridical definition, of course, has been a major force in shaping the reactions of Muslims towards war over the centuries, but it would be rash to assume that it has been the only one. [….] The attitudes of the first generations of Muslims towards questions of war and peace were shaped by several factors. Paramount among them were (a) the cultural norms of the pre-Islāmic societies to which they belonged, (b) the attitudes towards war contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the Qur'ān, and (c) the dramatic events in their own lifetimes. All of these factors contributed to the formation of the 'classical' Islāmic conception of war...[4]

Thus, a more holistic and historical approach to the term jihād can be undertaken by focusing on how the concept was understood against the backdrop of specific social and political circumstances during Muslims history that have mediated its meaning. In order to achieve this objective, a thorough review must be conducted of the doctrinal, historical, and legal dimensions of jihād starting with the genesis of the term and its practice in the 7th century, to its formative legal applications from this period to the end of the medieval era, and finally revisionary and revival attempts from the 18th century onwards.

This larger objective entails canvassing a varied genre of texts to recreate a multifaceted understanding of jihād and *shahādah*, or martyrdom, as dynamic discursive terms through time. Such sources include the Qur'ān itself, exegetical works (*tafsīr*), early

[4] Fred Donner, "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War," in *Just War and Jihād: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions (Contributions to the Study of Religion)*, 1st ed., edited by John Kelsay and James Turner, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 32-33.

and late works of *Aḥādīth* which purport to contain the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), and the excellences of jihād (*faḍa'il al-jihād*) and the excellences of patience (*faḍa'il al- ṣabr*) literatures, which are often not consulted on this topic. Furthermore, the comparison of early and late sources and texts from these genres allows one to chart both the constancies and changes in the spectrum of meanings and repertoire of activities included under the terms jihād and shahādah. Recovering this broader semantic landscape undermines exclusively martial conceptualizations of both these terms and has important implications for the contemporary period.

Regarding the introduction of jihād in the Islāmic tradition during the 7th century, the research begins by documenting the events surrounding the establishment and meaning of the term throughout the ministry of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H). The research demonstrates, through his ethics, strategy, and deployment of jihād that the purpose of warfare was intended for specific circumstances. This is contrasted to other forms of 7th century warfare within and outside the Arabian Peninsula, further demonstrating that at times of conflict Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) always prioritized a far more humane and peaceful outcome. As stated by Philip Jenkins, ″By the standards of the time, which is the 7th century A.D., the laws of war that are laid down by the Qur'ān are actually reasonably humane.″[5] It is argued that Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) methodology of warfare reformed the practice during his time into a more balanced and morally justified activity intended to secure the lives and values of his community, eventually serving as the roadmap for future generations of Muslim scholars as well.

[5] Barbara Bradley Hagerty, "Is The Bible More Violent Than The Qur'ān?" *National Public Radio (NPR)*, 18 March, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124494788> (accessed 15 October, 2019.

The doctrine of jihād for the Prophet (P.B.U.H) had multiple dimensions, demonstrated through his personal and collective struggle to improve one's relationship with God and His creation and to spread Islām primarily using non-violent approaches of reconciliation and calling to justice for all of humanity. The Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) said, "The best jihād in the path of Allāh is a word of justice in front of an oppressive ruler."[6] Notice that in this tradition, one of the best acts of jihād is done by words alone, without any fighting involved at all, which further demonstrates that the purpose was, and remains, to achieve these Islāmic objectives through peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and freedom of religion; warfare and combat are a last resort against oppression. The exercise of military force was only as a means of self-defense and strategic deployment within the bounds of an unprecedented code of ethics, a standard revolutionary for its time which protected the rights of women, children, prisoners of war, and even enemy property, to the extent that many who came into the hands of the Muslim armies sought refuge, asylum, and even converted to Islām as a result.

That said, this standard of securing the lives and values of the Muslim community were subsequently understood and practiced by the students and companions of the Prophet himself (P.B.U.H). For example, Ibn 'Abbās, perhaps the first major exegete of the Qur'ān, reportedly stated, "The best jihād is to build a mosque and therein to teach the Qur'ān, Sunnah, and religious understanding (*fiqh*)."[7] The meaning of *jihād* to them was not exclusively a martial activity; it was also used in its full linguistic sense as a struggle to

[6] Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, (Ṣaydā, Lubnān: al-Maktabah al-Aṣrīyah, 1980), 4:124 #4344.
[7] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'an*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutūb al-Miṣrīyah, 1964), 8:296, verse 9:122.

achieve good for the sake of God, involving such activities as charity, education, and so on.

After the death of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), this understanding of jihād was generally adhered to until the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty (661 – 750 C.E.[8]). It was at this point that Muslims had defeated and subdued two of the strongest empires in the word at the time: the Byzantium and Sassanids. Now that the Islāmic polity had been established and provided relative security to its inhabitants, the doctrine of jihād began to change in relation to these new conditions, with statesmen and scholars alike adopting a more forward-looking approach to future threats to the stability of the empire. As such, the expansion and strengthening of the state became paramount and jihād became a means to retain the hard-fought security of previous generations. Asma Afsaruddin states:

> Early jurists not aligned with official circles, like Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161/778) and Hijazi scholars like ʿAtaʾ b. Abi Rabah, Abū Salama b. ʿAbd al-Rahman (d. between 94–104/712–722) and ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar, were of the opinion that *jihād* was primarily defensive, and that only the defensive *jihād* may be considered obligatory on the individual. However, Syrian jurists like al-Awzaʿi (d. 157/773) and Makhul al-Shami (d. between 112/730–119/737) who were close to the Umayyads, held the view that even aggressive war may be considered obligatory. No doubt this last group was influenced by the fact that the Syrian Umayyads during his time were engaged in border warfare with the Byzantines and there was a perceived need to justify these hostilities on a theological and legal basis. It would not

[8] All dates of empires and historical figures will be listed according to the Common Era (C.E.) unless otherwise noted.

> be an exaggeration to state that expressing support for expansionist war at this time (the Umayyad period) was to proclaim one's support for the existing government and its policies. [….] By the early part of the 'Abbāsid period (750–1258), roughly mid-late 2nd/8th century, the military aspect of *jihād* became foregrounded over other spiritual and nonmilitant significations of this term in juridical and official circles. *Jihad* from this period on would progressively be conflated with *qital* ("fighting"), collapsing the distinction that the Qurʾan maintains between the two.[9]

By the 18th century, with the rise of colonial European states and the subsequent pushback against Muslim expansionism, the nature of jihād became a focal point of discussion between Islāmic scholars and non-Muslims alike, which cannot be rightly divorced from its context of support or resistance to European colonialism. As Michael Bonner notes, "Many of these modern arguments over historiography, and over the rise of Islām and the origins of jihād more generally, began in the nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries among European academic specialists in the study of the East, often referred to as the orientalists. Their involvement in the colonial project has been much discussed."[10] Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) military career, the mentions of jihād in the Qur'ān, and his traditions, form the foundation for most judgments about his mission. Islām is either a religion of peace or war depending on which interpretation of the messenger and message is followed or emphasized, sometimes selectively. That said, it is not surprising that

[9] Asma Asfaruddin, "Jihād and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought and History," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 9. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.46> (accessed 28 September, 2019).
[10] Michael David Bonner, *Jihād in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 16.

Orientalists generally construed jihād as primarily militaristic, perhaps not only to justify the subjugation of Muslim societies by European powers, but also as a means to justify their own military doctrines.

When discussing the contemporary period, we must begin with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, when the Muslim world – for the first time in its history – has not been ruled by any central political administration (i.e. Caliphate). As a result, the understanding of jihād has once again evolved to accommodate the changing political and intellectual landscape, some taking more extreme views based on anachronistic perceptions or those removed from history all-together, and others still attempting to determine what the doctrine of jihād entails.

The research challenges not only the extreme views emanating from the confusion and discord of the contemporary period, but to offer an objective and holistic means towards understanding jihād for future generations.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are the following:

1. To comprehend the historical context and original understanding of the concept of jihād during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions.
2. To comprehend the historical contexts behind the understanding of *jihād* during the post-Prophetic era of Islām (9^{th} – 18^{th} centuries) and how the political and social climate during this time affected and influenced that understanding.

3. To comprehend the historical contexts behind the understanding of jihād during the Modern-Contemporary period of Islām (19th – 21st centuries) and how the political and social climate during this time has affected and influenced that understanding.
4. To provide a sound understanding of the concept of jihād through an objective methodology that gathers these historical circumstances, contexts, and biases holistically into a definitive understanding of the concept of jihād and which can be used for future research endeavors. Subsequently, to contrast this approach against more reactionary and extreme understandings of the concept.

1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

Due to a lack of coherently agreed-upon scholarship surrounding the concept of jihād in the contemporary period, the world has been left with reactionary theories by independent researchers outside the realm of traditional scholarship and peer-review. For example, Andrew Bostom, an associate professor of medicine at Brown University – by no means an expert on Islāmic or Middle Eastern Studies – has published numerous articles and books on the subject of jihād, such as *The Legacy of Jihad: Islāmic Holy-War and the Fate of Non-Muslims*, where he argues his central thesis:

> In fact, the consensus view of orthodox Islāmic jurisprudence regarding *jihād*, since its formulation during the eighth and ninth centuries, through the current era, is that non-Muslims peacefully going about their lives – from the Khaybar farmers whom Muḥammad ordered attacked in 628 to those sitting in the World Trade Center[s] on September 11, 2001 – are

> "muba'a," licit [….] And these innocent noncombatants can be killed, and have always been killed, with impunity…[11]

Likewise, ISIS follows the same interpretation, justifying their indiscriminate killing on the pretext that war is conducted against others simply by virtue of disbelief. In their now (in)famous and retired propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, in an article entitled, "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You," they provide their reasoning behind their acts of violence:

> We hate you, first and foremost, because you are disbelievers… Furthermore, just as your disbelief is the primary reason we hate you, your disbelief is the primary reason we fight you, as we have been commanded to fight the disbelievers until they submit to the authority of Islām, either by becoming Muslims, or by paying jizyah – for those afforded this option – and living in humiliation under the rule of the Muslims.[12]

Despite being from two different ideological perspectives, both this lay author and ISIS extremists have a similar reactionary interpretation regarding the subject of jihād – they have removed the formative conception from its historical contexts and applied it to their own time without any regard to changing conditions. As such, their views are based on an ignorant and narrow perception of history and Islāmic doctrine. It is because of this lack of education and proper understanding of jihād from the Islāmic tradition, that both Islāmophobes, or anti-Muslim ideologues, and extremists alike can support each other's

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[11] Andrew G. Bostom, *Legacy of Jihād: Islamic Holy War and the Fate of Non-Muslims,* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008), iv-v.

[12] ISIS (Islamic State in Syria), "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You," *Dabiq*, no. 15 (Iraq: n.p., 2016), 31. <http://clarionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/islamic-state-magazine-dabiq-fifteen-breaking-the-cross.pdf> (accessed 28 September, 2019).

arguments and lay fertile intellectual ground for their future followers. Therefore, it is important that an objective and coherent understanding of jihād be provided in a time when such confusion leads to these extremes: one of anti-Muslim hatred and persecution, and the other of terrorism and violence.

1.1.2 Research Questions

This research responds to the following questions:

1. What was the historical context and original understanding behind the meaning and practice of jihād as implemented by the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) and his companions?
2. What were the contexts behind the formative legalities and application of jihād during the post-Prophetic era? How did the political and social climate between the 9th to 18th century contribute to Muslims (and non-Muslims) understanding of jihād?
3. What were the contexts behind the Modern-Contemporary period's understanding of jihād from the 19th century onward and how did the political and social climate during this time affect that understanding?
4. Is there an objective model of jihād that can be provided which coherently defines and provides a roadmap for future applications and research in an ever-changing world? And how does this objective understanding contrast to more reactionary and extremist viewpoints?

1.1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research cannot be overstated. Firstly, the most important impact this research will have is in establishing an objective understanding of jihād, as opposed to the more reactionary views surrounding the concept today. Rather than rely on sources bound to a specific time period or school of thought, the research attempts to transcend the limitations of previous efforts to define the concept of jihād by offering a coherent and holistic understanding which takes into account both the biases and circumstances surrounding Muslims in their specific periods and cultures, as well as the common thread tying them all together.

Secondly, the research challenges reactionary narratives about jihād, subsequently diluting the influences of Islāmophobes, terrorists, and revisionists alike. By providing an alternative and balanced narrative based in facts derived from a diverse tradition of Islāmic scholarship, absolutist views of jihād as being an aggressive military conquest and those suggesting that it is merely an inner struggle, can be shown as lacking and ultimately undermined.

Thirdly, this can pave the way for future scholars to be able to understand and apply the concept of jihād in accordance with the vastly different circumstances they may face different from our own, with less difficulty and confusion.

Finally, the research serves a need by filling a gap in contemporary studies on the subject of jihād by providing an objective definition and methodology towards understanding the concept. This is relatively innovative considering that past scholars have generally viewed the concept strictly from their own anachronistic biases or a

reductionist/reactionary view of history. To the contrary, this research attempts to transcend both these perspectives.

1.2 SCOPE OF STUDY

The research attempts to address the meaning and application of the concept of jihād by analyzing the historical circumstances and biases of Muslims in Islāmic history. In order to do so, this research needs to focus on the three major periods of spanning 14 centuries of this religious tradition: The Prophetic Period (7^{th} – 8^{th} century), the Formative Period (9^{th} – 17^{th} centuries), and the Modern-Contemporary Period (18^{th} – 21^{st} Century). However, given the impracticality (and perhaps impossibility) of addressing every single period comprehensively, this research will only emphasize the interpretations and practices of three major figures who are representative of these epochs. With regard to the first period, the obvious representative is the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) himself. While additional focus will be given to the practices and understanding of his companions, he will be the main exemplar of this period and will serve as a foundational reference for the rest.

With regard to the Formative Period, much thought was given to whose works would be best to analyze. Honestly, it would be inappropriate to assume that any one scholar could truly encapsulate the entire intellectual tradition of Islām with respect to the concept of jihād, especially given the fact the depth of scholarly disagreement and erudition manifested throughout this vast period of time. As such, a scholar was chosen whom best represents a culmination of the *general* understanding of jihād during this period, as well as one who is most credited for influencing future generations on the subject: the well-known (and even controversial) 13^{th} – 14^{th} century scholar, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn

Taymīyah (d. 1328). Ibn Taymīyah has been recognized as not only one of the major influences of Islāmic revivalist thought in the contemporary period but has also been accused of being the primary influence behind extremist ideologies (i.e. ISIS). It should come as no surprise, then, that his work would play a central role in this research. More specifically, his Mardin fatwá shall be analyzed, where he gives a legal opinion on the state of warfare with respect to a hybrid situation never-before-seen in the Islāmic world, in which non-believers (i.e. the Mongols) ruled over the Muslims. His answer to this dilemma – and the nuances he employs in explaining the nature of warfare – will be especially beneficial to this research and its objectives.

With respect to the Modern-Contemporary Period, it was slightly less difficult to find a scholar who best represents this epoch. Perhaps the most erudite of the modern Muslim intellectuals with regard to the concept of jihād was the founder of the largest Asian Islāmic political organization, Jamaat e-Islaami, Syed Abul ʻAla Maudoodi (d. 1997), also spelled Maududi or Mawdudi. His work *Jihād in Islām*[13] is perhaps the most comprehensive in scope and attempts to contextualize the concept of jihād in accordance with his own socioeconomic and political circumstances. Given that Maudoodi was responding to the recent fall of the Ottoman Empire and the evasive imperialism of the Western world, his perspective is paramount toward understanding the contexts of the Muslim experience during this era and serves as a sharp contrast to more reactionary (and less scholarly) understandings of jihād.

[13] Syed Abul ʻAla Maudoodi [Maududi] and Syed Rafatullah Shah (trans.), *Jihad in Islam*, (Lahore: n.p., 2017).

Finally, the research combines the analyses of the aforementioned exemplars and thinkers to showcase thematic similarities which provide an objective understanding of the concept of jihād.

1.2.1 Sources of the Research

This study is fully qualitative and relies on primary and secondary sources surrounding the subject of jihād. Of the primary source material, there are two categories: 1) Islāmic primary sources such as the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth collections, and Sīrah literature, and 2) Tafsīr and Fiqh works by Islāmic scholars. Both of these may be further divided into Arabic and English translations. Examples within the first category include Ṣafī al-Raḥmān Mubārakfūrī's *Al-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm*, translated into English as *The Sealed Nectar: Biography of the Noble Prophet*[14] and Ibn Isḥāq's *Life of Muḥammad*, translated by Alfred Guillaume.[15] Examples from the second category would include: Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, translated into English as *The Distinguished Jurist Primer*,[16] a 12th century manual for Islāmic jurists which elucidates the positions of the four major schools of thought on a variety of subjects, and Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimmah* (*Laws Regarding the Protected People*),[17] a 14th century work which details the legalities governing minorities in an Islāmic polity, especially those who have been conquered through war. More importantly, however, will be the works of Ibn Taymīyah and

[14] Ṣafī al-Raḥmān Mubārakfūrī and Issam Diab (trans.), *Ar-Raheeq Al-Maktum = the Sealed Nectar: Biography of the Noble Prophet,* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar-us-Salam, 2002).
[15] Ibn Ishaq and Alexander Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad: a translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[16] Ibn Rushd and Imran Nyazee (trans.), *The Distinguished Jurist Primer,* vol. 1-2, (New York: Garnett Publishing, 2002).
[17] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, Yusūf al-Bakrī (ed.), and Aḥmad al-ʿArārūri (ed.), *Ahkām Ahl al-Dhimmah*, (Dammām: Dār Ramādī li-l-Nashr, 1997).

Maudoodi. With regard to the former, Ibn Taymīyah's fatwá on Mardin plays an important role in understanding the nuances of *jihād* and its legal rulings in the 14th century, given the complexity of circumstances surrounding the Muslims (i.e. the occupation by the Mongols). His fatwá has been translated in Yahya Michot's *Ibn Taymiyya: Muslims under non-Muslim Rule*.[18] With regard to the latter, Maudoodi's work *Jihād in Islām* is a comprehensive treatise on the subject and how it should be understood in the modern world.

Of the secondary sources utilized throughout this research there are four categories: 1) Books 2) Academic Articles 3) News/Magazine Articles and 4) Miscellaneous. The first category may be further sub-divided into works written by academics and scholars in the field of Islāmic and/or Middle Eastern studies and those written by laypeople. An example of the former would be a book written by distinguished professor of Islāmic Studies at Georgetown University, John Esposito, entitled *Islām: The Straight Path,*[19] an essentially neutral primer on Islāmic doctrines and Muslim society. Another example would be *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islām (And the Crusades)*, written by the anti-Islām polemicist Robert Spencer,[20] who portrays Islām in a generally pejorative manner. These sources are important in that it allows for the researcher to examine the perceptions, biases, and paradigms of multiple authors – from various backgrounds and education – and draw from them so as to formulate a more objective understanding of the subject.

The second category are academic articles written by experts in the fields of Islāmic Studies or Middle Eastern Studies. An example would be Fred Donner's, "The Sources of

[18] Yahya Michot*, Ibn Taymiyya: Muslims under non-Muslim Rule* (Oxford: Interface Publications, 2006).
[19] John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[20] Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades),* (Washington: Regnery Publishing. 2005).

Islāmic Conceptions of War," which presents the sources and influences behind the understanding and practice of warfare in early Muslim society. Although concise, these sources are particularly important as they draw from the knowledge of experts in these fields.

The third category is similar to the first in that it includes both experts in the field and laypeople alike but is different in the sense that these articles tend to be more concise and polemical. That said, a great deal of insight can still be garnered from them. An example of one such article is Graem Wood's "What ISIS Really Wants" featured in *The Atlantic,*[21] which argues that ISIS conducts warfare for the simple sake of subjugating disbelievers. Several short propaganda pieces published by extremists, such as ISIS's online magazine *Dabiq*, are also useful in ascertaining the reactionary beliefs and practices surrounding jihād.

The fourth category refers to any reference that is not directly tied to the topic at hand and is used as supplementary. For example, when making comparisons between the Islāmic conception of warfare and the Christian perspective, the Bible will be utilized. When making comparisons with other traditions, such as ancient Chinese civilization, then Sun Tzu's *Art of War* will be particularly useful. These references are important for the sake of showing nuance and the scope of this research.

[21] Graem Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/> (accessed 28 September, 2019).

1.2.2 Literature Review

Following the discussion on the categories of literature utilized in this research, a sample of the sources are listed below. Among the primary sources used are the following:

Primary Sources: The translation of the Qur'ān that is most relied on is the contemporary work of Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation*.[22] This translation is notable in that it uses the most contemporary English syntax and terms, including the implied context of words. Unlike previous translations which rely on older English terminology and 'word-for-word' renderings, Haleem's rendition is perhaps the most accessible. That said, other translations are also referred to for the sake of a comparative analysis when analyzing different views, for example, *The Study Qur'an: A New Translation and Commentary* by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, et al. [23]

With regard to personal statements of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions, there are many collections of Aḥādīth (singular, *ḥadīth*) in the original Arabic that have been examined, in consultation with their English translations such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*,[24] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*,[25] and *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*.[26]

As for the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), there are numerous texts which are utilized – each with their own theme. Among the more concise works in this respect are Al-Qushayrī, et al., *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet*

[22] Abdel Haleem, M. A., *The Qur'an: English translation and parallel Arabic text*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[23] Syed Hossein Nasr et. al., *The Study Qur'an: A New Translation and Commentary,* (New York: HarperOne, 2015).
[24] Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (trans.), *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari: Arabic-English*, (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam, 1997).
[25] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī Muslim, Nasiruddin Khattab (trans.), and Huda Khattab (ed.), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: English Translation of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam, 2007).
[26] Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī Abū Dāwūd and Yasir Qadhi (trans.), *Sunan Abī Dāwūd = English translation of Sunan Abu Dawud*, (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam, 2008).

Muḥammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami'-uṣ-Saḥiḥ,[27] an integral work to this project as it collects narrations surrounding the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) sayings and life in a succinct manner. More importantly, however, is the fact that said narrations come from the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) own companions, giving us the closest approximation to how he lived and what he believed. This is helpful in elucidating the Prophetic view of jihād and how the early Muslims interpreted the concept. Similar concise works on the topic include *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad: Highlights and Lessons*[28] by Mustafa As-Siba'ei and Nasiruddin al-Khattab; Karen Armstrong's *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time*[29]; Martin Lings *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*[30]; Meraj Mohiduddin's *Revelation: The Story of Muhammad*.[31]; and Maxime Rodinson's *Muhammad: Prophet of Islām*.[32]

Another similar work to the above, but which focusses exclusively on the Meccan period of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life and the pagan culture surrounding him is Zakaria Bashier's *The Makkan Crucible*. This work is of interest given that it puts greater emphasis on the contexts surrounding the Qur'ānic revelation and how the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reacted to the conflict present in his environment.

More comprehensive works in the Sīrah genre – encompassing the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life from birth till death and additional historical contexts – are *The Sealed*

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[27] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī Muslim and Abdul Hameed Siddiqui (trans.), *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jāmi'-uṣ-ṣaḥīḥ,* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1971).
[28] Mustafa As-Siba'ei and Nasiruddin al-Khattab (trans.), *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad: Highlights and Lessons,* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005).
[29] Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time,* (New York: Atlas HarperCollins, 2007).
[30] Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources,* (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1983).
[31] Meraj Mohiuddin, *Revelation: The Story of Muhammad,* 1st ed., (Scottsdale: Whiteboard Press, 2015).
[32]Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad: Prophet of Islam,* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Nectar by Ṣafī al-Raḥmān Mubārakfūrī and *The Noble Light of the Prophet* by Ali Muḥammad As-Sallabi.

And works that focus primarily on the legal aspects and applications of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life such as Muḥammad Ghazali's *Fiqh-us-Seerah: Understanding the Life of Prophet Muhammad*.[33]

An Orientalist view of the Sīrah is also important to note and has been documented in Muḥammad Mohar Ali's *Sirat al-Nabī and the Orientalists: With the Special Reference to the Writings of William Muir*.[34] And an example of a personal reflection from an Orientalist himself, Robert Payne, can be found in *The Holy Sword: The Story of Islām from Muḥammad to the Present*.[35]

With regard to the primary works that are utilized to elucidate the concept of jihād from the Islāmic legal tradition, there are many, among which will be the aforementioned *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* by Ibn Rushd and *Aḥkam Ahl al-Dhimmah* by Ibn al-Qayyim. The scholarly writings on this subject are vast – encompassing hundreds (if not thousands) of volumes of Arabic works. Very few have been translated, so only the most influential treatises will be used and translated for the sake of this research.

Secondary sources: It is necessary to understand and elucidate some of Islām's doctrines with respect to how the religion views the human being and their rights. As such, the following works have been selected for this purpose. The first of these are about Islāmic teachings in general, such as John Esposito's *Islām: The Straight Path*, Juan Eduardo

[33] Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Fiqh-us-Seerah: Understanding the Life of Prophet Muhammad* (Riyad: International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 1999).
[34] Muhammad Mohar Ali, *Sīrat al-Nabī and the Orientalists: With the special reference to the writings of William Muir, D.S. Margoliouth and W. Montgomery Watt,* 1st ed., vol. 1B, (Madinah: King Fahd Complex, 1997).
[35] Robert Payne, *The Holy Sword: The Story of Islam from Muhammad to the Present,* (New York: Harper, 1959).

Campo's *Encyclopedia of Islām*,[36] and Thomas Hughes *A Dictionary of Islām: An Encyclopaedia of the Doctrines*. More mystical approaches towards the religion are elucidated in Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Islāmic Spirituality: Foundations*[37] and Heon Choul Kim's *The Nature and Role of Sufism in Contemporary Islām*: *A Case Study of the Life, Thought and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen*.[38]

That said, it is also important to understand how Islām was generally practiced and understood throughout history, so that one can better elucidate the contexts behind views pertaining to Muslim society and their enemies at the time (whether they be spiritual or material). Among the most comprehensive works in this regard are Reza Aslan's *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islām*,[39] Hans Küng's *Islām: Past, Present, and Future,*[40] and Hamilton Gibb et. al.'s *Studies on the Civilization of Islām*.[41] Since the research focuses on specific time periods where Islām was practiced, works such as Jacob Lassner's and Michael Bonner's *Islām in the Middle Ages: The Origins and Shaping of Classical Islāmic Civilization*[42] and H.E. Mohamed's *Historical Witnesses to the Ismaili Epoch: The Pluralism in Islām*[43] are important contributions. And the earliest periods of Islām – especially with regard to the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions – are elucidated in detail in Muḥammad Ishaq's and Gordon Newby's *The Making of the*

[36] Juan Eduardo Campo, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Facts On File, 2009).
[37] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).
[38] Heon Choul Kim, *The Nature and Role of Sufism in Contemporary Islam: A Case Study of the Life, Thought and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen,* (Philadelphia: Noor Publications, 2010).
[39] Reza Aslan, *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam,* (Westminster: Random House, 2006).
[40] Hans Küng and John Bowden (trans.), *Islam: Past, Present and Future*, (Oxford : Oneworld, 2007).
[41] Hamilton Gibb et. al., *Studies on the Civilization of Islam,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
[42] Jacob Lassner and Michael David Bonner, *Islam in the Middle Ages: The Origins and Shaping of Classical Islamic Civilization,* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010).
[43] H. E. Mohamed, *Historical Witnesses to the Ismaili Epoch: The Pluralism in Islam,* (Calgary: Highlight Publications, 2004).

Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muḥammad[44]; Irving Zeitlin's *The Historical Muḥammad*[45]; Khālid Muḥammad Khālid's *Men Around the Messenger*[46]; and Frederik Denny's "Umma in the Constitution of Medina", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.[47]

With respect to how Islām was spread throughout the world, the most comprehensive study on the subject comes from Abū Al-Fazi Izzati's *The Spread of Islām: The Contributing Factors*[48] which outlines the various means of religious propagation, whether through business, travel, or the conquering of neighboring empires. Studies which only look at one factor, such as preaching, include Thomas Arnold's *The Preaching of Islām; a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*.[49]

Sources on Islāmic Law are also be utilized for a better understanding on the issues and legal applications of Islāmic doctrine throughout history. As such, the research draws from comprehensive works on the subject like Hunt Janin's and Andre Kahlmeyer's *Islāmic Law: The Sharia from Muhammad's Time to the Present*[50] and Imran Nyazee's *Theories of Islāmic Law*.[51] Other studies in this genre which are on specific aspects of Islāmic Law, such as its *maqāṣid* (objectives/purposes), are classical works such as Ibn

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[44] Muḥammad ibn Ishaq and Gordon Darnell Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad,* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).
[45] Irving M. Zeitlin, *The Historical Muhammad,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
[46] Khālid Muḥammad Khālid, *Men around the Messenger (Rijāl Ḥawla Al-Rasūl)*, (New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2007).
[47] Frederick Denny, "Umma in the Constitution of Medina," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 36, n. 1 (1977). <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/372530> (accessed 11 March, 2018).
[48] Abū al-Faẓl 'Izzatī, *The Spread of Islam: The Contributing Factors,* (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies, 2002).
[49] Thomas Walker Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam; a History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (New York: AMS Press, 1974).
[50] Hunt Janin and André Kahlmeyer, *Islamic Law: The Sharia from Muhammad's Time to the Present,* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2007).
[51] Imran Nyazee, *Theories of Islamic Law,* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2007)

‘Āshūr’s (d. 1973) *Treatise on Maqasid al-Shari’ah*[52] and secondary studies such as Ahmad al-Raysuni’s *Imām al-Shatibi: Theory of the Higher Objectives of Islāmic Law*.[53]

However, most important to the class of secondary sources are those that specifically focus on the subject of jihād itself. With respect to the historical understanding and application of jihād, there are several works that the researcher has selected. For instance, the more comprehensive works in this regard are Michael Bonner’s *Jihad in Islāmic History: Doctrines and Practice,*[54] Asma Asfaruddin’s *Striving in the Path of God: Jihād and Martyrdom in Islāmic Thought,*[55] and Mirza Ashraf’s *Islāmic Philosophy of War and Peace*.[56] Those works discussing jihād during the earliest period of Islām are Russ Rodgers’ *The Generalship of Muḥammad: Battles and Campaigns of the Prophet of Allāh*[57]; John Morrow’s *The Covenants of the Prophet Muḥammad with the Christian World*[58]; Peter Crawford’s *The War of the Three Gods: Romans, Persians, and the Rise of Islām*[59]; Khalid Blankinship’s *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Ibn ‘Abd Al-Malik*

[52] Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Āshūr and Mohamed el-Tahir el-Mesawi (trans.), *Ibn Ashur: Treaties on Maqasid al-Shari’ah*, (Washington: International Islamic Institute of Islamic Thought, 2006).
[53] Aḥmad Raysūnī, Nancy N. Roberts (trans.), and Alison Lake (ed.), *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law*, (Richmond, Surrey : International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2013).
[54] Michael David Bonner*, Jihād in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[55] Asma Asfaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God: Jihād and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[56] Mirza Iqbal Ashraf, *Islamic Philosophy of War and Peace,* (Poughkeepsie: Mika Publications, 2008).
[57] Russ Rodgers, *The Generalship of Muhammad: Battles and Campaigns of the Prophet of Allah,* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).
[58] John A. Morrow, *The Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World,* (Sophia Perennis, 2013).
[59] Peter Crawford, *The War of the Three Gods: Romans, Persians, and the Rise of Islam,* (New York: Pen and Sword, 2013).

and the Collapse of the Umayyads[60]; and Yohanan Friedman's *Tolerance and Coercion in Islām: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition.*[61]

There are also sources which focus on much shorter time periods of political strife, which help to elucidate further how one's environment and social and political settings provide a narrow perspective of jihād. For example, Hamid Dabashi's *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islāmic Revolution in Iran*,[62] details the major ideological and social factors which resulted in the Iranian Revolution between 1978-1979 and how the Shia Muslim religious establishment influenced the population towards revolution.

Finally, sources considered miscellaneous and which supplement this research are also utilized to add further context and scope to the topic. For example, studies which discuss the history and culture of the empires that surrounded and interacted with the early Islāmic empire are integral to understanding why and how the Muslims engaged in warfare with their neighbors. Thus, the research includes a number of works in this genre. For instance, among those discussing the nature of the Byzantine Empire are Warren Treadgold's *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*,[63] Georgie Ostrogorski's *History of the Byzantine State,*[64] and John Norwich's *A Short History of Byzantium*.[65] With specific

[60] Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Ibn ' Abd Al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads,* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).
[61] Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[62] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).
[63]Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
[64] Georgije Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State,* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957).
[65] John Julius Norwich, *A Short History of Byzantium,* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 1997).

regard to the Byzantine conduct of warfare, J. A. McGuckin's article, "A Conflicted Heritage: The Byzantine Religious Establishment of War Ethic," will be most helpful.[66]

Other works which fall into the miscellaneous category range from primary to secondary sources which provide further context or assist in a comparative analysis of views on warfare. For example, the Bible and the Torah are utilized to compare both Christian and Jewish ethics of warfare with Islām.[67] Mahatma Ghandi's pacifism can also be compared to the concept of *jihād* from Raghavan Iyer's compilation *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*.[68] Even ancient Chinese perspectives and tactics on warfare are utilized, such as Ralph Sawyer's and Mei-chun Lee's translation of *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*.[69]

This is a small sampling of the references that are used throughout this research and reflects the scope and purpose of this study.

1.2.3 Methods and Procedures

The research adopts an analytical-thematic approach towards data collection, where primary and secondary sources are reviewed in accordance with their theme (i.e. jihād) and analyzed with respect to the circumstances surrounding the definition and application of said theme. The main primary sources used are the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth collections, and various historical documents pertaining to the actions of Muslim soldiers and statesmen.

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[66] J. A. McGuckin, "A Conflicted Heritage: The Byzantine Religious Establishment of a War Ethic," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 65/66 (2011-2012). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41933703> (accessed 12 March, 2018).
[67] Michael D. Coogan (ed.), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[68] Mahatma Gandhi and Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
[69] Sun-Tzu, Ralph Sawyer (trans.), and Mei-chun Lee (trans.), *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

Secondary sources from both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars are also be utilized. Subsequently, the data is coherently interpreted as evidence of a holistic understanding of jihād: a means towards establishing the security and values of the Muslim community (unbound by a specific time or cultural manifestation). This method is reminiscent of the exegetical theory employed by Muhammad Abdel Haleem in his monumental work of textual analysis, *Understanding the Qur'ān: Themes and Styles*.[70] This study concisely defines this thematic-analytical method as a process of interpretation which analyzes the themes of a text and how those themes interact with and are understood in light of the circumstances and conditions of the reader and their environment.

1.3 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research is divided into six chapters and a concluding analysis. Chapter one outlines the objectives, purpose, significance, and methodology behind this research. It also includes a concise literature review of some of the primary and secondary sources utilized in the study.

Chapter two addresses previous studies on the subject of jihād and discusses their differences in methodologies and conclusions, as well as their inherent weaknesses. Particular emphasis is given to the most commonly advanced interpretations of the concept, such as 'jihād as praxis,' 'jihād as modality,' and 'jihād as theme.'

Chapter three discusses the historical development of jihād from the very beginning of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) ministry. This chapter explicates the concept from the perspective of the Qur'ān and Aḥādīth, as well as the historical contexts behind the texts.

[70] M.A. Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

This chapter also goes into detail regarding the personal circumstances of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions – especially the first 13 years of persecution they faced in their hometown of Mecca – and how their experiences help to define the theme of jihād.

Chapter four delves into the post-Prophetic period and formative years of Islāmic law, where the four schools of jurisprudence began to define the concept of jihād and its application. In this chapter, a concise historical background is provided behind the legal understanding of jihād, subsequently leading to a more detailed discussion emphasizing the works of the 13th century scholar of Islāmic Law, Ibn Taymīyah – particularly his Mardin fatwá on the Mongol invaders. Subtopics then include the understanding of jihād from a position of imperial power and expansionism, the biases held by scholars and politicians alike, as well as how Muslims reconciled their religious tradition with their own circumstances.

Chapter five moves on to discuss the modernist understanding of jihād, elucidating the understanding of the concept in light of the rise of colonialism and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Particular focus is given to the 20th century Indian scholar, Abūl Ala Maudoodi and his work *Jihād in Islām*. Subtopics include the political and personal issues facing the scholar, as well as his 'liberating' understanding of the concept and whether it can be reconciled into a broader, more objective definition.

Chapter six offers concluding remarks, suggesting possible uses of this research in future studies and socio-political analyses. Special attention is focused on resolving contemporary European and American Islāmophobia, as well as extremist thinking in the Muslim world, through re-education on the concept of jihād and its application.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE ON JIHĀD

Jihād and warfare in Islāmic law has been the subject of numerous studies over the past few decades, especially during the post-9/11 period and the beginning of the War on Terror. Several treatises have been conducted attempting to elucidate the concept as comprehensively as possible. While researchers tend to appeal to the same theological and historical evidences, they adopt varying methodologies, and as a result, varying conclusions. Determining which of these methodologies is more valid largely depends on how coherently each individual researcher comprehends the primary sources and historical record of Islāmic civilization. Even so, contemporary studies on the subject come to conclusions that are not at all satisfactory. As should be expected, the biases of each researcher not only direct their work, but can sometimes taint it as well, often neglecting data that runs contrary to their own theories. Naturally, no study is immune from bias, but researchers should do their best to avoid drawing conclusions that trivialize a vast scholarly tradition, rendering their subjects narrow essentialisms, or pluralizing the said tradition to the extent that the subject becomes incomprehensible.

Prior to advancing the researcher's own methodology and conclusions, a short survey and deconstruction of those approaches that has most effectively captured the attention of both mainstream media and academia should be performed. As such, I have chosen to examine three representative perspectives: 'jihād as praxis,' 'jihād as modality,' and 'jihād as theme.'

2.1 JIHĀD AS PRAXIS

When it comes to defining the concept of jihād, a number of researchers have advanced the idea that jihād cannot be defined outside the interpretations and practices of Muslims themselves. This approach is noticeable for its reliance on the descriptive over the prescriptive, despite Muslims themselves preferring the latter over the former. In other words, *praxis* (that is, the practice of jihād) is far more important towards understanding the concept than abstract *theory*. Case in point, David Cook[71] exemplifies this approach in his book *Understanding Jihad*:

> The difference between what is written in theological and legal treatises and what a believer may practice in any religion, moreover, are often substantial. Therefore, the definition of jihad must be based both on what Muslims have written concerning the subject and on the historical record of how they have practiced it.[72]

Cook makes clear that the definition of jihād rests primarily in the various perceptions and practices of Muslims themselves over the course of history. Why he has chosen this methodology, one can only speculate. However, he seems principally concerned with being perceived as having an agenda, attempting to contrast his own approach against more "polemical" or "apologetic" methods:

> Given the complexity and sensitivity of jihād's associations – the term is at once at the heart of polemics against Islām and of apologetics for Islām – it's easy to slip away from the facts and fall into polemics oneself. Therefore, I will attempt to base this study completely upon original

[71] David Cook is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Rice University, USA.
[72] David Cook, *Understanding Jihād*, 2nd ed., (Oakland: University of California Press), 2.

sources, grounding the analysis in Muslim history, and clearly label any analysis or speculation on my part as such.[73]

Cook ultimately dismisses these approaches as "biased" and "ignorant," making it clear that he views unfettered nuance as a virtue.[74] However, despite the stated scope of his analysis, he surprisingly gives little attention to examining the early practices and perspectives of the first generation of Muslims; a scant nine pages in all. This is odd considering this period of time would seem the most important in explicating the formative conceptualization of jihād. Equally extraordinary are Cook's attempts to summarize this period against the backdrop of 86 military campaigns waged by the first generation of Muslims against their enemies. How he thought it possible to give an adequate depiction of these campaigns with such little emphasis is baffling. However, he manages to divide such a large number into four general categories: (1) Five "thematic" battles conducted to dominate three major cities in the region [Mecca, Medina, and al-Ṭā'if], (2) Raids against Bedouin tribes to acquire additional support or political leverage, (3) Attacks against local Jewish tribes to secure territory, and finally (4) Two raids against the Byzantine Empire and its allies in an effort to begin an expansionary conquest.[75]

Cook goes on to note that specific passages in the Qur'ān coincide with these events or mention them in passing as reminders or recollections, adding further instructions to the Muslims with regard to how they should respond to their enemies. The first of these passages explicitly represents the defensive aspect of warfare: "Those who have been

[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 166.
[75] Ibid., 6.

attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged… those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, 'Our Lord is God.'"[76]

Cook states that this verse "emphasizes the basic component of justice,"[77] and moves on to explain the historical circumstances behind the "thematic" battles, which played a significant role in how the first generation of Muslims viewed themselves and their place in the world as God's chosen people.[78] As this theologically driven perspective further developed and the Muslims became the leading political and social force in the region, he suggests that the Qur'ān began to promote a more aggressive narrative, "Fight those of the People of the Book who do not [truly][79] believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, who do not obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit."[80]

For Cook, this is evidence that the first generation of Muslims eventually came to view jihād as a means to assert total control and dominance over non-believers, regardless if they had begun hostilities or not. How one reconciles the apparent contradiction between the aforementioned aspect of justice implicit in jihād and its later seemingly more hostile rendition is not entirely explained. However, he believes the Qur'ān effectively established a precedent that would eventually be adopted and expanded upon by subsequent generations of Muslim jurists and theologians.[81]

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[76] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 39; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 345.
[77] Ibid., 7.
[78] Prior to Islam, the notion of a "chosen people" exclusively referred to those descendent from the tribes of Israel. This concept served as a central theological theme of Judaism. However, such ethno-centrism made it nearly impossible for anyone to be considered a Jew unless they were born into the faith. This contrasts with the Islamic notion in that a Muslim can be of any ethnic or cultural background.
[79] The translator Abdel Haleem comments in a footnote, "'Truly' is implied, as it is in many other statements in the Qurʾan, i.e. 2:32, 8:41, and 65:3."
[80] Qur'an, al-Tawbah: 29; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 192.
[81] Cook, 10.

At a later point in his analysis, Cook does attempt to address non-violent connotations of jihād by appealing to the literal meaning of the term and its use in the Qur'ān. As he points out, jihād literally means 'striving' and it almost always refers to activities and behaviors unrelated to warfare.[82] For example, the Qur'ān states in one such passage:

> Strive hard [*jāhidū*] for God as is His due: He has chosen you and placed no hardship in your religion, the faith of your forefather Abraham. God has called you Muslims—both in the past and in this (message)—so that the Messenger can bear witness about you and so that you can bear witness about other people. So keep up the prayer, give the prescribed alms, and seek refuge in God: He is your protector—an excellent protector and an excellent helper.[83]

Not surprisingly, Cook gives little attention to the literal meaning of the term and views the "demilitarized" interpretation as a later development pioneered by Muslim ascetics.[84] Although denying the significance of a literal reading of the text may appear questionable at first, Cook has not deviated from his methodology. In instances where the Qur'ān discusses warfare, he attributes an implicit understanding by the first generation of Muslims in inferring jihād from the text, despite the fact that the word is rarely used to refer to actual fighting. Likewise, when the Qur'ān explicitly mentions the term in a non-violent manner, he relies on Muslims to likewise dictate the meaning. In other words, the

[82] Ibid., 32.
[83] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 78; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 342.
[84] Cook, 33.

Qur'ān's influence in both cases is still primarily determined by the subjective experiences of Muslims themselves.

That said, Cook eventually displays a moment of inconsistency with regard to framing jihād in a non-violent fashion. Case in point, although he claims to be arguing for a definition based on Muslim interpretations and practices, he does not hesitate to critique the ascetics for what he sees as a dubious reinterpretation. Commenting on the notion of a 'greater jihād' – a spiritual struggle against one's own desires – he chastises Muslim mystics like Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 111) for turning the focus of jihād "radically away from its original intent."[85] Shortly thereafter, when discussing ever-expansive definitions of the concept, including the "effort to lead a good life" and/or "to make society more moral and just," he lambasts scholars like John L. Esposito for merely reiterating Muslim modernists' interpretations:

> This definition has virtually no validity in Islām and is derived almost entirely from apologetic works of nineteenth—and twentieth-century Muslim modernists. To maintain that jihad means "the effort to lead a good life" is pathetic and laughable in any case….Esposito apparently deliberately spiritualizes what is an unambiguously concrete and militant doctrine, without a shred of evidence from the Qur'ān or any of the classical sources, in which the jihad and fighting is against real human enemies…[86]

Here, Cook's impartiality and methodology ultimately become suspect. Why dismiss the opinions of 'Muslim modernists' if the goal is to define jihād based on Muslim praxis? Are not their experiences and interpretations just as valid in the grand scheme of

[85] Ibid., 37.
[86] Ibid., 42.

history? These questions become even more relevant when observing his readiness to accept contemporary extremists (i.e. Al-Qaeda and ISIS) as "legitimate heirs to the legacy of jihād."[87]

Aside from his blatant inconsistency, Cook's analysis suffers from a more glaring defect: If jihād is determined by Muslim praxis – a history which contains various and often mutually exclusive interpretations – then how is it possible to derive an adequately coherent definition? It is not surprising that he admits to the problematic nature of his methodology early on when he says, "These questions and apparent inconsistencies make it exceedingly difficult for Muslims, let alone outsiders, to articulate authoritatively what constitutes a jihād."[88] This conundrum ultimately forces Cook to settle for what can only be described as an indeterminate definition of the term: "warfare with spiritual significance."[89]

Thus, despite his intentions, the reader is still left asking the very question meant to be answered from the beginning: What is jihād? If the answer lies in Muslims themselves, then this tells us little else other than the fact that Muslims have various opinions about what jihād is and how it should be conducted. Attempting to derive a clear understanding from such a convoluted history only leads to obscurity. John Kelsay pointed out a number of similar problems in his review of *Understanding Jihad*, "Cook's approach leaves the reader with the impression of inconsistency."[90] As such, Cook's methodology effectively renders the discussion indefinitely unresolved. Although not writing about jihād

[87] Ibid., 164.
[88] Ibid., 3.
[89] Ibid., 2.
[90] John Kelsay, "David Cook: Understanding Jihad (Berkeley, Calif./Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005)," *International Journal of Middle East* Studies 39, no. 1 (2007): 134–35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380728256X> (accessed 28 September 2019).

specifically, the late professor of Islāmic studies, Shahab Ahmed (d. 2015) succinctly summarized the methodological problem in his book *What Is Islām?*:

> Basically, to say that Islām is whatever Muslims say it is does not help us to understand how Muslims conceive of Islāms as Islām. The notion does serve as an encouragement to us to take a thorough survey and to duly note down all the answers that we encounter without prejudice or disenfranchisement – but without looking for what might make them coherent. As such, "whatever-Muslims-say-it-is" may be a serviceable *description*, but it is an inadequate *concept* in that it simply does not help us to understand any better; indeed, it proceeds on the basis that we cannot understand any better, since there is no-*thing* there – which means: no coherent thing there – to be understood.[91]

A scholar who has displayed a similar method too Cook is Richard Bonney (d. 2017),[92] author of *Jihad: From Qur'ān to bin Laden.*[93] Bonney is less systematic than Cook in that he does not explicitly state a methodology, being more erratic in his presentation – often shifting between historical events, figures, and texts in an attempt to be as comprehensive as possible.[94] That said, unlike the latter, he attempts to utilize primary

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[91] Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 269.

[92] Reverend Richard Bonney served as professor of history for both the University of Reading and the University of Leicester. He was also an ordained minister for the Church of England.

[93] Richard Bonney, *Jihād: From Qur'an to Bin Laden*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

[94] Bonney spends the first three chapters attempting to explain the meaning of jihād from primary source texts and the earliest historical communities of Muslims. Although he gives more attention than Cook to the formative years of Islamic civilization, he quickly jumps between events and personalities with no apparent justification. For example, the first chapter stays focused on Islamic primary sources and the experiences of the first Muslim community, however, by chapter two Bonney combines the events of the first Muslim conquests, medieval juristic differences of opinion on warfare, and even reserves a section for Salahuddin (d. 1193) and the Crusades. By chapter three, Bonney addresses sufi interpretations, dedicating a whole section for modern scholars like Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1762). This would not be objectionable if Bonney gave reasons for these inclusions, but his intentions behind utilizing these examples are largely absent. The

religious texts as an essential ingredient towards constructing a proper understanding of jihād. However, despite this difference, Bonney's muddled approach forces him to come to a very similar conclusion to Cook:

> It will be evident to those who have read the previous eleven chapters of this study that jihād is a multi-faceted phenomenon both in theory and practice. There is no, single, all-embracing concept that has been applied within the long, complex and sometimes torturous, course of Islāmic history. Rather, there have been continual selections of texts and doctrines and the adoption of different practices, in accordance with cultural traditions and the needs and circumstances of the period.[95]

Here, Bonney admits his implicit reliance on unmitigated praxis by refusing to acknowledge the possibility that these various modalities (formulated by Muslims themselves) can be demarcated into valid and invalid perspectives of jihād. In other words, his refusal to settle on any sort of objective definition showcases that he believes that such a definition is ultimately indeterminable. However, this is ironic, given that he consistently expresses a wariness towards Western stereotypes of jihād and its conflation with extremists throughout his work – even going so far as to claim Osama bin Laden's (d. 2011) perspective an "innovation."

To be fair, Bonney makes it explicitly clear that the task of his book is to establish a "rethinking" of jihād so as to oppose both critics of Islām and terrorists alike.[96] No doubt, Cook would pejoratively judge Bonney's intentions as 'apologetic,' but at least the latter

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subsequent chapters (under the headings "Contextual Theorists", "Ideological Interpretations", and "Context and Distortion of the Texts") likewise lack any sort of discernable structure.

[95] Bonney, 399.

[96] Ibid., 12-14.

can be credited for being more open regarding his lack of impartiality. Although a question remains: How does Bonney contrast his understanding of jihād from views he considers erroneous? Putting aside his uncoordinated analysis, one can glean some examples of comparative case studies in his work. For instance, Bonney dedicates an entire chapter towards the thoughts of the medieval Muslim jurist and theologian Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328) – all for the sake of explicating the scholar's misconstrued influence on contemporary extremists:

> For all that he is views as a forerunner of violent Islāmism, Ibn Taymīyah's conception of jihad was essentially that of a 'just war' waged by Muslims whenever their security was threatened by infidels. Such a just war was very different from a 'holy war' seeking religious conversion... Jihad was, for him, a just and defensive war launched and waged by Muslims whenever their security was threatened…lawful warfare was the essence of jihad, the aim of which was to secure peace, justice and equity.[97]

However, if Ibn Taymīyah's views of jihād are truly opposed to the likes of terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, then why is he often referenced in support of their behaviors and goals? Bonney suggests three primary reasons: the first being that Ibn Taymīyah is often viewed as an extremely erudite and prolific scholar, earning him the timeless title of 'Shaykh al-Islām' (*The* Shaykh of Islām) by his supporters. Ibn Taymīyah's intellectual prowess was so well renowned that he became a professor of Islāmic studies at the early age of 19 and wrote 350 works through the course of his life in various subjects such as law, theology, and hermeneutics. Such importance established a certain image and

[97] Ibid., 120–121.

reverence for his opinions and intellectual tomes – a key authority whose views, if properly exploited, would certainly lead credence to any movement or agenda.[98]

The second reason that extremists attempt to co-opt Ibn Taymīyah is due to his reputation for independent thinking (*ijtihād*) and fiercely rebellious spirit towards mainstream scholarship and popular religion during his time. For his opinions, he was often condemned by his peers and even suffered imprisonment on numerous occasions, eventually dying in a cell.[99] Thus, it should not be surprising that he is lionized by many Muslims across the world as a devout advocate for truth in the face of adversity. However, radical Muslims also take Ibn Taymīyah's struggles as a means to justify their own experiences, viewing him as an exemplar of rebellion in the face of a corrupted establishment. In this way, figures such as Osama bin Laden find a model representative whom they can invoke as a manifestation of their own circumstances. They too are the minority; they too are considered criminals by mainstream scholars; they too are rebels against the world.[100]

But are these similarities truly reflective of Ibn Taymīyah's life and the contexts in which he lived, or is his reference by extremists merely a superficial anachronism utilized for the sake or propaganda? Bonney proposes the latter, contending that extremist like Bin Laden are either "ignorant" or "deliberately deceive the public in the Islāmic world by calling on his name."[101] This charge of misappropriation is substantiated by looking at the third reason extremists find this controversial medieval scholar appealing: the fact that he lived in one of the most turbulent periods of political instability.

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[98] Ibid., 111–112.
[99] Ibid., 112.
[100] Ibid., 122–123.
[101] Ibid., 126.

Ibn Taymīyah was born only a decade after the fall of the ‘Abbāsid Empire at the hands of Mongol invaders. The newly conquered Islāmic polity was now under the control of disbelieving aggressors, a reality which could not have been made more evident to the occupied than in the sacking of their capital city, Baghdad – a crowning achievement in the history of successful metropolises that reigned for over 500 years. The chaos and destabilization that would inevitably follow from this would create disastrous consequences for Muslim society, leading to a humiliated and debased population of individuals constantly reminded that they were no longer the leaders of the civilized world. It is within this context that one can understand the contrasting nature of Ibn Taymīyah’s views to those of his most radical and violent contemporary supporters.[102]

Bonney distinguishes between the adulations of Osama bin Laden and the controversial medieval scholar by emphasizing the anachronistic reasoning of the former. For example, Bin Laden likewise sees jihād as a means to defend the Muslim world from aggressors, but he rationalizes his sentiments within a totally dissimilar historical reality to his assumed predecessor. Ibn Taymīyah lived during a time where an Islāmic polity still existed and had been ravaged by decades of intense military occupation by a rival empire. The same cannot be said of the Muslim world today. Although certainly divided and unstable, Muslims no longer have a unified polity, and the various Muslim-majority nation states have not been subject to total occupation by foreign militaries (the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq only began after and in response to the events of September 11th).[103] This is not to dismiss or whitewash the crimes of certain Western nations against the Muslim world – for they are many – but it is a far cry from Bin Laden’s motivations and

[102] Ibid., 112-113.
[103] Ibid., 123.

subsequent actions. This point is further substantiated when examining Bin Laden's rationale for the September 11th attacks. In the Spring of 2004, Bin Laden recorded a video message where he attempted to explain how murdering nearly three thousand innocent people was a justified response to Western interventionism in the Muslim world:

> People of America, I speak to you today about the best way to avoid another Manhattan, about the war, its causes, and its consequences. First of all, I tell you that security is one of the pillars of human life. Free men do not underestimate the value of their security, despite [President] Bush' claim that we hate freedom…No, we have been fighting you because we are free men who cannot acquiesce in injustice. We want to restore security to our umma. Just as you violate our security, so we violate yours. Whoever encroaches upon the security of others and imagines that he will himself remain safe is but a foolish criminal…. I will explain to you the reasons behind these events, and I will tell you the truth about the moments when this decision was taken, so that you can reflect on it. God knows the plan of striking the [twin] towers had not occurred to us, but the idea came to me when things went just too far…The events that made a direct impression on me were during and after 1982, when America allowed the Israelis to invade Lebanon….On that day I became sure that the oppression and intentional murder of innocent women and children is a deliberate American policy…Against the background of these and similar images, the events of September 11th came as a response to these great injustices.[104]

[104] Osama bin Laden, Bruce Lawrence (ed.), and James Howrath (trans.), *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama Bin Laden*, (New York: Verso), 238-240.

Most noticeable in his reasoning is the conspicuous absence of any religious motivation. Rather, Bin Laden appears to exude the same ethical prose as the very Western culture he seeks to rebuke. References to 'security,' 'freedom,' and 'injustice,' certainly have their place in Islām, but his use of these terms appears entirely for the purpose of capturing the imagination of his intended audience: non-Muslim Americans. While his appeals to self-defense are obvious, his reference to a conflict decades prior is in no way comparable to the circumstances faced by Muslims during the time of Ibn Taymīyah.

Firstly, Bin Laden's intention to defend the "Ummah" (that is, the Muslim nation) is incoherent given that the term no longer represents a unified political community; at best he can only suggest that he is defending *certain* Muslims from aggression. Secondly, his targets of choice do not reflect an act of self-defense. Drawing from his primary example, the United States was only indirectly involved in a temporary conflict between Israel and Lebanon (and there was no decade's long occupation of the latter). More importantly however, were the specific individuals whom Bin Laden selected to be punished for these atrocities. The events of 1982 and those like it cannot seemingly validate the murder of three thousand civilians in 2001, all of whom had no evident connections to his grievances. But Bin Laden does attempt to make a logical connection. In an interview conducted by Al-Jazeera a little over a month after the September 11th attacks, Bin Laden discussed his rationale for committing acts of terrorism as both a matter of "balance" and as a deterrent:

> In light of these recent attacks and what ensued from them, Bush and Blair quickly reacted and said that now is the time to create an independent nation for Palestine. Amazing! And yet there was apparently no suitable time in the last 10 years to address this issue before the [9/11]

> attacks happened? They evidently won't wisen up without the language of beatings and killings. So, as they kill us, without a doubt we have to kill them, until we obtain a balance in terror….We treat others like they treat us. Those who kill our women and our innocent, we kill their women and innocent until they stop doing so.[105]

Bonney argues that it would have been "inconceivable" for Ibn Taymīyah to entertain such acts of terrorism, much less to have had any understanding of the political language used to justify them.[106] For Ibn Taymīyah, self-defense was the essence of jihād, which meant that there were limitations to the sort of violence that could be conducted. Killing individuals that had nothing to do with the aggressions shown to the Muslim world for the sake of "balance" or some benighted sense of deterrence, certainly falls outside the boundaries of what constitutes just warfare. Thus, Bonney can conclude that contemporary extremists' beliefs about warfare are unacceptable simply by observing the inconsistencies in their own arguments; their own sources contradict them, their rendering of jihād is ultimately self-refuting.[107] That said, Bonney neglects to consider the possibility of Bin Laden's own ijtihād. Despite his anachronistic thinking, could it be argued that present circumstances allow for the use of terrorism? If Ibn Taymīyah lived during this era would he have given approval to Bin Laden's atrocities? Bonney does not delve very deeply into these questions, nor considers the possibility that the former might have thought along the same lines if placed in the latter's circumstances. Unfortunately, these questions will

[105] Ibid., 114, 119.
[106] Bonney, 124-126.

remain unanswered since Bonney's methodology makes it impossible to determine a logically coherent definition of what jihād is. Even if he proposes some limitations based on the misappropriation of certain sources or figures in Islāmic history (unlike Cook), his reliance on praxis does not give any proper justification as to *why* those sources *cannot be misinterpreted* and what 'misinterpretation' actually means.

2.2 JIHĀD AS MODALITY

Similar to identifying the concept of jihād through praxis, there is another approach adopted by scholars that utilizes the historical record in a descriptive manner. However, unlike the former, this methodology focusses on the *modalities*, or forms, of jihād and its historical contingencies. While an initial assessment may render this modification superfluous, there is a significant difference between the two. Whereas praxis rests entirely on the subjective perspective to ground a definition, modalities change the hierarchy of influence; the subject becomes *secondary* to historical circumstance and textual sources (thus more objective).

Michael Bonner,[108] a major proponent of this method, attempts to situate himself in opposition to the method of praxis, as well as its extreme counter-opposite (i.e. parochialisms), in his work *Jihad in Islāmic History*:

> In the debates over Islām that have taken place…some have insisted that the jihad, and Islām itself, are all "about" peace. Others have proclaimed the opposite, that they are all "about" war. The accusation that the terrorists have "hijacked" Islām fits into this pattern of argument. But, of course, the

[108] Michael Bonner is a professor of Islamic History at the University of Michigan, USA.

> jihad and Islām cannot be all "about" any one thing. Still others, looking at the matter from relativists and comparative perspectives, have argued that in any religious tradition there are conflicting elements that gain the upper hand at different moments in history… But this sort of argument also does not help us to understand precisely what we have before us here. We may arrive at a more honest appraisal of the situation if we acknowledge that the jihad is a complex doctrine and set of practices that focus – sometimes literally, sometimes not at all literally – on violence and warfare.[109]

Bonner's stance is a pluralistic one, but also rather vague. Although he insists that jihād can be squarely defined as a "complex doctrine and set of practices" involving violence and warfare, the caveat that it can sometimes be construed literally or metaphorically raises the questions of *how* and *when* a given interpretation is valid. Is every situation of physical violence and warfare in which a Muslim participates in considered jihād? Is every figurative act of violence or warfare similarly the case? Can an instance of jihād be both literal and figurative at the same time? And how does one distinguish between permissive and prohibited types? For Bonner, these questions can be answered through analyzing the origins and structures of each individual historical modality (what he calls the 'theme' of any given manifestation of jihād).

Bonner focuses on three representative samples or developmental stages, all connected through a process of interpretation influenced by linear historical contingencies. The first of these stages relates to the Islāmic source texts and their relationship to Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions (i.e. the proto-Muslims). Naturally then, he

[109] Bonner, 173-174.

begins his analysis by explicating the thematic elements of the Qur'ān with respect to jihād. However, not only does he find little to no continuity between the revelation's brief and scattered narratives and the life experiences of the early Muslims, but also a lack of any coherent doctrine of jihād made explicit therein.[110] In fact, jihād is rarely mentioned throughout the Qur'ān, and where the literal word is found in the text, it almost never refers to military combat, but carries various more spiritually introspective connotations such as "devotion to God, righteous conduct, utter dedication and indeed, sacrifice of oneself [in terms of giving up income or time for the sake of religion]."[111] This leads Bonner to conclude that, by itself, the Qur'ān contains numerous contradictory notions of the concept ranging from peaceful passages concerning patience in the face of persecution to calls for all-out war against perceived enemies.[112]

Despite this, Bonner is confident that these contradictions can be resolved. Rather than rely solely on contexts derived from supplementary sources, he believes that a coherent narrative can be formed by simply appealing to the "inner logic" of complimentary and overlapping themes in the Qur'ān itself.[113] For Bonner, the Qur'ānic view of jihād can ultimately be explained as an *economic exchange* between God and the believers, represented by the interaction between two pairs of transactions; the first of which being the relation between *gift* and *reciprocity*:

> God makes a gift to us of His *fadl*, His surplus, a gift that we can never reciprocate in the Qur'ān, this gift is also called *rizq* (sustenance). In the relationship between God and believer, and between donor and recipient,

[110] Ibid., 20-21.
[111] Ibid., 21-22.
[112] Ibid., 25.
[113] Ibid., 2

there is no expectation that the gift will ever be restored to its original donor. Indeed, the believer cannot return the gift that God has made to him. However, he can and should imitate God's action by making is own gifts to the poor and needy, freely and unstintingly. These two relationships – between God and believer and between wealth donor and needy recipient – thus form the basis of circulation of goods within society: this is the virtuous cycle of "return" of Qur'ānic economics.[114]

The second thematic pairing is that of *fighting* and *recompense*, where the believer struggles to obtain a necessary compensation or reward through the "sale" of their own selves in physical combat. For Bonner, this can take two forms:

> However, where the Qur'ān treats war, we more often find a rhetoric of requital and recompense, rather than of gift. First of all, those who fight may do so not only out of love for God, but also to seek redress for wrongs done against them…Fighting in the path of God is a worthy response to the activity of oppressors (*zalimun*), especially when performed on behalf of the weak (*al-mustad'a-fun*). It is also appropriate to fight non-monotheists opponents (*mushrikun*) who have violated their covenants and oaths…. Recompense and requital also assume another form in the Qur'ān, that of divine reward (*ajr*)… How much one gains depends on what happens during the transaction: one obtains Paradise if slain in battle, or victory if one survives…[115]

[114] Ibid., 29-30.
[115] Ibid., 31-32.

Bonner believes that these thematic pairs not only explain the Qur'ānic understanding of jihād, but also manifest themselves among future generations of Muslims in both military and acetic contexts. However, it should be reiterated that Bonner views the Qur'ān as only a piece of a larger puzzle – foundational, but not comprehensive in explicating a definition of jihād aligned with the understanding of early Muslims. For that, one needs to rely on historical narratives that detail the experiences of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions and the contexts of those experiences. Such narratives can be found in complimentary sources, such as the biographical literature of the Prophet (*Sīrah*), records of campaigns and battles literature (*maghāzī*), and recorded statements from the Prophet himself (*Aḥādīth*).

With respect to Sīrah, Bonner relies on perhaps the oldest known account of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life, written by one who can rightly be claimed as the first Muslim historian and hagiographer, Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767).[116] However, this work – simply known as *Sīrat al-Rasūl Allāh* (The Life of the Prophet) – contains a plethora of unverifiable second-hand accounts and was only discovered through the preservation of another scholar of Islāmic history, Ibn Hishām (d. 834),[117] who is considered to have edited the original work considerably. Despite the derivative nature of much of its content, this Sīrah remains the earliest document on the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life to date and is still relied on heavily by scholars attempting to glean an accurate account of his experiences and their relation to the

[116] His full name was Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn Yasār ibn Khiyār. He resided in Baghdad and was known as a prolific author. However, most of his works are considered lost.
[117] His full name was Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Hishām ibn Ayyūb al-Ḥimayrī. He primarily resided in Basra and was known as a master of Arabic philology.

Islāmic source texts. Likewise, he utilizes another text by the historian al-Wāqidī (d. 832)[118] entitled *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* (Book of Battles).

Unfortunately, Bonner gives little attention to both of these works (less than 10 pages in total), noting only their apparent lack of external evidences and a general theme of jihād as warfare.[119] In his brevity, nowhere does he attempt to tie in other aspects of the Sīrah which may rightly fall under other definitions of the concept such as the numerous accounts of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) charity or the patience of him and his companions during a decade of severe persecution by the Pagan Arabs.[120] Despite this, Bonner claims both genres make "little mention" of the spiritual aspects of jihād.[121] However, this is clearly false even by a cursory reading of his sources and aforementioned categorizations.

With regard to the Aḥādīth literature, Bonner gives slightly more attention. Unlike the Sīrah and maghāzī texts, the Aḥādīth collections are less focused on narrative than the *contexts* of those narratives (i.e. the detailed circumstances of each incident in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life and the lives of his companions). There is also a plethora of different accounts regarding a particular incident or revelation in the Qur'ān. Sometimes, thematically similar Aḥādīth may drastically differ in wording and even their intended audiences, making them difficult to ascertain to an untrained eye. Likewise, it is not always clear which narrations refers to which incident or verse in the Qur'ān. This is why early scholars of Aḥādīth went to great lengths to systemize these accounts in accordance with

[118] His full name was Abu `Abdullah Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn Wāqid al-Aslamī. Much like Ibn Ishaq, he was a historian who resided in Baghdad.
[119] Bonner, 39-40.
[120] Literally two-thirds of the entire *sīrah* discuss the Prophet's character, his moral compass, as well as the years of persecution the Muslims endured prior to engaging in military conflict. Yet, Bonner glosses over these clear examples of jihād that he himself categorized only a chapter earlier. For more information refer to Ibn Isḥāq and Alexander Guillaume (trans.), *The Life of Muhammad: a translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
[121] Bonner, 45.

their intended themes, dedicating whole sections in their collections towards specific subjects such as prayer, hygiene, marriage, business, and yes, jihād.

Although Bonner recognizes the nuances of how jihād is interpreted in these collections, he nonetheless concludes that:

> What emerges [from the Aḥādīth] … is a central theme of the jihad, namely *the propagation of the Faith through combat*. Islām must be brought to the entire world, as when the Prophet says: "I have been sent to the human race in its entirety," and "I have been commanded to fight the people [or the unbelievers] until they testify: 'There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.'" This fighting and spreading of the faith will continue until the end of the world as we know it now.[122]

What is startling about Bonner's summary is how it so casually disregards other numerous Aḥādīth that either display a completely different understanding of the concept of jihād or run contrary to his interpretation entirely. For example, while it is true the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was recorded as saying "I have been commanded to fight *the people*…" the definite article does not necessarily indicate a universal subject (i.e. all humanity). The classical Aḥādīth scholar and outstanding commentator on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 1449), suggests that a general wording (*al-'āmm*) is used in this tradition, but it has been specified (*khuṣṣ*) by the evidence of other texts.[123] The language of that particular statement, although apparently unrestricted, could very well have a contextually intended meaning related to certain categories of people (i.e. aggressors, oppressors, etc.);

[122] Ibid., 49.
[123] Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, and Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Bukhārī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi-sharḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1959), 1:77.

this type of usage is common in Arabic. Bonner seems unaware of other Aḥādīth contextualizing which "people" the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was referring to in his declaration. Case in point, if we examine the Aḥādīth collection of Abū Dāwūd (d. 889),[124] we find a similar narration stating that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was "commanded to fight the polytheists [of Arabia]," which would indicate that it was not meant to be inclusive of non-Muslims in general.[125] This is an important distinction which undermines Bonner's entire analysis.

However, more damaging to his summary on the Aḥādīth corpus regarding jihād is the subsequent obscurantism he employs. Bonner eventually goes on to ask the question: "Can these conflicting traditions help us to understand what was actually happening in the early Islāmic world?"[126] Essentially, his answer to this question is that it depends on the methodology one utilizes, none of which thus far "have been proved to work" – including his own.[127] At this juncture, one may raise the question as to what the point of Bonner's intellectual exercise was to begin with if no concrete modalities can be determined from the source material.

Moving on to Bonner's second stage of jihād – what he calls the "extended origins" or formative period of an official doctrine – one finds a much lengthier and more detailed analysis staring from the first three decades after the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) death till the end of the 8th century when the 'Abbāsid empire was consolidating its power. Much of this period is defined by aggressive Muslim conquests into neighboring territories and the

[124] His full name is Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Azdi as-Sijistani. He was a Persian Aḥādīth scholar who authored the sixth most authoritative collection of Aḥādīth.
[125] Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (1980), 3:44 #2642.
[126] Bonner, 53.
[127] Ibid., 54.

subsequent downfall of two major powers: The Byzantine and Sassanid empires. It is here that Bonner's thesis begins to take shape.

For Bonner, several events after the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) influenced the ways in which Muslims began to view jihād as an official doctrine and way of life. For the most part, the organic development of a "conquest society" was the primary factor – a designation that he borrows from the late revisionist scholar, Patricia Crone (d. 2015).[128] At its core, this society was really a "fiscal regime" operating as a natural extension of the aforementioned Qur'ānic themes. What begins as merely a means to establish a communal identity in the face of a common enemy eventually escalates into a need to demarcate between conquerors and conquered (along with the perpetual maintenance of this distinction). Not only that, but it raises practical concerns in terms of financial stability for a vastly growing polity:

> The early Islāmic conquests society provides one of the first images… of the [Muslim] community in relation to the world around. Here the critical relationship was between the believers, who were consumers and warriors, and the far more numerous nonbelievers all around them, who were producers and taxpayers…. Soon afterward, Islāmic jurists began to represent the world according to a different scheme, dividing it between an Abode of Islām (*dar al-Islām*) and an Abode of War (*dar al-harb*). As the vocabulary indicates, these two are in a permanent condition of war. Since

[128] Patrician Crone was an orientalist scholar of Islamic studies who taught at Princeton Univeristy. She is most well-known for developing the theory of Islamic origins known as 'Hagarism,' which proposes that the traditional accounts of the rise of Islam are entirely false. Rather, the early Muslims were actually Jewish-Christian revolutionaries attempting to reclaim the Holy Land from the Byzantine Empire. Only later was a unique Islamic identity formed.

> the only legitimate sovereign is God, and the only legitimate form of rule is Islām, the various rulers and states within the Abode of War have no legitimacy, and their rule is mere oppression or tyranny… This doctrine requires warfare for the defense of lands under Islāmic control and encourages the acquisition, through conquest, of new lands. It does not aim at the conversion of populations or individuals, but rather at the extension of God's rule over the world.[129]

Again, Bonner presents the concept of jihād in terms of economics, going so far as to call this society a "fiscal regime" and labeling the conquered lands as "acquisitions." However, it is not entirely clear by this point whether or not he believes the early Muslims actually saw their goals in accordance with these themes, or if he's merely using them as figurative aids. None of the later discussions on jihād seem to indicate that Muslims have ever seen the concept in this light.

What further obscures Bonner's framing of the 'conquest society' in these terms is his lack of explanation as to *why* these conquests were initiated to begin with. Although he summarizes already-advanced hypotheses forwarded by Islāmic scholars, anti-Islāmic polemicists, and his own academic peers, his own conclusions on the motivations of the early Muslims is simply to allude the following, "Something new happened in early seventh-century Arabia, something greater than hunger and the desire for domination, something that brought about a transformation of social and spiritual life, in part through participation in combat."[130]

[129] Bonner, 92.
[130] Ibid., 70.

What follows from this is an attempt by Bonner to determine what exactly that "hunger" is. Unfortunately, the reader is only offered a cursory analysis of 'martyrdom' as the principle motivating factor – a need to satiate the spirit through self-sacrifice for the religion and community. This selfless act is seemingly tied to the thematic elements of the Qur'ān explicated by Bonner prior: the economic relationship between Gift/Reciprocity and Fighting/Recompense.[131] But this begs the question and offers little in the form of explanation, nor does it ask what others factors may have played a part in this militant drive. For example, what was the perception and behavior of neighboring polities towards the early Muslim community? And what part did hostilities from the enemy play in forming this desire to fight? As mentioned earlier, Bonner casually dismisses one of the central motifs of the Sīrah and Maghāzī narratives – that of persecution. It does not seem to occur to him that this may have been one of the primary influences behind the early Muslim's perception of 'the Other' and their motivations for conquest. Therefore, his neglect of these defining experiences of the proto-Muslims renders his methodology suspect and his reliance on the fiscal themes of the Qur'ān distant.

However, to be fair, Bonner is more grounded when discussing the third and final phase of the development of jihād as a doctrine (i.e. the maintenance and security of the state/empire) and its subsequent manifestations (i.e. revolution against colonial powers, foreign intervention, etc.). In the later chapters of his analysis, he ties in the actual experiences and perspectives of Muslims themselves and the rich contexts in which they lived and applied their individual perspectives of jihād. That said, because Bonner glosses over so much important information, it is difficult to justify his endeavor to interweave the

[131] Ibid., 72-83.

various modalities through the thematic threads he establishes at the beginning of his research.

Another proponent of defining jihād through modalities is Asma Asfaruddin. In her work *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islāmic Thought*, she states that the original meaning of the term – as developed in the Qur'ān – would eventually become eclipsed by more militant interpretations.[132] Much the same as Bonner, she sees jihād as a semantic 'tool' instrumentalized to conform to the specific circumstances of Muslim scholars and their society. Summarizing her study, she states the following:

> The contested multiple conceptualizations of jihad and the phenomenon of martyrdom derived through several lenses—scriptural, hermeneutical, ethical, and historical—leads us to the following concluding remarks. Jihad (and the accompanying concept of martyrdom) provided, in many ways, a discursive template for pre-modern Muslims (and continues to serve as such for contemporary Muslims) upon which a number of sociopolitical concerns could be creatively ventilated and configured in varying circumstances.[133]

However, unlike Bonner, Asfaruddin does not rely as much on Islāmic jurisprudence and history, suggesting that these aspects of understanding jihād have received "ample scholarly attention."[134] As such, she prefers to rely on tafsīr and Aḥādīth literature to compensate for the apparent lack of attention given to both. Asfaruddin does, however, maintain a connection with those two areas calling her study "more holistic…against the background of specific historical and political circumstances."[135] She

[132] Asfaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God,* 5.
[133] Ibid., 297.
[134] Ibid., 8.
[135] Ibid., 1.

engages in lengthy discussions on lexicology – primarily within the Qur'ānic corpus – and the opinions of exegetes from the classical to medieval period, with the crux of her study relying on the Qur'ān as a focal point of discourse on jihād.

Beginning her discussion around the semantics of the Qur'ān, Asfaruddin notes that the word 'jihād' is "a polyvalent concept... by no means reducible to only a combative dimension."[136] She goes on to list a number of classical scholars and their various opinions, showcasing how they understood the word to mean "struggle" in a general sense, encompassing matters of spiritual and worldly conflict alike. However, she notes that interpreting jihād as military combat (*qitāl*) did not become mainstream opinion among "influential circles" until the time of the renowned exegete Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), roughly three centuries after the revelation of the Qur'ān itself.[137] Her evidence is largely derived from tracing exegetical opinions on specific verses up until this point such as, "We shall be sure to guide to Our ways those who strive hard [*jāhadū*] for Our cause: God is with those who do good."[138] That said, it appears that Asfaruddin infers from this and other examples that the intended message of the Qur'ān had begun to be altered, primarily because prior exegetes did not deduce beyond a more specific historical or spiritual reading of certain passages. After a lengthy comparative analysis of several exegetes, she comes to the following conclusion:

> The trajectory of shifting meanings and emphases over time in connection with jihad— as becomes apparent in the exegeses of the verses discussed above— is highly revealing of the emergence of competing paradigms of

[136] Ibid., 10.
[137] Ibid., 19.
[138] Qur'an, al-'Ankabūt: 69; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 405.

> piety linked to a growing communal identity on the part of early Muslims. The contested nature of the parameters of this identity as it was coalescing in the formative period becomes encoded in these discourses of moral excellence that seek to decipher the best way to strive—at both the individual and communal levels—for the sake of God.[139]

However, Asfaruddin does not go into depth with the historical contexts surrounding this trajectory. Therefore, supporting the claim that meanings had "shifted" or that emphasizing different aspects of the concept over others necessarily entailed "competing paradigms of piety" tied to an evolving sense of identity among Muslims requires a deeper look at some of those contexts.

Her indications of the impact of those contexts is clear, with emphasis on scholarly partiality impacted by them. While using the Aḥādīth corpus and numerous scholarly tomes explicating the concept of jihād, she suggests that the various opinions, reports, and apparent contradictions on jihād are evidence of an internal issue within the Muslim community itself, or the result of some inherent bias of the author rather than an extension of the concept to fit the particular circumstance of the day. In other words, bias is the primary means towards interpreting jihād in the later periods of Islāmic history. For example, after a lengthy discussion on the Aḥādīth corpus and its variations, she comes to the following conclusion:

> These developments testify to a continuing robust *politics of piety* among various groups in the medieval period as they sought to define their earthly

[139] Bonner, 24-25.

relations to one another on the basis of moral excellence and precedence in Islām, even as they contemplated their fates in the next world.[140]

Although it is certainly the case that some scholars imposed their own bias, possibly in competition with others around them, the generalization of these developments as being nothing but testimony to bias, and not simply a broadening of the definition in relation to external circumstances, is contentious.

That said, Afaruddin's study is detailed and full of useful information on the various ways in which exegetes approached the Qur'ān and the concept of jihād. Likewise, her analysis on the Aḥādīth collections and subsequent treatises on jihād are helpful in deciphering the many ways in which the concept was applied. What remains is how an actual definition can be derived that adequately ties these variations together as 'jihād.' In summary, her study, while relevant, is primarily descriptive, which provides an added valuable resource to the attempt to arrive at the objective and prescriptive.

2.3 JIHĀD AS THEME

The final and most prominent means of defining the concept of jihād is through focusing on particular themes. Unlike Bonner and Asfaruddin's use of modalities, where there can be various interconnected themes reacting to historical circumstances, others discussed in this section have argued that a single all-encompassing meta-theme can be derived from Islāmic sources and the scholarly tradition. This perspective relies on historical and hermeneutical contexts to paint a single picture of jihād from its genesis to the current

[140] Asfaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God*, 148.

period, resolving apparent contradictions as either misinterpreted events and ideas or contrary to the theme and therefore not an accurate depiction of 'real jihād.'

All the aforementioned scholars would be opposed to this approach as it represents the "polemical" or "apologetic" end of this discussion. However, for all their erudition, several problems can be found in their methodologies and conclusions, subsequently raising the question regarding the validity of their criticisms. That said, despite these flaws, one cannot discard their contributions entirely. The praxis of Muslims is still very important towards understanding how jihād was understood and practiced by believers over the course of history. And the various modalities that jihād took over the ages is also helpful in determining how the concept came to be formalized as a doctrine and implemented on a larger scale. But still, the issue of what jihād is seems to imply that there is and can be a universal theme. Therefore, it is important to examine what that theme may be and whether or not it leads us to a more substantial answer.

For the most part, those who have taken this approach tend to define the theme of jihād in one of two ways. The first camp tends to include those who oppose Islām as a religion, along with those who see Islām as a means to terrorize and harm others (i.e. Muslim extremists). Academics and polemicists from this group, such as Andrew Bostom and Robert Spencer, view jihād as a doctrine of perpetual warfare against non-believers, and as a means of establishing Muslim supremacy over the world. On the other hand, the second camp tends to include academics and traditional Islāmic scholars who argue that jihād is an expression of *jus ad belum* ("justice to war"), a doctrine of just war against persecution and tyranny (i.e. self-defense, war as a last resort, etc.).

Both of these camps appear to have the same methodology, but they cannot both be correct. As such, we should examine the claims made from each and determine which of them depicts jihād most coherently.

2.3.1 Muslim Supremacy

Although there have been many critical works written about Islām since its debut – from both laity and academia alike – few have come as close to offering a comprehensive account of jihād than Majid Khadduri (d. 2007).[141] His work, *War and Peace in the Law of Islām*, has become a template for future academics and scholars in the field of Middle Eastern studies and the Islāmic conception of warfare. Therein, Khadduri argues from a purely legalistic standpoint, claiming that jihād is ultimately a means of establishing supremacy over others:

> In Muslim legal theory, Islām and shirk (associating other gods with Allāh) cannot exist together in this world; it is the duty of the imām [leader] as well as every believer not only to see that God's word shall be supreme, but also that no infidel shall deny God or be ungrateful for His favors (ni'am)… The jihād, in other words, is a sanction against polytheism and must be suffered by all non-Muslims who reject Islām, or, in the case of the dhimmis (Scripturaries), refuse to pay the poll tax.[142]

[141] Professor Khuddari was an Iraqi-born academic who specialized in the fields of Middle Eastern Studies and International Law. He taught at numerous universities including Indiana University, University of Chicago, USA and John Hopkins University, USA. He was also a member of the first Iraqi delegation to the United Nations.

[142] Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in Islamic Law,* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press), 59.

Khadduri arrives at this conclusion early on in his analysis after surveying some of the fundamental concepts of Islāmic law. While he is not sparing with citations from the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth, and early Islāmic scholars, there is scarce examination of the historical contexts surrounding these concepts and their implementation.

For the most part, Khadduri asserts that jihād is merely a variation of Arab tribal warfare.[143] The major difference is that Islām adopted a fundamental doctrine of universalism in protest against a Pagan Arab society "dominated by parochial traditions and particularism,"[144] which dictated the nature of its ancillary practices such as jihād. Unfortunately, Khadduri offers little to no evidentiary support for his assertion other than invoking the period of conquests after the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) death and his own interpretations of Islāmic source texts and their supposed implications. Much like Bonner, he also neglects particular historical events that led to the Islāmic legal precedents of warfare, such as persecution. Simply put, Islāmic doctrine obligates Muslims to dominate 'the Other' by any means necessary:

> The state which is regarded as the instrument for universalizing a certain religion must perforce be an ever expanding state. The Islāmic state, whose principle function was to put God's law into practice, sought to establish Islām as the dominant reigning ideology over the entire world. It refused to recognize the coexistence of non-Muslim communities, except perhaps as subordinate entities, because by its very nature a universal state tolerates the existence of no other state than itself… The jihād was therefore employed

[143] Ibid., 62.
[144] Ibid., 17.

> as an instrument for both the universalization of religion and the establishment of an imperial world state.[145]

That said, there are a number of anomalies in his thesis that Khadduri recognizes, but curiously dismisses. Case in point, he notes that jurists defined jihād in four ways, only one of which refers specifically to warfare. Also, he makes a peculiar admission that the first type of jihād recognized in the Islāmic tradition – 'jihād of the heart' – is solely about self-development and religious devotion, something that was "significant" to the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) himself.[146] However, that is the first and last time Khadduri mentions it throughout his work. This raises some important questions: Why acknowledge other versions of jihād but settle for only one? And why ignore such a significant aspect of the concept; one which was recognized and preached by the founder of the religion himself? These questions are oddly never addressed.

Likewise, Khuddari treats other anomalies with a similar level of dismissiveness. For example, when noting those scholars who had a different interpretation of jihād, he outright suggests that those scholars were merely a product of their time and changed the doctrine to reflect their circumstances.[147] Rather than view these as nuances, he sees them as contradictions that can be explained away as deviating from the orthodox understanding of jihād – but he never justifies why this is the case.

More revealing is the contradictory nature of his understanding of universalism. If Khadduri is correct that this notion necessarily leads to a desire to dominate and destroy opposing views and communities, then Islāmic law should reflect that. However, what we

[145] Ibid., 52.
[146] Ibid., 56-57.
[147] Ibid., 65.

find is a complex treatment of 'the Other' that runs contrary to this narrative. Khadduri himself notes many of these nuances in the second half of his work in which he details the Islāmic view of treaties and the treatment of non-Muslim subjects, stating this is "not inconsistent with Islām's ultimate objective."[148] But if Islām and shirk cannot coexist in this world, then why does Islām allow for shirk to exist within its borders per the payment of a tax? If Muslims are obligated to dominate over non-Muslims, why are treaties with non-Muslim states even entertained to begin with? Even if one admits of a practical benefit behind these exceptions – such as for the sake of economic gain or security – it does not fit within the supposed supremacist sentiment that Khadduri appears to have in mind; supremacists destroy and replace, they do not accommodate. In fact, this mentality appears more in line with his explication of Muslim extremists (i.e. Khawārij), who take jihād as a fundamental and uncompromising article of faith.[149]

Even Khadduri's use of the historical record of early Muslim conquests does little to support his argument and proves to be contradictory after closer inspection. Later scholars have come to dissect the "violent conquest" model, exposing it to be vacuous in the face of newfound data. Surprisingly, the most convincing evidence that undermines this theory comes from the perspectives of non-Muslims who were subject to the first Islāmic expansion. Case in point, Fred Donner[150] offers a more plausible rendition of early Muslim universalism by evidence of the lack of resistance from non-Muslims:

> Moreover, the "violent conquest" model of the Believers' [Muslims'] expansion into the Fertile Crescent is not convincing from a sociological

[148] Ibid., 202.
[149] Ibid., 67.
[150] Fred Donner is a well-established Western academic of Islam and is currently professor of Near Eastern History and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, USA.

> point of view. It is predicated on the mistaken notion that "conquerors" came with the intention of imposing a new religion by force on local populations. However, in regions such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Iran – which already had deeply entrenched religious traditions… that were highly adept at waging religious polemic to defend themselves – this would surely have failed. For, if the Believers already embraced a clearly defined and distinct new creed and had tried to demand the local communities observe it, those populations of the Fertile Crescent would have resisted their arrival stubbornly, in word and deed. But no significant Christian or other polemics against the Believers' doctrines appear for almost a century. The "violent conquest" model thus presents the historian with the double problem of explaining, first, how the conquest could have succeeded in the face of certain opposition to it by those articulate religious communities, and second, how the minute number of conquerors could have maintained their hegemony over a vastly more numerous hostile population.[151]

Donner points out that if the "violent conquest" narrative were correct regarding the Islāmic view of warfare, the early conquests would have turned out much differently. While Khadduri explains the inclusion of other religious groups as a means of subordination, it seems far-fetched that hostile civilian populations would willingly submit to a minority of conquerors without resistance. However, the only major conflicts that the Muslims engaged in were with imperial troops – armies under the command of politicians and landowners trying to hold on to power.

[151] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 108-109.

Despite the internal and historical discrepancies behind jihād being a means towards Muslim supremacy, extremists are quick to adopt it in support of their own agendas. For example, the Islāmic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has openly declared this view in their propaganda magazine *Dabiq* (15):

> Thus, even if you were to stop fighting us, your best-case scenario in a state of war would be that we would suspend our attacks against you – if we deemed it necessary – in order to focus on the closer and more immediate threats, before eventually resuming our campaigns against you. Apart from the option of a temporary truce, this is the only likely scenario that would bring you fleeting respite from our attacks. So in the end, you cannot bring an indefinite halt to our war against you. At most, you could only delay it temporarily. "And fight them until there is no fitnah [paganism] and [until] the religion, all of it, is for Allāh" [Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 193].[152]

Unlike Khadduri, ISIS takes an ahistorical approach with regard to their understanding of jihād, preferring to take the literal, apparent meanings of textual sources and negating contexts and nuances altogether. Despite admitting the specific nature of the Qur'ānic passages being referenced, they still prefer to generalize. For example, when referencing Sūrat al-Baqarah 193 in their polemic, they display in brackets how *fitnah* (i.e. persecution) should be defined: paganism. Therefore, the objective pronoun 'them' cannot literally refer to every disbeliever, but this logic is casually overlooked by the authors of the article.

[152] ISIS, *Dabiq*, 31.

Given the noticeable inconsistencies of the 'Muslim Supremacy' theme, one must question its viability in defining jihād. Not only have scholars (and extremists alike) neglected many of the doctrinal and legal nuances that run contrary to their thesis, but also the historical realities that prompted these nuances to begin with. As a result, other scholars have rejected this theory and proposed defining jihād in accordance with the theme of *jus ad bellum*, or just-war theory.

2.3.2 Jihād as Jus ad Bellum

The concept of 'just war' has been a theme consistently used to explain the reasoning and justification behind violence in many civilizations' ethical systems. According to political philosopher Alex Moseley,[153] the essential principles underlying a just war include "having just cause, being declared by a proper authority, possessing right intention, having a reasonable chance of success, and the end being proportional to the means used."[154] Over centuries, religious and secular philosophers alike have attempted to define exactly what constitutes a just war according to these parameters. Famous thinkers such as the Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), was one of the first to outline a theory of just war from the Christian perspective in his *Summa Theologica*. From the Jewish perspective, the philosopher Maimonides (d. 1204) outlined the proper justifications and conditions for warfare in his *Mishneh Torah*. Likewise, there were scholars who articulated a just war theory from the Islāmic perspective.

[153] Alexander Moseley is a former professor of political philosophy who has authored several introductory books about ethics.
[154] Alexander Moseley, "Just War Theory," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (n.d.). <https://www.iep.utm.edu/justwar/> (accessed 28 September, 2019).

In this regard, Ahmed al-Dawoody[155] has written extensively on the just war concept in the Islāmic tradition. His work, *The Islāmic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations*, is a comprehensive hermeneutical analysis of the motivations and practice of jihād. That said, it mostly reads like a critical missive towards contemporary Western scholarship on the subject. On the outset, Dawoody sets the parameters of his methodology in sharp contrast to those he criticizes:

> The study of the tradition of war in Islām must start by investigating relations between the earliest Muslims and their communities, including how non- Muslims reacted to the emergence of the religion of Islām and, more importantly, the occasions when fighting took place between the Muslims and their enemies during this period, that is, during the lifetime of the Prophet. The significance of starting with the occurrences of fighting during this period is that it is on the basis of these incidents and the Qur'ānic texts addressing them that the classical Muslim jurists developed the Islāmic law of war.[156]

Although all the aforementioned scholars began their research from the same place as Dawoody, they did not come to the same conclusions with respect to the importance of the early Muslim community and its impact on Islāmic jurisprudence. For Dawoody, not only are the Qur'ān and the historical praxis of the early Muslims intimately tied together,

[155] Ahmed Al-Dawoody is the Legal Adviser for Islamic Law and Jurisprudence for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Prior to this, he was an Assistant Professor in Islamic Studies and Islamic law at Al-Azhar University, Egypt.
[156] Ahmed al-Dawoody, *The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 11.

but they form the basis for every subsequent interpretation and application of jihād – the Rosetta stone for understanding warfare in Islām, both legally and theologically.

Unlike the methodology of praxis, which views any and every Muslim's perspective on jihād as valid, Dawoody only takes the perspective of the first generation of Muslims as relevant to defining the doctrine. Also, unlike Bonner's various modalities, the theme is determined solely by the Islāmic source texts and their relationship to Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions. From here, Dawoody largely concentrates on refuting what he views as the "mainstream" view of Western academia: that jihād is an archaic doctrine of perpetual hostility.[157] Case in point, one of the first criticisms he levels at his peers is their conformation bias with respect to the experiences of the early Muslim community. After discussing the decade long persecution endured by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions at the hands of the Pagan Arabs and their subsequent flight from oppression, Dawoody notes:

> The importance of the Meccan period in the study of the tradition of war in Islām has not been given adequate attention in Western scholarship. Although no fighting took place in this period, in fact, a state of war already existed, and the enmity escalated, especially after the Muslims and the Prophet were forced to leave Mecca, with the consequent confiscation of their land and properties by the Meccans. The failure of Western scholarship to recognize that the *hijrah* [migration] signifies a state of war seems to be the result of a cultural misunderstanding.[158]

[157] Ibid., 91.
[158] Ibid., 18.

This cultural misunderstanding is not expounded upon in much detail, but it is alluded to that this Western-centric perspective is primarily to blame for neglecting to acknowledge that the early Muslims' view of warfare was largely influenced by this experience of persecution, a fact that contextualizes all relevant source material surrounding jihād. To add support to his claim, Dawoody meticulously deconstructs his opposition's use of source material. For example, he indirectly scrutinizes Bonner's reliance of the *Maghāzī* literature to support his explanation that jihād was all about war, pointing out that the early biographers of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not always view a 'battle' (*ghazwah*) as being military conflict. In fact, nine of the 27 major battles mentioned in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) lifetime were simply excursions meant for preaching the message of Islām or proposing a peace treaty with another tribe. And although other excursions were meant for combat, they were all in defense of the Muslim community by perceived aggressors.[159] These nuances are not mentioned by Bonner at all, nor does he seem aware of them, as evidenced in his definition of ghazwah as a "battle" or aggressive raid.

Cook is likewise impugned for his careless reading of the source material, specifically for his interpretation of the last nine years of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life and the battles he fought. Dawoody accuses Cook of supplanting traditional interpretations of these battles and adding a context that has no relevance to the Qur'ān or *Sīrah*:

> David Cook, for example, thinks that the Prophet launched campaigns during the last nine years of his life in order to conquer territories. He concludes that the aim in the battles of Badr, Uḥud, the Ditch, Mecca, and

[159] Ibid., 22-23.

> Hunayn was to dominate Medina, Mecca, and al-Tā'if. This interpretation is an example of the construction of a context for these incidents wholly different from that traditionally accepted by Muslims, though, strangely enough, Cook does not discuss these "campaigns" per se. Furthermore, Cook here even constructs a contrary geographical context for these incidents, because the first three so-called campaigns were in fact offensive attacks launched against the Muslims in and around Medina, their [home]town. He omits to mention that after his arrival in Medina, the Prophet was made the leader of the community in Medina by the Constitution of Medina. Given this context, it is inconceivable that the Prophet could have "conquered" Medina.[160]

Much of Dawoody's analysis continues in this manner, showcasing how contemporary discourse on jihād is flawed. To compensate for these discrepancies, he often interjects an alternative perspective, expounding on the Qur'ānic message and Islāmic legal reasoning behind warfare. Unlike previous researchers who saw these sources as only peripherally related, for Dawoody, the persecution endured by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions is integral towards understanding jihād – and it is ultimately the *casus belli* (justification for war) expressed by the Qur'ān itself. A number of passages indicate just that. For example, several passages clearly articulate a need to fight for the sake of self-defense. In fact, according to the exegete Al-Qurṭubī, the very first revelation, verse 22:39, related to military conflict was in direct response to aggression.[161]

[160] Ibid., 46.
[161] Al-Qurṭubī, 12:68, verse 22:39.

Subsequent passages revolve around the same theme, encouraging Muslims to "fight those who fight you"[162] and encouraging them to "deal kindly with those who have not fought you in religion or driven you out of your homes."[163] This demarcation between aggressors and passive non-believers is particularly noteworthy in that it makes clear that disbelief was not the motivating factor behind hostilities. It also perfectly aligns with the experiences of persecution endured by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions:

> Thus, although it is true that the warring parties in these incidents did usually, though not always, belong to different religions, it was not the difference in religion that was the cause of the conflict. A state of war between the Muslims and, in Qur'ānic terms, the idolaters/unbelievers/poly theists of Mecca was the norm… The reasons for this enmity were hostility, persecution, and aggression [against the Muslims], not the holding of different beliefs and the religious definitions that identified the enemy combatants were not a justification for acts of war.[164]

This overall theme of self-defense extended further into the tradition of Islāmic jurisprudence, which, for Dawoody, is "the culmination of Islāmic thought" and a reflection of both revelation and the religious, social, and ethical rationale of Muslims throughout time.[165] This is further evidenced by the fact that legal scholars have generally agreed with the apparent Qur'ānic injunctions and the praxis of the proto-Muslims. In mainstream Islām, there are four main schools (*madhāhib*) of Islāmic law, the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī, each named after their perspective founders. Of these four,

[162] Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 191.
[163] Qur'an, al-Mumtaḥanah: 8.
[164] Al-Dawoody, 48.
[165] Ibid., 75.

three of them are in concordance with the *casus belli* expressed in the Qur'ān,[166] whereas the Shafi'i School appears to deviate in the sense that it cites disbelief as the prime motivation for war.[167] That said, influences outside the Qur'ān also played a role in cementing this feeling of persecution into official doctrine. For instance, Abū Hanifa (d. 768) and his students argued that war between Muslims and non-Muslims was the default state of affairs due to their lived experience with the realities of imperial politics. In other words, for the Ḥanafī School, non-Muslim states were *by their very nature* aggressive towards the existence of Islām, even if the former's constituents did not necessarily share the sentiment of their rulers.[168] As such, offensive warfare was considered a perfectly viable option to take in defense of Muslim lands – a preemptive strike against an inevitably aggressive, unless limited by an already established peace treaty.

Although classical scholars did mention *casus belli* behind war, they did so only passively and were not in-depth, being far more concerned with *jus in bello* (conduct in warfare). Perhaps they assumed that the reasons for war were already known and needed no further elucidation – one can only speculate – but all of the major legal treatises on war during the classical period were primarily concerned with whether or not Muslims behaved accordingly in battle.[169] For instance, scholars would discuss at length issues such as non-combatant immunity,[170] the validity of night raids and collateral damage,[171] and whether or not it was permissible to destroy enemy property.[172] In fact, it was not until Ibn

[166] Ibid., 78.
[167] It may be argued that the Shāfiʿī position may only be seen as contentious because the scholars did not sufficiently demarcate between the reasons for war with non-Muslims – conflating their disbelief with their aggression.
[168] Al-Dawoody, 80-81.
[169] Ibid., 107.
[170] Ibid., 111-116.
[171] Ibid., 118-119.
[172] Ibid., 126-129.

Taymīyah that the discussion of *sabab qitāl al-kuffār* (justification for fighting against disbelievers) was given adequate attention and the opinions of the four *madhāhib*, or traditional legal schools, were comprehensively explained.[173]

However, contemporary Western scholarship has largely been dismissive of classical jurists' perspectives and even less impressed with Ibn Taymīyah's views as documented in works like the *Fiqh al-Jihād* (Law of War).[174] According to Dawoody, modern attempts at correcting the mainstream view of jihād through the works of Ibn Taymīyah and others have been met with skepticism and insincerity by those who follow Khadduri's perspective despite the glaring discrepancies in his theory.[175]

But Dawoody's approach, and those of his predecessors, has its own share of flaws. The first and most glaring problem is that it omits other crucial interpretations of the concept, such as the spiritual or 'greater jihād.' Although Dawoody recognizes "personal moral struggle" as a legitimate manifestation of jihād, he literally only mentions it in one sentence.[176] This is ironic considering that much of his analysis is spent on lambasting Western scholars for neglecting data, but it is also unsurprising: defining jihād as *jus ad bellum* is far too narrow to accommodate spiritual struggle against one's own ego and temptations. To attempt to pigeon hole this aspect into the definition would be a stretch beyond reason.

Secondly, the concept of 'just war' does not appear to be the central theme of jihād according to both the Qur'ān and classical jurists. Certainly, both sources express the need to defend against persecution and cite this as their *casus belli*, or justification for war, but

[173] Ibid., 78.
[174] Ibn Taymīyah and Zuhayr S. Kabī, *Fiqh al-Jihād*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1992).
[175] Ibid., 90.
[176] Ibid., 76.

Dawoody conflates this *qua jus ad bellum*, that is, it is equivalent to 'just war.' However, the fact that jihād is triggered in response to aggression and has strict rules of conduct does not necessitate that jihād itself equates to 'just war,' as commonly defined and explained in Western traditions. While this certainly may be a descriptor of jihād from an outside observer, the doctrine must be defined within the parameters and terminologies of the Islāmic tradition; the Qur'ān, the early Muslim community, nor classical scholarship appear to describe it in this way. Rather, it is implied that justice is a characteristic of jihād, not its central defining quality. Even the literal meaning and use of the word ('to strive') does not appear to have any relevant connection to *jus ad bellum*, as it invokes an active sense of duty rather than a reactionary one contingent upon persecution or aggression. This raises two important questions, then: What does such striving entail? And for what should a Muslim strive?

2.4 A NEED FOR A NEW THEME

The current discourse around the concept of jihād has shown a diversity of methodologies and conclusions. Where some scholars advocate for defining the concept through historical praxis, other opt to understand jihād as historical modalities or as a theme. Each of these approaches utilize the historical data and Islāmic sources, but they vary based on how much importance they give to both. Most scholars refer to the Qur'ān, *Aḥādīth*, and *Sīrah* when explaining jihād, but how they use these sources is also varied. For instance, Cook sees the first three as peripheral, whereas Bonner views them all as one modality among many. For those who follow a thematic approach, excluding the 'Muslim supremacy' or 'violent conquest' models, these sources are all essential and as significant as the lived experiences

of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions. This is why the thematic approach is superior to the other two, because it allows for the possibility of a canonical interpretation defined within the limits of Islāmic hermeneutics. And this is how the doctrine of jihād should be defined *because it is thematically Islāmic* – it cannot, per praxis and modalities, be defined by the mutually exclusive practices and behaviors of Muslims, because the very definition of Islām becomes incoherent by virtue of contradictions. However, this is not to say that what is or is not Islāmic is not a contentious issue. Certainly, there are disagreements to be had among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, but those disagreements exist only by virtue that there is something to disagree *about* – a thing that can be coherently comprehended and a truth that can be known. Thus, it is only through the methodology of theme that jihād might be properly elucidated.

But what is the theme of jihād? Is it to assert supremacy and domination over non-Muslims or is it just war? Regarding the former, it appears that those in support of it have neglected a great deal of historical data and Islāmic doctrine, thereby undermining their conclusion. Regarding the latter, there is similarly a great deal of neglect in recognizing other forms of jihād, as well as unsubstantially equating jihād's *casus belli qua jus ad bellum*, without referring to the Islāmic tradition's own definition of the term. These flaws leave much to be resolved. But how does one resolve them? Given the aforementioned discussion, it would seem a viable theme would be required to fulfill the following criteria:

1. It should be holistic with its use of historical data and Islāmic sources. Such a theme cannot neglect the contexts and nuances implicit in both. This is especially the case with the Qur'ān and its relationship to the early Muslim community.

2. It should be exhaustive in representing both categories of jihād (i.e. the 'greater [spiritual] jihād' and military jihād), as well as address the nuances of the Islāmic legal tradition.
3. It should have a consistent definition that can be objectively understood and applied universally across time and circumstance. Likewise, it must be able to effectively demarcate between legitimate and illegitimate claims to jihād.
4. It should be defined within the boundaries, parameters, and internal logic of the Islāmic tradition itself.

Constructing a definition from the above will necessitate a holistic analysis of every reference to Islām itself – its doctrinal, intellectual, and historical traditions alike. Given the limitations of this study's scope, we can only rely on archetypal examples (or what may be agreed upon as archetypal). As such, this research uses three archetypes from which to define jihād, the first being the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and the early Muslim community; the second being Ibn Taymīyah, often discussed in previous works and an apt representative of the formative years of Islāmic jurisprudence up until the 'middle period' of Muslim history; and finally Abū 'Ala-Maudoodi, an influential scholar living during the transition from the medieval period to the modern world. In the following chapters, the contexts and motivations behind the each of these archetypes understanding of jihād, their similarities and their differences, as well as whether an objective definition of jihād can be fashioned from these exemplars are discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

GENESIS OF JIHĀD: STRIVING TO PRESERVE ISLĀM

The vast amount of misconceptions, abuses, and confusion around the concept of jihād animates the highly-charged debate about the nature of Islām, in both religious and secular circles. Of the most erroneous opinions heard and amplified in society today is one that Islām promotes, or at the very least, endorses violence through permanent, religiously sanctioned war, namely jihād. Robert Spencer is a prolific proponent of this theory, which he recycles and restates many times across his numerous publications. In his latest work, Spencer attempts to draw a direct line of influence from Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) to ISIS:

> The attentive reader will note that there is no period since the beginning of Islām that was characterized by large-scale peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims. There was no time when mainstream and dominant Islāmic authorities taught the equality of non-Muslims with Muslims, or the obsolescence of jihad warfare… There has always been, with virtually no interruption, jihad. Nor is jihad in Islāmic theology primarily, or even prominently, anything but warfare against unbelievers.[177]

These assertions are demonstrably untrue, of course, but what is at play here is not a dispassionate reading of historical sources. This opinion is in part justified by the emergence, particularly post 9/11, of a number of groups holding extremist ideologies outside the scope of traditional Islāmic jurisprudence. These groups have hijacked the term jihād and use it to justify their heinous, violent responses to the autocratic regimes they

[177] Robert Spencer, *The History of Jihad: From Muhammad to ISIS*, (New York: Bombardier Books, Post Hill Press, 2018), 11.

oppose, at the cost of mass destruction and loss of innocent lives (the majority of whom, ironically, are Muslims themselves).

Many efforts have been made to define the doctrine of jihād. However, the resulting variance in interpretation has further contributed to a lack of clarity and accuracy. In order to arrive at a precise and comprehensive understanding of jihād, the doctrine must be understood in light of its original context. As such, it must be explained on the basis of a coherent analysis of Islāmic primary sources – the Qur'ān, the practices of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), and his companions – prior to any explication of subsequent Muslim interpretations and praxis. Because these sources were the first to offer a definition of jihād and form the very foundation for the doctrine's formulation, one cannot properly approach this topic without them. However, all of these foundational sources need to be taken holistically, as by themselves they do not offer a definitive rendering of the concept. With that in mind, there is little room for ambiguity when discussing the importance of the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) or early Islāmic sources, which are well-documented according to Abū Al-Faẓl 'Izzatī:

> Islām is the latest and most historically documented of the great religions of the world. It developed in the full light of history and human knowledge. The factors and causes of its development, spread and triumph can be fully explained without needing to retreat to assumption and accusation based on prejudice. We know as much about Muḥammad, the Qur'ān, and Islām as we do of any person, book, or phenomenon in the history of mankind.[178]

[178] Abū Al-Faẓl 'Izzatī, *The Spread of Islam: The Contributing Factors*, (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies, 2002), xi.

The problem is that in the extrapolation and interpretation of those texts, one is bound to be highly subjective based upon their overall views of the religion and character of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). Considering the biased nature of much inquiry and research, ‘Izzatī comments, “The orientalist' works lack metaphysical understanding and sympathetic insight into Islām; and the Muslims’ works lack systematic approach and modern analytical refinement.”[179] Recognizing the limitations and discrepancies of prior approaches – from both non-Muslims and Muslims alike[180] – this research will attempt to provide a far more coherent paradigm that can satisfactorily account for all the historical data, doctrinal interpretations, and manifestations of jihād.

This chapter analyzes the events surrounding the evolution and establishment of jihād in the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), from the period prior to his prophetic career through his life as a statesman and commander-in-chief of the Muslim army until his death. It will demonstrate from his ethics, strategy, and deployment of jihād that the purpose of warfare was intended to be limited to specific situations and only as necessary to achieve his religious and moral objectives. His practice of jihād is in contrast to other forms of the 7th century warfare, within and outside the Arabian Peninsula, further demonstrating that at times of conflict Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) always prioritized a far more compassionate and peaceful outlook. According to Caner Dagli, the Qur’ān and the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H.) precedent laid the foundation for what he calls the three principles of the “mainstream, traditional Islāmic position” on war: 1) Non-cambatants are not legitimate targets, 2) The religion of a person or persons in no way constituets a cuase for war against them, and 3)

[179] Ibid.
[180] Refer to Chapter 2.

Aggression is prohibited, but the use of force is justified in self-defense, for protection of sovereignty, and in defense of all innocent people.[181] Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.)

methodology reformed warfare along these lines as it had previously existed in Arabia, serving as the roadmap to infer which aspects of military activity were meant to continue after his death.

The doctrine of jihād has multiple dimensions, as a personal and collective struggle to improve one's relationship with God and His creation, and as an imperative to establish and protect the spread of Islām using primarily non-violent approaches of reconciliation and calling to justice for all humanity. When military force was warranted, it was only as a means of self-defense and strategic deployment within the bounds of an unprecedented code of ethics. This code of ethics provided that women, children, property and even prisoners of war were protected from unjust harm, to the extent that many who came into the hands of the Muslim armies sought refuge, asylum, and even converted to Islām during and after the time of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.).

But again back to the main question: What exactly is jihād? As stated earlier, it literally means 'to strive,' but to strive for what? Etymologically, there is little to work with. Taking into account all the linguistic cognates in the various source material, is it possible to construct a concise definition? Combining precedents and expressions of jihād from the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth, and the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) will assist in this regard. Linguistic analysis and scriptural exegetes may continue to provide a robust debate over the true essence and meaning of jihād, but the historical research on the earliest presented

[181] Caner Dagli, "Jihad and the Islamic law of war," in *War and peace in Islam: The uses and abuses of jihad*, edited by Ghazi bin Muhammad, Ibrahim Kalin, and Mohammad Hashim Kamali, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2013), 57.

material will embolden a more comprehensive and holistic interpretation. In this regard, we should begin by examining jihād from the perspective of the Qur'ān, then proceed on to the historical sources surrounding the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H).

3.1 JIHĀD IN THE QUR'ĀN

The Qur'ān contains 41 references to jihād and 17 derivatives of the term. Of these references, the majority (21) are specifically about exerting oneself to be more religious, after which, less than a third (12) refer specifically to warfare, and others (8) refer to things like fulfilling oaths or making oneself physically stronger.[182] With regard to the theme of the majority of passages, which may be called 'spiritual jihād,' some are vague, but others are more detailed with respect to how one should strive towards being more religious. For example, the Qur'ān commands believers to "strive for Allāh" by way of offering prayers and alms:

> Strive hard [*jāhidū*] for God as is His due: He has chosen you and placed no hardship in your religion, the faith of your forefather Abraham. God has called you Muslims—both in the past and in this—so that the Messenger can bear witness about you and so that you can bear witness about other people. So keep up the prayer, give the prescribed alms, and seek refuge in God: He is your protector—an excellent protector and an excellent helper.[183]

Elsewhere the Qur'ān connects jihād to belief, righteousness, and patience in the face of trials and tribulations:

[182] Al-Dawoody, 56.
[183] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 78; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 342.

> But as for those who strive for their meeting with God, God's appointed time is bound to come; He is the All Seeing, the All Knowing. Those who exert themselves [*jāhada*] do so for their own benefit—God does not need His creatures.[184]
>
> We shall test you to see which of you strive your hardest [*mujāhidīn*] and are steadfast; We shall test the sincerity of your assertions.[185]

The Qur'ān's emphasis on "striving for Allāh" by way of religious devotion and perseverance is not only mentioned as a duty for every believer, but ultimately as a benefit to those striving. Allāh is considered completely free from any of these benefits, although He is mentioned as the highest motivation behind jihād. It is only through Allāh that the believers will be protected from their enemies, have their sins forgiven, and be given favor in the world and in the Hereafter. The implication behind these passages is that practicing Islām requires a constant struggle to be aware of one's religious obligations and disciplined in fulfilling them – to diligently *preserve* one's own religious identity.

How do these passages coincide with the other forms of jihād mentioned throughout the Qur'ān? While the literal word 'jihād' is rarely mentioned in the Qur'ān in the context of physical fighting, it is undeniable that the Islāmic tradition views military combat as a manifestation of the doctrine.[186] Jihād became the *technical term* in Islāmic jurisprudence for a just-war theory. That said, how does the Qur'ān address this aspect of jihād? The first passage to be revealed in this respect was the following:

[184] Qur'an, al-'Ankabut: 5-6; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 397.
[185] Qur'an, Muḥammad: 31; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 511.
[186] Refer to chapter 2.

> God will defend the believers; God does not love the unfaithful or the ungrateful. Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged—God has the power to help them—those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, 'Our Lord is God.' If God did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where God's name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. God is sure to help those who help His cause—God is strong and mighty.[187]

What immediately stands out from the above is the fact that the Muslims were only giving permission to fight – not *commanded* to fight. The fact that "permission was granted" (*udhina*) was the language employed to allow fighting speaks to its undesirability in Islām in lieu of other non-violent methods. Unlike spiritual jihād, martial jihād was not initially seen as a duty, but rather a voluntary act contingent on whether or not the Muslims were being fought or threatened. More striking, however, is the stated motivation behind this permission and what it reveals about the early Muslim community.

First, this passage gives evidence that the Muslims were not the initiating party in war, but had been attacked first and forced from their homes – something suspiciously omitted by those who claim the doctrine is founded upon aggressive warfare. This incentive to fight is echoed in later verses, such as the following:

> Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits. Kill them wherever you encounter them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, for

[187] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 39-40; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 345.

> persecution is more serious than killing. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they do fight you, kill them—this is what such disbelievers deserve.[188]

And in another passage:

> Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in God's way. To anyone who fights in God's way, whether killed or victorious, We shall give a great reward. Why should you not fight in God's cause and for those oppressed men, women, and children who cry out, 'Lord, rescue us from this town whose people are oppressors! By Your grace, give us a protector and give us a helper!'? The believers fight for God's cause, while those who reject faith fight for an unjust cause. Fight the allies of Satan: Satan's strategies are truly weak.[189]

Second, the "wrong" mentioned against the Muslims in verse 22:39 does not seem to indicate that jihād is simply about self-defense *per se.* Rather, the Qur'ān appears more focused on another aspect of defense in these passages. When examining verse 22:39, Allāh states clearly that His permission is granted to the Muslims to fight as a means to stop others from destroying religious buildings "where God's name is mentioned often." In the other verses, the lives of the Muslim soldiers themselves are considered a secondary concern in relation to innocents, as they are called upon to defend the oppressed who invoke Allāh. Indeed, the "*fitnah* [persecution/trials] is worse than killing," which is to say that war became a kind of necessary evil, in the sense that it is not desired, to repel aggression and stop oppression of helpless victims. All of this appears to suggest that the call to

[188] Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 2:190-191; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 30-31.
[189] Qur'an, al- Nisā': 74-76; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 90-91.

military jihād is more about protecting the right to religious practice than only life. Although it cannot be necessarily ruled out whether or not the Qur'ān considers protecting the oppressed in other cases as a type of 'jihād,' it is not stated explicitly either.

There are other passages that command the Muslims to fight in response to legitimate political grievances alone. In a key passage on warfare in Sūrat al-Tawbah, one of the last parts of the Qur'ān to be revealed and which is worthy of examining in full, Allāh orders the believers to kill those polytheists who had broken a peace treaty, while sparing those who had abided by the contract:

> A release by God and His Messenger from the treaty you (believers) made with the idolaters (is announced)—you (idolaters) may move freely about the land for four months, but you should bear in mind both that you will not escape God, and that God will disgrace those who defy (Him). On the Day of the Great Pilgrimage (there will be) a proclamation from God and His Messenger to all people: 'God and His Messenger are released from (treaty) obligations to the idolaters. It will be better for you (idolaters) if you repent; know that you cannot escape God if you turn away.' (Prophet), warn those who ignore (God) that they will have a painful punishment. As for those who have honoured the treaty you made with them and who have not supported anyone against you: fulfil your agreement with them to the end of their term. God loves those who are mindful of Him. When the (four) forbidden months are over, wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every lookout post; but if they turn (to God), maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms,

let them go on their way, for God is most forgiving and merciful. If any one of the idolaters should seek your protection (Prophet), grant it to him so that he may hear the word of God, then take him to a place safe for him, for they are people with no knowledge (of it). How could there be a treaty with God and His Messenger for such idolaters? But as for those with whom you made a treaty at the Sacred Mosque, so long as they remain true to you, be true to them; God loves those who are mindful of Him. (How,) when, if they were to get the upper hand over you, they would not respect any tie with you, of kinship or of treaty? They please you with their tongues, but their hearts are against you and most of them are lawbreakers. They have sold God's message for a trifling gain, and barred others from His path. How evil their actions are! Where believers are concerned, they respect no tie of kinship or treaty. They are the ones who are committing aggression. If they turn to God, keep up the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms, then they are your brothers in faith: We make the messages clear for people who are willing to learn. But if they break their oath after having made an agreement with you, if they revile your religion, then fight the leaders of disbelief—oaths mean nothing to them—so that they may stop. How could you not fight a people who have broken their oaths, who tried to drive the Messenger out, who attacked you first? Do you fear them? It is God you should fear if you are true believers.[190]

[190] Qur'an, al-Tawbah: 1-13; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 188-189.

This passage, or rather selective quotes from it, is often cited in debates about the allegedly violent nature of Islām and the increasingly aggressive actions taken by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) at the end of his life. However, even if we limit ourselves to analyzing the text without any regard to other historical data and evidence, the passage can be understood as consistent with the Qur'ān's previous rules on warfare. It explicitly cites the breaking of their peace treaties as the *casus belli*, or justification for war, it upholds the treaties made with those who never broke them, and it offers a way for individual enemies to escape the conflict without necessarily converting to Islām. Abdel Haleem provides his astute analysis of this passage in relation to the debate about Islām and violence:

> The main clause of the sentence, 'kill the polytheists,' is singled out by some non-Muslims as representing the Islāmic attitude to war. Even some Muslims takes this view and allege that this verse abrogated many other verses including, 'There is no compulsion in religion,' (2:256) and even according to one solitary extremist, 'God is forgiving and merciful.' This far-fetched interpretation isolates and decontextualizes a small part of a sentence and of a passage which gives many reasons for the order to fight such polytheists: they continually broke their agreements and aided others against the Muslims, they started hostilities against the Muslims, barred others from becoming Muslims, expelled them from the Holy Mosque and even from their own homes. At least eight times the passage mentions the misdeeds of these people against the Muslims.
>
> Moreover, consistent with the restriction of war elsewhere in the Quran, the immediate context of this 'sword verse' exempts such polytheists who do

> not break their agreements and who keep peace with Muslims. It orders that those enemies seeking safe conduct should be protected and delivered to the place of safety they seek. The whole of this context to verse 9:5, with all its restrictions, is ignored by those who simply isolate one part of a sentence to build on it their theory of violence in Islām.[191]

Although the apparent motivation to fight from the above is with regard to the breaking of a treaty, the tone coincides with previous passages as well. Here, the concern is not so much self-defense, but *self-preservation*; the Muslims are afraid of the dominance of their pagan neighbors and the latter's habitual diplomatic dishonesty. The focus here is not on the pagans' aggression per se, but their refusal to allow the Muslims to have any sense of security, constantly placing them in a state of anxiety and apprehension. That fear was so consuming that the Muslims could no longer allow those who continued violating their treaties to live, as by that point there was no other way to guarantee the existence of the former's religious identity.

A few verses later in the same Sūrat we find, "Fight those of the People of the Book who do not (truly) believe in God and the Last Day…"[192] Taken in isolation, this verse has led David Cook and others to assert that offensive domination replaced defense and security as the justification for jihād. However, it would be odd for the Qur'ān and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to provide a consistent vision of just war only to abrogate all of it at the end. It is more plausible to read this verse in light of the previous passage, as a response to the aggression and threat of neighboring tribes and nations. One of the early exegetes, Al-Ṭabarī, cites Mujāhid ibn Jabir (d. 277) as saying the verse was revealed in connection

[191] Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, xxiii.
[192] Qur'an, al-Tawbah: 29; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 192.

to the ghazwah of Tabūk.[193] As the biographers of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would note, the Byzantines were indeed a natural competitor to the new-found Muslim community in Medina, so it is likely the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was commanded to preempt their threat. Some of them record that the expedition took place in response to the assassination of one of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) ambassadors. Either way, verse 9:29 can be read in complete consistency with the rest of the Qur'ān, especially with the same chapter in which it appears.

Given the above, the *casus belli* of military jihād is quite clear: the preservation of the religion of Islām, both with respect to its followers and inherent values. It can likewise be stated that this is the same motivation behind jihād on a personal level (i.e. spiritual jihād) – to preserve the religious belief and practices of a believer.

At this point, is worth nothing that the Qur'ān is the best historical source for the life of Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and the formation of early Islām. Historian Peter Crawford writes, "Despite it probably taking some time to assume its definitive form, the Qur'ān is not just a text of sacred and spiritual significance. Due to other surviving Arabic sources on the origins of Islām and the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) being written at least a century removed, the Qur'ān also represents a contemporary historical account of the events in early-seventh century Arabia."[194] In other words, it is impossible to avoid using the Qur'ān to understand how history unfolded over the prophetic career of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). While the world around Arabia can be studied independently from Islāmic theological sources, the world of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) himself can only be studied

[193] Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2000), 14:200, verse 9:29.
[194] Crawford, 81.

closely in combination with the scripture divinely-inspired in him. To Muslims, the Qur'ān is God's literal word and instruction revealed to the believers through Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) over a period of 23 years. The tone of the Qur'ān, as well as commentary on historical events as they unfolded, shows us the development of each doctrine including jihād.[195] It is proper to assume that the message of the Qur'ān and the historical accounts surrounding jihād, the Aḥādīth and Sīrah, have the same historical origin and therefore are interconnected. As has been shown, the Qur'ānic text expresses clear limits and objectives for combat; can we find this same understanding of jihād reflected in the Aḥādīth and Sīrah literature as well?

3.2 HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MUḤAMMAD AND JIHĀD

The *Sīrah*, or biography, of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) is central to Islām since his tradition and precedent (*sunnah)* is meant to be emulated by all Muslims.[196] His sunnah is considered the manifestation of Qur'ānic values by orthodox Muslims. Therefore, his example has been preserved quite delicately and meticulously in collections of Aḥādīth narrations through a sophisticated system of verification. The Sīrah was given almost as much importance as the Qu'ran in the early generations of Islām, according to the eminent companion of Muḥammad, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr (d. 685).[197] However, as with the Qur'ān, one is primarily subject to a Muslim interpretation of these events. The earliest complete

[195] Ibid., 82.
[196] Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality*, 100.
[197] Ibid., 101.

collection of Muḥammad's Sīrah is that of Ibn Isḥāq,[198] known for its "rigorous methodology and its literary style of the highest standard of elegance and beauty."[199]

Al-Wāqidī, Ibn Hishām, and Ibn Sa'd were also well regarded collections of the Prophetic biography. Yet all of these heavily reference the collection of Ibn Isḥāq,[200] which is organized in such a way that it served as a blueprint for most collections that followed it. As Sir Hamilton Alexander notes, "In its original form, it was apparently composed of three sections: *al-Mubtada*, dealing with pre-Islāmic history from the creation, and drawn largely from Wahb b. Munabbih and Jewish sources; *al-Mabath*, relating the life of the Prophet down to the first year of the Hijra (migration to Medina); and *al-Maghazi* to the death of the Prophet."[201] However, the Sīrah has not traditionally been given the same rigorous scrutiny that Aḥādīth collections were. Interestingly enough and perhaps paradoxically, Ibn Isḥāq is rejected as a reliable source of Aḥādīth, but he is considered the prime authority in Sīrah.[202] This is largely because biographical information did not influence Islāmic legislation in the same way that the Aḥādīth did. Hence, mistakes and omissions were viewed as forgivable by early Muslim scholars, so long as they were not overly exaggerated.[203]

Despite discrepancies within the Sīrah literature, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) has generally been praised by orientalists and intellectuals throughout history for his impressive moral character. Some examples include the late Indian civil rights leader and politician, Mahatma Gandhi (d. 1942), who openly credited Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) for

[198] Campo, 333.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., 340.
[201] Gibb, 112.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid., 113.

inspiring him, writing, “When I closed the second volume [of the Prophet’s biography], I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.”[204] Famous writers like Bosworth Smith (d. 1908) wrote, “He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports."[205] The great George Bernard Shaw (d. 1959) was also inspired by the qualities of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) found in the Sīrah literature – noble traits such as his exemplary leadership:

> I believe if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring much needed peace and happiness. I have studied him - the man and in my opinion is far from being an anti–Christ. He must be called the Savior of Humanity. I have prophesied about the faith of Mohammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.[206]

Thomas Carlyle (d. 1881) opined, “How one man single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less

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[204] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, (New Delhi, India: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960-1994), 29:133; as cited in H. E. Mohamed, *Historical Witnesses to the Ismaili Epoch*, 68.
[205] Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam Being a Cyclopaedia of the Doctrines*, (London: Allen, 1885), 397.
[206] Ashraf, 12.

than two decades. A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest."[207] And the orientalist, Montgomery Watt (d. 2006), lamented:

> His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement – all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muḥammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muḥammad.[208]

The praise revolved around his high standard of ethics in war and peace, whether in a time of prosperity or adversity. That said, there are just as many negative opinions of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) as there are positive, often represented through polemics that cast the doctrine of jihād in a negative light. However, when examining the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life chronologically – especially with regard to his approaches to peace, violence, and resistance of injustice – we find a great deal of nuance and events that run contrary to the view that he was a warmonger, or that jihād is an expression of aggressive militarism. As a matter of fact, much of the debate surrounding the moral character of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the early Muslims is very recent and within the context of the colonial project, as noted by Michael Bonner.[209] Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) military career, the mentions of jihād in the Qur'ān, and his sunnah, however they are understood, form the foundation for most judgments about his mission. Islām as a whole, through jihād, is either

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[207] Thomas Carlyle, *An Outline of the Doctrines of Thomas Carlyle, Being Selected and Arranged Passages from His Works,* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1896), 122.
[208] W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 52.
[209] Bonner, 16.

a religion of justice and self-preservation, or aggressive war, depending on which interpretation of the messenger and message is adopted. Which interpretation is the most coherent with respect to the source material? To begin answering this question, one must first take a look at the practice of warfare prior to the advent of his prophetic mission.

3.2.1 7th Century Warfare

In order to have a thoroughly informed discussion about jihād in its military context, it is imperative to study those civilizations present during the 7th century, both within and around the Arabian Peninsula, and their laws and ethics of warfare. The Eastern Roman Empire – eventually renamed the Byzantine Empire (330 -1453) after its capital city Byzantium (Constantinople) – was one of two significant powers outside central Arabia at the time. It encompassed modern-day Italy, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and North Africa. The Persian, or Sassanid Empire (224 - 651), rivaled the Byzantine Empire from the East at the dawn of Islām, controlling modern-day Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, eastern Syria, Turkey, parts of the Caucuses, and the Persian Gulf. The Abyssinian Empire, formally known as the Kingdom of Aksum, bordered Arabia from the South-West with control over the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea coast.[210] The kingdom had adopted Christianity and was primarily a trading power during this period.

The Byzantium–Sasanian war (602 – 628), fought between the two empires leading up to and during the time of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) prophetic career, is of most relevance to this study. Both empires had been at war with one another with sporadic periods of truce, fighting over territory, breached treaties, and religious persecution; the Byzantines adopted

[210] Mohiuddin, 68-69.

Christianity, whereas the Persians had practiced Zoroastrianism. The Byzantine Empire had already experienced a series of expansions and losses since its inception, having been defeated by the Persians and Huns between 300 and 450 CE, followed by a recovery period at the hands of Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565). Further expansions during the reign of Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602) resulted in the subsuming of North Africa, Italy, and Rome. Despite its growth leading up to the 7th century, the empire became more unstable, eventually leading to the army's revolt under a junior officer by the name of Phocas in 602 CE.

Unrest and reaction against government absolutism resulted in the rise of social and religious dissension in the Byzantine cities, manifesting in the "bitter internal clashes, and frequent fights between the Greens and Blues [factions]." Deteriorating discipline in the army and the mounting frustration toward the government after its decision to cut the pay of its army in response to its own financial strains led to a massive revolt led by a junior officer named Phocas at the head of an army of mutinous soldiers which succeeded in overthrowing Maurice. Phocas was approved by the Senate as the new Emperor and Maurice, the last emperor of the Justinian Dynasty, was executed along with his four sons.[211]

The Persians launched an attack on the Byzantines under King Khosrau II (r. 590-628), capturing Syria and Mesopotamia by 607 CE. According to the historian John Julius Norwich, the king's primary motivation to launch this attack was to avenge the murder of Maurice who had previously helped him regain his throne in return for control of western Armenia and Caucasian Iberia. [212] The desire to reconquer Armenia and Mesopotamia

[211] Ostrogorski, 76.
[212] Norwich, 87-89.

could also have been a likely factor behind the attack. By the following year, the Persians had encroached to just outside the capital of Constantinople, with the Avars and Slavic tribes simultaneously advancing towards it as well; the downfall of Phocas was near. He adopted a path of tyranny, alienating and disuniting his people with the use of large scale torture, even forcing Jews who had been deployed on the frontlines to convert to Christianity, all of which resulted in the Jews fleeing to Persian lands and eventually coming to the aid of their former enemies.[213]

Of most relevance to this study is the period that followed under the reign of Heraclius (r. 610-641), whose father overthrew Phocas, handing the throne to his 36-year-old son in 610 CE. Heraclius is credited with successfully reconstructing the military. He accomplished this by first financing the army through increased taxes, debasing the currency to pay more soldiers, forced loans, and assuming the finances of the Church.[214] Medieval chroniclers such as William of Tyre are of the opinion that this military campaign against the Persians was in fact the first "crusade."[215] Others such as Walter Kaegi disagree, citing that religion was only one component of the war.[216]

A second military strategy attributed to Heraclius by some historians is that he created military divisions known as the "Theme System," which allowed him to increase the military's potential. Themes consisted of four administrative regions, each with its own military governor, in which able-bodied men and their families would be given land to farm

[213] Ibid.
[214] Norwich, 91.
[215] Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 245.
[216] Walter Emil Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 126.

in return for their loyalty to the empire. This proved to be successful in tempering the soldiers' allegiances and was much preferred over a band of fickle mercenaries.[217]

Of particular significance is the capture of Jerusalem in 613 CE by the Persians, who burned numerous churches and took possession of ancient Christian relics, including the True Cross, Holy Lance and Holy Sponge.[218] As many as 57,000 or 66,500 people were slain according to Ancient sources, and another 35,000 were deported to Persia, including the Patriarch Zacharias.[219] The safe return of these relics was no doubt a motivating factor for Heraclius. In 618 CE, the Persians, led by their general Shahrbaraz, successfully invaded the Byzantine stronghold of Egypt, which would remain a Persian territory for only ten years. The loss of Egypt was significant, as it had cut off the grain supply to the Byzantine Empire.[220] At first glance, the Persians appear to have made great gains in the war, but in reality, these victories came at the cost of exhausting both the treasury and the army, leaving Khosrao no choice but to over tax his people to replenish the empire's coffers. Following the conquest of Egypt, Khosrao wrote the following letter to Heraclius:

> Khosrau, greatest of Gods, and master of the earth, to Heraclius, his vile and insensate slave. Why do you still refuse to submit to our rule, and call yourself a king? Have I not destroyed the Greeks? You say that you trust in your God. Why has he not delivered out of my hand Caesarea, Jerusalem, and Alexandria? And shall I not also destroy Constantinople? But I will pardon your faults if you submit to me, and come hither with your wife and children; and I will give you lands, vineyards, and olive groves, and look

[217] Ostrogorski, *History of the Byzantine State*. 87-88.
[218] Norwich, 90.
[219] Kaegi, 78.
[220] Ibid., 88.

> upon you with a kindly aspect. Do not deceive yourself with vain hope in that Christ, who was not able to save himself from the Jews, who killed him by nailing him to a cross. Even if you take refuge in the depths of the sea, I will stretch out my hand and take you, whether you will or not.[221]

With this, Heraclius began a counter-attack on the Persians in 622 CE by paying tributes to the Avars and Slavs,[222] even sending them hostages as promise of payment in order to move his army from Europe to Asia. Heraclius marched his forces through Persia "leaving a trail of burning cities behind him," including the destruction of the Persian palace at Ganzak, as he led his troops deep within the heartland of the Sassanid Empire to Ctesiphon, the Persian capital. It was not until the Persian general, Shahrbaraz (d. 630), began cutting off supply lines that Heraclius was forced to withdraw to the western shore of the Caspian Sea.[223] By 626 CE, Constantinople remained the final assault for the Persians. Khosrao II, who had refused an offer of a peace treaty from Heraclius in 624 CE, bolstered the Persian army to 50,000 men in an attempt to out-maneuver the Byzantines. Heraclius duplicated this strategy by creating three units: one to defend the capital, one to face the Persian army in Mesopotamia, and one to lead himself into Persia "ravaging and taking captives as he went."[224]

The capital city managed to protect itself at the hands of a force of 12,000 cavalry supported by the entire city's population. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, rallied the people with a call toward religious and patriotic duty. Constantinople was successfully defended against 80,000 Avars, Slavs, and Persians after a month long siege in June of 626

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[221] Charles Oman, *Europe, 476-918*, vol. I, (Macmillan, 1893), 206-207.
[222] Ostrogorski, 90.
[223] Norwich, 91.
[224] Treadgold, 295.

CE.[225] In December of 627 CE, a decisive battle took place near the ruins of Nineveh. Heraclius defeated the Persians, killing the Persian commander and taking thousands of captives. He advanced through Assyria burning royal palaces, plundering as he went, and freeing Byzantine prisoners – turning back with the offer of a peace treaty just shy of the capital city, only after seeing it under a flood and outbreak of the plague.[226] The treaty restored the pre-war Byzantine boundaries and all captives and religious relics were returned. As a result of these successes, Heraclius was hailed throughout the empire as the greatest general of his time, but such adulation would be short lived. In the long term these battles, spanning almost thirty years, eventually crippled the empire both economically and militarily. No doubt, the Byzantine and Persian armies were highly organized, well-trained, and heavily armed with tens of thousands of soldiers. Despite this, however, both empires surprisingly succumbed to the might of a newly formed Islāmic polity just a little more than a decade later. This subsequent humiliation at the hands of desert Arabs, and the numerous revolts within each empire, indicate the presence of other factors that must be taken into consideration. It is clear that the use of violence in the form of large-scale massacres, destruction, and forced conversions played a role in the lack of stability and eventual dismantling of the empires, in the absence of just rulers and humane treatment of the armies and conquered peoples.

It is clear that the Church played a significant role within the Byzantine Empire, as Christianity was their official religion. With such authority, the Church was needed to provide religious justification for any war the empire would fight. There was a shift with the advent of the Constantinian era, at which point the Christians became a dominant force

[225] Norwich, 92.
[226] Treadgold, 299.

within the army and imperial court, thereby necessitating that one of the purposes of war was a readiness to defend the Christian empire.[227] While historians have varied opinions as to the extent of the Church's influence over warfare, the canonical epistles of St. Basil the Great (d. 379), otherwise known as the Ninety-two Canons, provided the foundational legislation for religiously-sanctioned warfare and were adopted by the Byzantines as their official policy. These epistles outlined that war was only deemed necessary if it was for the cause of self-defense, that there was no justification for 'holy war' or 'righteous violence,' and that the returning soldiers would be granted a path to salvation through repentance if they lost their lives. As John McGuckin states:

> The reasons he [St. Basil] gives for suggesting that killing in time of hostilities could be distinguished from voluntary murder pure and simple— for which the canonical penalty was a lifelong ban from admission to churches and from the sacraments— is set out as the" defense of sobriety and piety." This is code language for the defense of Christian borders from the ravages of pagan marauders.[228]

It is also worthy of note that monks were known to defend themselves, their churches, their properties, and the "soldier-saints" whom they praised as martyrs and righteous warriors of God on earth. The retrieval of the holy relics from Persian invaders further illustrates an important religious motivation, since the Holy Cross was seen as a trophy against 'the enemy' encroaching Christian lands. This demonstrates that while the empire's policy was opposed to religiously motivated wars per se, religion was still a

[227] McGuckin, 7.
[228] Ibid., 9.

necessary means to an end.[229] The clergy had existed in the military since the reign of Maurice and it had become an established practice to lead soldiers in prayer before battle, as the act of spilling blood in war was never seen as a "liturgically defiling action."[230]

The isolated desert region of the Arabian Peninsula in the pre-Islāmic 7th century consisted of a confederacy of tribes, in which all authority and loyalty were given to tribe chieftains who were known for their character and courage in the face of battle. These chiefs were expected to fight on the frontlines and also held monetary responsibility; typically one quarter of the spoils of war would be assigned to them before distribution.[231] There was no centralized government, but rather each tribe had its own laws and customs. Disputes were handled between tribes and each individual was entirely dependent on his or her tribal affiliation for protection and status. The general lawlessness in which each tribe was left frequently manifested itself in senseless inter-tribal warfare. Upholding and defending the honor and protection of the tribe was always the primary reason for conflict. Nevertheless, this was not the only source of conflict in Arabia at the time.

The Abyssinians, backed by Roman forces, had been intermittently invading Yemen since 340 CE and subsequently settled a large community of Christians in the tens of thousands in Najran. This community would eventually suffer large-scale extermination, being thrown into ditches of fire at the hands of the Yemeni King, Yusūf Dhu Nawas (d. 525), in an attempt to force mass conversions to Judaism. The Abyssinians, once again backed by the Romans, reconquered Yemen two years later, giving way to Abraha, an Abyssinian general, to assume the role of governor of Yemen. Abraha erected a grand

[229] Ibid., 11-12.
[230] Ibid., 14.
[231] Mohiuddin, 69-73.

cathedral in Sana'a known as the Yemeni Al-Ka'bah to lure pilgrims away from Mecca, which at the time was a thriving religious and commercial center for Arabs of the surrounding area, who would gather annually for worship and trade. Because of this, an Arab from the Bani Kinānah tribe traveled to Sana'a to defile the cathedral in protest. In response, Abraha set out to destroy the Ka'bah in Mecca with an army of 60,000 soldiers and several war elephants. According to Islāmic tradition, the attempt failed after his army fell victim to a devastating pelting of stones from a flock of birds so numerous that they blackened the sky.[232]

This monumental event had a resounding effect throughout the Arabian Peninsula for generations to come, being recalled and passed down as the "Year of the Elephant."[233] It occurred just prior to the birth of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) in the year 570 CE and carries both historic and religious significance. From this point onwards, not only would the pagan Arabs respect the Quraysh and view Mecca as a holy sanctuary, but for Muslims it became a clear indication of God's protection over the Ka'bah. It was also understood as a sign for them that God would protect the message of Islām, which would be delivered to the world from this very city, calling people back to the faith of Abraham, the great prophet who had built the Ka'bah with his son Ishmael for the sole purpose of worshiping the One God. The Qur'ān speaks of this incident as a warning from God to all those who plot against His worshippers or sacred spaces, "Do you (Prophet) not see how your Lord dealt with the army of the elephant? Did He not utterly confound their plans? He sent ranks of birds

[232] Ibid., 74.
[233] Ibid.., 75.

against them, pelting them with pellets of hard-baked clay: He made them (like) cropped stubble."[234]

The Yemeni Arabs, backed by Persian forces, overthrew their Abyssinian rulers and Yemen became a Persian colony until the last of its rulers, Badhan, embraced Islām in 638 CE. The Arabian Peninsula, by virtue of its treacherous terrain, was a relatively isolated desert region in the pre-Islāmic 7th century. The only real interaction between the region and outsiders was for the purpose of trade. Essentially, it was a tribal society in which powerful chieftains led a cluster of extended families or "clans." Chieftains were generally chosen as leaders based on their perceived characteristics, one of the most important being how courageous they were in battle.[235] In such a dangerous environment, due to a difficult natural terrain and climate as well the threat from neighboring tribes and empires, it certainly made sense that strength and bravery were highly sought qualities in a leader.

There was no centralized government in Arabia, unlike the Byzantines, Persians, and Abyssinians. Rather, each tribe had its own rules and traditions, which is perhaps a reflection of their polytheistic religions at the time. Disputes were handled between tribes and each person was entirely dependent on his or her own tribe for protection and prosperity. This tribalism and lawlessness, in which each tribe was left to make alliances with others or wage war against common enemies, manifested itself in frequent inter-tribal conflict, often over relatively trivial matters. Upholding and defending the honor and protection of the tribe was crucial, given that members from one tribe could attack another's, seeking personal revenge or perhaps as a pretext to gain the spoils of war. Stolen

[234] Qur'an, al-Fīl: 1-5; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 602.
[235] Mubārakfūrī, 34.

property and enslavement of free citizens was a common occurrence in the aftermath of these wars. Karen Armstrong aptly points out, "There was no concept of universal human rights. He [tribal member] had no concern for outsiders, whom he regarded as worthless and expendable. If he had to kill them to benefit his own people, he felt no moral anguish and wasted no time in philosophical abstractions or ethical considerations."[236]

A poignant example of this is the conflict between the Taghlib and Bakr tribes, who fought a bitter war for forty years over the killing of a stray she-camel belonging to the former. The camel wandered onto the property of a man from the latter and who was subsequently murdered in retaliation, sparking an all-out war known as the 'War of Basus' (494-534).[237] Another example can be found in the incident between the tribes of 'Abs and Dhubyān who went to war over foul play during a horse race, in which one horse was sabotaged, and eventually died, to ensure victory for the other side.[238]

3.2.2 Muḥammad in Pre-Islāmic War and Peace

Though the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had not directly participated in a war himself before Islām, he often saw the lingering aftermath of it in the orphans around him, who lost their parents to various tribal wars. He was an orphan himself, though not because of a war. The city of Yathrib, which would eventually become the capital city of the Muslim polity under Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), was embroiled in its own share of conflicts between its tribes, 'Aws and Khazraj, taking turns to ally with Jewish tribes who themselves were seeking their own dominance.[239] These bloody wars, known as the 'Bu'ath Wars,' left most men

[236] Armstrong, 12-13.
[237] Kamal S. Salibi, *A History of Arabia*, (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1980), 68.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Zeitlin, 187.

over the age of forty dead by the time of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) advent, after which point the powerful message of justice and equality preached by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) would successfully unite the two tribes. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) gave the Muslims of Medina the noble title of *Anṣār* (the supporters) for their commitment to the establishment of Islām and taking in the *Muhājirūn* (the emigrants) who fled from persecution in Mecca.[240]

In Muḥammad's childhood (P.B.U.H.), he witnessed the *Ḥarb al-Fijār*, or sacrilegious war as it was known, because of it involved the violation of both the sanctity of the prohibited months of fighting as well as the area surrounding the holy city of Mecca. This prohibition was understood and accepted widely by the Arabs, being one of their most important religious and social customs. As put by contemporary Islāmic scholar Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī (d. 1996):

> A man would meet his father's murderer in the sacred month and his consciousness of this sanctity would restrain him from seeking revenge. When Islām came, it approved these heritages of the religion of Abraham: 'Behold! The number of months with Allāh is twelve months by Allāh's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right religion. So do not indulge in wrongdoing during that time.'[241]

The war lasted for four years, claiming many lives including those of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) uncles and his wife's relatives.[242] As was often the case, it was the result of an escalated dispute between the Kinānah and Hawāzin tribes, both of whom had been

[240] Lings, 32.
[241] Al-Ghazzālī, 87.
[242] Salibi, 68.

adversaries for quite some time leading up to the war. The Quraysh tribe, to whom Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) belonged, was pulled into the conflict in support of Kinānah, with whom they had a pre-existing alliance. It was during one such battle that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) assisted his uncles by collecting stray enemy arrows as they fell. He was likely only fourteen or fifteen years old, given his participation was kept to a minimum and did not entail direct fighting.[243] These feuds were a perpetual cycle of retaliation and senseless violence, rampant in the absence of both a centrally administrated justice system and a universal ethic. Reza Aslan notes, "In a society with no concept of an absolute morality as dictated by a divine code of ethics – a Ten Commandments, if you will – the Shaykh [chief] had only one legal recourse for maintaining order in his tribe: the Law of Retribution was actually meant to limit barbarism."[244] Thus, the violence of pre-Islāmic Arabia was not violence for violence sake, but instead was understood as the necessary, and perhaps natural, means of establishing some semblance of social order.

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), not yet declaring himself to be a prophet, managed to escape actively participating in all of these conflicts. In this regard, he was able to maintain a perception of neutrality among his peers for which he gained the respect of those around him, particularly of the prominent tribal elders of Mecca. He took strongly to moral calls of fairness and charity whilst not engaging in the ordinary course of tribal feuding or combat. However, some historians and anthropologists advocate for the opinion that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) strategically capitalized on this system of tribalism by making it the very foundation from which military jihād and Islām were predicated, associating it

[243] ʻAlī Muḥammad Ṣallābī, *The Noble Life of the Prophet*, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2005), 102.
[244] Aslan, 30.

with honor and promoting the expansion of the Islāmic empire through violence. Philip Carl Salzman expresses this view:

> The Arab and Islāmic conquests were not unlike tribal raids against distant, unprotected peoples, but on a much larger scale. One of the main characteristics of the Arab empire was the enslavement of conquered peoples. During conquest, men were commonly slaughtered while women and children were taken in slavery. Muslim invaders spared men who willingly converted but still enslaved their wives and children. In conquered regions, Muslim troops often took children from parents while along the periphery, it was normal to raid for slaves.[245]

This betrays even a cursory reading of the source material. In response to this claim, one need only to examine the effects this environment had on Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) in his quest for truth and justice, and the revolutionary manner in which he reformed a people steeped in tribalism through his visionary leadership. Throughout the Sīrah, we can highlight several examples of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) character and teachings that run contrary to this assumption.

The life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) is documented in incredible detail; everything from his daily bathroom habits, to his family relations, to his leadership decisions are preserved for the sake of emulation by his followers. His life is divided into three primary parts: (1) Pre-prophecy, which is the period of time until he reached the age of 40, (2) the Meccan phase, which lasted for 13 years while he preached Islām in Mecca, and (3) the Medinan phase, which lasted for 10 years after he emigrated from Mecca to Medina until

[245] Philip Carl Salzman, "Middle East's Tribal DNA," *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (2008): 23-33. <https://www.meforum.org/1813/the-middle-easts-tribal-dna> (accessed 14 March, 2018).

he passed away. The first of these phases allow for us to examine the contexts in which Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) lived prior to his ministry; the second phase presents us with an opportunity to study how he and his community functioned as a persecuted minority living in Mecca; and the third phase allows us to examine how he and his community functioned as a political entity that would eventually become dominant. It is in the final phase, which occupies that last decade of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) life, wherein he fought in numerous battles, led raids, and conducted major military and diplomatic operations. It is almost entirely in this last phase of his life that we can derive his military theory.

But just as it is impossible to separate his biographical character from divine revelation, it is impossible to separate the entirety of his life from the last phase in which military combat became a common theme. At the same time, we ought to consider how his experiences in the first two phases of his life laid the foundation for his view of just war later on. Surely his taking part in a pact for social justice in this era, known as the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* (League of the Virtuous), and securing fair dealings for all people, regardless of which tribe they came from, would have bearings on how he treated war with different tribes and what he hoped to achieve more broadly in society.[246] Ibn Hishām describes the nature of the pact, "They promised and pledged that they would not find any wronged person among their people, or anyone else who entered Mecca, but that they would support him. They would stand against whoever oppressed them until [the rights of] the oppressed were restored."[247] In another narration about the Ḥilf from the Aḥādīth, the Prophet

[246] Lings, 32.
[247] 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah*, ([al-Qāhirah]: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1955), 1:133-134.

(P.B.U.H.) said, "If I were called to it now in the time of Islām, I would respond."[248] The fact that he maintained the validity of that pact at the peak of his power speaks to the securing of justice as a primary goal of Islām, to the extent that he expressed he would take part in the pact again even if everyone else pledging with him were non-Muslim.[249] Though pockets of Christian and Jewish tribes lived among the Arabs, most of the people in Arabia at the time were pagans and had no interest or involvement beyond trading between themselves and the two warring empires (Byzantium and Sassanian) that neighbored them.[250] As such, the Ḥilf was a landmark step in this society towards the universal concept of justice that Islām would later cement.

Another pivotal incident in Muḥammad's life (P.B.U.H.) took place at the age of 35. He, along with others from the subtribes of Mecca, helped in the rebuilding of the Ka'bah to save it from flood damage. When the time came to place the final stone – the black stone – in place, each tribe took umbrage with the fact that another would be honored to carry out such a duty; the danger of bloody conflict was present once again. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was chosen to solve the problem due to his reputation for non-partisanship, as mentioned earlier, as well as his honesty that earned him the nickname *Al-Amīn* (the trustworthy). He devised a clever strategy to have the stone placed in a robe and carried by a representative from each tribe. This solution satisfied everyone and the threat of violence was neutralized.[251] Ultimately, his selection to arbitrate a heated tribal dispute underscores the noble status he had attained with the Quraysh, as well as his ability to mediate different

[248] Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī. *Al-Sunan al-Kubrá*. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2003), 6:596 #13080.
[249] Zakaria Bashier. *The Makkan Crucible*. (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1991), 52.
[250] Firas Alkhateeb. *Lost Islamic History*. (London: C Hurst & Co Pub, 2014), 6.
[251] Ṣallābī, 111-112.

parties for fair and practical solutions in order to avoid bloodshed; these traits would continue to be evident throughout his life.

His aversion to power or domination, despite its widespread popularity in candidates for chiefdom, granted him a unique ability to stand out as a potential leader in Arabia. The Qur'ān alludes to his humility and lack of political ambition, stating, "You yourself could not have expected the Scripture to be sent to you; it came only as a mercy from your Lord."[252] Ibn Hishām, citing Ibn Isḥāq, tells us that when Islām started to be perceived as a threat to the old pagan order, the Quraysh appealed to his uncle Abū Ṭālib for him to stop preaching. The Prophet's response (P.B.U.H.) was to say, "O uncle! By God, if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, on [condition] that I abandon this matter until Allāh makes it prevail or I die for it, I would never leave it."[253] In other words, no worldly acquisition, status, or reward would be enough for him to give up on spreading Islām; his mission was entirely religious, for the sake of his Creator. That is not to say the he was indifferent to matters of social justice and injustice. On the contrary, during this phase one of his stated reasons for long seclusions was his being troubled by the blatant immorality and inequality besieging his people.[254] This was at the height of his personal comfort before and after his declaration of Islām; he was wealthy, well-respected, and seemingly without any foe. His commitment to Islām was not out of a desire for wealth and power, then. It was truly sincere for God's sake, and his sincerity would later underpin the ethics with which he prosecuted wars and battles.

[252] Qur'an, al-Qaṣaṣ: 26; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 397.
[253] Ibn Hishām, 1:266.
[254] Mubārakfūrī, 85.

3.2.3 Jihād as Perseverance and Civil Disobedience

After receiving revelation at the age of 40, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) spent the next 13 years of his life trying to escape persecution, while not once preaching a violence as a response. Instead, he taught his followers to be patient and insistent in their faith; God would eventually sort the wicked from the righteous in the Hereafter. Believers only needed to practice and preach the message, not impose their theology by force. The following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed in Mecca and is one of several that exemplifies this approach:

> Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening, seeking His approval, and do not let your eyes turn away from them out of desire for the attractions of this worldly life: do not yield to those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our Qurʾan, those who follow their own low desires, those whose ways are unbridled. Say, 'Now the truth has come from your Lord: let those who wish to believe in it do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so.'[255]

The Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) made it clear in this phase that a spiritual foundation was necessary for any type of resistance injustice or desired social reformation. As Karen Armstrong notes:

> Muḥammad wanted every man, woman, and child in Mecca to develop within themselves the humble thankfulness that should characterize the human condition… Muḥammad was not content simply to work for social reform; he believed that without an interior transformation, a purely political program would be superficial.[256]

[255] Qur'an, al-Kahf: 28-29; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 298.
[256] Armstrong, 52.

It was not until the call to Islām became public that the Quraysh began to intensify their opposition, turning mere disapproval or ridicule into outright acts of humiliation and hatred that would become the modus operandi of a full-blown anti-Islām campaign, beginning as verbal abuse and eventually escalating into physical torture against Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers.[257]

Those who were largely protected from some of the harsher forms of abuse, such as those of higher status or who had powerful tribal protection, were encouraged to pray and recite the Qur'ān publicly as a sign of civil disobedience towards the obvious inequities in their society, as in this verse, "(Prophet), have you considered the person who denies the Judgement? It is he who pushes aside the orphan and does not urge others to feed the needy."[258] From this point onwards, the Qur'ān would be revealed for a period of over 23 years, responding to the various circumstances the Muslims faced, both in times of peace and war. What is interesting to note is that the first reference to jihād in the Qur'ān was revealed in Mecca in reference to civil disobedience. The verse reads, "So do not give in to the disbelievers: strive hard [*jāhid*] against them with this (Qurʾan)."[259] The believers were encouraged to do jihād literally by reciting the Qur'ān publicly and being beaten as a result of their convictions. Another verse reads, "We shall be sure to guide to Our ways those who strive hard [*jāhadū*] for Our cause: God is with those who do good."[260] (Al-Qur'ān, 29:69). According to the vast majority of scholars, this verse was revealed in the late Meccan period.[261] Similar verses that were revealed during this period of non-violent

[257] Al-Ghazzālī, 120.
[258] Qur'an, al-Mā'ūn: 1-3; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 603.
[259] Qur'an, al-Furqān: 52; Abdel Haleen, *The Qur'an*, 365.
[260] Qur'an, al-'Ankabūt: 69; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 405.
[261] Hunt Janin and André Kahlmeyer. *Islamic Law: The Sharia from Muhammad's Time to the Present*. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland &, 2007), 115.

activism, including statements in the Aḥādīth, is the reason classical Islāmic scholars like Al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Rushd, and Al-Tirmidhī wrote large tomes on the concept of jihād as a means towards spiritual self-development.[262] Put differently, the spiritual jihād was an essential concept before the term ever took on any military meaning.

A number of key observations can be noted from the period of persecution. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) clearly directed a policy of perseverance and non-violence as a response to the repeated provocations from the Quraysh. Abū Lahab, one of his paternal uncles and leaders of the Quraysh, was the first to hurl insults at him from the moment he started preaching from the mount of Safa near the Ka'bah, a place commonly used to address the people.[263] This paved the way for public mocking of the Muslims to become the norm, particularly when they were seen praying at the Ka'bah.[264]

Concerted effort was made by the Quraysh, who viewed the Muslims as being rebellious criminals for abandoning the pagan religion of their forefathers, to prevent anyone they could from listening to Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), both within and outside the city, as people from across the Arabian Peninsula would frequent Mecca for worship, pilgrimage, and trade. Walīd ibn al-Mughīrah, an elite Meccan and influential businessman, initiated a smear campaign against Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) in which he viciously slandered him so as to dissuade the public against the mesmerizing effects of the Qur'ānic recital.[265] Specific historical incidents illustrate the sort of intimidating propaganda Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) endured, such as accusations of him being a liar,

[262] Heon Choul Kim. *The Nature and Role of Sufism in Contemporary Islam: A Case Study of the Life, Thought and Teachings of Fethullah Gülen*. (Noor Publications, Philadelphia, 2010, 27.
[263] Al-Ghazzālī, 117.
[264] Ṣallābī, 327.
[265] Al-Ghazzālī, 125.

insane, and demonically possessed.[266] Even the Qur'ān makes mention of these slurs in numerous places, "The disbelievers almost strike you down with their looks when they hear the Qurʾan. They say, 'He must be mad!'" (Al-Qur'ān, 68:51)[267] and "The disbelievers think it strange that a prophet of their own people has come to warn them: they say, 'He is just a lying sorcerer.'"[268]

By the fourth year of prophethood, after all the schemes against him had failed, the Quraysh started lashing out by publicly by beating and torturing the weaker Muslims, those who were not protected by their powerful tribes or allies. The most vulnerable of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) followers were among the slaves of the wealthy Quraysh and their allies, such as Bilāl, the slave of Umayyah ibn Khalaf,[269] Khabbāb, the slave of Umm Anmar bint Saba' Al-Khuzā'īyah,[270] and the family of Yāsir, the freed slaves of the Makhẓūm tribe.[271] They were among the first victims to be dragged over hot desert sands, beaten, and even killed; Yāsir and his wife Sumayyah becoming the first martyrs of Islām.

Pained over the visible suffering of his followers and unable to protect them from harm, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) became grieved. Despite this, his strategy was a deliberate one with a long-term vision: to continue to invite people to Islām, choosing to appeal to their sense of morality and reason over the far more destructive use of brute force and passion. Even his noble companion and close confidant, Abū Bakr, who had used his wealth to free some of the early Muslim slaves in an effort to protect them from further torment, was not spared a beating that nearly took his life after he delivered a sermon in

[266] Ibid., 121.
[267] Qur'an, al-Qalam: 51; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 567.
[268] Qur'an, Ṣād: 4; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 454.
[269] Mubārakfūrī, 107.
[270] Ibid., 109.
[271] Al-Ghazzālī, 121.

public.[272] On another occasion, camel entrails were thrown on Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) back while he prostrated in prayer.[273]

When seen through the lens of tribal society, as it functioned at the time, any one of these incidents would have been a sufficient *casus belli*, yet the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his early followers showed unprecedented restraint, collective self-control, conviction in their religious mission, and perseverance in the face of adversity that can only be realized with the type of spiritual, moral, and just worldview at the basis of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) leadership. On the practical side, war would almost certainly have had a devastating effect on any chance of further establishing a fledgling community. Nevertheless, the Quraysh were not sure if they should have gone to war with the Muslims or not, given that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers were not from any single clan and several among them were the children of the most elite tribes; many of them had a great deal of political immunity as a result. As such, initiating an all-out war at this stage would have caused a massive conflict between each and every tribe – even between those with alliances as Sallabi notes:

> Since Islām was not universally accepted by all of the members of any given clan, Muslims did not have a source of protection, which would have come from tribal loyalty had all the members of a single clan embraced Islām. But on the other hand, had all of the Muslims been from a single clan, all of the other clans would have joined forces to attack that clan. As the matter stood,

[272] Ṣallābī, 388.
[273] Al-Ghazzālī, 123.

> Islām spread throughout all of the Quraish's clans, without any of the adverse effects that result from tribal loyalty.[274]

The universal ethic of Islām was beginning to form, which upended the usual tribal battle lines the Arabs had become accustomed to. With that in mind, it is indeed significant that the word jihād was not only absent from any sort of directive to violently resist the oppression of Quraysh, but it was actually used to describe the dignified restraint of the believers in the face of their provocations. The Quraysh wanted the Muslims to react in kind, which could have been used to argue that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) intended to divide families and cause chaos. Instead, with each sustained and principled non-violent response, the Muslims gained more and more sympathy.

Eventually, the Quraysh settled on imposing a boycott upon the Muslims, preventing them from selling or buying goods or marrying from within the community.[275] This boycott effectively blockaded Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers, along with the Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib clans.[276] Ostracized and in complete isolation, the Muslims were forced to survive for nearly three years with little to no resources – a shrewd strategy devised by the Quraysh to monopolize trade and pressure the Muslims to renounce their faith. This was nothing short of virtual warfare and oppression, which is analogous to the modern practice of socio-economic embargo.

Now in a state of famine, with limited assistance that came in the secrecy of the night from an empathetic relative of the Prophet's wife, Khadījah, conditions for the Muslims deteriorated rapidly. Even so, at no point did Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) change his

[274] Ṣallābī, 181.
[275] Aslan, 70.
[276] Mohiuddin, 147.

position or seek to revolt against the Quraysh. Eventually, the boycott was lifted after several individuals from Mecca had grown tired of witnessing the abysmal conditions that the Muslims were put under, and they formed a coalition to appeal to the other chiefs to lift the siege.[277]

It is noteworthy that the Muslims responding with a dignified jihād of perseverance led to sympathetic non-Muslims standing up to the leaders of Quraysh, which afforded the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) the political capital he would not have had on his own. It is also ironic that among the clan leaders who enforced the blockade on the Muslims were the same men who had come together with Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) in the past to sign the *Ḥilf al-Fuḍūl* pact that protected all those within Mecca from such injustice. Shortly after the boycott came to an end in the tenth year of prophethood, which came to be known as the 'Year of Grief,' Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) would suffer two major losses within a short span of one another; his wife of twenty-five years and primary source of personal support, Khadījaẖ, passed away, as did his uncle Abū Ṭālib, the leader of the Banū Hāshim clan, under whose protection he had been able to remain relatively safe in Mecca as dictated by tribal law.[278] Forced with having to consider a new strategy, given the intensity of the Meccan opposition, and the increased vulnerability he and his followers now found themselves facing, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) looked beyond Mecca hoping for support from the tribes in the surrounding region. As Lings notes:

> It was then that he decided to seek help from Thaqif, the people of Ta'if - a decision which eloquently reflected the apparent gravity of his situation in Mecca. For except that truth can conquer all things, what indeed could be

[277] Ali, 703.
[278] Aslan, 72.

> hoped for from Thaqif, the guardians of the temple of the goddess al-Lat, whose shrine they liked to think of as comparable to the House of God? There must however be exceptions in Ta'if as there were in Mecca, and the Prophet was not without hope as he rode up from the desert towards the welcoming orchards and gardens and cornfields which were the outskirts of the walled city.[279]

The Muslims viewed Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) unwavering belief and his professed obedience to God as exemplary in the face of oppression. [280] He was seemingly prepared to face every situation, submitting to God's command with complete reliance upon Him for fortitude, support, and success. Thus, the consistent message of the Qur'ān during these harsh conditions called for the believers to stay the course with patience, "Do you suppose that you will enter the Garden without first having suffered like those before you? They were afflicted by misfortune and hardship, and they were so shaken that even (their) messenger and the believers with him cried, 'When will God's help arrive?' Truly, God's help is near."[281]

With no one in Mecca to protect him now, Muṭ'im ibn 'Adi, a clan leader from the Quraysh who had been among the few men instrumental in bringing the boycott to an end, offered his protection to Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), escorting him into the city under heavily-armed guard to pray at the Ka'bah and return safely to his home. Though Muṭ'im never became Muslim, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) never forgot his favor, saying at the conclusion of the Battle of Badr during which a number of the Quraysh leaders were killed, "If Muṭ'im

[279] Lings, 98.
[280] Mubārakfūrī, 162.
[281] Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 214; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 34.

bin ‘Adi were living and had asked me for the release of these rotten people, then I would have given them to him.”[282] This incident and the subsequent respect shown to Muṭ’im years later once again indicates the importance Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) placed on uniting people for the purpose of justice and the common good, regardless of whether one had accepted Islām or not.

Skeptics may acknowledge these aspects of Muḥammad’s ministry (P.B.U.H.), but will subsequently argue that his policy of mutual aid and peaceful coexistence was only limited to the Meccan period because the Muslims were in an inferior position and needed to survive; it was merely a tactic and not commitment to principles, they say. In reality, it is well-documented that this approach was established throughout all of Muḥammad’s (P.B.U.H.) life in the form of peace treaties and alliances with neighboring Jewish and Arab tribes, eventually including even the Quraysh through treaty of Al-Ḥudaybiyah. This latter period gives us the context in which Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was compelled to seek alternative measures to spread his message and to secure support and physical protection from neighboring tribes.

As the Muslims faced intense persecution in Mecca at the hands of the Quraysh leadership, they also kept a close watch on neighboring conflicts with particular interest in the Romans and the Persians, the Muslims and the Meccan pagans chose opposing sides. The Muslims felt a naturally closer affinity to the Christians, since there were similarities between them and their beliefs as Abrahamic monotheists. On the other hand, the Arab pagans more closely identified with the Zoroastrian Persians for similar reasons.[283] It was at this time that Sūrat al-Rūm, or the chapter of the Romans, was revealed. This sūrah

[282] Mubārakfūrī, 167.
[283] Aslan, 90.

predicted a victory for the Romans and promised to the believers that both Muslims and Christians would rejoice at this victory.[284] Such a prediction was significant considering at this time the Romans were suffering defeat after defeat at the hands of the Persians. As Ali Shariati notes, the chapter signaled a divine shift of the world order, in that "the tyrannical powers ought to know that their might is dwindling, and the weak that their weakness is turning into strength."[285] This promise was given to the Muslims at the time "when the contemporary intellectuals ridiculed Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) for his lack of proper knowledge of the real superpowers of the world."[286] The message of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) to his people was to be patient and not resort to violence, for God would give the Muslims victory in due time, just like He had given it to the Romans.

3.2.4 Jihād and Hijrah, or Migration

The fifth year of prophethood marked a notable turn of events with the Muslims taking part in their first *hijrah*, or migration, to Abyssinia to escape persecution, followed by the conversion of two of the most prominent men among the Meccans, Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 624), Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) paternal uncle and a formidable warrior from the nobility of the Quraysh,[287] and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644), a young and commanding adversary respected among the clan leaders, who initially set out determined to murder Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) "armed with his sword," but in a shocking turn of events embraced Islām on-the-spot instead.[288] 'Umar, despite his initial hostility to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.),

[284] Ibid., 92.
[285] Dabashi, 126.
[286] Ibid.,128.
[287] Khālid, 69.
[288] Ibn Hishām, 1:343.

eventually became highly-respected for his commitment to Islām, in particular for his emigration to Medina, eventually taking office as the second *khalīfah*, or successor, of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). The Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) "winning the hearts," so to speak, demonstrated his clemency towards enemies and willingness to not only forgive them, but to even embrace his former persecutors as friends. This *modus operandi* was stated explicitly in the Qur'ān, "Good and evil cannot be equal. [Prophet], repel evil with what is better and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend."[289]

Prominent in Aḥādīth literature is the association of jihād and hijrah. In fact, even the Qur'ān makes the connection between sacrificing one's home in migration and sacrificing one's life, "If We had ordered, 'Lay down your lives' or 'Leave your homes,' they would not have done so, except for a few—it would have been far better for them and stronger confirmation of their faith, if they had done as they were told."[290] The Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) companion Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah narrates the following exchange, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, they are saying that no one will enter Paradise but a *muhājir* (emigrant).' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'There is no more hijrah after the opening of Mecca, rather only jihād and [good] intentions. If you are called to go forth, then go forth."[291] In another report on this topic, 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr al-Laythī asked 'Ā'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), about hijrah and she said, "Today there is no hijrah. One of the believers used to flee with his religion to Allāh the Exalted and to the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, fearing that he would be persecuted for it. As for today, Allāh has made Islām prevail and today one worships his Lord wherever

[289] Qur'an, Fuṣṣilat: 34; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 481.
[290] Qur'an, al-Nisā': 66; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 90.
[291] Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, (Ḥalab: Maktab al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmīyah, 1986), 7:145 #4169.

he wishes. Rather, there is only jihād and [good] intentions."[292] Hijrah was essentially to run away from persecution so that one could worship Allāh freely, certainly a jihād or struggle in terms of the effort and danger involved. It also shows that non-violent options, such as escaping danger, are preferable in order to secure one's right to practice Islām. After Mecca, Medina and its surroundings became safe for Muslims, it was no longer required of Muslims, unless they encountered similar persecution to what prompted the original emigrations.

It is important to consider how the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) treated those who performed emigration for the sake of Islām. The people who took part in the two migrations were considered the best of the companions, even one tradition suggesting that they had more right to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) than some of the more famous and illustrious Muslims. In this incident, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb got into an argument with Asmā' bint 'Umays, who was one of the original emigrants to Abyssinia. 'Umar argued that they had more of a right to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) than her on account of their emigration to Medina. Asmā' was upset by this claim, so she took it to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), who said to her, "He does not have more of a right to me than you. He and his companions have one emigration, but you and the people of the boat have two emigrations."[293] Imām Muslim narrated this tradition under his chapter heading on the virtues of the "people of the ship," meaning those who sailed to Abyssinia.

Although these significant incidents are documented in the Sīrah and Aḥādīth, they are often given cursory mention in modern writings on jihād, leaving readers with the

[292] Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Bayrūt: Dār Ṭawq al-Najjāh, 2002), 5:57 #3900.
[293] Ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* ([Bayrūt]: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1955), 4:1946 #2503.

mistaken impression that they are not important to rules of warfare developed later. Careful examination of each formative event yields valuable insight into the mindset of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and further strengthens the fact that his approach was one of non-violent resolution as the first and general rule, even in the face of visible hostility. The persecution of the Muslims at this point had worsened considerably to a level that became intolerable, denying them the freedom to practice their faith in safety, whether in public or in private.[294] The Meccan opposition had united the clans against Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions to the exclusion of the Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib, which still supported the Muslims out of tribal allegiance toward Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). As a consequence, Muslims from other tribes were left without the support. Muḥammad Mohar Ali theorizes that this lack of support was the reason which drove these "tribeless" families to Abyssinia.[295]

After having received verses alluding to a move away from Mecca as a means to protect the lives and freedom of vulnerable Muslims, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) selected Christian Abyssinia as the site of the first emigration, ruled by the Negus, Ashamah, who was known to be benevolent and just.[296] These Christians were natural allies, being fellow Abrahamic monotheists. The Quraysh sent men to pursue the emigrants, resulting in them being questioned before the Negus about their new religion. Perhaps this 'Islām' was hostile to Christianity? Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855) records the exchange:

> The Negus said to them, 'Do you have anything with you from Allāh?'
>
> Ja'far said yes. The Negus said, 'Then recite it to us.' Ja'far recited from

[294] Lings, 80.
[295] Ali, 667.
[296] Mohiuddin, 119.

> memory the verses of Sūrat Maryam. The Negus, along with the bishops in his realm, were moved to tears by what was recited to them, to the point their beards became soaked. The Negus said, 'Indeed, this [scripture] and what has come from Moses have emerged from a single light. You are released. By Allāh, I will never hand them over to the Quraysh.'[297]

There is some discussion among scholars and historians about whether one or two migrations took place, and as to what was the actual objective that motivated these individuals in particular to leave Mecca. Adil Salahi, a contemporary biographer of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), suggests that this was a "shrewd strategic move on the part of the Prophet," in that most of the emigrants were from the upper echelon of the Meccan families; any confrontation on the part of the Quraysh would have had to cross tribal lines. Not only was such a confrontation not feasible, but it also demonstrated the strength, unity, and momentum the Islāmic movement had gained in the face of opposition.[298] Montgomery Watt puts forth a number of possible impetuses, from the obvious need to escape persecution to the possibility of expanding trade, citing the fact that some of the Muslims remained in Abyssinia even after the establishment of Medina as the center of the first Islāmic polity. Watt even asserts the possibility that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) wanted to build a military base in Abyssinia.[299] However, the events leading up to and after the migration of the Muslims to Medina suggest otherwise. The migration was a non-violent response to conflict and based upon the general permissibility of conducting business,

[297] Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2001), 3:267 #1740.
[298] Mohiuddin, 119-120.
[299] Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 67-69.

peace treaties, and otherwise coexisting with non-Muslim nations and tribes who are not hostile or threatening to the Muslim community.

Following the migration, the impact of Ḥamzah and ‘Umar joining the Muslims was a significant milestone in terms of the strength and support it brought: Ḥamzah was unable, of course, to prevent all the harm suffered by vulnerable Muslims on his own, but his conversion was a shield that protected Muslims for some time, and it was an indication that the peaceful spread of Islām was moving forward. It gave a number of Meccans that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was not an insane preacher, but rather his religion should be taken seriously. This effect was multiplied by the conversion of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb’s conversion, after which a surge of individuals embraced the new religion.[300] Had there been a time to fight against the Quraysh, this would have been it, yet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) chose to maintain his stance of non-violence and tolerance.

3.2.5 Jihād as Protecting the Vulnerable

The people of Yathrib, later names as Medina, were a farming community more than two hundred miles North of Mecca. It was home to the ‘Aws and Khazraj Arab tribes as well as several prominent Jewish tribes. They would secretly meet with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) during the pilgrimage season in Mecca. It is important to note that Yathrib was experiencing the war-torn aftermath of the Bu’ath wars, the unfortunate result of fluctuating alliances, breaches and fighting among the tribes. As Karen Armstrong points out:

[300] Khālid, 71.

> There were about twenty Jewish tribes in Yathrib, many whose members may have been Arabs who had assimilated to Judaism. They preserved a separate religious identity, but otherwise were almost indistinguishable from their pagan neighbors. Clan and tribal loyalty came first, and there were no united 'Jewish community.' The Jewish tribes formed separate allegiances with Arab groups and were often at war with one another.[301]

It was during the eleventh year of prophethood that a group of six Khazraj tribesmen met with Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and readily accepted his invitation to Islām, having believed him to be the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) their Jewish neighbors had been claiming was foretold in their scripture. The group informed him of their situation. "We have left our people at home. There are no people among whom mutual jealousy, enmity, and evil are rifer. Perhaps God will effect unity among them through you. We shall approach them and invite them to what you have asked of us and we shall explain to them what we have responded to of this religion... So if God should unite them on this basis then there shall be no person more powerful than you."[302] During the following year's pilgrimage, twelve men from Yathrib met with the Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.); this time all of them taking a pledge according to which they willingly committed themselves to faith in God, loyalty to His Prophet, and adherence to the essential aspects of the moral code of Islām. In the words of one of them:

> We pledged our allegiance to the Messenger of God on the night of the First 'Aqabah, that we would associate nothing with God, that we would neither steal, not commit fornication, nor slay our offspring' nor utter slanders; and

[301] Armstrong, 125.
[302] Mohiuddin, 169.

> that we would not disobey him in that which was right. And he said to us: 'If ye fulfil this pledge, then Paradise is yours; and if ye commit one of these sins and then receive punishment for it in this world, that shall serve as expiation. And if ye conceal it until the Day of the Resurrection, then it is for God to punish or forgive, even as He will.[303]

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) accepted their allegiance and sent them back to Yathrib with Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr as their guide and ambassador, with the imperative of inviting the community at large to Islām. This was an important development considering what was about to occur over the coming year. Islām was offering Yathrib the profound social and moral change it desperately needed at a time of hatred and bloodshed, compounded by a void in authoritative unifying governance. As a result, the hopeful message of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) would be welcomed by its people with eagerness.[304]

Later, a second pledge was taken from the rest of the community. The terms were clear: obedience to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), to spend in charity in times of abundance as well as in scarcity, to enjoin good and forbid evil, not to fear the censure of others in service to God, to aid the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and to protect him from anything from which one protects himself, his spouses and children – all in return for the promise of eternal Paradise. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) also expressed his loyalty to them, alleviating their future concerns that he might abandon them for the opportunity to return home to Mecca, saying, "Nay it would never be; your blood will be my blood. In life and death, I will be with you and you with me. I will fight whom you fight and I will make peace with whom you make peace."[305]

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[303] Ibid.
[304] Payne, 26.
[305] Mubārakfūrī, 189-190.

This was the nature of the relationship between Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and the new Muslims of Yathrib, who would be known as the Anṣār for their sacrifice and service to their Prophet. This also had deep political and military implications as Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) swore loyalty to them in war. The Quraysh would eventually come to know of the pact, setting in motion a plot to assassinate Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). It was an attempt to bring a decisive end to his mission, fearing the momentum it was gaining and the potential threat they perceived from his new allies in Yathrib.[306] The Qur'ān refers to this incident in the verse, "Remember [Prophet] when the disbelievers plotted to take you captive, kill, or expel you. They schemed and so did God: He is the best of schemers."[307]

Despite having access to and studied the classical source material, earlier Orientalists often chose to reinterpret these historical events and casually dismiss the fact that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions were constantly under threat.[308] A look back at the thirteen years of his prophethood and the evolution of his mission in Mecca overwhelmingly quells any theories brought forward by those historians, who suggest the opposition and persecution of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers was far less severe than the numerous reports stating the contrary. Still, however, some suppose that he planned the migration to Medina with deliberation as a political move toward statehood and to form a military base from which to launch an attack on the Quraysh.[309] However, the mainstream narrative adopted in academia is that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) actively solicited followers from other tribes to grant him protection from his persecutors. The

[306] Ibid., 192.
[307] Qur'an, al-Anfāl: 30; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 181.
[308] Lassner and Bonner, 44-46.
[309] M. A. Khan, *Islamic Jihād: A Legacy of Forced Conversion, Imperialism, and Slavery*, (New York: IUniverse, 2009), 14-15.

people of Yathrib responded and secretly met the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) during the season of pilgrimage in Mecca. It was during this meeting that they took a pledge with him and suggested that they attack the unsuspecting Meccans at night, but Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) refused and said, "We were not ordered to behave in such a way."[310] On another occasion, the Prophet refused (P.B.U.H.) to even curse his persecutors or pray for their destruction. The companions once said to him, "O Messenger of Allāh, offer a supplication against the idolaters." The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) responded, "Verily, I was not sent to bring curses. I was only sent as mercy."[311]

Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) refusal to take up arms against the ruling class in Mecca frustrated even some of his staunchest followers. Khabbāb ibn al-Arat, who was amongst those most severely tortured for accepting Islām, shares his account:

> We complained to the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, while he was leaning upon his rolled up cloak in the shade of the Ka'bah. We said, 'Will you ask Allāh to help us? Will you supplicate to Allāh for us?' The Prophet said, 'Among those before you, a believer would be seized, a ditch would be dug for him, and he would be thrown into it. Then, they would bring a saw that would be put on top of his head to split him into two halves, and his flesh would be torn from the bone with iron combs. Yet, all of this did not cause him to abandon his religion. By Allāh, this religion will prevail until a rider travels from Yemen to Hadhramaut,

[310] Ibn Ḥanbal, 25:94 #15798.
[311] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1955)*, 4:2006 #2599.

fearing no one but Allāh and the wolf, lest it trouble his sheep. Rather, you are being impatient.'[312]

It is revealing that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) never guaranteed any material incentive for supporting him; he promised them only the rewards of the afterlife. The Qur'ān commanded him to declare specifically that he had no such worldly wealth to promise anyone, "Say, 'I do not have the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.'"[313] This even became one of the talking points among his enemies, as they could hardly conceive of a messenger from God who was not powerful and fabulously wealthy, "They also say, 'What sort of messenger is this? He eats food and walks about in the marketplaces! Why has no angel been sent down to help him with his warnings? Why has he not been given treasure or a garden to supply his food?'"[314] Nevertheless, the loyalty that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) garnered from the few followers he had proved effective on the battlefield, as they became well-known for their disciplined performance in battle.[315] It was with this meaning that the often misquoted ḥadīth states, "I have been supported against the enemy with dread,"[316] for which the word 'dread' (*al-ru'b*) is translated as "terror" in an effort to link his statements to modern-day terrorists. On the contrary, the meaning is that his enemies feared not the brutality of the Muslims, but rather their effectiveness in combat and perhaps the notion that God was lending them divine support.

[312] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 9:20 #2943.
[313] Qur'an, al-An'ām: 50; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 134.
[314] Qur'an, al-Furqān: 7-8; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 361.
[315] Zeitlin, 317.
[316] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1995)*, 1:372 #523.

Yet another valuable perspective is that the people of Medina were approaching Jihād and military struggle from a new vantage point. They were no longer a persecuted minority in a hostile city, like the Muslims in Mecca, but instead they were going to fight in defense of the oppressed. As Paradise was guaranteed to them for every sacrifice they made in regards to their wealth, property, and status, they volunteered for the opportunity to defend vulnerable Muslims 'with the sword,' so to speak. They were not required to fight alongside the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) if the people of Mecca pursued him in Medina, as his enemies would do during the battle of Badr, yet his closest companions willingly stood by him despite no obligation to do so.

3.2.6 Jihād and the City-State

Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) life changed dramatically at the age of 53 when he fled to Medina to become its new governor. As such, he had to adjust his message to the new environment accordingly. As John Esposito notes:

> This migration (*hijra*) marked a turning point in Muḥammad's fortunes and a new stage in the history of the Islāmic movement. Islām took on political form with the establishment of an Islāmic community-state at Medina. The importance of the hijra is reflected in its adoption as the beginning of the Islāmic calendar… At Medina, Muḥammad had the opportunity to implement God's governance and message, for he was now the prophet-head of a religio-political community. He did this by establishing his leadership in Medina, subduing Mecca, and consolidating Muslim rule over the remainder of Arabia through diplomatic and military means.

> Muḥammad had come to Medina as the arbiter or judge for the entire community, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.[317]

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) knew that some people felt apprehensive about him coming to Medina and wanted to secure their alliances right away. He was also fully aware of the fact that the city was still recovering from the Bu'ath conflicts, in which most people had lost loved ones. Amidst the post-war weariness, substantial support from both the 'Aws and Khazraj tribes had arisen to appoint 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl (d. 631) as king.[318] However, Ibn Salūl was quickly forgotten upon the arrival of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Having lost his prospect for power, Ibn Salūl would eventually conspire with the pagan Meccan and neighboring Jewish tribes to take down the new Muslim polity.[319] It seems that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) anticipated the plans of his enemies and preempted their likely attacks with a call for peace. According to 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām (d. 663), who was a Jewish Rabbi in Medina and an eventual convert to Islām, the said in his first speech after arriving in Medina, "O people, spread peace, feed the hungry, and pray at night when people are sleeping and you will enter Paradise in peace."[320] He had come fleeing persecution, seeking religious freedom and desiring reconciliation, not vengeance against those who had cause him and the Muslims so much suffering up to this point.

Yet, for his own protection and that of his followers, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) immediately began speaking to the various tribes around the city to form pacts known as

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[317] Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 8-9.
[318] Muhammad Hamidullah, *The First Written Constitution in the World: An Important Document of the Time of the Holy Prophet*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1975), 7.
[319] Mubārakfūrī, 239.
[320] Muḥammad ibn 'Īsá al-Tirmidhī. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmī, 1998), 4:233 #2485.

mu'ākhāt, or 'brotherings.'[321] The ultimate manifestation of these pacts came about during his first year in Medina, in which he formed 'The Medina Charter.' According to some historians, this was the first constitution in history, long before it came to rise in the European Englightenmen-era.[322] As stated by Azizah al-Hibri:

> The Charter represents an early seventh century example of "federalism." At that time, the Prophet concluded agreements with various Muslim and non-Muslim tribes of the city as a way of forging a new "federal" community which would no longer be plagued by divisive tribal warfare. The Charter of Medina, which reflected the product of these agreements, declared all Muslim and Jewish tribes of Medina (apparently, there were no Christians) to be one community. At the same time, each tribe retained its identity, customs and internal relations. The "federal" system of Medina was responsible, however, for such matters as common defense and peacemaking, purposes similar to those in the Preamble to the American Constitution, which refers to insuring "domestic Tranquility, [and] provid[ing] for the common defence. The Charter also contained its own partial bill of rights, which was supplemented by the Qur'ān and sunnah. Among the rights that it protected were the right to freedom of religion, and the right not to be found guilty because of the deeds of an ally, a form of

[321] Edward Vickers and Krishna Kumar, *Constructing Modern Asian Citizenship*, (Livingston Publishers, NY, 2010), 12.
[322] Denny, 44.

guilt by association which was widely practiced at the time. For this reason, due process protections are important in Islāmic criminal justice.[323]

This constitution established many rulings regarding how different tribes and people of faith should deal with one another. Of greatest relevance is that the emigrant tribes known as Muhājirūn, and the Anṣār tribes who were originally residents of Medina, would each unite among themselves to form a brotherhood between all Muslims; those who spread enmity would be brought to justice regardless of tribal bonds.[324] This community was further extended to include protections for the neighboring Jewish tribes. All tribes, and thus all political units in the city, whether Muslim or not, were obligated to defend Medina against enemy attacks and to seek lawful retribution for offenses and settlements though the arbitration of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), who as noted before was known for his impartiality.[325]

Likewise, the Constitution of Medina sanctions retribution as the principal deterrent for crime, but with the unprecedented stipulation that the entire community must only punish the criminal and no one else – a stark reversal of tribal tradition and a clear indication that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was already beginning to lay the foundations of a moral society based on universal humanitarian principles.[326] The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) declared, "Do not return to unbelief after me by striking the necks of each other. No man is to be punished for the crimes of his father or his brother."[327] Not only was collective punishment no longer legally valid, but such bloodshed in the pre-Islāmic period was the

[323] Azizah Y. al-Hibri, "Islamic and American Constitutional Law: Borrowing Possibilities or a History of Borrowing?" *University of Pensylvania Law School*, vol. 1, i. 3 (1999): 511-512. <https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/jcl/vol1/iss3/2/> (accessed 15 October, 2019).
[324] Mubārakfūrī,, 230.
[325] Mohiuddin, 184.
[326] Aslan, 83.
[327] Al-Nasā'ī, 7:127 #4127.

epitome of *kufr*, or unbelief, a rejection of God and His prophets. His policies in this time period were undoubtedly summarized in his saying, "Show mercy to people on earth so that Allāh will have mercy on you in heaven."[328] The value of mercy would eventually be codified as one of the maqāṣid, or objectives, of classical Islāmic law.

With regards to military doctrine, the constitution established two important concepts. First, Muslims and non-Muslims would fight together against any common enemy and share the costs and burdens of war. Second, non-Muslims were not obliged to take part in the religious wars of the Muslims.[329] This was the beginning of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) career as a military commander and as a statesman in general. Ostensibly, the Jewish tribes accepted the charter, considering its benefit as a means of averting civil war in the aftermath of inter-tribal hostilities in Medina.[330] As another dimension of Jihād, this introduced the concept of the defense of the nation as a noble jihād, including its non-Muslim citizens if they were unjustly targeted. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims with respect to the imperative to protect them from hostile forces. This is most evident in his saying, "Whoever wrongs a person protected by a covenant (*mu'āhid*),[331] violates his rights, burdens him with more work than he is able to do, or takes something from him without his consent, I will be his prosecutor on the Day of Resurrection."[332] Defending the non-Muslim citizens and allies from aggression was only one of many duties; Muslim were not allowed to harm them in their lives, property, and reputations as well, as if they were Muslims. This rule persisted in its application

[328] Mubārakfūrī, 233.
[329] Denny, 58.
[330] Lings, 127.
[331] A *mu'āhid*, unlike a *dhimmī*, is a non-Muslim in a peace or non-aggression treaty with Muslims and who is not under the direct executive authority of Muslim leadership.
[332] Abū Dāwūd, 3:170 #3052.

through Islāmic history to include non-Muslim citizens, those in a non-aggression pact, or those who received diplomatic immunity, as stated by Egyptian scholar of Islāmic jurisprudence, Sulaymān ibn 'Umar al-Jamal (d. 1790), "The non-Muslim citizen (*dhimmī*), the non-Muslim in a non-aggression pact (*mu'āhid*), and the non-Muslim granted immunity (*musta'min*) are [legally] similar to the Muslim."[333]

3.2.7 Jihād and the Military Raids

In the wake of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) escape from Mecca and the establishment of his city-state in Medina, the Meccans adopted a two-fold strategy; they kept a close eye and firm hand on the Muslims left behind in Mecca, and they issued an ultimatum to 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl "ordering him to fight or expel the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), otherwise they would launch a widespread military campaign that would kill his people and arrest his women."[334] Specifically, the Quraysh wrote a secret menacing letter to him, saying, "We swear by Allāh that you must fight [Muḥammad] or exile him, or else we will march upon you in full force. We will kill your fighting men and violate your women."[335] Ibn Ubayy obviously took their threat seriously. While professing his compliance to the authority of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), he would covertly conspire with both the Quraysh and the Jewish tribes of Medina to undermine the new social order. For this reason, he became known as the "leader of the hypocrites." It is against this backdrop of rising tensions and the threat of a looming invasion that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would begin dispatching groups of the Muhājirūn to intercept the Meccan trade caravans in a series of raids, caravans that not

[333] Sulaymān ibn 'Umar al-Jamal, *Ḥāshiyat al-Jamal 'alá Sharḥ al-Manhaj*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1990), 3:90.
[334] Mubārakfūrī, 239.
[335] Abū Dāwūd, 3:156 #3004.

only contained the confiscated property of Muslims in Mecca but also would fund any war effort against Medina.

The evidence suggests that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was initially hesitant to respond to the Meccans militarily. After it was clear fighting became necessary for self-defense, and Allāh had revealed verses permitting and commanding it, the Qur'ān also mentions that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions did not desire violence, "Fighting is ordained for you, though you dislike it. You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: God knows and you do not.'"[336] In other words, fighting back against the Quraysh was now the lesser of two evils, so to speak. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said something similar to his troops that speaks to his understanding of war as a last resort, "O people! Do not wish to meet the enemy [in battle] and ask Allāh for safety, but if you meet them, then be patient and know that Paradise is under the shade of swords."[337] The verse 2:216 was revealed early in Medina during a time when the Muslims would need to defend themselves against the Meccans in the famous Battle of Badr. However, very few books deal with the minor military skirmishes leading up to Badr and their relevance to the broader doctrine of jihād. Prior to this, the Muhājirūn had their homes and property seized in Mecca and were left with little to no financial assets. As a response, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) ordered the Muslims to disrupt the trade routes of the Meccans. The goal was not only to rectify the theft suffered by his followers, but also to deter the Meccan's from further criminal and oppressive behavior.[338]

[336] Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 216; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 35.
[337] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:63 #3024.
[338] Mubārakfūrī, 126.

Historians have attempted to infer the motives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in initiating these raids. Among them, Richard Gabriel points to the fact that the Muslims were primarily urban or agricultural people and therefore ill-equipped to take such a risk against the Bedouin armed guards who routinely accompanied the Meccan caravans, in addition to the unthinkable possibility of having to fight one's own kinsmen. In pointing to what must then be an underlying long term strategy on the part of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), he erroneously concludes that the motive was simply seeking revenge and "searing hatred for his tormenters," seemingly rooted in his belief that God was now condoning him to spread his message through violence.[339] As we have seen, this interpretation does not comport with the ethics taught by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) throughout the Meccan period and after arriving in Medina. Gabriel does, however, correctly point out, "It was also likely that these first raids served to train Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) men in how to conduct operations in the desert environment and to gain familiarity with the terrain over which the raiders were required to maneuver… Beyond the need to get to know the desert, there was the issue of military expertise."[340] Certainly, gaining military experience for his troops was likely a secondary consideration in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) long-term strategy, though it is far-fetched to claim raw malice was the impetus of such dangerous operations.

In effect, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was also conducting reconnaissance and training missions in preparation for the Muslims to defend themselves from large-scale military attacks. Karen Armstrong explains the raids as follows:

[339] Richard A. Gabriel, *Muhammad: Islam's First Great General*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 72-74.
[340] Ibid., 79.

> Their aim was not to shed blood, but to secure an income by capturing camels, merchandise, and prisoners, who could be held for ransom. Nobody would have been particularly shocked by this development. The ghazu [raid] was a normal expedient in times of hardship…He was living in a chronically violent society and he saw these raids not simply as a means of bringing in much-needed income, but as a way of resolving his quarrel with the Quraysh.[341]

The Meccans used to go on trade journeys to Yemen in the winter and Syria in the summer. Now, they were actively selling off the confiscated possessions of the Muslims who fled, which would give them more funds to buy weapons, recruit soldiers, and so on. After Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) had attacked eight caravans in response to this provocation, the Meccans started to become concerned with the viability of their trade routes.[342] The idea was to show strength and warn the Meccans from pursuing the Muslims in Medina. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) led some of the raids himself, two of which resulted in him securing alliances with the Ḍamrah and Mudlij tribes, mutually pledging to the security of their lives and wealth.[343]

Of particular importance was the raid that took place in the month of Rajab of the second year after hijrah, one of the four sacred months recognized by the Arabs during which the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) dispatched a small group of men under the leadership of 'Abd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh.[344] On the last day of Rajab, one man among the Quraysh was killed and two were captured and brought back to Medina as prisoners, along with the caravan of

[341] Mohiuddin, 193.
[342] Mubārakfūrī, 127.
[343] Ibid., 244-245.
[344] Mohiuddin, 194.

goods. However, when Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) learned of the results of the raid, he refused to take any of the spoils and informed the caravan traders that he was not instructed by God to fight during the sacred months. Even so, the Quraysh still took this as an opportunity to spread propaganda against him, claiming that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had violated the customary prohibition to fight during the sacred months.[345] It was on this occasion that the following verse was revealed that upheld the sanctity of the sacred months, but clearly absolving the Muslims of any wrongdoing in light of the unrelenting existential threat posed by the Quraysh:

> They ask you (Prophet) about fighting in the prohibited month. Say, 'Fighting in that month is a great offence, but to bar others from God's path, to disbelieve in Him, prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and expel its people, are still greater offences in God's eyes: persecution is worse than killing.' They will not stop fighting you (believers) until they make you revoke your faith, if they can.[346]

It was at this juncture that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) first uttered the words, "War is deception," as narrated by his companion Abū Hurayrah (d. 681) and others.[347] This tradition is often cited out of context to impinge Islām as a dishonest religion. However, deception in warfare (in actual combat, not in treaties, promises, or diplomacy) is universally accepted as a legitimate tactic. The famous Chinese general Sun Tzu said about it, "All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when we are able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must appear inactive; when we are near, we must make

[345] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *The Life of Muḥammad*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2008), 226.
[346] Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 217; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 35.
[347] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:64 #3029.

the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near."[348] Indeed, another narration of this tradition, on the authority of Ka'b ibn Mālik, adds the context that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was specifically speaking about military tactics, "When the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, intended to set out on a military expedition, he would pretend to go somewhere else. The Prophet would say, 'War is deception.'"[349] At the same time, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) strongly warned Muslims about betraying the enemy with false promises of safety and so on, saying, "When Allāh gathers together the earlier and later generations on the Day of Resurrection, he will raise a banner for every treacherous person. It will be announced that this is the treachery of so-and-so, the son of so-and-so."[350] Therefore, winning the war was never to be at the expense of core values of honesty.

Beyond the legitimacy of these military raids and their defensive nature, however, was that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had legislated the protection of one's life, family, and property as a type of jihād resulting in martyrdom. Sa'īd ibn Zayd recalls that he heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) say, "Whoever is killed protecting his property is a martyr. Whoever is killed protecting his religion is a martyr. Whoever is killed protecting his life is a martyr. Whoever is killed protecting his family is a martyr."[351] This understanding was the basis for the right of the companions to fight for their stolen property, and the reward for doing so being within the axis of jihād. It could also have been that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) considered that forgoing their rights would embolden oppression and have adverse

[348] Sun-Tzu, 18.
[349] Abū Dāwūd, 3:43 #2637.
[350] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1955)*, 3:1359 #1735.
[351] Al-Tirmidhī, 3:82 #1421.

consequences for others in a similar situation thereby reducing the potential of a just society.

3.2.8 Jihād as Self Defense

The first major and decisive battle engaged by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his followers was the Battle of Badr, 110 km southwest of Medina. The Muslims had little more than three hundred soldiers against an army of a thousand pagans. The Quraysh sought nothing more than to wipe out the Muslims entirely, but they underestimated Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) forces. It was nothing less than a miracle that the Muslims were victorious that day. This battle was the culmination of over a decade of religious persecution, torture and killing of vulnerable Muslims, a long and punishing boycott, and two major instances of exile or hijrah; it was undoubtedly a defensive battle in every respect. However, some historians, such as Robert Payne, have misrepresented Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) motives for going to war, even suggesting that the Quraysh were merely defending themselves, "After this first obscure engagement Muḥammad searched for an opportunity to make war on the Quraysh… When Abū Sufyān realized that Muḥammad was bent on conquest, and that the army was in danger, he sent a hurried dispatch to Meccan forces, urging them to return to Mecca."[352]

On the contrary, an objective historical analysis of the events leading up to the confrontation at Badr provides a much different picture, one in which the Muslims were forced to defend themselves yet again in the face of an existential threat to their lives, community, and religion. This is generally how Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) military policy

[352] Payne, 34-35.

would be defined for ages to come, as a means to establish justice and peace for all of humankind while safeguarding the practice of Islām from numerous actors determined to exterminate it. The Qur'ān reiterates this policy throughout, even responding to the aftermath of the Battle of Badr with the verses granting "permission" to fight in response to this "wrongdoing" (*ẓulm*).[353] These verses made it abundantly clear that God would provide a way out for those subjected to injustice by allowing the Muslims to take up arms in resistance, a monumental shift from the restraint and perseverance they had been commanded to uphold for thirteen years in Mecca prior. Karen Armstrong describes the situation, "In the steppes, aggressive warfare was praiseworthy; but in the Qur'ān, self-defense was the only possible justification for hostilities and the preemptive strike was condemned. War was always a terrible evil, but was sometimes necessary in order to preserve decent values, such as freedom of worship."[354] John Esposito adds to that:

> Permission to fight the enemy is balanced by a strong mandate for making peace: "If your enemy inclines toward peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God" (8:61) and "Had Allāh wished, He would have made them dominate you, and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh allows you no way against them" (4:90). From the earliest times, it was forbidden in Islām to kill noncombatants as well as women and children and monks and rabbis, who were given the promise of immunity unless they took part in the fighting.[355]

[353] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 39; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 345.
[354] Armstrong, 116.
[355] John L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120-121.

Of the accomplishments of the early raids was that "the Quraysh recognized that its trade route to Syria was no longer secure" and this served as a restraint on any rash provocation against the Muslims in Medina.[356] The previous raid under the leadership of 'Abd Allāh ibn Jaḥsh would mark a defining moment for the Muslims in regard to the Quraysh, opening the door for both parties to engage militarily.[357] In Ramadan of the second year after hijrah, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) sent two scouts to monitor the movements of a caravan belonging to the Quraysh on its return from Syria to Mecca, a caravan which was led by Abū Sufyān. With the intent to intercept the caravan, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) proceeded toward Badr with a small army consisting of a little over 300 men, 70 camels and three horses.[358] Having caught wind of the Muslims approaching, Abū Sufyān immediately dispatched a camel rider to Mecca in a plea for help.[359]

Word was sent once again to Mecca, this time informing the army to return home, as Abū Sufyān had successfully altered his route and avoided encountering the Muslims;[360] but Abū Jahl, at the head of the Meccan army, remained determined to confront the Muslims in an effort to thwart future caravan raids and to avenge the killing of a Meccan during the raid at Nakhlah. He said in defiance, "We will not go back… We shall spend three days in Badr, slaughter camels, feast and drink wine…"[361] The Muslims had no intention to, nor were they expecting to, meet the Quraysh on the battlefield. According to Watt, the earliest sources indicate that if the Muslims had known of the impending battle, they would have refrained from engaging the Meccan army.[362]

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[356] Ibid., 196
[357] Haykal, 233.
[358] Lings, 138.
[359] Payne, 35.
[360] Haykal, 240.
[361] Payne, 35.
[362] Watt, Montgomery, *Muhammad at Medina*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), 11.

As news of the Meccan's approach became evident, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) chose to consult his closest companions as to whether they should return to Medina or stay and confront the sizeable Quraysh force. Outnumbered three-to-one, there was an apparent sense of fear and uncertainty among the ranks, which is openly recorded in the revelation itself:

> For it was your Lord who made you (Prophet) venture from your home for a true purpose, though a group of the believers disliked it and argued with you about the truth after it had been made clear, as if they were being driven towards a death they could see with their own eyes. Remember how God promised you (believers) that one of the two enemy groups [the Meccan trade caravan or their army] would fall to you: you wanted the unarmed group to be yours, but it was God's will to establish the truth according to His Word and to finish off the disbelievers.[363]

With an overwhelming show of support from both the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār present, in a display of firm faith and commitment to their promise to uphold their pledge to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), and despite the fact that it stipulated defending him only within the bounds of Medina, they requested him to lead them into battle.[364] This loyalty and dedication were hallmarks of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) followers, especially at such times of danger. Richard Gabriel mentioned this fact:

> Muḥammad's armies… were highly cohesive, holding together even when they fought outnumbered or were overrun. The ummah served as a higher locus of the soldier's loyalty that transcended the clan. Many of

[363] Qur'an, al-Anfāl: 5-7; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 178.
[364] Mohiuddin, 201.

> Muḥammad's early converts had left their families and clans to follow the Prophet. There were many instances where members of the same clan or even families fought on opposite sides during his early battles. Religion turned out to be a greater source of unit cohesion than blood and clan ties, the obligations of faith replacing and overriding those of tradition and even family. His soldiers cared for each other as brothers, which under the precepts of Islām they were, and quickly gained a reputation for their discipline and ferocity in battle.[365]

As a result of the battle, the Muslims succeeded in turning the Meccans away with very few casualties, suffering only 14 losses and killing 70 of the enemy combatants; among them were several clan leaders who had been instrumental in oppressing Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers in the early years of Islām.[366] After the fighting was over and victory secured, an argument broke out between the Muslims regarding rightful claim to the spoils of war. The Qur'ān was then revealed to resolve this dispute, stating, "They ask you (Prophet) about (distributing) the battle gains. Say, 'That is a matter for God and His Messenger, so be mindful of God and make things right between you. Obey God and His Messenger if you are true believers."[367] Afterwards, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) "ordered that everything that had been taken, including the captives, should be brought together and no longer be considered as the private property of any individual."[368] He then divided the spoils equally among the fighters.[369] The significance of this can be

[365] Richard A. Gabriel, "Muhammad: The Warrior Prophet." *HistoryNet*, 2007. <http://www.historynet.com/muhammad-the-warrior-prophet.htm> (accessed 15 October, 2016).
[366] Mubārakfūrī, 270.
[367] Qur'an, al-Anfāl: 1; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 178.
[368] Lings, 151.
[369] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 12.

made apparent when contrasted against the prevalent Arab tribal war practices at that time. As Gabriel notes:

> Under the old ways individuals kept whatever booty they had captured. Muḥammad required that all booty be turned in to a common pool where it was shared equally among all combatants who had participated in the raid. Most important, Muḥammad established that the first claimants on the booty that had been taken in the name of the ummah were the poor and the widows and orphans of the soldiers killed in battle.[370]

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) also sought a moral victory that would soften the tensions between the Meccans and the Muslims by freeing any prisoners of war that could ransom themselves with a monetary payment, or as an alternative, to teach ten Muslims how to read.[371] In a society in which it was commonplace that "adult males were killed, and women and children were captured and held for ransom or sold as slaves,"[372] his approach was unprecedented in its humane treatment of the defeated, establishing an ethic of warfare with the objective of minimizing the loss of life and suffering. Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr reports that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) gave the order at that time, "I enjoin you to treat the prisoners well." Muṣ'ab then commented, "After I accepted Islām, I was among the Anṣār and when the time of lunch or dinner arrived, I would feed dates to the prisoners, for I had been fed bread due to the command of the Messenger of Allāh."[373] This was part of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) deliberate campaign to win the hearts and minds of his enemies, as he once

[370] Gabriel, "Muhammad: The Warrior Prophet."
[371] Mubārakfūrī, 132.
[372] Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34.
[373] Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al- Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, (al-Qāhirah, al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat Ibn Taymīyah, Dār al-Ṣumay'ī, 1983), 22:393.

remarked, "Allāh wonders at people who enter Paradise in chains,"[374] meaning the prisoners of war who later converted to Islām. The Quraysh expected less than amicable treatment, which was commonplace at the time, so they were shocked by his gesture. Yet they could not bear the humiliation of being defeated by an army only one-third its own size and composed of people who, in their eyes, amounted to little more than rebellious and uncouth members of their society. Therefore, they planned their revenge and gathered up an even larger army to assault Medina a year later.

By Shawwal of the third year after hijrah, the Meccans, having put forth a concerted effort towards amassing arms and transport, marched upon Medina with an army of three thousand warriors, with two hundred well-mounted cavalries and three thousand camels, led by Abū Sufyān to avenge the losses at Badr. ʻAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 653), the uncle of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who had remained in Mecca after ransoming himself at Badr, provided necessary intelligence to his nephew while keeping his loyalty a secret from the Quraysh, thus allowing the Muslims to brace for the onslaught against Medina.[375] The Prophet (P.B.U.H.), having consulted his companions as to the best strategy that would minimize danger and losses, agreed to have his army face the Quraysh at the base of mount Uḥud, though he initially preferred an even more defensive approach from behind the city.[376] The Muslims had an army of around a thousand men, but three hundred of them withdrew due to the persuasion ʻAbd Allāh Ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites who had no intent to fight. He initially showed outward support to the Muslims, proclaiming to be one himself, but then he convinced almost a third of the Muslim army to abandon the

[374] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:60 #3010.
[375] Mubārakfūrī, 293-294.
[376] Lings, 174-176.

fight.[377] It was a tactic he had devised to cause alarm and deal a blow to the morale of the Muslim army just before the battle commenced. The Qur'ān mentions his treachery:

> …when it was said to them, 'Come, fight for God's cause, or least defend yourselves,' answered, 'We would follow you if we knew how to fight.' On that day they were closer to disbelief than belief. They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts: God knows exactly what they conceal. As for those who stayed behind, and said of their brothers, 'If only they had listened to us, they would not have been killed,' tell them (Prophet), 'Ward off death from yourselves if what you say is true.[378]

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) positioned his forces to the left of the valley of Uḥud and to the right of a mountain that came to be known as Jabal al-Rumāh, which means the "mountain of archers," and directly in front of the city of Medina in case his soldiers needed to flee. The Muslims were once again greatly outnumbered and needed their archers to keep the opposing army at bay. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) stationed 50 archers on the mountain of Al-Rumāh and told them, "Do not come down until I tell you to. Even if the victory is earned and you see the spoils being distributed or defeat has come and you see the birds eating our corpses, stay put until you are commanded to descend."[379] The battle initially unfolded in the same way as Badr, with the Muslims performing surprisingly well against a much larger force, but 40 of the 50 archers were hasty to collect the spoils and came down from their post, thinking that the battle was over. As a consequence, the Qurayshi general (who later converted to Islām), Khālid ibn al-Walīd, saw an opening and

[377] Ibid., 178.
[378] Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān: 167-168; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 73.
[379] Mubārakfūrī, 187.

led the Meccan cavalry around the mountain, flanking the Muslims from behind and almost killing Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) in the process.[380] The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was personally injured in this engagement and yet, despite this transgression, he prayed for Allāh to forgive his enemies. Sahl ibn Sa'd reports that he heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) say, "O Allāh, forgive my people for they do not know." The notable scholar of ahadith, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 890), commented on this statement, "He said this supplication on the day of Uḥud after they had slashed his face."[381] Had the intention of the battle been to take revenge or indulge malice against his oppressors, one would expect him to curse his enemies instead of pray for them to be forgiven; all the more indication that these battles were neither offensive, not motivated by hatred.

The Muslim army was eventually defeated, losing 70 men in total.[382] Many of the bodies were subjected to a common, yet humiliating, practice of mutilation (*muthlah*) by a handful of Meccan soldiers. Among those who partook in the practice was Hind, the wife of Abū Sufyān, who had orchestrated the assassination of the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) uncle, Ḥamzah, during the battle, subsequently tearing out his liver and biting into it. The cruelty performed on the dead was so immense that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) received a verse from the Qur'ān strictly forbidding the practice of mutilation, even if it were done out of reciprocation, "If you (believers) have to respond to an attack, make your response proportionate, but it is best to stand fast."[383] This verse highlights the law of proportionality in war that a response to injustice must be according to the measure of injustice and not itself unjust. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) also explicitly outlawed his companions from

[380] Ibid., 188.
[381] Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1993), 3:254 #973.
[382] Mohiuddin, 230.
[383] Qur'an, al-Naḥl: 126; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 282.

resorting to this revolting and senseless revenge tactic, according to 'Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd, "The Prophet, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, prohibited plundering and mutilation."[384]

However, the battle of Uḥud was not an absolute loss, as it proved to the enemy that the Muslims could sustain the onslaught of an army four-times its size and far better equipped.[385] When the goal of the enemy was extermination, survival itself was a victory though it was a painful setback. As evidenced by the motives and events leading up to and during the battle itself, Uḥud was yet another example of a just war, unavoidably and defensively fought on the part of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his followers to preserve the sanctity of life, religious freedom, and peace – not only for Medina, but the entire Peninsula, including the Jewish and pagan tribes.

The Muslims who had taken part at Uḥud were commanded the following day by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to march out of Medina and to set up camp at Ḥamrā' al-Asad, in anticipation of another possible attack from the Meccan army camped only 36 miles away.[386] As it turned out, Abū Sufyān was indeed preparing his army for a second offensive strike on Medina in order to claim an outright victory, but he would be forced to withdraw to Mecca as panic and fear overcame the Quraysh after hearing rumors, initiated by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself, that the Muslims had marched out with a significantly larger army. It is important to note Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) military strategy here; one of using acceptable means of deception to avert further harm. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his army would eventually return to Medina three days later, taking one prisoner of war, Abū 'Azzah

[384] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 7:94 #5516.
[385] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 28.
[386] Mubārakfūrī, 340-341.

al-Jumahi, a man who had previously been captured and released by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) after Badr without ransom, under the condition he would refrain from further hostility towards the Muslims. He had clearly broken his promise by engaging in the battle at Uḥud. This time he was, along with a spy from the Quraysh who was also previously caught and ordered to leave Medina within three days but had not complied, sentenced to death.[387] These two enemy combatants had proven themselves dishonest, unrepentant, and dangerous; the only recourse to safeguard the community from them was to kill them.

Viewed from the perspective of modern warfare, the total number of casualties on both sides combined one hundred at most; it was quite remarkable in light of this battle's significance in Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) life as a military leader and, indeed, its impact on the flow of world history. The Ḥamrā' al-Asad mission played an important role as a show of morale and strength on the part of the Muslims, reliance even in the face of devastating loss, while it lessened the perceived military superiority of the Quraysh, who were left without any spoils after Uḥud. Nawaf Bedah Al-Fughom notes:

> The principle of chasing the enemy was therefore carried out for strategic reasons, chiefly to demonstrate that the Muslim army was still powerful and that its morale had not been crushed, since the pursuers were the same warriors who had been involved in the confrontation at Uḥud. It was also strategically necessary to counter any Quraysh claims that Uḥud had been a disastrous defeat for the Muslims…[388]

[387] Ibid., 341-343.
[388] Nawaf Bedah al-Fughom, "Factors in the Spiritual Preparation and Motivation Of Muslim Armies," PhD thesis, *University of Leeds*, 2003, 251.

The aftermath of Uḥud undoubtedly left the Muslims in a state of precarious vulnerability, despite the fact that they had been able to hold off the Quraysh. Hostile forces in the region intensely observing both parties from the sidelines perceived the loss at Uḥud as an opportunity to increase their aggression and even attack the Muslims given their weakened military strength, and perhaps get rid of them for good; among them were the Jewish tribes of Banū Al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayẓah in Medina, who were eager to instigate and aid those tribes harboring enmity toward the Muslims, particularly the Quraysh and a number of surrounding Bedouin tribes.[389]

Over a period of several months, a number of subsequent military campaigns were initiated by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to neutralize the threats from these tribes, resulting in the acquisition of spoils and serving to establish the Muslims as a recognized military presence in the region. The first to take up arms against the Muslims after Uḥud was the tribe of Banū Asad, who was forced to retreat and leave behind its livestock as gains.[390] In contrast, two surprise attacks by the enemy resulted in a significant loss of Muslim lives and property. The first attack was at Rājiḥ, near Mecca, by tribesmen from Hudhayl seeking revenge for the death of their leader, who was executed by the order of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) specifically for his plot to attack Medina. The second was an attack at the well of Ma'ūnah by the clan of Banū Sulaym, who had ambushed and killed seventy of the most devout and learned Muslims there. The victims had been dispatched in good faith by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to instruct the people of Najd about Islām.[391] With almost a year having passed since Uḥud, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) set out for Badr again with fifteen hundred men

[389] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 31.
[390] Lings, 199.
[391] Mubārakfūrī, 352-353.

and ten mounted horsemen to confront the Quraysh head on. However, the Meccan army of two thousand footmen and fifty horsemen became fearful at the thought of facing the Muslim army and turned back for Mecca, giving the Muslims a moral victory and an "awe-inspiring presence over the whole of Arabia."[392]

In the beginning of the fifth year after hijrah, having heard of a possible raid from the Ghaṭfān clan, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) proceeded with an army of four hundred men to Najd, but the enemy fled before the Muslims arrived.[393] A month later, he would lead an army of a thousand men northward toward the Syrian border to Dūmat al-Jandal, where the tribe of Banū Kalb was known to be plundering goods on their way to Medina.[394] Watt aptly concludes, "Thus in the period between Uḥud and the siege of Medina, while Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was unable to prevent the Meccans forming a confederation against him, he probably stopped many from joining it, and he certainly increased the forces at his own disposal."[395]

All of these skirmishes and preemptive strikes eventually culminated into one of the most distinguished battles of the Prophet's career (P.B.U.H.), an engagement with the alliance of anti-Islām tribes known as *Al-Aḥzāb*, or 'the confederates,' at the *Ghazwat al-Khandaq*, or the 'Battle of the Trench.' While the battle itself was more of a military stand-off, with very little bloodshed on either side, it is crucial to understand the backdrop in which the alliances making up the confederate army were formed, particularly the central role of the Jewish tribes. It was the leader of Banū Al-Naḍīr, Ḥuyayy ibn Akhṭab, who masterminded and convinced the Quraysh and several pagan tribes to unite as an army of

[392] Ibid., 359-360.
[393] Lings, 208.
[394] Ibid., 210.
[395] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 35.

then thousand soldiers, with Abū Sufyān at its head, with the objective of dealing a final military blow that would eliminate the Muslims once and for all.[396] Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) sought the advice of the citizens of Medina as to how to fight the battle. A recent convert to Islām from Persia, Salmān al-Fārisī, suggested a Persian tactic of building a large trench around the city to block off the incoming cavalry. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) accepted the proposal and had a large trench dug around the outskirts of Medina, hence granting the name of the battle Battle of the Trench.[397] The companion Al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib recalls that he saw the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself covered in mud while building the trench and he said, "Verily, they were the first to transgress against us. If they intend persecution, we have refused."[398] It is revealing that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said this fact had allowed fighting, as if to remind his companions that the *casus belli* for the conflict had been the Quraysh' many initial acts of aggression.

The Banū Qurayẓah, still an ally at this point, willingly loaned their tools in service of this strategy, despite having no affinity for the Muslims; rather, they merely found it politically expedient to do so as they too felt threatened by the incoming army.[399] Using these tools, the Muslims and their allies dug a massive trench around Medina. The strategy was particularly advantageous because Medina rests between two lava fields, meaning the trench only had to be constructed from the front.[400] When the Meccans had arrived, they were completely baffled and caught off guard by what they saw. They tried penetrating through the trench but were fought off before they could make it across. The Meccans then

[396] Al-Fughom, 57.
[397] Rodinson, 216.
[398] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 8:127 #6620.
[399] Lings, 216.
[400] Rodinson, 217.

had their thousands of archers rain down arrows on the people of Medina, but it was still not effective enough to cause significant damage.[401] Nearly a month passed as both armies faced each other down without the invaders making significant gains, fighting only a few duels and an occasional volley of arrows.[402] The Qur'ān makes mention of this event, "God sent back the disbelievers along with their rage—they gained no benefit—and spared the believers from fighting. He is strong and mighty."[403]

No doubt the brilliant strategy of digging the trench saved many lives and perhaps the entire community, especially considering the Muslim army numbered only a third of the confederates, placing it at a significant disadvantage had the allied forces been able to enter Medina.[404] Yet, there were additional factors that eventually forced the Meccans to retreat. From a strategic and psychological point of view, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was able to skillfully shatter the alliance between the Quraysh, Banū Qurayẓah, and the Ghaṭfān tribes, by sending an agent who planted seeds of mutual doubt and dissension between them to the extent that trust gave way to suspicion and mistrust thereby significantly deflating the army's morale and motivation to fight. Coupled with the physical devastation caused by a violent windstorm, one that Muslims believe to be divine intervention, the confederates' camp was irreparably disordered such that the Meccans were forced to return home with accomplishing their objective.[405]

It is telling that the three most important battles in the life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) – Badr, Uḥud, and Khandaq – were all defensive in their nature; they are the most

[401] Ibid., 218.
[402] Al-Fughom, 59.
[403] Qur'an, al-Aḥzāb: 25; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 422.
[404] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 36.
[405] As-Siba'ei, 95-96.

prominent examples of jihād in the Muslim collective memory. Several important points related to just war can be derived from them: *jus ad bellum* or proper justification for war, *jus in bello* or proper conduct during war, clemency with prisoners of war, and even holding out for reconciliation with enemy. As such, they can show us how many or most Muslims conceive of jihād as a just war, not a war of aggression. These are the three battles most discussed in books on the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life and military career, and even highlighted in the arts. It speaks to the ethos of the Muslim community's conception of jihād being one of noble perseverance and ethics, even when outnumbered by ruthless armies. Most lay Muslims can hardly name another military campaign of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) outside of these three. The famous 1970's movie biopic of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) entitled *The Message* only focuses on these three, due to their prominence in Sīrah literature.[406]

3.2.9 Jihād Against the Munāfiqūn, or Hypocrites

It is only in the last few years in Medina that Allāh revealed a verse about fighting hypocrites as a form of jihād. This verse in Sūrat al-Taḥrīm relates to an incident that took place with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his wives seven years after hijrah, "Prophet, strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Deal with them sternly. Hell will be their home, an evil destination!"[407] According to Maudoodi, this represented a shift in how the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was to deal with the treacherous in Medina, with specific reference to

[406] Moustapha Akkad (dir.), *The Message = al-Risālah*, ([Troy, MI] : Distributed by Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2012).
[407] Qur'an, al-Taḥrīm: 9; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 562.

Ibn Ubbay, and was to send a broader message to the hypocrites. He writes regarding the incident:

> ‘Abd Allah also requested the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to lead the Funeral Prayer for ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy. Acting with the same magnanimous spirit, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) promised to oblige. Although ‘Umar tried to dissuade the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) from doing so in view of ‘Abd Allah b. Ubayy’s ignominious role in opposing Islam, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) ignored his protest and did not mind praying for the forgiveness of this arch-enemy of Islam. This was out of his mercy and tenderness, which embraced friend and foe alike. However, as soon as the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) rose to lead the Funeral Prayer, the above verse was revealed, forbidding him to do so. For a policy had already been laid down that no further allowance should be given to the hypocrites (see verse 73). They should no longer be allowed to flourish and that there should be a total abstention from anything that might encourage them.[408]

In Medina, this referred to the hypocrites and some of the Jewish tribes that conspired against the Muslims. With respect to the Jewish tribes, several incidents occurred after Badr which increased hostilities between them and the Muslims. For instance, the Banū Qaynuqā’, one of the three Jewish tribes living in the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H.) city-state, engaged in commerce within the market center, putting it in close proximity to the Muslims’ strongholds. It relied monetarily on interest and taxes that were no longer permitted under Muḥammad’s (P.B.U.H.) new economic policies. Reza Aslan explains the

[408] Syed Abul ‘Ala Maudoodi and Zafar Ishaq Ansari (trans.), *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān*, (London: Islamic Foundation, 1988-1998), 3:238.

motivation behind the tribe's treachery, stating, "The Banū Qaynuqā' suffered especially from the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) tax-free market, which had eradicated their economic monopoly over Medina and greatly reduced their wealth. A war with Mecca would only have worsened the situation of Medina's Jewish clans by permanently severing their economic ties to the Quraysh."[409] It was only after Banū Qaynuqā' broke the treaty and showed open enmity, declaring its refusal to cooperate, that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) commanded the Muslim army to lay siege outside the tribe's fortified quarters.[410] This was a strategic measure that not only isolated the tribe economically and protected the Muslims from their military strength, but also resulted in the Banū Qaynuqā' conceding to their own voluntary exile from Medina two weeks later, without further hostilities. As Armstrong notes, "Muḥammad would have been expected to massacre the men and sell the women and children into slavery – the traditional punishment meted out to traitors…[however], bloodshed was avoided."[411] Forbearance was again shown to the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) enemies, giving them every opportunity to avert war and conflict if they would leave Muslims in peace.

Another incident related to the troublemaking of the hypocrites involved clandestine activities between the Quraysh and other Jewish tribes. Two months after the battle of Badr, Abū Sufyān led two hundred horsemen to conduct a night raid on Medina as a show of open hostility and revenge. He was given information as to the whereabouts of a Muslim date farm by the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr. As a consequence, two men of the Anṣār were killed and the farm was deliberately set on fire. The Prophet (P.B.U.H)

[409] Mohiuddin, 214.
[410] Lings, 161.
[411] Mohiuddin, 215.

pursued Abū Sufyān and his forces, but eventually lost track of them.[412] The assassination of Ka'b ibn Ashraf, chief of the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr, was explicitly commanded by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in response to this betrayal.[413] This action is often cited by critics in an attempt to debase his character as if he were a ruthless warlord, intolerant of criticism of his policies and religion. To the contrary, when examined within the context of the events unfolding at the time, the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) decision to order an assassination was entirely legitimate under the rules of just war, given that this particular chieftain had traveled to Mecca for the explicit purpose to rally the Quraysh against the Muslims militarily; it was an open breach of the treaty, which meant he was to be dealt with as a "clear enemy of the Islāmic community" because he had committed an act of treason. [414]

The Jewish tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr also sought their opportunity to maneuver against the Muslims. The Prophet (P.B.U.H) approached the tribe, who were ostensibly allies under the city-state's constitution, to pay a share of blood-money for the wrongful killing of two men from the 'Āmir tribe.[415] Certain individuals from the Banū al-Naḍīr initiated an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) by hurling a rock at him from a rooftop. However, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was informed just in time to leave with his companions and he issued a ten-day ultimatum to the tribe to vacate Medina for having broken its pact with him. 'Abd Allāh ibn Ubayy convinced them otherwise, promising the aid of two thousand men, which forced the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the Muslim army to lay siege to their fortress. When the Al-Naḍīr tribesmen began their counter-offensive, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), under divine command, ordered that some of their valued date palms

[412] Payne, 35.
[413] Lings, 171.
[414] Mohiuddin, 220.
[415] Lings, 203.

be cut down, forcing them to surrender under duress of losing their previous crops.[416] This was sanctioned by the Qur'ān as an exceptional case justified by dire necessity, as the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had generally prohibited the destruction of the property, crops, or resources of enemy combatants: Whatever you [believers] may have done to [their] palm trees — cutting them down or leaving them standing on their roots —was done by God's leave, so that He might disgrace those who defied Him."[417] Under ordinary circumstances, the general policy of limited destruction of property continued long after the death of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), especially by the actions of his immediate political successors. Abū Bakr, after having assumed the role of the first Caliph, sent the Muslim army toward Syria and commanded them to abide by the ethics of warfare passed down by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), "I instruct you with ten things. Do not kill a woman, nor a child, nor an elderly decrepit person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not tear down an inhabited building. Do not slaughter sheep, nor camels, unless [needed] as food. Do not drown a bee hive, not burn it. Do not steal from the spoils and do not be cowardly."[418] This legal precedent set by Abū Bakr was significant since it ensured that the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) ethics of warfare remain in practice, rather than be lost or forgotten. It was recorded by Imām Mālik in the *Muwaṭṭa'*, the first complete book of Islāmic jurisprudence.

As a result of their surrender, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) exiled the Banū al-Naḍīr from Medina with their belongings, amounting to six hundred camel-loads of property; their threat to the community was neutralized before it turned into violence and all-out war. It is important to note that although two of the three major Jewish tribes in Medina had now

[416] As-Siba'ei, 93-94.
[417] Qur'an, al-Ḥashr: 5; Abdel Haleen, *The Qur'an*, 546.
[418] Mālik ibn Anas and Abū Muṣ'ab Zuhrī, *Muwaṭṭa' al-Imām Mālik*, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1993), 1:357 #918.

been exiled, this was not an act of religious or racial intolerance, but instead was the appropriate response to treason. Armstrong summarizes the expulsion of the Banū al-Naḍīr saying, "…this was not Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) intention. He had wanted to cut the cycle of violence and dispossession, not continue it."[419] As a matter of fact, 'Ā'ishah reported that "the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, passed away while his coat of mail was with a Jew for [the price of] a portion of barley."[420] That the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) engaged in trade with Jews up until the very end of his life indicates that he had no malicious enmity towards Jewish people as a whole, despite what had occurred with the other tribes in Medina.

The Banū Qurayẓah had been an ally to the Muslims up until the beginning of the Battle of the Trench, at which point they renounced their loyalty. After being persuaded by the Banū al-Naḍīr chieftain of the military might of the Qurayshi confederate alliance, the Banū Qurayẓah betrayed Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and planned a joint attack from within the city.[421] The tribe even went so far as to offer the confederate forces ancillary support in the form of supplies and weaponry.[422] Realizing the imminent danger facing the Muslims from both the opposing army and now additionally within their own city, the hypocrites within the Muslim army also began retreating to their homes. There was such an overwhelming sense of fear within the Muslim ranks that it struck even the most loyal fighters, compelling the Prophet (P.B.U.H) to consult with the Anṣār out of concern for

[419] Mohiuddin, 241.
[420] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:41 #2916.
[421] Lings, 221.
[422] Aslan, 116.

their safety. Nevertheless, the Anṣār refused to waiver in their support and did not abandon their posts.[423] The Qur'ān mentioned this incident in detail:

> You who believe, remember God's goodness to you when mighty armies massed against you: We sent a violent wind and invisible forces against them. God sees all that you do. They massed against you from above and below; your eyes rolled (with fear), your hearts rose into your throats, and you thought (ill) thoughts of God. There the believers were sorely tested and deeply shaken: the hypocrites and the sick at heart said, 'God and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusions!'[424]

Despite all these setbacks, the Muslims held their ground and the confederate forces were eventually forced to retreat due to harsh weather conditions and a lack of supplies. However, not a moment sooner after the Meccan's departed, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) learned of the Banū Qurayẓah's betrayal and commanded his army of three thousand troops to proceed to their fortress to confront the threat to the city-state.[425] After a two-week siege, the tribe agreed to surrender on the condition that Sa'd ibn Mu'ādh (d. 627), a former adherent of Judaism and leader of the 'Aws tribe whom the Banū Qurayẓah had been allied to in the days of pre-Islāmic Yathrib, be the one to judge its outcome, and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) agreed to their terms.[426] Sa'd, a highly respected companion of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), ordered that the tribe be dealt with in accordance with their own laws as found in the *Tawrāt*, or Torah. Thus, all the warriors who participated in the battle were executed,

[423] Watt, *Muhammad at Medina,* 38.
[424] Qur'an, al-Aḥzāb: 9-13; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 420.
[425] Mohiuddin, 257.
[426] Al-Dawoody, 48

the women and children taken into custody, and their wealth was distributed among the Muslims.[427] His judgment was taken directly from their own scripture:

> When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. If it accepts your terms of peace and surrenders to you, then all the people in it shall serve you at forced labor. If it does not submit to you peacefully, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall put all its males to the sword. You may, however, take as your booty the women, the children, livestock, and everything else in the town, all its spoils. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. Thus you shall treat all the towns that are very far from you, which are not towns of the nations here.[428]

In order to ease tensions, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H) appointed ʻAbd Allāh ibn Salām, a former Jewish rabbi and ally to Banū Qurayẓah, to deal with the women and children. Most of them were ransomed by and to another Jewish tribe, Bani al-Naḍīr.[429]

Scholars have put forth various arguments with respect to this incident, some even suggesting the execution of Banū Qurayẓah never occurred in an attempt to reconcile it with prevalent non-violent principles of Islām.[430] Adil Salahi theorizes the number of men executed has been exaggerated and that "a more careful examination of these reports proves that this could not have been the case. The number of those who were killed could not have been more than twenty-five, if not less" considering only few among the tribe's

[427] Ibid., 48-49
[428] The Bible, Deuteronomy 20:10-15; Coogan, 283.
[429] Ishaq and Newby, 290
[430] Aslan, 116.

warriors actively took part in the treachery.[431] Some anti-Islām commentators describe this incident as a "genocide" or "pogrom," but Marco Schöller suggests that the confirmed existence of several male descendants of Qurayẓah demonstrates that the sentence against them was limited:

> The Islāmic tradition knows a number of descendants from the Qurayẓa by name, most famous among them being the traditionist Muḥammad b. Kaʿb al-Quraẓī, who was born a Muslim and died in Medina in 120/738 or some years before. Others include his father Kaʿb ibn Asad ibn Sulaym and his brother Isḥāq, as well as ʿAṭiyya al-Quraẓī, al-Zubayr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Zabīr, ʿAlī ibn Rifāʿa and the progeny of Abū Malik al-Quraẓī. This suggests that, in contrast to what is reported in the Islāmic tradition, several male persons of the Qurayẓa did survive the conflict in Medina, probably because of their young age at the time.[432]

Though the execution of combatants is undoubtedly an unpleasant scene for numerous reasons, some of the claims and details narrated about the incident are highly problematic. For one, the narrations claiming that hundreds of men were killed are all derived from one man, Ibn 'Awn, who is considered a weak narrator of Aḥādīth.[433] What is more, the Maghāzī literature that attempted to document the battles fought by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) were not put through the same rigorous process of verification that other Aḥādīth texts were. The second issue is that the incident has been used to illustrate

[431] Mohiuddin, 260.
[432] Marco Schöller. "Qurayẓa (Banū Al-)," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Claude Gilliot, William A. Graham, et. al. (Brill Reference Works Online). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQSIM_00348> (accessed 4 October, 2019).
[433] Ishaq and Newby, 291.

that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) had an inherently tense, some would say 'anti-Semitic,' relationship with the Jews. The fault with that assessment is that no matter which account of the incident of Banū Qurayẓah one finds most accurate, it cannot be considered as the norm in Muslim-Jewish relations but instead an extraordinary situation with other factors to be taken into account. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) did have a well documented healthy relationship with many of the Jewish tribes of Medina, had a neighbor that was a Jew, prayed for some of the Jews, and stood out of respect for the funeral of a Jewish man.[434] Moreover, there were Jews of Medina who fought alongside the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to the consternation of other Jews. Perhaps the most prominent example was the Rabbi Mukhayrīq, who did not convert to Islām but nonetheless, according to Ibn Isḥāq, led a group of Jews into battle on the day of Uḥud; he ended up being killed. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said about him, "Mukhayrīq was the best of the Jews."[435] Hence, to use an atypical incident that occurred in a specific context to construct a narrative of Jewish-Muslim hatred is highly dubious.

The reality of the matter is that this was a case of treason; one that, if it had succeeded, could have led to the destruction of the entire city-state and the loss of countless innocent lives. It was a blatant crime for which such a punishment would be seen as appropriate by most civilizations given the circumstances. It must be again emphasized that, contrary to claims in public discourse about Islām, Banū Qurayẓah were not punished on the basis of race or religion, nor was this a genocide or pogrom. Rather many other Jewish tribes lived peacefully in the area and were neither forced to convert to Islām, nor live in exile. As Armstrong is sure to point out, "The seventeen other Jewish tribes of

[434] Al-Bukhārī and Khan, #4587.
[435] Ibn Hishām, 1:518.

Medina remained in the oasis, living on friendly terms with the Muslims for many years, and the Qur'ān continued to insist that Muslims remember their spiritual kinship with the People of the Book."[436]

3.2.10 Jihād, Diplomacy, and the Use of Treaties

The contracting of treaties by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), whenever he had an opportunity to secure one, suggests that political agreements are preferable and can serve the purpose of jihād without violence or bloodshed. The Qur'an actually commanded him to accept the terms of a proposed peace treaty, even if he feared it was a ruse from the enemy, "But if they incline towards peace, you (Prophet) must also incline towards it, and put your trust in God: He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing. If they intend to deceive you, God is enough for you: it was He who strengthened you with His help, and with the believers, and brought their hearts together."[437] Consistent with this message, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661), the cousin of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who would carry on his policies as the fourth righteous Caliph, reports that he said, "Verily, after me there will be conflicts and affairs, so if you can end them in peace, then do so."[438]

Despite numerous attempts by the Quraysh to assassinate him, torture and kill his companions, and completely annihilate his religion and his followers from the face of the earth, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was still eager to secure a treaty with the people of Mecca. He set out with his followers unarmed to carry out a pilgrimage to the Ka'bah during the sacred months in which the Arabs forbid fighting. Nevertheless, the Meccans prevented

[436] Ibid., 261.
[437] Qur'an, al-Anfāl: 61-31; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 185-186.
[438] Ibn Ḥanbal, 2:106 #795.

them from entering and a long series of negotiations began. The Muslims camped out in a nearby town of Al-Ḥudaybīyah and Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and the Meccans exchanged several messages through their ambassadors. Eventually, a peace treaty was drawn up with clear terms and conditions that guaranteed all sides security from military action. However, there were people on both sides who did not agree with the terms stipulated in the treaty. From the Meccans, a group had gone out to assault the Muslim pilgrims but were detained in the process. Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), determined to of keep the truce, returned them back to Mecca unharmed.[439] The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) desired peace so much that he even made several concessions, among them being that those Muslims who were captured by the Meccan pagans were prohibited from returning to Medina, nor were those who became Muslim allowed to flee to Medina. This was perhaps one of the most challenging moments of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) leadership because it forced him to sacrifice the security and happiness of those he cared for in the interest of maintaining the truce. For instance, his companion Abū Jandal was captured before the treaty, but managed to escape after it had been signed. Because of this, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was forced to send Abū Jandal back to Mecca in order to maintain the peace saying, "Be patient, oh Abū Jandal, God will surely give thee and those with thee relief and a way out. We have agreed on the terms of a truce."[440] This move was questioned by some of his companions, but Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) reminded them that it aligned with the overarching principles of Islām: that the greater good of peace was the standard by which people should live. His long-term vision and scrupulous adherence to his ethics would prove to be fruitful and ultimately led to the complete victory of Islām over the old customs of idolatry.

[439] Lings, 253.
[440] Ibid., 254.

Within a year, the Meccans broke the treaty by attacking an ally of the Muslims unprovoked. In response, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) marched towards Mecca with ten thousand soldiers to finally put an end to the war. Fearing they would be massacred, most of the townspeople his in fear in their homes and refused to come out. Instead, as Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) laid siege to the city, he offered them amnesty on the condition that they would not resist. Despite having every right to enact revenge and with the capacity to do so, he refused to abandon his own standards of maintaining peace and seeking reconciliation. Even Abū Sufyān, who championed every battle against Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), was left to rule over Mecca so long as he would not incite any harm against the Muslims. As Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) marched in, he placed his head on the back of his camel as a sign of humility and shouted, "Whoever enters the house of Abū Sufyān will be safe, whoever lays down his weapons will be safe, whoever locks his door will be safe."[441] The companion Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah, undoubtedly with revenge on his mind, taunted and threatened Abū Sufyān, saying, "O Abū Sufyān, today will be a day of slaughter!" But the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) corrected him, "O Abū Sufyān, today is a day of mercy. Today Allāh will honor the Quraysh."[442] One can appreciate the linguistic switch here, as the 'day of mercy' (*yawm al-marḥamah*) sounds similar to the 'day of slaughter' (*yawm al-malḥamah*). Al-Qāsim ibn Salām also shared an account from his father who saw the Quraysh holding fast to the Ka'bah, in hopes of invoking its sanctity to protect them from the revenge they expected. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said to them, "What do you say? What do you think?" They said, "We say you are the son of our brother." The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, "I say to you as Joseph said to his brothers: You will hear no reproaches today.

[441] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1955)*, 3:1407 #1780.
[442] 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), 23:454.

May God forgive you: He is the Most Merciful of the merciful."[443] Like Joseph in the Qur'ān, who forgave his brothers even after they abandoned him to die or be a slave, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) pardoned his tribesmen for all that they had done, which demonstrates that his practice of jihād cannot be divorced from the totality of Islāmic ethics as contained in the stories of the prophets. At this point, awed by the mercy shown to them, most of the Meccans became Muslim; Islām had finally replaced all the idols around the Ka'bah with one religion devoted to God alone.

The conquest of Mecca is perhaps the greatest testimony against any insinuation that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was after the blood of his enemies. But what is significant is that it is still called a conquest by the Qur'an, just as the treaty of Al-Ḥudaybīyah had been, although no bloodshed had ensued.[444] By describing a peace treaty with the term *fatḥ* (conquest), from the root meaning "to open," Allāh spoke to the opening of hearts as a greater victory than the opening of cities. Had the Muslims acted in haste with the Meccans, perhaps more glorious accounts of martyrdom would have been etched in history, but what was sought in jihād was gained through the treaty without the death of a single warrior.

The spirit of treaties continued after this well-known one with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) a treaty to Christians around the world. The message was directed to the St. Catherine Monastery in Egypt. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) wrote:

> This is a message from Muḥammad, son of 'Abd Allāh, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allāh! I hold out against anything that displeases them.

[443] Al-Bayhaqī, 9:199 #18275.
[444] Qur'an, al-Fatḥ: 1.

> No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims' houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God's covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation of (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).[445]

Some historians point out that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) felt a particular obligation to Christians not just due to viewing his religion as an extension of the message of Christ, but also in remembrance of the Christians of Abyysinia who protected the vulnerable Muslims from persecution when no one else was willing or able. [446]

3.2.11 Jihād as Preemptive Battle

It is in these last two years of the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) that we try to extract the overall goals of jihād. Up until this point, all of his battles were entirely defensive. There are three notable campaigns after the conquest of Mecca. The first was the battle of Mu'tah in which the Muslim ambassador to the Arab Christian tribe of Ghassān was executed.

[445] Morrow, 32.
[446] Ibid., 48.

Historians debate whether Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) waged war on them in order to spread Islām, to retaliate, or to preemptively strike, thinking they were preparing for war. This was a fierce battle in which many people died on both sides, including Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) adopted son, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, and his cousin, Jafar ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 629). The general of the Muslim army, Khālid ibn al-Walīd who had recently converted, said, "On the day of Mu'tah, nine swords were broken in my hand and only a Yemenite sword of mine remained in my hand."[447] Shortly thereafter was the Battle of Ḥunayn, in which a group of people came from the nearby city of Al-Ṭā'if after the conquest of Mecca to fight Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) army. Lastly was the battle of Tabūk, in which the Muslims marched to Tabūk near Syria due to reports that the Byzantines were planning to attack, but no battle took place as a result. According to Martin Lings, it was "during those days the Prophet made a treaty of peace with a Christian and Jewish community who lived at the head of the gulf of 'Aqabah and along its eastern coast."[448] Soon afterwards, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) passed away leaving behind a great debate as to what he intended with his political and military doctrines. He managed to introduce many ethical obligations during war hitherto unpracticed by the Arabs, such as not killing women, children, or monks.[449] He also condemned the use of poisoned arrows or poisoning water wells, which many historians say is an overall condemnation of biological warfare.[450] Lastly, he commanded that if a people surrender under siege, Muslim armies were to treat the captives well, not destroy their land or trees, and to respect their places of worship.[451]

[447] Al-Bukhārī and Khan, #565.
[448] Lings, 319.
[449] Ibid., 323.
[450] Ibid., 324.
[451] Ibid.

But did Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) intend for Muslims to continue pursuing battles and expanding the empire by the sword? The evidence suggests that jihād was not aimed at expanding political borders per se, but rather to spread the free practice of Islām to people living under tyrannies that prevented them from even hearing about Islām. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrates an important incident in this regard. Someone came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and said, "A man might fight for spoils, or a might fight for fame, or a man might fight for his status to be raised. Who is in the way of Allāh?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, "Whoever fights for the word of Allāh to be highest, he is in the path of Allāh."[452] In the version of Imām Muslim, the questioner said, "A man might fight out of anger, or a man might fight out of zeal."[453] Hence, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) denied that wealth, fame, status, anger, or zeal could ever be legitimate motives for jihād. That only leaves raising the word of Allāh as the right motive, but what does this phrase mean? Ibn Ḥajar suggests that it refers to the "call of Allāh to Islām" (*da'wat Allāh ilā al-Islām*).[454] 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar, son of the second Caliph and well-known for his neutrality in regards to the latter civil wars, once criticized the revolutionaries who challenged his stance, saying, "Muḥammad, peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him, only fought the idolaters because there was persecution (*fitnah*) to make them enter their religion. It was not like your fighting for the sake of dominion (*al-mulk*)."[455] Another point to consider is the saying among the Arabs, "When the Romans are not campaigned against, they campaign [against you]."[456] This suggests that it was commonly understood that competing empires were

[452] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:20 #2810.
[453] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1955)*, 3:1513 #1904.
[454] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 6:28.
[455] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 9:54 #7095.
[456] Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām Al-Nubalā'*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006) 14:85.

considered hostile by default; such as the nature of foreign relations in those times. What can be gathered from this evidence is that jihād was always intended to be in the service of religious goals, that is, to protect the religion and its adherents and remove political obstacles that would not allow Islām spread peacefully and naturally.

3.2.12 The Success of Islām's Military Conquests

The military of success of the Muslims after the death of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) had far-reaching effects on world history. Even from the narrow view of military history, they were impressive victories indeed. Peter Crawford writes:

> That the seventh century marks the founding of Islām is probably its well-known fact. However, the extent of the military conquests achieved in the name of this new religion by its skilled adherents is far less famous. Fueled by their new faith, they would first unite the Arabian Peninsula and then not only challenge the traditional hegemony of Rome and Persia, but smash it to smithereens. Within a generation of the Prophet Muḥammad's death, with a series of expertly conducted campaigns, monumental battles, and shrewd use of political and religious tolerance, Islām and its adherents had taken the first massive strides towards severely altering the course of history not just for the Middle East but the entire Mediterranean, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, through one of the most spectacular military advances in all of history.[457]

[457] Crawford, xii.

What is interesting about Crawford's words is that he views the tolerance showed by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) as a reason for the spread of his religion militarily. Nation-states functioned in such a way that when a people were conquered, their religious symbols were desecrated. The jihād of the early Muslims, in the military sense, was built on the idea of fighting against tyranny but not harming the people under such tyranny. They were to be liberated by their tyrants in the Muslim view. Rabī'ah ibn 'Āmir, a commander under the second Caliph of Islām, famously stated to the Persian Ruler Rustum, "We were sent to liberate people from the worship of other servants to the worship of the Lord of all servants, from the oppression of tyrants to the freedom of Islām, and from the constriction of this world to the expansiveness of the afterlife."[458]

Some historians assert that Muslims exaggerated their early heroic military victories in Magḥāzī literature, as mentioned by Crawford, "The recorded sizes of Muslim armies are often hard to accept due to their seemingly formulaic nature. They are usually portrayed as being particularly small in number throughout their earliest history, such as raiding parties featuring forces numbering less than 100. However, the rapidity with which Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was able to field armies of up to and beyond 10,000 might be cause for some suspicion – 300 at Badr; 700 Mecca at Uḥud; 3,000 at Mu'ta, 10,000 at Mecca; 12,000 at Hunayn."[459] So while they were able to use highly motivated men to defeat larger armies in the name of jihād, later writers seem to have been compelled to alter the numbers. Yet what the lower numbers do suggest is that jihād was viewed by Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and early Muslims as true faith fighting valiantly against the great oppressors of the world, rather than overwhelming other populations with the brute force of huge armies.

[458] Rodgers, 1.
[459] Crawford, 94.

Crawford tells us further that Heraclius "would employ barbarians *en masse*. This willingness to employ foreigners would continue throughout the existence of the Roman Empire and a list compiled from the sources includes every people with which the Romans were in contact — Huns, Slavs, Gepids, Lombards, Bulgars, Avars, Franks, Burgundians, Arabs, Goths, Vandals, Berbers, Armenians, Caucasians, Turks, and Persians. Such reliance on non-Romans might suggest that there was some trouble finding Roman recruits."[460] Similarly, but in important ways qualitatively different, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was able to motivate people through a mix of belief in the Hereafter and a sense of justice to join in battles. The early Muslims outlined a way to involve non-Muslims in a manner that would embed them further into Muslim societies:

> With the advent of Islām's temporal power, a vague outline of a recruiting process begins to emerge. Volunteers or prescribed tribes gathered at Medina or at a predetermined site, were formed into an army and then sent into the field. Most of the muqatila- 'fighting men' — who served in the Arab armies were of Bedouin origin, which is unsurprising given that raiding, fighting and familiarity with riding-spears, swords and archery were integral parts of their daily lives. However, the rapid expansion of the Muslim community brought with it a wider spectrum of potential soldier. There is some evidence that the Muslims equipped some of their more settled or poorer members to fight. Alliances with Jewish, Christian, and other non-Muslim tribes played major roles in the military survival and successes of Muḥammad and his Umma in its earliest years. Clients and

[460] Ibid., 12.

> slaves were also present in Muslim armies with the likelihood being that not all of them were Arabic in origin. Defection also added to the military strength of the Muslim armies while at the same time undermining its opponents.[461]

The inclusion of Jews and Christians as *Ahl al-Kitāb*, or the "people of the book," was instrumental in these policies and likely contributed to the overall success of the early Muslims' military campaigns. Ahl al-Kitāb is the term the Qur'ān uses to describe Jews and Christians. The question that many historians, jurists, and scholars have posed is whether or not the status of Ahl al-Kitāb was to be granted to religions other than Jews and Christians. Early Muslim scholars debated the subject by paying particular attention to Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) statements regarding Zoroastrians. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "Follow the precedent with the Zoroastrians (*al-majūs*) as you do for the people of the book."[462] This equivalency was significant for numerous reasons. The early Muslims considered the Zoroastrians to be the worst people on earth from a theological point of view. The founding jurist Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have said that "their religion is foul," and Ibn 'Abbās, the cousin and companion of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), said that their book "was written by Satan."[463] Nevertheless, they believed that they should be treated with tolerance and not fought unless they instigated a conflict with the Muslims. The Zoroastrians would not be given the same status of Ahl al-Kitāb in regards to marriage and dietary Islāmic law, since it is permissible for Muslims to eat Jewish and Christian ritually-slaughtered food and marry their women, but they would be

[461] Ibid., 13.
[462] Mālik ibn Anas, 1:289 #742.
[463] Friedmann, 76.

afforded similar legal protections, "The generally agreed ruling that Muslims may not marry their women or consume meat slaughtered by them is an indication that they are not People of the Book, and the permissions included in Qur'ān 5:5 are therefore not applicable to them."[464] What this proved is that there is a precedent for establishing peace with all people and that most Islāmic schools of laws "do not consider possession a heavenly book as an indispensable requirement for a group's inclusion in category of *ahl al-dhimma* (i.e. protected citizens)."[465] Thus while no heavenly book was revealed to them according to most early traditionalists, there is practically no disagreement concerning their status as being protected like Ahl al-Kitāb.

3.2.13 Retaining the Non-Militaristic Meaning of Jihād

Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was a master at diplomacy and ending conflicts without violence, and as mentioned previously, such political efforts were essential to his activities that fell under the category of jihād. As put by Crawford, "The Arabs in particular seem to have quickly realized that victory often depended on preliminary political success rather than sheer military power. With this realization, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.), his successors and their commanders proved themselves adept at separating a settlement from its allies through negotiation or blockade and then offering protection and toleration in return for a fixed tribute. Through such a combination, even the most major of cities Antioch and Alexandria—Damascus, Ctesiphon, Jerusalem, would prove to be within the grasp of Muslim forces."[466] One could cynically argue that Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) only preached a

[464] Ibid.
[465] Ibid., 77.
[466] Crawford, 93.

non-violent version of jihād in the early days of persecution, but later adopted an exclusively militaristic version once he was in power. However, numerous traditions after Medina maintained the same spirit as in early Mecca. For example, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) said, "The [true] warrior (*mujāhid*) is one who wages jihād against himself for the sake of Allāh."[467] 'Ā'ishah also reported that she asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), "Is jihād [a duty] upon women?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, "Yes, a jihād in which there is no fighting, the Ḥajj and 'Umrah."[468] Both of these statements, the latter of which was certainly made in the last few years of Muḥammad's (P.B.U.H.) life, retain an entirely non-militaristic meaning of Jihād. Indeed, the true mujāhid is said to be one who fights jihād against his own soul, by which is meant a fight against one's ego, vain desires, and impulses to sin.

Just as any military struggle performed by Muslims for Islāmic reasons is properly classified as jihād, any good deed which either realized the goals of jihād in a society or the struggle of jihād in an individual's capacity could be categorizes as the same. The companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not understand jihād to be limited to only warfare, societal effect, or even individual reward. Rather, they saw it as struggle for the sake of God to embody God's commands, and to spread God's words and teachings in society. As such, when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) mentions the best jihād being a word of truth in the face of a tyrant, it should not be surprising the Imām Mālik narrated a similar statement from the earliest Muslims, "Whoever departs to the mosque in the morning, intending to go nowhere else and to teach goodness, or to learn it himself, and then he returns to his house, he is like one who strives in jihād in the way of Allāh and returns with

[467] Ibn Ḥanbal, 39:375 #23949.
[468] Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1975), 2:968 #2901.

spoils."[469] In another ḥadīth, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, "One who lends effort to the widows and the poor is like one who strives in jihād in the way of Allāh, or one who stands to pray and never stops, or one who fasts and never breaks his fast."[470] In essence, not only is the reward of taking care of a widow like perpetual jihād, prayer, or fasting, but it is as if to suggest that of the goals of jihād is to secure the poor and the widows in society, and of the goals of prayer to become more aware of your duty to God's creation, and of the goals of fasting to become more aware of God's blessings upon you that you may act charitably out of empathy and gratitude.

3.3 CONCLUSION

The final verdict on Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and the early jihād must take into account many factors. As this study has shown, there is not much room for ambiguity when studying the life of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) or early Islāmic doctrine, as the source material has been documented and analyzed from several perspectives. The problem is that in the extrapolation and interpretation of those texts, one is bound to be highly subjective based upon their overall views of the religion and character of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.). There are many factors that are often overlooked when discussing the spread of Islām. For some, the ideological component is not properly considered when discussing the unique military strategy of the Muslim empire that contributed to the Arab expansion. Khalid Blankinship brings this point to our attention, "This could scarcely have occurred without the ideological motivation provided by Islām, however many other factors may have played a

[469] Mālik ibn Anas, 1:207 #529.
[470] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1955)*, 4:2286 #2982.

role as well."[471] Some would argue that it was the ability of the Muslims to control populations as they expanded that made their jihād uniquely successful. Other scholars and historians argue that it was not the sword that won Islām its place in the world, but the unique tolerance of the growing Muslim empire. Trevor Ling wrote that, "The present extent of the Muslim population of the world is due almost entirely to missionary activity, tolerance, persuasion, and the attraction which Islām has exerted for one reason or another."[472] The largest Muslim countries in the world did not become Muslim because they were forced to through military jihād. Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world, was never conquered militarily. Even in situations in which Muslims did conquer in the name of jihād and expanded the empire, the tolerance exhibited was well acknowledged and documented. An example is found in the Muslim conquest of parts of India. In 712 C.E., when the Muslims conquered Sind of India, many of those belonging to lower castes happily embraced Islām and would become the reason for the spread of Islām throughout India. Muḥammad Ibn Qasim, the new ruler, impressed all with his declaration that, "They have been taken under our protection, and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their Gods. Nobody must be prohibited or prevented from following his own religion."[473] Sir Thomas Arnold, who emphasized the development of the Ottoman empire, wrote that the spread of Islām "exhibits a toleration such as was at that time quite unknown in the rest of Europe."[474]

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[471] Blankinship, 19.
[472] Trevor Ling, *A History of Religion East and West; an Introduction and Interpretation*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 330.
[473] H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians the Muhammadan Period*, (Allahabad: Kitah Mahal Private, 1964.), 177.
[474] Arnold, 134.

The Qur'ān undoubtedly contains unrestricted references to fighting in defense of yourself and others. There are also apocalyptic narrations in the Aḥādīth, authentic or not, of various lands coming under Muslim rule. But did Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) teach that the Muslim empire should wage war on non-Muslim empires simply for being non-Muslims? In a counter example to this claim, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, "Leave the Abyssinians alone so long as they leave you alone, and leave the Turks alone so long as they leave you alone."[475] The question then becomes how do we reconcile all the mitigating evidence with the various verses of the Qur'ān and traditions of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) which speak of the virtue of military jihād in unqualified terms? Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) sums up his entire theory by saying, "Verily, the most tyrannical of people to Allāh, Almighty and Glorified, is he who kills those who did not fight him."[476] Every text mentioning jihād is qualified by the ethics and principles mentioned in this research, as expressed in equally authoritative and authentic Islāmic texts.

In summary, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) taught that peace is always to be sought instead of war, but martyrdom for one who shows courage at a time of danger is a praiseworthy virtue. His idea of expansion was one that would occur through a combination of religious preaching, natural military strife, exemplary moral standards, tolerance for weaker populations, and strategic alliances that would secure the propagation of his attractive message. This interpretation of jihād as an internal struggle, sometimes combined with a military campaign in a just war as a last resort, is not some apologetic post-modern view; rather, it is and has been mainstream Islāmic orthodoxy, deeply rooted in the core texts of the religion.

[475] Abū Dāwūd, 4:114 #4309.
[476] Ibn Ḥanbal, 26:298 #16376.

CHAPTER FOUR

JIHĀD CYRSTALIZED: IBN TAYMĪYAH'S STRUGGLE

From the very beginning of the Prophet's ministry (P.B.U.H.) until his death, one cannot deny that the early Muslims were under constant physical threat from the pagan Arabs over theological and social disagreements. After enduring 13 years of persecution, exile, boycotts, and in some cases death, the Muslims were forced to leave to the neighboring city of Yathrib, where they established themselves a safe haven from which to conduct their first military excursions against their oppressors. What followed were years of intense skirmishes and battles, finally resulting in the Muslims' victory over their enemies and the unification of Arabia under a single banner. Shortly thereafter, Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) and his companions dedicated their time towards spreading the message of Islām to nearby lands, offering peace-treaties to the rulers of Arab tribes situated on the outskirts of the Islāmic polity, as well as the leaders of the Byzantine and Persian empires. Eventually, what followed were a series of skirmishes that developed into full-blown conquests, resulting in the creation of an empire that stretched from the Arabian Peninsula to modern day Spain. These successes would subsequently give rise to the Dynastic clans, such as the Umayyad's and their eventual usurpers, the 'Abbāsids. It would also lead to a Golden Age of scientific and technological progress, beginning from the 9th century and coming to a decline by the 16th – the forerunner to the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment.

More importantly, the establishment of the Islāmic empire allowed jurists to begin systematizing and codifying legal rulings pertaining to the administration of society, as well as international relations and especially conduct in war. However, as discussed earlier, these legal scholars gave little attention to the justifications behind declaring a war,

preferring to focus their attention on proper conduct during battle (*jus in bello*), the benefits and consequences of warfare, and what constitutes a proper enemy.[477] The reasons for this lack of discourse on *casus belli*, or what type of provocation legitimizes war as a response, does not appear to be explicated by scholars during the formative period, at least not explicitly. This may be due to the fact that they saw it as too obvious to warrant sufficient mention. But why this seemingly apathetic sentiment? The answer lies in the nature of the world prior to the last century. Although the scope of this research is not to detail the function and design of the Islāmic jurisprudential tradition during this period, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the perspectives of warfare by jurists so as to understand the contexts in which they understood jihād.

4.1 CONTEXTS OF WARFARE

The development of legal rulings during the formative years of Islāmic jurisprudence rested on several assumptions derived from interpretations of the Qur'ān and the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) life. However, those interpretations also rested on the assumptions of the jurists themselves with their biases largely contingent on historical circumstances. While it may be tempting to believe that scholars formed their opinions solely from Islāmic sources, one must be conscious of the fact that many of these sources (i.e. the Aḥādīth and Sīrah) had yet to be systematically organized and verified, and were not as easily accessible. Rather, jurists had to rely much on oral traditions and within the contexts surrounding those traditions. As described by Beham Sadegi:

[477] Al-Dawoody, 77.

> Islāmic law evolved as the judgment of jurists. In the first two centuries of Islām, some of these decisions reflected practices that had always been part of the life of the community, ever since the Prophet Muḥammad had introduced them. Other decisions reflected local customs of non-Prophetic origin: tribal law, personal preferences, and ad hoc decisions. These laws of non-Prophetic origin sometimes supplemented the Prophet's laws and sometimes supplanted them… In this early period, law did not primarily derive from the reports about the Prophet (Aḥādīth) and his companions…[478]

This is especially the case when examining the jurists understanding of Islām's position on warfare, how it should be conducted, and why. A notable example occurs in the classical treatment of conquered people who had fallen under the rule of Muslim governance by military force. After succumbing to defeat, these non-Muslim subjects were given the status of the 'protected' class (*dhimmī*) as long as they continued to pay a tax or tribute (*jizyah*), refrained from taking up arms against Muslims, and followed some general guidelines that reinforced a position of political inferiority. However, many of the initial rules surrounding their status cannot be said to have originated from Islāmic source texts; rather, such rules were merely copied from Byzantine and Persian laws of that time – a changeover of precedents imposed on the subjugated as a symbolic gesture of their defeat at the hands of those they once considered "inferior." In other words, "an eye for an eye."

The earliest known legal document to stipulate these conditions is known as the 'Pact of Umar,' which has been attributed to the companion of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and

[478] Beham Sadegi, *The Logic of Law Making in Islam: Women and Prayer in the Legal Tradition*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2-3.

second Caliph of Islām, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Commenting on this document and its Byzantium influences, Milka Levy-Rubin notes:

> The Pact of ‘Umar reflects a process in which Muslim society was redefining itself versus the conquered societies. During this process, various elements from the ethos and codes of the conquered were adopted by the Muslims. These adopted codes were then used to dispossess the non-Muslims of their former place in society, thus creating a new situation in which the Muslims held the superior position of rulers in Islāmicate society while the non-Muslims were the ruled and subjected... Byzantine law is indeed reflected in the Pact of ‘Umar and provides precedents for the clauses regarding synagogue building, slave ownership, apostasy and [the prohibition of] prevention from joining Islām. Other Muslim laws regarding non-Muslims not found in the Pact of ‘Umar, such as those relating to the prohibition on holding public office, questions of inheritance, testimony, and the defamation of Islām also originated in Byzantine law regarding non-Christians.[479]

Despite this synthesis between Muslim practice and Byzantine laws, jurists felt no hesitation with codifying these rulings, nor did they feel the need to point out this synthesis or the justifications behind it. Likewise, there does not appear to have been any pushback from the scholarly class with regard to these practices, indicating that they were viewed as perfectly natural within the milieu of the Islāmic legal tradition. Likewise, jurists’ explication of warfare in Islām was given the same treatment.

[479] Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Caliphate: From Surrender to Coexistence*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 162.

There are a number of clues one can follow in order to ascertain the early Muslim's justifications for war. The most explicit of these can be found in the Qur'ān and the *Sīrah* as discussed in the previous chapter: an amalgamation of commands, prohibitions, and events that succinctly defined the early Muslim experience as that of an oppressed community attempting to survive against an aggressive foe. Although less explicit, there are some indications of this same sentiment within the writings of the jurists themselves up until the 13th century. For example, the Shāfi'ī jurist, 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 1262), detailed the benefits of military jihād in his work *Rules of the Derivation of Laws for Reforming the People*. Therein, he describes one of the benefits as followed:

> The second type of the benefits of jihād is the prevention of *mafsadah* (harm)… the immediate one is through its removing disbelief from the hearts of the disbelievers through them being killed or through their accepting Islām out of fear of death. Similarly, it prevents the disbelievers from gaining power over Muslims and killing them and taking their properties and making their women and children slaves, and violating the sanctity of religion.[480]

Implicit in Al-'Izz's explanation is the sentiment that jihād equally prevents the harm of both disbelief itself and the warring behavior of disbelievers. Curiously, he considers these two things to be in the same category, suggesting that they are one in the same. This implies that he views the state of disbelief as not merely an adoption of a contrary theological view to Islām, but as an intrinsic quality of being militarily aggressive

[480] 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām and Muhammad al-Muhsin (trans.), *Rules of Derivation of Laws for Reforming the People (Awa'id al-ahkam fi islah al-anam)*, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Banking & Finance Institute Malaysia), 75.

towards Muslims. But why consider these two things to be similar? The answer lies in the world that Muslims were used to inhabiting up until this period and beyond: a world of empire.

Dawoody remarks that the scholars "formulated their rules of international law on the assumption that a state of war existed between the Islāmic and non- Muslim states. It is important to add here that this assumption was not based on an interpretation of the Islāmic sources but on the reality of their current situation. In fact, a state of war, in the absence of a peace treaty, characterizes the pattern of international relations during the periods in which Islām emerged."[481] The essence of empire was characterized by unrelenting conquests and the desire to dominate neighboring lands for the sake of gaining territory, resources, human capital (i.e. slave labor or potential soldiers), and converting conquered populations to their ideology or global vision.[482] It was during this period that the Islāmic polity emerged, surrounded by nations which – by their very nature – sought any means necessary to subjugate potential competitors. In summary, war was the default state of international relations. Any polity that desired to avoid engaging in war had to offer a treaty in advance, sometimes under humiliating terms; it was a fragile method of peace in a time wherein peace was not normally considered lucrative, nor advantageous. It is no surprise then that many early jurists generally divided the world into two separate factions: the 'house of Islām' (*dār al-Islām*) and the 'house of War' (*dār al-ḥarb*). One could argue that these categories were *descriptive* of the current reality, rather than a prescription of permanent war. However, there were sometimes exceptions to this dichotomy, as those

[481] Al-Dawoody, 80.
[482] Andreas Wimmer and Brian Min, "From Empire to Nation-State: Explaining Wars in the Modern World, 1816-2001," *American Sociological Review*, vol. 71, i. 6 (2006): 873.

with peace treaties fell into a third, although rarer, category: the 'house of covenant' (*dār al-'ahd*).[483]

The first two divisions are self-explanatory in that the former represents the abode where Islām reigns supreme, and the latter is characterized by hostility towards Islām and Muslims. More tellingly, those nations deemed the 'house of war' were by their very essence seen as targets of hostility *because* they were seen as essentially hostile. In other words, through this division, the early Muslim jurists contrasted Islām to war *in toto*, an implicit admission that runs contrary to those who claim Islām is synonymous with war. Furthermore, the existence of a third abode, the 'house of covenant,' showcases that jurists were aware of the potential for peace, that there could be amicable or at least non-aggressive relations via contract between Muslims and non-Muslims, despite the seemingly intrinsic and hostile nature of disbelief.

It is through this experience of empire that Muslims understood the world and the necessity for war in order to survive and preserve their religion and community. Yet the jurists saw no need to elucidate that experience because it was such an obvious aspect of their lives. In other words, there was absolutely no need to do so; everyone, including their enemies, was aware of this reality. It was not until the late 13th to 14th centuries that the justifications for war against disbelievers (*sabab qitāl al-kuffār*), or Islāmic *casus belli*, was given adequate attention in a theoretical manner. More specifically, this aspect of warfare was finally made explicit by the Ḥanbalī jurist, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah.[484]

[483] Al-Dawoody, 92.
[484] Al-Dawoody, 78.

4.2 THE LIFE OF IBN TAYMĪYAH

Ibn Taymīyah was born to a family of scholars in 1263 in the small city of Ḥarrān, situated in northern Syria. His grandfather, Abū al-Barkat Majd al-Dīn ibn Taymīyah al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1255) and his uncle Fakhr al-Dīn (d. 1225), were both considered credible scholars of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence and were well-known by the community.[485] However, Ibn Taymīyah would never really experience the recognition or privilege of his family's status. He would eventually become a scholar himself, but the world that he entered was rife with conflict and discord, a tumultuous period in Islāmic history that would plague his career till death. In the year 1256, the Mongols began their invasion of the 'Abbāsid empire. By 1258 – five years prior to his birth – they had sacked the capital city of Baghdad, placing it in ruins and the Muslim population in disarray. Although this initial invasion would eventually be thwarted by 1265 at the hands of the Mamlūk sultanate, it would only come to be one of six subsequent incursions by Mongol forces into Muslim lands, lasting until the middle of the 14th century (1341).[486]

When Ibn Taymīyah had reached the age of seven, he and his family were forced to flee their hometown, fearing the Mongols' advance. Even after taking refuge in Damascus, they could not escape the horrors of war. The Mongols laid siege to the city on at least four separate occasions, eventually forcing the young Ibn Taymīyah to personally take up arms against an enemy that had threatened his existence ever since birth. Ovamir Anjum describes the circumstances of this period and the sentiment of the Muslim world in the following manner:

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[485] Henri Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., (Brill Reference Online, 2012). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3388> (accessed 28 September, 2019).
[486] Denise Aigle, "The Mongol Invasions of Bilad al-Sham by Ghazan Khan and Ibn Taymiyyah's Three 'Anti-Mongol' Fatwas", *Mamluk Studies Review*, vol. 11, i. 2 (2006): 89-90.

> The terror and apparent invincibility of the Mongols, their killing of the ‘Abbāsid caliph, destruction of the center of the Islāmic world, Baghdad, and the annexation of the entire eastern half of the Islāmic world were traumatic beyond comprehension. The world seemed to be nearing its end, and many interpreted these events in apocalyptic terms.[487]

Much of what defines Ibn Taymīyah’s perception of the world and how he responded to it throughout his life must be placed against this backdrop, from his views on politics to the concept of jihād itself. That said, a more detailed analysis of his character and personal conflicts is also necessary. Fortunately, there is a wealth of information on his life, as he had many dedicated followers, and critics, who took the time to write detailed biographies about him. Perhaps the most prominent of them was written by one of his closest disciples, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 1347/1348). This work, often referred to as the *Nubdha* (excerpt)[488] by subsequent biographers who utilized the text as a primary source, contains eye-witness accounts of Al-Dhahabī himself during the life of Ibn Taymīyah and after. Perhaps the most fascinating feature of this biography is the seemingly objective stance that Al-Dhahabī takes on his teacher. Caterina Bori describes his sentiments towards Ibn Taymīyah as a range “between unqualified praise of his intellect and sharp criticism of his public conduct.”[489] For example, speaking positively about Ibn Taymīyah’s knowledge of the Islāmic scholarly tradition, Al-Dhahabī writes:

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[487] Ovamir Anjum, *Politics, Law and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 173-174.
[488] Caterina Bori, “A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyyah,” *Bulletin for the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London*, vol. 6, i. 3 (2004): 322.
[489] Caterina Bori, “Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jama’atuhu: Authority, Conflict and Consensus in Ibn Taymiyya’s Circle” in *Ibn Taymiyyah and His Times*, edited by Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 37.

> He had a perfect knowledge of the transmitters of Muslim of challenging and correcting them and their peers. He knew the kinds of traditions, whether with a long chain or a short one, knowing the authentic from the faulty. This came by virtue of his full recall of their bases in which he excelled. None of his contemporaries ever reached his standard nor came close to him. He was outstanding in quoting traditions and extracting arguments from them. He was the best of the best in tracing them back to the Sunnah Books or to the *Musnad* to such a degree that it was entirely credible to say of him that: "Every tradition that Ibn Taymiyya does not know is no tradition." Nevertheless, the all-encompassing knowledge is to God alone; and regardless of the fact that, in the knowledge of tradition, he would draw from a sea while other Imāms would draw from mere streams.[490]

Likewise, in other places, Al-Dhahabī praises Ibn Taymīyah's knowledge of Qur'ānic exegesis, Islāmic history, theology, an his erudition and courage in the face of censorship and imprisonment. Other qualities that he praised were Ibn Taymīyah's memory, recalling at one point a time when he was imprisoned in Alexandria, Egypt, and subsequently requested by the governor to write a number of Aḥādīth for him to learn and pass down. Apparently, Ibn Taymīyah wrote 10 pages worth of narrations from memory, in order, with full chains of transmissions, something which Al-Dhahabī considered unparalleled at the time.[491] However, he also had some harsh words of criticism for his

[490] Bori, *A New Source*, 341.
[491] Ibid., 342.

teacher, often remarking that Ibn Taymīyah was "frequently tactless and argumentative"[492] and "involved himself in weighty questions [of law and theology] that neither the intellects of his contemporaries nor their learned could bear."[493] As a result, he was frequently chastised by other scholars, jailed for his opinions, and eventually lost many followers. Even Al-Dhahabī felt the need to distance himself from Ibn Taymīyah on occasion, fearing the loss of his scholarly career for his loyalties.[494]

Ibn Taymīyah's often severe and pedantic confrontational approach appears to stem largely from his personal experiences with the deteriorating state of Muslim society at the time. That said, he does not exclusively, nor even primarily, blame foreign invaders for these problems, but rathers takes a more holistic approach, at times even placing most of the responsibility at the feet of his contemporaries. As Ovamir Anjum notes:

> Ibn Taymiyya's recognition that his world was in crisis was not unique, but his understanding of it was, as was his approach to the solution. His diagnosis was neither of a technical nature… nor apocalyptic like that of most preachers and scholars. Rather, it was a total critique of the contemporary Muslim society, starting with its intellectual apparatus and social and political institutions. His criticism was directed to all segments of society, but in particular to the ulama [scholars] and the rulers… Although the Mongol onslaught and the general sociopolitical upheaval of his age are undeniable aspects of the context in which to understand Ibn

[492] Ibid., 343.
[493] Ibid., 346.
[494] Ibid., 327-328.

> Taymiyya's writing, he contended that the spiritual and intellectual corruption of the umma is far worse than its military defeats.[495]

Ibn Taymīyah's insistence to look inward and critique the state of intellectualism and spirituality of his fellow Muslims may have been one of the major reasons he began to lose his support within the traditional scholarly community. For example, Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1393), who wrote a biographical dictionary, comments that few scholars within Ibn Taymīyah's circle were traditional Ḥanbalīs and that he was marginalized for his obsession with "trivial matters" and appeals to minority viewpoints:

> A number of traditionalists scholars, including the most learned among them (*al-huffaz*) and the jurists, loved and venerated the Shaykh [Ibn Taymīyah], but did not like his excessive preoccupation with the speculative theologians and the philosophers… Similarly, many scholars, jurists, traditionalists and virtuous men disliked his taking isolated and irregular positions in questions of law, something which the Pious Ancestors (*salaf*) had abhorred. This was to the point where one of the judges of our school of law [Ḥanbalī] prohibited him from issuing fatwás on some of these issues.[496]

Ibn Taymīyah was known for taking positions that rocked the establishment. He often deviated away from the methods of his own school when he felt it at odds with Islāmic primary source texts, historical data, and rationality. His fiercely independent thinking was perhaps influenced by his assumption that the traditional scholarly class was partly to blame for the malaise of the Muslim world. His disregard for local scholarly authority

[495] Anjum, 177.
[496] Bori, "Ibn Taymiyya wa-Jama'atuhu, in *Ibn Taymiyyah and His Times*, 34.

likewise drove him to adopt a methodology that, for reasons we may consider pragmatic, effectively allowed him to circumvent that authority when necessary. For Ibn Taymīyah, reason and revelation were not in opposition and could be used in conjunction to comprehend the religion and its laws; it was a perspective considered anathema by many of his contemporaries.[497] More damning to his reputation among the scholarly class, however, were his direct attacks on the unquestioned authority of the established legal schools of thought and their followers (i.e. Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī, and Ḥanbalī). Case in point, his work *The Removal of Blame from the Great Imāms* (*Raf' al-malām 'an al-a'immat al-a'lām*) is particularly noteworthy, more for what it indirectly sets out to do as opposed to its apparent goal.

During his time, uncritical legal conformity (*taqlīd*) of the four legal schools was endemic and, according to Ibn Taymīyah, unwarranted as the scholars themselves were largely to blame for the Muslim community's subservience to corrupt social and political structures within society. From the onset, his treatise became a means to not only "remove blame from the Imāms," but to showcase the mistakes of the schools' founders, proving they should not be followed blindly, and effectively freeing the Muslim community from the corruptions of the scholarly class.[498] In the very beginning of his time, Ibn Taymīyah respectfully, yet audaciously, summarizes the reasons behind the early scholars' mistaken views:

> It should be known that none of the Imāms who are generally accepted by the Muslim ummah would intentionally oppose the Prophet in any aspect of his Sunnah, whether small or great… They believe that the words of anyone

[497] Ibid., 39.
[498] Ibid., 203.

> other than the Prophet may be accepted or rejected. [Yet] if any of their opinions were found to be in opposition to an authentic Aḥādīth, then there must be a just excuse for that and these excuses fall under one of the three categories – Firstly, that the scholar did not believe that the Prophet [actually] uttered the Aḥādīth. Secondly, that the scholar did not think that the issue in question was [actually] intended to be covered by the Prophetic Aḥādīth. Thirdly, the scholar believed the rule [contained in the Aḥādīth] to have been abrogated.[499]

The implications behind this text had numerous consequences, both beneficial and detrimental for Ibn Taymīyah. On the one hand, it increased his support base by including the common man. The fact that someone from outside of the scholarly establishment could now, theoretically, perform their own independent legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) was something which Ibn Taymīyah himself considered possible; of course, within the limits. Naturally, he did not believe that a scholar and a layman were in the same category with regard to knowledge, but the fact that the former no was no longer entirely *dependent on* the latter was a radical notion, if not, in the words of Yossef Raporport, "self-serving."[500] Similarly, it freed him from having to appeal exclusively to one school of thought and justified his intellectual program of reform and renewal. This had an immediate effect for what might have been Ibn Taymīyah's purpose all along: to justify his war with the Mongols.

During the initial invasion by the Mongols in 1260, under the leadership of Hulegu, the Mamlūk forces were not hesitant to fight back and repel the invaders from Syria.

[499] Ibn Taymīyah and Al-Matroudi (trans.), "The Removal of Blame from the Great Imams: An Annotated Translation of Ibn Taymīyah's Raf' al-Malām 'an al-A'immat al-A'lām." *Islamic Studies*, 46 (3), 328-329.
[500] Yossef Rapoport, "Ibn Taymiyya's Radical Legal Thought: Rationalism, Pluralism, and the Primacy of Intention," in *Ibn Taymiyyah and His Times*, 207.

However, forty years later when Ghazan Khan attempted to conquer Syria under the Mongol banner, things had changed dramatically; he and a good majority of his men had converted to Islām.[501] The initial impression by the Mamlūks was that of apprehensive skepticism. For Ghazan Khan had not only converted to Islām, but also granted himself the title of 'Padisha al-Islām' ('King of Islām').[502] In a written correspondence between Ghazan Khan and the Mamlūk sultan, Al-Mālik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (d. 1341), the latter accused the former of converting to Islām only for a strategic advantage, knowing that many of his own subjects had refused to fight the Mongols out of fear that they would be violating Islāmic ethics by killing fellow believers and rebelling against a Muslim authority. However, Ibn Taymīyah concurred with the sultan's conclusions, declaring that the Mongols were in fact disbelievers and that it was permissible to fight them.[503] Among the ways he was able to justify fighting these new "converts" was to undermine early scholarly consensus regarding the impermissibility of fighting against fellow Muslims. Writing in his work *Governance According to Allāh's Law in Reforming the Ruler and his Flock* (*Al-Siyāsah al-shar'īyah fī iṣlāḥ al-rā'ī wal-ra'īyah*), Ibn Taymīyah attempts to correct early scholarly consensus while connecting it to the Mamlūks' reluctance to fight against the invading forces (i.e. Mongols):

> The earlier [jurists] have done three things that require caution and correction. First, [their legalization of] fighting against anyone who rebels against any ruler, even if the rebel is similar to him or the same as the ruler in the extent of his following of the *Shari'a* and the Sunna, [arguing that]

[501] Aigle, 90.
[502] Ibid., 92.
[503] Ibid., 97.

> that leads to division, division being [the] breakdown of order (*fitna*) [which is prohibited]. Second, there equation between those [who rebel against the ruler] and those who rebel against some or all the rulings of Islām. Third, their equation between those and the Khawarij [extremists]… That is why you find [the jurists who conflate these issues] getting mixed up in the vain ambitions of kings and rulers and commanding [on account of their religious authority] to join them against their enemies in fighting.[504]

Although speculative, the notion that Ibn Taymīyah felt it necessary to undermine the authority of past scholars and his contemporaries for the sake of fighting off the Mongol invaders is a tempting hypothesis. Admittedly, it may not have been his only or primary motivation, but one cannot deny that his experience with war and destruction by the hands of foreign influence played a significant role in his views. On the other hand, the adoption of his new methodology, and the positions he eventually came to support, provided sufficient excuse for the scholarly establishment to condemn and imprison him on multiple occasions – a total of six times.

Al-Dhahabī attributes Ibn Taymīyah's trials to a number of positions he held that would appear trivial in comparison to his undermining of the entire scholarly class. Among them included his fatwá opposing the consensus on divorce, where a man uttering, "I divorce you," three times to his wife made his divorce irrevocable. Ibn Taymīyah reversed this ruling by asserting that three utterances was merely one in substance.[505] Yet, the one fatwá which landed Ibn Taymmiyyah in prison for the last time was his view that it was impermissible to visit the grave of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) with that intent alone, a common

[504] Anjum, 250.
[505] Bori, *A New Source*, 346.

and popular practice at the time. Al-Dhahabī recalls the consequences his master suffered as a result of his declaration:

> Because of this matter, they [the people] slandered him, and asked for a legal opinion against him, and a group of people [scholars] wrote concerning the issue that the error of attributing imperfection to prophecy must be stopped. On this basis he was accused of unbelief. Several people issued a legal opinion according to which in this matter he made the mistake of the *mujtahidin* [independent jurist], which they forgave, whereas [another] group agreed with him. But the matter was exacerbated, so he was made to go back to a hall in the Citadel [prison], where he remained for some twenty months. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that he was forbidden to write and read. They left him neither a notebook nor ink. He remained for months in that condition, so he devoted himself to Qur'ān recitation and would go on reciting it from beginning to end three or more times. And he would spend the night in prayer, worshipping his lord until he died.[506]

Ibn Taymīyah passed away due to illness while in jail, at the age of 67. Despite the witch-hunt he was subjected to by some within the scholarly community, he was revered by the masses. Al-Dhahabī records that over 60,000 people attended his funeral, women mourned openly in the streets, and his life was celebrated through numerous elegies.[507] He would come to have a profound impact on the Islāmic scholarly tradition, most immediately felt by his disciples who would carry on his legacy. However, his influence

[506] Ibid., 347-438.
[507] Ibid., 438.

would wane over subsequent generations. According to Khaled El-Rouayheb, Ibn Taymīyah had little clout among later scholars, who went so far as to accuse him of deviancy and irrelevance, only being remembered through a small following of Ḥanbalī thinkers.[508] That said, whether this lack of influence for three centuries within the Islāmic scholarly tradition actually counts as sufficient evidence of lacking influence is debatable, as Ibn Taymīyah is still considered a highly regarded scholar among both modern mainstream Islāmic thinkers and extremists alike. In the words of Daniel Lav, "The recent revival of his polemics on faith is thus a testament to the unique potency of Ibn Taymiyya's thought; from beyond the grave, he continues to roil the Islāmic world in new and highly important arenas of disputation."[509] But why did the sudden resurgence of Taymīyan thought happen?

4.3 THE NOTORIOUS IMĀM?

In October of 1981, Egypt held its annual victory parade in its capital city Cairo, in commemoration of the army's achievements against Israel during Operation Badr, a military excursion that successfully regained control of a portion of the Sinai Peninsula during the Yom Kippur War. However, the celebration was bitter-sweet, as it came during a time of unprecedented tensions in Egyptian society. Two years prior (March 26, 1979), then President Anwar Sadat had signed the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in Washington, D.C. alongside Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (d. 1992) in an effort to normalize

[508] Khaled El-Rouayheb, "From Ibn Hajar al-Ḥaytimī (d. 1566) to Khayr al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d. 1899): Changing views of Ibn Taymiyya among non-Hanbali Sunni scholars," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 269-270.
[509] Daniel Lav, *Radical Islam and the Revival of Medieval Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 10-11.

relations between the two states, which had been in conflict since the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. The treaty not only removed the Israeli military presence from the remaining portions of the Sinai Peninsula, thereby ceding control to Egypt, but also opened up trade relations between the two states, allowing for Israeli ships to pass freely through the Suez Canal. Although this was considered a triumph by the international community, eventually leading to Sadat and Bengin earning the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize, it did not come without consequences.

For most of the Muslim world, Sadat's attempts at forging amicable relations with Israel was nothing less than treacherous, primarily because of the ongoing plight of the Palestinian people who had claimed right of the land which the Israelis now occupied. Then leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Yaser Arafat (d. 2004), was the most vocal critic of the treaty, saying, "Let them sign what they like. False peace will not last."[510] But perhaps the greatest condemnation came from the now defunct Arab League, which immediately suspended Egypt's membership; it was a suspension that lasted a decade until it was lifted in 1989. The political isolation of Egypt from its neighbors produced a wave of disapproval that quickly spread within Egyptian society, destabilizing it to its very core. Within months, riots broke out across the country and calls for revolution could be heard in the streets. Radical militant groups appealed to the disillusionment of the masses and called for revolution. One group in particular came into existence in the same year Sadat signed the treaty, known as the 'Jihād Organization' (*Jamā'at al-Jihād*) founded by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām Faraj (d. 1982). Faraj was a graduate from Cairo

[510] BBC On This Day, "1979: Israel and Egypt shake hands on peace deal," *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, 26 March 1979. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/26/newsid_2806000/2806245.stm> (accessed 12 March, 2019).

University's engineering faculty and had little formal education in Islām, being largely self-studied. Nonetheless, he commanded adoration from his peers and created a network of like-minded and aggrieved activists from amongst the university's student body.[511] With the goal of overthrowing the government, Faraj and his compatriots began stockpiling weapons and convincing military leaders to join them in executing a coup. However, government officials eventually discovered the militants' plan and Sadat initiated a crackdown across the country in September of 1981, arresting approximately fifteen hundred of the Jihād Organization's members and other anti-government activists. Faraj managed to evade arrest and he and his remaining supporters went underground.[512]

The crackdown emboldened protestors and bolstered their claims regarding the illegitimacy of Sadat's government. It was not only the citizens who felt betrayed, but many within the military as well. By June of the same year, a coup was attempted but failed. At this point, members of the Jihād Organization realized they could never hope for an open revolution, so they became more clandestine in their approach. Faraj enlisted the help of Khālid al-Islāmbouli (d. 1982), a Lieutenant in the Egyptian Army, to carry out Sadat's assassination. Unbeknownst to Sadat on that fateful day of October 6, 1981, during Egypt's annual celebration, his assassins would be part of the military parade.

Al-Islāmbouli and his subordinates sat in an armored truck as they passed by cheering spectators. As they drew near to the Prime Minister, the truck came to a halt, and al-Islāmbouli dismounted the vehicle and quickly approached Sadat. Assuming his Lieutenant wanted to show respect, Sadat began to salute. In response, al-Islāmbouli raised

[511] Mona Hassan, "Modern Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, 356.
[512] "Cracking Down: Sadat locks up his opponents," *Time Magazine*, vol. 118 i. 11 (14 September 1981), 52.

his hands, but instead of saluting he removed his helmet, brandishing three hand grenades from underneath. Al-Islāmbouli then threw all the grenades at once. A startled Sadat ran in panic, and he and his cohorts managed to survive the initial blasts since the grenades were not thrown far enough. His assassins were armed with AK-47's to finish the job. Al-Islāmbouli approached his target and began firing frantically into the shell-shocked crowd. Two minutes later, Sadat lay motionless and ten others were dead. The assassins attempted to flee the scene as chaos erupted among the citizens and loyalist soldiers. However, one of them was gunned down and three others arrested. Al-Islāmbouli and the remaining assassins, along with Faraj, would be found only a few months later and executed by a firing squad.[513] Sadat was rushed to the hospital where he died two hours later.

The aftermath of this event drew out one major question from across the world: Why did this happen? It did not take too long to ascertain the answer. Police investigating the assassination discovered a pamphlet left by the perpetrators at the scene of the crime entitled, "The Neglected Duty" (*al-Farīḍah al-Ghā'ibah*), written by Faraj himself. The pamphlet detailed the necessity of fighting in jihād against disbelievers and those who did not abide by Islāmic law. Much of it was laced with passages from the Qur'ān and Aḥādīth. Yet, its most striking feature was the presence of numerous discussions on the legalities of war (*jus ad bellum*) and what constitutes justified targets of aggression, as well as the particular classical scholar Faraj primarily references throughout his tome: Ibn Taymīyah. For many people across the Muslim world and the West, this would be the first time learning of the medieval scholar's name; unfortunately coloring a terrible first impression of what Ibn Taymīyah stood for.

[513] Johannes Jansen, *The Neglected Duty: The Creed of Sadat's Assassins*, (New York: RVP Press, 2013), 1.

4.3.1 "The Neglected Duty"

For centuries, scholars and activists alike have drawn influence from Ibn Taymīyah in one way or another. In the modern period, this has manifested itself into several varying interpretations, which may be regarded as mutually exclusive paradigms. As Ḥassān notes: Moving beyond the scope of his written corpus, Muslims of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have admired and sought to emulate Ibn Taymiyya's active interest in ensuring the welfare of his community and society… This model of Ibn Taymiyya's political thought and social activism, however, has not been recalled and reconstituted in a monolithic fashion, and his precedent has been subject to multiple, and even conflicting, interpretations in the modern era.[514]

Despite the multitude of ues of Ibn Taymīyah's example, Ḥassān is able to divide them into two general categories. The first of these she calls 'Accommodationists,' represented by the contemporary Islāmic scholar Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, who calls for a "courteous and pluralistic" society.[515] By using Ibn Taymīyah's fatwá, Al-Qaraḍāwī is able to find a balanced approach in engaging political and interfaith discourse through an Islāmic perspective. On the other hand, people like Faraj and his group the Jihād Organization view Ibn Taymīyah as a justifying source for aggression and violence, sometimes even terrorism. They fall under the polar opposite category, which Ḥassān labels the 'Confrontationists.' It is this category of influence that has led many across the world to view Ibn Taymīyah as "the evil progenitor of Islāmic radicalism."[516]

[514] Mona Hassan, "Modern Interpretations…" in *Ibn Taymiyyah and His Times*, 350-351.
[515] Ibid., 352.
[516] Ibid., 356.

Although both categories claim to derive their views from Ibn Taymīyah, they cannot both be equally authentic to his teachings at the same time. One of them is certainly incorrect in their comprehension of the medieval scholar's views. That said, when examining the 'Confrontationist' approach, a number of discrepancies can be found that undermine their claims to Ibn Tamiyyah's intellectual legacy; the most prominent of all is their reliance on his *fatwá*, or legal verdict, against the Mongols.

In the "Neglected Duty," Faraj cites Ibn Taymīyah's opinions in numerous places to justify war against disbelievers, the overthrow of the Egyptian government, and by extension, the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Not only that, but he attempts to counter any possible objections to his reasoning. In many ways, this is a truly comprehensive work with extensive arguments and references. For example, after some preliminary remarks discussing the Muslim world's "negligence" to uphold their duty of fighting against disbelievers, Faraj begins to lead the discourse into a political manifesto regarding the status of nation-states and the legitimacy of Muslim leaders. First, he divides polities according to their religious states, citing a number of scholars – including Ibn Taymīyah – as support:

> Here a question appears: Do we [i.e. Egyptians] live in an Islāmic state? One of the characteristics of such a state is that is it ruled by the laws of Islām. The Imām Abū Ḥanīfah gave as his opinion that the House of Islām changes into the House of Unbelief if three conditions are fulfilled simultaneously: 1. If it is ruled by other laws than those of Islām, 2. The disappearance of safety from the Muslim inhabitants, 3. its being adjacent or close… to the House of Unbelief to such an extent that this is a source of

> danger to the Muslims and a cause for the disappearance of their safety… The Imām Muḥammad and the Imām Abū Yusūf, both (jurists) from the school of Abū Ḥanīfah, gave as their opinion that a House [i.e. polity/territory] must be categorized according to the laws by which it is ruled. If (a House) is ruled by the laws of Islām, then it is a House of Islām. If (a House) is ruled by the laws of Unbelief, it is the House of Uneblief… The Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah, in his Fatwá collection… "When he was asked about a two called Mardin which have been ruled by the Rule of Islām, but in which the situation had then changed and people had established the rule of Unbelief, whether such a town constitutes a House of War or a House of Peace [Islām], he answered that these two concepts become combined in it… It had become, however, a third category: A Muslim in it should be treated according to what is due to him, and someone who has rebelled against the Law of Islām should (in his turn) be treated according to what is due to him..." … So peace is whom peace is due, and war to whom war is due… the State (of Egypt in which we live today) is ruled by the Laws of Unbelief although the majority of its inhabitants are Muslims.[517]

Faraj cites scholars primarily from the Ḥanafī school to elucidate how the world should be divided. He then compares the situation of Eygpt during his period with that of Ibn Taymīyah's understanding of a particular city under Mongol rule (i.e. Mardin), implying that non-Muslims within a Muslim majority society should therefore be fought

[517] Jansen, *The Neglected Duty*, 166.

and killed as per Ibn Taymīyah's inference. However, there are some issues with Faraj's use of these sources. For one, nowhere in his treatise does he ever explain what exactly "laws of unbelief" are. He seems to assume his readers will understand that Egyptian society is not functioning on the basis of Islām, without elaborating in detail. Secondly, he does not explicate the historical contexts behind the scholarly categorization of the Houses and even appears to contradict the very scholars he uses to bolster his argument. For instance, he assumes that not implementing Islāmic law is indicative that a Muslim-majority society is under the 'House of Unbelief,' despite his first reference – Abū Hanifa – stating that two other conditions related to safety and security need to be met simultaneously before making this judgment. Although he claims there is "no contradiction" between the scholars and his conclusions, he does not relieve the reader of this doubt.

Faraj then appeals to Ibn Taymīyah's fatwá declaring a third category of House, assuming that Muslims and "someone who has rebelled against the Law of Islām" should be treated "accordingly," that is, the latter should be fought. Faraj explains further in the next section of his treatise:

> The Laws by which the Muslims are ruled today are the laws of Unbelief, they are actually codes of law that were made by infidels who then subjected the Muslims to these (codes)… After the disappearance of the Caliphate definitively in the year 1924, and (after) the removal of the laws of Islām in their entirety, and (after) their substitution by laws that were imposed by

> infidels, the situation (of the Muslims) became identical to the situation of the Mongols…[518]

Faraj claims that the situation of contemporary Muslims in Egypt (and the world) is "identical" to the circumstances facing the Muslims between the 13th and 14th centuries. Faraj adds some supplementary exposition wherein he argues that the Muslim leaders of today are "apostates" due to them not implementing Islāmic Law; once again, without any clear indication as to what Islāmic Law is or should be.[519] He then concludes this part of his treatise with what appears to be a preemptive counter to possible objections to his comparison between modern Egypt and Mongol rule (i.e. that it may be anachronistic) in his section, "The Comparison between the Mongols and Today's Rulers." Once again, he invokes Ibn Taymīyah as support:

> In a question directed to the Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah by a concerned Muslim, the questioner says, describing their (the Mongol's) situation to the Imām (Ibn Taymīyah): "These Mongols who come again and again to Syria and who have pronounced the double Islāmic Confession of Faith and who have not remained in the state of Unbelief in which they originally found themselves – have they to be fought and how must someone who has been forced to join their armies be judged? – (The question is relevant because) they attached Muslim (units) to the ranks of their army by force, 'obligatory conscription' – and how much the (Muslim) scholars, jurists, mystics, etc., who are in their camp be judged, and what can be said about those who fight

[518] Ibid., 167.
[519] Ibid., 169–172.

them are Muslims as well, and that both of them are wrong (*zalim*) and that one should not serve in the army of any of these two groups?"[520]

Faraj interjects some commentary after the questioner, "This is the same difficult doubt (*shubhah*) which exists now."[521] He then continues with a lengthy reply by Ibn Taymīyah to the questioner:

> In his description of the Mongols, Ibn Taymīyah says: "Everyone who is with them in the state over which they rule has to be regarded as belonging to the most evil class of men… They fight under the banners of Genghis Khan – the name of their king. Whosoever enters their obedience becomes their client [ally/friend] even if he is an infidel. Whosoever rebels against their authority is regarded as their enemy even if he were from amongst the best of Muslims. They do not fight under the banners of Islām and they do not impose the head tax (on the Jews and Christians).[522]

Faraj inserts additional commentary between Ibn Taymīyah's responses in the form of rhetorical questions. For example, he asks, "Is this not (exactly) what is the case (in Egypt today)?" and, "Are not these characteristics the same characteristics as those of the Rulers of this age, and their entourage of clients as well?"[523] Although Faraj extends the discussion into matters pertaining to the doctrine of jihād and other relevant, but ancillary, concerns, it is clear that the basis of his argument hinges on both the historical precedent of the Mongol era and Ibn Taymīyah's fatwá.

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[520] Ibid., 172–173.
[521] Ibid., 173.
[522] Ibid.
[523] Ibid., 173-174.

But is Faraj's analysis accurate that there is a similarity between the Mongol period and the situation in Egypt during his time? Even a cursory examination between these two eras casts doubt on Faraj's deductions. Among the more obvious differences are the following:

1. During Ibn Taymīyah's time, the Caliphate (under the Mamlūks) was still operational, whereas during Faraj's time the Caliphate – by his own admission – it had been completely dismantled. As such, only Ibn Taymīyah could genuinely argue that rebelling against *established* Islāmic Law justified a military response.
2. By extension, Faraj cannot argue that the rulers of his period are "similar" to the Mongol invaders because they merely inherited a system that already displaced the Caliphate. They were not in the process of displacing it themselves, now were they the invaders. In other words, when compared to Ibn Taymīyah, Faraj's analysis and solution to the problem are post-hoc.
3. Faraj's appeal to traditional scholars' divisions of 'Houses' is based on the implicit legal clause that all polities were in a natural state of war (i.e. empires). However, this division cannot adequately apply to nation-states like Egypt, where the default state is neutrality or peace (as per U.N. regulations). This was emphasized by the Egyptian scholar of Islāmic law, Abū Zahrah (d. 1974), who wrote the following prior to Faraj's *The Neglected Duty*, "It is essential to note that the world today is united under a single organization [United Nations] where each member [state] adheres to its terms and conditions. The Islāmic ruling in this case is that it is obliged to fulfill all agreements and treaties that the Islāmic lands commit themselves to, as is stipulated by the law of fulfilling treaties endorsed by the Qur'ān. Based on this, those non-Muslim countries

that are members of this world organization are not deemed as the Abode of War (*dār al-ḥarb*). Instead, they should be seen as Abodes of Truce (*dār al-'ahd*)."[524]

These dissimilarities are telling given that Faraj relies on these two situations being exactly the same in order to push his narrative; it calls into question the veracity of his argument and his understanding of history and Islāmic law. Likewise, it calls into question his use of Ibn Taymīyah, and whether the latter would actually agree with his assessment if given the opportunity to observe the differences of contexts himself. In other words, Faraj cannot say with certainty that Ibn Taymīyah would concur with his conflation of the 14th century Mamlūk society facing off against the Mongol hordes and modern-day Egypt. In fact, Islāmic scholars themselves have responded to *The Neglected Duty* on numerous occasions, pointing out these same discrepancies. For instance, the Muftī of Egypt and Imām of Al-Azhar University, Shaykh Jadd al-Haqq (d. 1996), released a 25 page missive to Faraj's polemic on January 3, 1981.[525] Therein, Al-Haqq addressed the arguments put forth point by point, stressing the erroneous exegetical readings of the Qur'ān, Aḥādīth, and Sīrah literature, by Faraj and his compatriots. With regard to the nature of Egyptian society, Al-Haqq rebuts the notion that it is not an Islāmic society with the following argument:

> The prayer ceremonies are executed, mosques are opened everywhere, religious taxes paid, people make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the rule of Islām (*ḥukm al-Islām*) is widespread except in certain matters like the Islāmic punishments, usury, and other things that are contained in the laws

[524] Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Al-'Alāqāt al-Dawlīyah fī al-Islām*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1995), 77.
[525] Ibid., 54.

> of the country, but this does not make the country, the people, the rulers, and the ruled apostates, since we believe that God's rule (*ḥukm Allāh*) is better.[526]

Al-Haqq essentially appeals to the "no one is perfect" principle to make his case, asserting that the intention of Egyptians is to follow Islām, but they are held back by circumstance. As such, one cannot legitimately claim that the rulers and their subjects are apostates because both still admit the supremacy of Islāmic law over all others. At most, they may be considered "sinners," but they are still Muslims. Eventually, Al-Haqq tackles Faraj's comparison of Egyptian society with the Mongols and points out the latter's anachronistic reasoning, offering a rhetorical question as a rejoinder, "Is it really meaningful to compare between these savage destructive Mongols on the one hand, and the rulers and the inhabitants of Egypt on the other?"[527]

Near the end of his refutation, Al-Haqq attempts to make a startling comparison of his own between those who follow the reasoning of *The Neglected Duty* and a heretical group: the Khawārij ("those who left"), an early extremist sect who declared the majority of Muslims apostates by virtue of the fact that they did not abide by the full letter of Islāmic law (as they interpreted it). Al-Haqq even shows how they use similar textual evidences from the Qur'ān in order to justify their indiscriminate violence.[528] As a result of their thinking, the Khawārij went on to slaughter countless Muslims, including some of the companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself. In other words, they were the Muslim world's first domestic terrorists.

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[526] Quoted in Ibid., 55.
[527] Ibid., 56.
[528] Johanes Jansen, "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Thirteenth Century: A Formative Period of Modern Muslim Radicalism," (*Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, vol. 5, i. 6 (1987-1988): 392.

Later scholars would come address *The Neglected Duty* in a similar fashion. Even up until the present period, scholars have discovered much to criticize about the document. For example, in 2010, Muslim scholars from across the world held a conference at Artuklu University, Turkey, to discuss the impact and influence of Ibn Taymīyah's fatwá of Mardin on extremists. Among the scholars present at the conference were Ḥamzah Yusūf and the Mauratanian scholar 'Abd Allāh bin Bayyah. Numerous lectures were given discussing the historical contexts of Ibn Taymīyah's legal opinions and the fallacious reasoning of terrorists claiming him as their intellectual flag-bearer.[529] Despite the depth of the presentations, one of the primary solutions towards resolving the problem of extremism in the Muslim world was in fact to correct the translation of the Mardin fatwá itself, suggesting that a mere typo was the reason behind the indiscriminate violence of groups like Al-Qaeda. According to Bin Bayyah, the fatwá was apparently being misread because of a single word in the phrase, "A Muslim should be treated according to what is due to him, and someone who has rebelled against the Law of Islām should be fought [*yuqātal*] according to what is due to him..." In earlier editions of the fatwá, the word is not *yuqātal*, but rather *yu'āmal* ("to treat accordingly"). Therefore, simply correcting the typo would resolve the issue. However, Yahya Michot, an author of *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule: Ibn Taymiyya*, a comprehensive study of Ibn Taymīyah's legal opinions with special focus on his fatwá on Mardin, argues that proposing a typo correction as the remedy to extremism in the Muslim world is nothing but "naïve if not farcical."[530] As an alternative, Michot suggests focusing purely on refuting the fallacious de-contextualization of Ibn

[529] Yayhya Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's 'New Mardin Fatwa.' Is genetically modified Islam (GMI) carcinogenic?"*The Muslim World: Special Edition*, vol. 101, i. 2 (2011): 131-132.
[530] Michot, "Ibn Taymiyya's 'New Mardin Fatwa'," 146.

Taymīyah's thought as a means to undermine the extremists' narrative; what he calls the "Mongolization" of Anwar Sadat and other Muslim rulers across the world.[531] Likewise, academics such as Johannes Jansen concur with this anaylsis of Michot and Al-Haqq:

> The modern radicals themselves consequently feel obliged to deny with some vehemence that there are similarities between their own movement and the ancient *khawarij*. They quote Ibn Taymīyah extensively but in a slightly selective way, and are deeply impressed by Ibn Taymīyah's condemnation of the Mongols. Although this condemnation of the Mongols was dictated by the particular circumstances of the Mamlūk-Mongol conflict of the thirteenth century…[532]

Given the above discussion, it may be summarized that Ibn Taymīyah's notoriety is unwarranted considering his misuse by extremists in the contemporary period. Although widely referenced, his legal opinions had a specific historical context disparate to that of 20th century Egyptian society. Anwar Sadat, for all of his flaws, did not deserve to die on the basis of a faulty comparison between him and the Mongols of the 14th century, nor can we assume that this was the primary motivation behind the actions of the Jihād Organization in the first place. Rather, the grievances of the Egyptian youth were developed over a lengthy period of time, from the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, to the humiliating defeat of the Arab states in the Arab-Israeli War and the subsequent occupation of the Palestinian people, to the instability of Egyptian society all culminating in a shameful reminder as Sadat acquiesced to Israel's supremacy in the Egypt-Israel treaty of 1979. It

[531] Yahya Michot, "Mamlūks, Qalandars, Rafidis, and the 'Other' Ibn Taymiyyah," in *Memoriam: The Thirteenth Annual Victor Danner Memorial Lecture*, (2015), 6-7.
[532] Jansen, "Ibn Taymiyyah and the Thirteenth Century," 396.

was this final moment which pushed many youth over the edge of tolerance and eventually led them down the dark path of rationalizing their violent intentions by means of misappropriating an obscure medieval scholar who had a tenacity for justice through war. Blinded by their desire for change or confused by their ignorance, or both, Faraj and his companions removed Ibn Taymīyah from his historical context and referenced his fatwá as justification to assassinate its leaders. As a consequence, many innocent people were killed and Ibn Taymīyah was wrongly impugned.

Yet, despite scholars and academics deconstructing *The Neglected Duty*, Ibn Taymīyah's appeal would not wane among extremists seeking to utilize his credibility for their own ends. Rather, they would find other means to exploit his notoriety as a war-mongering cleric seeking to conquer non-Muslims. More specifically, they would borrow extensively from his explicit statements on jihād's *casus belli*.

4.4 IBN TAYMĪYAH'S STRUGGLE

In his *Siyāsah* in the chapter entitled, "Jihād against the Disbelievers: The Decisive Fight," (*Jihād al-Kuffār: Al-Qitāl al-Fāṣil*), Ibn Taymīyah offers a concise justification for jihād rooted in the Islāmic scholarly tradition:

> Since lawful warfare is essentially Jihād and since its aim is that the religion is entirely for Allāh [2:189, 8:39] and the word of Allāh is uppermost [9:40], therefore, according to all Muslims, those who stand in the way of this aim must be fought. As for those who cannot offer resistance or cannot fight, such as women, children, monks, old people, the blind, handicapped and their likes, they shall not be killed, unless they actually fight with words

> [e.g. by propaganda] and acts [e.g. by spying or otherwise assisting in the warfare]. Some [jurists] are of the opinion that all of them may be killed, on the mere ground that they are unbelievers, but they make an exception for women and children since they constitute property for Muslims. However, the first opinion is the correct one, because we may only fight those who fight us when we want to make the religion of Allāh victorious. Allāh has said in this respect: "And fight in the way of Allāh those who fight you, but transgress not: Allāh loves not the transgressors" [Al-Qur'ān, 2:190]…This means that, although there is evil and abomination in killing, there is greater evil and abomination in the persecution of the unbelievers. Now, the unbelief of those who do not hinder the Muslims from establishing the religion of Allāh is only prejudicial to themselves.[533]

Elsewhere he states explicitly in his *Book of Prophethood* (*Kitāb al-Nubūwāt*), "The disbelievers, they are only to be fought on condition of them waging war first, as is the view of the majority of scholars, and as is proven by the Book and the Sunnah."[534] This principle underpinned his interpretation of other religious texts that apparently justified a more belligerent stance. For instance, the often misquoted ḥadīth, "I have been commanded to fight the people…" was cited by Bonner and others, as mentioned previously, to suggest that the jihād is defined as "the propagation of the faith through combat," as if aggression were the default stance of Islām vis-à-vis non-Muslims. In contrast, Ibn Taymīyah chooses to limit the scope of the statement to refer only to combatants and aggressors, commenting,

[533] Ibn Taymīyah and Abū Umamah (trans.), *The Religious and Moral Doctrine of Jihād*, (Birmingham: Makhtaba Al-Anṣār Publications, 2001), 28-29.
[534] Ibn Taymīyah, *Kitāb al-Nubūwāt*, (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1985), 140.

"The meaning is to fight those who are combatants, whom Allah has called us to fight. It does not mean to fight those who have a treaty (*mu'āhidīn*), with whom Allah has commanded us to fulfill their treaty."[535] In fact, there is a brief worked attributed to Ibn Taymīyah entitled *Qā'idah Mukhtaṣarah fī Qitāl al-Kuffār wa Muhādanatuhum wa Taḥrīm Qatlahum li Mujarrad Kufrihim (An abridged rule on fighting the uneblievers, making truce with them, and prohibition of fighting them merely because of their disbelief)*, which is a concise treatise expressing his views on this topic. The treatise's editor Ibrāhīm al-Zīr Āl Ḥamad also connects his statements in the treatise to many of his other works, demonstrating that Ibn Taymīyah consistently championed this view across all of his writings.[536]

Thus, we can see clearly that Ibn Taymīyah considers jihād a purely defensive endeavor, a reaction to aggression by disbelievers when the Muslims want to make religion "entirely for Allāh" and His Word "uppermost." He describes the two categories of legitimate targets as "people of obstruction (*ahl al-mumā'anah*) and combat (*al-muqātalah*)."[537] In other words, as long as Muslims are allowed to practice and proselytize Islām without fear of persecution, then jihād in the sense of warfare is unnecessary. This sentiment is reiterated by Ibn Taymīyah's closest disciples, such as the Shāfi'ī exegete Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) who authored the famous commentary on the Qur'ān, *Commentary of the Glorious Qur'ān* (*Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azim*). In numerous places in his tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr discussed jihād at length. For instance, his commentary on Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:190 ("fight

[535] Ibn Taymīyah and Ibn Qāsim (ed.), *Majmū' al-Fatāwà*, (al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah: Majma' al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā'at al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf), 19:20.
[536] Ibn Taymīyah and Ibrāhīm al-Zīr Āl Ḥamad (ed.), *Qā'idah Mukhtaṣarah fī Qitāl al-Kuffār wa Muhādanatuhum wa Taḥrīm Qatlahum li Mujarrad Kufrihim*, (al-Riyād: 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Zayr Āl Ḥamad, 2004).
[537] Ibn Taymīyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwà*, 28:354.

in the way of Allah those who fight you…") is especially noteworthy for his rebuttal of opinions which opine that verses declaring the defensive nature of jihād have been abrogated:

> Abū Al-'Aliyah said, 'This was the first Ayah about fighting that was revealed in Al-Madinah. Ever since it was revealed, Allāh's Messenger (P.B.U.H) used to fight only those who fought him and avoid non-combatants. Later, *Surat Bara'ah* (chapter 9 in the Qur'ān) was revealed.' 'Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said similarly, then he said that this was later abrogated by the Ayah 'then kill them wherever you find them,' (9:5). However, this statement is not plausible, because Allāh's statement 'those who fight you' applies only to fighting the enemies who are engaged in fighting Islām and its people.[538]

Ibn Kathīr supplements the above by reminding his readers of the legal prohibition of targeting non-combatants, such as women, children, the elderly, monks, and all others who are not actively engaged in combat roles.[539] Following this, Ibn Kathīr makes even more explicit statements regarding the discriminate nature of jihād in several other verses. He states in his commentary on Sūrat al-Mumtaḥanah 60:8-9:

> 'Allāh does not forbid you with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes,' means, those who did not have a role in your expulsion. Therefore, Allāh does not forbid you from being kind to the disbelievers who do not fight you because of the religion, such as women and weak disbelievers… Allāh forbids you from being kind

[538] Ibn Kathīr and Ṣafī R. Mubārakfūrī (ed.), *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2003), 1:527.
[539] Ibid., 1:528.

> and befriending with the disbelievers who are openly hostile to you, those who fought against you, expelled you and helped to expel you. Allāh the Exalted forbids you from being their friends and orders you to be their enemy…[540]

Another student of Ibn Taymīyah from the Ḥanbalī school was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (d. 1350), a jurist who authored several works including his *Regulations for the Protected People* (*Ahkām Ahl al-Dhimmah*), which discusses the Islāmic rulings pertaining to non-Muslim subjects living under an Islāmic polity. Therein, he concisely reiterates his teacher's *casus belli* of jihād, "Fighting is only a duty in response to being fought against, not in response to disbelief, which is why women, children, the elderly and infirm, the blind, or monks who stay out of the fighting are not fought. Instead, we only fight those who wage war against us."[541] In another work, Ibn Qayyim rebuts the charge made by Jews and Christians at the time that Islām is an essentially violent and conquest-driven religion that sanctions forced-conversions:

> [The Prophet] never forced the religion upon anyone, but rather he only fought those who waged war against him and fought him first. As for those who made peace with him or conducted a truce, he never fought them and he never compelled them to enter his religion, as his Lord, Glorified and Exalted, commanded him, 'There is no compulsion in religion; right guidance is clear from error.' [Qur'an, al-Baqarah: 256]. The negation in

[540] Ibid., 9:596-597.
[541] Ibn Qayyim, *Ahkām Ahl al-Dhimmah*, 1:110.

> the verse carries the meaning of prohibition, namely, you may not force your religion upon anyone.[542]

It would appear at this point that Ibn Taymīyah's understanding of jihād is antithetical to the likes of the Confrontationists who simply believe fighting is prescribed for combating disbelief in general or to rid the world of those who do not abide by Islāmic precepts.

That said, even his explicit views on jihād have been warped to suit others' agendas. The most glaring instance of this is Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network, Al-Qaeda,[543] who frequently cite Ibn Taymīyah in their polemics; like Faraj, they read far more into his thoughts than what he intended. Case in point, Al-Qaeda's justification for terrorism comes from expanding the medieval scholar's definition of combatants. Where Ibn Taymīyah rightly pointed out a universal sentiment that those who participate in warfare against Muslims beyond physical means, such as through intentional economic support or propaganda, are likewise considered legitimate targets of retaliation, Al-Qaeda attempts to rationalize the same status for unwilling or ignorant participants in a democracy. More specifically, the terrorist organization takes after an obscure fatwá by the Saudi cleric Ḥamūd al-'Aqlā al-Shu'aybī (d. 2001), which states the following:

> [W]e should know that whatever decision the non-Muslim state, America, takes—especially critical decisions which involve war—it is taken based on opinion poll and/or voting within the House of Representatives and Senate, which represent directly, the exact opinion of the people they represent—

[542] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah and Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥājj (ed.), *Hidāyat al-Ḥayārá fī Ajwibat al-Yahūd wal-Naṣārá*, (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam, 1996), 1:237.
[543] Much of Bin Laden's reasoning is previously discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

> the people of America—through their representatives in the Parliament [Congress]. Based on this, any American who voted for war is like a fighter, or at least a supporter.[544]

Al-Shu'aybī reasoned that because the United States (and similar systems of government) operates as a democratic republic made up of representative entities, the latter are actual manifestations of public opinion in the country. However, Al-Shu'aybī's view of the American political process was sophomoric, neglecting the nuances of how the system works and the number of those who not only do not participate in this process, thereby having no legitimate claim to representation, but who unwillingly had representatives vote against their conscience. In other words, the cleric did not account for the variances of opinions in the United States and the general lack of influence of the majority of its constituents. Therefore, to suggest that most Americans are willing supporters of unjust Western intervention is an unsubstantiated assumption formed around fallacious and unsophisticated black-and-white reasoning. Furthermore, his reasoning calls into question how specific attacks on U.S. soil (i.e. the 9/11 attacks) could be justified considering it unlikely, perhaps nearly impossible, to determine which of the targeted civilians were legitimate "combatants" (20%, 30%, or 50%?). Following suit, Al-Qaeda neither delves into these technicalities, nor do they appear concerned with doing so. Rather, they invoke *ad hoc* reasoning in the form of "reciprocity" to justify their indiscriminate violence, referencing the sins of the United States and its allies as sufficient reason for their actions. As Bin Laden himself argued, "We treat others like they treat us. Those who kill our women

[544] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "A Genealogy of Radical Islam," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 28:2, 91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100590905057> (accessed 15 October, 2019).

and our innocent, we kill their women and innocent, until they stop doing so."[545] However, nowhere did Ibn Taymīyah use any such argument, nor did he ever call on Muslims to slaughter indiscriminately. In fact, Al-Qaeda's reasoning runs contrary to any need to demarcate between combatants and non-combatants at all, because the expansive justification of reciprocity makes such a distinction irrelevant. Thus, not only is use of Ibn Taymīyah superfluous, but the fact that his views need to be *added to* by the very individuals utilizing him as a reference is evidence of gross misappropriation. As Quintan Wiktorowicz aptly summarizes:

> Obviously Ibn Taymiyya did not discuss the culpability of individuals in a democracy because this was not a medieval or classical issue. The jihādis have transmogrified his line of argument and a well-established principle in Islāmic jurisprudence that those who assist in combat, even if they are not soldiers, are legitimate targets. By declaring all Americans personally responsible simply because they live in a democracy, Al-Qaeda has manipulated the subjective nature of defining 'the capacity to fight' to justify widescale attacks on non-combatants.[546]

4.5 CONCLUSION

Much of this discussion has revolved around the formative years of Islāmic law with respect to the military jihād, stressing the implicit cause of a world governed solely by aggressive warring states. In this environment, Muslims had to engage in the conquests of their non-allied neighbors so as to secure peace and security of their religious identity,

[545] Bin Laden, 119.
[546] Wiktorowicz, 92.

practices, and missionary imperative. Had they not done so, Islām and its people would not have been preserved from the inevitable onslaught of the Byzantine and Persian empires. This perception of the world was so apparent to the early Muslims that they felt little need to clarify the *casus belli* of jihād in detail. As such, this has caused a great deal of misunderstanding for Muslims and non-Muslims alike in the contemporary period, whom have often applied an anachronistic view of this time period, believing that scholars' hostility towards disbelief merely reflected an intolerance to opposing opinions or religions. However, this could not be further from the truth. Disbelief during this time was not simply a matter of opinion, but of political loyalties in a world wherein war between countries was the default reality. Unlike today, in which the normal state of the world is neutrality or peace, citizens were not defined by their nationality, but by their ideological persuasions (i.e. religion). Therefore, to be a 'disbeliever' was more than just a label for one's adherence to an opposing theology, but for one's intended or active opposition against the Muslim community. It was not until the 13th century when the justifications for war in Islām would be explicated more explicitly by Ibn Taymīyah during a period of unrelenting offensives by the Mongol hoards.

During this time, Muslims were faced with a new dilemma. Initially, the Mongols had invaded as disbelievers, but then eventually claimed to have converted to Islām. This caused a great deal of confusion among the Muslims, especially the scholarly class, due to the fact that Muslims are fundamentally not permitted to fight other Muslims. How, then, should the Mongols be treated given their continued aggression against the Mamlūk sultanate? For Ibn Taymīyah, the answer could be found in another technicality: to proclaim the Mongols as disbelievers for their lax observance of Islāmic law, thereby

freeing the Mamlūk's from their reluctance to fight off the usurpers. Thus, Ibn Taymīyah reignited the jihād against the Mongols by way of undermining their legitimacy as self-proclaimed Muslims. That said, regardless of his intentions, it cannot be said that his anti-Mongol fatwá were meant for any other time or place; they were situated within a specific context of defining legitimate combatants already engaged in aggressive warfare with the Islāmic polity. Nevertheless, modern unlearned extremists have found a way to utilize Ibn Taymīyah's opinions for their own ends, as embodied by the Egyptian terrorist Mohammad Faraj, who was ultimately responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and the former leader of the transnational terrorist organization, Osama bin Laden. By removing Ibn Taymīyah from his historical context, these extremists have universalized and extended his categorizations of non-combatants, going so far as to proclaim contemporary secular leaders identical to the Mongols in every respect, or even arguing that every member of a democracy is an active participant in warfare. Both these views have been found to be erroneous, not only for their own internal inconsistencies, but also due to the current situation in the Muslim world having little in common with Ibn Taymīyah's experience. In fact, it may be argued confidently that had Ibn Taymīyah lived in the contemporary period, he would not have supported the likes of Faraj, nor Bin Laden, but instead considered them both Khawārij extremists for their insistence on rebelling against Muslim leaders, their indiscriminate violence, and their unrestrained excommunication (*takfīr*) of fellow Muslims, even against those from the scholarly class. Ironically, Ibn Taymīyah may have called on the Muslim world to fight them instead, not only for the sake of preserving the Ummah, but for preserving Islām from the taint of violent extremism.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFINING JIHĀD IN MODERNITY:

SYED ABUL 'ALA MAUDOODI

In 1680, the longest running conflict in Indian history began between the Mughal Empire and the Maratha Empire. Taking place on the Deccan Plateau, the conflict was aptly named the 'Deccan Wars' and persisted for twenty-seven years until the death of the last great Mughal Emperor, Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad "Aurangzeb" (d. 1707). The Mughals initiated the conquest of southern India through a series of excursions against Maratha forts on the border. For years, Aurangzeb would obsess over conquering the region at the expense of the unity of his empire and the royal coffers. The best example of this was his insistence on taking control of one of the Maratha's greatest strongholds, the Jinji Fort. Situated on the North Eastern side of today's Tamil Nadu province, the fort was specifically designed to fend off foreign invasion. A massive structure, the Jinji was comprised of three massive citadels built atop three hills spanning 11 km, with a 20 meter thick 13 km wall and an 80 ft moat enclosing the entire complex.[547] The fort was so heavily defended that the Mughals took eight years to finally end the siege, a pyrrhic victory which resulted and the loss of thousands of lives and drained the royal treasury.

Despite these setbacks, the Mughals were largely successful in their conquest. By 1687, a year before the fall of the Jinji fort, Aurangzeb claimed a decisive victory at the Battle of Wai, when the Maratha forces were routed and their most prominent general, Hambirao Mohite, was killed. The defeat had such an impact that many within the Maratha

[547] Bindu Manchanda, *Forts & Palaces of India: Sentinels of History*, (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2006), 149.

army defected. Shortly thereafter, the Maratha Emperor Sambhaji was captured and executed; his wife and infant son, Shahuji Maharaj, taken as captives.

The Maratha Empire was nearly at its end. But a sudden event would reverse the fate of both empires within the span of a few months. On March 3, 1707, Aurangzeb came down with a fever. He died shortly thereafter in his encampment at Ahmadnagar, deep within Maratha territory. It did not take long for his sons to begin quarreling over who should inherit the throne.[548] Immediately, war broke out across the empire. Prince fought against prince, governors rebelled, and tributary states, bitter from being under Mughal rule, finally saw it fit to proclaim independence. Mughal hegemony was challenged from all corners of India. As a result, the campaign against the Maratha came to a halt and their remaining soldiers were given time to recover from their losses. Still, the Hindu polity was far too weakened at this point to stage any sort of counter assault at this time. They neither had the manpower, nor resources, but their fortunes would soon change.

After twenty-one years in captivity, the young prince of the Maratha Empire was about to reclaim his throne. Following the death of Aurangzeb, his son, prince Azam Shah, ordered the release of Shahuji Maharaj in hopes that he would become an ally in the wars of succession.[549] Despite the murdering his father, Aurangzeb raised Shahuji in the same manner as a Mughal noble, thinking that he would eventually be given the chance to barter the young prince in exchange for sovereignty over the Maratha. However, after several attempts at negotiations, this never came to pass. Azam would now take advantage of his father's failed prospect, but his opportunism would mark the beginning of the end of

[548] John F. Richards, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Mughal Empire*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 253.
[549] Ibid., 259.

Mughal authority. In 1708, Shahuji would reclaim his throne, ushering in an era of consolidation and reconquest for his people. In the wake of Mughal disunity and discord, the Maratha Empire would eventually rise to become the dominant force in India. John Richards aptly summarizes this decline and fall of Mughal power:

> Between 1707 and 1720 the centralized structure of [the Mughal] empire broke apart. Four wracking, bitter wars of succession occurred in this thirteen-year period. The bureaucratic edifice manned by skilled technical staff lost its efficiency and probity… After 1720 the formerly centralized empire continued as a loosely knit collection of regional kingdoms, whose rulers, although styling themselves imperial governors, offered only token tribute and service to the Mughal emperor at Delhi. The Marathas, headquartered at Poona, were organizing a counter-empire, one less rigid, more flexible than the Mughal empire. The symbols and aura of Timurid authority continued to fascinate the hardened Indian and European politicians and generals of eighteenth century India. [However] the Mughal empire was fast becoming merely the empty shell of its formerly grand structure.[550]

The Mughal Empire was firmly fixed in Delhi, isolated and surrounded on all sides by rivals they could no longer compete with. Having been dismantled by years of internal dissension, the Maratha Empire would take their place, conquering swaths of territory expanding to every corner of India. The Hindu majority was once again sovereign over their own land. Nonetheless, there was another political power on the rise that would come

[550] Ibid., 291, 297.

to challenge Maratha rule. Such a challenge, though, would come from an unlikely entity, one which would be unique in history: The East Indian Company.

The Company was the first model corporation sponsored by a state. Under the privileged charter of the British crown, it initially functioned as medium of trade, exporting and importing goods between India and Europe. It was also one of the first business ventures to be fully funded by share-holders, allowing for a great deal of autonomy in the broad distribution of risks.[551] However, the Company usually found it difficult to secure contracts, as there was little to no political enforcement of terms from local Indian governments; if a British businessman had signed a written agreement with an Indian supplier, the latter could easily renege without serious consequences. To resolve this dilemma, the Company began cooperating with local governors and royalty, offering them a share of profits in exchange for said enforcement. As a result, the Company became increasingly involved in the Indian political system, even to the extent where it took on progressively influential roles. For example, during conflicts between empires and monarchies, the Company would be approached to lend money so as to compensate government coffers or provide reinforcements in the form of mercenaries in exchange for territory or exclusive contracts. The natural consequence of this was that government officials would come under the burden of debt. In other words, the Company would acquire political power over sovereigns in the form of financial obligations. Eventually, it would undergo a metamorphosis and evolve into the very first Corporatocracy, negotiating peace treaties, land disputes, and even installing governors so that it could rule by proxy. Even

[551] Tirhankar Roy, *The East Indian Company: The World's Most Powerful Corporation*, (London: Penguin, 2012), xi.

during the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Company took advantage of the changing political landscape.

Being that the ultimate goal of any corporation is to maximize profits and limit expenditures, destroying or taking control of the competition can be an effective means to this end. For the Company, its only remaining competition was the Maratha Empire. This 'monopolization of the market' agenda would come to fore in a series of conflicts between the Company and the Maratha, beginning with the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782), a conflict won by the latter. The second military engagement would occur nearly two decades later with the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-1805), and the final conflict with the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-1818). The last of these conflicts was a decisive and devastating defeat, leading to the utter dismantling of the Maratha Empire and its territories under Company control, effectively making the entirety of India a British tributary.[552] By 1858, the Company would cede sovereignty to the British crown, ushering in an age of colonialism that would continue for nearly a century. It was during this period that the descendants of the fallen Mughal Empire would attempt to find their place in a new world wherein they were no longer the dominant culture in society; even as now, their greatest rivals, the Maratha, were also defeated and conquered by foreign invaders. The Indian Muslims now needed to look beyond their homeland in hopes of preserving their identity and gaining independence.

In 1908, the Ottoman Empire was thrust into a vicious civil war. On the one side were Turkish nationalists who went by the moniker 'The Young Turks,' symbolizing a new era of Turkish thought modeled off Western ideas, and on the other was Sultan 'Abd al-

[552] Ibid., 189.

Ḥamīd II (d. 1918) and the traditional Ottoman system of the Caliphate. The conflict came to be known as the 'Young Turk Revolution,' and was primarily led by members of the military. Given the popularity of nationalism at the time and the military power to enforce it, the Young Turks were able to successfully restore the old Ottoman Constitution of 1876, which established a constitutional monarchy and was initially supported by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II only to be revoked two years later.[553] The constitution recognized a multi-party parliamentary system and an electoral process not before seen in the empire, effectively turning the Caliph into a figure head. However, despite now becoming a symbolic position, the global Muslim community still largely perceived the office, and the Ottomans generally, as a functioning Islāmic polity unifying the Muslims under one religious identity.

On Jun 28th 1914, World War I began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, by presumed Serbian nationalists. Given the nature of the world at the time, this was not simply a declaration of war from one nation to another, but to their respective allies as well. As a result of these intricate international security agreements, other countries were quickly pulled into the conflict. On one side stood the Allied Powers, which included the Kingdom of Serbia, the Russian Empire, the British Empire, the Empire of Japan, the French Republic, the Kingdom of Italy, and the United States (among others). On the other side stood the Central Powers, which included the Austro-Hungarian Empire Empire, the German Empire, the Kingdom of Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were initially reluctant to enter the war, but were eventually pressured into it by the Germans to fulfill their treaty ratified in

[553] Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 76.

August of 1914. Two months later, the Ottomans initiated hostilities with Allied Forces by attacking the Russian port of Odessa in what became known as the 'Black Sea Raid.'[554]

By 1918, after devastating years of loss and suffering, the Central Powers were defeated and the 'Great War' had come to an end. The Ottoman Empire was forced to surrender and sign the Armistice of Mudros on October 30th, effectively ending hostilities between the Islāmic polity and Allied Powers, with concessions that included partitioning the Empire's territories to the Allies.[555] Less than a month later, Istanbul (also known as Constantinople) was occupied by British, French, and Italian forces. The Ottoman Empire had fallen, and the Muslim world was in disarray, broken into pieces that were now colonized by foreign entities that neither shared, nor held empathy, for their religious values. For already occupied nations whose resources and manpower were consumed by the war effort, anti-colonial sentiments would reach their climax. This was especially the case for India and its Muslim minority. Writing on the times, Gail Minault explains the predicament that faced the Indian Muslim community:

> The situation in India at the end of 1918 favored new political initiatives. Among a wide variety of Muslims, discontent was patent. The intercommunal skirmishes [between Muslims and Hindus] of the previous year had increased Muslim anxiety about their political future in India, and the defeat of Turkey had rekindled their fears for the future of Islām as a world force… Something had to be done to mobilize Muslim discontent, to broaden their constituency… The prospect for Hindu-Muslim cooperation,

[554] Lawrence Sondhaus, *The Great War at Sea: A Naval History of the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 107.
[555] David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, (New York: Hold Paperbacks, 1989), 372.

> however, seemed less bright than they had in 1916. The communal strife had increased mutual suspicions in several regions. Muslim attention generally seemed riveted on issued that were specifically Islāmic, having little to do with the Indian national cause. But these Islāmic issues also had anti-British content. Muslim loyalism [to nationalism] had been severely eroded, if not extinguished, by the war.[556]

What manifested from these grievances was the beginning of the Khilafat Movement, founded in 1919 by Indian Muslims from various intellectual and professional backgrounds "to lobby the British government for the protection and integrity of the Ottoman caliphate in any post-First World War settlement…"[557] This newfound activism of India's Muslim minority came during a period in which war had taken its toll on the world, when the rise of nationalism presented itself as a major force of opposition to empire, as many nations sought freedom from the consequences of being tributary states forced to participate in their colonizer's bloody conflicts. It was a time of discord and anxiety, when the potential for violence was an ever-present reality. To struggle (i.e. *jihād*) for independence against oppression and reclaim one's identity was paramount to the collective consciousness of Muslims all over the world. And it was during this time that an Islāmic activist-turned-scholar would rise to prominence as a major influence, an intellectual and spiritual guide, for the Indian Muslim community: Syed Abul 'Ala Maudoodi Chisti (d. 1979).

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[556] Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 65-66.
[557] Reza Pankhurst, *The Inevitable Caliphate? A History of the Struggle for Global Islamic Union, 1924 to the Present*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2013), 37.

5.1 MAUDOODI: THE SLEEPING SCHOLAR

Maudoodi (also spelled Mawdudi, Maududi, etc.) was born in 1903 in Aurangabad, India, a small city situated in the province of Maharashtra. This urban landscape is well-known for its 17th century shrine stylized after the Taj Mahal, the Bibi Ka Maqbara, commissioned by Azam Shah – the son of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb – in memory of his mother. However, the historical prestige of this city was not merely found in its monuments, but in the noble lineages which lived therein. Maudoodi came from one such lineage. His father, Aḥmad Ḥassān (d. 1920) was a well-respected lawyer among the people and carried the title of 'sayyid,' a moniker of spiritual nobility[558] passed on from his father, Mir Sayyid Ḥassān, who was regarded as a Ṣūfī master and a privileged patron within the court of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafur (d. 1862). Ḥassān's mother was also of notable descent, being related to the renowned Muslim reformist, Sir Syed Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898), a connection that the Maudoodi family would benefit most from after the fall of the Mughal Empire.[559] Maudoodi's mother, Rugquaya Begum, was likewise of noble blood. Originally hailing from Turkey, the Begum family came to serve the Mughal Empire as military generals and landlords. Maudoodi's maternal grandmother, Mirza Qurban Ali Khan, was a renowned poet and writer in Delhi.[560]

Needless to say, this privileged family history would play a vital role in Maudoodi's upbringing and perception of the world around him, including his father. Because of the family's connection to the reformer Syed Aḥmad Khān, the young Ḥassān was one of the first students recruited to the College of Aligrah, an educational institution set up by the

[558] This title is similar to the English title 'lord' or 'noble.' It's usually translated as 'master.'
[559] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 10.
[560] Ibid., 11.

former in hopes of modernizing Muslim society in concordance with the dominant British culture. However, Ḥassān was eventually forced to leave the school after a short time, primarily due to his father harboring anti-colonial sentiments after the oppression his family, being Mughal loyalists, had endured under British rule, "His father called him home when he learned that he had played cricket, wearing *kāfir* (unbeliever, English) clothes. Aḥmad Ḥassān never finished his modernist education and was sent instead to Allāhabad to study law..."[561]

Despite this, Ḥassān's early education had a profound impact on him and, unlike his father, willingly adopted British cultural norms as his own. It was not until after he had received his degree, began his mariage, and moved to Aurangabad in 1896, that his perspective changed dramatically. There, he met his relative Mawlvi Muḥyī al-Dīn Khān, the chief justice of Aurangabad and a Ṣūfī master of the Chisti Order. Muḥyī al-Dīn did more than simply assist Ḥassān in establishing his legal practice, but also guided him spiritually. Eventually, Ḥassān gave *bay'ah* (allegiance) to Muḥyī al-Dīn and began pursuing a life of mysticism, abandoning his modernist leanings. As a result, he became disillusioned with his professional *qua* worldly life, considering it a detriment to his newfound spiritual awakening, and gave up his practice.

In 1904, Ḥassān sold all his belongings and moved his family to Delhi to be closer to the Ṣūfī shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, where he practiced his mysticism in seclusion and largely neglected his financial obligations to his family. Due to his father's zealousness, Maudoodi and his mother suffered a life of poverty and humiliation. Nevertheless, their circumstances would soon become known to Muḥyī al-Dīn. In 1907,

[561] Ibid., 10.

Ḥassān's spiritual master ordered him to return to Auragabad, rebuking him for his ascetic extremism. That year, Ḥassān reopened his law firm, although still refusing to defend clients whom he felt were guilty. As a result, his business faltered and he procured a meager income, though an income nonetheless.[562] Later in life, Maudoodi would reminisce about his father's religiosity in both a positive and negative light, for he was both impressed with his dedication to Islām, but also seemingly disappointed by his apathy for worldly matters.[563] Maudoodi's criticism of his father's lifestyle would come to influence his distaste for other philosophies that promote mysticism. An example of this can be seen in his summary of Christianity:

> Christianity as we know today is a religion of mysticism, monasticism, and of complete abstinence. It does not lay down a plan for man's socio-cultural life. A code of conduct, spiritual guidance, or a set of rules to be followed to lead a life accordingly is not detectable in it. It does not instruct man about his duties towards himself, his family, his nation, his posterity, and towards God, nor does it advise him the best way of fulfilling them. It neither instructs man as to the reasons for which the Almighty blessed him with his material wealth and his mental and physical prowess, nor does it instruct them on the best way of using them. In fact, it shows a total unconcern for the problems of life.[564]

One may detect in the above criticism a hint of disdain from what Maudoodi experienced as a young boy watching his father escape from his responsibilities. Yet,

[562] Ibid., 10-11.
[563] Ibid., 12.
[564] Maudoodi, *Jihad in Islam*, 286-287.

Maudoodi did believe himself to be the "favorite" among four children and was given a great deal of attention by his father.[565] In this respect, the attention was largely pedagogical in nature.

In accordance with his father's anti-colonial attitude, Maudoodi was homeschooled and secluded from local children. Ḥassān wanted his son to become a religious scholar dedicated to Islām and his Indian culture. Under his tutelage, Maudoodi "began with the study of Persian and Urdu and soon included Arabic, *manṭiq* (logic), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *Aḥādīth* (traditions or sayings of the Prophet)," with teachings in ethics and bed-time stories featuring great men in Islāmic history as supplementary forms of instruction.[566] Maudoodi himself mentions this time in his life as mostly beneficial:

> Since I had originally been kept secluded, in this there existed benefits as well as drawbacks for me, such that when I became involved in society, I was conscious and aware. My father in his talks and education had taught me how to distinguish between good and evil. My early education and his hand had left an indelible mark upon me such that I would not easily fall under the sway of various influences.[567]

Even so, Ḥassān could not keep Maudoodi away from the world. By 1914, at the age of 11, Maudoodi was enrolled in the local *madrasah* (school) to take his exams. Despite being isolated from the education system, he excelled in all subjects with the exception of mathematics. His homeschooling had been so effective that he impressed the school's administration, proving his talents by translating advanced Arabic texts to Urdu. Only a

[565] Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 10.
[566] Ibid., 12.
[567] Syed Abul 'Ala Maudoodi and Muhammad Yusuf Buhtah, "Khud niwisht," in *Mawlana Mawdudi: apni awr dusrun kin azar main*, (Lahore: Idarah-i-Ma'arif-I Islami, 1984), 31.

year later, Ḥassān decided to move the family to Hyderabad, where his prodigious son enrolled in the local seminary under the guidance of Mawlana Hamiduddin Farahi (d. 1930), an alumnus of Aligrah University. Nonetheless, Maudoodi's newfound experiences into the world of public education ended abruptly when his father suffered a stroke, forcing his son to drop out of school and begin working to support the family at the age of 15. It was during this period of life that he would experience an intellectual awakening that would shape his future as a political activist and scholar.

In 1918, Maudoodi began working under his brother Abū'l-Khayr, the editor of the religious journal *Medina*. He had always wanted to be a writer, but was discouraged by his father. Now, he was able to finally live out his dreams as a journalist. Although he would only work at the journal for a mere two months, this would be the start of a new intellectual journey for the young Maudoodi. He and his brother would move back to Delhi, which at the time was the center of political discord and nationalist movements seeking independence from Britain.[568] It was here that he began to learn independently of his madrasah education, studying the works of traditional and modernist thinkers alike. He also immersed himself in the study of the natural sciences, economics, Western philosophy, and began learning English. His fiercely independent spirit and thirst for understanding eventually transitioned itself into political activism. Working as an editor for numerous journals, he was able to observe many activists and their concerns, being influenced through their grievances and fiery speeches. Unlike his father, he did not wish to seclude himself from the world, but instead sought to participate in it as a force of change for the greater good.

[568] Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 14-15.

After suffering from a paralyzing stroke four years' prior, Aḥmad Ḥassān finally passed away in 1920. Maudoodi and his brother were both devastated. However, with the reigning influence of their father out of the picture, they were now free to forge their own paths. By this time, Maudoodi had joined the Khilafat Movement in Jabalpur and worked for a nationalist newspaper called the *Taj*. Although he had found his calling as a political agitator fighting against British rule, giving speeches of his own and writing provocative polemics against his detractors, his brother had grown tired of the life of journalism and went on to become an Islāmic scholar. It would not be long after that until Maudoodi would follow suit. In 1921, he would move back to Delhi (again) where he would meet with Maula Muftī Kifayat'llah and Maulana Aḥmad Sa'īd, two Islāmic scholars from Deoband, and the president and secretary of Jamiat Ulama al-Hind (Society of Scholars of India), respectively. They offered Maudoodi the position of editor for their newspaper *Muslim*. Although the publication would cease printing by 1923, Maudoodi was heavily influenced by his new employers and learned a great deal from them.

Motivated by their combined acumen for Islāmic knowledge and political activism, and his desire to fulfill his father's wishes to become a scholar, Maudoodi decided to continue his formal education, initially under the tutelage of the famous scholar Maulana Abdussalaam Niyazi (d. 1966), and finally finishing his studies at the Fatihpuri Mosque seminary in 1926, where he would receive his *ijāzah* (religious license to teach).[569] It was at the end of his religious education that Maudoodi would begin writing his first major work in defense of Islām: *Al-Jihād fī al-Islām* (*Jihād in Islām*).

[569] Ibid., 16-18.

5.2 Al-JIHĀD FĪ AL-ISLĀM

In 1919, the Turkish nationalists staged a rebellion against the Allied occupiers in what would come be known as the 'Turkish War of Independence.' However, the British had designs to fully take control of Turkey and turn it into a Western-Christian state. The Ottoman Sultan at the time, 'Abd al-Majīd II (d. 1944), was largely passive to this move against the nationalists, as he needed the British to retain any semblance of power. Despite pushback from the British, the nationalist movement declared victory in 1923. Under the leadership of Kemal Pasha (d. 1938), known as 'Ataturk,' Turkey became a constitutional republic and the Ottoman caliphate was officially disbanded in 1924, leading to the exile of Sultan 'Abd al-Majīd II and subsequently to the obsolescence of the Khilafat Movement itself.[570]

This was a traumatic moment for India's Muslim population as they no longer had any real political representation to counterbalance the Hindu majority. They were now forced to gain their independence through other means. Some became more violent, while others placed their hopes in the Indian National Congress and its aspirations for independence (*Swaraj* or "self-rule") from the colonial powers. Although the National Congress made no explicit claims of an anti-Islām animus, the party became increasingly populist and hostile to its Muslim minority. This was primarily due to the propaganda of the Ayra Samaj ('Noble Society'), a Vedic reformist movement founded in 1875 by the Indian philosopher, Dayananda Saraswati (d. 1883).[571]

[570] Feldman, 87.
[571] Roy Jackson, *Mawlana Mawdudi & Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic State*, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 30.

Sarawasti was a Hindu purist who despised other religions and their practices, considering them deviations from the Vedic teachings that he believed all Indians should follow. He had particular disdain for Islām, claiming Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) was an "imposter" and regarded the religion as intrinsically warlike and antithetical to human values, going so far as to claim that "the Qur'ān disturbs the peace of the world and fosters discord."[572] His followers were few and far between, but his message made more popular as calls for Indian independence and a strong Hindu identity intensified. It is not surprising that around the same time that the Khilafat Movement disbanded, the Ayra Samaj started their campaign of *shuddi* (i.e. Sanskrit for 'purification'), calling on all Indians to reject Islām as part of their national identity while pronouncing Muslims as 'Other.' As a result, the Indian Muslim minority became more marginalized as they saw themselves increasingly isolated from their own cultural heritage.

It was at this point that Maudoodi was invited to become the editor for the *Al-Jamiat* newspaper – a successor to the now defunct *Muslim* – and began writing more fervently in defense of Islāmic traditionalism while gradually becoming more disenchanted with nationalism. He blamed the rise in Turkish and Arab nationalism for the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, and saw the rise of the Shuddi movement as a sign that Muslims could no longer depend on others besides themselves and their own intellectual traditions to protect their own interests.[573] But his career as a journalist and budding scholar would finally be put to the test when one of the leading missionaries of the Shuddi movement, Swami Shadhanand, would be assassinated by a Muslim rebel.

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[572] Dayanand, "An Examination of the Doctrine of Islam," *Satyarth Prakash* (*The Light of Truth*), (1875), 694.
<http://aryasamajbangalore.in/wp-content/files/satyarth_prakash_Eng.pdf> (accessed 9 April, 2019).
[573] Nasr, *Mawdudi*, 20-21.

In December of 1926, Shadhhanand was visited in his home by ‘Abd al-Rashīd; a young man who had come under the guise of seeking advice from him. This seemingly reserved young man was pleasant and soft spoken, covering himself with a blanket and appearing to be of no threat. Shadhhanand’s servant invited him into the house and escorted ‘Abd al-Rashīd to the Hindu guru’s bedroom to ask whatever he needed. Shortly thereafter, a loud bang rang out and the young man fled just as quickly as he came. Shadhhanand was found dead, slumped over his bed, bleeding from a gunshot wound; he had been assassinated. The motive was never made entirely clear, although ‘Abd al-Rashīd thought himself to have been performing his religious duty against what he perceived to be an extremist threat to his community. Even though his grievances may have been legitimate, his methods towards resolving the issue were certainly not agreeable, sparking wide condemnation across India by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Despite a consensus of condemnations that transcended religious identity, the Ayra Samaj, along with the National Congress, saw fit to utilize this tragedy as a means to impugn Islām and the Muslim community as a whole as being inherently violent towards disbelievers. It was at this moment that Maudoodi felt obligated to relieve these tensions by putting his experience in political activism and journalism to greater use, compiling his journal articles into a larger work. Maudoodi states his reasons for committing to writing the book, recalling the aforementioned event and its aftermath:

> I have been planning for some time to embark on this work, but luxury of time was required to undertake such a gigantic task, but for people associated with newspaper journalism, free time is a commodity rarely available to them. However, in 1962 there was an incident, which prompted

me to commit myself to this work. This incident was the murder of Swami Shadhanand, a leader of the Shudi movement. The incident provided another opportunity for the ill-informed and shortsighted people to spread wrong information about the teachings of jihād in Islām, as unfortunately the person who was arrested and accused of the murder was a Muslim man. Th newspaper reports associated his motives to the animosity against men of other faith, and that he was expecting entry into paradise through this act of his… Because of this incident, the enemies of Islām became paranoid. Despite the clear declarations by Muslim scholars and the consensus explanation in magazines by renowned Muslim leaders… the entire Muslim nation and even the teachings of Islām were regarded as being responsible for the act. The Qur'ānic teachings were openly criticized and portrayed as the source for producing blood thirsty followers and murderers. It is said that these teachings are against peace and a danger for the security and calm in society; its teachings have produced such prejudice in its followers that they regard every non-Muslim liable for killing and they hope for Paradise by killing non-Muslims. Some people with rotten minds even suggested that until the teachings of the Qur'ān are [no longer] present in the world, it is not possible to have peace and security, therefore, all mankind should strike to rid the world of these teachings.[574]

However, there was more to Maudoodi's intentions, much of it related to the overall political and social contexts in which he lived. Although he does not elucidate the

[574] Maudoodi, *Jihād in Islam,* 16.

background of his thoughts in detail, there are subtle clues littered throughout his work. Among these references include critical remarks towards the Muslim community for their apologetic and defensive nature in the face of overwhelming criticism. Maudoodi laments that certain individuals within the Indian Muslim community have "modified" the religion to suit the moral and theological sentiments of Islām's detractors; those with a "slave mentality" who behave "as if they are convicts" desperately responding to accusations.[575] Rather than present Islām per se, these apologists deliberately leave out information that may appear controversial to their detractors. Even if the rebuke appears vague, Maudoodi was clearly targeting a certain segment within the Indian Muslim community affected by the fall of the Khalifat Movement and the subsequent propaganda of Arya Samaj, particularly the manifestation of the Ahmadiyyah Jama'at founded by Mirza Ghulam Aḥmad (d. 1908).[576]

Aḥmad was a court clerk by profession and regarded by many to be a social recluse because he often secluded himself with religious books or prayer in the mosques. Despite no formal training with regard to his religious views and largely being self-taught, this did not stop him from engaging in polemical debates with the local Christian missionaries and Shuddi followers in and around his hometown of Qadian. After the death of his father in 1876, he began to claim that he was the recipient of divine revelation. Initially, his proclamations of divine communication were benign – isolated to special requests to fasts for long periods of time and visions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his family members – but his claims grew more grandiose overtime. Eventually, Aḥmad declared himself a *mujaddid* (reviver) of Islām, a title reserved only for religious scholars who bring about a

[575] Ibid., 15.
[576] Jackson, 33.

reform or revival of Muslim power and Islāmic prestige within a given generation. It would not take long for Aḥmad to finally declare himself to be the long awaited *Mahdī*, the last spiritual successor to the Prophet Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.) meant to lead the Muslims during the final days before Armageddon. By 1889, Aḥmad had established the movement after his name, taking allegiance from forty-one of his dedicated followers. Unsurprisingly, these declarations of religious authority were seen as ostentatious heresy by many within the Indian Muslim community. However, in 1908 Aḥmad's claims would receive the ultimate test. While visiting Lahore, he became ill with a severe case of diarrhea and subsequently passed away, leaving his followers behind to reinterpret his legacy and the broader Muslim community relieved that his claims were finally put into disrepute.[577]

Although at this point the Ahmadiyyah were a small group (numbering only in the hundreds) and in disarray, this did not stop them from appointing their first spiritual successor to Ahmad and his movement, his close companion, Hakeem Noorudin (d. 1914). This new leadership was seen as a continuation of the now politically defunct caliphates of old and served only a theological function, much like the current office of Pope in Catholic Christianity. It also served the function of legitimizing Aḥmad's claims to being the Mahdī, as his legacy was now reinterpreted in a more esoteric fashion. Likewise, the Ahmadiyyah's new spiritual caliphate conveniently indulged the desires of Indian Muslims wishing for the revival of an Islāmic polity in their lifetimes by removing the obligation to establish said polity, for the "real caliphate" had finally arrived. Consequently, many of Aḥmad's followers saw jihād as no longer possessing a physical element, as there was no longer any need to engage in military combat given their increasing apathy towards Muslim

[577] Ibid., 33-34.

political sovereignty.[578] As long as they conformed to Hindu political rule, they were under no threat of violence. Thus, the Ahmadiyyah lived on and gained prominence in India, challenging all other claimants to Islāmic orthodoxy, an orthodoxy that Maudoodi wished to protect and establish in opposition to this theologically renegade movement.

That said, although Maudoodi was discontent with the Ahmadiyyah movement, he saw them as ancillary to a greater problem and reserved much of his ire for Hindu supremacists (i.e. the Shuddi Movement) whom he referred to as the "enemies of Islām." From the outset, he laments that "people of reason had become confused," and were persuaded by negative propaganda with regard to the teachings of Islām.[579] In response, Maudoodi dedicates a great deal of time in his book towards critiquing Hindu ethical teachings.[580] In essence, the decline of Muslim sovereignty and the subsequent rise of Hindu purism are the primary factors that fueled Maudoodi's missive on jihād. For him, the Ahmadiyyah were just another phase in a growing threat to the Indian Muslim community. As Roy Jackson summarizes:

> So what we have leading up to Mawdudi's writing on jihād was what he perceived as a threefold threat to Muslim survival in India. First, the Hindu ascendency with the Indian National Congress coupled with the collapse of the Khalifat movement and what Mawdudi perceived as Gandhi's unwillingness to side with Indian Muslims. Second, the rise in popularity of the Arya Samaj and the Shuddhi movement with such anti-Islāmic remarks

[578] Ibid., 35.
[579] Maudoodi, *Jihād in Islam*, 16.
[580] Much of Maudoodi's criticism of Hindu ethics can be found in chapter six of *Jihād in Islam,* 222-260.

from its leading figures such as Swami Shradhanand and Dayananda. Third, the challenge to orthodoxy from the Ahmadis.[581]

With this complex set of many interconnected elements, a scholarly and robust response would be necessary – a missive which not only addressed root causes, but could correct negative propaganda while providing a salient alternative to opposing ideological influences. Just as important, such a work would need to take into consideration its target audience and the societal contexts surrounding the discourse, adjusting its tone accordingly. This was the task facing Maudoodi at the time of writing *Jihād in Islām*.

It is impossible to objectively measure whether Maudoodi was successful in fulfilling all the above criteria, but much can be gleaned from his work that showcases extraordinary nuance, thoughtfulness, and an ability to anticipate potential objections to his arguments. For instance, the first and most apparent feature of his book is its structure. Divided into seven chapters, each may be further categorized by its intended approach towards the subject. Chapters one to three are a descriptive analysis of jihād and attempt to offer a positive case for the ethics behind military conflict in Islām. In the first third of his book, Maudoodi is preoccupied with explaining the Islāmic perspective on the value of human life, the rights of humankind, the differences between right and wrong, ethical versus non-ethical warfare, and so on. Nonetheless, in subsequent chapters, the tone of his writing changes dramatically to a more apologetic character, despite his explicit distaste for this approach. Chapters four and five are dedicated solely to defending the concept of jihād from misinterpretations, claims such as "Islām was spread by the sword." Therein, the historical contexts of Muslim conquests take center stage as he directly targets Shuddi

[581] Ibid., 41.

propaganda. In the last two chapters, Maudoodi goes on the offensive and engages in a comparative analysis of different religions and ideologies, particularly Hinduism, critiquing opposing ethical paradigms and arguing that Islām is the superior system of life with regards to peace, justice, and warfare.

One can only speculate why he decided to structure his book in this manner, but it may have been that, in his efforts to be as comprehensive as possible, he felt the need to address the subject from all angles; first by providing a positive case for Islām, then defending that image of Islām from misrepresentation, and finally undermining his opponent's beliefs so as to remove any inkling of suspicion that there may be better ethical systems than Islām. It might also be argued that Maudoodi organized the chapters in such a way so as not to make the readers averse to his line of argument. By building a positive case for Islām first, he sought to convince the reader of his religion before directly undermining their own, sparing any potential sensitivity to criticism from the beginning. Had Maudoodi reversed this structure, he may have repulsed potential sympathizers to his cause.

5.2.1 The Value of Life

The first chapter of *Jihād in Islām* serves as a primer to the larger subject and attempts to establish Islām as a religion that values life and respects the rights of humankind. Although it is impossible for Maudoodi's approach to have been influenced by the formal *qua* legal discourse surrounding individual rights post-World War II, the concept of human rights had been entertained in the West as early as the 19th century through such figures as Thomas Paine and John Stuart Mills. Maudoodi's insistence to begin with a discussion on

this topic was most likely reactionary, embedded in an environment in which Western ideas, such as nationalism and individualism, were beginning to gain traction globally and used as a means to ostracize Muslims as 'Other.'[582] In contrast, Maudoodi attempts to offer a conciliatory conception of rights rooted in sentiments of universalism:

> Civilization has for its primary basis the respect of human life. The first right that man has on civilizations is his right to live and his first civilized duty is to let others live. This right is embodied in all religious and other codes of law. Those [codes] which do not recognize this right can neither claim to be a religion nor a code of law for human beings for which people living under its influence can hope to live peacefully. One can judge for oneself whether it would be possible for men to live together where life has no value and there is no arrangement for its security, where there can be no mutual interaction. In the absence of these essential prerequisites, commerce, industry, and agriculture cannot be established nor sustained. Hence, civilized pursuits such as earning money, making and sustaining households, travel and tourism, and leading a meaningful life in general would be impossible.[583]

Maudoodi opts for a consequentialists approach to the value of human rights, claiming that no civilization can function without these precepts, but shortly thereafter takes a far more exclusivist approach, ultimately crediting Islām for these mandates. He supports his claim directly from the Qur'ān:

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[582] Shiraz Maher, *Salafi-Jihādism: The History of an Idea*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 174-177.
[583] Maudoodi, *Jihād in Islam*, 18.

> …We decreed to the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a person—unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land—it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind. Our messengers came to them with clear signs, but many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.[584]

Maudoodi boldly suggests the arrival of Islām is synonymous with the advent of human dignity. He does not simply rely on revelation, but sociological evidence as well. His first example is rooted in Islāmic historiography, in which he references the pre-Islāmic Arabs disregard for women and their tendency to bury 'undesirables' (i.e. female infants) alive. Even those societies considered 'civilized' at the time had similarly abhorrent practices. He goes on to elucidate the cultural norms of Roman antiquity and their love for the gladiatorial games; the Coliseum's meted out cruel treatment of slaves and animals alike, all for the love of sport. Philosophers like Aristotle and Plato are also brought under dispute for their apparent endorsement of premature abortions, suicide, and the right of a husband to kill his own wife with little to no legal repercussion. Finally, in rather predictable fashion, he goes on to impugn early Hindu customs of human sacrifice, specifically calling out the practices of *Sati* (self-immolation of widows) and *Jal Pradha* (the sacrifice of a first-born child through drowning).[585] The correlations are concise with little to no further exposition. More importantly, they are deliberately presented as a polemic to introduce the reader to the Islāmic alternative, beginning a lengthy *modus tollens* that will inevitably justify jihād as a method to protect the rights of humanity from such impunities.

[584] Qur'an, al-Mā'idah: 32; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 114.
[585] Maudoodi, *Jihād in Islam*, 21-22.

From the universal sanctity of human life to Islām's exclusive influence, Maudoodi continues to narrow down the parameters of what constitutes human dignity, introducing more exceptions to the general rules, especially regarding the taking of life. He quickly transitions into a discussion about 'rightful killing' and the need for society to enact laws managing their domestic affairs, punishing criminals for extreme offenses such as murder. Killing should generally be abhorred, of course, but killing *for the right cause* is an essential feature of any prosperous nomocratic civilization towards maintaining order and peace in society. As such, one cannot despise killing in all circumstances lest they become unjust themselves. For Maudoodi, Islām offers a middle path between the bloodlust of oppressors and the "docile tolerance" of pacifists:

> On the one side is the transgressor who holds human life of little value and considers it right to shed human blood to satisfy his lowly desires. On the other side is the misguided group that holds the mistaken viewpoint that life is sacred and inviolable, whatever the circumstance may be. The Islāmic law negates both these wrong schools of thought. It holds that human life as neither inviolable… nor is it so valueless that it may be sacrificed to satisfy one's ego or emotions.[586]

Maudoodi does not entertain calls for reformative justice heard today in many contemporary nations, perhaps because such discussions were rare during his time. The act of executing traitors, murderers, and other excessive criminal offenders was a normative feature of both Western and Eastern judicial systems across the world. But if one were to speculate as to his response, Maudoodi may deem such discussions well outside the bounds

[586] Ibid., 24.

of a proper moral and legal system; for him, those who insist on violating said boundaries devalue their own lives and become a "burden for society."[587] That aside, assuming the soundness of his premise on capital punishment, we can move on to the subsequent part of his argument: "collective evil." For Maudoodi, the evils committed within the confines of a city are nothing compared to those evils threating the city walls, beyond the scope of local laws and enforcement. As such, these evils require a much greater response, one that pushes the margins of the sanctity of human life for the greater good of society. And thus, war becomes a "moral imperative" to fend off the avarice and corruption of aggressive nations.[588] It is at this point that Maudoodi begins to introduce jihād as a moral and religious obligation, a necessary means towards combating all things that threaten the rights of human beings to life, liberty, and the pursuit of their own aims.

5.2.2 Causes for War

Maudoodi ultimately distinguishes two overarching categories of just causes for military action: 'wars of defense' and 'wars of reform.' With respect to the former, he lists several subcategories legitimizing armed conflict in defense, all supported by references to the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The first of these is to fight "brutality and aggression" against Muslims, examples of which are:

1. When war is waged on Muslims and they are oppressed and brutalized, war in self-defense is permissible.
2. Against those who plunder and loot the homes and property of Muslims, war should be waged.

[587] Ibid., 25.
[588] Ibid., 28.

3. When Muslims are being persecuted because of their religion and beliefs, they are permitted to wage war against those responsible.
4. If the enemy, having overpowered the Muslims, forces them off their lands, depriving them of its sovereignty, they (Muslims), whenever they gather sufficient strength, must try to regain what they had lost.[589]

Maudoodi mentions the second just cause for defensive war as "defense of truth" or "against those who obstruct the Muslims from following 'the path of Allāh' [i.e. Islām]."[590] In other words, anyone who refuses Muslims (and even non-Muslims) their religious freedom should be fought. His third cause for defensive warfare is "punishment for treachery and for violation of agreements." After explication from the Qur'ān, Maudoodi goes into further detail:

1. War should be waged on those who enter into treaties with Muslims and then violate them. This also covers those of the infidels who pledged allegiance and then committed mutiny against the Islāmic State.
2. There are some with whom treaties exist, but the hostility of their attitude and actions are such that there is always a danger that Muslims or Islām itself will come to harm on their account. Such should be given notice that their attitudes and actions amount to 'contravention of treaty' and then they should be adequately punished for their temerity.
3. There are others, with whom treaties exist, but they often violate these and are always scheming against the Muslims, and in their desire to harm them, stoop below all levels of morality and ethics. Against such, continual war is specified. Pacts and treaties with

[589] Ibid., 45.
[590] Ibid., 46.

them are permissible only on the condition of their conversion to Islām and in their presence adequate proof of this conversion. Otherwise, to keep Islām and Muslims from their misdoing, killing, besieging, and arresting them and other such like actions are necessary.[591]

The fourth cause for defensive warfare is the "suppression of the covert internal enemy" or the "hypocrites" who attempt to cause disunity within the Muslim ranks and provide material support to the enemy.[592] The fifth cause is the "defense of peace" against acts of terrorism.[593] Finally, the sixth cause is to "aid the weak and oppressed" Muslims residing in enemy territory and liberate them from their oppressors.[594]

The reasons for war given by Maudoodi are thus far singularly focused on the protection of Muslim society, its values, laws, and freedoms. If we were to summarize his justifications for defensive warfare, it would simply be to protect Muslims and Islām from annihilation. In this respect, Maudoodi's perspective conforms closely to figures already analyzed in this study. Although neglectful of the broader definition of the concept, which includes 'internal warfare' against one's own ego, there appears to be a remarkable consistency between his justifications and those of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and Ibn Taymīyah. Despite their varied contexts and time periods, all rely on similar religious justifications from the Qur'ān (albeit the latter two rely on the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) actions just as equally) to justify warfare against aggressors, and all of them are solely concerned with one objective when it comes to pursuance of jihād, an objective which Maudoodi

[591] Ibid., 49.
[592] Ibid., 50-51.
[593] Ibid., 52-54.
[594] Ibid., 54-55.

concisely summarizes as, "Muslims under no condition should allow their religion and their national existence to be dominated by the forces of evil and mischief."[595]

But this was not Maudoodi's only understanding of jihād. For him, warfare in self-defense is only an initial phase of a much larger project meant for the betterment of humankind, or what he calls "wars of reform." Muslims, therefore, should not act selfishly in their ambitions and must extend their good will to all those in need of liberation from oppression. Every nation serves its best interests by extending those interests to the rest of humanity:

> As the individual has obligations, apart from himself, towards his kith and kin and towards God, a nation has its duties in relation to God and humanity… Defense of its own independence, unity, and standing against aggression, oppressive and vice directed toward it, is the first duty of any nation, but that is not all. Its real duty lies in using its strength and prowess in aiding the entire humanity in achieving its salvation and in removing obstacles in its (humanity's) path, that hinder its ethical, material and moral progress. It is duty-bound to continue striving until the world is free of all strife, evil, suppression, oppression, and turbulence.[596]

This is expected from every nation, but once again, Maudoodi attempts to make distinctions between all others and one that follows Islāmic principles. He disparages other empires of his day, and in the past, as having ambitions inconsistent with the collective good of humankind, calling them "usurpers of freedom" and abusers of power, all for

[595] Ibid., 55.
[596] Ibid., 60-61.

avarice.[597] Likewise, these empires only empower the conquerors – their next of kin, race, and nationality – while disempowering the conquered.[598] In context, the British Empire would appear to be the main target of his antagonism given its historical exploitation of colonized India. In contrast, Islām is truly for the benefit of humanity, being prejudiced only against 'oppressive ideologies' and ways of life:

> The purpose and utility of war has been stated as the termination of strife and turmoil and the crushing of the ability to spread them, and that is for establishing the supremacy of the word of Allāh. This is the true purpose of war; the establishment of order and peace in the world, the unrestricted moral, ethical, and material pursuit, the promulgation of divine laws and termination of self-made and altered rules of the non-believers, and the termination of satanic discrimination**…** which should establish actual freedom in all walks of life; the freedom that favors humanity, that recognizes the restraints of ethics and morality and is not unnecessarily shackled nor is totally unbridled. The sword is only raised against arrogance, strife, and turmoil, whether the targets of the satanic oppressors are Muslim or non-Muslims, and until they (oppressors) give up the foul use of their might, this conflict will continue. However, the very moment they give it up and accept being subjects of the laws of righteousness and justice, their live becomes sacrosanct and the responsibility for the safety of their material belongings and their honor becomes the responsibility of the Muslim state. Then they have the complete freedom of pursuing their trade,

[597] Ibid., 88.
[598] Ibid., 93.

commerce and industry, education and literature, civilization and codes of conduct.[599]

Maudoodi distinguishes between the racists and national policies of other empires from the nomocratic principles of Islām, which seek to bring true freedom by relieving people from the yoke of "satanic discrimination" and "self-made and altered rules." As such, he calls for an imperial order that is motivated to end all others through force, based on the virtuous mission of freeing humankind from itself. For justification, he first cites the Qur'ān as declaring Muslims "the best nation for mankind" who "enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh,"[600] inferring from this that Muslims are obligated to be arbiters and caretakers over the rest of humanity. In conjunction with this, he claims the conquests of the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires were a fulfillment of this obligation. After the Muslim polity had liberated itself from its internal enemies, it went on to liberate the rest of the world from the tyrannies of both the Christian and Zoroastrian civilizations, where "law and justice had lost their meanings" and the rulers were "symbols of immorality."[601]

Maudoodi's emphasis on the freedom of minorities under an Islāmic polity targets more than external forces of colonization, but also the very Hindu purists seeking exclusive independence through the repression of the Indian Muslim community. Although he conceptualizes an ideal Islāmic state as restricting non-Muslims from acquiring top positions in central governance or even being part of the military, he promotes a level of autonomy for various religious communities that allow them to operate beyond the

[599] Ibid., 87-88.
[600] Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān: 110.
[601] Ibid., 102-103.

boundaries of a one-law-for-all nation-state, effectively shielding his argument from accusations of hypocrisy (i.e. the promotion of second class status for the conquered).[602] However, his insistence on a state that both discriminates on the basis of ideology, while allowing various ideological communities to manifest their beliefs in their own legal spheres, was not only formed in response to his particular contexts but derived from historical Islāmic jurisprudence itself. Sajjad Idris comments Maudoodi's sources for his anti-nationalist leanings:

> His discussion of their rights is tightly bound to their place in the state and the restrictions placed upon them as enunciated in classical works. Mawdudi could never sever his links with, or his dependence on, the traditional establishment. He drew heavily on juridical rulings of the past to inform his own views. In essence, he sought to apply them to present day contexts by comparing between what he calls a "national state" and an "ideological state" run by Islām.[603]

But is Maudoodi's understanding of jihād as a universal reformist project consistent with the early Muslim community and the formative years of Islāmic jurisprudence? Does his perspective conform to the Qur'ān and historical Muslim praxis, or is it clouded by bias emanating from his own troubled existence as a marginalized Muslim minority in pre-independence India?

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[602] Ibid., 87-88.
[603] Sajjad Idris, "Reflections on Mawdādī and Human Rights," *The Muslim World,* vol. 93 (2003), 556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1478-1913.00037> (accessed 15 October, 2019).

5.2.3 Jihād as Liberation

Maudoodi believed that he could find the answers facing Indian Muslims through Islāmic sources and its scholars. As such, he may very well be deemed a 'traditionalist' when it came to his understanding of Islām and jihād. Even so, his own sociopolitical context would have influenced how he interpreted those sources, for better or worse.

Recalling Chapter Four of this study, early jurists imbued their legal rulings with some unstated assumptions about the world they lived in. When it came to jihād in particular, their understanding of war was often informed by the conditions they faced, and the necessity of defending Muslim society against constant aggression. From the very advent of Islām to Maudoodi's time, the world was primarily governed by empires in which war was the ordinary state of affairs between polities. Therefore, war was not only unavoidable, but rightly considered essential to survival. Even peace treaties were no absolute guarantee of lasting peace, as they were usually temporary and almost always violated. As such, Muslims felt no obligation in maintaining their force against perceived threats, unless bound by treaty, nor did they find it necessary to explain the motivations behind their hostility in detail. It was simply assumed by everyone, everywhere. Only in the event where new situations arose, blurring the lines between just and unjust warfare, did this motivation need to be expounded, as exemplified by the fatwá of Ibn Taymīyah against the Mongol rulers.

The time in which Maudoodi lived was one where the world was transitioning from empires to independent nation-states. Although the former still existed to a degree, their influence and power was waning as new political theories were proposed as alternatives, especially among conquered communities who sought to revolt against their masters.

Maudoodi had to carefully navigate these new contexts within the Islāmic tradition by formally demarcating between two types of military jihād: those fought defensively and those fought to reform society for the better. However, the single thread that tied them together was that of liberation, perhaps ironically, emphasized largely by the very same ideologies he sought to oppose in his work and conceptualized differently only in minutiae.

Unlike the early Muslim community and the scholars that followed, Maudoodi saw preservation of Muslims and Islām as a secondary concern. For him, independence from tyranny was the prime objective. In many ways, then, his political understanding of jihād was not a carbon-copy continuation of the Islāmic tradition, but rather somewhat modified to fit the needs of his society at the time. Simon Woods notes that Maudoodi "was responding to a perceived threat… one he perceived in the unique Muslim-Hindu demographics of the subcontinent, not post-Enlightenment modernity and its marginalization of religion."[604] Wood summarizes his views aptly with the following:

> Mawdudi's discourse is hardly anti-modern. Further, the rejection of secularism and traditionalism does not embody a fundamentalist rejection of modernity, but an assimilation of modernity. That assimilation, to be sure, entails a complex combination of tradition and modernity. But, and this is the heart of the matter, that combination is not, per the model, a case of high irony or essential contradiction. Rather, it embodies what is a categorically modernizing and reformist agenda that is obfuscated by apologetics, an obfuscation necessitated by local conditions: Mawdudi addressed a Muslim population disempowered by colonialism and its

[604] Simon Wood, "Rethinking Fundamentalism: Ruhollah Khomeini, Mawlana Mawdudi, and the Fundamentalist Model," *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory,* vol. 11, i. 2 (2011): 192.

> legacies. His intention, then, was to facilitate Muslim subscription to his agenda through framing it as an Islāmic agenda, through lending Islāmic cultural legitimacy to phenomena generally associated with the West.[605]

Even then, his need to contextualize jihād as a method of liberation from oppressive ideologies and morals runs somewhat contrary to his promotion of the Islāmic polity as granting autonomy to minority communities. If Islām was truly sent to free humankind from false ideas, why allow them to exist within its borders? Why allow the very same beliefs that have historically oppressed people to thrive in the same space as the force he claims to have liberated them to begin with? The inconsistency here is palpable. As such, Maudoodi's views are not entirely in complete accordance with the traditional Islāmic doctrine. Had he limited his conception of jihād to merely preserving Islām and Muslims from extinction in the face of aggression, his views of warfare beyond the borders of an Islāmic polity may have agreed almost entirely with those of the early Muslims and Ibn Taymīyah. However, it seems he was influenced by the independence movements of his period and appealed more to the collective conscience of the Muslim Indian community. In his work, however, which does not necessarily contradict the early Islāmic sources but expands on them and reprioritizes the objectives of jihād, is a unique scholarly methodology reconciling the tradition with the modern political order and Muslim political grievances, a conclusion that does not veer into extremism or terrorism.

[605] Ibid., 184-185.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Maudoodi was very much a man of his time. As such, it should be of no surprise that he conformed his understanding of Islam to his immediate circumstances. Much like Muslims before him, he had to adapt accordingly, reviewing and reapplying Islamic principles and legalities to suit new realities. But do these apparent modalities cancel out a more general and objective understanding of jihād, or do they merely represent different manifestations of that same concept? What these exemplars of jihād have shown us is that preserving the Muslim community and Islam can come in a variety of forms which are not necessarily mutually exclusive (although they may differ in the minutia).

Maudoodi is an important figure because he occupies a point in history where jihād required an explanation and needed contextualization during a transition between empires and nation states – something never-before seen in Islamic history. Although his thesis was not entirely in accord with previous thinkers on the subject, much of what he preached was, showcasing that there has been a general concordance in Islamic intellectual tradition. Ironically, this common understanding and praxis among generations of Muslim thinkers serves as a powerful rebuke of the 'jihād as praxis' and 'jihād as modality' models, because if an all-encompassing definition can be derived – despite varying contexts and circumstances – then it cannot be argued that there are various mutually exclusive perceptions of the concept.

Therefore, those who study Islamic history and thought should begin openly rejecting these models for their incoherency, and promote a paradigm shift which takes into account the 'themes' of Islamic principles and practices. Doing so will provide researchers with a far more organized and efficient means towards understanding Islam as

a belief and coherent tradition among Muslims, as well as objectively categorize anomalous beliefs and practices which do not accord to mainstream interpretations. The idea that there is no standard measure for orthodox interpretation only serves to undermine any objective analyses on what Islam is or teaches, thus rendering legitimate questions and criticisms unreasonable.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The previous chapters of this study have attempted to crystalize the definition of jihād and its application, so as to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the concept for present and future generations to come. Chapter One outlined the methodology of this study, the scope, and the references that would be utilized. Chapter Two examined and deconstructed previous studies on the subject, showcasing their numerous limitations, erroneous methodologies, and suspect conclusions. However, there was also much positive gleaned from prior research that was incorporated into this study, such as the thematic approach used by Dawoody and his emphasis on early Muslim community and primary sources (something scarcely analyzed in other works on the subject). That said, Dawoody's approach was too narrow in scope and too vague with respect to its understanding of 'just war' – wholly insufficient in accounting for the nuances in how jihād was conceived and applied overall throughout Islāmic history. As such, this study sought to remedy these issues in subsequent chapters by modifying Dawoody's thematic approach and increasing its range to provide a much more objectively holistic understanding of jihād.

Chapter Three is where the research begins to examine primary Islāmic source material related to jihād. Rather than attempt to impose a subjective understanding onto the subject, such as Bonner's peculiar view of jihād as a manifestation of economics theory or Dawoody's just war theory, the sources are meant to speak for themselves. Thus the source material is quoted from directly, allowing for the apparent meaning to be exposed to the reader.

The first source analyzed in this study is the Qur'ān itself. Therein, it is found that when the literal word 'jihād' is used, it rarely refers to physical combat, but in numerous instances emphasizes charity and spiritual tenacity. This, in fact, reflected the literal meaning of the term, which is 'to struggle' or 'strive.' That said, the Qur'ān does mention jihād in the sense of military conflict in certain places. Whenever it does, it often describes war as something to avoid and only engage in when necessary. This necessity is almost always for the sake of self-defense against aggression, protecting the lives of believers and their right to practice Islām unencumbered. This is most notably in the following verses of the Qur'ān:

> Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged—God has the power to help them—those who have been driven unjustly from their homes only for saying, 'Our Lord is God.' If God did not repel some people by means of others, many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, where God's name is much invoked, would have been destroyed. God is sure to help those who help His cause—God is strong and mighty.[606]

Here, the object of military jihād is made clear: to correct the wrongdoing of those who transgressed the Muslims by harming them and exiling them from their homes, and additionally as a means to protect places of worship from destruction (i.e. the freedom to establish and practice religion). The target of physical jihād is further clarified in the following verses:

[606] Qur'an, al-Ḥajj: 39-40; Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an*, 345.

> He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes: God loves the just. But God forbids you to take as allies those who have fought against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and helped others to drive you out: any of you who take them as allies will truly be wrongdoers.[607]

In these verses, the Qur'ān demarcates between peaceful or passive disbelievers and those who "those who have fought against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and helped others to drive you out." Given evidence like this, the fact that jihād literally means 'to struggle or strive,' and the various other verses calling for religious devotion, I found that the most accurate definition of jihād found in the Qur'ān to be *the struggle for the self-preservation of Islām.* Expanding on this definition, the 'struggle' can be either spiritual and isolated to the individual or physical and encompassing the entire Ummah. 'Self-preservation of Islām' simply means the preservation of the religion by means of securing the lives and religious freedom of Muslims everywhere. This definition is also consistent with the non-militaristic concept in spirituality discourse which is to preserve the natural state of goodness in one's self by purging acquired evils through the labor of jihād al-nafs.

However, this may not be enough to showcase the Qur'ān's expression of the concept. For this reason, the research goes on to argue that the Qur'ān must be viewed in light of other sources, which should be seen as an extension of the Qur'ānic narrative. As such, the Qur'ān must not only be seen as revelation, but as a historical document that explicates and responds accordingly to the experiences of the early Muslims themselves.

[607] Qur'an, al-Mumtaḥanah: 8; and Ibid., 551.

This is in fact how the Islāmic scholarly tradition views the Qur'ān and how one should attempt to understand it if they wish to understand what jihād means in its fullest sense. Thus, the research goes into detail showcasing how the Aḥādīth and Sīrah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) conform to the Qur'ānic understanding of the concept. Unsurprisingly, all of the verses on jihād – both spiritual and physical – could be traced to actual events in the experiences of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions, further solidifying the need to view jihād in light of historical contingincies. All those specifically dealing with war demonstrated that the early Muslim community faced severe persecution from the pagan Arabs in the region, forcing them to migrate away from their homeland and eventually defend themselves from aggressive military onslaughts. Therefore, there appears to be a clear link between the Qur'ānic narrative and the proto-Muslim community's experiences and beliefs with respect to jihād.

Although it would seem enough to cohesively tie together all the primary source material in Islām on the topic of jihād – its definition and application – it would not truly encompass the entirety of the Islāmic tradition nor Islāmic history. Some questions remained. Was this the understanding of jihād carried out by the companions and their followers after the death of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H.)? How later generations of Muslims would understand the concept? And how does this definition of jihād remain coherent in different historical circumstances?

Admittedly, these questions cannot be answered *in toto*, given that every single event and Muslim in Islāmic history would have to be analyzed and deconstructed – an impossible task by any objective measure. Furthermore, it cannot be doubted that differences in opinion have existed on the nature of jihād and its applicability. However,

one can ascertain what the *majority* of Muslims throughout time understood about the subject, most importantly many of Islām's most notable scholars, particularly those tasked with conversing with unprecedented political contexts. Therefore, the research extends into the formative years of Islāmic law. This begins by elucidating on the early consensus of the scholars on what jihād was, as well as some of the hidden clauses in their assertions. For example, the context of empire was noted as one of the primary reasons behind scholarly consensus on the permissibility of preemptive warfare. Scholars interpreted the necessity for warfare against most non-Muslim polities on account of the correctly assumed state of affairs during their period; that is, a state of natural aggression between nations, wherein peace treaties were temporary and fragile. As such, war was prescribed for all polities unless an exception presented itself in the form of a treaty. This natural state of war especially informed the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence, which deemed "disbelief" as the primary reason for Muslims to go to war, considering that the act of disbelieving was viewed as inherently tied to the polities in which said disbelief existed. In other words, one's religion or ideology automatically implied political loyalties as well. Despite this, harming non-combatants was strictly prohibited by scholarly consensus and only soldiers were considered appropriate targets of aggression. Therefore, disbelief *per se* – as understood in the 21st century – was not a justified reason to go to war. This is further explicated by the 13th century Islāmic scholar, Ibn Taymīyah, who then becomes the focus of Chapter Four, given that he is the first to express the scholarly consensus in detail and within his unique historical circumstances. Ibn Taymīyah serves as an example of the culmination of the formative years of Islāmic thought on the concept of military jihād. Not only that, but he is important for the role he plays in the contemporary period, for both

traditional scholars and extremists (i.e. terrorists' groups) alike. Not only is he one of the most widely referenced medieval scholars today, but he is also one of the most widely researched in academia with respect to Islāmic thought and extremism.

Often maligned due to certain extremists citing him in their propaganda, Ibn Taymīyah has been accused of being the "father of Muslim extremism" by many within academia and the Muslim world in general. However, this analysis is faulty and often motivated by an agenda to validate the place extremism has in classical Islam. Thus, the research proceeds to show how extremists, especially the likes of the assassins who killed Anwar Sadat and Al-Qaeda, misappropriate the views of Ibn Taymīyah to suit their own agendas. More specifically, extremists rely on his fatwá regarding the status of the Mongols and whether they should be fought, anachronistically applying his opinions to contemporary Muslim rulers. As such, it is demonstrated how extremists are relying on fallacious reasoning by removing Ibn Taymīyah from his historical context, as well as how the Mongol invaders during his time cannot possibly be compared to current Muslim leadership around the world. To do so is not only erroneous, but disingenuous.

For instance, it is recalled that Ibn Taymīyah was responding to events during his lifetime when the Mongols were invading Muslim lands. During this period, the Mongols had initiated their conquests as non-Muslims and were fought back by the Mamlūk Sultanate. Eventually, the Mongols converted to Islām, but their invasion did not cease. As a result, the Muslims in Syria were confused as to whether or not they should continue fighting off the invasion, considering the clear prohibition of fighting fellow Muslims. However, Ibn Taymīyah felt their conversion was not sincere and issued fatwá on the permissibility of continuing the jihād against the Mongols on account of their failure to

rule by the complete edicts of Islāmic law. From this, one can immediately see some issues with using Ibn Taymīyah to condemn contemporary Muslim leadership across the globe. These leaders are not invaders, nor are they directly responsible for the decline of the Muslim world. Rather, they are inheritors of secular systems forced upon them from previous invaders (i.e. European colonizers and the current Western occupations happening across the world). Hence, they do not fall in the same category as the Mongols, nor is it obvious that Ibn Taymīyah would classify them as such. In fact, the extremists impugn themselves by declaring Muslim political leaders as "disbelievers that should be fought," because they too do not operate by, nor establish, Islāmic rulings in their entirety.

Another way in which extremists misuse Ibn Taymīyah is by expanding on his notion of "combatants." Writing elsewhere, Ibn Taymīyah makes it clear that Islām only consistently allows for jihād in self-defense, but he does not explicate in detail about what constitutes a legitimate combatant other than those who directly participate in fighting or indirectly through financial and rhetorical support. That said, it could very easily be inferred that he agreed with the scholarly consensus with respect to these details, but extremists take his vagueness as a license to be more inclusive of who qualifies as a 'combatant.' For example, Al-Qaeda makes the argument that because the United States is a republic in which political officials are elected representatives of the people, therefore the American people are collectively responsible for everything their representatives do, thus becoming legitimate military targets. As shown in the research, this is a misrepresentation as it ignores many of the nuances of American political culture. It neglects to account for several factors, such as the fact that most Americans do not vote, that representatives do not always perform the duties promised to their constituents, and

that there is no clear methodology for determining most Americans' level of support for said representatives or their policies. Al-Qaeda's justifications for terrorism are nothing more than an ad hoc excuse based off exaggerated inferences of Ibn Taymīyah's writings. On the contrary, Ibn Taymīyah was explicit that jihād can only be performed in defense of the Muslim community and the freedom to practice one's religious beliefs, a position which aligns with the Qur'ān and proto-Muslim praxis. His explication of the jurisprudential consensus also showcases that this view was normative within the Islāmic scholarly tradition.

The research then proceeds to skip ahead several centuries to examine the contemporary period's conception of jihād in Chapter Five, especially through the eyes of Maudoodi. The historical context in which he lived was perhaps the most important factor informing his views. Despite how comprehensively he attempted to address the subject of jihād in his work with Islāmic sources and history, much of what he wrote was colored by his growing up in colonial India and his subsequent experience with Hindu nationalists who sought a decisive end to the Muslim minority in the subcontinent. His predisposition is obvious given he couches much of his analysis in modernist language, relying heavily on contemporary political terminology and constructs to express his views. This was obviously something difficult for him to avoid considering that, during his time, he was attempting to revive Islāmic ethos in a world where secular-nationalism, communism, and other modernist ideologies were both dominant and popular among Muslims after the fall of the caliphate. However, by entrenching himself in this discourse, his definition of jihād can come across as another expression of revolution (ie. a means to liberate Muslims and non-Muslims from oppression). Even so, there is still a clear demarcation between

Maudoodi's understanding of jihād and contemporary extremists. ISIS calls for world domination through jihād, with its claimed motivation being the extinguishing of disbelief throughout the world. Their primary concern is not oppression or freedom from it, but rather the supremacy of their highly distorted understanding of Islām over everyone and everything. On the contrary, Maudoodi views jihād as a means towards granting everyone the right to believe and live as they wish. He views jihād as a civilizing mission to eradicate tyranny and protect the rights of humanity, including non-Muslims, in a world where tyranny was the norm, and genuine human rights was sorely lacking. Appreciating this point, extremists seeking to use Maudoodi in support of their violent machinations would need to ignore much of what he wrote the subject.

The fact is that most extremists, even by secular academic standards, are ignorant of their own religion and have formed an instrumentalized and highly selective (i.e. 'cherry picked') view of Islām to suit their own agendas. Rather than exhibit erudition, they reveal themselves as mere laymen influenced by their own desires in reaction to the policies of certain Western governments. In fact, their beliefs and actions can easily be traced back to the first known heretics in Islāmic history: the Khawārij. That being the case, it is no surprise that most contemporary Muslim scholars regard them as the symbolic reincarnation of that original violent, extremist sect. Despite this however, many right-wing pundits in the West attempt to present groups like ISIS as the embodiment of Islāmic teachings, especially with respect to jihād. But when closely examining Islāmic doctrine, Islāmic history, and some of the most influential figures and scholars throughout, these polemics are simply untenable and, quite frankly, detrimental to civil and international relations.

6.1 IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has important implications that may not be immediately effective or made manifest until more research is conducted to confirm its findings. For example, if the definition and applications of jihād noted in the findings are consistent with Islāmic primary sources and the consensus of the Islāmic scholarly tradition, this would prove the thesis that there is an objective understanding of jihād that can be found throughout Islāmic history, regardless of the varying circumstances of historical actors. This further implies that such an objective definition can and should be utilized for future generations of Muslims who may be in doubt about what their religion teaches. This study may even eventually serve as a concise guide for the scholarly community to teach lay Muslims what jihād is and is not.

Another evident implication of this research is that it provides a stark contrast between the traditional-normative understanding of jihād in the Islāmic tradition and extremist narratives. As such, it serves as a strong rebuke towards terrorists' groups and can prove helpful in developing effective, measured educational approachs towards combating extremism that do not fall prey to the Islāmophobic assumptions propelled through most government counter extremism programs that are currently in existence. Likewise, this research can assist in tackling Islāmophobia by providing a proper understanding of jihād as per the Islāmic tradition, thereby disassociating law-abiding Muslims from extremists and quelling the fears of non-Muslims across the world. Counter-terrorism agencies, as well as law-enforcement agencies, can be better prepared and challenged to identify the specific motivations, beliefs, propaganda, and rhetoric of extremists, rather than continue what appears to be a narrow focus on the Muslim

community and mainstream Islām as being the source of extremism, while extremists clearly are not interested in extrapolating an authentic definition of jihād.

Finally, this study sets the foundation for future research into the subject of jihād by providing a coherent understanding of the term that can be tested across all time periods in Islāmic history. Due to the narrow scope of this research, it is only able to examine three eras and three major figures. The hope is that others will be influenced by this study to see if the proposed definition holds any weight when looking into influential Muslim figures of other time periods. Undoubtedly, there may be inconsistencies found within Islāmic history that may appear to render this study invalid, but the research offers a solid hypothesis that these events and figures would be anomalous to Islāmic history and the scholarly tradition as a whole. The research maintains that the definition put forth will continue to adequately represent Islāmic primary sources, the praxis of the proto-Muslims, and the consensus of the majority of scholars in history. Any subsequent studies that run contrary to the definition may naturally suffer from ignoring or misrepresenting the data presented. But as the goal is the defend the normative tradition and maintain a robust discussion about what it represents, particularly in an ever evolving context, all such attempts should be welcomed and seen as an exertion of the doctrine of righteous struggle embedded in the way of the Prophet (P.B.U.H).

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