

The Jihad Spirit of Islam

How Islam divides the world

Jihad in Arabic means to “make exertion” or “struggle” in the path of Allah, and has been called the Sixth Pillar of Islam.¹ Muslims differentiate between Lesser and Greater Jihad. Greater Jihad is the inner struggle against one’s ego, selfishness, greed, and temptation toward evil. This highlights a noble stream of thought and ethics in Islam, also called “Inner Jihad,” that cultivates compassion, generosity and hospitality, for which a good many mainstream Muslims are known.

Lesser Jihad is the name given to violent struggle conducted against non-Muslim peoples and nations. Such religiously motivated violence ironically has a far more prominent place in Islamic scriptures than Greater Jihad. Violent Jihad has long been integral to Islam’s quest to establish a global *Umma*, a worldwide community living under Islamic sharia law.

Islam stands out among major world religions for its distinctive way of using violence to subdue people who don’t accept their religion. A pivotal issue is that violence in sacred Islamic texts passages is not viewed merely as a historical matter descriptive only of past events, but is used as a religious principle to justify violence in any era, including our own. It’s not just historical fact but viewed by many Muslims as a matter of religious doctrine. To illustrate the point, we don’t hear about Jews or Christians in the 21st century threatening non-believers to convert or die. But we definitely hear a shocking number of Muslim jihadis asserting it is a religious duty to kill people who reject Islam.

A Universal Principle

Jihad is considered a universal principle. An Iraqi-born American law professor who taught some of the first courses on Islamic law in the U.S., Majid Khaduri (1909-2007), wrote that “**jihad ...is regarded by all jurists, with almost no exception, as a collective obligation of the whole Muslim community.**”²

America is not exempt from such a claim. The most widely used text book for 7th graders in U.S. Islamic schools says:

“Islam is not merely a religion, however, but a complete way of life...The basis of the legal and political system is the shari’ah of Allah...The Law of the Land is the shari’ah of Allah...**The duty**

¹ The Five of Pillars Islam are: (1) Profession of Faith in Allah and Muhammad as God’s Messenger, (2) Prayer five times a day, (3) Giving of alms, (4) Fasting during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan, (5) Making pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

² Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 60.

of Muslim citizens is to be loyal to the Islamic State...If anyone dies in jihad they are promised Paradise.”³

Consider this statement by the co-founder of Hamas two years before the October 7 attack in Israel:

We are not talking about liberating our land alone.... The entire...Planet Earth will come under [a Muslim system] where there is no injustice, no oppression, no Zionism, no treacherous Christianity and no killings and crimes like those being committed against the Palestinians, and against the Arabs in all the Arab countries, in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and other countries.⁴

The largest voting block at the UN consists of 56 Islamic nations plus the “State of Palestine” who call themselves the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They promulgated the “*Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*” at the UN in 1993. It advances the right of all Muslim nations to filter the UN’s human rights through the lens of Sharia Law, making the latter more authoritative to Muslim nations than the UN Charter. The Cairo Declaration says:

“There shall be no crime or punishment except as provided for by the Shari’ah (Article 19)...All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this [UN] Declaration [of Human Rights] are subject to the Islamic Shari’ah (Article 24)...the only source of reference...of this Declaration (Article 25).”

Political Islam

A growing number of political analysts now recognize Islam’s teachings on violence are appropriately called political Islam, defined as attacking people for what amount to ideological reasons. On this basis, there are no comparable verses at all advocating political violence in the Christian New Testament, meaning Christ *never* taught his followers to kill people who refuse to become His followers.⁵ To the contrary, Jesus told his disciples to move elsewhere if someone did not accept their profession of faith (Matthew 10:14).

Meanwhile, there are roughly 328,000 words in the three most sacred writings of Islam (*Quran*, *Hadith* [Sayings of Mohammad] and *Sira* [Authorized Biographies of Muhammad]), that can be used to promote use of political violence in any era.⁶ Altogether, Islamic doctrine devotes ten times the number of words to political violence as the Bible. Radical jihadists use the relevant verses as contemporary justification for committing violence.

Surveys prior to the 2023-24 war in Gaza reported about 15% of Muslims worldwide held the view that violence is religiously justified to advance Islam. That totals some 285 million Muslims worldwide, a number likely to have risen since the outbreak of war in Gaza. Any good political

³ *What Islam is All About*, by Yahiya Emerick, former VP of the Islamic Foundation of North America. Quoted in *The Hamas-Muslim Brotherhood Network in the United States*, by John D. Guandolo, July 4, 2024, p. 9

⁴ Al-Masirah TV (Yemen), December 12, 2022, <https://www.memri.org/tv/snejior-hamas-official-zahar-zionism-treacherous-christianity>. Quoted in *The Builders Stone: How Jews and Christians Built the West—and Why Only They Can Save It*, Melanie Phillips, Post Hill Press, 2025. See especially her chapter 1: “The Inflection Point.”

⁵ Muslims often misconstrue or omit key portions of relevant Old Testament passages to argue that Jesus advocated use of violence to spread the Gospel. See: <https://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/articles/bible-quran-violence.aspx#>.

⁶ <https://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/quran/violence.aspx>, offers a nuanced view of this topic. Data cited in my text is from [2016 APR 13 A Comparison Of Violence In The Bible & The Koran By Bill Warner PhD](#).

scientist can tell you historical events are often catalyzed by a small group of strongly committed people, as we saw in our discussion about Marxism. If only 15% of Muslims worldwide support violent jihad now, it is actually a huge number of people.

Quranic Texts About Violence

Violent jihad is explicitly described in the Quran and is also exemplified in Muhammad's own life when his tribe rejected him as a prophet. After fleeing his home in Mecca to seek refuge in Medina, his Quranic revelations began to justify use of violence and warfare against people groups that rejected his call to submit to Islam. His behavior shifted heavily from preaching to becoming a political and military leader.⁷

Islamic scholars debate what constitutes appropriate use of violence based on the Quran. It's difficult to sort these views without expert knowledge, but the Quran has obvious verses that unequivocally spell out the religious duty of Muslims to fight and kill those who reject Islam's revelation of Allah. For example, the same chapter that mentions Muhammad's Night Journey to Jerusalem described in Brief 15 decrees:

When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send a definite order to those among them who are given the good things of this life and yet transgress; so that the word is proved true against them: then We destroy them utterly. *Surah 17:16*

Other verses lay out conditions and limits for violent jihad. Here are a few summarized in sequence as they appear in the Quran⁸:

5:33 – **TREATMENT OF ENEMIES**: “The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger...is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land....”

8:12-14 – **BEHEAD AND MAIM**: “I will instill terror into the hearts of the Unbelievers: smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger-tips off them... because they contended against Allah and His Messenger...for those who resist Allah is the penalty of the Fire.”

8:37,39 – **MAKE WAR ON UNBELIEVERS**: “In order that Allah may separate the impure from the pure, put the impure, one on another, heap them together, and cast them into Hell.... fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah altogether and everywhere.”

8:57-61 – **BREAK TREATIES**: “Muslims may break their treaties with unbelievers if they feel that the infidels are being treacherous. Unbelievers will never get the better of Muslims. They should be attacked with such a mighty force that it frightens [terrorizes] them...if they want to surrender, then make peace.”

⁷ See [The Challenge of Dawaa](#), by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Hoover Institution Press, 2017, PDF p.11. The author writes: “It cannot be said often enough that the United States is not at war with Islam or with Muslims. It is, however, bound to resist the political aspirations of Medina Muslims where those pose a direct threat to our civil and political liberties. It is also bound to ensure that Mecca Muslims and reforming Muslims enjoy the same protections as members of other religious communities who accept the fundamental principles of a free society.”

⁸ English translations of these verses are from <https://quran411.com/>.

9:5 - **KILL IDOLATORS:** "...kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and [pay tribute], let them [go]...."

9:29 - **FIGHT NON-MUSLIMS:** "Fight those who believe not in Allah...(even if they are) People of the Book [Jews and Christians], until they pay [tribute] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

9:123 - **FIGHT NEIGHBORS:** "Fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find [harshness] in you...."

33:60-62 - **CHANGE OR BE KILLED:** "Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition...desist not...they shall have a curse on them: whenever they are found, they shall be seized and slain (without mercy). (Such was) the practice (approved) of Allah among those who lived aforetime: No change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of Allah."

These passages confer a religious mandate to violence that jihadists adopt in our time to justify aggression and terrorism. The verses establish that in the Quran, peace means submission to Islam, and tolerance means not killing followers of other religions only if they agree to live subjugated to Islamic law and pay taxes that support Islam's theocratic system.

Islam's Social Boundary Markers

Islam began among highly mobile Arab desert dwellers, where boundaries were fluid, subject to conflict, and supported by sacred patriarchal codes of honor. As Islam progressed beyond Arabia toward wider influence and power in the world, it developed distinctive boundary markers defined by Islamic law, religious differences, and legalized social castes within Islam.

DAR AL-HARB: Islamic jurists divide the world into *dar al-Islam*, the Abode [House] of Islam, referring to lands submitted to Islamic rule, and those that are not, which are called *dar al-harb*, "abode of war." These concepts are not defined explicitly in the Quran, but were established by jurists as Islam expanded.⁹

In classical teaching, it was a duty of Muslim rulers to bring *dar al-harb* lands into submission. This didn't necessarily mean there was always a state of war with such nations. That was left to local Muslim rulers to decide. In practice, peace often existed between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* nations, either through formal treaties or informal understanding. The goal was to secure and expand safe places for Muslims to prosper under sharia law.

Today, moderate Muslims hold that *dar al-harb* only applies to nations where Muslims are not allowed to practice their religion constitutionally or by law. Nations where Muslims comprise a minority but are free to pursue their religion in peace, such as India and the U.S., are classified as *dar al-aman*, or abodes of peace. Muslim nations that join the UN are considered by moderate Muslims to be in a default peace arrangement with other members of the UN. However, radical Islamists consider both the UN and member Muslim nations to be outside the House of Islam

⁹ See <https://csss-islam.com/institute-of-islamic-studies-iis/on-kufrijihadcow-slaughter-and-dar-al-harb/>. My discussion above draws heavily on this source, written by an Indian Muslim author.

An Islamist Vision of Worldwide Muslim Conquest

Attributed to the World Islamic Mission in Manchester, UK



established by Muhammad. After all, the Quran instructs Muslims to establish a global community submitted to Sharia Law, which overrides the UN universal declaration of human rights, as previously mentioned.

Muslim extremists use the term *dar al-harb* to identify nations still in need of conquest. An interesting map, above, depicts the entire world as *dar al-harb* ripe for conquest in the 21st century enroute to creating a worldwide “United States of Islam” — a global union of all nations under Islam. The map circulated online as an inspirational vision for Muslims devoted to bringing the entire world into submission

KAFIRS: *Kafir* means to “hide” or “cover.” People who ignore, hide, or cover up truths revealed by Muhammad and the Quran are considered *kafirs*. The word appears often in the Quran but is frequently translated as “unbeliever,” a more neutral sounding word. In Arabic, *kafir* is a specific word used by Muhammad to describe anyone doing anything not acceptable to Allah, including rejecting Islam, sinning, or following gods other than Allah. *Kafirs* are not considered innocent in Islam. They comprise a political class to be directly opposed.

Nearly two-thirds of the Quran and over a third of the sayings of Muhammad are about *kafirs*, making this a huge area of focus.¹⁰ Moderates hold that non-Muslims are not automatically *kafirs* because they can possess truth in a different form than Muslims. Still, the Quran says in multiple places that *kafirs* may be deceived, plotted against, hated, enslaved, mocked, tortured or worse. To Islamic fundamentalists, *kafirs*, especially Jews, are not fully human.

¹⁰ See <https://www.cspii.org/learn-political-islam/articles/kafir/>. See also: <https://archive.org/details/2018feb23kafirwithacapitalkbybillwarnerphd>

DHIMMIS: *Dhimmi* means “protected person” and refers to non-Muslims who live under legal protection in an Islamic state. Since non-Muslims are not full citizens in Muslim nations, they are forbidden to engage in the affairs of state.

Dhimmis face numerous restrictions and are obliged to pay a tax to live under sharia law. The tax, called *jizya*, means “penalty” in Arabic. It differs from religious tithes (*zakat*) paid by ordinary Muslims. The *jizya* is considered a symbol of humiliation and submission because *dhimmis* are not regarded as citizens even if they are natives in their own country.

Dhimmis are not generally allowed to build new religious buildings, or make changes to such buildings. In some locales *dhimmis* are not allowed to read their sacred books out loud where they might be heard by a Muslim. They’re not allowed to print or circulate religious publications, display stars of David, crosses or other religious symbols where they can be seen by Muslims, nor can they congregate publicly to attract attention. Specific restrictions vary from Muslim state to state, but *dhimmis* always live under reminders they are second class citizens. They’re not free compared to those who enjoy constitutional freedoms in liberal democracies.

Restrictions on Personal Freedom under Islam

Forty-seven countries today are defined as “Muslim majority nations.” About half consider themselves neutral about religion, but public questioning of Islamic beliefs and practices remains punishable in most Muslim majority nations, including many neutral ones.¹¹ At the other extreme, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Turkmenistan and Brunei have no constitutional freedom of speech, and little or no such freedom in practice.

Many restrictive boundaries in Islam control personal lifestyle choices, marking traditional Islam with a distinctive patriarchal, male dominant spirit of control. These restrictions are often overlooked by human rights activists who support Palestinian efforts to achieve statehood, even though Islam is particularly repressive to lifestyles such activists typically endorse.

Muslim nations generally have higher incidences of domestic violence. So-called “honor killings,” particularly of women, are still found in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, but reliable data is hard to find. Muslim nations also typically criminalize gay sex and transgender lifestyles, and often inflict corporal punishment, even death for infractions. Pew Research has found over 90% rejection of gay lifestyles in Jordan, Egypt, Palestinian territories, and Tunisia, and 80% rejection in Lebanon.

The bottom line is that most Muslim nations greatly reduce and commonly punish expressions of personal freedom seen as challenging security, religious or cultural values.

Tunneling Beneath Free Societies

DAWA, also written *darwa*, means to summons or invite, and is a distinctive Islamic approach to evangelizing. Dawa is inextricable from efforts to vigorously advance support for Islam and

¹¹ See “Freedom of Speech and Press in Muslim-Majority Countries,” by Hugofa Dastgeer and Daxton Stewart, *The International Journal of Communication* 15 (2021), 5004–5028.

sharia law. In 2017, one scholar wrote “If Islamism is the ideology, then dawa encompasses all the methods by which it is spread.” He went on to say:

The term “dawa” refers to activities carried out by Islamists to win adherents and enlist them in a campaign to impose sharia law on all societies. Dawa is not the Islamic equivalent of religious proselytizing, although it is often disguised as such by blending humanitarian activities with subversive political activities.¹²

Because *dawa* appears to be predominantly religious activity, its adherents enjoy greater legal protection in free societies than groups identified directly as Islamic extremists. It can be likened to tunneling beneath the surface of free speech and freedom of religion in order to undermine those freedoms. The philosopher Karl Popper labeled this the “paradox of tolerance:”

If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.¹³

Islamist Jihad in America

In the West, particularly in America, *dawa* has been compared to the “long march through the institutions” that served Marxism well in the 20th century. This refers to the way in which Marxists slowly and intentionally targeted colleges and universities to expand influence and reach larger numbers of people over time. Islamism has been spreading in the U.S. the same way. It’s not by accident. In fact, Pro-Palestinians and Marxists have developed close links based on their shared perception that Palestinian oppression is the result of western colonialism.

Behind this reality one group stands out, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which began operating in the U.S. in the 1960s. It’s beyond the scope of this Brief to go deeply into this topic, but it’s important to mention key points that highlight the spirit behind the MB’s network of influence.

When the Ottoman Empire fell apart after World War I, Muslim thinkers advanced competing visions of how to move forward. One Egyptian, Hassan al-Banna, stood out, arguing that Muslims needed to displace new secular, regional and Arab nationalist movements with authentic universal Islam based on the Quran, Muhammad’s sayings, and sharia law.

Al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928, emphasizing humanitarian works at first, such as feeding the poor and healthcare services. Very soon the MB developed a strategy and specialized jihadi military forces dedicated to creating a global Islamic state by any means possible.

Today the MB exercises influence in over 100 countries. It works directly with the Organisation of Islam Cooperation (OIC), which includes all 56 Islamic nations in the world and the “State of Palestine.” The OIC is the largest voting bloc in the UN. **Hamis identifies itself totally with the MB. It’s 1988 Charter says: “The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the**

¹² Ayaan Hirsi Ali, [The Challenge of Dawa](#).

¹³ Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.

wings of the Muslim Brotherhood...the largest Islamic movement in modern times” (Charter, Chapter 1, Article 2).

In the U.S., the first national Islamic organization, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) was founded by the Brotherhood in 1962. An FBI counterterrorism expert has noted “nearly all of the prominent Islamic organizations in America formed out of the MSA.”¹⁴ The expert asserts that 90% of the Brotherhood’s efforts in the U.S. involve open subversion rather than violent jihad. In the early 1980’s the Brotherhood created the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) headquartered in Plainfield, Indiana. ISNA became the leading MB umbrella organization. In 1991, a senior member of the U.S. Brotherhood wrote: **“The Muslim Brotherhood’s goal [is] to destroy America from within by using U.S. leaders to do the bidding of the jihadis.”**¹⁵

Following the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Towers, U.S. policy focused on combating violent “extremists” rather than addressing the ideological Islamic roots of violence. This approach diminished the perceived threat as originating from a small extreme minority without accounting for their religiously motivated zeal. This had the effect of categorizing criticism of Islam as slander, thereby obscuring what has been called the “information battlespace.”¹⁶ The second Trump administration quickly went to work to reverse this strategy.¹⁷

Defining the issue as extremism caps the legal and military options for addressing subversive Islamist activities that occur openly, including raising funds for violent jihad. Based on *The American Mosque 2020 Report*, U.S. mosques were giving an estimated \$14.1 million annually to support terrorism. A 2023 report identified \$260 million in total donations from prominent Islamic NGOs, funneled through legal channels such as PayPal.¹⁸

Author John Guandolo asserts that Interfaith Outreach is “the most effective domestic jihadi effort inside the U.S. today.” At a minimum, this calls for examining the deeper roots of “Civilization Jihad,” a euphemism for psychological warfare used strategically to position and support use of violent jihad. Unawareness of these types of subversive activities combined with lack of ethical clarity led many U.S. educational institutions to label as healthy freedom of speech what was in fact hateful speech that openly incited violence and fear. The Trump administration began redressing these issues within days following his second presidential term.

The text box on the next page highlights the Brotherhood’s goals and values in their own words and illuminates the nature of the spirit behind their brand of Islamic jihad as they target all of western civilization.

¹⁴ *Raising a Jihadi Generation: Understanding the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in America*, by John Guandolo. 2013. Law Enforcement Handbook. pp 53-55. Prominent NGOs influenced by the MB include: International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT), Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).

¹⁵ *The Hamas-Muslim Brotherhood Network in the United States*, by John Guandolo, 2024, p. 14.

¹⁶ Open subversion activities are viewed militarily as propaganda, counter-intelligence, psychological and economic warfare.

¹⁷ See <https://www.commentary.org/seth-mandel/hamass-american-mouthpieces/>

¹⁸ See [‘Hamas-aligned’ charities have received \\$260 million in donations](#) | National Post. This doesn’t include use of illicit funding channels.

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Their Own Words

"Allah is our goal; the Messenger is our guide; the Koran is our law; Jihad is our means; and martyrdom in the way of Allah is our inspiration." *MB Creed*.

"The Islamic nation must be fully prepared to fight the tyrants and the enemies of Allah as a prelude to establishing the Islamic State. *MB By-Laws*.

"It is permissible to lie if attaining the goal is permissible...and obligatory to lie if the goal is obligatory." *Reliance of the Traveller (Um Dat al Salik)*, the most widely promoted book of Islamic sharia law used by Muslims in North America.

"The defeatists should fear Allah lest they distort this religion and cause it to become weak on the basis of the claim that it is a religion of peace. Yes, it is the religion of peace but in the sense of saving all of mankind from worshiping anything other than Allah and submitting all of mankind to the rule of Allah." Sayyid Qutb, *Fiqh al-Da'wah*, pp 217-222

The [MB] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and sabotaging its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions." *Explanatory Memorandum of the U.S. Muslim Brotherhood*

"There should be some kind of fear in the western world, one of the causes of which is that since the time it first appeared in [Mecca], Islam has never decreased in numbers, rather it has always continued to increase and spread. Moreover Islam is not only a religion, rather one of its pillars is jihad." *Muslim World Magazine*

"The chasm between Islam and [people separated from Allah] is great, and a bridge is not to be built across it so that the people on the two sides may mix with each other, but only so that the [separated] people...may come over to Islam." Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*

"Adopt the Palestinian cause as part of a worldwide Islamic plan, with the policy plan and by means of jihad, since it acts as the keystone of the renaissance of the Arab world today." *Toward a Worldwide Strategy for Islamic Policy*, MB "Departure 11"

10-1-25