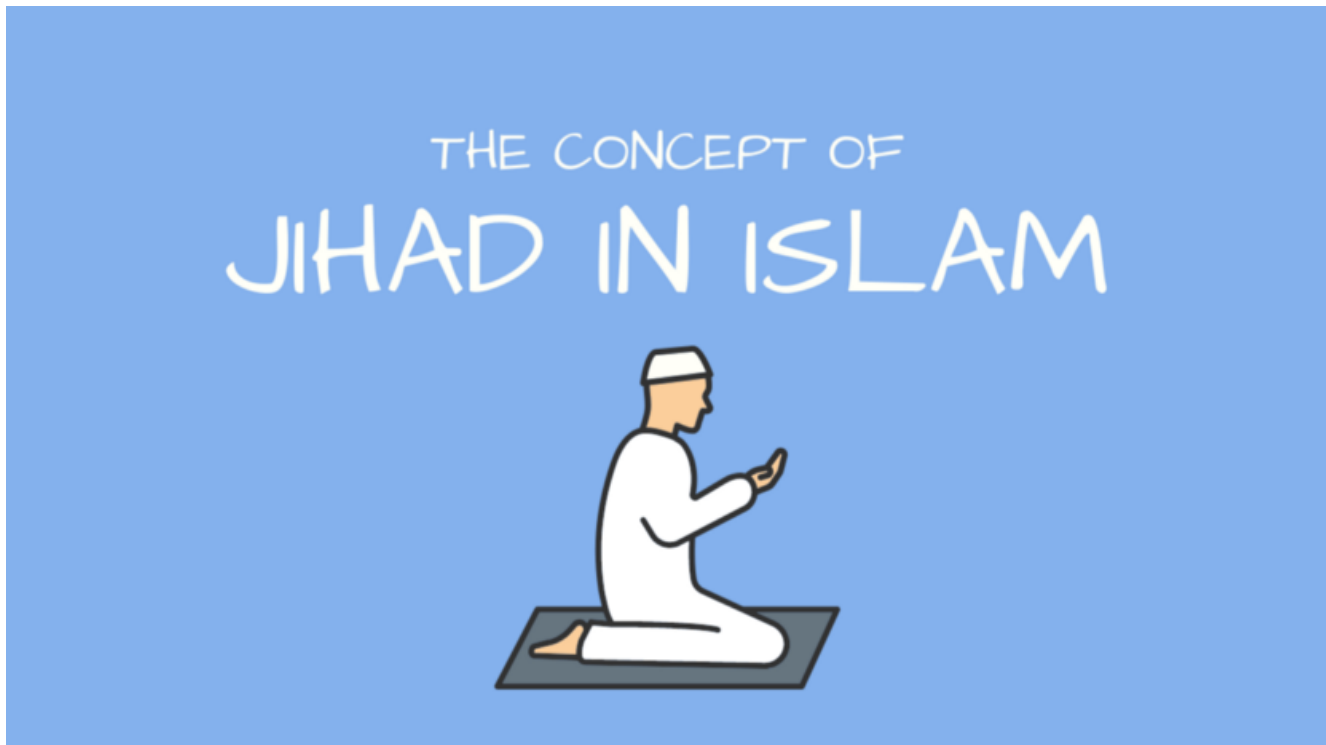


# WHAT IS JIHAD IN ISLAM? - The Sincere Seeker - Medium

The Sincere Seeker : 10-12 minutes : 10/11/2021



Islam is generally misunderstood, especially in the western world, and no Islamic term is more widely misunderstood and evokes such strong reactions as the word *Jihad*. Jihad is often mistranslated to mean ‘*Holy War*,’ and some non-Muslims misunderstand the term to mean waging war against disbelievers to either convert them to Islam or to kill them. Often the word Jihad is thought to be synonymous with terrorism. In reality, this couldn’t be further from the truth.

Jihad comes from an Arabic word meaning to ‘*make an effort*’ or ‘*to strive towards a goal*.’ The term Jihad means to ‘*to exert oneself*’ or ‘*to struggle*.’ In the Islamic context, it means to struggle against one’s evil inclination. So, any effort of self-improvement, whether in the form of improving One’s spirituality, education, or financial situation, is an act of Jihad. The Holy Quran makes it clear that Jihad has been used to mean ‘*striving*’ or ‘*exerting*.’

**“We shall certainly guide those who strive for Our cause to Our path. God is certainly with the righteous ones” (Quran 29:69)**

This Verse applies to ones that spiritually struggle to attain closeness to and seek the pleasure of God.

Jihad comes in different forms. The most essential type of Jihad, which can be labeled as Major Jihad, is *Jihad An-Nafs (The Jihad of the soul)*. This is the spiritual struggle between the two powers within human beings; the soul and the body. The soul is prone to becoming corrupted, with the corruption arising from within oneself, from external influences, or both.

**“Verily, the soul is inclined to evil” (Quran 12:53)**

Islam expresses the importance of one to purify, to cleanse, and to restrain themselves from submitting to their sinful desires. They are expected to avoid acts of disobedience and are expected to perform acts of obedience which are pleasing to God. Islam expects its followers to give preference to their soul and their conscience over their body and desires, by striving to resist their urges and inner temptations.

**“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds” (Quran 29:6)**

Islam places a great deal of emphasis on self-improvement, self-development, self-restraint, and self-control, shaping one's life in the best manner for one's benefit and the benefit of society at large. This Jihad is intended to purify the soul and involves struggling against the greed for worldly purposes, arrogance, pride, envy, jealousy, hatred, hypocrisy, insincerity, vanity, narcissism, and other evil traits which Satan uses to lead humanity astray into destruction. It is imperative for every Muslim to struggle and strive daily to overcome these evils to the best of their ability. The Jihad of the soul also includes the struggle to perform good deeds for the sake of God, to please Him and become closer to him. Allah states in His Book:

**“He has succeeded who purifies it” (Quran 91:9)**

Scholars state that the successors this Verse is referring to are those individuals that engage in purifying their souls by obeying God and restraining from sins and evil doing.

The other major type of Jihad is *Jihad Al-Shaytan (Jihad against Satan)*. Satan's main aim is to destroy the Religion of mankind by attacking them with continuous whispers regarding their belief in God and when in worship to tempt, corrupt and mislead people away from God's guidance.

**“O, you who have believed, enter into submission completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy” (Quran 2:208)**

The whispers of Satan can come to pious and righteous people and to wicked and evil individuals. These whispers can be detrimental to one's spiritual, emotional, physical, and psychological well-being, so it's essential for one to strive to fight against Satan; to ward off doubts that Satan stirs up that undermines one's faith in God and to ward off corrupt desires which he provokes.

These two types of Jihad are the foundation for all other varieties of Jihad and are obligatory upon everyone accountable. If one does not engage in these types of Jihad, he or she cannot venture into the other realm of Jihad, which involves battles against external enemies.

This introduces us to the other variety of Jihad: *the armed struggle against those who plot against Muslims*, which can be classified as Minor Jihad. When Muslims or their faith or territory is threatened under attack, Muslims are permitted to defend themselves. This Jihad is the act of striving in the battlefield, to fight in self-defense to protect one's own life, family, faith, wealth, and property. It also includes fighting against evil, operation, and tyranny to defend what is right and to combat oppression. This Jihad is the effort and struggles to improve society.

As stated earlier, Jihad does not mean Holy War. The Arabic word for Holy War is *'Harbun Muqaddasah.'* The word Jihad does not imply Holy War, and the words *'Holy War'* do not exist at all in the Holy Qur'an or any authentic Hadith (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad). The killing of innocent people — whether Muslim or non-Muslim — is condemned in Islam and is considered a major sin. Islam does not permit Muslims to fight against non-Muslims, solely based on their faith.

Islam is a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness. No one can be compelled to accept Islam.

**“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the Religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So, whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing” (Quran 2:256)**

Muslims must convey and establish the proofs and evidence of Islam to people so that they can be differentiated from falsehood. Islam is clear in terms of its Message and Mission, both of which no one is compelled to accept. Whoever is not stubborn or arrogant in their acceptance will enter and accept Islam, and whoever rejects the Truth may do so. No one can threaten or harm anyone because they choose not to accept Islam. If one is compelled to accept this faith, then he/she is not a true Muslim at heart.

Islam does not allow for the fighting of noncombatants. Military conflicts are to be directed against only fighting soldiers, and not against innocent civilians. The acts such as those committed on 9/11 in the United States, for example, are classified as a major sin in Islam and carry the death penalty.

**“...Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or corruption [done] in the land — it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one — it is as if he had saved mankind entirely...” (Quran 5:32)**

It is also forbidden for one to harm or kill oneself by any means. Suicide is a severe sin in Islam, a state of disbelief, and a loss of faith that is condemned by the Quran.

**“... do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good” (Quran 2:195)**

Unfortunately, there is a category of brainwashed Muslim youth who get drafted into misguided terrorist groups, who believe that upon exploding themselves that they would die as martyrs and get sent directly to Paradise. Islam condemns quite the contrary, suicide in any form.

If attacked, one is permitted to fight back in self-defense. Muslims should be keen to defend themselves and preserve their own lives.

**“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory” (22:39)**

However, if the other party refrains from aggression and offers peace, then Muslims are expected to extend their hand for peace in return.

**“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing” (Quran 8:61)**

The first battle fought by our Prophet and his followers, called the *Battle of Badr*, was an act of defense against a group who plotted and waged war against the Muslims. When fighting in defense, the Holy Koran warns Muslims not to exceed their military actions beyond the proper limits.

**“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors” (Quran 2:190)**

This type of fighting is permitted, as it is a lesser evil designed to rid the world of a bigger evil. It is committed with the purpose of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. It constitutes the act of fighting to defend Islam, rather than to spread it.

Islam has provided guidelines for fighting against the enemy in self-defense. Islam prohibits the killing of children, women, the elderly, the sick, monks in monasteries, rabbis, those who are sitting in places of worship, and the murder of any other noncombatant — even in a state of war and fighting. Islam does not allow torture of prisoners of war, mutilation, treason, rape, cutting down fruitful trees, or the destroying of cultivated fields or gardens, or the destruction of property. Islam also does not allow the slaughter of cows, sheep, and camels, except for food. Muslims are also forbidden from attacking wounded soldiers unless the wounded soldier is still fighting you. Islam only allows fighting with minimum necessary force.

Some enemies of Islam take the text of the Holy Quran and Hadith out of context, claiming Islam promotes violence and terrorism; even though Jihad has nothing to do with harming oneself or society. Jihad remains a noble matter; a noble strike for the sake of God.

## **BUY ISLAMIC BOOKS by The Sincere Seeker Collection for Adults & Children on AMAZON:**

<https://www.amazon.com/thesincereseeker>

**FOLLOW The Sincere Seeker on social media to stay up to date 📌**

 Website [➡ https://www.thesincereseeker.com/](https://www.thesincereseeker.com/)

 Instagram [➡ https://www.instagram.com/thesincereseeker/](https://www.instagram.com/thesincereseeker/)

 TikTok [➡ https://vm.tiktok.com/brsQ7u/](https://vm.tiktok.com/brsQ7u/)

 Facebook [➡ https://www.facebook.com/TheSincereSeekerChannel/](https://www.facebook.com/TheSincereSeekerChannel/)

 Podcast [➡ https://apple.co/2R4z1Uy](https://apple.co/2R4z1Uy)

 Amazon Store [➡ https://www.amazon.com/thesincereseeker](https://www.amazon.com/thesincereseeker)  

 **SUBSCRIBE to The Sincere Seeker YouTube Channel & Turn on Notifications!** 

 <https://goo.gl/ckDmLs> 