WAR AND PEACE: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING
OF THE THEOLOGY OF JIHAD

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The growing number of terrorist attacks waged by Islamic fundamentalists has led to an increasing desire to understand the nature of jihad. These attacks have led to a renewed sense of urgency to find answers to such questions as why these attacks occur, and who they are waged against. Towards this end I turn to examine the political philosophy of four Muslim theologians. Specifically I look at the political philosophy of Sayyid Qutb, Shah Walai Allah Dihlawai, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Muhammad Sa’id al- Ashmawy. I find that the notion of jihad is very inconclusive. Furthermore, the question of jihad revolves largely around the question of whether or not individuals can be reasoned with, and secondly whether religion should be compelled upon individuals.
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PART I

THE ROAD TO WAR:

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Chapter 1

Introduction

If one were to search on the Internet today for jihad, one would obtain 1,220,000 search results. After September 11th, the word jihad has found a permanent place in American lexicon. Unfortunately, despite the large volume of usages for this word, individuals are confused as to what jihad is. In the recent years jihad has taken on various meanings. It has even been invoked in an attempt to get Barney, the dinosaur, off the Internet.

Before looking at how the word is used today, I begin with a look at how the term was originally used. The term jihad has evolved over time. For the most part, the term jihad used today is an off-shoot of the original term. Jihad originally had a two-fold meaning. The first type of jihad is often referred to as the “greater jihad.” Contrary to what one may think, this greater jihad is not violent jihad waged against others but rather an internal struggle against oneself and one’s desires. Sayyid Qutb says of this type of jihad, “Before a Muslim steps into the battlefield, he has already fought a great battle within himself against Satan, against his own desires and ambitions, his personal interests and inclinations, the interests of his family and of his nation…” ¹ This greater jihad was prescribed by God prior to violent jihad or “lesser jihad,” the second type of jihad. God first told the Muslims to “Restrain your hands, and establish regular prayers, and pay Zakat.” (Zakat is the amount a Muslim must pay to the poor each year.)²

The reason why greater jihad was prescribed prior to the lesser jihad was two fold. First, Islam was new to Mecca at the time of this revelation. God wanted these new Muslims to fully comprehend, know, and appreciate their religion before spreading the message to others.

Individuals cannot convince others to join a new and unfamiliar religion when they themselves are not sure of the various aspects of the religion. Secondly, the greater jihad was advocated prior to the lesser jihad so that individuals within the community could have time to adequately prepare themselves physically and mentally before engaging in battle.\(^3\)

The command to engage in the lesser (violent jihad) was also revealed in stages. First, Muslims were permitted to fight when war was waged against them. “Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight you” (2:190). Here, war was to be waged only against those individuals who were guilty of aggression. This first provision was revealed in Mecca, at the time when the Prophet Muhammad and his followers suffered severe abuse at the hands of the non-believers, simply because they believed in Islam. In this sense, the first time violent jihad was called for was in defense, in order to protect and maintain themselves. It was only after this that war was declared against all polytheists. The Qur’an says, “And fight against all the polytheists, because they fight against you” (9:36). Again, it must be stressed that the reason why Muslims were instructed to fight against polytheists is because they fought against the Muslims. However, God later commanded that the Muslims fight against the People of the Book (those to whom revelation or scripture was previously given, principally Jews and Christians) “who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, who do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, and who do not consider the true religion as their religion.”\(^4\) It is this command to fight all the People of the Book which often times is cited by Muslims who advocate violent jihad.

\(^2\) The Holy Qur’an, 4:77. This notation refers to the chapter number and the verse number where the verse can be found in the Qur’an. Here, the verse is the 77\(^{th}\) verse of Chapter 4.

\(^3\) Qutb, pg. 53.

\(^4\) Ibid., pg. 52.
When most individuals hear the word jihad today, they tend to associate it with Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden defines jihad as “a legal and morally demanded duty”\(^5\) to be waged against those who carry arms into the land of the Holy Mosque. Moreover, it is an individual duty to fight “in the cause of Allah and to cleanse the land from those occupiers.”\(^6\) He further defines jihad as a fight against the “clear declaration of war on God, his Messenger, and Muslims.”\(^7\) By this definition, jihad is a holy war waged against those who occupy Muslim territory. In waging jihad, bin Laden wished to end the aggression of the West, which he considered to be the occupation of the Arabian Peninsula, “plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.”\(^8\) In this sense, it appears to be a defensive war.

In his book, *Unholy War*, John Esposito highlights the multi-definitional nature of jihad. He notes that definitions of jihad can be broadly classified under four categories. Depending on who is asked, jihad can mean, “striving, spreading the message of Islam, freeing oppressed persons, and the overthrow of oppressive government.”\(^9\) Daniel Pipes, of the *New York Post*, defines jihad as, “the legal, compulsory, communal effort to expand the territories ruled by non-


\(^6\) Ibid.


\(^8\) Bin Laden. 1996. “Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land.”

Muslims, with the eventual goal of achieving Muslim domination over the entire globe.”\textsuperscript{10} By this definition the purpose of jihad is to regain control of land currently under the leadership of Christians or Jews, thereby expanding Muslim sovereignty. Dr. Abdullah Azzam, a founder of Hamas, and a member of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood continued this theme when he called for jihad in a speech, noting that one should use “jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues,” in regaining “all lands that were Muslim”\textsuperscript{11} regardless of how they were originally taken or lost.

The purpose of this research is to come to an understanding of what jihad is and is not. Moreover, this research seeks to understand the various responses to internal and external threat taken by Muslim leaders today. Why have some chosen to respond to violence with violence, yet others have chosen to respond with a message of peace and toleration? The advocates of jihad insist on a literal interpretation of selected Qur’anic verses and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad. Conversely, those who argue for less violent alternatives to jihad believe that those verses and the teachings should be re-interpreted and adapted in light of modern times, and within the context of the situation at hand.

In order to understand the variation among responses, I look only at the more controversial of the two forms of jihad, or the lesser jihad. Toward this end, I examine the writings of four political theologians, two of which advocated violent jihad and two of which advocated more peaceful methods. The two theologians who advocated violent jihad are Sayyid Qutb, and Shah Walliyullah of Delhi. For the counter argument, I look at the theology of Averroes (Ibn Rushd) as well as that of Muhammad Sa’id al-Ashmawy.

With respect to these writings I specifically seek to answer the following set of questions. First, what is the particular theorist’s understanding of jihad? How does he define jihad? Secondly, what is its purpose? Finally, what arguments does the author make to support his position for or against jihad? However, besides their position on jihad I will also examine their thoughts on the nature of relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims. As will be seen, it is primarily this delicate relationship which serves as the cornerstone of an individual’s decision to advocate or not advocate the use of jihad.

The outline for this project is as follows. The first main section will cover the proponents of violent jihad. In chapter 2 I examine the writings of Sayyid Qutb. After a brief description of his life and the times within which he wrote, I proceed to outline his political theology. In chapter 3 I follow the same format outlined above in outlining the theology of Shah Waliyullah. This format is continued in the second section of the paper in which I examine the theology of those who advocate a more peaceful interpretation of jihad. In chapter 4 I examine the theology of Averroes, and look at that of al-Ashmawy in chapter 5.

While much research has been generated on the topic of jihad after September 11, 2001, more research has yet to be done. My effort stands apart from this earlier scholarship in that only a handful of scholars have sought to understand jihad from the vantage point of influential political theologians who sought answers to these very questions decades and centuries before us. If we are to understand the arguments being made today we must step back and analyze the foundations of those arguments, which are embedded in the writings of these early philosophers of religion.

11 Esposito, pg. 7.
Chapter 2

Sayyid Qutb

Hailed as the “single most influential writer in the Islamic tradition,” Sayyid Qutb was born in Egypt in 1906 to a middle-class family. His mother was a very devout and pious woman who greatly influenced his life and work. It is she who made sure he received a proper Islamic education, and by the age of ten Qutb had memorized the Holy Qur’an in its entirety. After receiving a degree, Qutb worked in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. Eventually he traveled to the United States to study at the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley where he earned a Master of Education. Because Qutb is often remembered for his shockingly harsh discourses on the topic of jihad it is surprising that many describe him, during this period of his life, as evidencing “traces of individualism and existentialism.”

Nonetheless, Qutb’s religious upbringing was not too far in the background. He soon became disillusioned with the West and irritated with its lifestyle. Specifically, Qutb was horrified by the mood, habits, materialism, racism, violence, past times, and sexual promiscuity of the West. These aspects of Western civilization served as part of the fuel for Qutb’s criticisms against what he would later term, jahili or backwardness. Disgusted with America, Qutb returned to his home in Egypt and threw himself into the preeminent Islamist movement of the time, the Muslim Brotherhood. He became quite active in this movement and quickly

13 Ibid., pgs 60-1.
14 Ibid., pg. 61.
15 Ibid., pg. 61.
16 Qutb defines jahili societies as those societies outside the din of Allah. Milestones, pg. 80.
became revered by its members, who looked to him for advice on which direction the movement should take next. Prior to Qutb’s involvement with the organization, the Muslim Brotherhood was far less organized and while active, undertook non-violent means of expression. Qutb advocated more aggressive measures. He believed that the next step for the Muslim Brotherhood should be to re-institute the *shari‘ah*, or Islamic Law in Egypt. Irritated with his radicalism, which included an assassination plot against Nasser, he was jailed in 1954. It was during this period of time that Qutb’s vision turned particularly revolutionary prompting him to write *Milestones* in 1964. He did not write *Milestones* for the mass public, but rather for a vanguard, perhaps his followers, who were to take its writings as signposts “along the road of Islamic revivalism.” However, due to the controversial nature of this work, it was widely read in Egypt before it was eventually banned. It was for this work that he was hanged on August 29, 1966 at the age of 61. He was charged with being a threat to the national security and a danger to the regime. It is principally this work that I draw on.

The nature of Qutb’s revivalist philosophy can be summed up by one verse in the Qur’an, found at the beginning of *Milestones*. “And therefore, then, call (all mankind to faith), and pursue the right course steadfastly, as you have been commanded; and do not follow their vain desires.” Qutb believed that the whole plight of man in modern society was the result of

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17 Berman., pgs. 62-3.

18 Qutb’s other works include, *Social Justice in Islam; In the Shade of the Qur’an; Islam; The Religion of the Future.*

19 Qutb’s use of “vanguard” is interesting here as he particularly despised Marxism.

20 Qutb, pg. ii.

21 Ibid., pg. i.

22 The Holy Qur’an, 42:15.
individuals following their vain desires and passions. Man’s condition resulted when, “man, swayed by his desires, deviates from the truth imbedded in the depths of his innate nature, or when he follows his own opinion instead of Allah’s commands.” Therefore, Qutb believed that if man uses independent reason and follows his vain desires; surely his nature will be corrupted as a result. Qutb here also implies that it is in the best interest of humans to follow divine commands rather than follow blind passion, which can misguide, since man’s passions contradict his nature. Essentially, Qutb is here advocating the need for man to wage the greater jihad.

Although Qutb had a problem with modern society, it should be noted that he was not against modernity or progress; nor was he against innovation and improvement in society. On the contrary, he believed that God had blessed each of us with faculty, or reason, and that one should pursue science and technology; however, certain limits needed to be placed. Islam “considers material production to be of prime importance for man to function as the vicegerent of Allah on earth. However, material comforts are not elevated to the highest value, at the expense of human characteristics, e.g. freedom and honor, family and its obligations, and moral values.”

Yet another problem, according to Qutb, was that man had lost his relationship with God, who provides society with order and harmony. Qutb described this situation of man as a moment of crisis, a situation in which man was ill at ease. According to Qutb, man’s quality of life was “sliding downward.” His inspiration, intelligence, and morality, were degenerating. “Man was

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23 Qutb., pg. 77.
24 Berman, pg. 69.
25 Qutb, pg. 82.
26 Berman, pg. 68.
miserable, anxious, skeptical, and was suffering from affliction, distress, nervous and psychological diseases, perversion, idiocy, insanity, and crime.” He further wrote, in *The Shade of the Qur’an*, that modern men had “lost touch with their own soul.” What was the root cause of man’s suffering? God was thought to be dead. What was the antidote? God.

According to Qutb Western society had lost the values necessary for its development and growth, and had infected Muslim society. Qutb believed Islam was the only system that possessed these necessary values, and he desperately wanted to revive God. The only chance to regain harmony would be for Islam, the one true religion, to be reinstated as the sole religion. Qutb, then, was on a mission to reacclimatize man to God, and to convince him to follow God rather than his blind passions.

The ignorance in which you are living makes you impure, and Allah wants to purify you; the customs you follow are defiling, and Allah wants to cleanse you; the life you are living is low, and Allah wants to uplift you; and the condition you are in, is troublesome, depressing, and base, and Allah wants to give you ease, mercy, and goodness.

Qutb’s third problem with Western society was that it placed a distinction between religion and the state. Society had relegated God to the heavens and His rule had no place on Earth. For Qutb, as well as all Muslims, this distinction between the realm of the religious and the realm of the secular was inconsistent with Islam. “The entire universe is under the authority of Allah, and man, being a small part of it, necessarily obeys the physical laws governing the

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., pg. 69.
29 Qutb, pgs. 6-7.
30 Ibid., pg. 115.
31 Berman, pg. 80.
universe.” 32 Thus, “man should not cut himself off from this authority to develop a separate system and a separate scheme of life.” 33 Islam is a complete, all encompassing package. It dictates every facet of a human’s life. According to Qutb, the shari’ah provides man with freedom, equality, social welfare, morality, and humanity. 34 Qutb believed that because modern man followed the dictates of fellow men rather than God, they had become enslaved to others. “The shari’ah gives us a system of laws, free from human interference, beyond the reach of human desire, and above the interests of any particular group or class of people.” 35 Moreover, the shari’ah is utilitarian, as it provides the greatest good for the greatest number. 36

Conflict was the result of man using his imperfect faculty to devise laws which inherently contradicted those laws of nature. Moreover, conflict within oneself will, “spread to human societies, nations, and races.” 37 It is interesting to note here that although Qutb believed man should use his faculties to make improvements in his society, this same faculty is imperfect in devising laws to govern man. Qutb postulates that when man follows the shari’ah, he is in harmony with the universe and thus is at peace with himself. Once man is at peace with himself, “peace and cooperation among individuals follow automatically because they all live together under the same system.” 38 Furthermore since conflict spreads internationally as a result of internal conflict, once this conflict is resolved, peace will also extend across borders.

32 Qutb, pg. 38.
33 Ibid.
34 Berman, pg. 95.
35 Ibid., pg. 114.
36 Berman, pg. 95.
37 Qutb, pg. 77.
38 Qutb, pg. 75.
For Qutb then, the end was to establish a state based on the shari’ah, free from man made laws, and to establish the Reign of God, cleansed of all impurity.\(^{39}\) According to Qutb, “the earth belongs to Allah and should be purified for Allah, and it cannot be purified for Him unless the banner, ‘No god except Allah’ is unfurled across the earth.”\(^{40}\) Qutb believed developing this pure, Islamic worldwide nation was a divine task. He cites the following verse as evidence. “And thus have We made of you a community justly balanced, that you may be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves” (2:143). This verse here entails that the community is a chosen one which will triumph and become the dominant nation.

Further, Qutb wanted to resurrect the old Islam, or Islam in its original state.\(^ {41}\) According to Qutb, it was essential that one must resurrect this old order because it was the uncorrupted version, which existed under the leadership of the Prophet. However, the Islam of today was buried under generations of man-made traditions, and had strayed from the straight path.\(^ {42}\) This made waging the greater jihad even harder. In order to re-establish the old order, Qutb first sought to awaken the Muslims to the potential danger (the jahili\(^ {43}\)), and gather the vanguard that first had to purify themselves.\(^ {44}\) It was essential that Muslims return to this original form of Islam in order to know what kind of person God wanted us to be, what morals to hold, and what society to form.\(^ {45}\) Muslims had to correct themselves before they could later go

\(^{39}\) Ibid., pg. 99.

\(^{40}\) Qutb, pg. 22.

\(^{41}\) Berman, pg. 93.

\(^{42}\) Qutb, pg. 7.

\(^{43}\) Jahili, refers to the entire society. Jahilliyah, is a single individual within that society.

\(^{44}\) Berman, pg. 92.

\(^{45}\) Qutb, pg. 7.
correct others “Our first step will be to raise ourselves above the jahili society and all its values and concepts.” In this sense, Qutb did not believe the vanguard should wage jihad against jahili society until they have succeeded in purifying the Muslims within their society.

In dealing with jahili society, the problem for Qutb was not merely that the *jahiliyyah* did not believe in Islam. Rather a fundamental problem was that they did not incorporate Islam into their everyday lives. Here it is interesting to note that Qutb does not adopt what he calls a “Western concept of religion, which is merely a name for ‘belief’ in the heart, having no relation to the practical affairs of life.” He defines jahili society as one that does not dedicate itself wholly to the submission of Allah, in its worship, and it laws. “This jahiliyyah is based on rebellion against the sovereignty of Allah on earth. It attempts to transfer to man one of the greatest attributes of Allah, namely sovereignty, by making some men lords over others.” It does so by “claiming that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behavior, and to choose a way of life rests with men, without regard to what Allah has prescribed.”

From this, one can gather that Qutb believed God was the ultimate lawgiver and furthermore, that God had already dictated the laws which would be necessary to govern man. As such, it was outside the realm of man to dictate laws unto other man. If man were to devise such laws he would be assuming the role of God. In order to remedy this situation of some men lording over others, Qutb held that, “the call to Islam was a …declaration of war against every

46 Ibid., pg. 16.
47 Ibid., pg. 62.
48 Qutb, pg. 8.
49 Ibid.
authority that legislates laws not permitted by Allah.”\(^{50}\) Here we see that jihad for the author is aimed against those in society who make laws. However, lordship of one over another is not just limited narrowly to the realm of the legislator. Qutb also considered it lordship to tacitly dictate norms, attitudes, and ways of living, as well as customs and values to the society.\(^{51}\) Hence, the few dictating to the masses, and vice versa, is also considered lordship.

Qutb also classified all idolatrous societies as jahili since they took other gods besides Allah, and base their laws on sources other than Allah. These include Christians who associated partners with God by equating the Son of God with God. Furthermore, Qutb considers Christians jahili because they followed the spirit of the law but neglected to adopt the actual code, or letter of the law. Jews are also classified as jahiliyyah because although they followed the code, they followed it in such a way that it became too rigid. In adhering to the code, Jews had forgotten the spirit of the code.\(^{52}\) In following stricture, the Jews had neglected to ascertain the true meaning and purpose of worship. Here it is evident that Qutb believed it to be necessary to follow stricture, but with a view to its spirit. For Qutb, both are equally necessary in the maintenance of religion. Furthermore, the Jews and the Christians were said to have made some men lords over others; namely, rabbis and priests. By giving the rabbis and priests the authority to declare what was permissible and what was forbidden, they too had elevated the religious authorities to the status of lords, and in essence enslaved themselves to them.\(^{53}\) Again, in essence, they served someone other than Allah. The liberal thinkers we will encounter later are

\(^{50}\) Ibid., pg. 21.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., pg. 81.

\(^{52}\) Berman, pg. 71.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., pgs. 66-7.
accepting of the *People of the Book* (those that received scripture from Allah); however, Qutb appears to be abrogating this category.

The fourth type of jahili society was Marxism. Marxists had denied the very existence of God. Instead of worshipping God, they worshipped materialism.\(^{54}\) Marxists also made a distinction between classes, and some classes enjoyed more benefits than others. Moreover, this distinction and special treatment of some classes is against one of the foundational principles of Islam, that of equality and full incorporation. Under a system of Islam, all individuals are equal and none were accorded special status. Islam “is an all encompassing community in which people of various races, nations, languages, and colors were equal members.”\(^{55}\)

Furthermore, Marxist society had elevated materialism as the highest value. According to Qutb, in a society in which “all other human values are sacrificed at its altar, then such a society is a backward one.”\(^{56}\) Still a greater criticism of Marxism was that it had denied people their spiritual need. This spiritual need differentiates humans from animals. Marxist society holds that all existence is the result of economics and the means of production.\(^{57}\) Such an understanding of existence leaves no room for God, and no need to rely on God for anything. Due to these critical flaws, Marxism can be taken to be the worst type of jahili society in the eyes of Qutb.

Finally, jahili society also includes all Muslims, to the extent that Muslims do not follow

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\(^{54}\) Berman, pg. 79.

\(^{55}\) Qutb, pg. 40.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., pg. 80.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., pg. 66.
the original, true form of Islam. “Muslims were jahiliyah before they were Muslims, and jahili values and thought may still be influencing them.” For these reasons, Muslim society cannot truly be called an Islamic society. Islam’s values, concepts, and entire system of living had been corrupted by jahili thought. It is in this sense that Muslims must first wage the greater jihad, against themselves - to be purified of jahili ways, and strengthen their will against the temptations of jahilliyah they will likely encounter. Qutb also considered all Muslim societies, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, to be jahili because they relegate law making to others besides Allah. “Among Muslim societies some openly declare their secularism and negate all their relationships with Islam. Others pay respect to Islam only with their lips, but in their social life have completely abandoned it. None is based on submission to Allah alone.” For these reasons, Muslim society cannot truly be called an Islamic society.

In dealing with jahili society Muslims have only two choices, peace with a treaty, or war. Once the vanguard had waged jihad against itself and purified itself, this vanguard would march “through the vast ocean of jahiliyyah…” and wage jihad, which would be worldwide, and end only on the Day of Judgment. Here Qutb is assuming that the vanguard gets past the first stage of jihad, and is successful in purifying themselves. Given this assumption, the vanguard is to take its cues from the Qur’an, which would guide it as to how to approach and

58 Ibid., pgs. 67-8.
59 Ibid., pg. 32.
60 Ibid., pg. 16.
61 Ibid., pgs. 67-8.
62 Ibid., pg. 102.
63 Berman, pg. 98.
address the jahiliyyah.\textsuperscript{64} It should be noted that in waging jihad, Qutb believed the battle existed between the community of belief (i.e., Islam) and the community of nationalism, or countries which had elevated the status of the nation above God.\textsuperscript{65} Islam was a community based on belief and was all-inclusive rather than those societies based on weak associations such as race, ethnicity, or language.\textsuperscript{66} It should be noted that for Qutb this battle was strictly based on religious grounds. It was a struggle between belief and unbelief. In this sense, its main objective was not material gain.

Qutb stressed that in dealing with jahiliyyah absolutely no compromise could be made. He asserted, “We and jahiliyyah are on different roads, and if we take even one step in its company, we will lose our goal entirely and lose our way as well.”\textsuperscript{67} The fundamental reason why there could be no compromise between the jahiliyyah and Muslims centered on the issue of sovereignty. For Qutb, jihad would be waged until \textit{La ilaha illa Allah} (no God except Allah), was accepted everywhere.\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Ilaha}, or \textit{Uluhiya}, translated is the equivalent of sovereignty.\textsuperscript{69} For Qutb, jihad was to be waged until all accepted that there was no sovereignty except Allah. This was the distinguishing feature separating jahili society from the community of believers.\textsuperscript{70} However, it should be noted, that if to a certain degree all Muslims are considered jahili and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} Qutb, pg. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Berman, pg. 115.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Qutb, pg. 40.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., pg. 16.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., pg. 39.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Ibid., pg. 20.
\item \textsuperscript{70} Ibid., pg. 39.
\end{itemize}
there exist no true believers anywhere, than jihad is to be waged everywhere, against everyone, including so called Muslims.

Islam is compelled to use force when confronting the jahiliyyah primarily because the jahili society enjoys the status quo. It is already established and enjoys political and economic support. Because the jahili society is already active, traditional methods of preaching and persuasion will not be useful. Moreover, preaching alone will not convince those in authority to relinquish their power. As Qutb notes, historically the response to the call of Islam by jahili society is to fight and not make peace. However, the Islamic movement is to use such methods, preaching and persuasion, to reform ideas and beliefs after physical force and jihad is used to abolish political organizations and authorities, “which prevent people from reforming their ideas and beliefs, forces them to follow deviant ways, and makes them serve other humans instead of their Lord Almighty.” The purpose of Islam then is to eradicate power and authority from the jahili.

“It [Islam] does not attack individuals nor does it force them to accept its beliefs. It attacks institutions and traditions.” For this reason, Qutb wished to destroy the political systems under which people were prevented from freely choosing their beliefs. “Islam uses force only to remove these obstacles so that no barrier remains between Islam and individual human beings; Islam releases them from those material constraints and addresses their hearts and

71 Ibid., pg. 45.
72 Ibid., pg. 48.
73 Ibid., pg. 65.
74 Ibid., pg. 45.
75 Ibid., pg. 61.
minds, while giving them freedom of choice to accept or reject its call.”  He believed that no political system should put forth obstacles preventing the free and open preaching of Islam. Furthermore, “every government and nation should leave every individual free to accept it (Islam) or reject it.”

Although Qutb believed that force should be used to destroy obstacles, once these obstacles were removed, Islam should then address the individuals, “with extreme kindness and love.” Qutb clearly states that the purpose of *jihad bil saif* (striving by the sword), is to “clear the way for freedom and to strive through preaching…” “It strives through preaching and exposition when there is freedom of communication and when people are free from all extraneous pressures.” Therefore, Islam uses violence only initially in order to take over the state and secure the ability to preach to individuals.

“We invite people to Islam because we love them and we wish them well…” It is ironic that Qutb intended to use the sword as a means to obtain peace. Peace is not traditionally what one would associate with a sword. However, Qutb wanted to build a bridge by which jahilliyah could freely cross over to Islam. He held that Muslims could not show the beauty of Islam by “severing relations with it and removing ourselves to a separate corner.” However, whether or not they accept the invitation is up to them; the job of the Muslim is only to make them aware of

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76 Ibid., pg. 59.
77 Ibid., pg. 46.
78 Ibid., pg. 115.
79 Ibid., pg. 50.
80 Ibid., pg. 51.
81 Ibid., pg. 118.
82 Ibid., pg. 120.
their low situation and to extend the invitation. One can’t help but wonder though, if such a bridge would also allow Muslims to cross into jahili society. Such a bridge while allowing Muslims to invite jahilliyah also provides an opportunity for the jahilliyah to invite Muslims.

Thus far we have seen that jihad has two main purposes for Qutb. First, it is to be waged as a means to purify oneself, and secondly, as a means to destroy the formal institutions which prevent individuals from accepting or rejecting Islam. The second of these two uses seems to be contrary to what one normally thinks is the purpose of jihad, namely, defensive. However, Qutb notes that jihad is not the defensive war it is often construed by the Orientalists (who studied the Middle East) to be. These individuals who define jihad in such a narrow way, “claim that the battles fought in Islamic jihad were all for the defense of the homeland of Islam.” 83 These people fail to understand the nature of Islam and its primary aim. It is a defensive war only in the sense that it is the “defense of man against all those forces that limit his freedom.” 84

For Qutb, the purpose of jihad is not to secure the homeland of Islam or protect it from invaders; the homeland in itself has no value. It only serves as a container for Islamic belief, life, and values. The homeland is transient and only a means to the end - the universal establishment of the divine authority. 85 In this sense, the peace of Islam extends beyond borders. This view of the homeland as having no intrinsic value and as transitory coincides with the Islamic view of the world as transitory. Islam does not hold land and other material possessions in high esteem. These are gifts from God which will one day have to be returned to Him, and accounted for.

83 Ibid., pg 50.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., pg. 59.
Rather, the purpose of jihad is to sustain the peace of Islam. The peace of Islam means purifying the system for Allah. Under such a system, all people must obey Allah alone. Furthermore, every system characterized by the enslavement of man should be abolished.86 “Any system in which the final decisions are referred to human beings, and in which the source of all authority are men, deifies human beings by designating others than Allah as lords over men.”87 “All men are creatures of Allah and no one has the authority to make others his slaves or to make arbitrary laws for them.”88 The problem for Qutb is that in allowing others to devise laws, individuals must be obedient to the lawgiver, as well as Allah. In his view, living under any law but the shari‘ah enslaves individuals to their human lawgivers. By dividing obedience between the two, it is possible that Qutb viewed such obedience as associating partners with God i.e., associating the lawgiver as a partner of God. Evidence of this possibility is supported from his citing the following verses of Qur’an. “The command belongs to Allah alone. He commands you not to worship except Allah” (12:40). Muslims are admonished to “not associate anything with Him, and not take lords from among ourselves besides Allah” (3:64).

Jihad becomes incumbent on Muslims when individuals no longer have such freedom. Islam does not force people to accept its belief, but it wants to “provide a free environment in which they will have the choice to believe.”89 In Qutb’s view, this environment exists only in a Muslim state. However; where such freedom is blocked by tyrannical forces or a system based

86 Ibid., pg. 51.
87 Ibid., pg. 47.
88 Ibid., pg. 57.
89 Ibid., pg. 46.
on class or racial distinction, Islam has “no recourse but to remove them by force.”\textsuperscript{90} Qutb refers to this struggle for freedom as not temporary, but eternal, “and will continue until all religion is for Allah, and man is free to worship and obey his sustainer.”\textsuperscript{91} For Qutb the purpose of jihad is not to convert individuals by force, but rather, “to free those people who wish to be freed from enslavement to men so that they may serve Allah alone.”\textsuperscript{92} However, this seems contradictory to his earlier statement that the purpose of jihad is to purify the system such that all in the system obey Allah alone. If he leaves individuals free to reject Islam, and not obey Allah alone, then he has failed in establishing the peace of Islam.

Although thus far Qutb has stressed that the purpose of jihad is in large part to free individuals from the tyrannical forces which enslave them, and that jihad is not a defensive war, he nonetheless extends his definition of jihad to include an attempt to spread religion. “Islam has the right to take the initiative. If the whole system of life is against religion, then its function is to abolish this system and to establish a new one.”\textsuperscript{93} Islam must take the initiative and spread Allah’s \textit{din} (religion), which is for the whole world. Not only does Islam have a right to spread, but it has an obligation and a right to release mankind from servitude.\textsuperscript{94} Therefore, because Islam is duty bound to free human beings by the sword if necessary, it no longer requires any justification for violent action.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., pg. 51.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., pg. 53.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., pg. 45.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., pgs. 61, 70.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., pg. 61.
It is this aspect of his teaching that has made Qutb so popular with radical Islamists of later generations. While some have argued that Islam should leave individuals alone in their respective geographical enclaves, Qutb asserts that non-action against jahili society is not an option. The only way a society may be left alone is if they “submit to its authority by paying the jizya,”\(^95\) or poll tax. The *jizya* is a tax paid to Muslims by the *jahiliyyah* living in a given community. By paying this tax, jahili society acknowledges the greater authority and sovereignty of God although they chose not to conform to its laws or practice. The payment of jizya is a, “guarantee that they have opened their doors for Islam and will not put any obstacles in its propagation.”\(^96\) In essence the payment of jizya forces the nation to accept Islam; however, it leaves people free to accept or reject Islam. In this sense, Islam can dominate a country in which no one is Muslim.

Once jihad has been waged and a region has been secured for preaching, the next step is to spread Islam into the region. For Qutb, the Islam which was to be spread across jahili society was more than a mere abstraction or theory. It is a complete and active way of life.\(^97\) “Jihad in Islam is simply a name for striving to make this system of life prevail in the world.”\(^98\) Qutb asserted that because jahili society was an active way of life with its own leadership, traditions, values, and habits, it could only be countered or overcome by an equally active and comprehensive way of life. Islam is an “active, organic, and vital movement.”\(^99\) Islamic theory

\(^{95}\) Ibid., pg. 60.

\(^{96}\) Ibid., pg. 60.

\(^{97}\) Ibid., pg. 27.

\(^{98}\) Ibid., pg. 62.

\(^{99}\) Ibid., pg. 31.
at its core cannot be separated from its practicality, and can only be revealed through action. The practical life of Islam mirrors the faith and serves as an interpretation of the faith.\footnote{Ibid., pg. 27.} In this sense, the true essence of Islam can only be revealed by living it.

However, Qutb asserts that one should not impose this complete Islam upon the jahili society, rather Islam should be broken into two parts. First, the society must fully agree to the principle of the sole sovereignty of Allah. Only then should the legal code and regulations be introduced. For Qutb, once society accepts the tawhid, or oneness of Allah, they will naturally follow his commands.\footnote{Ibid.} He further asserts that this process of spreading Islam, belief then regulation, should not be rushed; nor can the order of the process be reversed.\footnote{Ibid., pg. 29.} Society must submit fully to the will of Allah before adhering to His dictums. “The spirit of submission is the first requirement of this faith.”\footnote{Ibid., pg. 27.} For Qutb, it was more important that one willingly follow the guidelines set by shari’ah because they are from Allah, than just blindly following them. Here Qutb reasserts his position that it is essential that individuals follow commandments with passion.

Once an individual joins the Islamic movement, Qutb stressed there must be a complete break from the jahili society except perhaps in the undertaking of business transactions.\footnote{Ibid., pg. 15.} Of the Muslim community, Qutb writes, “This group must separate itself from the jahili society and
become independent and distinct from the active and organized jahili society…”\textsuperscript{105} For Qutb, it was not possible for Islam to co-exist in the same land together with jahiliyyah. However as it is not realistic that the Muslims could move out of the country, Qutb believed they should separate themselves geographically within the region.

First, he argues separation is absolutely necessary for Islam as the goal of jahili society is to block or prevent Islam. From this it appears that Qutb would be against a policy of Lockean toleration. Lockean toleration seeks to place a check on religion and keep it from becoming dominant politically; however, Qutb sought to expand Islam’s role to include the political sphere. Secondly, separation is necessary as, “there is no other way for the revival of Islam in the shade of jahiliyyah.”\textsuperscript{106} In jahili society, sovereignty did not belong to Allah but to the tribal or national leader, or to the people. It is because of this fundamental difference on the issue of sovereignty that jahiliyyah and believers could not live as one. “There is nothing beyond faith except unbelief, nothing beyond Islam except jahiliyyah and nothing beyond truth except falsehood.”\textsuperscript{107} "Truth and falsehood cannot co-exist on this earth."\textsuperscript{108} Living within the jahili society would imply that Muslims had divided sovereignty between Allah and non-believers. This necessity for separation coincides with his earlier claim that the state had to be taken over. When Muslims overcome the state they will no longer have to live under falsehood, and all sovereignty will belong to Allah alone. Here we are faced with yet another of Qutb’s contradictions. Earlier he stated that Muslims cannot invite the jahiliyyah to Islam if it separates itself from jahili society;

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., pg. 39.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., pg. 40.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., pg. 110.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., pg. 53.
however, here he stresses a need for one to separate from jahili society. It is not clear from his writings how he resolves this issue, and both the reader and the vanguard are left to wonder whether one should separate from society or not.

Once Islam is successful in conquering jahili society, Islam must then establish a new social, economic, and political system based on equality and freedom.\textsuperscript{109} Again, only when man fully accepts that there is no God but Allah, and only when they are not governed by laws legislated by the people or tribal leader is man considered, “completely free of servitude to anyone other than Allah”\textsuperscript{110} and can become members of a Muslim community. While members of the community may have the freedom to choose to practice Islam or not, they do not have the freedom to choose to be slaves to others. According to Qutb, any system of government may be formed except one based on the servitude of some by others.\textsuperscript{111} This appears to be another contradiction. As Qutb noted earlier, the only persons truly free are those who are Muslim. By default then, all non-Muslims are considered slaves.

However, from his statement above, individuals have the choice to be non-Muslims yet cannot choose to be slaves to others. The contradiction lies in that by choosing to be non-Muslim, they are by default choosing to be enslaved to others. Qutb attempts to correct for this contradiction by developing a system of governance based on the\textit{ shari’ah}. Under such a government, the laws which are given are the laws of God and not laws created by man. In this sense, no one is enslaved to the lawgiver. By extension, although individuals are not Muslim, they are at the same time not enslaved to others. This Islamic system once formed gives it “a

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., pg. 49.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., pg. 65.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., pg. 50.
separate and unique position among all other systems.” Under such a government, individuals are left free to accept Islam or reject it. At the same time they are free from the enslavement of others.

To summarize, Qutb had three main goals or objectives in waging jihad. First, Muslims should strive to civilize the world. He defined civilization as morality, and equated backwardness with immorality. He further believed that the world could be divided into two— the believing and the unbelieving, or jahilliyah. Qutb sought to conquer jahili society and return all sovereignty to God. The only way to conquer jahili society was to destroy all forms of political, social, and economic institutions which sought to stop the advance of Islam. Only by conquering jahili society and establishing a separate Islamic society could Muslims achieve their goal of world leadership.

Secondly once jahili society had been overcome and civilized, he sought to re-instate the system of values derived by God. By following their blind desires and passions, man’s actions had no standard on which to be based. Without such a standard, man was free to do anything he pleased, without limit. Moreover, it was this freedom that had led to the degeneration of man. Furthermore, Qutb wanted this code of values and conduct to serve as the basis of society.

Third, Qutb desperately wanted to free man from slavery to others. By following the shari’ah rather than man-made laws, individuals would no longer have to obey the dictates of the legislator. It should be recalled that Qutb did not take issue with the fact that individuals did not believe, rather he took issue with the fact that under the present system they did not have an

112 Ibid., pg. 73.
113 Ibid., pgs. 79-80.
opportunity to believe. In this sense, jihad was not against individuals, but rather against the organization and structure of society.

Qutb did not wish to build a new Islamic empire; rather, he wanted to take society and restructure it. He sought to eliminate jahiliyah and backwardness and replace it with a society in which complete sovereignty resided with God alone. Secondly, he sought to create a society in which there existed complete freedom of man. The only way this could be achieved was under the banner of Islam.
Chapter 3

Shah Walai Allah al Dihlawai

Shah Walai Allah al Dihlawai\(^{114}\) was born on February 21, 1703 in Delhi, India. His father, who served as his main spiritual leader, ran a madrasa or religious school and was also responsible of the local Sufi caste. Waliyullah’s father taught him the hadith, or traditions of the Prophet, at a young age as well as Qur’anic interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence, and theology.

His father also put him in charge of the Naqshbandiyya order (a mystic Sufi order) as a teen and he began teaching others about Islam. After some time teaching he lived in Mecca, Saudi Arabia for fourteen months, during which time he spent extensive time studying hadith from local scholars. It was during this intense period of study that he began to have dreams about the Prophet Mohammad in which he was told to pursue the mission of teaching, specifically, reviving Islam.

He began writing after his pilgrimage to the holy city and sought to restore morals and the Islamic sciences, or Qur’anic interpretation;\(^{115}\) however, the first thing he did upon his return, was to translate the Qur’an into the language of the commoners, Persian.\(^{116}\) Although some meaning is lost when one translates the Qur’an out of Arabic, Waliyullah thought it was important for the local residents to be able to understand the teachings of Islam. In this sense, while Waliyullah sought to transform the elites in power, his target audience was the common man. He spread his revolutionary message to the masses that would serve as his army in

\(^{114}\) Walai Allah, is also spelled Waliyullah in much of the literature. I will here after refer to him as Waliyullah.


carrying out his mission. In this sense, Waliyullah’s masses were to serve the same role as Qutb’s vanguard.

These writings were his first form of jihad, via the pen. His notion of jihad only turned violent upon the invasion of his homeland by a nearby non-Muslim, tribal group, the Marathas in 1738, and by the Afghans during the 1740s. He advocated war against the Marathas who had plundered and oppressed the Muslim population. He also sought to use violent jihad against the imperial rule of the British, under whom “the true religion was lost among the unworthy and the vicious.”

Besides being angered by the Marathas and the British, Waliyullah was deeply troubled by the state of affairs in India; namely, by the lavish lifestyle of the rich ulama, or religious scholars, and their deplorable treatment of the poor. As such, he sought to reform both religion and the state. Waliyullah was especially critical of the ulama for having elevated mysticism above the Qur’an. Although he belonged to the Sufi, a typically mystical sect, he believed the type of mysticism implored by the ulama had bred, “lethargy, inactivity, and a series of innovations, which had almost sapped the marrow of Islam and cut at its very root.”

Waliyullah also sought to eradicate injustice and wrongdoing in the world as he saw it. The root causes of such injustice were the absence of truth and righteousness, as well as the fact

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117 Ibid., pg. 150.
118 Ibid., pg. 152.
119 Ibid., pg. 3.
120 Ulama are scholars of religion. They are charged with the responsibility of interpreting the verses of the Qur’an and Hadith (traditions of the Prophet).
121 Jalbani, pg. 3.
that the *shari’ah*, or divine laws, had been altered by man.\textsuperscript{122} In essence, by altering the shari’ah, man had altered the standard by which to judge what morally upright behavior was. Waliyullah also believed that having someone in power that was not capable of upholding the divine laws and religion caused injustice. Thus like Qutb, it appears that Waliyullah believed Islam to have a political nature which should not be separated from Islam. Finally, he believed the injustice he saw was the result of mixing the divine laws with the heretical or mystical, much as the ulama during his time had done.

Waliyullah not only thought society to be corrupt at the national level, but he believed individuals within the community had also become corrupt. In order to remedy society of this corruption, he adopted a revivalist theology. His guide was the strict interpretation of the Qur’an, and the Prophet.\textsuperscript{123} In order to reform society, Waliyullah developed two mottos for his mission, “Back to the Qur’an”\textsuperscript{124} and “Re-establish true form.”\textsuperscript{125} The fact that he wanted to return Islam to its true form is reminiscent of Qutb’s desire to resurrect the original Islam, as well as that of fundamentalist movements in all religions. Like Qutb, Waliyullah believed Islam had become corrupted over the years. Furthermore, he viewed jihad as the primary means of remedying these two aspects of society.

First, Waliyullah wished to wage jihad against the corrupt ulama and state officials, who had mistreated the commoners and deprived them of their basic rights, including their right to worship. According to Waliyullah, “corruption occurs when the leadership of people goes into

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., pg. 135; Al-Dihlawi, pg. 345.

\textsuperscript{123} Jalbani, pg. 150.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., pg. 2.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., pg. 3.
the hands of those who ignore the absolute good and the consideration for the general interests, which are required for the welfare of the masses and take to the satisfaction of their low desires.”

Regarding these low desires, the Qur’an says, “Seest thou such a one as taketh for his god his own passion (or impulse)? Couldst thou be a disposer of affairs for him?” The footnote to this verse states that, “the man who worships his own passions or impulses or desires is the most hopeless to teach or lead or guide. The lawless man has killed his instincts and is unwilling to submit to guidance.” Furthermore, individuals must join together and “fight against the malicious faction, those who follow their own desires.”

Apparentl, because the person is beyond reform, it is best that one should kill the person rather than attempting to try to reform such a person. As such, Waliyullah believed it was better for the collectivity that a corrupt person be killed rather than be kept alive. Regarding such a person, he insists that, “God curses a wicked man who does injury to the general public and whose extinction is more in the interest of the general community than his survival.”

Here he is referring to a ruler who injures or does harm to his subjects. Waliyullah believed revolution becomes necessary when, “people are deprived of their primary needs of life.” When this occurs, Waliyullah held that individuals should wage jihad to save the oppressed from the predatory. “The persons who know wherein lies the general welfare feel it at that time as their bounden duty to bring about

126 Jalbani. pg. 182.
127 The Holy Qur’an, 25:43.
129 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 129.
130 Ibid., pg. 230.
132 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 360.
revolution.”\textsuperscript{133} The purpose of this rebellion is to obtain the material needs which they have been deprived. It is interesting to note here that for Waliyullah, the revolution against the state was to be brought about from within society, rather than an outside force.

Secondly, Waliyullah believed that jihad should also be waged to end sedition. Sedition is defined as any act which prevents a person from worshipping God or carrying out his commands. Waliyullah finds support for waging jihad for this reason in the following verse, “Then fight them until there is not sedition and religion is for Allah.”\textsuperscript{134} By referring to the verse which precedes this, one can determine that those who are to be fought against are the unbelievers, specifically those who oppressed the Prophet and prevented access to the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Similarly, Waliyullah urged jihad to be waged against all in his state who prevented access to the mosque, and against all Muslims who were harassed because of their beliefs. Here he increases the scope of rebellion to include the regaining of religious rights they had been denied, as well as material needs.

Once jihad had been waged against the state, Waliyullah believed it to be necessary to reform society. He believed society’s problems could be resolved if everyone converted to Islam.\textsuperscript{135} Based on verses from the Qur’an, and examples of the Prophet, Waliyullah believed it to be the mission of man to continue to root out idolatry and unbelief in the present day. Towards this end, speaking to a group of soldiers he urges them to remember that, “God sends you out for Jihad in order to raise aloft the Word of God, to destroy idolatry, and its

\textsuperscript{133} Jalbani, pg. 189.
\textsuperscript{134} The Holy Qur’an, 8:39.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., pg. 158.
adherents.”136 On yet another occasion Waliyullah admonishes a group of soldiers that, “it is the Will of God that you should draw out your swords from the scabbards, and should not insert them back until God makes a distinction between the Muslims and the infidels, and free the weak and helpless from their hands. You continue your fight against the infidels and the idolaters until the religion of God prevails.”137

It is important here to differentiate between what Waliylullah defines as a Muslim and what he defines as an infidel. He defines a Muslim as one who believes in God, in His Apostle, has faith in the life to come, and does good deeds.138 Although Jews do believe in God, in the life to come, and do good deeds, they would not considered Muslims, as they do not accept Muhammad as His Apostle. Furthermore, as was the case made by Qutb, they have taken “their priests and their anochorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah” (9:31). In other words, by blindly following their rabbis, Jews have to a certain extent been worshipping them instead of God. By extension, Christians would not be considered Muslims since they believe that Jesus is God, “yet they were commanded to worship but One God” (9:31). However, Christians and Jews are considered people of the book (those who received a divine form of revelation through a prophet) because at one point they did receive a prophet who brought down the up-to-date version of the divine law. Nonetheless, war is still sanctioned against them because they had become very corrupt and altered the divine rules they had been given.139

136 Balyon, pg. 185.
137 Jalbani, pg. 163.
138 Ibid., pgs. 120-1.
139 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 345.
Waliyullah holds that even if there are Jews and Christians following their respective religions completely i.e., without corruption, they too must be converted by force. They must accept Islam, not to perfect themselves or to get closer to God, but rather, in order to receive God’s pleasure. According to Waliyullah, God’s pleasure can only be achieved by following, “the religion brought by Muhammad and to the open acknowledgement of his mission.” 140 Furthermore, he based his belief of revolution against the polytheists or non-believers on the Qur’anic verse, “It is He Who sent His Apostle with guidance, even though the polytheists like it not.” 141 Elaborating on this verse, he determines that Islam can be propagated through preaching but because the polytheists would stand in the way, it is “not always possible to put up with it peacefully, and sometimes, one is compelled to use force.” 142

Jihad is also to be waged against those who resist, or refuse to accept Islam. He further supports this notion by noting that the Prophet Muhammad waged jihad against those who opposed him until God’s command was fulfilled, even if the community was unwilling. 143 He further notes that the Prophet was “ordered to wage war against those who oppose and resist, both with the sword and with the tongue, and continue his fight until the vicious and the vile are separated from the virtuous.” 144 It is interesting that according to this understanding of the role of the Prophet, the Prophet is told to first fight with violence, then to use his tongue. Undertaking this understanding of the role of the Prophet appears to give Waliyullah

140 Ibid., pg. 138.
141 Waliyullah does not cite which verse of the Qur’an he is referring to.
142 Jalbani, pg. 162.
143 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 369.
144 Jalbani, pg. 103.
authorization to first fight with the sword, then by the tongue. One can argue that verses revealed to the Prophet apply only to the Prophet and his time only. However, one should recall that Waliyullah believed the Prophet was the absolute discerner of the Qur’an, and that he should serve as the absolute example by which to live. Waliyullah wanted to return the Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet to a status of highest authority. Therefore, verses which pertain to the Prophet also pertain to Waliyullah.

In converting individuals to Islam, leaders will be able to make their religion predominant through three measures. First, they should publicize the practices that distinguish its adherents (Muslims) from non-Muslims. This would entail for example, public prayer worship, sermons, and birth rites. Secondly, the leader should restrict people so that they do not openly practice the rites of other religions. This measure means that non-Muslims should not worship in public or hold mass. Here Waliyullah appears to have a double standard. Like the early caliphs before him, Waliyullah wanted Muslims to practice their religion openly; however, a non-Muslim’s practice is viewed as a possible threat; if Muslims observed non-Muslims worship, they may convert. This problem is similar to that created by the bridge Qutb built between the two societies. If one builds a bridge, or leave non-Muslims to reside in the same country, it creates the possibility that Muslims may convert.

Waliyullah also appears to have a double standard in that he wants others to be tolerant of Muslims, yet believes Muslims should not be tolerant of non-Muslims. This intolerance is actually in line with the political nature of Islam. The political nature of Islam is such that in order to be superior politically and hold the political power of the country, non-Muslims must be subverted and their rights limited. Waliyullah’s principal reason behind implementing these two

145 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 344.
measures was to show that Muslims are not equal to the unbelievers. He believed that by creating a clear distinction between the two groups, and the use of blatant inequality, non-Muslims would eventually convert to Islam in an attempt to escape their inferior state.\textsuperscript{146}

Besides publicizing the practices of Muslims, and denying non-Muslims the right to openly practice their religion, Islam can become dominant in a society if the leaders hold the followers accountable for their acts. They can do so by requiring these acts, by not giving them a choice in the divine laws, not telling the followers why they are to perform such acts, as well as using compulsion.\textsuperscript{147} Regarding the measure of not giving individuals a choice in the divine laws, it is not clear whether he means not giving individuals the opportunity to chose amongst laws, i.e., Islam, Judaic, or Christian, or whether he means not giving them a choice in following them or not. Waliyullah also believed that initially, because Islam was new to the people, it was better that they start performing religious obligations in order to get used to them, rather than first understand why they are performing such acts. This is contrary to Qutb, who believed it was more important that the new Muslims first develop a fear of Allah. Waliyullah justifies the use of compulsion by noting that, “when faith is introduced into society, they are not amenable to arguments of reason. Therefore, it is for their good that jihad be waged against them and they be forced to accept religion under compulsion.”\textsuperscript{148} Here too Waliyullah appears to differ from Qutb. As one will recall, Qutb did not seek to convert all individuals by force. Rather, his goal was to introduce Islam into a region. However, Waliyullah aspired not only to introduce Islam into society, but moreover, to ensure that all accept it even against their will.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} Balyon, pg. 185.
While compulsion may achieve predominance, it appears to go against the founding principles of Islam at all three levels. First, requiring the acts by compulsion violates verse 2: 256 of the Qur’an which clearly states, “Let there be no compulsion in religion.” According to the footnote to this verse, compulsion is incompatible with religion. Religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force.”

According to this verse, one should only inform another of his obligation to act. For example, a Muslim should only remind another Muslim that he is supposed to pray in Islam. After that, whether they chose to follow the commandment or not is up to the individual.

Every human is gifted with faculty or reason, which distinguishes man from animal. Moreover, every human is entailed with free will to decide whether to engage in the act or not. With free will, individuals are free to take the knowledge they have and decide whether to engage in the behavior or not. Free will allows individuals the freedom to do good, or evil. Not telling individuals why they are to perform such acts fails to appeal to an individual’s reason.

Waliyullah himself was in favor of reason. “Religion backed by reason, carries conviction and fortifies wavering faith.” Waliyullah did not himself blindly accept the rulings of the four schools of Islamic thought. Rather, he investigated their proposals to insure that they complied with the Qur’an and hadith (the traditions of the Prophet). Here, it is interesting to note that Waliyullah believed reason should be used only in so far as it confirms rather than rejects religious doctrine.

149 The Holy Qur’an. footnote 300. pg. 106.

150 Jalbani, pg. 4.

151 Differences in interpretation of the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet led to the evolution of four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. These are the Hunafi, Shafi, Humbali, and Maliki.
Regardless, Waliyullah believed it necessary to implement the *shari’ah* in order to further improve upon society. According to Waliyullah, man is composed of an angelic faculty as well as a bestial faculty. As such, happiness is acquired by enhancing the angelic over the bestial. This may explain why compulsion is required - to restrain the bestial. It is necessary to subdue the bestial and acquire happiness. Moreover, the shari’ah appeals to, and fosters the angelic.

The shari’ah was given to man because he requested it, and prayed for it. Because of his situation, man needed for it to be made obligatory on him that which fosters the angelic, and make unlawful on him that which fosters the bestial.\textsuperscript{152} Therefore, it appears that for Waliyullah, the shari’ah was not a divine command forced upon individuals, but rather a fulfillment of man’s desire to attain happiness. The shari’ah was not divinely initiated but initiated by human beings.

However, in implementing the shari’ah, Waliyullah strongly believed one should introduce change incrementally, rather than all at once. Because a large group of people will not believe or follow the new rules at first, leaders of the community should “…not proceed to what is totally contrary to their habit.”\textsuperscript{153} Rather, he believed that conventions (laws) should resemble something similar to what they are already accustomed to doing. Moreover, leaders should adopt that which is already “…done by the righteous. Something their intellects would not reject.”\textsuperscript{154} He supports this by observing that the Prophet Muhammad only eradicated harmful conventions, and replaced them with virtuous ones. The only conventions which should be altered were those

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} Ibid., pgs. 121-125.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Al-Dihalwai, pg. 305.
\item \textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\end{itemize}}
which caused harm to others, or which promoted pursuit of this worldly pleasures rather than the next life.\textsuperscript{155}

Thus far we have seen that Waliyullah sought to reform society at its roots, by waging jihad not only against the state apparatus, but also against all individuals who did not adhere to the doctrine of Islam. Furthermore, the critical problems which society faced could only be remedied if Islam emerged as the only system. For Waliyullah, Islam must become the dominant religion and he believed that it “should have prevalence over all other religions.”\textsuperscript{156} Moreover, violent jihad was the means towards establishing this prevalence. According to Waliyullah, Islam would become prevalent when, “…all other religions be made powerless, their supporters and missionaries be divided and broken up and Islam alone be found dominant and glorious.”\textsuperscript{157}

It is possible that here Waliyullah wished to enact a system of Islam similar to that under the Charter of Medina. Under this contract, non-Muslims were allowed to reside in a Muslim controlled society. Furthermore, under such a system, non-Muslims shared essentially no political rights or privileges, let alone the right to worship publicly. Waliyullah based his mission of spreading Islam into every region on the Qur’anic verse 13:41, “Have they not seen that We are reducing the earth from all sides?”\textsuperscript{158} From this verse, Waliyullah meant to show that Islam was spreading throughout the world, and soon they (non-Muslims) would be overthrown as well. Here it appears that jihad is quite territorial and violent in nature.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., pg. 303.
\textsuperscript{156} Jalbani, pg. 137.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., pg. 140.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., pg. 146.
While the purpose of jihad may not solely be to amass territory, it is nonetheless an integral aspect of jihad, since Islam must control the state. It appears that for Waliyullah, the predominance of Islam entailed not merely the adoption of belief by individuals, but rather, the aggressive, dividing, conquering, and acquiring of lands through force. He furthers this notion in other writings as well, by observing that predominance was acquired not through celestial beings, but rather through wars.\footnote{Balyon, pg. 185.} Waliyullah’s goal was for Islam to become dominant. It could only do so by acquiring land. By equating power with land, he appears to be adopting a rather realist understanding of power. Unlike Qutb, the battle was one not just over belief, but it was territorial at its core.

His over-arching goal was to create an international system. He believed one should “aspire and work for the establishment of Islam as the greatest international force and power.”\footnote{Jalbani, pg. 161.} Upholding and defending the faith is, “the sacred duty of all the Muslims throughout the world, to work hard and spare no pains for the establishment of an international organization which could successfully face the combined opposition.”\footnote{Ibid., pg. 190.} While Waliyullah does seek to create a Muslim state, he realizes that it will not be possible to create a single, unified one and recognizes that there will be individuals outside the state who oppose it. Moreover, he adds that the “completion of favor takes practical shape only when such a great power is created.”\footnote{Ibid.} This favor which Waliyullah here refers to can be found in chapter 5 verse 3 of the Qur’an. “This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you
Islam as your religion.” This verse is believed by many to be the last verse revealed by God. If this favor has already been completed then either the great power has already been formed, or its formation is not necessary for the completion of God’s favor.

In forming this international community, Waliyullah believed it was essential that a leader calls “a nation to the right path and purifies them, and improves their condition.”163 Once the leader unites the community, he is then to take them and struggle against others so that they (Muslims) may spread. Again, this goes back to Waliyullah’s earlier statements on the territorial nature of jihad. Here he appears to be building his army which will spread Islam across the globe. He further justifies the building of this community of right guidance on the following verse, “Ye are the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah” (3: 110).164 He also draws support for this theory from the following verse, “It is He Who hath sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest it” (9:33).

Moreover, in creating this international community, it was necessary that the leader “bring people out of darkness into light and to see that his community turns out to be good and a useful guide for the other communities.”165 It is through such means that Islam will be able to create and extend a community of belief. Furthermore, God ordered the prophets, or messengers to wage jihad so as to motivate people. According to Waliyullah, the Prophet was to wage jihad against one community which would serve as an example to others. Thus, such a community

163 Al-Dihalwai, pg. 341.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid., pg. 110.
would be considered, “a people brought out for mankind.” It is logical for Waliyullah to take on such an interpretation. Individuals tend to follow the behaviors of their forefathers, be they good or bad. Altering the religion of one community can ensure that future generations of that community would follow Islam as well. Moreover, the religion will spread through interactions its members have with members of neighboring cities and states. Here it is not clear whether the spreading of Islam by interaction would obviate the need to wage jihad. If the purpose of jihad is to spread Islam, and interaction will also spread Islam, what is the need to wage jihad as well?

Waliyullah also sought to extend the Muslim community by ending the rule of tyrannical states. According to his definition, tyrannical states include those ruled by individuals who don’t believe in God and/or do not conduct themselves according to the shari’ah. Waliyullah’s theology thus far would lead one to the conclusion that it is incumbent on individuals to wage violent jihad not only against oppressive leaders, but by this definition also against all leaders who a) do not believe in God, and b) do not follow the shari’ah. By extension, based on the teachings of Waliyullah, Muslims should wage war against all nations except the handful of Muslim nations which are governed under shari’ah. In other words, Waliyullah’s theology appears to be a call to arms.

However, it should be noted that although Waliyullah strongly believes in using jihad to rid societies of oppressive leaders, convert idolaters, and spread the boundaries of Islam; he nonetheless maintains that there are different types of jihad. “Sometimes one has to struggle through protests, at times through demonstrations, and at times through the raising of slogans,

\[166\] Al-Dihalwai., pg. 361.

\[167\] Ibid., pg. 361.
and on certain occasions one has to put up an actual fight.”

Here, he does not elaborate under which circumstances each type of jihad should be used. Waliyullah also notes that the domination of Islam by the sword is not enough, and one must follow up by appealing to their reason. He also holds that jihad is not enough, as it cannot conquer the minds of people. Therefore, one must follow up with “press and platforms, with arguments and proofs…” Here; Waliyullah is referring to the conversion of idolaters and infidels.

This is particularly confusing considering that he also takes the position that mere preaching is not enough. Furthermore, he also held that when Islam is first spread into a community, they (the infidels) should not and cannot be reasoned with. Rather, they should be compelled to follow the divine laws by force, and not have a choice in following stricture. Does Waliyullah therefore believe that the proper method to spread Islam is by force and compulsion, i.e., jihad, or rather that one should reason with individuals? Clearly one cannot take the position that one should use force and preach, for compulsion leaves no room for reason. Perhaps one is to assume that jihad be waged first. Once individuals have submitted themselves and it is safe to disseminate Islam into the community, one can then begin to preach and use reason. Again, this is only one possibility. The sequence of dissemination is not made clear from his writings.

Despite being greatly concerned by corruption in his country and moral decay, the issue which Waliyullah took to heart most seriously was the severe apathy and negligence towards jihad, as was evidenced by individuals in his country. According to Waliyullah, when individuals

168 Jalbani, pg. 189.
169 Ibid., pg. 159.
abandon the spirit of jihad they become submerged, or taken over by corrupt leaders.\textsuperscript{170}

Moreover, he believed that,

\begin{quote}
Every nation should make itself strong from a religious, moral, and political point of view. They should always remain vigilant, ready and well prepared to fight, keep themselves adequately informed of the latest developments in the modern methods of warfare and infuse the spirit of jihad into the hearts of their people.\textsuperscript{171}
\end{quote}

From his writings, it is clear that Waliyullah’s theology was quite revolutionary. He adamantly wanted to convert every individual to Islam, and propagate Islam to every corner of the Earth. Above preaching and proselytizing, jihad was the means towards fulfilling the sea change in the world he envisioned. While he believed that preaching was a necessary type of jihad, it could only be effective after the foundation had been laid, via violent jihad. Moreover, his understanding of jihad extended beyond warfare to include preparedness, and included fighting internal as well as external enemies.\textsuperscript{172}

While the expansion of Muslim territory was no doubt a goal of Waliyullah, his objectives for jihad extended beyond amassing land. His main objective was far more noble than revolutionary. Waliyullah wanted to spread Islam to eradicate injustice. He wanted to restore peace and order, and rescue all oppressed persons from darkness. Waliyullah sought to end tyrannical regimes and end corruption, as well as restore the dignity of the poor. Interestingly, all of these are strikingly similar to the duties which were given to the Prophet Muhammad. In his writings he notes that, “when the condition of the world worsens and there is chaos everywhere, God raises a prophet to assist in the rescue of the suffering humanity, and to restore

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{170} Jalbani, pg. 160.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., pg. 190.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., pg. vii.
\end{footnotes}
peace and order." Noting these similarities, one can only wonder whether Waliyullah saw himself as a modern day prophet.

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173 Ibid., pg. 103.
PART II

THE ROAD TO PEACE:

IBN RUSHD AND MUHAMMAD SA'ID AL-ASHMAWY
In the two previous chapters we have become acquainted with the violent theology of Sayyid Qutb and Shah Waliyullah. Both advocated that the means for spreading Islam across lands, and converting individuals to Islam was violent jihad, including the overthrow of governments deemed to be corrupt. For both men jihad was also the only means of creating an over-arching Islamic state. However, the radical opinions of Qutb and Waliyullah represent only one side of the spectrum. As will be seen, the theology of Ibn Rushd and Muhammad Sa’id al-Ashmawy seeks to take the road to peace, rather than the road to violence. They advocate toleration over intolerance. Moreover, their interpretation of the goal of Islam is different, especially concerning politics.

While Qutb and Waliyullah trace verses of the Holy Qur’an to justify their use of violence, they appear to neglect other verses of the Qur’an which advocate preaching and toleration over outright violence. For example, in verse 16:125, the Qur’an states, “Invite all to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.” The footnote of this verse continues on to note that, “our manner and our arguments should not be acrimonious, but modeled on the most courteous and the most gracious example.”

Finally, in Chapter 26, verses 208-209 of the Holy Qur’an admonish that societies should be warned prior to being attacked. “Never did We (God) destroy a population, but had its warners by way of reminder; and We never are unjust.” According to these verses, no community was ever destroyed prior to having been sent individuals to warn. Therefore, it would be unjust to wage war on a nation today prior to dispatching diplomats to invite and warn.

174 The Holy Qur’an, footnote 2161. pg. 669.
The Qur’an reminds us that, “it may be that Allah will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies.” Furthermore, “Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just.”

This appears to give permission to be kind and just to those who do not fight the Muslims and who are not oppressive. Moreover, we see from the second verse that if one speaks softly to an enemy and communicates the principles of Islam, it is possible that the person may change their stance. In essence, Muslims should hate evil, not the men who do evil. This principle is similar to disliking the behavior of a child, but not disliking the child who does the behavior.

The Qur’an also advocates being tolerant of other religions. Chapter CIX of the Holy Qur’an ends with the verse, “Unto you your religion, and unto me mine.” This verse seems to be accepting of various religions. It further appears to contradict the theology of Qutb and Waliyullah that all persons must attempt to be converted, and supports the notion that multiple religions can indeed coexist. It will be seen in the theology of Ibn Rushd and al-Ashmawy that, “Islam does not regard itself to be anew teaching, different or separate from that of other world religions. It is the reaffirmation of the ancient yet living truth of all religions.”

The term Islam is a complex one, with several meanings. One of those meanings is peace. Although Islam means submission to the Will of Allah, commitment to Islam “entails striving for peace through a struggle for justice, equality of opportunity, and mutual caring and

175 Ibid., 60:7.
176 Ibid., 60:8.
177 Ibid., footnote 5420. pg. 1454.
consideration for other’s rights.” Therefore, it would appear that war and the use of violence are antithetical to Islam. As evidenced in the above mentioned verses, there is more involved in creating an Islamic state than just violence. Since I have presented the violent side of Islam, it is only fair that I turn to an exposition of the verses which advocate peace as well. Towards an understanding of this, I turn now to those who advocated peace rather than war, Ibn Rushd, and al-Ashmawy.

179 Ibid., pg. 2.
180 It should be noted that the verses cited here represent only a sample of the many verses in the Qur’an which speak of peace.
Chapter 4

Abu'l-Walid Ibn Rushd

Ibn Rushd, known in the West as Averroes, was born in the year 1126 in Cordova, Spain. His family was quite wealthy and well known in the community, and served as judges and statesmen. Like his forefathers before him, Ibn Rushd studied Arabic, jurisprudence, theology and philosophy, as well as medicine. He served as a judge in Seville and Cordova before being appointed royal physician.\(^{181}\) While most Muslims of his time did not study, and looked down upon philosophy, Ibn Rushd greatly advocated the study of philosophy. Through his works on Aristotle and Plato’s Republic, he raised the status of philosophy in the Eastern hemisphere. Besides these works, he also wrote a treatise entitled *Incoherence of the Incoherence* in which he defended philosophy against the criticisms launched earlier by the Islamic philosopher, al-Ghazali. However, Ibn Rushd’s journey in elevating philosophy was by no means an easy one. In 1195, at the height of war with Christian states, he was condemned as a heretic for advocating philosophy, as well as for his liberal views.\(^{182}\)

Unlike many of his fellow judges, Rushd believed one should come to an understanding of Islam and the Qur’an from a philosophical perspective, and utilize reason to understand revelation. Prior to Rushd, many jurists had frowned upon using reason to understand Qur’anic injunctions. They had equated using reason with questioning the principles God had established.


\(^{182}\) Ibid., pg. 2.
“Al-Ghazali held that we know right and wrong only by divine revelation.”\textsuperscript{183} Furthermore, he
believed that “reason could not establish its own premises.”\textsuperscript{184} Whereas al-Ghazali saw no place
for philosophy in religion, Rushd believed the two were “qualitatively different methods by
which the same truths could be apprehended and transmitted.”\textsuperscript{185} He further believed that
philosophy and knowledge were the way to God.\textsuperscript{186}

Moreover, for Rushd, “reasoning is a prerequisite of religious obligation.”\textsuperscript{187} Without the
ability to reason, man would be no different than animals or inanimate objects. Without reason,
man would be compelled to do things which are intolerable to his nature. Therefore, prior to
acting, man should first use his reason to determine if the act he is to perform would in fact
intolerable to his nature. This use of reason is the opposite of what Waliyullah understood the
purpose of reason to be. While Waliyullah held that one should use reason to reaffirm religious
obligation, Rushd is of the opinion that reason should be used to negate religious obligation,
although he does not give any specific examples of instances in which reason would reject parts
of the Qur’an. His interpretation of the use of reason is also counter to the fundamentalist
position that God’s commands should not be questioned.

He further advocated that reason should be used in evaluating law. “Law, like
philosophy, has developed since the start of Islam, and so should not be accused of innovation

\textsuperscript{183} Black, Antony. (2001). The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present. New

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., pg. 117.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., pg. 118.

\textsuperscript{187} Fakhry, pg. 102.
(bidʿa) just because it was not contemporaneous with Muhammad.” Rushd believes that Islamic law too can and should be changed over the course of time to reflect the current situation. Furthermore, even if Islamic law today does not resemble that of the Prophet, it does not mean that it is not valid, or that it has been fabricated. Here, Rushd appears to be advocating the use of *ijthihad,* (the use of independent reason) which is “resorted to when there is no relevant text in the Qur’an, no tradition, and no consensus.” In such instances, “the answers should be sought by independent reason.” Rushd appears to be making a case against those who argue that the Qur’anic revelations are “self-validating and coherent in their own terms.” Furthermore, individuals should not shy away from questioning and discussion when trying to determine the meaning of a given text. “Over a period of time of questioning, searching, and experimenting the right answer will emerge and put the Islamic community in a much better position to know what to accept.”

These two positions concerning interpretation are of central importance to the debate presently at hand. First, Rushd would applaud Muslims for debating and questioning what exactly Islam’s perspective on jihad is. Secondly, he would advocate that we continue to use reason to reinterpret the texts in light of the current situation. By suggesting that we re-interpret the text, Rushd appears to be alerting us to the possibility that the violent notion of jihad is outdated. However, one must question as to how long one is to debate, question, and search


189 Black, pg. 35.

190 Ibid.

191 Ibid.

192 Leaman, pg. 147.
before arriving upon the answer. Moreover, whose reinterpretation of the text is the correct one? I will speak at greater length on Rushd’s own interpretation of jihad later on in this chapter, but first I turn to his rather interesting position on the role of good and evil in this world, as well as his view of predestination.

As aforementioned, Rushd wrote a number of works analyzing Plato and Aristotle. Although at most places he agrees with Plato, and in fact utilizes parts of the Platonic dialogues directly in his own philosophy, he differs with Plato on the question of whether or not God created both good and evil, or just good. For example, Socrates discussing the topic with Adeimantus, in the Republic, stresses that in the ideal city all must be assured that,

the god, since he’s good, wouldn’t be the cause of everything, as the many say, but the cause of a few good things for human beings and not responsible for most. For the things that are good for us are far fewer than those that are bad; and of the good things, no one else must be said to be the cause; of the bad things, some other causes must be sought and not the god. 193

From this passage it is clear that Plato, speaking through Socrates, believed that god is responsible for creating good, but because he is good he is not capable of creating evil. Whether or not a god could have created evil or bad things has long since been a question raised by many. Individuals have always been curious as to how a just god could in fact do, or allow injustice. Ibn Rushd believes God, “is the Creator of good for the sake of the good, and of evil for the sake of the good;” 194 From this one can see that for Rushd, not only did God create evil as well as good, but evil has a purpose, the sake of good. He likens God’s creation of evil to that of fire. Although it (fire) can cause harm, it is still necessary for the existence of things which cannot

194 Fakhry, pg. 82.
survive without it. In this sense, “its existence is preferable to its non-existence.”\textsuperscript{195} In this sense, God’s creation of evil is just. Moreover, because evil does accord good, “the coexistence of the greater good with the lesser evil is preferable to the non-existence of the greater good, on account of the possible existence of the lesser evil.”\textsuperscript{196} In this sense it appears that if evil has a good purpose, it is no longer evil, but rather is good. Furthermore, if we are then to conclude that such evil is in fact good, this implies that God in fact created only good and did not create evil. By extension then, this implies that the concept of evil is a concept devised by man.

It appears that Rushd is accepting of, indeed justifying the existence of evil in the world. Moreover, evil in the world serves a purpose. While one can see the good that comes from fire, what good can come from the other types of evil which Qutb and Waliyullah sought to eradicate? For example, what good can come from an oppressive leader? What good can come from corruption? Furthermore, based on a Rushdian understanding of evil, if one can lay claim to some good obtained from the evil he has committed, then the existence of this evil would be justified; moreover, the existence of this evil would be preferable to its non-existence. Jihadists could use this logic to claim that waging jihad and seizing the lands of infidels serves a greater good- the good of the Muslim community. Therefore, destruction and death are of lesser evil than the resulting good, i.e., spreading the realm of God.

Just as Rushd appears to be tolerant of injustice and evil, he is likewise tolerant of other religions. He contends that, “Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and the Sabaen religion, concur in affirming the truth of God’s existence, His attributes, and the reality of life after death, although

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
they differ with respect to the degree or manner of such difference.” Moreover, he believes that God is responsible for the existence of unbelief. “Even if We (God) did send unto them angels, and We gathered together all things before their very eyes, they are not the ones to believe, unless it is in Allah’s Plan.” Furthermore, “Allah leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases.” Rushd believes that of all persons created by God, some were meant to believe while others were not. “…the prior will [of God] which determined that the varieties of existing entities shall include creatures who are astray; I mean disposed by their natures to being misled and driven to error by the causes inducing them to error, from outside or inside.”

Here the key words for Ibn Rushd are ‘disposed’ and ‘natures’. According to Rushd’s understanding, man has no control as to whether he will be driven to error or not. This particular position sounds similar to the Protestant notion of predestination by which God had chosen which persons would be saved and which ones would be punished. While this notion drove Protestants into a state of constant uncertainty, leading them in turn to do good deeds in case they were of the saved, one must question what the point of doing good deeds was. What purpose does it serve to work hard and do good deeds if it has already been determined that one will not be saved? Moreover, if only individuals who believe will be permitted to heaven and individuals are pre-determined to believe or not believe, is it not in vain to wage jihad and try to change an individual’s nature? Furthermore, if it has already been determined who will believe and who

197 Fakhry, pg. 93. It should be noted that the Sabaen religion is recognized in the Qur’an to be one of the officially sanctioned religions, along with Judaism and Christianity.

198 The Holy Qur’an, 6:111.

199 Ibid.

200 Fakhry, pg. 82.
will not, does man have the right to attempt to change God’s plan? However, one may make the argument that jihad must be waged to destroy those whom God has disposed to unbelief.

While Rushd holds that one is predisposed to believe or not believe, he likewise holds that if man were predetermined in all his actions then there would be “no difference between man and inanimate objects, devoid of capacity. God Almighty has endowed us with certain faculties or powers, whereby we are able to perform actions of contrary natures.”201 These notions of free will and reason seem contradictory to Rushd’s earlier statements that man and his nature are predetermined. To clarify his position further, Rushd explains his definition of determinism. According to Rushd, determinism is composed of two things: “the human will,” and “external causes or factors determined by God’s decree. These two lines of determinism are concurrent, rather than contradictory.”202 From this definition, any outcome will be the result of both these intermixing. “What insures the harmonious working of both our will and the external forces causing us to act is the perfect regularity of the order of causes and effects determined by God since all eternity.”203 This coincides with Rushd’s earlier statements that God determined that individuals would be predisposed by their nature and free will to do error, due to the external causes with which they come in contact. From this understanding of the process of events, it appears that any error or harm which befalls man is the result of his free will combining with some external force with which it is not supposed to come into contact. Furthermore, because God controls the external forces, the harm which results cannot be said to be the fault of the

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201 Ibid., pg. 102.
202 Ibid.
203 Ibid., pg. 103.
external force, or by extension, the fault of God. Because God does not create evil, He likewise
does not create things which could harm man.

Because Rushd believes individuals are bestowed with reason, he believes reason and
persuasion should be used in order to make arguments for Islam, rather then waging jihad. He
believes that, “religion is an attempt at communicating true science and right practice.”
Moreover, religion should be “presented for the easy comprehension of the masses. The
prevailing methods of expression in religion are the common methods by which the majority
comes to form concepts and judgment.” Rushd appears to believe that individuals can be
reasoned with regarding their beliefs. “He sees the common people as the recipient of rhetorical
arguments aiming initially to instill adherence to sound beliefs and later to achieving good
behavior.” He supports his policy of preaching with the Qur’anic verse, “Summon to the way
of your lord by wisdom and by good preaching, and debate with them in the most effective
manner.” Rushd believes individuals will be attracted to Islam if they use their own intellect
and reason to arrive at a decision. “There are some people who will be attracted to and
strengthened in their faith if the logical arguments for being a Muslim are pursued and
explained.” This of course implies that there will be some who will not be changed in their
convictions.

204 Leaman, pg. 153.
205 Ibid., pg. 154.
207 The Holy Qur’an, 16:125.
208 Leaman, pg. 149.
Furthermore, Rushd holds that, “war as a coercive measure to change people’s beliefs has very limited value, especially when it is directed against peoples who have some rational ability.”\textsuperscript{209} Furthermore, “Averroes views the just war as a mode of bringing wisdom to those who have the natural potentiality for it.”\textsuperscript{210} Here it appears that Rushd holds two seemingly contradictory positions. In the first, he holds that war is not an effective means of changing individual’s beliefs; yet in the second, the just war is to bring wisdom to those who can be reasoned with.”\textsuperscript{211} Here, the key appears to be whether you are dealing with rational individuals, or sub-rational masses. His second position seems to be in line with that of Sayyid Qutb’s. As was noted earlier, Qutb held that a main purpose of jihad is to spread wisdom.

From the arguments presented thus far, it is evident that Rushd prefers the use of persuasion to war. However, “in dealing with enemies or those who are not amenable to the third type of persuasion (rhetorical), recourse to coercion is justified, especially in dealing with non-virtuous citizens. As a last resort, recourse to war is justified too.”\textsuperscript{212} It is not clear from his writings what he considers to be a non-virtuous citizen. In his commentaries on \textit{The Republic of Plato}, Ibn Rushd likens the decision of a head of state to wage jihad, to that of the head of a household. Like the head of the household, the head of state, “being obliged to teach them correct opinions by force only where there is no viable alternative course of action available.”\textsuperscript{213}

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., pg. 125.
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., pg. 126.
\textsuperscript{212} Fakhry, pg. 106.
\textsuperscript{213} Leaman, pg. 126.
It is interesting that for Rushd the purpose of waging jihad is not to punish individuals for unbelief, but rather to “inculcate virtue in the souls of the citizens by the rulers of the state.”\footnote{Fakhry, pg. 106.} It appears dangerous to propose war for the purpose of teaching. This is a substantial shift away from the notion of jihad as a defensive war. While the purpose of jihad for Rushd is not to establish a Muslim state, he is none-the-less agreeing with his more conservative counterparts by allowing state leaders to wage jihad to instill virtue. He also is agreeing with Waliyullah that jihad should be waged to compel individuals to adopt virtue, even against their will. However, while Qutb and Waliyullah wished to create an Islamic state, in order to instill virtue in people, Rushd believed leaders can instill virtue in their citizens without creating a Muslim dominated state. Although the means of instilling such virtue (which remains undefined) is jihad, the key here is that jihad is to be waged as a last resort, when alternative means of preaching and reason do not avail.

He believed that “Muslims had misunderstood the intention of the legislator and turned an ad hoc recommendation to engage in war with unbelievers into a universal rule. Therefore, there are times in which peace is preferable to war.”\footnote{Black, pg. 124.} Rushd held that “war is useful until the root of those who are different from one’s own is extirpated.”\footnote{Ibid.} However, “because it was impossible to extirpate their enemies, many losses have followed from this.”\footnote{Ibid.} In order to remedy this situation, he believed that in deciding to wage jihad the statesman should first take into consideration the nature of the given situation. He compares this decision making process to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[214] Fakhry, pg. 106.
\item[215] Black, pg. 124.
\item[216] Ibid.
\item[217] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
that of the doctor. “The doctor acts in accordance with each case, but bearing in mind the order of nature and in a manner that reconciles the one with the other following a process governed by the laws of the discovery of truth.” Rushd appears to be advising that leaders do what is in the best interest of the people, based on the situation, and in making a decision they should use reason – ‘the laws of the discovery of truth’ to determine what course of action to take.

Although he does state that jihad may be waged as a last resort, there are still further restrictions which he places on its use. For example, Rushd holds that one cannot go out and fight as soon as the decision to wage war has been made. Rather, “the prerequisite for warfare is that the enemy must have heard the summons to Islam. It is not allowed to attack them before the summons has reached them.” He supports this prerequisite with the Qur’anic verse, “We have not been accustomed to punish until We have sent a messenger.” Here again we return to Rushd’s underlying philosophy, that one should preach to individuals prior to waging jihad. We are also here reminded that jihad is only to be waged as a last resort, after sufficient warning has been given.

Secondly, Rushd believes that during jihad individuals may be slain “only on the condition that amana [safe conduct] has not been granted.” What Rushd implies here is that individuals may be slain only if they do not allow Muslims access into the country, or if they fight the Muslims when they enter their country. Furthermore, although men may be slain during combat, “it is forbidden to slay women and children provided that they are not fighting, for then

218 Urvoy, pg. 115.


220 The Holy Qur’an, 17:15.

221 Peters, pg. 13.
women, in any case, may be slain.”\textsuperscript{222} Although he advocates slaying, it should be noted he is a firm believer in the Qur’anic verse, “But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things).”\textsuperscript{223} Therefore, not only can men be slain only if they do not submit and give Muslims safe harbor, they cannot be slain if they incline towards peace.

Finally, warfare does not continue forever. Jihadists hold that jihad must be waged until non-Muslims submit to Islam, or agree to pay the \textit{jizya}, or non-Muslim poll tax. Payment of the jizya entails that they have become subsumed under Islamic rule, while they are free to remain in their ancestral religions. Although they must agree to “comply with Islamic rules involving public behavior and dress, in acts of worship and their private lives, the subjected community have their own laws, judges, and courts, enforcing the rules of their own religion among themselves.”\textsuperscript{224} Furthermore, under jizya, the leader of the Muslims is obligated to protect the non-Muslims who have made the jizya under treaty.”\textsuperscript{225} Rushd contends that during combat, non-Muslims can surrender to a truce, if they pay a certain amount of money determined by the statesman. Payment of this monetary amount is not considered to be jizya. Therefore, Rushd appears to be creating yet another option for peace, besides the jizya.

Heretofore we have seen that although Rushd is not entirely against jihad, he believes it should be used only as a last resort. Even then, there are limits as to when, whom, and until when one can fight. For Rushd jihad is not to be waged against all, but rather, against those with

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{222} Ibid., pg. 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{223} The Holy Qur’an, 8: 61.
  \item \textsuperscript{225} Ibid., pg. 608.
\end{itemize}

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whom rhetorical arguments and persuasion have failed. Rushd differs from fundamentalists in that the objective for waging jihad is not to punish unbelief, but rather to communicate belief. It is particularly this notion of communicating ideas rather than using force that separates him from his more extreme counterparts. While Qutb and Waliyullah believed jihad was the means to communicate religion, Rushd believed one should preach. His position also runs counter to that of Waliyullah, who believed that non-Muslims were backward and could not be reasoned with. Moreover, his belief that jihad should be reinterpreted in the light of the situation at hand, appears to suggest that the same Qur’anic verses used by Qutb and Waliyullah are outdated, if not invalid. Finally, Rushd stands apart from the conservatives by being accepting of evil, and tolerant of unbelief. Qutb and Waliyullah sought to wage jihad to eradicate evil and corruption, as well as to convert unbelievers. However, by accepting evil and being tolerant of unbelief, Rushd is taking away from Qutb and Waliyullah the ability to claim these two reasons as justification for going to war. For Rushd, actions do not speak louder than words. Ibn Rushd sought to show non-Muslims that Islam is the religion of peace, mercy, and fairness.
Chapter 5

Muhammad Sa’id al-Ashmawy

Almost daily, armed thugs call for a 'holy war' against everyone who disagrees with them. More and more young men wear beards and robes as political badges. Militant preachers proclaim that women who fail to wear the veil are 'waging war against God.' But this Islam of intolerance and violence is not the religion of my father and grandfather. It is not the Islam that inspires more than a billion people around the world to pray, to fast, to give to the poor, to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. My Islam is a religion of tolerance and brotherhood.

Muhammad Sa'id al-Ashmawy

According to Muhammad Sa’id al-Ashmawy, Islam has been transformed “from a faith for all humanity into a political ideology.” As an alternative to the radical viewpoints of Sayyid Qutb and Shah Waliyullah, al-Ashmawy attempts to shed a different light on Islam. Muhammad Sa’id al-Ashmawy is the former chief justice of the High Criminal Court in Cairo, Egypt. Trained as a specialist in Islamic law and comparative law, al-Ashmawy obtained his law degree in 1954 from Cairo University and also served as assistant district attorney. While he does dispense harsh criticism of fundamentalist, right-wing ideologues, al-Ashmawy writes not so much against militant ideology, but rather against the bad name Islam has received as a result. Al-Ashmawy began writing in the 1980s at a time when Islamic militants, specifically, the Muslim Brotherhood, began their push towards an Islamic state. What is particularly interesting is that being a native of Egypt, al-Ashmawy surely must have read the works of his famous predecessor, Sayyid Qutb. While al-Ashmawy is critical of militants, his theology is not Western, but based in Islamic theology and methodology.228


227 Ibid., pg. 1.

228 Ibid., pg. 15.
While both Waliyullah and Qutb base their theology in Islamic methodology, rooted in the Qur’an and hadith, (the traditions of the Prophet) al-Ashmawy interprets these same sources in a unique light. al-Ashmawy utilizes a historical lens to understand verses of the Qur’an. He believes one should undertake such a method, as the Qur’an was revealed not all at once, but rather over 22 years. As a result, one should take into consideration the historical time at which a particular verse was revealed.\(^{229}\) Militants “reject analysis for mere literal meaning. The result is that the intent of Qur’anic revelation is distorted and its true meaning lost.”\(^{230}\) “The challenge of today’s world and its changing conditions requires flexibility, not rigidity. The latter only deepens the current crisis in Islamic societies.”\(^{231}\) Here there is a potential flaw in al-Ashmawy’s methodology. If Islam is a religion for all times, and the shari’ah (religious law) should be updated or changed accordingly, then how does one achieve permanency? If we keep re-interpreting the verses of the Qur’an, at some point we will no longer be able to decipher true Islam from the Islam practiced today. Secondly, if every verse in the Qur’an is historic in such a way that it applies only to one time or another, what can we apply to our life today?

According to al-Ashmawy, “Islam is concerned with people, not with systems; with the conscience, not with legal rules; with the spirit, not with the letter of the law.”\(^{232}\) This is in direct contrast to Sayyid Qutb’s criticism of Christianity. As will be recalled, Qutb was critical of Christianity because it failed to follow scripture, and believed it to be sufficient for individuals to uphold the spirit and love of Christ. However, al-Ashmawy appears to be adopting the same

\(^{229}\) Ibid., pg. 19.

\(^{230}\) Ibid., pg. 95.

\(^{231}\) Ibid., pgs. 14-15.

\(^{232}\) Ibid., pg. 79.
philosophy Qutb attributed to Christians, believing that it will suffice to utilize the spirit of Islam as a moral compass. Moreover, the purpose of religion “is a faith of profound power instilled in mankind’s conscience to connect the individual with his family, society, humanity, and the cosmos at large.” For these reasons, al-Ashmawy believes that one needs to utilize a holistic approach to interpretation. He believes that it is more important to extract the general good from a verse, even if it is inconsistent with the literal meaning of the word. In interpreting the Qu’ran, one should be guided by the overall sense of the Qur’an. In other words, it is more important to adhere to the general meaning or spirit of the Qur’anic passage, rather than its specific provisions.

Now that I have spoken of al-Ashmawy’s methodology, I will turn to his actual theology; specifically, what he believes to be the relationship between dar-al-Islam (the land of Islam) and dar-al-harb (the land of war), his position regarding relations with the West, politics, and of course, jihad.

Distinguishing himself from Qutb and Waliyullah, al-Ashmawy, does not believe that there needs to be any division or boundary between dar-al-Islam and dar-al-harb. Dar-al-Islam can best be defined as, “the place where the Islamic state is established, and the Shari’ah is enforced, and Allah’s limits are observed.” Conversely, dar-al-harb can be defined as, “any country that fights the Muslim because of his belief and prevents him from practicing his religion, and in which the Shari’ah is suspended.” Rather than maintaining a separation between the two, al-Ashmawy calls for a dramatic reform; specifically, a “renunciation of the

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233 Ibid., pg. 71.
234 Qutb, pg. 102.
235 Ibid., pg. 109.
doctrine of absolute superiority of Islam and Muslims.” It is not clear why al-Ashmawy would call for an end to Muslim superiority, when such superiority would in theory guarantee the rights of Muslims, and protects Muslims from oppression. Theoretically speaking, in a country where Muslims are superior and hold political power, they would hold an advantage over the minority groups not represented by the government. As such, they are in a far better position to execute the laws of Islam and practice their religion, without threat of oppression. However, one could argue that extending religious toleration to non-Muslims would by no means hinder a Muslim’s ability to practice freely. Nonetheless, as will be seen, al-Ashmawy sought to renounce Islamic superiority precisely so that religious toleration could be guaranteed to non-Muslims.

He further believes that one should aim to create a “multi-religious modern world.” While militants see Islam as the sole, valid, and complete faith, making all non-Muslims infidels, al-Ashmawy believes that all three faiths, i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are equals which can coexist as collaborators. He believes that because all three religions were sent revelation from a prophet of God, individuals of all three religions belong to one religion. “There is, then, one religion with many paths. These paths integrate with each other as the various facets, aspects, or attributes of the same religion.” Moreover, because they received revelation, Jews and Christians are referred to as People of the Book. As such, there is no vengeful God whose

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236 Al-Ashmawy, pg. 25.
237 Ibid., pg. 25.
238 Ibid., pg. 17.
239 Ibid., pg. 54.
wrath is incurred upon those who don’t believe. On the contrary, he believes that multiple religious heritages can coexist with Islam because there is only “one ethical and moral code for all human beings; to be upright in conduct.” Moreover, “no people who follow this moral code should be excluded on any grounds.” It should be noted that al-Ashmawy leaves undefined what this moral code is, and what it is based on. By whose standards does one decide what socially acceptable conduct is or is not? By this definition, it would seem that anyone who is an upstanding citizen in his or her community must be not only tolerated, but also praised as pious. Here one must assume that he is relying on a notion of common morality, whose standard is the accepted norms of society. Furthermore, al-Ashmawy’s vague notion of uprightness of conduct leaves the reader to wonder whether he does not here simply mean the golden rule, “Do unto others, as you would have done unto you.”

Al-Ashmawy believes that the reason why all three religions are at war with one another is because they are closed religions. Judaism believes that the Talmudic law, derived from the Hebrew Bible, is comprehensive. Christianity believes the Ecclesiastical law is considered sacred, and Islam considers the *shari‘ah* as part of the faith. As a result, each religion finds it difficult to “cooperate with or to accept any other system of laws.” However, al-Ashmawy contends that the *shari‘ah* is man made, and not divine. “The greater part of what is considered *shari‘ah* is not what has been revealed in the Qur’an, but what the scholars have determined are.

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240 Ibid., pg. 6.
241 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
243 Ibid., pgs. 55-56.
legal rules based on their interpretations of Qur’anic texts.” Furthermore, because it is man made it can be changed, and should be updated to serve the needs of the community.

What al-Ashmawy attempts to do is focus on the similarities between the three great religions, rather than their differences. By doing so he arrives at the ‘authentic conception of Islam.’ He defines this point as being the result of there being “only one religion revealed by God to all teachers, messengers, and prophets throughout history and to all peoples all over the world.” As a result, “we are all one community of the faithful.” The coalescing of the three religions is illustrated below (Fig. 4.1). The arrow points to the authentic conceptualization of Islam.

Fig. 4.1

244 Ibid., pg. 18.
245 Ibid., pg. 55.
246 Ibid., pg. 56.
As is apparent from the Venn diagram shown above, al-Ashmawy believes there is one religion. Furthermore, it appears he suggests discarding the unshared aspects of religion, rather than learning or borrowing from them. It should be noted, that although this diagram does not include polytheistic religions, such as Hinduism, or even Buddhism, he none-the-less believes we need them as well. “The wise attitude is not to deny or neglect any link, but rather to deal with all of them in an integrated manner.”247 As will be seen later, al-Ashmawy advocates mercy and respect for these religions as well. It should be noted that while al-Ashmawy is significantly distancing himself from the aforementioned conservatives, he is by no means laying any new grounds for liberals. Extending toleration to Peoples of the Book is something which has been at the center of liberal Islamic theology. However, where he does differ from liberals, is in extending this toleration to polytheistic religions, and even non-theistic belief systems. One can only wonder as to whether he would also extend toleration to atheists, who uphold the moral code.

Furthermore, he believes there should be “…many paths, several interpretations, changeable laws, and flexible jurisprudence to suit man’s activities without disturbing him or harming his spirit, his mind activities, freedom and ambitions.”248 It appears that what al-Ashmawy is calling for is a type of free-for-all religion, one which is open to interpretation and by design creates a slippery slope; a religion which one can put on and take-off at will. Al-Ashmawy calls for a religion with, “flexible jurisprudence to suit man’s activities.”249 Allowing for such flexible jurisprudence is a license by which man can justify any action he so chooses.

247 Ibid., pg. 54.

248 Ibid., pg. 57.

249 Ibid., pg. 57.
With multiple interpretations no one individual’s interpretation can be said to be wrong. Moreover, if several interpretations are all equally acceptable, how does one establish a commonality between men? Al-Ashmawy furthers that man’s mind and his spirit should not be hindered. Here it appears that for al-Ashmawy, it is a far greater sin to hinder man than to commit an act that could anger God.

Besides advocating being tolerant to non-Muslims, Sa’id al-Ashmawy also advocated a series of reforms. He believed a “reformulation of Islamic institutions and thought as a response to deep crisis in Muslim society.” While he does not specifically mention the nature of the crisis, we can get a glimpse of it by understanding the series of reforms he seeks to initiate; specifically, “a renewal of the Islamic mind, its ethical code, and respect for human rights, including women’s emancipation.” He seeks to free “the Muslim mind by helping to turn it toward more systematic, more objective, and ultimately more scientific thinking.” This type of renewal is significantly different from the type of renewal advocated by Sayyid Qutb and Shah Waliyullah. As will be recalled, for them, the renewal of the Muslim mind referred to returning to a strict and literal interpretation of the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet.

However, al-Ashmawy calls on Muslims to follow the spirit of the law rather than strictly adhering to the letter. He further exhorts Muslims to use their reason in reforming Islam. He reminds them that, “The Qur’an is a book that exalts respect for reason, the shaping of the individual through research, knowledge, and the use of reason and reflection.” In this sense,

250 Ibid., pg. 22.
251 Ibid., pg. 23.
252 Ibid., pg. 18.
253 Ibid., pg. 21.
al-Ashmawy would justify defiance of the letter of the law in instances where one uses reason to decipher the overall meaning, or spirit of the Qur’an. An example of such an instance would be in understanding the command for women to cover. In this case, if one were to look at the scripture and come to the conclusion that the spirit, or meaning of the verse, is to be modest, al-Ashmawy would justify that women’s decision not to cover (not follow the letter of the law), in favor of dressing modestly (which would uphold the spirit of the law, modesty). A second example of upholding the meaning rather than the letter can be seen in the instance of hudud, or punishment laws. Based on al-Ashmawy’s methodology, one could justify not cutting off the hand of a person who steals (i.e., not following the letter of the law), and instead sentencing him to prison (consistent with the spirit of the law, punishment).

Al-Ashmawy notes that, “without such a reformation, Muslims will be excluded from the international community and will be unable to play their just and proper role in human history.” Therefore, unlike Qutb and Waliyullah who advocated a total separation between Muslims and non-Muslims, al-Ashmawy believes it to be critical to maintain the relationship, and advocates extensive contacts with Europe and North America. Without such contacts, al-Ashmawy maintains that Islamic societies “will be left in a hopelessly backward position, unable to catch up with world trends in coming centuries.”

It is interesting that al-Ashmawy calls on maintaining contacts with precisely the same backward nations that Qutb was afraid would lead to the downfall of the Islamic world; namely, the United States and Europe. However, al-Ashmawy explains Qutb’s stance of breaking relationships by noting that Qutb’s position was most likely based on a verse revealed in the

254 Ibid., pg. 28.
255 Ibid., pg. 28.
Qur’an during the time of war between the Jews and the Muslims and Medina. Although he does not specifically cite the verse, he is referring to an instance in the year 623 C.E. when a part of the Jewish community (the Bani Qurayza tribe) renounced their covenant with the Muslims. Because they had broken their covenant with the Muslims, they were considered apostates. As such, the Muslims were required to separate themselves from the Jews of Mecca. Based on al-Ashmawy’s methodology, this verse was temporary, and therefore currently null and void.

Al-Ashmawy’s position to uphold relationships with the United States and Europe can further be understood within the context of the debate over rejecting or embracing modernity. On the one hand, there exists the argument made by the ulama (religious scholars) against modernity. The ulama sought to protect Islam against the “imposition of Western culture and the selective suppression of aspects of Arab-Muslim culture.” They view East-West relations as competing paradigms; either the West will dominate, or the East. However, both cannot coexist. They further view the West as a monster which will swallow Islam unless measures are taken to defend and uphold Islamic values. In this sense, modernization and liberalism appears to be hostile to religion. Those in favor of modernization make the case that Islamic society can learn something from Europe. Furthermore, these modernists believe there is nothing wrong with borrowing ideas from the West, and note the “multiple examples of mutual borrowing that have occurred between East and West, North and South.” This is the argument made by al-Ashmawy. What he calls for is “a synthesis of Islamic values with global technology and world

256 Ibid., pg. 112.
257 Ibid., pg. 115.
258 Ibid., pg. 26.
259 Ibid., pgs. 27-8.
civilizations…” al-Ashmawy “does not see the West as bad or the global culture that it has spawned as necessarily all evil.” Rather, he calls for “selective judgment in receiving and retaining materials and ideas from the West.” Furthermore, “he points to the general benefits of the spread of Western based technology.”

Beyond seeing reforms in the arenas of women’s rights, and reforming the relationship between Egypt and other countries, al-Ashmawy also seeks to reform the Egyptian legislature, in order to extend proportional representation to non-Muslims. According to al-Ashmawy, adopting a traditional Islamic constitution would demote non-Muslims to second-rate citizens. Al-Ashmawy opines that “Islam does not recommend any single form of government and is absolutely against religious government.” Here, al-Ashmawy appears to echo Qutb’s belief that Islam does not call for any specific type of government, so long as it follows the shari’ah. However, al-Ashmawy is against forming an Islamic government based on the shari’ah at all.

Unlike Qutb and Waliyullah, he believes it is critical that religion and politics remain separated, due to the high chance that such a religious government may become corrupt and illegitimate. Because such governments claim divine backing, the corruption is more dangerous and incurable. Al-Ashmawy believes it is much more difficult to remedy individuals who claim to be acting on behalf of God. A religious state elevates its acts to that of divinity, and demands

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260 Ibid., pg. 28.
261 Ibid.
262 Ibid.
263 Ibid.
264 Ibid., pg. 9.
265 Ibid., pg. 79.
absolute obedience from its subjects. For this reason, it is extremely dangerous for a ruler to rule under the auspices of religious dogma. Furthermore, “religio-political entities are ignorant of their own faiths and those of others…preferring to cut themselves off not only from other faiths but even from those of their faith who do not share their opinion.” It should be noted that a religious state is not corrupt because the divine commands it rules by are corrupt, but rather, it is ruled by imperfect instruments, i.e., the ruler.

Al-Ashmawy believes that a truly Islamic government will be one based on justice. While Qutb and Waliyullah would not disagree with this, the difference between them and al-Ashmawy lies in the definition of justice. While Qutb and Waliyullah defined justice as one in which the shari’ah is enforced, al-Ashmawy believes a just government will only be one in which the shari’ah is not enforced. Al-Ashmawy’s “government will gather everyone into one community and will exclude no one.” This reflects his desire to extend rights and privileges to non-Muslims as well. However, an Islamic government based on the shari’ah, as advocated by Qutb and Waliyullah, would exclude privileges to non-Muslims, and would therefore be unjust.

This discussion of politics and religion leads one to ask several questions. First, while it is clear that a religious government has the potential to become corrupt, cannot one make the same claim as to other governments? Islamic governments are not the only ones that have the potential to become corrupted. Secondly, al-Ashmawy’s notion of an Islamic government is extremely vague. If an Islamic government is based on justice, equity, and morality, what can be

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266 Ibid., pg. 109.
267 Ibid., pg. 72.
268 Ibid., pg. 79.
said of other governments which are based on the same founding principles, e.g., the United States? By this definition, one could qualify almost any government today as an Islamic government. This reflects his earlier point that all religions and moral systems are essentially the same. This vague definition of government is also consistent with his views that all individuals are one community of faithful.

Finally, al-Ashmawy noted earlier that the purpose of religion is to connect mankind with his society and the cosmos at large. Is politics not necessarily a fundamental relationship one has with his society? Moreover, is politics not part of the cosmos at large? The first Islamic community at Medina had a constitution, and the Prophet engaged in politics. He presided as the administrator of the laws, and maintained the political relationships with other communities. As such, in the first Islamic community politics and religion were not separated, but rather, intertwined. However, al-Ashmawy would contend that the first community at Medina is a historical instance which no longer applies to today. Asserting that this first community is no longer applicable to today is the biggest reinterpretation al-Ashmawy engages in. The first Islamic community serves as the official doctrine calling for the intermixing of religion and politics. This reinterpretation further separates him from the fundamentalists.

Now that I have noted al-Ashmawy’s position on politics at the local level, I will turn to his position on international politics, in particular, his stance on jihad. Al-Ashmawy, like other Muslims, believes that the term jihad initially meant self-control and self-refinement, which the Prophet referred to as the great jihad. He cites the well established tradition, “We (the Muslims) have returned from the minor jihad to the major one (struggle).” He defines the greater jihad

269 Ibid., pg. 88.

270 Ibid., pg. 115.
as, “ethical, moral, and spiritual. This jihad is a strenuous effort, or series of efforts, to discipline oneself against greed, avarice, cowardice, fear, tyranny, ignorance, subjection to negative elements, yielding to evil desires and giving way to passion.” What is particularly interesting is that here al-Ashmawy classifies efforts against tyranny, ignorance, and subjugation, as forms of greater jihad. As will be recalled, it was precisely against these three things that Qutb and Waliyullah believed to be just causes to wage the lesser jihad, or armed struggle. It appears that al-Ashmawy believes that these issues, which he leaves undefined, can be resolved through non-violent means.

Moreover, he contends that jihad originally meant “keeping to one’s faith in difficult times. Jihad was originally intended for self-defense and not as means for imposing Islam on non-Muslims.” He further states that if jihad is understood and interpreted as more than this, “it is not jihad but aggression, forbidden by the verses and the very spirit of the Qur’an.” Unfortunately, the militants believe jihad is a “means to impose Islam on the infidels at anytime and anywhere, to convert them to the right path and the true faith.” Conversely, al-Ashmawy believes that jihad is only to be used as a type of self-defense, and that “the one-sided stress placed on holy wars and fighting is a historical distortion of the real concept of jihad and is due to political interests.”

271 Ibid.
272 Ibid., pg. 29.
273 Ibid., pg. 111.
274 Ibid.
275 Ibid., pgs. 112.
Consistent with his view that the verses in the Qur’an are historically limited, al-Ashmawy notes that the meaning of jihad changed during the Medina period from that of the Mecca period. During the Mecca period (610 – 622 C.E.), Islam was just beginning to be spread through Arabia. Because Islam was new, and sought to change the status quo, Muslims were often harassed and oppressed for their views. However, during this time, jihad was a spiritual struggle. God ordered the Prophet to be patient with the Meccan people who did not believe, and not to dominate over them. “Remind them (the People of Mecca), for thou art but a remembrance. Thou art not at all a dominator over them” (88:22). Furthermore, “Say it is truth from the Lord of you all. Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve” (29:18).276

However, later the Prophet and his followers were forced to migrate to Medina in order to escape the increased oppression they faced at the hands of the Meccans. This aggression against the new Muslims continued even after their migration. In 624 C.E., “The Meccans prepared an army of a thousand men to fight against three hundred Muslims.”277 It is for that reason that God gave the Prophet permission to fight in verse 22:29 of the Holy Qur’an. “Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged, and God is indeed able to give them victory.”278 “Because of the circumstances of this period (622- 632 C.E.), the initial spiritual meaning of jihad, striving and struggle, gave ground to the new material meaning, to struggle together against the evil and harmful aggression of the people of Mecca.”279

276 Ibid., pg. 113.
277 Ibid., pg. 114.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid., pg. 115.
Al-Ashmawy does believe that jihad was sanctioned by God; however, he argues that it is based on Qur’anic verses which were of temporary applicability. Therefore, jihad can be sanctioned for a time, but “after Islam is established and spread into diverse societies, jihad can no longer be justified.”

By this interpretation, it appears that jihad can be waged in the beginning to spread Islamic society into a new area, where it is not yet established. This interpretation appears to be similar to that advocated by Qutb. Sayyid Qutb believed that jihad should be waged in order to fight opposition upon entering a new region; however, once Islam is introduced into a region, it is no longer legitimate to wage jihad in that region. Therefore, by this interpretation, jihad can no longer be justified today, as it is firmly established in every region of the Earth. Because one could use non-violent means to spread Islam, one must question why violent jihad ever was necessary. He also argues that jihad is no longer applicable as, “the word ‘people’ in the Qur’an does not mean all the people at every time and in every place, but rather the people of Mecca at the time of revelation.”

If one takes this interpretation of ‘people’ then jihad can no longer be waged anywhere, against anyone.

Al-Ashmawy also holds that one should not wage jihad against all persons, but only against those who are in close geographical proximity. Al-Ashmawy justifies fighting those in close proximity from the verse 9:23. “Fight those of the disbelievers who are close to you.” Moreover, “its emphasis is on self-defense and on the security of the community.”

Fighting those who are in close proximity is considered self-defense, since they are a possible threat to your safety and resources. Here, al-Ashmawy again attempts to show that jihad is only to be

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280 Ibid., pg. 20.
281 Ibid., pg. 117.
282 Ibid., pg. 116.
waged, or was sanctioned, in instances of self-defense. Regardless of when and where jihad is waged, al-Ashmawy admonishes Muslims to adhere to verse 2:190. “Fight in this way of God against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. So, god loveth not aggressors.”

Al-Ashmawy’s overall position on jihad is made clear in the following statement. “Jihad is mercy, not a sword; and justice, not violence.”\textsuperscript{283} It is most likely that the jihad which he had in mind here was the greater jihad. Because he notes that jihad is not violent, he is not advocating the lesser jihad. Far above jihad, al-Ashmawy advocates mercy. He notes that, “the path of Islam is mercy.”\textsuperscript{284} He defines mercy in the following way:

Mercy is to have no conflict with any country or enmity with any people. Mercy is to recognize and respect any other path: Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and so on. Mercy is to cooperate with everyone regardless of faith, color, language and origin. Mercy is to spread prosperity, liberty, equality, justice and love, not only for Muslims but also for everyone, anytime, and anywhere.\textsuperscript{285}

If the path of Islam is mercy, and if mercy is to be defined as above, then it appears that the United States, and countless other nations are in fact on the path of Islam, unless they have forsaken religion altogether. Numerous treaties and constitutions promote such a definition of mercy. For example, the United Nations Charter prohibits conflict with other nations. Moreover, the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States as well as the constitution of many other countries calls for the protection and respect of all persons, regardless of religion, color, and origin. Finally, the purpose of the Constitution is to promote liberty, equality, and justice to all.

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., pg. 119.

\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., pg. 89.

\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., pg. 90.
What is clear throughout al-Ashmawy’s theology is his belief that certain verses in the Qur’an are outdated, and only apply to a specific moment in time. As such, because jihad was only to be waged against the Meccans, it is now outdated and can no longer be used, except in its original sense as the greater jihad. His theology is also particularly liberal as he seeks to be inclusive of all religions rather than exclusive. This is contrary to the theology of Qutb and Waliyullah who sought to separate both communities rather than unite them. As such, he sees more in common among the religions than his conservative counterparts. Furthermore, he seeks to elevate religion and restore it “to the pedestal of pure understanding, respect for one’s own faith, and the faith of others.”

Moreover, he believes, “…God gave all the Prophets one faith but different paths. In this sense, Islam as a path did not abrogate any other paths and as such, we must cooperate with other paths rather than wage war against them.”

If all individuals are of the same religion, then there is no difference which needs to be extirpated from the enemies, as Ibn Rushd suggested. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to wage jihad on others who are different. While extending tolerance to all will no doubt help to create civility and a non-confrontational atmosphere in which jihad will soon become obsolete, one must ask if such tolerance is really realistic. How will all three world religions overcome their rigid and closed stance to arrive at the authentic conception of Islam? Can Christians, Jews, and Muslims, all really live together, as one happy community of faithful?

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286 Ibid., pg. 73.

CONCLUSIONS

While I began this research to find an answer to what jihad was, and when it was justifiable, sadly the results appear to be inconclusive. “Who can declare a jihad and what constitutes a legitimate defensive jihad as opposed to an unholy war of aggression would, like beauty, be determined by the eye of the beholder/believer.”²⁸⁸ Jihad appears to be an umbrella concept under which one can include anything from an internal struggle, to a conquest for land, to a means of mass conversion. What is clear is that jihad is no longer just a battle of wills between dar-al-Islam and dar-al-harb. Rather, it is also a battle among Muslims over interpretation. There exist as many interpretations of jihad as there are verses of the Qur’an. As was seen, for Sayyid Qutb, the purpose of jihad is to free individuals, so they may have the ability to choose to follow Islam – a liberation which required the seizing of political power. For Waliyullah, the goal of jihad was to extend the boundaries of Islam, and force all individuals to accept Islam. Even one of the liberal theologians, Ibn Rushd, believed jihad was justified in order to instill values in individuals. Rather than pushing these multiple interpretations on non-Muslims, it is necessary first to wage a greater jihad among the Muslim community, in order to devise a unified Islam to spread to others.

Perhaps a synthesis of views is the most reasonable approach to jihad today. In deciding to wage violent jihad or not, Muslims today should first determine whether the period we live in most resembles that of the Mecca period (610 -622 C.E.), or the Medina period (622-632 C.E.). If the state of Muslims today reflects that of the Mecca period, in which Muslims faced minimal harassment at the hands of non-believers, then Muslims should adhere to the Mecca verses of the

²⁸⁸ Esposito, pg. 41.
Qur’an. As will be recalled, in these verses the Prophet was advised to be patient and spread the truth through preaching. Furthermore, if this is the state of Muslims today, they should allow individuals to disbelieve if they so choose. However, if Muslims are being oppressed and attacked by non-Muslims, then the state of Muslims today resembles that of the period after migration to Medina. If this is the case, the Qur’an would advise Muslims to fight against those who fight them. However, this is but one reason to wage jihad. It should be noted that if the period we are in resembles Medina, then the goal of waging jihad is not to convert non-Muslims, but to eradicate the source of oppression.

What appears to be central in all the interpretations of those who advocate jihad is that the West is to blame for both its foreign policy and materialism. Jihad also appears to be a punishment for introducing and spreading globalization, which further increase corruption in Islamic society. Militants believe the West has made their society corrupt by infiltrating their safe-havens where Islamic values reside, and infested them with movies, music, print media and luxury goods, which have transformed the minds of countless individuals, and brainwashed them into conducting such impurities such as not wearing the veil. Furthermore, the West has introduced new values into these Muslim countries which are counter to Islamic shari’ah (law) and jurisprudence.

In waging jihad against the advances of globalization, Islamic militants appear to be adhering to the law of physics, ‘for every attraction there is an equal and opposite reaction.’ For every push towards globalization and materialism, there exists an equal push against its penetration. This reaction against globalization is a defense mechanism. It is an attempt to prevent the spreading of values associated with globalization and materialism into Islamic society. It is because these values are counter to the values of Muslim society, and not
necessarily counter to non-Muslim society, that we do not see the same reaction from non-Muslims societies.

For still other Muslims, jihad is an act of revenge. Muslims view themselves as one ummah, or community of believers. All in this community are considered brother and sister. Therefore, the death of one Muslim is seen as an attack on the whole community, and the death of a fellow brother incites anger among the members. Seen in this way, jihad appears to be a form of justice. However, it is interesting to note that Muslims do not avenge the death of a brother or sister when he or she is killed by a fellow Muslim. What seems to be central in the decision to avenge a death is that the Muslim was killed by a non-Muslim. In this sense, it appears that the death of a Muslim by a fellow Muslim is seen as justifiable, since no revenge was sought. If revenge had been sought, this would imply that the killing was not justified, and it was therefore necessary to revenge the death in order to seek justice.

Once the decision to wage the lesser jihad is made, how long the jihad should be waged further revolves around two questions. First, to what extent can the individuals be reasoned with? Secondly, should these individuals be compelled to follow Islam? As was seen, for both conservatives jihad should be waged first, then individuals should be reasoned with. Qutb sought only to eradicate those obstacles which prevented the free preaching of religion within a given community. However, once these obstacles were removed, he asserted that individuals should be invited to the religion. Therefore, jihad does not continue forever. Waliyullah also believed that individuals could be reasoned with; however, only after they had been conquered. Like Qutb, he too believed individuals should first wage jihad. However, he believed one should first wage jihad not to overcome obstacles, but rather to convert non-Muslims against their will. Only when the non-Muslims had submitted to Islam, should Muslims attempt to reason with
individuals. Therefore both conservative theologians hold that individuals do have reason and should in fact be reasoned with. However, because their reason is inhibited, it is necessary to wage jihad first.

On the question of reason, Ibn Rushd held that individuals were given the ability to reason. As such, Rushd believed that all attempts should be made to preach Islam to non-Muslims. By using their reason, they would be convinced by the persuasive arguments of the Muslims. However, Ibn Rushd does believe that jihad is an acceptable means of instilling values in individuals, against whom persuasive arguments failed. This implies that some individuals have imperfect reasoning, and must be convinced by other means. Therefore, for Rushd, reason should be used prior to waging jihad, until it proves unsuccessful. It is interesting that both conservatives and one liberal believe that individuals have some degree of reason, and believe that jihad should be waged. On this point, they differ only as to what order jihad and preaching should occur. This overlap between conservatives and liberals further highlights the inconclusiveness of these findings.

Secondly, how long jihad should be waged appears to center around the question of whether or not individuals are compelled to follow Islam. If individuals are free to reject Islam, then they cannot be forced into submission. This is the position that Sayyid Qutb took. As was seen, for him, the purpose of waging jihad is not to force individuals to accept Islam, but rather, to free them so they have a choice to follow or not. Therefore, jihad is only to be waged until individuals have the freedom to choose to practice Islam or not. Conversely, Waliyullah disagrees with Qutb and believes that individuals do not have such freedom and must be compelled, by force, to accept Islam. As such, jihad is to be waged until all submit to Islam. Ibn Rushd would agree with Qutb that individuals have the free will to decide whether to accept
Islam or not. Finally, on this point al-Ashmawy would contend that because all individuals follow the same moral code, individuals are not compelled to follow Islam specifically, and are free to choose any religion they wish.

Throughout this research, the case has been made by both camps, for and against jihad. Regardless of how inconclusive these findings, one thing remains clear. In our day, “the locus of jihad has been shifted from local, remote areas to ‘jihad international.’ The scope of jihad today is far more expansive and is no longer merely the problem of small third world countries.” Jihad today is a clash of civilizations. Although jihad has entered a global arena, we must remember that those who wage jihad, and actually participate in it, are those at the margins of Islam. As such, those individuals who engage in jihad do not reflect average Muslims. One must keep in mind that pockets of fundamentalism exist in every religion. What jihad strives for is an ideal type, a model based on the past. Individuals who call for jihad seek to re-establish the seventh-century caliphate state of the Prophet, based solely on shari’ah (Islamic law). As such, it is not likely to materialize in the near future. Like their Christian and Jewish counterparts, Muslim fundamentalists lack the cohesion and the resources necessary to appeal to the masses.

Most mainstream Muslims today are stuck in a difficult situation. They are unable to decide whether to be loyal to their religion, or to their country. Many who have immigrated to the West feel a sense of loyalty and gratitude to their new country, for providing them with a save haven. As such they are not comfortable, nor do they support a war against the West. Others in Eastern countries are likewise not willing to wage war against the United States and other European countries, which have introduced many luxuries and transformed their lives. It seems that globalization has made things messy. Furthermore, most Muslims today shun those

289 Ibid., pg. x.
who advocate and wage jihad. Similarly, most Christians and Jews shun their fundamentalist counterparts.

Despite the inconclusiveness of the arguments posed by both camps, “what unites liberals like al-Ashmawy and more conservative Islamist thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries is their common belief in the continuing relevance of Islam, its ability to provide a sufficient framework for life in the 20th century and beyond.”\(^{290}\) If Islam is to provide a framework for life in the 21st century, it is imperative that Muslims come together and find a middle ground between the two camps. Muslims must come together and decide once and for all whether jihad is mandated according to the Qur’an, and what the nature of this jihad is. Now more than ever, Muslims need to come together to decide upon a cohesive definition of jihad. Finally, Muslims need to join together and unify, not under the banner of jihad, but under the banner of Islam.

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\(^{290}\) Al-Ashmawy, pg. 22.


