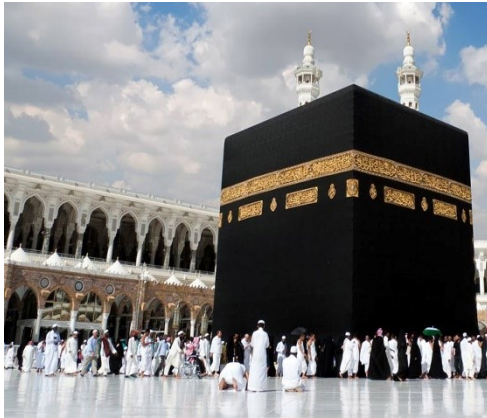


# **Spiritual Jihad in Islam:** *An Inner Struggle Seeking Proximity to God*



**Saleh Muhammad Harunur Rashid Khan**

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**Spiritual Jihad in Islam:**  
*An Inner Struggle Seeking Proximity  
to God*

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Saleh Muhammad Harunur Rashid Khan  
Commonly known as: Harun Rashid, Ph.D.  
Printed in the United States of America  
First Printing 2021  
First Edition 2021  
ISBN: 978-1-955393-00-3  
1-853-053-3281

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Published & Distributed by:  
Iqra Publishing Inc.  
157 Sunset Avenue NW, Atlanta, GA 30331  
<http://iqrapublishing.com>  
Edited by Editor-in-Chief: Victor Trionfo of the IPI team.



## **DEDICATION**

*Dedicated to those seeking proximity to Allah  
through lifelong spiritual jihad*

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## Author Biography

Saleh Muhammad Harunur Rashid Khan (commonly known as Harun Rashid<sup>1</sup>, Ph.D., University of Saskatchewan, Canada, 1975) is a co-author of three books related to climate change. (Rashid and Paul 2014; Rashid and Bauld 2016; Paul and Rashid 2017) In addition, he has published at least 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. Most of his research and publications are related to environmental management issues, such as climate change disasters, floodplain management, water resources, environmental geomorphology, and others. Dr. Rashid has served as a member of the editorial boards of four international journals: *International Journal of Disaster Risks Reductions* (IJDRR), *Environmental Management, Disasters, and The Arab World Geographer*. Although this is Dr. Rashid's first book on Islam, he has been working on this project for more than two decades.

Dr. Rashid served as Acting Associate Vice-President Research at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada for more than two years (April 2002 to August 2004). In 2004, he joined the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, USA as Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography and Earth Science (2004-2007) and retired in 2009 as an Emeritus Professor. Earlier, he taught at Lakehead University (1975-2004), University of Benin, Nigeria (1981-1982) and University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (1965-1969).

<sup>1</sup>My original name, Saleh Muhammad Harunur Rashid Khan, was changed to Harunur Rasid by a school clerk prior to my Matriculation (High School) Final Examination when I was 14 years old and had no idea about this distortion. For a variety of legal reasons, I was unable to change it.

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## Preface

*Wa man a'rada a'n dhikree fa inna lahoo mae'eshatan dankanw wa nahshuruhoo Yamal Qiyamatil a'ama. Qala Rabbi lima hashar tanee a'maa wa qad kuntu baseeraa. Qaala kadhalika atatka Aayaatunaa fanaseetahaa wa kadhalikal Yawma tunsaa. (20: 124-126)*

**Translation:** “But whoever turns away from remembering me will certainly have a miserable life; then We will raise them up blind on the Day of Judgment.” He will say: “O my Lord! Why have you raised me blind, although I had eyesight (before)?” Allah will respond, “It is so, just as Our revelations came to you and you neglected them, so Today you are neglected.” (Chapter 20 of the Quran: *Surah Taha*, verses 124-126)

It was, perhaps, in 1956 or 1957 — my memory fades away that far back — when I was a — 9th or 10th grader — student in a small rural town in southern Bangladesh. One afternoon in the winter dry season of the monsoon climate, when I was returning home alone from my school, I was surprised to see a large gathering beside the main road leading into town. As I approached the gathering, I watched how, seemingly, devout Muslims — assuming from their beard and white caps covering their heads — had been listening intently to the melodious recitation of the above verses by a famous preacher (commonly called *Peer* in Bangladesh). Using a loudspeaker, the preacher kept on reciting the verses, first in Arabic, followed by Bengali translations. Like the devotees sitting on the ground, I was spellbound and paused for a while to listen to him and his interpretation of these verses. I reported my experience to my parents and later to one of my relatives, who had extensive knowledge of the Quran. Immediately, he recognized the verses and asked me to check out *Surah Taha* (Chapter 20). Ever since, I



memorized these verses and have recited them repeatedly during my daily *Salah* (Prayer).

My parents, who were devout Muslims, encouraged me to follow the path of Islam. They sacrificed so much for my general education and encouraged me to excel in my studies. In addition, they taught me how to perform daily *Salah*, obligatory (fard) prayers, and also hired a tutor for teaching me how to recite the Quran. For their dedication to my general education and Islamic teachings, I am eternally grateful to my late parents. However, remaining steadfast in faith is a spiritual jihad, i.e., it is not necessarily without challenges. As I moved from the small rural town to the metropolis of Dacca, the then capital of East Pakistan (now Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh) I strayed from the path of Islam under the influence of secular urban society. For a long time, I had been praying only the *Jumu'ah* prayer (i.e., the Friday congregation) in mosques, ignoring the obligatory five daily prayers. Often, I used to feel guilty when the memory of those verses of *Surah Taha* flashed back reminding me that Allah has warned clearly the consequences of ignoring Him and not remembering Him as he commands.

It all changed nearly a quarter century, back in the summer of 1997 when a group of my Arabic speaking university colleagues and graduate students from Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries organized weekly *Halaqa* (Islamic seminars) at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. The *Halaqa* was led by Yasser Hassan, then a Ph.D. student of Engineering under the supervision of Dr. Said Easa, Professor of Civil Engineering at Lakehead University (Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada) in the late 1990s. The seminars focused mainly on recitation of verses of the Quran and their interpretations. Both Yasser Hassan and Said Easa are expert in Quranic scholarship. Besides pursuing his studies in science and engineering, Dr. Hassan memorized the Quran at a young age. In a more familiar term, he became a *Hafiz*, meaning memorized the Quran. [Currently, Dr. Hassan is Professor of Engineering at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada]. Recently, Dr.

Easa, who is now Professor of Engineering at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada, has also memorized the Quran. Both Dr. Hassan and Dr. Easa are reputed experts in their respective fields of engineering. Such a combination of expertise in modern science and engineering, simultaneously with their Quranic scholarship, impressed upon me that modernity and Islamic scholarship need not compete with one another. Another contributor to the weekly Halaqa was Walid Chahal, who teaches Sociology at Lakehead University. His expertise in modernity and Islam has influenced my interpretations throughout this book. Some of the earlier drafts of selected chapters of this manuscript were reviewed by Walid Chahal and Said Easa. Their constructive criticisms and suggestions helped me in subsequent revisions of the manuscript.

Special thanks are due to Masood Wasiq Azad, CPA (Canada) [now resident of Vancouver] who nudged me gently towards a manuscript focusing on spirituality in Islam. Similarly, Dr. Wahhab Khandker, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse encouraged me to focus on spirituality and peaceful attributes of Islam. Dr. Syed Serajul Islam, Professor of Political Science, Lakehead University, Orillia Campus (Southern Ontario) supported this research project at every stage. In particular, he encouraged me to publish with Iqra Publishing Inc.

The design of the cover and the back cover is based on a personal photograph of the Kaba by Dr. Munshi Khaledur Rahman, Assistant Professor of Geography at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA. He took this picture during his 2017 Umrah. I thank him for this contribution. I am also indebted to Dr. Nasrul Huq, MD of Austin, Texas who donated me a copy of *The Gracious Quran: A Modern Phrased Interpretation in English*, translated by Dr. Ahmad Zaki Hammad (2007)<sup>1</sup> and a research monograph on *Surah Al-Fatiha* (The Opening Chapter) by the same author. Both proved to be helpful especially for drafting the chapter on Islamic Faith (*Iman*). On an impersonal note, I would also like to express my gratitude to the Murphy Library of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for granting me unlimited access to its digital resources

(because of my status as an emeritus professor). Without that access, I could not have finished this project.

Among some of my friends and colleagues in the Greater Vancouver region who encouraged me to pursue this project, I would like to acknowledge the continued support of Dr. Muhammad Zaman (an international consultant in resettlement) and Dr. Mustafa Alam (retired Professor of Economics, University of Dhaka, now residing in the Greater Vancouver region). Thanks are due to Mizan Majumder, P. Eng who loaned me a classic manual on authentic hadiths authored by a medieval Muslim scholar (Al-Misry) and co-authored by Keller (Al-Misry and Keller 1994)<sup>1</sup>. Among others, Engineer Rabiul Islam encouraged me at every stage of this project. I thank him for this kind support.

Unconditional support of my family has been a source of inspiration throughout this project. In particular, my wife Mohsina Rashid sacrificed countless hours of family time because of my pursuit of this project. I thank her for her patience, love, and understanding. My children, Moona and Zaid, and grandchildren have always supported and loved me unconditionally.

Iqra Publishing Inc. assisted me with editing this book in a professional manner. Mr. Antonio Fleming (Abdul Wahid Salem Muhammad ibn Fleming), the Owner of IPI, encouraged me throughout every stage of the publication. In particular, I would like to acknowledge superior editing skills of Victor Trionfo, the Editor-in-Chief of IPI for his watchful corrections of grammar, syntax, and critical content. In addition, he spent countless hours in providing constructive criticism of the manuscript which have improved the text significantly. I thank him for his contribution. I would also like to thank Mahinoor of Adilproductions /Adilproductions88@gmail.com for her artful designing of the cover and the back cover which seems to convey the mystery of the subject matter of the book. This is an enormous contribution for which I am truly grateful to the IPI graphic team. Above all, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah SWT, who has given me the

courage to undertake such a challenging task. I seek His forgiveness for any unintentional errors in this book.

Saleh Muhammad Harunur Rashid Khan (Harun Rashid), Maple Ridge, Greater Vancouver, BC, Canada, May 2021. Email: [rasid.haru@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:rasid.haru@eagle.uwlax.edu)

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 1 for references on Hammad (2007); Al-Misry and Keller (1994).

## **Abbreviations**

AH - After Hijra (Prophet's emigration to Madinah)

CE - Common/Current era

IPA - Intention, Purification, Attention

PBUH - Peace Be Upon Him

RA - Radi Allahu Anhu

SAWS - Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam

SWT [Allah] - Subhanahu wa Ta'ala



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### *Spiritual Jihad Seeking Proximity to Allah*

***Abstract.** As the title of this introductory chapter (and of this book) indicates, this study deals with a central theme that spiritual jihad is a personal inner struggle of the heart and soul seeking proximity to Allah. The chapter introduces the doctrine of Tawhid (Absolute Monotheism), which provides a theoretical basis of spiritual jihad requiring all Muslims to believe in the Oneness of Allah and to worship Him alone. The chapter then presents a model of spiritual jihad which is operated by a triad of three interrelated processes. These have been short-formed as IPA methods for: **I: Intention**, i.e., for making the niyyah for a given form of worship of Allah, **P: Purification** of the heart and soul by expressing tawba astagfirullah, often formally and frequently informally, and **A: Attention** for performing a devotional worship (ibadah) of Allah, giving utmost attention to Him. The central assumptions of the model have been verified by interpretations of large numbers of verses of the *Quran*, dealing with each of the IPA methods. Research methods for preparing this book manuscript include: (a) interpretations of verses of the *Quran*, based on their English translations and exegeses (tafsirs), (b) discourse analysis of selected verses of the *Quran*, and (c) literature review of scholarly publications on Islam, including peer-reviewed journal articles and books, and limited numbers of Internet blogs.*

**Keywords:** Spiritual jihad; Tawhid; Model of Spiritual jihad; Intention (*niyyah*); Purification (*tawba astagfirullah*); Attention (devotional *ibadah*); Exegeses; Discourse analysis

## Objectives of Spiritual Jihad

Spiritual *jihad*<sup>1</sup> is a composite term consisting of the English expression “spiritual” and the Arabic word “jihad.” Treated separately, interpretations of each of these words in the western literature and media discourse differ significantly from their use in modern Islamic literature. In particular, spirituality is a pervasive concept in Islam. In the western tradition, the term spiritual is often defined to contrast “human spirit or soul” from “the physical things.” (Barber 1998, p. 1401) In Islam, in contrast, spirituality is based on the Quran’s doctrine of *Tawhid*, which requires a Muslim to believe in an unseen Allah<sup>2</sup> as the only god worthy of worship. The Arabic word, jihad (noun), means “striving, endeavoring, struggling,” whereas its verb, *jahada*, means “someone who is diligent, industrious, or laborious in the pursuit of a praiseworthy objective.” (Bassioni 2007, p. 122) Thus, simply put, spiritual jihad refers to struggles for the purpose of worship of Allah (see below for a more comprehensive definition).

Jihad is used in the Quran<sup>3</sup> to refer to Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) defensive (armed) jihad against aggression by Arab polytheists for the purpose of establishing Islam. However, the original intent of this word has been lost due to a legacy of misuse for political purposes by both post-Prophet Muslim rulers and other non-state actors. As it stands now, jihad is interpreted as a religious war against non-Muslims in most of the modern media and political discourse, as well as in some of the classical Islamic literature (for example, in Al-Misry and Keller 1994, p. 599). More commonly, it is now associated with violent jihad, i.e., terrorist attacks committed by different groups of so-called Islamic terrorists. This is a major departure from the original intent of the word jihad which appears in the Quran in several verses as a conjoint expression of spirituality, such as *jaahadoo fee sabeelillaah* (“struggle in the way of Allah”). Consistent with such divine intent, *spiritual jihad may be defined as a personal inner struggle of the heart and soul of a worshipper seeking proximity to Allah*. Thus, this is an alternate



interpretation of the word, jihad, which has nothing to do with armed jihad or violent jihad.

The concept of spiritual jihad has received inadequate attention in modern literature. Similarly, the Islamic literature on spiritual jihad is also limited. Among them, it is cited briefly in a classic manual of Islamic Sacred Laws<sup>4</sup> (Al-Misri and Keller 1994, p. 599) and more elaborately in a treatise on classical interpretation of Jihad as a mystical path (*Al-Risālat al-Qushayriyya*, translated into English by Al-Jaārah [2001]) (cited in Heck 2004, p. 99). It has also been explained in a recent YouTube video conference (Al-Hameedy 2017). The rationale for spiritual jihad is provided in a rare *hadith* (Prophet's saying)<sup>5</sup>, according to which the Prophet (PBUH) told his Companions, upon returning from an early war in defense of their newly established community, that they had come back from waging *jihad al-asghar* (lesser jihad) to fight the *jihad al-akbar* (or the greater jihad). (Jalal 2008; Mcneil 2008; Bassioni 2007, Bonner 2006; Powers 2004; Heck 2004; Nasr 1987; Ashraf 1987; Brohi 1987) Using the concept of spiritual jihad, the greater jihad refers to the struggle of the heart and soul “against those inner forces which prevent them from becoming human in accordance with his primordial and God-[given] nature.” (Jalal 2008, p. 9) Based on this hadith, “many have claimed that the authentic jihad, the ‘greater jihad,’ is not warfare waged in the world against external adversaries but is rather an internal spiritualized war against the self and its base impulses” (Bonner 2006, p. 12). Claiming distortions of the original meaning and intention of jihad, Ayesha Jalal, a noted American historian and expert on Jihad in South Asia, has stressed on the complementarity of spirituality with jihad:

“If the triad of submission, faith, and good conduct is constitutive of Islam, its moving principle is the notion of jihad as a spiritual, intellectual, and moral struggle. To isolate jihad from faith and virtuous intentions is to lose sight of the high ethical standards that distinguish mere mortals

from human beings, and to reduce the sacred to the profane and the transcendental to the purely worldly” (Jalal 2008, p. 14).

One of the characteristics of spiritual jihad is that it conforms to the “doctrine of peaceful jihad,” which differs significantly from armed jihad. It is also consistent with the modern worldview that Islam is a private religion rather than a public force, a theory first proposed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the reformist Muslim scholar of British India (Siddiqi 1967). The concept of Islam as a private religion is based on the principle of freedom of religion as a personal choice, which is supported by two famous verses of the Quran, i.e., “*There shall be no compulsion in religion*” (2:256) and “*You have your way, and I have my way*” (109:6). In Chapter 8 (Conclusion), I will show that this worldview is compatible with the ethos of Islam “as a religion uniting itself in both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life and seeking to regulate not only the individual’s relationship to God ... but human relationships in a social setting as well” (Rahman 2019).

## Chapter 1 Objectives

The objectives of this chapter complement such spirituality of jihad as noted characteristically above, specifically as follows:

- Firstly, to interpret how Quran’s doctrine of Tawhid provides the basis for worshipping Allah seeking His proximity.
- Secondly, to present a model of spiritual jihad, based on different metaphysical components of the soul (*ruh*).
- Thirdly, to explain how the model of spiritual jihad is operated by a triad of interrelated processes, short-formed as IPA methods for intention (*niyyah*), purification (*tawba astagfirullah*) and attention (devotional worship/*ibadah* of Allah).

- Fourth, to describe research methods of this study for confirming all assumptions related to spiritual jihad.

In addition to consulting existing modern literature on the topic, interpretations of a substantial number of verses of the Quran provide the main methods of testing all assumptions related to spiritual jihad.

## **Doctrine of Tawhid as the Basis of Spiritual Jihad**

The doctrine of Tawhid based on the epistemology of the Quran (i.e., the source and methods of knowledge of the Quran) is explained at great length in Chapter 2. Here, it is introduced briefly to explain the theoretical context of spiritual jihad. The term tawhid literally means “the unity and uniqueness of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe” (The Oxford Dictionary of Islam). The very first tenet (pillar) of Islam, called *Shahada*, meaning the Declaration of Faith, emphasizes this absolute monotheism by declaring formally that there is no god but Allah alone and that is His last Messenger. As an extension of this concept, the doctrine of tawhid also requires a Muslim to believe in Allah’s unseen angels, His revelations (Quran and previous other scriptures), previous prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)<sup>6</sup> as His last Messenger, Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, Hell and Heaven, and Allah’s creations, including the creation of the universe, the earth and all forms of life on earth.

The second component of the tawhid deals with the worship of Allah, which is mentioned in many verses throughout the Quran. According to the doctrine of Tawhid, Allah created humans and *Jinns* (another unseen creation made of fire) for the exclusive purpose of worshipping Him (Mawdudi 2015)<sup>7</sup>. This concept of worshipping Allah alone is emphasized, for example, in *Surah*<sup>8</sup> *Az-Zumar* (Chapter 39. The Groups) in verse 39:66: *Balil laahha*

*fa'bud wa kum minash shaaakireen* (“No! Worship God alone and be one of those who are grateful to Him” (translation by Haleem 2020). The rewards of worshipping Allah and retributions for not worshipping Him have been emphasized, among others, in *Surah Ash-Shura* (Chapter 42. The Consultation) in verse 42:7: “*and warn of the Day of Gathering — about which there is no doubt — when a group will be in Paradise and another in the Blaze [Hell]*” (translation by Khattab 2020).

The Arabic word for worship is *i'badah* (or, simply *ibadah*). This word appears repeatedly throughout the Quran, referring to all forms of worship of Allah. Perhaps, the most common forms of Islamic worship include each of the rituals of five tenets of Islam:

- *Shahada* (Declaration of Faith)
- *Salah* (daily prayers)
- *Zakah* (annual wealth tax)
- *Sawm* (fasting in the month of Ramadan), and
- *Hajj* (pilgrimage to the *Kaba*).

In addition to the obligatory (*Fard*) and supplemental (*Sunnah*) rituals of tenets of Islam, other voluntary rituals include optional (*nawfil*) prayers, recitation of the Quran, supplications (making *dua*) to Allah, chanting Allah’s names and attributes (*dhikr*) and others. Based on the doctrine of Tawhid, Allah has created humans as his servants (slaves) and envoys on the earth to devote their entire life in the worship of Allah. Not only Allah wishes His servants to worship Him, but also to do so with earnestness, sincerity, and devotion. The following are examples of many such verses throughout the Quran which emphasize the importance of worshipping Allah with sincere devotion to Him.

- 40:14, 98:5: “*So, call upon Allah with sincere devotion to Him*” (translation by Khattab 2020).

- 19:65: *“He is the Lord of the heavens and earth and everything in between, so worship Him: be steadfast in worshipping Him”* (translation by Haleem 2020).
- 71:3: *“that you should worship God [alone] and be conscious of Him. ‘Now do pay heed unto Me’”* (translation by Asad 2020).
- 21:19: *“Everyone in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and those that are with Him are never too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary”* (translation by Haleem 2020).

The preceding concept of worshipping Allah with sincere devotion to Him is the specific niche of spiritual jihad. As the definition of the term spiritual jihad (above) implies, it deals with the inner struggle of a worshipper — a struggle of the heart and soul — seeking proximity to Allah and His pleasure. Why and how does Allah wish His servants to be close to Him? As a part of His grand design, Allah wishes His servants to please Him, to love Him and to be close to Him through their unconditional devotion to Him. In particular, Allah wishes His believers to love Him and in response to reciprocate His love for them as it is indicated in *Surah Al-Imran* (Chapter 3. The Family of Imran) in verse 3:31: *“Say, O Prophet, ‘If you sincerely love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. For Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful’”* (translation by Khattab 2020). Similarly, Allah’s reciprocal love for believers is expressed so cogently in *Surah Al-Ma’idah* (Chapter 5. The Table Spread) in verse 5:54: *“O believers! Whoever among you abandons their faith, Allah will replace them with others who love Him and are loved by Him”* (translation by Khattab 2020). In return for their worship (*ibadah*) of Allah and love for Him, Allah has promised paradise and eternal bliss following resurrection on the Day of Judgment (42:7). This provides a basis (purpose) of spiritual jihad since the cornerstone of “spirituality in Islam is proximity to the One and Only God, the Lord who is our Creator, Sustainer and Dispenser of our destinies” (Mawdudi 2015, section

2). This proximity can be achieved only through worship of Allah. Consistent with the central assumption of this study, as stated above, I posit that a believer (Muslim) could practice spiritual jihad — inner struggle of the heart and soul — during performance of each of the obligatory and optional/voluntary rituals of Islam seeking proximity to Allah and His pleasure.

One of the purposes of this study is to draw attention to a recurring problem with the observance of some of the rituals of Islamic worship, which may risk the appearance of external compartments only without a focus on spirituality, that is, without adequate attention to Allah. On the other extreme, there is a lingering western question about Islamic worship as “empty rites and ceremonies” (Tisdall 1910, cited by Powers 2004, p. 426). By emphasizing spirituality of each of the rituals of Islam (analyzed in Chapters 4-7), this study is a response to this erroneous assumption about Islamic worship. Countering such erroneous assumption, the Prophet (PBUH) stressed the importance of spirituality by focusing on the intention of worship. According to an authentic hadith, “The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get reward according to what he has intended” (Sahih Bukhari Book 1, Hadith #1). In short, in Islamic worship, including all five tenets of Islam, both rituals of worship and their spirituality, are equally important. A model of spiritual jihad is presented below to explain how a worshipper struggles to seek proximity to Allah.

## **A Model of Spiritual Jihad**

91:7: *Wa nafsinnw wa maaa sawwhaa*

“And by the soul and by Him Who perfectly proportioned it”  
(translation by Maududi 2020)”

This verse in *Surah Ash-Shams* (Chapter 91: The Sun) reflects on how Allah has perfected human soul by proportioning it. The term *nafs* has a wide range of meaning in the Quran. Here, it refers to the “human self or personality as a whole, that is, a *being*

composed of a physical body and that inexplicable life-essence loosely described as soul” (91:7 tafsir #4 by Asad 2020). Yusuf Ali has further interpreted that “Allah breathes into the human soul, an understanding of what is sin, impiety, wrongdoing and what is piety and right conduct ...” (Ali 2006, p. 452, tafsir #6152). In Islamic spirituality, the soul is in a constant battle between good and evil. Based on this conflict between two opposing forces, spiritual jihad may be conceptualized as a theoretical model — first proposed by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Muslim philosopher Al-Ghazali — consisting of four essential components of the human soul: (a) the *nafs* or lower self, (b) the *qalb* or heart, (c) the *aqal* or intellect, and (d) the *ruh* or spirit. (Rothman and Coyle 2018; Abu-Raiya 2012)

Spiritual jihad is an essential struggle for purifying one’s soul as every human being faces forces of evil and good on the battleground of his/her soul. Each of the four components of the soul engages in this battle. The *nafs* is the lower self, similar to ego; it is the part of the soul that inclines towards the *duniya* (this world) through desires, distracting a person from Allah, and exposing him/her to the influence of the *Shaitan* (evil). (Rothman and Coyle 2018). The *qalb* (the heart) is the place where consciousness resides. It is the spiritual center of the soul that has the ability to turn either toward the *duniya* or the *Shaitan* via the *nafs* or toward Allah via the higher aspects of the soul. (Rothman and Coyle 2018) Being the spiritual center of the soul, the *qalb* is also the spiritual center of prayer (Ashraf 1987). In other words, the prayer of the heart is the real prayer. Therefore, if a person neglects this aspect of the prayer, his/her formal prayer becomes only an external show. The Prophet (PBUH) commented on this shortcoming: “Prayer without the presence of the Lord in the heart is not prayer at all” (hadith cited by Ashraf 1987, p. 236). *Aqal* or *aql* (intellect) is the cognitive aspect of the *qalb*. The *ruh* is the part of the soul where God’s imprint resides in purity, i.e., in a state of *fitrah* (using a Quranic expression). In spiritual jihad the *qalb*, *aqal* and *nafs* should be aligned in “the right path by exerting effort in the struggle of the soul (*ruh*)” (Rothman and Coyle 2018, p. 1740).

Divine messages on each of these components, evident in large numbers of verses throughout the Quran, provide a comprehensive epistemology of Islamic conception of soul. For example, the Holy Quran has described three stages of development of the *nafs* in the following verses (among many other verses):

- 12:53: ... *nafsa la ammaaratum bissouri*: The soul is ever inclined to the evil
- 75:2: ... *nafsil lawwaamah*: Self-reproaching soul
- 89:28: ... *nafsul mutma'innah*: Tranquil soul or soul at rest

These verses are interrelated as they imply stages of human soul from its inclination to evil to its self-reproaching spirit, eventually leading to a tranquil soul. The theoretical context of these three stages of soul have been interpreted by Yusuf Ali (2006) as follows: In 12:53, the emphasis is on the *Ammarah* “which is prone to evil, and if not checked and controlled, will lead to perdition” (i.e., eternal death or damnation). In 75:2, “*Lawwamah* feels conscious of evil, and resists it, asks for Allah’s grace and pardon after repentance and tries to amend; it hopes to reach salvation.” In 89:28, *Mutma'innah* refers to “the highest stage of all, when it achieves full rest and satisfaction” (Ali 2006, p. 427, tafsir #5810). There are many verses throughout the Quran that have implications for spiritual jihad. However, the preceding three verses (corresponding to three stages of soul), perhaps, lays down, succinctly, the stages of inner struggle of a soul (spiritual jihad) for trying to be closer to Allah.

## **Methods of Spiritual Jihad**

### **Methods**

Spiritual jihad is operated by a triad of three interrelated processes. For the convenience of repeated references to these processes, I have short-formed them as IPA methods for:



- **I:** Intention (*niyyah*) or Intentions (*niyat*) to perform a given form of worship of Allah, e.g., *Salah*, *Zakah*, *Sawm* and others.
- **P:** Purification (*tawba* — *astagfirullah*) of the heart and soul by expressing, simultaneously, *tawba*, i.e., repentance for past sins and *astagfirullah*, i.e., seeking Allah’s forgiveness.
- **A:** Attention for performing a devotional worship (*ibadah*) of Allah, i.e., giving utmost attention to Him during all worship.

### **Intention (*niyyah*) of the Heart**

The *niyyah* for performing a given ritual, such as fasting in the month of Ramadan or performing a daily prayer, is an obligatory (*fard*) requirement for performing each of the tenets of Islam. The *niyyah* may be uttered silently or made in one’s mind. It is considered as the most powerful spiritual component of the Islamic faith because *niyyah* is a function of both the heart (*qalb*) and the mind (*aqal*), which, in turn, are among the properties of the *ruh* (soul) (as explained above). Some of the western scholars of Islamic theology are critical of formalizing *niyyah* as a spiritual component of formal rituals (see Powers 2004, for a critique). Such criticisms fail to take into account that *niyyah* has both a formal requirement for a given ritual of Islam as well as an informal and personal component beyond its five tenets. The central goal of all *niyat* is the inner struggle for trying to be closer to Allah. It does not matter whether a *niyyah* is for a formal ritual or for an informal act for the cause of Allah; what matters is what is in one’s heart. This is stated clearly in the following verses.

33:5: “... *You will incur no sins if you err in this respect: [what really matters is] but what your hearts intend — for God is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace!*” (translation by Asad 2020).

2:225: *Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts, and He is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing*” (translation by Ali 2006, p. 28).

## **Purification of the Heart by Expressing Repentance to Allah**

In the P component of IPA Methods, a powerful tool for purifying one’s heart is seeking Allah’s forgiveness for past sins. Implementation of the model of spiritual jihad begins with a conscious effort in the struggle against the *nafs al ammarah*, the lower base, which tends to pull the heart (qalb) toward the evils of this world (duniya). In this struggle the very first requirement is *nafs al lawwammah*, that is to feel conscious about the evil and then to ask for Allah’s forgiveness in hopes of reaching salvation. There are two interrelated exercises in this struggle, namely expressing repentance (*tawba*) to Allah for past sins and seeking His forgiveness (*astagfirullah*) for them. The Arabic word, *tawba* (or *tawbah*), commonly translated as “repentance,” means “a retreat,” “a return,” or “to regret” (Yusoff *et al.* 2018; Khalil 2009 and 2006). Here, the term, return, means either “a return to God from sin” or simply “a 180° turning away from sin.” The concept of *tawba* thus entails “a fundamental reorientation, a change in direction, towards a moral, ethical, or even ontological higher ground” (Khalil 2009, p. 17). The importance of repentance (*tawba*) in Islam is evident from the title of a chapter of the Holy Quran using this keyword (i.e., *Surah At-Tawba*: Chapter 9. Repentance). The relevance of seeking Allah’s forgiveness concurrent with the expression of *tawba* (i.e., acknowledgement of one’s sin or guilt) is evident from selected verses that use the complementary word *astagfirullah*, which stands for seeking Allah’s forgiveness. Purification of the heart as one of the requirements of spiritual jihad is stated in verse 26:89: *Illaa man atallaha biqalbin saleem* (“Only

those who come before Allah with a pure heart will be saved.”) (translation by Khattab 2020)

To interpret how the concept of *tawba* is complemented by *astagfirullah*, let us review what does the Quran say about them? Table 1.1 is a sample of 64 verses containing either or both of these keywords (retrieved through several runs of the *QuranSmartSearch* program of Islamicity.org).

Perhaps, the central concept in all of the verses listed in Table 1.1 is that Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, i.e. He is willing to accept sincere repentance. This concept may be implied in many of the verses, but it is stated directly in nearly one-quarter of the 64 verses (15 verses = 23% of total, row1). Many of these verses proclaiming that Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance ends with such expressions as (in 2:37 and 2:54): *Innaoo Huwat Tawwaabur Raheem* (“He alone is the accepter of repentance, Most Merciful”). In contrast, verse 4:26 finishes with a significantly different composition than the rest of the verses: *wa yatooba a’laikum; wallaahu A’leemun Hakim* (“He wishes to turn towards you in mercy — He is all knowing, all wise”) (translation by Haleem 2020). Verse 5:39 combines repentance with forgiveness (as in many other verses): *fa innallaaha yatoobu a’laihi; innallaaha Ghafoorur Raheem* (“God will accept his repentance. God is Forgiving and Merciful” (translation by Itani 2020). Whereas most of the verses end with the expression of repentance and forgiveness, both 40:3 and 42:25 express repentance beginning with an entirely different composition such as 40:3: *Ghaafiridh dhambi wa qaabilitawabillah ...* (“the Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance”). Overall, all of the 15 verses in row 1 incorporate some of the expressions of Allah as the accepter of repentance and dispenser of forgiveness.

By far, the largest number of verses (25 out of 64, i.e., 39%, row 2) deal with the general concept of repentance. Divine discourse admires believers who would repent readily after committing a sin (9:112, 19:60, 25:70, 25:71, 28:67). Allah’s magnanimity is evident in many verses that have incorporated the

expression that He is willing to accept repentance from a sinner as long as the latter would express his/her sincere repentance (for example, 3:89, 4:17, 5:34, 5:39, 5:71, 6:54, 7:153, 7:155). Despite this generosity, if a sinner would follow his/her desires (without repentance), it would result in a total deviation from the path of Allah (4:27). An alternative discourse is used in verse 7:23 (without using the specific word *tawba*) for expressing sincere repentance for wrongdoings and asking for Allah’s forgiveness (using a derivative of *astagfirullah*): *Qaalaa Rabbanaa dhalamna anfusanaa wa illam taghfir lanaa wa tarhamnaa lanakoonanna minal khaasireen* (They replied, “Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be losers”) (translation by Khattab 2020). Eternal rewards for expressing repentance to Allah and seeking His forgiveness have been described in verse 66:8: “*O believers! Turn to Allah in sincere repentance, so your Lord may absolve you of your sins and admit you into Gardens (Paradise), under which rivers flow ...*” (translation by Khattab 2020).

All of the verses listed in row 3 incorporate expressions seeking Allah’s forgiveness using derivatives of the Arabic word, *astagfirullah*. Verse 2:199 is an example of a shorter sentence, repeating twice, Allah’s attribute of forgiveness: *Summa afeedoo min haisu afaadan naasu wastagh firullah; innallaha Ghafoor ur-Raheem* (“And seek Allah’s forgiveness. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (translation by Khattab 2020). A similar composition is used in another sharp and short verse (5:74), asking a rhetorical question to the Prophet (PBUH) about the sinners: *Afalaa yatooboona ilallahi wa yastaghfiroonah; wallaahu Ghafoorur Raheem* (“Will they not turn to Allah in repentance and seek His forgiveness? And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”) (translation by Khattab 2020). Allah’s willingness to forgive the sinners is evident in verse 4:64: “*If only those hypocrites came to you ‘O Prophet’ — after wronging themselves — seeking Allah’s forgiveness and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would have certainly found Allah ever Accepting Repentance, Most*

*Merciful*” (translation by Khattab 2020). Conversely, there is a stern warning from Allah for the stubborn non-believers in 9:80: *Istaghfir lahum aw laa tastaghfir lahum in tastaghfir lahum sab'eena marratan falany yaghfirallaahu lahum; dhaalika bi annahum kafaroo billaahi wa Rasoolih; wallahu laa yahdil qawmal faasiqeen* (“It does not matter whether you ‘O Prophet’ pray for them to be forgiven or not. Even if you pray for their forgiveness seventy times, Allah will never forgive them. That is because they have lost faith in Allah and His Messenger. Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (translation by Khattab 2020). In this verse, the rhetorical expression ‘seventy times’ stands for many, just as ‘seven’ is synonymous for several (as 24/7) (Asad 2020, tafsir #110). Similarly, verse 63:6 insists that Allah will not forgive stubborn non-believers.

To emphasize Allah’s magnanimity and His willingness to accept repentance, at least 28% of the verses (row 4) end with the expression that “Allah is much forgiving!” Although their Arabic compositions might vary slightly from one verse to another, their meanings are almost identical:

- 5:34: *fa'lamooo annal laaha GhafoorurRaheem* (“Then know that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”) (translation by Khattab 2020).
- 9:27: *wallahu GhafoorurRaheem* (“And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”) (translation by Khattab 2020)].
- 25:70 and 33:73: *wa kaanallaahu GhafoorurRaheem* (“And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”) (translation by Khattab 2020).

Verses in the last row were revealed in the context of specific sins. For example, verse 2:37 refers to redemption from sins committed by Adam, Allah’s first creation of human being: *Fatalaqqaaa Adamu mir Rabbihee Kalimaatin fataaba a'laihi;*

*innahoo Huwat Tawwaabur Raheem* (“Thereupon Adam received words [of guidance] from his Sustainer, and He accepted his repentance: for verily, He alone is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Dispenser of Grace”) (translation by Asad 2020). This verse was a response from Allah to a prayer by Adam and Eve: 7:23: *Qaalaa Rabbanaa dhalamnaaa anfusanaa wa illum taghfir lanaa wa tarhamnaa lanakoonanna minal khaasireen* (“They replied, Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be losers”) (translation by Khattab 2020). Similarly, stories of Prophet Moses (Musa, RA<sup>6</sup>) expressing repentance following his unwarranted request to Allah to see Him (7:143) is awe-inspiring:

*“When Moses came at the appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he asked, ‘My Lord! Reveal yourself to me so I may see You.’ Allah answered, ‘You cannot see Me! But look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, only then will you see Me.’ When his Lord appeared at the mountain, He levelled it to dust and Moses collapsed unconscious. When he recovered, he cried, ‘Glory be to You! I turn to you in repentance and I am the first of the believers.’”* (translation of 7:143 by Khattab 2020).

Not only Allah is willing to accept sincere repentance, the Prophet (PBUH) recommended convenient methods of expressing repentance to Allah and seeking His forgiveness. Intention to make tawba is very important. Therefore, the following steps might be undertaken before proceeding with tawba: (a) Recognize the sin, and regret it sincerely, (b) Do not persist the sin (3:135), i.e., stop the sin, and (c) Make a sincere intention not to go back to the sin (Basiony 2017). According to a hadith narrated by Abu Dawood, the Prophet (PBUH) recommended two *rakahs* (units) of optional prayer for expressing tawba and asking for Allah’s forgiveness. Timing of tawba is also very important. According to another hadith narrated by Trimidhi, the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Allah

accepts a slave's repentance as long as the latter is not on his death bed" (cited by Basiony 2017).

Besides optional prayer, the Prophet (PBUH) used to beg Allah's forgiveness three times following each prayer by saying "Astagfirullah" (Hadith by Muslim, Book 19, Hadith #8). According to another hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "I seek Allah's pardon and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day" (Hadith by Al-Bukhari, Book #75, Hadith #319). Although there is no authentic hadith to extend this practice, some Muslims seek Allah's forgiveness throughout the day by uttering "Tawba Astagfirullah" seventy times following each fard (compulsory/obligatory) prayer. This amounts to a total of 350 times a day ( $70 \times 5 = 350$ ). This seems to be a practice of genuine spiritual jihad as long as Allah has the worshipper's undivided attention.

### **Attention to Allah: Focus during Devotional Worship (Ibadah)**

The "A" component of IPA Methods triad, Attention (Ibadah) completes the requirements of Allah to reward the petitioning sinner forgiveness. The ultimate goal of spiritual jihad is to maximize attention to Allah during all forms of obligatory and voluntary worship. In particular, focus is a major issue during performance of daily prayers (salah) because often many irrelevant thoughts may crowd a worshipper's mind. The basic requirement for attention during salah is to get rid of all of these irrelevant worldly thoughts. That is not an easy task, but some of the methods of maximizing focus on Allah — a challenge for practicing Muslims — have been elaborated in Chapters 4-7. The importance of attention (focus) to Allah during prayer is emphasized in many verses throughout the Quran. The essence of devotion to Allah during salah is stated in *Surah Al-Baqara* (Chapter 2) in verse 2:238: *Hafidhoo a'alas salawaati was Salaatil Wusta wa qoomoo lillahi qaaniteen* ("Be ever mindful of prayers, and of praying in the

most excellent way; and stand before God in devout obedience” (translation by Asad 2020).

## **Research Methods**

### **Translations and Exegesis of Verses of the Quran**

Verses of the Holy Quran provide the main backup of the central theme of this study dealing with spirituality in Islam. I use three types of interpretations of selected verses: (a) literal English translation, (b) exegeses (*tafsir*) of verses, i.e., in-depth contextual interpretations of some of the verses, and (c) discourse analysis of selected verses and chapters (*surahs*).

It is a common practice in scholarly literature to cite verses of the Quran only in numerical short form, such as 2:284, which refers to the second chapter (*Surah 2*) and verse #284. In addition to following this style, in some cases I have expanded the citation with the English transliteration of verses, which is then followed by their English translation. For the latter, I have consulted large numbers of translations which are readily available on the Internet. According to one source, there are at least fifty English translations and interpretations of the Quran (Kidawi 2017, p. 232). Nearly twenty such English translations are available in two websites: *islamicity.org* and *quran411.com*. Among all translations, I have cited Mustafa Khattab’s (2020) work more frequently because of his lucid modern English. In addition, I have also used translations by the following authors: Yusuf Ali (2006), Muhammad Asad (2020), Muhammad Abdel Haleem (2020), Talal Itani (2020), and Muhammad Mermaduke Pickthall (1977). In most cases, I have reproduced the original English translation by one of these authors without any change.

### **In-depth Interpretation of Verses**

In-depth interpretations involved primarily contextual analyses. Often the contexts were provided by a specific historical event, whereas in some cases references to the previous verse or



several verses provided fuller context of a given verse. In discourse analysis, often, I have compared similar verses from other chapters (surahs) of the Quran. For in-depth interpretation (tafsir) of relevant verses, I have drawn heavily from the work of the following translators who are also among some of the leading Quranic scholars.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali's (2006) translation of the Quran (*The Meaning of the Noble Qur'an*) stands out as a monumental work. His commentary on the Quran includes 6,311 footnotes (*tafsirs*), 300 pieces of running commentary "in rhythmic prose, written in the style of blank verse", and fourteen appendices (Iqbal 2000, p. 108). However, his English translations of the verses are a mixed bag: while most of the translations are easy to follow, he, sometimes uses old-fashioned Biblical English (though this is limited). Because of his authentic and exhaustive interpretations, I cite Ali's work more frequently than the remaining translations.

Abul Ala Maududi's (2020) translation of the Quran (*Tafhim-ul-Quran — Towards Understanding of the Quran*) was first published in Urdu in 1972. Its web-based English edition was published in 2006. Like Ali's (2006) work, Maududi's translations and exhaustive *tafsirs* also stand out as one of the leading translations of the Quran. However, I cite his work less frequently because he employs an orthodox interpretation of the scriptures, contrary to my preference for modern approaches by others.

Muhammad Mermaduke Pickthall's (1977) *The Glorious Qur'an: Text and Explanatory Translations* (first published in 1930) was, perhaps, one of the first high-profile English translations of the Quran in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pickthall's work is well-known for its authenticity, but paradoxically, because of his close attention to Quran's classical Arabic text, he produced a translation using archaic classical Bible-style English which is often difficult to comprehend. In particular, his usage of classical pronouns and verbs, such as thou, thy, thine and hast, has drawn some criticisms from recent reviewers (Kidwai 2017, p. 245). Also, unlike Ali's and Maududi's exhaustive *tafsirs*, Pickthall used

footnotes sparingly. However, Pickthall's preamble to each of the 114 chapters of the Quran, often with exhaustive notes/essays on context of revelation of a given surah (and always with dates of revelation), have been most helpful in my own understanding of his work.

Muhammad Asad's English translation of the Quran (*The Message of the Quran*), first published in 1980, also stands out as one of the leading translations of the Quran in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both his writing style and the quality of extensive tafsirs rival that of Yusuf Ali's. As a recognition of the quality of his work, the *QuranSmartSearch* program of the Islamicity.org website uses Asad's work as the default translation of each of the verses of the Quran.

Ahmad Zaki Hammad's (2007) monumental two volumes on *The Gracious Quran: A Modern-Phrased Interpretation* in English provide another source of exhaustive and authoritative tafsirs, general notes and helpful background essays that rival Ali's and Maududi's works. Besides substantive quality of his work, his English is also lucid and modern.

## **Discourse Analysis of Verses of the Quran**

Discourse analysis is "a method of analyzing the structure of texts or utterances longer than one sentence; taking into account both their linguistic content and their sociolinguistic context" (Barber 1998, p. 399). More specifically, it deals with the analysis of a body of statements — both written and spoken — concerning a specific subject matter, especially "as typified by recurring terms and concepts" (Barber 1998, p. 399). Thus, it is a type of content analysis in which the frequency count of certain key words and concepts is one of its basic methodologies. In this study no commercial software for content analysis was used. Instead, I use an Excel spreadsheet for computing frequencies of selected keywords and concepts in a verse or in several verses in a surah (chapter). The frequency data presented in several summary tables

throughout this book have been the basis of most of my original interpretations.

## Literature Review

Modern literature on Islam and Jihad is extensive. The history of the origin of Islam was reviewed at great length by Donner (2010), Afsaruddin (2008) and Eaton (1985). Some of the authoritative books and journal articles on modern Islam were authored by John L. Esposito (for example, Esposito 2011; 2010; Esposito and Voll 2001; Esposito and Picatory 1991). Among large numbers of books and journal articles, Esposito's books on *Islam: The Straight Path* (2011) and *The Future of Islam* (2010) are two of his most influential scholarly contributions on modern Islam. Research on reform and modernity in Islam was championed by Fazlur Rahman (1982) and Tariq Ramadan (1999). The philosophical, cultural and, political discourse by such Muslim reformers have been reviewed at some length by Ahmed (2013). In Chapter 8 (Conclusion), I reviewed implications of modernity in Islam for practicing spiritual jihad by modern/western Muslims, citing seminal contributions of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) and subsequent research contributions by Rahman (1982) and Ramadan (1999)<sup>9</sup>.

Among substantive scholarships on tenets of Islam, I consulted and cited a classical document on *Islamic Sacred Law* (including large numbers of *ahadith*<sup>10</sup>) — a massive volume exceeding 1200 pages — by Al-Misry and Keller (1994). Another masterpiece on the concept of faith (*Iman*) in Islam is an Amman-based English language monograph (Ali 2012). Two other in-depth research monographs on the opening chapter of the Quran, i.e., *Surah Al-Fatiha*, have been produced by Hammad (not dated) and Neifeily (2005). I also consulted two foreign language books on Islam: (a) a book/research monograph on the *Emergence of Islam* (translated from Urdu into English) by Hamidullah (1993), and (b) *Lessons on Salah* (in Bengali) by Aziz (1999). A brief but illustrated guide to Islam by Ibrahim (1997) summarizes central themes of the Islamic

faith in a convenient handbook. A conference proceeding on the *Tawhidi Epistemology* (knowledge of Islamic Monotheism) provides in-depth perspectives on management of Islamic charity, i.e., *Zakah* (Ismail *et al.* 2010).

In addition to the preceding books and monographs, I also consulted several Internet blogs on the tenets of Islam. Often their authors and dates of publication are not stated clearly. These are normally considered as grey literature, but they provide useful sources of information on relevant topics. I cite them throughout this book wherever they are relevant. The following are examples of some of these blogs:

- Five pillars of Islam (Mufti 2018): Provides a broad outline of these tenets.
- Concept and purposes of Zakat (Alam 2017): Explains rationale for this magnanimous institution.
- Types of Hajj and Umrah (Davids 2017): Differentiates the rituals of two related practices.
- Justification for following the Sunnah (Al-Munajjid 1998): Provides insights into this topic by a leading Islamic scholar.

Overall, most of the literature on five tenets of Islam provides objective perspectives on peaceful Islam. In contrast, some of the publications on Jihad focus on controversial political topics. Some of them trace correctly, the evolution of Jihad from the Prophet's (PBUH) armed struggles against Arab pagans in self-defence to more recent violent political jihad (Bassioni 2007). Similarly, some of them explain that there is a vast difference between religious (spiritual) Islam and political Islam, often called Islamism (Demant 2006), while others focus on the contradiction between modernity and sectarian violence within Islam (Sedgwick 2007). On the other extreme, there are several significantly more polemic publications that question the very central thesis of Islam as a religion of peace

(Beck 2015, for example). The literature on spiritual jihad is much more limited. An edited volume by Nasr (1987) is an exception. A recent edition by Mawdudi (2015) provides significant insights into spirituality in Islam. Another book chapter by Jesser and Shahid (2009) provides some insights into the inner struggle of Muslims between spiritual Islam and political Islam.

## **Concluding Comments**

The literature on Islam and Jihad is extensive but modern research on spiritual jihad is much more limited, perhaps, because it is essentially a classical theological topic. The present study is a contribution to the modern literature on spiritual jihad. By focusing on spirituality, I tried to avoid political content as much as possible. That is not an easy task because focusing on spiritual jihad draws an inevitable comparison with political jihad. I reviewed a limited amount of literature on post-Prophet political jihad (in Chapter 3) that could be traced back to the Muslim armed expansions in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Subsequent armed jihad with the European Crusaders left a legacy of Islamic jihad not only for repelling the Crusaders but also for expanding Muslim territories in Europe. Instead of focusing on this revisionist history, the main message in this study for modern Muslims is that personal spiritual jihad in the cause of Allah is a greater jihad than the violent jihad of the terrorists. One of the outcomes of spiritual jihad is that, in addition to the potential of being closer to Allah, it is likely to produce a Muslim community with a focus on the peaceful aspect of Islam. Instead of responding to the provocation of Islamophobia, it should allow Muslims to promote Islam's principle of equality of human race, equal justice for all and a peaceful coexistence with others, irrespective of religious, social and cultural differences. These are also common socio-political principles of the western secular democracies.

## Endnotes

1. In this book, I use *italics* for an Arabic word for the first time. If the word is repeated too often, most of the time I use normal fonts for it.
2. I use the Islamic expression of *Allah* for God throughout most of this text. However, the word God is preferred for the title of the book for the general audience (i.e., both Muslims and non-Muslims). I have also retained the word God of all original English translations, such as God in Asad (2020), Haleem (2020), Itani (2020).
3. The word Quran is written in English in at least three different forms: Qur'an, Quran, and Koran. The term Koran seems to be inappropriate, because the Arabic letter *Qaf* is pronounced as Q (not K). I, therefore, adopted Quran as the preferred form for its simplicity without an apostrophe. It also approximates the Arabic pronunciation.
4. *A Classic Manual on Islamic Sacred Law*: This is one of the most comprehensive manuals (book) on Islamic legal interpretations and hadiths (*ahadith*) on each of the five tenets of Islam. This is a massive volume comprising of 1232 pages of fine prints in both English and Arabic (side by side in two separate columns; the right-hand side column in Arabic). The manual covers almost all of the details of rituals of Islam, which are further backed up by authentic hadiths. This classic document was first written in Arabic by Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri (died 1368 CE), one of the leading Muslim legal scholars of the Middle Ages. The original title of the manual is *Umdat al-salik wa 'uddat al-nasik* (The Reliance of the Traveller and Tools of the Worshipper). It has been edited and translated into English by Nuh Ha Mim Keller and published in 1994 (see al-Misri and Keller 1994).
5. Regarding the authenticity of this hadith, some of the orthodox scholars consider it to be weak because of “its questionable chain of transmission to the Prophet (PBUH)” (Bassioni 2007, p. 124, footnote #17).
6. In this book, the short-form PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him) is used each time following the name of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as an honorific expression. Another similar short-form is SAWS, an abbreviation of the Arabic expression Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam meaning “May the blessings and Peace of

Allah be upon him.” Other prophets, caliphs (Arabic khalifas, successors), and Muslim dignitaries are respectfully acknowledged as well with "RA" or its meaning. RA is a short-form for the Arabic Radi Allahu Anhu, meaning “May Allah be pleased with him/her.” It is an honorific title which is frequently used for the caliphs and other Muslim dignitaries. Khalifa (caliph) is a title designated to a successor of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as leader/ruler of a Muslim country and defender of the faith; this title was first given to Abu-Bakr (RA), who succeeded Muhammad (PBUH) in the role of leader of the Muslims after the prophet's death first used in the late 14th century.

7. Mawdudi (2015) is a spelling variation of the same name Maududi (2020).
8. Throughout this text I use the word “Surah” as an indefinite noun to refer to a chapter in the Quran. According to the rules of Arabic grammar, a surah becomes a definite noun by adding “al” meaning “the” (Wightwick and Gaafar 2005, p. 10), such as *Surah Al-Hajj*. However, the addition of “al” may also change the ending of the original noun by an assimilation process into *Surat Al-Hajj* (as in Hammad 2007, p. 115). Similarly, I use each of the words “Salah” and “Zakah” as a free-standing indefinite noun. Their definite noun forms are as follows: *Salat Al-Fajr* (Dawn prayer) and *Zakat Al-Fitr* (zakah during Eid festival).
9. See Chapter 8, endnotes #5, #6, and #7 for contributions to modernity in Islam by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan.
10. *Ahadith* is the plural of *Hadith*, i.e., the Prophet’s sayings. Throughout this book, I use normal fonts for “hadith” and its plural as “hadiths” (instead of ahadith).

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**Table 1.1: Discourse Analysis of Selected Verses of the Quran dealing with Repentance (*Tawba*) and Allah’s Forgiveness (*Astagfirullah*)**

Recurrent themes	Number of verses (n = 64) (% of total)*	List of verses (Chapter: Verse)
Allah is the acceptor of repentance	15 (23%)	2:37, 2:54, 2:128, 2:160, 4:16, 4:26, 4:64, 5:39, 9:104, 9:118, 24:10, 40:3, 42:25, 49:12, 110:3
Express repentance to Allah	25 (39%)	3:89, 4:17, 4:27; 5:34, 5:74, 5:39, 5:71, 6:54, 7:23, 7:153, 7:155, 9:112, 11:3, 11:52, 11:61, 11:90, 16:119, 19:60, 20:82, 24:5, 25:70, 25:71, 28:67, 40:7, 66:8
Seek Allah’s forgiveness	17 (27%)	2:199, 3:159, 4:64, 4:110, 5:74, 7:23, 9:80, 11:3, 11:52, 11:61, 11:90, 24:62, 40:7, 60:12, 63:6, 73:20, 110:3
Allah is much forgiving	18 (28%)	2:199, 3:89, 4:106, 4:110, 5:34, 5:39, 6:54, 7:153, 9:27, 9:102, 24:62, 25:70, 33:24, 33:73, 39:53, 40:3, 60:12, 73:20
Specific contexts of repentance	14 (22%)	2:37, 2:54, 2:222, 3:90, 4:18, 7:143, 9:118, 9:126, 20:122, 46:15, 49:12, 66:4, 66:5, 85:10

\*Total number of verses add to more than 64 and the percentages exceed 100 because of the overlap of concepts among verses.

**Source:** Original table prepared by the author. Verses were retrieved by using the keywords *tawba* and *astagfirullah* and their English equivalents (i.e., repentance and seeking Allah’s forgiveness) in several iterations of the *QuranSmartSearch* program of Islamiccity.org.