

Session 14

Jihad and the Middle East Conflicts

Jihad can be considered as the ultimate application of Dawā.

- **Jihad is sometimes claimed as "spiritual"** - an act of piety in opposing the evil tendency of the heart. It is also a **call to Muslims to return to the true faith and practice of Islam**. This would include a full and committed belief and practice of **Sharia**. Problematically, sects differ in definition of orthodoxy and persecute and even kill one another as a consequence. This has been a feature of Islam for centuries past and continues today - despite claims that Islam is a religion of peace.
- **From the beginning the main thrust of Jihad has been violent conquest and suppression of unbelief.** **The modern expression of jihad has many roots including:** rage and resentment and shame at western domination of Muslim culture and countries, autocratic and corrupt rulers in Muslim lands, often linked to the West or to Russia, who did not improve social conditions for the majority poor, high birth rate and a very large number of young men with no sense of identity or prospects.

The apparent failure of Islam in the face of a "superior" Western culture required an explanation and correction - but how? **Modernization** that attempted to use western secular models within a religious Muslim framework **failed** and **new movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB)** became more prominent in the 1950s and 60s, emphasizing **Arab nationalism, socialism, and Islamic roots**. **The initial thrust of Jihad was against the apostates of Islam** who compromised and cooperated with Crusaders, Communists, and Zionists.

The "disaster" of the **1967 war** energized the return to more radical Islam as the solution to all the problems. **The capture of Jerusalem changed a Palestinian issue into a global Islamic one**. The 1970s saw the uprising of violent and non-violent jihad to depose existing governments and apply sharia. The **Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978-79** was another watershed. Also in **1979 the Grand Mosque in Mecca** was attacked by Islamists from a number of countries in protest at the corrupt Saudi rulers and their western connections. Following Sadat's agreement with Israel in 1978 the Muslim Brotherhood called for Holy War. Sadat suppressed the opposition and was assassinated in 1981.

Islamic Jihad began a **mission to transform Egypt into an Islamic state as a stage in restoring the universal Caliphate**. They were strengthened by **jihadists returning from the Soviet/Afghan war**. "Dhimmis" were attacked as enemies and supporters of the infidel West. Mubarak suppressed them to a large extent but failed to improve living conditions or democracy, while the MB involved themselves in dealing with "felt needs" and became more popular although proscribed. Hamas is a child of the MB - see later.

Saudi Arabia practices an **extreme and literalistic form of Sunni Islam (Wahhabism)** and together with Qatar has funded Islamists in many countries, especially since the Iranian (Shiite) revolution, linked to insistence on their brand of Islam being accepted. They were **involved in the Afghan wars and related funding of Madrassas in Pakistan**.

The Afghan wars did much to **globalise Islamic jihad**, training a huge number of jihadists. Jihad thus spread to non-Muslim countries, taking the fight to the "Christian Crusader West" that had invaded Muslim lands in Afghanistan and Iraq and support the Zionists in occupation of the Holy Land.

This is **the world view that undergirds the current jihadist movements**. Anything and everything is justified in the "defence" of pure and universally prescribed Islam and explains the jihad against both "the wrong sort of Muslims" and the neo-colonialists and crusaders in the West.

Jihad is fuelled by religious passion, hatred, rage, and revenge and, in some cases, a thirst for martyrdom.

S3:156-158. O you who believe! Be not like those who disbelieve (hypocrites) and who say to their brethren when they travel through the earth or go out to fight: "If they had stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed," so that Allah may make it a cause of regret in their hearts. It is Allah that gives life and causes death. And Allah is All-Seer of what you do. And if you are killed or die in the Way of Allah, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all that they amass (of worldly wealth, etc.). And whether you die, or are killed, verily, unto Allah you shall be gathered.

S4:74 Let those (believers) who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter fight in the Cause of Allah, and whoso fights in the Cause of Allah, and is killed or gets victory, We shall bestow on him a great reward.

Religion is the key to understanding the conflicts sweeping the Middle East, N. Africa, Nigeria, etc. and also the violent outrages in Western countries.

This is the "elephant in the room" that Western secular politicians have been determined to ignore - denying a thousand years of history, blinded by their own secular worldviews, inhibited by "post-colonial guilt" and justification of violence as a response to victimization, fearful of criticism (Islamophobia) and violent reaction. They choose to discount the jihadists' own witness to their motivation and substitute socio-economic deprivation or even psychotic illness.

Jihad is mandated by Allah to the end of time, until the whole world is subject to the perfection of sharia and under the governance of the elect people - the Umma. It was actively pursued for more than a thousand years, interrupted by the rise of western power, wealth, and technology in the 18th - 20th centuries. Wealth from oil and the major upheavals of the two world wars and their aftermath have created a situation favourable to a correction on this "reversal of history".

Islam teaches the superiority of Muslims (Umma) over non-Muslims, S9:33. *It is He Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the Mushrikun (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) hate (it).*

The Dhimmi in Muslim-majority countries should show subservience, act in submission, and accept humiliation in exchange for permission to live (= tolerance). S9:29. *Fight against those who (1) believe not in Allah, (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.*

Western powers destroyed this essential division and imposed a completely non-Islamic doctrine of "human rights" and democracy. **Westerners cannot comprehend the "corrective action" that is being taken** and are baffled by the failure to adapt to the (obviously) superior system of democracy that they promote but which is utilized to seize control and reintroduce an Islamic form of government (of whatever flavour).

Following the "liberation of Iraq" hundreds of thousands of Christians fled for their lives and many were killed. The "Arab Spring" soon became the "Christian Winter" across N. Africa.

The pattern of centuries of history is repeated again and again, yet the West, trapped in its own worldview, clings doggedly to the illusion that this is an aberration of a peaceful religion. *"When the people of ISIS perpetrate slaughter, murder, rape, immolation, and all those barbaric crimes, they say that they are relying on the sharia. They say that this is based on a certain hadith, on a certain Quranic chapter, on a certain saying of Ibn Taymiyyah, or on some historical event. To tell the truth, everything that ISIS says is correct." Ibrahim Eissa (journalist) .*

S9:123 *"O you who believe! fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let them find in you hardness."*

S5:33 *"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement"*

The meteoric rise of the Islamic State took the world by surprise.

Its roots are in al-Qaeda which has its theological basis in Wahhabism. The sectarian conflicts in Syria and Iraq form the essential background, facilitated by the Western intervention in Iraq and the uprising in Syria and funded by Sunni regimes (Saudi Arabia and Qatar) on the one hand, and Shia (Iran) on the other. The opposition to President Assad (Shiite) was quickly taken over by Sunni militants (al-Qaeda). Iraq has been dominated by a Shiite government, supported by USA while trying to promote Sunni/Shiite unity; many Sunnis have been killed, resulting in fear and mistrust in the northern area where Sunnis are in the majority. They tend to regard IS as the lesser of two evils.

The Iraqi army is fairly ineffective, as a result of corruption and poor leadership, affecting morale and melted away in early battles with ISIS. Iraq opposes arming the Kurds with heavy weapons, fearful that they could subsequently be used against the government.

America is in a quandary; the original chief enemies were Syria and Iran (Shia) so it made sense to arm the Syrian (Sunni) opposition. Weapons supplied to them are being transferred to IS which is now a bigger problem. America is now backtracking in relation to sanctions against Iran in relation to nuclear weapons, seeking support against IS and, in the process, weakening its traditional support for Israel. Saudi Arabia and Qatar were also supporting the Sunni rebellion in Syria but are now concerned about IS which regards the House of Saud as corrupt and are joining in the coalition against their fellow Sunni Muslims, together with Jordan (also Sunni) which fears for its security.

Israel is a special, and extreme, case in this scenario.

Hostility towards Jews is rooted in the origins of Islam and is not the product of recent events.

Jews are hated and despised as rebels against Allah and corrupters of his revelation. Their success in modern times and their presence as a democratic State in "The House of Islam" adds to the offence and is intolerable.

Eternal enmity is mandated against Jews as they are incorrigibly evil,

S60:4. Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Ibrahim (Abraham) and those with him, when they said to their people: "Verily, we are free from you and whatever you worship besides Allah, we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you, hostility and hatred for ever, until you believe in Allah Alone ..."

S5:60. Say (O Muhammad to the people of the Scripture): "Shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from Allah: those (Jews) who incurred the Curse of Allah and His Wrath, those of whom (some) He transformed into monkeys and swines, those who worshipped Taghut (false deities); such are worse in rank (on the Day of Resurrection in the Hell-fire), and far more astray from the Right Path (in the life of this world)."

S8:12. (Remember) when your Lord inspired the angels, "Verily, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved, so strike them over the necks, and smite over all their fingers and toes."13. This is because they defied and disobeyed Allah and His Messenger. And whoever defies and disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.14. This is the torment, so taste it, and surely for the disbelievers is the torment of the Fire.15. O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve, in a battle-field, never turn your backs to them.16. And whoever turns his back to them on such a day - unless it be a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop (of his own), - he indeed has drawn upon himself wrath from Allah. And his abode is Hell, and worst indeed is that destination!17. You killed them not, but Allah killed them. And you (Muhammad) threw not when you did throw but Allah threw, that He might test the believers by a fair trial from Him. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.

A saying of Muhammad from a [hadith](#): "The Day of Judgment will not come until Muslims fight the Jews, when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say, 'O Muslim, O servant of God, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'

Jews have suffered at the hands of Islam from the days of Mohammed and throughout the succeeding centuries. Islamic attitude towards Jews was not caused by their return to the Land of Israel or the creation of the State of Israel. The "Land Issue" **is a consequence of the implacable hostility of Islam towards Jews** (Eternal Enmity), and a sense of rage that these despicable people, permanently rejected by Allah and under his judgement, should "occupy" "the House of Islam" and displace the superior politico/religious rule of Islam.

Since the time of Mohammed Jews and Christians have been banished from Saudi Arabia (an apartheid state!).

Throughout the 19th century there were mass attacks on Palestinian Jews.

In the 1830s 40,000 Muslims invaded Jerusalem, looting and raping Jews. There were scores of incidents of anti-Jewish violence, persecution, and extortion between 1848 and 1878. In 1929 Arab riots involved rape and massacre of most of the Jewish population of Hebron (the British military did not intervene). The Mufti of Jerusalem (Haj Amin Al-Husseni) collaborated with the Nazis and opposed emigration of Jews from Hungary in 1944 - 400,000 perished.

They have been similarly persecuted throughout the Middle East and in N. Africa over the

centuries and large Jewish communities have all but disappeared - the "overlooked" Jewish refugee situation. In 1948, there were between 758,000 and 881,000 Jews living in communities throughout the Arab world. Today, there are fewer than 8,600. In some Arab states, such as Libya, which was about 3% Jewish, the Jewish community no longer exists; in other Arab countries, only a few hundred Jews remain.

Of the nearly 900,000 Jewish emigrants, approximately 680,000 emigrated to Israel and many to France; the remainder fled to other countries in Europe as well as to the Americas.

The long series of peace processes/negotiations have addressed the problem as if the critical issues are (secular) politics and land. These are certainly factors to consider but once again "the elephant in the room" is being ignored - religion. **Religion is not just one aspect of the situation - it is the central and critical one, uniting Muslims and Christians against a common enemy.** This unity has two underlying causes:

Catholic and Orthodox Christians have been rooted for centuries in a false belief system (Replacement Theology).

France, with powerful political ambitions in the Middle East, together with Catholic replacement theology, fostered Arab nationalism in an anti-Jewish, Muslim-Christian united movement against Israel.

The Catholic and Orthodox Churches promoted belief in the "blood libel". The Jesuits were active in disseminating the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" that purported to be a plan by Jews to dominate the world.

Christians in the Ottoman Empire had been exiled and massacred in huge numbers from the middle of the 19th century.

300,000 Armenians were killed in 1894-96 and 800,000 in 1915, of a total estimated at more than 1.5 millions. Several hundred thousand Greek Christians were killed between 1914 and 1923 and during the same period about 300,00 Assyrian Christians were killed. Huge numbers fled into exile. **The Christian population of Turkey was reduced from 30% in 1900 to 1.8% in 1927.**

Christians wished to escape from the consequences of their own "Dhimmi status", which they did by emphasizing their shared Arab identity with the majority Muslim population.

The Muslim-Christian Association (MCA) was established in 1918 with the approval of the **highly anti-Semitic British Military Administration** and was directed towards frustrating the Balfour Agreement.

Britain and France both encouraged Christians to merge with Muslims in an **Arab nationalism** that would replace the Ottoman Empire.

This combined theological and political position has been maintained to the present time, although softened by the Catholic Church in official statements regarding the Jewish people.

The PLO Charter 1968

- Palestine, with the boundaries under the British mandate, is the homeland of Palestinian Arabs and is indivisible.
- The Jews who lived in Palestine before the Zionist immigration are considered Palestinian.
- The partition of Palestine and the founding of Israel are illegal since they violated the will of Palestinians and the principle of self-determination included in the United Nations Charter.
- The Balfour Declaration and the British mandate for Palestine are null and void.
- The Palestinians reject all solutions which are substitutes for total liberation of Palestine.
- Zionism, associated with international imperialism, is racist, expansionist and colonial, and Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement.

Promises to amend this charter but have not been activated.

The Hamas Charter

The Charter identified Hamas as the [Muslim Brotherhood](#) in Palestine and declares its members to be Muslims who "fear God and raise the banner of Jihad in the face of the oppressors."

The charter states that "our struggle against the Jews is very great and very serious" and calls

for the eventual creation of an Islamic state in Palestine, in place of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and the obliteration or dissolution of Israel.

It emphasizes the importance of jihad stating in **article 13**, "**There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavours.**" The charter also states that Hamas is humanistic, and tolerant of other religions as long as they "stop disputing the sovereignty of Islam in this region".

The Charter adds that "**renouncing any part of Palestine means renouncing part of the religion of Islam.**"

It is claimed that this has been revoked but recent comments from senior leaders indicate otherwise:

[Ismail Haniyeh](#), stated that Hamas would agree to accept a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, and to offer a long-term truce with Israel, (2011). In contrast to this, Hamas leader [Mahmoud al-Zahar](#) stated that **any talk of the 1967 lines is "just a phase" until Hamas has a chance to "regain the land...even if we [Hamas] have to do so inch by inch."**

Other Hamas leaders, including [Ismail Haniyah](#) and [Khaled Meshaal](#) have also stated repeatedly that "**Palestine – from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea, from its north to its south – is our land, our right, and our homeland. There will be no relinquishing or forsaking even an inch or small part of it," and that "we shall not relinquish the Islamic waqf (inalienable religious endowment) on the land of Palestine, and Jerusalem shall not be divided** into Western and Eastern Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a single united [city], and **Palestine stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, and from Naqoura [Rosh Ha-Niqra] to Umm Al-Rashrash [Eilat] in the south.**" (2014).

The current plight of Christians

This has its roots in the Gulf wars. In 21 June 2007, the [UNHCR](#) estimated that **2.2 million Iraqis had been displaced to neighbouring countries with a large majority of them Christians**, and 2 million were displaced internally, with nearly 100,000 Iraqis fleeing to Syria and Jordan each month.

In 2010, reports emerged in **Mosul** of people being stopped in the streets, asked for their identity cards, and **shot** if they had a first or last name indicating [Assyrian](#) or [Christian](#) origin.

On 31 October 2010, 58 people, including 41 hostages and priests, were killed after an attack on an Assyrian Catholic church in Baghdad. A group affiliated to [Al-Qaeda](#), [Islamic State of Iraq](#), stated that **Iraq's indigenous Christians were a "legitimate target."**

In November, a series of **bombings and mortar attacks** targeted Assyrian Christian-majority areas of **Baghdad**. Half the Christian population has allegedly fled in the face of **en masse immolation** in 243 cathedrals and additional churches and mass **beheadings** that included pregnant women and children. An estimated **330,000 fled to Syria** and smaller numbers to [Jordan](#) and some to [Iraqi Kurdistan](#) in northern Iraq and to neighbouring countries, such as [Iran](#).

During the 2014 Northern Iraq offensive, the [Islamic State of Iraq](#) issued a decree in July that all Christians in the area of its control must **pay a special tax of approximately \$470 per family, convert to Islam, or die.**

Many of them took refuge in nearby [Kurdish](#)-controlled regions of Iraq. Christian homes have been painted with the [Arabic letter ن \(nūn\)](#) for [Nassarah](#) (an Arabic word Christian) and a declaration that they are the property of the Islamic State. On 18 July, the Jihadists seemed to have changed their minds and announced that all Christians would need to leave or be killed. Most of those who left had their valuable possessions stolen.

Christians and Jews are revealed as the twin targets of Islam in its quest for world conquest. Sadly the West is mostly asleep to its own peril; a major part of the church still seems to believe that Israel is the problem, rather than understanding that Israel's destiny is very much intertwined with her own.

The old Islamic statement "First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people" now seems to be "Let's take both of them together!"

The Good News is that God has other plans, including for the Muslim world, as we will see in the final two sessions.

Sources:"The Middle East" by Bernard Lewis, "Dawa" and "Global Jihad" both by Patrick Sookhdeo, "Unholy War" by John L. Esposito, "Jihad" by Moshe Sharon, "Modern Day Trojan Horse" and "Al-Yahud, Eternal Islamic Enmity & the Jews" both by Sam Solomon & E Al Maqdisi, "The Rise of Islamic State" by Patrick Cockburn, "Islam and Dhimmitude - Where Civilizations Collide" by Bat Ye'or, "Why I left Jihad" by Walid Shoebat, and also archived papers at Gatestone Institute via www, and Wikipedia.