UNDERSTANDING JIHAD

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been launched by globalist radical Muslims such as Usama b. Ladin against the United States and its allies. The movement's literature invokes the legal, religious, and military vocabulary of traditional jihad and situates the actions of the movement's adherents within the traditional parameters of Islamic jihad. Yet many Muslims reject the globalist radical Muslim claim to wage jihad, citing the movement's (apparent) lack of legitimate authority to wage war: declaring jihad, they argue, is solely the prerogative of a Muslim leader (such as a legitimate *imam* or a caliph). Jihad cannot legitimately be undertaken in the absence of a pronouncement by a recognized authority. Of course, radical Muslims have their own answers to this critique.

Present usage notwithstanding, one can neither deny the validity of an exclusively spiritual notion of jihad nor discount the possibility that Muslims may in time amend their interpretation of the concept to exclude militant aggression. One consequence of the present-day upsurge in jihad and visibility of the manner in which radical Muslims, and especially globalist radical Muslims (al-Qa'ida and its associates), practice it may be a decisive rejection of militant jihad by a majority of Muslims. If that were to happen, Muslim apologists would likely seek to ground the concept of nonviolent jihad as inherent in the religion, rather than as an amendment of the term's definition. (Historians of religion have often noted that the greatest changes in a given religion are sometimes masked by elaborate "proofs" of doctrinal consistency.) There is as yet no indication that such a redefinition of jihad has in fact been undertaken—outside of apologetics intended for "external consumption"—but it is still a possibility.

With these issues in mind, the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad must be examined first, and then the ramifications of the great Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries.

ONE

QUR'AN AND CONQUEST

MUHAMMAD, THE QUR'AN, AND JIHAD

Islam did not begin with violence. Rather, it began as the peaceful proclamation of the absolute unity of God by the Prophet Muhammad (ca. 610 C.E.) in the pagan-dominated town of Mecca. The early *sura*s (chapters) of the Qur'an proclaim this basic message: "Say: He is Allah, the only One, Allah, the Everlasting. He did not beget and is not begotten, and none is His equal" (Qur'an 112). Initially, Muhammad was instructed merely to communicate this message to his immediate family and close friends, who, together with a number of social outcasts and slaves, formed the original community of Muslims. Within a few years, the Prophet and his adherents found themselves increasingly persecuted for their beliefs by the elite of the Quraysh (the tribe that dominated Mecca). Muhammad proselytized among the tribesmen of the oasis of Yathrib, about 150 miles to the north of Mecca, who accepted his message. In 622 he, together with the other Muslims, emigrated to this oasis, which was subsequently called Medina.

Muslim history begins with the *hijira*—Muhammad's emigration to Medina (although there continue to be major, unresolved problems with the historicity of the events narrated below concerning the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the first conquests). Medina was not a town in the conventional sense but rather a collection of small villages and forts spread over the oasis, divided politically among two pagan Arab tribes—the Aws and the Khazraj—and three smaller Jewish tribes: the Banu

Qaynuqa, the Banu al-Nadir, and the Banu Qurayza. Muhammad and the Muslims based their community within Medina, and over a period of five years they converted the Arab tribesmen that occupied the territory.

It was in this context that jihad arose, and the campaigns to gain adherents and control territory constituted the focus of the community's activity during the last nine years of the Prophet's life. Muhammad is recorded as having participated in at least twenty-seven campaigns and deputized some fifty-nine others—an average of no fewer than nine campaigns annually.[1] These campaigns can be divided into four groups:

1. The five "thematic" battles of Badr (624), Uhud (625), Khandaq (627), Mecca (630) and Hunayn (630), undertaken with the goal of dominating the three principal settled areas of the Hijaz: Mecca, Medina, and al-Ta'if
2. Raids against the Bedouin, undertaken to force local tribesmen to support—or at least not to attack—the Muslims
3. Attacks against Jewish tribes to secure the oases in which they resided
4. Two raids against the Byzantines at al-Mu'ta (629) and Tabuk (631) and the campaign led by Usama b. Zayd (632) against Syria, which, though less than successful at best, heralded the direction of Muslim conquests during the years following the Prophet's death in 632.

This evidence demonstrates categorically the importance of jihad to the early Muslim community. It is no coincidence that a number of the Prophet Muhammad's early biographers refer to the last ten years of his life as *al-maghazi* (the raids).[2]

The raids were a mixed success. Unexpectedly, the Muslims emerged victorious from the first of their battles—the Battle of Badr—but campaigns undertaken during the three years following ended in losses or stalemates, compensated in some instances by attacks on poorly defended Jewish tribes, first in Medina and later in the oases to the north. After the Battle of the Khandaq in 627, which was a stalemate, the tide turned for the Muslims, as a result of the Meccans' political weaknesses. By 629 Muhammad controlled the region to the north of Medina almost to the border with the Byzantine Empire, and in 630 he conquered Mecca and its allied town of al-Ta'if.

This mixed bag of victories, half-victories, Pyrrhic victories, and defeats associated with Islam's origins figured prominently in how the

community defined itself. The revelations that constitute the Qur'an coincide with military activity, and many address issues related to the conduct of jihad; one of the earliest of these defines just causes for waging jihad, emphasizing the essential component of justice:

> Permission is given to those who fight because they are wronged. Surely Allah is capable of giving them victory. Those who were driven out of their homes unjustly, merely for their saying: "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled some people by others, surely monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is mentioned frequently, would have been demolished. Indeed, Allah will support whoever supports Him. Allah is surely Strong and Mighty. (22:39–40)

This verse emphasizes the basic component of justice in the waging of jihad. The persecutions of the pagan Quraysh forced the Muslims to emigrate to Medina. During the course of this migration, many of the Muslims lost most or all of their worldly goods and were unable to adjust to life in the agricultural oasis of Medina (as Mecca lacked any agriculture [see 14:37]). Since Medina lay close to the route between Mecca and Syria, through which the Meccans had to pass in order to continue their trading activities, the Muslims sought recompense for their losses by attacking the caravans of the Quraysh. These attacks precipitated the first round of "thematic battles" leading to the eventual conquest of Mecca by Muhammad and the Muslims. In 624 a Meccan caravan was passing by Medina en route from Syria, and its commander, Abu Sufyan, realizing the danger, sent for reinforcements to assist him. Muhammad, who was leading the Muslims, intercepted the caravan, but Abu Sufyan managed to escape. The subsequent battle at Badr between the Muslims and Meccan reinforcements constituted the first of Muhammad's victories.

Much of *sura* 8 (the Spoils) deals with this event, which was important to early Islam for a number of reasons. The victory was unexpected because of the fact that the Muslims were outnumbered, necessary because the Muslims needed it in order to build up prestige, and sweet because of the number of prominent members of the Quraysh who were slain, for they had figured prominently in the persecution of the Muslims in Mecca. The battle was important for Islam in the long run as well. The Qur'an identifies God as the agent of the battle and the sole cause of the Muslim's victory. According to *sura* 8, it was God who induced the believers to march forward (8:5), compelled the Muslims to attack the Meccan reinforcements instead of the caravan (8:6), and supplied angels to assist the Muslims (8:9):

> It was not you [the Muslims] who slew them, but Allah; and when you threw it was actually Allah who threw, so that He might generously reward the believers. Allah is Hearing, Knowing. (8:17)

The Qur'an, moreover, directs the community of Muslims to preserve the memory of the event: "whoever turns his back on that day, unless preparing to resume fighting, or joining another group, incurs Allah's wrath and his refuge is Hell; and what an evil fate!" (8:16). All of this will be accomplished "so that He may cause the Truth to triumph and nullify falsehood, even though the wicked sinners dislike it" (8:8). Although Christian and Jewish bibles and apocalyptic literature, like the Qur'an, often describe God fighting on the side of believers (see, for example, Joshua 10:14), associating the will of the deity with victory is theologically problematic, and particularly so in the wake of a defeat.

The Battle of Badr was not taken advantage of by the Muslim community, which was too small to follow up on its unexpected victory. A year later, the Meccans sought revenge for their defeat and obtained it at the Battle of Uhud, fought just to the north of Medina. The Muslims took positions at the foot of Mount Uhud (a small butte), while the Meccans held a key strategic location between them and the entrance to Medina. Just before the battle, a number of Muslims, led by 'Abdallah b. Ubayy (the leader of the lukewarm, or uncommitted, Muslims, usually called "the Hypocrites" in the Qur'an), abandoned the Muslim force in full view of the Meccans. When the Muslims advanced from their base on Mount Uhud, the Meccan cavalry encircled them from behind; the Prophet Muhammad only narrowly made his escape, while many of his adherents, thinking he had been killed, fled the battle. Several prominent Muslims, including Muhammad's uncle Hamza (often called "the Prince of Martyrs" in the jihad literature), were killed in the trap. To a large extent, Muhammad and the Muslims could count themselves lucky that the Meccans did not take advantage of their victory and finish off the defenseless Muslim families in Medina.

Because of the theological weight placed upon the victory at Badr the previous year, the defeat at Uhud proved difficult to explain. Muslims asked: if God was on our side then, why did He allow this disastrous defeat? Answers are forthcoming in the Qur'an, especially in the last half of *sura* 3 (The Family of 'Imran), which introduces the idea that "Islam" needs to be divorced from the person of Muhammad (3:144); the death of the religion's prophet will not signal the end of the religion itself. The defeat at Uhud is explained in terms of God's alternating victories between people in order to test them (3:140–42, 152), and the

Prophet is commended for having forgiven those whose impetuousness caused the disaster (3:155–59). Thus, an event that could have divided the still small Muslim community was used to reinforce its unity.

This unity was tested yet again during the Battle of the Khandaq (627). By this time, the pagan Meccans had decided that the Muslim community must be decisively defeated, and so they gathered a large number of tribal allies—referred to in the Qur'an as *al-ahzab,* the Confederates—and laid siege to the oasis of Medina. Within Medina, the Prophet Muhammad's authority was challenged by the Hypocrites, who discounted the threat and refused to fight (33:12–20). The true believers are characterized as "men who fulfilled what they pledged to Allah; some of them have died, some are still waiting, without changing in the least" (33:23).

The Battle of Khandaq was not a battle of weapons, but rather a challenge to the disunity among Muslims first manifested in the Battle of Uhud (by 'Abdallah b. Ubayy's last-minute abandonment of the other Muslims). These problems were resolved by the massacre of the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza (33:26), God's causing a wind to arise and sending unseen hosts to defeat the Meccan besiegers (33:9), and the ultimate capitulation of the Hypocrites and their integration within the community loyal to Muhammad. These factors were decisive in the ultimate victory of the Muslims over their Meccan opponents three years later.

The conquest of Mecca (630) is treated only briefly in the Qur'an, although most of *sura* 48 is devoted to this subject. Of much greater importance for the study of jihad is the penultimate *sura* in the Qur'an, *surat al-Tawba* (Repentance). This *sura* is the only chapter of the Qur'an that is not preceded by the phrase "In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful," which in itself indicates the martial nature of the text. It was most likely revealed in 631.[3] *Sura* 9 contains the account of the salvific covenant between God and the Muslims that helps define the nature of jihad:

> Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for Paradise; they fight in the way of Allah, kill and get killed. That is a true promise from Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an; and who fulfills His promise better than Allah? Rejoice, then, at the bargain you have made with Him; for that is the great triumph. (9:111)

Like much of the language of the Qur'an, this covenant is presented in contractual terms. The exchange is clear: the Muslims' lives and wealth are given to Allah in return for an assurance of Paradise. Given the verse's unique power and relevance to the subject, it is no wonder that

this verse is prominently cited in collections on the subject of jihad (for example, that of al-Bukhari).

However, *sura* 9 has many more important verses to offer concerning jihad. The *sura*'s main subject is the revocation of the immunity granted by God and Muhammad to those tribes that had not converted to Islam prior to this revelation. After the lifting of the immunity, the Muslims must fight the unbelievers:

> Then, when the sacred months are over, kill the idolaters wherever you find them, take them [captive], besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every point of observation. If they repent afterwards, perform the prayer and pay the alms, then release them. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Merciful. (9:5)

This verse, together with the salvific covenant, is one of the most important verses on the subject of jihad. It is usually called the "Verse of the Sword" and is said to abrogate all other verses in the Qur'an on the subject of war and peace. While its immediate subject is the pagan Arabs—a narrow application sustained by early commentators—later Muslim jurists would use the verse to proclaim a universal jihad against all non-Muslims.

Sura 9 also deals extensively with social relations between believers and nonbelievers—again of decisive importance for the later development of Islam. According to 9:23–24, a Muslim should distance himself from his kin and friends if they persist in unbelief (see also 3:28, 4:139, 5:51, 57). This *sura* also establishes the paradigm of Muslim dominance over Jews and Christians that would dictate the social system of Islam for centuries to come:

> Fight those among the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] who do not believe in God and the Last Day, do not forbid what God and His Apostle have forbidden, and do not profess the true religion [Islam] until they pay the poll-tax out of hand and submissively. (9:29)

One of the goals of jihad was to conquer and dominate non-Muslims. Reading through *sura* 9, and understanding that this *sura* was probably revealed toward the end of Muhammad's life, just a few years before the conquests (making the final revelation a declaration of war), explains the aggressiveness of the early Muslims.

In summarizing the teachings of the Qur'an with regard to the subject of jihad, it is important to emphasize that we have a very martial and well-developed teaching here. Although it not an exhaustive treatment of jihad—many of the *hadith* and subsequent jurisprudence are devoted to annotating topics only adumbrated in the *suras*—the Qur'an nonetheless presents a well-developed religious justification for waging war against Islam's enemies. It covers questions concerning prisoners, the fate and rewards of martyrs, disunity and doubt within the Muslim ranks, and a number of other issues as well. The Qur'an even reveals that many Muslims were reluctant to fight (2:216, 9:38). The text provides the religious basis for the doctrine of jihad that would result in the great Muslim conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries.

THE EARLY ISLAMIC CONQUESTS: THEORY TO PRACTICE

The early Islamic conquests are one of the great bursts of military achievement known to history and arguably one of those with the longest-lasting effects. After Muhammad's death, the Muslim armies embarked upon a series of campaigns in the ancient Fertile Crescent (present-day Syria and Iraq) and quickly conquered the territory. The conquest of Egypt soon followed, and by 650 the heartlands of Islam—the area between Egypt on the west and the Iranian plateau on the east, and the Arabian Peninsula—were ruled by the Muslims.[4]

After a five-year hiatus (the civil war of 656–61), the Muslims, now centered in Syria under the Umayyad dynasty (661–749), embarked on a further surge of conquest in all directions. To the northeast, the regions of Central Asia and Afghanistan were conquered, albeit with great difficulty, while to the southeast, the Muslims mounted attacks in the area of the Indus River valley (present-day Pakistan) and parts of northern India. To the north, Armenia and the Caucasus were conquered, while two major unsuccessful attempts to take Constantinople—the seat of the Byzantine Empire—were undertaken in 676–80 and 715–17. To the south, the Muslims of Egypt launched unsuccessful attacks upon the Christian kingdom of Nubia (what is today the northern Sudan). To the west, the Muslims conquered and pacified North Africa and converted the native Berber population to Islam (by 699). By 701 the Muslim armies, using Berbers as reinforcements, had conquered the Iberian Peninsula and in the early 730s entered France, where they were defeated in 732 by Charles Martel at Poitiers.

One might legitimately ask how exactly these conquests were achieved, since previously (and thereafter) the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula had not demonstrated the capacity to control the neighboring settled regions, much less distant territories. Part of the reason was the unifying force of Islam. Another element of the conquests' success was a

shrewd military strategy. The early Muslims adopted innovative tactics involving the extensive use of light cavalry to move quickly and target enemies at their weak points.[5] Some of these innovations are described in the *hadith* on the subject of jihad. The weakness of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires also aided the early Muslims immensely. With the exception of the Sasanians, not a single major powerful state fell to the early Muslims. Rather, the Muslims advanced through politically unstable regions or regions controlled by nomads, many of whom converted to Islam and joined the conquest. These auxiliary forces, by supplementing the manpower from which the Muslims could draw their armies, proved crucial in obtaining the ultimate victory.[6]

The Islamic conquests wrested control of an enormous territory from Christian and Zoroastrian religious domination (with local populations of Jews, Manicheans, Gnostic sects, and pagans) and resulted in a linguistic shift in the entire region from Aramaic (and its dialects) and Greek to Arabic. The changes engendered by the conquests culminated in the civilization known to historians as the high Islamic civilization, which lasted roughly until the thirteenth century. The speed at which the Muslims conquered is reminiscent of the campaigns of Genghis Khan, Napoleon, or Hitler, but none of these conquerors was able to sustain his conquests. The geographic scope of the Muslim conquest, the resultant advanced civilization, and religious and linguistic shifts could be compared to those of the Romans, the Spanish, or the British, but these empires expanded much more slowly in order to consolidate their gains. The most apt comparison is the conquests undertaken by Alexander the Great, whose victories over the Persian Achmenaeid Empire (330s B.C.E.) similarly heralded long-term religious and linguistic shifts (the spread of Hellenistic culture and the Greek language) in the territories he conquered at lightning speed.

For many Muslims, the conquests constitute a miracle from God attesting to the veracity of the revelation of Islam. During preparations for the Battle of the Khandaq, the following scene is said to have taken place:

> [Salman al-Farisi] said: I was striking [with a pick while digging the trench] on one part of the Khandaq, when there was a stone that was too tough for me. The Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] was close to me, and when he saw me and how difficult the place was for me, he descended [into the trench] and took the pick from my hands. He struck the rock with force that caused lightning to flash from the pick . . . then he struck again, and lightning flashed from beneath the pick . . . and then struck a third time and again lightning flashed from beneath it. I said: "May my father and mother [be a redemption for you], O Messenger of Allah, what was that I saw beneath the pick when you struck?" He said: "Did you see that, O Salman?" I said: "Yes." He said: "With the first [flash] Allah gave me the Yemen, with the second Allah gave me Syria and the Maghrib [Morocco] and with the third, Allah gave me the East."[7]

Thus Muhammad, like Moses (Deut. 34:1–4), was granted a legitimizing vision of the lands his community was to conquer shortly after his death; the vision's meaning is explicated in the verse immediately following the account of promised territories:

> Abu Hurayra would say after these *amsar* [cities founded by the Muslims] were conquered during the time of 'Umar, 'Uthman and afterwards, "Conquer whatever you wish, because by the One who holds the soul of Abu Hurayra in His hands, you have never conquered nor will you ever conquer any city until the Day of Resurrection without Allah having already given its keys into the hands of Muhammad previously."[8]

Because of the miracle of the conquests, jihad emerged as one of the core elements of Islam. Without the conquests, the religion would not have had the opportunity to spread in the way that it did, nor would it have been the attractant that it was. Islam was not in fact "spread by the sword"—conversion was not forced on the occupants of conquered territories—but the conquests created the necessary preconditions for the spread of Islam. With only a few exceptions (East Africa, Southeast Asia, and to some extent Central Asia beyond Transoxiana), Islam has become the majority faith only in territories that were conquered by force. Thus, the conquests and the doctrine that motivated these conquests—jihad—were crucial to the development of Islam.

While the Qur'an provides the basis for the doctrine of jihad, it is the tradition literature of Islam that describes how Muslims perceived it as they were fighting and what they were fighting for.

ACCOUNTS OF THE JIHAD: THE *HADITH* LITERATURE

Such remarkable conquests could not have been achieved had they not been backed up by the developing Islamic tradition. The tradition literature, or *hadith*—sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and accounts of events in his life recounted by his close companions—is in part a record of the warfare during this early period. These traditions cover a broad range of subjects, in some instances supplementing

accounts in the Qur'an, in others treating events and issues not addressed therein. Scholars analyzing this material have concluded that few, if any, of the *hadith* are contemporaneous with the events that they describe; the earliest extant parts of the corpus likely date to the end of the seventh century (about seventy years after the Prophet's death). For Sunni Muslims the *hadith* literature is of central importance in deciding how to live one's life.

These early collections of tradition literature, although small compared to the genre's vast growth during the eighth and probably ninth centuries, record the living and developing religion of Islam at the time of its origins. The earliest *hadith* compilations that have come down to us are as random as the subjects they address. By the mid-eighth century, and especially by the ninth century, however, the collections become much more sophisticated, organized topically for the purpose of reference. These annotated *hadith* contain extensive discussions of jihad, which in most collections are located immediately after the sections devoted to the "five pillars of Islam."

Some of the earliest collections are devoted entirely to jihad, and with the aid of these books we can reconstruct to some extent the beliefs of the early Muslim conquerors. The earliest known writer is 'Abdallah b. al-Mubarak (d. 797), who was originally from the region of Central Asia and emigrated to Syria in order to fight the Byzantines. He was well known as a warrior-ascetic (see chapter 2), and his *Kitab al-jihad* complements his much larger book on asceticism. The *Kitab al-jihad* documents the evolution of the Muslim conception of warfare during the period of the conquests after Muhammad's death. The spiritual conception of warfare is much more detailed than it is in the Qur'an:

> The slain [in jihad] are three [types of] men: a believer, who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights them until he is killed. This martyr *(shahid)* is tested, [and is] in the camp of God under His throne; the prophets do not exceed him [in merit] except by the level of prophecy. [Then] a believer, committing offenses and sins against himself, who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights until he is killed. This cleansing wipes away his offenses and his sins—behold the sword wipes [away] sins!—and he will be let into heaven from whatever gate he wishes. . . . [Then] a hypocrite, who struggles with himself and his possessions in the path of God, such that when he meets the enemy [in battle] he fights until he is killed. This [man] is in hell since the sword does not wipe away hypocrisy.[9]

This tradition could be taken as a representative example of the numerous (262) traditions contained within this book on the subject of jihad. It presents jihad as spiritualized warfare in the same spirit as Qur'an 9:111. Of the three figures mentioned—the True Believer, the Sinning but Repentant Believer, and the Hypocritical Believer—the second is clearly the most interesting. This Sinning but Repentant Believer seeks to expiate his sins on the field of battle. According to the tradition, the sword, together with the pure intention of the fighter, wipes away the believer's sins.

Thus, there is a redemptive aspect to jihad that is crucial to understanding its development. We have already noted Qur'an 9:111, where this salvific contract is spelled out. In 'Abdallah b. al-Mubarak's *Kitab al-jihad* we see similar attitudes. In the above *hadith*, "the sword wipes away sins" in a manner similar to the Christian tradition, which places redemption in the Cross: "Being killed in the path of Allah washes away impurity; killing is two things: atonement and rank [in heaven]."[10] Fighters were encouraged to wear white so that the blood of their sacrifice would be apparent.[11] Later traditions distinguish several types of fighters:

> There is a man who fights in the path of Allah and does not want to kill or be killed, but is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood [dripping] from him is atonement for every sin he has committed; for every drop he sheds he gains levels in paradise. The second type of man is one who fights desiring to kill but not to be killed, and is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood [dripping] from him is atonement for every sin; for every drop he sheds he gains a level in paradise until he bumps Abraham's knee [on the top level]. The third type of man is one who fights in the path of Allah desiring to kill and be killed, and is struck by an arrow. The first drop of blood [dripping] from him is atonement for every sin; he will come to the Day of Resurrection with a drawn sword, [able to] intercede.[12]

These traditions are very powerful and descriptive, reflecting a belief system capable of inspiring the conquest of so much territory and achieving what the early Muslims achieved.

Much of the extensive tradition literature on the subject of jihad concerns broad themes: defining fighters and fighting, distinguishing classes of prohibitions in fighting, determining the equitable division of spoils and the fate of prisoners. Among the authoritative collections, those of Malik b. Anas (d. 795) and al-Awza'i (d. 773), although not included in the "six canonical collections" of Sunni Islam, are important because of

the early date of their composition, their preservation by communities located close to the borders of Islam (Spain, in the case of Malik; North Africa and Syria, in the case of al-Awza'i), and the extent to which both authors capture much of the spirit of the early conquests. Malik encourages jihad, albeit without Ibn al-Mubarak's heavenly incentives for martyrdom. Rather, his emphasis is on defining the parameters of waging jihad: the prohibition on the killing of women and children, the division of spoils, and sanctions for illegal looting. It is only at the end of his discussion, in the context of a discussion of martyrs, that Malik treats the spiritual merit of fighting.

Al-Awza'i's presentation attests to the circumstances of Syrian Muslim communities, who were regularly subject to Byzantine naval incursions and shared the territory with a large Christian population of uncertain allegiances; for al-Awza'i, jihad is linked to the protection of Islam's frontiers (*ribat*). He does not glorify jihad, devoting considerably more attention to the merit of the fighter than does Malik, and he deals extensively with the weapons and tactics of the border warrior, as well as the problem of assimilation with the local population.[13] Other early precanonical collections, such as those of Ibn Abi Shayba (d. 849) and 'Abd al-Razzaq (d. 826) similarly reflect the particularities of the locations in which they were written. 'Abd al-Razzaq, who wrote in the Yemen, where there was little fighting, begins his discussion of jihad with a lengthy (eighty-page) explication of the equitable division of spoils. Only then does he treat the merit of the fighter and the other aspects of aggressive jihad common to the collections cited so far. The placement of a discussion of guarding the borders at the very end of the collection suggests that it was not as high a priority for him as it was for al-Awza'i. Ibn Abi Shayba, writing in Iraq, in contrast, begins his treatment of jihad with much of the same material cited by Ibn al-Mubarak, and the two collections share a similar emphasis on themes of descriptions of heavenly pleasures, conquest and victory, and forgiveness of sins for the martyr. However, Ibn Abi Shayba segregates administrative and legal materials into another chapter (as do a number of later collections).

The six canonical collections of Sunni Islam—those of al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Maja—are more important for the development of Islamic practice than these earlier collections (although the early works are more directly infused with the spirit of the first conquests). These canonical collections, in contrast to those discussed above, were written by Muslims from the eastern part of the empire—more specifically, eastern Iran. All six of the collections

accord a prominent place to jihad, and they contain more elaborated discussions of the term's meaning than do the eighth-century collections.

Al-Bukhari (d. 870), whose collection is accorded a rank in Sunni Islam just below that of the Qur'an, starts his discussion of jihad with the citation of the salvific contract from the Qur'an (9:110) and repeatedly refers to the Qur'an, either by interspersing verses or by undertaking their exegesis in order to illustrate a point of law. (This sets him apart from the precanonical authors, who rarely cite the Qur'an.) Many traditions that he cites paint a vivid visual picture of jihad: angels' wings overshadow the fighters, feet that become dusty while fighting in the path of God will not enter hell, and martyrs are led into paradise smelling of musk, with their clothes the color of blood. The fighter who takes good care of his horse will find that the horse's feed-bucket, his bowl, his excrement, and his urine will be added to the balance of the fighter's good deeds on the Scales on the Day of Judgment. A light shines from the graves of the martyrs who die in battle.[14]

It should already be clear from this description how important the fighter's mount was to the success of his campaign. Each of the canonical collections (and most of the other collections as well) devote an extensive discussion to the merits of horses, donkeys, and other animals used in fighting, and to their upkeep, good treatment, and ultimate reward.

The canonical collections devote considerable attention as well to the question of whether women can fight in the jihad, although there is little unanimity among authors. In several isolated traditions women are said either to have fought during the time of the Prophet or to have received assurances from Muhammad that they would be allowed to fight in the future. There does not seem to have been any question that women could accompany fighters (Muhammad himself regularly allowed this) and serve as "inciters" or as nurses after the battle.[15]

Incitement and psychological fear are both important components of jihad, as is recognized in the Qur'an 3:151: "We will cast terror into the hearts of the unbelievers on account of their associating with Allah that for which He sent down no authority." The Prophet Muhammad further amplified this idea by noting that God had helped him with a fear *(ru'b* or *mahaba)* that He had sent before the Muslim armies to a distance of a month's journey.[16] According to this idea, all who lived at this distance from the Muslims would feel this fear and be defeated by it even before meeting the Muslims in battle.[17] The psychological preparation for victory or defeat is also a theme of the *hadith* literature, in which we find a great many references to poetry,[18] flags, and slogans

intended to aid the fighters.[19] Probably the most popular slogan—*Allahu akbar!* (God is greater!)—is usually said to precede Muslim advance into battle. There are also examples of curses to incapacitate the unbelievers; among these, the best known is the Prophet's ritual curse of the Confederates (during the Battle of the Khandaq in 627): "O Allah! Revealer of the Book [the Qur'an], hasty in judgment (variant: mover of the clouds), O Allah, defeat the Confederates; O Allah, defeat them and shake them!"[20]

Other collections address the problems of continuous fighting. The wives and children of the fighters at the battlefront have to be protected. Traitors and spies are a constant danger. As always, dividing the spoils and preventing battlefield looting, unruly behavior, and mistreatment of prisoners are major issues. Other social problems are addressed, such as those who pay others to go out and fight,[21] as well as those who take money for fighting, but do not go. In almost every collection, there is a section devoted to extolling bravery and excoriating cowardice. Advice is given for the upkeep of horses (do not geld them, do not cut their tails). Issues concerning treaties, redemption of prisoners, social relations with conquered peoples, and traveling in hostile lands are also covered. We also can see how closely interrelated Islam and fighting were when the *hadith* on jihad allow mosques to be put to use as prisons for enemy captives or as storehouses for weapons.[22]

Certain traditions demonstrate a grasp of the social and economic realities of warfare:

> Allah causes three people to enter Paradise because of an arrow: the maker of the arrow who because of his manufacturing expects a reward, the one who shoots the arrow, and the one who collects it. So, [practice] shooting and riding, but it is better to shoot than to ride.[23]

No doubt this aided Muslims in seeing that an entire economy produces a fighter and that the front-line fighters could not exist without the production capabilities of the society supporting them. However, the dominant attitude in the jihad literature toward society and the sedentary life—especially farmers and merchants—is a negative one. One example of the negative attitude toward the sedentary life is the following tradition: "The Messenger of Allah said: One of the prophets [before me] raided, and he said: No one who has built a house and has not lived in it, who has married a woman and not had intercourse with her or who has any desire to return should accompany me" (compare Deut. 20:5–7).[24] This is understandable because fighting the jihad necessitated

constant movement (probably the secret to the success of the early Muslim conquests) and exposed the fighters to constant danger. For this reason, the spiritual component to jihad is accorded high importance: the constancy of fighting divorced the Muslims from this world and increased their desire to inhabit the next.

Previously we had noted that the Qur'an was a powerful exponent of an aggressive jihad doctrine. The *hadith* literature follows in its footsteps. Whereas the Qur'an suffices with generalities and encouragement to fight, the *hadith* materials take us into a full-blown description of warfare with a heavy spiritual content. It is clear from even the cursory overview above that the subject of militant jihad was of critical concern to Muslims during the formative first three centuries of Islam, and there is no indication from any of this material that the jihad being described is anything other than military. However, while the legal component of the *hadith* literature describing the jihad is preponderant, it required codification.

LIMITS TO JIHAD: THE EARLY LEGAL DEFINITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

Out of the disorganized mass of *hadith* a coherent body of law was produced. By the early ninth century, Muslim jurists had begun to codify the basic materials of the tradition to form the *shari'a,* sometimes translated as the "Divine Law." Although this was never a unified body of law, and is essentially the sum total of all the jurists' discussions and commentaries on the subject, it provides a focus for legal and definitional aspects of jihad that are not addressed in the Qur'an or the *hadith* literature. It also seems clear that the jurists of Islam wanted to regulate the nature of the warfare, as they did other aspects of social intercourse.

One of the bases for this type of regulation was defining the manner in which war should be declared and what its limits were.

> The Messenger of Allah, when he would send a commander with a raid or an army would enjoin upon him the fear of Allah, especially with regard to himself, but also with regard to the Muslims, and say: When you meet your polytheist enemy, call to him [to choose] between three possibilities—accept whichever one they accept, and desist from them:
>
> 1. Call them to Islam; if they accept, then accept it from them and desist from them. Then [if they accept Islam] call them to move from their homes to the home of the *muhajirun* [immigrants]; if they do this, then they will have the rights and the responsibilities of the *muhajirun.* If

they refuse, then designate their home, and inform them that they will be like the Muslim Bedouin—Allah's law, which is incumbent upon the believers, will be incumbent upon them, but they will not have any right to the movable or nonmovable spoils, except when they fight at the side of the Muslims.

2. If they refuse, then call them to pay the *jizya* [poll tax]. If they accept, then accept it from them and desist from them.
3. If they refuse, then ask Allah for aid against them, and fight them. If you besiege the people of a fortress, and they desire to surrender unconditionally *('ala hukm Allah)*, do not accept this from them, but let them surrender according to your judgment, and do with them what you wish afterwards.[25]

With these statements jihad is made into a legal process, regulated, and defined. While the Muslim history books leave us with the impression that Muslims always acted in accordance with the above regulations, this is difficult to accept and is not backed up by non-Muslim sources. But the mere establishment of such regulations, albeit with the goal of augmenting the Islamic polity, was a step toward systematizing warfare.

Already in the Qur'an and the *hadith* literature there is a sense of codification of rules. Some rules, such as those governing the division of spoils, hardly needed to be clarified after what was revealed concerning them in the Qur'an. For example,

> And know that whatever booty you take, the fifth thereof is for Allah, the Apostle, the near of kin, the orphan, and the wayfarer, if you really believe in Allah and in what We revealed to Our servant on the day of decision [the Battle of Badr]. (Qur'an 8:41)

The principle of the *khums,* the fifth portion of the spoils that was to be designated for the above purposes, remains a constant in Muslim law down to the present time.

The previously cited tradition is foundational for answering an important question of law: against whom were the Muslims permitted to fight? Some of the Qur'anic verses cited seem to indicate that the Muslims were entitled to fight against everyone who fought them (e.g., 9:36). However, legal definitions based upon the above *hadith* distinguished several categories of territories: Dar al-Islam, the sum of the territory in which Islam and the *shari'a* was supreme; Dar al-Harb, the sum of the territory in which it was *possible* (not necessary) to fight, because this area had not submitted to Islam or was in an active state of war against it; and the Dar al-Sulh, that area with which Muslims had some type of treaty or cease-fire.

These categories clearly represent a refinement of the above *hadith* in that they presuppose that Muslims will not be in a permanent state of universal war but that there are stages to an inevitable God-ordained Muslim victory at the end of the world It was possible to live in peace over an extended period with non-Muslim neighbors because of the length of time granted to the non-Muslim to convert and because of the presumed inevitability of the process. The above *hadith* also distinguishes the process by which Muslims are entitled to declare war. Although the choices usually given—convert to Islam, agree to pay the *jizya,* or fight until one of the two sides gains the victory—are absolute and presuppose that Muslims are taking the initiative and have a generally victorious record of warfare, they present both sides with the stakes of warfare and the consequences of victory or defeat. The terms also presuppose that the wars that the Muslims and their opponents are fighting are wars of religion. The side that wins has received the affirmation of God.

Muslim legal literature is divided among four schools *(madhahib)*: Maliki (preeminent in North and West Africa), Hanafi (throughout the Muslim world), Shafi'i, and Hanbali. One of the earliest legal compendia to deal with the questions of jihad was that of al-Shafi'i (d. 820), who played a foundational role in the development of Muslim law. Like the *hadith* collections, he presents jihad as an ordinance of God essential for the continuation of the Muslim community, but his concern is to establish the legal foundations of the Muslim society that benefits from the victories obtained by means of jihad rather than to define the legal limits on the actual waging of war. For example, his first category, after the sections encouraging the waging of jihad, addresses the payment of the *jizya* by non-Muslims (Jews, Christians, Sabeans, and others) and the manner in which this tax should be levied and collected (see chapter 3). Sections on truces, cease-fires, dealing with rebels, safe-conducts, and disposition of spoils all follow, together with sections describing relations with captured women. All of these discussions presuppose a victorious polity and reflect the confidence of the early Muslims that God would give them the victory.[26] Other early legal compendia, such as the *Mudawwina* of Sakhnun (d. 854), do not detail the subject of jihad more than does al-Shafi'i (however, Maliki compendia such as al-Qayrawani's [d. 997] *al-Nawadir wa-l-ziyadat,* which is a supplement to Sakhnun, do).[27]

Al-Mabsut, a massive legal compendium attributed to the Hanafi eleventh-century jurist al-Sarakhsi, deals with jihad in greater depth

than do those of other legal schools. Al-Sarakhsi begins with a discussion of the significance of jihad, and the reasons behind it, and he then proceeds to discuss the relative legal validity of tactics, including the process of surrender, the manner in which a siege is to be carried out, and dealing with captives—which ones can be killed, which enslaved. He describes many of the Prophet Muhammad's battles and extracts basic legal principles from each one. In summary, al-Sarakhsi completes the process begun by al-Shafi'i and covers the entire process of waging jihad in law. From this point forward, although individual points continued to be debated, the Muslim method of warfare was set.

One of the expressions of the codification of jihad is the listing of sins that are associated with fighting. The early list of al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. 930) proscribes single combat with an enemy without the permission of the *imam* and prohibits asking for help from polytheists in battle, killing young boys, and hamstringing horses during battle.[28] The comparatively late treatise of al-Haythami (d. 1565) lists sins in considerably more detail: listed under the title of jihad we find the sins of leaving jihad, the failure to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, not responding to the *salam* greeting, love that begets the sin of pride, cowardice on the battlefield and desertion (Qur'an 8:15), fleeing from a plague, taking illegal booty, betraying a safe-conduct or an assurance of protection, spying on the Muslims, or taking horses for the purposes of personal gain or for racing rather than fighting.[29] Not all of these sins are directly connected with the process of fighting jihad, although all are connected to the social process. The reference pertaining to the waging of jihad in lists of grave sins implies that fighting was of crucial importance for Muslims, but it does not detail for us the ultimate goal of the warfare.

GOALS OF JIHAD: APOCALYPSE AND CONVERSION

The Muslim conquests of the seventh through the ninth century were by no means easy victories. In certain cases natural boundaries (mountains, impassable deserts, bodies of water) prevented the Muslims from advancing; in other cases they were defeated on the battlefield (Constantinople in 717, Poitiers in 732). After a century of warfare, the early Muslims suffered from a severe lack of manpower, and the logistical challenge of supporting conquests in an empire stretching several thousand miles from end to end was insurmountable. Was the goal merely to conquer as much as could be conquered while the going was good? Or was there a deeper religious goal driving the conquests?

One explanation is that the conquests were sustained by a strong belief in the imminent end of the world. This attitude could have been strengthened by the events of the late sixth and early seventh centuries, marked by plagues (the Plague of Justinian in 541, for example), wars (such as that between Byzantium and the Sasanian Empire, 602–28), and appearances of comets and other celestial phenomena. Both the war and various celestial phenomena are alluded to in the Qur'an (30:1–6, 53:1, 54:1),[30] and much of the holy book is written in an apocalyptic vein. However, there is little explicit prognostication, since in 7:187, 31:34, 33:63, 79:42 it is said that the knowledge of the future is with God alone. Other verses speak of the nearness of the Hour (42:17, 54:1), that there is no doubt that it will appear (22:7, 40:54, 45:32), and that when it does, it will appear suddenly (12:107, 22:55, 43:66, 47:18). But was this belief sufficient to fuel mass conquests?

While the texts that comprise the Qur'an do not answer this question, the *hadith* literature, especially the apocalyptic predictions, does. In this literature there is a strong connection between the fighting process and the imminent end of the world:

> Behold! God sent me [= Muhammad] with a sword, just before the Hour [of Judgment], and placed my daily sustenance beneath the shadow of my spear, and humiliation and contempt on those who oppose me.[31]

The Prophet Muhammad is portrayed, as Patricia Crone has stated, as a doomsday prophet, sent just before the end of the world to warn those who would heed a warning and to punish those who would not. Here, the process of jihad, as in the traditions cited above, is one in which the hold of worldly things over the believer is diluted. Because of the impermanence of the soldier's life, and the difficulties of establishing a stable family or gathering substantial possessions, many of the ties that bind people to this world are weakened or even dissolved entirely. When this is taken into consideration, the spiritual significance of jihad becomes even more pronounced.

It is clear why the connection with the end of the world had to be maintained in the jihad literature. Without this final date in mind, it would have been difficult for Muslim fighters to summon up the necessary energy to achieve the conquests. Dates of the end of the world are to be found in great numbers in the *hadith* and apocalyptic literature.[32] In Abu Da'ud's *Sunan* (one of the six canonical *hadith* collections), "jihad is in force until the Day of Resurrection."[33] Not only that, but a further tradition indicates that one specific group will be continually

victorious until that time: "A group *(ta'ifa)* of my community will continue fighting for the Truth, victorious over those who oppose them, until the last of them fights the Antichrist."[34] This assurance provides a basis in Sunni Islam for deciding which sect or group will ultimately be the one saved, as is indicated by the books discussing it within the context of creedal statements, theological polemics, and heresiography.[35]

Jihad plays a major role in Muslim apocalyptic literature as well. Since the early Muslims' existence was largely dominated by fighting and conquest, it is hardly surprising to find that their vision of the future just before the end of the world, as well as their vision of the messianic future, was characterized by a state of continuous war. Apocalyptic traditions focus on the wars with the Byzantines, who were the early Muslims' only serious opponents. The early Muslims entertained hopes of conquering the Byzantine capital of Constantinople (besieged by them in 676–80 and 715–17) and completing their conquest of the territories historically controlled by the Roman Empire—the entire Mediterranean basin. This enterprise, cut short by the failures of the Muslim armies during the first half of the eighth century, remained a dream of the future in the apocalyptic literature.

For all the certainties associated with the "end of days," early Muslims were driven by fears that are reflected in the apocalyptic literature. The possibility that their families, surrounded by subject populations of infidels, could be violated while the men were away fighting is a major theme in these traditions. There was also a widespread fear of betrayal by Arab or converted nomadic tribes, whose allegiance to Islam was sometimes less than certain. Often these tribes are portrayed as apostatizing and joining the Christians in the event of a Byzantine victory. The Muslim Arabs had largely come from the Arabian Peninsula and were afraid that military defeat would force them to return to it. Having tasted the pleasures of the fertile settled communities in Egypt, Syria-Palestine, and Iraq, Muslims were naturally reluctant to abandon these places.

Muslim messianic traditions are a reflection of these realities. The Sunni Muslim messianic figure, the *mahdi,* will complete those conquests left undone by the early Muslims. He will conquer Constantinople, Rome, and Europe, as well as finishing the conquest of Central Asia, India, and Ethiopia. All of these places were precisely those that the early Muslims were unable to dominate. However, according to most accounts, the *mahdi* will not convert the subject populations to Islam, but will rule them justly according to their own laws. The Muslims will

be required to give up their settled ways—their farms and houses—and return to fighting the jihad together with the *mahdi,* re-creating the warrior caste of early Islam where the Muslims were the fighters and the non-Muslims tilled the soil.[36]

In addition to the apocalyptic and messianic goals of the jihad, there are also the goals of spreading Islam. Although Islam was not spread by the sword, as is commonly imagined, conquest and jihad created the preconditions for conversion, and conversion or proclamation was one of the goals of the jihad. An early tradition describes the limits of fighting:

> I was ordered to fight people until they say: "There is no god but Allah." When they have said that, then their blood and their property is protected from me, solely by reason [of saying it], and judgment upon them is in the hands of Allah.[37]

As M. J. Kister has pointed out, this tradition was most likely one of the earliest to describe the radical change implicated by conversion, most probably with the intent of nipping the issue of questionable conversions in the bud, since according to the text, judgment is in the hands of God. If a person converted for less than pure motives—to save his life, for example—the conversion was still legitimate and he would be judged accordingly on the Day of Resurrection. However, the tradition also demonstrates the connection between fighting and conversion. The fighting will persist until conversion occurs, the only exceptions to this rule being the "protected peoples": the Jews, the Christians and the Sabeans (2:62, 5:69, 22:17).

Both the jihad literature and the apocalyptic literature are very frank in their assessment of the economic reasons that drew the early Muslims to conquest. Fantastic amounts of booty and slaves are described in the sources. In describing the eventual conquest of Constantinople, the apocalyptic sources speak of gold, jewels, and virgins, saying fighters "will ravish 70,000 as long as they wish in the Royal Palace."[38] These baser motives are acknowledged in the jihad literature, at the same time that they are dismissed as ancillary to the spiritual goals of jihad:

> A man came to the Prophet and said: "Some men fight for spoils, some for fame, some to show off; who is fighting in the way of Allah?" He said: "The one who fights to lift the Word of Allah to the highest, he is fighting in the path of Allah."[39]

Clearly the spiritual rewards of the martyr had to be defined more carefully; the first step in this process was the definition of who a martyr was.

DEFINITIONS OF "MARTYR"

Defining the Muslim martyr (in Arabic, *shahid*) is not an easy task. Originally the word "martyr" (from Greek) meant "witness": those who bear testimony as to the truth of their beliefs and are willing to attest to its veracity with their lives. Judaism and Christianity popularized the concept of martyrdom throughout the classical world.[40] Many followers of these faiths refused to compromise their beliefs and were willing to undergo torture or even death in order to prove their faith. The early Muslims in Mecca were also willing to suffer for their faith when persecuted by the pagan Meccans. However, after the *hijra* (the Prophet Muhammad's emigration to Medina in 622) there are comparatively few instances recorded in the literature when Muslims were persecuted on a large scale *specifically* because they were Muslims. Islam, in contrast to other religions, became closely identified with power.

Thus, the concept of martyrdom developed differently in Islam than it did in either Judaism or Christianity. Martyrdom in Islam has a much more active sense: the prospective martyr is called to seek out situations in which martyrdom might be achieved. For example, in 'Abdallah b. al-Mubarak's *Kitab al-jihad,* we find Nawf al-Bikali praying: "O, God! Make my wife a widow, make my child an orphan, and ennoble Nawf with martyrdom!"[41] Most often in early Islam, martyrdom meant dying in battle.

Other categories of martyrdom were established fairly quickly. An important tradition in the *Kitab al-jihad* lists seven:

> . . . the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] said: God Most High has established [the martyr's] reward according to his intention. What do you count as the circumstances of martyrdom? They said: Dying in the path of Allah. The Messenger of Allah said: There are seven categories of martyr other than being killed in the path of Allah. The one who dies of a stomach complaint is a martyr, the one who drowns is a martyr, the one who dies of plague is a martyr, the one who dies of pleursy is a martyr, the one who dies in a structural collapse is a martyr, the one who dies in a fire is a martyr, and the woman who dies in childbirth is a martyr.[42]

This tradition is quite common, and one should note the absence of intention among all of these categories, which describe inadvertent or unavoidable circumstances that have nothing (necessarily) to do with war or violence.

The definition of "martyr" expanded greatly over the centuries. By the sixteenth century, an authoritative pamphlet on the circumstances of martyrdom included among the categories of *shahid* a merchant who

dies defending his goods, a man who dies defending his wife and children, a person who dies in a strange land; martyrs include those who die of fever, snakebite, attacks by wild animals, or falling from their mount, in addition to those who die of seasickness or hypothermia.[43] This vast expansion of the term *shahid* rendered it almost meaningless by this time and probably facilitated the transition between the paradigm of aggressive jihad and "internal" spiritual jihad (the so-called lesser jihad and the greater jihad discussed in the next chapter). However, the tradition literature was most concerned to return the definition of "martyr" to its original sense of dying after fighting for the cause of Allah:

> A Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah and said: "A man can fight for fame, another can fight in order to receive praise, yet another to receive spoils, and another in order to show off." The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever fights in order to make the Word of Allah the highest [see Qur'an 9:40], that person is [fighting] in the way of Allah."[44]

This is the definition that was most widely accepted by the jurists of Islam, who had always been suspicious of the expansive categories that tended to displace the respect accorded to martyrs who died in battle. It is clear that the spiritual prestige of being a martyr contributed greatly to the expansion of the term. Part of that positive attitude derives from the rewards attached to being a martyr in the next world.

THE REWARDS OF A MARTYR

Paradise is extensively described in the Qur'an. In the early verses, the marvels described in heaven are promised to those who believe in God. In the later sections of the Qur'an, these descriptions are closely associated with being a martyr or dying in battle. For example,

> There surely was a sign for you in the two armies that confronted each other [at the Battle of Badr, 624], the one side fighting for the cause of Allah, and the other consisting of unbelievers . . . attractive to mankind is made the love of the pleasures of women, children, heaps of gold and silver, thoroughbred horses, cattle and cultivable land. . . . Say: "Shall I tell you about something better than all that?" For those who are God-fearing, from their Lord are gardens beneath which rivers flow, and in which they abide forever [along with] purified spouses and Allah's good pleasure. (3:13–15)

Comparisons of earthly, transient pleasures with the rich and permanent ones available in the next world are abundant both in the Qur'an and in

the *hadith* literature, especially in those sections dealing with jihad. These descriptions fall into several major categories. One is the assurance of life after death and an immediate entry into Paradise. This is already available in the often quoted Qur'anic verse: "And do not think those who have been killed in the way of Allah as dead; they are rather living with their Lord, well-provided for" (3:169). It is clear that this assurance was of major importance in inducing believers to seek out martyrdom or to undertake acts of bravery. As we already noted, a number of the traditions included in the *Kitab al-jihad* and other books on the subject portray heaven as an army camp. This description, however, does not seem to have been a very popular one; understandably soldiers, having endured the privations of army camps for extensive periods of time, did not want to visualize heaven in this way.

Heaven is described in a sensual manner. Many of those things that were forbidden to the Muslim during life, such as drinking wine or wearing gold and silk, are not only permitted in Paradise, but are a major feature of the pleasures in store for the blessed. However, without a doubt, the literature concentrates on the women of paradise. Already in the Qur'an there is mention of the *hur al-'in,* those women with black-and-white eyes (44:54, 52:20, 56:22); although, if one can place credence on the dates accorded to these verses by Muslim scholars, none of them belongs to the Medinan phase of the Prophet's ministry and thus cannot have been exclusively directed at martyrs. In the later *hadith* literature, especially the *Kitab al-jihad,* the connection between the Muslim martyr and the women of Paradise is made more explicitly:

> The earth will not be dry from his [the martyr's] blood before two of his wives catch him—as if they were two nurses who had lost their young one in a desert—in the hand of each one of them is a garment better than the world and everything that is in it.[45]

During the course of the battle, the women of Paradise (the *houris*) are said to encourage the fighters in the following manner:

> Yazid b. Shajara said: O people, remember the grace of Allah toward you—what is better than the mark of Allah upon you! If you were only able to see what I see of yellow, red, white, and black, when on the saddles there is what there is! When the prayers are fulfilled, the gates of heaven, of Paradise and of Hell open; when the two lines meet [in battle] the gates of heaven, of Paradise and of Hell open [also], and the *hur al-'in* (*houris*) are decorated and descend. When a man advances, they say: "O Allah, make him steadfast, help him." When he retreats, they hide from him, and say: "O Allah, forgive him, make him charge the opposing side." May my father and mother be your ransom, do not dis-

> appoint the *hur al-'in.* When he is killed, the first bubble of his blood causes his sins to fall off, like a leaf falls off of the branch of a tree. Two [*houris*] descend to him, and they wipe his face, saying: "We are ready for you" and he says to them: "I am ready for you." They will dress him in one hundred garments—if he put them between his fingers they would expand. They are not of human weaving, but are the fruit of Paradise.[46]

Although sexual imagery is absent from these particular traditions, a number are far more explicit, describing the promised seventy-two virgins and the pleasures they will provide.[47] Many collections cite examples of near-death or out-of-body experiences during which Muslim fighters view or experience the pleasures in store for them before they die—no doubt proving to the skeptical the truth of the traditions described above.[48]

Martyrs also have earthly rewards, although naturally they are subordinated to heavenly rewards. Fame and honor, important attributes in a tribal society, are conferred upon the martyrs and their families. One should note that although ordinarily bodies of Muslims are washed after death and before burial, the bodies of martyrs are buried as they are found, unwashed. Most probably this is the result of the presumed purity of their sacrifice and the evidence of the violent death they suffered as a result of it. All these outward manifestations of honor are worthy of a martyr's death.

Despite the attention given to the women of paradise, there are other spiritual privileges that seem to have been either of equal or greater importance to the martyr. One of these is the relative rank the martyr receives in Paradise. It is said that there are one hundred ranks in Paradise, and that the martyr will achieve the highest among them (ranking only below prophets and other righteous men of God in the hierarchy of Paradise). One of the most important reflections of this spiritual rank is the ability of the martyr to intercede on behalf of Muslims at the Day of Judgment. This intercession has been a subject of controversy in Islam, since, in principle, it might be construed to relieve the faithful of their obligations as set forth in basic Muslim teachings. A number of Qur'anic verses seem to indicate that each person will stand alone before God and not be able to receive help from other sources (e.g. 6:51, 9:116, 32:4), but this severe attitude was not accepted by all Muslims, and soon all manner of "intercessors" began to appear in the Muslim literature. For the most part these are prophets, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, or Sufi holy men and women, but there are a substantial number of traditions concerning martyrs and those who lived in the border towns

as well. For example, the early Syrian ascetic Abu al-Darda' is quoted as saying: "I heard the Messenger of Allah say: The martyr will intercede for seventy of his family."[49] On other occasions, this number is extended to encompass broader categories or left to the discretion of the martyr in question.

Cities are also associated with privileges of this nature—for the most part, cities in dangerous locations, such as those close to the Byzantine border, along the Mediterranean Sea (subject to regular Byzantine raids), in northern Persia facing the mountainous and unconquered area of Tabaristan, and in Central Asia. In all cases, those Muslims who guard the frontiers are assured either the rank of martyrs or the privileges of intercession after their deaths. It seems clear that the issue of intercession was a very powerful incentive for people to live in what would otherwise be undesirable locations.

Summing up the early material, one can say that during the first several centuries of Islam the interpretation of jihad was unabashedly aggressive and expansive. The Qur'anic material provides a core of teachings that leads the believer to assume that God is on the side of the Muslims, giving them victory over their enemies, and supporting them in every way possible. One cannot reasonably doubt that this Qur'anic material was instrumental in the great Muslim conquests. These conquests, however, created a whole additional genre of literature available today in the *hadith* collections Chapters devoted to jihad, as well as books and pamphlets on jihad surviving from this early period, flesh out the Qur'anic materials, and deal with many practical problems arising from the exigencies of battle in distant locations. This *hadith* literature was subsequently codified into law.

All these sources are to be found in great abundance, and it seems that comparatively little of the vivid jihad material was lost over the centuries. Judging from the frequency with which this material was cited by later authors, it has an important place in Islam overall. Most Muslim historians devote a good deal of attention to the conquests, and they are alluded to on a regular basis in almost every genre of literature. For this reason, we can state confidently that the conquests constitute a confirmatory miracle for Islam; because of the close identification between this miraculous event and the jihad ideology that enabled it to come about, jihad has remained of crucial importance in Islamic culture. This does not mean necessarily that there is always an aggressive aspect to the importance of jihad—in many cases the feeling is more nostalgic, alluding to this period of Muslim history as the ideal. But the importance of classical jihad is latent and can be brought to the fore in Islam at any time.

However, as the conquests died down after the middle of the eighth century, other versions of jihad began to become more prominent. It was no longer practical for all Muslims to live at the frontiers, and there were many converts to the new faith. Because of the attractive spiritual prestige of the martyr, many must have asked: is this spiritual rank to be confined solely to those who can die in battle? (answered partially by the expansion in the definition of "martyr" covered above).

ONE: QUR'AN AND CONQUEST

1. See al-Waqidi, *Maghazi* (Beirut, 1984 repr.), I, p. 27; Muslim, *Sahih* (Beirut, n.d.), V, pp. 199–200; ʿAbd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf* (Beirut, 1983), V, pp. 294–95 (nos. 9659–60); the full list in Ibn al-Nahhas al-Dumyati, *Mashariʿ al-ashwaq* (Beirut, 2002), II, pp. 896–908; and the clarification of J. M. B. Jones, "The Chronology of the *Maghazi*—A Textual Survey," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19 (1957), pp. 245–80 (detailing a total of eighty-six).

2. For example, al-Waqidi; Ibn Hisham also refers to this period as *al-maghazi.*

3. Uri Rubin, "*Bara'a:* A Study of Some Qur'anic Passages," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984), pp. 113–32; however, Reuven Firestone has questioned the relationship between historical events and certain jihad verses, pointing out that there is a far greater unity in Qur'anic teaching with regard to the subject than previously thought: see his "Disparity and Resolution in the Qur'anic Teachings on War: A Reevaluation of a Traditional Problem," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56 (1997), pp. 1–19.

4. Surveys of the conquests include Marius Canard, "Les expeditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et dans la legende," *Journal Asiatique* 208 (1926), pp. 61–121; S. A. Hasan's three-part "A Survey of the Expansion of Islam into Central Asia during the Umayyad Caliphate," *Islamic Culture* 44 (1970), pp. 165–76; 45 (1971), pp. 95–113, 47 (1973), pp. 1–13; and 48 (1974), pp. 177–86; Fred Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), chaps. 2–4; Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State* (Albany, 1993), chaps. 6–9; and Elizabeth Savage, *A Gateway to Hell, a Gateway to Paradise: The North African Response to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton, 1997), chaps. 4 and 6.

5. Donald Hill, "The Role of the Camel and the Horse in the Early Arab Conquests," in V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp, eds., *War, Technology, and Society in the Middle East* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 32–43.

6. Isaac Hasson, "Les *mawali* dans l'armée musulmane sous les premiers umayyades," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991), pp. 176–213; Khalil ʿAthamina, "Non-Arab Regiments and Private Militias during the Umayyad Period," *Arabica* 45 (1998), pp. 347–78.

7. Ibn Hisham, *Sira* (Beirut, n.d.), III, pp. 234–35.

8. Ibid., p. 235; and note the concept of *hijra* implied by this tradition, for which see Patricia Crone, "The First-Century Concept of *Hijra,*" *Arabica* 41 (1994), pp. 352–87.

9. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Kitab al-jihad* (Beirut, 1971), pp. 30–31 (no. 7); al-Tabarani, *Musnad* (Beirut, 1987), II, pp. 116–17 (no. 1023); Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut, n.d.), IV, pp. 185–86; and al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan* (Beirut, 2001), IX, p. 164; al-Bayhaqi, *Shuʿab al-iman* (Beirut, 2001), IV, p. 29 (no. 4262); see also Blankinship, *End of the Jihad State,* pp. 11–18.

10. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* p. 30 (no. 6).

11. Ibid., p. 112 (no. 137).

12. Ibid., pp. 104–5 (no. 125).

13. Al-Awzaʿi, *Sunan* (Beirut, 1993), p. 387 (no. 1252); and see M. J. Kister, "Do Not Assimilate Yourselves . . ." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1989), pp. 321–44.

14. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih* (Beirut, 1991), III, pp. 269 (no. 2903), 272 (no. 2811), 274 (no. 2816), 284 (no. 2853); Abu Da'ud, *Sunan* (Beirut, 1998), III, pp. 15–16 (nos. 2523–24).

15. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* III, pp. 265 (no. 2788), 291–93 (nos. 2875–83); Muslim, *Sahih* (Beirut, n.d.), V, pp. 196–99; Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, pp. 17–18 (no. 2531).

16. E.g., al-Nasa'i, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), VI, pp. 3–4; and the examples cited in my "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihad,*" *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), pp. 99–100, n. 120.

17. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* IV, pp. 15–16 (nos. 2977–78).

18. Note how much poetry is cited concerning jihad in Muslim, *Sahih,* V, pp. 168, 186–89, 191–92, and 194–95.

19. Khalil ʿAthamina, "The Black Banners and the Socio-Political Significance of Flags and Banners," *Arabica* 36 (1989), pp. 307–26.

20. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* III, p. 307 (no. 2933); Muslim, *Sahih,* V, p. 143.

21. See Michael Bonner, "Jaʿa'il and Holy War in Early Islam," *Der Islam* 68 (1991), pp. 45–64.

22. Muslim, *Sahih,* V, p. 158; Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, pp. 31–2 (nos. 2586–87).

23. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 13 (no. 2513); Ibn Maja, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), II, p. 924 (no. 2811); al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), III, p. 95 (no. 1687).

24. Ibn Abi ʿAsim, *Jihad* (Medina, 1986), I, pp. 140–41 (no. 11); and see al-Hindi, *Kanz* (Beirut, 1989), IV, p. 282 (no. 10,500): "I was sent as a mercy and as a fighter, not as a merchant or as a farmer; the worst people of this community are the merchants and the farmers, other than those who take their religion seriously," ignoring the fact that Muhammad was a merchant for most of his life.

25. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, pp. 37–38 (no. 2612); compare Muslim, *Sahih,* V, p. 140; and usually cited by Muslim jurists at the beginning of their discussions on jihad; e.g., al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut,* V (section 10), p. 6.

26. Other Shafiʿi jurists such as al-Mawardi (d. 1058) go further than Shafiʿi in detailing the specific laws governing combat, however, and we will cover them in more detail in chapter 4.

27. See Mathias von Bredow, *Der Heilige Kreig (ĝihad) aus der Sicht der malikitischen Rechtsschule* (Beirut, 1994).

28. Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *al-Munhiyat,* pp. 246, 253–54.

29. Al-Haythami, *al-Zawajir an iktiraf al-kaba'ir,* II, pp. 325–59 (sins 390–408).

30. See my "Survey of Muslim Material on Comets and Meteors," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 30 (1999), pp. 131–60.

31. Ibn. al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* pp. 89–90 (no. 105); compare al-Awzaʿi, *Sunan,* p. 360 (no. 1165); and Ibn Abi Shayba, *Musannaf,* IV, p. 218 (no. 19,394); and the discussion in Ibn Rajab, *al-Hukm al-jadira bi-l-idhaʿa min qawl al-nabi "buʿithtu bi-l-sayf bayna yaday al-saʿa"* (Riyadh, 2002).

32. Most are summarized by Suliman Bashear, "Muslim Apocalypses and the Hour: A Case-Study in Traditional Interpretation," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993), pp. 75–99.

33. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 18 (no. 2532); al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* III, p. 284 (no. 2852).

34. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 4 (no. 2484); and see the discussion in al-Ghimari, *al-Ajwiba al-sarifa li-ishkal al-hadith al-ta'ifa* (Beirut, 2002) (with all of the variants).

35. E.g., Ibn Batta al-ʿUkbari's *al-Ibana ʿan shariʿat al-firqa al-najiya* (Beirut, 2002); and Abu al-Muzaffar al-Isfara'ini's *al-Tabsir fi al-din wa-tamyiz al-firqa al-najiya ʿan al-firaq al-halikin* (Cairo, 1999).

36. This material is taken from my book, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, 2002), chaps. 1–3.

37. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, pp. 44–45 (no. 2640); al-Nasa'i, *Sunan,* VI, pp. 4–7; see M. J. Kister, "*illa bi-haqqihi . . .*" *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984), pp. 33–52, for many variants.

38. Cited in "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihad,*" p. 93 (from al-Sulami's *al-ʿIqd al-durar fi akhbar al-muntazar* [Maktabat al-Manar, 1993], pp. 260–61 [no. 303]).

39. Al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* III, p. 272 (no. 2710); and see Ibn Maja, *Sunan,* II, p. 931 (no. 2783).

40. See Mahmoud Ayoub, "Martyrdom in Christianity and Islam," in Richard Antoun and Mary Elaine Hegland, eds., *Religious Resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity and Judaism* (Syracuse, 1987), pp. 67–77; also Etan Kohlberg, "Martyrdom and Self-Sacrifice in Classical Islam," *Peʿemim* 75 (1998), pp. 5–26 (Hebrew); idem, "Medieval Muslim Views on Martyrdom," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* 60 (1997), pp. 281–307; also A. J. Wensinck, "The Oriental Doctrine of the Martyrs," *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Akkademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde* 53 (1921), pp. 147–74.

41. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* pp. 110–11 (no. 135); and see the prayers in al-Wasiti, *Fada'il al-Bayt al-Maqdis* (Jerusalem, 1979), p. 23 (no. 29); Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 21 (no. 2541); al-Tabarani, *Kitab al-duʿa* (Beirut, 1987), III, p. 1703 (no. 2015); al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan,* III, p. 103 (no. 1704).

42. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* pp. 63–64 (no. 68); also al-Bukhari, *Sahih,* III, p. 278 (nos. 2829–30).

43. See Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Abwab al-saʿada fi asbab al-shahada* (Cairo, 1987), *passim.*

44. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 14 (no. 2517).

45. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* p. 37 (no. 20); also Ibn Maja, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), II, p. 935 (no. 2798); Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut, n.d.), II, pp. 297, 427.

46. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* p. 38 (no. 22); and see also pp. 117–18 (no. 143), 124–25 (no. 150), where fighters just before going into battle would tell stories of the *hur al-ʿin* or even say that they were "married" to them; also Ibn Abi Zaminayn, *Qudwat al-ghazi* (Beirut, 1989), p. 242 (no. 111); Ibn al-Nahhas al-Dumyati, *Mashariʿ al-ashwaq* (Beirut, 2002), II, pp. 771–78.

47. Most of these are described very graphically by Hunnad b. al-Sari, *Kitab al-zuhd,* (Kuwait, 1985) I, pp. 59–60, 86–88; al-Suyuti, *al-Budur al-safira fi ahwal al-akhira* (Beirut, 1996), pp. 554–73.

48. E.g., Ibn Abi Zaminayn, *Qudwat al-ghazi* (Beirut, 1989), pp. 243–45 (no. 112) (a near-death experience coupled with a tour of heaven and a sampling of its sexual pleasures).

49. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan,* III, p. 15 (no. 2522); and compare Ibn Abi Zaminayn, *Qudwat al-ghazi* (Beirut, 1989), p. 236 (no. 104); and al-Bayhaqi, *Shuʿab al-iman* (Beirut, 2000), IV, p. 25 (no. 4254), for a full list of the benefits conferred on a martyr.

TWO: THE "GREATER JIHAD" AND THE "LESSER JIHAD"

1. Cf. al-Nasa'i, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), VI, p. 6.

2. Michael Bonner, "Some Observations concerning the Early Development of *Jihad* on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992), pp. 5–32; Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence* (New Haven, 1994) chapter 4; and my "Muslim Apocalyptic and *Jihad,*" *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), pp. 99f.

3. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Kitab al-jihad* (Beirut, 1971), p. 36 (no. 16).

4. Al-Awzaʿi, *Sunan* (Beirut, 1993), p. 368 (no. 1186); compare al-Bukhari, *Sahih* (Beirut 1998), III, p. 264 (no. 2786); and Nuʿaym, *Kitab al-fitan* (Beirut 1993), pp. 78f.

5. Abu Da'ud, *Sunan* (Beirut 1988), IV, p. 122 (no. 4344); al-Ghazali, *Ihya* (Beirut, n.d.), II, pp. 284–85; and see Wensinck, ed., *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden, 1936–64), *s.v.* "Sultan," for numerous references; as well as Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 1505), *Ma rawahu al-asatin ʿan ʿadam maji' al-salatin* (Beirut 1992), pp. 31f.

6. See on this subject, Michael Cook, *Commanding the Right and Forbidding the Wrong* (Cambridge, 2000).

7. Al-Darimi, *Sunan* (Damascus 1996), II, p. 659 (no. 2341); and see Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad* (Beirut, n.d.), III, pp. 456, 460, VI, p. 387.

8. Ibn al-Mubarak, *Jihad,* p. 143 (no. 175); idem, *Kitab al-zuhd* (Beirut, n.d.) (*Istidrak* of Nuʿaym b. Hammad), p. 36 (no. 141); Ibn Abi al-Dunya, *Muhasibat al-nafs wa-l-izraʾ ʿalayha* (Beirut, 1986), p. 102 (no. 64); and al-Bayhaqi, *Zuhd* (Beirut, n.d.), p. 163 (no. 369), and see the sources cited by the editor.

9. Al-Bayhaqi, *Zuhd,* p. 165 (no. 373); compare the saying attributed to ʿUmar II in al-Mubarrad, *al-Kamil fi al-lugha wa-l-adab* (Beirut 1997), I, p. 120: "[When asked which type of jihad was the best], he said: 'Fighting your passions.'" Much of my discussion below is indebted to John Renard, "*Al-Jihad al-akbar:* Notes on a Theme in Islamic Spirituality," *Muslim World* 78 (1988), pp. 225–42.

10. Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan* (Beirut, n.d.), III, p. 89 (no. 1671); even so, he cites this tradition in the context of the reward of the *murabit* (one who guards the frontier), so it is not entirely without military implications.

11. For example, al-Jarrahi, *Kashf al-khifa' wa-muzil al-ilbas* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 424–25 (no. 1361), cites the "greater jihad" tradition as a popular proverb and not as an authentic *hadith.*