

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 14 – August 25

Topic: (J) Jihad

As meaning spiritual striving to attain nearness to God:

- “And those who *strive hard* for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways. And Allah is surely with the doers of good.” — 29:69
- “And *strive hard* for Allah with *due striving*. He has chosen you and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion ... so keep up prayer and pay the due charity and hold fast to Allah.” — 22:78
- “And whoever *strives hard, strives for himself*. Surely Allah is Self-sufficient, above need of His creatures.” — 29:6

The word translated as “strive hard” indicates the act of doing *jihad* in the original Arabic. The meaning is clearly to strive hard to bring about your moral and spiritual improvement. It may be noted that a synonym of *jihad* is the word *mujahada*, which is applied to religious exertions such as fasting.

Jihad of patience and endurance:

- “Then surely your Lord, to those who flee after they are persecuted, then *strive hard* and are patient, surely your Lord after that is Protecting, Merciful.” — 16:110

This verse was revealed while the Holy Prophet was still resident at Makka, before Muslims had been commanded to fight in battle. Their striving hard or *jihad* was to bear all this hardship with patience, and did not mean fighting.

Jihad of propagating the message of the Quran:

- “And if We pleased, We could raise a warner in every town. So do not obey the disbelievers, and *strive against them a mighty striving with it*.” — 25:51–52

The mighty or great striving, the great *jihad* (*jihad kabir* in Arabic) mentioned here, is the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad to spread the truth *with the Quran*, which is what the words “*with it*” refer to. This is also the duty of every Muslim as the great *jihad*. This verse, again, was revealed during the Makkan phase of the Holy Prophet’s life and therefore the command in it to “*strive a mighty striving*”, which mentions *jihad* twice, cannot possibly refer to undertaking any armed conflict.

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Jihad like the one conducted by disciples of Jesus:

- “You should believe in Allah and His Messenger, *and strive hard in Allah’s way* with your wealth and your lives. That is better for you, if you but knew!” — 61:11

The above verse tells Muslims to strive hard or conduct *jihad*. Three verses later it is stated:

- “O you who believe, be helpers (in the cause) of Allah, as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples: Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We are helpers (in the cause) of Allah.” — 61:14

The striving hard, or *jihad*, of verse 11 is explained in verse 14 as making yourselves helpers in the cause of Allah *in the manner in which the disciples of Jesus responded to his call to be helpers* in the Divine cause. The disciples of Jesus, whether according to Islamic or Christian sources, were not asked to fight in any battle with weapons. They helped the cause of truth by propagating his message in the face of persecution and the utmost difficulties.

Jihad of war:

The word jihad is also applied to fighting by arms in the Quran, for example:

- “Go forth, light and heavy, and strive hard in Allah’s way with your wealth and your lives.” — 9:41

But the kind of fighting by arms the Quran allows is illustrated by the following verses:

- “So those who emigrated and were driven forth from their homes and persecuted in My way and *who fought and were slain*, I shall truly remove their evil and make them enter Gardens wherein flow rivers — a reward from Allah.” — 3:195

They were first forced to migrate, driven from their homes and persecuted for their faith. It was after that that, as a continuation of their tribulations, they had to fight in battles, in which many lost their lives.

- “And what reason have you not to fight in the way of Allah, *and of the weak* among the men and the women and the children, who say: Our Lord, take us out of this town, *whose people are oppressors*, and grant us from Yourself a friend, and grant us from Yourself a helper!” — 4:75

Fighting *in the way of Allah* was fighting *in the way of* the weak and helpless men, women and children who were praying to God to be saved from the oppressors of their town, Makka.
