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**“Parity of Muslim and Western Concepts of Just War”**

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When one examines Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources, similarities in both the idealized and historically-actualized concepts of just war in the western and Muslim worlds become very clear. However, with the powerful anti-Muslim and anti-Islam discourse that has long existed in Western Europe and the United States, a discourse which has been refurbished and exacerbated in the last few years, sometimes with violent vituperative statements, and which replies to this discourse by Muslims, such similarities have been increasingly masked and neglected. In such arguments, it can be perceived that usually a very different, indeed a diametrically and deliberately opposed, vocabulary, is used when referring to one's own warlike actions versus those of the "other." This can be seen in the repeated claim of self-defense used by belligerents from time immemorial, whether justified or not, as well as in their actual justifications for admittedly offensive warfare. Thus, tellingly, the early Muslim expansion and the conquest of North America by English-speaking Europeans are similarly described respectively as *futûbât* or "openings" and as "the opening up of the West." Likewise, all justified wars take on a sacred character. Troops are honored above all other citizens. The sacrifice of troops in battle is seen as higher than any other form of service to the state, nation, and community. The self-sacrifice of martyrdom is seen as the noblest form of conduct, as in the case of Nathan Hale, whose famous if apocryphal quote, "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," almost exactly paraphrases a prophetic hadîth. The conclusion to be drawn from this parity of concepts is that there is no just or rational way to impugn Islam and the Muslims for upholding concepts that are still held equally dear in the West. The historical wars of the Muslims no more deserve characterization by the pejorative term "holy war" than do wars waged by Western powers down to the present. Likewise, the use of the Arabic term *jihâd* to characterize Muslim warfare deliberately distances the Muslim world from the legitimate use of the concept of "just war" except under western control and auspices. This prejudicial distancing also helps, in turn, to suppress any discussion of the actual, invariably political, and always comparable causes of all warfare, thereby enabling the continuance of the idealization of war.