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**“Text, Context and Human Agency in Interpreting Jihād:  
Struggles of Political Domination, Faith, and Identity”**

**By: Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad, Ph. D  
(Minaret of Freedom Institute, MD)**

Jihad may be the premiere example of a textual term taken out of scriptural context in order to serve human purposes. This paper reviews the use of the term in the Qur’an, Hadith and various epochs of Muslim history and examines with close scrutiny its use by Ibn Khaldun, as well as his Orientalist translator, Franz Rosenthal, and the Neo-orientalist *dhimmitude* movement. The term that initially referred to the utmost exertion “in the path of God,” i.e., by pure means to a pure end was gradually extended to include a manifest destiny for political domination. The revival of this interpretation into a form of “call to aggressive warfare” by the 20th century *hirabist* movement has been further extended by the pseudo-intellectual *dhimmitude* movement into a claim that jihad is a call for the forcible conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. Relying on the work of Franz Rosenthal, Ibn Khaldun is cited as an authority to argue that this interpretation was prevalent as early as the 14th century C.E. Using the original Arabic text of Ibn Khaldun, its immediate context in the Muqaddimah, as well as the Qur’anic and legal context, this paper demonstrates how Ibn Khaldun addressed the question of political domination. Hence, this study concludes that the disputes over the meaning of jihad demonstrate that the conflict within civilizations in which neo-orientalists and *hirabists* share a perspective leads toward a warfare of religious identity, while moderates both among Western scholars of Islam and Muslim reformers share a perspective that leads to the recognition of a religious mandate for tolerance.