

61. Ibid., 183.

62. 'Editorial' 2017.

63. Rana 2017, 2.

## 11

## Conclusion

We have traced out the history of the concept of jihad from the eighteenth century till the present time in South Asia. Basically, the trajectory of movement is from an orthodox and traditional interpretation of it to diverse ones under the pressures of modernity. Going deeper into the matter, the intellectual construction of jihad and its use is ultimately related to Muslim political power. When Islam was ascendant in India, jihad was invoked to legitimise and sacralise conquest and the political and social subjugation of the conquered people. When this power declined by the eighteenth century and some of the hitherto subjugated peoples rose in revolt to consolidate their own power, jihad was invoked to bring in foreign help or fight them in order to put them down once again and regain the lost power. Then, when a modern state became unquestionably ascendant, jihad took on diverse meanings. Those who thought power could only be gained by getting co-opted in the imperial venture of the colonial power, interpreted jihad to mean defensive warfare only. Others, who believed in anti-colonial resistance, either took to guerrilla adventurism or to mass political movements against the empire. Both responses were sacralised by fresh interpretations of jihad. In the post-colonial globalised world, a minority interprets jihad in ways which justify a global guerrilla warfare against the hegemonic 'West' or, in the case of Pakistan, a continuing conflict with India to settle territorial disputes and deny Indian hegemony in South Asia. Another minority, called progressive or modernist Muslims, interprets it as defensive warfare in keeping with the imperative of playing by international rules in order to secure maximum power in the new world order through peaceful means. Still others, possibly a majority, thinks about it in terms of Muslim history and their own understanding of the faith as both defensive and aggressive without being quite sure what is said about it in the canonical sources of religion. Interpretation is left by this last group of people to the specialists so they keep changing their opinion about the nature of Jihad

according to which 'specialist' defines it. Modernity, it seems, changes the rules of the game of interpretation but the basic overall purpose of interpreting jihad in keeping with the maximisation of Muslim power remains constant.

Going by the data presented in this book, it appears that the traditional interpretations of the verses pertaining to jihad permit both aggressive and defensive war. However, many South Asian exegetes inclined towards aggressive interpretations. For instance, they used the classical exegeses, the *Jalālayn* and *Ibn Kathīr*, to support aggressive warfare. The verses which could be read to promote peaceful co-existence with non-Muslims were interpreted to be either inapplicable or to have other meanings. For instance, in *Ibn Kathīr*, the permission in 60:8, to live in peace with those unbelievers who have not been hostile to Muslims, is restricted to only non-combatants. Such interpretations are typical of the reasoning Islamists give when they cite classical scholars to promote their own agenda of eternal warfare with non-Muslims. However, the Islamists borrow only selectively from the classical scholars. Moreover, they also add certain other imperatives not found in classical works. For instance, they allow jihad without there being a Muslim ruler (*imām*) to order it. They allow attacks upon non-combatants. They permit suicide attacks and do not respect international treaties. In short, they allow terrorist attacks all over the world by non-state actors in the name of jihad. Three interpretations of the 'sword verse'—so crucial for both militants and modernist-progressive Muslims—one by a classical exegete (*Ibn Kathīr*), another by a South Asian revivalist (*Mawdūdī*), and still another by militants (*Aḏhar* and *Sa'īd*) are given in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1: Classical and Militant Interpretations of Q. 9:5

Ibn Kathīr	Cancels all peace treaties and makes it necessary to fight the polytheists ( <i>mushrikīn</i> ) till they accept Islam. Does not restrict it to Arab <i>mushrikīn</i> only. Quotes one opinion that it has been abrogated but several that it abrogates peaceful verses (Vol. 2, 31–33).	Abrogation/ generalisation
Mawdūdī	The Arab <i>mushrikīn</i> were to be fought with till they accepted Islam. Exp. 6 & 7 do not generalise the verses to all unbelievers but they do say that apostates may be fought with (Vol. 2, 176–177).	Generalisation for certain groups

Mas'ūd Aḏhar	Unbelievers may be fought with wherever found. Quotes 4 swords (a) Arab polytheists (9:5) (b) People of the Book (9:29) (c) Hypocrites (9:73) (d) rebels (49:9). It is general and still valid and abrogates verses of peace (Vol. 2, 380–381).	Abrogation/ generalisation
Ḥāfiẓ Sa'īd	Order to fight unbelievers. It is applicable nowadays also e.g. in Kashmir, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq (p. 40). A local commander for jihad can be appointed just as Abū Bakr was appointed the <i>amīr</i> of Hajj and 'Alī was given the responsibility to announce this verse to the polytheists (pp. 38–40).	Generalisation/ ideological assumption

The modernist-progressives, as we have seen, argue that the peaceful verses are still valid and that the ones which suggest eternal conflict are no longer applicable because they were meant for a specific group of people (the Arab polytheists and *hostile* People of the Book). Let us now sum up the main points of the modernist-progressive interpretations of jihad (see Table 11.2).

Table 11.2: Modernist-Progressive Interpretations of Q. 9:5

Azād, <i>Tarjumān</i>	Explained with reference to <i>asbāb al-nuzūl</i> —the breaking of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah by the Quraish—and restriction of the orders to the Arab polytheists who had initiated hostilities and broken treaties (specification). This was a special case as the Ka'ba had to be reserved only for the worship of God (ideological assumption). This order is no longer valid (Vol. 2, 78).	Specification/ ideological assumption
Iṣlāhī, <i>Tadabbur</i>	Kill the polytheists giving no quarter. This was God's way ( <i>Sunnah Ilāhiyah</i> ) so these orders are specifically meant for the Arab polytheists. Thus Muslims are not to fight anyone except in defence (Vol. 3, 13–131).	Ideological assumption/ specification
Khān, <i>Tazkīr</i>	Kill the polytheists giving no quarter. This was God's way ( <i>Sunnah Ilāhiyah</i> ) and such orders are addressed to prophets only. These orders are specifically meant for the Arab polytheists. Thus Muslims are not to fight anyone except in defence (Vol. 1, 463–464).	Ideological assumption/ specification
Parvēz, <i>Matālib</i>	Those who do not live as peaceful citizens should be fought with. Others—Muslims or non-Muslims—can live in peace. The order to 'kill wherever found' only refers to war according to rules. Nowadays there is no need for an Islamic state as one can practice Islam in peace anywhere as in India (Vol. 6, 166–169).	Specification/ ideological assumption.

As far as jihad is concerned, though not when it relates to women or slavery, the contemporary modernists-progressives stay more close to the literal meaning of the text as far as the peaceful verses are concerned. However, since they claim that jihad is only defensive—thus repudiating aggressive warfare as nineteenth century modernists did<sup>1</sup>—they tend to gloss over, or use ideological assumptions, to explain the removal of polytheists from Arabia and the subsequent conquests of Iranian, Byzantine and Egyptian lands during the orthodox caliphates. For the two sets of interpreters at extreme ends of the ideological divide—modernists-progressives and militants—the ideas of each other are anathema. Waḥīduddīn Khān from India and Ghāmidī from Pakistan, for instance, are special targets of, among others, Ḥāfiẓ Sa'īd's organisation<sup>2</sup>—as they are, indeed, of many radical Islamists.

One factor, common to all groups of interpreters, is that they all construct a belief-system which they call 'true' Islam. In so far as it deviates from traditional, conservative, and historical understandings of the faith, they constitute a disruption of past authority. And, as Michael Cook has observed, the trend in the modern Muslim world is to equate the injunction to 'command right and forbid wrong' as 'a praxis for spreading Islamic, not liberal, values'.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the interpretations of jihad, this means, at least in the hands of self-educated intellectuals getting their information from the internet and their peer group, imbibing the idea that war, rather than peace, is the norm of international relations. This is important as a trend in the intellectual history of the interpretation of Islam and is a trajectory which needs to be noted for this study.

The understanding of jihad among Indian scholars and the public changed from the medieval to the modern period. The latter period, indeed, was the one which brought about the changes which concern us the most, i.e. the anarchic, unconventional, and modernist view of jihad. This view differs from the traditional, conventional, pre-modern view of jihad in Indian Islamic thought in that it does not consider the presence of a central Muslim ruler (*imām*) as mandatory for ordering an aggressive jihad. Secondly, in this view asymmetrical warfare, even against a much more powerful antagonist, is permissible. Thirdly, it allows the use of guerrilla tactics which can, at places, cause casualties among non-combatants. And, lastly, it is undeclared. One might add that it is undertaken even in the presence of treaties, while traditional views advocated that existing peace treaties were to be ended before jihad could be declared formally by the *amīr* and not by non-state actors. This is understandable if we take the factor of Muslim political power into

consideration. The medieval jurists and interpreters of jihad operated in a world in which there were powerful Muslim rulers and states which needed to defend themselves and expand and, of course, this was only possible if the central authority remained powerful. Modern interpreters of the concept operate in a world in which there are no such authorities. Moreover, those which do exist operate in the name of the nation, not a single religiously defined community. Moreover, nation-states are bound by pragmatic considerations of remaining functional parts of the world order. Those who still choose to fight know that they have to rebel not only against the nation-state and the world order but also the past interpretations of jihad undertaken in an age which is gone—hence, the diversity of interpretations of jihad.

The diversity of interpretations we have noted above is called the 'fragmentation of authority'. The interpreters use the concept of objectification defined as 'the process by which basic questions come to the fore in the consciousness of large numbers of believers'.<sup>4</sup> One consequence of this engagement with Islam as a definer of identity is that it makes an increasing number of Muslims 'take it upon themselves to interpret the textual sources, classical and modern, of Islam'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, there is a fragmentation of authority and the issue of who represents Islam 'becomes central to Muslim politics'.<sup>6</sup> There were, to be sure, different interpretations of the canonical texts during the medieval age of Islam as well. The main ones—Kharījites, Mutazilites, Murjiites, Bāṭiniyyās, etc.—are mentioned by historians, though there are many sub-sects and other small groups not mentioned specifically in any one work. However, since Abū'l Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's (b. 873) construction of Sunni orthodoxy, the orthodox clerical establishment has been very powerful. In the words of Montgomery Watt, this Asharite thought created 'the stability of this whole Sunnite system and of the society founded on it...'.<sup>7</sup> Once established, this broad consensus was maintained by adhering to it (*taqlīd*) rather than charting new paths of one's own (*ijtihād*). This *taqlīd*, however, was not absolutely rigid nor was it blind adherence to conservative legal precepts. But, on the whole it favoured doctrinal stability. This stability was maintained by the informal power of the '*ulamā*'. One calls it informal because Islam does not officially recognise a clergy. However, it was maintained in the same way as official clerical establishments maintain their authority: through *takfīr* (declaring someone excluded from the fold of Islam), boycott, public pressure, and state persecution. The challenge from the occasional dissenters could be contained by the 'institutions for the issuance of edicts' (*dā'ir al-iftā's*) and the pulpit of the mosque.

But such tactics could not face the modernist challenge since modernity brought into being an ubiquitous network of communication channels, a newfound emphasis upon the integrity of the individual, a rationally-oriented positivist research methodology and role models of intellectual authenticity and success of a secular kind. This resulted in a dilution and dissipation of clerical authority despite the '*ulamās*' use of *fatwās* of heresy and excommunication. Hence, some of the reformist '*ulamā* realised that '*ijtihād*, not *taqlid*, might be the most effective means for the containment of legal anarchy'.<sup>8</sup> Even the critics within the clerical community, who remain committed to the authority exercised by their peers, use the space provided by the very fragmentation of this authority 'to reshape Islam and to enlarge the numbers of those who might be able to contribute to such processes'.<sup>9</sup>

But the same space, much further enlarged, is used by the Islamist radicals as well as the progressives, to give a multiplicity of meanings to the words of the canonical sources. Moreover, these opinions are disseminated by people who do not know any canonical source on their own nor would they know how to interpret one if they found it. Since virtually anyone who has access to the internet or to conventional means of dissemination of one's ideas can be an interpreter of the faith, or at least a conduit of other peoples' ideas, such plurality of interpretations can no longer be under clerical control. This is a form of democratisation of interpretation. But, since this implies that there is no coherent body of axioms (apart from the *shahādā*: 'there is no deity except Allah and Muḥammad (PBUH) is His prophet') which can be called as the faith system of Islam, it can also be called, for want of a better word, 'anarchisation'. This benefits the progressive Muslims of the contemporary world who want to interpret Islam as a religion of peace, gender equality, and freedom; equally, it also benefits the radical Islamists who, as we have seen, want to interpret it to mean perpetual warfare, including the use of terrorist tactics, against all non-Muslims including non-combatant civilians.

This brings us to a highly significant issue: what constitutes religious authority? In a very insightful discussion on the subject, Qasim Zaman says that 'the '*ulamā* have long recognized the contextual and relational aspects of authority'. Elaborating upon this, he continues:

religious authority is a matter of unrelenting contestation. Claims to it involve contesting other claims to it, dislodging or otherwise unsettling rivals, showing the inadequacy of views, and defending one's own.<sup>10</sup>

In short, one can see why the Syrian born Hungarian academic 'Azīz al-'Azmeḥ (b. 1947) speaks of both Islam and democracy in the plural forms when he studies the relationships between the two, i.e. 'there are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain it'.<sup>11</sup> In this context Shahab Ahmed's recent book *What is Islam?* (2016) may be useful. Ahmed begins with such disparate, even problematic (for orthodoxy) phenomena as amorous poetry, figural art, celebration of wine-drinking, mysticism, all practices which the strictly textual interpretations of Islam frown upon in the Balkan to Bengal complex, i.e. traditional Persianate Muslim societies. Unlike others he does not marginalise them as cultural aberrations nor does he slot them as being unIslamic, secular or mundane. Instead he finds a new language to include them into a holistic human phenomenon he calls 'being Islamic'—hence the sub-title of the book: *The Importance of Being Islamic*. His project is to create a language comprising the terms: Pre-Text, Text, and Con-Text. The Pre-Text is the world of the Unseen and reason as well as mystical intuition are ways of engaging with it. The Text is revelation and the Con-Text includes the phenomena mentioned above. It also includes all the interpretations, modes of saying and doing, existential explorations and meaning-making which Muslims practically indulge in. Given this language the term 'Islamic' is defined as 'meaning-making for the Self in terms of Pre-Text, Text and Con-Text' and this 'enables us to recognize that all acts and statements of meaning-making for the Self by Muslims, that are carried out in terms of Islam—that is, in terms of any of Pre-Text, Text or Con-Text—should properly be understood as *Islamic*' (emphasis in the original).<sup>12</sup> What light does this shed upon violence in the name of Islam? Shahab Ahmed gives his answer to this question in two paragraphs. The crucial one is as follows:

As long as the Muslim actor is making his act of violence meaningful to himself in terms of Islam—In terms of Pre-Text, Text, or Con-Text of Revelation—then it is appropriate and meaningful to speak of that act of violence as Islamic violence. The point of designation is not that Islam causes violence; rather it is that the violence is made meaningful by the actor in terms of Islam—just as the prodigious violence undertaken by soldiers of democratic nation-states is made meaningful for them and by them in terms of nation-state, and may, therefore, meaningfully be called "democratic violence" (or may meaningfully be designated in terms of the particular nation-state as "American-violence" or "Israeli violence" (emphasis in the original).<sup>13</sup>

This implies that the violent actions of Islamist militants are one way of being Islamic. But this merely extends the issue of legitimacy of authority both chronologically and spatially without providing any way to delegitimise militancy. For those who want peace, then, the only solution is to valorise and legitimate those interpretations which one finds necessary as an existential choice of surviving in a dangerous world.

One issue, which could be a subject of further research, is to what extent any interpretation actually influences human behaviour. A tentative answer could be that there are conditions to which one response is resistance. This is legitimised through certain interpretations which, then, take on a momentum of their own, influencing behaviour. Modernity, one could argue, was such a condition. But it did not come to Muslim lands merely as rational, empirical, positivist knowledge, new ways of thinking about human beings (individualism versus the collectivism of Muslim societies), new mantras about grand narratives like progress, egalitarianism, human rights, democracy, and so on. Instead, it came in the wake of Western conquests of Muslim lands and reforms so radical and disorienting that it created a schizophrenic, confused, and alienated society uncertain of its values and unsure about its direction. Those who were impressed by the intellectual imperative of rationality—people like Shaikh 'Abdūh in Egypt and Sir Sayyid, Chirāgh 'Alī, and Amcer Ali in India—accepted this and attempted to interpret Islam as being compatible with it. But acceptance of modernity did not mean indifference to Western critiques of Islam. Indeed, it was this critique which created the enormous intellectual ferment of the nineteenth century in India which is called modernist Islam. This work, now called progressive Islam, is going on in the Muslim diaspora and jihad is perhaps the most important theme which is being addressed in it since it is Islamist radicalism which is the most pressing problem for Western countries. Another response was what Emmanuel Sivan calls 'total rejection of modernity' in the case of Sayyid Quṭb and the radical Islamists.<sup>14</sup> However, this response was never total as the technology of the West was taken over and used effectively, and, in any case, radicalism itself was also a reaction to modernity. Despite the radicals' use of some medieval thinkers, like Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Kathīr, it is modern in its selection of this material, modern in its interpretation of it, and contemporary in its use of it against conditions which are found today (such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the American occupation of Afghanistan, the rise of al-Qaeda and ISIS, etc.). In this context, the insight offered into this issue by Fazlur Rahman is instructive. At a mundane level, he calls fundamentalism one kind of

response to modernity, another being modernist Islam. But 'while the modernist was engaged by the West through attraction, the neo-revivalist is equally haunted by the West through repulsion'.<sup>15</sup> In concrete terms, while the modernists wanted to interpret jihad as a purely defensive doctrine such as the UN considers legitimate for all states; the radical Islamist interprets it as the duty to spread Islam by force as well as offensive-defence against Western domination and persecution of Muslims (perceived or actual). Both, as mentioned above, are responses to the overwhelming power of Western societies. The modernist-progressive desires to reconcile with the state of affairs and carve out one's own share of power peacefully by playing with the rules; the radical Islamist wants to change the rules by force.

But in order to change the rules, i.e. to end Western domination, a state is required—hence the recurring theme of the Islamist narrative for the creation and consolidation of an Islamic state. Such a state was created in Iran in 1979 though, ironically for the Sunnis, it was a Shī'a one. It is in this context that Daniel Pipes asserted that the Iranian revolution was the first political movement away from Western political ideals and that the secularisation theory of the West causes 'the press and scholarship too often to ignore Islam's role in politics'.<sup>16</sup> To correct Pipes, the Iranian revolution was the first major and successful movement to set up an Islamic state in the twentieth century but hardly the first as it was preceded by many minor and transitory ones (such as that of Sayyid Aḥmad Barīlwi). And, more importantly, it is precisely because imperialism, especially American neo-imperialism, actually moves away from the political ideals ostensibly considered sacrosanct verities (human rights, freedom, absence of exploitation in international relations, non-aggression under the charter of the UN, etc.), that Islam becomes a rallying cry for revolutionaries in the Muslim world.

While the theoreticians respond to modernity at the deeper, philosophical level (rejection of individualism, the democratic ideas of sovereignty belonging to the people, the secular assumptions of modern education, and so on), they join their rank and file by reserving their jeremiads for the forms of entertainment and the new behavioural norms for women they see in Muslim countries. Thus, the Islamic political parties and their student offshoots, such as the Jam'iyyat-e-Ṭulabā', which is the student wing of the Jamā'at-e-Islāmī of Pakistan, delivered jeremiads against romantic film songs, the tight-fitting clothes of 'teddy girls' in the 1960s in the big cities of Pakistan, and the mixing of men and women on the campuses. This, indeed, became more important than human life and

resulted in attacks on people whose lifestyles were not considered Islamic enough. That is why the works of Bannā, Quṭb, and Mawdūdī are so full of references to create an Islamic state in which the lifestyle would be made to conform to Islam.

But the objective conditions of Muslim societies were not a matter of knowledge-production and lifestyle only. This, indeed, represented one aspect of power. The real issue, at least from the radical perspective, was that political and economic power was held by a Westernised elite in Pakistan while in the Arab world it was monopolised by dictators. In Egypt, this led to the invocation of the idea of revolt against rulers like Nasir—'the Pharaoh' as the blind Shaikh 'Umar 'Abd al-Raḥmān, who was the mastermind of the bomb explosions under the Twin Towers in 1993, used to refer to him in his fiery anti-regime sermons<sup>17</sup>—whose promise of Arab nationalism and progress had turned into a nightmare for the Islamists who were being tortured in his jails.

In the Arab world, the defeat in the 1967 war against Israel also led to radicalisation. But, since both Arab nationalism and Marxism had not succeeded, this radicalisation was Islamic. Sivan points to the growth of the production of religious literature in Egypt (from 8–9 to 19 per cent in the 1970s), stories of young people turning to religion and finding answers denied to them both by their parents' generation and the conservative 'ulamā with their respect for authority and taboo on rebellion against the government.<sup>18</sup> In Pakistan, the Arab-Israel wars did have a resonance but not to the extent it had on Arab countries which were directly involved. However, the Kashmir issue, the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and later the United States, as well as the ongoing battle of Pakistani troops against militant groups under the Taliban umbrella, did. These events did disseminate radical interpretations, making them ineluctable for vulnerable groups (Pashtun tribesmen, angry youth, etc.). The educated youth of Egypt did not turn to the traditional 'ulamā for guidance,<sup>19</sup> but in Pakistan Deobandi madrasahs supplied much of the anti-unbeliever fervour already part of their worldview. This worldview was basically religious. It became more so since Islamisation, especially during the Ziaul Haq era (1977–1988), increased it and turned it towards the hardline direction. Thus, the invocation of jihad during the First Afghan war against the Soviet Union (1979–89) brought the concept of jihad into currency among the youth. The example of the Iranian revolution had already given confidence to religious forces which were now trained on the battle fields of Afghanistan.

Even more importantly, the idea of religion being a very powerful force was used in support of Pakistan's own national interest, specifically obtaining Kashmir, which was supported at some level by the most powerful institution in Pakistan—the army. As an indicator of the growing Islamic orientation of the officer cadre of the army, there is increase in the writings on jihad in army publications.<sup>20</sup> There is also a corresponding lack of confidence in the civilian leadership as a study of writings from the National Defence University in Islamabad where the senior ranks of the armed forces are trained, suggests.<sup>21</sup> This implies that, in Pakistan, control over militants, as instruments of policy, is in the hands of decision-makers who might have absorbed at least some of the ideas of the militants to begin with.

The present situation, both among radical Islamists and the states which fight them, is best defined as anti-politics. This concept was used by Mikel Thorup for the reaction of Western powers towards radical Islam but it is also true for the reaction of Islamists towards others. Thorup's definition of anti-politics is as follows:

That democratic debate must cease, ordinary rule-bound practice must be suspended or altered, because we are in a situation of imminent and catastrophic threat; that this is the only option available and that any problematization thereof is not an insistence on debate but an amoral weakening of the defence. There can be no discussion but only action.<sup>22</sup>

This concept can also be applied to Islamist militants. One has only to substitute concepts like the 'rule-bound practice' of jihad (not killing non-combatants, order by the *amīr*, non-violation of treaties, etc.) instead of 'democratic debate' to understand the ideological assumptions of the Islamists, i.e. worldwide victimisation of Muslims. Of course, the response of those who fight them (as in Afghanistan, Iraq, etc.), as Thorup indicates, deviate from classical liberal-humanist norms of political conduct too just as the Islamist militants deviate from the norms of traditional understanding of the rules of jihad.

This study has concerned itself only with ideas about jihad. Perhaps a crucial question, not addressed here, is whether people are really influenced by these ideas? In short, is it because there are radical interpretations in circulation on the internet, among role models of the peer group, among friends and relatives, that people get radicalised? Or is it that they join for other reasons such as poverty, lack of education, mental illness, sexual frustration, or money? This gap in the present study



can be filled by future researchers. Of course, there are studies providing tentative answers which are mentioned briefly below.

We have seen that the narrative of the Islamists is that of the victimhood of Muslims, and Islam itself, at the hands of Western governments and societies. Not everybody who believes in the whole or part of this narrative necessarily believes in violence. Jason Burke identified three groups of Islamists in 2002. The first were leaders, often intellectuals, who had come from the educated lower-middle class—a class which had supplied leaders for all political movements such as anti-colonialism, Marxism, Anarchism, and so on. They felt frustrated and angry and blamed the system for their problems. The second group rose to prominence in the 1980s. They were less educated and narrower in their approach. They already existed on the fringes of society and took to jihadist teachings to get some meaning out of their lives and possibly a way of feeling powerful. Then there were the ordinary young people who came from migrant backgrounds—from the village to the city or from Muslim countries to the West—and had unresolved identity crises.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps they would have reacted to perceived injustice around them or, indeed, stories of such injustice, by joining the Communist Party in the 1930s. But now they read militant interpretations of Islam around them and joined the radical Islamist groups. Not all of them actually performed violent acts, of course, but they approved of them in theory at least.

Marc Sageman conducted studies on the profiles of jihadis.<sup>24</sup> The 2004 study was based on a sample of 172 fighters. He divided them further into clusters. The first was the central staff of Al-Qaeda. They were, as it were, theoreticians and leaders who joined the initial movement during the 1980s. The second cluster came from core Arab states (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Kuwait). The third cluster was from North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco), including people from these countries residing in France. And the last cluster was from South East Asia.<sup>25</sup> Sageman found that militants were not among the poorest nor the least educated people among their cohorts. They had not been brainwashed into extremist beliefs since childhood nor were they desperate people with no economic opportunity. They were mostly married, though some had contracted marriage before their militant actions. Psychological explanations were also controversial and not convincing. They normally joined jihadist activities from the ages of 29 to 35 years and not as children; and they were not forced nor, indeed, actively recruited. However, they had joined generally (70 per cent) in a country 'where they had not grown up'.<sup>26</sup> They could, for instance, be workers or the

children of immigrants or students in European countries. At the time of joining, they had become very religious following a fundamentalist (*salafi*) version of Islam.<sup>27</sup>

In his second study, Sageman repeated some of the same findings adding that the hypothesis that militants are sexually frustrated people are just myths. More crucially, he added that globalisation creates the kind of 'radicalization that generates small, local, self-organized groups in a hostile habitat but linked through the Internet also leads to a disconnected global network, the leaderless jihad'.<sup>28</sup> In these networks, there need not be active recruitment. Indeed, 'participation is often through friendship and kinship networks, which grow according to the forum of participation, whether it is a physical protest demonstration against some foreign Western intervention or chatting on the Internet'.<sup>29</sup> This virtual jihad community, or would-be community, cannot be controlled. It is, in a sense, headless.

Edwin Bakker, studying jihadis in Europe from 2001 till 2009, identified 65 jihadi terrorist incidents and found a sample of 304 individuals responsible for them. Out of them, socioeconomic data were available for only 93 persons of whom 'only five can be regarded as upper class, 36 middle class and 52 lower class'.<sup>30</sup> A majority finished secondary education—not in itself an achievement in Europe—and 22 finished college or university. They were generally not raised in highly religious homes and were mostly married. They actively started pursuing a jihadist course of action at the average age of 27.7 years and were recruited mostly in Europe where they had their homes. The final conclusion is that 'there is no standard Jihadi terrorist in Europe'.<sup>31</sup> What can be generalised, however, is that most are Arabs, from immigrant families, and from the lower strata of the society. In Egypt, at least, the Islamists were 'young, science students and reject the ulema because the latter accept secular governments'.<sup>32</sup> In Western countries, they were self-recruited through networks of friendship and kinship. According to Rik Coolsaet, 'individuals do not adhere to extremist groups as a direct consequence of their extremist ideas. It is not the narrative that lures individuals into terrorism—if even at the end it can acquire its own momentum'.<sup>33</sup> But at what moment do ideas take over? And why does the narrative bring about 'conversions'—and biographies do suggest it does. These questions remain largely unanswered.

As for the profiles of the people who do pursue jihad in Pakistan, here we are on surer grounds. In common with other countries, in Pakistan, too, the jihadis do not belong to the poorest of the poor. According to

Christine Fair, who has analysed the biographies of LeT/JUD fighters, 89 per cent came from the Punjab and not the poorest and most peripheral areas. Moreover, their educational attainment was actually higher than the average person in their cohort.<sup>34</sup> Ajmal 'Āmir Kasāb (1987–2012), the LeT fighter from Okara who was captured and executed in India after the Mumbai attack of November 2008, was from the lower middle class. So was 'Umar Kundī (d. 2010), who was shot by Pakistan army commandos after he had attacked an ISI office in Lahore in May 2009. More evidence from Pakistan may be adduced. Sohail Abbas, a Pakistani psychologist, interviewed 517 men in jail for having attempted to go to Afghanistan to fight US troops. He found that 'they were recruited largely from the mainstream of the Pakistani population'. Having attended government Urdu-medium schools, 'their literacy level is above the average of general population' though, suggests Abbas, their 'intelligence level' was 'assessed to be barely average in most cases'.<sup>35</sup> They were not from extremist madrasahs nor were they particularly devout to begin with. Being a psychologist, Abbas also carried out personality tests on the group and concluded that 'a slightly higher degree of psychological morbidity was observable among the *jihadi* groups'.<sup>36</sup> But it is not quite clear what one is to make of this finding. What is common between this group and others studied by researchers is that it too felt victimised and outraged. As Abbas tells us, they were angry with the US, and with the Pakistani government which they accused of being a stooge in the hands of the Americans. They were also against the exploitative society which frustrated and humiliated them and 'has kept them deprived for ages'.<sup>37</sup> Fair too has similar findings to offer. She tells us that, in the case of those fighting in Kashmir—and 98.9 per cent fighters of the LeT/JUD fought there—there was heightened religiosity and, more importantly, a sense of outrage upon hearing India's violation of Kashmiri Muslims' human rights.<sup>38</sup> Amir Rana, who has been mentioned earlier, has collected biographies of militants and has classified them in three cohorts (or generations). The first generation came from moderate, Barēlwī families and got inspired by the ongoing battle in Kashmir. The second generation emerged after the 1990s and took a definite form after the attacks of 11 September. They were hardliners and much more violent than their predecessors. The third generation was highly committed and more educated than the previous ones. Their biographies suggest that 'the element of adventure' rather than lack of education, poverty, or religiosity made them take part in jihadi activities.<sup>39</sup> They belonged to the lower-middle or the middle classes but were not necessarily in abject poverty.<sup>40</sup> Nor, at least to begin with, were

they very religious, though they did have connections, or found them later, with very religious people. However, at least in the first generation, the Barēlwīs forced their parents and siblings to veer towards the stricter Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith orientations as they got radicalised.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, these surveys from Pakistan point to the same conclusion that one finds in Western surveys, i.e. there is no determining cause for the inclination to join the jihad though there are trends which can be identified. These are: a perception of victimisation, education—but not the liberal arts subjects at an advanced level—and peer group pressure.

While it is conceded that people do not fight only because they are inspired by theory—indeed, they fight for various complicated reasons—this is no reason for not trying to understand the intellectual history of such theories. Whatever the reason they initially come to join militant groups, they do come in contact with some radical ideas which acquire a niche in their worldview, and they use them to justify their deeds to themselves and others. The adherence to these ideas gives them a sense of belonging to a community, even if it is a virtual one, which they might lack otherwise. This book has attempted to put together a historical narrative of an idea which people ostensibly cite to justify their actions without going into the question of their deeper, covert psychological motivations.

Whether this history of the idea of jihad is of any practical use is a point in which the present researcher has interest insofar as it refers to the presentation of ideas. If this book has successfully described how interpretative devices are used to privilege one kind of interpretation of jihad rather than another in South Asia, it would be a very satisfactory outcome. If, however, someone uses interpretations promoting domestic and international peace and ensuring amicable co-existence of Muslim countries with others, it will be an added bonus. However, considering that such pro-peace narratives already exist—some pertaining to South Asia being discussed in chapter 10 on refuting the militants—it is highly unlikely that this book will provide them where others have failed. Indeed, it seems that the problem is not with the narrative but with who presents it and in what circumstances it is presented. If the authorities of Egypt call Islamists Kharijites and the 'ulamā of al-Azhar present learned disquisitions in support of such a stance, people being tortured by the state's military machine and those who are still smarting after the defeat at the hands of the Israelis and the elite's perceived corruption, will not pay any heed to it. Likewise, in Pakistan, the state, which has itself used Islamic militants, will not be believed if it presents counter-narratives now emphasising peace. To be credible to the ordinary people, the



Pakistani state will have to abandon its double-faced, often obfuscating, and contradictory policy towards religious militancy. This, at least, is possible, though after having brainwashed the people into believing that it is necessary to fight for Kashmir, even at the risk of nuclear annihilation, it is a job which only a really stable and popular government can do. Other things which make the radical interpretations persuasive may not be in any Arab or Pakistani government's control. For instance, nobody from these countries is likely to be able to persuade Israel to create a viable, really independent Palestinian state possibly by withdrawing to pre-1967 boundaries. Instead, the advice coming from the right wing writers about Islam, like Daniel Pipes, is that this conflict will 'wind down only after the Palestinians accept the existence of Israel'.<sup>42</sup> This advice can also be given to Israel which, in fact, has more agency in the conflict than the Palestinians owing to its status as the occupier.

However, peace is possible at least in theory. For instance, if Israel itself or the United States think it will serve their national interest—by ensuring peace for their citizens—they can take initiatives in this direction. Similarly, some satisfactory solution to Kashmir, in consonance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people, may be found if India and Pakistan are sincere about it. But there are certainly no signs of any of these changes yet. In short, the changes which can privilege peaceful interpretations of jihad are beyond the domain of interpreters or historians. This, as mentioned before, is no reason for not studying the history of the idea of jihad and if the reader has derived intellectual gratification from this book, as the author certainly has, it would have served its purpose.

## NOTES

1. For the repudiation of jihad in the nineteenth century see Jaffar 1992.
2. Yasmeen 2017, 125.
3. Cook 2000, 515.
4. Eickelmann and Piscatori 1996, 38.
5. *Ibid.*, 43.
6. *Ibid.*, 43.
7. Watt 2006, 317.
8. Zaman 2012, 104.
9. *Ibid.*, 73.
10. *Ibid.*, 33.
11. Azmeh 1993, 1.
12. Ahmed 2016, 544.
13. *Ibid.*, 452.
14. Sivan 1985, 27.
15. Rahman 1982, 136.

16. Pipes 1983.
17. Euben and Zaman 2009, 345.
18. Sivan 1985, 131–134.
19. *Ibid.*, 56.
20. Fair 2014, 66–102.
21. Shah 2014, 237–253.
22. Thorup 2010, 192.
23. Burke 2003, 301–307.
24. Sageman 2004 and 2008.
25. *Ibid.*, 2004, 70 and 137–138.
26. *Ibid.*, 92.
27. *Ibid.*, 93.
28. Sageman 2008, 143.
29. Sageman 2011, 121.
30. Bakker 2011, 140.
31. *Ibid.*, 142.
32. Roy 1999, 36–38.
33. Coolsaet 2011, 261.
34. Fair. Forthcoming, 195–198.
35. Abbas 2004, 189.
36. *Ibid.*, 190.
37. *Ibid.*, 192.
38. Fair. Forthcoming, 207–209.
39. Rana 2015, 56.
40. *Ibid.*, 57–59.
41. *Ibid.*, 60.
42. Pipes 2004, 5.