

Core Curriculum

3 Foundations of Islam - Obligatory Acts

3.2 **Jihād in Islamic Law and Spirituality**

Jihad literally means struggle. In Islam it means to struggle for the sake of Allah. This can be done in two ways. The first way is through something we call the “Minor Jihad” and the second way is what we call the “Major Jihad”.

The minor Jihad is when an aggressing army attacks you, or your village or town is invaded and you defend yourself.

The second form of Jihad is called the Major Jihad or al-Jihād al-Akbar. According to the Prophet Muhammad (s), this is the most difficult kind of jihad because it is a fight against your deepest desires.

this jihad is a struggle between 1) the divine and angelic powers that we have inside us which command us to the good and 2) the satanic forces that want us to follow our bad desires.

How does one win this battle though? It sounds like a pretty tough struggle. Remember we had a specific discussion on the nafs previously. Winning this inner battle means winning against our bad habits and developing new and good ones. The more we get used to saying no to our bad desires, the stronger our will becomes and the easier it becomes to say “no” to them overtime. But if we are constantly submitting to whatever desires our evil selves push us to, we will get used to that and over time, it will get harder and harder to say no to the bad desires.