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The Human Dimension of Jihad as Reflected in the Sufi Experience

Dr. Hadjer Mansouri, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, University of Batna 1
Laboratory of Islamic Fiqh and New Problems
hadjer.mansouri@univ-batna.dz

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Abstract:
This research explores the relationship between Sufism and jihad by examining the concept of human being from a Qur'anic perspective, and by assessing its presence in Sufi pêrspective and in certain practices of jihad within Sufism. It begins with the observation that certain Sufi practices have become associated with asceticism, seclusion and devotional practices , while jihad has become synonymous with combat and bloodshed. This has resulted in a divide between spiritual cultivation and active engagement with reality, as well as between jihad and expressions of human being. The study therefore poses the following question: How did Sufism, drawing on the Qur'anic conception of human being, contributed to highlighting the human dimension of jihad? The study concludes that Sufi education, based on self-purification and self-struggle, is not inherently incompatible with active engagement in reality. The 'greater jihad' and the 'lesser jihad' are two complementary aspects of the Sufi experience:; in which the internal struggle prepares individuals to take on responsibilities and confront threats to human interests. Furthermore, an examination of certain Sufi models revealed principles and values that preserve human dignity and safeguard human rights, thereby highlighting the human dimension of jihad in Sufi experiences.

Keywords: human being; Sufism; jihad; perfect human being; ribat

Introduction:

The Holy Qur'an holds human beings in high regard, honoring them as creatures favoured by Allah, the Exalted, above many of His other creations. He has endowed them with all that is in the heavens and on earth, and has entrusted them with the responsibility of stewardship and the cultivation of the earth. He has also endowed them with the capabilities and energies that enable them to shoulder this responsibility. This status has made the study of human nature, value, capabilities and the purpose of human existence one of the issues that has attracted the attention of Islamic thought, which bases its view of human being on a divine authority as expressed in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an provides the foundations that shape our understanding of human being and reveal its nature, the purpose of its existence, his role in the universe, and his relationship with himself, his Creator and the world around him.

This perspective has found resonance in the Sufi experiene, which has made the nurturing and purification of the human being its central focus. Indeed, in some of its conceptions, this has culminated in the notion of the 'perfect human being', described as the fruit of a path of purification, refinement and spiritual elevation. Attention to the inner self, the struggle against one's own desires, the cultivation of noble character, and other such principles were linked to the endeavour to build a personality that strikes a balance between spiritual cultivation and the attainment of higher stations of closeness to the Creator. In addition to the responsibilities towards oneself and one's surroundings that this existential function – stewardship of creation – entails, other considerations must be taken into account.

However, certain interpretations and practices associated with Islam have led to reductive portrayals of some of its concepts. Jihad has been reduced to manifestations of violence and bloodshed, and linked to the coercion of people and the violation of their dignity. Sufism is often misunderstood as being solely concerned with asceticism, seclusion and withdrawal from life. In some of its more negative manifestations, it has even been linked to passivity. This has led to the assertion that there is a contradiction between Sufism and human agency, and between jihad and the values that preserve human dignity.

It is therefore vital to research the relationship between Sufism and jihad, especially given that the concept of jihad itself is too broad to be reduced to war and combat. The term's presence in Sufism, specifically in the 'greater jihad' or the struggle against the self, invites us to reflect on the nature of the relationship between this struggle, which is a fundamental aspect of Sufi education, and jihad in the cause of God, which is defined by confronting what threatens humanity. Sufi education places significant emphasis on the concept of the inner struggle as a tool for self-reflection and the moderation of desires. However, the participation of Sufis in jihad raises questions about the practical implications of this spiritual evolution on real-world conduct and the extent to which the values associated with jihad are reflected in its practice.

The present study therefore seeks to examine the relationship between Sufism and jihad. The study begins by exploring the concept of human being from Qur'anic perspective, and then evaluates the extent to which this concept is embodied within the Sufi vision of human being. The study also examine the participation of Sufis in jihad, with the aim of revealing the manifestations of humanity in Sufi practices of jihad.

The significance of this research stems from the importance of its subject matter, which brings together interrelated issues in the fields of Islamic doctrine and thought—namely, the concept of human being, Sufism and jihad—and the study seeks to uncover the connection between them. Its significance is also evident in its reinterpretation of the Sufi experience from a perspective that goes beyond viewing it only in terms of worship and instead examines of the human element within this experience, while also seeking to understand the practice of jihad in the light of the values that preserve human dignity. The research problem therefore centres on the following main question: How has Sufism, based on the Qur'anic conception of human being, contributed to highlighting the human dimension of jihad? A number of sub-questions stem from this problem, the most important of which are: What is meant by 'human being' in the Qur'anic and Sufi conceptions?; What is the nature of the relationship between Sufism and jihad?; - How did female Sufis participate in jihad?; How was the Sufi conception of humanity reflected in jihadist practices?

To address this research problem, the study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to presente and analyse concepts and ideas, and to examine certain experiences and examples that reveal the participation of female Sufis in jihad and the human dimension in their practice of it. The study was organised into three main sections. The first addressed the conceptual framework of the research, which focused on the concepts of human being, Sufism and jihad. the second was devoted to studying the relationship between Sufism and jihad and the extent of the presence of Sufis in jihad by examining the system of connection; whilst the third section addressed the role of Sufism in highlighting the human dimension of jihad. The study concluded with a set of findings included with a set of findings.

1. Defining the Concepts:

1.1- The concept of human being in the Holy Qur'an:

a. The term 'insan' (human being), can be defined in linguistically as follows: Those acquainted with classic arabic dictionaries will be aware that the word "ins" has two meanings related to human nature. The first is the act of forgetting, while the second is 'uns', meaning 'affection' and representing the opposite of aversion. This is indicative of the social nature of human beings, which can only be realised through harmony amongst people.[i]

B. Human being in the Holy Qur'an: As for the term " human being"in the Holy Qur'an, it does not refer merely to outward appearance, but often indicates the inner spiritual nature of the human being. These meanings are particularly evident in the words of Allah: " 'Recite in the name of your Lord who created (1) Created man from a clinging substances (2) Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous (3) Who taught by the pen (4) Taught man that which he knew not (5) No!(but) indeed, man transgress (6) because he sees himself self-sufficient (7) Indeed, to your Lord is the return (8)" - Surah Al-'Alaq: 1–8 – this verse draws our attention to the creation of man from a clinging substance and distinct through knowledge, while also warning against the transgression into which he may fall when, carried away by arrogance, he comes to believe that he has no need of his Creator.[ii] This means that, in the Holy Qur'an, human being is being 'neither an angel nor an animal; although in certain states of degradation he is capable of becoming worse than an animal, and in certain states of elevation he can elevate his spirit to the level of the angels in purity, yet in his natural state he is something between the two, possessing a propensity for evil; neither of these elements is alien to his nature, nor is it imposed upon him from outside himself.'[iii] Man thus possesses an innate nature with two distinct inclinations: the first is material, binding him to the earth, for life cannot be realised without these inescapable urges; the second is spiritual, directing him towards elevation and sublimity, relative liberation from earthly bonds, or at least control over them. This nature, which is unique to human beings, is the basis of their honour, as stated in the words of the Almighty: 'And we have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much over what we created with preference.'

It is important to note that human beings are, by their very nature, imperfect; the linguistic meaning of the term encompasses both positive and negative aspect. Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an addresses the physical and spiritual dimensions of human nature, emphasising the importance of reason as the foremost tool for acquiring knowledge, as well as righteousness and submission, while warning against tyranny and arrogance. In the context of this study, the human dimension refers to the totality of meanings and values that ensure that human beings, by virtue of their dignity, freedom and rights, are central to the aims, principles and practice of jihad. This is based on the Qur'anic conception of human beings as honoured creatures entrusted with the stewardship of the earth.

Sufism is a philosophy that aims to achieve a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of human nature. Its approach is to guide the relationship between human beings and their Creator, and to emphasize spiritual and moral values that are practised in everyday life. In this context, we pose the following question: What is the Sufi concept of human being? Before that, however, the concept of Sufism must be clarified.

1.2- The concept of Sufism:

The focus here will not be on the linguistic and terminological differencse surrounding Sufism[iv] , as many specialists in this field have attempted to define its meaning and formulate a comprehensive definition for it. Instead, we shall concentrate on the meaning relevant to the subject of our study, namely the station of ihsan mentioned in the hadith of Jibril, peace be upon him, in which the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him explains the concept of ihsan. In my view, this is one of the most precise definitions of Sufism ever formulated. It summarises its subject matter, its function, and the goal it seeks to achieve. This is based on the idea of drawing closer to God through the purification of the heart; as the prophet (peace be upon him) said:"Verily, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound; and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart." The text also delineates the route to attaining this station, commencing with the station of islam (the pillars of Islam), progressing to the station of iman (the pillars of faith), and culminating in the station of ihsan, where the integration of the outward and the inward is exemplified. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained, this means: "That you worship Allah as you are seeing Him; for if you do not see Him, He, verily sees you."[v] One of the verses that reflects a meaning related to ihsan mentioned in the hadith of Jibril (peace be upon him) is the following: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believers, we will surely cause him to live a good life ,and we will surely reward according to the best to the best of what they used to do".(Surah Al-Nahl,16:97). The Quran also explains the meaning of righteousness in surah Al-Baqarah 177 : Righteouse is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, bat [true] righteousness is one who believes in Allah, the last day, the angels, the book, and the prophets...). The assertion that the essence of Sufism aligns with the concept of ihsan signifies its status as the fundamental tenet of Islam, representing the ultimate aspiration of believers. The pursuit of ihsan is defined by the establishment of a spiritual connection with Allah through adherence to His divine directives and the avoidance of His prohibitions. These encompass both practical guidelines and moral values. This approach underscores the significance of worship, emphasising its purpose as a means of connecting with the divine rather than as an end in itself.

However, the concept of Sufism that has been discussed appears to focus on regulating the relationship between human beings and their Creator, while concentrating on the spiritual dimention. This suggests a lack of compatibility with the dual nature of human beings, who are concerned with their relationship to the world around them and their material dimention. How then, can the relationship between Sufism and the material dimension of human existence be understood? In this context, we cite a statement by Imam al-Shirani, who discussed the practical implications of Sufism's focus on the spiritual dimension, stating: The science of Sufism is a system that emerged from the spiritual enlightenment of the saints, who gained knowledge through their actions in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Those who apply these principles are said to gain insights, morals, secrets and truths that are beyond human expression."[vi] To summarise, the spiritual dimension of human beings – as demonstrated through adherence to the Qur'an and the Sunnah – does not merely involve regulating the relationship between man and his Creator, but extends to other levels. It governs human relationships with other people based on moral values and principles derived from divine commands. Those who wish to follow these principles endeavour to embody and apply them in order to draw closer to God, the Almighty.It also has a significant impact on the relationship between humans and the universe, which is governed by human cognitive faculties and the sciences, as well as the knowledge and mysteries they reveal. In surah Al-Baqarah 30, God informes the angels that He will place a vicegerent on earth. This role enables humanity to shape its own reality in accordance with the responsabilities entrusted to it. Sufism is a philosophy that aims to achieve a balance between the spiritual and material aspects of human existence. It is a way of life that encourages the realisation of the concept of human being within the framework of the Sufi vision. One of the ways in which this is expressed is through the concept of the 'perfect human being'.

The concept of the 'perfect human being': This term has been adopted by certain Sufis, including figures such as Ibn al-'Arabi, al-Tabrizi and Emir 'Abd al-Qadir. However, the concept can be traced back to Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, who is widely regarded as the first to allude to this idea, although he did not use the term itself in the saying attributed to him:

Your solution is internal, though it may not be immediately apparent; it is intrinsic, though it may not be perceptible.

You may perceive yourself as a minor element, but within you exists the broader world.[vii]

This expression is reminiscent of a concept later adopted by Sufi thinkers who embraced the notion of the 'perfect human being'. In the thought of Ibn al-'Arabi, for example, this concept assumes a significance that transcends the mere status of a honoured creature. He regards the human being as a creature created in the Image, embodying both cosmic and divine realities, thereby qualifying him for the rank of perfection and vice-regency. Ibn al-'Arabi's theory posits that human being unites divine realities, otherwise known as the Divine Names, with cosmic realities. According to this theory, this makes human being becoming the most perfect of all beings.[viii] This concept points to the knowledgeable and conscious

human being who combines contemplation and action, endowed with reason, guided by the Sharia, and realised through spiritual discernment.

Sufism is a field in which some have focused on cultivating the perfect human being – who seeks to draw closer to his Creator by embodying His attributes, and adopts this as a methodology for engaging with his surroundings and reality – and who thereby achieves a balance between the material and the spiritual in his nature. When we refer to the 'perfect human being', we are talking about the vicegerent who acts on behalf of God, the Exalted, in governing the universe in accordance with His will, obeying His commands and refraining from His prohibitions. In this regard, Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi, describing the perfect human being as envisaged by Muhammad Iqbal, says: "I am concerned that I may surprise you with something you cannot fathom or perceive if I tell you that the perfect human being whom Muhammad Iqbal found—and in whom he found all that he sought in terms of humanity, strength, life, beauty and perfection—is the Muslim, no more and no less… For he sees in the Muslim the longed-for ideal and the perfect image of humanity"[ix] The term 'Muslim' refers to the ideal Muslim, who combines unshakeable faith, courage, spiritual strength, asceticism, and humanity; who lives by his mission and for his mission. The ideal of the muslim remains constant and undisturbed by external circumstances. However, these circumstances and their way of life may evolve over time. Iqbal expressed this through the concept of the Muslim, whereas Emir Abd al-Qadir's perspective is that of the Khalīfa, as he himself states: The ideal human being is the Khalīfa, who is prepared to embody all the divine names in their fullness, both in essence and attributes, for he is created in the divine image. [x]

As elucidated by both Emir Abd al-Qadir and Iqbal, the ideal human being is the self-aware Muslim who is not led astray by his material nature. This individual is aware of the latent energies within him that enable him to think and act in his world. By harnessing these energies and potentials to fulfil the cosmic function for which he is responsible – namely, the function of vicegerency – he can achieve his full potential. The concept of the perfect human being is linked to manifestations of divine honour and the implications thereof regarding human free will and superiority over all other creatures. Sufism is a religion whose fundamental principles seek to achieve a harmonious balance between the spiritual and the material aspects of human existence. This pursuit is regarded as a pivotal route to attaining human perfection. This signifies the Muslim, the vicegerent, or the human being at the highest level of humanity. In order to achieve this rank, Sufism has relied on an essential pillar known as the 'Greater Jihad'. This is widely regarded as the foundation of the spiritual path towards God. What, then, does jihad mean? Yet, what is the relationship between jihad and Sufism?

The concept of jihad:

A. Linguistically : The root 'J-H-D' has multiple connotations in linguistic dictionaries, the most relevant to our subject being: energy, hardship, capacity, and excessive exertion; from these branch out meanings such as fighting and warfare. In "Lisan al-'Arab" it is stated: "Al-johd and al-jahd : energy; it has been said that al-jahd means hardship, whilst al-johd means energy, diligence and striving: exerting one's utmost capacity and effort, and it is derived from al-jahd and energy… One who strives against the enemy does so with mujahada and jihad, that is, fights him, and strives in the cause of Allah. And 'jihad' denotes excess and the exhaustion of one's utmost capacity and energy, whether in word or deed."[xi] It is evident from this linguistic usage that jihad is not confined to a single meaning limited to war and fighting; rather, its scope is broader than that, as it encompasses every exertion of one's utmost capacity and energy, whether in word or deed, as well as extreme situations that cause hardship to a person. This breadth of linguistic meaning applies – as will become clear – to the technical meaning as well.

B. Technically: One of the most precise technical definitions of jihad, and one that best captures the breadth of its meanings, is that given by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, who states: 'Jihad, in the Shari'ah, is the exertion of effort in fighting the disbelievers; it is also applied to the struggle against one's own self, the devil and the immoral. As for the struggle against one's own self, it involves learning the matters of religion, then acting upon them, and then teaching them; as for the struggle against the devil, it involves warding off the doubts he instils and the desires with which he adorns them; as for the struggle against the unbelievers, it is waged with one's hand, wealth, tongue and heart; and as for the struggle against the immoral, it is waged with one's hand, then one's tongue, then one's heart."[xii] This definition reveals the diversity inherent in the term 'jihad'; it is too broad to be reduced to a single manifestation represented by fighting with the sword and the shedding of blood. This is because jihad – in its essence – involves exerting one's utmost effort and enduring hardship whilst warding off everything that seeks to divert a person from the path of Allah, the Almighty, whether these distractions are internal, such as the self and one's desires, or external, such as Satan and the whispers he instils in the human soul. It thus encompasses all situations in which the believer commits himself to righteousness—which means adhering to the commands and avoiding the prohibitions—and all the means that assist in upholding that commitment. This is a matter that requires effort and hardship to achieve, on the one hand, and striving to maintain it, on the other. This understanding is supported by the words of Allah, the Exalted: "And whoever strives, only strives for[the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds" (Al-'Ankabut 29:6), Ibn Kathir interpretes as righteous deeds; he holds that the 'jihad' referred to in the words of Allah: "Whoever does righteousness - it is for his [own] soul; and whoever does evil [does so] against it. And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants." (Fussilat 46) – meaning that the reward for a good deed benefits its doer, and Allah is Self-Sufficient, having no need of the deeds of His servants. In this context, it is reported that al-Hasan al-Basri said: "A man may strive in jihad without ever having drawn a sword in his life"[xiii]. This emphasises that true jihad does not necessarily depend on confronting the enemy with weapons, but may be achieved by one's own struggle to remain obedient to God.

Among the technical definitions that take a spiritual approach, which suits the breadth of the concept of jihad and is appropriate to the subject of our study, is the view that, with the advent of Islam, jihad came to signify guiding a person to his Lord by removing the obstacles between him and Allah, the Exalted and Glorious. This is the function of jihad in both its aspects: the Greater Jihad, which is directed inwards, signifies: "the process of guiding human beings to their true self and to their Lord"[xiv] , and is achieved through striving against the self so that it does not become attached to this world, its pleasures and its desires, which prevent a person from connecting with their Lord. As for the lesser jihad, which is directed outwards, it signifies: "the process of guiding others to their true selves and to their Lord".[xv] That is to say, it relates to external factors that prevent the fulfilment of the will of God, the Exalted and Glorious. Thus, the concept of jihad within the Sufi perspective broadens to transcend the manifestations of war, combat and bloodshed, and is linked in both its aspects to the idea of attaining the highest stations of closeness to God.

Through these meanings, it becomes clear why the Greater Jihad is the most important tool of Sufism and a fundamental pillar relied upon as a methodology for the training of the seeker and the shaping of his character. For at the outset of the spiritual journey, knowledge of doctrine and the rectification of acts of worship and dealings with others are indispensable; and whilst travelling the path, the seeker cannot do without knowledge of the states of the heart, good character and the purification of the soul. All of this requires a struggle that enables the seeker to adhere to the requirements of the path towards God. Hence, this study raises a question regarding the relationship between jihad and Sufism, as a fundamental step towards understanding the role of Sufism in preserving the humanity of jihad.

2. The Relationship between Sufism and Jihad:

Despite these authentic meanings of jihad, derived from the teachings of Islam—from which Sufism drew the meanings of the 'greater jihad', which is essentially based on striving against the self for the sake of purification, refinement and righteousness, not for the sake of withdrawing from life—Sufism has generally been associated in people's minds with a completely different meaning. namely asceticism in a sense detached from human reality. This has led to the spread of a 'baseless' notion linking Sufism with idleness, laziness, stagnation, and an escape from the trials of life.'[xvi] This idea has contributed to the formation of a negative image of Sufism that has become entrenched in people's minds, due to several factors, particularly political ones, including those during the colonial era; where this misconception was exploited to call for the renunciation of worldly pursuits, including fighting and jihad, which, from the coloniser's perspective, were regarded as forms of attachment to worldly pursuits; Consequently, this superficial and negative image of Sufism encouraged people to abandon the "lesser jihad" (jihad al-asghar) due to its apparent contradiction with its principles, whilst the focus shifted to the "greater jihad" (jihad al-akbar) and its associated asceticism, renunciation of worldly life and withdrawal from social life; thus, innovations, superstitions and the idea of submission to colonialism—on the grounds that it was God's decree and destiny—spread.

Thus was formed the view of those who reject Sufism, which portrays it as hostile to jihad and loyal to colonialism, injustice and tyranny; and thus the humanity of Islam found itself caught between two misconceptions: the first being the portrayal of Islam as a religion of violence, bloodshed and the violation of human freedom; The second is the portrayal of a religion that isolates its followers from life and instils in them a mentality of passivity and resignation to divine decree and fate – in the negative sense – which imposes submission even to the usurping coloniser. Caught between these two perspectives, the true concept of jihad has been lost, particularly within the context of Sufism and, more generally, within the context of Islam. To dispel these misconceptions, we must set out the facts that refute these false claims, both from a factual and a historical perspective, beginning with an explanation of the relationship between Sufism and jihad in both its forms.

1.2. Jihad from a Sufi perspective: As we have previously explained, jihad in its general sense is not confined to the meaning of combat; rather, it denotes the exertion of one's utmost effort, endeavour and energy, whether in confronting an external or internal enemy, and whether it involves confronting the internal impulses that stand in a person's way or confronting external factors that threaten the community. Hence the distinction between the lesser jihad – fighting the enemy – and the greater jihad – fighting the self; a distinction that indicates two complementary levels of action, between which there is no contradiction. This raises the question: does Sufism's focus on fighting and purifying the self imply a prioritisation of the greater jihad and a negation of the function of the lesser jihad?

Sufism is regarded as an educational and formative system that seeks to elevate human existence to the level of khilafah, signifying the human being as an active and influential agent within their environment and in the universe in which they have been appointed as vicegerents; so that they may fulfil the purpose and goal of their existence, and this is the central idea upon which the concept of humanity in the Holy Qur'an is based, an idea which has guided Islamic thought in general, and the moderate Sufi conception of humanity in particular. What distinguishes this vision is that it stems from a true understanding of human being, its nature (matter and spirit), its capacities (cognitive faculties), and its aims and objectives (worship and stewardship); thus, the first step towards realising one's humanity is to achieve a balance between one's physical and spiritual existence; For this reason, Sufism has focused on the spiritual dimension—including the values, ethics and the relationship between human beings and their Creator—which requires the "greater struggle" (al-jihad al-akbar) in order to discipline the self to adhere to them, as well as in the endeavour to embody all of this in reality; a process which yields "the khalifa" or, as known within the Sufi framework, the "perfect human being", who undergoes "the greater jihad" as a foundational stage in building a character capable of action.

As for transcending this dualistic nature, it results in a restriction of human free will, causing it to become subject to whims, greed and attachment to the self's desires; this leads to the spread of discord, conflict, strife, injustice and the violation of rights. It is here, in this context, that the role of the "lesser jihad'" comes into play : the sacrifice of the self or that which is beneath it—a self prepared by the "greater jihad"—in defence of values such as love, freedom, justice and equality. Only that person who has turned away from the world, renouncing its allure, and who has prepared himself through the "greater jihad" to sacrifice it for the sake of God Almighty, will be able to undertake this task.

For this reason, the concept of ji[xvii]had was originally linked to the Greater Jihad—which involves striving against one's own self to renounce its desires, the pleasures of this world, and to practise asceticism towards them. It is this meaning that leads those in whose hearts it has taken root to the Lesser Jihad, which signifies exerting effort and sacrificing one's wealth and life in the cause of upholding the Word of Allah, the Exalted, who says: 'Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for that they will have Paradise; they fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed…' – At-Tawbah 111 – Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi says: "That moral and spiritual strength, that exceptional and formidable character, that sincerity and piety, and that courage and nobility of character which we need… for struggle, self-sacrifice, the giving of one's life and soul, renewal and reform, do not arise or manifest themselves, in most cases, except after the purification of the soul, the refinement of the self, spiritual discipline and worship; and that is why we see that most of those who played a role in renewal and jihad in the history of Islam enjoyed a lofty spiritual standing."[xviii] Thus, the Greater Jihad precedes the Lesser Jihad, for it prepares the soul to face the visible enemy. The soul that is detached from worldly affairs and in control of its desires and passions is the soul prepared to sacrifice its life and all that is beneath it in the cause of Allah and for the sake of upholding the truth. The Greater Jihad is what grants the soul the courage, determination and strong will to confront the enemy. As Shalabi Ahmad says: "As for those souls that have strayed and followed their whims, they are unable to face the enemy, nor to contend with the aggressors."[xix]

- 2.2 Sufis and Jihad:

From the foregoing, we may say that Sufism, with the aim of realising human dignity—which begins by enabling a person to fulfil the purpose and goal of their existence, namely khilafah — may shift from the Greater Jihad to the Lesser Jihad; to confront anything that might undermine human dignity, humanity or freedom. And there is no freedom like the freedom of Islam, which liberates man from the bondage of materialistic tendencies that claim to raise the banner of human dignity and free him from the constraints of religion, whilst in reality they render him a slave to materialism, standing before it helpless and powerless; thus transferring him to a different form of servitude—servitude to material laws that make him an integral part of nature, powerless to contravene the laws that govern them both alike. In contrast, we find that the freedom of Islam has led human being to a form of servitude that guarantees their dignity, rights and humanity; namely, servitude to their Creator. This is distinct from material servitude, which is regarded as nothing more than 'empty laws and forms that cannot stir in a person the slightest desire for altruism and sacrifice, let alone the sacrifice of their life and soul, —which requires— a spiritual delight and a concern for moral benefit that makes immediate material gains seem insignificant in his eyes."[xx] Thus, human being's servitude to his Creator imbues his life with meaning, so that he becomes a person of purpose who lives by his mission and for his mission, prepared to sacrifice himself for its sake.

The notion of moving from the 'greater jihad' to the 'lesser jihad' does not imply a disregard for human being dignity; and there is no clearer evidence of this than the example set by the greatest role model, the most perfect of mankind, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, through the campaigns and battles he waged alongside his righteous companions. Throughout all stages of his mission, the Prophet, peace be upon him, called for dialogue and debate in the best manner; the greatest evidence of this is the gradual introduction of the legislation on jihad in two fundamental phases: the first was the Meccan phase, which focused on the jihad of the word, during which the Prophet, peace be upon him, presented arguments and evidence for a period of thirteen years; As for the second phase, this was the Medinan period which followed the establishment of the state and the Islamic system. It was a phase marked by wars and campaigns waged by the Prophet, peace be upon him, alongside his Companions; these were never initiated by them, nor did they ever exceed the bounds of self-defence. They were necessitated by the circumstances facing the Muslims at the time, in order to preserve the Islamic state. An example of this is the Battle of Badr, in which the Prophet did not initiate the fighting, nor did he ever pave the way for it. His purpose in going there was to recover the Muslims' wealth that had been confiscated by the Quraysh in Mecca; thus, the aim of the 'lesser jihad' here was not to compel people to convert to Islam, but to rid the seat of authority of injustice and corruption, This is what has been established regarding the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and his noble Companions, who, when confronting the enemy, would offer them a choice between three options: Islam, protection (dhimma), or the sword. It should be noted that the sword here is the last resort, coming only after the rejection of Islam and the protection (dhimma), which allows Muslims to rule justly, thereby preventing injustice and corruption.[xxi]

Jihad in Islam was not, as some fallacies suggest, legislated with the aim of spreading Islam by the sword or forcing people to embrace it; rather, its purpose was to defend Islam and remove obstacles to the call to Islam. Gustave Le Bon states in his book "The Civilisation of the Arabs": "The reader, upon examining the Arab conquests and the reasons for their victories, will see that force was not a factor in the spread of the Qur'an, and that the Arabs left the vanquished free to practise their own religions. If it so happened that some Christian peoples embraced Islam and adopted Arabic as their language, this was due to the justice practised by the conquering Arabs, the likes of which people had never before experienced, and because of the ease inherent in Islam, which was unknown to other religions."[xxii] In other words, the widespread dissemination of Islam amongst peoples was not achieved through coercion or bloodshed, but was linked to the characteristics of Islam and

its distinctive tolerance and justice, which led to its easy acceptance amongst people; this is due to its suitability to human nature and the changing circumstances of time and place.

Thus, even after the changes that occurred as a result of the transition from the Meccan period to the Prophetic period, we find that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, emphasised the meaning of the 'greater jihad', despite it being a phase that required the 'lesser jihad'; this is evident from his statement upon returning from one of the military campaigns: 'We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad', Although the authenticity of this hadith is weak, as mentioned by al-Bayhaqi ([xxiii]), its meanings were nevertheless present and widely disseminated at that time, particularly with regard to the Prophet's—may the best of prayers and peace be upon him—concern for the purification, refinement and discipline of the soul in the face of the desires, whims and whispers it encounters. It is also authentically reported from the Prophet, peace be upon him, through a sound chain of transmission, that he said: "The mujahid is he who strives against his own self in obedience to Allah."[xxiv] From this hadith, we understand the complementary relationship between the struggle against the self and confronting the enemy; for, in the Sufi view, external jihad cannot be properly carried out if the person practising it is subject to his inner whims, For if a person trains themselves in patience, self-restraint and sincerity, they will be capable of jihad and of adhering to the goals and constraints that prevent power from turning into tyranny.

This does not mean to suggest that the struggle against one's own self is a substitute for external jihad; rather, it contributes to preparing a person spiritually and morally to put this struggle into practice in reality, by freeing oneself from the dominion of lust and desire and prioritising the public good over one's own interests. In this context, Ibn al-Qayyim says: 'The struggle against one's own self takes precedence over the struggle against the enemy and is the foundation for it; for unless one first struggles against one's own self to do what one has been commanded to do, to refrain from what one has been forbidden to do, and to fight against it in the cause of Allah; he will not be able to wage jihad against his external enemy. How, then, can he wage jihad against his enemy and gain the upper hand over him, when the enemy within him—who is dominant over him and has power over him—has not been fought or resisted in the cause of Allah? Indeed, he cannot even set out to face his enemy until he has first waged jihad against his own self to overcome it."[xxv]

As for the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them—who are our role models, having been brought up under the guidance of the Prophet, upon whom be the best of blessings and peace—we find that they adhered to his instructions, which call for self-control and restraint of one's desires, and for not chasing after worldly gains. Among these is what the narrations confirm to us regarding the Companions' sincerity in their pursuit of jihad in the cause of Allah, to exalt His Word, and not for the sake of spoils or material gain. "This reminds us of the story of the Bedouin who pledged allegiance to the Messenger, peace be upon him, for jihad. When the dust of battle had settled, the Noble Messenger wished to give him his share of the spoils, but the Bedouin said to him: 'I did not pledge allegiance to you for this, O Messenger of Allah, but rather I pledged allegiance to you so that I might shoot an arrow here' – and he pointed to his chest – 'and enter Paradise.'[xxvi] This spirit has remained alive in every mujahid who strives to exalt the word of Allah. Thus, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were the first ascetics and Sufis, moulded by the guidance of the Noble Messenger, upon whom be the best of prayers and peace, who laid the foundations of the Islamic Sufi movement. As for the erroneous practices recorded in Islamic history, these are to be attributed to their perpetrators and not to Islam. Among the institutions that attest to the contribution of a group of Sufis to jihad, and the strength of their presence within its ranks, is the commitment to which the Sufis resorted, turning away from pleasures and desires whilst striving to defend the Islamic frontiers; this was one of the finest examples representing jihad within the framework of Sufism and within the framework of Islam in general.

Here, the connection between the concept of the 'perfect human being' and jihad in the Sufi vision becomes clear; for the perfect human being is not detached from reality; rather, they are one who has achieved a degree of balance between the demands of the body and the soul, and between self-purification and active engagement with reality, to the point of engaging in jihad in its outward manifestation—which represents the outcome of that spiritual and moral edification founded upon the 'greater jihad', which endows its practitioner with patience, discipline, devotion and courage, which manifest themselves in the realm of historical and social action. This is what we shall explore in the most powerful system of jihad known to Islamic civilisation, represented by the system of al-rabt.

2.3 – Sufism and the system of 'al-ribat':

Whilst the struggle against the self is linked to its purification, refinement and liberation from the dominion of desire, it does not stop there; rather, it prepares the individual for social life through the transition from inner cultivation to action in the real world. One of the most prominent examples illustrating this transition is the ribat, which combines worship with garrison duty at the frontiers and readiness to defend the community; in other words, it is an institution not merely associated with asceticism and renunciation of worldly life and its pleasures, but one that embodies the image of a person whose spiritual cultivation is not an end in itself, but rather a means of preparing him for positive action within his environment.

A. **The meaning of 'al-Ribat':** The term 'al-Ribat' carries two overlapping connotations; on the one hand, it refers to the place where the murabitoon reside to guard the frontiers, and on the other, to the place where those devoted to worship and spiritual practice take refuge. Al-Maqrizi combined these two meanings in his definition, stating: "Al-Ribat is the plural of 'ribat', which is a dwelling inhabited by those on the path of God; it is the home and abode of the Sufis. 'Al-Murabata' means to remain stationed at an enemy outpost; it is also said that every outpost whose inhabitants defend those behind them is called a 'ribat'. Thus, the mujahid stationed at the outpost defends those behind him, whilst the one residing in the ribat in obedience to God wards off calamities from the land and its people through his supplication."[xxvii] Al-Ghazali also cites the same meaning, stating: "The root meaning of 'al-ribat' is that which is used to tether horses; it was then applied to any frontier

where the inhabitants defend those behind them. Thus, the mujahid stationed at the frontier defends those behind him, whilst the one residing in the ribat in obedience to God wards off calamities from the people and the land through his presence and supplication." "[xxviii] This dual connotation reveals a significant characteristic of the concept of 'al-Ribat': it combines inner and outer strength and steadfastness, which translates in practice into the act of 'jihad al-asghar' (the lesser jihad) through garrison duty at the frontiers. This does not represent merely a military preparedness separate from spiritual cultivation, but rather an intertwining of the spiritual, devotional and jihadist dimensions. Historical sources indicate that the ribat established at the frontiers combined residence for worship with garrison duty for jihad, whilst the ribat found in some urban centres were predominantly characterised by the devotional and residential nature of Sufism.[xxix] This means that we do not generalise the military function to the ribat system; rather, the focus here will be on the model in which the spiritual function converged with the jihadist function.

B. **Jihad in the ribat:**

Various periods of Islamic history witnessed political unrest and power struggles, alongside the spread of luxury and indulgence in pleasures amongst certain groups, which prompted a number of devout worshippers and ascetics to engage in preaching and guidance, whilst others chose to garrison the frontiers, far from these conflicts and strife and from worldly indulgences, where they found a sphere combining worship and garrison duty; their aim was to practise both the greater and lesser forms of jihad;[xxx] They established the 'rabt', which served as military-religious institutions fulfilling an educational role, comprising the devotional practices of the disciples and their reception of guidance from their sheikhs, in addition to military training, guard duty, and participation in combat on the borders of Islamic states in their defence.[xxxi]

The ascetics amongst the Sufis were the most prominent figures in the ribat, which is considered one of the strongest systems of jihad, as it combined two functions: the first being devotional, educational and instructive, and the second being jihad. This is because the devotional spirit in jihad, linked to the endeavour to exalt the word of God, necessitates, in addition to combatant jihad, the support of God Almighty; Thus, supplication and devotion through dhikr and daily devotional practices were characteristic of these ribats, which were regarded as military, educational and spiritual schools. The spiritual dimension of these institutions is most clearly evident in the role played by their sheikhs; the sheikh was not merely a supervisor of the ribat, but performed an educational function based on refining behaviour, strengthening resolve and guiding the disciples, They thus had a clear influence on the spiritual upbringing of their followers, which was reflected in their participation in jihad, to the extent that the Sufis came to be described as **'**the youths of the frontiers' [xxxii]. Consequently, at the head of every movement for jihad and struggle, we find a strong spiritual figure who instils courage and certainty in the believers.[xxxiii] On this basis, Sufism and the Sufis' presence in the Ribat should not be viewed merely as military participation; rather, it is a practical embodiment of the relationship between spiritual purification and active engagement, For the patient, disciplined individual, detached from the desires of the self, is better able and more prepared to fulfil the duties of garrison duty and defence; thus, in the Ribat, the struggle against the self is integrated with the struggle against the enemy, so that a person's spiritual development becomes a vital element in preparing them for external action.

Historical experience in certain periods confirms that this intertwining of Sufism and the principles of jihad was not merely a theoretical concept; indeed, the names of certain Muslim leaders are associated with the establishment of khanqahs, ribats and zawiyas, owing to the religious, educational and social functions they performed, In this context, Saladin (Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi) stands out; prior to the decisive confrontation with the Crusaders, his policy centred on achieving unity amongst Muslims and preparing them both materially and spiritually through the establishment of ribats, khawanq and zawiyas, an endeavour on which he worked for a period of twelve years (570/582). These institutions served as military and educational schools, producing for him a strong contingent within his army on whom he relied to confront the Frankish forces.[xxxiv] If this was Saladin's policy in confronting the Crusaders—where he relied on strengthening the spiritual system through these institutions, which were utilised to train scholars and ascetics who accompanied him in his conquests and battles— this indicates that the Sufi institution was not necessarily one of withdrawal from the practical realities of Muslim life; rather, in some of its manifestations, it was able to form part of a religious and social system that contributed to raising the spiritual and moral readiness of society, and demonstrated the possibility of combining spiritual education and historical agency within a single endeavour, It also demonstrated to us that asceticism and Sufism did not necessarily produce a passive individual withdrawn from reality, but rather a model that combines worship and action.

This raises the question of the connection between this model and the human dimension of jihad, which is fundamentally based on the individual's ability to control and ethically direct their power, particularly as the Sufi tradition, as we have shown through the example of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, was able to combine the reform of the individual with the protection of the community. For the struggle against the self does not merely mean preparing it for the lesser jihad, but rather restraining it within a humanistic ethical framework that safeguards the Muslim's conduct during jihad from tyranny and injustice, thereby making it a truly humane act. This leads us to examine the influence of Sufism on the preservation of the human spirit in jihad.

3. Sufism and the Humanity of Jihad:

From the foregoing, we have concluded that Sufism does not represent a single stance that rejects jihad in its external – or 'minor' – sense, nor does it regard the struggle against the self as a substitute for confronting aggression; rather, it considers it one of the stages in preparing a person capable of enduring the hardships of jihad and making sacrifices. However, the issue lies not merely in establishing the presence of jihad in its external sense within the Sufi experience; but in revealing the nature of the person who practises jihad, and the values that govern their behaviour when they move from striving against

the self to striving against others. This demonstrates to us the importance of the Sufi approach in dealing with power, not as an independent value, but by linking it to the condition of the individual and their ability to control their motives and objectives.

In this context, we may draw upon Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al-Buti's conception of jihad, as he rejects reducing it to the meaning of coercion to convert to Islam, and links its various levels to a progressive set of objectives beginning with calling people to God through wisdom and kind exhortation, followed by confronting those who prevent its dissemination, then repelling aggression, and confronting those who lie in wait for Muslims; this level includes fortifying borders, protecting frontier regions, and preparing armies to safeguard Muslim homelands from attempts to infringe upon their material or moral rights.[xxxv] According to this conception, the purpose of jihad is not to force people to embrace Islam by force, but rather to remove whatever stands between them and their freedom of choice, and to protect the sphere in which people exercise their right to belief and expression. All these meanings are inspired by the words of the Almighty: 'Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in way that is best' – An-Nahl 125 – This verse emphasises that the fundamental principle of da'wah is clarification and persuasion, not coercion. Thus, the use of force in jihad is linked to a situation that goes beyond a mere difference of belief; it concerns confronting aggression, curtailing people's freedom to exercise their right to choose, or protecting the community from attack. From this perspective, jihad can be understood as a defence of human freedom and dignity, not as a means of abolishing them. This understanding clarifies the humanitarian value of jihad, which is not determined by the presence or absence of fighting, but rather by its causes, aims and means.

These constraints are most clearly evident in the Prophetic Sunnah, which teaches us that combat is not governed solely by the logic of force; rather, it is subject to a set of ethical restrictions that ensure that human beings and their dignity are given due consideration even in times of war. We see this in a hadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him. It is narrated by Sulayman ibn Buraydah from his father that he said: 'Whenever the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, appointed a commander over his army or a detachment, he would advise him in private to fear Allah and treat the Muslims with him well, then he would say: 'Go forth in the name of Allah, in the cause of Allah; fight those who disbelieve in Allah. Go forth, but do not commit excesses, do not betray, do not mutilate, and do not kill a child. And if you encounter your enemy from among the polytheists, call them to three conditions; whichever of them they accept, accept it from them and desist from fighting them, then call them to Islam; if they accept, accept it from them and desist from them; then call them to move from their homeland to the land of the Muhajirun, and inform them that if they do so, they shall have the rights of the Muhajirun and bear the obligations of the Muhajirun; if they refuse to move from there, inform them that they shall be like the Muslim Bedouins, upon whom the judgement of Allah applies as it does to the believers, and they shall have no share in the spoils or the spoils of conquest unless they fight alongside the Muslims. If they refuse, then demand the jizyah from them; if they agree, accept it from them and leave them in peace; if they refuse, then seek help from Allah and fight them...'"[xxxvi] This hadith is regarded as a testament containing a range of meanings that transcend the combatant and military dimensions of jihad; for it links it to the principle of fighting in the cause of Allah, which safeguards the mujahid from seeking personal gain, and prevents him from engaging in acts such as extremism, treachery, mutilation and the killing of children. All these principles serve as safeguards that preserve human dignity and the sanctity of the human body, Furthermore, adherence to these principles prevents war from degenerating into a blanket licence to kill, for although the mujahid is a combatant, he does not lose his humanity merely by belonging to one side of the conflict; the state of war does not remove all moral constraints from his behaviour, Furthermore, the options set out in this commandment carry significant implications, as the process does not begin with fighting but with da'wah (calling to Islam) and the choices it entails, as clarified by the hadith; fighting then follows as a consequence of the rejection of those options and the continuation of the state of confrontation. Thus, the use of force is governed by context, constraints and objectives, and is not left to the fighter's will and desires.

Here, the contribution of Sufism to preserving the human dimension of jihad becomes evident; for its focus on the purification and self-discipline of the soul, and on the development of the complete human being, limits the possibility of power turning into aggression and tyranny, as it is based on an ethical system that has instilled in the individual principles such as the awareness of God's observation of one's actions, self-accountability, and adherence to moral principles that liberate one from feelings of hatred, anger and the desire for revenge. Thus, the revival of the human dimension in jihad does not rest on altering the nature of jihad itself, but rather on transforming the mujahid through the struggle against the self—a struggle that is inseparable from, and indeed forms the very foundation of, ethical conduct towards others. It enables a person to master themselves, making their power subservient to a higher standard—that of truth, justice and responsibility. Thus, Sufism is not merely a form of spiritual cultivation for the individual; rather, it is an education in moral responsibility regarding the use of power, ensuring it is subject to the principle of piety, in accordance with the Prophetic guidance. The aforementioned hadith indicates that whenever the Prophet appointed a commander over his army or a detachment, he would privately advise him to fear God and treat the Muslims with him with kindness, so that piety might form part of the preparation for jihad and not be a separate act of worship distinct from it.

Our discussion of piety in this context aligns with the educational function of Sufism, as its concept does not stop at mere fear in the heart, but extends to a state aimed at monitoring behaviour and controlling the human will. Al-Ghazali points to the multiple connotations of piety in the Qur'an, which indicate three meanings: one is in the sense of fear and awe; Allah, the Exalted, says: "And fear Me" – Al-Baqarah 41 – … The second is obedience and worship, as Allah says: "O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared" – Al-'Imran 102 – Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "Obey Allah as He should be obeyed." Mujahid said: "It means to obey Him so as not to disobey Him, to remember Him so as not

to forget Him, and to be grateful to Him so as not to be ungrateful." The third meaning is the purification of the heart from sins. Allah, the Exalted, says: "And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah and is conscious of him and it is those who are the attainers" – An-Nur 52 – He mentioned obedience and fear, then He mentioned piety; thus it is understood that the reality of piety is a meaning distinct from obedience and fear."[xxxvii] That is to say, the true nature of piety lies in acting in obedience to Allah out of faith and with the intention of seeking His reward, whether in matters of command or prohibition, so that the servant places between himself and that which he fears and is warned against a protective barrier of piety. Thus, performing acts of obedience and avoiding sins protects a person from the wrath, displeasure and punishment of his Lord. Incorporating piety into the context of jihad means that the relationship with God does not end at the moment of worship— —but extends to encompass various aspects of human life, including jihad, in which the practitioner is required to submit to a set of guidelines that determine what is permissible and what is not.

Accordingly, the revival of the human dimension of jihad within the Sufi tradition is based on two complementary levels: the first is the level of purpose, for fighting in jihad is not an end in itself but is for the sake of God, to protect human being, repel aggression, and uphold freedom and dignity; and the second is the level of practice, which is governed by piety and manifests itself through adherence to the divine commands and prohibitions relating to jihad, whilst upholding ethical principles and the humanity, justice and dignity they embody. Thus, Sufism has not abolished the combative dimension of jihad; rather, it has contributed to the development of individuals capable of practising the 'lesser jihad', without abandoning their humanity and without overstepping the purpose for which jihad was prescribed.

Sufism is not concerned only with spiritual and moral education and asceticism in this worldly life; rather, it contributes to achieving stability in society through the social and humanitarian services it provides, and it also helps to raise the level of religious awareness through its educational roles. On the political level, however, it confronts every enemy that threatens the fulfilment of humanity's existential purpose – khilāfa – which is regarded as the result of God's honouring of human being and His favouring of it over all other creatures, as the soul of this universe.[xxxviii] This is achieved through jihad and its principles, which are inspired by divine teachings and which preserve human dignity, rights and freedom; for although on the surface it may appear to involve severity and violence, in reality it seeks to embody the principles of justice, to remove obstacles to the call to Islam, and to confront everything that stands in the way of fulfilling the role of khilāfa and the purpose of human creation – worship.

Perhaps one of the most prominent examples revealing the presence of the human dimension in Sufi jihadist practice is the experience of Emir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri, who combined scholarly and spiritual training with jihadist leadership in the face of French occupation, His experience is significant because of the care he took to ensure that his practice of jihad remained governed by a set of ethical constraints that preserve human dignity even in times of conflict and war, He turned these spiritual and ethical values into reality by actively practising them in his dealings with adversaries and prisoners of war. Charles Henry Churchill highlights Emir Abdelkader's humanity through his treatment of prisoners, which was unprecedented in the history of warfare: French prisoners were treated as guests, guaranteed clothing, food and drink, He went even further by ensuring their spiritual needs were met, taking care to bring a priest to his camp so that he could lead the prisoners in prayer daily and correspond with their families to obtain money, clothing and books for them, thereby alleviating the hardships of captivity.[xxxix] This practice reveals an important principle of jihad, namely that conflict does not strip the opponent of their humanity; the warrior who has gone out to fight as an adversary is a human being with dignity, needs and the right to be treated well.

This point is made even clearer by the policy adopted by the Emir in dealing with prisoners of war; he made the reward for anyone bringing in a prisoner contingent upon keeping him alive and unharmed, whilst punishing anyone who killed or mistreated a prisoner. In this context, Churchill recounts a conversation between the Emir and one of his soldiers regarding the value of the prisoner and the conditions for receiving the reward: " One of his soldiers asked him boldly: 'How much will you pay for a prisoner?' He replied: 'Eight dollars.' 'And how much will you pay for a severed head?' he was asked. 'Twenty-five lashes on the feet,' he replied."[xl] He also ensured that the manner in which the prisoner was treated determined the reward or bonus to be received by the officer in charge; any complaint from the prisoner indicating ill-treatment would result in the forfeiture of the reward.[xli] As for the female prisoners, they were placed under the care of the Prince's mother, who housed them in a tent close to her own, and they were guarded by two of her Black guards; she did not allow anyone to approach them without permission, and she ensured they were provided with food, feeding them with her own hands.[xlii]

These practices do not merely reflect organisational measures within the army; rather, they reveal the transformation of moral values and humanitarian principles into rules governing the behaviour of the mujahideen. The Emir did not merely put forward slogans calling for the preservation of the dignity of human captives; rather, he sought to establish practical mechanisms for applying those laws in reality. The humanity of the adversary is not an abstract moral value, but rather part of the system governing the relationship between the mujahid and the captive. Through these practices, one can understand the humanitarian dimension of the experience of Emir Abdelkader al-Jaza'iri, who distinguished between the legitimacy of resisting aggression and the manner of treating those taken captive; Differences in religion or affiliation are no justification for violating human dignity; this means that the exercise of power does not necessarily entail abandoning humanitarian values, and that the defence of justice can be reconciled with compassion, fairness and respect for dignity. Thus, Emir Abdelkader's experience serves as a model for the effectiveness of spiritual education in guiding behaviour of jihad, for it is not confined to a person's relationship with their Lord, but must manifest its effects in their relationship with others. We therefore arrive

at the conclusion that the Sufi experience in jihad did not, in any of its forms, eliminate its combative dimension or strip it of its conflictual nature, but rather subjected force to a system of values that define its aims, means and limits. This transferred the Sufi experience from the realm of spiritual purification and education to that of jihadic action, by refining force rather than abolishing it, restraining it rather than unleashing it, and making it a means of defence rather than a means of destroying the humanity of others.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research has shown that the relationship between Sufism and jihad is not one of conflict between spiritual cultivation and active engagement in the real world, but one of complementarity. The process of self-improvement and refinement, as well as the acceptance of personal responsibility, equips the individual with the necessary foundation to undertake the duties associated with jihad and to exercise authority within the established legal framework.

The experience of the Ribat has demonstrated that Sufism does not necessarily entail withdrawal from reality. Instead, it contributes to shaping the individual in a manner consistent with the Qur'anic perspective affirms human dignity.

The Sufi experience has demonstrated that the human dimension of jihad does not negate its nature or legitimacy; rather, it regulates the use of force through values that preserve human dignity and prevent jihad from becoming a means of aggression, revenge, or violation of human rights. The experience of Emir Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri has demonstrated the potential for translating spiritual values into the practice of jihad by combining the right to resist aggression with the preservation of human dignity.

Consequently, Sufism contributes to preserving the humanitarian spirit of jihad by forming a balanced individual who serves God Almighty while acting as a steward on earth and who purifies the soul while engaging actively with the world around them. This enables both the greater and lesser forms of jihad to use force correctly, making it a means of defending humanity and human dignity.

References

[i] See Al-Raghib al-Asfahani (2009), Dictionary of the Terms of the Holy Qur'an, ed. Safwan Adnan Daoudi, 4th ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam), p. 94; Ibn Manzur (2008), Lisan al-'Arab, vol. 3, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr), pp. 8–9, entry 'Anas'.

p. 20.

[iii] Muhammad Qutb, (1418–1997) (1418 AH/1997 CE), Man Between Materialism and Islam, 12th ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouk), p. 69.

[iv] The linguistic meaning of the term varies, as does its technical meaning. Some scholars trace the term to the Greek word sophia, meaning 'wisdom', while others derive it from suf (wool), referring to the wool worn by Sufis. Others trace it to safa' (purity), among other proposed etymologies.

[v] Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH), (2006), Sahih al-Imam al-Bukhari, vol. 1, n.d., (Cairo: Al-Zahra' for Arab Media), Book of Faith, chapter on Gabriel's questioning of the Prophet regarding Islam, faith, righteousness and the knowledge of the Hour, and the Prophet's explanation thereof, hadith no. 50, p. 29.

[vi] 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Shirani (d. 973 AH), (2005), Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, ed. Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahim al-Sayih and Tawfiq 'Ali Wahba, vol. 1, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyyah), p. 12.

[vii] Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (n.d.), Diwan al-Imam 'Ali: The Poetry Collection of the Imam of

Eloquence, ed. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Khafaji (Dar Ibn Zaydun; Al-Azhar Colleges Library), p. 71.

[viii] Muhyiddin Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn al-‘Arabi (1329), Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya fi Ma‘rifat Asrar al-Malikiyya wa al-Malikiyya, vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra Press), p. 396.

[ix] Abu al-Hasan al-Nadwi (1379, 1960) (1379 AH/1960 CE), The Masterpieces of Iqbal, 1st ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr), pp. 52–53.

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