

# INCORRECT! Jihad

Mon, Oct 31, 2022 1:48PM 38:22

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

jihad, muslims, war, book, people, fucking, nerds, struggle, islam, mujahideen, incorrect, megan, religion, frankly, breast milk, jihadis, afghanistan, writing, imperialism, called

## SPEAKERS

Ilyse, Megan

---

- I** Ilyse 00:18  
This is Keeping It 101, a killjoys introduction to religion podcast in 2022-2023. Our work is made possible through both a UVM reach grant and a loose AAR advancing public scholarship grant. We're grateful to live, teach, and record on the current ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki, Wabanaki and Aucocisco peoples. As always, you can find material ways to support indigenous communities on our website.
- M** Megan 00:43  
What's up nerds? Hi, hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions race, gender, and politics.
- I** Ilyse 00:49  
Hi, hello. I'm Ilyse Moorgenstein Fuerst historian of religion, Islam, race, and racialization and South Asia. How's it going Megan?
- M** Megan 00:56  
Oh, you know, it's going, like the dude I abide.
- I** Ilyse 01:00  
Glad to hear it. Well, as you know, today's episode is an "INCORRECT!" Incorrect, where we kindly but firmly insist that religion does more and different work than our nerds might think that it does. On today, we want to challenge some basic assumptions about Jihad.

M Megan 01:23  
Yeah, yeah, we do.

I Ilyse 01:24  
One of those, you know, overly politicized words that folks use and have legitimately no idea what they're saying.

M Megan 01:31  
Yeah, yeah. Fucking jihad on that.

I Ilyse 01:35  
Stop waging jihad, we're in the first minute of the podcast, and you're already doing some damage.

M Megan 01:45  
Doing some Eddie Izzard, thank you very much. All right. All right. No jihad on Jihad except maybe jihad on Jihad. Anyway, what do folks get wrong? I should say incorrect, when it comes to Jihad?

I Ilyse 01:57  
I'm so glad you asked Megan!

M Megan 02:01  
There that's the other one.

I Ilyse 02:04  
Okay, I'll stick with "incorrect". Here's what folks are doing incorrectly when it comes to jihad, not correct. First and foremost, they think incorrectly that Jihad means an infinite, unending, and mandatory war by Muslims against I'm gonna say anyone who's not Muslim, all non Muslims,

M Megan 02:29  
Yeah yeah, constant always. Ya know, so incorrect to assume that Muslims are waging infinity

year year, onstant always. Ya know, so incorrect to assume that muslims are waging infinity war on everyone. This is not a Marvel movie. No.

I Ilyse 02:41

All right, incorrect. Point number two: Jihad is a preoccupation of Muslims throughout all time, and every single place Muslims have lived and continue to live. So not only is jihad, number one incorrect, infinite, unending mandatory war but also it is the only thing Muslims have ever thought about in the history of Islam.

M Megan 03:01

Or cared about it's shocking frankly that they managed to write anything down because so obsessed with the jihad.

I Ilyse 03:07

Yeah, incorrect. The third and final thing that people get wrong every single frickin time we talk about jihad: is a very simple equation. It's gonna be mind blowing Megan...

M Megan 03:20

all right, I'm, I'm braced. I'm ready. Tell me the incorrect equation...

I Ilyse 03:24

That Jihad equals terrorism.

M Megan 03:27

That's not true?

I Ilyse 03:28

No you sweet summer child, that is not true.

M Megan 03:38

Megan, you ignorant slut. Not what Jihad means at all.

I Ilyse 03:44

I Ilyse 03:44

Oh my god. Oh my god. I couldn't even respond to that it hurt my soul so much.

M Megan 03:48

Sorry, I went old school SNL. Apparently I'm just doing bits. I'm just doing bits. I'm sorry. People are really dumb about this word. It makes me jokey. Apparently. Sorry, go ahead.

I Ilyse 03:57

No one could have expected you or the Inquisition. So let's let's roam through these incorrect assumptions. Because I've got to be honest, I'm so...one of the reasons that I decided to do that you had episodes that people have asked for for a long time is frankly, because I'm sick of having this exact conversation. I'm sick of the word jihad. In, no small part because like the early aughts and 2010s. For me, were just all Islamic studies all the time. Yeah. All, Ohmid fondly calls "squiggle languages" in airport. And as you know, my first book is more or less about jihad. And so doing that research internationally meant, like a solid seven years where the TSA was profiling me as if I wasn't a small white lady from New Jersey,

M Megan 04:53

I mean you're kind of swarthy. I could see it.

I Ilyse 04:54

I don't know, it is you know what a low point is. A low point is when you're carrying, expressed breast milk and holding in your bag, because you're a dumbass, a book in Persian. And the TSA guard is like, "we think that your breast milk is explosive" and that is not the sad part. The sad part is is that a turbaned Sikh man put his arm around me because I was almost crying because they like, because they like poured out my breast milk. And this man who has been racially profiled in far more violent ways, is like it's okay, my daughter, it's fine. And I was like, I was like, nope, I'm gonna. I'm gonna my leaky boobs and I are gonna cry at the TSA line. Yeah, it was horrible

M Megan 05:37

I'm tearing, I'm tearing up.

I Ilyse 05:39

It was like girl, like, I'm a dumb white girl, but also like their litmus testing my breast milk and you're just going through my bag of Persian and like, I can't process...Anyway, the longer the short of it is, I don't don't like the TSA, fuck all cops, and don't be near me at the TSA because I

am often randomly selected for fun times because of this word jihad. Yeah, yeah. So Goodwain, before we jump in, let me ask you, let's play pedagogy for a second.

**M** Megan 06:08  
Okay!

**I** Ilyse 06:16  
What, I know you're an expert on religion, and that you've written a lot actually about race and Islam, and what's the now the US? But like, What do you know about jihad?

**M** Megan 06:26  
Okay, so I am delighted to be identified as an expert on religion, and you're right, I actually have written quite a lot about race and Islam in what's now the United States. Guess how much I've written about jihad. I think this is a trick question. I don't know. Zero, Zero things about jihad, because you know what, it's actually not a thing that gets talked about a whole lot, if you're looking at people doing Islam in what is now the United States like this is not an operative category. So what I know about jihad is it means struggle. If I understand in Arabic, it is usually an internal struggle to be in right relationship with God, and others. And honestly, the one that always sticks in my head is I have this video that I use in class when we talk about Islam in my global religions class. That is called "A Land Called Paradise". And it makes me cry every time and I think we have included it in the show notes before and I will do it again. But there's this like seven year old Desi boy who's writing this message. And these are all of the people in the video are writing messages about things that they want other Americans to know about them as Muslim Americans. And this little seven year old guy just wrote down broccoli is my Jihad. It makes me really happy.

**I** Ilyse 07:43  
That's like really excellent. Is that secretly my kid?

**M** Megan 07:50  
But like, that's it. That's that's what I know about jihad, which is to say very little at all, because it's not a an important category for any of the folks that I work with or on. So,

**I** Ilyse 08:02  
yeah, it's really only and like, I'm going to underline a few things that you said the first is, is actually the last bit. It's only an important category for most Muslims, specifically the Muslims living in European and American contexts. It is an issue for them as like a defense strategy, right? Not as like, like, like, all of the white people in their neighborhood are asking them about

Jihad every five minutes. And so that is where Muslims have learned to have like your stock three sentence answer to escape potential violence, whether that's like emotional violence or like physical violence, right? Like that is the place we see Jihad come up. And we see white people, particularly white, Christian, American, frankly, Republican, though not exclusively, republican lawakers, putting forward things like we forbid jihad in our like state constitution, and you're like, and all the Muslims are like, "I don't know what the fuck you're talking about". Like, that's not

**M** Megan 09:01

what the fuck does that mean?

**I** Ilyse 09:02

That's not a thing. But you see, legislatures do this. Like with its twin word Sharia, which we're not going to get into. Let me underline today, not on today, let me get underlined the other thing you said, which is that Jihad literally means "struggle". So I'm going to quote someone here, which I know is not usually our jam, but it's my favorite sentence about Jihad ever, from historian Aisha Jala, who says, quote, "few concepts have been subjected to more consistent distortion than the Arabic word 'jihad'" end quote. One of my favorite lines because it is legit true. There's not one word in that that's not true.

**M** Megan 09:39

That is correct.

**I** Ilyse 09:41

It is correct. Literally, it means to strive or just struggle as in like the struggle is real as in I strive against all odds or as in like, I strive slash struggle slash work hard to achieve my goal.

**M** Megan 09:57

Even if that goal is just just eating the broccoli

**I** Ilyse 10:00

Yeah, sometimes broccoli is your jihad, particularly if you're a small, small child. I feel that solidarity to you small child People become obsessed with jihad, not recently. I want you to hear that people think it's like a post 911 mishegoss craziness. And it's not, it is an obsession of particularly imperialists and colonists in the 18th and especially the 19th century, where they start defining jihad as "holy war" in English and in like, cognate "holy war" in French and German.

M Megan 10:40

Hmm. So I hear Western European forces distorting this concept as we get the concept of like nation states and imperialism in its modern context. Interesting.

I Ilyse 10:53

Ding, ding, ding!

M Megan 10:55

It's almost like I read your book or something.

I Ilyse 10:56

It's almost like you read my entire book but holy war becomes such a prominent definition that if you put it in your browser today gang Oh, God, that is the first thing that comes up. Holy war equals jihad, Jihad equals holy war. You do not get, "this means struggle", you do not get jihad is like a popular name for children of a certain age, particularly South African Muslims in the apartheid struggle, right? Because you named your children after the struggle after the struggle, so but now those are exactly the folks were like, I can't fly on a plane because my name is jihad.

M Megan 11:32

Wow, that's beautiful and exhausting and heartbreaking. And I hate it and love it. And, and it's just this one word.

I Ilyse 11:41

It's just one word. You also said Goodwin. A thing that was correct, even though you are not an expert on jihad, is that there's this understanding of like, greater and lesser jihad, which is the way that like, frankly, white people divide this shit up like, like Muslim theorists, outside of the modern period where they're answering all these colonizers are not doing this, but for our sake: the greater jihad, this is like you're good person, this is the Greater One, you're striving against the ego, you're getting right with God, you're getting right with your community. This is where folks really like philosophize about jihad as an operative part of their life. It is things like maybe I should spend less money. Or maybe I should be less jealous of my neighbors. Or, you know, I've been a real asshole to my mom. The greater jihad for me is like not being so impatient all the time.

M Megan 12:37

Woff, that struggle is very real for 100%. Solid, not just with your mom mom's actually might be my personal jihad. This is not the time for that it is your list. Yep, yep. Yep.

I Ilyse 12:59

With apologies to our nerds. Let's talk about the lesser Jihad which like is warfare and it's not not warfare. I want everyone to hear me say that. I'm not like it a jihad apologist. And we'll get into like all the things I've been called on the internet for writing about jihad. Not because I'm special, but because I want our nerds to hear what it means to even talk about this in publics. But your Jihad is really specific warfare when it's mentioned in Islamic, religious and philosophical texts, it is very close to the European or enlightenment concept of a just-war. So like defensive wars, wars of liberation, wars that are to save someone else, or more like on the mat, like a micro level: you're intervening in a fight between two people to save the person who is less trying to make this not ableist. But like the damsel in distress, chivalric moment, or like the more vulnerable person, right less vulberable person. Absolutely. And it does get gendered in this very particular way. So I'm translating in my head nerds, but forgive me, all that's to say is that literally all of the sources that are suggesting this is an actual moment of like, war, are doing so in the understanding that like you would have done everything else to exhaust every other possibility besides bloodshed. You are to avoid that at all costs. But there is an acknowledgement within Islamic legal and religious sources, that there are some certain circumstances where you have done everything and there is nothing left to do except engage in like fisticuffs. That is the lesser jihad. So, Jihad means struggle. We usually use it religiously to think about like, the struggles we have as individuals or communities against the worst parts of ourselves. Sometimes it means war, and when it means war, it specifically means just war, not holy war, which I think have different valences in English. And it is only after you've exhausted all other diplomatic options.

M Megan 15:15

Okay, so a couple things are hopping out to me here: 1) it's language and Catholicism, you're shocked, right? Where my brain lives. So my sense of this and I promise I won't get too far into it. But my sense of this is it's interesting to me that the definition and deployment of jihad has always been dialogic, right? Because Muslims don't ever get to justify it for themselves. They're always defining it in conversation with or against the way that it's being understood by non-Muslims, and particularly in the context of things like imperialism, for example.

I Ilyse 15:51

Yeah, unless you unless you go all the way back in time, like the earliest texts where this is really just a thought experiment. What does it mean to have a just-war where we're like, Muslim intellectuals are writing thought pieces, as they like, ruminate. But yes, you're right in the modern way, there is never a moment where we're talking about Jihad without talking about imperialists.

M Megan 16:11

Yeah, yeah, it's almost like Imperialism is deeply invested in telling folks who are resisting it,



that they're resisting it wrong. And that's curious to me. And also sounds a little bit like a book that I read by my close personal friend, Dr. Ilyse morgenstein Fuerst. So there's that piece, but the other piece that I find interesting is this language of just-war, because many primary source here, I in seventh grade made a whole argument about just-war, an unjust war, in our like, practice debate about the Iraq War, was one of the Iraq wars. Because there was a handout at church I was this kid, I was the kid picking up the handouts at church where I was voluntarily. And it was a whole thing about what makes a just-war and why Vietnam had not been a just conflict. So the other space that my brain wants to go is like this category of a just-war of a war that is justified or necessary, because you've tried everything else. And it's not working, and lives are at stake is not unique to Islam.

I Ilyse 17:13

Absolutely. Thank you for underlining that I'm specifically using the phrase just-war because it is a it is a set of concepts that comes out of like, enlightenment thinking. Right? Like, we're not worrying. I mean, again, like we could go on and on about this, but like, this is not a moment of like, I'm going to take your shit. It's how am I justifying that? And when is it like, unavoidable? That's a European concept that actually works. Holy War? Is not it. Like we have a cognate for this. It is not that.

M Megan 17:45

Right, right. And also, most people misunderstand Holy War, and the Crusades were largely a land grab and more about Christians fighting Christians than anything else. Anyway.

I Ilyse 17:54

100%. But the question that we would ask our nerds is, why are we purposefully getting incorrect? Holy War and just-war? Right? That's, that's like, not on accident. That is no fool.

M Megan 18:21

So why does this matter? Why do we care that so many folks have been so incorrect about jihad for so very long?

I Ilyse 18:30

We care because it makes Muslims seem like very violent, violent monsters, like first and foremost, we care a lot that having a concept of just-war in one's religious tradition, makes all of the people who subscribe to that religion open to the claim that what their religion says is bloodlust. Right? And that matters a lot, because we start to see that and again, these are spoilers from my very now old book. But these are, it matters a lot that we start to see people bandying this about this, accusation that you are bloodthirsty, that you can't be trusted that

anyone who tries to rule you will be absolutely subject to your crazy-ass war-like ways it matters that that accusation only happens when White Christian people are subjugating, repressing and murdering Muslims around the world.

M

Megan 19:27

I was gonna say because the sounds like both of religious and racial, dare I say religio-racial argument and an essentialization about Muslims, this is a space where Muslims get literally categorized as inherently warlike because of their religion and because of the way that they're racialized.

I

Ilyse 19:44

Absolutely, absolutely. So like the quick historical rundown is that some anti-colonial movements, the people who were like legitimately trying to get the British, the French, the Belgians, the Russians out their backyard out their house, off their women out of their schools. You name it. Some of those folks are like, "y'all keep saying this is jihad and you know what? It is! Fuck imperialism. My jihad is your oppressive rule." And it's used as a rallying cry. Now most of that doesn't doesn't actually become like skirmish fighting, it becomes like strongly worded letters to the editor, but like fine, some people are actually using this as a rallying cry. Today, some extremists and terrorists fully appropriate, the language of jihad, and they do see themselves as freedom fighters, so like, we can disagree with their tactics. But the history of this language is 100%, people who feel repressed, oppressed, or financially punished in ways, are using the language of jihad, to fight back against those oppressions, repressions and, like, punitive measures. So my favorite example of this is the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the early 80s, late 70s, early 80s. I was like to how quickly how quickly switch right when the USSR is like fucking with Afghanistan, and we're anti USSR. Boom, don't the Mujahideen, fucking led by Bin Laden or like Bin Laden is part of the crew? Aren't they our best buddies? Don't we give them all of our weapons? Aren't we sharing them with stuff? Reagan is like, creaming in his tighty whities about those freedom fighters.

M

Megan 21:24

Yeah, of course, because at least they're religious. At least they believe in God. Unlike the godless Russians, right. So like, let's give them a ton of guns that we don't track particularly well. And also, like accidentally, maybe a little bit fund, the largest opium trade in the world. Don't worry about it. It's not important. BTWs, this is the moment where we have to pause and acknowledge that Rambo three was initially dedicated to our brothers in the Mujahideen. Uh huh.

I

Ilyse 21:50

Oh, this is like nationalism, mixed war, mixed with patriotism is the degree to which we loved the jihad against the commies?

-

M

Megan 21:59

Yeah, yeah, yeah, Rambo, plus Jihad equals BFF. A) And then B) If y'all watched the boys this season, you know that soldier boy who was like the original all American hero, also did a spot celebrating the Mujahideen 100% made me snort out loud.

I

Ilyse 22:15

But the second dose Soviets leave Afghanistan and, and the Americans and the Americans don't leave because we got some good opium, and also, this is a really important part of the world that we would like to control, all of a sudden when those guys sort of like morph into the Taliban, when they morphed into being less anti-Soviet and more anti-American, because now we're the guys. Then suddenly, they're not freedom fighters. They're not the glorious Mujahideen, they're terrorists.

M

Megan 22:43

Yep, yep, yep, yep. Yep.

I

Ilyse 22:45

And Megan, I'm gonna say a disclaimer now, nerds, you probably don't care about this disclaimer. I care because once every six months my name ends up on some fucking weird website. So let me say this clear and loud. And I'm going to get real close to the mic. Is everyone ready?

M

Megan 22:59

Yeah, do it. Do it, do it.

I

Ilyse 23:01

I do not. I Ilyse Ryan Morgenstein Fuerst do not support the Taliban. I am not a secret jihadi nor have I ever been, as has been reported on many websites.

M

Megan 23:13

I'm not now nor had I have I ever been a secret jihadi.

I

Ilyse 23:17

Nor am I an open jihadi, I suppose is also a good agenda. I am nerds a good post-holocaust Postclassic Jew, which means I straight up do not remove violence from the toolkit of rebellion. But I don't like it either. I'm not generally in favor of holy wars. Jews tend to do very poorly in

but I don't like it either. I'm not generally in favor of holy wars, Jews tend to do very poorly in holy way.

M

Megan 23:36

The numbers are not on your side, not a fan.

I

Ilyse 23:38

But I can acknowledge that using a religious concept to think about how one agitates against one's own oppression is effective. That does not make me any of those things. Please stop sending me hate mail.

M

Megan 23:56

Yeah, I have to do this every semester to because my second so I do two days on Islam and my global religions class and the second day is look at American imperialism, Michael. And so I look at work by like Saba Mahmood. And the way that yes, Taliban did some very bad stuff. Not a fan of the Taliban. Not also me Megan Prince Goodwin, not secret jihadi, I would be a very bad secret anything frankly. This was true. But also, American occupation, not good for Afghanistan did some big damage to particularly women in Afghanistan, who we were nominally there to help and support and protect, and instead, we increased the likelihood that they would be sexually assaulted and also made it much harder for them to access things like food and water. So anyway, imperialism bad American imperialism in Afghanistan, very bad, but also Taliban not great either. Okay, so I feel like we have spent A lot of time talking about what jihad is not. When Muslims now talk about Jiha, what are they? What are they talking about?

I

Ilyse 25:09

So I can't speak to all times in places, but let me let me do some of the stuff I know. Right? So in the 19th century British Indian context, Muslims are really trying to make sense of their role visa vie the British like being there and usurping all sorts of stuff. So you start to see a lot of fatwas or legal rulings about jihad. And all of that, frankly, is a response to being called Jihadis left, right and in between what all of these fatwas are like really thoughtful writing, and most of them say things like "a proper and just war against the British is just not called for or sanctioned", Because as long as the Muslims are free to worship and practice Islam, as long as there is a modicum of religious freedom, and the religious identity of the ruler is inconsequential, err, go for Britain and Queen Victoria is fear of jihad being like, called for is unfounded. So you see a lot of this kind of writing where it's not just yeah, yeah, yeah Jihad's not real, it's like, Nope, there are very specific qualifications for jihad, and this does not meet them. You go ahead.

M

Megan 26:17

I was just I'm thinking that arguing for nuance with colonizers always goes really well. Just,

I Ilyse 26:23

I mean, bless all these dudes hearts, right. Yeah.

M Megan 26:26

Sir Sayed, dude? See, I learned some stuff. I mean, like, You're misunderstanding this concept. Let me educate you and the British were like, instead, what if we kill you a bunch? Thanks. Yeah,

I Ilyse 26:38

I mean, this is the argument of like, you can't argue with someone who fundamentally questions your humanity. However, these bros and they were mostly bros are writing in all manner of publication in multiple languages, including English, German, and French, trying to make the case that like, you have misunderstood something crucial. And that misunderstanding is why you're all like perturbed. If you would just understand us better, it'd be fine. But we don't actually want you here.

M Megan 27:06

But like we can work this out. I am laughing because it's sad. And also because I identify with this particular struggle very much from the depths of my autistic soul. If I just explain it right, you'll stop hurting me and understand what's going on. Like, I'll just keep explaining it. Bless. You know.

I Ilyse 27:25

The other thing that Muslim intellectuals are doing in like the 19th and early 20th century is they're actually making the claim that Jihad exists, it's real. And it's just-war, and they're playing with just and holy war. And they're doing it because in the 20th century, this might come as a shock to many of you. Lots of wars were justified as just-wars. And so in the midst of all this, you have all of these Muslim intellectuals coming from frankly, all of these imperialized places where lots of Muslims are fighting and things like the Boer War, the World War One, World War Two, and in the midst of all this, they're like, "Yo, you want the concept of jihad working for you? Yeah? You are making a claim that this is just you are making a claim that if we don't fight the Germans, we are all going to lose things like democracy". We agree. We agree. You're totally right. This is what jihad is, you want us on your team. And so you start to see this argument as as Europeans are making the claim that Muslims are not compatible with democracy because of jihad. Muslims are like, point of order. Jihad is exactly what y'all are up to. This is actually how we prove that we are compatible with enlightenment values, which like, again, gross, puke, no thank you. But that's what's going on in those in those spaces.



Megan 28:41

And as a survival strategy, like I cannot fault them for trying. No.



Ilyse 28:45

And the last place we see Muslims really like saying like, well, we can't throw this out, right? It's right there. It's in the text. We can't get rid of it. You You're going like that would be bullshit. But you do see this reliance, particularly in a post 9/11 universe, of greater and lesser, where you start to be like, if you're really gross, if you're doing the base level, if you're like fulfilling the worst in humanity. Yeah, jihad is war. But war is bad across all places. But like, let's take this other option, the greater jihad, it's me being a better person. And you start to like whole-ass sermons, conversations, particularly liberal Muslims getting in public and like explaining this difference again, if you just understood the word you would not be doing so much damage to us logics at play,



Megan 29:27

Yeah, yeah. Well, that's a lot and it's heavy, and it's a lot of violence.



Ilyse 29:35

I mean, it is jihad. Yeah. So



Megan 29:38

Well, but I also I really appreciate a space where I get like squishy in my soul about religion are the spaces where folks who are really trying to work make the world a better place, dig in their heels and say, like, you don't get to have this you don't get to take this from me because it's important. So like, I am not a Quranic scholar, as you know, is jihad In the Quran?



Ilyse 30:01

There is a couple mentioned in the Quran, it comes up more in Hadith, like the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, you know, because those are the places where Muslims are figuring out how you live life and war is part of life, then that's obviously part of the corpus of how we address everything in our lives, not just like the hunky dory bits.



Megan 30:22

Yes, it's, I always think of it. This, I don't know if this is reductive, but I always think of it as like the workbook session like this is where we're actually working it out. But the reason that I asked about the Quran honestly, is because that means God said it, God said this word. This is a word that comes from the Divine, to sort of see folks struggle with this and try to use it to the betterment of themselves and others and the world. Like that. That gets me and I am inspired

by that. I will also just say from like a math point of view, how they're like, what, almost 2 billion Muslims in the world. So like, if all Muslims everywhere every second of every day, we're just like, fucking jihad on all of this all of it, jihad everywhere. And what I mean by jihad is bloody blood thirsty, world conquering war, I just feel like 2 billion people putting their minds together could probably have taken over the world by now. So I want to suggest just from like a practicality standpoint, that it can't be all of all the Muslims thinking about this all the time. I just Yeah, I feel like maybe there's something else.

I Ilyse 31:31

Yeah, this is the part that has bothered me, like since 911, quite frankly, is like just just your logic alone. Fucking white people is is incorrect. Not Correct. Correct.

M Megan 31:44

Incorrect. does not add up does not literally does not compute. Oh, so Okay, so we're oh go ahead,

I Ilyse 31:52

No, I was gonna say let's let's wrap this up. Let's, I was gonna say

M Megan 32:04

Hey, jihad is not straight up, just all out holy-war. Jihad means struggle. And that struggle is complicated. And often internal and more about you trying to be the best person you are then like, taking over the world.

I Ilyse 32:22

Yeah. Second, second bit to sum-up textual history when jihad is war it's usually rendered as just-war, which can mean a defensive war, after all other options have been exhausted. It is not like a bunch of like real creepy looking dudes being like, "Oh my God, who are we gonna fuck up today?" God, that's not how it works.

M Megan 32:47

So again, if we're talking about Muslim spiritual practice, jihad is about working through your own shit, just doing better all of the time. It is constant, and it is a struggle. Because I if you are a person out in the world, trying to do better, you know how much work that is all the time, it's easy to be shitty. It is really hard to be your best. And that is, in essence, what your jihad is trying to do is struggling to just be the best you you can be, and helping to create the best world there can be for all of us.

I Ilyse 33:20

Yeah, and last thing on jihad is that you had has been used as a metric through which to bar Muslims from public spaces, to oppress and repress really since the middle of the 19th century, but probably before that, depending on whose sources you're looking at. And the assumption that all Muslims are secretly jihadis, and all of us who talk about jihad, as secretly jihadis is a racialized and racist assumption.

M Megan 33:46

Yeah, that's stupid and bad and wrong. So Yeah, correct. Incorrect. So in short, if you think Jihad equals holy-war mandated for all Muslims, you are incorrect. But you have listened to this episode. So you don't think that and good for you nerds. We appreciate you. But don't pack up stuff yet. You have homework, homework, what homework?

I Ilyse 34:11

Goodwin I figured I'm taking over the homework today, and I will put some stuff in the show notes. But mostly, I'm just gonna give you the highlights of all of my years of research. So first, the woman I quoted before Aisha Jalal, has a great book called "Partisams of Allah: Jihad in South Asia". It's a fantastic Clear, clear book on what's going on in South Asia with the word jihad. There's Michael David Bonners book "Jihad in Islamic history:doctrines in practice", I'm not gonna lie a little bit dry a little bit of a text if you want to know about Jihad and the ways in which it is like, actually a deep fucking philosophical conversation, and it is not the exciting, like, like movie version of a bunch of dudes with

M Megan 34:50

So much library, like it's got so many letters. That's a Princeton Book. That makes sense. Yeah.

I Ilyse 34:59

Then you've got us Asma Afsaruddin's book, "Striving in the path of God: Jihad in martyrdom Islamic thought", again, a really good intellectual history about what jihad is doing and what it is not doing. And a classic, frankly at this point, and it probably needs updating like no shade to my former adviser, but Charlie Kurzman's book "Missing Martyrs", is literally a question of math. He is literally saying we are obsessed with jihad in the United States. And after taking many of the federal government's dollars, he's like, Yo, we just don't have jihadis here. So I don't know what the fuck you're talking about. But the numbers don't add up. Like literally the missing martyrs refers to the missing number of jihadis that the government is counting on being there, but that just never show up.

M Megan 35:42

Colby: it sounds like jihad might be more of I don't know a money money laundering scheme



Golly, it sounds like jihad might be more of I don't know, a money, money laundering scheme for defense contractors. Right? That's wonder if I will be writing about that. In my book where I talk about the cultification of American Islam. There's big money in Islamophobia. Sure, there's always money in the Islamophobia. We can point you to

I Ilyse 36:01

Islamophobia, Inc, and a few other books like that. I will link to some of my own work on jihad in South Asia, but I'll put that in the show notes. Megan, did you have anything that you want to add? Or is that enough?

M Megan 36:11

No, I have a couple quickie things. So one I want to shout out as always, Dr. Amina Wadud and her concept of gender Jihad struggling for gender justice, because I think that's really important. I have quoted a number of times a very short part of Eddie Izzard stress to kill, but hers is the voice I hear when someone says jihad, so I will yank that out for you. And then also I'm just going to shout out again that that short music video with land called Paradise because it is I think, in addition to being incredibly moving and deeply personal, I think it does more work than a lot of my classroom voice or yelling online could do to just disrupt this idea of jihad because like I I, at this point also can't hear that word without seeing that like little seven year old guy being like, it's broccoli. My Jihad is broccoli.

I Ilyse 36:59

Awesome. Shout out to Eeve Wolfe, Rachel Zieff, and Juliana Finch the key I want to one team whose work makes this pod accessible and therefore awesome. Listen, of all social media of all among many other things for which we are eternally grateful.

M Megan 37:11

And we appreciate you you can find mega that's me on Twitter @mpgPhD and Ilyse @profirms or the show @keepingit\_101 Find the website at keepingit101.com. Keep the instant if you want to drop us a rating review and your pod catcher of choice and with that peace out nerds do your homework it's on the syllabus

I 37:49

we get scared about Islamic Jihad I think we do assume that everyone who is into the Islamic religion is having a jihad every other bloody day there's a lot of very relaxed Islamic people and we got to understand remember this is very important. And we do assume that your hands are just like you know every day three Jihads just issued by every individual it just seems that everywhere the fruit shop shortchanged me a fucking Johanna on them. bump into someone say fucking Jehan, you need your hands you got going now Dad well 24 cars difficult to keep up with



38:21  
them.