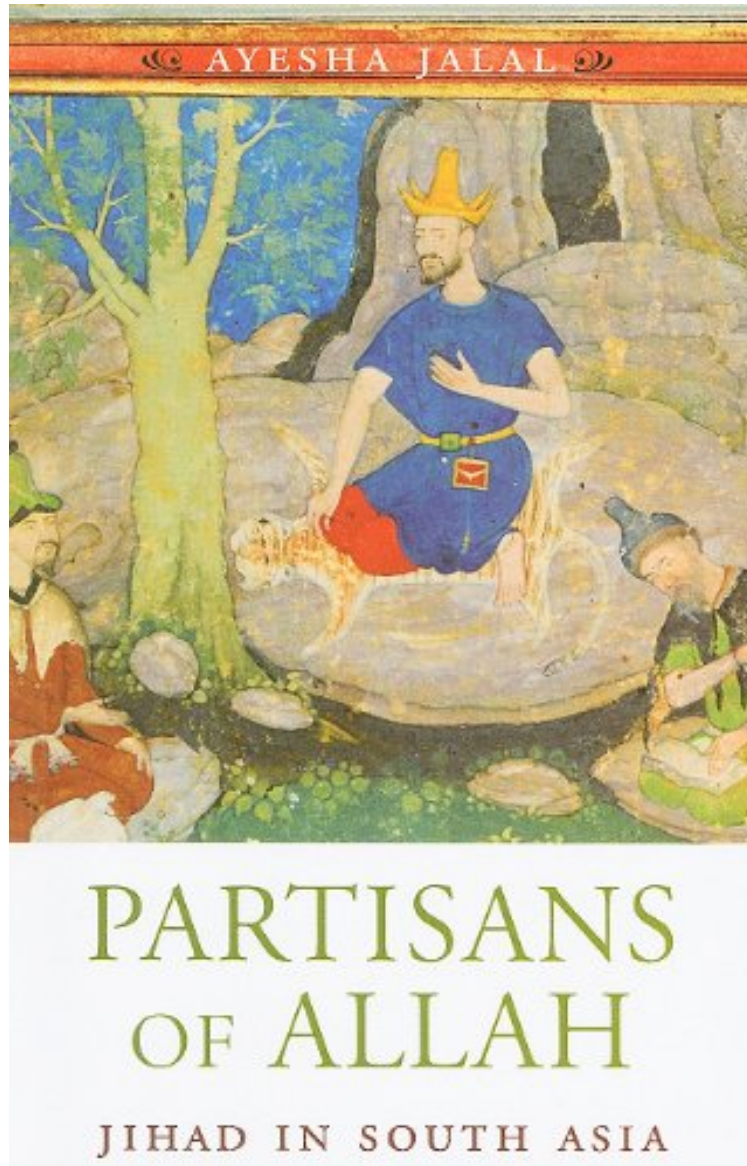


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## Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia

Ayesha Jalal

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**Ayesha Jalal : Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A different perspectiveBy ObaidIn South Asian Islamic history Shah Wali Ullah is much reverend and truly. But no one, that i know, had such a critical analysis of Shah Wali Ullah thoughts and how it shaped the Muslim identity struggles afterwards, as Ayesha Jalal. Much recommended as an alternative perspective.4 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Badly writtenBy haruThe book is shabbily

written even though it provides useful information on the subject. Very often, it remains unclear whether the historical facts are author's own views or references to the subject. She fails to detach herself from the history and at times sounds like a spokesperson for the subject. The ambiguity of the arguments increases as the distinction between the subject and the author diminishes. The book needs heavy revision and editing. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Striving for a worthy cause By Ellison Begins in the 1850's telling about a guy that wanted to go jihad but had trouble finding anybody to actually go. He borrow\$ fund\$ to pay guy\$ to go, they are willing if they can pick up some war booty. Says Islam fears freedom, Capitalism, and democracy. First-hand accounts of thought feels, and beliefs. Insightful but a reader may have to push to get through this. B/W images, two maps. Claims jihad is the battle to be a good human.---

The idea of jihad is central to Islamic faith and ethics, and yet its meanings have been highly contested over time. They have ranged from the philosophical struggle to live an ethical life to the political injunction to wage war against enemies of Islam. Today, more than ever, jihad signifies the political opposition between Islam and the West. As the line drawn between Muslims and non-Muslims becomes more rigid, Ayesha Jalal seeks to retrieve the ethical meanings of this core Islamic principle in South Asian history. Drawing on historical, legal, and literary sources, Jalal traces the intellectual itinerary of jihad through several centuries and across the territory connecting the Middle East with South Asia. She reveals how key innovations in modern Islamic thought resulted from historical imperatives. The social and political scene in India before, during, and after British colonial rule forms the main backdrop. We experience the jihad as armed warfare waged by Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareilly between 1826 and 1831, the calls to jihad in the great rebellion of 1857, the fusion of jihad with a strand of anti-colonial nationalism in the early twentieth century, and the contemporary politics of self-styled jihadis in Pakistan, waging war to liberate co-religionists in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Partisans of Allah surveys this rich and tumultuous history of South Asian Muslims and its critical contribution to the intellectual development of the key concept of jihad. Analyzing the complex interplay of ethics and politics in Muslim history, the author effectively demonstrates the preeminent role of jihad in the Muslim faith today.

Intelligent, erudite and timely. This is an important and compelling historical narrative that spans the depth and breadth of the history of Islam in South Asia. By far the best intellectual history of jihad, this work will greatly enrich the study of Islam, South Asia, and Islamic activism. (Vali Nasr, author of *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*) Based on a vast command of the relevant literature, wide-ranging, meticulous research, fine-tuned analysis, and deep critical thinking, *Partisans of Allah* traces the history of ideas about jihad and its ethical practice from the early days of Islam to the present. This important book travels the entire Muslim world and should be urgent reading for anyone concerned with cultural politics inside present-day globalization. (David Ludden, New York University) Jalal restores the much used concept of jihad to its enabling history of radical self-examination in the pursuit of justice and freedom, treading a fine balance between religious faith and secular belief. This is a courageous and brilliant book for a hopeful future beyond the quagmire of those who believe in the clash of civilisations (Homi Bhabha, Harvard University) It is difficult to imagine a more timely or a more thoughtful book on this subject. Jalal's subtle reinterpretations sweep away many of the misconceptions fostered both by Western commentators and contemporary Muslim publicists. (Christopher Bayly, co-author of *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*) Jalal seeks to explain how the principles of Islamic ethics--within the Muslim world itself--have been distorted and abused by political, economic and social interests. She concentrates on South Asia, where Muslims are in the minority and where they have faced a nuanced battle, over many centuries, to reconcile inner faith with temporal ambition. And she focuses on the most distorted principle of all--that of "jihad." (Philip Delves Broughton *Wall Street Journal* 2008-04-04) While numerous books have appeared recently on the topic of Islamic jihad, few have focused specifically on jihad in South Asia. Jalal here examines the concept of jihad as it has been understood over the past several centuries in that region. She notes that more than a third of all Islamic people live in South Asia and that the meaning of jihad has undergone significant changes there over time, owing largely to political and social transitions...She provides a more thoughtful and insightful perspective on jihad than can be found in many other works. (John Jaeger *Library Journal* 2008-04-01) While discussion of Islam tends to focus on the Arab world, Jalal makes a compelling case for paying attention to south Asia, where a Muslim minority has had a long and complex relationship with other communities--each period of history seeing a shift in ideas of jihad...One thing that *Partisans of Allah* makes clear is that religious discourse within Islam fluctuates widely, and is entwined with geopolitics...An erudite and thought-provoking study of the interplay of religion and politics, with some particularly interesting things to say about the history of south Asian Muslims focus on the outer husk of religion, often to the detriment of inner faith. (Kamila Shamsie *The Guardian* 2008-06-21) Absorbing...It is the latest and most authoritative statement on Indian Jihadism. Jalal goes into the fascinating South Asian history and theology of Jihad. This is a challenging book to comprehend, but it is well worth it...Jalal brings Jihad into the contemporary period, and the perversion of the concept of Jihad amongst a minority of Muslims who have reinterpreted it as a violent struggle...It is important reading

for all Muslims--especially here in the West--where one hears so much erroneous claims and counter-claims on Jihadism. *Partisans of Allah* is not only a book for education for Muslims, but the information presented can here help to explain the true nature of Islam to those outside the faith and to clarify the misrepresentation on many subjects to the non-Islamic world. (Geoffrey Cook Muslim Media Network 2009-12-31) To palliate a frail sense of identity and purpose, many people in Pakistan have in recent years turned to the crusade known as jihad. In her splendid and important book, Ayesha Jalal traces that history to its origins through the words and deeds of Indian Muslim scholars and intellectuals, many of global fame. With *Partisans of Allah*, she has contributed a rich intellectual and political history of Islam in South Asia, spanning several centuries. She is a talented historian of ideas, and at the outset of her extraordinary story she makes several distinctions that will inform her nuanced and thorough account. (Camille Pecastaing New Republic online 2011-01-05) About the Author Ayesha Jalal is Mary Richardson Professor of History at Tufts University.