



Striving in the Path of God: Fethullah Gülen's Views on Jihad

by Asma Afsaruddin

Jihad ('struggle', 'striving') in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* is a term with multiple inflections. The reiterated Qur'anic phrase *al-jihad fi sabil Allah* ('striving in the path of God') allows for that striving to be accomplished in myriad ways. After surveying a range of exegeses of relevant Qur'anic verses and early hadith works, the paper shows how fully Fethullah Gülen's emphasis on jihad as a means of personal, moral, spiritual and social renewal and transformation is in line with the earliest meanings found in exegetical and hadith works. Such a traditional, historical understanding runs counter to recent, polemical assertions that jihad is a monovalent term requiring unremitting armed combat against non-Muslims. The paper demonstrates that contemporary Muslim thinkers like Gülen, who offer a more expansive and multi-faceted reading of what it means to 'strive in the path of God', are harking back to earlier, and thus more historically authentic, understandings of jihad and its moral purview.

Panel:
Evaluation of Gülen's
Thought and Methodology

Venue:
Old Theatre,
LSE

27.10.07 Panels	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2
9:30-11:30		
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00	Presentation: 10	

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