Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 107 (1) Regular Issue (2026)

The Concept of Jihad and Qital in the Perspective of Islam and Christianity: A Comparative Analysis Between Hadith and the Gospel in the Context of Indonesia

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https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.107.18

Abstract

The concepts of jihad and qital in Islam and their Christian equivalents are often debated, especially in the context of religious pluralism in Indonesia. In public discourse, these two terms are often misunderstood as legitimising violence, whereas both have complex theological, ethical and historical dimensions. This study aims to comparatively analyse the understanding of jihad and qital based on the Prophet Muhammad's hadith-reports and the Gospel teachings on warfare and sacrifice, and how the two teachings are interpreted by their adherents in Indonesia. The research method used is qualitative-descriptive with a comparative approach

of text and context, through a literature study of sahih hadith and Gospel texts, as well as a review of the interpretations of Muslim and Christian religious figures in Indonesia. The results of the study show several main points: *firstly*, the traditions explain jihad as an all-encompassing struggle that includes spiritual, social, and military aspects, with qital as the last part in defence of religion and humanity proportionally. *Secondly*, in the Injīl, although there is no direct terminology such as jihad and qital, there are teachings about love, sacrifice and moral struggle against evil, which are often interpreted in a spiritual and pacifist way. Third, in Indonesia, interfaith leaders tend to emphasise peaceful and contextual interpretations of verses and hadiths that speak of warfare, in order to maintain harmony. *Fourth*, it was found that both religions have great potential in promoting the value of peace when interpreted contextually and moderately. This research contributes to the strengthening of interfaith dialogue and interfaith understanding in a plural society.

Keywords: Jihad, Qital, Holy War, Hadith, Gospel, Islam, Christianity

Glossary

Note: This glossary provides concise definitions of key Arabic and theological terms as they are used in the context of this study.

Jihad (Jihad): An Arabic term derived from the root j-h-d, meaning "to strive" or "to exert effort." In Islamic discourse, it denotes a "struggle" or "striving" in the way of God. Crucially, it encompasses a broad spectrum of efforts, including:

a. Jihad al-Nafs (Jihad Melawan Hawa Nafsu): The "greater jihad"; the internal, spiritual struggle against one's own ego and base desires.
b. Jihad al-Lisan (Jihad Lisan): Striving through speech, such as preaching, teaching, and speaking truth to power.
c. Jihad al-Mal (Jihad Harta): Striving through one's wealth, such as charity and funding good causes.
d. Jihad al-Saif (Jihad Pedangan): The "lesser jihad"; physical fighting in defense of the religion and community (qital).

Qital (Qital): An Arabic term specifically meaning "fighting," "combat," or "warfare." It refers to the physical, military aspect of jihad, which is strictly regulated by Islamic law (fiqh). It is permissible only under specific conditions (e.g., self-defense, persecution) and is subject to stringent ethical rules that prohibit harming non-combatants.

Sahih (Sahih): A classification for a hadith that is deemed "authentic" or "sound" based on a rigorous science of verification that examines the reliability of its chain of narrators (isnad) and the integrity of its text (matn).

Ulil Amri (Pemegang Otoritas): A Qur'anic term (Surah An-Nisa: 59) referring to "those in authority." In classical and modern Islamic political thought, this is widely interpreted as the legitimate state authority, which holds the responsibility to maintain order, administer justice, and, critically, declare and oversee legitimate warfare (qital).

Introduction

The discourse of jihad and qital in Islam and the depiction of violence and struggle in Christian teachings are classic yet relevant themes that emerge in various academic, theological, and socio-cultural discussions, especially in a multi-religious context like Indonesia. The terms *"jihad"* and *"qital"* are often misunderstood by the general public, even by religious people themselves, due to limited access to authoritative texts such as the hadith and the Bible, as well as interpretations that develop in the political and social sphere (Ahlan and Redho, 2022; Andrian, 2022). On the one hand, jihad in Islam is often misunderstood as a form of violence or terrorism, even though in its textual and historical dimensions, it has a broad spiritual meaning (Iskandar, 2019). On the other hand, the doctrine of struggle and violence in the Old

Testament is often ignored in modern Christian narratives, while the aspect of love in the New Testament is the main emphasis, creating the impression that Christian teaching completely rejects violence, without seeing the complexity of the text (Fangidae, 2021).

In Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world and a significant Christian community, the discourse on jihad and religious violence has become very relevant in the context of national and state life. This discourse is not unique to Indonesia; similar debates on the interpretation of jihad and religiously-framed violence resonate across various Muslim-majority countries, often triggered by local conflicts, the rise of militant groups, or intellectual contestations over religious authority (see, for example, Hefner, 2011; Bonnefoy, 2011). In the last two decades, various incidents involving religious violence such as the Poso conflict, Ambon, and the terrorist incidents in Jakarta and Surabaya caused unrest in society and revived debate about the meaning and limits of jihad in Islam (Kirsten E Schulze 2019; Sidel, 2007). Meanwhile, the anti-Christian narrative that is developing in radical groups also touches on a wrong understanding of the history and doctrine of struggle in Christian teachings, especially in the context of the Gospel (Kristian Zega, 2020). Among the general public, ignorance of the textual and historical context of both the hadith and the Gospel is the root of prejudice and negative stereotypes between religious communities. Thus, an in-depth and comparative scientific study of the concepts of jihad and qital in Islam and the concepts of struggle and violence in the Gospel is very urgent to bridge interfaith understanding in Indonesia.

Socially, Indonesian society indicates the diverse dynamics in responding to the issues of jihad and religious violence. On the one hand, there are moderate and interfaith movements that continue to encourage peaceful interfaith dialogue, such as those carried out by Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and PGI (*Communion of Churches in Indonesia*) (Hasbullah, 2024). But on the other hand, there are still exclusive and intolerant groups that carry extreme interpretations of the teachings of jihad and narrate violence as a form of defending the faith. This is exacerbated by the massive spread of hoaxes and extreme narratives through social media, which strengthens misperceptions of other religious teachings (Febriansyah and Muksin, 2020). In such a situation, text-based and dialogue-based interfaith education becomes an urgent need in building inclusive social cohesion.

Regarding to a literature perspective, scholars have long studied the concepts of jihad and qital in Islam. For example, Abou El Fadl emphasizes the importance of understanding jihad as a moral and spiritual struggle, not merely as an order for war (M. Abou El Fadl, 2007). This aligns with classical scholarship, such as that of Al-Ghazali, who prioritized jihad al-nafs (the struggle against the self) as the "greater jihad," a foundational element of Islamic ethics (Al-Ghazali, 2019). Furthermore, John Esposito argues that the meaning of jihad must be understood in the context of ethical and social struggle, not just military (Esposito, 2011), a perspective that finds resonance in the works of contemporary scholars like Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who elaborates on jihad's socio-economic dimensions (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). Karen Armstrong in Fields of Blood states that violence in the name of religion is often rooted in political and identity motives, not in the teachings of the religion itself (Armstrong, 2015).In Christian studies, Walter Wink, through his book Engaging the Powers, criticizes structural violence and offers a non-violent approach in the spirit of Jesus (Walter Wink, 1992). Bart D. Ehrman also shows that the Gospels are not homogeneous documents, but rather consist of texts that represent the complexity of early Christian thought, including about resistance and suffering (Ehrman, 2011). Although studies on jihad and qital in Islam and violence in the Christian tradition are quite extensive, comparative studies that specifically compare the hadith and the Bible in the Indonesian context are still very limited. Previous studies have focused more on the theological or historical aspects of each tradition separately.

First, Ahmad Bazith's study entitled "*Jihad in the Perspective of the Qur'an*" emphasizes the importance of jihad as a concept of social and spiritual struggle, but does not compare it with the Christian tradition.

Second, the study by Loba et al., This article discusses three forms of violence found in the Old Testament: violence between humans, violence committed by God, and prayers that invoke violence. This study also explores how believers understand these texts in theological and ethical contexts (Loba et al., 2023).

Third, the article by Farhanah This article discusses a contextual approach to understanding the hadiths related to war commands, with the aim of countering radical interpretations (Farhanah, 2021).

Fourth, Kaha et al., discuss the importance of interreligious dialogue as an effort to build harmonious relations between Christian and Muslim communities in Indonesia (Cornelius Kaha, 2020).

Finally, Eliasaputra et al., This study examines the factors that influence Christian perceptions of Islam in the context of acts of terrorism, which can provide additional insights for a comparative analysis between the concept of jihad in Islam and the view of violence in Christian teachings in Indonesia. contains relevant empirical data but minimal exploration of primary texts such as the hadith and the Bible (Eliasaputra et al., 2022).

Based on the five studies, there is a research gap in the form of a lack of studies that integrate a comparative primary text approach between the hadith and the Bible regarding the theme of jihad and qital (war or struggle). Most previous studies are descriptive in one particular religion and not many examine the intersection or meeting point and fundamental differences from a textual and contextual perspective. In fact, a comparative approach to primary religious sources is very necessary to build a more objective and in-depth understanding, especially in the pluralistic context of Indonesia. The absence of cross-scriptural studies with an academic basis causes public discourse to often get caught up in shallow dichotomies that exacerbate prejudice and social conflict.

In accordance with the description, the focus of this study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the concept of jihad and qital in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the concept of struggle or violence in the Gospel (especially the Synoptic Gospels), with a contextual and hermeneutic approach. This study does not aim to equate two different religious traditions, but rather to examine how each religion understands the meaning of struggle, the limits of violence, and the spiritual purpose behind it. In the Indonesian context, this is important to formulate an educational and dialogical approach that can reduce religious-based conflicts.

The research questions proposed are as follows: (1) How are the concepts of jihad and qital in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW understood in the spiritual and social context of Muslims, and how are they applied in Indonesian society? (2) How are the concepts of struggle or violence in the Bible understood by Christians and how is this meaning translated into the practice of interfaith life in Indonesia? By answering these two questions, it is hoped that this research will be able to enrich academic discourse and social practice in building healthy and productive interfaith relations.

Thus, this research is not merely academic but also has practical relevance in strengthening the foundation of tolerance, interfaith education, and a fair and balanced understanding of the teachings of other religions. When religious people are able to read and understand other holy books objectively and contextually, then the space for dialogue, collaboration, and reconciliation will be wider open. In a multicultural society like Indonesia, understanding jihad and violence in holy texts is not only a theological issue, but also the foundation of peaceful and civilized coexistence.

Methods

The research method used was qualitative-descriptive with a comparative approach, both at the text and context levels. Qualitative-descriptive research tries to describe in depth the social realities, religious views, and constructions of meaning inherent in the concept of jihad in Islam

and qital (holy war), and its equivalent in Christian teachings, especially related to Jesus' teachings on violence, love, and forgiveness. Through this approach, the research not only attempts to understand religious texts as doctrinal products alone, but also places the texts in dynamic interaction with the socio-cultural context of plural and multireligious Indonesian society.

As Creswell explains, qualitative research allows researchers to understand the hidden meanings behind texts and social practices by placing human experience at the center of the study (W.Creswell, 2014). This method is also in line with Max van Manen's ideas which emphasize the importance of reflective meaning in interpreting texts and human life experiences in certain contexts (Manen, 1990).

The types of approaches used were comparative textual and contextual approaches. The textual approach examines primary sources from each religious tradition, namely the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad in Islam and the text of the Gospel in the New Testament in the Christian tradition. Meanwhile, the contextual approach is carried out to understand how these texts are interpreted and implemented in the socio-religious reality in Indonesia, including in public discourse and the behavior of religious people towards the issue of violence in the name of religion.

This study used a library research method as the main technique for collecting data. Primary data are in the form of authentic hadith texts containing the concepts of jihad and *qital*, as well as verses from the Bible that are relevant to the theme of violence and peace. While secondary data are obtained from theology books, hadith interpretations, scientific journals, research reports, and literature related to religious violence and interfaith relations in Indonesia.

The data analysis technique used was content analysis, namely by critically reading religious texts and supporting literature, then systematically comparing the meaning of the concept of jihad and violence in two religious traditions (Krippendorff, 2018). The aim of this analysis is to find common ground and fundamental differences in the teachings of the two religions regarding violence and peace, and to examine their relevance in building harmony between religious communities in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

General Concepts of Qital and Jihad in Islam and Christianity

In Islamic studies, the term *jihad* (الجهاد) comes from the root word jahada (جهد) which means “serious” or “striving with all one’s might.” Etymologically, jihad means hard work, and in the context of Islamic law, this term has undergone a broad and multi dimensional development of meaning. According to Ibn Manzur in *Lisan al-‘Arab,* jihad means والطاقة الوسع بذل (exerting all one’s abilities and strength) in order to defend and uphold the truth (Ibn Manzur,1990). This concept is not only interpreted as warfare (*jihad fi sabilillah* in the form of *qital*), but also includes the inner struggle against lust (*jihad al-nafs*), the struggle to uphold social justice, and efforts to seek knowledge as part of intellectual jihad.

Classical scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali placed jihad as an instrument of cleansing the soul. In *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, he stated that the greatest jihad is *jihad al-nafs,* namely the struggle to subdue oneself from tendencies towards evil (Al-Ghazali, 2019). Meanwhile, Yusuf al-Qaradawi in *Fiqh al-Jihad* said that jihad has a spiritual, social, political and even cultural meaning, and is not limited to a military context (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). He criticized the narrow reading of the verses on jihad which were only understood as an order for war, even though there are many verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet SAW which actually emphasize peace and self-control.

Meanwhile, the term *qital* (القتال) literally means “battle” or “killing in war.” Qital comes from the root word *q-t-l* (قتل) which means killing. This term is mentioned in the Qur'an as in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 190, “يقاتلونكم الذين الله سبيل في وقاتلوا” (“*And fight in the way of Allah those who fight*

you…"). This verse contains ethical limitations in war, namely that war is only carried out in self-defense and does not exceed the limits (*la ta'taddu*). In Ibn Kathir's interpretation, it is explained that *qital* in Islam is permitted on condition that there is an attack from the opposing party and is based on the intention to defend the religion and people (Ibnu Katsir, 2008).

The difference between jihad and qital is important to note. Jihad is a broad umbrella for various forms of struggle, while qital is one form of jihad carried out in a defensive war. In this context, violent action is not the goal, but rather an instrument to maintain the existence of the people and religion.

On the other hand, in Christianity, the concept of jihad or qital is not directly known. Christian teachings fundamentally place love (ἀγάπη, agape) as the core of morality and human relations. In the Gospel of Matthew 5:44, Jesus said: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This principle is the foundation of Christian morality in responding to violence. According to Hauerwas, a Christian ethical theologian, violence in Jesus' teachings is morally rejected because it contradicts the essence of the Kingdom of God which prioritizes reconciliation and peace (Hauerwas, 1991). Even when Jesus was arrested, he forbade Peter to use the sword (John 18:11), demonstrating a preference for peaceful resolution over physical confrontation.

However, it is important to note that Christian theological tradition has also engaged with the concept of justified violence, particularly through the Just War Theory, which was significantly developed by St. Augustine. Augustine argued that while war is a tragic consequence of human sin, it could be justified under certain conditions, such as in self-defense or to protect the innocent, with the aim of restoring peace and justice (Nicolaides, 2024). This tradition does not negate the primacy of love and peace in Christian ethics but provides a framework for considering the ethical use of force in a fallen world. Thus, Christian thought on violence is not solely pacifist but includes a nuanced discussion of when and how force might be morally permissible, as seen in the ongoing theological reflections on jus ad bellum, jus in bello, and jus post bellum.

However, it should be noted that in the Old Testament (for example in the Book of Joshua and 1 Samuel), there are narratives about the wars of the Israelites that are often used by some conservative theologians to justify forms of violence in church history. However, contemporary interpretations understand these narratives as historical texts that cannot be used as a basis for normative ethics in modern Christianity (Wright, 2004).

Thus, although there is an impression that Islam allows war through the concept of qital, while Christianity emphasizes love and non-violence, in reality both religions have high ethical principles regarding peace and human protection. Both Islam and Christianity encourage their adherents to uphold justice in a dignified and contextually appropriate manner. In the midst of the plurality of Indonesian society, a deep and contextual understanding of these two terms is very important so that there is no distortion of meaning that could trigger conflict.

Jihad and Qital in Hadith and Bible: Comparative Analysis of Texts

In the Hadith, there are various narrations that describe jihad as a physical and spiritual struggle. There are several meanings of jihad and *qital* scattered in several hadiths of the Prophet SAW, including;

1. Spiritual Aspect (*Jihad al-Nafs*)

Jihad in the spiritual aspect is a struggle against lust and an effort to improve the quality of oneself, faith, and closeness to Allah.

> The believers whose Islam is most important are Muslims who are safe from the evil of their tongues and hands. The believer with the most faith is the one with the best behavior. The most important Muhajirin are people who abandon Allah's

> prohibitions. The most important jihad is jihad against one's own desires for the sake of Allah. (Imam Ahmad, No. 23489)

This hadith is narrated in Musnad Ahmad. This hadith emphasizes the importance of internal struggle to improve oneself, control desires, and increase devotion to Allah as part of a greater jihad.

Opinion of al-Thibi (d. 743 H). In the book *al-Kasyif 'an Haqaiq al-Sunan Syarh Misykat al-Mashabih*, al-Thibi comments on this hadith and says, "A mujahid is not just someone who fights with enemy infidels. However, a true mujahid is one who fights his desires, encourages him and forces him to obey Allah. This is because a person's desires are a stronger enemy than hostile infidels. Because, hostile infidels are in a different position. far away. Will not meet and come face to face with them unless there are certain conditions. When a person's lust is, then he will always meet them, lust will prevent people from doing good and obedience. There is no doubt that fighting with a close enemy is more important than fighting with a distant enemy" (Al-Thibi, 2013).

Meanwhile, al-Munawi (d. 1031 H) in the book *Faidh al-Qadir Syarh al-Jami' al-Shaghir* said,

> Fighting lust is more important than fighting unbelievers, hypocrites and criminals. This is because something can become major and have high value by looking at its impact. The impact of fighting lust is to obtain guidance. Allah says, "Those who truly obey us, we will show them the way to us." With the statement of this verse, it is quite clear the glory of fighting lust. Allah commands to fight lust, "and fight in obedience to Allah with real struggle"(Al-Thibi, 2013).

Meanwhile, according to al-Shan'ani (d. 1182 H) in *al-Tanwir Syarh al-Jami' al-Shaghir,* the true meaning of mujahid is,

> The essence of a mujahid is a person who fights against his desires in order to always carry out all obedience. Among obedience is fighting in the way of Allah and abandoning evil. In general, all obedience will not be complete without jihad against lust (Al-Thibi, 2013).

2. Social Aspects (Jihad in Da'wah and Kindness)

Jihad also includes the struggle to spread the goodness and preaching of Islam. This can be seen in the hadith which directs people to strive hard to maintain social justice and improve the condition of society

> "Whoever goes out to fight jihad in the way of Allah and tries to improve the condition of the people, then he is a person who fights jihad in the way of Allah." (H.R. Muslim, No. 1915)

This hadith underlines the importance of social struggle to bring benefits to humanity and improve social life. Imam an-Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim provides an important framework for expanding the meaning of jihad in Islam. The meaning of jihad as a form of non-violent struggle that includes defending people's rights, eradicating poverty, and fighting against social injustice, shows that jihad is not just a military action, but also a manifestation of social and moral responsibility (Al-Nawawī, 2023). In this context, jihad can be interpreted as a transformative activity carried out with sincere intentions for the good of the people and public welfare (*maslahah ‘ammah).*

This approach is in line with the *maqāṣid al-syarīʿah,* especially in efforts to protect the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), protect property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and maintain human dignity (*ḥifẓ al-‘ird*). Contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi also emphasize that jihad in the modern era must be interpreted as a collective effort by Muslims to fight structural poverty, economic inequality, and exploitation of power (Al-Qaradawi, 1995). He calls jihad in the form of social and intellectual development as civil jihad, which is more relevant in the context of developing Muslim countries.

From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic law, jihad in the form of social improvement is also an instrument for strengthening legal awareness, social solidarity, and community participation in creating a just order (Ma'arif, 2009).Thus, the understanding of jihad must be placed in a broad ethical horizon, namely as a spiritual calling to defend humanity and uphold justice.

> "Indeed the greatest jihad is a just (true) expression delivered in the face of an oppressive ruler." (HR. Muslim, No. 1984)

In the Sharh of Sahih Muslim, Imam an-Nawawi explains that the hadith regarding "*truthful* speech in the face of an oppressive ruler" indicates a high position for those who dare to correct power in order to uphold the truth. According to him, jihad in this context does not involve physical strength, but requires moral courage and steadfastness of faith. This is the most difficult form of jihad because it risks personal safety for the sake of the public interest (Al-Nawawī, 2023). In the Islamic scholarly tradition, such actions are known as amar ma'ruf nahi munkar at the highest level, which is carried out not only on ordinary people but also on the highest authorities of the state.

In the context of universal morals, this teaching is also in line with the values of Christianity. Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew 5:10–12 affirms: “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matius 5:10–12).” This teaching suggests that suffering experienced in order to uphold justice and truth is a sign of spiritual nobility. This reflects the principle of moral courage that does not submit to the pressure of power, similar to the concept of moral jihad in Islam.

Contemporary Christian theologians such as Walter Wink also support this idea. In Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination, Wink explains that the act of resisting unjust power is an active, not a passive, form of spirituality. He calls it “nonviolent resistance,” a nonviolent resistance that remains grounded in the values of love, justice, and truth. He argues that the courage to speak the truth in the face of oppressive power is not only a social act, but also an act of deep faith (Walter Wink, 1992).

In interfaith dialogue, this principle shows that there is a meeting point between Islam and Christianity in understanding the courage to uphold the truth. Both Islam through the hadith of the Prophet and Christianity through the words of Jesus both emphasize the importance of siding with the truth even when faced with social and political risks. Thus, moral jihad in Islam and testimony of truth in Christianity actually strengthen each other as a form of spiritual courage that transcends sectarian boundaries.

3. Military Aspect (Qital to Defend Religion and Humanity)

Qital, in this context, is understood as warfare that is permitted to defend religion, humanity, and justice. Qital is only allowed in certain situations that meet the criteria and do not contradict the principles of humanity.

> "There is no jihad against people who do not threaten us. But if they attack us, then we must defend ourselves.."(HR. Bukhari, No. 6871)

This hadith shows that jihad in the form of war is not an act of aggression, but rather a legitimate form of defense against actual attacks or threats.

In Fath al-Bari, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani explains that the context of this hadith is an affirmation that Islam does not teach hostility without cause, and qital is only justified when Muslims are faced with threats to their lives, religion or territory (Al-’Asqalani, 1959). This is in accordance with the principle of la darar wa la dirar (no harm and no harm), as well as maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah in the aspect of *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of the soul).

> "Indeed, you will all fight against those who fight against you, but do not kill women, children and the elderly." (HR. Muslim, No. 1744)

This hadith contains a fundamental principle in Islamic law of war (*ahkām al-jihād),* namely the limitation of who may be targeted in war. This hadith emphasizes that in conditions of jihad or *qital*, Islam does not justify indiscriminate violence, especially against those who do not have a direct role in hostilities or fighting. Imam an-Nawawi in Syarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim explains that the prohibition of killing women, children, and the elderly is based on their non-involvement in acts of hostility or military resistance. If they do not act as combatants, then killing them is included in the acts of injustice that are forbidden (Al-Nawawī, 2023). This shows that the principles of justice and compassion still apply even in the context of war.

Apart from that, this principle is also in accordance with maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, especially *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of the soul) and *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (protection of honor), which demands humane treatment of every individual, even in situations of conflict. In the contemporary context, this principle is relevant to international humanitarian law such as the Geneva Conventions which protect civilians in war. This proves that Islam has already laid the ethical foundations in armed conflict.

In contrast, the Gospels offer a more cautious view of violence. In the Gospels, Jesus teaches, "Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). This verse underscores the principle of peace and forgiveness. This teaching does not stand alone; it is central to the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus overturns the social and legal norms of lex talionis (the law of retaliation) with an ethic of love and sacrifice. This view rejects physical retaliation even in conditions of oppression. Karen Armstrong, a theologian and historian of religion, states that "Jesus' teaching on enemy love is not simply a moral ideal, but a radical spiritual strategy that challenges violence with a higher moral force"(Armstrong, 2007).

Although in historical context, there were wars involving Christians, such as the Crusades, the teachings of Jesus as a whole tended to avoid violence. This reflects how early Christianity emphasized resolving conflicts through peaceful means. Stanley Hauerwas, a Christian moral theologian, asserts that "true Christianity rejects violence not because military force is useless, but because the cross of Christ shows that love, not power, is the way of salvation*"* (Hauerwas, 1991).

Matthew 5:39-*"But I say to you, Do not resist evil people. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him also your left cheek*." This verse teaches about calm in the face of violence or attacks, by not returning evil for evil, but responding with an attitude of forgiveness. In the view of N. T. Wright, a New Testament scholar, this verse does not mean passiveness towards injustice, but rather refers to proactive action that rejects revenge and changes power dynamics through unexpected responses (Wright, 2012).

Luke 6:27-28-*"But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."* This teaching reinforces the concept of forgiveness and prayer for those who do evil, leading to the resolution of conflict in a loving and non-violent manner. In his commentary, John Stott writes that love for one's enemies is not only a form of mercy, but the highest form of spiritual integrity that reflects the love of God himself (Stott, 2002).

Rome 12:17–21 - "Do not repay evil for evil, try to do good to everyone. If possible, as long as it depends on you, live in peace with everyone." In this verse, Paul teaches Christians not to repay evil with evil, but to seek peace and sincerity, even in challenging situations. Theologian Karl Barth asserts that Christian love, as taught by Paul, rejects retaliation as a reversal of the values of the Gospel (Stott, 2002). According to him, true love can only be proven by the willingness to forgive, even in times of injustice.

A comparison between these two teachings shows deep differences in the meaning of jihad and qital. Islam recognizes the existence of war in certain contexts, while Christianity emphasizes the principles of peace and forgiveness. However, both religions have strong moral principles regarding good intentions and justice in all actions.

Reactualization of Jihad and Qital in Indonesian Religious Life

Indonesia as a multicultural country with a majority Muslim population and a significant Christian community requires a comprehensive approach in understanding and implementing religious values related to struggle and violence. In this context, a holistic and critical understanding of jihad and *qital*, as well as an interpretation of the message of love in Christianity, becomes very important to avoid misuse of religious doctrine which can give rise to extremism and horizontal conflict.

Theologically, jihad in Islam reflects a broad and multidimensional struggle. In many hadiths, jihad does not always refer to armed warfare (*qital*), but rather to a Muslim's efforts to improve himself (*jihad al-nafs*), uphold social justice, and defend religious values from various forms of oppression. This indicates that the spiritual dimension has a major role in jihad, and that qital is only one manifestation of jihad in certain situations that meet strict ethical and legalistic requirements.

Fazlur Rahman, a modernist Muslim thinker, emphasized that jihad must be understood within an ethical and moral framework that is in accordance with the principles of maqashid al-shari'ah (the goals of sharia), such as protecting life, religion, reason, descendants, and property (Rahman, 1982). In the context of a peaceful and democratic Indonesia, jihad is more relevant if manifested in the form of a struggle for social justice, eradicating poverty, strengthening education, and fighting corruption as a real form of structural oppression faced by society.

Instead, within the framework of Islamic political jurisprudence (fiqh siyasah), the legitimacy of qital is not only conditioned by a real existential threat and universal ethical principles but is also traditionally contingent upon the declaration by a legitimate state authority (ulil amri). This classical legal restraint serves as a crucial theological-ethical bulwark against the anarchic use of violence by non-state actors. However, the complex socio-political reality in Indonesia reveals the risk of this doctrine being co-opted. Radical groups often bypass this state-centric authority, framing their struggles as religiously mandated qital to justify political agendas, a phenomenon where religious symbolism is instrumentalized for power, as critically observed by Armstrong (2015). This politicization creates a critical juncture where theological ethics must be reasserted. Contemporary Indonesian Muslim scholars, such as Azyumardi Azra, have consistently argued for a neo-modernist interpretation that reinforces the state's constitutional role as the primary guarantor of security and the sole legitimate entity capable of authorizing defensive force, thereby delegitimizing vigilante actions (Azra, 2006). Furthermore, theologically grounding the ethical limits of war within the higher objectives of Sharia (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah), especially the preservation of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs) and public welfare (maslahah), provides a powerful discursive tool for religious leaders and civil society to counter narratives that exploit religious doctrines for political violence (Masud, 2009).

In the Christian context, especially in Indonesia, the principle of love (agape) is a very strong moral foundation in establishing relationships between people. Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew 5:44 emphasized, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This teaching shows the superiority of a dialogical and reconciliatory approach in resolving conflicts, while also encouraging the formation of an inclusive and civilized society. In the study of Christian peace theology, figures such as John Howard Yoder through his book The Politics of Jesus state that Christianity that is faithful to the teachings of Jesus will reject structural and personal violence, and strive to present the kingdom of God in peaceful actions in the world (Rahman,1982).

However, in Indonesian socio-political practice, challenges arise from the misuse of the concepts of jihad and qital, including in the form of religious extremism. Acts of terrorism in the name of Islam and communal violence involving Christian groups show that religious textual interpretations cannot be separated from social and political realities. Perpetrators of violence often ignore the historical context, ethical norms, and universal principles contained in religious teachings.

In this situation, the role of religious education and religious literacy becomes very crucial. Nurcholish Madjid, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, proposed that Islam should be interpreted as a religion that liberates, enlightens, and humanizes humans. According to him, contemporary jihad is jihad to eradicate ignorance and poverty, and to uphold the values of humanity and justice (Madjid, 2019). In this framework, Muslims in Indonesia need to reactualize the meaning of jihad in line with the current socio-cultural and democratic context.

Likewise, Indonesian Christian figures such as Franz Magnis-Suseno emphasized the importance of Christian social ethics based on love, solidarity, and respect for human dignity as the basis of national life. He stated that the ethical task of Christians is to be peacemakers, not justifiers of violence in the name of doctrine (Magnis-Suseno, 2003).

For this reason, an interfaith approach becomes an integral part in the reactualization of the values of jihad and love. Interfaith dialogue is not only a formal forum, but must be used as a deep social process to build mutual understanding. Interfaith programs such as social cooperation, joint education, and post-conflict reconciliation must be expanded to strengthen the roots of peace. Religious leaders need to have historical literacy and deep theological understanding in order to guide their people towards an inclusive and tolerant religious life.

In the Indonesian context, an integrative approach like this is increasingly urgent, given the increasing intolerance and politicization of religion in the public sphere (Hakim et al., 2023). The state has a strategic role to facilitate inclusive religious education, as well as ensuring that religious teachings are not misused to discriminate or incite conflict. The model of religious moderation promoted by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs needs to be supported by strong academic research and implementation at the grassroots community level.

Thus, the reactualization of jihad and qital in religious life in Indonesia does not mean relativizing sacred texts, but rather carrying out contextual, critical, and humanistic rereading so that the noble values in Islamic and Christian teachings truly function as pillars of social harmony. Only with a complete, reflective, and dialogical understanding can religious people go beyond the trap of formalism and fanaticism, towards a religious practice that is liberating, humanizing, and reconciling.

Conclusion

Jihad and qital in Islam and the concepts of war and violence in Christianity reflect two different approaches to interpreting struggle in religion. In Islam, jihad is often understood as an effort to achieve goodness, including through da'wah, education, and self-defense in situations that are legal according to the Shari'a. Jihad does not always mean physical war, but also includes internal struggle (*jihad al-nafs*) to fight desires and improve one's spiritual quality. However, qital, which refers to fighting or warfare, is only permitted under certain conditions and with strict limitations, such as for self-defense, protecting the Muslim community, and ensuring social justice. Ethical and moral principles, such as the prohibition on killing people who are not involved in war, have always been the basis for implementing jihad and qital in Islam.

Meanwhile, in Christian teachings, the principle of love (agape) is the main foundation in interpersonal relationships. Jesus taught to love enemies and forgive those who do evil. Therefore, Christians tend to avoid violence and emphasize peace and forgiveness as the main way to resolve conflicts. Violence is considered a violation of the deep teachings of love. However, in the context of diverse Indonesia, a correct and deep understanding of these two concepts is very important to maintain harmony between religious communities. Despite the differences in these teachings, the essence of both religions is peace, mutual respect, and fostering compassion. Misuse of religious teachings for the purpose of violence can damage social harmony and worsen divisions. Therefore, religious communities, both Muslims and Christians, need to deepen their understanding of their religious teachings in a broader context, namely peace and tolerance to create a harmonious and understand religious life.

This study, however, has its limitations. Its primary reliance on textual analysis and the interpretations of religious elites means that the lived experiences and diverse understandings of these concepts among the grassroots Muslim and Christian communities in Indonesia are not fully captured. Future research could employ empirical methods, such as in-depth interviews and surveys across different regions of Indonesia, to investigate how the notions of jihad, qital, and non-violence are practically understood, contested, and lived out by ordinary believers in their daily socio-political contexts. Furthermore, subsequent studies could expand this comparative framework to include other religious traditions present in Indonesia, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, to develop a more comprehensive model of interfaith education for peacebuilding.

Acknowledgment: The researcher (Achmad Nasrul Waton Ar Rosyit) would like to thank the Indonesian Education Fund Management Institution (LPDP) as a scholarship and a supporter of publication fund, State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

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***Conflict of Interest Statement**: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*