



Islam:

Does belief in Akhirah help Muslims to lead a good life? (Part 2)

Topic Overview

- Muslims define Jihad in different ways, for some it is an individual daily struggle to do the right thing, to avoid evil and temptation.
- For some other Muslims, Jihad can be taken to mean literally fighting against a perceived enemy or evil, for example in a Holy War (a military Jihad).
- This has led some Muslims to take extreme action and even die for their faith as well as kill others in the belief that this action will lead them straight to paradise.
- Some Muslims interpret the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) words: '*the person who struggles so that Allah's word is supreme is the one serving Allah's cause,*' to mean it is their duty to fight in order to make sure people know Allah's word is supreme.
- They believe they are being 'good' by doing this and some of them believe they will be rewarded with heaven when they die if they do.
- The Qur'an makes it clear that Muslims may fight in self-defence but must not start a fight or a war.

Links with other religions

- **The Bible** (Christianity). The Bible does not give Christians a clear answer about whether war is permitted or not. Most Christians believe that war should be avoided if possible, and should only be undertaken if all efforts to resolve an issue by peaceful means have failed. Christians believe God gave them life and that each human is made 'in the image of God.' Christians believe that life is sacred and should be protected. The 10 Commandments forbid murder. In Matthew, Jesus tells his followers to 'love your enemies.'
- **Ahimsa** (Buddhism). The principle of 'non-harm'. Most Buddhists try to practice ahimsa in their everyday lives and believe that it is wrong to show violence at any time.
- **War** (Judaism). Judaism teaches that war is sometimes necessary in self-defence and in order to bring about peace. Judaism also teaches that humans must not destroy life but preserve it. God created life, and life therefore belongs to God so only God can take away life. To take life is a sin and is against God's will.
- **Dharam Yudh** (Sikhism). Sikhs generally believe it is right to fight in cases of self-defence or for a righteous cause. They may fight for injustice but never for revenge. Sikhs must never be the first to draw their swords.
- **Ahimsa** (Hinduism). Many Hindus believe war is unavoidable when all attempts at peace-making have failed; some believe war is never right. Some Hindus would say it is the duty (dharma) of everyone to protect the innocent. If this means having to fight, then that is a necessary and acceptable form of evil. Some Hindus believe that violence in any form is wrong and a bad action resulting in bad karma.

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Akhirah	Life after death.
Influence	To affect or change how someone or something develops, behaves, or thinks.
Interpretation	An explanation or opinion of what something means.
Qur'an	Muslim Holy book.
Jihad	A personal struggle against evil.
Prophet	Individuals who were sent by God to serve as examples of ideal human behaviour and to spread God's message on Earth.
Just War	A war that might be acceptable to fight.
Lesser Jihad	A struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam.
Holy War	A war that has religion as the driving force; usually to defend it from attackers.

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors.

Qur'an 2:190

But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is One that heareth and knoweth (all things).

Qur'an 8:61

DOES

JIHAD MEAN

HOLY WAR?

Lesser Jihad