



Islam:

Does belief in Akhirah help Muslims to lead a good life? (Part 1)

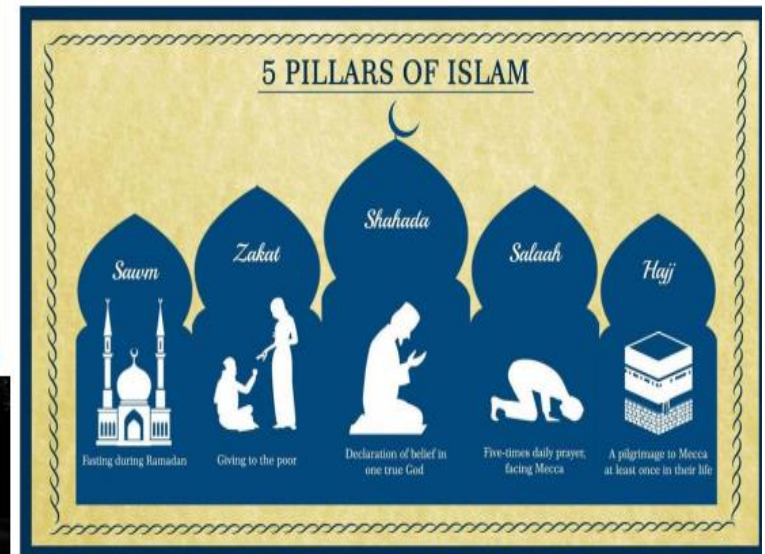
Topic Overview

- Muslims try to live 'good' lives - lives they believe will show love and respect to Allah, for example: by following the Five Pillars of Islam.
- Muslims believe that Allah will judge them when they die and weigh up the good things they have done against the not so good.
- They believe that their daily thoughts, words and actions will be used as evidence.
- This belief encourages Muslims to live in the 'right way' and try to do the right thing.
- Every Muslim will have a judgement day which will determine whether they go to heaven after they die.
- It may also determine which tier/part of Heaven they are allowed to go to.
- Muslims believe Allah will be fair and just: their after life will be what they deserve.
- The spiritual struggle or effort of every Muslim to follow the teachings of Allah in their own lives is called 'Greater Jihad.'
- Greater Jihad is an individual's personal struggle against evil. This evil might prevent you from doing the will of Allah. This is a daily feature in the life of a Muslim as they try to ensure that every aspect of their life is lived in line with Allah's will.

Links with other religions

- **Heaven** (Christianity). Christians believe those who believe in Christ and live good lives will be given eternal life in Heaven with God and Jesus.
- **Life after Death** (Judaism). While Jewish people believe there is a life after death, the details of this are unclear. Most Jews concentrate on living a good life today in the present, rather than what will happen when they die.
- **Samsara** (Sikhism). Many Sikhs believe that all beings have a soul (atma). The atma is a part of Waheguru within them. Through a series of reincarnations, Sikhs believe they will be purified and able to return to Waheguru.
- **Samsara** (Buddhism). The Buddha taught that humans are born an infinite number of times, unless they achieve Nirvana (enlightenment).
- **Samsara** (Hinduism). Most Hindus believe that humans are in a cycle of death and rebirth called samsara. When a person dies, their atman (soul) is reborn in a different body.
- **Karma** (Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism). Sikhs, Buddhists and Hindus believe that good actions will result in a better rebirth, while bad actions will have the opposite effect.
- **Yawm ad-Din** (Judaism). Jews believe the Day of Judgement will occur after the coming of the Messiah. They believe that God will judge how good or bad people have been in order to decide their destiny in the afterlife.
- **Judgement Day** (Christianity). Many Christians believe that after death God will judge them for the deeds they have done or failed to do during their lifetime. Some Christians believe that this judgement will happen when they die. Others believe that there will be a Day of Judgement at the end of time, when everybody will be judged at the same time.

| Key Vocabulary | Definition |
|----------------|--|
| Akhirah | Life after death. |
| Motivation | A reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way. |
| Judgement | To form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence |
| Jihad | Struggle or effort. |
| Greater Jihad | Personal individual struggle against evil. |
| Righteous | Acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin. |





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.

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

| 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. |

DOES

JIHAD MEAN

HOLY WAR?



Lesser Jihad

