

# Celestial Grace Temple

## What is a Jihad ?

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### **Jihad:**

The Arabic word "jihad" is often translated as "holy war," but in a purely linguistic sense, the word "jihad" means struggling or striving.

The arabic word for war is: "al-harb".

In a religious sense, as described by the Quran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (s), "jihad" has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslims or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.

If military jihad is required to protect the faith against others, it can be performed using anything from legal, diplomatic and economic to political means. If there is no peaceful alternative, Islam also allows the use of force, but there are strict rules of engagement. Innocents - such as women, children, or invalids - must never be harmed, and any peaceful overtures from the enemy must be accepted.

Military action is therefore only one means of jihad, and is very rare. To highlight this point, the Prophet Mohammed told his followers returning from a military campaign: "This day we have returned from the minor jihad to the major jihad," which he said meant returning from armed battle to the peaceful battle for self-control and betterment.

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In case military action appears necessary, not everyone can declare jihad. The religious military campaign has to be declared by a proper authority, advised by scholars, who say the religion and people are under threat and violence is imperative to defend them. The concept of "just war" is very important.

The concept of jihad has been hijacked by many political and religious groups over the ages in a bid to justify various forms of violence. In most cases, Islamic splinter groups invoked jihad to fight against the established Islamic order. Scholars say this misuse of jihad contradicts Islam.

Examples of sanctioned military jihad include the Muslims' defensive battles against the Crusaders in medieval times, and before that some responses by Muslims against Byzantine and Persian attacks during the period of the early Islamic conquests.

### **WHAT JIHAD IS NOT**

Jihad is not a violent concept.

Jihad is not a declaration of war against other religions. It is worth noting that the Koran specifically refers to Jews and Christians as "people of the book" who should be protected and respected. All three faiths worship the same God. Allah is just the Arabic word for God, and is used by Christian Arabs as well as Muslims.

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Military action in the name of Islam has not been common in the history of Islam. Scholars say most calls for violent jihad are not sanctioned by Islam.

Warfare in the name of God is not unique to Islam. Other faiths throughout the world have waged wars with religious justifications.

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May the grace of God be with you always --- Amen.

*Pastor Andy Anderson*

Celestial Grace Ministry