

Religious Studies

Islam Revision Guide



Name: _____



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Key Concepts

Tawhid 'Oneness' in reference to God. The basic Muslim belief in the oneness of God.

Prophethood or 'risalah' The term used of the messengers of God, beginning with Adam and ending with the Prophet Muhammad.

Halal (permitted) Actions or things which are permitted within Islam, such as eating permitted foods.

Haram (forbidden) Any actions or things which are forbidden within Islam, such as eating forbidden foods.

Jihad Means 'to strive'. There are two forms of jihad. The greater jihad is the daily struggle and inner spiritual striving to live as a Muslim. The lesser jihad is a physical struggle or 'holy war' in defence of Islam.

Mosque or 'masjid' A 'place of prostration' for Muslims, it is a communal place of worship for a Muslim community.

Shari'ah (straight path) A way of life; Muslims believe God has set out a clear path for how Muslims should live. Shari'ah law is the set of moral and religious rules that put the principles set out by the Qur'an and the Hadith into practice.

Ummah Means 'community'. Refers to the worldwide community of Muslims who share a common religious identity.



The Ummah

The ummah is the worldwide community of Muslims. Within the ummah all Muslims are equal, whatever their language, culture or nationality. There is great diversity across the Islamic world. There is no one, single pattern for what it means to be a Muslim, but there are certain fundamentals they all hold to. The central belief for Muslims is that there is one God (Allah) who has revealed his divine teachings to the Prophet Muhammad, in the Qur'an.

The Sunni and Shi'a split

Who are they?

One of the major divisions within Islam is the split between Sunni and Shi'a. Sunnis form the majority of Muslims in the world today (87–90 per cent); they live in the countries of North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Indonesia. The remaining 10–13 per cent of Muslims today are from the Shi'a community (although only about 5 per cent of British Muslims are Shi'as). Shi'as live mainly in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and India. Sunnis and Shi'as have coexisted for centuries, living peaceably side by side, often worshipping together in the same mosques, sometimes intermarrying. Although they share most central beliefs, they do have significant differences in the way they understand religious truth, laws and practices.

Why is there a split?

Soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad a dispute arose over who should lead the emerging Muslim community. Abu Bakr had been a close companion of the Prophet and a large group of believers chose him to become the new Khalifah (leader). After Abu Bakr's death Umar became the leader, then Uthman and then Ali. These four leaders have come to be known as the Rightly Guided Khalifahs and Sunni Muslims accept that they were God's appointed leaders. However, there was a smaller group who believed that Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, should have become the first Khalifah. It was their belief that the Prophet Muhammad had chosen and appointed Ali as his successor and they rejected the leadership of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman. They were angry that Ali had been overlooked and when Ali was later murdered, they began to separate themselves, calling themselves the Shi'a (the House of Ali). They believe that the Prophet Muhammad appointed 12 successors (Imams) from his own descendants, who are known as the Ahl al-Bayt, 'the Family of the House' of Muhammad.

Sunnis believe that:

- ▶ Religious guidance can only come from God through the Qur'an and the Hadith. Together these holy books form the Shari'ah, Islamic law.
- ▶ There should be no religious hierarchy. Imams are not holy figures appointed by God. They are simply good teachers and leaders and should be chosen through agreement among the local community.
- ▶ The new leader after Muhammad died should only be men that the Prophet Muhammad had most trusted while he was alive.

Shi'as believe that:

- ▶ God guided the Prophet Muhammad to appoint Ali as his successor.
- ▶ The leadership of the Muslim community has continued through Imams who are divinely appointed from descendants in Muhammad's family.
- ▶ The last Imam will appear at the end of the world as the Mahdi (the Chosen One who will bring justice to the world).
- ▶ The new leader after Muhammad died should have only come from his bloodline

The Six Articles of Faith

Sunni

For Sunni Muslims there are six central beliefs, or articles of faith, which define their understanding of God.

This teaching can be found in the Hadith, where Muhammad is recorded as saying: *'You must believe in Allah, his angels, his holy books, his messengers, in the Last Day and in fate (both in its good and in its evil aspects).'* Hadith

Although these six beliefs are central to the Islamic faith they are not the only important beliefs. Others include: the jihad and submission to the will of God.

Jihad striving to do what is right, for God. The greater jihad is the struggle that each person has, as an individual, to follow God's will in their life. The lesser jihad is the fight to defend Islam (holy war).

Submission to the will of God Islam means 'submission'; following the Five Pillars and the rules of Shari'ah law are a sign of being a true Muslim.

The six articles of faith in Sunni Islam

1. **Allah (God):** the unity and oneness of God is called Tawhid.
2. **Malaikah (angels):** God created angels to interact with human lives, bringing his divine message. Each Muslim has two guardian angels who record that person's good and bad actions.
3. **Holy books:** God has revealed his word to humans in the Qur'an. This tells Muslims all they need to know about how to live their lives. Other inspired scriptures include the Tawrat of Musa (Torah), the Zabur of Dawud (Psalms) and the Injil of Isa (Gospels).
4. **Risalah (prophethood):** God has spoken through numerous prophets throughout time, including Adam, Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus). However, Muhammad is the greatest prophet.
5. **Akhirah (the afterlife)** Belief in the final judgement and life after death. This life is a preparation for the eternal life that follows. On the last day there will be a time of judgement, when Muslims will have to account for their lives.
6. **Al-Qadr (God's predestination):** God is responsible for everything and has set out a divine destiny for all things. God has written down all that has happened and all that will happen in the universe. However, this does not take away human free will.

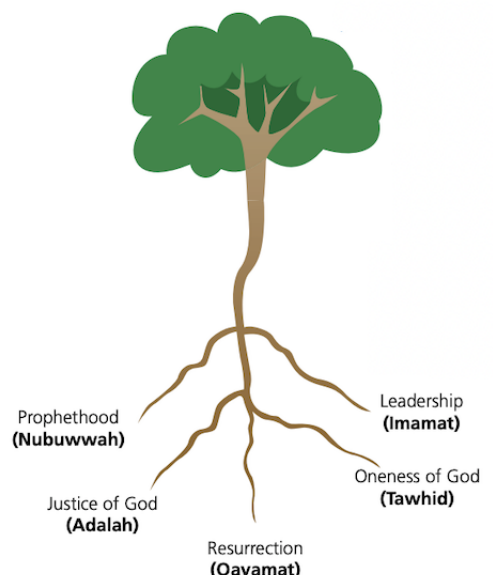
The five roots of religion in Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

1. **The oneness of God (Tawhid):** There is one God who has no equals; he is a divine unity. He cannot be compared to anyone or anything. He is perfect and unique, and he possesses infinite power and knowledge. He is immortal (he was never born) and has no partner or children.
2. **The justice of God (Adl or Adalah):** God is perfect justice, fairness and wisdom. He does not wrong anyone, and he will not tolerate wrongdoing. He cannot abuse his power by performing acts that go against his own nature to be just and fair. Humans must be responsible for their own actions, good or bad.
3. **Prophethood (Nubuwwah):** God has appointed prophets and messengers to guide human beings, showing them how to live in peace and submission to God. Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets, meaning that he brought the final, perfect and unchanging message from God.
4. **Leadership (Imamate):** Most Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last prophet, who brought the final scripture (the Qur'an) to humanity. Shi'as believe that, after his death, God appointed 12 infallible Imams to guide the Muslim community, leading them on the path set by the Prophet Muhammad. These Imams are part of what Shi'as call Ahl al-Bayt (the Family of the House). In other words, they are part of Prophet Muhammad's extended household. Of these 12, 11 have been killed. They believe that the 12th (or hidden) Imam is still alive, but is in hiding (occultation), waiting to reappear and rule on earth with justice. They sometimes refer to him as the Mahdi.
5. **Resurrection (Qayamat):** The belief that, on the Day of Judgement, there will be a resurrection, when all human beings will be physically raised to life to be judged by God. He will reward the good and punish the evil.

The Five roots of Religion

Shi'a

Shi'a Islam emphasises the importance of five fundamental principles which are sometimes called the 'roots of religion'. Every individual must make themselves aware of these truths as the foundation of their faith.



The nature of God

The single most important belief in Islam is **Tawhid**, the oneness and unity of God. There is one God (Allah) who is the universal God of all humanity. Muslims believe that God is:

- **Immanent:** God is always close by. The Qur'an says that '*God is closer to each one of us than the veins in our necks*' (50:16)
- **Transcendent:** God is beyond all things, not limited by the rules of nature.
- **Omniscient:** God has all knowledge, nothing can be hidden from him.
- **Beneficent:** God is always kind; he loves us.
- **Merciful:** God is always fair; he forgives us if we are sorry.
- **Judge:** on the last day, God will be our judge.
- **Creator:** God is the beginning; he is the cause of all that exists.

The 99 names of God

In Islam, God is not to be confused with any living creature; he is beyond all things and cannot be pictured as a physical being. God is outside our human understanding, but for Muslims he lies at the very centre of everything they think and do. So, how do Muslims 'see' God? The Qur'an and the Hadith have many different 'names' for God, not as a person, but using words that describe his qualities and attributes. They use names like:

King, Protector, Wise, Eternal, Light, etc. These are known as the 99 beautiful names of God. In fact, there are different lists of these names, recorded through different traditions of Muslims, but reciting these names has been a powerful form of prayer for Muslims through the centuries.

The sin of shirk

Islam warns of the sin of shirk. This is when a person worships something else other than God. There is one God and there can be no pictures to represent him. Muslims must worship the true God, not the image of him, created by human hands. The prophets bring the word of God, but they are only human; God is divine. For most Muslims, it is a sin of 'shirk' to show a picture of the Prophet Muhammad.

The characteristics of Allah

- **The immanent (Al-Baatin)** – God is close to humans. No being can live without him and he is present in all things. He is present in human activity, including prayer. This is how Muslims can communicate with him directly.
- **The Transcendent (Al-Muta'ali)** – Allah is above and beyond the material universe. He is responsible for the creation of all things, with no helpers. He is outside of space and time, separate from the universes he has made.
- **The Omnipotent (Al-Jabbar)** – Allah has absolute power over all things. He is in complete control over everything that happens with no dependence upon anyone or anything. This implies his omniscience (knowledge over all things) and his infinite, limitless existence. Allah's powers ensure that the only things that **happen are according to his will.**
- **The Beneficent (Ar-Rahman)** – this name appears in a blessing known as the bismillah, which begins almost every chapter in the Qur'an. Allah acts for the benefit of humanity. He gives us messages through prophets to support us and provide us with everything we need to be khalifahs (guardians) of his creation.
- **The merciful (Ar-Rahim)** – All is compassionate, He forgives those who makes mistakes. He punishes those that gets things wrong but accepts repentance.
- **The Just (Al-Adl)** – Allah sent the message of Islam to everyone so all can have the chance to enter paradise. He treats all equal and will punish to reward them justly for their behaviour. He is consistent and fair in his actions.

▼ Surah al-Fatihah The Opening ▼

1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.
3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
4. Master of the Day of Judgment.
5. It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help.
6. Guide us to the straight path.
7. The path of those You have blessed, not of those against whom there is anger, nor of those who are misguided.

▼—QURAN 1 ▼

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Al-Fatihah, the opening

The al-Fatihah is the first surah (chapter) in the Qur'an. It means 'the opening', and many Muslims learn to recite it from memory in their daily prayers. It tells Muslims about the attributes of God.

Risalah: Prophethood

A '**rasal**' a prophet. 'Risalah' means bringing prophecy from God.

The channel of communication between God and humanity is called **risalah**; the prophets are our guides. They are human beings chosen to carry guidance from God to people, but their wisdom does not come from within themselves; it comes from God. In the Qur'an it says:

'And We have already sent messengers before you and assigned to them wives and descendants. And it was not for a messenger to come with a sign except by permission of God . For every term is a decree.'

Qur'an 13:38

The Qur'an teaches that every community has been given its own prophet, bringing God's message in a book. The message brought by the Prophet Muhammad is essentially the same message as had been preached by all the prophets back to Adam: the need to worship the one, true God, who will be the judge of all.

Key figures in Islam

Islam teaches that God has sent many prophets throughout history; 25 of them are mentioned by name in the Qur'an, going right back to the creation of the world. Many of these prophets are characters from the Jewish and Christian scriptures (what Christians refer to as the Bible). However, Islam teaches that, over the centuries, the messages from these prophets have either been lost or become corrupted, so there was a need for a final revelation. Muhammad is known as the Seal of the Prophets, because his revelation of the Qur'an was God's final and absolute word.

Muslim tradition says that, in total, there have been around 124,000 prophets and that, once a prophet had been called by God, he lived a sinless life. Muslim authors put PBUH (peace and blessings be upon him) after a prophet's name to show them a deep level of respect. In Islam the major prophets (apart from Muhammad) are: Adam, Ibrahim, Musa, Dawud, and Isa.

'People, no prophet or messenger will come after me, and no new faith will emerge.' Muhammad's last sermon' (**Hadith**)



Adam

Adam is said to be the father of the human race. According to the Qur'an, God formed Adam from a handful of soil of many colours. This represents the diversity of people on earth.

Eve was created from Adam's rib and they lived together in paradise. They were commanded not to eat from a particular tree, but the devil was able to convince them to taste its fruit. As a result, they were banished to earth. However, Adam confessed his sin and was forgiven, becoming the first prophet. Muslims believe that Adam was created as God's 'khalifah' (his representative on earth). It was to be his job to rule in the place of God. Tradition says that he built the first Ka'ba in Makkah.

Musa

Musa (Moses) is remembered by Muslims as one of the most significant prophets.

The teachings of Ibrahim had been forgotten and his book lost, so a new prophet had to be sent. Musa led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land. Islam teaches that he was given the word of God, known as the Tawrat (Torah), but the people were disobedient and the message became distorted.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim (Abraham) is regarded as a hanif. This means that he had an inner knowledge that there is really only one true God. For this reason, he is seen as the greatest of the prophets before Isa (Jesus). He was born into a family of polytheists, but he rejected these beliefs in favour of monotheism and became a Muslim (one who bows down to God).

‘Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to God]. And he was not of the polytheists.’ Qur’an 3:67

Ibrahim had two sons who were both prophets: Ishma’il (the prophet to the Arabs) and Ishaq (the prophet to the Jews). For Muslims, Ishma’il is the more important, because he is an ancestor to Muhammad.

(Ishma’il’s mother) as she ran between the hills of Al-Safa and Muhammad is the Seal of the Prophets, because, when you put a seal on something you close it up. It is the final act, showing that nothing more can be added. Ka’ba known as the House of God, the black covered, cube-shaped building at the centre of Islam’s holiest mosque in Makkah. Polytheism belief in many gods. ‘To every people was sent an apostle.’ Qur’an 10:47 236 7 Islam: Beliefs and teachings Al-Marwah in search of water. They also remember how God instructed Ibrahim to sacrifice Ishma’il. When Satan tried to tempt Ibrahim to disobey God, telling him to refuse to sacrifice his son, Ibrahim drove the evil one away by throwing stones at him.

There is a tradition that God revealed a holy book to Ibrahim, known as ‘the scrolls of Ibrahim’ or the ‘Sahifah’. The Qur’an mentions this book, but no record remains of it today.

Isa

Isa is the Islamic name for Jesus. Apart from Muhammad, Isa (Jesus) and his mother Maryam (Mary) are the most prominent figures in the Qur’an. It recognises Isa as a prophet and as a successor to Moses. He was given the Injil (Gospel) and he performed miracles. However, Muslims deny the Christian teaching of the Trinity and reject the belief that Isa is God. They say God is ‘one’ not ‘three’.

‘We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of apostles; We gave Jesus ... signs (miracles) and strengthened him with the holy spirit.’ Qur’an 3:87

The Qur’an teaches that, although it appeared as if Isa (Jesus) had been crucified, in fact he did not die. God could not allow evil men to triumph over his prophet in such a way. Instead, Isa was taken up to heaven and will reappear in the second coming when God judges the world.

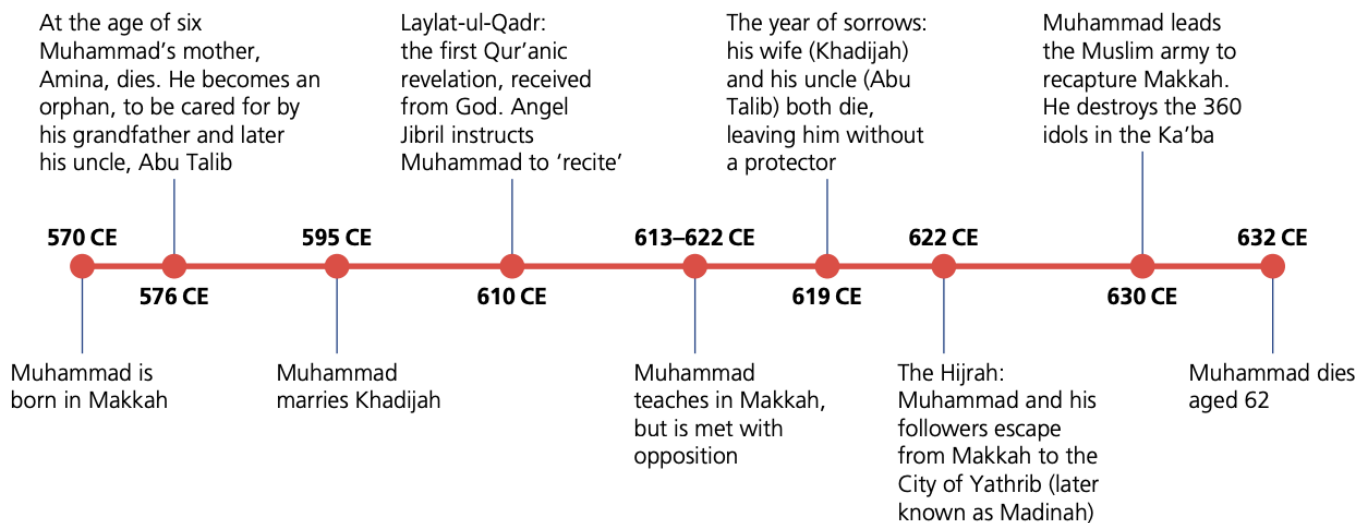
‘And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them.’ Qur’an 4:157

Muhammad: The last and greatest prophet

Muslims believe that through history, God has communicated to humans through revelations and the last and greatest of these revelations was given to the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad did not come from a rich family and it is likely that he could not read or write. He was not a learned man or a scholar, but he was very devout. He would take himself off for days to meditate in a cave in the desert, seeking God. Muslims believe that God chose Muhammad as a prophet because he was a humble, honest man; a man he could trust with such a special message. Islam teaches that Muhammad is the last and the greatest prophet, sent by God. He is a role model for Muslims because of the moral and prayerful way he lived his life. Unlike Jesus he performed no miracles; he was born, lived and died an ordinary man, but Muslims see him as the perfect example of a human being.

Muhammad did not write the Qur’an from his own words; he was the channel through which God spoke. Islam makes a clear distinction between the divine revelation of the Qur’an and the human words of the Prophet Muhammad, which are preserved in the Hadith.

The life of Muhammad



- Muhammad was born in Makkah (in Arabia) in 570 CE, but by the age of six he had become an orphan. In his twenties he entered the service of a wealthy merchant named Khadijah and he so impressed her with his honesty and character that Khadijah proposed marriage. They married and had four daughters, and two sons (who sadly died in infancy).
- As he grew older, Muhammad began to feel troubled by the corruption and cruelty he saw in Makkah. He believed that the worship of idols by the people of Makkah was wrong and that there was really only one true God.
- He started to spend more time alone in prayer and one night, in the year 610 CE, while he was praying in a cave near Makkah he had an experience that would change his life. As he sat meditating, the Angel Jibril appeared before him and ordered him to recite the words that had miraculously appeared before him. Muslims call this event Laylat-ul-Qadr, the Night of Power and they remember it today on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is one of the holiest days of the Muslim year.
- These revelations were to continue for the next 23 years, until Muhammad's death. He did not always see the Angel Jibril; sometimes he heard a voice speaking to him; sometimes these revelations took place while he was in prayer, at other times when he was going about his everyday life.
- The message Prophet Muhammad brought to the people of Makkah was: there is one true God, Lord of goodness and power, we need to show thanks to God through worship and there will be a judgement day where God will judge our lives. Many in Makkah did not receive this message well; he was ridiculed and insulted. However, some did follow him and they became known as 'Muslims'.
- In the years following his first revelation, Prophet Muhammad gained some followers in Makkah, but his ideas also angered many. Makkah was a centre for pagan pilgrims who came to worship the idols in the Ka'ba, bringing great wealth to the city. Muhammad began preaching openly that the worship of idols offends God and that these idols were no more than useless bits of wood and stone. His message, that God is merciful, but that there will also be a Day of Judgement caused many to turn against him and threaten violence. For nearly ten years Prophet Muhammad struggled to gain converts in Makkah, with little success and then tragedy struck: two of his closest supporters, his uncle and his wife Khadijah, died. This was a devastating blow.
- Not long after, while teaching in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad was approached by some pilgrims from Yathrib, a city some distance to the north. They were impressed with his message and invited him to visit, to judge their community disputes. He agreed and sent some of his followers ahead of him. Now, as he planned to leave, it became clear that his life was in danger; there were people plotting to kill him. Ali insisted on staying behind in Makkah, to act as a decoy, while Muhammad made the treacherous journey. This migration of Muhammad from Makkah to Yathrib is known as the Hijrah. It marks the start of the Muslim calendar. Ali was Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Shi'a Muslims refer to him as the first Imam and look to Ali as Muhammad's rightful successor.

The life of Muhammad

- Prophet Muhammad was welcomed into Yathrib, where he came to be seen not just as a prophet, but also as a political leader and military commander. He became the city's ruler and it was renamed Madinah (City of the Prophet). For the next ten years he worked to unite the different communities. There were a number of Jewish tribes in Madinah and he had expected them to become Muslims. However, many rejected Prophet Muhammad's belief that the revelations he received were from the same God that they worshipped. They refused to believe that they should now turn towards Makkah to pray (instead of Jerusalem) and that they should fast during Ramadan. Some of these Jewish tribes in Madinah began to plot against Muhammad and so he was forced to expel them from the city. By 630 CE he had gained enough support across Arabia to march on Makkah with an army of 10,000 men. Faced with this overwhelming force, the rulers of the city conceded defeat and opened the gates. Makkah was taken without the shedding of a drop of blood and the Ka'ba was cleansed of idols and re-dedicated to Allah.
- In 630 CE Muhammad and his followers were able to return to Makkah, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam as a permanent religion. Muhammad was now accepted as the final and true prophet of God. He continued to lead his community until his death in 632 CE.

Malaikah: Angels

Islam teaches that angels are heavenly, immortal beings, God's first creation. According to the Qur'an, humans were formed from clay, but angels were made out of light. They are God's messengers, the channels through which we can become aware of his laws and his purposes in our lives. They are God's servants and they can take on many forms to carry out his commands, but unlike humans they have no free will. They are without sin and so they are able to enter into God's divine presence, but they can also communicate with humans.

Muslims believe that, although angels are invisible, they exist everywhere, throughout the whole universe. They are never far away and they are always in contact with humans, especially when someone prays or thinks about God. They have no physical bodies, but the Qur'an describes them as having wings and they are always described as male.

In the Islamic tradition there are countless angels, but the Qur'an and the Hadith mention some by name. These are:

- Jibril (Gabriel) is the angel of revelation. He is the archangel who is responsible for revealing the Qur'an to Muhammad and brings messages to God's chosen ones.
- Mika'il (Michael) is the archangel responsible for keeping the devil out of heaven and protecting faithful worshippers. He brings sustenance for the body and soul and rainfall for the earth, to water the land.
- Israfil (Raphael) is the archangel who will blow the trumpet on the Day of Judgement to announce the resurrection of all from the dead.
- Azrail is the archangel that takes souls at death.
- Raqib and Atid are the angels referred to in the Qur'an as the 'noble recorders'. They sit, one on each shoulder, noting down our good and bad deeds, to be read from the book on the last day.
- Munkar and Nakir are the two terrifying, judging angels who will question each person after their death, testing their faith.

Too see more information on each angel use page 152-153 in the pink textbook

Diversity in belief between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims regarding angels

In general, Sunnis and Shi'as share common beliefs about angels.

According to the Qur'an, angels were God's first creation, they are immortal and they always obey the commandments of God.

Sunnis believe that God created the angels from light and they have no free will.

Shi'as, however, accept that angels do have a limited free will, although this will never lead them to sin or act against the will of God.

Muslims believe in angels because they are told to in the Qur'an:

'The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in God and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinctions between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination."' Qur'an 2:285

Jibril

Jibril (Gabriel) is described in some hadiths as the most important archangel. He is mentioned by name in the Qur'an, where he is also referred to as the Holy Spirit. Jibril is the angel of revelation. The message of Allah that he brings is the path to Jannah and a good life.

Jibril appears in various forms to Muhammad and revealed each verse of the Qur'an to him. Sometimes he appeared as a handsome disciple, sometimes a desert traveler. At other times, only his voice was heard.

Jibril also appeared to Maryam (Mary) and foretold the first of Isa (Jesus). He is also said to have appeared to Adam and Musa.

Say, 'O Prophet, 'Whoever is an enemy of Gabriel should know that he revealed this 'Quran' to your heart by Allah's Will, confirming what came before it—a guide and good news for the believers.'

Qur'an 2:97

Mika'il

Mika'il (Michael) is an archangel who provides everything needed for life on earth. He brings the seasons, rain, wind and thunder to earth. He sustains life in troubled times and oversees the angels responsible for the laws of nature. Mika'il is known as the Angel of mercy. He protects the souls of the faithful, keeping Shaytan out of heaven and asking Allah to forgive peoples sins.

Mika'il is mentioned once in the Qur'an and is spoken of in the hadiths. Some believe he was one of three angels who visited Ibrahim to announce that his wife, Sarah, would give birth to Ishaq (Issac)

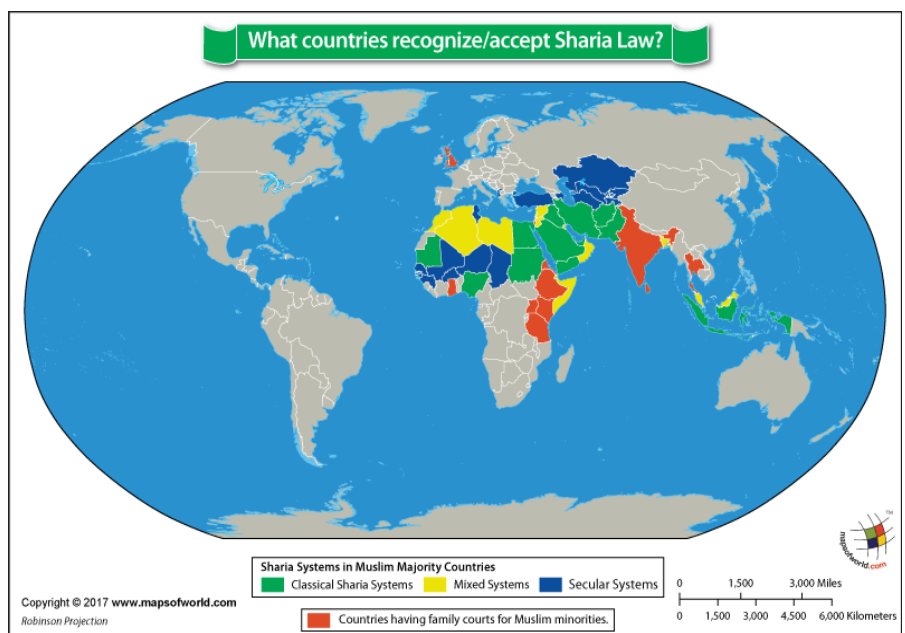
Israfil

Israfil (Raphael/Uriel) is the archangel commissioned to blow the trumpet that will announce the end of time when everyone will die. He will sound it again on the Day of Judgement, to announce people's resurrection. Israfil means 'burning one'. He is mentioned in several hadiths and is said that he is always ready, with a trumpet at his lips, waiting for Allah's command.

Sharia law

Sharia law is Islam's legal system - which is based on the Quran and the rulings of Islamic scholars - and acts as a code of conduct for modern Muslims to adhere to, ensuring they abide by God's wishes in all areas of life from daily routines to personal beliefs.

- The word 'sharia' means 'straight path'.
- Sharia law is the law of Islam. It sets the code of law for Islamic living.
- Both **Sunnis** and **Shi'as** have similar interpretations of Sharia law.
- Sharia law is based on both the **Qur'an** and the **Sunnah**. These are its main sources.
- Sharia law governs a Muslim person's whole life as it is based on revelation from God.
- For Muslims, Sharia law applies the insight of the Qur'an to new situations and it explains to them how to properly obey **Allah**.



Islamic holy books

The Arabic word for book is 'kitab' (plural 'kutub'). The Qur'an is known as Umm-ul-Kitab, 'Mother of Books' (43:4).

The Qur'an

The Qur'an is believed to be a sacred text, perfectly inspired by God and thus free from any mistakes or distortion. However, Muslims do believe that God revealed his laws in stages, through his prophets. Muslims have respect for all previous scriptures from the messengers of God, but they see the Qur'an as the completion of these earlier books.

The Qur'an names four other holy books.

These are from the Jewish and Christians traditions and, according to Islam, in their original form, they were true revelations from God. However, because they were not properly written down or preserved, they are now believed to be corrupted. So, unlike the perfect Qur'an, they cannot be trusted as the true word of God.

- ▶ **Sahifah:** the Scrolls of Ibrahim, now lost
- ▶ **Tawrat** (Torah): the revelation given to Musa (Moses)
- ▶ **Zabur** (Psalms): given to Dawud (David)
- ▶ **Injil** (Gospel): the teaching given to Isa (Jesus)

The Hadith: the sayings of Muhammad

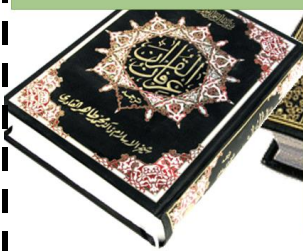
There are collections of thousands of Muhammad's sayings, called hadiths, which form part of what Muslims called the Hadith.

Muslims love and respect the words of Prophet Muhammad, because he was such an outstanding character. He had deep devotion to God, but he was also a man of enormous wisdom, kindness and compassion. The Hadith is a book which contains his sayings, as recorded by his family and companions. There are different collections of these sayings, each accepted by different Muslim groups.

The Qur'an is believed to be a sacred text, perfectly inspired by God and thus free from any mistakes or distortion. However, Muslims do believe that God revealed his laws in stages, through his prophets. Muslims have respect for all previous scriptures from the messengers of God, but they see the Qur'an as the completion of these earlier books. This is why the revelation to Muhammad is so significant.

The Sunnah: the way of the Prophet

The Prophet Muhammad is an inspiration to all Muslims, so they try to imitate the way he lived. It is the second most important source of authority for Muslims and describes the customs, practices and traditions of Muhammad. It teaches the perfect path or model of how Muslims should live.



Aakhirah: The after life

What will happen on the Day of Judgement?

Muslims believe that only God knows when the Day of Judgement will happen.

There will be signs that include: abundance of earthquakes, the spreading of killing, rejection of Islam, increase in dishonesty, drunkenness, obscenity, nakedness and fornication. Society will be full of terrible corruption and chaos.

Those who are awaiting will be kept in a state of barzakh (waiting) until the archangel Israfil blows his trumpet to announce the resurrection of all from the dead.

On the Day of Judgement, Muslims believe that the dead will be raised from their graves and will stand before God at the **Plain of Arafat**

The two terrifying judging angels, Munkar and Nakir, will question each person, testing their faith. The three questions the angels Munkar and Nakir will ask are: 'Who is your Lord?' 'Who is your prophet?' 'What is your religion?'

Muslims believe they will be handed a book that represents every good and bad deed they have done in their life. If it is given to them in their right hand they believe they will go to heaven but if it is given in their left hand they will be damned to hell.

Most Muslims understand the afterlife in a literal way. In the Qur'an, heaven (Janna) and hell (Jahannam) are described in physical terms. Janna is a garden of contentment full of flowers, fruits and fountains. Jahannam is a place of terror with boiling water, scorching fires and black smoke.

Muslims believe that the Mahdi (the 'guided one') will come on the Day of Judgement. He is the long-awaited saviour who will come to rescue the world. Sunnis believe that he will appear in the End Times, with Isa (Jesus). Shi'as too are awaiting the Mahdi, but they believe his identity will be revealed as the Hidden (or 12th) Imam.

God weighs our deeds

God judges each person's actions, but intentions (niyyah which means done with honest intention to worship God) are also taken into consideration.

- If the person has the intention to do a good deed, but was unable to carry it out, this is counted as a good deed.
- If they intended and carried out a good deed, this is counted as ten good deeds.
- If the person intended a bad deed, but did not do it, that is counted as a good deed.
- If they intended and carried out a bad deed, God records that as one bad deed.



Muslim believe that God will weigh up our good and bad deeds and this will determine what happens to us after death

Al-Qadr

Islam teaches that God is responsible for all things and that he has a divine plan for all of us (al-Qadr). God has a masterplan; everything that happens is predestined to take place; it is all part of his design. He is the cause of all things and the whole of creation is under his control. God knows all things in the greatest detail, with accuracy that we, as humans, could never imagine.

Muslims believe that we can never know the reasons behind the universe, but that it is all part of a larger picture. God is the all knowing one; his knowledge is complete and perfect. He even knows the secrets of our hearts.

Insha' Allah, if God is willing

Muslims believe that things which some people might call coincidences are, in fact, part of God's plan. The word insha'Allah expresses the belief that all events are outside our own control; they are in the hands of God. When a Muslim says insha'Allah they are acknowledging that they are in submission to God. They will only succeed in their own plans if God is also willing to make it happen.

'And never say of anything, "Indeed, I will do that tomorrow," except [when adding], "If God wills." And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct."' Qur'an 18:23-4

Freewill

Islam teaches that we all have free will and God will hold us accountable for our decisions on the Day of Judgement. Humans are not puppets or robots; we have the ability to choose right from wrong. God wants us to follow the 'straight path', but it is up to us to make the right choices. Central to Islamic thought is the idea that life is a test and we need to learn how to turn away from evil.

Can good come out of suffering?

If all things are part of the will of God, then that must include suffering, pain, diseases and disasters. It is easy to see how good can come out of things which cause us suffering, like training to run a marathon, but harder to understand how hurricanes and wars can be seen in a positive way. Islam teaches that painful experiences need to be viewed as opportunities for our own growth as human beings.

Insha' Allah 'if God allows it'. It comes from joining the Arabic words: 'Allah' and 'his will'. It is a very common phrase, for example: 'I will get to school on time, insha'Allah!'

Predestination and free will: diversity in belief in Islam

Although both Sunnis and Shi'as believe God is all-powerful and has a masterplan for the universe, there are differences in the way they understand the extent to which he controls the lives of human beings.

Sunnis tend to put more emphasis on the fact that everything is ordained by God. They believe that although humans have free will, nothing can happen without the will and knowledge of God.

Shi'as, on the other hand, allow more room for humans to use their own free will. Some Shi'as actually reject the idea of predestination.

They say that God cannot be responsible for evil; humans must have free will to be independent of God's authority.

Adalat in Shi'a Islam

All Muslims believe that Allah is infinitely just 'Adalat' means justice, and Muslims must accept Allah's justice even if they cannot understand his infinite wisdom. Shi'a Muslims believe that Allah's justice is absolute and on the Day of Judgement he will judge all people according to his objective moral framework. This is one of the five roots of religion in Shi'a Islam.

For Allah to judge people justly for their behaviour, they must have free will to perform morally good or bad actions. Therefore, Shi'a Muslims do not accept predestination. They believe it would not be just for Allah to send someone to Jannah or Jahannam for something they could not control. Humans can understand correct behaviour by reading the Qur'an, listening to the prophets and following Shariah law. If they choose to act correct through their free will, they will be rewarded justly.

Sunni Muslims agree that Allah is just, but they accept predestination. They argue that while Allah judges people on their moral choices, he has complete power over all human action.



Islam – practices

Section 1: The Five Pillars of Sunni Islam

- Shahadah - Creed
- Salah – prayer
- Zakah – charity
- Sawm – fasting
- Hajj – pilgrimage

Section 2: The Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam

- The differences in Sunni and Shi'a practices

Section 3: Jihad

- Greater Jihad
- Lesser Jihad
- Misconceptions in the media about Jihad

Section 4: Festivals

- Id-ul-Adah: The festival of sacrifice
- Id-ul-Fitr: The festival of fast breaking following ramadam
- Ashura: The day of Remembrance (Shi'a_
- The Night of Power: Qur'an revelation

Key Concepts

Tawhid 'Oneness' in reference to God. The basic Muslim belief in the oneness of God.

Prophethood or 'risalah' The term used of the messengers of God, beginning with Adam and ending with the Prophet Muhammad.

Halal (permitted) Actions or things which are permitted within Islam, such as eating permitted foods.

Haram (forbidden) Any actions or things which are forbidden within Islam, such as eating forbidden foods.

Jihad Means 'to strive'. There are two forms of jihad. The greater jihad is the daily struggle and inner spiritual striving to live as a Muslim. The lesser jihad is a physical struggle or 'holy war' in defence of Islam.

Mosque or 'masjid' A 'place of prostration' for Muslims, it is a communal place of worship for a Muslim community.

Shari'ah (straight path) A way of life; Muslims believe God has set out a clear path for how Muslims should live. Shari'ah law is the set of moral and religious rules that put the principles set out by the Qur'an and the Hadith into practice.

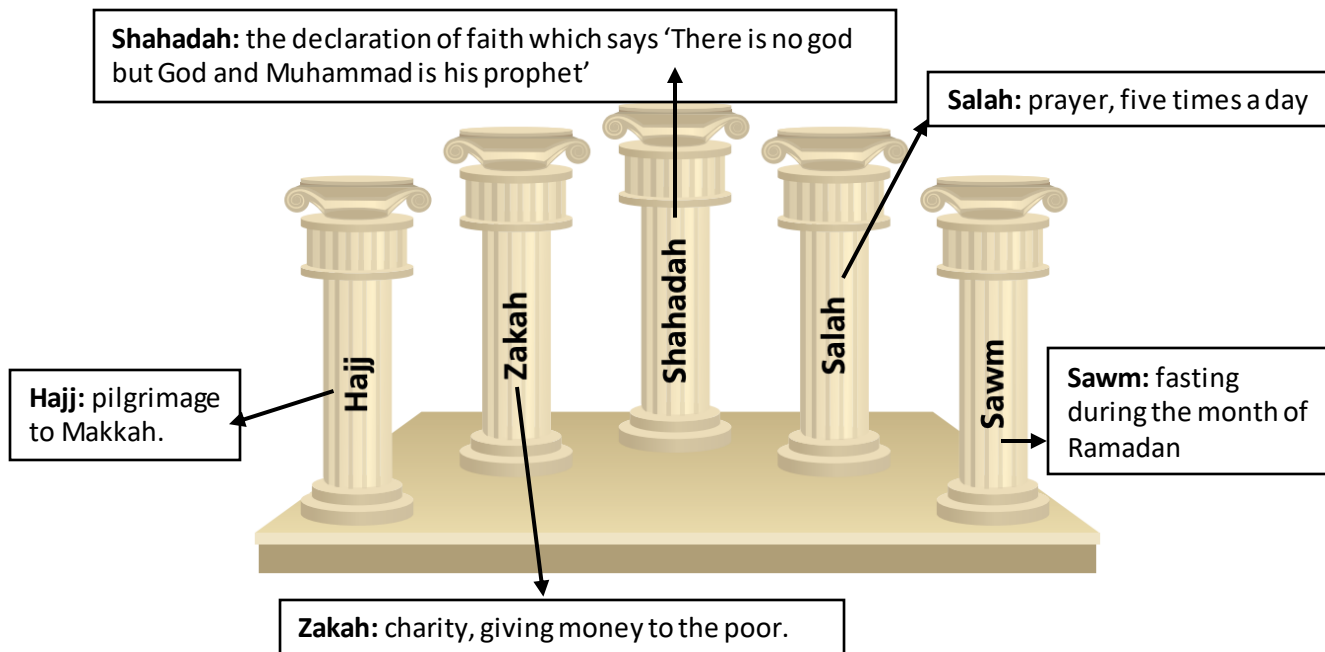
Ummah Means 'community'. Refers to the worldwide community of Muslims who share a common religious identity.

Ibadah acts of worship; any permissible action performed with the intention to obey God.

Ibadah: For Muslims, actions speak louder than words and it is not enough just to have faith in God; they believe it is necessary to show religious commitment through the way they live their entire lives.

Niyah: The right intention to worship God. Muslims believe that it is important to have God consciousness (**taqwa**). They may not always be in the right mood to worship God, or they may feel unworthy to meet him, but when praying it is important to dedicate that time to being in his presence.

The Five Pillars Sunni Islam teaches that all Muslims have a duty to worship God by following the Five Pillars. These actions are all ibadah, acts of worship carried out with the intention of obeying God.



By following these rules, they can show their obedience to the will of God. The Shari'ah (Islamic law) sets out the Five Pillars as religious duties; they are seen as practical signs which demonstrate true submission to the divine creator.

They must be carried out with niyyah, the true intention to submit to the will of God. Muslims say that there can be no doubt that they have been instructed by God to complete the Five Pillars: the Qur'an contains many references as to their importance and, in his last sermon, Prophet Muhammad makes clear mention of them.

'O People, listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakah. Perform Hajj if you have the means.'

Muhammad's last sermon (Hadith)

Shahadah

What is it?

The first pillar of Islam is the Shahadah. It declares that 'there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the prophet of God'. This statement forms the central support for the 'House of Islam': the other four pillars are all outward expressions of this deeply held belief.

The **Shahadah** sums up the religion of Islam: the belief in the one and only Almighty God and the acceptance of Muhammad as the final messenger, a man sent by God to reveal the divine path to life (the Shari'ah).

How do they practice it?

For Muslims, the words of the Shahadah are heard throughout the day in countless aspects of their lives. They are announced in the adhan (the call to prayer) from the minaret in the mosque and recited in each of the five daily prayers. These words are also known as the Kalimah prayer. They are the first words whispered into a new-born baby's ear and, if possible, they are the last words a dying Muslim hears on their death-bed. Muslim soldiers have these words on their lips as they go into battle.



Calligraphy of the Shahadah

'God witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.'

Qur'an 3:18

How do they practice it?

Preparation for prayer is vital because coming into the presence of God requires a deep sense of respect and reverence. Prayer begins with a declaration of intent (niyyah). It must be a deliberate act, to set aside a few minutes to focus on God and enter into a state of 'God consciousness'. This allows Muslims to concentrate on God's greatness, to thank and praise him and ask for his forgiveness.

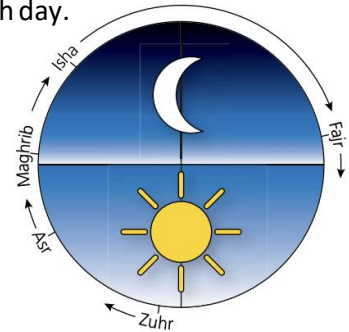
Salah

Salah bowing or worship. There are over 700 verses in the Qur'an that refer to it.

What is it?

For Muslims, prayer is the most important way to worship God. It is a duty for all Muslims to pray five times a day. Muhammad called prayer the 'pillar of religion' and it reminds them to give thanks for God's blessings and of the importance of submitting to God's will. It is a physical, mental and spiritual activity that draws believers close to God.

Both the Qur'an and the Hadith contain Prophet Muhammad's night journey. In the story, Muhammad is woken from his sleep and taken on a winged horse to Jerusalem and then up through seven levels of heaven, to the very presence of God. Here, God reveals to Prophet Muhammad that Muslims must pray continuously, 50 times a day. Worship must be a constant presence throughout life. However, Moses intervenes and says this is too much and eventually it was agreed that there must be five prayer times each day.



Time given for each of the daily prayers

Wudu: Before starting to pray, Muslims must practise wudu, washing specific parts of the body: hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head and feet in a particular order. This is an outward sign of the inner cleanliness needed to face God.

The aims of prayer

- The aims of prayer are:
- ▶ as a constant reminder of the presence of God
 - ▶ to show submission to the will of God
 - ▶ to cleanse away the corruption of the world
 - ▶ to unite all Muslims
 - ▶ to bring about peace in the world
 - ▶ to remove sins, just as water removes dirt

Congregational all together, praying as a whole community. This emphasises the ummah.
Du'a prayers personal prayers which may be said at any time of the day.

Wudu Step By Step – How To Perform Wudu Or Ablution?



Islam – Practices

Zakah

What is it?

the practice of charity, giving money to the poor. All Muslims are expected to be charitable as a regular duty, giving 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. They can be sure that God will reward them for their acts of giving.

Why do Muslims give Zakah?

- The Qur'an makes a clear command: to give to those in need, to widows, orphans and travellers.
- They want to protect the ummah by lessening the gap between rich and poor.
- According to Islam, our wealth and our property are not ours; wealth is given to us by God, for the benefit of all humans. It is our duty to share the good fortune that we have received, not to hoard it and spend it purely for selfish reasons.
- The Qur'an teaches that humans are khalifahs (God's representatives on earth). This means that we are stewards or trustees of the world; we do not own it, we are looking after it in trust, for God, to hand it on to our children and to future generations. Therefore, we should not view our possessions as our own; they are on loan to us from God, so we do not have the absolute right to spend our money as we choose.
- The practice of giving Zakah began when Prophet Muhammad was the ruler in Madinah. After the first battles, there were many orphans and widows and the prophet instructed people to care for all those in need.

'The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person is like a warrior fighting for God's cause.'

Hadith

How should Zakah be spent?

The Qur'an identifies a number of people who can receive Zakah: the poor, the needy and travellers. Today there are many Muslim aid agencies that distribute Zakah to support development in community projects in areas such as: water supply, sanitation, healthcare and education.

'A Muslim who plants a tree or sows a field, from which man, birds and animals can eat, is committing an act of charity.'

Hadith



Sadaqah: giving from the heart

It is a duty for all Muslims to pay Zakah once a year, but Islam also teaches that voluntary giving is important too. Sadaqah is any good deed done out of compassion or generosity; it could be a gift of time, helping others or a donation to a charity.

Sawm

What is it?

The practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan. For many Muslims, it is the holiest month of the year, being a time dedicated to self-discipline and spiritual reflection. Ramadan holds a special place in the Muslim calendar, because it is believed to be the month in which the Prophet Muhammad received the first verses of the Qur'an, revealed to him by God.

The fast:

Fasting is the deliberate control of the body and Muslims are expected to refrain from eating, drinking (including water), smoking and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk for the period of 29/30 days. They must also abstain from evil thoughts, harmful actions and unkind speech.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic year. Muslims follow a lunar calendar which lasts 354 days; it is 11 days shorter than the solar year. This means that Ramadan moves earlier every year.

During Ramadan, Muslims gather at the mosque for extra night prayers. This includes the recitation of a section of the Qur'an each day, so that by the end of the month the whole Qur'an has been recited. All Muslims should try to attend the mosque on the 27th day of Ramadan to celebrate Laylat-ul-Qadr, the night of power. This is remembered as the date of the first revelation of the Qur'an, when the Angel Jibril first visited Prophet Muhammad.



Why do Muslims fast?

- ▶ is commanded in the Qur'an by God follows the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- ▶ follows the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- ▶ celebrates the fact that God has given humans the Qur'an
- ▶ brings people closer to God
- ▶ is a reminder of the mercy and blessings of God
- ▶ helps Muslims to identify with the poor
- ▶ promotes self control
- ▶ helps to recharge spiritual batteries
- ▶ unites Muslim communities (ummah).

God has instructed all adult Muslims to fast during Ramadan. Children, from quite a young age, often begin to fast for just a few days in the month. According to the Qur'an, if someone is ill or travelling they are exempt from fasting, although they would be expected to make up the days at a later time.

Hajj

The pilgrimage to Makkah. This is the only pillar of Islam that Muslims don't have to perform. It is compulsory for those who are able to make the journey, but the Qur'an only commands it as a duty for those who:

- have enough money to leave their homes for a lengthy period
- are physically and mentally fit enough to carry out this demanding ritual.

The importance of Makkah

It is considered by Muslims to be the holiest city on earth. Because it is the city of God it has immense spiritual significance in Islam. Muslims believe that it is here that:

- ▶ Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was commanded by God, in a dream, to sacrifice his son, Isma'il.
- ▶ Ibrahim overcame a test when the devil appeared, trying to trick him into denying God's word. Ibrahim threw stones to drive the devil away.
- ▶ Ibrahim's wife, Hajar, searched frantically for water in the desert. Miraculously an angel showed her the Zamzam well.
- ▶ Ibrahim built the Ka'ba as a place of worship to the one, true God.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad was born.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations from God.
- ▶ Prophet Muhammad returned before his death to reclaim the city for God.

The route of the Hajj pilgrimage takes believers to the sacred sites where many of these events are said to have taken place.

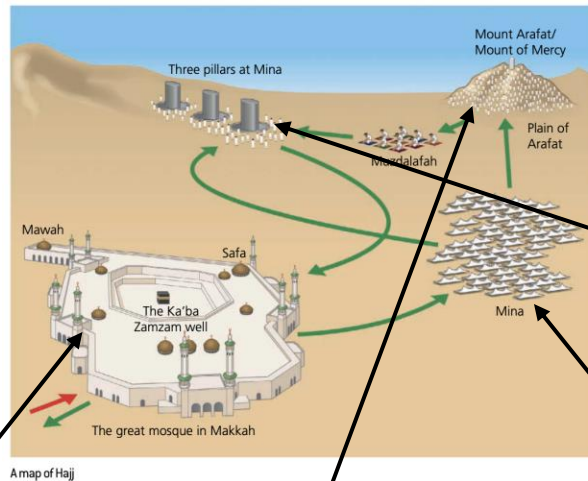
The Qur'an instructs believers to go on Hajj, but it does not specify many details. The Sunnah describes the pilgrimages the Prophet Muhammad performed and how he worshipped in Makkah. This forms the pattern for today's pilgrimage.

Ihram is a sacred state of purity, symbolised by the white garments worn on Hajj. Muslims must make a special intention (niyyah) to dedicate themselves to worshipping God when they arrive in Makkah. Hajjis/Hajjahs are often buried in these white garments, at the end of their lives, to remind God of their dedication to worship him.

Day 1:

- **Ihram:** When the pilgrims arrive in the city of Makkah they enter a state of mind called ihram. Whilst in the state of ihram Muslims must dedicate themselves to prayer and purity, Muslim men wear two white sheets to symbolise purity and to show that all are equal in the sight of Allah. From this point on Muslims are not allowed to, use any perfume, have sex, cut hair or nails or kill any living thing.
- **Tawaf:** The first thing a Muslim will do is rush to the Ka'aba and circle it seven times in an anticlockwise direction whilst praying. If they can they will touch the Black Stone, otherwise they will point towards it.
- **Marwa and Safa:** Next they run between the hills of Marwa and Safa seven times. This is called sa'i. They do this remembering the time when Hagar searched for water for her child Isma'il.
- **Zamzam:** The pilgrims then drink from the well of Zamzam. The water is said to give special blessings. At the end of the day the pilgrims set off on a 13 mile walk to Arafat in very hot temperatures.

What do Muslims do on Hajj?



Day 2:

- **Arafat:** is a desert location where pilgrims meet and stay until sunset. Once in Arafat, the pilgrims spend time in prayer and remembrance of Allah. It is recommended to spend the entire time reading the Quran and making special prayers to Allah. Muslims ask for forgiveness for sins and pray for all the people that they know. Pilgrims listen to a sermon which is broadcast on speakers and the radio. Arafat is special as it was where the prophet delivered his last sermon and where Muslims believe they will meet again to be judged.
- **Muzdalifah:** After sunset at Arafat pilgrims leave to spend the night at Muzdalifah where each pilgrim collects 49 pea-size pebbles for throwing.

Day 3:

Mina

- **Stoning the Devil:** The pilgrims throw their pebbles at three stone pillars, preferably before midday. Stoning the pillar symbolizes rejecting evil, as when Ibrahim was tempted by the Devil when he was asked to sacrifice Isma'il but didn't.
- **Sacrificing an Animal:** An animal is sacrificed on behalf of the pilgrims for the feast of Eid ul-Adha. One third of the meat can be consumed, one third is offered as a gift and one third distributed to the poor. It commemorates the great act of obedience to Allah by the Prophet Ibrahim in showing his willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il.
- **Cutting Hair:** Pilgrims can now shave/trim the hair, shower, and change into everyday clothes.

Hajj

Day 5 Makkah

- The pilgrims encircle the Ka'ba another 7 times. Ihram is over and the rest of the pilgrimage has a holiday feeling.
- Pilgrims will buy water from Zamzam and they dip their white ihram cloths in it. Muslims are wrapped in these cloths when they are buried.
- The black cloth which covers the Ka'ba is cut up and sold to the pilgrims to keep as souvenirs.
- Muslims who have completed the pilgrimage can now be called Hajji or al-Hajj.

Adha sacrifice.

The Qur'an is very clear that it is not the physical act of killing an animal which is pleasing to God. What is truly valuable is the personal sacrifice that each individual makes in their heart, offering their life in service of God.

It is traditional for each Muslim family or community to buy and sacrifice their own animal, but in Britain it is illegal to kill an animal without a licence and most families do not have the space and skills to keep and kill a sheep or a goat! People may ask a butcher to slaughter a sheep for them; they will then share it amongst family and neighbours as a communal meal. Giving some of this meat to the poor is a sacred duty.

Preparations for Id-ul-Adha

This is a very important occasion for Muslim families and communities, so preparations begin in good time:

- ▶ gifts are bought
- ▶ new clothes are made
- ▶ food is prepared in advance
- ▶ arrangements are made for the sacrifice.



Id-ul-Adha: the festival of sacrifice

Id-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice. It is the most important event in the Muslim calendar and, to many, it is known as the Greater Id or the 'Big Id'. It marks the end of the annual Hajj pilgrimage and it is a chance for all Muslims, across the world, to worship and celebrate together. For the Hajjis/Hajjahs, who have just completed Hajj, it is the culmination of five intense days of worship, but it is also special for those who have been unable to travel to Makkah, who will celebrate in their home communities.

Ibrahim: At this time Muslims remember the story of Ibrahim, told in the Qur'an. Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice his son, Ishma'il, to show his love for God. Just in time he heard a voice telling him to spare his son and sacrifice a sheep instead. Today an animal, such as a sheep or goat is killed at Id-ul-Adha as part of the commemoration. The meat is shared among family and friends, as well as being distributed to the poor. In the story it tells how the devil came to tempt Ibrahim, but his faith was too strong. This symbolises how each individual has to struggle against sin, and it shows the importance of total commitment to God.

'And complete the Hajj and 'Umrah for God. But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter. And whoever among you is ill or has an ailment of the head [making shaving necessary must offer] a ransom of fasting [three days] or charity or sacrifice.'

Qur'an 2:196

Celebrations

It is a public holiday in some countries where there are Muslim majority populations, such as Indonesia, Turkey and Jordan. It is not an official holiday in the UK, but some Muslim organisations and businesses may close and Muslim children have the day off school.

Celebrations include:

- ▶ going to the mosque to pray and listen to an Id prayer
- ▶ wearing new clothes
- ▶ visiting friends and relatives.



The Ten Obligatory Acts (Furu ad-Din) of Shi'a Islam

The Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam are known as Furu ad-Din. They are: Salah, Sawm, Hajj, zakah, Khums, Jihad, Amr-bil-Marooif, Nahil Anril Munkar, Tawalia and Tabarra. There are some differences between these practices and the five pillars that Sunni Muslims practice.

1. Salah (prayer)

There are five daily prayers (Salah), where Muslim's face towards the Ka'ba in Makkah (Qibla), but many Shi'as combine these into three. These prayer times are:

- between dawn and sunrise
- just after noon
- at dusk, just after sunset.

They do this because they say that that Muhammad allowed the combination of prayers: Zuhr with As'r and Maghrib with Isha.

2. Sawm (fasting)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as practise fasting (Sawm) during the month of Ramadan, but from the 20th day of Ramadan they remember the death of Ali (son-in-law of the prophet) spending three days in mourning.

3. Hajj (pilgrimage)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as go on the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) in the 12th month of the Muslim calendar (Dhul Hijjah). In addition to Hajj, they also make pilgrimages to Shi'a shrines and graves, in particular visiting the grave of Husayn in Karbala (in modern-day Iraq).

4. Zakah (charity)

Like Sunnis, Shi'as make a charity (Zakah) payment of 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. This goes to support the poor and those in need.

5. Khums (wealth tax)

In addition to Zakah, Shi'as are expected to pay Khums, a wealth tax of 20 per cent of their savings. This money is paid to Muslim scholars and community leaders for the welfare of the community.

6. Jihad (struggle)

Jihad is the duty to struggle against sin. For the sake of God, Muslims should fight against injustice, removing any obstacles that might prevent people being able to worship God.

7. Amr-bil-Marooif (encouraging others to do good)

The central purpose of Islam is to create a society where people can live in peace and harmony. Therefore, it is the duty of all Muslims to encourage others to do good, for the sake of God. In the Hadith Muhammad promises that the person who persuades someone else to do a good deed will get the same reward as the person he persuaded.

'And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.' Qur'an 3:104

8. Nahil Anril Munkar (discouraging the bad)

It is the duty of all Muslims to forbid evil; when someone sees a wrong, they should correct it. It is the responsibility of the whole Muslim community (the ummah) to discourage others from harmful actions, such as bribery, corruption and dishonesty. This applies to individuals, families and the whole society.

'Whoever among you sees an evil should change it with his hand. If he is unable to do that then with his tongue. If he is unable to do that, then with his heart, and this is the weakest level of faith.' Hadith

9. Tawalia (to love the friends of God)

Tawalia means having love for God and for the Prophet Muhammad. We should love all those who are friends of God: people who are truthful and kind, honest and fair. We should try to associate ourselves with people who are kind and trustworthy. For Shi'a Muslims it also means having love for the 'Ahl al -Bayt', the 12 infallible Imams who are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad.

10. Tabarra (to hate the evil-doers)

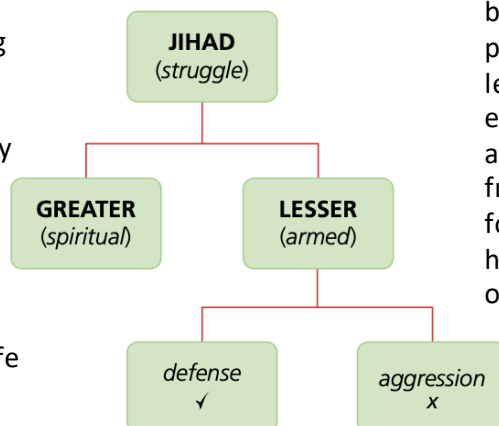
Muslims believe that it is important to dissociate themselves from the enemies of God. We should hate, and separate ourselves from, people who are impure and those who oppress others. However, Muslims often disagree on exactly who are the enemies of God.

	Sunni	Shi'a
Qur'an	Sunnis believe that the Qur'an is an earthly copy of a heavenly original. Sunnis usually interpret the Qur'an literally, as it is read. They don't look for hidden meanings.	Shi'as say the Qur'an is not eternal, but was created by God as a guide for human beings. They believe that everything in it has a hidden meaning, which must be interpreted by special religious leaders (Imams).
Shahadah (statement of belief)	'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God'.	Shi'as say the same Shahadah as Sunnis, but they add the phrase: 'and I bear witness that Ali was the friend of God'.
Salah (prayer)	Five prayer times every day.	Many Shi'as pray three times a day.
Zakah (giving)	Sunnis often pay Zakah to the state (government).	Shi'as pay Zakah to religious leaders. They also pay an additional Khums tax.
Sawm (fasting)	Fasting during Ramadan.	Shi'as fast in the same way, but they also spend three days during Ramadan mourning the death of Ali.
Hajj (pilgrimage)	Pilgrimage to Makkah.	Shi'as are expected to go on Hajj, but they also go on pilgrimage to other sites sacred to the Shi'a tradition (e.g. Karbala).
Prophethood	Risalah: Sunnis believe that Muhammad was the final prophet.	Nubuwwah: Like Sunnis, Shi'as believe that Muhammad was the last prophet, but they also believe that there have been 12 infallible Imams since Muhammad's death.
The appearance of the Mahdi	The Mahdi is the 'guided one' who will come on the Day of Judgement. Sunnis believe that he will appear in the end times, with Isa (Jesus), to rid the world of evil.	Shi'as too are awaiting the Mahdi, who will come on the last day, but they believe his identity will be revealed as the Hidden (or 12th) Imam.
Festivals	Sunnis celebrate Id-ul-Adha and Id-ul-Fitr.	In addition, Shi'as celebrate Ashura.
al-Qadr (predestination)	Sunnis believe that God has set out a plan or destiny for all things.	Many Shi'as reject predestination, saying that God cannot be responsible for evil. Humans have free will and are independent of God's authority in this life.
Imam (leadership)	For Sunnis, an Imam is a leader chosen by the community. He is an ordinary man.	For Shi'as an Imam is a holy figure. Most Shi'as believe that there have been 12 Imams who are all descendants of Muhammad. The first Imam was Ali, who was followed by his sons Hasan and then Husayn and passed on down through the generations.
Successors to Muhammad	Sunnis believe in the 'rightly guided' khalifahs, the four leaders who followed the death of Muhammad: Bak'r, Umar, Uthman and Ali.	Shi'as reject the 'rightly guided' khalifahs, seeing them as traitors of Islam. They believe that, Muhammad named Ali as the first Imam, not Abu Bakr.

Jihad

Jihad is the struggle to live according to God's laws. It is one of the most misunderstood words in Islam, because to many people jihad simply means 'holy war', but in fact it has a deeper meaning than this. Jihad actually means 'directed struggle':

- ▶ striving to serve God
- ▶ making an effort to live a moral life
- ▶ actively trying to live in peace.



Many Muslims make a distinction between the greater jihad (the personal struggle for right) and the lesser jihad (the desire to remove evil from society). It is the duty of all Muslims to try to remove evil from society, but you can only fight for justice in the world when you have truly removed the evil in your own life.

The Prophet Muhammad said that the supreme jihad is against oneself.

Greater Jihad

The greater jihad is the spiritual struggle with oneself. It is the desire and commitment to live the perfect Muslim life:

- ▶ to perform the Five Pillars with devotion
- ▶ to practise the path set out by Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah)
- ▶ to seek justice and fairness for all
- ▶ to rise above one's own greed and selfishness.

Controlling desires:

Islam teaches that Muslims need to control their own desires and behaviour, to follow the Five Pillars and live a life that is pleasing to God. This will ensure that when the last day comes, and they are brought to judgement by God, they will be worthy to receive God's favour and thus to enter paradise.

A fight against laziness: The greater jihad is the spiritual fight against the tendency to be lazy: to get up for prayers before dawn, to only eat food that is halal (permitted), to show kindness and generosity towards other people. Prophet Muhammad said: 'God, I seek thy protection against helplessness and laziness, and against cowardice . . . and miserliness.'

Encouraging what is right: The Qur'an urges Muslims to 'encourage what is right (ma'ruf), and forbid what is wrong' (3:104). This process is partly about removing evil from yourself, but also about making the world a better place. Prophet Muhammad says:

'Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest form of faith.'

Hadith

Respect for the beliefs of others

The Qur'an encourages Muslims to be tolerant and respectful towards the beliefs others: 'To you be your religion, and to me mine' (109:6). Muslims should live in peace and harmony in society, celebrating differences and obeying the law. The Qur'an makes it clear that every single life is precious:

'If anyone slew a person . . . it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.'

Qur'an 5:32

Jihad Today: most Muslims agree that a holy war can only be called against an aggressor that threatens Islam. Some Islamic extremist groups argue that the attack on the World Trade Center (the Twin Towers) in New York, on 11 September 2001, commanded by Osama Bin Laden, was an act of jihad. However, moderate Muslims reject this idea, arguing that this attack was an aggressive act, which targeted innocent civilians and so fails the test set by the Qur'an.

There are a number of groups who have labelled themselves as jihadists in recent years (for example, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Islamic State/Daesh). They are prepared to use violence in order to create an Islamic State that would be governed in accordance with Islamic (Shari'ah) law. Western governments regard these groups as terrorist organisations and moderate Muslims reject this form of extreme Islam.

Lesser Jihad

There are certain circumstances in which Islam accepts that force needs to be used, but only ever in self defence. While the greater jihad is the personal struggle against sin, the lesser jihad or holy war is the struggle to remove evil from society. This involves the whole community, rather than the individual, and there are strict rules for the use of force in jihad.

'To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.'

Qur'an 22:39

Where does lesser Jihad come from?

The concept of lesser jihad arose during the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime, when he gave his faithful followers authorisation to fight. Muhammad's enemies in Makkah planned to wipe out all Muslims and so they believed that there was no choice other than to engage in conflict.

'Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, God is competent to give them victory.'

Qur'an 22:39

This passage from the Qur'an records the permission given by God for the Muslims to defend themselves against their enemies. Some argue that war with such a pure motive (to establish the principle of religious freedom) is a true jihad.

'Fight in the way of God those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.'

Qur'an 2:190

Who can declare a jihad? Muslim law is clear that jihad can only be declared by a Muslim leader who is holy and pure and who has the support of the whole Muslim community. Some Muslim communities do believe their leaders are able to declare jihad. However, many Muslims today say that it is difficult to see how these conditions for jihad could be met, because there is no one, indisputable Muslim ruler who would be eligible to declare it.

The Crusades

Many Muslims would say that it was a jihad when Muslims fought against the Christian in the

Middle Ages.

The Crusades were military campaigns by Christians between 1095 CE and 1291 CE. Their aim was to win back the Holy Land for Christianity, from Muslim control, and in 1099 CE they succeeded in re-taking Jerusalem. Muslims vowed to wage jihad (holy war) against the invaders from Europe and the Muslim armies eventually defeated the Christian Crusaders.

Jihad must never be aggressive

The Qur'an lays down the condition that the Muslims must not be the first to attack; a war of aggression is prohibited. However, if it can be agreed that a war is a 'jihad', then it is a duty to fight back, but only against those who are attacking you, never to kill civilians.

Festivals

All Muslim festivals have special significance, often relating to events or stories from Islamic history. However, festivals in Islam are not just moments of joy and happiness, they are also occasions to worship and remember the presence of God.

There are two main festivals in Islam: **Id-ul-Adha** (See Hajj section for information on this festival) and **Id-ul-Fitr**, but there are also other important days to be remembered.

Mawlid an-Nabi: the birth of the prophet

Mawlid an-Nabi is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. It is a public holiday in many countries. In Britain, Muslims celebrate this day with joyful processions through the streets, chanting stories in praise of his life.

Laylat-ul-Qadr: the Night of Power

Laylat-ul-Qadr is one of the holiest days in the Muslim calendar, marking the date when the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Islamic tradition is not certain of the exact day, so this event is remembered throughout the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. It is often celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan. During this time Muslims may stay up all night, reciting the Qur'an, praying and remembering God's mercy and forgiveness.

Laylat-ul-Miraj: the night journey

Laylat-ul-Miraj remembers Prophet Muhammad's miraculous journey on a winged horse to Jerusalem and then up through the heavens into the presence of God. Today Muslims commemorate these events at the mosque by saying particular prayers and at home by telling the story to their children and reciting special night-time prayers.

Laylat-ul-Bara'at

Laylat-ul-Bara'at is the night of the full moon in the month before Ramadan. This is the night on which Muhammad used to begin his preparations for Ramadan and many Muslims stay up all night reciting the Qur'an.

Muharram

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar and it remembers the Hijrah, when Muhammad and his followers fled from Makkah, to establish the first Muslim community in Madinah. Sunnis fast on the tenth day of Muharram. Shi'as observe Muharram as the month when Husayn (Prophet Muhammad's grandson) was martyred and so they refrain from joyous events in his memory.

Id-ul-Fitr, the festival of fast-breaking

Breaking the fast

Id-ul-Fitr is a joyful three-day celebration which takes place at the end of Ramadan, on the start of the new month of Shawwal. It is a well-deserved reward for the completion of a month of fasting, when Muslims thank God for giving them the strength and self-control needed to give up food and water over so many days. The festival begins with the new moon being observed in the sky, but in Britain, where the weather is often cloudy, Muslims often have to rely on getting the news from other countries.

A special day

In Muslim-majority countries, Id-ul-Fitr is a public holiday; in Britain, many Muslim businesses close and Muslim children are often given a day off school, especially in areas where there is a high Muslim population. It is an occasion when people feel a strong sense of generosity and gratitude towards each other and to God.



Celebrating Id-ul-Fitr in Britain

On the day of Id, Muslims will:

- decorate their houses with colourful lights, banners and flags
- dress in their finest, new clothes
- gather early in mosques or outdoors to perform congregational prayers and listen to a sermon, usually on the subject of sharing and community
- send 'Id Mubarak' greetings cards
- visit family and friends to share food and festivities
- visit the cemetery to remember loved ones who have been divided from the family through death
- give gifts and money to children
- share a delicious meal, where everyone joins in with the food preparation and organisation
- give generously to the poor

Zakat-ul-Fitr: festival tax

Islam places a high value on the whole community (ummah) experiencing the blessings and mercy of God, so in addition to the duty to pay the annual 2.5 per cent Zakah tax, Muslims are expected to pay Zakat-ul-Fitr. This donation, given at the end of Ramadan, goes to the poor. It allows everyone, even those in poverty, to eat a generous meal at Id-ul-Fitr.

Ashura: day of sorrow and inspiration

Ashura is an important festival for all Muslims, but it has enormous significance in Shi'a Islam. It is celebrated (or commemorated) on the tenth day of Muharram.

Ashura is of particular importance to the Shi'a Muslim community, because it remembers the death of Husayn in battle at Karbala in 680 CE. This event triggered a split between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims that continues to divide Islam today. Shi'as believe that Husayn was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad, so the massacre of Husayn and his followers carries great significance. They refer to Husayn as the third Imam, following his father Ali as his older brother Hasan. Still today they remember his betrayal and death with a deep sense of injustice.

For Shi'as, Ashura is an emotionally charged day, remembering the martyrdom of Husayn, the grandson of Muhammad and it is celebrated with processions, plays and public displays of grief in the streets. Blood is often spilled and people cry and wail.

How is Ashura celebrated around the world?

The death of Husayn gave rise to the Shi'a cult of martyrdom and to a sense of betrayal and struggle against injustice and oppression. Ashura is a day of great sorrow, mourning and self-mutilation, where much public grief is expressed. Central to the events is the need to share in the sufferings of Husayn. Ashura is celebrated in communities across the Shi'a world (for example, in Iran and Iraq), but many Shi'a Muslims feel the need to make the pilgrimage to Karbala every year to take part:

- Men and women dress in black and march through the streets, slapping their chests and chanting.
- There are processions and religious gatherings.
- Plays re-enact the martyrdom.
- Fervent men beat themselves with chains and cut their heads with swords.

Ashura in Britain today

Ashura is not a public holiday in Britain, but Shi'a Muslim children can be given permission to have the day off school. Many people will fast and pray on this day. In cities such as Manchester and London Shi'as gather in large crowds and take part in public marches. The men often slap their chests violently, in time to their chanting, but it is uncommon to see them drawing blood through whipping and beating themselves, as happens in many countries in the Middle East. Those who feel that they should lose blood may be encouraged, by Shi'a leaders, to donate to the blood transfusion service.

Ashura literally means 'tenth'. It falls on the tenth day of the month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.

Sunni Islam

Ashura for Sunnis is a day of fasting. The Prophet Muhammad established Ashura as a day of fasting, based on the Jewish day of atonement, when sacrifices are made for the sins of the people. Ashura is an occasion to thank God for saving the Israelites from the Pharaoh. Sunni Muslims remember how Musa (Moses) fasted in gratitude to God for opening up the Red Sea to allow his people to escape from the Egyptian chariots.



Shi'a street processions