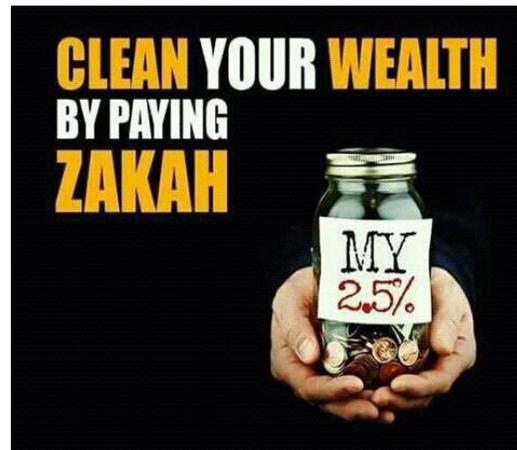
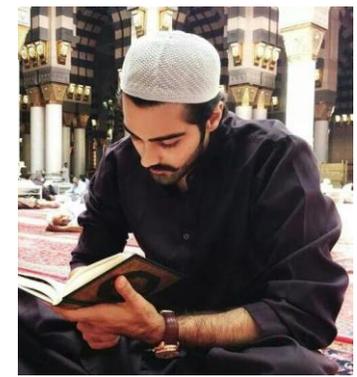


MUSLIM PRACTICES



STUDENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

THE FIVE PILLARS, THE TEN OBLIGATORY ACTS AND THE SHAHADAH

The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars are central to Muslim practices, and they have a great impact on daily life. Muslims believe that they support the main principles and beliefs of Islam, just as pillars are used to support a building. They can be seen as the key to living a perfect Muslim life. They help to give Muslims an identity as one community who share a faith, and enable them to show their obedience and dedication to God.

The Five Pillars are:

1. Shahadah - the declaration of faith.
2. Salah - prayer.
3. Zakah - charitable giving.
4. Sawm - fasting.
5. Hajj - pilgrimage.



Pillars being used to support a mosque in Iran

The Ten Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam

For Muslims who follow Twelver Shi'a Islam, there are ten duties called The Ten Obligatory Acts (also known as the Ancillaries of the Faith). These include all the Five Pillars except Shahadah (which is covered by some of the additional acts). They are:

1. Salah - prayer.
2. Sawm - fasting.
3. Zakah - charitable giving.
4. Hajj - pilgrimage.
5. Jihad - the struggle to maintain the faith and defend Islam. For many Muslims this means the struggle to live by their faith as well as possible, for example by obeying the Five Pillars, contributing to the community or doing voluntary work.
6. Khums - a 20 per cent tax on income once all expenses are deducted. Half goes to charity and half goes to Shi'a religious leaders.
7. Amr-bil-Maruf - encouraging people to do what is good.

8. Nahi Anil Munkar - discouraging people from doing what is wrong.
9. Tawallah - to be loving towards the friends of God, including Muhammad and the Imams.
10. Tabarra - disassociating from the enemies of God.

Shahadah

The basic belief of Islam is expressed in the Shahadah. In Arabic it is 'La ilaha illa Allah wa - Muhammad rasul Allah' which in English translates to 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah'. Sincerely reciting this statement in front of Muslim witnesses is the only requirement for joining the Muslim community. It is recited many times during a lifetime. It is said when a baby is born, so the first thing they hear is this basic belief of the faith they are born into. It is also included in the daily prayers. If possible, it becomes the last words of a Muslim before they die.



The national flag of Saudi Arabia in the Shahadah

Shahadah in Shi'a Islam

Many Shi'a Muslims add an extra phrase to the Shahadah: 'and Ali is the friend of God'. This demonstrates their belief that Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, was the true successor of Muhammad, and that only he and his descendants know the true meaning of the revelation given to Muhammad.

Key terms:

The Five pillars:

The five most important duties for all Muslims: to believe, to pray, to give to charity, to fast and to go on pilgrimage.

The Ten

Obligatory Acts:

Ten important duties for Shi'a Muslims, which include the Five pillars.

Shahadah: This is the Muslim declaration of faith.

SALAH - THE FIVE DAILY PRAYERS

The times of prayer

To observe the second pillar of Islam (salah), Sunni Muslims are required to pray at five set times during the day. The times are worked out from the times of sunrise and sunset, so they change slightly each day. Muslims refer to prayer timetables based on where they are in the world so they know that the times are right.

The times of prayer are:

Fajr - Just before sunrise

Zuhr - Just after midday

Asr - Afternoon

Maghrib - Just after sunset

Isha - Night



A digital prayer timetable in a mosque.

The first prayer is earlier in the summer than the winter because sunrise is earlier. This places demands upon Muslims but is all part of the self-discipline required in submitting themselves to God.

Shi'a Muslims combine the midday and afternoon prayers, and the sunset and night prayers, so they only pray three times a day.

How Muslims prepare for prayer

It is important that Muslims are spiritually clean before they pray. This is achieved by ritual washing (or ablution) called wudu. Muslims follow detailed instruction in order to make sure that they do this properly. These are outlined in the Qur'an:

"You who believe, when you are about to pray, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, wipe your heads, wash your feet up to the ankles and, if required, wash your whole body" (Qur'an 5:6)

Mosques have two special rooms set aside for washing, one for men and another for women. Washing is done under running water rather than using a basin. If water is not available,



Above: The order of wudu.

Below: A wudu washroom in a mosque.



for example in a desert, a dry form of washing is allowed using sand or dust. This illustrates that it is not physical cleanliness that is required but spiritual cleanliness, and wudu is a form of spiritual preparation or purification to allow Muslims to focus fully on God in their prayers.

The direction of prayer

It is very important that while praying, Muslims face the holy city of Makkah. This means that all Muslims are physically and mentally focussing on one place associated with God, in the same way that all Muslims should focus every part of their lives on God. If the prayers are taking place in a mosque, this is easy to achieve. All mosques have a mihrab. This is a semi-circular niche built into the qiblah wall, which shows the exact direction of Makkah from the mosque. Muslims face this in order to pray.



A mihrab in a mosque in Cairo, Egypt

If prayer is taking place anywhere outside the mosque, a special compass is used to show the direction of Makkah. This is sometimes a part of the mat Muslims kneel on when they pray.

Prayer inside a mosque

Many mosques have special carpets that look like separate rows of prayer mats, facing the mihrab. This gives each person a suitable space to carry out their prayers properly.

The prayers are led by an imam who is positioned in front of the congregation but also facing the mihrab. Men and women pray at the same time but in separate spaces; they are either separate by a partition or curtain or they pray in separate rooms. It is normal for the voice of the imam in the men's prayer room to be broadcast in the women's prayer room at the same time, so he can lead their prayers along with the men's.

Key terms:

Salah: Prayer with and in worship of God, performed under conditions set by the prophet Muhammad.

Wudu: Ritual washing before prayer.

Mihrab: A niche in a wall of the mosque that indicates the direction of Makkah.

Qiblah wall: The wall in a mosque that contains the mihrab.

Rak'ah: A sequence of movements in ritual prayer

Recitation: Repeating a passage of text from memory.

Prostration: Kneeling with the forehead, nose, hands, knees and toes touching the floor, in submission to God.

Jummah prayer: A weekly communal prayer performed after midday on Friday, which includes a sermon



The Rak'ah

The daily prayers are made up of a number of rak'ah. This is a set sequence of actions and recitations. For example, the morning prayer is made up of two rak'ah and the night prayer is made up of four rak'ah. The rak'ah changes slightly depending on which prayer it is used in, and whereabouts it occurs in the overall sequence, but it includes the following basic actions (all the recitations are said in Arabic):

- While standing, Muslims recite the first chapter from the Qur'an.
- While bowing, Muslims say in Arabic 'Glory be to my Lord who is the very greatest' three times. The bowing positions shows that they believe God to be great.
- Returning to the upright position, they make a recitation, praising God.
- They then kneel with their forehead, nose, hands, knees and toes touching the floor. This is called prostration and shows complete obedience to God. They recite 'How perfect is my Lord the most high'.
- Muslims then sit while reciting 'God is the greatest', and after pausing for a few seconds prostrate themselves once more while repeating 'God is the greatest'.

Once the required number of rak'ah is completed, in a kneeling position Muslims turn their face to the right and then to the left, reciting in Arabic 'Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of God'.

Personal prayers (Du'a prayers) may be added on at the end of the final rak'ah. These do not have to be in Arabic and do not follow any set form. Muslims believe that God answers their prayers in the way that God know is best for them.



Muslims praying at a mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.

JummaH prayer

The midday prayer every Friday is considered to be special, and is called the JummaH prayer. All male Muslims are expected to attend a mosque for this prayer, and women may do so if they wish. Once the prayer is complete, the imam will deliver a sermon that reminds Muslims of their obligations and duties to God. This is the only day that a sermon is delivered, so is the only day the congregation are being direct spiritual guidance in the mosque. Although Friday is not a day of rest, Muslims must leave their work or close their business in order to attend the JummaH prayers, and then return to work afterwards.



A Muslim woman praying at home

Prayer at home

Muslims are allowed to pray at home. They must perform wudu before prayer, but they do not need a special room in their home to pray. Provided the room is clean, it is suitable. Many Muslims will use a prayer mat, which they position so it is facing Makkah, in the same way as it would in a mosque. Muslim women in particular can find it useful to pray at home, especially if they have children to look after.

The significance of prayer

Prayer has its own importance as one of the Five Pillars. However, for Muslims it is more than that - it is what God has commanded them to do. Prayer creates a much greater awareness of God, which in turn motivates them to do God's will.

Prayer also unites Muslims worldwide because they all pray the same way. A Muslim can go into any mosque anywhere in the world and be able to participate with fellow Muslims. In addition, reciting from the Qur'an during the prayers reminds Muslims of its importance. The action of bowing and prostrating remind them that God is greater and more important than they are.

"Your Lord says, 'Call on me and I will answer you'."
(Qur'an 40:60)

"Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of God and leave off your trading."
(Qur'an 62:9)

ZAKAH - ALMSGIVING

What is Zakah?

The third pillar of Islam is Zakah. This means giving alms (giving money to the poor). For Muslims who have enough savings, it is compulsory to give 2.5 per cent of those savings every year to help the poor. Many Muslims will work out how much they owe and give the money at the end of Ramadan.

By giving Zakah, Muslims are acknowledging that everything they own comes from God and belongs to him, and that they should use their wealth to remember God and give to those in need. It frees people from desire, and teaches self-discipline and honesty.

Zakah literally means to purify or to cleanse. Muslims believe that giving Zakah helps to purify the soul, removing selfishness and greed.

The origins of Zakah

The giving of Zakah began as a response to an instruction in the Qur'an:

"They ask you (Prophet) what they should give. Say, 'Whatever you give should be for parents, close relatives, orphans, the needy, and travellers. God is well aware of whatever good you do.'" (Qur'an 2: 215)

The Qur'an does not specify how much should be given in Zakah; the figure of 2.5 per cent was worked out later by Muslim scholars.

How Zakah is given and who receives it

Only Muslims with savings greater than a certain figure (known as the nisab) are required to give Zakah. The nisab is either worked out as the value of 87 grams of gold, which in 2015 was around £2200, or 612 grams of silver, which in 2015 was around £200. Muslims can choose the figure they use and therefore how much they pay, although using the gold nisab is more common.

An example, this means that a Muslim with savings



Zakah is calculated at 2.5 per cent of savings.

of £1000 would not be required to give Zakah if they were using the gold nisab, whereas a Muslim with savings of £4000 would pay £100 (2.5 per cent of £4000).

Zakah can be donated directly to a charity such as Islamic Relief or Muslim Aid. Alternatively it can be put into a collection box in the mosque to be distributed among the poor. The Qur'an makes it clear who should receive zakah:

"Alms are meant only for the poor and the needy, those who administer them, those whose hearts need winning over, to free slaves and help those in debt, for God's cause, and for travellers in need." (Qur'an 9: 60)

In Muslim countries, it is common for Zakah to be paid to an Islamic government who distribute it to those who need it. In non-Muslim countries such as Britain it is either collected by the mosque during Ramadan, or given directly to specific organisations or individuals. The first use should be locally to benefit the Islamic community. It is given anonymously so that the money remains pure and so that there is no pride or arrogance in the amount given.

Those who receive Zakah should not be made to feel embarrassed. No one actually owns anything, so in fact people are receiving a blessing from what is Allah's anyway. If a person is poor, that is a test that Allah has given them and so to receive from the rich is the will of Allah. Everyone has a different test. The rich have a duty to help, and someone who accepts Zakah is helping others fulfil their duty of giving. Zakah should be paid with good grace, not grudgingly. To help one another is to help Allah.

In addition to giving Zakah Muslims are encouraged to voluntarily give their

Key terms:

Zakah: Purification of wealth by giving 2.5 per cent of savings each year to the poor.

Sadaqah: Good actions or voluntary payments that are undertaken for charitable reasons.

Khums: A 20 per cent tax paid by shi'a Muslims on their excess income.



Zakah can be given to Islamic relief to support projects such as providing clean water for the people of Ethiopia.

money and time to charity at any point of the year. This is called Sadaqah.

Dangers with Zakah

Some people give reluctantly or give as little as they can; it is seen as ungrateful to not want to pay as you have the benefit of these blessings. However, since no one records what is given, and the giving is secret, only Allah can deal with that.

The significance of Zakah

- In giving Zakah, Muslims are fulfilling a duty imposed by God. The Qur'an makes it clear that giving Zakah is a sign of a true Muslim.
- The purpose of giving Zakah is to cleanse and purify; giving Zakah makes a person's remaining money clean and unsullied (untarnished)
- Paying Zakah gives Muslims a good attitude towards money. They learn to share it and not be greedy with it.
- Zakah strengthens communities by making the rich support the poor. By paying Zakah Muslims share their blessings from Allah with others.
- For those individuals who receive Zakah it can practically improve their lives, for example, by providing decent food for a period of time.
- Zakah links well with Salah (prayer). Prayers should make Muslims feel concern for others, and Zakah puts this concern into action.

Khums

Khums is an important part of Muslim practice for Shi'a Islam in addition to giving Zakah. It literally means 'fifth'. Originally it referred to a requirement for Muslims to donate 20 per cent of the spoils of war to the leader representing the state of Islam. Today, it refers to the excess income or earnings that a Shi'a Muslim makes, and is still set at 20 per cent. Half the money collected as Khums goes to Shi'a religious leaders, to be spent on behalf of God on things considered necessary for religious matters, while the rest is given to charity or the poor.

'Be steadfast in prayer and giving.'
(Qur'an 2: 110)

'And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, [it will be said], this is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard' (Qur'an 9:34-35).

Read the information and then complete the following activities:

1. Explain what Zakah is, and how it is calculated.
2. What do you think the obligation to give Zakah teaches Muslims?
3. How is Zakah creating a fair society?
4. What are the main dangers with Zakah?
5. How does Sadaqah differ from Zakah?
6. Explain what Khums is for Shi'a Muslims and how it is used.
7. Do you think we should have a system like zakah in the UK? Explain your reasons clearly

Possible 12 mark evaluation statements:

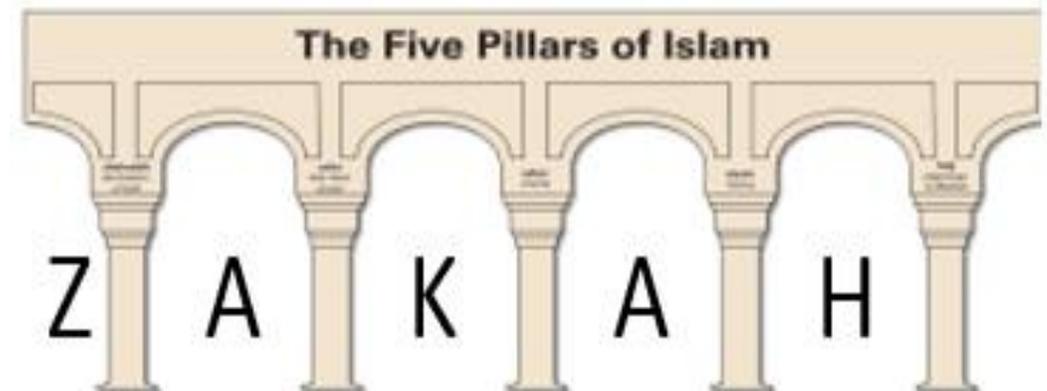
- 'The rich should help the poor.'
- 'Zakah should be used to help the needy, not to develop the religion.'

Remember to answer using full sentences so that it is clear what the question was asking from your response.

Exam Practice

Explain two Muslim teachings about giving alms (Zakah).

Refer to scripture in your answer. (5 marks)



Who receives Zakah money?



The poor and the needy



Muslims studying Islam



Travellers who need money



People in debt

Zakah goes to:



New Muslims



Prisoners of war

Schools, Hospitals, Libraries, Mosques



SAWM: FASTING DURING RAMADAN

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and for Muslims, the most important. They believe it was during Ramadan that the Qur'an started to be revealed to Muhammad. Many Muslims will recite the whole of the Qur'an, in daily sections, over the 30 days of Ramadan. The daily readings from the Qur'an help Muslims to remember its teachings and its importance in their lives.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims focus on fasting (Sawm), charity and pleasing God.

Fasting

Ramadan is known as the month of fasting because Muslims fast during daylight hours of the whole month, going without food or drink. They get up every day before sunrise in order to eat and drink enough to keep them going until sunset. Then the fast is broken and Muslims are allowed to eat until sunrise the next day. The evening meal is often shared with family and friends, then followed with extra prayers and readings from the Qur'an.

The command to fast can be found in the Qur'an, and it has been obligatory for Muslims to fast during Ramadan since the seventh century.

For Muslims, fasting is not just to do without food and drink; smoking and sex are also forbidden during daylight hours. Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries may find this month particularly difficult, since there can be more temptation to break the fast. For example, in the UK it can be very difficult for those in school to resist temptation or participate in PE lessons without being able to drink to rehydrate themselves. Many schools at break and lunchtimes provide special rooms during Ramadan, where Muslim students can go so that they may avoid the temptation of food and drink.



Many Muslims break their fast at the end of each day during Ramadan by drinking water and eating dates.

The whole focus during the month of Ramadan is on God, for which purity of thought is required in order to cleanse the soul and free it from harm. Fasting requires considerable self-discipline, but it allows Muslims to show they can sacrifice their physical needs as evidence of their submission to God.

Exceptions to fasting

Not all Muslims have to fast during Ramadan, although those excused from fasting are supposed to make up for it later if they can (this is clearly outlined in the Qur'an 2:18). People can be excused for health reasons - for example pregnant women, mothers nursing babies, children and those who are ill do not have to fast. Some children fast for a shorter length of time to help train themselves.

"It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind...So any one of you who is present that month should fast, and anyone who is ill or on a journey should make up for the lost days by fasting on other days later." (Qur'an 2:18)

Charity

One of the positive elements to feeling hungry during the day is that it serves as a reminder that the poor feel that way all the time if they cannot afford to eat properly. This greater awareness inspires many Muslims to find ways to help the poor. This may include inviting the poor to share their meal that breaks the fast at sunset. Many Muslims choose to pay Zakah during Ramadan.

The Night of Power

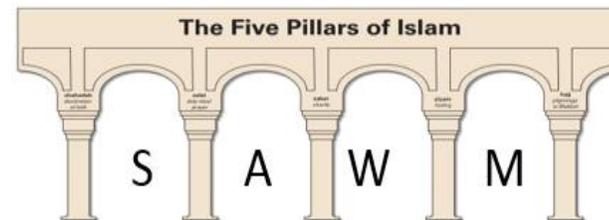
The Night of Power is an important festival that marks the beginning of God's revelation to Muhammad. The exact date this happened is not agreed on, but it is believed to be one of the odd-numbered dates in the second half of Ramadan. The first verses of the Qur'an that were revealed to Muhammad on this night (96:1-5) describes how the Angel Jibril instructed him to start reading:

"Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clot. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by the pen, who taught man what he did not know." (Qur'an 96:1-5)

The night's importance is explained in the Qur'an:

"What will explain to you what that Night of Glory is? The Night of Glory is better than a thousand months." (Qur'an 97:2-3)

This means that observing the Night of Power gives Muslims the benefits of worshipping for a thousand months. Because of this, Muslims try to keep awake throughout the night on each of the possible dates, devoting themselves to prayers and studying the Qur'an.

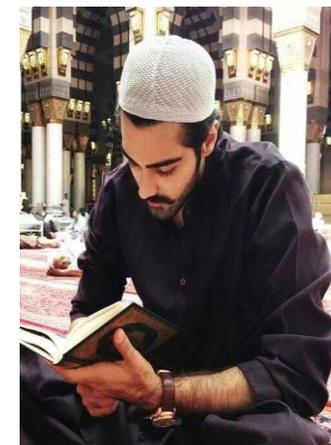


Key terms:

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Muslim calendar, during which Muslims have to fast from dusk to sunset

Fasting: not eating or drinking for a certain length of time, usually for religious reasons.

The Night of Power: (1) The night when the first revelation of the Qur'an was made to Muhammad (2) the festival that marks the start of God's revelation to Muhammad



Studying the Qur'an is an important part of Ramadan.

HAJJ: PILGRIMAGE TO MAKKAH

What is Hajj?

A pilgrimage is a journey made for religious reasons. Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam, is a pilgrimage that should be made at least once during a Muslim's lifetime, provided they are healthy and wealthy enough to do so. Some communities will provide financial support for a poor Muslim to make the pilgrimage because it is a religious obligation and not a holiday.

Hajj starts and ends in the holy city of Makkah (Mecca) in Saudi Arabia. It always takes place from 8th to 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, which is the last month of the Islamic calendar. During this time, around 3 million Muslims take part in the pilgrimage, performing various rituals to show their devotion to God.

There are several references to Hajj in the Qur'an, for example:

"Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to god by people who are able to undertake it."
(Qur'an 3:97)

The origins of Hajj

Muslims believe that around 4000 years ago, the prophet Ibrihim was told by God to take his wife Hajar and son Ishmael to Arabia. He was then told to leave Hajar and Ishmael on their own with some supplies of food and water. Within a few days, the supplies ran out and Hajar and Ishmael were suffering from hunger and dehydration.

Looking for help, Hajar ran up and down two hills called Safa and Marwah before collapsing beside her son. She prayed to God for help. Ishmael struck his foot on the ground, which caused water to gush up from the earth. They traded some of this water for food and other supplies. When Ibrihim returned he was told by God to build a shrine dedicated to him. This became the Ka'aba. Ibrihim was told to make the Ka'aba a pure place of worship and to call people to perform Hajj there.

Many centuries later, the city of Makkah was established nearby using the water from Ishmael's well (the well of Zamzam). Over the years, the people of Makkah became used to worshipping idols, many of which were stored in the Ka'aba. In 628 CE, Muhammad journeyed from Madinah to Makkah with a large group of Muslims in what is now seen as the first pilgrimage in Islam. In 630 CE, the Ka'aba was returned to the worship of God alone.

It is this story that is reflected in Hajj.

How Hajj is performed

Entering a state of Ihram

Before Hajj begins, pilgrims must enter a sacred state called Ihram. This involves performing ritual washing, praying and putting on Ihram clothing. For men this is two sheets of white cloth that they wrap around their body. The white cloth is a sign of equality and purity. Women wear

clothes of a single colour that cover the whole of their body apart from their face.

They are now ready for the pilgrimage to begin.

Circling the Ka'aba

Hajj begins in Makkah at the Ka'aba. Pilgrims circle the Ka'aba in an anti-clockwise direction seven times (Tawaf). If possible, they touch the black stone built into the Ka'aba or raise their hand to acknowledge it. This stone is revered by Muslims as an ancient Islamic relic; it is considered by some to be the only surviving stone from the original Ka'aba built by Ibrihim. However, the origins of the stone are unclear. Some believe it is a meteorite; others believe it was given by God to Adam to erase his sin and allow him a path into heaven; others believe it was brought from a nearby mountain by the archangel Jibril, or that it came from paradise.



Hajj begins with pilgrims circling the Ka'aba.

As Muslims circle the Ka'aba they recite the pilgrims' prayer: *'Here I am. Oh lord, at your service. Praise and blessings to you.'*

Travelling to Arafat

The crowd then walks along a covered walkway linking the hills of Safa and Marwah, which feature in the story of Ibrihim, Hajar and Ishmael. After completing seven circuits of this walk they return to the Ka'aba to collect bottles of water from the well of Zamzam.

Muslims then face the prospect of a 13 mile walk or ride to Arafat, possibly in high temperatures that many are not used to. Halfway there they stop for the night at Mina, where they pray and read the Qur'an.

Standing at Arafat

At dawn on the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah, pilgrims walk from Mina to Arafat, where Muhammad preached his last sermon. Here they spend the whole afternoon praying under the hot summer sun. The heat of the sun is a reminder of what the Day of Judgement will be like. Some Muslims spend the whole afternoon standing to show the depth of their faith, and the afternoon is sometimes called 'the standing at Arafat'.

Key terms:

Pilgrimage: A journey by a believer to a holy site for religious reasons; an act of worship and devotion.

Hajj: The annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca) that every Muslim should try to make at least once in their life.

Hajji: Someone who has completed Hajj.

Ka'aba: The black, cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah (Mecca); the holiest place in Islam



Thousands of tents are provided at Mina for pilgrims to sleep in..

Islam teaches that God will forgive sins of all who complete the standing at Arafat, but only if they know they have done wrong, are determined not to do wrong again, and are prepared to try to make up for their sins.

Throwing pebbles at Mina

At the end of day, Muslims walk to Muzdalifah, where they spend the night. On the way, they collect 49 small pebbles to be used next day at Mina. At Mina, there are three stone pillars which are called the Jamarat. These pillars represent the devil and temptation. On the 10th of Dhull-Hijjah, pilgrims throw the pebbles they have collected at the pillars to show they reject evil.

Many pilgrims then sacrifice an animal (a sheep, cow, camel or goat). This is repeated throughout the world as part of the celebration of Id-ul-Adha. The leftover meat that cannot be eaten is frozen or canned and given to the poor. To follow teachings of the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad, pilgrims cut their hair. Women normally just cut off a small lock of their hair while men shave their heads.



Pilgrims throwing pebbles at the Jamarat pillars in Mina.

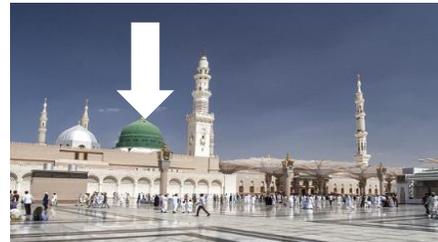


A male pilgrim having his head shaved at Mina

Returning to Makkah

The next day, pilgrims return to Makkah to circle the Ka'aba seven more times. They then return to Mina to spend two more nights there, remembering God and reflecting on his blessings, before Hajj ends.

Once Hajj is completed, many pilgrims take the opportunity to travel to Madinah to visit Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (the Prophet's Mosque). This is a huge mosque, placed on the site of a much smaller mosque that Muhammad built in 622 CE. It contains the tomb of Muhammad and of some early Muslim leaders.



The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah – the tomb of Muhammad is located beneath the green dome (see arrow in picture).

The significance of Hajj

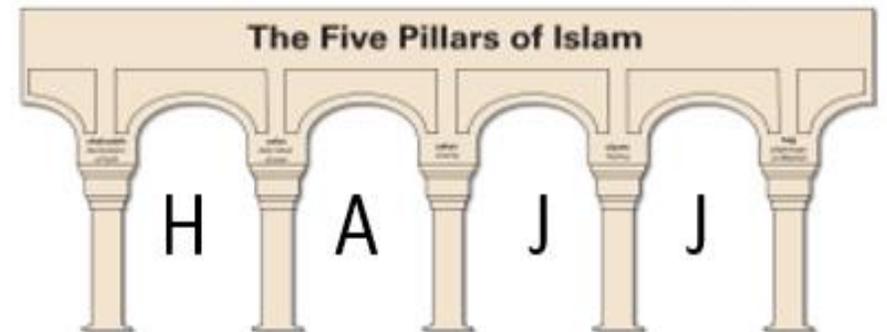
Hajj has great significance for Muslims. Even though it is a requirement to go on Hajj once in a lifetime, many Muslims go a number of times, especially if they live close to Makkah. Once someone has completed Hajj they can be referred to as a Hajji.

Hajj is so important to Muslims for a number of different reasons:

- It can bring about a deep spiritual transformation that makes the Hajji a better person. Their consciousness of God grows and they become more aware that God is with them and watching them.
- It teaches sincerity and humility in a person's relationship with God.
- It produces inner peace, which is shown in the values of justice, honesty, respect, kindness, mercy and forgiveness.
- It shows self-discipline. The physical and mental demands it imposes are great. Not all are able to complete it.
- It emphasises unity and equality. The Ihram clothing ensures there is no distinction between rich and poor, and the thousands of tents that pilgrims stay in at Mina strengthen the feeling of brotherhood and sisterhood.
- It reminds Muslims of the faith and examples set by Ibrahim, Hajar and Ishmael.
- It can lead to forgiveness for sins.

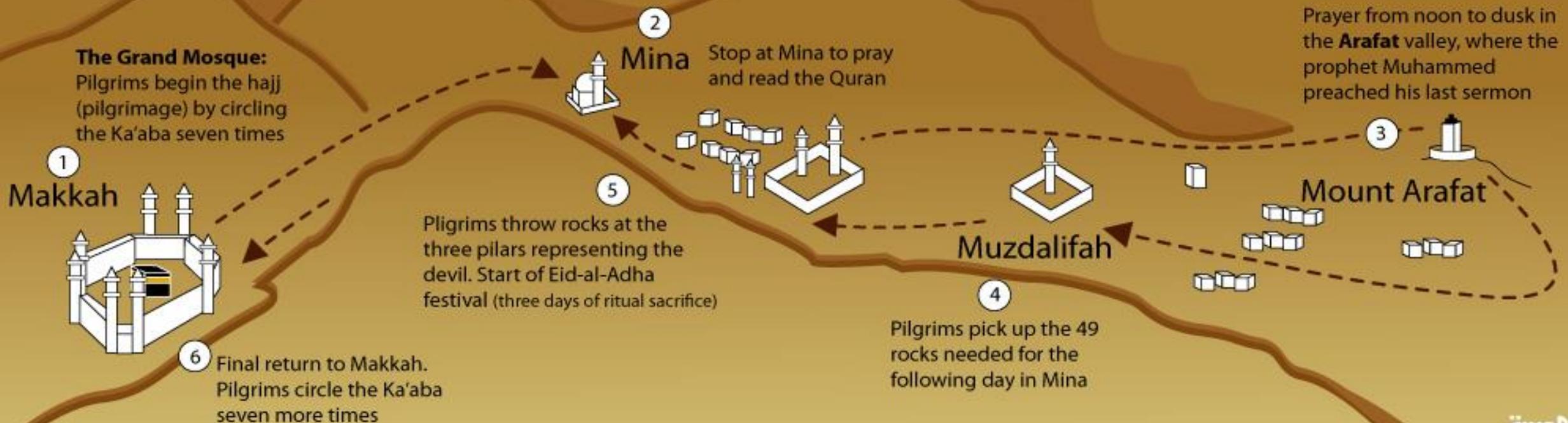
Key Tasks

1. What is pilgrimage?
2. In your own words, tell the story that explains how Hajj originated.
3. Explain why Makkah has become such an important city for Muslims.
4. How is Ihram a sign of purity and equality?
5. Create a Hajj flowchart. Include all of the main places that pilgrims visit on Hajj, in the correct order. Include brief explanations to describe what happens at each place.
6. Produce a spider diagram with Hajj in the middle, surrounded by the benefits it has for a Muslim. Try to think of simple illustrations to represent each of the benefits and add them to your diagram.



THE HAJJ GUIDE

The map below shows the key route Muslims take when performing Hajj. At each place Muslims perform specific rituals to show their devotion to Allah.



JIHAD

What is Jihad?

Jihad is an important concept for Muslims. It refers to struggling against evil, either as an individual or as the collective fellowship of Islam. Jihad requires Muslims to strive to improve themselves and the societies in which they live in a way that God would approve of. The origins of jihad go back as far as Muhammad, as the concept appears many times in the Qur'an and the Hadith (the sayings of Muhammad):

"This is my path, leading straight, so follow it, and do not follow other ways; they will lead you away from it - 'This is what He commands you to do, so that you may refrain from wrongdoing.'" (Qur'an 6:153)

"But those who have believed, migrated, and striven for God's cause, it is they who can look forward to God's mercy: God is most forgiving and merciful." (Qur'an 2:218)

There are two elements to jihad: greater jihad and lesser jihad. Although they are strongly linked, there are distinct differences between them.

Greater Jihad

Greater jihad is a personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teachings of their faith. This means they must observe the Five Pillars of Islam, which bring them closer to God;

- The Shahadah and salah lay the foundations for their faith, by putting God above everything else.
- Zakah requires them to care for others as a duty.
- Sawm requires them to show discipline by putting God above their bodily needs for a whole month.
- Hajj means that for ten days they leave behind worldly concerns and dedicate themselves to God's will.

All of this is required as part of greater jihad, which for Muslims is a constant struggle to purify one's heart from all evil traits, and to establish instead all types of virtues.

Muslims must also devote their lives to God by avoiding such temptations and distractions as drugs, alcohol, greed and jealousy. Anything that takes them away from their submission to God must be avoided. Some Muslims take their devotion to God even further. For example some learn the Qur'an by heart, which requires great discipline and patience.

Others make great efforts to improve life for people in the community. Not only do they give



Muslim volunteering to pack food for families in need.

Zakah, they also choose to give extra sums of money to charity. This is called Sadaqah. Others also give their time by working with the poor and vulnerable, both locally and globally.

In all these ways, Muslims improve themselves spiritually and deepen their relationship with God.

Lesser Jihad

As the term suggests, it is considered less important than greater jihad, which Muslims believe is required every single moment of their lives. Lesser jihad is seen as the outward struggle to defend Islam from threat. In the early days of the faith, this was important when Muslims were being persecuted and they needed to protect their freedom to practise their faith.

There are several instances in the Qur'an that appear to allow extreme violence in the name of lesser jihad, but it must be remembered that they were written in the 7th century CE when the new faith of Islam was under threat. Some might argue that in the content of war, behaving in such a violent way is justified, but this does not mean that lesser jihad can be used to justify terrorism that targets innocent civilians.

Fighting for a religious cause is sometimes referred to as a holy war. Some of the criteria for a holy war are:

- It must only be declared by a fair religious leader.
- It cannot be used to make people convert to Islam.
- It must be in response to a threat to the faith.
- It must not be used to gain territory or wealth.
- It must be a last resort - peaceful methods must be tried first.

As the above criteria suggests, neither lesser jihad or holy war should be used to justify terrorist acts, whether or not there is a perceived threat to the faith. However, this lesser jihad is sometimes misinterpreted in modern times. Muslims extremists are often called jihadists, but no Muslim for whom greater jihad

is an important element in their faith would justify such violent actions by referring to terrorism as struggling to live in the way that God intends. For Muslims, jihad is essentially an important spiritual practice that brings them closer to God.

Key terms:

Jihad: A struggle against evil; this may be an inward, personal struggle or an outward, collective struggle.

Greater Jihad:

The personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teachings of their faith.

Lesser Jihad:

The outward struggle to defend one's faith, family and country from threat.

Holy war:

Fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader.



These Syrian refugees left their homes in 2015 as a result of what some believe to be a lesser jihad in their country.

MUSLIM FESTIVALS - Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Adha & The festival of Ashura

The origins of Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha

It is said that when Muhammad arrived in Madinah, he noticed that some people were celebrating two specific days with entertainment and festivities. When he asked about this he was told that before Islam came to their city, they had celebrated two grand carnivals each year. Muhammad replied that God had appointed two other days that are better to celebrate, the days of Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha.

Id-ul-Fitr

Why is Id-ul-Fitr important?

Id-ul-Fitr (also written Eid-ul-Fitr) means the 'festival of breaking of the fast'. It has several other names including the Sugar Feast, the Sweet Festival and Lesser Eid. The festival marks the end of the month of Ramadan. Muslims are not only celebrating the end of a whole month of fasting, but are thanking God for the strength and help he has given them to fast for a month. Muslims also give thanks to God for providing his guidance and wisdom in the Qur'an, the first revelation of which was made during the month of Ramadan.

How is Id-ul-Fitr celebrated?

Id-ul-Fitr may be celebrated for one, two or three days. Muslims gather together in mosques or large outdoor areas to say special prayers. The imam's sermon usually reminds Muslims that they should forgive and forget any differences or disputes that have occurred during the year, and focus instead on helping the poor.



Women decorate their hands with henna for Id-ul-Fitr.

Everyone wears their best clothes or new clothes for the occasion, and homes are decorated. Special foods are eaten and processions take place through the streets. There is a festive atmosphere, and cards and presents are exchanged.

Although Id-ul-Adha is not a recognised national public holiday in Britain, in areas where many Muslims live they may be granted the day off to attend morning prayers and enjoy the festival. May also go to their local cemetery to remember family members who have died and pray for them.

Celebrating Id-ul-Fitr - Sumaiya's experience

Sumaiya, from Luton, recounts her experience of Id-ul-Fitr: 'The preparations for Id-ul-Fitr begin the night before with the women decorating their hands and feet with henna. Baklava and special biscuits, called finger biscuits, are also made.'

In the morning the men go to the mosque to attend a special Id prayer and the women will usually stay at home to put on new outfits. Throughout the day different family members visit each other and guests will be given drinks, biscuits and baklava, and the children are usually given toys as gifts



Special sweet foods are made for Id-ul-Fitr.

Id-ul Adha

Why is Id-ul-Adha important?

Id-ul-Adha (also written Eid-ul-Adha) is the festival of sacrifice or Greater Eid. It is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Dhul-Hijjah, and lasts for four days.

The festival remembers and honours the prophet Ibrahim, who was willing to sacrifice his son Ishmael on God's command. The Qur'an 37:100-112 records how Ibrahim had a recurring dream in which God told him to sacrifice his son. Ibrahim loved his son dearly, but decided he must obey God's command, provided his son agreed with him. Ibrahim informed his son and his son replied that he must do what God had told him.

However, as Ibrahim was about to carry out the sacrifice, God prevented it and gave Ibrahim a ram to sacrifice instead. He had passed the test of being willing to carry out God's commands.

How is Id-ul-Adha celebrated?

The festival forms part of Hajj, but is celebrated by Muslims all over the world. In Britain, it is a time of celebration when people visit family and friends, and enjoy festive meals. It begins with prayers in the mosque, where the imam preaches a sermon about sacrifice and reminds those who attend why the festival is celebrated.

During Id-ul-Adha animals are slaughtered to remember Ibrahim's sacrifice. On Hajj many pilgrims sacrifice an animal, but this is not allowed in Britain. Instead some British Muslims buy an animal from their local slaughterhouse. This animal will have been killed in a certain way, following Islamic law. The family usually keeps a third of the meat, gives another third to relatives, friends and neighbours, and the remaining third is given to the poor. However, many in Britain prefer to give money instead of meat to support those in need.

Cards and presents are given and community celebrations are often organised. Those living on their own receive invitations to share meals with their neighbours. Those in hospital receive lots of visitors as every effort is made to ensure that no one is left out.



Muslims often send cards, such as the ones shown here, as part of the Id celebrations.

Key terms:

Id-ul-Fitr: A Muslim festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan.

Id-ul-Adha: A Muslim festival that celebrates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for God.

Day of Ashura: A festival that is important for Shi'a Muslims in particular, who remember the battle of Karbala and the death of Husayn on this day.



The festival of Ashura

The origins and meaning of Ashura

The Day of Ashura (Day of Remembrance) is a major Shi'a festival that takes place on the 10th day of the month of Muharram. Ashura means 'tenth'.

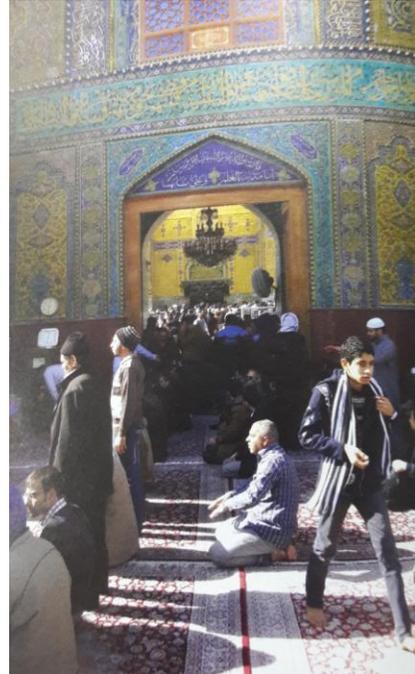
Sunni Muslims also observe Ashura, but they refer to it as the Day of Atonement, and remember it as the day when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Others believe that traditionally Ashura remembers the day Noah (Nuh) left the ark after the flood. After going to Madinah, Muhammad nominated Ashura as a day of fasting from sunset to sunset, and it is still a voluntary fast day for Sunni Muslims. To Shi'a Muslims, however, Ashura is a day of great sorrow because of the tragic events of Karbala.

Shi'a Muslims remember the death of Husayn (Hussein), son of Imam Ali and grandson of Muhammad, on 10 October, 680CE, in Karbala, Iraq. It is a day of mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn. The battle at Karbala was fought between Husayn and his supporters against the army of Caliph Yazid I. It lasted all day as Husayn, with around 70 men plus women and children, fought against the much larger army. Eventually Husayn's supporters were overwhelmed near the river Euphrates, and it is said that their camp was set on fire and their bodies were trampled upon by the horses of their enemy. Husayn and his male followers were killed and their property looted. The women were allowed to live but were taken as captives.

This event had a profound effect on the surviving relatives and supporters of Husayn, as they mourned for him and all his companions who were killed. Poems were written to retell the story and it is remembered by Shi'a Muslims with much sorrow. Husayn's martyrdom is widely seen by Shi'a Muslims as a symbol of the struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression.

How is Ashura commemorated?

In many Muslim countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, a public holiday takes place to remember the events at Karbala. During the day Shi'a Muslims take part in public expression of grief and mourning. Some even go so far as to beat themselves on the back with chains, pound their head or cut themselves. They do this in an attempt to connect with Husayn's suffering and death.



The shrine of Husayn, which many Shi'a Muslims visit during the festival of Ashura.

Recently some of these practices have been condemned by some Shi'a religious authorities, who have stated that they are the wrong actions for Muslims to take. Re-enactments and plays are performed to retell the story of Husayn's death so that people will remember the events at Karbala.

In London, several thousand Shi'a Muslims go to Marble Arch for a procession of mourning and to listen to speeches. In cities such as London and Manchester, Shi'a Muslims gather in the street and some men beat themselves (slap themselves on their bare chests in unison) as part of the mourning ritual. Some British Shi'a Muslims believe that they should shed blood to remember Husayn. Rather than beating and cutting themselves, some UK religious leaders encourage them to donate blood to the blood transfusion service instead.



Shi'a Muslims beating themselves during Ashura in London.

In Iraq, many Shi'a pilgrims go to the Mashhad al-Husayn, the shrine in Karbala which is believed to house the tomb of Husayn. During the reign of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Ashura commemorations were banned as Saddam saw the gathering of thousands of people as a potential threat to his regime. After Saddam Hussein was removed from power, the pilgrimage began again despite the dangers from bomb attacks. For example, in 2004, bombs killed and wounded hundreds of pilgrims in Karbala at the time of Ashura. In Iran, the festival became a major political symbol during the Islamic Revolution. The day of Ashura has become a point of difference between some Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, and security in many countries is heightened for the occasion.

For Sunni Muslims, Ashura is a day when many fast voluntarily. Many give to charity, show kindness to their family and to the poor, recite prayers and learn from Islamic scholars. It is not such an important festival or as solemn an occasion as it is for Shi'a Muslims.



Muslims praying at Marble Arch in London during the annual Ashura commemoration.

