

# Muslim Practices

## Revision Guide



Check through the list below to make sure you have revised all content.

Worship	✓ Done
Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam (you should know the Five Pillars and jihad in both Sunni and Shi'a Islam and the additional duties of Shi'a Islam).	
Shahadah: declaration of faith and its place in Muslim practice.	
Salah and its significance: how and why Muslims pray including times, directions, ablution (wudu), movements (rak'ahs) and recitations; salah in the home and mosque and elsewhere; Friday prayer: Jummah; key differences in the practice of salah in Sunni and Shi'a Islam, and different Muslim views about the importance of prayer.	
<b>Duties and Festivals</b>	
Sawm: the role and significance of fasting during the month of Ramadan including origins, duties, benefits of fasting, the exceptions and their reasons, and the Night of Power, Qur'an 96:1-5.	
Zakah: the role and significance of giving alms including origins, how and why it is given, benefits of receipt, Khums in Shi'a Islam.	
Hajj: the role and significance of the pilgrimage to Makkah including origins, how hajj is performed, the actions pilgrims perform at sites including the Ka'aba at Makkah, Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifah and their significance.	
Jihad: different understandings of jihad: the meaning and significance of greater and lesser jihad; origins, influence and conditions for the declaration of lesser jihad.	
Festivals and commemorations and their importance for Muslims in Great Britain today, including the origins and meanings of Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Ashura.	

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## Key terms and definitions

**Ablution:** Ritual washing in Islam. The Arabic term is wudu.

**Allah:** The Islamic name for God.

**Arafat:** A plain near to Makkah where pilgrims gather to worship, pray and ask for forgiveness. This takes place on the ninth day of the Islamic month, the day before Eid ul Adha.

**Ashura:** A very important festival in Shi'a Islam, occurring on 10th Muharram. Shi'a Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein (Muhammad's grandson). Ashura is observed by Sunni Muslims for a different reason, as a day of repentance for sins in the belief that they will be forgiven.

**Fasting:** Not eating or drinking. It refers especially to sawm, which is the 4th of the Five Pillars. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset.

**The Five Pillars:** The Five Pillars observed by Sunni Muslims which support Islam by encouraging the development of good character, attitude and behaviour. These are shahadah, salah, zakah, sawm and hajj.

**Friday prayer:** Jummah. Friday prayers in the mosque, where a sermon (khutbah) is heard.

**Giving alms:** A key practice in Islam. Zakah is the 3rd of the Five Pillars. Giving alms means giving to those in need, e.g. money, food, time.

**Greater jihad:** This refers to the duty of every Muslim to live a good life, staying faithful to the beliefs and obeying the commands of Islam.

**Hajj:** Annual pilgrimage to Makkah, which all Muslims must undertake at least once in their lives, unless prevented by problems over wealth or health. The 5th of the Five Pillars.

**Id-ul-Adha:** Celebration of the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for Allah. It comes at the end of the period of hajj.

**Id-ul-Fitr:** A celebration that comes at the end of Ramadan and marks the end of fasting.

**Jihad:** 'To struggle'. It refers to the effort made to obey Allah.

**Jummah:** Weekly communal salah performed after midday on a Friday.

**The Ka'aba:** The black covered cube-shaped building in the centre of the grand mosque in Makkah. All Muslims face towards it when they pray.

**Khums:** This is a practice in Shi'a Islam. It is a 20% tax on annual surplus income and is given to the poor and to religious leaders.

**Lesser jihad:** This refers to the military struggle to defend Islam. It is carried out according to strict and clear-cut rules.

**Makkah:** The city where Muhammad was born. The spiritual centre of Islam, it is in Saudi Arabia.

**Mina:** Place to be visited on hajj – stoning of pillars.

**Mosque:** The Muslim place of worship.

**Muslim:** One who has submitted to the will of Allah and has accepted Islam.

**Muzdalifah:** Place where pilgrims hold a night prayer and rest during hajj, after the Stand on Mount Arafat.

**Pilgrimage:** A journey made for religious reasons.

**Ramadan:** Month during which fasting from dawn to sunset is demanded (ninth month of the Islamic calendar).

**Recitations:** Acts of reciting from memory texts from the Qur'an.

**Salah:** Prayer to and worship of Allah, performed under the conditions set by the Prophet Muhammad – five times a day. The 2nd of the Five Pillars.

**Sawm:** Fasting from dawn to dusk during Ramadan; sex and smoking are banned when the believer is engaged in this. The 4th of the Five Pillars.

**The Shahadah:** Muslim declaration of faith. It is a statement of faith in Allah as the only God and in Muhammad as Allah's prophet. The 1st of the Five Pillars for Sunni Muslims. In Shi'a Islam it is not a separate Pillar and it has two additional statements relating to Ali as beloved of Allah and the rightful trustee and successor of Muhammad.

**The Ten Obligatory Acts:** These are requirements for Shi'a Muslims. They include salah, sawm, zakah, hajj and jihad (duties also for Sunni Muslims) but the final five are not part of the Sunni tradition.

**Wudu:** Ablution. Ritual washing performed before salah and also when purification is needed.

**Zakah:** The 3rd of the Five Pillars. It consists of the giving of alms to purify those who give it and the rest of their money.

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# Key Practices: Worship

## Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam

The Five Pillars are:

1. *Shahadah:* The declaration of faith. 'There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.'
2. *Salah:* Prayer – five times a day
3. *Zakah:* Charitable giving
4. *Sawm:* Fasting
5. *Hajj:* Pilgrimage

The Five Pillars are central to Muslim practices and they have an impact on the daily lives of Muslims. 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 Ten Obligatory Acts are followed by Twelver Shi'a Muslims. They include the Five Pillars, with the exception of the Shahadah. Salah: Prayer

1. Salah: Prayer
2. Sawm: Fasting
3. Zakah: Charitable giving
4. Khums: a 20% tax on income once all expenses are deducted. Half goes to charity and half goes to Shi'a religious leaders.
5. Hajj: Pilgrimage
6. 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 and doing voluntary work.
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.

Just because Sunni Muslims don't follow the Ten Obligatory Acts doesn't mean they aren't important. For example, Sunnis also recognise jihad, even if it's in the Five Pillars.

**The Shahadah**: This is the statement of belief. The first part of Shahadah entails the rejection of shirk and the acceptance of tawhid. Shi'a Muslims add '...and Ali is a friend of Allah' to recognise his importance. The Shahadah is the only obligatory act isn't accompanied by an action. It is recited in Arabic on a daily basis during prayer, reminding a Muslim to submit to God, avoid shirk and develop God consciousness (taqwa). It is also whispered in the ear of a new born baby or a dying person, so that it is the first and the last thing a person hears.

**Salah**: Prayers are compulsory for Muslims at prescribed times. Muslims are instructed to 'celebrate the glory of your Lord' with 'regular prayer'. In addition, salah enables Muslims to develop taqwa and the desire to avoid sin and establish self-discipline as it 'restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour.' Through prayer they can ask for forgiveness, thank Allah for what he has done and gain good comments for their book for the Day of Judgement. When all Muslims pray in the same way and at the same time, a sense of belonging to the ummah (worldwide Muslim community) is developed.

Prayers consist of different rak'ahs (movements and recitations) that are performed while facing the Ka'aba in Makkah. This is because the Qur'an says 'turn your face in the direction of the sacred mosque: where ever you may be, turn your faces to it.' Prayer can be performed in the home, in the mosque or in a clean dry place where shoes have been removed. Outside the mosque a prayer mat is often used. Shi'a Muslims will use a clay or

wooden tablet, called a mohr. They believe Muhammad prayed in this way and are therefore following his example.

Sunni Muslims pray five times a day. Shi'a Muslims complete all five prayers but combine two of them. Sunnis can combine them and do if need be but they don't make a habit of it. Prayer times follow the sun.

Sunni	Shi'a
Fajr – just before sunrise	Muslims pray at this point
Zuhr – noon/just after midday	These two are combined
Asr – mid/late afternoon	
Maghrib – just after sunset	These two are combined
Isha - evening	

In order to pray a Muslims should have a pure mind and clean body. Preparation for prayer using water is called wudu. This involves washing the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms; wiping the head, ears and nape; and washing the feet, including the ankles. In the Shi'a tradition the feet are wiped instead of washed. During wudu Muslims should think about the sins they have committed so that they are ready to ask Allah for forgiveness.

If circumstances allow, all Sunni male Muslims are required to attend the mosque for communal Zuhr prayers on Fridays. These prayers are led by the imam, who will also give a sermon (khutba). While it is not compulsory for Shi'a Muslims to attend jummah prayers, it is recommended. The compulsory prayers are always said in Arabic, whereas du'a (voluntary prayers) are said in any language.

## Duties & Festivals

**Sawm:** Fasting occurs during the month of Ramadan, which is considered to be the holiest month in Islam. This is because it is when Muhammad received his first revelation from Angel Jibril. No food or water is to be consumed during daylight hours. As they are supposed to be focusing on worshiping Allah, they should avoid telling lies, gossiping or sinful actions. All Muslims are expected to fast once they reach puberty unless it's going to cause them hardship. They are also exempt if they are pregnant or breastfeeding, elderly or sick, very poor, travelling a long distance, menstruating or doing something that might make fasting dangerous. They can make up their fast later.

During Ramadan a Muslims will wake before the dawn prayers to consume a meal called suhur. The fast then begins at dawn and ends at sunset in the Sunni tradition but the Shi'as break their fast a few minutes later at the very end of sunset. Most fasts are broken with a light snack, called iftar, which often consists of water and dates (as this is what Muhammad ate.) This is followed by an evening meal, which is often communal.

The primary goal of fasting is to enable a Muslims to submit to and 'be mindful of God' so that God consciousness can be developed. It also helps to developed self-control and

empathy towards the poor, knowing they go without food regularly. As the Muslim calendar is lunar, the date for Ramadan changes each year. Sawm ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr.

**Zakah:** Muslims have a compulsory duty to give to those in need once they have more than the minimum amount they need to survive. A proportion of their wealth must be given at the end of zakah, which is generally 2.5% of savings. In the Shi'a tradition, the 2.5% is from profit only acquired from business transactions, so not all Shi'a Muslims will pay zakah, but they all pay khums. Muslims give zakah to obey and worship Allah, help the poor and cleanse them of greed. Zakah can be given directly to the poor, an appropriate cause or charity or collected by the mosque. It should go to:

1. The poor
2. The needy
3. Those wanting to convert (revert) to Islam
4. Those who collect the money
5. Slaves who need freeing
6. Those who are in debt
7. Travellers in need
8. Those working for the cause of Allah

Muslims believe zakah is beneficial because it:

- Reminds Muslims that all money belongs to Allah
- Reminds Muslims that they have a duty to help those in need
- Is a way of worshipping Allah
- It gains good deeds for their book on the Day of Judgement

Muslims can donate extra money as they see fit or they can donate their time. Voluntary acts of charity are known as sadaqah, which means performing a good deed for the sake of Allah.

Khums is only obligatory for Shi'a Muslims and is deemed to be more important than zakah as all Shi'a Muslims must pay it. It is the giving of 20% of their annual profit after expenses have been paid. Half of this money goes towards the descendants of Muhammad and the other half to representatives of the Imams who will use the money for a deserving project, such as helping orphans). Khums is collected because in the Qur'an, it says, 'Know that one-fifth of your battle gains belongs to God and the Messenger' and historically, money that was gained from battle was given to the prophet. Sunnis believe that this ended with the death of Muhammad and don't pay khums.

**Hajj:** In the Qur'an it states 'Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it.' All Muslims are required to go on pilgrimage to Hajj. It is one of the Five Pillars and one of the Ten Obligatory Acts. Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that involves a set of rituals between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> month of Dhu'l Hijjah. Muslims must be able to complete Hajj, both from a physical and a financial point of view.

Before Muslims arrive at Mecca, they must enter a state of ihram, which is a sacred state. They will perform a ritual washing and put on special clothing, which for men is two sheets of un-sewn white cloth, and for women is a modest dress of one colour (usually white), which covers the whole body except the face. While in the state of ihram, Muslims cannot:

- Use perfume or soap
- Marry or take part in a wedding
- Lie or gossip
- Carry a weapon
- Cut their hair or nails
- Have sex

What happens on Hajj?

Day	What takes place	Why this happens
1	<p>Muslims will start Hajj at the Masjid al-haram, the mosque that contains the ka'aba, and perform tawaf, circling the ka'aba seven times in an anticlockwise direction. They should try to touch the black stone, but if they can't, then they raise their hand to it. Muslims will drink water from the Zamzam well.</p> <p>Then they will walk between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times while praying to Allah.</p> <p>In the evening, they will travel to Mina, which is halfway between Mecca and Arafat. They spend the night there, praying and reading the Qur'an.</p>	<p>Allah told Ibrahim to do tawaf, so it shows a Muslim's devotion to Allah. They believe that Ibrahim built the ka'aba as Allah told him to. It was built as a place to worship Allah, so Muslims should visit it to worship Allah too.</p> <p>The Zamzam well is the spot where Ishmael struck his foot at the ground in order to get water.</p> <p>Ibrahim left Hagar and Ishmael without food and water. Hagar ran between the hills of Safa and Marwah looking for food and water. This also shows Muslims that they should trust Allah to give them what they need.</p>
2	<p>After morning prayers, Muslims go to the plain of Arafat next to the Mount of Mercy.</p> <p>While on the plain of Arafat, Muslims will stand from midday until sunset, praying to Allah, asking for Allah's mercy. During this they should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge their sins</li> <li>• End their sinful practice</li> <li>• Ask for Allah's help in this task</li> <li>• Make recompense for their sins</li> </ul> <p>After sunset, they head to Muzdalifah for the night, collecting 49 pebbles. Muslims will pray together in the evening, helping to develop further the feeling that they belong to the ummah.</p>	<p>This plain is important because it is believed to be the site where Adam and Hawwa (Eve) were reconciled with Allah.</p> <p>Standing on the plain of Arafat is the high point of the Hajj as it enables a Muslim to reflect on what is entailed in submitting to Allah. It also helps a Muslim to wipe out their sins in the book kept by the angels so that there are only good deeds for the Day of Judgement (enabling them to get into heaven in the afterlife).</p> <p>In the Shi'a tradition it is believed that Imam Sadiq said that Allah will forgive the sins of the whole village for a believing man who performs this act.</p>

<p><b>3-5</b></p>	<p>Muslims head to Mina whether they stay for three days. Here they stone the three very wide walls, called the Jamarat, to symbolise their rejection of temptation and the devil</p> <p>Also, on day three of Hajj, Muslims partake in Eid-ul-Adha, the festival of the sacrifice, and pay for a sheep or goat to be slaughtered (the main part of this meat is given to the poor and needy). Once the slaughtering had occurred, they can remove Ihram and men shave their head, while women cut off a lock of hair.</p> <p>After leaving Mina, they return to Makkah. Sunnis will perform Tawaf, while Shi'as perform Tawaf, Sa'y and Tawaf again.</p>	<p>The Qur'an says that Allah tested the faith of Ibrahim to see if he would still submit to Allah's will, even if it meant sacrificing his own son. As part of this test of faith, Ibrahim was said to have been tempted by the devil three different times. However, Ibrahim ignored this temptation and Muslims today remember this by throwing stones at the pillars in Mina, just as Ibrahim did. While doing this they think about how they should reject and ignore their own temptations, and never abandon their faith.</p> <p>Once Ibrahim was prepared to kill his son, Allah is believed to have stopped Ibrahim just as he raised his knife to perform the deed. Instead, Allah provided a small animal in place of Ishma'il, which is why Muslims sacrifice an animal as part of Eid-ul-Adha and is a reminder of Ibrahim's obedience.</p>
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### Benefits of Hajj

- It enables the person to develop God consciousness because it is a time solely set aside for the worship of and submission to Allah when all other distractions are temporarily ignored.
- It can lead to a feeling of inner peace as a person is more aware and in tune with the way Allah has designed them to live their life, which they may be more willing to follow.
- Like sawm, it helps develop self-discipline as a Muslim has to learn to put aside their own desires to focus on the will and demands of Allah, even if it means they must suffer physical and other discomfort.
- It reminds Muslims that they must not give in to the temptations that they will face in their life but that they must remain firm on the path Allah has for them.
- It enables Muslims to prepare for the day of judgement. This is because they can ask for forgiveness of their sins and think about how they can overcome evil.
- It fosters a sense of belonging to the ummah as all Muslims wear the same clothing and have to perform the same acts at the same time.

### Jihad:

The definition of jihad is struggle and it refers to the struggle that occurs when a Muslim roots out evil and establishes goodness in order to bring about Allah's justice. Jihad is obligatory for all Muslims and it is one of the Ten Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam.

Muslims believe Allah will help people who are involved in this struggle through the guidance in the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad. Greater jihad us said to result in peace for the individual (which is what Islam means) and ultimately heaven in the afterlife.



*Greater Jihad:* Many Muslims believe that this is the main meaning of jihad. It refers to the internal struggle within the believers as they try to ignore the persuasion of the devil and their own selfish desires in order to follow the will of Allah, Greater jihad should be undertaken on a daily basis and it involves:

- Speaking the truth
- Acting honourably
- Overcoming anger and hatred
- Working for social justice
- Using wealth for good means
- Seeking forgiveness
- Spreading the words of Islam

Lesser jihad: Islam is not a pacifist tradition and recognises that it is sometimes it is necessary to take up arms to defend 'God's cause' and this means to uphold justice and bring about peace. However, **strict rules** have evolved over time to show when this is permissible:

1. **Self-defence for example if the opposition has already started the fight.**
2. **As a last resort and all other ways of trying to solve the dispute have been tried and failed**
3. **To preserve Islam or enable Muslims to freely practice their faith**
4. **To protect the oppressed**

It is **not** jihad if:

- People are being forced to convert to Islam
- It is trying to conquer other nations
- It is an attempt to take territory for economic gain
- It is a means to settle disputes
- Peaceful ways to resolve a dispute/conflict have not been tried
- It involves fighting other Muslims
- It is declared by an individual or political leader who does not have authority

There are also rules surrounding the kinds of behaviour that must be adhered to during lesser jihad, which the Qur'an says Muslims should obey because they must not '*over the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits.*' **These rules are:**

1. Making every attempt to ensure that innocent people such as women, children the old and the sick are not killed (and this also includes not destroying places of refuge)
2. Not committing rape
3. Not using poisonous weapons
4. Not destroying resources needed to survive (such as food and water); plants and animals should also be protected)
5. Using minimum and only necessary force
6. Trying to minimise the damage done to property (especially religious buildings)
7. Treating captured enemies with justice
8. To cease fighting as soon as this is possible (and if the enemy asks for peace, this must be upheld).

Only a legitimate ruler or leader can declare lesser jihad. It is believed that once a legitimate call has been made, all able-bodied male Muslims should obey this call. If they die during lesser jihad, they will gain immediate entry into paradise. Once fighting is over, Muslims should ensure that a just and fair-minded reconciliation follows because Allah desires peace and justice.

**Origins and meanings of Eid-ul-Adha:** This is the feast of the sacrifice and is the second most popular Muslim festival. It can last for four days, beginning on day three of the Hajj. It remembers when Allah tested Ibrahim's faith by asking him to sacrifice his beloved son, Isma'il. The devil tried to persuade both of them to ignore Allah but they would not listen. Just as Ibrahim was about to sacrifice Isma'il, Allah called out to him and said: 'you have fulfilled the dream' and an animal was provided for the sacrifice instead.

Muslims who are not on Hajj will get a butcher to sacrifice an animal, usually sheep or goat, which is often divided into three: a third goes to the family, a third to relatives and a third to the poor and needy. Some Muslim families donate all the animals to the needy. On the first day of the festival, Muslims will put on new clothes and some will exchange cards, saying 'Eid Mubarak'. Special Eid prayers will be said and a special sermon will be given in the mosque.

**Origins and meanings of Eid-ul-Fitr:** This is the festival of the breaking of the fast and is also known as the lesser Eid. It lasts between one and three days beginning on the first day of the 10<sup>th</sup> immediately after the end of Ramadan. It is believed that Allah commanded Muhammad to start this festival when he was living in Madinah as a means to celebrate the end of Ramadan.

After the first prayer on the morning of this festival, a Muslim should shower, put on clean clothes and eat a small sweet breakfast. This is followed by a special communal prayer, immediately after sunrise in a public place. Sermons follow the prayers during which Muslims are encouraged to ask Allah for forgiveness and to forgive others who have wronged them. Greetings of 'Eid Mubarak' will be said along with the giving of gifts, eating a big feast and spending time with friends and family.

Before celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr Muslims give a donation to the poor, known as Zakah al-Fitr. The amount given differs, but it is normally the price of one meal for each member of the household so that the poor can also celebrate. This is significant because it helps to remind Muslims of the hardships they have endured during Ramadan and how for some this is a constant state of affairs. It also reminds Muslims that wealth and good fortune is a gift from Allah and they have a duty to share this with those in need. In most Muslim countries this festival is a public holiday.

### **Origins and meanings of Ashura:**

*Shi'a tradition* – For Shi'as Ashura remembers the martyrdom of the third Imam Husayn at the Battle of Karbala. This arose because Yazid did not trust Husayn after he refused to pledge his allegiance to him. They not only killed Husayn but also 72 members of his family and companions. Not only do Shi'a Muslims remember this, but it also symbolises the struggle of Muslims against injustice, tyranny and oppression. This helps Shi'as to endure their own suffering, while trying to emulate the virtues Husayn demonstrated. Ashura is marked through participating in activities that are focused on mourning and sorrow and

many wear black clothing. No celebrations or weddings will occur on this day. Activities to remember this day are:

- Organising/attending narrations of the Karbala tragedy. During these readings, discussions might take place about what lessons can be learned from the tragedy.
- Re-enactments of the tragedy.
- Watching or participating in a mourning procession.
- Although banned in most countries, a very small minority of Shi'a Muslims will flagellate themselves to show that they would be willing to be martyred if Huseyn asked them to fight.

Shi'as believe that through getting involved with these activities the Imams will intercede on their behalf with Allah.

Sunni tradition – While some Sunnis will remember the martyrdom of Huseyn, most Sunnis use Ashura to remember when Musa and the Hebrews were saved by Allah from the pharaoh, when he parted the sea. Sunnis may complete two optional fasts to show gratitude to Allah.

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## Revision Activities

One-mark questions:

- How long do Muslims go without food and water during the month of Ramadan?
  - The whole month
  - During daylight hours
  - During night time hours
  - One day
- How many 'Obligatory Acts' are there in Shi'a Islam?
  - 5
  - 7
  - 10
  - 12

Two-mark questions:

- Give two places pilgrims visit while on Hajj.
- Give two features of prayer in Islam.

Four-mark questions:

- Explain two ways in which Muslim beliefs about jihad might influence Muslims today
- Explain two ways in which a belief in the importance of prayer influences Muslims today.

Five-mark questions:

- Explain two Muslim teachings about giving alms (Zakah).
- Explain two Muslim teachings about the importance of festivals.

Twelve-mark questions:

- 'The Shahadah is the most important pillar of Islam.'
- 'It is important that Muslims celebrate their festivals in Great Britain today.'