

## Islam: Beliefs and Teachings

### CORE KNOWLEDGE:

**1. What is tawhid?**

Tawhid is the oneness and unity of God. Muslims repeat this idea daily in the Shahadah. No one else has God's qualities or attributes – his will is supreme, especially for Sunni Muslims.

**2. How did the split happen between Sunni and Shi'a Islam?**

After the Prophet Muhammad's death there was disagreement about his successor. Some Muslims wanted Abu Bakr (Sunni), others wanted his son-in-law, Ali to take over (Shi'a means "party of Ali").

**3. What are the 6 articles of faith in Sunni Islam?**

- Reality of the one true God (Tawhid)
- Existence of the angels of God
- Authority of the books of God (see Q13)
- Following the prophets of God
- Preparation for and belief in the Day of Judgment
- Supremacy of God's will, i.e. belief in predestination good or bad is from God alone

**4. What are the 5 roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam?**

- Tawhid (Oneness of God)
- Adalah (Justice)
- Prophethood
- Imamate (Leadership)
- The Day of Resurrection

**5. List 5 of the names (attributes) that Allah is given:**

Omnipotent, beneficent, merciful, fairness and justice.

**6. Who are Jibril and Mika'il and why are they important?**

Archangels: Jibril brought God's message to the prophets, particularly Muhammad. Mika'il is the archangel of mercy who rewards good deeds and provides nourishment to people and the earth.

**7. Why are angels important to Muslims?**

Angels bring the word of God to prophets or messengers of God. There are many different forms and lots of different roles they play, such as recording good and bad deeds.

**8. What is risalah?**

The belief that prophets are an important channel of communication between God and humans.

**9. Name 3 of the prophets of Islam. Why are they important?**

Adam, Ibrahim, Moses, Jesus. A prophet is someone who has been chosen by God to communicate his message to people. Muhammad is believed to be the last of all the prophets of Allah.

**10. Why is Ibrahim so important?**

Ibrahim (Abraham) was the Father of all nations due to his faithfulness to God which makes him an important role model. Muhammad was descended from him through his son Ishmael.

**11. Name 2 important things that Muhammad did?**

- Received the Qur'an from God through the angel Jibril.
- Proclaimed and taught the supremacy of God.
- Challenged the people of Makkah to give up cheating, drinking alcohol, gambling and idol worship.
- Conquered the city of Makkah in the name of Allah.
- Introduced Muslim law (Shariah).

**12. What is an imam in Shi'a Islam?**

Imam in Shi'a Islam is the title given to Ali and his successors. Some Shi'a believe there have been 12 imams in total.

**13. Name 3 of the holy books of Islam.**

Qur'an, The Torah (Tawrat), The Psalms (Zabur) and The Gospel (Injil)

## Islam: Beliefs and Teachings

**KEYWORDS:**

**Muslim:** one who has submitted to the will of God and has accepted Islam.

**Islam:** the name of the religion followed by Muslims; to surrender to the will of God; peace.

**Allah:** the Arabic word for God.

**Tawhid:** the Oneness and Unity of God.

**Supremacy:** supreme power or authority; a quality of God.

**Qur'an:** the holy book revealed to Muhammad by the angel Jibril; God's final revelation to humankind.

**Sunnah:** the teachings and deeds of Muhammad.

**Sunni:** Muslims who believe in the successorship to Muhammad of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.

**Shi'a (Shi'i):** Muslims who believe in the Imamate, the successorship of Ali.

**Immanent:** the idea that God is present in and involved with life on earth and in the universe; a quality of God.

**Transcendent:** the idea that God is beyond and outside life on earth and the universe; a quality of God.

**Omnipotent:** almighty, having unlimited power; a quality of God.

**Beneficent:** benevolent, all-loving, all-good; a quality of God.

**Merciful:** the quality of God that shows compassion or forgiveness to humans, even though he has the power to punish them.

**Fairness:** the idea that God treats people fairly and impartially without favour or discrimination.

**Justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam):** the idea that God is just and fair and judges human actions, rewarding the good and punishing the bad.

**Angels:** spiritual beings believed to act as messengers of God.

**Day of Judgement:** a time when the world will end and every soul will be judged by God, and either rewarded or punished.

**Jibril:** the Arabic name for Gabriel, the archangel who brought God's message to the prophets, particularly to Muhammad.

**Mika'il:** the Arabic name for Michael, the archangel of mercy who rewards good deeds and provides nourishment to people.

**Predestination:** the idea that God knows or determines everything that will happen in the universe.

**Akhirah:** everlasting life after death.

**Resurrection:** rising from the dead or returning to life.

**Heaven:** the state of eternal happiness in the presence of God; also called paradise.

**Hell:** the state of total separation from God.

**Prophet:** a person who proclaims the message of God.

**Risalah:** the belief that prophets are an important channel of communication between God and humans.

**Prophethood:** when God makes someone a prophet to communicate his message to people.

**Iblis (Satan):** a spiritual being, created from fire, who was thrown out of paradise for refusing to bow to Adam.

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

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

**Hajj:** the annual pilgrimage to Makkah that every Muslim should try to make at least once in their life.

**Caliph:** a person considered to be a political and religious successor to the prophet Muhammad, and the leader of the Sunni Muslim community.

**imam:** 1) a person who leads communal prayer (Sunni); 2) **(Imam)** in Shi'a Islam, the title given to Ali and his successors.

**Imamate:** the divine appointment of the Imams.

**Torah:** the five holy books revealed by God to Moses.

**Psalms:** a holy book revealed by God to David.

**Gospel:** a holy book revealed by God to Jesus.

**Scrolls of Abraham:** a holy book revealed by God to Abraham.

## Islam: Beliefs and Teachings

### QUR'AN REFERENCES:

#### The Oneness of God (Tawhid) and supremacy of God's will.

"Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him'." **Qur'an 112:1-4.** You could be asked a question about this ref so it is vital you learn it.

#### The nature of God. (Salah in Practices).

"The most excellent Names belong to God: use them to call on Him." **Qur'an 7:180**

#### The nature of God; predestination:

"He is with you wherever you are." **Qur'an 57:4**

#### Angels; life after death.

"Each person has angels before him and behind, watching over him by God's command." **Qur'an 2:215**

#### The nature of God; life after death.

"The record of their deeds will be laid open and you will see the guilty, dismayed at what they contain, saying 'Woe to us! What a record this is! It does not leave any deed, small or large, unaccounted for!' *They will find everything they ever did laid in front of them: your Lord will not be unjust to anyone.*" **Qur'an 9:60**

#### Life after death; (Salah and Zakah in Practices).

"Those who believe, do good deeds, keep up the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms will have their reward with their Lord." **Qur'an 2:277**

#### The nature of God; Adam:

"He first created man from clay...Then He moulded him; He breathed from his Spirit into him; He gave you hearing, sight and minds" **Qur'an 32:7-9**

#### Prophethood (Ibrahim):

"Who could be better in religion than those who direct themselves wholly to God, do good, and follow the religion of Abraham, who was true in faith? God took Abraham as a friend." **Qur'an 4:125**

#### Muhammad; prophethood; nature of God; predestination:

“Muhammad ... is God’s messenger, and the seal of the prophets; God knows everything.”  
**Qur’an 33:40**

The holy books of Islam:

“This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of God.” **Qur’an 2:2**

## Islam: practices.

### CORE KNOWLEDGE:

**1. What is the Shahadah?**

The declaration of faith and the first of the five pillars of Sunni Islam. “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah.”

**2. What are the ten duties called in Shi’a Islam?**

The Ten Obligatory Acts (also known as the Ancillaries of the Faith)

**3. What is the ritual washing that Muslims must perform before salah?**

Wudu.

**4. Describe two things that might help Muslims when they pray in a mosque.**

- Facing the mihrab in the qiblar wall.
- Carrying out wudu.
- Imam leads the prayers (Sunni).
- Men and women pray separately to avoid distractions.
- At Jummah prayer there is a sermon.

**5. What is Jummah prayer?**

Midday prayers on a Friday. All male Muslims are expected to attend a mosque for this prayer. Women can do so if they wish. The imam will deliver a sermon

**6. What is Zakah?**

Third pillar: Those Muslims who have enough money give 2.5% of their savings to the poor.

**7. What is khums?**

In addition to giving Zakah, Shi’a Muslims are required to give 20% of their savings. Half goes to religious leaders, and the other half to the poor or charity.

**8. What is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar called when Muslims fast in daylight hours and focus on charity and pleasing God?**

Ramadan (during this time Muslims focus on fasting (sawm)).

**9. Explain what the Night of Power is.**

The night during Ramadan that marks the beginning of God’s revelation of the Qur’an to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims stay awake praying and studying the Qur’an.

**10. When would a Muslim wear ihram?**

When they begin Hajj. It is worn again when they are buried.

**11. Give two reasons why hajj is important to Muslims.**

- Recalls the story of the Prophet Ibrahim and his wife and son (Ishmael).

- It can lead to a deep spiritual transformation making them a better Muslim.
- Teaches sincerity and humility.
- Shows self-discipline,
- Emphasises unity and equality.
- Can lead to the forgiveness of sins.

**12. What is the difference between greater and lesser Jihad?**

Greater Jihad is the personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teachings of their faith, eg following the five pillars and avoiding temptations. Lesser jihad is the outward struggle to defend Islam from threat. This is less common, hence “lesser” jihad.

**13. What is Id-ul-Fitr?**

Festival of the breaking of the Fast (Lesser Eid). It marks the end of the month of Ramadan. Celebrated with special prayers in the mosque, exchanging gifts, sharing special food and processions.

**14. What is Id-ul-Adha?**

Festival of sacrifice (Greater Eid). It is celebrated towards the end of Hajj and recalls the story where Ibrahim is asked by God to sacrifice his son as a test. Ibrahim demonstrates his faith by agreeing but God tells him to sacrifice a ram instead. On Hajj, many pilgrims sacrifice a sheep but this is not allowed in Britain. Donations are made to charity instead. There is a sermon in the mosque about sacrifice.

**15. In which festival do Shi’a Muslims remember the death of Husayn?**

The Day of Ashura (the Day of Remembrance). Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, was killed in the battle of Karbala. His martyrdom is seen by Shi’a Muslims as a symbol of the struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression.

## Islam: practices.

**KEYWORDS:**

**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:** the Muslim declaration of faith.

**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 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.

**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 a religious reason.

**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.

**Zakah:** purification of wealth by giving 2.5% of savings each year to the poor.

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

**Khums:** a 20% tax paid by Shi'a Muslims on their excess income.

**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 must try to make at least once in their life.

**Ka'aba:** the black, cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah; the holiest place in Islam.

**Hajji:** someone who has completed Hajj.

**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.

**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 death of Husayn on this day.

## Islam: practices.

### QUR'AN REFERENCES:

#### Salah

"So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer." **Qur'an 107:4-5**

"Your Lord says, 'Call on Me and I will answer you'." **Qur'an 40:60**

#### Sawm:

"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**

Zakah (predestination and the nature of God in Beliefs and teachings):

“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**

“Alms are meant only for the poor, 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**

Haji:

“Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it.”  
**Qur’an 3:97**

Jihad (nature of God in beliefs and teachings):

“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**