



# Islam key facts

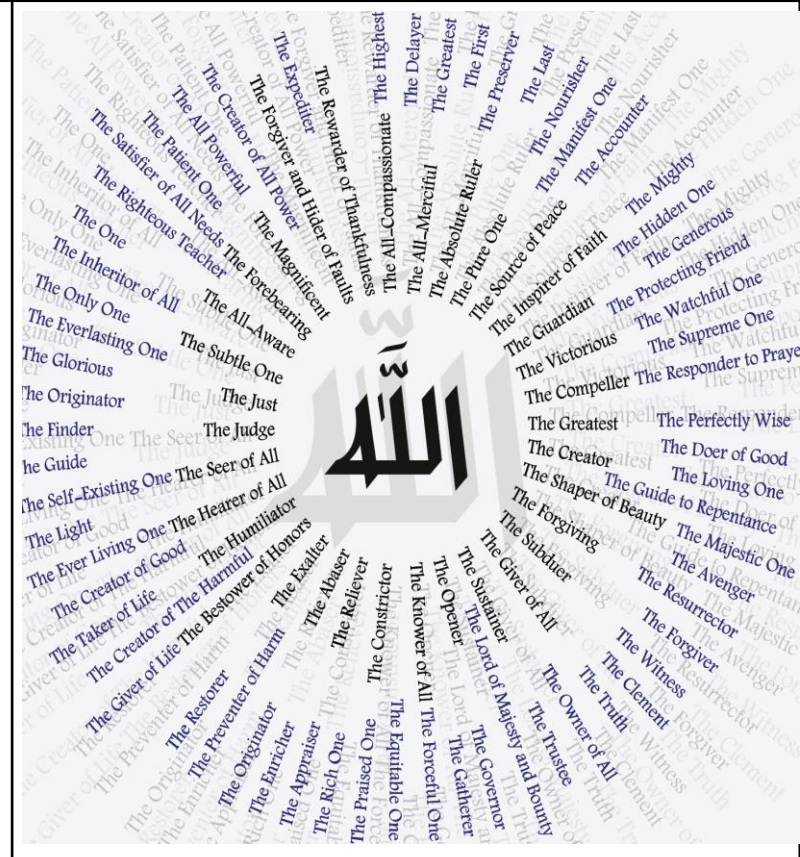
You are expected to know all of the information in this booklet.  
You will be assessed on this knowledge.

## Islam

- People who follow Islam are called **Muslims**.
- Islam is a **monotheistic** religion. Muslims believe that there is one God, **Allah**.
- Muslims submit to God and believe that they should live their whole life for God. The Arabic word 'Islam' means 'submission'.
- **Salam** means peace. Salam is the word used by Muslims to greet other Muslims.
- Muslims believe that Allah created the world out of nothing and that he has complete control over it and the people in it.
- Men and women are equal in Islam. In the eyes of God, Nobody is better than anyone else.
- There are two main traditions in Islam – **Sunni** and **Shi'a**.

## What do Muslims believe about God?

- Allah begot no-one, nor was He begotten. This means that Allah has never had offspring (children), nor was he born. This is mentioned in the Qur'an in chapter 112 called Surah Al-Ikhlās.
- Muslims believe that there is nothing greater than God and that no words can get close to explaining what he is like – he is beyond anything that humans can think or say.
- However, Muslims believe that God has revealed some of his characteristics in the Qur'an and other sayings of Muhammad. These characteristics are sometimes known as the **99 names of Allah**.
- Muslims believe that God is One and that there are no gods other than Him. This belief in the oneness of God is called **tawhid**.
- Muslims believe that God is the **creator** of everything.
- Muslims believe that God is **eternal** (everlasting).
- Muslims believe that God has power over everything – he is **omnipotent**.
- Muslims believe that God knows and sees everything – he is **omniscient**.
- Muslims believe that God is generous and compassionate and merciful and that He will always forgive people for their sins if they are truly sorry.
- Muslims believe that, at the end of the world, Allah will judge everyone with fairness and total justice. People who were good will go to heaven (**Jannah**) and people who were evil will go to hell (**Jahannam**).
- Muslims believe that only Allah is worthy of praise.



## Prophet Muhammad



- Islam started after the other Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Christianity) but Muslims often call Jews and Christians 'People of the Book'. This is because Muslims believe that God revealed himself to the earlier **prophets** mentioned in the Bible, such as Abraham, Moses and Jesus. However, Muslims believe that over time the message of these prophets was changed and so God sent one **final prophet** – Muhammad – to make His message clear. Muhammad is known as the **Seal of the Prophets**.
- Muslims believe that God revealed messages to Muhammad about what people should believe and how they should live their lives. They think that these **revelations** were perfect.
- Some Muslims add a short Arabic phrase whenever they hear or say Muhammad's name. This translates to 'peace be upon him' (**pbuh**). Non-Muslims do not do this.
- The first revelation came from the **Angel Jibril** (Gabriel) on the **Night of Power**. Jibril told Muhammad to recite words that were later recorded in the **Qur'an**.
- After the Night of Power, Muhammad began preaching his message in Makkah. He told the Makkans that it was wrong for them to worship many gods and told them that there was only one true God, Allah.
- The Muslims were persecuted in Makkah. Eventually, Muhammad and his followers had to leave. They travelled to Medinah. There were a series of battles between Makkah and Medinah. Muhammad finally conquered Makkah in 629 CE. He rode straight to the **Ka'aba** and circled it 7 times before destroying all the idols inside of it. He then dedicated the Ka'aba to Allah. It is known as the **House of God on earth**.

## Sources of authority

- For Muslims, the main sources of guidance are the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the Hadith.
- The **Sunnah** is the actions of the Prophet Muhammad. He was a role model for Muslims and Muslims try to live like he did.
- The **Hadith** is a collection of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

## The Qur'an



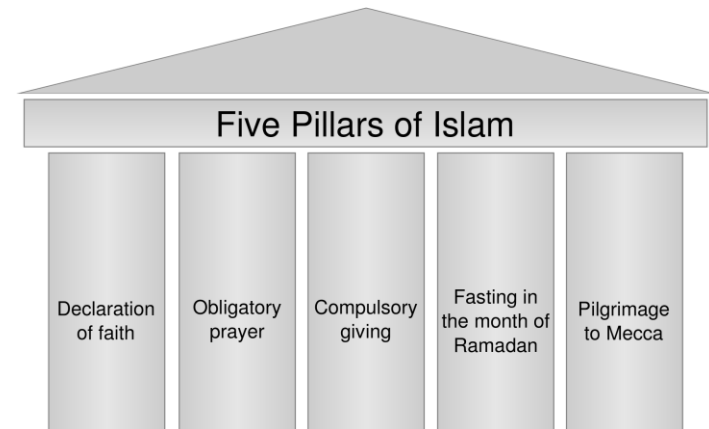
- The **Qur'an** is the most important holy book for Muslims. They believe that it is the perfect word of God, revealed to Muhammad.
- Some parts of the Qur'an are similar to stories found in Jewish and Christian holy books. However, Muslims believe these contain inaccuracies, so God gave the Qur'an to correct them.
- The chapters of the Qur'an are called **surahs**.
- To show respect to the Qur'an, Muslims will often wash before they touch it and they will keep it in a clean place with nothing on top of it or above it.

## Angels

- Muslims believe in angels. They believe that Allah created the angels from special light – this is mentioned in an Hadith.
- The angels are pure and can only do what Allah wants them to do.
- Muslims believe that the angels live in heaven but they sometimes get sent to earth to complete tasks for God, for example to protect people.
- Muslims believe that they have an angel on each shoulder, recording the good and bad things that they do (their good and bad deeds).

## The Five Pillars of Islam

- The Five Pillars are five acts of worship that all Muslims are expected to do. They are called pillars because they help to support a Muslim's faith. If one of the pillars collapses, the whole of the person's faith might fall with it.
- The Five Pillars are The Shahadah, Salah, Sawm, Zakah and Hajj.
- **The Shahadah** is the declaration of faith: 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger'. It is always recited in Arabic.
- The Shahadah is whispered into the ears of Muslim children when they are born and most Muslims will make it the last words they say before they die.
- **Salah** is prayer. Muslims pray at least 5 prayers every day.
- Muslims can pray at the Mosque in congregation (with other people) or at home with their family, or on their own.
- **Zakah** means giving 2.5% of your savings to charity. Zakah is paid on disposable income – what is left after the money needed to pay bills, rent etc.
- Muslims give zakah because they believe their wealth is given to them by God and they therefore have a responsibility to share some of it with those who are less fortunate than themselves.
- Muslims believe that giving zakah makes the rest of their money pure.
- **Sawm** means fasting during Ramadan. The fast lasts from dawn to sunset. There is usually a celebratory meal in the evening, when the fast is over. During the fast, Muslims must not eat or drink or have sex.
- The day after Ramadan ends is called **Id ul-Fitr**.
- **Hajj** is a pilgrimage to Makkah. Hajj takes place once a year and millions of people attend from all over the world.
- Every Muslim is expected to complete Hajj at least once in their lifetime.



## Prayer in the mosque

- Prayers usually happen five times a day at dawn, midday, mid-afternoon, dusk and evening.
- At every mosque, the five prayer times are announced by a **muezzin** reciting the call to prayer (**adhan**).
- Muslims can pray anywhere that is clean, but many choose to visit the mosque to pray.
- When entering a mosque, Muslims remove their shoes to show respect to God and keep the space clean.
- Before praying, Muslims must perform a ritual wash called **wudu**. They wash their hands, mouth, nostrils, face, arms, the top of their head and their feet in a specific order.
- The only time when attending a mosque is compulsory is for Friday noon prayer, and this only applies to men. Women can attend if they want to. The Friday noon prayer is called **Jumma**.
- Jumma can be performed outside a mosque as long as there is a person who can lead the prayer and at least 3 other people who are willing to join in and pray.
- When Muslims pray outside of a mosque they use a **prayer mat** to make sure they are still praying somewhere clean.