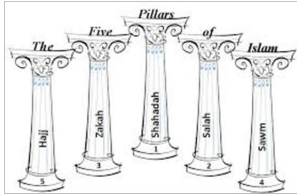


# GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES TOPIC 4 ISLAM PRACTICES

## KEY PRACTICES

### SUNNI

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.



The Five Pillars are:

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

### SHI'A



For Muslims who follow Shi'a Islam, there are ten duties called the Ten Obligatory Acts. Some are the same as the Five Pillars of Islam. They are:

- Salah** – prayer.
- Sawm** – fasting.
- Zakah** – charitable giving.
- 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.
- Hajj** – pilgrimage.
- 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.
- Amr-bil-Maruf** – encouraging people to do what is good
- Nahi Anil Munkar** – discouraging people from doing what is wrong.
- Tawallah** – to be loving towards the friends of God, including Muhammad and the Imams.
- Tabarra** – disassociating from the enemies of God.

1

## SHAHADHA

### Declaration of faith in one God

#### TEACHINGS

##### STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The basic belief of Islam is expressed in the Shahadah, 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.



#### CONTRASTS

*"There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah"*

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, should have been the true successor of Muhammad.

#### MOST IMPORTANT?

It is the first of the Five Pillars, the Shahadah provides the foundation for the other four, for example, when Muslim pray, they are praying to one God.

## SALAH

### Prayer – all Muslims should pray daily

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#### TEACHINGS

##### WUDU

It is important that Muslims are spiritually clean before they pray. This is achieved by ritual washing called wudu.

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

##### FACING MAKKAH

It is very important that while praying, Muslims face the holy city of Makkah. This means that all Muslims are physically and mentally focusing on one place associated with God, in the same way that all Muslims should focus every part of their lives on God.



##### PRAYING IN 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 pray 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 (for modesty); they are either separated by a partition or curtain or they pray in separate rooms.



##### PRAYING AT HOME

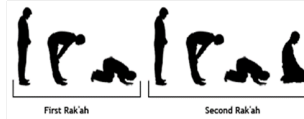
Muslims are allowed to pray at home. They must perform wudu before prayer, but they do not need a special room in their home to pray. Many Muslims will use a prayer mat, which they position so it is facing Makkah, in the same way as it would in a mosque.

## SALAH

### Prayer – all Muslims should pray daily

##### 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



First Rak'ah

Second Rak'ah

#### MOST IMPORTANT?

This is the only one of the pillars that requires Muslims to do something everyday.

Praying throughout the day shows their commitment to their religion as it is not always easy to arrange modern life around prayers; this shows their commitment to their faith.

##### PRAYER TIMES

Just before sunrise

Just after midday

Afternoon

Just after sunset

Night

Sunni Muslims observe the five times whereas Shi'a Muslims combine the midday and afternoon prayers and the two evening ones.

##### 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 duties to God.

Although Friday is not a day of rest, Muslims must leave their work or close their businesses in order to attend the Jummah prayer, and then return to work afterwards.

#### CONTRASTS

Sunni Muslims are required to pray at five set times during the day whereas Shi'a Muslims pray three times a day.

There is a requirement for men to attend the Mosque for the Jummah prayers on Fridays whereas women have the choice to pray at the Mosque or at home for this.

*"Your Lord says, 'Call on Me and I will answer you'."*

## Fasting during Ramadan

### TEACHINGS

#### MUHAMMAD RECEIVES THE QUR'AN

Muslims believe it was during Ramadan that the Qur'an started to be revealed to Muhammad.

Muslims read sections from the Qur'an daily 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 is a reminder that the poor feel that way all the time if they cannot afford to eat properly. Many Muslims choose to pay Zakah during Ramadan.

### MOST IMPORTANT?

Fasting during Ramadan unites the Muslim community as they experience being hungry together.

It also helps people to understand what it is like to be poor and not have enough food to eat.



*"So any one of you who is present that month should fast."*



### FASTING

Muslims fast during daylight hours for the whole month, going without food or drink. The evening meal is often shared with family and friends, then followed with extra prayers and readings from the Qur'an.

For Muslims, fasting is not just to do with food and drink; smoking and sex are also forbidden during daylight hours.

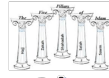
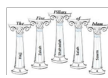
The whole focus during the month of Ramadan is on God. Muslims show they can sacrifice their physical needs as evidence of their submission to God.

Not all Muslims have to fast during Ramadan, although those excused from fasting are supposed to make up for it later if they can. People can be excused for health reasons – for example children, pregnant women and those who are ill do not have to fast.

### THE NIGHT OF POWER

The Night of Power marks the beginning of God's revelation to Muhammad.

Prayers said on the Night of Power give Muslims the benefits of worshipping for a thousand months. Because of this, Muslims try to keep awake throughout the night it is celebrated and pray and study the Qur'an.



## Almsgiving - 2.5% of savings given to charity

### TEACHINGS

#### WHAT IS IT?

Zakah means giving alms (giving money to the poor). For Muslims who have enough savings, it is compulsory to give 2.5% of those savings every year to help the poor.

By giving Zakah, Muslims are acknowledging that everything they own comes from God and belongs to him.

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

*"Alms are meant only for the poor"*



### SADAQAQ

In addition to giving Zakah, Muslims are encouraged to voluntarily give their money and time to charity at any point in the year. This is called Sadaqaq.



### MOST IMPORTANT?

Unlike all of the other pillars, zakah is the only one that provides practical help for the poor.

### BENEFITS OF ZAKAH

Zakah strengthens communities by making the rich support the poor.

Zakah links well with salah (prayer). Prayers should make Muslims feel concern for others, and Zakah puts this concern into action.

### CONTRASTS

Both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims believe in the importance of zakah and sadaqaq but Shi'a Muslims also believe it is important to pay khums.

Khums is an important part of Muslim practice in Shi'a Islam in addition to giving Zakah. It literally means 'fifth'. Today it refers to the excess income or earnings that a Shi'a Muslim makes, and is set at 20%.

Half of 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.

## HOW IS HAJJ PERFORMED?

### 1. 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.



### 2. Circling the Ka'aba

Hajj begins in Makkah at the Ka'aba. Pilgrims circle the Ka'aba in an anti-clockwise direction seven times. If possible, they touch the black stone built into the Ka'aba or raise their hand to acknowledge it. As Muslims circle the Ka'aba they recite the pilgrim's prayer: 'Here I am, Oh Lord, at your service. Praise and blessings to you.'



### 4. Standing at Arafat

At dawn on the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 is a reminder of what the Day of Judgement will be like. The afternoon is sometimes called 'the standing at Arafat' as some Muslims spend the afternoon standing to show commitment to their faith. Water and toilets are provided for this day. Islam teaches that God will forgive the sins of those who complete the standing at Arafat but only if they promise to make up for their sins and not commit any more.



### 5. Throwing pebbles at Mina

At the end of the day, Muslims walk to Muzdalifah, where they spend the night. On the way, they collect 49 pebbles to be used the next day. At Mina, there are three stone walls called Jamarat which represent the devil and temptation. Pilgrims throw the pebbles they have collected at the walls to show that 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 preserved and given to the poor. The Qur'an teaches that pilgrims should then cut their hair. Women usually cut off a small lock while men shave their heads.

### 3. Travelling to Arafat

The crowd then walks along a covered walkway linking the hills of Safa and Marwah. 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 a 13 mile walk or ride to Arafat, possibly in high temperatures. Halfway there they stop for the night at Mina, where they pray and read the Qur'an.

### 6. 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.<sup>27</sup>

## Pilgrimage to Makkah

### TEACHINGS

#### 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, as long as they are healthy and wealthy enough to do so.



### MOST IMPORTANT?

- It specifically says in the Qur'an that all Muslims should complete Hajj during their lifetime.
- It produces inner peace, which is shown in justice, honesty, respect, kindness, mercy and forgiveness.
- It shows self-discipline – not all are able to complete Hajj as it takes a huge toll on Muslims physically and mentally.
- It emphasises equality – wearing the same clothing makes sure there is no separation between the rich and the poor.



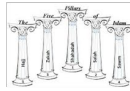
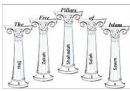
*"Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it."*

### ORIGINS OF HAJJ

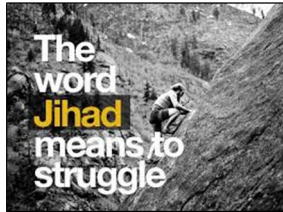
The prophet Ibrahim was told by God to take his wife Hajjira and son Ishmael to Arabia. He was then told to leave Hajjira and Ishmael on their own, within a few days, supplies ran out and Hajjira and Ishmael were suffering from hunger and dehydration.

Hajjira 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 Ibrahim returned he was told by God to build a shrine dedicated to him. This became the Ka'aba. Ibrahim 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. In 628CE, Muhammad journeyed from Madinah to Makkah with a large group of Muslims in what is seen now as the first pilgrimage in Islam. It is this story that is reflected in Hajj.



## The struggle against evil

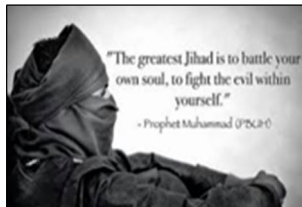
**War is acceptable only if it:**

- \* Has a justified cause
- \* Is a last resort
- \* Is to protect Allah's creation
- \* Aims to restore peace
- \* Is controlled by a religious leader
- \* Is not fought as an act of aggression
- \* Is not fought to gain territory

**A war cannot be described as jihad if:**

- \* The war is for political reasons
- \* The purpose of the war is to force people to convert to Islam
- \* The war puts women and children at risk
- \* The war involves destruction of homes or places of worship
- \* The war is likely to destroy trees, crops and animals.

GREATER JIHAD	LESSER JIHAD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater jihad is a personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teachings of Islam.</li> <li>• Greater jihad is a constant struggle to avoid evil and do good.</li> <li>• Muslims must also devote their lives to God by avoiding temptations such as drugs, alcohol, greed and jealousy; anything that takes them away from their obedience to God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesser jihad is seen as the outer struggle to defend Islam from threat.</li> <li>• There are several instances in the Qur'an that appear to justify war and violence if it considered necessary to protect Muslims from being attacked.</li> <li>• Muslims do not believe that lesser jihad can be used to justify terrorism that targets innocent civilians.</li> </ul>



**"Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors."**

## TEACHINGS

Id-ul-Fitr means the 'festival of breaking the fast'.

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.



## WAYS IN WHICH THE CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL ARE IMPORTANT

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.

Everyone wears their best clothes or new clothes for the occasion, and homes are decorated. Special foods are eaten and processions take place on the streets. Cards and presents are also exchanged.

Many Muslims **pay zakah** during this time as the fasting during Ramadan has helped them to appreciate what it is like to be poor and hungry.



## TEACHINGS

Id-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice or Greater Eid; it remembers and honours the prophet Abraham (Ibrahim), who was willing to sacrifice his son for Allah (although Allah stops him at the last minute as it was just a test to see if Abraham was loyal).

The festival is celebrated at the end of Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah)



## WAYS IN WHICH THE CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVAL ARE IMPORTANT

This festival forms part of Hajj, but is celebrated by Muslims all over the world. 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. 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.



This is major festival for Shi'a Muslims and remembers the death of Muhammad's grandson Husayn in battle. Husayn's death is widely seen by Shi'a Muslims as a symbol of the struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression.



During the day Shi'a Muslims take part in public expressions 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.

Some British Muslims believe that they should **shed blood** to remember Husayn but rather than beating and cutting themselves, they donate blood to the blood transfusion service instead.

For Sunni Muslims, the day of Ashura remembers Moses freeing the slaves from Egypt and it is marked as a day for praying for the forgiveness of sins.



Ashura is a day when many Sunni Muslims **fast voluntarily**. Many give to charity, show kindness to their family and to the poor and recite prayers.

It is not such an important or solemn occasion for Sunni Muslims as it is for Shi'a Muslims.

