

## Sunni Obligatory Acts

Sunni Muslims refer to their faith as 'the house of Islam' by which they mean their home. A house needs foundations and for Muslims, this is the Qur'an. The 'House of Islam' is supported by the 5 pillars. The Ten Obligatory Acts were developed by the Twelve Imams of Shi'a Islam.

	Act	Description
1	Salah	Praying 5 times a day
2	Sawm	Fasting during Ramadan
3	Hajj	Pilgrimage to Mecca
4	Zakah	Alms given
5	Khums	Tax set at 20% for causes decided by Shia leaders
6	Jihad	Striving in the way of Allah
7	Amr bil ma'roof	Encouraging good actions
8	Nahi anil munkar	Discouraging evil actions
9	Tawalla	Association with good people eg those who follow the ahl al-bayt
10	Tabarra	Dissociation with evil people

Shi'a Muslims believe that these Acts are important because:

- The Acts were established by Muhammad, Ali and the Imams
- Allah will punish those who do not fulfil the acts
- By observing the four practical pillars, a Muslim is following the example of the Prophet Muhammad, following his example if the way to lead a good Muslim life
- By fulfilling the acts a Shi'a Muslim feels confident that on the Day of Judgement, Allah will allow him or her into heaven

## Zakah & Khums – 4th pillar

**Zakah:** Muslims believe that wealth is a blessing from Allah and should be used responsibly. Both Shi'a and Sunni Muslims believe it is their duty to give part of their wealth to those in need. Zakah is a pillar of Islam and is compulsory for all Muslims and means they have to pay 2.5% of their wealth to charitable causes. Zakah is calculated based on a person's income, savings and jewellery. Zakah only applies to people who have more than a certain amount, known as Nisab. Muslims keep anything below the value of Nisab for themselves and pay Zakah on everything above the value of Nisab. The Nisab is set at approximately the value of 87 grams of gold, or 63 grams of silver. Muslims pay Zakah once a year.

In Islamic countries, Muslims pay Zakah to the government, whereas in non-Islamic countries, Muslims pay it to the mosque. In both cases the contributions are kept anonymous and people aren't told what their money is spent on.

**Khums:** Khums is calculated purely on a person's savings and makes up 20% of what someone has saved. In the past, Shi'a Muslims paid Khums to the Imam, the Muslim leader after Muhammad and starting with Ali, who Shi'a believe was chosen by Muhammad to lead after his death. Shi'a Muslims believe that the final Imam – the 12th – has not yet been sent by Allah and therefore they pay Khums to their leader, the Grand Ayatollah. Khums is only paid by Shi'a Muslims and in addition to Zakah once a year.

### Qur'an:

- Zakah and Khums allow Muslims to serve others and Muhammad said "the upper hand is better than the lower hand," meaning that it is more important to give than to receive.
- Muslims believe Zakah is a form of worship and the Qur'an states: "pay the prescribed alms so that you may be given mercy."
- All acts of charity will be rewarded by Allah: "Pay the prescribed alms and lend God a good loan. Whatever you store up you will find with God, better and with greater Reward."
- Failure to use wealth in the right way can lead to serious consequences: "If you use your wealth to bar people from the path of God, this will be a source of intense regret and you will be herded towards hell."

**Benefits of Zakah and Khums:** Zakah and Khums are seen as purifying to Muslims. Paying it means that the heart of the person is purified from selfishness and greed. Through them, wealth is also distributed to benefit the whole community and everyone in the Ummah (Muslims community). After paying Zakah or Khums, the rest of a Muslim's wealth is considered to be blessed by Allah.

One of the meanings of Islam is peace and it is important for Muslims to create a harmonious society that does not forget the less fortunate. Zakah and Khums improve the quality of life for the less fortunate, for example providing access to education.

Zakah can be used for relieving poverty, helping the homeless, helping those in debt, providing comfort for travellers and paying ransom for prisoners of war.

## Shahadah – 1st Pillar

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

Shahadah means 'to observe, witness, testify'. The first part shows the belief of Tawhid, that there is only one God. The second element shows the belief in Risalah. It confirms Muhammad's humanity and that he was a servant of Allah.

Faithful Muslims will repeat this statement thousands of times during their lifetime. In particular they will:

- Repeat it several times each day in between getting up in the morning and going to bed at night
- Whisper it into the ear of their new-born baby
- Teach it as a matter of urgency to each of their children
- Hope and pray that it will be the last words to cross their lips before they die
- When someone reverts to Islam

### The Shahadah is important because...

- It's a promise that they have made and so reminds Muslims of the commitment they have made to Islam.
- There are no ceremonies like baptism or confirmation in Islam. All a revert needs to do is recite the Shahadah in front of Muslim witnesses to be a Muslim
- It highlights the belief that Allah and Muhammad came before anything else in their lives.
- Shows that Islam rejects Christian beliefs about Jesus being the Son of God - Muhammad is nothing more than a prophet

### Shahadah in Shi'a Islam

Just like in Sunni Islam, Shi'a Muslims recite the Shahadah in Arabic to revert to Islam. However there are two important differences:

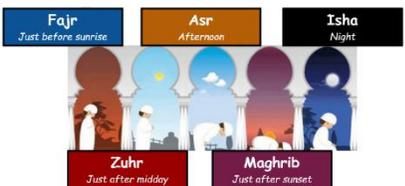
- Shi'a add "And I bear witness that Ali is a friend of Muhammad" at the end of the Shahadah to show their belief that Ali is the leader of the believers along with God and Muhammad.
- Shahadah is not one of the Ten Obligatory Acts for Shi'as, whereas it is the first of the five pillars for Sunnis.

## Salah – 2nd pillar

**History of Salah**  
Salah is the five times a day ritual prayer of Islam. Salah as it is known today began with Muhammad. According to the Muslim biographies, Muhammad began a system of morning and evening prayers. By 628CE the ritual prayer of salah was established at five times a day, with Muhammad indicating how to perform the ritual on the basis of revelations as recorded in the Qur'an.

'Set up regular prayers: for such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times (Surah 4:103)

**Prayer times:** To follow the second pillar of Islam (salah), Sunni Muslims are required to pray 5 times a day. The prayers take place at set times, and they are worked out from the times of sunrise to sunset. This means that they will change slightly each day.



**Wudu:** It is important that Muslims are spiritually clean before they pray. This is achieved by ritual washing. Mosques have two special rooms for washing, one for men and one for women.

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

**Direction:** All mosques have a mihrab, this is a semi-circular niche built into the qibla wall. This shows the exact direction or Makkah from the mosque. Muslims face this in order to pray.

**In the mosque:** Prayers are led by an Imam, who is positioned at the front of the congregation. Men and women pray in separate spaces. The voice of the imam is often broadcast in the women's prayer room at the same time, so that he can lead their prayers along with the men's.

**Salah 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 house to pray. Muslims will use a prayer mat, which they position so it is facing Makkah, in the same way as it would in a mosque. Muslims women can often find it useful to pray at home, especially if they have children to look after.

**Jummah prayer:** The midday prayer every Friday is considered to be special, and it is called the Jummah prayer. Once the prayer is complete, the imam will deliver a sermon (Kutba) that reminds Muslims of their obligations and duties to God. Although Friday is not a day of rest, Muslims must leave their work or close their business in order to attend Jummah prayer, and then return to work afterwards. All male Muslims are expected to attend a mosque for this prayer, and woman may do so if they wish.

**The Rakah:** The daily prayers are made up of a number of rakah, this is a set sequence of actions and recitations.

### Private prayer:

- Du'a is not part of a formal or set prayer and can be offered at any time, place and be any length.
- Recitation of the Qur'an. This is read aloud in a soft melodious manner to reach and touch the heart as a reminder of the words of Allah. The Qur'an can be read home, the mosque or anywhere else and Muslims will usually then reflect and meditate on its meaning.
- Subhah (prayer beads) to utter forms of praise and glorification of Allah, to seek protection or forgiveness. Usually after each prayer Muslims remain seated and the subhah as an aid to say subhanallah (Glory be to Allah), Al-humdu-lillah (Thanks be to Allah), and Allahu Akbar (God is great) 33 times each.

### Significance of salah

- 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 greater awareness of God, which in turn motivates them to do God's will.
- Prayer also unites Muslims worldwide because they all pray in 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 actions of bowing and prostrating remind them that God is greater and more important than they are.

Similarities between Christian and Muslim worship	Differences between Christian and Muslim worship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weekly worship includes a sermon</li> <li>- Worship involves the whole congregation saying a prayer</li> <li>- Involve praying for the needs of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In Islam men and women worship separately</li> <li>- Face Makkah for worship</li> <li>- Must perform wudu before worship.</li> </ul>

# Living the Muslim life

## Hajj – 5th pillar

A pilgrimage is a journey made for religious reasons. Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam is a pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia that Muslims should make once in their lifetime as long as they are healthy and wealthy enough to do so. Hajj takes place in the last month of the Islamic calendar. During this time around 3 million Muslims take part in pilgrimage. Hajj starts and ends at the Ka'aba, this is a cube shaped building built by the prophet Ibrahim as a shrine to God. Over the years the people of Makkah (who worshipped many gods), used the Kaaba to store their idols. However, the prophet Muhammad restored it to the worship of God alone.

### Pilgrims must be:

- Muslim. Non-Muslims are not allowed
- Of sound mind
- Physically fit and able to take the strains and rigour of the journey
- In a position to provide for any loved ones they have left behind
- Able to pay for Hajj without having to resort to dishonest ways of raising money

**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 those who live close to Makkah. Once someone has completed Hajj, they can be referred to as a Hajji.

- Hajj is important to Muslims because:
- Reminds Muslims of their faith
  - Spiritual transformation
  - Unity and equality
  - Inner peace
  - Forgiveness
  - Spiritual self-discipline
  - Teaches sincerity and humility
  - Become more aware of God



## Sawm – 3rd pillar

**Ramadan:** Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim Year, but that does not mean that it happens in September. Muslims traditionally follow a lunar calendar which is slightly shorter than the solar year, it means that Ramadan will be slightly earlier (by about ten days) in the Western calendar every year.

Ramadan begins when the new moon is sighted in the night sky. Fasting is compulsory during daylight hours and so Muslims will get up while it is still dark so they can eat. This first meal of the day is known as sahur and must be finished before the first prayer, which is called Fajr and it is said just before the sun comes up

**Fasting:** During daylight hours, Muslims are not allowed to eat, drink, smoke or have sex. It is a month when they try to live especially good lives, so they will often try to give up any bad habits and stop doing things they know are wrong. Ramadan is believed to be a holy month when the Devil is not allowed to tempt human beings. This means that Muslims have no excuse to act badly. Even if Muslims don't usually say the five daily prayers, they often make the effort to do so during Ramadan - Fajr (just before sunrise), Zuhr (after midday), Asr (mid afternoon), Maghrib (just after sunset) and Isha (when it is completely dark).

Just after sunset, the Maghrib prayer marks the end of the fast and Muslims can finally eat. This meal is known as Iftar. It is traditional to break the fast with water and dates because that is what Muhammad (pbu) used to do. Many people like to gather at home or at a mosque to share the meal together.

**Exceptions:** All adult Muslims have the duty to fast but they are excused if they are:

- physically or mentally ill
  - very elderly
  - travelling
  - a pregnant woman
  - a menstruating woman or a breast-feeding mother
- Of these, the elderly, the ill and the breast-feeding mothers should pay for a poor person to be fed for all the days they are not fasting. Travellers should make up the days they have missed at a later date. Some children, fast for a shorter length of time to help train themselves.

**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.

**Night of Power:** Ramadan is also important because it is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad on the Night of Power or Lailat ul-Qadr in Arabic. It is not known exactly on which day this happened, but it is believed to have been during the last ten days of the month and on one of the odd-numbered dates, so it is celebrated on the 27th. Some Muslims will spend all ten days living in seclusion or staying up all night to read the Qur'an to remember Muhammad.

The Nights importance is explained in the Qur'an:

"What will explain to you what the 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.

### Beliefs about the Night of Power:

- Prayers on that night are the best prayers
- Prayer in the mosque on the Night of Power can bring about forgiveness of all a person's sins
- There is a tradition that reciting Surahs 29 & 30 during the 23rd night of Ramadan will ensure admission into paradise
- Praying on this night brings religious insight
- Meditating and retreating to the mosque for the last 10 days of Ramadan can bring a special closeness to and relationship with Allah

Stage of Ihram	Before Hajj begins, pilgrims 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.
Tawaf (circling the Ka'bah)	The Ka'bah is an ancient stone building set in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. Muslims will perform the 'Tawaf' which means walking around the Ka'bah 7 times in an anti-clockwise direction. Preferably running the first three and walking the last four. As they circle they pray 'Here I am Oh Lord, at your service. Praise & blessings to you'. They start their circuit at the corner where the black stone is. If possible they should try to kiss or touch this stone. Although the stone is seen as sacred, the origin of it are unclear. Some believe it is a meteorite; others believe it was given to Adam by God to erase his sin & allow him a path to heaven; others believe it was brought from a nearby mountain by the angel Jibril, or that it came from paradise. The circling symbolises unity - worshipping One God together at that moment.
Safa and Marwa	The Hajj moves on to walk seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa. During each quarter-mile walk Muslims recite prayers. The walk signifies Hagar's search for water and perseverance before God. Hagar and her son Ishmael were left in the desert by her husband Zarahab at God's command. Hagar went in search of water, frantically running in between the Mountains 7 times. When she returned Ismael had kicked his heels into the sand and a spring had appeared - provided by God in reward for her persistence. Pilgrims can still visit this spring, at the Zamzam well. There are steps leading down to it, in a chamber under the courtyard of the Sacred Mosque. Many pilgrims drink it, wash with it, and take some of the water home with them.
Arafat & Muzdalifah	The Hajj moves to the Mount of Mercy on the Plain of Arafat where Muhammad preached his last sermon. This is the heart and soul of the Hajj. Pilgrims will stand from midday to sunset reaching out to Allah, feeling His presence and forgiveness. Muslims pray for others when they are at Arafat because they believe that their prayers are more effective there since they are submitting to Allah & are especially close to him. After sunset the Hajj then moves on to Muzdalifah for the evening & night prayers. A rough pebbled plain where pilgrims will rest, eat and collect 49 stones for the following day.
Mina	Pilgrims set out to Mina where they will throw seven stones at each of the three pillars there which represent the devil & temptation. After being cleansed by God at Arafat they want to hit these symbolic pillars of wrong with right actions. The stoning of the devil is followed by the festival of Id ul-Adha (the festival of sacrifice). A sacrifice of a goat or a sheep is made, in memory of when Ibrahim was going to sacrifice his son Ishmael for his love of God.
Return to Makkah	Pilgrims set out to Mecca where they will throw seven stones at each of the three pillars there which represent the devil & temptation. After being cleansed by God at Arafat they want to hit these symbolic pillars of wrong with right actions. The stoning of the devil is followed by the festival of Id ul-Adha (the festival of sacrifice). A sacrifice of a goat or a sheep is made, in memory of when Ibrahim was going to sacrifice his son Ishmael for his love of God.

## Jihad

- to struggle or to strive

The prophet Muhammad said that there are two types of Jihad. The concept of Jihad comes from the Qur'an and it is mentioned several times.

**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.

**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.

### Greater Jihad means:

- Struggle to perform all of the five pillars properly
- Struggle to follow the Shari'ah exactly
- Struggle to both discover and follow the perfect example of the Prophet Muhammad
- The struggle to be 'pleasing to Allah' so that one will be allowed into paradise.

### Lesser Jihad means:

Having removed the evil from themselves, Muslims can then begin the work of removing evil from society. They should target injustices such as:

- Underdevelopment
- Unfair trading
- Lack of education
- Lack of welfare state
- The gap between rich and poor

Muslims aim to produce a perfect Muslim society before they are in a position to target non-Muslim societies and bring them into Islam.

### Different ideas about jihad:

Some groups like IS and Boko Haram, believe that they have a duty to fight non-Muslims so that Islam can dominate the world. They also kidnap and torture people, endorse suicide bombings and teach that anyone who dies as a martyr will go straight to paradise.



The majority of Muslims believe that this is a wrong interpretation of jihad and that nothing can ever justify terrorism. They would emphasise the importance of peace - which is one of the meanings of the term 'Islam' - and say that lesser jihad does not permit terrorism.

"Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main in God's cause with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of God. These are the people who will achieve salvation" (Surah 9:20)

## Celebrations and commemorations

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Id-ul-Adha: festival commemorating the devotion of Ibrahim and Isma'il.</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Id-ul-Fitr: festival to celebrate the end of Ramadan.</u></b></p>
<p>Id-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrifice and commemorates the story of Ibrahim and Isma'il. Ibrahim had a dream in which Allah commanded him to sacrifice his son Isma'il. When Ibrahim told Isma'il about his dream, he agreed to give his life for Allah. When Ibrahim was ready to kill Isma'il, Allah intervened and praised them both for their faith. Id-ul-Adha reminds Muslims that they should give Allah their full devotion and the festival was started by Prophet Muhammad. It is celebrated ten weeks after Id-ul-Fitr and the end of Hajj. Muslims sacrifice sheep and cattle in memory of Ibrahim and Isma'il and share the meat with the poor or give to charity. Muslims wear new clothes on Id-ul-Adha and families go to the mosque to offer a special prayer and listen to a sermon. Muslims from all backgrounds hug each other and say "Id Mubarak" which means 'have a blessed Id'. This symbolises that all Muslims are one big community.</p>	<p>Id-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan and Muslims express their gratitude to Allah for helping them through a month of fasting and bringing blessings to all Muslims. Prophet Muhammad started off the tradition of celebrating Id-ul-Fitr and Muslims give gifts to family and friends and invite each other to eat a special meal. Muslims wear new clothes and families go to the mosque to offer a special prayer and listen to a sermon. Muslims from all backgrounds hug each other and say "Id Mubarak" which means 'have a blessed Id'. This symbolises that all Muslims are one big community. Each family is expected to give money to charity to show that every member of Muslim society is protected.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; background-color: #fff9c4;"> <p>"Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen as your religion Islam." Surah 5:3</p> </div> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Id-ul-Ghadeer: Shi'a festival commemorating the Prophet Muhammad's choice of Ali as a leader of Muslims.</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Ashura: Shia commemoration of Imam Hussain's martyrdom.</u></b></p>
<p>Id-ul-Ghadeer is a commemoration of the time Muhammad officially declared that Ali was going to be his successor and is therefore only celebrated by Shi'a Muslims, as Sunni Muslims don't believe this was Muhammad's intention. Ghadeer is a pond, where Shi'a Muslims believe Muhammad's decision to appoint Ali as the next leader was made. Id-ul-Ghadeer takes place on the 18th day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah and Shi'a Muslims fast on this day. They also go to the mosque and listen to poetry being read out. Shi'a Muslims refer to this festival as "the greatest Id."</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; background-color: #fff9c4;"> <p>"Whomsoever's master I am, Ali is also his master. O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him". (Muhammad)</p> </div> 	<p>Ashura takes place on the 10th day of the month of Muharram. It commemorates the anniversary of the martyrdom (being killed for your beliefs) of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Imam Hussain, who was murdered in Karbala in Iraq. Hussain had refused to accept the leadership of Yazid because he was an oppressive ruler who went against Muhammad's teachings. Yazid forced Hussain, his relatives and companions out of the city of Madinah and sent an army after them into the desert. Hussain was eventually trapped and starved and Yazid's army murdered them all. Shia Muslims commemorate this event by going to the mosque every night, from the 1st day of the month of Muharram until the 10th. Shi'a Muslims wear black to symbolise mourning until 40 days after Ashura, when mourning officially ends. Every year, millions of Muslims visit Karbala to see the shrine of Hussain and many Muslims give blood in memory of Hussain's death.</p>

<u>Topics</u>	<u>I've got it!</u>	<u>Bits and bobs!</u>	<u>Oh dear!</u>	<u>Questions I still have</u>
The Ten Obligatory Acts				
Shahadah				
Salah				
Sawm				
Zakah and Khums				
Hajj				
Jihad				
Celebrations and commemorations				

### Possible exam questions:

- Outline 3 of the Ten Obligatory Acts (3 marks)
  - Outline 3 rules for sawm during Ramadan (3 marks)
  - Outline 3 parts of hajj (3 marks)
- Explain two reasons why salah is important to Muslims (4 marks)
  - Describe the similarities between Muslim worship and that of another religion (4 marks)
  - Explain two reasons why the Night of Power is important to Muslims (4 marks)
- Explain two reasons why Zakah is important to Muslims. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority (5 marks)
  - Explain two reasons why hajj is important to Muslims. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority (5 marks)
  - Explain two reasons why there are different understandings of jihad among Muslims. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority (5 marks)
- 'Religious celebrations cause nothing but trouble'. Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your answer you should:  
Refer to Muslim points of view  
Reach a justified conclusion
  - 'The shahadah is the most important of the Five Pillars' Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your answer you should:  
Refer to Muslim points of view  
Refer to non-religious points of view and Situation Ethics  
Reach a justified conclusion
  - 'One night in Ramadan is no more important than another'. Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. In your answer you should:  
Refer to Muslim points of view  
Refer to non-religious points of view  
Reach a justified conclusion