

Islam beliefs and teachings

Topics covered:

- 1. The Oneness of God (Tawhid)
- 2. Nature of Allah
- 3. Angels

4. Life after death

- 5. Prophethood
- 6. Predestination
- 7. Muhammad

8. Holy books

- 9. Sunni and Shi'a
- 10. Imamate

Remember: if a question is asking you for the influence of something on Muslims, it is asking you for what it makes them think, say, feel or do!

7. Muhammad

- ✓ Muhammad received the final revelation of Islam from God.
- ✓ Known as the last and greatest prophet.
- ✓ Religious from an early age and would go into the mountains to a cave to pray and meditate.
- ✓ In 610CE on Mount Hira received his first revelation from God through the angel Jibril.
- ✓ For more than 20 years received further revelations, which were combined together to make the Qur'an.
- ✓ 3 years after the first revelation began preaching the words he received and continued to do it for the rest of his life.
- ✓ He challenged the people of Makkah to give up their sinful ways (cheating, drinking, gambling and idol worshipping).
- ✓ Was persecuted by the leaders of Makkah and so fled from the city in 622CE. This is known as the **Hijrah (departure)** and marks the beginning of the **Ummah (worldwide community)**.
- ✓ Before the departure Muhammad was taken on an amazing experience where Jibril took him to Jerusalem. Muhammad was carried on a horse like creature with wings. From Jerusalem he ascended to heaven and saw signs of Gods and spoke to prophets such as Isa. This is where he was told to pray 5 times a day. This journey is known as the **Night Journey**.

'Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men; he is God's Messenger and the seal of prophets: God knows everything'. Qur'an 33:40



9. Sunni and Shi'a Islam

Sunni:

- ✓ When Muhammad died the majority of Muslims thought that **only** the Qur'an and Sunnah had the authority to guide the beliefs and behaviour of Muslims.
- ✓ They elected Caliphs to act on behalf of God and Muhammad. They do not make the laws; they just enforce them.
- ✓ These Muslims became known as Sunni (meaning followers of the Sunnah).

Shi'a:

- ✓ Another group believed that Muhammad named his cousin Ali as his successor.
- ✓ Ali and his supporters thought that the true leader had to be a descendent of Muhammad and chosen by God.
- ✓ Ali's claims to be leader were ignored by many Muslims.
- ✓ Over time a split developed between those who followed Ali (the Shi'as) and the Sunnis.
- ✓ Shi'as have their own interpretations of the Law and only accept sayings of Muhammad which have been passed down through Ali or his followers.

Six Articles of Faith in Sunni Islam:

1. There is only one God Allah.
2. Angels communicate the message of God to humans.
3. The Qur'an is the most important writing and the highest authority in Islam.
4. Muhammad is the most important prophet of God.
5. The Day of Judgement is when all humanity will be judged by God and sent to paradise or hell.
6. The supremacy of God's will means that God already knows but also makes happen everything that occurs in the world and in human lives.

The Five Roots of 'Usul ad-Din' in Shi'a Islam:

1. Tawhid means that God is one.
2. Prophethood means accepting that Muhammad is God's last prophet.
3. God is just and wise and cannot do wrong. He holds humans accountable for their actions.
4. The Imamate means accepting that twelve Imams are the leader of Islam and guard the truth of the religion without error.
5. After death you will be resurrected and judged by God.

10. The Imamate

- ✓ When Muhammad died it wasn't clear who should succeed him.
- ✓ Muslims split into two groups **Sunni and Shi'a**.
- ✓ **Sunni's** elected Abu Bakr as their first Caliph (leader, teacher).
- ✓ **Shi'a** believe that Muhammad named his cousin Ali as his successor so he became the first Imam.
- ✓ For Shi'as it was important that Ali took control because they believe that Muhammad appointed him under divine instruction and leadership should follow in the family line.
- ✓ When Ali died his son became the Imam. Each Imam that followed was the son of the previous Imam.
- ✓ The **Twelver Branch of Shi'a Islam** believe that there have been twelve Imams in total. The last one they believe has been kept alive by God and is hidden somewhere on earth who will return to bring peace, justice and equality.
- ✓ The **Twelver's** believe that the Imams not only rule but are able to interpret the Qur'an and Shari'ah Law without fault.
- ✓ They believe that the receiving of God's law was through Muhammad but guiding people comes through the Imams.
- ✓ **The Imamate** is the name given to the appointment of the Imams and is important because people need divine guidance to know how to live correctly.

8. Holy Books

The Quran:

- ✓ The Qur'an is the direct word of God, which was revealed to Muhammad over a period of around 22 years.
- ✓ Contains the foundation of every believer's faith.
- ✓ Is most sacred of all the holy books.
- ✓ Is infallible (without error and non-changing)
- ✓ Contains a mixture of historical accounts and advice on how to follow God.
- ✓ There are 114 surahs (chapters) in total.
- ✓ Those who can recite the Qur'an from memory are given the title 'Hafiz'.

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

Other holy books have been revealed by God. Some Muslims believe these books have been lost, whilst others believe they can be found in the Bible, although the original text has been corrupted so does not have the same authority as the Qur'an.

The Torah (Tawrat):

- ✓ Given to Moses (Musa).
- ✓ Mentioned 18 times in the Qur'an
- ✓ Essentially the first five books of the Bible but additions and subtractions have been made.

The Psalms (Zabur):

- ✓ Revealed to David
- ✓ Mentioned 3 times in the Qur'an
- ✓ Similar to the Psalms in the Bible.

The Gospel (Injil):

- ✓ Revealed to Jesus (Isa).
- ✓ Mentioned 12 times in the Qur'an.
- ✓ It is thought to have been lost but some of its message is still found in the Bible.

Scrolls of Ibrahim:

- ✓ One of the earliest scriptures of Islam, revealed to Ibrahim.
- ✓ Referred to in the Qur'an
- ✓ No longer exist as they have been lost.

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1. The Oneness of God

- ✓ One of the most important beliefs for Muslims is Tawhid (the belief that there is only one God).
- ✓ This belief is repeated daily in the Shahadah (one of the five pillars).
- ✓ A Muslim's most important duty is to declare faith in one God.
- ✓ God is unique. No one can picture God which is why there isn't any pictures or statues of Him in Islam.
- ✓ God is the only creator and controller of everything.
- ✓ Muslims believe they should accept whatever happens as the will of God (supremacy of God's will)

'Say, He is God the One, God the eternal'. Quran 112:1-4

'Misfortunes can only happen with God's permission'. Quran 64:11

5. Prophethood

- ✓ God has chosen people to bring the message of Islam to the people. These chosen people are called prophets.
- ✓ They are important because they provide communication between God and humans.
- ✓ In order for humans to live how God wants it is necessary for instructions to be delivered through prophets
- ✓ Around 124,000 prophets of which 25 are named in the Qur'an
- ✓ They are important role models as they were good people who lived according to God's will.

'Every community is sent a messenger'. Quran 10:47

Adam:

- ✓ First man on earth and first prophet of Islam
- ✓ Father of the human race so treated with great respect
- ✓ God created Hawwa (Eve) to stop Adam being lonely
- ✓ They were told not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden but they did and so sin entered the world.
- ✓ Adam is important as God gave him understanding which he passed on through his descendants. God revealed to him the foods they can eat, how to repent for wrong doing and how to bury the dead.

'He taught Adam the names [of things]'. Quran 2:31

Ibrahim:

- ✓ Fulfilled all the tests and commands God gave him.
- ✓ Was promised to be the father of all nations.
- ✓ Demanded people to stop idol worship. Was supposed to be burnt alive but survived (miracle) so people began to follow God.
- ✓ Re-built the Ka'aba after it was destroyed.
- ✓ Important as he stopped idol worship, gave the message of one God and rebuilt the Ka'aba

'God took Abraham as a friend'. Qur'an 4:125

4. Life after death

- ✓ For Muslims death isn't the end but the start of a new stage of life called Akhirah.
- ✓ After death you lie in the grave waiting for the day of Judgment this is called Barzakh.
- ✓ Angels are sent to question them about their life. If they are good and honest they will be rewarded if they are bad an untruthful they will be punished.

The Day of Judgement

- ✓ When God's purpose for the world has been fulfilled He will destroy it.
- ✓ The world will be transformed into a new world.
- ✓ Everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected and judged by God.
- ✓ If people are given the book of deeds in their right hands they will go to heaven, if it is in their left they will go to hell.

Heaven and Hell

Heaven:

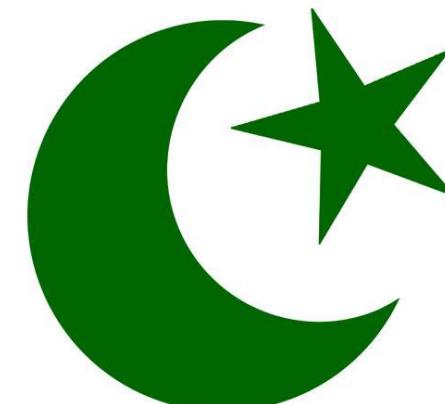
- ✓ Described as the gardens of happiness
- ✓ It is a reward for faith and good deeds

'A reward for what they used to do'. Quran 56:24

Hell:

- ✓ Described as a place of fire and great torment
- ✓ Punishment for those who reject God and do evil

'They will dwell amid scorching wind and scalding water in the shadow of black smoke, neither cool nor refreshing'. Quran 56:42-44



2. Nature of Allah

Muslims believe God is:

- ✓ Immanent (present in earth and involved with humanity)
- ✓ Transcendent (outside life and beyond understanding)
- ✓ Omnipotent (all-powerful)
- ✓ Beneficent (all-loving and all-good)
- ✓ Merciful (compassionate and forgiving)
- ✓ Just (fair and judges humans actions)

'There is no God but Him, the Creator of all things'. Qur'an 6:102

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

3. Angels

Muslims believe angels bring the words of God to the prophets. They have no free will and are made from elements of light. Their roles are:

- ✓ Messengers
- ✓ Guardians of people
- ✓ Recording actions of humans
- ✓ An angel of death
- ✓ Purify hearts
- ✓ Bring natural disasters

'Each person has angels before him and behind'. Qur'an 13:11

Jibril:

- ✓ Archangel
- ✓ Relayed the Qur'an to Muhammad
- ✓ Guided Muhammad through his entire life

Mika'il:

- ✓ Archangel
- ✓ Angel of Mercy
- ✓ Responsible for sending rain, thunder and lightning

6. Predestination

Sunni:

- ✓ Believe God has already determined everything that will happen in the universe.
- ✓ Linked to Sunni belief of the supremacy of God's will.
- ✓ Doesn't mean that people have no choice about how they behave.

'Only what God has decreed will happen to us'. Qur'an 9:51

Shi'a:

- ✓ Believe that God knows everything that is going to happen, but does not decide what is going to happen.
- ✓ Shi'a Muslims do not see conflict between supremacy of God's will and human freedom to act freely and make choices as God knows what you will choose but does not choose for you.

'God does not change the condition of a people [for the worse] unless they change what is in themselves'. Qur'an 13:11