

Islam

Topic Top Ten	
Allah	God
Akhlaq	Ethics and moral character of a person
Five Pillars	The foundations which hold up the faith
Ibadah	Worship and obedience, devotion.
Iman	Faith
Islamophobia	Fear or hatred of all Muslims
Jihad	Struggle. Greater jihad is the struggle to be a good person. Lesser jihad is the struggle to make the outside world like Allah would want.
Muhammad	A prophet chosen by Allah to receive messages (revelations) to take back to humanity.
Shi'a / Sunni	Denominations(groups) of Islam. Share basic beliefs but do some things differently.
Ummah	Worldwide community of Muslims

How did Islam begin?

In the 7th Century, in a city called **Makkah**, **Allah** chose a man called **Muhammad** to be his final **prophet**. **Muhammad** was a good and thoughtful man.

Allah sent the **angel Jibril** to deliver his message to **Muhammad**, who had to remember it all off by heart as he could not read or write. The angel visited **Muhammad** many times over 23 years and **Muhammad** told his followers Allah's messages.

Many people in **Makkah** disagreed with **Muhammad** because Allah's messages spoke against some of the ways they were living, and he and his followers had to leave the city and move to **Madinah**, a nearby town. Eventually, they returned but had to fight many battles with those who opposed the new religion.

Muhammad was the first leader of **Islam** and **Allah's** messages were written down and became the Muslim holy book, **the Qur'an**, which Muslims believe is the exact word of God and can never be changed.



What do Muslims believe about Allah?



- Allah is the Muslim name for God. It literally means 'The One'.
- Muslims believe there is only one God who should be worshipped and this is Allah.
- They believe he created the world and everything in it.
- They believe Allah is **infinite** (has no beginning or end).
- This belief in the oneness or uniqueness of God is called **Tawhid**.
- Muslims believe it is wrong to ever draw pictures of Allah as we do not know what he is like and if we represent him in pictures, we are linking him to other things when he is unique. They also believe it is wrong to worship images and people might start to do this if there are pictures of Allah.

Why do Muslims respect Muhammad?

- He was a good man who did the right thing.
- Allah chose him to be his Prophet, or Messenger and he remembered the message and passed it on.
- He was the first leader of Muslims and fought for the religion.
- He said 'The only reason why I am sent is to perfect good **Akhlaq**'

How do they show this respect?

- When Muslims say or write Muhammad's name, they add 'peace be upon him' to show their great respect for him.
- They pay attention to his advice and try to follow his example so they can be good Muslims and develop their **Ibadah** (devotion to Allah) and **Akhlaq** (good character).
- They do not allow pictures of Muhammad as they might be inaccurate or disrespectful. They also believe it is wrong to worship images and people might start to do this if there are pictures of Muhammad. Worshipping Muhammad would be wrong because he is just a man and only Allah should be worshipped.

The **Five Pillars of Islam** are duties Muslims must perform.



The Five Pillars support a Muslim's **Iman** (faith) by helping them to stay connected to Allah and each other. They remind Muslims of the important beliefs shared by the **Ummah** (worldwide community of Muslims).

They encourage Muslims in their **Ibadah** (worship and devotion) by focusing their lives on thinking about and obeying Allah.

They help Muslims to develop **Akhlaq** (good character and morals) by making sure they live good Muslim lives and think of others.

There are 1.9 billion Muslims around the world, from all races and ethnic backgrounds. They are all part of the **Ummah**, but don't all show their beliefs in the same way. Some Muslims are stricter about their religious lives than others and there are different groups within Islam who practise their religion in different ways.



The two main groups are **Sunni** and **Shi'a**. They disagreed about the leadership of Islam after Muhammad died and have developed different ways of expressing their religion. Sunni is the bigger group, but there are members of both groups living in Britain today.

Both groups follow the teachings of the Qur'an and Muhammad, perform the Five Pillars and worship in a Mosque.

But they pray at different times and in different ways, say the Shahada differently and do not agree about whether they should also follow the teachings of Muhammad's close companions.

Jihad means struggle. It is a word which is often misunderstood when it is used in the media. Muslims think of jihad in two ways:

Greater jihad is the inner struggle with yourself to be a good Muslim. It can be hard to always do the right thing, but it is important to develop your **Ibadah** (devotion to Allah) and **Akhlaq** (good character). For example, fasting during Ramadan is very difficult, but Muslims must struggle to do it as it is a duty to Allah and develops self-control.

Lesser jihad is the struggle to make the world a better place so that it pleases Allah. This means standing up for what is right. Violence is only allowed if all other means have been tried first. There are strict rules, for example that forbid attacking women and children, crops and animals and places of worship. Some people confuse terrorism with jihad, but terrorism breaks the rules and would never be allowed in Islam.

Art in Islam

Reminder: Muslims believe it is wrong to represent Allah or Muhammad in pictures. Read over the previous sections to remind yourself why.

Muslims like to decorate the mosque (place of worship) in ways that help worshippers to feel spiritual and think about Allah.

They do not use images of people or living things, but prefer patterns which people can look at and think about Allah.

The patterns are complex and intricate to help people think about the infinite and complex nature of Allah. They are beautiful to show their love for him.

They often use circles, which have no beginning or end, and repeating patterns, to remind Muslims that Allah is infinite (has no beginning or end) and goes on forever.

