



# An Introduction to Islam



## KEYWORDS

**Tawid** = the belief in the oneness of Allah

**Allah** = God

**Qur'an** = the holy book of Islam

**Prophet** = a messenger of God

**Muslim** = a follower of Islam

**Commandment** = rule

**Revelation** = new information that is given (revealed)

**Orphan** = a child whose parents have died

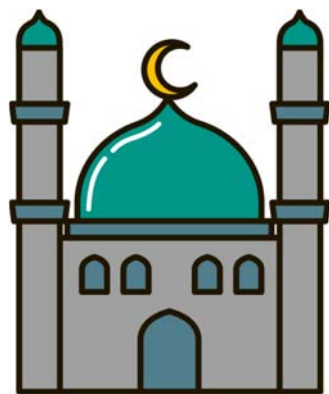
**Immortal** = will never die

**Mosque** = the holy building for Muslims

**Congregation** = the group of people that have gathered together for the religious service

**Adhan** = the call to prayer. So people know it is time to stop what they are doing and to go and dedicate time praying to Allah

**Muezzin** = the person who calls Muslims to prayer from a minaret five times a day



## THE NATURE OF ALLAH

Muslims believe in one God, Allah, whose word was received by the Prophet Muhammad on behalf of humankind. Belief in Allah's oneness means that Allah must be the creator of everything since he is the only God. It also means that Allah must be all-powerful and in control of everything and that Allah must be present in the universe He has created.

Many Muslims understand this to be THE MOST important belief in Islam as it is this belief that motivates Muslims to follow his commandments,



*"Allah has promised those who believe (in him) and do good deeds that for them is forgiveness and great reward."*

In the Qur'an a number of different names are used for Allah. These names, or adjectives, give Muslims an insight into the nature of what Allah is like.

*Many Muslims commit these names to memory and are able to pray and meditate using these names.*

## THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Muhammad is the final prophet in Islam, known as the 'Seal of the Prophets'. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is formed from God's revelations to Muhammad, given through the Angel Jibril. According to Islamic belief, no further prophets will come after him.

### Key events in Muhammad's life

- Muhammad was born around AD570 into the Quraysh tribe in Arabia. At this time, people worshipped many gods within their tribes.
- Muhammad was orphaned and brought up by his uncle, Abu Talib.
- Muhammad married Khadijah.
- Following the Night of Power, Muhammad began preaching, which made the leaders of Makkah angry.
- Muhammad left Makkah to live in Madinah.
- There was a war in Makkah between Muhammad and the Quraysh tribe, and Muhammad won. He smashed all the statues of gods in the Ka'aba, teaching Muslims that they should believe in one God, Allah.

## ANGELS

Most Muslims believe that angels were created before humans with the purpose of following the orders of Allah and communicating with humans.

Angels are immortal, are made of light and have wings. They are pure and cannot sin. They obey and serve Allah at all times.

**Angels can appear in human form and there are some who have specific roles:**

They act as messengers to the prophets.

They take care of people.

They record everything a person does, and this information is used on the Day of Judgement.

Izrail, the Angel of Death, takes people's souls to God when they die.

They welcome Muslims into Paradise and also supervise the pits of Hell.

Angel Jibril always brings good news. He is mentioned in both the Qur'an and the Hadith and he brought the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

## THE MOSQUE

There are over 2.5 million Muslims in the UK and over 1,500 mosques. The mosque is a place to gather for prayers, to study and to celebrate festivals. It can also be used to house schools and community centres.

The first mosque was the Prophet Muhammad's home in Medina, Saudi Arabia

Although mosques vary in design and size, the purpose is always to provide a place where Muslims may join together to perform prayer together. Muslims may pray anywhere as long as it's a clean place. However, praying in a mosque gives Muslims a sense of community. All mosques have certain features in common:

- Qibla – also known as a prayer wall, shows the direction of Mecca and the Ka'bah for prayers. Prayer is led by the imam, a man chosen for his knowledge of the Qur'an.
- Mihrab - usually a niche in a qibla wall, to show the direction of Mecca.
- Minbar - a platform from which an imam might deliver a talk to the congregation or speak to the Muslim community
- Some mosques have the additional features of a dome and minaret. A dome represents the universe and Allah's power as creator. The Minaret is a tall tower in a mosque, from where a muezzin performs the adhan to call the faithful to prayer.

## THE 5 PILLARS

These are 5 duties / actions that Muslims **must** carry out. Following these shows dedication, and ensures the people are living how God wants them to.



## PRAYER (SALAH)

Salah is the second Pillar of Islam for Sunni Muslims, and the first of the Ten Obligatory Acts for Shi'a Muslims. Salah means 'prayer and connects Muslims to Allah. Muslims must pray five times a day, mainly in the mosque or at home.

### What is Salah?

Salah is a physical, spiritual, and mental act of worship following prescribed words and actions

Salah is offered at fixed times during the day.

Salah is performed today in the same way it was performed by the Prophet Muhammad.

Salah aims to purify the mind and soul and helps Muslims develop a closeness to Allah.

