

Notes for teachers
Units D and K - Islam

GCSE Religious Studies

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Teacher's Guide to Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies Units D and K Islam

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This photocopiable guide is intended to indicate to teachers the depth and range of knowledge required for the GCSE Religious Studies Course Units D and K. No teaching schemes are included, but there is help in the appendices for some of the skills required.

Either Unit D or Unit K constitutes a short course GCSE (code number 3480 - 100% exam, 3481 - coursework). Both units together constitute a full course (code number 1480 - 100% exam, 1481 - coursework).

The full course is available as a modular course in which unit D is taken at the end of Year 10 and Unit K at the end of Year 11. Schools taken the modular route can do either coursework or 100% examination, e.g.

Summer Year 10	Unit D with coursework
Summer Year 11	Unit K 100 % exam

or

Summer Year 10	Unit D with coursework
Summer Year 11	Unit K with coursework

or

Summer Year 10	Unit D 100% exam
Summer Year 11	Unit K 100 % exam

The teaching of Unit D requires copies of *Religion and Life* by Victor W Watton, published by Hodder and Stoughton 2001.

The teaching of Unit K will be helped by copies of *Examining Religion – Islam* by Ruqaiyya Maqsood, published by Heinemann 1995.

CHAPTER ONE

UNIT D

Section 1: Believing in Allah

The Nature of Allah

Surah 1 shows that Allah is Merciful and Compassionate, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the universe, in control of the end of the world (Master of the Day of Judgement), worthy of worship and praise.

Surah 2:115-117 shows that Allah is the creator of the universe, omnipresent (everywhere in the universe), omniscient (all knowing), everything belongs to Him.

Surah 6:95-99 shows that Allah is the Creator and Sustainer of everything and all of nature is a sign of Allah's creation.

Surah 30: 20-25 shows that there are signs of Allah's presence in the world, such as the existence of human beings, the way humans can find love with a mate, the creations of the heavens and the earth, the variety of languages and colours, rain giving life to the earth.

Surah 40: 61-68 shows that Allah is the Creator of the universe, the Creator of humans from a drop of sperm, the only God, the Giver of Life and Death, so powerful that He only has to say BE and it is.

Surah 112 shows that Allah is a unity:

"Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him."

How religious upbringing in a Muslim family can lead to or support belief in Allah

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 3, Factfile 26.

The nature of religious experience for Muslims and how this may lead to or support belief in Allah

- **As seen in the Night of Power**

The Night of Power was the occasion in Ramadan 610 when Allah sent an angel to Muhammad and told him to recite. When Muhammad said he could not, the angel clasped Muhammad in a tight embrace and after this had happened three times, Muhammad was able to recite Surah 96, the Blood Clots.

From this, Muhammad knew he had been in the presence of Allah and that Allah had spoken to him through the angel.

This religious experience made Muhammad more aware of Allah's presence and aware that Allah was calling him to be his prophet.

- **As seen in salah**

During salah, Muslims believe that they come into the presence of Allah. This can be seen in their preparations. Muslims must perform salah in a clean place, after they have cleansed themselves by performing wudu and wearing clean clothes. To make sure the place is clean, Muslims remove their shoes before stepping onto the prayer carpet or mat.

This shows that a religious experience is a holy experience and that in a religious experience Muslims come into the presence of Allah.

- **As seen in zakah**

Muslims believe that paying zakah purifies the wealth of rich Muslims and brings them closer to Allah by making them aware of the unity of Islam and so of the unity of Allah. Muslims pay zakah not only to obey Allah's command in the Qur'an, but also to help their fellow Muslims who are part of the ummah.

Muslim scholars teach that there is a close connection between salah and zakah.

Prayer means nothing if the purification of prayer is not backed up by the practical purification of zakah.

- **As seen in sawm**

During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, pray extra prayers and try to read one-thirtieth of the Qur'an each day. Many Muslims claim that this makes them more aware of Allah. As their body feels hunger and thirst, they overcome these feelings by concentrating on Allah rather than eating and drinking. This concentration makes them more aware of the presence of Allah, which is a religious experience.

- **As seen in hajj**

During hajj, Muslims all wear a special form of dress called ihram. Putting on ihram is a religious experience making them aware of the power of Allah, as up to 2 million Muslims will be doing this at the same time and in the same place.

When the pilgrims circle the Ka'aba, they feel in the presence of the holiest place of Islam and feel the presence of Allah and the prophets. When they stand and confess their sins at Arafat, they feel that Allah is listening to them as they prepare for the Day of Judgement. When they stone the pillars and make the sacrifice at Mina, they feel they are in the presence of Allah.

Hajj is a tremendous religious experience for Muslims taking them to the great holy places of Islam, making them aware of the extent of the Muslim ummah and spending several days as near to Allah as they are for the short time of salah.

How the appearance of the world may lead to or support belief in Allah

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 3, Factfile 28.

How the search for meaning and purpose may lead to or support belief in Allah

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 3, Factfile 28.

Agnosticism and atheism

- Scientific explanations of the world can lead people to become agnostic (not sure whether God exists) or atheists (believing that God does not exist). Science now explains the world and the universe much better than religion. Also the discoveries of astronomy and astronauts going into space make it difficult to think of anywhere God could be.
- Problems with miracles can lead people to become agnostic or atheist. Why would a good God send miracles for a few people, but allow thousands to starve to death and millions to die in the Holocaust? Also most miracles can now be explained.
- Unanswered prayers can lead people to become agnostics or atheists. God is supposed to care for those who worship him and answer prayers, but if someone prays for God to help a dying child and the child dies, that person may well become agnostic or atheist.
- Evil and suffering in the world lead some people to become agnostics or atheists. People suffer from moral evil (such things as starvation, wars and poverty caused by human beings) and non-moral evil (such things as disease, flood, earthquakes which are not caused by humans). If God is good, he must want to get rid of such things. If God is all-powerful (omnipotent), he must be able to get rid of such things. The fact that these things continue to exist leads some people to believe that there is no God.

How Islam responds to the problem of evil and suffering

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 3, Factfiles 29 and 31.

Section 2: Matters of Life and Death

Islamic teaching about life after death

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 36.

Why Muslims believe in life after death

All Muslims believe in life after death because:

- it is what the Qur'an teaches and the Qur'an is the word of God.
- they believe that life is a test from God, which only makes sense if there is life after death.
- belief in life after death gives their lives meaning and purpose.
- the evidence of religious experience and all the reasons there are for believing in God make it likely that there is life after death. After all if God exists, then life after death is also likely to exist.
- of the evidence of the paranormal. This includes ghosts, contacts with the dead through mediums, seances, ouija boards etc. Also, post or near-death experiences may make them believe there is life after death. This means people who have died, or nearly died, in heart attacks or on the operating table etc, who have been resuscitated. About 70% of these cases talk about becoming aware that they are out of their body. They then feel a presence of light urging them to go down a tunnel of light, followed by vision of some kind, either of dead relatives or of a divine presence.

Why some people do not believe in life after death

Most people assume that the mind will be able to survive death. Sometimes the mind is called the soul or the self. But other people think the survival of the mind is not likely because:

- death means the end of life, therefore to live after death is a logical contradiction.
- the scientific evidence for the origins of humanity shows that our mind has developed from a material process as the brain grew more complicated, and so it will not be able to survive when the material brain is dead.
- the physical evidence is that when your body dies everything about you dies. For instance, when someone drinks a lot of alcohol both their mind and their body are affected, so if they drink enough alcohol to kill their body, their mind must be killed as well.
- the medical condition of brain death implies that the mind can die before the body - a life-support machine is perfect evidence that there can be no life after death.
- we can only recognise each other because we have bodies. If there were life after death, how would we be able to recognise people without bodies?
- the physical universe is a vast material place with no evidence of non-material existences, so where could life after death take place?

Islamic teaching on sanctity of life

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 34.

The nature of abortion

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 39.

Muslim attitudes to abortion

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 41.

Differences among Muslims in their attitudes to contraception

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 8, Factfiles 64 and 66.

The nature of euthanasia

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 44.

Muslim attitudes to euthanasia

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 4, Factfile 46.

Section 3: Marriage and Family Life

Changing attitudes to cohabitation and marriage

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 1.

Marriage in Islam

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 3.

Islamic teaching on relationships between the sexes and sex outside marriage

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 3.

Changing attitudes to divorce

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 1.

Differences among Muslims in their attitudes to divorce

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1 Factfile 3.

The changing nature of family life in the UK

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 1.

Islamic teachings on family life and its importance

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 7.

How mosques help with family life

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 1, Factfile 7.

Changing attitudes to homosexuality in the UK

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 7, Factfile 59.

Muslim attitudes to homosexuality

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 7, Factfile 61.

Section 4: Social Harmony

The growth of equal rights for women

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 10.

Differences among Muslims in their attitudes to the role and status of men and women

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 12.

The nature of the UK as a multi-ethnic society

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 15.

Islamic teachings which help to promote racial harmony

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 17.

How the hajj and ummah show racial harmony

On hajj, over two million Muslims come together in Makkah. They are from all over the world and from all races. There are black Muslims from countries such as Sudan and Nigeria. There are Arab Muslims, Turkish Muslims, Pakistani and Indian Muslims, Malaysian and Chinese Muslims and white Muslims. All these different races gather together as equals and perform the same actions in the same language and wearing the same clothes.

The ummah is the community of Islam, which is regarded as a unity - 'every Muslim is a brother of every Muslim'. The ummah is based on the central belief of tawhid - the unity of God. If God is a unity, God's followers must be a unity. The idea of the ummah is therefore a force for racial harmony because all races and colours must become brothers and sisters in the unity of the ummah.

The UK as a multi-faith society

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 20.

Differences among Muslims in their attitudes to other religions

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 2, Factfile 22.

Section 5 – Option 1: Religion and the Media

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 5, Factfiles 49-52.

Section 5 – Option 2: Religion: Wealth and Poverty

The teachings of Islam on wealth and poverty

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 6, Factfile 54.

The relief of poverty in the UK by Muslims

Either use the work of a local mosque or use the Muslim Directory (copies available by phoning 020 8840 0020) to find relevant charities, such as Muslim Hands.

An outline of the need for world development

Use *Religion and Life* chapter 6, Factfile 57.

The work of one Muslim agency for world development

Use information on the work of Muslim Aid, available from PO Box 3 London N7 8LR or phone 020 7609 4425.

CHAPTER TWO

BELIEFS AND VALUES

Tawhid: Muslim beliefs about Allah

Muslims believe that there is only one God, Allah. They believe that God is one, therefore Allah can have no plurals, polytheism is wrong and Christianity is wrong because Jesus was not God's son.

Because Allah is one, he must always have been and always will be and he depends on no one but himself. Because Allah is one, the universe he created must be a unity. This is why following the way of Islam makes Muslims a united community (ummah).

Surah 112 states, "Say, 'He is God the One and Only, God the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him.'" This means that Muslims reject the Christian belief in the Trinity and will not allow anything to interfere with Allah's oneness.

The belief in Allah's oneness is called tawhid by Muslims and is the basis of all their beliefs about Allah. It is also the first part of the shahadah (first pillar, often called the Muslim creed) - 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.'

Muslims believe that as there is only one God, it follows that Allah created everything. According to Muslim belief, Allah created the universe and humans in six days, though many Muslims would claim that one day for God is not the same as one day for humans and therefore this could fit with the timescale of evolution. However, Muslims do not believe in evolution because everything was made directly by God for a particular purpose, and nothing came into being accidentally.

As the one God who created everything, Muslims believe that Allah has power over everything. (He is omnipotent.) The Qur'an calls Allah the All-powerful. Allah is in control of the universe he made and he has a plan for it. Muslims believe that nothing happens without Allah's consent.

Muslims believe that God is merciful and compassionate. He has not just left humans alone in the world to get on with things. He has sent prophets with holy books to show them how to live their lives and his justice means that they will only be judged on how far they have followed the teachings of the prophets and holy books. Muslims also believe that God's mercy means that God will forgive people if they do not live up to everything in the holy books. If Muslims feel they have done something wrong, they will pray to God for forgiveness and either fast (sawm) or give money to the poor (sadaqah). Before they die all Muslims try to confess their sins and ask God to forgive them, so that they will not be sent to hell on the Day of Judgement. The Qur'an and Muhammad say that Muslims will be forgiven by God if they are truly sorry for what they have done and are determined to do better in future. They will not be forgiven if they are only confessing in order to avoid hellfire.

The sin of shirk

As belief in the oneness of Allah is the central belief about God, so the greatest sin a Muslim can commit is shirk (associating other beings with God). For this reason Muslim mosques have no images and no pictures, only abstract art or calligraphy (beautiful writing of verses from the Qur'an). Some Muslims will not allow photographs as this might lead to shirk. They would especially not allow pop posters or football player posters, because hero worship is shirk.

The ummah of Islam

The oneness of God who created everything means that there must be a oneness (unity) in what God has created. Just as the universe is a unity, so the religious community of Islam should be a unity. This is why Muslims are called the ummah (religious community of Islam), which shows the unity of Islam.

The unity of the ummah is shown in the following ways:

- when Muslims perform **salah** and stand in rows shoulder to shoulder, so all are equal.
- in **zakah**, where rich Muslims give money to help their poor Muslim brothers.
- in **hajj**, where Muslims from all over the world of many races and colours perform the same actions, wear the same clothes and say the same things.
- the fact that there is only one **shari'ah** (law) for all Muslims, wherever they live.

There should be no quarrelling or fighting in Islam. Therefore those who do quarrel or fight do not really believe in tawhid.

Islamic teaching on humans as khalifah

The Qur'an says that Allah created Adam to be his khalifah (vice-regent or steward) to look after the world. Allah taught Adam the nature of all things and made the angels bow down to Adam. Muslims believe that this was because Adam had been given free will by Allah, which allowed Allah to teach him the nature of things. As khalifah of the earth with free will, Adam was different from the angels.

Muslims believe that, as descendants of Adam, all humans have been put on this earth to be khalifah for God. They are to look after the world as God intended it to be done, which is by accepting the six beliefs and following the pillars and shari'ah as given in the Qur'an. If this is done properly, then the earth will become the sort of place God created it to be.

Because Allah created people for this purpose, and in his mercy gave them the Qur'an and the examples of the prophets to live by, humans have no excuse for not being good khalifah. Therefore Allah is justified in judging them on the way they carry out their role as khalifah.

Islamic teaching on al'Qadar and human freedom

Al'Qadar (the Divine Decree) says that Allah has a plan for the universe and the power to make that plan come about. Allah will make happen what he wants to happen. Islam teaches that Allah knows what will happen in the future and that what will happen is what Allah wants to happen. Therefore Muslims believe that Allah can interfere with what is happening in the world. They believe that he can protect his faithful servants. This means that whatever happens is part of Allah's plan and even though it might not seem like it, eventually everything will work out all right.

This belief in al'Qadar is why many Muslims use the phrase 'insh'Allah' (if Allah wills) a lot. Whatever happens will not be what they want, but what Allah wants.

This causes problems for Muslims because it seems to mean that there is nothing we can do about things and therefore they must leave it all to Allah and just sit back. However, most Muslims believe in both Allah's power and human freewill. Humans have to do what Allah wants of their own free will. Allah knows what people will do but they have the freedom to decide what to do. Most Muslims do not think about the implications and say 'insh'Allah' without thinking that it means they are not free.

Islamic teaching on angels

Muslims believe that angels were created directly by Allah, and are made of light and are sexless (though they have male names). They have no freewill and so cannot do evil. The chief angel is Jibrail (Gabriel) who gives God's messages to the prophets. Mikail (Michael) looks after heaven and keeps the Devil out. Israfil is responsible for the Last Day and will sound the trumpet. Izrail is responsible for taking the last breath from the dying.

Most Muslims believe that they have recording angels who write down everything they do for the Day of Judgement, and guardian angels who look after them if they are good Muslims.

Islam teaches that Allah uses angels to communicate with humans via prophets.

Islamic teaching on prophets

Muslims believe that prophets are human beings called by God to give his message to humans. They are made sinless by God after they become prophets, but they remain human.

Adam was given the message of Islam as the sign of God's mercy. He showed humans how they should live as Allah's khalifah and so go to heaven, but his message was lost or distorted by humans and so God had to send another prophet, but with the same message.

There were many prophets, but the main ones you have to study are:

Ibrahim who was born into a polytheistic family, but came to believe in Allah and so broke all the statues of the gods in his tribe. He was condemned to be burnt to death for this, but Allah stopped the fire from touching him. Ibrahim had two sons, **Ismail** (who became the prophet for the Arabs), and **Ishaq** (who became the prophet for the Jews). Ibrahim was tested by Allah to sacrifice Ismail and the devil tempted him not to. Ibrahim stoned the devil and obeyed Allah. Allah gave Ibrahim a ram to sacrifice, and Ismail was saved. Ibrahim and Ismail rebuilt the Ka'aba which had been destroyed in Noah's (Nuh) flood.

Isa (Jesus) was born of the Virgin Mary, but was not the Son of God and was not crucified on the cross; someone else died in his place. Isa performed many miracles, was taken directly to heaven by God and will return again at the end of the world.

The work of all these prophets was either forgotten or distorted, so that Islam had become Judaism or Christianity or Arab Bedouin polytheism. At this point Allah decided to call a prophet who would be given the message in a way that could not be distorted so that no more prophets would be needed. This was the prophet **Muhammad**. Muslims believe that Muhammad performed no miracles except for receiving the Qur'an, which was the final word of God, given to Muhammad in such a way that it could never again be distorted. This was Allah's final word and enabled Muhammad to restore Islam. Muhammad has the same status as all the other prophets.

Muslims are supposed to say Peace Be Upon Him each time they mention a prophet's name.

Islamic belief in holy books

Islam teaches that:

- Ibrahim was given Allah's word in the holy book of the Scrolls of Ibrahim.
- Musa (Moses) was given Allah's word in the holy book of Tawrat (Torah).
- Dawud (David) was given Allah's word in the holy book of Zabur (Psalms).
- Isa (Jesus) was given Allah's word in the holy book of Injil (Gospels).

Some Muslims believe that each of these holy books contained the Qur'an, but most Muslims believe they only contained a part of the Qur'an.

Each of these holy books was distorted and so they are no longer the original holy book. Muslims believe the Qur'an is Allah's final word to humans, and so no other holy books are needed.

The belief in Muhammad as the seal of the prophets

What makes Muhammad different from the other prophets is that the Qur'an says that Muhammad is 'the seal of the prophets'.

Muslims believe that this means:

Adam was given Allah's message, but it was forgotten.

So Ibrahim was given Allah's message, but that was also forgotten.

So Allah gave Musa the holy book of the Tawrat, but that was distorted.

So he gave Dawud the Zabur, but that was distorted.

So he gave Isa the Injil, but that was distorted.

So he decided to give Muhammad his final word, the Qur'an, in a form that can never be distorted. Muhammad received the Qur'an in such a way that it will never be forgotten or distorted and so there will never be a need for another holy book. If there will never be a need for another holy book, there will never be another prophet. This means that Muhammad is the last of the prophets, acting like a seal at the end of Allah's letter to humans.

Because Muhammad is the last prophet there can be, it follows that his life is the last example Muslims have of how Allah wants them to live. This is why Muslims follow Muhammad's way of life. Also the sayings of Muhammad, the hadith, are the next most holy words to the Qur'an, and are followed wherever the Qur'an is unclear.

The belief in Muhammad as the seal of the prophets means that there can be no more prophets, so anyone claiming to be a prophet must be wrong and there can be no new religions.

Akhirah: Muslim beliefs about life after death

Muslims believe that when people die, their body stays in the grave until the Last Day, when the earth will be ended and everyone will die. Then Israfil will sound the trumpet and there will be a resurrection. All the dead bodies will be raised and will gather on the plain of Arafat for the final judgement.

The judgement will take place in the following way:

- Everyone will be naked, so that nothing can be hidden, and then each in turn will read out the book of their lives where again no thought or action will remain hidden.
- Each person will be judged on the basis of how well they have behaved as khalifahs, and will be sent to heaven or hell.

Most Muslims believe in the principle of repentance. (Those who repent of their sins before they die will be forgiven by Allah and will not go to hell.)

No one knows when this will happen, but Isa will come before it happens and kill Dajjal (the beast of evil), and the dead will rise.

Because of this belief about the Day of Judgement, when Muslims die, they are not allowed to have anything taken from their bodies. They are buried quickly and are buried facing Makkah.

Muslims call heaven al'jannah (the Garden). The Qur'an paints a wonderful picture of heaven as a place of gardens, flowers, streams and rivers and a beautiful life in the presence of Allah.

Muslims call hell jahannam (the place of fire). The Qur'an paints a terrible picture of hell as a place of fire and torment where the evil will have their skins burnt off whilst they drink pus and boiling water.

Both heaven and hell last for ever, so where people end up is where they will stay.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY AND TRADITION

Muslim beliefs about the Qur'an

Muslims believe that Allah gave certain prophets his word in a holy book. Musa received the Tawrat, but that was not written down until much later and so was distorted. Dawud was given the Zabur, but that also became distorted. Isa was given the Injil, but that too was distorted. Finally, Allah sent his word to Muhammad.

The first revelation came when Muhammad was meditating in Cave Hira and the Angel Jibrail ordered him to recite what is now Surah 96 (the Blood Clots). This occasion is known as the Night of Power (Lailat al'Qad'r) and is thought to have happened on 27 Ramadan 610. After this, Muhammad continued to receive direct revelations from Allah. As he could not read, he dictated them to scribes and their writings were put in a chest. The revelations continued until just before Muhammad died. Muhammad himself sorted out the revelations into surahs, but it was the third Caliph, Uthman, who ordered an authorised edition in 656 CE when all other copies were destroyed. All Qur'ans are exactly the same with all the same Arabic letters.

The Qur'an is divided into 114 surahs (chapters) which are subdivided into ayat (verses). The surahs are organised in order of size except for surah 1, which is the first surah because it is used as a call to worship. Surah 2 is the longest surah and surah 114 is the shortest. Every surah except surah 9 begins with the bismillah ('In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate').

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the direct word of Allah. Some Muslims say the Qur'an is 'an earthly copy of a heavenly original'. Muslims believe the Qur'an is in Arabic because Arabic is the language of heaven. Many Muslims will only read the Qur'an in Arabic and believe that it cannot be translated. Because Muslims believe the Qur'an contains Allah's words and not human words, it is the holiest thing a Muslim can possess.

Muslims believe that the Qur'an tells people all they need to know about Islam. It has teachings on each of the six beliefs. It also has information on each of the pillars and it has detailed laws on marriage, divorce, dress, the status of women, economics and inheritance.

Muslims believe that they must obey everything that is said in the Qur'an because it is Allah's word.

How Muslims show their respect for the Qur'an

- They show they believe the Qur'an is holy by the following actions:
 - never touching it without first washing their hands
 - usually wrapping it in a special covering
 - keeping it above all other books
 - never holding it below their waist
 - never eating, drinking or talking while reading it.
- They show they believe it is God's direct word by always reading it in Arabic, because this was the language it was revealed in and therefore Arabic must be the language of God.
- They show what they think it can do for them by carrying one on journeys or in war as a good luck sign.
- The main way they show their respect for the Qur'an is by obeying what it says. A Muslim who performs the pillars and follows the shari'ah is showing their respect for the Qur'an.

The life of the prophet Muhammad

Muhammad was born in 570 CE into the important tribe of the Quraysh in Makkah. His father died, Abd'Allah, died before he was born. He was brought up by his grandfather Abd'al Muttalib, until he was six when his grandfather died. Muhammad was then looked after by his uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad worked in trading and was employed as trading manager by a wealthy widow, Khadijah. Muhammad married Khadijah in 595 CE and became increasingly interested in religion.

The call to prophethood

Muhammad used to spend the month of Ramadan meditating and in Ramadan 610 CE, he was meditating in Cave Hira on Mount Nur when the angel Jibrail appeared and told him to recite. At first he could not but the angel clasped him and told him to recite and after this happened three times, Muhammad found he could recite what is now surah 96 of the Qur'an.

The angel left and Muhammad was afraid and thought he was going mad. He ran home to his wife who comforted him and took him to see her cousin, Waraqa, an Arabian Christian. Waraqa convinced Muhammad that Allah was calling him to be the prophet for the Arabs who had been foretold in the Bible.

Muhammad's work in Makkah

Muhammad received more revelations from Allah and converted some of his family to the religion of Islam. They began regular prayers, and Muhammad began to preach on the streets of Makkah. He gained converts from among the young in the wealthy clans and all sorts of people from the other clans. He preached:

- the oneness of Allah
- the foolishness of polytheism
- the resurrection of the body
- future judgement
- the need to live a good life with the rich helping the poor.

Converts were formed into a community with three daily prayers said facing Jerusalem. There was also teaching about the new revelations as they were given.

However, the heads of the wealthy clans saw Muhammad as a threat. Makkah was based on the polytheistic religion centred on the Ka'aba which gave the Makkans trade dominance. Not only did Muhammad threaten this, but also his popularity threatened their role as leaders. So they began a persecution of Muslims, which meant Muhammad was no longer able to preach and Islam could not expand.

The hijrah and its importance

The hijrah was the emigration of Muhammad and the Muslims to Madinah. Muhammad went to preach at a fair near Makkah and converted some people from Madinah. The following year, they returned with more converts and eventually the Madinans invited Muhammad to become their leader in Madinah. Madinah was divided between Jews and Arabs, and between the two Arab tribes of Aws and Khazraj. They needed someone impartial to bring them together, so Muhammad and the Makkan Muslims left Makkah in 622 and went to live in Madinah.

This was very important because it not only gave Muhammad a new opportunity to expand Islam, but also it made it possible to establish Islam as a communal religion with one and the same state law and religious law. This is why Islam dates everything from this event. New Year's Day (15 March 2001) marks the beginning of the year 1423 AH.

The work of Muhammad in Madinah

Muhammad quickly established an ummah or community, which agreed to certain laws. He slowly converted all of Madinah to Islam.

Then he dealt with Makkah. Firstly he dealt with the military threat of Makkah by fighting. The main battles were Bad'r, Uhud, and the Trench. He then received a revelation to change the direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah and to go on

pilgrimage. Muhammad tried to make the first hajj in 628, but was refused entry. Rather than fight, Muhammad made the Treaty of Hudaibiya with the Makkans, which allowed Muslims to make the first hajj in 629 without fighting. When the Makkans broke the treaty, Muhammad and the Muslims attacked Makkah in 630. He surrounded the city and gave everyone the chance to convert and made the conquest as peaceful as possible, in order to prevent further trouble.

By the time of his death in 632 CE, Muhammad had united Arabia under the rule of Islam. The five pillars and the shari'ah were in place and the revelations making up the Qur'an had been gathered together and sorted into surahs. Muslims believe that Muhammad had restored Islam and made it possible for it to become a world religion.

When he announced the death of the prophet to the Muslims, Abu Bak'r said, 'Oh Muslims, he who worshipped Muhammad should know that Muhammad is dead, but he who worshipped Allah should know that Allah lives and never dies.'

The Sunnis and the Shi'ahs

There are many divisions in Islam, but the main division is between Sunnis and Shi'ahs. About 95% of Muslims are Sunni. This means that they follow the sunnah (way of life) of Muhammad as recorded in the hadith and accept the authority only of the Qur'an and hadith. The Shi'ahs follow the sunnah of Muhammad, but also follow hadith from Ali and have a different attitude to leadership and authority.

There are about 90 million Shi'ahs around the world and about 800 million Sunnis. The main Shi'ah centres are given as the percentage of each whole country's population in the table below.

Country	Shi'ahs as percentage of the population
Iran	90%
Iraq	57%
Azerbaijan	55%
Bahrain	55%
Kuwait	40%
Afghanistan	35%
Lebanon	30%
Qatar	20%
Turkey	15%
Pakistan	15%
Saudi Arabia	5%
India	2.5%

The reasons for the split between Sunnis and Shi'ahs

Both Sunni and Shi'ah historians agree that Ali was Muhammad's first convert and constant companion. They even agree that Muhammad hinted on several occasions that Ali should succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. However, when the ummah met to decide on the succession after Muhammad's death, political concerns appear to have taken precedence and Ali was not even invited to the meeting. Abu Bak'r was chosen simply because he was perceived as the only candidate who would be acceptable to the tribes of both Makkah and Madinah because of his own lowly origins. Ali, as Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, represented the Hashim clan, which was unpopular in both cities. As a result of the selection of Abu Bak'r, Ali retired from public life.

When Abu Bak'r died, Ali was ignored again and the general Umar was elected as caliph. When he died, Ali was ignored yet again and Uthman was elected. Caliph Uthman was a member of the Umayyad clan, which had been one of the chief opponents of Muhammad before 630CE. He appointed members of his clan as governors of the new provinces even though they had been opponents of Muhammad during his lifetime. Indeed, his cousin Mu'awiya was appointed to the chief post of governor of Syria.

Uthman allowed members of the Ridda tribes (the ones who had fought against Islam after the death of the Prophet) to become full soldiers, and at the same time removed the privileges of the Qurra (the original soldiers of Islam who had settled in Iraq). Uthman also ordered the authorised Qur'an, which meant he banned the official remembrancers who were very holy, pious Muslims, and this annoyed many of the religious Muslims. All these facts made the Qurra feel that Uthman was betraying Islam and they revolted against their Umayyad governor and marched on Madinah to present their grievances to Uthman. When he would not listen to them, they killed him.

Ali was now the only candidate for the Caliphate and was elected in 656CE. Unfortunately, Ali had many opponents and they formed an army and marched on Ali, who defeated them at the Battle of Jamal in 656CE. Ali then moved his headquarters from Madinah to Kufa in Iraq, allowing Uthman's cousin, Mu'awiya, to lead opposition based in Syria and the area around Madinah. When Ali was murdered, Mu'awiya took advantage of the situation to declare himself Caliph in Damascus and offered a pension to Ali's eldest son (a grandson of Muhammad), Hassan, who stayed in Madinah.

The Muslims of Iraq never really accepted Mu'awiya, and when he died, they invited Hussayn (Ali's younger son and also a grandson of the Prophet - Hassan had now died) to come to Kufa and be their Caliph. Hussayn set off from Madinah with his wife and family and about 60 armed supporters. Mu'awiya's son, Yazid, sent an army to intercept Hussayn. They met at Karbala and when Hussayn refused to turn back, he and most of his followers were killed. This led to the Muslims of Iraq forming themselves into Shi'ah Ali (the party of Ali).

Different attitudes to leadership and authority

For Sunnis, the leader should be a good Muslim chosen by agreement among Muslims. For Shi'ahs, leadership is based on the Imam. In Shi'ism, the Imam is a semi-divine figure who is a successor of Muhammad and must be a descendent of Muhammad. The Imam can commit no sin and is an intermediary between man and God. Every Imam is chosen by the previous Imam, thus ensuring continuity (the doctrine of nass).

All Shi'ahs agree that Muhammad appointed Ali as the first Imam and gave Ali the divine light. Shi'ahs believe that Abu Bak'r, Umar and Uthman knew that Muhammad had appointed Ali as his successor and deliberately kept quiet about it. Therefore, Shi'ahs regard the first three Caliphs as the great traitors of Islam rather than rightly guided. They are publicly cursed in Shi'ah juma prayers.

Sunnis believe that the first three caliphs were rightly guided because they were chosen by the Muslim community. In Sunni Islam, an imam is simply a leader of prayer.

Clearly, from what Shi'ahs believe about the Imams, their powers must be considerable. The Imam is the one who determines what the Qur'an means and who determines what the law should be - the problem is to know what the Imam says! There is a Shi'ah hadith which says, 'whosoever knows not the Imam of his age dies the death of a heathen.'

Shi'ahs have two views on this:

- specially chosen descendants of the Prophet keep in touch with the Hidden Imam and pass on his wishes to the community
- specially able religious leaders who have gone through complex training in a holy city (e.g. Qom in Iran) become mujtahids or ayatollahs. New messages can only be given by all the ayatollahs working together.

Sunnis believe that authority lies in the Qur'an and hadith and their interpretation by the ulamah (group of leading Muslim lawyers). They believe that because Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, there can be no new messages.

The Shi'ahs have the same concept of Shari'ah as the Sunnis and have Qadis to administrate the law. Often the Shi'ah Shari'ah is the same as the Sunni, but it has a fundamental difference in that the hadith of Ali are to be consulted as well as the hadith of Muhammad.

Attitudes to tradition

Shi'ahs follow all the same traditions as Sunnis, but have some extra ones:

Shi'ahs add to the Shahadah 'and I bear witness that Ali was the friend of God.'
Although Shi'ahs are expected to go on Hajj to Makkah, they also make pilgrimages to Shi'ah shrines such as Karbala. Shi'ahs believe that they get grace *from* visiting the tombs of Shi'ah saints.

Many Shi'ahs also believe that faith in the atoning death of Hussayn will bring them salvation from their sins and therefore heaven, rather than hell, on the Day of Judgement. The Shi'ahs have several festivals which are not celebrated by Sunnis. The main one is Al'Ashura or 10 Muharram, which commemorates the death of Hussayn at Karbala. It takes place at Karbala and throughout the Muslim world. There is great weeping and self-mutilation as Shi'ahs remember the betrayal and death of the second Imam, Hussayn. There is often a passion play, during which the Shi'ah idea of being able to get to heaven by faith in the atoning death of Hussayn is brought out. This is very similar to some Christians' attitude to the death of Jesus and is totally opposite to the belief of Sunnis, especially as prayers are offered to Hussayn.

CHAPTER 4

WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Muslims believe that Islam is a complete way of life and they often refer to Islam as a house. In Islam, the foundation of the house is the Qur'an, on which everything is based. On the foundations are built the pillars and these support the roof, which is the Shari'ah.

The pillars are the things that show someone is a Muslim:

- **Shahada** - declaration of faith
- **Salah** - ritual prayer
- **Zakah** - compulsory giving to the poor
- **Sawm** - fasting during Ramadan
- **Hajj** - pilgrimage to Makkah.

The shahadah as a summary of Islamic belief

The shahadah is the Muslim declaration of faith:

1. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah
2. I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.

These words sum up Islamic belief, because if someone bears witness that there is no God but Allah, then they are saying that they believe in tawhid and that they have submitted to Allah's will. If someone bears witness to Muhammad being the prophet of Allah, then they must believe in risalah (holy books and prophets) and akhirah and in the Qur'an and sunnah, so they are saying that they will follow the Muslim way of life.

This is why all a person has to do to become a Muslim is say these words in front of witnesses. The words are very important to Muslims and this is shown in the following ways:

- A Muslim father must whisper them in his newborn baby's ear so they are the first words it hears.
- They are shouted by the muezzin as he calls Muslims to prayer.
- They are repeated in salah.
- Muslims try to say them as they are dying.

The practice and significance of salah

Salah is ritual prayer, meaning a prayer that has to be carried out in a certain way at certain times. It is commanded in the Qur'an, but the way Muslims carry out the prayer is by following the example (sunnah) of Muhammad, who showed Muslims how to perform Salah.

A Muslim has to perform salah five times a day. The times of prayer are decided by when the sun rises and sets. Most Muslims in this country find out the prayer times from the mosque, where there is a board with six clocks on showing the five daily prayer times and the time of Friday prayers (ju'mah).

Muslims must prepare for salah in a special way:

- The **muezzin** (caller to prayer) calls from the minaret repeating the shahadah four times, shouting that God is great and calling the Muslims to the best act, which is prayer.
- Those who respond to the call must now prepare for prayer. This means they must perform **wudu** (washing hands and wrists, head, nose, ears, nostrils, mouth, feet and ankles and head three times each in running water) and preferably put on clean clothes so they are pure to make contact with God. They must then find a clean place to pray. This could be the mosque, but they do not have to do salah in the mosque as it can be done anywhere. This is why many Muslims have a prayer mat, which gives them a clean place wherever they are.
- They must then find the **qibla** (direction of prayer). All Muslims have to face in the same direction when they say their prayers. They have to face in the direction of the Ka'aba in Mecca. In a mosque this is shown by the **mihrab** (an alcove or hollow in the wall). Many prayer mats have a Qibla compass so that you can find the direction of Mecca.
- They must make a prayer of intention (**niya**) saying how many actions they intend to perform and why.

They must then carry out a set prayer ritual. This is a set of actions and words during which the Muslims:

- hold their hands to their ears
- bow down
- prostrate themselves (showing their submission to God)
- repeat surahs from the Qur'an (especially surah 1)
- say God is great ('Allahu akbar'),
- finally, wish God's peace over their left and right shoulders.

This is called a raka and each prayer time has a set number of rakat.

All the prayers have to be said in Arabic, doing the same actions and facing the same direction.

The significance and benefits of salah are as follows:

- Salah shows a person is a Muslim because not only they are following the example of Muhammad, but their actions show their submission to God and the fact that they do it five times a day means that they can never really forget God.
- The fact that all Muslims do this in the same language, facing the same direction and performing exactly the same actions, shows the unity of Islam. In addition, when this is done the mosque, there are no special places and everyone stands shoulder to shoulder whether they are rich or poor, important or unimportant.

- The fact that Muslims have to perform wudu, wear clean clothes and use a clean place, means that Muslims think God is very holy and cannot be approached in a normal way.

Friday prayers are of special significance and are known as ju'mah.

The midday prayers on Friday must be said in the mosque (though women are allowed to say them at home). These are special prayers when the prayer leader (**imam**), gives a sermon (**khutba**) from the pulpit (**minbar**). This sermon will not only explain Islam, but also give the congregation advice about how to be a good Muslim in Britain.

Although Friday is the Muslim holy day, it is not a complete day. After the midday prayers Muslims should go back to work. There is only need for a couple of hours off work.

The practice and significance of zakah

Zakah is a special charity tax that Muslims have to pay. It is commanded in the Qur'an and there are many regulations about it.

Once a year Muslims should pay zakah on their income and savings. The Law Schools say that Muslims should pay zakah of two and a half percent on their savings and on their income above the nisab (the amount you need to live on). Farmers have to pay proportions of their crops and livestock. The money should be paid to the mosque and all mosques have a special zakah box for collecting the money.

Zakah should be used:

- to help the poor. Zakah should re-distribute wealth from rich to poor.
- to help orphans and widows.
- to pay for the upkeep of mosques and Muslim schools.
- to pay for Muslim missionary work.

All Muslims should pay zakah:

- as a purification. Zakah means purification and Muslims believe that giving zakah purifies what wealth a Muslim keeps so that it does not stop them from worshipping Allah properly.
- because the Qur'an says Muslims must.
- because of tawhid and ummah. God's unity means all wealth is God's, and sharing wealth means that a Muslim believes in the ummah and in unity. It is also a sign of belief in the unity and brotherhood of the ummah of Islam if a Muslim shares with less fortunate Muslims.
- to show submission to the will of God.
- because it is one of the pillars.

Sadaqah is voluntary charity whereas zakah is the compulsory charity. All Muslims are expected to give more than the compulsory, but there are no rules on this. The Qur'an says that Muslims should give "What you can spare" and many Muslims believe that if the rich Muslims took zakah and sadaqah seriously there would be no poverty among Muslims because all would share.

The significance of zakah shows:

- that Islam covers the whole of life and that submission must extend to money.
- that Allah is concerned for the poor.
- the ummah as the brotherhood of Islam and the way Muslims must serve Allah by helping each other.

The practice and significance of sawm

Sawm means fasting and the Qur'an commands Muslims to fast as a sign of their devotion to God. However, the Qur'an also says that Muslims must fast during the month of Ramadan and so most Muslims practise sawm by the fast of Ramadan.

During Ramadan Muslims:

- must give up food, drink and sex during the hours of daylight - indeed nothing must pass their lips, so they cannot smoke etc
- must eat and drink in special meals at dusk and dawn so that they can carry on a normal life
- should read one thirtieth of the Qur'an per day so that they read the whole Qur'an by the end of Ramadan
- should say special prayers in the mosque at night (tarawih prayers)
- should attend a special service in the mosque on lailat al'qad'r (the night of power) when they remember the night when Muhammad received his first revelation from Allah
- should not gossip, swear nor tell lies.

Reasons for fasting

- It is commanded in the Qur'an.
- It is the third pillar of Islam.
- It is a celebration and thanksgiving for the gift of the Qur'an, which was first revealed in Ramadan. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is Allah's word and therefore the most precious gift they have, so they should thank Allah for it during the month when it was first sent down.
- It shows a Muslim's devotion to Allah.
- It brings a Muslim closer to Allah.
- Most Muslims believe that fasting in Ramadan brings forgiveness of their sins.

Benefits of fasting

- It brings Muslims closer to Allah.
- It promotes self-control and submission to Allah's will.
- It makes Muslims aware of the brotherhood of Islam (ummah) because all Muslims fast together and help each other through the difficulties of fasting.
- It helps Muslims to give zakah from the heart because they gain some understanding of what it is like to be poor.

The celebration of Id-ul-Fitr

The ending of the fast is celebrated by the feast of Id-ul-Fitr. On this day, Muslims wear new clothes and go to the mosque for a special service. After the salah, the imam gives a sermon about the benefits of Ramadan and then the Muslims give their id zakah to the mosque. After this Muslims visit each other and eat special foods and often the children are given presents. Some Muslims exchange id cards. However, the id is not a festival like Christmas and Easter. It is Ramadan that is important. A Muslim must keep Ramadan, but they do not need to keep the id.

Hajj

Hajj is the pilgrimage to Makkah which takes place in the month of Dhu al'Hijja. It follows the example of the Prophet's own pilgrimages and is commanded in the Qur'an. Hajj is the only one of the pillars that is not compulsory, although Muslims must perform it if they are able.

What Muslims have to do to be able to go on hajj

- They must have sufficient money not only to pay for themselves, but also to provide for their family while they are away. This is why hajj is not compulsory.
- They must be in sound health.
- They must wear the special pilgrim dress (known as **ihram**). This is two pieces of white cloth, one worn round the waist, the other round the shoulders. The ihram is important because it means that everyone is equal during the hajj. The differences of wealth, class and race have to disappear during hajj so that Muslims are aware of the unity and brotherhood of Islam.
- Pilgrims have to give up sex, perfumes, jewellery, etc and cannot enter into legal agreements.
- Men should shave their heads, as hair cutting is not allowed whilst on hajj.

Hajj begins in Makkah at the Great Mosque which surrounds the Ka'aba and the hills of Marwa and Sa'fa which are connected to the Great Mosque. The pilgrims then go to Arafat and finally to Mina. At Arafat and Mina the pilgrims have to stay in tents, but in Makkah they stay in hotels.

What happens at Makkah and its relationship to the prophets

- The pilgrims go round the Ka'aba seven times. Each time they try to touch the Ka'aba or kiss the Black Stone as a sign of devotion to Allah. The Ka'aba was built by Adam and re-built after the flood by Ibrahim and Ismail, so they remember these prophets as they perform this ritual which is called a **tawaf**.
- The pilgrims run between the hills of Marwa and Sa'fa (this is now a covered walkway) copying what Hagar did with her young son Ismail as she searched for water to survive in the desert. They also remember Ibrahim fighting with the Devil here. This ritual is called a **sa'y**.
- The pilgrims collect water from the Zamzam well, which was discovered by the young Ismail. This is regarded as the holiest water in the world and bottles are taken home.
- They perform salah and listen to a sermon in the courtyard of the Great Mosque. There are lots of prayers during hajj as the pilgrims become united with Allah.

What happens at Arafat and its relationship to the prophets

- The pilgrims listen to a Sermon given by the Imam from the Mount of Mercy.
- Then they stand up for several hours and confess their sins to Allah. Arafat is where Adam and Eve landed after being thrown out of Eden and is where Adam confessed his sins, was forgiven and made a prophet. Muslims believe that the final judgement will take place on the plain of Arafat and so if they confess their sins at Arafat and they are forgiven by God (as Islam teaches they will be), then those sins will not count against them when Judgement Day comes.

What happens at Mina and its relationship to the prophets

- On the way from Arafat to Mina, the pilgrims gather 49 stones, which they throw at the pillars of stoning in Mina. They do this to remember how Ibrahim stoned the Devil at Mina when the Devil tempted him to disobey Allah and not sacrifice his son. As they do this they also promise to get rid of all the evil in their own hearts.

- On the tenth of Dhu al'Hijja, the pilgrims gather to make their sacrifice. Often pilgrims join together with a sacrifice, but they kill it themselves to remember the way in which Ibrahim was prepared to sacrifice his son Ismail, but Allah provided him with a "fat ram" to sacrifice instead. The meat from the sacrifice should be shared with the poor and nowadays the Saudi Arabian government provides refrigerated container ships to take the meat to poor Muslim countries.

The celebration of Id-ul-Adha

The sacrifice at Mina is the one event of hajj that all Muslims join in. At mosques all over the world there is a congregational prayer as on Id-ul-Fitr. Then families gather together to make their sacrifice and eat it as a celebratory meal. In the United Kingdom, Muslims who wish to make a sacrifice themselves will sacrifice a chicken, as this does not require an abattoir. Otherwise, they pay a halal butcher to make the sacrifice for them. Instead of sharing the leftover meat with the poor, they pay an id zakah.

The significance of hajj

- It is the fifth pillar.
- Muhammad went on hajj.
- The places of hajj are connected with the great prophets of Islam: Muhammad, Adam, Ibrahim and Ismail.
- It makes Muslims realise that Islam is not a new religion; it came from Adam and Ibrahim before Muhammad.
- All the sins Muslims confess at Arafat will be forgiven and they will not have to read them out on the Last Day. Therefore, Muslims can start a new life after hajj.
- It brings the Muslim close to Allah. For a whole week, pilgrims are in the same state as they are for the few minutes of salah.
- It makes the pilgrims aware of the power and unity of Islam as over two million Muslims of many races, colours and languages say the same words and perform the same actions in the same place.
- Other Muslims regard hajjis (the name given to someone who has successfully completed the hajj) as very holy people and they have a certain authority in their community.
- If a pilgrim dies on hajj, they go straight to heaven and do not wait for Judgement Day.

CHAPTER 5

LIVING THE MUSLIM LIFE

The sources of the shari'ah

- The main source of the shari'ah is the Qur'an because this is the word of Allah. Allah has revealed what he wants Muslims to do in the Qur'an and what the Qur'an says about marriage, divorce, treatment of parents, lending money at interest, gambling and alcohol etc must be obeyed and so must be the basis of the Holy Law.
- Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, the last in the line and therefore the final example for Muslims to follow. Because of this, Muslims believe that if the Qur'an does not tell them what to do in a situation, the sunnah (example/way of life) of the Prophet as recorded in the hadith (e.g. Umar said that Muhammad did not shave his beard), will tell Muslims what to do. Therefore, the collections of hadith are very important. There are several collections, the most important being those of Bukhari and Muslim. Hadiths are accepted as genuine (really going back to Muhammad) if there is a line of people from Bukhari or Muslim to Muhammad, who each guarantee the truth of the hadith.
- Sometimes neither Qur'an nor sunnah tell Muslims what to do, and so schools of lawyers grew up to sort out the shari'ah. There were four great law schools and all Muslims now follow the shari'ah as decided by one of these: the School of Hanbal, the School of Shafi'i, the School of Hanif, the school of Malik.

How the shari'ah works

- In a Muslim country, a group of respected lawyers (muftis) called the **ulama** should meet together and decide on the shari'ah. The government should then appoint a **qadi** (mufti who runs a court and acts as judge and jury), for each town to administer the law for that town.
- In a non-Muslim country the Muslim religious leaders should decide on the shari'ah for Muslims in that country, and then the imams of the mosques should give advice to individual Muslims about how they should behave in particular situations.

The shari'ah as the basis of Muslim life

Because Islam is submission to the will of Allah and all Muslims are Allah's khalifah who will be judged on how they have obeyed Allah's will in their lives, it follows that there must be a law of Allah to cover the whole of a Muslim's life. This is what the shari'ah is. Literally shari'ah means "the way Allah wants men to walk" and this sums it up. It applies to everything a Muslim does: what to wear, what to eat, who to marry, how

to treat children, how to draw up wills etc. Everything a Muslim should do is covered by the Shari'ah.

'The Islamic shari'ah removes from human beings harmful, burdensome customs and superstitions, aiming to simplify and ease the business of day-to-day living. Its principles are designed to protect man from evil and to benefit him in all aspects of his life.'

Yusuf al'Qaradawih - *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*

Islamic teaching on greater and lesser jihad

Many non-Muslims think that jihad means holy war. In fact it means struggling in the way of God and Muslims usually divide jihad into two types:

- **Greater jihad** - this is where a Muslim struggles with him/herself to become a good Muslim. It is a struggle, especially for Muslims living in a non-Muslim country to live their life as a perfect Muslim following all the pillars and following the Shari'ah of Islam. Therefore, the first struggle of Muslims is with themselves to make themselves good Muslims.
- **Lesser jihad** - this is where a Muslim has managed to make him/herself a good Muslim and can now concentrate on making their community, and then the whole world, a perfect Muslim place. Most Muslims think this is done by peaceful means, making the government and laws Muslim and converting everyone to Islam. Surah 2 says there should be no compulsion in religion, which seems to ban jihad to make people Muslim. However, there is a belief in Islam that Muslims must fight to defend their faith. If Islam is attacked, it is the duty of Muslims to defend it. Surah 2 says that Muslims must fight jihad if they are attacked, and that those who die on jihad go straight to heaven. However, this is war fought in self-defence, not attacking anyone. It is the duty of Muslims to convert the world to Islam, but this should be done by peaceful means, not by war.

The effects of this teaching on a Muslim's life

The teaching on jihad means that life must always be a struggle for a Muslim. If a Muslim is struggling to make themselves a good Muslim, it means that they will be trying to practise all five of the pillars and trying to fulfil all the regulations in the shari'ah. Perfect Muslims will then have to struggle to make the world Muslim.

There are some Muslims who believe that the struggle to defend Islam and make the world Muslim is the greater jihad and the struggle to make oneself a perfect Muslim is the lesser jihad.

Islamic living: dress laws

The basic principle lying behind the dress laws of Islam is that clothing should not permit any sexual attraction outside the home. Therefore, both men and women must cover their whole body from neck to ankles in such a way that the body is not visible through the clothing. So clothing must be baggy and non-transparent.

There are special dress laws for men:

- they may wear knee length shorts for certain tasks
- they must not wear silk or gold
- they must not wear jewellery.

Some Muslim men cover their heads with a turban or prayer cap as a sign of respect for Allah and their status as a representative of Allah in the world.

There are special dress laws for women:

- they must cover their head and hair when outside the home (this covering is called a hijab) and some Muslim women cover their face as well with only a slit for the eyes (this covering is called a burka);
- they must wear a covering garment over their clothes when they go out of the home.

Neither men nor women are allowed to wear clothes normally worn by the opposite sex. Muslims are not allowed to appear naked before anyone else except for medical purposes, which means school showers etc are not allowed for Muslims.

Islamic living: food laws

Muslims have very strict regulations about what they can and cannot eat. What Muslims can eat is called **halal** and what they are not allowed to eat is called **haram**. Muslims are only allowed to eat meat which has been slaughtered by having its throat slit and the blood drained from it whilst a prayer of thanks is said to God. This means Muslims cannot eat the ordinary meat in the UK because it is slaughtered by being stunned first. Muslim meat is called halal meat and has to be purchased from halal butchers. However, Muslims can eat Jewish meat, known as Kosher meat, because this is slaughtered in exactly the same way.

Muslims are not allowed to eat any form of pork, or any animals that live on dead meat e.g. crows, hyenas, shellfish.

Islamic living: alcohol and gambling

Muslims are not allowed to drink alcohol or have anything to do with its manufacture or sale. Most Muslims believe that because the Qur'an bans alcohol because it intoxicates and clouds the mind, all drugs are banned to Muslims. However, Muslims are allowed to

take medicines, prescribed by a doctor, which contain alcohol or other drugs. When Muhammad was asked what to do with a gift of a barrel of wine, he poured it out onto the ground so that no one could be harmed by it.

Gambling is prohibited by the Qur'an, and so Muslims should not bet. This includes buying lottery tickets and raffle tickets. There is debate in Islam as to whether all games of chance are forbidden (e.g. card games, Monopoly etc which do not involve gambling) because the Qur'an says that Muslims should not be involved in things which depend on luck. Muslims are expected to work for their living but only at jobs that are halal. Money is a gift from God and should be shared through zakah and sadaqah.

Islamic living: riba

The Qur'an bans Muslims from being involved in riba - the lending of money at interest. It states that those who lend or borrow at interest will go to hell. This is because interest takes money from the poor and gives it to the rich, whereas Islam should take money from the rich and give it to the poor.

This causes problems for Muslims living in the United Kingdom because:

- they cannot have mortgages
- they cannot buy things on hire purchase
- they cannot use credit cards
- they cannot have savings accounts in banks or building societies
- they cannot have current accounts in banks which give interest
- they cannot have loans.

To avoid these problems, many Muslims:

- only use Muslim banks which give a share of profits rather than charging or giving interest
- form savings groups so that houses can be bought one at a time without involving anyone in mortgages
- save for things so that they can pay cash.

Birth rituals

As soon as a baby is born, the adhan (call to prayer) must be recited in its right ear and the iqama (call to begin to pray) in its left ear. This is usually done by the father and is intended to ensure that the name of God and the need for prayer are recorded in child's brain immediately.

A week or so after the birth, there should be a naming ceremony (aqiqa). In some communities the child's hair is shaved and a sum of money equivalent to the weight of the hair in gold is given to the poor. In others a sheep or goat is sacrificed to Allah, one third of the meat is given to the poor, one third to relatives and one third is used for a

special meal in the home. The child wears special clothes, prayers are said and presents may be given to the child.

Muslim boys are circumcised (often while they are in hospital as babies) because the prophets were circumcised.

Death rituals

There should be no loud crying at death because Muhammad said that this helps the devil to enter the house.

Before death

If it is known that someone is dying, relatives and friends should be with them and say the shahadah (kalimah) to them and recite special verses from the Qur'an which Muhammad recommended as giving grace to the dying. This should ensure that they die peacefully and will have no trouble on the Day of Judgement.

Immediately after death

The body should be prepared for burial by close relatives of the same sex. The contents of the stomach should be squeezed out, and the body wrapped in white cloth (if the deceased has been on hajj, the ihram should be used) leaving the face uncovered.

The funeral

The body should be taken to the mosque where the janazah prayers are said. The prayer leader stands in front of the body, which should have its head pointing to the right and its feet to the left of the prayer leader who should be facing the qibla. Often the prayer leader gives a short talk about the deceased and then salah is made with everyone standing in rows; there is no prostration at janazah prayers.

The burial

This should take place as soon as possible, preferably within 24 or 48 hours of the death. Cremation is not allowed. The coffin must be buried facing the qibla of the ka'aba. Prayers are said as the coffin is lowered into the grave. The headstone should be very simple, as all Muslims are equal, especially in death.

Mourning

On the third day after the death, family and friends meet in the house of the deceased to read from the Qur'an and say special prayers for the deceased. Then for forty days there can be no celebrations for the immediate family (even if the ids fall on those days) and on the fortieth day, the readings and prayers are said again and the mourning is over.

CHAPTER SIX

OPTIONS

OPTION 1 THE MOSQUE

The architectural and other main features of a mosque

The architectural features of the mosque are:

- the prayer hall, which should have a dome and a separate part for women
- at least one minaret from which the adhan (call to prayer) can be made
- the prayer hall should also face the ka'aba in Makkah and have a mihrab (an alcove or niche) in the wall facing Makkah (the qibla)
- there should also be separate washrooms for men and women.

The other main features are:

- a carpet with lines across in the prayer hall
- a minbar which is rather like a pulpit
- a shoe rack at the entrance to the prayer hall
- a board showing the prayer times
- a zakah box
- Qur'an stands and shelves of Qur'ans.

The reasons for the features

These are shown in the table below.

Feature	Reason
Prayer hall	The main function of a mosque is to provide facilities for salah. Mosques are often called masjid, which means 'place of prostration'.
Dome	The dome is a feature in the Middle East to act as air-conditioning, but it also serves to make good acoustics.
Separate prayer room for women	Men and women must not pray together, but most Muslims believe the mosque should provide facilities for women to perform salah.
Minaret	It is preferable for the muezzin to call Muslims to prayer from something high enough for the call to carry to the local area. Many British mosques have a minaret, but only call to prayer on the Ids to avoid offending the local non-Muslim community.

Mihrab	Prayers have to be made facing the Ka'aba in Makkah as this is commanded in the Qur'an, and Muslims need an indication of the direction before they make their prayers.
Washrooms	Muslims must perform wudu before they perform salah. This requires at least the washing of feet, arms and head and sometimes the whole body.
Carpet with lines	Muslims must perform salah in a clean place and standing in rows shoulder to shoulder. The carpet makes it possible to pray in bare feet and the lines show worshippers where to stand.
Minbar	At Friday midday prayer (ju'mah), a sermon (khutbah) must be preached. This is often an occasion in the UK for the imam to give advice on problems Muslims may have in living their faith in a non-Muslim country. Obviously this needs somewhere for the imam to stand where he can be seen and heard.
Shoe rack	As the prayer hall has to be clean, shoes have to be removed before entering.
Prayer time board	The times of the five daily prayers depend on the times when the sun rises and sets which changes considerably in the UK. Therefore Muslims need something to tell them at what times they should be making their prayers.
Zakah box	Zakah is not organised in the UK. It is up to the individual and so the mosque needs to provide people with a means of paying their zakah and sadaqah.
Qur'ans and Qur'an stands	Many people like to read the Qur'an in the mosque where the atmosphere is right. Qur'an stands are needed because Muslims regard the Qur'an as the word of Allah which is too holy to place on the floor or on someone's lap.

The role and function of an imam in Sunni mosques

Contact your local mosques or find mosques through the list of mosques in the Muslim Directory (available free from 65a Grosvenor Road London W7 1HR Phone 020 8840 0020).

The role and function of the mosque in the local Muslim community

Contact your local mosques or find mosques through the list of mosques in the Muslim Directory (available free from 65a Grosvenor Road London W7 1HR Phone 020 8840 0020).

The reasons for differences in places of worship and forms of worship among Muslims

Cultural differences in the Muslim community

It is often not appreciated by non-Muslims that Muslims from different cultures will have different practices, even though they are all Muslims. For many British people Muslim equals Pakistani. In fact Muslim countries have different cultures just as Christian ones do. Attitudes to dress, marriage customs etc are all matters of culture and can be causes of division in the British Muslim community, because individual Muslims think they are part of Islam rather than part of their national culture. Most mosques are organised for nationalities, for instance there are Pakistani mosques, Bangladeshi mosques and so on. The language used for sermons and teaching in the madrassah will be Urdu, Bengali etc, so that it is difficult for other Muslims to worship there.

Other divisions in the British Muslim community

As well as national ethnic divisions, there are sectarian divisions in British Islam. These are based on various groups, many of which originated in the Indian sub- continent.

- **The Barelvis**

This is the main sect among British Muslims. It originated with an Indian Sunni Muslim, Raza Khan. He led a reaction against the import of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism into Indian Islam. The Wahhabis felt that what was wrong with Islam was that it had lost its roots and started to make Muhammad into a semi-divine figure, to worship the graves of saints and follow special holy men. They also rejected the Sufis. As a reaction against this the Barelvis insist on the role of Muhammad as a semi-divine figure. They claim that he had unique knowledge of the unknown and that he had the light of Muhammad, which was derived from God's own light and which existed from the beginning of creation. They have a major celebration on the Prophet's birthday (id Milad un'Nabi) and their imams are often connected with Pirs (Sufi spiritual guides) who are thought to have special powers. The main aim of the Barelvi movement is love of the Prophet Muhammad and defence of his honour if it is under attack.

- **The Deobandis**

This group is based on the ideas of the Wahhabis and denies the divine light and unique knowledge of the unknown of Muhammad. They are much less political than the Barelvis and emphasise Islam as a personal rather than a social religion. The Deobandis have their own mosques, which they regard as essential to pass on their view of Islam.

- **The Tablighi Jamaat**

This is an offshoot of the Deobandis, which became disillusioned with the Deobandis' introspection. They want to encourage Muslims to project Islam to the rest of the community. Their founder, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, gave them a six-point programme:

1. Profess the faith
2. Perform salah properly
3. Practice knowledge and remembrance of God
4. Respect all Muslims
5. Have sincere intentions
6. Give time to Islam.

Tablighis can be recognised by the wearing of a cap, beard and a long shirt that is worn over trousers shortened to above the ankles.

- **The Jamaat-I-Islami**

This is essentially a Pakistani political party founded by Mawdudi (1903 -1979). But as he was concerned with how to make Pakistan a Muslim state, it has great religious overtones. It tends to be most powerful among middle-class Muslims and supporters of Saudi Arabia. The basic aim of the Jamaat is to relate acceptance of the shari'ah with a modern democratic type of state. It insists that the law and Islam cannot be separated. However, it has no concept of how Muslims should behave in a non-Muslim democracy and seems to be losing support among the young Muslims. Associated with the Jamaat are the Muslim Education Trust, which is the most effective producer of text books and teaching aids for Muslim schools, and the UK Islamic Mission, which is a source of support for missionary activity. The Jamaat has close connections with Saudi Arabia which provides the funds for its publishing work.

- **Shi'ahs**

There are many Shi'ahs in Britain and they sometimes have their own mosques, but often attend other mosques without letting the members know that they are Shi'ah.

- **Modernisers**

A variety of groups are concerned with the problem (initially raised in the nineteenth century by the Indian Muslim Muhammad Iqbal) of relating Islam to Western knowledge.

The common theme of these groups is a rejection of the traditional approach to Islam. They tend to emphasise that everything a Muslim should need can be found in the Qur' an alone rather than in Hadith and Law Schools. They are also concerned with relating Islam to such issues as women's rights and the environment. Groups connected with this approach are Ahl-e-Hadith, the Pervaizi, and the Islamic Party of Britain.

- **The Ahmadiyya**

Pakistan has declared this group as non-Muslim, and most British Muslims would agree.

However, they class themselves as Muslims and are often invited into schools to talk about Islam because they speak good English and are very articulate about their beliefs.

They originated in Pakistan as a result of the work of Mirza Ahmad (1836 -1908) who proclaimed himself the Mahdi. He claimed he was called by God to bring a new message that would lead to a new age, in which all mankind would be given a better standard of living and world peace would emerge. The Ahmadiyya teach the equality of women, the need for Muslims to have Western education and the use of Western media techniques in spreading the faith. They have their own mosques.

The Impact of Foreign Sponsorship

Many of the mosques and Muslim organisations in the UK are actually funded from abroad. The Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in Regents Park is organised by the embassies of Muslim countries in London. This means that the divisions between Muslim countries (Iran and Iraq, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Iran and Saudi Arabia and so on) are imposed on the British situation. This can cause conflict within the British Muslim community. According to Iqbal Wahhab in *The Independent* of 16 September 1990, leaders of British Mosques funded by Saudi Arabia were called to a three day conference during the Gulf Conflict in order to be told that they must stop criticising the presence of American troops on the holy soil of Saudi Arabia.

There are therefore many reasons for differences in places of worship and forms of worship. Many British Muslims think that this is wrong, as Islam should be a united ummah. They propose that all mosques should:

- only use Arabic and English to unite British Muslims
- just serve the local Muslim community, not different groups
- raise all their funds in Britain.

OPTION 2 SUFIS

Use the chapter on Sufism in *Examining Religions - Islam* by Ruqaiyya Maqsood, published by Heinemann in 1995. This covers all the issues.