

An overview of the religion:





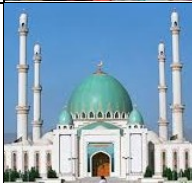

Islam is one of the world's major religions. It is the world's 2nd largest religion, with about 1.8 billion followers.

Muslims are followers of the Islamic faith. They believe in one God who created everything – he is called Allah (the Arabic name for 'God').

Muslims believe in a messenger of Allah, named Muhammad pbuh. They view him as the final prophet, following Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others.

Muhammad (pbuh: peace be upon him) is believed to be the person who founded the faith of Islam, about 1,400 years ago.

Question and Answers on Islam.

Where do most Muslims live in the world?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are about 50 countries around the world in which Islam is the largest religion. • The Arab world (the Middle East and Northern Africa) accounts for about 20% of all Muslims. • There are also millions of Muslims from Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. • China, Iran and Turkey also have many Muslims.
How many different types of Muslims are there?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two main types of Muslims: Sunni and Shia. • Although all Muslims follow the Qur'an and the five pillars of Islam, they also have some differences: • Sunni Muslims believe that leadership of the community and the 'caliph' (leader) should be elected from the community. • Shia believe that leadership should stay within the prophet's family, or be chosen by Allah.
Where do Muslims worship God?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muslims pray in a building called a mosque. • The word for mosque in Arabic is 'masjid.' Most masjids have at least one dome, and many also have one or two towers. • Muslims take off their shoes before entering the mosque to pray. This is a sign of respect.
What is the Qur'an?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam. Muslims believe that it contains the direct words of God. • Other books in Islam are the Sunnah (about Muhammad pbuh's life) and the Hadith (the words of Muhammad pbuh).

The Key Beliefs of Islam:

Muhammad pbuh

Muslims believe that God sent his final message to Earth through Muhammad pbuh 1,400 years ago. He is considered so holy that Muslims say 'peace be upon him' whenever they say or write his name. His image is never drawn.

When he was around 40 years old, Muhammad pbuh is believed to have been approached in a cave by the angel Gabriel, who sent 'revelations' from Allah. He continued to receive these messages, and to teach them to others.

Laws and Customs

There are many laws and customs written in the Qur'an, that Muslims should follow. They must dress modestly, e.g. many Muslims wear long clothes that cover their bodies, and women wear a hijab which covers parts of their hair/face. Food must be halal, meaning animals must be killed in a certain way.

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is a month in which Muslims worldwide take part in fasting. For the whole of the month, Muslims do not eat during daylight hours.

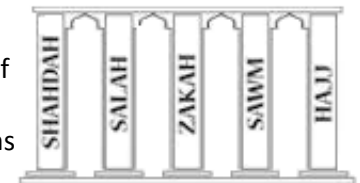


Instead, they devote themselves to prayer and to Allah.

The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam are the behaviours and beliefs by which Muslims must live their lives. They were founded in the hadith of Gabriel.

1. **Shahadah:** the declaration of faith: 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad pbuh is his messenger.'
2. **Salah:** the five daily prayers.
3. **Zakah:** Giving money to help the poor.
4. **Sawm:** Committing to fasting during the month of Ramadan.
5. **Hajj:** A religious pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims should undertake at least once in their lives.



Key Vocabulary:

Allah,	Muhammad pbuh,	Qur'an,	Five Pillars,
Ramadan,	Eid,	Mosque,	Prophet,
Hadith,	Sunni,	Shia	