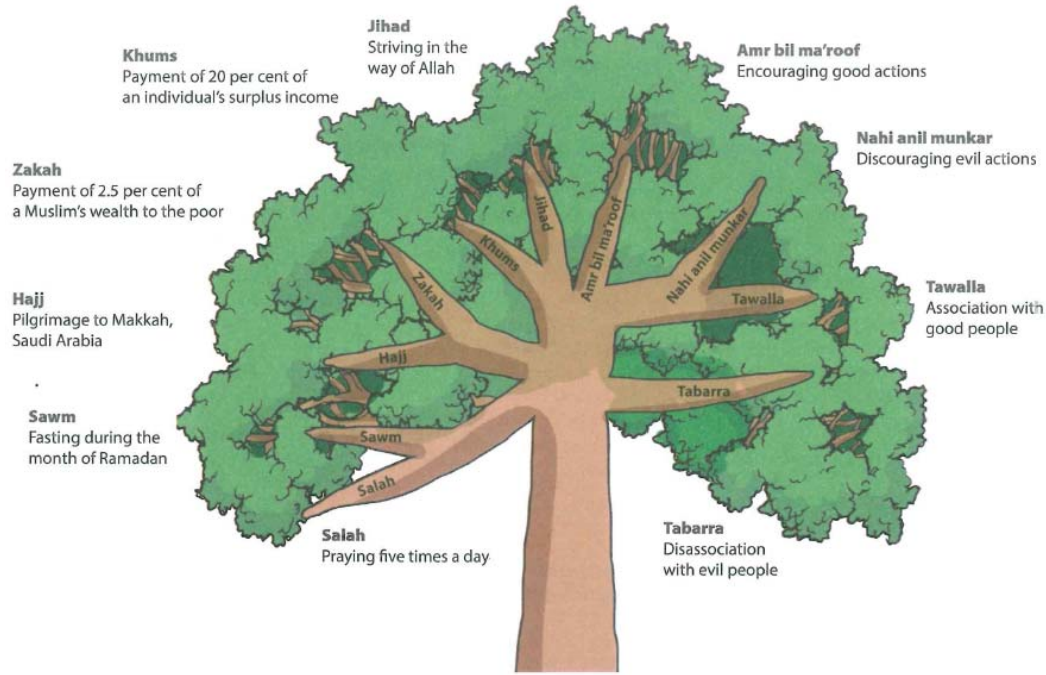


# Living the Muslim Life

## TEN OBLIGATORY ACTS—Shi'a Islam

**Essential information:** The Ten Obligatory Acts are the most important duties for Shi'a Muslims. Most of these acts are also carried out by Sunni Muslims. They teach Shi'a Muslims that beliefs are not enough, that actions are essential too.



For Shia Muslims, the Ten Obligatory Acts are like the branches of a tree that flourish and grow from strong roots (5 roots of Usul ad-Din). These acts enable Shia Muslims to connect with Allah, purify their hearts, ease the suffering of the poor, and promote a better society. Additionally, they improve their chances of getting into paradise in the next life. Sunni Muslims also perform all except Khums, but officially recognize only five acts as the Five Pillars

The 10 obligatory Acts are based on the Qur'an, the Hadith and the work of early Shi'a scholars.

"The believers, both men and women, support each other; they order what is right and forbid what is wrong." (Surah 9:21)

## THE FIVE PILLARS

<p><b>Shahadah (Faith)</b></p> <p>To believe in no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet and the messenger of Allah.</p>	<p><b>Salah (Prayer)</b></p> <p>To pray five times each day: Fajr - Before Sunrise Zuhr - Early Afternoon Asr - Late Afternoon Maghrib - After Sunset Isha - Night.</p>	<p><b>Sawm (Fasting)</b></p> <p>To give up food and drink during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan.</p>	<p><b>Zakah (Almsgiving)</b></p> <p>To give a share of personal wealth to help people in need and support the Muslim community.</p>	<p><b>Hajj (Pilgrimage)</b></p> <p>To perform a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in a lifetime.</p>
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## SHAHADAH—declaration of faith

Shahadah the first of the Five Pillars of Islam. It is the declaration of faith for all Muslims, including Sunni and Shi'a. The Shahadah sums up the core beliefs of Islam.

### What is Shahadah?

It is based on the teaching:

"God bears witness that there is no god but Him, as do the angels and those who have knowledge."

The Shahadah has two parts that all Muslims recite:

1. I Bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone and He has no partner.

2. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.

A number of Shi'a Muslims will also add a third phrase:

And I bear witness that Ali is the friend of God.

### The importance of the Shahadah for Muslims today:

- Shahadah sums up the core Muslim beliefs, which are Tawhid (oneness of God) and Risalah (prophethood).
- Anyone who wants to become a Muslim is required to repeat the words.
- It reminds a Muslim of the important commitment they have made, making them more likely to honour it.
- Rewards are promised to those who put Allah and the Prophet Muhammad before everything else.
- The Shahadah is the first thing recited into the ears of a newborn child, and is also repeated during burial.

## SAWM—fasting

**Essential Information:** one of the five pillars and obligatory acts. It means 'to abstain', and is used to refer to fasting, which is particularly important during the month of Ramadan. Muslims hope to experience a special feeling of closeness to Allah during Ramadan.

### What is Sawm?

- Fasting
- Only required by healthy and mature Muslims (not required to fast if old, sick, travelling, pregnant, or young children. Adults must make up missed days at another time, or pay money towards feeding poor families.)
- Fasting starts from the first lights of dawn and ends with sunset.

### The importance of the Sawm for Muslims today:

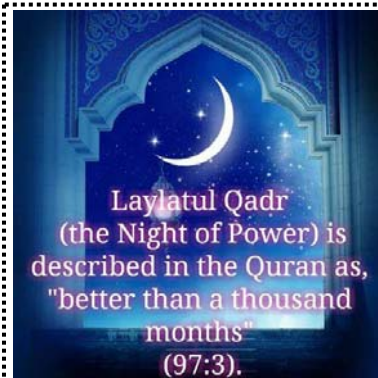
- Helps them to appreciate the suffering of the poor and be more grateful for what they have
- Brings them closer to God
- Brings community closer
- Prophet Muhammad taught that fasting is pointless if Muslims do not become better people as a result
- Fasting makes Muslims spiritually purer



### The Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr)

There is a close link between Ramadan and Laylat al-Qadr, which is when the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation from Allah.

Muslims hope to experience their own special feeling of being close to Allah in the last days of Ramadan, as a sign of Allah's acceptance of their prayers. During the final nights of Ramadan, Muslims hold extra prayers.



## SALAH—prayer

**Essential Information:** 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.

"keep up the prayer: prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour." (Surah 29:45)

"Celebrate the glory of your Lord and be among those who bow down to Him: worship your Lord until what is certain comes to you." (Surah 29:45)

### Features of Salah:



### ABLUTION (WUDU)

It is important to be clean for prayer. Muslims must wash parts of the face and body including hands, mouth, elbows and feet. Sunni Muslims wipe their whole head and wash their feet; Shi'a Muslims wipe the front of the head and the top of their feet.

### TIMINGS

There are 5 daily prayers (fajr, zuhr, asr, maghrib, isha). Sunni Muslims pray at these 5 set times;

Shi'a Muslims combine some of the prayers and pray three times a day.

### RECITATIONS

- Words recited during salah are taken mainly from the Qur'an and the Hadith.

### MOVEMENTS

- Each salah is made up of a sequence of actions and prayers known as rak'ah, including standing, kneeling, bowing and prostrating.



### DIRECTION (QIBLAH)

- Muslims face Maakah, there the Ka'bah is located

### Salah in the lives of Muslims today

- Salah can be offered anywhere but Muslims aim to go to the mosque
- Muslims can also offer Salah at home, where a clean space may be allocated to pray with other relatives.
- The most important day of the week for Muslims is Friday. This is when the Jummah prayer takes place in mosques, the main part being a sermon by the imam (prayer leader). (Do not confuse this type of imam with, for example, the 12 Imams whom Twelver Shia Muslims believe have been chosen by Allah.)

## Zakah and Khums

**Essential information:** Zakah is one of the Five Pillars of Islam for Sunni Muslims and one of the Ten Obligatory Acts for Shia Muslims. It is an act of charity that involves sharing one's wealth with the poor. Khums is an additional tax paid by Shi'a Muslims to be spent by their leaders on various causes.

### Zakah

Muslims believe that wealth is a gift from Allah, and should be shared with those that are less fortunate.

- 2.5% of the value of savings or wealth
- Means 'purification' so is a way for Muslims to become purified from greed and become closer to God
- Only given by Muslims who have an income above a certain value, called the nisab
- Goes to the less fortunate, those in debt, widows and orphans, and to other beneficial causes in the community.



- The poor
- Orphans
- Schools
- Mosques and religious scholars

### Khums

Shi'a Muslims also believe in khums, which means 'fifth'. It began as a contribution of 20% of the value of 'battle gains' (Surah 8:41), given by Muslim armies to religious causes. Today Shi'a Muslims contribute 20% of all of their wealth. In the Shi'a tradition this is normally given to Imams, but, as there is no imam present today, they give this to their leader, the Grand Ayatollah, who spends it on charitable causes including:

*"Alms [food or money given to the poor] are meant only for the poor, the needy [...] to free slaves and help those in debt, for God's cause, and for travellers in need." (Surah 9: 60)*



## Haji

**Essential information:** Hajj is the pilgrimage made to Makkah in Saudi Arabia. It is one of the five pillars and the 10 Obligatory Acts. It is believed that by performing Hajj all of their sins can be forgiven.

### What is Hajj?

- Hajj is commanded in the Qur'an: 'Proclaim the Pilgrimage to all people' (Surah 22:27).

*We commanded Abraham and Ishmael: 'Purify My House for those who walk round it, those who stay there, and those who bow and prostrate themselves in worship.' (Surah 2: 125)*

- Makkah is the holiest place for Muslims. The Ka'bah is believed to be the first place dedicated to the worship of Allah. It was rebuilt by Ibrahim and Isma'il around 4000 years ago:
- Hajj is important for Muslims because they are following in the footsteps of Ibrahim, Ismail, and Muhammad.

### How Hajj is performed:

To perform Hajj, Muslims must:

1. be physically able
2. be able to afford all the expenses
3. pass through a safe route.



Pilgrims wear ihram to symbolize unity and equality. For men this is two sheets of white cloth wrapped around the body, while women dress in simple clothes that are usually white.

**BENEFITS:** stronger relationship with God, unites all Muslims, inspires pilgrims to become better people.

<b>Tawaf</b>	Walking 7 times anti-clockwise around the ka'bah, and often trying to touch the Black Stone. This was the practice Muhammad.
<b>Sa'ee</b>	Walking between two hills in memory of Ibrahim's wife Hagar, who was left in the desert with their son Isma'il, searching for water.
<b>Standing at Arafat</b>	A day of repentance and prayer, the place where Muhammad gave his final sermon.
<b>Ramy al-jimar</b>	Stoning of pillars that represent Satan. In memory of Ibrahim's confrontation with the devil.
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Animals sacrificed to remember Ibrahim's son Isma'il's readiness to give his life to God. The meat is distributed to the poor.
<b>Hair cutting</b>	Men shave their head and women cut a few hairs to symbolise a new beginning.

## Jihad

**Essential information:** means to 'strive' or 'struggle', particularly against evil. There are two kinds: greater (spiritual) and lesser (physical). The large majority of Muslims reject extremist interpretations of Jihad.

Muslims recognise that life is full of challenges and struggles, but that they should try and be better for Allah. This striving to be better is known as 'jihad'.



Greater Jihad	Lesser Jihad
Striving to resist evil, to be a better person.	Physically resisting evil in the world. It is allowed if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is persecution</li> <li>• Religious freedoms are taken away</li> <li>• Islam has to be defended from attack</li> <li>• It is authorised by a religious leader</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• jihad of the soul: improving your character</li> <li>• Of the tongue: telling others about Islam</li> <li>• Of the pen: writing about your beliefs</li> </ul>	<i>"Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits." (Surah 2:190)</i>

### Jihad today:

- Both types were practiced by Muhammad, and Muslims are required to follow his example
- Allah is pleased with those who improve themselves, it brings them closer to Him.
- The majority of Muslims do not agree with the way in which extremist groups interpret lesser jihad. For example, the Qur'an teaches that lesser jihad cannot be used to convert people to Islam, but this is how it is being used by some groups like IS.
- Lesser jihad is only permitted when certain conditions are met: for example when religious freedom is taken away. Religious freedom is protected by law in the UK and many other countries around the world. This makes jihad less relevant to Muslims today.

## Celebrations and Festivals

**Essential information:** All Muslims celebrate 2 main festivals: Id-ul-Adha and Id-ul-Fitr. Shi'as have 2 additional: Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura. Special occasions are a way for Muslims to unite, honour people and events in the past, and

Celebration	Why is it important?	What happens?
<b>Id-UI-Adha</b> —remembers the devotion of Ibrahim and Isma'il, and marks the end of Hajj	Remembers when Ibrahim and Isma'il's faith was tested by God. Ibrahim had a dream where he was sacrificing Isma'il and interpreted it to mean that he must do this. God stopped him, but praised him for his dedication. It reminds Muslims to show devotion to God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Animals are sacrificed and meat is shared with the poor.</li> <li>•New clothes are worn and people greet each other saying "Id Mubarak" (blessed Eid).</li> <li>•Families go to the mosque for special prayers and a sermon by the imam.</li> </ul>
<b>Id-ul-Fitr</b> —festival at the end of Ramadan (Sunni and Shi'a)	Festival at the end of Ramadan—Muslims express joy and gratitude for being able to complete a month of fasting for Allah. By fasting they strengthen their relationship with Allah, improve themselves, and appreciate what they have.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•New clothes are worn and people greet each other saying "Id Mubarak" (blessed Eid).</li> <li>•Gifts are exchanged</li> <li>•Money given to the poor</li> <li>•Families go to the mosque for special prayers and a sermon by the imam.</li> </ul>
<b>Id-ul-Ghadeer</b> —remembers the appointment of Ali	Celebrates the day Shi'a Muslims believe that Muhammad appointed Ali as his successor. This happened at a pond called Ghadir Khumm during Muhammad's last Hajj.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fasting is encouraged</li> <li>•Gathering held in mosques where poetry is recited and scholars give speeches.</li> </ul>
<b>Ashura</b> —a day of solemn remembrance (Shi'a)	Commemorates the day when Imam Husayn was martyred (killed for his beliefs), along with his family and companions in Karbala, Iraq. This was because he refused to swear allegiance to the oppressive and corrupt ruler Yazid. It is a reminder to Muslims to stand up against injustice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Gathering in mosques</li> <li>•Often wear black to showing mourning</li> <li>•Many make pilgrimage to Karbala</li> <li>•Some perform acts of self flagellation to express grief</li> <li>•Many fast for two days; Ashura also coincides with the day Musa and his followers were freed from Egypt. Muhammad observed 2 days of fasting to remember this.</li> </ul>

