

Islam

Practices

Festivals

There are three main festivals. Id ul-Adha, Id ul-Fitr and Ashura.

Id ul-Adha

This festival of sacrifice also known as Greater Eid. This festival remembers and honours the prophet Ibrahim who was willing to sacrifice his son for God. In this festival Muslims will visit families and friends and enjoy meals together, cards and presents are given. It begins with prayers at the mosque an imam will preach a sermon about sacrifice. Animals are sacrificed and split into thirds, one third to family, one third extended family and friends and final third to the poor.

Id ul-Fitr

This festival means breaking of the fast its also known as Lesser Eid. This festival marks the end of Ramadan. Muslims gather together in the mosque, say special prayers, have a sermon about the importance of forgiveness. Everyone wears their special clothes, homes are decorated, special foods are eaten, cards and gifts are given, Muslims will visit ceremonies to remember family members who have died. Many Muslims will be given the day off work to celebrate.

Ashura

Day of remembrance in Shi'a Islam. Ashura means tenth and takes place on the 10th day of Muharram. For Shi'a Muslims they remember the death of Hussain. It is a time of mourning after the martyrdom of Hussain. This festival is a symbol of struggle against injustice and oppression. Mosques are covered in black, Muslims wear black, recite poems and rein act the story. For Sunni Muslims this is a festival of atonement and remembers the day the Israelites were saved. Others remember it as when Noah left the ark after the flood.

Jihad

This is the struggle against evil. The aim of Jihad is for a Muslim to strive to improve themselves and the societies they live in.

Greater Jihad

This is the personal inward spiritual struggle of Muslims. They must follow the five pillars of Islam to get close to God. Muslims must devote themselves to God by avoiding temptations and distractions. They will make great efforts to improve their life and the lives of people in their community.

Lesser Jihad

This type of Jihad is seen as the outward physical struggle to defend Islam from threat. Lesser jihad can lead to holy war some of the criteria for this is:

- It must be declared by a religious teacher.
- It can't be used to make people to convert to Islam.
- It must be in response to a threat to the faith.
- It must not be used to gain land or wealth.
- It must be a last resort
- It can't involve killing innocent civilians.

Five Pillars of Islam

Shahadah

Declaration of faith '*There is no God but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.*' (Ali is the friend of God is added by Shi'a Muslims) By saying this with intent and in front of Muslim witness this is what makes you a Muslim. It should be if possible the first thing and last thing you hear in life. The way to show your faith can be seen through the other four pillars.

Salah

This is the pillar of prayer and Sunni Muslims are required to pray at five set times a day (Shi'a combine prayers therefore pray three times a day.) in order to be spiritually cleaned before they pray Muslims will do wudu. During prayer Muslims will do rak'ah while facing in the direction of Makkah. Prayer was commanded by God, it creates a greater awareness of God which helps them to be motivated to do God will.

Sawm

This is fasting during the month of Ramadan. Muslims will go without food and drink during daylight hours. Many Muslims will recite the whole of the Qur'an during this month to remember the teachings and its importance in their lives. The whole focus this month is on God, therefore purity of thought is needed to cleanse the soul and free it from harm. It is also a time to understand and connect with those in society who are less fortunate.

Zakah

This is the pillar of giving **alms** (giving money to the poor) you must give 2.5% of savings every year. Shi'a give an additional 20% known as khums. Zakah reminds Muslims that everything they own comes from God and belongs to God. By giving Zakah it frees people from desire and teaches self discipline and honesty. Zakah helps to purify the soul removing selfishness and greed.

Hajj

This pillar is religious pilgrimage to Makkah. It should be made at least once in your lifetime if able to. There is a lot of significance behind Hajj.

- Brings about spiritual transformation.
- Teaches humility in relationship with God.
- Produces inner peace.
- Shows self discipline.
- Emphasises unity and equality.
- Reminds Muslims of their faith.
- Leads to forgiveness of their sins.

How to answer exam questions

Q1) **Multiple choice question-** remember you only need to give one answer. **(1 mark)**

Q2) **Give two** – in this question you need to give two words or two simple sentences in your answer. **(2 marks)**

Q3) **Explain two ways** – you need to write two paragraphs that clearly make a point that is explained and backed up. (could have wording of contrasting or influences) **(4 marks)**

Contrasting requires you to give two different views.

Influences requires you to show how it impacts on the actions and way a believer leads their life.

Q4) **Explain two You must refer to scripture or sacred writing-** you need to write two paragraphs that clearly make a point that is explained and backed up. In this answer you must include a quote that shows how it links to your point or a teaching. **(5 marks)**

- Q5) Evaluate the statement and include: Christian teachings
- Detailed arguments that support the statement
- Detailed arguments that go against the statement
- Reach a justifiable conclusion

In this answer you need to clearly explain your points, back them up and show how they agree/disagree with the statement. When using quotes, you must explain what they mean and how they link to your points made. In your conclusion you must reach an overall judgment and show why you came to it. **(12 marks)**