Your notes

GCSE Religious Studies: revision notes

Islam: beliefs and teachings

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Key beliefs in Sunni and Shi'a Islam

- Sunni Muslims hold Six Articles of Faith: belief in Allah, the angels, the holy books, the prophets, the Day of Judgement, and predestination (**al-Qadr**).
- Shi'a Muslims hold the five roots of Usul ad-Din: **Tawhid** (the oneness of Allah), Adalat (Allah's justice), Nubuwwah (prophethood), **Imamah** (the leadership of the Imams) and Mi'ad (the Day of Judgement).

The nature of Allah

- **Tawhid**: Allah is one and unique (Surah 112). Associating anything with Allah (**shirk**) is the greatest sin.
- Allah is immanent (close to and within creation) and transcendent (beyond it), omnipotent, beneficent, merciful and just. Almost every chapter of the Qur'an begins with the Bismillah: 'In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful'.

Angels, prophets and holy books

- Angels are made of light and obey Allah. Jibril (Gabriel) revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad; Mika'il (Michael) brings nourishment.
- Prophets include Adam (the first), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad, the final prophet, the 'Seal of the Prophets'.
- Holy books include the Qur'an, revealed to Muhammad from 610 CE and believed to be the final, complete word of Allah, as well as the Torah (Tawrat), the Psalms (Zabur), the Gospel (Injil) and the Scrolls of Abraham.

Life after death, predestination and leadership

- **Akhirah**: after death, souls wait in **barzakh**. On the Day of Judgement, everyone will be judged on their deeds and sent to paradise (**Jannah**) or hell (Jahannam).

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- **Al-Qadr**: Allah knows and decides everything, yet humans have free will and are responsible for their actions.
- Shi'a Muslims believe Muhammad appointed his cousin and son-in-law Ali as the first Imam. Sunni Muslims believe the community chose Abu Bakr as the first caliph.

Your notes

Key terms

Tawhid	The oneness of Allah.
Shirk	Associating anything with Allah; the greatest sin.
Risalah	Prophethood: Allah's communication through prophets.
Akhirah	Life after death.
Al-Qadr	Predestination: Allah's knowledge and control of everything.
Barzakh	The state of waiting between death and the Day of Judgement.
Jannah	Paradise.
Jahannam	Hell.
Imamah	The Shi'a belief in the divinely chosen leadership of the Imams.
Sunni and Shi'a	The two main branches of Islam.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is Tawhid?
2. What is shirk?
3. Which angel revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad?
4. Who is the final prophet in Islam?
5. What do Muslims believe the Qur'an is?
6. What is Akhirah?
7. What is al-Qadr?
8. What is barzakh?

Answers

1. The oneness of Allah
2. Associating anything with Allah, the greatest sin
3. Jibril (Gabriel)
4. Muhammad
5. The final, complete word of Allah
6. Belief in life after death
7. Predestination: Allah's knowledge and control of everything

8. The state of waiting between death and the Day of Judgement

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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