Your notes

GCSE Religious Studies: revision notes

Islam: practices

Contents

1. The Five Pillars
2. The Ten Obligatory Acts (Shi'a)
3. Jihad
4. Festivals and commemorations
5. Key terms
6. Quick questions
7. What to do next

The Five Pillars

- **Shahadah**: the declaration of faith, 'There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.'
- **Salah**: praying five times a day, facing Makkah (the **qiblah**), after **wudu** (ritual washing). Friday midday prayer (Jummah) is held at the mosque. Many Shi'a Muslims combine the five prayers into three sessions.
- **Sawm**: fasting from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan. Children, the ill, pregnant women and travellers are among those excused. The Night of Power (Laylat al-Qadr) remembers the first revelation of the Qur'an.
- **Zakah**: giving 2.5% of savings each year to help the poor. Shi'a Muslims also pay **khums**, one-fifth of surplus income.
- **Hajj**: the pilgrimage to Makkah, required once in a lifetime for those able to go. Rituals include circling the Ka'bah (tawaf), standing at Arafat and stoning the pillars at Mina.

The Ten Obligatory Acts (Shi'a)

- They include **salah**, **sawm**, **zakah**, khums, Hajj and jihad, as well as encouraging good, forbidding evil, loving those who love Allah, and turning away from Allah's enemies.

Jihad

- Greater **jihad** is the personal struggle to live as a good Muslim. Lesser **jihad** is the struggle to defend Islam, with strict conditions: for example, it must be in self-defence, declared by a proper religious authority, and must not harm civilians.

Festivals and commemorations

- **Id-ul-Fitr** celebrates the end of Ramadan with special prayers, gifts, new clothes and charity.
- Id-ul-Adha, at the end of **Hajj**, remembers Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il. An animal is sacrificed and the meat is shared, including with the poor.
- Ashura: Shi'a Muslims mourn the martyrdom of Husayn, Muhammad's grandson, at Karbala in 680 CE. Many Sunni Muslims fast, remembering how Musa (Moses) was saved.

Key terms

Shahadah	The Muslim declaration of faith.
Salah	Prayer five times a day.
Wudu	Ritual washing before prayer.
Qiblah	The direction of Makkah, which Muslims face to pray.
Sawm	Fasting during Ramadan.
Zakah	Giving 2.5% of savings to the poor each year.
Khums	A Shi'a tax of one-fifth of surplus income.
Hajj	The pilgrimage to Makkah.
Jihad	Struggle: the personal struggle to be a good Muslim, or the defence of Islam.
Id-ul-Fitr	The festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan.

Quick questions

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

1. What is the Shahadah?
2. How many times a day do Muslims pray (salah)?
3. What is wudu?
4. Which direction do Muslims face to pray?
5. In which month do Muslims fast?
6. What share of their savings do Muslims give as zakah?
7. What is khums?
8. What is Hajj?

Answers

1. The Muslim declaration of faith
2. Five
3. Ritual washing before prayer
4. Towards Makkah (the qiblah)

Your notes

5. Ramadan
6. 2.5%
7. A Shi'a tax of one-fifth of surplus income
8. The pilgrimage to Makkah

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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