



## WHAT DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE?

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# WHAT DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE?

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## What do Muslims believe?

Muslims believe in a Supreme God that is called Allah in Arabic. "Islam" means "submission" in Arabic and a Muslim is a person who submits his life to the way and authority of Allah. This means that everything in a Muslim's life is under God's control. A Muslim is also someone who can repeat the Shahada, which is a declaration of faith, and understands and believes it completely. The Shahada says:

*"There is no God but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God."*

Muslims do five special things as part of their faith. These tasks are like the pillars that support a house and are called the "Five Pillars of Islam". The first pillar is to believe in one God. The second is that Muhammad is God's last prophet. Muslims also have to pray five times a day.

The third pillar is to give a part of personal wealth to charity every year. This is called Zakat. The fourth pillar of Islam is to fast during the month of Ramadan. This means that Muslims do not eat or drink anything from sunrise to sunset. The last pillar is that every Muslim must try to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime.

There are certain things in a Muslim's life that he/she is allowed to do and eat these things are Halaal. This includes eating the meat of an animal that is slaughtered in a certain way. There are also certain things that they are not allowed to do these are Haraam. Some of the things that are Haraam are pork and alcohol. The word Halaal means "allowed" or "accepted" and Haraam means "forbidden".

## Who was Muhammad?

Muslims believe that Muhammad is Allah's final messenger or prophet to humans. He was born in Mecca, in the Arab Emirates, around 570 AD. They also believe that Allah sent other prophets like Ibrahim, or Abraham, and Isa, or Jesus, but that his final message was sent through Muhammad. Muslims do not worship Muhammad they only worship Allah.

## What is the Qur'an?

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the last holy book that was handed to Muhammad by Allah to guide us in life.

Muhammad and his people spoke Arabic, and this is the language in which he received his messages from God. Muslims read the Qur'an in Arabic and also pray in Arabic. Muslim children go to classes where they learn to read the language.

## The spread of Islam

A century, or 100 years, after Muhammad's death Muslims had become powerful and had defeated the Persian and Byzantine empires. They ruled the area from North Africa to the border of China. Muslim rulers were just and allowed religious freedom and many of the people they conquered eventually converted to Islam. There are more than 50 independent Muslim countries in the world and about 1.3 billion Muslims.

## Muslim Festivals New Year/Day of Hijra



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This is the beginning of the Islamic year and celebrates the day the prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina to set up the first Islamic state. The Muslim calendar counts dates from the Hijra, which is why every Islamic year has the suffix A.H after it. There is no specific celebration on this day, maybe the family will say a special prayer but otherwise it is a quieter holiday unlike some of the others.

### **Ramadan**

This festival lasts for a month and requires all Muslims who have reached the age of puberty to fast between sunrise and sunset. They are not allowed to eat or drink anything during the day, but are supposed to spend their days in meditation and prayer. At sunset the family gathers to break their fast and then pray together. In the evening the men of the family usually go to the mosque where the community meets for extended prayers. This is one of the holiest months on the Islamic calendar.

The festival of Id Al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan. This is a happy festival when the poor and children receive gifts, clothes and sweets and families gather for celebrations.

### **Dhil-Hijja/ The Month of Pilgrimage**

This is the month of the Great Pilgrimage to Mecca. Every year millions of Muslims travel to Mecca, the holiest place to them. This is also called the Hajj and every Muslim has try and go there at least once in his or her lifetime.

The end of the pilgrimage is also celebrated as a festival called Id Al-Adha, or the Festival of Sacrifice, and lasts for 4 days. During this time animals are and a portion of the meat is given to the poor while the rest is given to close family and extended family and friends.



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