

## Key words!

Allah: The Arabic word for God.

Muslim: A follower of Islam.

Muhammad: The founder of Islam.

Mosque: The place where Muslims worship.

Imam: A spiritual leader in Islam.

Qur'an: The Muslim's holy book; the Revealed Book.

Wudu: The act of washing before prayer.

Ramadam: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which fasting is required from sunrise to sunset.

Five pillars of Islam: Five obligatory practices Muslims must follow: Shahadah, Salah, zakah, sawm and Hajj.

Hajj: An annual pilgrimage to Mecca, which every Muslim should aim to make.

Salat: A spiritual communication with Allah. Prayer five times a day.

Zakah: Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due (giving to charity)

Sawm: Fasting in the month of Ramadan

Hijab: A covering cloak worn by Muslim Women

Prophet: a messenger/teacher of the will of God

## Mosque

The Arabic word for mosque, "masjid", means "place of prostration". The first mosque was the Prophet Muhammad's home in Medina, Saudi Arabia, a 7th-Century house with a large courtyard surrounded by long rooms. The simplest mosque would be a prayer room with a wall marked with a "mihrab" – a place indicating the direction of Mecca, which Muslims should face when praying. A typical mosque also includes a minaret, a dome and a place to wash before prayers. Each feature has its own significance. Before prayer, Muslims perform ritual washing, or "wudu", in the ablutions area. Larger mosques have an ablutions fountain in their entryways or courtyards. In smaller mosques, the restrooms may be used for ablutions.

# Islam

## Key beliefs

- Muslims [believe](#) that there is only One God.
- The Arabic word for God is Allah.
- According to Muslims, God sent a number of prophets to mankind to teach them [how to live](#) according to His law.
- Jesus, Moses and Abraham are respected prophets of God.
- They believe that the final Prophet was Muhammad.
- Muslims base their laws on their holy book the [Qur'an](#), and the Sunnah.
- Muslims believe the Sunnah is the practical example of Prophet Muhammad and that there are five basic [Pillars of Islam](#).

## Eid

**Eid** al-Fitr literally means the Festival of Breaking the Fast, and it marks the end of a month-long fast. During the month of Ramadan, observant Muslims are expected to abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk in order to purify their minds and bodies. On the day of **Eid**, however, it is forbidden to fast. The first Eid was celebrated in 624 CE by the [Prophet Muhammad](#) with his friends and relatives after the victory of the battle of Jang-e-Badar.

## Prophet Muhammed

Muhammad was born in Mecca in Saudi Arabia in 570.

He was a deeply spiritual man, and often spent time in meditation on Mount Hira.

The traditional story of the [Qur'an](#) tells how one night in 610 he was meditating in a cave on the mountain when he was visited by the angel Jibreel who ordered him to [recite](#). Once Jibreel mentioned the name of Allah, Muhammad began to recite [words](#) which he came to believe were the words of God.

Believing that God had chosen him as his messenger Muhammad began to preach what God had revealed to him.

## Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed in stages to the [Prophet Muhammad](#) over 23 years.

Muslims regard Qur'anic revelations as the sacred word of [God](#), intended to correct any errors in previous holy books such as the [Old and New Testaments](#).

There are 114 chapters in the Qur'an, which is written in the old Arabic dialect.