



# Islam

## Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared to help staff and students in raising awareness, increasing knowledge and to assist their work at MMU.

The resource has been prepared according to the Faith Communities Navigator' published in 2007 by the Faith Regen Foundation and guidance from

MMU Chaplains. The interpretation of the faith, observances and representation of standards etc. are part of this professional judgement and should not be construed as an authorised or official interpretation. MMU has sought to acknowledge the use of any published material in the text of this resource. Any inadvertent omissions deemed necessary will be corrected upon notification of this error.

## Key beliefs

Islam began in Arabia and was revealed to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during the 7th CE. Those who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that there is only one God. The Arabic word for God is Allah. The word Islam means submission to Allah (God) and those who follow Islam are called Muslims.

Muslims believe that everything in life should be at the service of Allah. Together with Judaism and Christianity, Islam is one of the three Abrahamic Faiths or Religions of the Book. Islam is the second most popular faith in the world with over a thousand million adherents. There are between 1.5 and 3 million Muslims in Britain, making it the second most popular faith. There are two main groups of Muslims: Sunni Muslims who make up 90% of the world's Muslims, and the Shi'ite Muslims who make up the rest 10%.

Muslims have 6 main beliefs that define the fundamental theology of Islam and form the core of other practices:

- Belief in Allah as the one and only God
- Belief in angels
- Belief in the holy books
- Belief in the Prophets eg Adam, Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Dawud (David), Isa (Jesus)
- Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final prophet
- Belief in the Day of Judgement... the day when the life of every human being will be assessed to decide whether they go to heaven or hell

There are five pillars of Islam that help Muslims put their faith into action:

- Shahadah - declaration of faith
- Salat - ritual prayer 5 times a day
- Zakat - giving a fixed proportion to charity
- Sawm - fasting during the month of Ramadan
- Hajj - pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime

## Places of worship

The Mosque plays a central role in a Muslims individual and community life. Prayer in Islam is not restricted to the Mosque when prayer time comes many Muslims pray wherever they are.

## Food and drink

In Islam, all food is classified as either halal (lawful) or haram (Prohibited). Religious law requires that animals be slaughtered in the name of Allah by a trained person. Pork and alcohol are forbidden. The Dietary Code of Practice should be adopted for the preparation and serving of food.

## Dress

Both men and women are required to dress modestly.

## Festivals and days of worship

There are only two Muslim festivals set down in Islamic law: Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha (Eid is a word meaning festival). But there are several other special days which Muslims celebrate.

**Al-Hijra (1 Muharram)** - this festival commemorates the Hijra (or Hegira) in 622 CE when the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) moved from Mecca to Medina.

**Ashura (10 Muharram)** - Shi'a Muslims use the day to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet (pbuh) in 680 CE. It has been a day of fasting for Sunni Muslims since the days of the early Muslim community.

**Milad un Nabi (12 Rabi' Awal)** - at this time Muslims celebrate the coming/birth of Muhammad (pbuh), and the events of his life.

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**Lailat al Miraj (27 Rajab)** - the festival celebrates Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in a single night on a winged creature called Buraq. From Jerusalem he ascended into heaven, where he met the earlier prophets, and eventually God.

**Lailat-ul-Bara'h (15 Shabaan)** - the Night of Forgiveness (Lailat-ul-Bara'h) takes place two weeks before Ramadan. Muslims spend the night in prayer seeking God's guidance and forgiveness for their sins. It is an opportunity to put the past behind them and forgive each other. Many Muslims believe that a person's destiny is fixed for the coming year by God on this night.

**Lailat al Qadr (27 Ramadan)** - the Night of Power marks the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) by Allah through Arch Angel Gabriel. No one knows of its exact date, but the Prophet (pbuh) said that it falls in the last 10 nights of Ramadan, and is most likely on the 27th night.

**Eid ul Fitr (1 Shawwal)** - this marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting, and is a festival of great celebration. In Islamic countries it is a public holiday.

**Eid ul Adha (10 Dhul-Hijja)** - this festival marks the end of the Hajj or holy pilgrimage, which is one of the 5 pillars of Islam. It commemorates the sacrifice offered by Abraham of his son in the plane of Arafat in Arabia. However, it is celebrated by all Muslims, not just those who are on the pilgrimage.

## Bereavement

Burial must take place as soon as possible following death, and may therefore occur at short notice.

## Text

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed by God in stages to the Prophet Muhammad over 23 years. Treated with great respect, many Muslims memorise various chapters and will not touch it without wudhu (physical cleansing of the body and spiritual cleansing of the soul).

The diversity calendar can be found at [www.mmu.ac.uk/humanresources/equalities](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/humanresources/equalities)

This fact sheet has been produced using information found in the 'Faith Communities Navigator' published in 2007 by the Faith Regen Foundation and [www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/zoroastrian](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/zoroastrian) with guidance from MMU Chaplains.