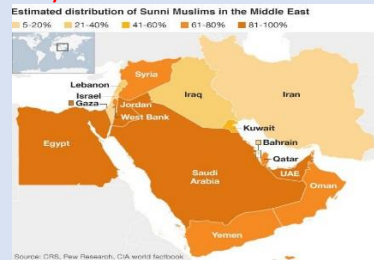


What unites the Ummah?

Within Islam, there are two main denominations, called Sunni and Shi'a. All Muslims share some key beliefs. However, some beliefs vary depending on the denomination a Muslim belongs to. Why did the divide between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims happen? Sunni and Shi'a Muslims agree on the basic principles of Islam, such as believing in one God and the importance of the prophets. They also share the same holy book - the Qur'an.

The reason there has been a split into different branches is due to differences in belief about who was the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad as leader of the Muslim community after his death. Many Muslims believed that Abu-Bakr, the Prophet's closest companion would be the first Caliph (which means 'deputy to God's Prophet'). This is the Sunni viewpoint. A minority believed that Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law should lead the community. These Muslims came to be known as Shi'a, which means 'Party of Ali'



Key terms

Allah - Muslim's God

A church – a Christian building for worship.

The Church – The worldwide Christian community / movement

Denomination – Different sub groups within one religion.

Haram – Forbidden.

Heaven - A place, or a state of mind, associated with God and the afterlife.

Hell - A place or state of torment and punishment for those who have done wrong.

Liturgical – Following the word of the Bible regularly through prayer and worship in church.

Nicene Creed – A set of beliefs that ALL Christians have.

Omniscient – All knowing

Omnipotent – All powerful.

Pontius Pilot – the Governor of Judea at the time of Jesus' crucifixion

Purgatory - Purely Catholic belief. Where the soul goes to be cleansed of sin before going to Heaven.

Qur'an - Muslim religious book

Rakat - set sequence of actions and prayers (standing, bowing, prostrating, and kneeling).

They turn to the left and right to show respect to the angels.

Risalah - The belief in prophets.

Tawhid - Islamic word meaning Muslims only accept one God.

Ummah – the community of Islam (like the idea of the Church in Christianity).

Muslim beliefs about Allah

Allah as one God - Tawhid

The Qur'an contains guidance for Muslims on the nature of Allah, and how to live a good life that pleases him.

Key beliefs about God include:

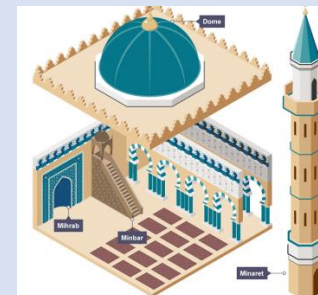
Tawhid - the belief in the oneness and unity of Allah as expressed in the first of the Five Pillars of Islam, the Shahadah. Belief in this oneness or unity of Allah is an essential aspect of Islam. Muslims believe in only one God, Allah.

"Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining the creation in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted, in Might, the Wise." Qur'an 3:18

Muslims believe that Allah is; Beneficent (All good), Immanent (Throughout the universe), Merciful (All forgiving / compassionate) Omnipotent (All powerful) and Transcendent (Beyond the universe).

Features of a Mosque

All mosques have the same internal features; Qibla – also known as a prayer wall, shows the direction of Mecca and the Ka'bah for Salat prayers. Salat is led by the imam, a man chosen for his knowledge of the Qur'an / Mihrab - usually a niche in a mosque qibla wall, to show the direction of Mecca / Minbar - to provide an elevated platform from which an imam might deliver a sermon to the congregation or speak to the Muslim community Some mosques have the additional features of a dome and minaret / Dome - this represents the universe and Allah's power as creator of all. This is the belief in the oneness of Allah or Tawhid. The dome is over the prayer hall, which is the main focus of a mosque. Minaret – the tall tower in a mosque, from where a muezzin performs the adhan to call the faithful to prayer.



Life of Muhammad (pbuh)

Muhammad was born in about 570CE, in an Arab city called Mecca. His father died before he was born, his mother died when he was six. He was brought up by his grandfather & then his uncle. When he was 25 he married a rich widow called Khadijah. They had seven children. As a young man, Muhammad was already known for his honesty & goodness. When he married Khadijah he was rich & respected – his marriage was happy. It seemed that Muhammad had everything which he could possibly want.

Muslims believe that when Muhammad was about 40, he was visited by the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) in a cave on Mount Hira. Gabriel revealed a series of verses to Muhammad which Muslims believe are the word of Allah. They make up the Muslim holy book, the Qur'an.

1. Founder of Islam.
2. Prophet and Gods messenger.
3. Final prophet of God.
4. Born in Mecca.
5. Muhammad received the word of God through Angel Gabriel, which made up the Qur'an.
6. Muhammad's popularity was seen as threatening by the people in Mecca, and Muhammad took his followers on a journey from Mecca to Medina in 622.
7. This journey is called the **Hijrah** (migration).
8. Within ten years Muhammad had gained so many followers that he was able to return and conquer Mecca.

Muhammad is known as the Seal of the Prophets. It is a title given to Muhammad in the Qur'an.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but He is the Messenger of God and the Seal of the Prophets." - Qur'an 33:40

Traditionally it means that Muhammad is the last prophet, no other prophet is to follow.



The Five Pillars of Islam are the obligations that Muslims must satisfy to live a good and responsible life and to bring them closer to God. These are:

Shahadah - sincerely reciting the declaration of faith. It is the pillar on which all the others are based. Without it, the other pillars would mean nothing. When someone says the Shahadah and mean it totally in their hearts, they are a true Muslim.

Salat - performing set prayers five times a day at specific times. Everybody now lives busy lives, and Salah is a way of Muslims keeping a connection to Allah throughout the day. That is why they are encouraged to perform salah five times every day. During times set aside for prayer, their thoughts are turned away from everyday things to Allah. Muslims pray towards the direction of Mecca as this is the holiest city for Muslims.

Zakat - giving a portion of one's income, usually one fortieth, to help the poor. This creates a bond between rich and poor and helps Muslims to purify their wealth and keep away from greed. It is usually paid once a year. Like other duties, paying Zakah is a blessing to all Muslims. Its aim is not to take money away from people—instead it is seen as a blessing. This will play a big part on the Day of Judgement, when Muslims will have to answer to Allah.

Sawm - fasting during the month of **Ramadan**, for Muslims who have reached maturity and are in good health. There are several reasons why Muslims fast during Ramadan: It builds up self-control and prevents greed, it reminds all Muslims of what it is like to be poor and hungry. Hunger is the same for everyone, so it is important to share the experience, it brings Muslims from every background and reminds them that they are all equal in the sight of Allah and it gives Muslims more time to pray, read the Qur'an and help the poor.

Hajj - the annual **pilgrimage** to **Mecca** made during the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims are expected to undertake this pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime, if they are physically able and can afford it. The journey Muslims have to take on Hajj lasts up to 5 days, where they have to do carry out certain rituals to remember Muhammad and Allah, and to cleanse themselves. There are 5 different parts of the Hajj, the most important being the Ka'bah (black stone), where Muhammad use to pray.

