

SECTION

8

MAJOR BELIEFS
OF ISLAM



RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PRACTICES, MORAL VALUES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Major Beliefs of the three Religions

Introduction

Islam is a faith that guides millions of people around the world. Its major beliefs, such as the oneness of God, belief in the prophets, angels, scripture, and judgement, among others, are expressed in the shahadah, worship-prayer, songs, dressing, etc. This section focuses on helping you to deepen your understanding of the above in order to help you to be more religiously tolerant and appreciate how the religious values in Islam may support an individual's personal growth and development.

Key Idea

Islam's foundation is built on major beliefs that guide millions of people in the world. They are: God's Oneness, prophecy, revelation, and the afterlife. The beauty and wisdom of these Islamic beliefs are expressed differently in worship, songs, prayer, dress code, etc. These have inspired many people and will surely inspire you to translate the values you learn into practice.

MAJOR BELIEFS OF ISLAM

Belief in the oneness of God (Qur'an 112:1-4)

The core tenet of Islam is tawhid, or the oneness of God. It declares that there are no equals or partners for Allah, and that He alone is the creator, sustainer, and object of devotion. The Shahada, also known as the Kalimatush Shahada, is the Islamic statement of faith and the first pillar of Islam. It contains a summary of this idea. "There is no god but Allah" (*Laa ilaaha ill Allah*) and "Muhammad is the Prophet and Messenger of Allah" (Muhammadur Rasul Allah) are the two main statements of the Shahada. The Shahada is the gateway to Islam; upon reciting it sincerely, one enters the Muslim community.

Allah, the creator of all things and the universe, is believed to be free from any partnership with anyone (*Qur'an* 29: 61). This belief, known as Tauhid, is categorised into three, namely,

Tauhid ar-Rubuubiyah; refers to the idea of maintaining the oneness in the Lordship of Allah (*Qur'an* 29: 61). It is the belief that Allah is the creator of heaven and earth and that which is in between them (both living and non-living things).

Tauhid Uluhiya or al-Ibaadah. It is the idea of maintaining Allah as the only one worthy of worship (*Qur'an 1:2; Qur'an 16:36; and Qur'an 19:36*) All prayers, rituals, and acts of worship in Islam must be done with a sincere intention for the sake of Allah alone.

Tauhid al-Asma'-was-sifaat; This is a belief that the 99 names of Allah, or the uniqueness of Allah's attributes, represent His perfect might, knowledge, mercy, justice, wisdom, and all His pure, holy, and flawless attributes.

Belief in the Prophets (Qur'an 40:78; Qur'an 2:285)

The second part of the *Shahadah*, *'ašhadu 'anna muḥammadan rasūlu-llāh'*, affirms Muhammad as the Messenger of God, completing the Islamic declaration of faith. Muslims believe God has sent guidance through prophets throughout history, starting with Adam, and the Qur'an names 25 prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. However, Muhammad is considered the final prophet, and his message is universal. Additionally, Muslims believe in 124,000 unnamed prophets, emphasising the extensive nature of God's guidance.

The prophets guide humanity to Allah's path, making belief in them essential and from Adam to Muhammad, the final messenger, they taught the message of Tauhid. As such, Muslims revere all prophets, as stated in the Qur'an, and believe in the 124,000 messengers sent by Allah, with 25 mentioned in the Qur'an.

Belief in the scriptures (Source: Qur'an 2:285-286)

The messenger, Muhammad's, belief in affirms the truth of, what was revealed to him from his Lord, namely, the Holy Qur'an, and the believers.

The above verse is telling the prophet Muhammad and all Muslim that they should believe all the revealed Books within the Qur'an.

Allah sent messages to prophets to guide humanity in the path of righteousness. These messages are compiled in the 'Kitab', or Heavenly Books deemed essential for Muslims to believe in, alongside Tauhid and Risalat. The Kitab reveals fundamental Islamic concepts like Allah, Rasul, and Akhirat. There are references to 104 Heavenly Books, including four main books and 100 Saheefas, revealed to various prophets like Adam, Ibrahim, Idris, and Shish.

The famous heavenly books revealed to the holy prophets:

- Tawrah (revealed to Moses)
- Zabur (revealed to David)
- Injil (revealed to Jesus)
- Quran (revealed to Muhammad)

Belief in these books and angels is essential in Islam. Angels are made of light. They have the mission of obeying Allah in performing various duties. The following angels play important roles in Islamic beliefs and have specific roles, as outlined below:

- Gabriel: delivering revelations.
- Mikail: managing necessities and nature
- Israfil: blowing the trumpet for judgment
- Izrail: collecting souls
- Maalik: guarding hell
- Ridwan: guarding paradise
- Munkar and Nakir: questioning the deceased
- Raqib and Atid: recording good and evil deeds

Belief in the judgement (last) day (Qur'an 84:25)

Allah is also known as 'The Master of the Day of Judgment', when human deeds on earth will determine their fate. This name is given in the Qu'ran 1:4 as one of His beautiful names. The righteous will enter paradise, while those who reject Allah will face painful punishment. Muslims also believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, as a sign of Judgment Day and a means of salvation for humanity. Reference to this can be found, in the Quran (4:157 and 43:61).

On Judgment Day, all humans will gather in the Field of Judgment (Hashar Maidan) to account for their deeds in the mortal world. This is called 'resurrection'. Belief in life after death (Akhirat) is essential, where individuals will face reward or punishment for their good or bad deeds.

Belief in destiny or predestination – Al Qadr (Qur'an 87:2-3)

Al-Qadr, the divine decree, highlights Allah's comprehensive knowledge and authority over all events, past, present, and future. It affirms that:

- Allah knows the fate of every individual, including their life journey, choices, and ultimate destiny.
- Nothing happens on earth without Allah's explicit permission, whether it's a natural phenomenon, human action, or random event.
- Allah's knowledge and control are not limited to major events but extend to every detail, no matter how small.

Al-Qadr underscores Allah's wisdom, justice, and mercy, as He allows events to unfold according to His divine plan, which is beyond human comprehension.

In sum, Muslims believe that the affairs of all human beings have been predetermined right in their mothers' wombs before they are born. Allah controls luck (*Takdir*) and decides whether a person will have good or bad luck. Man should try and work. For the results of his work and endeavor, man should depend on Allah alone.

Activity 8.1. Looking for information from the internet

Search online for information on the Articles of Faith in Islam. The following weblinks may be helpful in your search.

- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zr4r97h/revision/1?utm_source=perplexity
- [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_\(Islam\)#:~:text=performing%20our%20duty.-,The%20Six%20Articles%20of%20Faith,%2C%20Israfil%2C%20and%20more](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_(Islam)#:~:text=performing%20our%20duty.-,The%20Six%20Articles%20of%20Faith,%2C%20Israfil%2C%20and%20more)

Your teacher may provide you with a specific set of questions or a brief to find out more about a specific aspect of Islamic belief. You may want to look for additional sources of information as part of your research.

Consider how each source describes the Articles of Faith and which quotations from the Qu'ran, or other texts, support these beliefs.

Activity 8.2: Engaging with a resource person

Your teacher may invite a professional, such as an Imam, Islamic Scholar or a lecturer on Islamic studies to talk to you on the Articles of Faith in Islam.

Prepare a set of questions that you could ask in order to understand more about beliefs in Islam during the discussion.

E.g., How would shahada be applied to our daily lives? etc.

1.	
2.	

Activity 8.3: Video show

Search for relevant videos that support your understanding of the Articles of Faith in Islam as demonstrated in recitals. You may use the following weblinks.

- https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=WxuHBTES2-s&utm_source=perplexity
- https://www.islamreligion.com/videos/10874/six-articles-of-faith-part-1?utm_source=perplexity

Make notes as you watch the videos and be prepared to engage in a group discussion with your peers or teacher on the Articles of Faith,

EXPRESSION OF MAJOR BELIEFS OF ISLAM

This section outlines how Islamic beliefs are manifested in the daily lives of Muslims.

1. Worship

Congregational worship is held on Fridays from 12noon to 2pm and is referred to as *Jummah*. Other ceremonial worship happens during Eid (Fitr and Adhar).

Al-Jumu'ah (Friday) Prayer

A special congregational prayer replaces the regular Zuhr prayer on Fridays. The Imam delivers a sermon (Khutbah) in Arabic, translated if necessary, glorifying Allah, praying for blessings, and reminding the congregation to follow Islamic teachings. The prayer consists of two Rak'ah, with the Imam reciting aloud and the congregation following silently. Attendance is compulsory for men and optional for women.

Eid Prayers

They are two annual prayers: Eid al-Fitr (after Ramadan) and Eid al-Adha (during Hajj). No Adhan or Iqamah is required, as they are voluntary prayers.

Procedure:

- Takbirat-al-Ihram, followed by six additional Takbirat with raised hands.
- First Rak'ah follows the usual procedure.
- Second Rak'ah begins with six Takbirat, followed by the usual procedure.
- A special Khutbah is delivered by the Imam after the prayer.

Attendance is encouraged for all Muslims, including men, women, and children. In sum, Al-Jumu'ah and Eid prayers are special congregational prayers with unique procedures and emphasis on community and remembrance of Allah's teachings.

2. Songs

Another expression of Islamic belief is through songs. Some Muslim sing songs to demonstrate their beliefs in God. Some of the songs may express the oneness of God, his attributes as peaceful and loving, among others. The Tijaniyya, Shia Ahmadiyya sects. are among those who publicly express their beliefs in the form of songs. Example: *Hajia Police, Sallamah x Ali - Ya Ramadan and Abdur Rahman Sanni among others express Islamic beliefs in their songs.*

3. Prayer

Prayer is one of the key practices that manifest Islamic beliefs. Muslims are instructed to pray five times a day. The prayers are:

- *Dawn prayers: Fajr – 5am – 10am. Fajr or Subhi:* This is a two *raka'at* prayer offered from dawn until the sky turns bright yellow. Recitation of the surahs is done loudly. There are two *nawafil raka'at* before the *fajr* prayer known as

'*Raka'taini Fajr*'. This *nawafil* is not obligatory but recommended because of the reward it attracts.

- *Afternoon prayers: Zuhur – 12 noon – 3 pm* **Zuhr**: This is a four *raka'at* prayer offered after mid-day until mid-afternoon, i.e., when the length of an object's shadow is double its actual size. The recitation is done silently.
- *Late afternoon prayers: Asr – 3 pm – 6 pm.* **Asr**: This is a four *raka'at* prayer offered from the time that an object's shadow becomes double its size until just before sunset. Just like Zuhr, the recitation is done silently.
- *Evening prayers: Maghrib – 6 pm – 7 pm.* **Fajr or Subhi**: *Night prayers: Isha – 7 pm – 3 am.* **Ishai**: This is a four *raka'at* prayer like Zuhr and Asr but is offered from twilight to dawn, although the preferred time is before one-third of the night has passed. Also, recitation in the first two *raka'at* is done aloud while the last two are done in silence.

Besides the five mandatory daily prayers, Muslims perform special prayers such as:

- *Salat al Janazah – Prayer for the dead*
Salat-al-Janazah is a prayer for a dead Muslim brother or sister before they are buried. When a Muslim dies, adult or child, the body is washed as for Wudu' and Expiation. It is then wrapped in *Kafnan* (clean, white unsewn sheets). The body is then brought to a Masjid or public place where fellow Muslims, led by an Imam, pray over the deceased. If possible, the body is placed on its right side facing the *Qiblah*. The Imam stands behind the body and the followers form rows behind him, all facing the *Qiblah*.
- *Kushuuf /Khusuuf– Eclipse of the Sun and Moon.*

During a solar eclipse, Muslims gather for *Salatul Kusuf*, a congregational prayer with loud recitation. In contrast, *Salatul Khusuuf* is a non-congregational prayer with silent recitation, performed during a lunar eclipse. Although the two prayers share the same formula, their intentions differ. Both prayers consist of two *raka'ats*, without the need for Adhan and Iqama. Known collectively as *Kusufayn*, these prayers involve:

- Reciting *Fatihah* and a long surah (like *Baqarah*) in the first *raka'at*, either silently (*Khusuuf*) or loudly (*Kusuf*).
- A prolonged *ruku* (bowing) before standing up.
- Reciting another *Fatihah* and a shorter surah (like *Al-Imra*) in the second *raka'at*.
- The *qiyan*, *ruku*, and prostrations are repeated twice in each *raka'at*, making these prayers unique and distinctive.

Salat Istisqah – Prayer during drought: When rain is much delayed, it is recommended that Muslims pray to Allah as follows. In the morning, after sunrise but before noon, worshipers should assemble to offer the prayer in an open space or mosque. Following a two-*Rak'ah* prayer, in which *al-Fatihah* and another Surah are recited aloud, a sermon may be given. Then, worshipers should stand and raise their hands and eyes towards the heavens and pray to Allah for rain. The *du'a'* may be as follows:

*O our Lord! Send Your rain to Your servants and Your animals.
Shower Your mercy on us and revive Your dead land!
Tarawih – Voluntary prayer during Ramadan*

Tarawih is a special, voluntary prayer in Ramadan, focusing on reciting the Qur'an and seeking blessings. It is offered after the "Isha" prayer. It consists of 13 Raka'at (6 pairs + 1 Witr) or 23 Raka'at (20 + 3 Witr). It is usually performed in congregation, led by a Hafiz (Qur'an memorizer). The Hafiz recites a portion of the Qur'an each night, completing the entire recitation by the last 10 odd nights of Ramadan. Tarawih can also be offered individually or with family at home, reciting memorised portions of the Qur'an.

4. Giving

Another way in which Islamic belief is manifested is through giving. Muslims are instructed to give Zakat (mandatory giving). Zakat is 2.5% of one's annual income and it should be given to the poor and needy. Besides the mandatory Zakat, Muslims also voluntarily give Sadaqah. Sadaqah is not necessarily money but any valuable material, including food that may be freely given to persons in need. Zakat literally means "to purify." It is the third pillar of Islam and therefore it is obligatory on every Muslim male and female. Zakat is a type of welfare tax that is paid to poor Muslim brothers and sisters. A Muslim, whether male or female, must pay Zakat when his/her wealth has reached a certain determined amount called the Nisab. If his/her wealth is below the value of Nisab, he/she pays nothing. According to the Shariah, a person who possesses property exceeding the Nisab for at least a year is capable of paying Zakat. The Shariah has determined a fixed Nisab for different assets, such as currency, gold, silver, minerals, crops, property, animals, etc.

Gold, Silver and Currency

The Nisab for gold, silver and currency depends on the current value of gold, which changes from time to time. The amount to be given as Zakat is 2.5% of any savings of one year or more.

Livestock

Zakat must be paid once a year on livestock such as cows, camels, sheep and goats, when their number has reached the level of the Nisab. The following lists the Nisab for ownership of livestock and the Zakat owed accordingly.

Number of cows owned	Zakat to be given
30 to 39	A two-year-old cow
40 to 59	A three-year-old cow
Number of sheep or goats owned	

40 to 120	one-year-old sheep or goat
121 to 200	2 sheep or goats
2 sheep or goats	3 sheep or goats
400 and above	a sheep or goat for each hundred owned

Zakat is not required on animals which Muslims are forbidden to consume; dog, cat, pig, etc.

Grains and Crops

Zakat is to be paid on crops whenever they are harvested. The Nisab for farm produce, if the land is watered naturally by a spring, rainfall or a river is one-tenth. If it is irrigated by drawing water from a well or dam, the Nisab is half of one-tenth.

Every Muslim is expected to spend of the good things which they have earned, and of that which God brings forth from the earth on others (Qur'an 2: 267).

Zakat is not required on fruits and vegetables which perish quickly when picked, such as oranges, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, guavas, lettuce spinach, tomatoes, peppers, etc.

5. Propagation (Dawa)

Muslims propagate Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Dawa is the practice of sharing one's beliefs with others in order to get them to practice righteousness. Islamic propagation may happen in the mosque or outside the place of worship. It may be congregational or individual. Electronic and media spaces are also used to propagate Islam to different audiences. In Islam the Qur'an teaches us how to propagate to Muslims and non-Muslims. Qur'an (15:94) Muslims should openly reveal and clarify the divine message without ambiguity: "therefore reveal openly what you are commanded and turn away from polytheists". The Qur'an espouses the right of freedom of religion and states that there should be no compulsion in religious choice. After imparting the message, people should be left to choose whether or not they accept it. Therefore, propagators must be patient and steadfast.

6. Dressing and dress code

Muslims dress in unique ways that demonstrate their beliefs. As a minimum, men are to dress by covering their abdomen to the knee. Muslim women are known by their wearing of hijab – the practice of covering the entire body from head to toe. The use of veil to cover the face is optional. Islamic dress codes for men and women emphasise modesty and dignity and Muslims are advised to avoid the use of tight clothing. Below are some pictures depicting Islamic dress.



Fig. 8.1: A photo of a decently dressed man and his sons at prayer



Fig. 8.2: A picture of a decently dressed Muslim teacher.

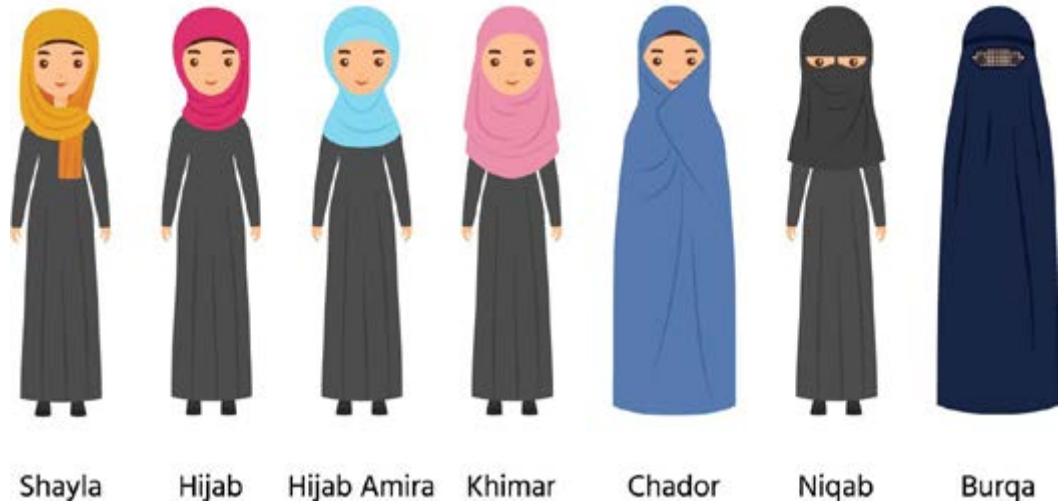


Fig. 8.3: Types of decent dresses for Muslim women

Activity 8.4: Participating in an Islamic ceremony

If you have the opportunity, attend an Islamic festival or performance of any Islamic rites of passage such as: naming, marriage, funeral ceremonies.

Take notes and/or pictures of your observations and be ready to share these in a discussion when you are back in the classroom. Consider the following:

- Participants' way of dressing
- Their way of worship
- Their way of prayer.

Activity 8.5: Listening

Search for short Islamic audio song on the beliefs and practices of Islam. Alternatively, click the links below an audio for the activity.

<https://www.perplexity.ai/search/a-short-audio-music-of-the-art-7wQZMePxQcim8rKHhMJKIQ>

Try to learn the song as you listen to it write a one-page document on how you think it manifests Islamic beliefs.

You could use a worksheet or table for this, such as the one below.

Table 8.1: Beliefs and practices of Islam

Belief	Lyrics	Reflection	Questions if any
Oneness of God			What does the concept of Tawhid mean to me?
Prophets			
Scripture			What is the significance of the Quran in my life?
Afterlife			How does the concept of Akhirah influence my actions?

Activity 8.6: Surfing the internet

Search online for information on the Islamic beliefs and practices. Examples of sources include:

- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zr4r97h/revision/1?utm_source=perplexity
- [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_\(Islam\)#:~:text=performing%20our%20duty.-,The%20Six%20Articles%20of%20Faith,\)%2C%20Israfil%2C%20and%20more](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_(Islam)#:~:text=performing%20our%20duty.-,The%20Six%20Articles%20of%20Faith,)%2C%20Israfil%2C%20and%20more)

Your teacher may provide you with a series of questions to answer from your research. Make note of your sources and consider they support your understanding of the central Islamic beliefs and how Muslims put these into practice.

Activity 8.7: Video show and discussion

Team up with your colleagues, search for videos or documentaries from the internet or from other sources about Islamic beliefs and practices and watch them together.

Before you watch the video, discuss what you are hoping to learn and how this connects to your existing knowledge with a colleague. You could also complete a “quick writes” activity, by setting a timer for five minutes and write a series of questions or ideas you would like to answer through watching the video. You may also wish to write prompts for yourself on specific issues, for example “Pay attention to...”

During Viewing:

Allow time for processing and discussion to prevent “TV mode” and enhance understanding.

Implement “Watch-Think-Write”: View the segment without writing.

Discuss in groups without writing.

Take notes and summarise key points.

After you’ve watched the video and made notes, discuss insights and questions that arose with a colleague or in groups to deepen understanding.

Activity 8.8: Role play

Work in groups to role play an aspect of Islamic belief, such as an act of worship or zakat.

Consider how each member of the group can participate in the activity from the planning, scripting, execution and evaluation. Share your piece with colleagues in your class.

Self-Assessment Questions

Answer one of the following questions to review your learning from this section:

- Outline the Articles of Faith in Islam.
- Explain the Articles of Faith in Islam.
- Use Islamic scriptures to justify the Articles of Faith.

Review Questions

1. How do Islam's core values manifest themselves in the Five Pillars of Islam?
2. In what ways might a Muslim use Shahada, the confession of faith, to demonstrate their faith in day-to-day interactions?

Answers to Review Questions

1. The Five Pillars of Islam are practical expressions of the major beliefs of Islam and reflect these beliefs in the following ways:
 - a. **Shahada (Faith):** Declaring the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad, which is the core belief of Islam.
 - b. **Salah (Prayer):** Performing the five daily prayers reinforces the belief in a personal relationship with Allah and the importance of regular worship.
 - c. **Zakat (Charity):** Giving to charity emphasizes the belief in social responsibility and the duty to support the less fortunate as a sign of obedience to Allah.
 - d. **Sawm (Fasting):** Observing fasting during Ramadan reflects self-discipline and the belief in seeking closeness to Allah through personal sacrifice.
 - e. **Hajj (Pilgrimage):** Undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime demonstrates the unity of Muslims worldwide and their submission to Allah.
2. A Muslim might express their belief in Shahada through several actions, such as:
 - a. **Daily Prayers (Salah):** Repeating the declaration of faith in their prayers.
 - b. **Daily Speech:** Saying phrases like “Bismillah” (In the name of God) before starting any task, and “Alhamdulillah” (Praise be to God) when something good happens.
 - c. **Teaching and Sharing:** Discussing the importance of Shahada with others, especially during religious gatherings or with family members.
 - d. **Living Ethically:** Striving to live by Islamic values, which are rooted in the acknowledgment of Allah’s oneness and Muhammad’s prophethood.

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Glossary

WORDS

MEANING

Akhirat:	Belief in life after death
Dawa:	This is the practice of sharing one's beliefs with others in order to get them to practice righteousness.
Hashar Maidan:	Field of Judgment
Kalimatush Shahada:	This is the Islamic statement of faith and the first pillar of Islam.
Khutbah:	Homily or preaching
Nisab:	It refers to the minimum amount of wealth and property on which Zakat should be paid
Salat Istisqah:	<i>Prayer during drought</i>
Salat-al-Janazah:	It is a prayer for the dead Muslim
Tarawih:	Voluntary prayer during Ramadan

Acknowledgements



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