

## The Five Pillars of Islam

1. **Shahadah**: the declaration of faith.
2. **Salah**: Prayer
3. **Zakah**: Charitable giving
4. **Sawm**: Fasting
5. **Hajj**: Pilgrimage



## The Festival of Ashura

- Ashura means 'tenth'
- Sunni Muslims observe Ashura, but they refer to it as the Day of Atonement, and remember it as the day when the Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. Many give to charity, show kindness to their family and to the poor
- After going to Madinah, Muhammed nominated Ashura as a day of fasting from sunset to sunrise
- To Shi'a Muslims, Ashura is a day of sorrow because of the tragic events of Karbala
- Shi'a Muslims remember the death of Husayn, son of Ali
- Husayn martyrdom is widely seen by Shi'a Muslims as a symbol of the struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression
- In many Muslim countries Shi'a Muslims take part in a public expression of grief and mourning
- Some go as far as to beat themselves on the back with chains
- They do this in an attempt to connect with Husayn's sufferings and death.
- In London, thousands of Shi'a Muslims form a procession of mourning and listen to speeches



## Jihad

- **Jihad**: a struggle against evil, either as an individual or as the collective fellowship of Islam. Origins go back to Muhammed. **"This is my path, leading straight, so follow it....." (Quran 6: 153)**

## Greater Jihad

- A personal inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teaching of their faith
- Follow the 5 pillars of Islam.
- Purify ones heart from all evil traits and to establish all types of virtue.

## Lesser Jihad

- Considered less important than Greater Jihad.
- Outward struggle to defend Islam from threat.
- In the early days of faith, this was important when Muslims were being persecuted and they needed to protect their freedom to practice their faith. **Fighting for a religious cause is sometimes referred to as a holy war.** Some of the criteria for a holy war are:

- It must only be declared by a fair religious leader
- It cannot be used to make people convert to Islam
- It must be in response to a threat to the faith
- It must not be used to gain territory or wealth.
- It must be the last resort - all peaceful methods must have been tried first.
- Neither lesser Jihad nor holy war should be used to justify terrorism.
- However, this is how lesser jihad is sometimes misinterpreted in modern times
- For Muslims, jihad is essentially an important spiritual practice that brings them closer to God.

## The Festivals of Id-UI-Fitr and Id-UI-Adha

### Id-UI-Fitr

- Festival of breaking of the fast
- The festival marks the end of the month of Ramadan
- They are thanking God for the strength and help he has given them to fast for a month
- Id-UI-Fitr may be celebrated for one, two or three days.
- Muslims gather together in Mosques or large outdoor areas to say special prayers
- Everyone wears their best clothes or new clothes for the occasion
- Special foods are eaten and processions take place through the streets.

### Id-UI-Adha

- Id-UI-Adha is the festival of sacrifice.
- It is celebrated on the 10th day of Dhual Hijjah and lasts for 4 days
- The festival remembers and honours the prophet Ibrahim, who was willing to sacrifice his son Ishmael on God's command
- Qur'an 37:100-112 records how Ibrahim had a recurring dream in which God told him to sacrifice his son. Ibrahim loved his son dearly, but decided he must obey God's command
- However, God prevented it and gave Ibrahim a ram to sacrifice instead
- He had passed the test of being willing to carry out God's commands
- This festival forms part of Hajji, but is celebrated by Muslims all over the world
- It is a time of celebration when people visit family and friends.
- Animals are slaughtered to remember Ibrahim's sacrifice

## The 10 Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam

- In addition to the five pillars of Islam, Shi'a Muslims also practice

1. **Jihad**: the struggle against evil
2. **Amr-bil-Maruf**: encouraging people to do what is good.
3. **Nahi Anil Munkar**: discouraging people from doing what is wrong
4. **Twallah**: to be loving towards the friends of God, including Muhammed and the Islams.
5. **Tabarra**: disassociating from the enemies of God.

