

Key concepts

- The role and significance of Zakah (purification through giving) – a key moral principle – The nature and purpose of different types of giving in Islam: zakah; sadaqat (voluntary) and khums (a fifth).
- The reasons for giving in Islam: obedience; compassion; personal sacrifice; value of benefits gained. The importance of liberationist thinking in Islam and attitudes towards the poor; the impact of giving on the ummah.
- Hajj (pilgrimage) for Muslims and the Ummah (Muslim community). The nature and purpose of the Hajj and its role in uniting the ummah. The role of Hajj in uniting the ummah.

- Zakah is a tax of 2.5% on profits and comparable amounts on surplus crops and gold, for Muslims who earn a high wage. It may be used to support the poor, students, the ill, soldiers and others in need.
- The payment is more than a tax: it is to encourage Muslims not to be selfish and consider all wealth as belonging to God. By giving away wealth, Muslims are less attached to possessions and feel more empathy and compassion for their brothers and sisters in the worldwide family of Muslims who are less fortunate and in need of support.

- Hajj is the pilgrimage to Makkah, an obligation for adult male Muslims to perform once in their lifetime if they are so able.
- The journey consists of entering the sacred area in Makkah whilst wearing two white cotton un-sewed cloths; entering a state of purity in which nothing may be killed, not even a fly.
- Pilgrims perform tawaf, circling the ka'aba 7 times anti clockwise; sai – running between the hills Al-Safa and Al-Marwa remembering Hagar's frantic search for water.
- They also throw stones at pillars representing the devil and stand in the hot sun on the plain of Arafat, at which point pilgrims believe all their sins are forgiven and they may make a fresh commitment to follow Islam.
- Hajj is one of the largest gatherings in the world and Muslims of different racial backgrounds, rich and poor alike, become equal whilst circling the Ka'aba together.

Key quotes

- 'God alone has the choice of who is to be born rich or poor; therefore all Muslims have a duty towards others.' (Maqsood)
- '[Zakat was] the cornerstone of social justice in the early Muslim community.' (Turner)
- 'The rich man may only 'purify' his wealth, which he is then free to enjoy with the blessing of Allah, by paying zakat.' (Horrie and Chippindale)
- In Islam, the true owner of things is not man but God. (Esposito)
- 'The journey to Mecca is both physical and metaphorical: physical in the sense that one moves through time and space leaving one's homeland behind; a sense that one moves upwards, hopefully in an ascension towards God, leaving one's self behind.' (Turner)
- 'It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah. it is your piety that reaches Him.' (The Qur'an Sura 22:37, Yusuf Ali)

Key words

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| Haji | Zamzam | Wuquf | Sai |
| Ihram | Id-ul-Adha | Al-Safa | Al-Marwa |
| Tawaf | Talbiyah | Hajar al-aswad | Umra |
| Hajj | Riba | Nisab | Khums |
| Sadaqat | Zakat | | |

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key questions, arguments, and debates

1. The extent to which Islam is based on support for the poor. Zakah supports the poor and is one of the five pillars of Isla, important for Muslims to fulfil; but is that in devotion and obedience to God, or is the purpose to support the poor as its basis? The extent to which Zakah supports the poor and to which Muslim societies effectively do so could also be questioned and evaluated.
2. Whether the Hajj is more than just a personal journey of religious enquiry. Hajj enables Muslims to find out more about their faith; where Muhammad cleansed the Ka'aba of idols for example. Is it more? To some, it is a spiritual journey of renewal of faith. Some are inspired by equality of all races on Hajj and learn more from this. If the intention is personal, can Hajj be anything more?