



# ISLAM

*A Complete Deep Dive*

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*The Five Pillars. Prayer postures step by step. The Quran and Hadith. The Prophets. Sunni, Shia & Sufi. Islamic history & law. Dress codes, mosque etiquette, and daily devotional life. With Samaritanism woven throughout — the ancient cousin religion that shares Islam's roots but took a completely different path.*

*Personal Reading Series • April 2026*

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## PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS

# 1. What Is Islam? Core Identity & Fast Facts

Islam (Arabic: submission or surrender to God) is the world's second-largest religion with approximately 1.9 billion followers — about 24% of the global population. It is a strictly monotheistic Abrahamic faith that teaches complete submission to the will of Allah (Arabic for 'the God' — not a separate deity name but the Arabic word for God, used by Arab Christians too).

A person who practices Islam is called a Muslim — Arabic for 'one who submits.' Islam understands itself not as a new religion but as the final, complete restoration of the original monotheism that God revealed to all prophets from Adam onward — a thread that runs through Judaism and Christianity but was, in the Islamic view, distorted over time until its perfect restoration through the Prophet Muhammad.

Fast Facts: Founded: 610 CE (first revelation) / 622 CE (Islamic calendar begins)  
Founder/Final Prophet: Muhammad ibn Abdullah (570–632 CE) Sacred Text: The Quran (also: Hadith collections) Holy City: Mecca (Saudi Arabia) — also Medina and Jerusalem  
Major Branches: Sunni (~85–90%), Shia (~10–15%), Sufi (mystical tradition within both)  
Followers: ~1.9 billion worldwide Concentrated in: Middle East, North Africa, South/Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa Fastest-growing religion in the world

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## 2. Origins & History — From Arabia to the World

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### Pre-Islamic Arabia (Before 610 CE)

The Arabian Peninsula before Islam was a world of tribal polytheism, merchant culture, poetry, and oral tradition. The Ka'ba in Mecca — a cubic stone structure believed by Muslims to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael — housed 360 idols representing the deities of various tribes. Mecca was a major commercial and religious hub.

Jewish and Christian communities existed across Arabia, and the concepts of monotheism, prophecy, and scripture were not unfamiliar — setting the stage for Muhammad's message to resonate.

### The First Revelation (610 CE)

Muhammad ibn Abdullah, a 40-year-old merchant known for his honesty (nicknamed Al-Amin — 'the trustworthy'), was meditating in a cave on Mount Hira outside Mecca when the angel Jibril (Gabriel) appeared and commanded: 'Read!' (Iqra!). Muhammad, who could not read, was overwhelmed. The angel repeated the command three times, then recited the first verses of what would become the Quran.

Muhammad returned home shaking, certain he had either encountered the divine or lost his mind. His wife Khadija, a wealthy businesswoman 15 years his senior who had proposed to him, embraced him, reassured him, and became the first Muslim. Her cousin Waraqa, a Christian scholar, confirmed that what Muhammad had experienced was the same revelation that had come to Moses.

### Mecca, Medina & the Hijra (610–632 CE)

For 13 years Muhammad preached in Mecca — facing mockery, social boycott, and eventually violence. His followers were persecuted. In 622 CE he and his community made the Hijra (migration) to the city of Medina, where he was invited to lead as a statesman. This migration marks Year 1 of the Islamic calendar (AH — Anno Hegirae).

In Medina, Islam transformed from a persecuted minority movement into a functioning community with laws, treaties, and eventually military capability. In 630 CE Muhammad returned to Mecca with 10,000 followers, conquered it without significant bloodshed, and cleared the Ka'ba of idols. He died in 632 CE, having united most of the Arabian Peninsula under Islam.

### The Rapid Expansion (632–750 CE)

Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, Islam had spread from Spain and Portugal in the west to the borders of China and India in the east — the fastest expansion of any religion or empire in history. The

Islamic Golden Age (750–1258 CE) produced extraordinary achievements in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and architecture, preserving and advancing the knowledge of Greece and Rome while Europe was in its Dark Ages.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritanism has none of this missionary or expansionist history. While Islam spread from Arabia to encompass billions, the Samaritans remained a tiny, insular community rooted to Mount Gerizim in what is now the West Bank. At their peak in the 4th–5th centuries CE they numbered perhaps 1–1.5 million. Today only ~800 remain — the smallest religious community in the world. This is one of the most dramatic contrasts between the two traditions.

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## 3. The Prophet Muhammad — His Life & Mission

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Muhammad is not worshipped by Muslims — he is emphatically human. But he is the most beloved figure in Islam: the seal of the prophets (Khatam an-Nabiyyin), the final messenger through whom God's complete guidance was delivered to humanity. His life (Sira) is studied in extraordinary detail as both biography and spiritual model.

### Key Facts of His Life

Date	Event
570 CE	Born in Mecca to the Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe. Father Abdullah died before his birth; mother Amina d
595 CE	Married Khadija bint Khuwaylid, a wealthy merchant widow who had employed him as a trade manager. She v
610 CE	First revelation in the Cave of Hira. Begins preaching monotheism and social justice — care for the poor, free
619 CE	The 'Year of Sorrow' — both Khadija and Abu Talib (his protector) die. Muhammad loses his two greatest sup
620 CE	The Night Journey (Isra and Mi'raj): Muhammad is miraculously transported from Mecca to Jerusalem, then a
622 CE	The Hijra to Medina. Year 1 of the Islamic calendar begins.
630 CE	Conquest of Mecca. The Ka'ba is cleansed and rededicated to monotheism.
632 CE	The Farewell Pilgrimage to Mecca. Final sermon. Death in Medina at approximately 62 years old, in the arms

When Muslims mention or write the Prophet's name, they traditionally follow it with 'sallallahu alayhi wa sallam' (peace and blessings be upon him), often abbreviated as (PBUH) or (SAW) in writing.

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## 4. Samaritanism — The Ancient Cousin Religion

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Samaritanism is one of the world's oldest and smallest religions — a branch of ancient Israelite religion that diverged from mainstream Judaism approximately 2,500–2,800 years ago. Today only about 800 Samaritans exist, living in two communities: Holon (near Tel Aviv) and Kiryat Luza on Mount Gerizim (West Bank).

### Samaritanism: Origins — The Great Schism with Judaism

The split between Samaritans and Jews is ancient and contested. The Samaritan account: they are the true, unbroken descendants of the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, faithful to the original Torah of Moses, who never deviated. The Jewish account (reflected in 2 Kings 17): when the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE, they resettled foreigners there who mixed with remaining Israelites and adopted a mixed religion.

What is historically clear: by the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (5th century BCE), Samaritans and Jews were in sharp conflict over where God should be worshipped — Jerusalem (Jewish) or Mount Gerizim (Samaritan). This dispute has never been resolved. The Samaritans built their own temple on Mount Gerizim; the Jews destroyed it in 128 BCE. The Samaritans consider Gerizim — not Jerusalem — the true holy mountain where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac.

### Samaritanism: The Samaritan Torah

Samaritans accept only the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) as scripture. They reject all other Hebrew Bible books (Psalms, Prophets, Writings) that Judaism considers canonical, and obviously reject the New Testament and Quran. Their version of the Torah — the Samaritan Pentateuch — differs from the Jewish Masoretic text in approximately 6,000 places, most significantly: every reference to 'the place God will choose' to dwell (which Jews interpret as Jerusalem) is changed to 'the place God has chosen' — Mount Gerizim.

### Samaritanism: Core Beliefs

- One God (Yahweh/YHWH) — strict monotheism, no trinity, no second deity
- Moses is the only true prophet — no prophets after Moses
- The Samaritan Torah is the only true scripture
- Mount Gerizim is the holiest place on earth — the navel of the world, where Adam was created, where Noah's ark rested, where Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac
- A future redeemer figure (Taheb — 'the Restorer') will come at the end of days, similar to a messiah but specifically identified as a Moses-like figure
- The Day of Judgment — reward and punishment after death

## Samaritanism: Sacred Times & Prayer Practices

Samaritans pray three times daily — morning, afternoon, and evening — facing Mount Gerizim. Prayer is in Ancient Hebrew (Samaritan Hebrew), an archaic form very close to biblical Hebrew but with different pronunciation. Prayers are performed standing, bowing, and prostrating — remarkably similar in physical form to both Jewish and Islamic prayer.

The Sabbath (Saturday) is strictly observed — no cooking, no electricity, no travel. This is far stricter than most modern Jewish Sabbath observance.

Their most spectacular ritual: the Passover sacrifice on Mount Gerizim. The entire Samaritan community climbs the mountain, the priests slaughter lambs at sunset (as commanded in Exodus 12), and the community cooks and eats the meal together before dawn — exactly as described in the Torah, making this the oldest continuously performed biblical ritual in the world. No other religious community has maintained this practice unbroken for 3,500+ years.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Islam and Samaritanism: The Abraham connection is central to both. Muslims revere Abraham (Ibrahim) as the first Muslim — one who surrendered completely to God. Samaritans trace their entire identity to Abraham's covenant and the mountain where he acted on it. Both traditions also revere Moses deeply: Islam considers Moses (Musa) one of the five greatest prophets (Ulul 'Azm); Samaritans consider Moses THE prophet — the only one who ever truly spoke with God. The critical difference: Islam extends the prophetic chain through Jesus (Isa) to Muhammad as the final seal. Samaritanism freezes the prophetic line at Moses.

# 5. The Six Articles of Faith (Iman)

While the Five Pillars describe what Muslims do, the Six Articles of Faith (Arkan al-Iman) describe what Muslims believe. Faith in all six is required for a person to be considered Muslim.

## 1. Belief in Allah

Strict monotheism (tawhid) — there is one God, indivisible, without partners, parents, or children. The most fundamental Islamic doctrine is the absolute unity of God. Any association of partners with God (shirk) is the one unforgivable sin. God has 99 beautiful names (Asma ul-Husna) describing his attributes: Al-Rahman (the Merciful), Al-Rahim (the Compassionate), Al-Malik (the King), Al-Quddus (the Holy)...

## 2. Belief in the Angels (Mala'ika)

Angels are beings of pure light created from light, who obey God completely and have no free will. Key angels: Jibril (Gabriel) who delivered revelation to prophets; Mikail (Michael) who oversees nature and provision; Israfil who will blow the trumpet at the Day of Judgment; Azrael (Malak al-Mawt) the angel of death. Two recording angels (Kiraman Katibin) accompany every person, recording good and bad deeds.

## 3. Belief in the Divine Books (Kutub)

God revealed scriptures to various prophets: the Suhuf (scrolls) to Abraham, the Tawrat (Torah) to Moses, the Zabur (Psalms) to David, the Injil (Gospel) to Jesus, and finally the Quran to Muhammad — the final, complete, and preserved revelation. Muslims believe previous scriptures were divinely revealed but became corrupted through human transmission over time.

## 4. Belief in the Prophets (Anbiya)

God sent prophets to every nation throughout history to guide humanity. Islam counts 124,000 prophets in total; 25 are named in the Quran. All prophets brought the same core message: worship God alone. Muhammad is the last and final prophet — no prophets after him.

## 5. Belief in the Day of Judgment (Yawm al-Qiyama)

All humans will be resurrected and judged by God for their deeds. The recording angels' books will be revealed. Those whose good deeds outweigh the bad will enter Jannah (paradise); those whose bad deeds outweigh will enter Jahannam (hellfire). God's mercy is the ultimate determining factor.

## 6. Belief in Divine Decree (Qadar)

Everything that happens — good and bad — occurs by God's knowledge and permission. This does not eliminate human free will and responsibility; Muslims believe both coexist. This doctrine brings peace: whatever happens is within God's wisdom, even what we cannot understand.

SAMARITANISM COMPARISON Samaritans share Articles 1, 4 (partially), 5, and 6 with Islam — strict monotheism, divine decree, the Day of Judgment. They diverge sharply on Article 3: Samaritans accept only the Torah, rejecting all later scriptures including those Islam venerates. On Article 4: Samaritans accept Moses as prophet but reject all prophets after him — David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jesus, and Muhammad are all outside their prophetic framework. Angels exist in Samaritan theology but are less elaborated than in Islamic tradition.

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## 6. The Quran — Structure, Revelation & How to Approach It

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The Quran (Arabic: Iqra — 'recitation') is the literal word of God as revealed to Muhammad over 23 years (610–632 CE) through the angel Jibril. Muslims do not consider it a book Muhammad wrote or composed — it is God speaking in first person. This is why even touching the Quran requires ritual purity (wudu), and why memorizing it in Arabic — regardless of one's native language — is considered the highest religious act.

### Structure

The Quran contains 114 chapters (suras), arranged not chronologically but roughly by length — from the longest (Al-Baqara, 286 verses) near the beginning to the shortest (3 verses each) at the end. The only exception is the opening chapter (Al-Fatiha — 'The Opening'), which is 7 verses and is recited in every unit of every prayer.

Each sura begins with 'Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim' — 'In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful' — except one (Sura 9). The Quran is divided into 30 equal sections (juz) to facilitate reading the entire text over 30 days (one juz per day during Ramadan).

### Meccan vs. Medinan Revelations

Suras revealed in Mecca (610–622 CE) tend to be shorter, poetic, and focused on core theology: the oneness of God, the reality of judgment, the importance of prayer and charity, and vivid descriptions of paradise and hellfire. Suras revealed in Medina (622–632 CE) tend to be longer and more legislative, covering community law, marriage, inheritance, war, and social relations.

### Al-Fatiha — The Opening Chapter

Al-Fatiha is the most recited text in human history — a Muslim who prays five times daily recites it 17 times per day, over 6,000 times per year. It is the foundation of Islamic prayer:

#### **Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim**

*Bismi-l■hi r-ra■m■ni r-ra■■m*

Meaning: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

#### **Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi l-'alamin**

*Al-■amdu li-l■hi rabbi l-■■lam■n*

Meaning: All praise is due to God, Lord of all the worlds

#### **Ar-rahmani r-rahim. Maliki yawmi d-din**

Ar-raḥmānī r-raḥīm. Malīki yawmi d-dīn

Meaning: The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment

### Iyyaka na'budu wa-iyyaka nasta'in

īyyaka naḥbudu wa-īyyaka nasta'in

Meaning: You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help

### Ihdina s-sirata l-mustaqim

īhdinā s-sirata l-mustaqīm

Meaning: Guide us to the straight path

### Sirata lladhina an'amta 'alayhim

īrāna llaḥna an'amta alayhim

Meaning: The path of those You have blessed

### Ghayri l-maghdubi 'alayhim wa-la d-dallin. Amin

ghayri l-maghdūbi alayhim wa-lā d-dallīn. āmin

Meaning: Not of those who have earned anger, nor of those who have gone astray. Amen

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## 7. The Hadith — The Prophet's Sayings & Sunna

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The Quran is God's word. The Hadith are the recorded sayings, actions, and silent approvals of the Prophet Muhammad — collected and verified by Islamic scholars in the centuries after his death. Together with the Quran, they form the Sunna ('custom' or 'practice') — the comprehensive model for Muslim life.

The science of Hadith authentication (Ilm al-Hadith) is one of the most rigorous in world scholarship. Every hadith has two parts: the matn (the content of what was said) and the isnad (the chain of transmitters going back to the Prophet). Scholars analyzed thousands of hadiths for reliability of the chain, character of each transmitter, and consistency with the Quran.

### The Six Authentic Collections (Kutub al-Sitta)

- **Sahih al-Bukhari** (Muhammad al-Bukhari (810–870 CE)): Considered the most authentic. Of 600,000 hadiths evaluated, only 7,275 were accepted. The word 'Sahih' means authentic/sound.
- **Sahih Muslim** (Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (815–875 CE)): The second most authoritative collection; 3,033 unique hadiths. Together, Bukhari and Muslim are called 'the Two Sahih.''
- **Sunan Abu Dawud** (Abu Dawud (817–889 CE)): Focuses heavily on legal matters; 5,274 hadiths. The Prophet's guidance on prayer, contracts, marriage, and governance.
- **Sunan al-Tirmidhi** (Al-Tirmidhi (824–892 CE)): Includes hadith on the Prophet's physical description; rates reliability of each hadith within the text itself.
- **Sunan al-Nasa'i** (Al-Nasa'i (829–915 CE)): Known for its strict criteria; focuses on ritual matters.
- **Sunan Ibn Majah** (Ibn Majah (824–887 CE)): Completes the six collections; contains some hadiths not in other collections.

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## 8. The Prophets of Islam — From Adam to Muhammad

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Islam holds that God sent prophets to every nation throughout human history to guide people to the worship of one God and righteous living. The Quran names 25 prophets specifically. All are considered equally truthful messengers, though Muhammad holds the highest station as the final seal.

### Adam (Adem)

The first human and first prophet. Created from clay, breathed into by God. Given knowledge of all things. Placed in paradise with his wife Hawwa (Eve). Descended to earth after eating from the forbidden tree — unlike the Christian concept of Original Sin, Islam teaches that Adam and Hawwa both repented and were fully forgiven. Their descent is not punishment but the beginning of humanity's earthly mission.

### Ibrahim (Abraham)

One of the five greatest prophets (Ulul 'Azm). The first to be called 'the friend of God' (Khalilullah). Smashed his father's idols as a young man, was thrown into a fire by the king Nimrod (the fire became cool by God's command), migrated, and was commanded to sacrifice his son Ismail (Ishmael in the Islamic account, not Isaac). His willingness to obey is commemorated every year at Eid al-Adha. He and Ismail rebuilt the Ka'ba in Mecca as the house of monotheistic worship.

### Musa (Moses)

The prophet to whom the Torah (Tawrat) was revealed. Led the Israelites out of Egypt. Spoke directly with God on Mount Sinai. In the Night Journey (Isra and Mi'raj), Muhammad met Moses in the sixth heaven — Moses advised Muhammad to negotiate the number of daily prayers from 50 down to 5. Islam considers Moses one of the greatest prophets and the Quran mentions him more than any other prophet — over 130 times.

### Dawud (David)

The prophet to whom the Zabur (Psalms) was revealed. A king and warrior of great spiritual depth. His voice was so beautiful that mountains and birds sang with him when he praised God. The Quran treats him as a just ruler and devout worshipper.

## Isa (Jesus)

Born of the virgin Maryam (Mary) — the Quran gives more attention to Maryam than the New Testament does, and she has an entire chapter named after her (Sura Maryam). Isa performed miracles by God's permission: healing the blind, raising the dead, speaking as an infant. Islam firmly rejects the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus — he is a great prophet and messenger, not God. Islam also teaches that Jesus was not crucified — God raised him to heaven before the crucifixion, and a likeness was made to appear in his place. He will return before the Day of Judgment.

## Muhammad

The final and seal of all prophets. No prophet will come after him. His message is for all of humanity for all time, unlike previous prophets whose messages were for specific peoples. The Quran is his miracle — unlike Moses's staff or Jesus's healings, Muhammad's miracle is the text itself, considered inimitable in its linguistic perfection.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Moses (Musa) is where Islam and Samaritanism most powerfully converge — and most sharply diverge. Both traditions consider Moses the greatest human to whom God spoke directly, face to face. Both accept the Torah he received. Both hold him in a category above all other human beings. The divergence: Islam adds the entire chain of prophets after Moses — David, Solomon, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, and finally Muhammad. Samaritanism stops completely at Moses. Any prophet after Moses — including those the Hebrew Bible reveres — is simply not recognized. Samaritans would describe their tradition as the Torah, purely lived, without addition or interpretation from subsequent prophets or scholars.

# 9. The Samaritan Torah — How It Differs from the Islamic View

Both Islam and Samaritanism reference the Torah of Moses as a divine scripture. But what they mean by it, how they relate to it, and what they do with it are entirely different.

Question	Islam's Position	Samaritanism's Position
Is the Torah divine?	Yes — originally. But it has been altered and corrupted through time, preserving only as much as possible.	Yes — and it has remained perfectly preserved exactly as Moses received it.
Which version?	The Torah in principle; the Quran supersedes it.	The Samaritan Pentateuch, which differs from the Hebrew Bible.
What about later Hebrew scriptures?	They are later revelations (Zabur to David, etc.).	Completely rejected. Only the Five Books of Moses are scripture.
Who interprets it?	The Quran, Hadith, and 1,400 years of Islamic scholarship.	The Samaritan high priests and their lineage; their own commentaries.
Language of prayer?	Classical Arabic (Quranic Arabic). The Quran is in Arabic.	Arabic and Samaritan Hebrew — only interpreted out of Hebrew preserved in the Samaritan Torah.

## PART THREE: THE FIVE PILLARS

# 10. Shahada — The Declaration of Faith

### La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadun rasul Allah

La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadun rasul Allah

Meaning: There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God

The Shahada ('testimony' or 'declaration') is the first and most fundamental pillar of Islam. To become Muslim, one need only sincerely declare this statement with full intention and understanding before witnesses. It is whispered into the ear of every newborn Muslim, and ideally the last words a Muslim speaks before death.

The first part — 'There is no god but God' — is the core of tawhid (monotheism). Notice the structure: it first negates all false gods ('no god') before affirming the one true God ('but God'). The second part — 'Muhammad is the messenger of God' — affirms that the Quran and Sunna are the valid guide for Muslim life.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritans have their own central declaration: 'There is no God but One, and Moses is His prophet, and the Torah is Truth, and Mount Gerizim is the house of God.' This parallels the Shahada's structure — oneness of God, prophetic messenger, divine scripture — but freezes at Moses and adds the sacred mountain. Samaritans explicitly exclude Muhammad and the Quran from their confession of faith.

# 11. Salah — The Five Daily Prayers (Complete Guide)

Salah (also spelled Salat) is the ritual prayer performed five times daily by Muslims worldwide. It is the most visible and regular practice of Islam — a Muslim who lives to 70 performs approximately 127,750 prayers in their lifetime. Unlike spontaneous du'a (personal supplication), salah is a precise, structured ritual with specific postures, words, and times.

## The Five Prayer Times

Prayer	Units	Time Window	Character
<b>Fajr (Dawn Prayer)</b>	2 units (rak'ahs)	Between first light and sunrise	The day begins with God. Many Muslims consider this the most sacred prayer.
<b>Dhuhr (Midday Prayer)</b>	4 rak'ahs	After the sun passes its zenith	The time is after the workday. In Muslim-majority countries, businesses close for prayer.
<b>Asr (Afternoon Prayer)</b>	4 rak'ahs	Mid-afternoon until just before sunset	The Prophet Muhammad calls this 'the middle prayer' and emphasizes its importance.
<b>Maghrib (Sunset Prayer)</b>	3 rak'ahs	Just after sunset until twilight	The prayer is communal — families often eat iftar (breaking Ramadan fast) after this prayer.
<b>Isha (Night Prayer)</b>	4 rak'ahs	After twilight until midnight (or later)	The final prayer closes the day. Many add extra voluntary prayers (nafl) after Isha.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritans also pray three times daily — morning, afternoon, and evening — facing Mount Gerizim. Judaism traditionally prays three times daily facing Jerusalem. Islam prays five times daily facing Mecca (the Qibla direction). The three-times vs. five-times difference originated in Muhammad's Night Journey — God originally commanded 50 daily prayers; Moses advised Muhammad to negotiate, and through multiple rounds it was reduced to five.

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# 17. Prayer Postures Explained — Every Movement & Its Meaning

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A single unit of Islamic prayer (rak'ah) consists of a precise sequence of postures, each with specific words. Here is every movement explained in detail — what you do, what you say, and what it means.

## 1. Niyah — Intention

**What you do:** Standing upright, facing Mecca. Before raising the hands, the worshipper forms a silent intention in the heart: 'I intend to pray [Fajr/Dhuhr/etc.] for the sake of God.' Niyah is internal — spoken silently, never aloud. In Islam, intention determines the spiritual validity of every act.

**Meaning:** *Aligning the inner self with the outer act before it begins. The body faces Mecca; the heart faces God.*

## 2. Takbir al-Ihram — Opening Exaltation

**What you do:** Both hands raised to ear level (palms facing forward, thumbs nearly touching the ears), then lowered to the chest or navel, right hand over left. Said aloud: 'Allahu Akbar' (God is the Greatest).

**Meaning:** *This gesture physically cuts off the worshipper from the world. The raised hands symbolize setting aside all worldly concerns at the door of prayer. You have entered a sacred threshold.*

## 3. Qiyam — Standing

**What you do:** Standing upright, right hand over left at the chest or navel, eyes cast downward toward the place of prostration. Recite Al-Fatiha (the opening chapter, 7 verses) — mandatory in every rak'ah. Then recite any additional passage from the Quran.

**Meaning:** *Standing before God in attentiveness. The downward gaze represents humility — not looking upward toward heaven but inward and downward in awe.*

#### 4. Ruku — Bowing

**What you do:** Bending forward at the waist until the back is parallel to the ground, hands gripping the knees, fingers spread. Head aligned with the back — not hanging down, not raised. Said three times: 'Subhana Rabbiy al-Azim' (Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent).

**Meaning:** *The bow acknowledges God's greatness and the worshipper's smallness. The spine is horizontal — the proudest part of the human body humbled. Said three times to establish it firmly in consciousness.*

#### 5. I'tidal — Rising from the Bow

**What you do:** Returning to standing position, hands at sides. Said: 'Sami Allahu liman hamidah' (God hears those who praise Him). Then: 'Rabbana wa lakal hamd' (Our Lord, to You is all praise).

**Meaning:** *God responds to praise. The rising from the bow represents the restoration — God lifts those who humble themselves.*

#### 6. Sujud — Prostration (First)

**What you do:** THE most important posture. The worshipper descends to the ground in a specific order: knees first, then hands, then forehead and nose simultaneously touching the ground. Seven body parts must touch: forehead+nose, two palms, two knees, toes of both feet. Arms raised slightly off the ground, elbows not resting on the floor. Said three times: 'Subhana Rabbiy al-A'la' (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High).

**Meaning:** *The highest part of the human body — the forehead, seat of reason and pride — touches the lowest place: the ground. This is the closest a Muslim comes to God in prayer. The Prophet said: 'The closest a servant is to his Lord is when he is in prostration.' The phrase 'Most High' is said while the body is at its lowest — the theological paradox is deliberate.*

#### 7. Julus — Sitting between Prostrations

**What you do:** Rising from prostration to a seated position: left foot folded flat, sitting on it; right foot upright with toes pointing toward Mecca. Hands resting on thighs. Said: 'Rabbighfir li' (My Lord, forgive me).

**Meaning:** *The brief pause between two prostrations. A moment to ask forgiveness before returning to the ground again.*

## 8. Sujud — Prostration (Second)

**What you do:** The same prostration repeated. Said three times again: 'Subhana Rabbiy al-A'la.'

**Meaning:** *The second prostration completes one rak'ah (unit). Each unit contains two prostrations — the prayer returns to its deepest point twice, like a breath: bow, rise, prostrate, sit, prostrate.*

## 9. Tashahhud — The Testimony (Final Sitting)

**What you do:** In the final rak'ah, the worshipper sits with the right index finger raised and slowly moved (this is the tasbih gesture — pointing to God's oneness). Recites the Tashahhud: 'At-Tahiyyatulillah... As-salamu 'alayka ayyuhan-Nabiyyu... As-salamu 'alayna wa 'ala 'ibadillahis-salihin. Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh.' (All greetings, prayers and good things belong to God... Peace upon you, O Prophet... Peace upon us and upon the righteous servants of God. I testify that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.)

**Meaning:** *The raised index finger during the Tashahhud is a physical declaration of tawhid — one finger, one God. The greeting of peace to the Prophet and to the community connects every Muslim to every other Muslim across time and space.*

## 10. Taslim — The Closing

**What you do:** Turning the head to the right: 'As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullah' (Peace and God's mercy be upon you). Then turning to the left and repeating. The prayer is complete.

**Meaning:** *The worshipper returns from the presence of God into the world by offering peace in both directions — to the angels who recorded the prayer, and to the broader community of humanity.*

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritan prayer postures are strikingly similar to Islamic salah — standing, bowing, and full prostration facing Mount Gerizim. This similarity is not coincidental: both traditions draw from ancient Semitic worship practices. The prostration (falling with the face to the ground) appears throughout the Hebrew Bible as the standard act of reverence before God. Both Islam and Samaritanism preserved this ancient bodily practice while Judaism gradually moved toward a prayer style that is primarily standing. The key difference: Samaritans pray in Ancient Samaritan Hebrew facing Gerizim; Muslims pray in Quranic Arabic facing Mecca.

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## 12. Zakat — Obligatory Charity

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Zakat (purification) is the mandatory annual giving of 2.5% of one's savings and accumulated wealth above a minimum threshold (nisab — equivalent to approximately 85 grams of gold) to those in need. It is not optional charity — it is a pillar of faith, as obligatory as prayer.

The Quran pairs zakat with salah more than 80 times — they are inseparable. Zakat purifies wealth (hence the name) by acknowledging that all wealth ultimately belongs to God, and the poor have a right to a portion of it. Recipients include: the poor, the destitute, those in debt, travelers in need, and those working to collect and distribute zakat.

Zakat vs. Sadaqa: Zakat is obligatory and calculated precisely. Sadaqa is voluntary charity — any act of generosity, including a smile or kind word. The Prophet said: 'Every good deed is sadaqa.' Muslims are encouraged to give both.

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## 13. Sawm — Fasting in Ramadan

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Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar — the month in which the first verses of the Quran were revealed to Muhammad. For the entire month, Muslims who are able fast from Fajr (dawn) until Maghrib (sunset) — no food, no water, no smoking, no sexual relations, no lying or backbiting.

The fast is broken each evening with iftar ('breaking the fast') — traditionally beginning with dates and water, following the Prophet's practice, before the meal. The pre-dawn meal (suhoor) is eaten before Fajr. The final night of Ramadan and the following day (Eid al-Fitr) is one of the greatest celebrations in the Islamic year.

Fasting is exempted for: the ill, elderly, pregnant or nursing women, travelers, and children. Missed days are made up later or compensated by feeding the poor.

Laylat al-Qadr — The Night of Power: In the last ten days of Ramadan (most likely the 27th night), the Night of Power falls — the night the first Quran verses were revealed. The Quran says this night is 'better than a thousand months.' Muslims spend it in intense prayer, Quran recitation, and worship. Many spend the last ten days in i'tikaf (seclusion in the mosque).

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritans fast on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement — the same day as in Judaism) and several other days tied to the Torah calendar. Their fasting is absolute — no food, no water, no bathing. The Ramadan concept of an entire month's daily fast with communal breaking of the fast each evening has no equivalent in Samaritanism. However, the Passover fast before the Passover meal is a significant Samaritan practice.

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## 14. Hajj — The Pilgrimage to Mecca

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Every Muslim who is physically and financially able must perform Hajj — the pilgrimage to Mecca — at least once in their lifetime. It occurs in the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijja (the 12th month) and draws 2–3 million pilgrims annually, making it the largest annual human gathering on earth.

### The Rites of Hajj

- **Ihram:** Upon approaching Mecca, pilgrims enter a state of ihram — donning two seamless white cloths (men) or modest white clothing (women), symbolizing equality before God. All pilgrims look the same: no distinction of wealth, race, or nationality. Prohibited during ihram: cutting hair, clipping nails, sexual relations, hunting, wearing perfume.
- **Tawaf:** Circumambulating the Ka'ba seven times counterclockwise. The Ka'ba — a cube-shaped stone structure draped in black cloth embroidered in gold — is the focal point of all Islamic prayer worldwide. According to Islamic tradition, it was first built by Adam and rebuilt by Ibrahim and Ismail.
- **Sa'i:** Walking seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa, commemorating Hajar (Hagar) — Ibrahim's wife — desperately searching for water for her infant son Ismail. God caused the spring of Zamzam to burst from the ground. Pilgrims drink Zamzam water throughout Hajj.
- **Wuquf at Arafat:** Standing on the plain of Arafat from noon to sunset — the spiritual heart of Hajj. The Prophet said: 'Hajj is Arafat.' Pilgrims pray, supplicate, and seek forgiveness. Those who cannot make Hajj fast this day from wherever they are (Yawm al-Arafat).
- **Muzdalifah:** After Arafat, pilgrims collect 49 or 70 small pebbles overnight.
- **Rami al-Jamarat:** Throwing pebbles at three stone pillars representing the devil — commemorating Ibrahim's rejection of Shaytan when the devil tried to dissuade him from sacrificing Ismail.
- **Eid al-Adha:** Animal sacrifice commemorating Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ismail. The meat is divided: one third for the family, one third for relatives, one third for the poor. Muslims worldwide who are not on Hajj also perform this sacrifice on the same day.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** The Samaritan equivalent of pilgrimage is the three annual ascents of Mount Gerizim — for Passover, Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), and Sukkot (Tabernacles). The Passover ascent is the most dramatic: the entire Samaritan community climbs the mountain and camps there for the duration. For Samaritans, Gerizim is the Ka'ba — the axis mundi, the navel of the earth, the place where heaven and earth touch. The direction of prayer, the direction of pilgrimage, and the direction of burial all point to Gerizim.

# 15. The Mosque — Architecture, Etiquette & Jumu'ah

## Architecture

The word masjid (mosque) means 'place of prostration.' A mosque's essential elements: a prayer hall (musalla) with a clear wall facing Mecca, a niche (mihrab) indicating the Qibla direction, a pulpit (minbar) for the Friday sermon, and a place for ablution (wudu area). Large mosques add minarets (towers from which the call to prayer is given) and a dome (which improves acoustics and symbolizes the vault of heaven).

## Mosque Etiquette — What to Know Before You Enter

- Remove shoes at the entrance. A shoe rack is always provided.
- Dress modestly — shoulders and knees covered for all. Women cover their hair (a scarf is usually available at the entrance).
- Men and women typically pray in separate sections — women behind or to the side, or in a separate room. This is standard practice, not a statement of lesser value.
- Enter with the right foot and say 'Bismillah' (In the name of God).
- Perform wudu before entering the prayer hall if you intend to pray.
- Keep voices low. Phones silenced.
- Do not walk in front of a person who is praying — it interrupts their prayer.
- Non-Muslims are welcome to observe in most mosques. Some mosques offer open-door tours. You are not required to pray.
- Leave with the left foot.

## Jumu'ah — Friday Prayer

Friday (Jumu'ah) is the Islamic holy day — not a full day of rest like the Jewish Sabbath or Christian Sunday, but the Dhuhr (midday) prayer on Friday is replaced by a congregational prayer with a sermon (khutbah). This prayer is obligatory for adult Muslim men; encouraged for women. The imam delivers two sermons before the prayer, typically in Arabic with translation, covering religious, moral, or community topics.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritanism's holy day is the Sabbath — Saturday — strictly observed from sunset Friday to Saturday nightfall. No fire, no electricity, no cooking, no travel, no writing. This is more strictly observed than in most Jewish communities today. The Samaritan Sabbath has no equivalent of the Islamic Friday communal sermon — it is a day of complete cessation and prayer at the synagogue on Mount Gerizim.

## 16. Wudu — Ritual Purification Step by Step

Before salah (prayer) or touching the Quran, a Muslim must be in a state of ritual purity (tahara). Wudu is the minor purification — performed with clean water, it purifies specific body parts in a prescribed sequence.

Step	Action
<b>1. Intention</b>	Form the silent intention to purify for the sake of God.
<b>2. Bismillah</b>	Say: 'Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim' (In the name of God...).
<b>3. Wash hands</b>	Wash both hands up to the wrists three times, between the fingers.
<b>4. Rinse mouth</b>	Take water in the right hand and rinse the mouth three times.
<b>5. Sniff water</b>	Take water into the nostrils and blow out three times (istinshaq).
<b>6. Wash face</b>	Wash the entire face from hairline to chin, ear to ear, three times.
<b>7. Wash arms</b>	Wash right arm from fingertips to elbow three times, then left arm.
<b>8. Wipe head</b>	Wet both hands and wipe them over the head once — front to back.
<b>9. Wipe ears</b>	Using the wet hands, wipe inside and behind both ears once.
<b>10. Wash feet</b>	Wash right foot up to the ankle three times (between toes), then left.

## 18. The Call to Prayer (Adhan) — Full Text & Meaning

The Adhan is called five times daily from mosques worldwide — one of the most beautiful and recognized sounds in human civilization. It is also whispered into the right ear of every newborn Muslim. The Adhan was established by Muhammad, who chose Bilal ibn Rabah — a freed Ethiopian slave — to be the first mu'adhhdhin (one who calls the adhan) because of his powerful voice.

### **Allahu Akbar (x4)**

*God is the Greatest*

Said four times to open — the world's concerns are set aside. God is greater than everything you were just doing.

### **Ashhadu alla ilaha illa Allah (x2)**

*I testify there is no god but God*

The first half of the Shahada.

### **Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah (x2)**

*I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God*

The second half of the Shahada.

### **Hayya 'ala s-Salah (x2)**

*Come to prayer*

Turning right while calling — directing the invitation eastward.

### **Hayya 'ala I-Falah (x2)**

*Come to success/flourishing*

Turning left — 'falah' means ultimate success in both this life and the next.

### **(Fajr only) As-Salatu khayrun min an-nawm (x2)**

*Prayer is better than sleep*

The unique addition to the dawn call — an acknowledgment that waking before sunrise is hard, and an encouragement that it is worth it.

### **Allahu Akbar (x2)**

*God is the Greatest*

Closing affirmation.

### **La ilaha illa Allah (x1)**

*There is no god but God*

Final seal of the call.

## 19. Islamic Calendar, Festivals & Holy Days

The Islamic calendar is lunar — 12 months of 29 or 30 days each, totaling 354 days per year. Because it is not adjusted to the solar year (unlike the Jewish calendar which adds a leap month), Islamic holidays cycle through all seasons over a 33-year period.

Festival	When	What It Is
<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	1 Shawwal (end of Ramadan)	'Festival of Breaking the Fast' — one of the two great Eids. A day of celebration.
<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	10–13 Dhu al-Hijja (during Hajj season)	'Festival of Sacrifice' — the greater of the two Eids. Commemorates Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son.
<b>Laylat al-Qadr</b>	One of the last 10 nights of Ramadan (likely 27th)	The Night of Power — the holiest night of the year. Intense prayer, Quran recitation.
<b>Mawlid al-Nabi</b>	12 Rabi' al-Awwal	The Prophet's birthday. Celebrated in many Muslim communities with prayers, processions.
<b>Islamic New Year (Muharram)</b>	1st Muharram	The new year, marked quietly — not a major celebration. The 10th of Muharram is Ashura.
<b>Isra and Mi'raj</b>	27 Rajab	Commemorating the Night Journey — Muhammad's miraculous transport to Jerusalem and then to Mecca.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritans follow a strictly Torah-based calendar — the same three pilgrimage festivals commanded in the Torah: Passover (Pesach), Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). They also observe Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Rosh Hashanah. No additional holidays have been added in 3,500 years — no Hanukkah (post-Torah), no Purim (post-Torah), and obviously no Islamic festivals. Their calendar is solar-lunar with a leap month added to stay aligned to seasons, unlike the purely lunar Islamic calendar.

## 20. Halal & Haram — Dietary Laws & Daily Ethics

Halal (Arabic: permissible) and Haram (Arabic: forbidden) are the two poles of Islamic law governing all of life — not just food but financial dealings, relationships, speech, and entertainment.

### Dietary Laws

- Halal meat: animals must be slaughtered by a Muslim (or People of the Book) with the name of God spoken ('Bismillah, Allahu Akbar'), the throat cut swiftly to minimize suffering, and the blood drained.
- Forbidden (Haram): pork and all pork products, alcohol and intoxicants, blood, carrion (animals not properly slaughtered), animals slaughtered in the name of anyone other than God.

- Seafood: generally halal — fish with scales are unanimously permitted; opinion varies on shellfish.
- Gelatin: a common concern — pork-derived gelatin in sweets and capsules is haram; halal-certified alternatives exist.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritan dietary laws are based strictly on Leviticus and Deuteronomy as interpreted by their own tradition — no pork, no blood, no mixing of meat and dairy (though their rules on this differ from Jewish kashrut in detail). Their slaughter method (shechita-like, with specific prayers in Samaritan Hebrew) is similar to Islamic halal in requiring a swift, humane cut and specific divine invocation. The underlying principle — acknowledging God's ownership of all life — is shared by both traditions.

# 21. Islamic Dress — Hijab, Niqab, Abaya & Male Dress Explained

Islamic dress is rooted in the concept of hijab — a word that means 'covering' or 'screen,' not only the headscarf but the broader principle of modest presentation. The Quran instructs both men and women to dress modestly and guard their gaze. The specific forms of dress vary enormously by culture, interpretation, and personal practice.

## Women's Dress

- **Hijab:** The head covering worn by Muslim women — covering the hair, neck, and ears while leaving the face visible. The most common form of Islamic modest dress globally. Worn by women who choose it as an act of worship, identity, modesty, and devotion. NOT a sign of oppression in itself — many Muslim women wear it proudly and by choice; others are pressured into it by family or state. The distinction matters enormously.
- **Niqab:** A face veil that covers everything except the eyes. Worn in addition to the hijab. More common in Gulf Arab culture (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar). The majority of Islamic scholars consider it recommended but not obligatory; a minority consider it obligatory. A small minority consider it unnecessary.
- **Abaya:** A long, loose robe — typically black — worn over clothing. Common in the Arabian Peninsula. The abaya covers the body but not the face. It is primarily a cultural garment (from Gulf Arab culture) that has spread globally with Gulf influence.
- **Jilbab:** A loose, full-length outer garment — similar to an abaya but not necessarily black; can be any color. More common in South and Southeast Asian Muslim communities.
- **Chador:** A full-body covering — a large semicircular cloth held at the front by the wearer's hands or teeth, covering the head and body but leaving the face visible. Common in Iran.
- **Burkini:** A full-body swimsuit that covers the hair, body, and limbs while allowing swimming. A modern innovation.

## Men's Dress

The minimum Islamic requirement for men (awrah) is covering from navel to knee. Beyond this, modesty, cleanliness, and non-arrogance are the principles:

- **Thobe/Dishdasha:** Long white robe common in Arab countries — practical, cool, and modest in desert climates.

- Kufi/Taqiyah: Small rounded skullcap worn during prayer and by many devout Muslim men as a daily sign of religious identity.
- Keffiyeh: Traditional Arab headscarf held by an agal (rope). Cultural, not religious in origin.
- Western clothing: Entirely acceptable in Islam as long as it meets modesty requirements — covering the awrah and not being skin-tight or sheer.
- Beards: The Prophet kept a beard; many Muslim men grow one as Sunna. It is recommended but not obligatory in most scholarly opinion.
- Silk and gold: Forbidden for men; permitted for women. Based on Hadith of the Prophet.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritan dress has no equivalent to the hijab or Islamic modest dress codes. Samaritan women do not traditionally cover their hair in daily life. During the Passover sacrifice on Mount Gerizim, all Samaritans dress in white — symbolizing purity — which has a spiritual parallel to the ihram white garments of Hajj pilgrims. The priests wear specific white priestly garments during rituals. Otherwise, modern Samaritans dress in contemporary Israeli fashion.

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## 22. Sunni, Shia & Sufi — The Major Branches

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### The Origin of the Split — 632 CE

When Muhammad died without designating a clear successor, the Muslim community faced its first great crisis. Two positions emerged:

The majority (who became Sunni) held that the community should choose the best qualified leader through consultation. They supported Abu Bakr — Muhammad's closest companion and father-in-law — as the first Caliph.

A minority (who became Shia — from 'Shi'at Ali,' 'the party of Ali') held that leadership should have passed to Ali ibn Abi Talib — Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, married to Fatima, the Prophet's daughter. They believed Ali was divinely designated by Muhammad at Ghadir Khumm.

The split became permanent and violent at the Battle of Karbala (680 CE), when Husayn ibn Ali — grandson of the Prophet — was killed by the Umayyad Caliph's army. This event is the defining tragedy of Shia Islam, commemorated every year during Ashura with profound grief, processions, and in some communities, acts of mourning.

### Sunni Islam (~85–90% of Muslims)

Sunni Islam recognizes four schools of Islamic law (madhabs), all considered equally valid: Hanafi (most widespread globally), Maliki (North and West Africa), Shafi'i (East Africa, Southeast Asia), and Hanbali (Arabian Peninsula). Sunnis do not have a central religious authority — no Pope equivalent. Al-Azhar University in Cairo is one of the most prestigious Islamic scholarly institutions.

### Shia Islam (~10–15% of Muslims)

Shia Islam centers on the authority of the Imams — descendants of Ali and Fatima who are considered divinely guided interpreters of Islam. The largest Shia branch (Twelver Shia, dominant in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain) awaits the return of the 12th Imam — Muhammad al-Mahdi — who went into occultation (hiddenness) in 874 CE and will return at the end of times. Shia theology, jurisprudence, and ritual practice differ from Sunni in significant ways.

### Sufism — The Mystical Heart of Islam

Sufism (tasawwuf) is not a separate sect but a dimension of Islamic spirituality that exists within both Sunni and Shia traditions. Sufis seek direct inner experience of God — not just ritual compliance but the transformation of the heart into a mirror of the divine.

Sufi practices include: dhikr (rhythmic repetition of God's names), sama (sacred music and sometimes whirling dance — the Mevlevi 'Whirling Dervishes' of Turkey follow the 13th-century poet-mystic Rumi), murshid-murid relationships (spiritual master and student), and retreat (khalwa). Great Sufi poets —

Rumi, Hafiz, Ibn Arabi, Rabia al-Adawiyya — produced some of the world's most beautiful spiritual literature.

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritanism has no equivalent to the Sunni/Shia division or to Sufi mysticism. It has remained a single, unified religious community with no major internal splits for most of its history — partly because its tiny size made schism impractical, and partly because the priestly hierarchy provides clear religious authority. There is no Samaritan equivalent of the Sufi path of mystical experience — their spirituality is centered on the Torah, the priesthood, and the sacred mountain.

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## 23. Sharia — Islamic Law Explained Clearly

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Sharia (Arabic: 'the path to the watering hole') is Islamic law — the comprehensive framework derived from the Quran and Sunna that guides Muslim life. It is widely misunderstood in Western contexts, where it is often associated only with harsh criminal punishments. In reality, the vast majority of Sharia concerns personal religious practice, family law, and ethics.

The five categories of human action in Islamic law:

- **Fard (Obligatory) (Must be done; failure is sinful):** The five prayers, fasting Ramadan, paying zakat
- **Mustahabb (Recommended) (Rewarded if done; no sin if omitted):** Praying voluntary prayers, giving extra charity, being kind to animals
- **Mubah (Neutral) (Neither rewarded nor punished):** Most everyday activities: eating, sleeping, working
- **Makruh (Disliked) (Discouraged but not sinful):** Wasting food, being harsh in speech, excessive sleep
- **Haram (Forbidden) (Must not be done; violation is sinful):** Alcohol, pork, adultery, theft, lying, murder

**SAMARITANISM COMPARISON** Samaritan religious law is derived entirely from the Torah as interpreted by their priestly tradition. Like Sharia, it covers diet, purity, Sabbath observance, marriage, and ritual. But where Sharia has 1,400 years of elaboration by thousands of scholars across many cultures, Samaritan law is more contained — developed by a tiny community's priests over millennia. Samaritan marriage law is the strictest parallel: Samaritans may only marry other Samaritans. As the community has shrunk to ~800 people, this has created serious genetic and demographic challenges.

## 24. Islam vs. Samaritanism — Side-by-Side Comparison

Category	ISLAM	SAMARITANISM
Followers	~1.9 billion worldwide	~800 — the world's smallest religion
Origin	Arabia, 610 CE	Ancient Israel; diverged ~8th–5th century BCE
Founder	Muhammad (final prophet)	No single founder; descended from Moses's tradition
God	Allah — one God, no partners	Yahweh — one God, no partners
Core declaration	La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadun rasul Allah	'There is no God but One, Moses is His prophet, the Torah is T
Sacred text	The Quran (God's word) + Hadith	The Samaritan Pentateuch (Torah only)
Prophets	Adam through Muhammad (25 named; Muhammad is the last)	Moses (only) — no prophets before or after are recognized in the
Jesus	Prophet (Isa), not divine; not crucified; will return	Not recognized as a prophet
Holy place	Mecca (Ka'ba); also Medina and Jerusalem	Mount Gerizim (West Bank) — exclusively
Prayer direction	Facing Mecca (Qibla)	Facing Mount Gerizim
Prayer times	5 times daily	3 times daily
Prayer language	Quranic Arabic	Ancient Samaritan Hebrew
Prayer postures	Standing, bowing, full prostration	Standing, bowing, full prostration — very similar
Sabbath	Friday Jumu'ah prayer; no full day of rest	Full Sabbath (Saturday) — strict rest, no fire/electricity
Calendar	Purely lunar (shifts through seasons)	Solar-lunar (adjusted, stays seasonal)
Major festivals	Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Ramadan	Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Yom Kippur
Dietary laws	Halal/Haram — no pork, halal slaughter	Torah-based — no pork, specific slaughter rules
Pilgrimage	Hajj to Mecca (once in lifetime if able)	Three annual ascents of Mount Gerizim
Marriage	Marriage to non-Muslims historically debated; v	May only marry other Samaritans (endogamous)
Afterlife	Jannah (paradise) and Jahannam (hell)	Day of Judgment with reward and punishment
Mysticism	Sufism — a rich mystical tradition	None — no equivalent mystical tradition
Branches	Sunni, Shia, Sufi (and many smaller groups)	One unified community with no major branches
Shared with Judaism	Abraham, Moses, prophets, monotheism	The Torah; the Sabbath; dietary laws; the Exodus story
Key difference from Judaism	Muhammad as final prophet; Quran as final scrip	Gerizim not Jerusalem; Moses only; Samaritan Pentateuch not

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*Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim — In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

*Two ancient paths, rooted in the same soil of Abrahamic faith — one that spread to encompass nearly two billion souls, one that retreated to a mountain and kept the oldest fire burning.*

