

ISLAM

A Faith Resource Pack

compiled by

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FAITH RESOURCE PACK

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Compiled by Elahe Mojdehi
for Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource

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CONTENTS

ISLAM

THE QUR'AN

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

THE PROPHETS

THE KABBAH

THE PRAYER

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

THE MOSQUE

AT THE MOSQUE

A MUSLIM HOME

MUSLIM HOPES AND PRAYERS

ISLAM



ALLAH: Is an Arabic word meaning THE GOD - The One and Only Universal God of all humanity.

ISLAM: Means Submission, Surrender and Peace.

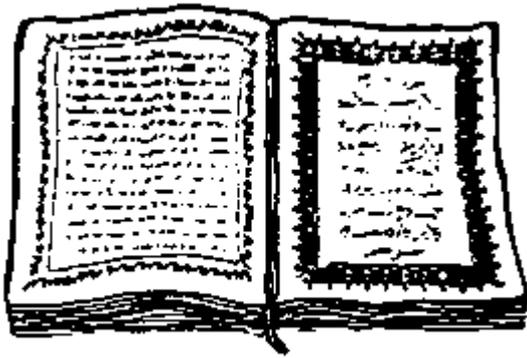
MUSLIM: Is the one who submits willingly to the teaching of Islam.

BASE OF ISLAM: THERE IS NO GOD BUT THE GOD AND MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF THE GOD.

THE QUR'AN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE
COMPASSIONATE.



The Qur'an is the sacred book of the Muslims. It is the last book of guidance from Allah. It is the final and complete revelation of ISLAM. It was sent down to the last prophet of Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him), through the

angel Jibrail (Gabriel). It was revealed over a period of 23 years in the Arabic language. Every word of the Qur'an is the word of Allah. The Qur'an contains 114 chapters and over 6000 verses. Every chapter, except one, starts with the words: 'In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate.'

Muslims usually learn to read the Qur'an in Arabic and many memorise it by heart. They are expected to understand its meaning and practise its teachings.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE FOR A MUSLIM

Mankind's purpose in life is to seek knowledge of Allah, and by means of that knowledge to worship Allah with understanding.

To worship Allah is to know Him, to love Him, to obey His commandments and to be just to Him, to ourselves and to our fellow human beings.

Allah has given life to man with unique qualities and great abilities. He has gifted man with intelligence and power to choose his course of conduct. Allah means to help man to fulfil the purpose of life and realise the goal of existence. Allah means to help mankind to learn the creative art of living a good life according to the Divine guidance. Man is thus strongly commended by Allah to exert his utmost to fully serve the purpose of his existence. Should he fail to do that, or if he misuses the purpose of his life or neglects his duties, he shall be responsible to Allah for his wrong deeds.

Life is a trust from Allah, and mankind is a trustee who should handle the trust with honesty and skill, with mindfulness of Allah and with consciousness of responsibility to Him.



THE PROPHETS

The fundamental points of the missions of all the Prophets of Allah are as follows:

To teach man to acknowledge the exclusive sovereignty of the God and to demand absolute service and obedience to the God. This is the basis for the entire structure of human morality and social behaviour.

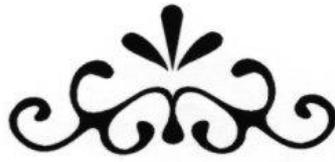
To teach man to obey the prophets since they are the representatives of the true sovereign.

The Law which should regulate man's conduct should be none other than the Law of the God.

‘Whoever disbelieves in the false deities and believes in the God, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that will never break....’ 2.256

Prophets were chosen from mankind to guide and invite people to the way of the God. The first of them was Adam (peace be upon him) and the last of them and their Seal was Muhammad (pbuh). They are all brothers in-faith and inviters unto the Lord of the Worlds.

All of the prophets are protected from attributing to the God something of their own inventions, judging according to their own desires, falling into major sins and adding to or diminishing from the religion. They are directed by the God to be upright in the disposition of their affairs. It is only because they achieved submission to the God that they were honoured with the divine assignment. They are the most perfect in belief, most God-fearing and most knowledgeable among the believers. Not one of them called people to magnify himself, rather they called all people to worship the God alone.



ADAM (Peace be upon him)

The First Prophet of Islam

Allah has created everything that is in the Earth and the Heavens.

After creating them Allah informed the angels that He intended to create man as His representative on the earth.

Then Allah created Adam (peace be upon him) out of clay and breathed life into him. Allah taught Adam (pbuh) all the names of whatever is in the creation and the Names of Allah.

Allah then asked all the angels to bow before Adam (pbuh); all of them did so. Iblis (Satan) who was one of the jinn refused to bow down to Adam (pbuh) out of pride, saying that he was better than Adam because Adam was made from earth, whereas he was made from fire.

Allah created Eve from Adam (pbuh). To begin with Adam and Eve (pbut) lived at peace in the Garden. They were free to enjoy its fruits as they wished, with one exception. They were warned not to approach a particular tree so that they would not run into harm and injustice. Allah also warned them to beware of Iblis. However Iblis intrigued them and persuaded them to taste the fruit that Allah had commanded them not to eat.

Allah then threw Iblis out of the divine presence, but Iblis promised that he would not give up tempting Adam and his progeny. Having realised what they had done, Adam and Eve felt shame, guilt and remorse. They prayed for Allah's mercy.

They said 'Our lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, surely we will be among the losers.' (Qur'an 7: 23)

Allah the Forgiving the Merciful had mercy on Adam and Eve and He forgave them.

'Then Adam received words (of revelation) from his Lord, and He turned in forgiveness towards him; surely He is the Relenting, the Compassionate. We said 'Go down from here together, but certainly guidance will come from Me to you and whoever follows My guidance will neither fear nor grieve' (Qur'an 2:37-38)

We are all the children of Adam and Eve (pbut); we are all descended from them. Allah describes mankind in the holy Qur'an as the 'Tribe of Adam'. The event in the Garden it seems was designed to discipline the first man, to give him actual experience of fall and rise, moral defeat and triumph, straying from and reconciliation with Creator. In this way man would become better prepared for life.



ABRAHAM (Peace be upon him)

A Prophet of Islam

Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was descended from Sham, one of the sons of prophet Noah (peace be upon him). All the prophets who came after Prophet Abraham (pbuh) were descended from him. He was born in the city of Ur, situated on the banks of the Euphrates, about a hundred miles from the Persian Gulf. His father was Azar. He lived at the time of king Nimrud, at a time when the Chaldean civilisation was at its height.

Abraham (pbuh) is described in the holy Qur'an as being hanif, which means 'naturally pure' and 'submitter'. It was in his nature to recognise the true nature of existence and to worship only Allah and nothing other than Allah.

'When Lord said to him (Abraham), 'Submit', he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds' (Qur'an 2.131)

'Jacob said to his sons, 'What will you worship after me?' they said, 'We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, the One God, and we will be Muslims toward the God.' (Qur'an 2.13)

'When I revealed to the Apostles, 'Have faith in Me and in my messengers', they said, 'We have faith, and we bear witness that we are Muslims.' (Qur'an 5.111)

‘Abraham was a hanif, a man of pure worship. He was not one of the idol worshippers, but a believer in One God. Only those who follow him are entitled to claim relationship with him. Muhammad and his followers are nearer to him. Allah is the protector of all the believers.’ (Qur'an 3.67-68)

When Ishmael was still a small boy Abraham had a dream in which he was commanded to sacrifice his only son. He interpreted his dream literally, and travelled to Makkah in order to fulfil his Lord's command.

‘And when he was old enough to walk with him, (Abraham) said, O my son, surely I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you, so consider it, what do you think?’ He replied, O my father, do what you have been commanded to do. Insh'Allah you will find that I am one of those who are steadfast.’ (Qur'an 37.102)

On their way to the place of sacrifice, which is known as Mina, Satan attempted to dissuade him from doing what he believed he had been commanded to do. It was not until he was just about to sacrifice Ishmael that Allah commanded him to sacrifice a large ram instead.

‘Enough, Abraham! You have kept your word with us. You have already fulfilled the vision.’ (Qur'an 37.105)

‘We redeem Abraham's son with a great sacrifice and we give our benediction to him and bless him through generations to come and shower our peace upon him.’ (Qur'an 37.107-109)

‘The righteous belong to the community of Abraham, who was pure in his worship of the God. So were Ishmael, Jacob and the tribes, and Moses, Jesus and the rest. They are all Our messengers, We make no distinction between them.’ (Qur'an 2:135-136)

Say: Surely my prayer and my worship and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds - nothing can be associated with Allah. And it is to this that I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit.



JESUS (peace be upon him)

A Prophet of Islam

Muslims respect and revere Jesus (peace be upon him), and await his Second Coming. They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. A Muslim never refers to him simply as 'Jesus' but always adds the phrase "peace be upon him".

The Qur'an confirms his virgin birth (a chapter of the Qur'an is entitled 'Mary'), and Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation. Jesus (pbuh) was born miraculously through the same power which had brought Adam (pbuh) into being without a father. The Qur'an tells us that during his prophetic mission Jesus (pbuh) performed many miracles.

Neither Muhammad (pbuh) nor Jesus (pbuh) came to change the basic doctrine of the belief in One God, brought by earlier prophets, but to confirm and renew it.

The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

"Whoever believes there is no god but God, alone without partner, that Muhammad (pbuh) is His messenger, that Jesus (pbuh) is the servant and messenger of God, His word breathed into Mary and a spirit emanating from Him, in the Hereafter and on the Day of Judgement, shall be received by God into Heaven."
(Hadith from Bukhari)



MUHAMMAD (Peace be upon him)

The Last Prophet of Islam

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) the last messenger of Allah, was born in Makkah, Saudi Arabia into the leading tribe of Quraysh in the year 570 CE. He was called Muhammad (highly praised). His father Abdullah, died before his birth and he lost his mother Aminah, when he was only six. He married a noble lady of Makkah, when he was 25.

He is always spoken of with the greatest affection and respect by Muslims, but he is never a substitute for Allah in the Muslim mind. Muhammad (pbuh) was pure-hearted, gentle, sensitive to human suffering; he was always ready to help the poor, needy and orphans. His integrity and sense of duty won him the title of ‘the true’ and the ‘trustworthy one’.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the last prophet and messenger of Allah who brought the final revelation. He was not the founder of Islam, but the Seal of the Prophets of Islam.

It was in the year 610 CE. in the month of Ramadan on the outskirts of Makkah in the cave of Mount Hira where he used to pray in solitude for years that he received his first revelation. The message was brought to him by the Angel Gabriel, who called Muhammad (pbuh) to Read:

‘Read - in the name of Allah, who created, Created man out of a single clot of blood. Read ! Allah is the Most Generous One Who has taught by the pen, Taught man what he did not know.’

(Qur'an 96: 1-5)

From this time on, over the next twenty two years ‘The Qur'an’ the final and complete message of Islam valid for all times and for all peoples, was revealed to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

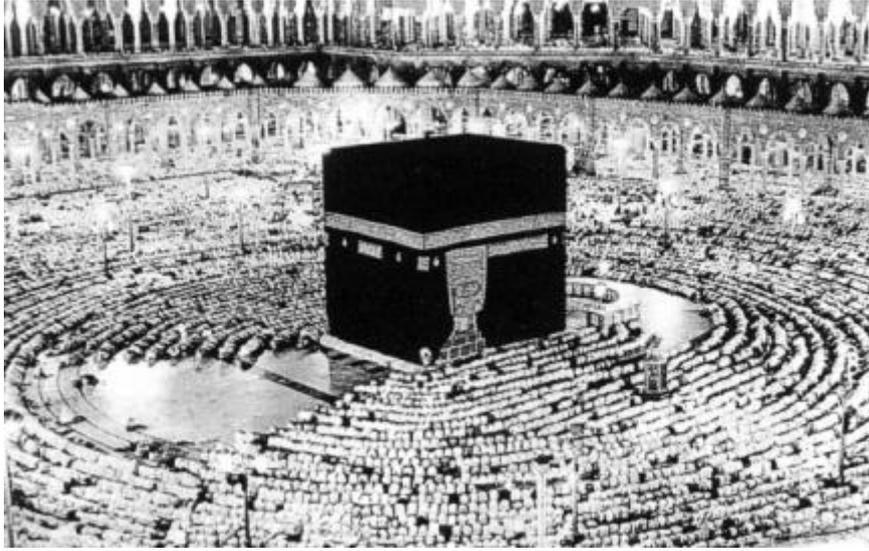
Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) preached the message of Allah with patience and wisdom. He always described himself as a Messenger and Servant of Allah. He was a man with a noble mission, which was to unite humanity on the worship of One and Only God and to teach them the way to honest and upright living based on the commands of the God.

Eventually Islam was established in the whole of Arabia. Within a short time the message of Islam spread from Arabia to most parts of the world from China to Spain. Islam has made a great contribution to the history and civilisation of the world.

In the present day world there are over a billion people who follow Islam and its teachings.



THE KABBAH



Muslims pray toward the Sacred Mosque of Kabbah.



Kabbah means square shaped building.

The Kabbah is in the city of Makkah in Saudi Arabia. The Sacred Mosque of Kabbah was built by one of the most important prophets of Islam Ibrahim (Abraham) and his eldest son Ismael (peace be upon them), for the worship of Allah.

Allah commanded Ibrahim and Ismael to build the Kabbah over four thousand years ago.

Father and son both worked, carrying stones from the mountains around Makkah, and built the Kabbah with their own hands.

Ibrahim (pbuh) would always remember Allah and call on Him. He said 'Our Lord, accept this from us, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing'.

Allah accepted it from Ibrahim and Ismael, (pbuh) and blessed the Kabbah.

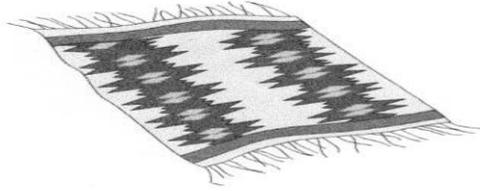
It is an obligation for a Muslim who has the means to do so, to make a pilgrimage to the Kabbah in Makkah once in a lifetime. This annual pilgrimage is known as HAJJ.

Hajj demonstrates to Muslims that mankind belongs to none but his Creator. All the pilgrims wear white garments, and they all together worship Allah. This tends to remove distinctions of rank. Hajj demonstrates the equality of mankind and creates a brotherhood of faith.



THE PRAYER

Why do Muslims believe it is necessary to pray?



SALAH (prayers) is offered five times a day individually or in congregation.

Prayers are the practical demonstration of faith.

Prayers keep believers in constant touch with the Creator.

Prayers give them an opportunity to show their respect, love and devotion to the Creator.

Prayers make them conscious of their basic duty which is to follow the teaching of the Qur'an.

Prayers encourage in a person the qualities of self discipline.

Prayers make the believers honest, truthful and courageous.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Five principles regulate the life of Muslims in direct relationship with God.

Declaration of the Kalima (Shahadah) - the statement of faith which is an expression of the belief in God as One and that Muhammad is his prophet.

Prayer (Salat) - which should be recited five times a day (early dawn, mid-day, mid-afternoon, sunset and night). Its purpose is that Muslims should remember their creator, and show gratitude and devotion to him. Praying will put one's life in perspective and purify the spirit.

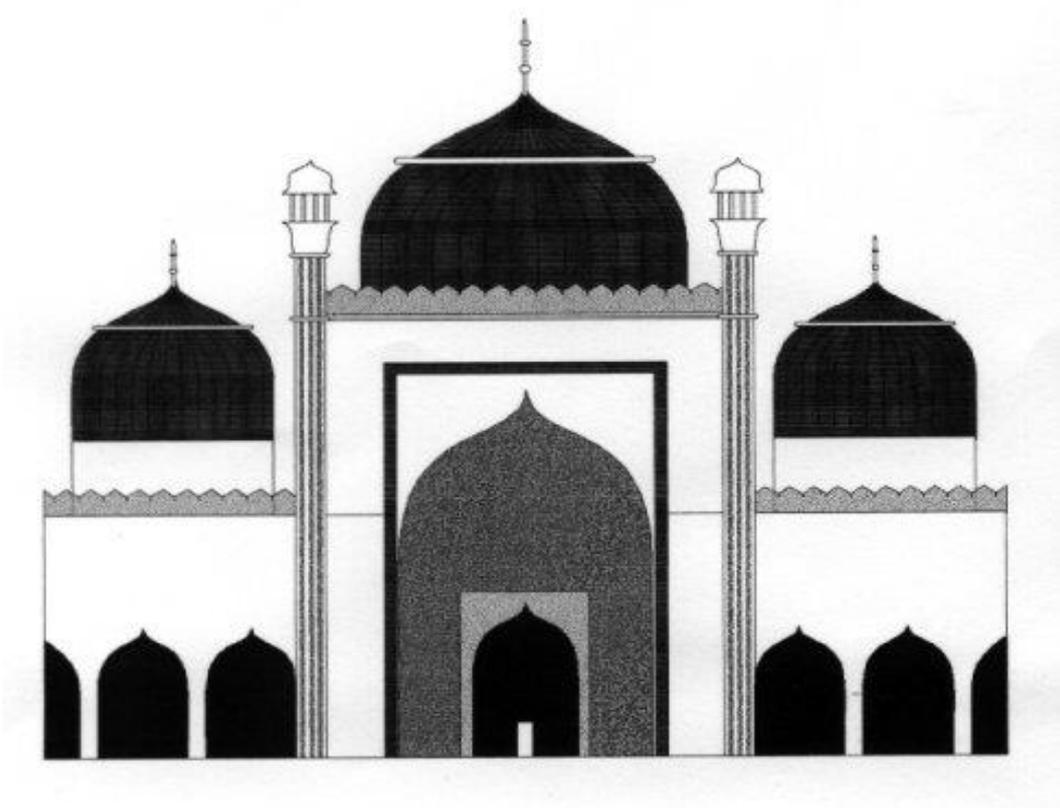
Fasting (Saum) - during the month of Ramadan, which is determined by the sighting of the moon. In this month, Muslims abstain entirely from food and drink from early dawn to the time of sunset. Fasting is a time of strict discipline, in matters of personal behaviour, passions and desires. The able-bodied and strong, irrespective of their status, must fast during Ramadan. Fasting, by imposing a discipline in the body, purifies the mind. Fasting also has a positive effect on society as it generates a feeling of a community and solidarity - and creates a sense of brotherhood. 'Eid al Fitr' is the feast that marks the end of Ramadan. This is one of the special days of festivity for Moslems.

Charity (Zakat) - every Muslim is obliged to contribute a portion (about 2 1/2%) of his income, and of the value of all his goods and property, towards charity every year. This is due only when the income is at a certain level. The reason for this tax is to keep the balance of wealth within an Islamic nation so that Moslems can find security in the solidarity of Islamic society, a society which fulfils its responsibilities by neglecting and rejecting none. Islam thus clearly establishes the principle of equality by resisting the greatest social evil - poverty.

Pilgrimage (Haj) - this is the largest annual congregation of Moslems, which takes place at Mecca every year in Saudi Arabia on an international level. From almost all corners of the globe, Muslims who can afford the journey, undertake this pilgrimage to Mecca. The basic purpose of the pilgrimage is to keep alive the pilgrim's devotion to God. The wearing of similar garments and the togetherness of worship during the ceremonies tend to remove distinctions of rank and hierarchy. They are reminders of the equality of men and create a brotherhood of faith.

True Muslims are also expected to follow other precepts of an obligatory nature. Islam forbids evil and tyranny, prohibits intoxicants, gambling, adultery and indecencies, eating the flesh of swine and of dead animals. However, there are no harsh and hard rituals or unreasonable dogmas in Islam.

THE MOSQUE



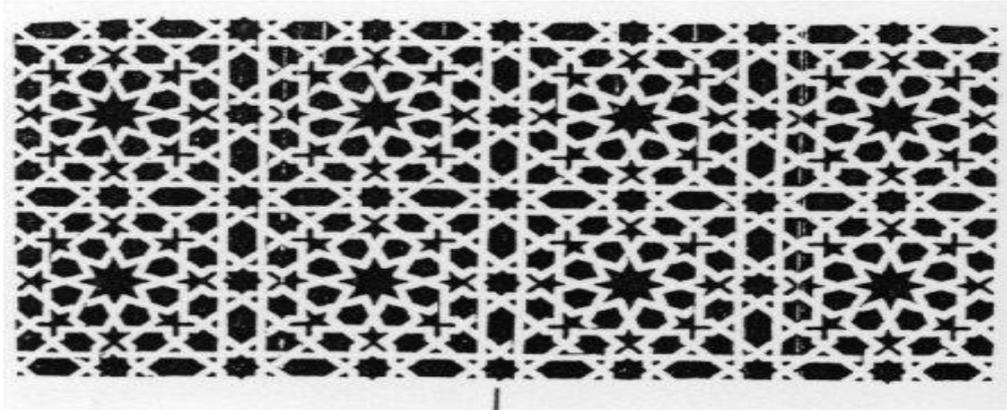
The Mosque is the place of public worship, gathering and learning for Muslims.

MAIN FEATURES:

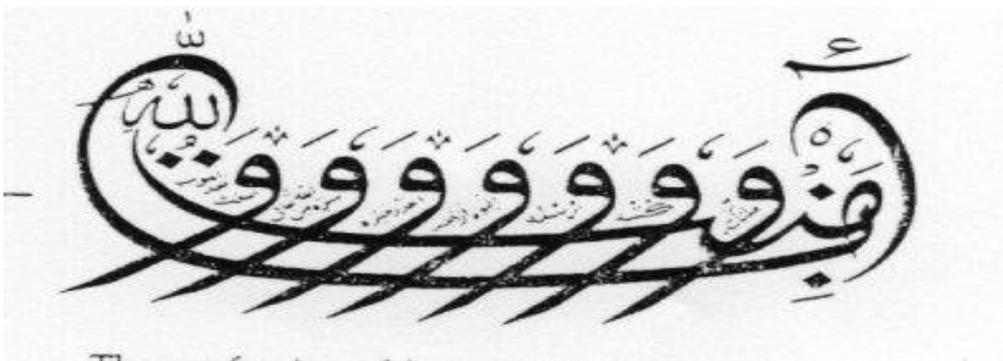
Mosques often have a dome shaped roof representing the heavens. In non-Muslim countries the mosque may be a converted house or other suitable building.

One notices the lack of images and the simplicity of interior.

Mosques are often decorated inside and outside with mosaic in beautiful designs. The Muslim talent for calligraphy which is expressed in Arabic text from the Qur'an is featured in these designs.

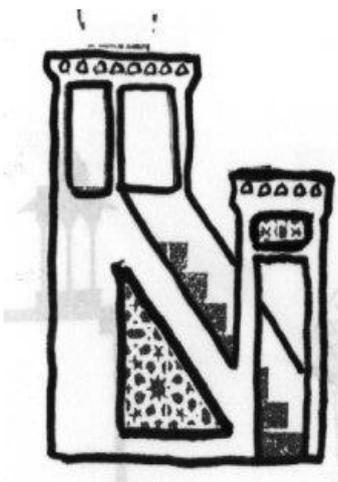


A Beautiful Islamic Design.



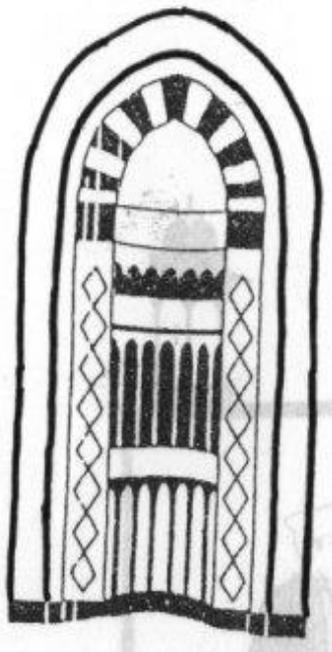
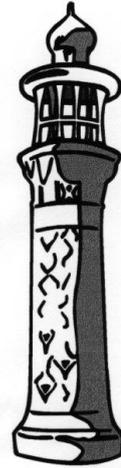
An example of Islamic Calligraphy.

Every mosque has a washing room for ablution before the prayer. Most mosques have a courtyard and a fountain for ablutions; these also add to the beauty of mosques.



Every Mosque has a Minbar. A Minbar is a pulpit, or stepped platform, from which the imam delivers his sermon.

Mosques often have a Minaret - a tower built next to it. The call for the prayers comes from the top of the Minaret five times a day.



Every mosque has a Mihrab. This is a recess indicating the direction or 'Qiblah' of the prayer, which faces in the direction of the Kabbah in Makkah.

THE IMAM

There is no priesthood in Islam. The imam is simply selected by the community, and is preferably a person skilled in the teachings of Islam and known for his piety.

WHAT CAN YOU SEE IN A MOSQUE

Minaret — The call to prayer is sounded out from the minaret 5 times a day in Muslim countries. This is the tall part of the Mosque as you look at it from the outside.

Mihrab — This is a niche in the wall (mihrab) which indicates the direction of prayer. All Muslims face the Ka'ban in Makkah when praying.

Minbar — This is a platform from where the imam (leader of the prayer / community) gives a sermon (khutbah) at Friday prayers.

Wudu area — Every mosque has an area where a person can carry out ablution (washing) before performing prayers.

No Pictures but a lot of Islamic writing from the Quran

Lots of books (Quran)

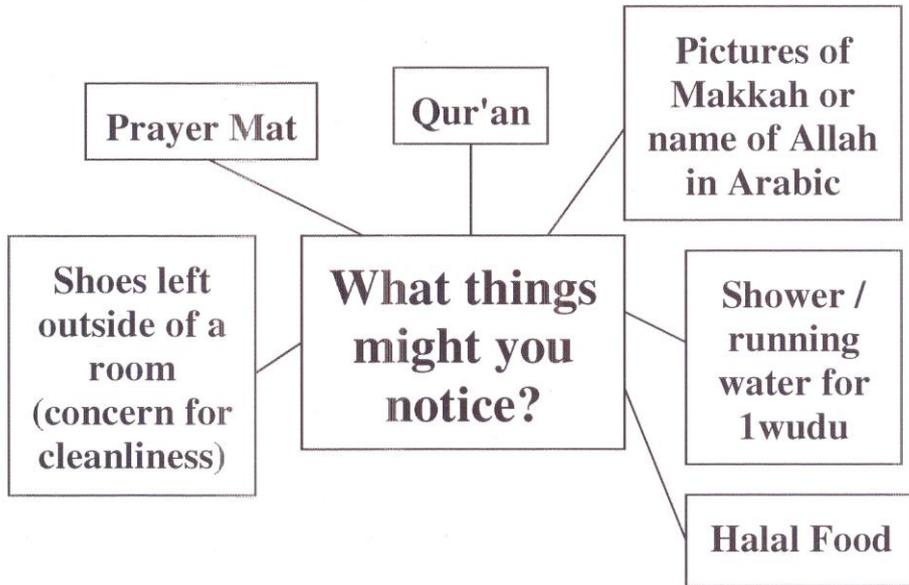
Clocks

Carpets

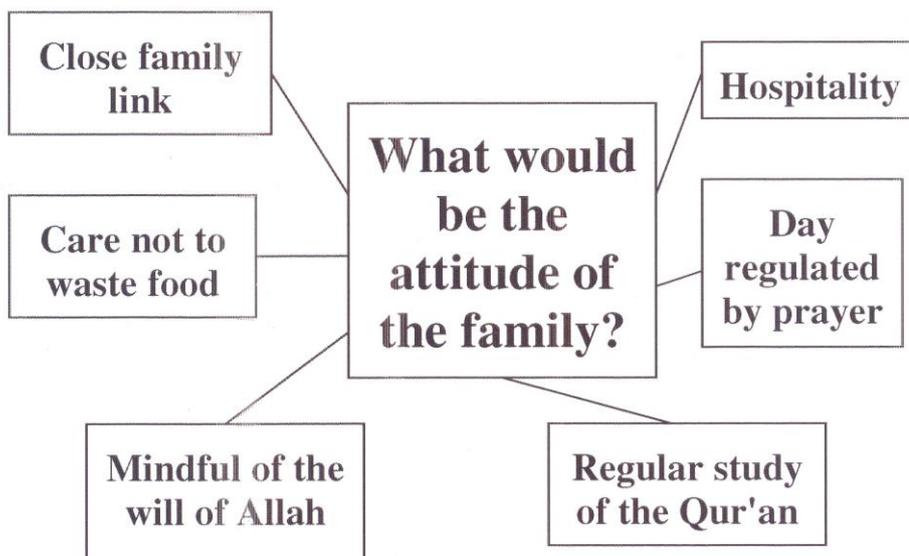
No seats

Shoe racks

Washing area



A Muslim Home



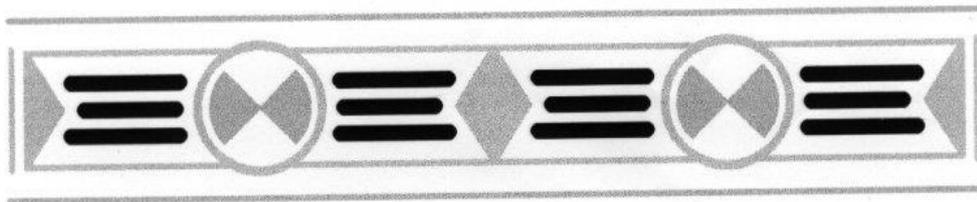
MUSLIM HOPES AND PRAYERS

SOME WORDS OF MUHAMMAD

"All creatures of God form the family of God and he is the best loved of God who loveth best His creatures."

"O Lord! Lord of my life and of everything in the Universe! I affirm that all human beings are brothers unto one another."

"Respect the ways of God and be affectionate to the family of God."



On the following pages are the wishes of two young Muslims girls for the new Millennium. Nardin is nine years old. Nazanin, her sister, is fourteen years old. They are Elahe's nieces. Both girls go to an Islamic School and live in an Islamic country. However they visit England almost every summer in order to improve their English and meet up with their English friends that they have grown to love.



WISH 2000

From Nardin 9 years old:

People from the beginning of their life until the end always have beautiful wishes.

I love:

Trees to be green.

Lakes to be blue.

Sky to be of light.

Tears to be of joy,

and the blessing of Allah to be on all.

My wish for the new millennium is for the people everywhere to be kind to each other.

My wish is for the smoke, dust and pollution to go away from my country, for people to be kinder.

Our country is an Islamic country; my wish for the year 2000 is for people everywhere to learn that Islam has many important lessons for everyone, like having faith in people and above all having faith in God. The way to be close to God is through prayer, and showing kindness to others. These lines are very important.

Prayer is part of our faith. Every year at school we learn important lessons from the Qur'an.

NARDIN



WISH 2000

From Nazanin 14 years old:

“Mankind has always lived with their hopes. Even though sometimes they seem impossible to be obtained, yet this somehow has not stopped mankind from showing perseverance and hard work in hope of achieving them.

One’s thoughts for the future are always shaped by wishes and hopes, in a way that forms the pages of our lives.

Today, mankind is engaged more than ever in reaching to more sophisticated, civilised and industrial societies. However this has evolved his wishes too.

My wish for the new Millennium is that people everywhere in the world from every race, tribe, culture and faith unite and stop powers that with their empty, worthless excuses step over the rights of innocents for the sake of self interest.

I wish that there will be an end to segregation. I wish that the mind and thoughts of us in our planet would be for the sake of all. I feel it is then that development and progress will lead to a more humane world.”

NAZANIN

AT THE MOSQUE

What is a mosque for?

What is a Muslim's Holy Book called?

How do people treat the Holy Book in the mosque?

Why do Muslims take off their shoes when they come into the mosque?

What else do Muslims do before they pray? Where do they do this?

Do men and women pray together in the mosque?

How many times does a Muslim pray each day?

Why is it important for a Muslim to pray every day?

Why are there little clocks on the wall of the mosque?

What else can you see on the walls?

What is the minbar (little stool) for?

Why are there no chairs?

Why does the mosque have carpet on the floor?

Why do Muslims face south-east when they pray?

Why do they cover their heads when they pray?