



# A VISIT TO A MUSLIM PLACE OF WORSHIP BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL MOSQUE

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## WELCOME TO BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL MOSQUE



A mosque is an Islamic place of worship and a centre of learning for Muslims. A Muslim is a person who follows the religion of Islam. It is the second largest religion in the world.

In 1969 a decision was taken to build a mosque for the large community of Muslims in Birmingham. It took hard work and fundraising and in 1975, it was completed.

Birmingham Central Mosque is one of the largest mosques in the UK and Europe with space for 6000 people. It has served the community well and since 2020 a major project is now underway to enlarge and upgrade the building.

Across the world, a mosque may be identified by the **dome** and the **minaret**.

The minaret was traditionally used by a **Muezzin**. This is a person who makes a call to prayer in Arabic. **Arabic** is the language of Islam.

The Muezzin (also Mu'addin in Arabic) calls the worshippers to the mosque reminding them to pray five times a day.



*Birmingham Central Mosque extension project 2020-22  
Taken from architect's video*

People go to the mosque to pray, to learn and to meet each other. There are Prayer Halls, a library, offices and community areas for weddings, funerals, lectures and special occasions such as festivals. There are also classrooms known as Madrasah ( which is the Arabic name for a place of learning.)

**The star within a crescent moon** which can be seen on the top of the dome has become a symbol of Islam. The Muslim calendar is based on lunar months.



**Muslims believe there is one true God, Allah,  
and Muhammad is the last messenger of God.**

Muhammad is so respected that it is usual for Muslims to say 'Peace be upon him' after his name or write PBUH.

## AT THE MOSQUE

There are separate entrances for men and for women. People are calm and quiet in the mosque.

As Islam is a global religion, in different cultures, Muslims wear different styles of modest clothing to show respect for Allah.

Women usually wear a **Hijab**, which is Arabic for 'veil.' This covers the head and hair. A fuller veil is



*Schools' Guide at BCM*



called a '**Niqab** and a full body veil is called a '**Burqa**'.

Muslim men often wear a small cap called a **Taqiyah** when they pray to show commitment to the faith and the will of Allah.



**Removal of shoes**  
Shoes are removed at the entrance as a mark of respect.

### Wudu

To prepare for prayer and for touching the Qu'ran, ritual washing of parts of the body is required. This is called **Wudu**.

Muslims do not touch the Qur'an and pray without having Wudu.



## FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

These are the **five key practices** that Muslims are obliged to fulfil so that they can lead good and responsible lives. They are asked to put their beliefs into practice by performing certain acts of worship.

### Declaration of Faith **Shahada**

'There is no deity except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God'. Repeated many times during the day and always at prayers.



*The Imam*

### Prayer **Salah**

Pray 5 times a day at dawn, noon, late afternoon, sunset and night. Friday noon prayers are special to Muslims.



### Fasting **Sawm**

During the month of Ramadan, do not eat or drink from dawn to dusk.



### Charity **Zakat (or Zakah)**

Encouraged to give 2.5% of their wealth to benefit the poor and to give as much as they can voluntarily.



### Pilgrimage to Mecca **Hajj**

If they can afford it, every Muslim is required to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, once in their lifetime.



*Kaaba at the Great Mosque in Mecca*

Kaaba, also spelt Ka'bah, is a cubic structure in the centre of the Great Mosque in Mecca and is considered by Muslims to be the most sacred spot on earth.

## THE QUR'AN AND PRAYER HALL

Allah cannot be seen and has no physical form. You will not see any images in the mosque.

**The Qur'an is the Muslims' holy book.** It is the focus of worship. You will see many copies of the Qur'an on shelves in the mosque where it is read, studied and memorised. The Qur'an is always treated with great respect by Muslims in their homes as well as in the mosque.



The language of the Qur'an is Arabic which is written from right to left. In prayers, verses from the Qur'an are recited. The Qur'an has over 6000 verses divided into 30 equal parts and 114 chapters or **(surahs in Arabic.)**



### PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Peace be upon him

Muslims believe that the early words of the Qur'an were revealed by the angel Jibreel (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH in a cave in the desert near Mecca in Saudi Arabia nearly 1400 years ago.

It took 23 years for the whole of the Qur'an to be completed. The words remain unchanged and Muslims believe the Qur'an is Allah's last and final words. It provides Muslims with complete guidance about how they should live their lives.



Islamic art has a rich tradition of decorating books and walls with geometric patterns and calligraphy.



**Friday is the holiest day of the week** when Muslims all over the world attend a mosque for prayers at noon. Men and women have separate Prayer Halls. The Men's Prayer Hall has space for 3000 worshippers.

They stand in straight rows, shoulder to shoulder, bow and kneel to show they follow the will of Allah. Everyone is equal in the House of Allah. This action helps Muslims to connect with Allah and with all Muslims throughout the world. They look for peace as they worship God.



You will see that one wall is different. This is called the **qibla** wall. It has a niche (called a **Mihrab**) to show the direction of the **Kaaba** in **Mecca** (or **Makkah** in Arabic). Muslims throughout the world turn to pray towards Mecca five times a day.



Mihrab



Imam leading prayers

Prayers are led by the **Imam** who sits on raised steps called the **Mimber** (also known as **Minbar**) to the right of the niche, to deliver a sermon from where he can see everyone. Guided by the Imam, Muslims learn from the Qur'an, how to become a good human being.



Mimber or Minbar

## FESTIVALS

There are two official holidays in the Islamic lunar calendar: **Eid ul-Fitr** and **Eid Ul-Adha**.

**Ramadan** Ramadan ( sometimes spelt Ramadhan) is a time when Muslims remember the month the Qur'an was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad PBUH. For thirty days, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset. This is known as **fasting**. Children are not expected to fast until they are 14. Muslims give up bad habits, do good deeds, give charity and care for their family and friends. They read the Qur'an and attend special prayers at night.

**Eid ul-Fitr** celebrates the end of Ramadan. There is a special Eid prayer when Muslims give thanks to Allah. They have a special meal with family and friends. People give gifts, dress in their best clothes and give money to charity.



### Eid ul-Adha

This is a very important Festival of Sacrifice. Muslims remember Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son on the orders of Allah. Ibrahim (Abraham) was tempted to disobey, but was strong and was prepared to submit to the will of Allah. But at the last minute, Allah intervened and a ram was sacrificed instead.

It marks the end of **Hajj**, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca when Muslims renew their faith.



From right to left: The Chairman of the mosque with a trustee at Eid



Women in their prayer hall at Eid ul-Adha 2021



Islamic Arabic decorative jug

## COMMUNITY AREA and EDUCATION

The Community area is a multi purpose area which includes a library, a place where lectures, weddings and funeral services are held and an area where people come together for feasts such as Eid and other special celebrations.



The wedding area



Education is very important at the mosque. Children come to the Madrasah on week days from 5pm to 7pm or at the weekend to learn about Islam and how to read the Qur'an in Arabic.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

"Peace be upon him" in Arabic.

Arabic is written from right to left. Calligraphy has a special importance in Islam. It is an art used to decorate buildings and personal items.

Designed by The Arts Society Birmingham, in collaboration with members of Central Mosque 2021



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