

## Pilgrimage

### Key words

**Pilgrimage:** A journey of moral or spiritual importance

**Hajj:** A religious journey for Muslims to Mecca. One of the 5 pillars of Islam

**Reincarnation:** The belief that when you die your soul moves into another being

**Langar:** A free (vegetarian) meal which ends Sikh service

### Why do religious people go on pilgrimages?

It helps them feel united with others who share the same faith / feel like they belong in a community

It shows their devotion to their religion

They are able to learn about their religion

It helps them to experience a place of historical significance in their faith

It helps them feel closer to God

It allows them to experience a place of historical significance in their faith

### Islam: Hajj

Hajj is an annual pilgrimage that starts and ends in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Every Muslim is expected to go on Hajj at least once in their lifetime as it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Hajj remembers the actions of the Prophet Ibrahim and his family, who rebuilt the Kaaba (the cube shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque, and the holiest place in Islam).

Hajj strengthens a Muslim's faith and shows their commitment to God and also absolves their sins.

### Islam- Hajj: What do Muslims do?

First they are required to enter the state of Ihram. They wear white to show they are all equal

Next, they circle the Kaaba seven times

After they have circled the Kaaba, they then run between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times



Muslims then travel to Mina to spend the night praying and reading the Quran

The next day, Muslims travel from Mina to stand at the Plain of Arafat, where they stand from midday until sunset, thinking about Allah and praying

Once Muslims have been to Arafat, they then travel to Muzdalifah in time for the evening prayers and camp there overnight

Muslims then make the journey back to Mina, to throw stones at the pillars that represent the devil and temptation

Finally, Muslims camp at Mina for three days, then travel back to Mecca and walk round the Kaaba again

### Sikhism: The Golden Temple

Many Sikhs aim to visit the Golden Temple in India at least once in their lives. In the temple there are readings from the Guru Granth Sahib almost continuously. The lake the temple is built on is called the Pool of Nectar and Sikhs believe it has healing powers, so pilgrims will often bathe in the water.

This special temple has 4 entrances to symbolise that people from all over the world are welcome. In Sikhism, sewa (service) is an essential part of worshipping God, giving help to others. At the Golden Temple service is given in the form of langar.



### Hinduism: Varanasi and the River Ganges

The most famous holy river is the River Ganges. It flows through the city of Varanasi in India and is an essential place of pilgrimage for Hindus. Millions of Hindus bathe in its waters, and they believe that drinking even one drop of its water will wash away of all the sins (wrong-doings) they have committed in this life and in all previous lives. Hindus believe that this will help the person to break out of the continuous cycle of death and reincarnation.

### Judaism: Jerusalem

The Jewish connection to Jerusalem goes all the way back to Abraham. God is said to have tested Abraham's faith and told him to take his son to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him. It was here that Abraham proved his faith in God so it is believed that this place symbolises the relationship the Jewish people have with God.

Another sacred place is the western wall. The wall is the only remains of the second temple. Despite the Temple being destroyed Jews still visit the remains of the wall to connect to their faith and community, remember the history of their religion and people, and communicate with God.

### Christianity: Lourdes

Lourdes (in South-West France) is a place of pilgrimage dedicated to Mary. In 1858 a girl named Bernadette had visions of Mary in a grotto. Mary told Bernadette to dig for a spring of water, which was discovered to have healing properties. Now thousands visit to pray where Mary appeared and bathe in the water where it is said over 60 miracles have taken place.

