

As Muslims celebrate Ramadan, Islamic Relief UK reveals a new YouGov Poll showing that 47 per cent of Brits do not know that charity is a major component of Islam



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Public understanding of Islam and Ramadan in the UK is limited, according to a new poll conducted by YouGov and charity Islamic Relief UK. The poll comes as Muslims celebrate a second Ramadan (until 12 May) in UK lockdown.

When asked what Muslims believe about charity, 47 per cent of respondents admitted to not knowing. A further 10 per cent thought Muslims gave to charity because it is a nice thing to do, whilst three per cent suggested it can only be given to Muslims.

In Islam, there are a variety of ways to give money to both Muslims and non-Muslims; these include the compulsory religious levy, zakat and a secondary core method, sadaqah. Muslims donate huge amounts of money to charity every year during Ramadan and according to figures by fundraising platform, Give Brite, UK Muslims donated £150 million to charity during Ramadan 2020.

Ramadan 2020 was a record-breaking year for donations to Islamic Relief with over 900,000 people in 31 countries benefitting from food packs. This was made possible thanks to charitable donations in the UK and worldwide.

When respondents were asked what the Five Pillars of Islam

were (believing in God, prayer, charitable giving, fasting and pilgrimage/Hajj) 42 per cent admitted to not knowing at all. A further 12 per cent incorrectly said that establishing Shariah law was one of the pillars of the Islamic faith, whilst 13 per cent believed that encouraging others to convert was core to the religion – nine per cent also said treating men as the superior gender was one of the Five Pillars, despite the Qur'an stating that men and women should be considered spiritual equals.

“It's sad to see the latest YouGov figures pointing towards people's lack of understanding about Islam in the UK. Muslims make up about five per cent of the UK's population, but the negative social stigma attached to our community has obscured people's understanding of what Islam actually is and how we practise it. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance, but another important part of the faith is charity – as the Qur'an states there is a 'recognised right for the needy and deprived (70:24-5)' over our own wealth. A huge part of the work we do would not be possible without generous giving from donors – particularly during Ramadan when Muslims give a significant sum through zakat and other charitable means. Ramadan 2020 was record breaking for us in terms of donations and we're excited to carry that momentum through 2021.”

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired, development and humanitarian agency working to transform and save the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in over 40 countries. Islamic Relief assists people according to need and does not discriminate in any way.

Set up in Birmingham in 1984 by a group of volunteers, we have assisted over 117 million people all over the world. We're saving lives and empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty in over 37 countries – from Bangladesh to Bosnia, Pakistan to Palestine, Kenya to Kosovo. Islamic Relief is on the ground in some of the world's most dangerous and difficult places – including Syria and Yemen – strengthening the most marginalised communities to withstand conflict and natural disasters and to build a brighter future. We also support vulnerable people in the UK in partnership with local

charities and organisations.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 2100 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 14th – 15th April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

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