

Glossary

‘Adil: fair, just

‘Adl: the concept of the justice of God

Ahadith: singular of *hadith*, a statement (usually attributed either to the Prophet [S] or to one of the members of his Progeny [as] or companions)

Ahilla: plural of *hilal*, crescent

‘Alim: scholar, theologian, a highly knowledgeable person

A’mal: highly recommended acts of adoration

‘Arsh: literally: throne, symbol of the Almighty's Authority

Ashar: plural of *sahar*, the time immediately preceding daybreak

Athan: the call for prayers; *muaththin* is one who performs *athān*.

Ayat: verse (from a sacred scripture)

Barzakh: the place and time wherein the souls of the dead live a life of their own prior to the Day of Judgment; see the Holy Qur'an, 23: 100.

Beed: plural of *abyad*, white

Dahr: time, age, eternity

Dinar: an Islamic (now Arab) gold currency varying in weight

Dirham: an Islamic silver currency weighing approx. 3.12 grams

Du’a: supplication, invocation

Eid: an Islamic feast, a joyous celebration, a merry occasion

Faaizeen: winners

Fajr: daybreak

Faqih: jurist, one who is knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence

Farasikh: plural of *farsakh*, parasang (a loan Persian word), a measure of length (distance). According to *Lisan al-'Arab*, it may be three to six miles. "It is called so," the author of *Lisan al-'Arab* goes on, "because one who walks one *farsakh* will have to sit to rest," suggesting that the original meaning of the word is: to halt, to come to a stand still, to rest.

Fatawa: plural of *fatwa*, a religious edict or decision

Fiqh: the science of Islamic jurisprudence

Firdaws: Paradise

Fitra: the amount (in cash or kind) paid to the needy at the end of the month of Ramadhan; see text for more details

Ghazwa: a military campaign, invasion

Ghusul: ceremonial bath

Hadith: (singular:) tradition, a statement made by Prophet Muhammad (S); its plural is: *ahadith*

Hadi: sacrificial animals offered at Mecca's holy precincts

Hajj: Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca during the prescribed period

Halal: Islamically permissible, admissible, allowed

Hilal: crescent, singular of *ahilla*

Haram: Islamically prohibitive, inadmissible, forbidden

Hujja: proof, argument, authority

Huri: heavenly wife with large lovely eyes married to the male residents of Paradise

Ihram: pilgrimage garb, white unwoven cotten shroud worn by pilgrims

Ijtihad: the degree one reaches in order to be qualified as a *mujtahid*, one who is capable of deriving religious decisions on his own

'Illiyeen: the highest pinnacle of Paradise; see Holy Qur'an, 83: 18.

Imam: leader of an *ummah*, a group of people (small or big); he may be the one who leads others in congregational prayers, or a supreme religious authority, or one of the Twelve Infallible Imams (as)

'Isha: nighttime, evening

Isnad: the method whereby one *hadith* is traced and in the end attributed to a *muhaddith*, traditionist, one who transmitted it the first time

I'tikaf: the act of remaining most of the time at a mosque for prayers and supplications

Iftar: the time or the meal to break the fast

Iqamah: the statements recited immediately before starting the ritual prayer

Isnad: the rendering of a quoted statement to its chain of narrators and transmitters

Israa: night journey; usually a reference to the Prophet's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem

Jahannam: hell

Jahiliyya: pre-Islamic period of ignorance

Jami'a: inclusive, universal, university

Janabah: uncleanness caused by seminal discharge

Jannat: heaven, Paradise, garden, singular of *jannaat*

Jihad: a struggle, an effort exerted, or a war waged in defense of Islam

Kaffara: atonement from sin

Kafir: infidel, apostate, atheist, one who does not believe in the existence of the Creator

Kalima: synonymous to "shahada," it is a Muslim's declaration of faith (that is, to testify that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah), and it is always pronounced in Arabic

Kantar: in Arabic: *qintaar*, a varying weight of 100 *ratls* (rotls); a *ratl* in Syria is roughly 3.202 kg., whereas in England it is 449.28 grams, and in Lebanon it is 2.566 kg.

Khums: one-fifth of one's savings (usually paid by Shi'a Muslims) set aside from annual income

Kursi: literally: chair, symbol of the Almighty's Seat of Judgment and Authority; see Holy Qur'an, 2:255

Khutba: lecture, sermon; a speech delivered on a specific occasion

Kufr: apostacy, infidelity, disbelief

Labbayk: an exclamation conveying the meaning of "At your service!" or "Here I am!"

Ma'ad: the Return: a reference to the returning of the souls to their new bodies after the period of *barzakh* (see above), and their ultimate returning to their Maker for judgment; generally, it is used to refer to death and the life hereafter.

Majalis: meetings or gatherings held to commemorate certain religious occasion, mostly applied to those held during the month of Muharram or to recite the Fatiha for a deceased person; singular of *majlis*, a place where people sit

Marji' taqlid: the highest theological authority—referee followed

Mash'ar: a place where certain rites are to be conducted, a sacred area or place or precinct

Mawla: depending on its usage, it may mean either "master" or "slave," or it may mean one who is most fit for a specific position of honor and prestige. Derived from the adjective *awla* (one who is best qualified), it means: the person who is best suited to be the religious and temporal leader of all Muslims.

Mi'raj: ascension to heaven

Mithqal: a weight equivalent to 24 karats or 4.68 grams

Mu'min: believer, one who has *iman*, conviction, true belief

Mujtahid: one who acquires the degree of *ijtihad* and thus becomes capable of deriving religious decisions on his own

Musnad: a compilation of traditions (*ahadith*) which are consecutively and chronologically traced to their transmitters

Mutawatir: consecutively reported, traced by a perfect chronological chain of ascertained narrators of *hadith*

Nafil: optional, non-compulsory, supererogatory, highly recommended act of worship

Najasa: uncleanness, impurity

Nathr: One's pledge to do something very good to show appreciation for the Almighty's favorable response to his supplication and the attainment of his worldly wish

Noor: divine or celestial light

Nubuwwah: prophethood, the belief in prophets and their messages

Qaniteen: those who are constantly supplicating

Qaza: compensatory, making up for a missed rite

Qibla: direction towards the Ka'ba, Mecca

Qiyam: standing

Qudsi: divine, related to the Almighty

Qunoot: supplication during prayers

Rek'at: prostration (during prayer or a ritual)

Rukoo': kneeling

Sabeel: path, way, avenue

Sadaqa: (singular:) charity offered voluntarily; its plural is: *sadaqa*ﷻ

Sadeed: pus collected from bleeding wounds to be served to the sinners in hell when they ask for water to quench their thirst

Sahaba: (singular:) companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S); its plural is: *sah*ﷻ*bi*

Sahabi: companion (e.g. of the Holy Prophet), one of the *sahaba*

Saheefa: tablet, scroll, parchment, a written document

Sahih: literally: authentic, correct, accurate; it is generally used to refer to the collection, group of collections, or book, of verified and authenticated *ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (S)

Shahada: martyrdom

Shahr: month

Shaikh: also *syakh*, an honoring title with many meanings; literally, it means an old man; in Islamic theology and philosophy, however, it is used to denote a mentor, professor, or scholar of a high calibre

Shari'a: Islam's legislative system

Shirk: polytheism, the belief in the existence of partners with God

Shubha: (singular) doubt, suspicion; its plural is: *shubhat*

Shura: the principle of mutual consultation, Islam's form of democracy

Siddeeq: one who testifies to the truthfulness of a prophet

Sirat: path, highway; same as *Sabeel*

Siyam: Islam's norm of fast

Suhoor: time or meal taken before daybreak in preparation to fast during the day

Sunan: plural of *sunnah*: a highly commended act of worship or way whereby a Muslim seeks nearness to Allah

Tabi'een: plural of *tabi'*, one who follows and learns from a *Sahabi*

Tabi'l: (singular:) one who accompanied for a good period of time and learned from a *sahabi*, a companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S); its plural is: *tabi'een*

Tafsir: (singular:) exegesis or explanation of Qur'anic verses; its plural is: *tafsir*

Tahara: purification, the act of removing *najasa*, uncleanness or impurity

Takbeer: the act of glorifying Allah by declaring in an audible voice: "Allaho Akbar!" Allah is Great!

Taqiyya: one's way of exerting precaution in order to save his life when it is in jeopardy, Shi'as' way of trying to survive against the presence of sure perils

Taqleed: the concept of following a *mujtahid* or an authority recognized as the *a'alam*, the most knowledgeable in Islamics

Tarwiyah: The Day of Tarwiyah is the 8th of Thul-Hijjah when the pilgrims fill their water bags and prepare to go to Mina.

Tashahhud: the testimony regarding Allah being the Lord and Muhammad (S) being His Servant and Messenger; it is the uttering of "Ashhadu an la ilaha illa–Allah, wa anna Muhammad abdoho wa rasooloh"

Tashreeq: the cutting and sun-drying of sacrificed meat

Tawaf: circling around a certain sacred site

Tawatur: consecutive reporting, the tracing of one particular *hadith* to its respective chronological chain of narrators

Tawhid: the concept of the absolute Unity of God, the belief that God is One and indivisible, One ___ and

Only One ___ God

Tawwabeen: the penitent ones, those who repented their reluctance to go to the rescue of Imam Husayn (as) when he was confronted with Yazid's armies and who enlisted under the military command of al-Mukhtar and pursued those who massacred Imam Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) and killed them

Thakireen: those who often mention the Name of the Almighty and Glorify Him

Thayyib: a deflowered woman, a widow or divorcee

Thireed: pieces of bread cut and dipped in stew

'Ulema: plural of *'Alim*, scholar-theologian

Ummah: nation, group of people

'Umra: the pilgrimage to Mecca during any time other than the prescribed (first ten) days of the month of Thul-Hijjah

Usool: the basics of jurisprudence

Waqf: a piece of property dedicated for the promotion of any particular good cause

Wajib: compulsory, obligatory, binding

Wali: person to whom *wilayat* is obligatory

Wasi: successor to a prophet

Wilayat: supreme authority that combines both temporal and religious authority

Wisal: fasting the last day of every lunar calendar month

Wudu: ablution

Zakat: Literally, it means "purification;" it is a compulsory 2.5% tax on one of three categories of wealth: 1) metal coins (gold, silver, etc.), 2) grain crops (barley, wheat, grain, rice, etc.), and 3) animals raised for food consumption. *Zakat* is somehow a complicated issue, and for details, readers are advised to consult books dealing with *fiqh*. Among its types are: *zakat al-mal* (taxable wealth accumulated during one full year), and *zakat al-fitr* (a tax to be paid by the head of a household at the end of the fast of the month of Ramadhan).

Zihar: the making of a similitude between the back of one's wife with that of his mother; i.e. saying that his wife's back looks similar to his mother's

And surely Allah knows best...

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