

Glossary

Abee Lahab: Leader of the opposition for the early Muslims. He was an uncle of the prophet Muhammad.

Abraham: The prophet who originally called the believers “Muslims.” He is known as the father of Islam and it was through him that all of the practices of Islam came. Muhammad was a follower of the religion of Abraham.

Adultery: In the Quran this refers to any sexual relations outside of one’s own marriage. It applies to both married and unmarried offenders.

Al-Fatehah: The first chapter of the Quran. This seven-verse chapter is recited in each unit of the Muslim Contact Prayers.

Al-Quran: See Quran. “Al” is an Arabic article meaning “the”. Thus Al-Quran is “the Quran.”

Allah: The Arabic word for God.

Arab: While the popular understanding of an Arab is anyone who speaks the Arabic language this word more properly refers to a native of the Arabian Peninsula or one whose family comes from there. While most Arabs follow the religion of Islam, most Muslims do not descend from this area, so are not Arabs in the Quranic sense.

Arafaat: The knoll near Mecca where Muslim pilgrims spend one day meditating on God during the performance of the Hajj pilgrimage.

Asr: The afternoon Contact Prayer.

Azan: The call to the Contract Prayer.

Bedouins: The once nomadic tribes of the area now known as Saudi Arabia.

Contact Prayers: The prayers that Muslims perform each day. There are five Contact Prayers, each done during a specific time of the day. Please see the chapter on the Contact Prayers for further details.

Culture: The customs, thought patterns, language, way of life, etc., of a distinct group of people.

Dhur: The noon Contact Prayer. (Also spelled Zuher.)

Fajr: The dawn Contact Prayer.

Friday Prayer: The congregational prayer that Muslims attend around noon every Friday.

Gospels: The first four books of the Christian New Testament.

Hadith: What has been understood to be the sayings of the prophet Muhammad. These sayings were not collected until generations after the death of Muhammad. In general usage this word can refer to an individual saying or a collection of them.

Hajj: The pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must make at least once if he/she can afford it.

Haram: The Arabic word meaning “forbidden” or “unlawful”.

Haram: The Arabic word meaning “sacred”. For example Al-Masjid Al-Haram is the Sacred Mosque in Mecca.

Harem: The women living in the women’s quarters of a Muslim household where the tradition of having the women live in a separate part of the house is followed.

Hijab: Literally translated from the Arabic as “a barrier”. In this book it refers to the traditional garments put on by Muslim women (usually over their normal clothes) when going out in public.

Hoopoe: A crested bird with a long curved bill and distinctive plumage. Found in Africa and Eurasia.

Ihram: The ritual state of purity that every Muslim pilgrim must enter and maintain during his or her Hajj.

In Shā Allah: The Arabic for “God willing”.

Intestate: If someone dies intestate they die without having made a will.

Isha: The night Contact Prayer.

Islam: The religion of submission to God. Normally thought of as the organized religion originated by the prophet Abraham and taught by the prophet Muhammad. The Quran however makes it clear that all of the prophets taught the same religion to their followers. The practices of Islam were given to the prophet Abraham. Muhammad was a follower of the religion of Abraham and was the man through whom God revealed the Quran.

Ismail: Also spelled Ishmael. Abraham’s first son. His descendants were the Bedouin Arabs.

Isaac: Abraham’s second son. Isaac’s descendants were the Jews.

Jacob: Abraham’s grandson.

Juma prayer: See Friday Prayer.

Jumu’ah: See Friday Prayer.

Kaaba or Ka’aba: The shrine Abraham built and dedicated to God. It is now housed in the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This is the focal point towards which Muslims turn when they pray and to which they make their pilgrimage.

Koran: Alternate spelling of Quran.

Khutbah: Each of the two short talks given during the Friday Prayer. Each khutbah substitutes for one unit of the normal Contact Prayer that is said during the Friday Prayer.

Last Day: The Day of Resurrection. Christians sometimes know this as the Last Judgment.

Mā Shā Allah: Can be translated “This is what God has given me”.

Maghrib: The evening Contact Prayer.

Masjid: Another term for mosque, or the formal place of worship for Muslims.

Mecca: The city in Saudi Arabia where the Kaaba stands.

Mohammed: Alternate spelling of Muhammad.

Monogamy: Marriage to only one person at a time.

Monotheism: The belief that there is a single god.

Mosque: The formal place of worship for Muslims.

Muhammad: The prophet through whom the Quran was revealed. He was born into the strongest of the nomadic Arab Bedouin tribes in 570 A.D. and died in 632 A.D. He was a follower of the religion of Abraham, Islam.

Muslim: A submitter. Generally thought to be a follower of the religion of Islam. However in the Quran anyone who submits his or her will to God is considered a Muslim.

Obligatory Charity: A specific charity that must be given to those in need whenever income is received. Please see the chapter on the Obligatory Charity for details.

Ottoman Turks: Refers to the Ottoman Empire (c. 1300-1900) when the Turks controlled much of southeast Europe, southwest Asia and northeast Africa.

Polygamy: The practice of one man having multiple wives at the same time.

Prophet: In a traditional Muslim context this title generally refers to the prophet Muhammad. The Quran uses the title for anyone through whom God revealed scripture.

Qiblah: Direction Muslims face to pray their Contact Prayers (Salat).

Quran: The holy scripture of Islam. Quran was revealed through the prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago.

Qur-an: A variation on the spelling of Quran.

Quranic Islam: The practice of Islam based totally on the Quran rather than the traditions ascribed to the prophet Muhammad or any other source.

Quraish tribe: The Bedouin Arab tribe into which the prophet Muhammad was born.

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar throughout which Muslims observe a complete fast from the earliest light of dawn to sunset.

Safa & Marwah: The two knolls adjacent to the Kaaba. Part of the performance of the pilgrimage includes walking or trotting between them.

Sacred Masjid: The large mosque that surrounds the Kaaba.

Sacred Months: The lunar months of *Zul-Hijjah*, *Muharram*, *Safar*, and *Rabi I* when fighting except in self-defense is forbidden and Hajj can be observed.

Salat: The Arabic word for the Contact Prayers.

Salat Al-Jumu'ah: The Friday Prayer.

Sectism: The setting up and following of sects.

Seyam: The Arabic word for fasting.

Shahada: Literally “bearing witness”. Refers to bearing witness to the fact that there is no god but God.

Shia Muslims: One of the major Muslim sects.

Sunna: What has been understood to be the practices of the prophet Muhammad.

Sunni Muslims: One of the major Muslim sects.

Talaaq: Translated as “I divorce you”. Many traditional Muslims believe that if the husband pronounces this three times in succession the couple is irrevocably divorced.

Tayammum: Dry ablution in preparation for the Contact Prayers. This is performed when water is not available or if one is ill.

Torah: The first five books of the Jewish Bible.

Urdu: The official language of Pakistan.

Wudu’: The normal ablution in preparation for the Contact Prayers.

Zakat: The Arabic word for the Obligatory Charity.

Zujir: Alternate spelling for the noon Contact Prayer.