

Arabic Glossary

An A-Z of common Islamic terms. Most of the definitions here have been taken from the Muslim Directory (UK).

A - B - C - D - E - F - G - H - I - J - K - L - M - N - O - P - Q - R - S - T - U - V - W - X - Y - Z
Adam (AS) The first man created by Allah.
Adhan / Azan The call to prayer, made using the human voice rather than a horn or bell, etc.
AH After Hijrah. The Hijrah, when Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) emigrated from Mecca to Medinah, signifies the beginning of the Islamic calendar. We are currently in the year 1429 AH.
Ahadith A verified saying of the prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Also referred to as Hadith.
Al-Fatihah The Opening Chapter - the first Surat (chapter) of the Qur'an.
Allah The Supreme Creator of the universe and all that exists, whom all Muslims worship. The word Allah is derived from the Arabic word Ilah (meaning god), but as the word 'god' has a plural form (gods) and a feminine form (goddess), the word Allah should always be used in its place.
Arafat A plain and mountain situated to the north of Mecca. Pilgrims gather here between midday and sunset on the ninth day of Hajj to pray for Allah's forgiveness.
AS Alaihi Salaam - peace be upon him.

Alaiha Salaam - peace be upon her.

Alaihum Salaam - peace be upon them.

This should always be said whenever mentioning any of the Prophets from Adam through to Jesus, or any of the women regarded as being the most notable women created (namely Eve, wife of Adam - Hajar, wife of Abraham - Asiya, one of Pharaoh's wives who joined Moses on his exodus - Mary, mother of Jesus - Khadija, Muhammad's first wife - and Fatima, Muhammad's youngest daughter).
Ashura Also Yawm Al-Ashura. The tenth day of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar). Muslims fast on this day to commemorate the crossing of the Red Sea by Moses (AS) and his followers during their flight from Egypt.
Asr The mid-afternoon prayer, consisting of four rak'at as Sunnah prayer, followed by four rak'at as Fard.
Assalamu Alaikum Peace Be Upon You. This is the greeting one should give to your fellow Muslims. The reply to this is "Walaikum Salaam" (And upon you be peace).
Ayah / Ayat A verse from the Qur'an. Literally meaning 'revelation', it can also describe a piece of evidence or proof, or a sign which leads or directs you to something important.
Ayat Al-Kursi Verse 2:255 of the Qur'an. This is regarded as the greatest verse in the Qur'an - whoever recites this after each and every prayer is guaranteed a place in Paradise.
Bismillah In the name of Allah.
Da'ud / Dawud (AS) David, the prophet to whom the Zabur (Psalms) were revealed.
Da'wah Inviting others to Islam through words or actions.
Dhikr Remembrance of Allah, either through thought or speech.
Diin / Deen One's religion, faith or way of life.
Du'a Supplication.
Eid Ul-Adha The 'Feast of Sacrifice'. This takes place on the tenth day of Hajj, and commemorates the prophet Ibrahim (AS) offering his son Ismail (AS) in sacrifice as an act of obedience to Allah.
Eid Ul-Fitr The 'Feast of Charity'. This three day festival marks the end of Ramadan.
Fajr The daybreak prayer, consisting of two rak'at of Sunnah prayer followed by two rak'at as Fard.
Fard Obligatory, such as the five daily prayers.
Fatwa A legal verdict or opinion given by one or more people well-versed in Islamic law, i.e. a cleric or scholar. It is NOT obligatory to follow a fatwa, as this is merely an opinion.
Fitrah A person's pure state of being before it is corrupted by outside influences. This term is commonly attributed to young children, and those new converts to Islam who have just made their shahada.
Ghusl

- A full ablution, necessary for praying after sexual intercourse or a period, for example. Instructions for this can be found on the Preparing to Pray section of this site.

- The act of washing the deceased's body prior to the funeral.
Hadith A verified statement describing the words or actions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).
Hajj The fifth pillar of Islam, Hajj is the pilgrimage to Mecca which every Muslim must take once in their lifetime, but only if they are healthy enough and able to afford it.
Halal Lawful or permissible according to Islamic law, especially with regards to food and drink.
Haram Forbidden or prohibited according to Islamic law, especially with regards to food and drink.
Hijab The required Islamic dress code for women, in which the body is covered so that only the face and hands are exposed.
Hijrah The emigration to Abyssinia and Medina that Muhammad (SAW) and his followers undertook in order to escape the persecution they were suffering in Mecca.
Hijri The Islamic lunar calendar, which began from the Hijrah. Each year lasts for approximately 355 days, and is comprised of 12 months - Muharram, Safar, Rabi Al-Awwal, Rabi Al-Thani, Jumada Al-Ula, Jumada Al-Thani, Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul Qa'adah & Dhul Hijjah. More details on the Hijri Calendar can be found in the Islamic Calendar page of this site.
Iblis The jinn who disobeyed Allah by not prostrating to Adam (AS) when ordered to, and so was expelled from His mercy. Also known as Shaytan (Satan).
Ibrahim (AS) Abraham, one of the greatest of all prophets. He, along with his eldest son Ismail (AS) rebuilt the Ka'bah in Mecca. All the prophets who came after Ibrahim (AS) were directly descended from him.
Imam The leader of any congregational prayer. It is also sometimes used to refer to the head of an Islamic state.
Iman Faith and trust in Allah.
Insha' Allah If Allah wills.
Isa (AS) Jesus, one of the greatest of all prophets. It was to Isa (AS) that the Injeel (Gospels) were revealed.
Isha The nightfall prayer, consisting of two rak'at as Sunnah prayer, followed by four rak'at as Fard, and two more as Sunnah.
Islam Derived from the word Salam (Peace), Islam literally means 'Peace through submission to Allah'.
Jibreel Gabriel, the angel through whom Allah conveyed his words to his prophets. He is also known as Ar Ruh al-Qudus (The Holy Spirit).
Jihad Literally means to struggle or strive, and is often incorrectly interpreted as 'holy war'. In an Islamic sense, Jihad is the struggle to propagate or preserve Islam. There are four main forms of jihad:

- Jihad an-Nafs: struggling against one's own evil traits in order to become a better person.

- Jihad as-Shaytan: struggling against the temptations of Satan.

- Jihad al-Kufar: struggling against the enemies of Islam, either by speech, wealth or force. There are strict laws

governing the physical form of Jihad (for example, not to be the aggressor, not harming unarmed civilians, their property or livestock, and accepting the enemies call for peace immediately). Unfortunately, these are largely ignored today by those claiming to be fighting for Islam (i.e. Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups), thus giving Islam's opponents more ammunition with which to attack it.

- Jihad ahlu ath-Thulm: struggling against injustice and evil, including those who corrupt Islam with heretic ideas (for example, those who reject the hadith & sunnah). The true meaning of Jihad is better explained in an essay written by sister Safia.
- Jinn: Beings created from fire, just as angels were created from light and mankind was created from dust. Known in the Western world as spirits, demons, ghosts etc. Like mankind, Jinn have been granted free will over their actions, therefore some are inclined to do good and some inclined to evil (unlike the angels, who are compelled by Allah to do his bidding, and therefore only do good).
- If one is mentioning the jinn purely of themselves, they are called Jinn (plural - jinni / jinnati).
- If one is mentioning the jinn that live among mankind, they are called Aamar (plural - amaar).
- If one is mentioning the ones that antagonize the young, they are called Arwaah.
- If one is mentioning the evil ones that antagonize humans they are called Shaitan (plural - shayateen).
- If they cause even more harm and become strong, they are called Ifrit / Ifreet.
- If one is mentioning the companions assigned to each and every person who encourages that person's base desires in order to make them inclined to commit evil, they are called Qareen.
- Ka'bah: The structure in Mecca to which all Muslims turn to whilst praying. It was originally built by Adam (AS), then subsequently rebuilt by Ibrahim (AS) and Ismail (AS), then finally cleansed by Muhammad (SAW) and his followers after the pagans of Mecca had used it for their idol-worship for hundreds of years.
- Kafir: A disbeliever in Allah, or one who disobeys Him or joins others in worship with Him.
- Kalifa: The ruler of the Muslim nation. The most honoured Kalifas were the four who ruled immediately after the death of Muhammad (SAW): Abu Bakr (RA), Umar (RA), Uthman (RA), and Ali (RA).
- Khutba: A sermon given at Jumu'ah (Friday) and Eid prayers.
- Madinah: Medina. The holy city in present-day Saudi Arabia approximately 250 miles north of Mecca where Muhammad (SAW) emigrated and set up the first Islamic state.
- Makkah: Mecca. The holy city in present-day Saudi Arabia in which the Ka'bah is situated, and where millions of Muslims make a pilgrimage every year.
- Maghrib: The sunset prayer, consisting of two rak'at as Sunnah prayer, three as Fard, then two more as Sunnah.
- Masjid: Mosque - any place for worship or prayer. The three holiest masjids are:
 - Al Masjid al-Haaram (The Mosque of Sanctuary, located in Mecca).
 - Al Masjid al-Nabawi (The Prophet's Mosque, located in Medina).
 - Al Masjid al-Aqsa (The Furthest Mosque, located in Jerusalem).
- Miraj: The 'night journey' undertaken by Muhammad (SAW), during which he traveled to Jerusalem to the site of The Dome On The Rock, ascended to paradise, met other prophets residing there, and received the command from Allah that all Muslims should pray five times a day.
- Muhammad (SAW): The last prophet to be sent by Allah, to whom the Qur'an was revealed.
- Musa (AS): Moses, one of the greatest of all prophets, who lead the Israelites from Egypt and to whom the Torah was revealed.
- Muslim: One who fully submits to the commandments of Allah.
- Qiblah: The direction facing towards the Ka'bah in Mecca, which all Muslims face during prayer.
- Qiyamah: The Day of Judgment, or Day of Resurrection. The day when all mankind will be brought forth to answer for their deeds.
- Qur'an: The final divine revelation sent to mankind via Muhammad (SAW). The word Qur'an literally means 'repeatedly recited'.
- RAR: Radi Allahu Anha - May Allah be pleased with him
- Radi Allahu Anhi - May Allah be pleased with her
- Radi Allahu Anhum - May Allah be pleased with them.

This is customarily said whenever mentioning the names of any of Muhammad's (SAW) family or followers.

Raka: Plural: Raka'at. Units of prayers consisting of a series of standing, bowing, sitting and prostrating positions. See How to Pray for more details.

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Hijri calendar. It was during this month that the revelation of the Qur'an began, and the bloodless conquest of Mecca occurred.

Rasul: A prophet to whom Allah revealed divine texts, i.e. Musa, Dawud, Isa & Muhammad.

Salam: Peace.

Salat: The five obligatory prayers that Muslims must perform every day. See When to Pray for more details.

SAW: "Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam" - "Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him".

This is said / written whenever Muhammad (SAW) is mentioned.

Sawm: The obligatory fast during Ramadan, one of the pillars of Islam. See Fasting for more details.

Shahadah: A declaration of faith, specifically "Ashadu Allah ilah ha illallah, Wa Ashadu ana Muhammadur Rasulullah" (I testify that there are no gods besides Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah).

Shariah: Islamic law, derived from the Qur'an & Sunnah. The Shariah is final and absolute, and cannot be changed.

Shaytan

- Satan
- A devil - any Jinn who is inclined to commit evil.
- Shirk: Associating, invoking or worshipping anyone or anything besides Allah. This is the worst sin a Muslim can commit; in fact, anyone who commits this sin cannot be described as a Muslim. More details on this subject can be found at the Tawhid & Shirk section of this site.
- Siwak: A branch or root from the al-Arak tree which is traditionally used as a toothbrush. It contains natural antiseptic, and is used by shaving the bark off the end, chewing the end lightly to soften it, then using it as you would normally use a toothbrush (it has a bit of a funny taste, but you soon get used to it!).
- Subhan: Allah: Glory be to Allah.
- Sunnah: The sayings, practises and living habits of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as recording in the various hadith collections. Along with the Qur'an, the sunnah is a source of Islamic law and practice.
- Surah / Surat: A chapter of the Qur'an, of which there are 114.
- SWT: Subhana Wa Ta'Ala. Often said when mentioning Allah, this is the most common way of glorifying Him. It means 'Glory to Him, the Highest'.
- Tahajud: An optional prayer performed during the last half of the night.
- Taqwa: The love and fear that a Muslim feels for Allah, which drives him / her to avoid things that displeases Him.
- Tawhid: The belief in the absolute uniqueness of Allah, His attributes and His actions, with no equals or associates. In short, this is the very fundamental concept of

Islam.UmmahA single united Muslim nation.UmrahAny pilgrimage to Mecca outside of Hajj.Wa'alaikum SalamAnd upon you be peace - this is the proper reply when someone greets you with 'Asslamu Alaikum'.WuduThe ritual washing with water which must be performed before prayer. See Preparing to Pray for more details.ZakatAn obligatory charity given by all but the poorest Muslims at the end of Ramadan.Zam ZamA sacred well in Mecca.ZuhrThe midday prayer, this consists of four rak'at of Sunnah prayer, followed by four rak'at as Fard, then four more as Sunnah. Return to Top - © Amir Brooks - 2006 / 1427

- (Ayat al-Kursi): The Holy Qur'an, 2:255 - Allah! There is no god but He! He is the Eternal and the Ever-living! Neither drowsiness, nor sleep ever seizes Him! Everything in the heavens and everything on the earth belongs to Him. Who can dare intercede in His presence except by His leave? He knows everything that lies ahead of them and everything that is behind them. They shall never know anything about Him except what He wills. His chair (His authority and influence, His domain and command) extends over the heavens and the earth. Preserving and protecting them does not tire (or burden) Him (in the least). He is the most High, the Greatest! (return to 'Ayat Al-Kursi' reference)

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