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Frequently Used Terms

Halal: permitted, allowed, lawful, legal. The acts or things which are permitted and lawful. There is neither reward for performing it nor any punishment for neglecting it. For example: drinking tea.

Haram: forbidden, prohibited. It is necessary to abstain from the acts which are haram. If someone performs a haram act, then he or she will be punished either by the Islamic court or in the hereafter or both. For example: stealing.

Jaiz: same as halal. See above.

Makruh: reprehensible, disliked, and discouraged. Acts which are disliked but not haram. If someone docs a makruh act, then he or she will not be punished for it; however, if people refrain from it, then they will be rewarded. For example: eating with left hand.

Mubah: same as halal, except that the term "mubah" is exclusively used for lawful things and properties, not for acts.

Mujtahid: a jurist. The term is used to describe a Shi'a Muslim religious scholar who is an expert of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Commonly it is used for the high ranking mujtahids whose decrees are followed by the Shi'a people. Such mujtahids arc also known as "marja" or "Ayatullah".

Mustahab: recommended, desirable, better. It refers to the acts which are recommended but not wajib. If one neglects them, then he or she will not be punished; however, if one performs them, then he or she will be rewarded. For example: washing hands before eating.

Shari'ah or Shari'a: literally means a way, a stream: in Islamic terminology, it means the laws of Islam.

Sunnat: same as Mustahab. See above.

Wajib: obligatory, necessary, incumbent. An act which must be performed. A person will be rewarded for performing it and punished for neglecting it. For example: the daily prayers.

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