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Glossary

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

Athbat: plural of thabat, one who is widely recognized as an authority in his own field.

'Atiyya: gift, present, grant, boon

'Awl: one sought during the time of need, a reliable helper

Bada': starting point, the very beginning of something, the onset

Bara'ah: dissociation or renunciation

Baytul-Mal: Islamic government's state treasury

Diwan: a collection of poems

Fagih: jurist, one who is knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence

Fatawa: plural of fatwa, a religious edict or decision

Figh: the science of Islamic jurisprudence

Firqa: group, party, sect

Furü': branches of the faith

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

Hajj: Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca during the prescribed period

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

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

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 relgious authority, or one of the Twelve Infallible Imams (as)

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

Jahiliyya: pre-Islamic period of ignorance

Janaba: uncleanness caused by seminal discharge

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

Jizya: a protection tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslims' control in exchange for their exemption from the military service

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

Kalam: the science of logic

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

Khiraj: the combination of all religious taxes collected at the end of the Islamic lunar year

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

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

Kufr: apostacy, infidelity, disbelief

Kunyat: usually applied for a parent, it is the way of calling him or her by the name of his or her oldest son (such as saying "father of so-and-so" or "mother of so-and-so"), or it may be applied out of respect, a tradition usually followed in Arab countries, and it is applied as a prefix to one's name.

Maqam: standing place, a place where one usually stands to preach or address the public

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.

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

Mut'a: temporary marriage

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

Najasa: uncleanness, impurity

Najwa: a silent supplication

Nuthur: plural of *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

Qayyim: person in charge of something, one charged with authority

Qibla: direction towards the Ka'ba, Mecca

Sadaga: (singular:) charity offered voluntarily; its plural is: sadagat

Sahabah: (singular:) companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S); its plural is: sahabi

Shari'a: Islam's legislative system

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

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

Sigaya: the act of providing water to the thirsty free of charge

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

Tabi'i: (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'in*

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

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

Takbir: 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

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

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"

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

Tawwabin: the penitent ones, those who repented their reluctance to go to the rescue of Imam Husain (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

Thiqat: plural of thiqah, a trustworthy authority

'Ulema: plural of 'alim, scholar-theologian

Usül: the basics of jurisprudence

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

Wilayat: supreme authority that combines both temporal and religious authority

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 figh. 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 commencement of the fast of the month of Ramadan).

And surely Allah knows best...

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