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## **Glossary of Terms**

Akhirah: An Islamic term referring to the afterlife.

**Akhlaq:** An Islamic term referring to the practice of virtue, morality and manners in Islamic theology and philosophy. It is also referred to as disposition, nature, temper, ethics, morals or character (of a person).

**Aalam al-Barzakh:** Sometimes referred to as the astral plane – the world of the planetary spheres, crossed by the soul in its astral body on the way to being born and after death; it is generally said that this world is populated by angels, spirits and other immaterial beings.

**Amaanah:** Trust or 'free will' which has been given only to humans and jinn, in contrast, other entities do not have this quality.

Aqd: A religious contract.

**Aql:** Intellect and a term used in Islamic theology or philosophy to the intellect or rational faculty of the soul or mind.

Arhaam: Family members or kin.

Ayah: Arabic word for sign, proof, commandment, law, rule and/or guidance.

**Aziz:** One who is powerful, strong, or respected.

Bay'ah: In Islamic terminology, an oath of allegiance to a leader.

Bidah: Any type of innovation in Islam.

**Dua**: In the terminology of Islam, this word means an act of supplication. The term is derived from an Arabic word meaning to 'call out' or to 'summon', and Muslims regard this as a profound act of worship.

**Ghaflah:** Used in Islamic terminology in the meaning of negligence or heedlessness.

Halal: Means lawful or legal and is a term designating any object or an action which is permissible to

use or engage in, according to Islamic law.

Haram: An Islamic term meaning "forbidden"; used to refer to anything that is prohibited by the faith.

Hawzahs: Religious seminaries.

Hidayah: An Islamic term meaning 'guidance' (given by Allah).

Husayniyyahs: Places in which sessions of remembrance of Imam Husayn are conducted.

**Imamah:** An Arabic word with an English language suffix (ate) meaning leadership. Its use in theology is confined to Islam.

**Insaaniyyah**: Humanity.

**Istihsan:** An Arabic term for juristic "preference". Muslim scholars may use it to express their preference for particular judgements in Islamic law over other possibilities. It is one of the principles of legal thought underlying personal interpretation or ijtihad.

Ja'ala: Made or done.

**Jahiliyyah:** An Islamic concept meaning "ignorant of divine guidance" or "the state of ignorance of the guidance from God" or "Days of Ignorance" referring to the condition that Arabs found themselves in pre-Islamic Arabia, i.e. prior to the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad.

**Jihad**: An Islamic term which refers to a religious duty for Muslims. In Arabic, the word jihad translates as a noun meaning "struggle".

**Jinn:** Genies are supernatural creatures in Arab folklore and Islamic teachings which occupy a parallel world to that of mankind. Together, jinn, humans and angels make up the three sentient creations of Allah.

**Kafan:** White burial shroud used to cover a deceased Muslim.

**Kafir**: Term used primary by classical Islamic doctrine to refer to those who "disbelieve" in one God – atheists and polytheists.

**Khalifah:** The calipha or successor to the Prophet Muhammad.

Khalq: Creation.

**Laghw:** Means "evil, vain talk", vain, dirty, false, falsehood, nonsensical, meaningless and anything which is forbidden by Allah. It refers to anything which serves no purpose or for a goal in a practicing Muslim life and has no room in a proper Muslim's life.

Ma'rifah: Recognition or awareness.

Ma'rouf: Righteousness.

Mahr: Dowry paid by the groom to the bride.

**Mahram:** Refers to people who are unlawful for a woman or man to marry due to blood relationships or marriage.

**Makruh:** A disliked or offensive act (literally "hated"). Though it is not haram (forbidden) and therefore not a sin, a person who abstains from this action will be rewarded. Muslims are encouraged to avoid such actions when possible.

Marja' Taqlid: The highest theological authority followed by the common people.

Ma'soom (Pl. Masoumeen): Infallible, Divinely protected against sinning.

Mawali: A word with many meanings in Arabic including: Master, Slave, Servers.

Minbar: Pulpit or podium.

**Muharram:** The first month of the Islamic calendar. It is one of the four sacred months of the year in which fighting is prohibited.

Mutashabihat: Things which are metaphoric and unclear.

Nafs: An Arabic word meaning self, psyche, ego or soul.

Qawamun: Care-takers.

**Qawl al-zur:** Deceitful sayings, lying, the untruth.

**Qibla**: The direction that Muslims face when performing their prayers. It is in the direction of the Ka'bah in Mecca.

Rakah: An individual unit of salat.

**Ruku**': To bow down. During the prayers, a Muslim performs the act of ruku' before God to express veneration to him, he bows forward at the waist, puts his hands on his knees and his back is parallel to the ground.

**Salat:** Salat is an Arabic word which means: a spiritual relationship and communication between the servant/being and his Creator. Salat is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is performed five times a day at these times: fajr (pre-dawn or pre-daybreak), dhuhr (noon), 'asr (afternoon), maghrib (just after sunset) and 'isha' (late night).

**Shahadah**: Martyrdom; it also means testimony, declaration of faith. A person must recite the shahadah in Arabic to convert to Islam.

**Shaykh** (**Shaikh or Sheikh**): The word "shaykh" is a title of an elderly person or a religious leader. This title is also given to a wise person, in this case, it means a mentor.

**Shirk:** Polytheism, the belief in the existence of partners with Allah, (which according to Islam is not permitted).

Shisheh: Waterpipe.

**Sujud** (**Sujood**): Prostration to God, it is done during one's daily prayers in which seven parts of the body are placed on the ground: the forehead, two palms, two knees and the two big toes.

**Sunna** (**Sunnah**): In general, the word Sunnah means: way of life, habit, practice, customary procedure, action, norm and tradition followed by tradition. Usually, the word Sunnah refers to what Prophet Muhammed had said and done or approved of when said or done, by someone else. It includes the Prophet's sayings, practices, living habits, etc. The hadith reports on the Sunnah. The two major legal sources of jurisprudence in Islam are the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Tafsir: The exegesis or commentary, usually of the Qur'an.

**Tahajjud:** Night devotions – the tahajjud prayer is an optional prayer that is supposed to be performed in the middle of the night and it helps one attain higher spiritual stations.

**Tajseem:** Materialization, personification, incarnation.

**Takfir** (**Takfeer**): Labeling someone as "kafir", apostate, unbeliever, excommunicating from the creed. People who do that are called "Takfiris" or Takfeeri". This terms is applied mainly to the most extremist and fanatical offshoots within Islam who loosely apply this term to those who do not follow their own line, ideology or version of "Islam".

**Tasbih**: A form of dhikr that involves the repetitive utterances of short sentences glorifying God, in Islam. To keep track of counting either the phalanges of the right hand or a misbaha is used. The tasbih is similar to the komboskini of the Eastern Church and the rosary in the Roman Catholic Church.

**Tawbah:** Literally means 'to return'. In an Islamic context, it refers to the act of leaving what God has prohibited and returning to what He has commanded.

Thawab: Reward or blessing.

'Ulama (Ulema or 'Ulema): Plural of 'Alim which is a scholar-theologian, a learned or knowledgeable person in Islam

Usuliyyah: Fundamentalism.

**Wudu:** A purification (ablution) which must be performed before one can perform the salat or touch the Qur'an. (There are other instances which also require one to be in this state of purity)

**Ziyarah:** Visit, social get-together. A pilgrimage to a holy site other than Mecca or Medina is also called Ziyarah.

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