

ISLAM VOCABULARY

Allah: lit, "the God"; the one and only true God.

As-salamu 'alaykum: standard greeting, meaning "peace be upon you".

Fiqh: the Law

Hadith: a canonical saying.

Hajj: 5th Pillar of Islam; the pilgrimage to Mecca, once during lifetime if able.

Hijrah: "the migration" from Mecca to Yathrib/Medina in 622, from which time the Islamic calendar is dated (A.H.).

Ijma: consensus of the community found by looking to the past.

Illa: a cause or principle contained at the heart of a Qur'an verse or sunnah that can be extended to new and different situations.

Imam: "one who stands before" and is the leader in common worship.

Islam: surrender or obedience to Allah; from the root s-l-m meaning "peace" and "surrender"; "Islam" means "the peace that comes when one's life is surrendered to God"; same root as "shalom".

Jihad: lit. "exertion"; refers to battling the enemy within one's own heart; resistance.

Ka'ba: the black stone cubicle temple in Mecca (said to be built by Abraham) which is the focus of worship of Allah.

Koran: Qur'an; al-qur'an, "a recitation" of divine messages spoken through Muhammad. The Qur'an is the created (manifested) form of the Uncreated Koran; also the only "miracle" claimed by Muhammad.

Mosque: temple; place of prostration

Mu'adhdhin; Muezzin: one who calls the community to prayer

Muhammad: "The Seal of the Prophets" (no valid prophets will follow him); the one true messenger of God; the ideal human response to Allah.

Mujuhidin: holy warriors

Muslim: one who surrenders to Allah.

Qiyas: analogical reasoning based on the Qur'an or sunnah using illa.

Quran: also Qur'an; Koran.

Ramadan: Islam's holy month, commemorating Muhammad's initial revelation and the Hijrah; the 9th month of the lunar calendar and the month of fasting.

Salat: 2nd Pillar of Islam; forma; ritual of prayer performed five times (ideally) a day facing Mecca. On arising, sun at zenith, sun at mid-decline, sunset, and before retiring; noon being most emphasized for prayer in the mosques. Washing first, to purify body and, symbolically, the soul.

Praise, gratitude, supplication. The forehead to floor is holiest moment, symbolizing signifying smallness in face of divine, and readiness to be reborn.

Sawm: 3rd Pillar of Islam; fast for the month of Ramadan

Shahadah: 1st Pillar of Islam; Islam's creed; public confession of faith "There is no god but Allah (la ilaha illa 'Ilah!), and Muhammad is his Prophet", must be spoken with conviction and full understanding at least once during lifetime.

Shi'ites: Muslims who follow Muhammad's "rightful" successor, Ali; 13% of Muslims clustered primarily about Iraq and Iran.

Sufi: Muslim mystic.

Sunnah: "tradition"; well-trodden path of the ancestors; generally with Muhammad as an example.

Sunnis: Muslims who follow the sunnah of Muhammad; 87% of Muslims.

Ulama: religious Shi'ite scholars guided by the hidden imam.

Zakat: 4th Pillar of Islam; charity; almsgiving or tithing.

Five Pillars

- Shahadah
- Salat
- Sawm
- Zakat
- Hajj