

## Key Terms in Islam

- **Abu Bakr:** Muhammad's father-in-law and first political successor (caliph)
- **'Ali:** Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, the first after Khadija to accept Muhammad's teaching; the fourth caliph and the first Imam of Shi'ite Islam
- **Allah:** literally means, "the God"; Muslim name for the deity
- **Caliph:** from *khalifa* (literal, 'deputy,' 'representative'); successors of Muhammad in leading Islam.
- **Dervish:** literally means, "one who comes to the door"; member of a Muslim monastic order
- **Fakir:** literally means, "poor man"; member of a Muslim monastic order
- **Five Pillars:** the basic obligations individual Muslims observe: 1) the profession of faith, 2) daily prayer, 3) the alms tax for the needy, 4) fasting during the month of Ramadan, and 5) taking the hajj at least once.
- **Hadith:** Arabic for "speech, news, event"; refers to the narratives of what Muhammad said, did, or was like when he established the first Muslim community in Medina. Next to the *Qur'an* the major source for determining Muslim law (*Sharia*)
- **Hajj:** pilgrimage each Muslim is supposed to make once in a lifetime to the shrines in and around Mecca
- **Hijrah:** literally means, "migration"; the migration of Muhammad and his disciples from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E.
- **Iblis:** Fallen angel who is the Satan figure in Islam
- **'Id al-Adha:** Muslim feast of sacrifice
- **'Id al-Fitr:** Muslim feast of fast breaking. Celebrates a return to normal life after the prolonged fast of Ramadan
- **Imam:** literally means, "one who stands before"; in Sunni Islam, the leader of worship in the mosque. In Shi'ite Islam, a spiritual successor to Muhammad who is endowed with the power to interpret the truth in the age in which he lives.
- **Jihad:** literally means, "struggle"; referring to the obligation of all Muslims to struggle against error. In one sense refers to the defensive military struggle against those who would attack Muslims and subvert their faith, hence the concept of the 'Holy war'
- **Kaaba:** literally means, "cube"; the central shrine of Islam, located in the Grand Mosque of Mecca. It symbolizes the center of the world and is visited by Muslims on the hajj.
- **Khadija:** Muhammad's wife and the first to accept his teaching
- **Koran (*Qur'an*):** literally means, "reading," "recitation"; Muslim scripture
- **Mahdi:** literally means, "the guided one"; in Islam in general, a descendant of Muhammad who will restore justice on earth. In Shi'ite Islam in particular, a messianic imam who will appear to end corruption.
- **Mosque:** Muslim house of prayer
- **Muezzin:** One who calls the Muslim community to prayer five times a day
- **Muslim:** literally means, "submitter" (one who submits to the will of God); one becomes a Muslim by utterance of the Shahadah: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."
- **Ramadan:** month during which devout Muslims do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. The fast celebrates the month in which the Prophet received the *Qur'an*.
- **Shahadah:** Creedal statement of Islam: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."
- **Sharia:** the path or way Muslims are to follow; hence, Muslim 'law'
- **Shi'ite:** literally means, "the party of"; this Muslim group, which accounts for approximately 14% of all Muslims, split from Sunni over the issue of rightful succession to Muhammad
- **Sufi:** literally means, "woolen"; Muslim group that seeks a mystical knowledge of God
- **Sunni:** the largest of the two main branches of Islam; where the *Qur'an* is not explicit this movement appeals to *Sunna* (the manner of behavior associated with Muhammad; via *hadith*)
- **Surah:** Chapter division within the *Qur'an*
- **Umma:** literally means, "community"; the entire community of Muslims throughout the world
- **Wahhabi:** Ultraconservative Muslim movement founded in the 18th Century and opposed to all forms of change within religion and culture