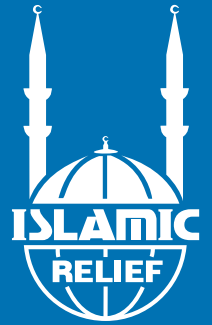


INTRODUCTION



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Preface

ABOUT ISLAMIC RELIEF

Islamic Relief is one of the world's largest independent Muslim NGOs, aiming to alleviate global poverty and suffering – regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender. Much of our work over the past 30 years has focused upon eradicating the structural and systemic causes of poverty. In addition to our anti-poverty work Islamic Relief increasingly concentrates upon addressing the social and cultural drivers of poverty and suffering, such as conflicts

Islamic Relief holds a commitment to help vulnerable communities meet the big challenges in their lives. Islamic Relief advocates for a holistic approach to tackling poverty and suffering, and to engage with these issues from the basis of our Islamic faith and values. Our integrated approach to programming provides for the practical needs of communities based on the priorities that they identify themselves. At the same time, we focus on the sources of conflict and support structures that enable communities to prevent disputes from taking place.

ISLAMIC RELIEF AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Islamic Relief has been engaged in conflict transformation programming for over 10 years and has made a sustainable impact through programmes to mitigate and prevent conflict, with conflict specific programming in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Pakistan, Sudan, and Yemen. Islamic Relief anticipates the provision of conflict transformation projects in a number of other offices over the coming years, including Mali and Afghanistan.

Islamic Relief is aiming at moving towards integrated strategic development plans in its work, where development outcomes are understood as multi-sectoral and include cross-cutting themes, including working to transform conflict.

Islamic Relief Worldwide can offer training and consultancy on the use of this toolkit and our approach to transforming conflict. If you would like more information on Islamic Relief's work on conflict transformation please contact:

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

In the course of fulfilling our mission Islamic Relief finds itself working in fragile or conflict locations around the world. Our Islamic faith and commitment to community-driven development inspired us to pose the following questions:

- ▶ What does it mean to be a Muslim iNGO working in these environments?
- ▶ What inspiration and messages are provided for us by Islamic theology and history that can inform our approach to transforming conflict?
- ▶ Can this provide a stable foundation to approach transformation?

Through the opportunity offered by the IRW-DFID Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA), Islamic Relief commissioned research to investigate the principles and frameworks provided by Islam in the pursuit of peace and the transformation of conflict. The result was the IRW working paper *Understanding an Islamic Framework for Peacebuilding* (2013).¹ Through this research and consultation with our operational offices, we found the answer to the last question to be a resounding 'yes' – it is from this basis that this toolkit has been developed.

¹ <http://www.islamic-relief.com/InDepth/2-65-understanding-an-islamic-framework-for-peacebuilding.aspx>.

Preface

This toolkit has been designed to be a practical resource for Islamic Relief staff working in conflict zones and fragile contexts that takes our Islamic faith as a foundation. As a resource focusing on Islamic approaches and principles, Islamic Relief hopes that the toolkit will also be of interest and use to other organisations that are working with Muslim communities experiencing conflict and violence.

WHY USE THIS TOOLKIT?

“While the trainer was making reference to the United Nations and international human rights, a participant responded by saying that Islam addressed Human rights 1400 years ago ... Another participant stood up and said they (the trainees) would not believe or trust any book or material not related to Islamic concepts.”
Islamic Relief Yemen¹

The experience of Islamic Relief continually emphasises the important role Islam plays in the social and political life of Muslim communities. In such societies Islamic discourse provides a source of legitimacy upon which notions of truth, justice and peace are built. As such, awareness and sensitivity to the Islamic faith of a community can be invaluable in seeking to build their resilience to conflict.

Conflict transformation and peacebuilding mechanisms are not owned by any one culture or religious tradition; generic peacebuilding approaches, tools and theories have been developed, tried and tested across numerous environments. However many of these arose from secular perspectives, which can encourage a ‘one size fits all’ approach. It is important to recognise the significant differences that exist between contexts, and to contextualise such approaches without ignoring or imposing cultural biases.

It is in pursuit of a truly community-driven approach that this toolkit looks to act as a resource for Muslim and non-Muslim organisations alike. We hope that it will enable readers to engage with conflict dynamics in ways that are in tune with the local context, especially around values and faith. In light of this pursuit it is important to also remember that the Muslim world is not monolithic, the approaches outlined should be considered a starting point to be amended in relation to the local context.

THIS INTRODUCTION

The toolkit is written primarily for the use of Islamic Relief field offices, and as such assumes a level of knowledge regarding Islam and Islamic communities that may not be immediately available to our colleagues in other agencies. To facilitate using this resource, this introduction seeks to provide a basic level of information about Islam, some conceptual differences relevant to the ‘humanitarian’ sector, along with an introduction to some of the more common cultural dynamics that may be of relevance to work with Muslim communities living with conflict.

This introduction, inevitably, will not provide a comprehensive account or understanding of Islamic culture in all Muslim communities. Culture, thus Islamic culture, is neither uniformly distributed nor a static entity but is always being constructed and changing with the experiences and context of society. While this toolkit may be used to enhance awareness of the religious and cultural differences that may need to be taken into account by practitioners, it is also important to remain aware of differences between communities due to their unique contexts.

¹ *Workshops and Sadaah Impact Network Workshop*, Islamic Relief Yemen: Citizens Empowerment in Conflict Transformation and Peace Building Program, observation report, December 2011

The Islamic faith



Islam is currently followed by 23% of world's population and is understood to be the world's fastest growing religion. Islamic tradition derives its legitimacy by drawing on its 1400-year-old history, with rules and customs derived from its holy text the *Qur'an*, and the *Sunnah* which are teachings from the Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him – PBUH),¹ the latter of which are recorded in *hadith*. These sources provide the basis for Islamic ethics and law, informing the actions of the Muslims.

The word Islam has the meaning 'submission to the will of God'. It is formed from the same root as the Arabic word for peace: *salam*. The word for peace, *silm*, can also mean reconciliation or coming to peace with one another. As such, the religion of Islam teaches that in order to achieve true peace of the mind and soul, one must submit to, and reconcile yourself to the will of God.

Muslims believe that the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) received revelation sent by God (Allah) that continues the message sent to previous Prophets and messengers including Adam (PBUH), Noah (PBUH), Abraham (PBUH), Moses (PBUH) and Jesus (PBUH).

¹ Prophets of God are honoured by Muslims with this saying when their name is mentioned.

Islam places great emphasis on their being only One God. The *Qur'an*, the holy book of Islam, says:

Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.'

Q112:1–4

The Islamic worldview has profound implications for how Muslims conduct themselves, individually and collectively. A believer is reminded that whatever they possess using the faculties and abilities bestowed by God; not belonging to them, but given in trust.

To be a Muslim, and to behave in an 'Islamic' way is to continually be aware of your relationship with and to strive to connect with God. The implication being that a believer should always be aware of how they conduct themselves. Muslims are to be conscious of how they conduct all their affairs, individually and collectively, as at the end they will be accountable and answerable for whatever they do.

In practical terms, to be a Muslim includes following the Five Pillars of Islam:

The Islamic faith

1. To testify that is one God and no other (Allah) and that Muhammad was Allah's Messenger
2. To offer prayers dutifully
3. To pay *Zakat* (obligatory charity)
4. To perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca)
5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan

Bukhari

DIVISIONS WITHIN ISLAM

Over time Islam has developed into different theological schools of thought, with the primary division between 'sects' being that between Sunni and Shi'a. Despite these divisions, Muslims share fundamental beliefs and practices such as belief in God, the holy status of the *Qur'an*, that Mohammed was a Prophet of God, and the practice of five pillars of Islam. Where they differ is on questions of political and religious leadership, and interpretations of Islamic law.

The split between Sunni and Shi'a dates back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 632 AD. Those who had followed him were in disagreement over who should succeed the Prophet in leading the community.

The majority, who would become known as the Sunnis, supported Abu Bakr (RA),¹ a friend of the Prophet. Others believed that the Prophet had indicated Ali (RA), his cousin and son-in-law, should be his successor. Abu Bakr was appointed to lead the community (as *Caliph*), and although later Ali became the fourth Caliphate, this was the beginning of the split within the community.

After Ali had died Islamic leadership (based in Damascus) decided that the tradition of descendants inheriting leadership should be discontinued. The dispute over this decision, and the belief that the leadership was acting unjustly, led to the Battle of Karbala, between the Caliphate under Yazid I and those supporting Hussein Ibn Ali, Ali's son. In this Battle, Hussein was supported by a small group of relatives, whereas Yazid had the benefit of a larger army and military capabilities. In the ensuing battle Hussein was killed and the Caliphate gained victory. This split the community between those that were in support of Hussein (Shi'a) and the majority group represented through the Caliphate (Sunni). Since then the theological divide has deepened. Sunni Muslims often consider Shi'as to have deviated from orthodox Islam, while Shi'as argue that they are the true followers because of how they retain leadership from the household of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

SUNNI ISLAM

Sunni Islam are the majority sect within Islam, making up about 90% of adherents worldwide. The name is due to the importance placed on the *Sunnah*, or 'way of the Prophet' as guidance for behaviour. Within Sunni Islam there are a number of schools of thought, law (*Madhabs*), theology and movements.

SHI'A ISLAM (SHI'ISM)

Shi'as comprise approximately 10% of worldwide adherents to Islam. Shi'a Islam is the official religion in Iran and have strong communities in a number of other countries including Pakistan, Lebanon, Afghanistan and others. Within Shi'a Islam Imams serve as both religious and political leaders. Such leaders are human but have infallibility. There are a number of groups, for example the Twelvers, who believe that there were 12 'rightly guided' Imams with direct contact with the divine, the twelfth and final imam being hidden (called 'in occultation') and will reappear one day to fulfill divine will.

¹ Radhiyallahu Anhu (May Allah be pleased with him) – companions of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) are honoured by Muslims with this saying when their name is mentioned.

The Islamic faith

SUFISM

A further important variant of Islam is Sufism (followers being known as Sufis). The word comes from *suf* (wool), which was worn by early ascetics. Sufis are most often found in West African and Asian communities, adherents belong to orders (congregations) based around the teachings of a master. Sufism places its focus on the spiritual practice of Islam, and there are orders to be found related to both Sunni and Shi'a Islam. Some Islamic scholars consider Sufism to be the name for the inner dimensions of Islam, practiced in relation to the typical outward practices of Islam. Others consider Sufism to be a deviation from Islam and may oppose it on this basis.

ISLAMIC LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Although there is a great deal of 'legal' material in the *Qur'an* there was not a systematic legal code developed in the time of the Prophet. As a result Islamic jurisprudence developed (*fiqh*) to interpret and understand the law of God.

Islam and Islamic governance are centred upon the legal tradition of *shari'ah*, the legal and moral code for Muslims, literally 'the path' (i.e. towards God). *Shari'ah* is derived from the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah*, *ijma* (consensus of the community), and *qiyas* (or analogical reasoning).

Some scholars associate it with Islamic law (*ahkām*) that regulates worships (*'ibādāt*), common practices (*'ādāt*), dealings (*mu'āmalāt*) and penal provisions (*jīnāyāt*). Other scholars give *shari'ah* a broader scope and consider it synonymous to *dīn* (religion) and so additionally covering *aqīda* (doctrine) which defines the faith and sets the system of beliefs, and *akhlāq* (ethics) which deal with matters of morality.

The objectives (*maqāsid*) of *shari'ah* is to preserve and protect the five necessities in human life (*darūriyāt*) namely; life, property/wealth, religion, intellect and progeny. Much of the purposes of detailed legal instructions in Islamic law can be traced back to the preservation of one of the five areas.

There are a number of different legal schools within Islam, and Islamic law cannot be considered a uniform system – it is highly contingent on the context and history of the community. In fact, as long as they do not contradict Islamic teachings, local customs (*'urf*) are often considered a source of Islamic law.



Humanitarianism and Islam

The Islamic concept of humanitarianism and the principles of justice and equality on which it is based have inspired humanitarian practice in the Muslim world for the last 1400 years. In Islam, humanitarianism is a very broad concept that encompasses traditional forms of charity, with which modern humanitarian aid is more often associated, and also more holistic interactions between human beings and indeed all creatures.

ZAKAT

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam and requires Muslims to donate a portion of their wealth every year to the poor and needy. *Zakat* collections began during the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) time and have since been treated as a form of tax or alms in Muslim societies to mitigate social injustice and inequality. While Muslim states no longer take responsibility for the collection of *zakat*, in many Muslim countries, the collection of *zakat* from those wishing to pay it is managed through government regulated *zakat* committees. There are different categories of recipient for *zakat*, and there can be debates over this including whether the recipients can be non-Muslim, and there may be cases where *zakat* may be spent on causes that may not usually be considered 'humanitarian', such as building religious institutions.

SADAQAH

Sadaqah, is charity which, although highly encouraged in the *Qur'an*, is not obligatory and Muslims are free to perform as and when they choose. One of the most influential and most documented forms of *sadaqah* is a charitable endowment known as *waqf*. Since the practice was initiated by the Prophet, the return from the investment of *waqf* has been a vital source of funding for a wide range of public services and welfare activities such as hospitals, schools, mosques and public soup kitchens.

Within Muslim communities charity is framed as part of a religious commitment, and so it is not likely to provoke feelings or perceptions of inferiority. Secular charity may be less understood and may be viewed with suspicion as the intention behind the donation is unclear and may be understood to have political motivations.

Today, Muslims all over the world continue to adhere to the principles of humanitarianism prescribed by Islam. *Waqf* remains a substantial source of charity, so much so that most Muslim majority states now include a Ministry of *Awqaf* to oversee the management of *waqf* donations.

Similarly following renewed interest in *zakat* in the twentieth century, a number of Muslim governments have reclaimed responsibility for collecting and distributing *zakat*. However *zakat* does not constitute a public tax as it did in early Islam.

NEUTRALITY, EQUALITY AND ISLAM

Within Islam there is a central concept of unity between believers, that all Muslims are a single community, or *Ummah*. Because of this concept the prospect of taking a 'neutral' stance can be precluded; as the community of believers should remain united, Muslims may feel obliged to support other Muslims in a conflict situation. This means that the English term 'neutrality' is not easily associated with Islamic values. For instance, Arabic does not have a direct translation of 'neutrality', the closest being '*hiyadiya*', which implies non-alignment rather than neutrality. However, this simple division is more complex in real terms, not least because of the internal divisions mentioned above, and so the concept is not necessarily one that cannot be appreciated or used by Muslim communities. Additionally, within the concept of the *Ummah* is that of 'brotherhood', which implies care for other members and a fundamental equality between people.

The Muslim context

The professional peacebuilding sector has primarily developed out of a secular western context, which is not always immediately relevant to communities elsewhere. How communities may have very different cultural approaches to the resolution of disputes can be seen through comparisons between a typical ‘Western’ approach and those found in many Arab-Islamic traditions:

Western approaches [W]

Arab-Islamic tradition [AI]

W. Underscore the primacy of individual choices in facilitation of the process.

AI. The process is communally oriented.

W. The practitioner is a neutral, unaffiliated outsider.

AI. The ‘third party’ has connections to the major disputants, as well as good relations with the community (age, experience, status, leadership).

W. The responsibility lies with the participants.

AI. Agreements are guaranteed by the communal leader.

W. A third party mediator relies on guidelines, experience and legal texts.

AI. Approaches are based on sacred texts, religious ideals, history and traditions.

W. The goals of the Western process are pragmatic, trying to achieve a win-to-win scenario that will delete the past and commence a new page in history.

AI. The process is continuity-oriented; history is the source of stability and shapes the future.

W. Individuals solve their own problems.

AI. Family and community are integrated into this matter.

W. Look for a structured problem resolution (‘separate the person from the problem’) which leads to a formal, written agreement.

AI. Issues are prioritised – harmony, solidarity, dignity and prestige. Agreements may be more informal and unwritten.

W. Often feel acting in a professional, rational manner is required, with a logical understanding of where our feelings come from. Scenes where people are emotional, expressing sadness/anger, may be considered a scene of chaos.

AI. Spontaneous and emotional acts of expression are considered part of the conflict resolution, and parties are expected and welcome to express their feelings and vent.

CONFLICT AS A NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE

In the Islamic tradition, conflict is recognised as a normal social phenomenon, but a deviation from our essential nature of goodness. The *Qur’an* mentions differences between people as part of God’s plan for humanity (Q49:13), with the preference being to reconcile these differences where they are problematic. It is where these disputes lead to aggression and hostility that differences are considered in a negative light.

COMMUNITY ORIENTATION AND AGENTS OF CHANGE

Islam has a unique vision about social change. It agrees with the necessity, unavoidability, irreversibility and universality of change but anchors this on *tawhid* (the principle of unity). It sees positive change as an attempt to forge a closer relationship with God and His creation. Such change aims to transform human beings spiritually and morally as well as materially so that they can achieve success both in this world and the hereafter.

Societal change must take place at several different levels for it to be transformative. In Islam it is deemed to start with individuals for they are the active agents of change.

The Muslim context

However it also needs to progress to families and communities before it permeates through to the society. For individuals, the path for change is two-fold: The first is inner transformation through struggle with the soul. The second is outer transformation through struggle with the vices and injustices within society. At all levels, the *Qur'an* clearly states that lasting change cannot be imposed from the outside but can only come from within. It says:

God does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves.

Q13:11

Across Islamic cultures there is clear emphasis on the community and dispute resolution systems are often based on community involvement and structures. There is also a tradition of hierarchical structures and leadership.

CENTRALITY OF SOCIAL NORMS AND ISLAMIC VALUES & RITUALS

Rituals play an important role in conflict resolution processes in Islamic communities. For instance, conflict resolution processes for Somali communities start with a ritual gathering of the community leaders under a tree.

Conflict resolution practices often end with a ritual where the whole community are gathered in a public space and declaring the agreement to all those present; visits between families may be an important part of the process. Such communities will frequently invoke Islamic values in order to manage negative emotions, rebuild broken relationships and even to encourage honesty and acceptance of blame.

CENTRALITY OF EMOTIONS

Within many Islamic cultures the role of emotion is different from that seen in a Western context – it may be more acceptable, and even encouraged, for parties to discuss and express their feelings.

Dignity and honour often play a strong role in such communities. Because of this it is important to pay attention to the need for parties to 'save face' – aiming to avoid humiliation and to find ways to restore the dignity of all parties can be crucial to the formation of an effective resolution.

Islamic cultures frequently have social norms that segregate the sexes, and authority is closely linked to age and experience. This can lead to a perception that women and youth are completely excluded from the process.

While social norms do typically exclude these groups from the decision making process, it is important to be aware that they are likely to be marginalised from the decision making process, while simultaneously utilising alternative avenues of influence and communication.

EMPHASIS ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Retributive justice focuses on

- ▶ Wrongdoing and violation of rules.
- ▶ On the offender.
- ▶ Punishment by relevant authorities.
- ▶ Asking:
 - i. What rules/laws have been broken?
 - ii. Who did it?
 - iii. What punishment do they deserve?

Restorative justice focuses on

- ▶ Wrongdoing as violation of people and relationships.
- ▶ How wrongdoing creates obligations.
- ▶ On the victim and the harm caused.
- ▶ Active participation by all involved to 'make things right'.
- ▶ Asking:

The Muslim context

- i. Who has been hurt?
- ii. What are their needs?
- iii. What obligations now arise?

Customary conflict resolution approaches within Muslim societies focus on wrong-doing as an offence both against the individual and the community, and processes typically involve the whole community in participatory mechanisms along with the offender(s) and victim(s). The focus on these approaches is to restore a sense of justice and re-establish order and harmony; they are very much **restorative** approaches to justice.

Within Islamic theology, although retributive justice is permitted, it is clear that reconciliation and restorative justice is preferable:

You who believe, fair retribution is prescribed for you in cases of murder ... but if the culprit is pardoned by his aggrieved brother, this shall be adhered to fairly, and the culprit shall pay what is due in a good way. This is an alleviation from your Lord and an act of mercy. If anyone then exceeds these limits, grievous suffering awaits him. Fair retribution saves life for you, people of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves against what is wrong.

Q2:178–9

Let harm be requited by an equal harm, though anyone who forgives and puts things right will have his reward from God Himself– He does not like those who do wrong. There is no cause to act against anyone who defends himself after being wronged, but there is cause to act against those who oppress people and transgress in the land against all justice– they will have an agonizing torment– though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things.

Q42:40–43



Potential issues

1. By focusing on communal harmony, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms may not focus on addressing the root causes of a dispute.
2. Traditional mechanisms may be practiced in a way that looks to maintain the status quo, which may itself have initiated a dispute.
3. Traditional structures and a focus on 'saving face' may perpetuate the marginalisation of various groups such as women and youth.
4. Some such systems may perpetuate non-Islamic practices, for example marrying young people, particularly girls, as part of a reconciliation agreement. Where these are believed to be sanctioned by Islam, mobilisation for change must be done in a sensitive manner.
5. Traditional conflict resolution approaches often rely on third parties that have social and political power. Although knowledge of the context, customs and Islamic rules and norms are key to their credibility in many Islamic contexts leaders, and at times Imams, do not have the opportunity to study these themes.
6. In most peacebuilding programs participants emphasise the peaceful nature of the Islamic tradition. However, it is challenging to explicitly link these values and moral teachings with concrete solutions relevant to the community's day-to-day experience.
7. There is a hesitancy amongst peacebuilding, humanitarian and development agencies to engage with religious leaders and faith-based associations.

For more information

- ▶ Mamoun Abuarqub and Isabel Phillips, *A Brief History of Humanitarianism in the Muslim World*, Islamic Relief, 2009 [<http://www.islamic-relief.com/InDepth/2-20-brief-history-of-humanitarianism-in-the-muslim-world.aspx>].
- ▶ Kadayifci-Orellana S.A., Abu-Nimer M. & Mohamed-Saleem A., *Understanding an Islamic Framework for Peacebuilding*, Islamic Relief Worldwide, working paper series No. 2013-02, 2013 [<http://www.islamic-relief.com/InDepth/2-65-understanding-an-islamic-framework-for-peacebuilding.aspx>].



Glossary

► Allah

This is the Arabic word for God.

► Ayah (Ayat pl.)

The Arabic meaning of ayah is a miracle and a sign. The *Qur'an* is considered to be a miracle itself. Each verse or sentence is called an ayah or a miracle. The plural of ayah is Ayat.

► Caliph, Caliphate

(or Khalif, Khalifah, Khulafa, Khalifate)

An Arabic word literally meaning 'one who replaces someone else who left or died'. In the context of Islam the word acquires a narrower meaning: the Muslim Caliph is the successor to Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) position as the political, military, and administrative leader of the Muslims, or *Ummah*. Caliphate is the government of the Muslim state, of which the Caliph is the leader, or head of state.

► Da'wah

To invite people to follow the Islamic faith. This is the Islamic equivalent to missionary work. This is tempered by the *Qur'anic* verse that

There is no compulsion in religion

Q2:256

► Dirham

A silver coin, referred to in some hadith.

► Du'a

A prayer.

► Fatwa

A legal opinion concerning Islamic Law, not a law.

► Fiqh

The meaning of the word *fiqh* is understanding, comprehension, knowledge, and is the word used for jurisprudence in Islam. *Fiqh* refers to the body of Islamic law extracted from detailed Islamic sources. Fiqh deals with the observance of rituals, morals and social legislation in Islam. There are four prominent schools (*madh'hab*) of *fiqh* within Sunni practice and two within Shi'a practice.

► Ghusl

The full ritual washing of the body with water (ablution) in preparation for prayer. This is a washing further to *Wudu*, and is required after menstruation, sexual relations and other actions.

► Hadith (or ahadith)

Reports on the sayings and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or what he witnessed and approved. Islam has a detailed system for the categorisation and authentication of *hadith*. *Hadith Qudsi* are *hadiths* in which the Prophet says that God has said something. In these hadith the meaning was revealed to the Prophet, but he put them in his own words.

This is different from the *Qur'an* which is believed to be the word of God which the Prophet conveyed exactly as it was revealed to him.

► Hijrah

Literally meaning migration, to seek sanctuary or freedom from persecution. The *Hijrah* refers to the migration by the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslim community from Mecca to Medina in order to escape persecution. This journey took place in the twelfth year of his mission (622 C.E.). This is the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

Imam

► Imam is a religious leader. Any person who leads a congregational prayer in Islam is called an Imam. A religious leader who also leads his community in the political affairs might also be referred to as an Imam, Amir, or Caliph.

► Insh'Allah

Literally meaning 'if Allah wills it'. When a Muslim wishes to plan for the future, when he promises, when he makes resolutions, and when he makes a pledge, they say insh'Allah in order to make them with permission and the will of God.

► Ka'bah

Believed by Muslims to be the first house of worship built for mankind – built by Adam and later on reconstructed by Abraham (PBUH) and Isma'il (PBUH). Based in the city of Mecca.

Glossary

Muslims turn to face the Ka'bah (*Qiblah*) when they offer their prayers. The black stone is held inside. Before the Arab tribes fully accepted Islam the Black Stone was the most venerated amongst a number of pagan idols within the *Ka'aba*. The pagan idols were destroyed by the Prophet Mohammed after his return to Mecca and Islam had been accepted by the population there.

► Khutbah

A speech or sermon, usually referring to the sermon given during the Friday congregational prayers.

► Masjid (or Mosque)

A place for worship and prayer in Islam. This can be a building or even a dedicated room.

► Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH)

Prophets of God are honoured by Muslims with this saying when their name is mentioned. These letters are abbreviations for the words which are the English equivalent of *Salla Allahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*, hence you may see (SAW) used instead.

► Qiblah

This is the direction that Muslims face when they are praying, in the direction of the *Ka'bah* in Mecca.

► Quraysh (or Kuraysh)

The Quraysh were the most powerful and prominent tribe in Arabia at the time of the Prophet (PBUH), and were responsible for the Ka'bah, which then contained a number of idols which were worshiped at the time. The Prophet was from among the Quraysh, however when he started to preach Islam the Quraysh persecuted him and his followers, leading to their migration to Medina. The Quraysh were defeated at the battle of Badr by the Muslims; the Muslims returned to Mecca and destroyed all the idols in the *Ka'bah* in the year 630 C.E.

► Radhiyallahu Anhu (RA) (may Allah be pleased with him)

Companions of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) are honoured by Muslims with this saying when their name is mentioned.

► Sadaqah

Charitable acts and payments outside of *zakat*. Although highly encouraged in the *Qur'an*, these are not obligatory and Muslims are free to perform as and when they choose.

► Sahabah

Collective name for the people who were companions of the Prophet (PBUH).

► Sheikh (or Shaikh)

The word Sheikh is a title or name used for an elderly person or a religious leader in a community. This title is also given to a wise person.

► Shari'ah

The *Shari'ah* is the revealed and the canonical laws of the religion of Islam. Literally, *shari'ah* means the way or the path. In Islamic terminology, some scholars associate it with Islamic law (*ahkām*) that regulates worships (*'ibādāt*), common practices (*'ādāt*), dealings (*mu'āmalāt*) and penal provisions (*jināyāt*). Other scholars give *shari'a* a broader scope and consider it a synonymous of *dīn* (religion) covering, in addition to Islamic law, *aqīda* (doctrine) which defines the faith and sets the system of beliefs, and *akhlāq* (ethics) which deal with matters of morality.

► Sunnah

Sunnah means habit, practice, customary procedure, or action sanctioned by Islamic tradition. More specifically it is used to refer to the sayings, practices, living habits and example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The *hadith* are reports on the Sunnah and this constitutes one of the major legal sources of jurisprudence in Islam. The *Sunnah* may confirm what is mentioned in *Qur'an*, interpret and explain it, specify what is meant by some general verses, limit and restrict the meaning of some verse in it.

Glossary

► Surah

The *Qur'an* is composed of 114 chapters, each of which is called a Surah.

► Tasfeer (or Tasfir)

Defined as the science by which the *Qur'an* is understood, its meanings explained, and its rulings derived.

► Tawhid

The concept of monotheism in Islam; that God is one and unique.

► Ummah

The *Ummah* refers to the community of Believers or Muslims.

► Waqf

One of the most influential and most documented forms of *sadaqah*, *waqf* is a charitable endowment.

► Wudhu (of Wudu)

Mental preparation and procedure for washing the body (ablution) with water in preparation for prayer.

► Zakat (or zakah)

Take from their wealth so that you might purify and sanctify them.

Q9:103

The word *zakat* means 'purity' or 'to purify'. All Muslims who are wealthy enough must perform this charity in order to purify their wealth. Offering zakat is a religious obligation of all Muslims – generally, 2.5% of savings – to help the needy.

► Zimmi (or dhimmi)

An historical term referring to non-Muslims in an Islamic state.



INTRODUCTION



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