

## Glossary

### **Arbaeen**

The pilgrimage to the shrine of Hussain in Karbala, which takes place forty days after Ashura each year. It recalls the visit made by Zaynab, Zayn al-Abidin and the other survivors of the battle at Karbala after their release from captivity in Damascus.

### **Ashura**

The tenth day of the month of Muharram on which the martyrdom of Hussain and his companions took place in 680CE in Karbala, Iraq. It is commemorated each year with solemn mourning.

### ***asr***

The formal prayer (*salat*) that takes place each day in the late afternoon when the shadows lengthen.

### **Caliph**

Literally the regent or representative of someone of higher rank; so, all human beings have the responsibility to be the caliph (*khalifa*) of God on earth. Used widely in Sunni circles for the head of the Muslim community.

### **Dirham**

A small silver coin used in Arabia. Around one hundred of them would buy a camel.

### **Hadith**

A report of something that Prophet Muhammad said, taught, did or approved of that has been rigorously checked according to the systems of Sunni or Shi'a scholars.

### ***hadith qudsi***

A saying given by God to Muhammad to be proclaimed amongst the people.

### **Hajj**

The annual pilgrimage to Mecca, which is obligatory once in a lifetime for all Muslims.

### **Hudaibiyya**

The place near Mecca where Muhammad and the Muslims of Medina made a treaty in 628CE with the leaders of Mecca, who were still idol-worshippers, to prevent bloodshed and pave the way for trade and movement between the two communities. This treaty led to Mecca becoming a Muslim city in 630CE.

### **Hussaini**

A temperament and character traits that are developed in imitation of Hussain.

## **Imam**

The term imam is used in three senses. First, there is the imam who leads the community at prayer. Second, the term is used of outstanding scholars, whose teaching is esteemed throughout generations. The third usage is specific to the Shi'a; amongst whom these are the divinely-appointed Imams who are the sinless, infallible guides of the community after Muhammad.

## ***jamaat***

A community or congregation for formal prayer (*salat*).

## ***jihad***

Literally, to struggle or strive (in the way of God). Used for the lifelong struggle of every Muslim against temptation, waywardness and forgetfulness (often called The Greater Jihad) and for the legitimate, defensive, use of force to prevent human degradation (The Lesser Jihad).

## **Ka'bah** (other common spelling: ka'aba, ka'ba)

The cuboid building in the Sacred Mosque in Mecca, which is the earthly focus and direction for formal prayer (*salat*). The original was built by Ibrahim and his son Isma'il.

## **Karbala** (*karb* meant sorrow and *bala* meant calamity)

The place in Iraq where Hussain and his companions were massacred in 680CE, where his shrine has become a centre of pilgrimage.

## **Kufa**

The city in Iraq that was associated with Ali, the father of Hussain, where he established his administrative centre for the Muslim community until his death in 661CE. It was this city that sent letters of invitation to Hussain to come to join them.

## **Kufans**

The people of the city of Kufa.

## **Medina** (other common spellings: Madina, Madinah)

The city in the Arabian Peninsula, originally called Yathrib, where Muhammad established his base in 622CE and where he died in 632CE and is buried. Often referred to as the City of the Prophet.

## **Mecca** (other common spellings: Makka, Makkah)

The city in the Arabian Peninsula where Muhammad was born in 570CE and where the ka'bah is located. Often referred to as the City of God.

## ***mubahala***

Literally, mutual cursing invoking the punishment of God on the person(s) who are not telling the truth. Specifically, it refers to the *mubahala* set to take place in 631CE between the Christian delegation from Najran and Muhammad, at which he appeared

with Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Hussain. The Christians withdrew before the *mubahala* took place.

### **Muharram**

The first month of the Muslim calendar, during which the massacre at Karbala took place on the tenth day (Ashura) 680CE, which is marked now by mourning by Shi'a Muslims for the deaths of Hussain and his companions.

### ***nafs***

The inner self or soul.

### **Qur'an**

The book of guidance sent down to Muhammad between 610 and 632CE, which forms the foundational deposit of revelation for all Muslims.

### **Siffin**

The place of the battle between Ali and Mu'awiya that took place in 657CE.

### ***umma***

The worldwide single Muslim community.

### ***umrah***

The minor pilgrimage to Mecca, which can be performed at any time of the year, during which pilgrims go around the ka'bah seven times (*tawaf*) and run between the two small hills nearby (*sa'i*).

### **Wahhabis**

The name given to the followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), a Sunni reformer. They have become the dominant school of Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia.

### **Yazidi**

Character traits that appear to imitate Yazid.

### ***zuhr***

The formal prayer (*salat*) that takes place each day after the sun has passed the middle of the sky.