

ISL201 - Islamic Studies

Glossary

A.H : A.H.: abbreviation for after hijrah. A.H. refers to the migration of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions from Mecca to Medina in the year 622. The Islamic lunar calendar starts from this historical event.

Abu Jahl : "Father of Ignorance". His true name was Amr ibn Hisham of Mecca. He had nothing but scorn for Muhammad. (Qur'an 22:8)

Adam : "Red earth". The first human being, who was created by God on the final day of Creation (Genesis 1-2). He was made in the image of God from the dust of the earth. From his rib, a female, Eve, was later formed and made his wife. Adam and Eve had power over all living things, but as a result of disobedience they were expelled from the Garden of Eden and condemned to work for a living. He died at the age of 930 years.

Ahadith or hadith : ahadith or hadith: plural of hadith.

Allah : The exclusive monotheistic deity in Islam. The name is derived from 'al-ilah', which literally means "the god". The Prophet Muhammad declared him the one and only god (of the Islam) in the 7th century CE. In pre-Islamic times, Allah was the supreme creator-god of the Arabs. The goddesses Allat, Manat, and al-Uzza were considered to be his daughters.

C.E. : C.E.: the Christian Era. In Islamic texts C.E. is preferred over the term A.D. to refer to time before Hijrah, the start of the Muslim calendar.

EESA (Jesus Christ) : In Christian belief, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, one third of the Blessed Trinity which comprises himself, his Father, and the Holy Spirit. Sent to Earth to atone for the sins of mankind, Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem, around 5 BCE, to mortal parents by virginal birth. His mother on Earth was Mary, his father Joseph. In Catholic doctrine, Mary -- whose own conception is referred to as the Immaculate Conception; being born without any stain of 'original sin' -- was

elevated to the status of Queen of Heaven after Jesus' death, while Joseph was made a saint. Jesus preached for three years on the Earth, explaining to the large and ever-expanding following he attracted the mysteries of his kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, and how people could attain that wonderful place. He gathered to him twelve acolytes, or Apostles, whom he later sent out into the world on their own, to cast out demons and bring the true word of God to the masses. Jesus himself performed many miracles while on the Earth, among them the changing of water into wine at a wedding feast in Canaan, the healing of the blind, the crippled and the lame, the curing of lepers, and even the resurrection from the dead of his friend, Lazarus. But all of this attracted the attention of the occupying Roman forces, who finally decided that they had to step in when the crowds proclaimed Jesus as their king. Betrayed by Judas Iscariot, one of his Apostles, Jesus was taken before the high priests of the Jews, tried before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, and sentenced to be crucified on the cross. Also according to Christian belief, the Savior rose from the dead after three days, and was seen to walk the Earth for some time, visiting again his Apostles, before being finally accepted back into Heaven, into which he ascended in glorious triumph, the sins of man expiated, his job on Earth accomplished. He is said to sit there since, at the right hand of his Father. The cross on which he died is still revered by Christians as a symbol of great power and reverence. His Galilean ministry was recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, while his Judean ministry was recorded by John. The four gospels embrace Christ's biography.

Hadith : Hadith: the sayings, actions and approvals of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him); the authentically recorded and reported narrations from the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which is modeled after the teachings of the Quran.

Hudaybiya : A plain once near Mecca but which now lies inside the city. It is famous because here Muhammad made a truce with the city fathers, thus ending the war between Islam and paganism (Qur'an 48:1).

Ibadah : : worship.

Iblis : Iblis is the name for the devil in the Qur'an. Although the term "devil" comes from the Greek diabolos, the Muslims derived the name from the Arabic, balasa, "he despaired," which can be interpreted "despaired of the mercy of God" but he is also al-Shairan, Satan, and "the enemy of God." The latter aspect of Satan is a commonly shared belief of both Muslims and Christians. According to one

tradition, when Allah ordered the angels to bow down to the newly created man, Adam, Iblis refused to do so because he, being made of fire, thought himself superior to a creature made of earth. He continues tempting humans, especially through the whisper (waswas, "he whispered") and false suggestion (haiif). In the end, it is believed, he will be cast into Jahannam (Hell). Another commonly shared belief held by both religions is that the universal existence of evil in personal lives is usually experienced as a consequence of a personal agent, the devil. Although both Satan and al-Shairan are identified, Shairan also has a distinct existence, perhaps as the leader of the jinns, a personification of temptation. This coincides with the Muslim belief that each individual is accompanied by two personal spiritual entities; an angel who urges toward good and a shairan who urges toward evil.

Ibraheem : "Loved by God". The praise-name of Ibrahim, since God was his guest (Qur'an (Khalilu'llah) 4:124). Other sources say that God sent him and his family sacks of fine flour in a time of famine.

Ijtihad : : To uncover Allah's rulings on any issue by using one's knowledge of the Quran, Sunnah, ijma (consensus of scholars) etc. Only the most knowledgeable about Islamic sources of legislation can engage in ijtihad.

In-Sha'-Allah : "If God Wills". No future planning should be done without this phrase (Qur'an 18:23).

Jahannum : Jahannam (Hebrew, gehinnom; Greek, gehenna) is the Islamic hell mentioned frequently in the Qur'an, It has seven gates (Qur'an 59. 71; 15. 43) and different levels, the lowest being the tree Zaqqum and a cauldron of pitch and fire. Punishments are in accord to the gravity of sins -- a theme much elaborated on by later commentators. The Qur'an is not clear if the punishments exacted on Muslim sinners last forever, and Muhammad's statement, "The condemned will be cast into fire, to dwell there so long as the heavens and earth shall last, unless God wills otherwise," does not make it clear as whether Allah ever would "will otherwise." It is theorized, by some, that such statements, which are not definitive, merely serve to protect omnipotent freedom. Neither is it clear whether the new heavens and the new earths will be created when the present ones are ended, in a way corresponding to Allah's renewal of the skins of the damned, so that the fire can burn them again. In contrast, a kafir is generally thought to be punished eternally.

Jannah : : paradise; heaven

Kaaba : An ancient stone building at the center of the Islamic holy city, Mecca, built, according to the legend by the prophets Ismail (Ismael) and Ibrahim. The structure forms a square of about 40 ft high, containing the Black Stone, which is ceremonially kissed by Muslims until today.

Mecca : The holy city of Islam, also called the 'mother of cities'. According to the Qur'an (3:96), the first house on earth was built there by Adam. Ibrahim and Isma'il built the Ka'ba there (the central sanctuary of Islam, towards which all believers must turn before beginning their prayers).

Muhammad(PBUH) Muhammad (570-632 CE) is for the Muslims the last and most trustworthy prophet of the one God. God revealed to him the Qur'an in chapters or in strings of verses, between his fortieth and his death. The revelation happened when a voice called Muhammad to recite (Qur'an 96:1-3). Receiving these revelations left Muhammad exhausted. There are a few allusions to visions (Qur'an 17:60, 53:5, 82:23) and two allusions to the 'night journey' and the journey to heaven or ascension during which Muhammad travelled through the skies (Qur'an 17:1, 53:5-18). Muhammad was insan al-kamil, "the perfect man", because he never lied. For if he lied just once, how could anyone believe whatever else he might have said? Also, he was perfect because he was chosen by God to be his last prophet, to whom he entrusted his definitive revelation to mankind. An extensive biographical literature, the hadith, details every word of Muhammad that was remembered by his contemporaries. In addition there is also an extensive popular tradition relating his numerous miracles (mawlid).

Qiyaas : : a method for deducing or reaching a legal decision in Islam for which there is no clearcut evidence in the Quran, the Hadith, or the consensus of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or Muslim scholars. The qiyaas must however be based on some precedents in the above sources. rahim: compassionate.

Sahaba : The companions of the Prophet Muhammad who accompanied him on his seventy-two campaigns, and to some of whom he promised paradise.



Zakah : : meaning purification and increase in one's wealth, zakah is one of the five pillars of Islam. All Muslims who have annual savings beyond a certain amount, or live off farming, are obligated to pay zakah. The rate at which zakah should be paid and its recipients are clearly identified.
