

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM A CRITICAL COMPARISON

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GLOSSARY

- Abu Bakr:** A rich and respected merchant of Mecca, one of the first converts to Islam, and a close friend and companion of Muhammad. According to the Sunnis he was the first Muslim Caliph.
- A.H.** (After *Hijrah*), abbreviation for the years in Muslim calendar after the flight of Muhammad (in 622 A.D.); used to divide time, as A.D. is for Christians.
- Adhan:** Daily call to prayer by the *muessin* from the mosque.
- Ahad:** The oneness of God; the negation of any other number. The denial that God has any partner or companion associated with him.
- Ali:** The son of Abu Talib, the first cousin of Muhammad, who married Fatimah, the youngest daughter of the Prophet. He is recognized by Shi'ite Muslims as the true successor of Muhammad, from whom come the succession of *Imams*. He is the fourth Caliph according to the Sunnis.
- Alms:** (See *Sadaqa*)
- Aqida:** A statement of religious belief, a creedal affirmation.
- Ayat:** A verse of the Qur'an.
- 'Ayisha:** The third wife of Muhammad and daughter of Abu Bakr.
- Bahira:** A Nestorian monk who lived in Basrah on the caravan routes and was a strong influence on Muhammad.
- Baraka:** A blessing.
- Bismillah:** An Arabic phrase meaning "In the Name of Allah."
- Caliph (Khaliph):** Title of the spiritual and political leader who took over after Muhammad's death.
- Deen:** Muslim religious practice, such as, reciting the creed, praying, fasting, and giving alms, as distinct from a belief (*iman*).
- Dajjal:** Name for anti-Christ who will appear at end of time.
- Fatima:** The daughter of Muhammad by his first wife.
- Five Pillars:** The chief religious duties of Muslims, namely, to recite the creed (*shahadah*); to pray (*salat*); to fast (*sawm*); to give alms (*zakah*); to make the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.

- Farwa:** An expert legal opinion of Qur'anic law.
- Hadith:** Literally, a story; an oral tradition later written down of what the prophet supposedly said (*sunna*), did, or approved of—something said or done in his presence.
- Hafiz:** One who memorizes the Qur'an, a professional reciter.
- Hajj:** Pilgrimage to Mecca; one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
- Hijrah:** Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622, thus the date used by Muslims to divide time before and after, as Christians use B.C. and A.D.
- Hanif:** An original monotheist, such as Abraham, who holds a prominent position among the prophets.
- Huri** (pl. *hur'in*): A damsel or maiden in Paradise.
- Ibidat:** Devotional worship involving performing one's primary duties and good deeds.
- Iblis** (from *diabolos*): A Qur'anic name for Satan.
- Ijma:** Consensus of Muslim legal scholars introduced in the eighth century to standardize legal theory and practice, as opposed to *ijtihad* ("to endeavor" or "exert effort"), the individual thought of the earlier period.
- Ijtihad:** Private opinion, as opposed to *ijma*, or consensus held by Muslim scholars.
- Imam:** A leader; a person considered by Sunni Muslims to be an authority in Islamic law and theology. A kind of Muslim pope in Shi'ite Islam. Shi'ites accept the succession of Imams. After the twelfth century the *imam* went into hiding when the source of authority was transferred to the *ulama*, who were considered collectively to be the representatives of the hidden Imam.
- Iman:** A Muslim belief, such as, in God, angels, prophets, Scriptures, and final judgment, as distinguished from Muslim practices (*deern*).
- Ijaz:** Miraculousness (see *mu'jizat*).
- Injil:** The New Testament Gospels as originally revealed by God, but not, as many Muslims believe, the subsequently corrupted text known as the New Testament by Christians.
- Isa:** Arabic word for Jesus.
- Islam:** The religion revealed to Muhammad, meaning "submission" (to the will of Allah).
- Ishmael:** The first son of Abraham by his wife's handmaid, Hagar. Muslims believe Ishmael, not Isaac, was the son of God's promise to Abraham.
- Isma:** Preservation, in particular, the preservation of the prophets from all sin or at least from all major sins; their impeccability.
- Isnad:** A chain of authorities through whom a tradition has been handed down from the days of Muhammad.

- Jihad:** Sacred struggle with word or sword in the cause of Allah; a holy war.
- Jinn:** Spirits created by God, some good and others evil.
- Jizyah:** Tax paid by Jews and Christians to Muslim rulers, as opposed to pagans who were forced either to accept Islam or die.
- Ka'ba:** A cubical stone building in the court of the mosque at Mecca that is called the "House of God," toward which Muslims turn in prayer. This building contains the black stone supposedly given by Adam to Gabriel and used by Abraham who allegedly built the Ka'ba with his son Ishmael. This black stone has been kissed by Muhammad and Muslims since his time.
- Khadija:** Muhammad's first wife and first to believe that his message was from God.
- Kafir:** An unbeliever; the opposite of a believer, *mumin*.
- Kufr:** Infidelity or apostasy.
- Kalam:** Speech. It is used of the Word of God, and later of scholastic theology that discussed theology rationally.
- Koran:** (See Qur'an.)
- Mahdi:** "The guided one," or coming world leader of righteousness. Sunnis wait for the first one to appear and Shi'ites believe the last Imam, who disappeared in A.D. 874, will someday reappear as the Mahdi.
- Mecca:** The birthplace of Muhammad located in Saudi Arabia, considered the most holy city by Islam. It must be visited at least once in a lifetime by all Muslims who are physically and financially able.
- Medina:** The second most holy city of Islam (after Mecca); previously named Yathrib, where Muhammad fled in A.D. 622 (see *Hijrah*).
- Miharet:** Tower at a mosque from which the call to prayer is made.
- Miraj:** Ladder or way of ascent; the Ascension of Muhammad into heaven.
- Mosque:** Building in which Muslims meet regularly for prayer on Friday and at other times.
- Muhammad:** The founder of Islam, born around A.D. 570 and died A.D. 632. He is considered by the Muslims to be the last and final prophet of God through whom God gave the revelations in the Qur'an.
- Mujahidin:** Muslims who fight in holy wars (see *Jihad*).
- Mu'jiza:** A special miracle granted to a prophet in confirmation of his mission.
- Mumin:** A believer in contrast to an unbeliever (see *kafir*).
- Muslim:** Literally, "one who submits" (to God), a follower of Muhammad.
- Muussin:** Person who does the call to prayer five times daily from the mosque.
- Nabi:** A prophet sent by God with his message.
- Namaz:** Prayers. A word commonly used in India for the daily *salat*.

- Nasikh:** That which abrogates, as *mansukh* is that which is abrogated.
- Omar (Umar):** According to Sunni teaching, the second Caliph and principal advisor to the first Caliph, Abu Bakr.
- Pbuh:** Literally, "peace be upon him." A phrase of blessing used by Muslims whenever they refer to a prophet.
- Qadar:** The determination of all things by God, his decree of good and evil.
- Qibla:** The point Muslims face in prayer, toward Mecca.
- Qur'an (Koran):** Believed by Muslims to be the full and final revelation of God to mankind, conveyed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel over a twenty-three-year period and corresponding perfectly to the eternal original in heaven.
- Ramadan:** The ninth month of the Muslim lunar year now devoted to fasting, when the Qur'an was supposedly brought down to the first heaven.
- Rasul:** An apostle, one who brings a message or revelation from God. Muslim tradition lists 124,000 prophets. But the most prominent prophets are five (or six): Muhammad (the Apostle of God), Noah (the Preacher of God), Abraham (the Friend of God), Moses (the Speaker with God), and Jesus (the Word of God). Some also include Adam (the Chosen of God) as the sixth person in the list. Muhammad is believed to be the last and final prophet with the full and final revelation of God in the Qur'an, the "seal of all the prophets."
- Sadaga:** Charity, almsgiving to the poor and needy. Muslims are obligated to give one fortieth (2.5 percent) of their income in alms.
- Salam:** Peace; a greeting of peace.
- Salat:** Prescribed five daily prayers, one of the *Five Pillars* of Islamic faith. Muslims are required to say 17 complete prayers each day. They may pray individually or collectively. On Friday at noon Muslims are required to gather at the Mosque to pray.
- Shahadah:** Literally, "to bear witness," which is done by reciting the creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger." Saying this sincerely is all that is necessary to become a Muslim.
- Shahid:** A witness, and then a martyr who has born witness by his death.
- Shirk:** Association, in particular the association of any other with God, so as to impugn his absolute uniqueness.
- Shi'ites:** The major Islamic sect that believes, in contrast to Sunnis, that Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, was the true successor to Muhammad in the leadership of the Islamic community.
- Sirat [or Serraf]:** Literally, the bridge over hell. Metaphorically, the narrow path to heaven.
- Suffis:** The mystical wing of Islam that renounces worldly attachments, sees God in all things, and strive for union of their beings with God's. In contrast to orthodox Islamic monotheism (God created all), they tend toward pantheism (God is

- all). Some have virtually deified Muhammad, something considered anathema by orthodox Muslims.
- Sunnah:** Custom, the usual way of acting, particularly that of Muhammad.
- Sunnis:** The main body of Islam that comprises about eighty percent of all Muslims who, in contrast to the Shi'ites, believe that the true line of succession from Muhammad is found in the four Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Omar, Uthman, and Ali.
- Sunna:** Written Islamic tradition about Muhammad's conduct, considered authoritative by Sunni Muslims.
- Sura (Surah, Surat):** A chapter in the Qur'an of which there are a total of 114.
- Tabdil:** Literally "change," used especially of a textual change or corruption in the Bible.
- Tafsir:** A commentary on the Qur'an.
- Taghyr:** Literally "changed or forged," sometimes used of a corruption of the biblical text (see also *tabdil*).
- Tahrif:** The Islamic doctrine that the original text of the Bible has been corrupted.
- Takbir:** Praising God by saying "God is great" (*Allahu akbar*).
- Tagdir:** God's subjection of all mankind and all history.
- Taqwa:** A pious or virtuous character.
- Tawhid:** Unity, used especially with regard to God's absolute oneness.
- Ulama:** The principles that Muslim scholars arrived at by consensus, considered authoritative by Sunnis; those learned in religious matters (scholars).
- Umar:** An early convert to Islam and a devoted follower of Muhammad. The second Muslim Caliph.
- Uthman:** Another early convert to Islam and the third Muslim Caliph.
- Wahid:** The One, Same God for all. Sometimes used interchangeably with *Ahad*.
- Zakat:** A religious offering of a devout Muslim that is supposed to total one fortieth of his income (2.5 percent), given primarily to the poor and needy.