

# Some Islamic terms defined

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Here are some terms commonly associated with Islam:

Allah — God. From the Arabic term for “one God,” the same God revealed to Abraham and Moses. Related to the Hebrew word “Elohim” and the Aramaic word “Elah,” also terms for God.

Caliph — A leader of Islam, regarded as a successor of Muhammad and by tradition always male.

Fatwa — A religious and legal decree issued by a religious scholar or a council of scholars.

Hadith — Stories and sayings concerning the practices, or Sunna, of the prophet Mohammed.

Hajj — Pilgrimage. Every adult Muslim who can is expected to make the hajj to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime.

Holy Cities — The three holiest cities in Islam, are, in order: Mecca, where Mohammed was born; Medina, where he was buried and established the first Islamic society; and Jerusalem, site of the Dome of the Rock, believed to be where Mohammed ascended to heaven. Mecca and Medina are both in Saudi Arabia.

Imam — Muslim religious leader. Any Muslim is an imam when he leads prayer in a mosque. Some who hold stable positions as prayer leaders use imam as a title. In the United States the term is used as a cleric’s title.

Islam — Arabic word for “submission.” Means submission to the will of God, in

religious terms.

Jihad — Literally, “struggle.” Means both the inner struggle against wrongdoing and taking up arms in defense of Islam, which must be declared by religious leadership or a Muslim head of state who is following the Quran.

Quran — The record of Mohammed’s revelations and the basis of Islamic law. Believed to be the exact words from Allah to Mohammed through the angel Gabriel over 23 years of revelation.

Madrasah — Islamic school.

Mohammed — Born in Arabia in 570 A.D., founder of Islam, based upon revelations he received from the angel Gabriel. Revered as a model for Muslims.

Mosque — Means gathering place. Islamic place of worship, used for daily prayers as well as Friday religious services.

Mullah — Local religious leader.

Muslim — Follower of Islam; one who lovingly submits to God.

Prophets — Muslims recognize thousands of prophets. The Quran mentions 25, treating Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed as the most influential.

Ramadan — The ninth month in the Islamic calendar, devoted to obligatory daily fasting and prayer.

Salat — Obligatory prayers said five times a day.

Shariah — Literally “the path.” Islamic law, drawn from the Quran, the Sunna and other sources.

Shiite — Second-largest Muslim group. Emphasizes the authority of imams, less concerned with the Sunna.

Sunna — A supplement to the Quran, based on the teachings and example of Mohammed.

Sunni — The largest group in Islam, comprising up to 95 percent of all Muslims. Emphasizes the Sunna.

Ulema — Religious scholars.

Zakat — Obligatory contributions to the poor.