

LANGUAGE IN INDIA
Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow
Volume 9 : 7 July 2009
ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.
Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.
Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.
B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.
A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.
Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.
K. Karunakaran, Ph.D.
Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohamed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohamed Ali, Ph.D.

Introduction

The purpose of writing this booklet is to exemplify how common Islamic terms and concepts which are mostly in Arabic are used in English. For instance, when referring to taking ablutions for saying our prayers, do we say make *wudu* or perform the *wudu*? Should performing one's ablutions for *solah* be spelled as *wudu*, *wuduk* or *wudhu*? Is it make *dua* or say *dua* when we make an invocation to Allah? Should it be spelled as *dua* or *doa*? There are items which are singular and those which are plural. In Arabic, *sahabi* is singular and refers to a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him-PBUH). The plural is *sahabah*. Alternately, can we say *sahabis*?

As more and more Muslims use English in their religious, social and professional interaction, it is inevitable that they will have to use many of the terms which appear in this book. So, it also serves as a guide for the uninitiated Muslim users of English, besides, of course, for the many non-Muslims who live and work in Muslim-majority countries.

Many of the sample sentences provided here have been adapted from real sentences from newspapers, magazines, books and internet sources. They have been edited for clarity and brevity. Where sentences were difficult to come by for some of the terms, the author himself constructed the sentences in such a way these words would actually be used. The sentences provided here adhere to the rules of English syntax, that is, sentence structure.

Although many of the sentence examples are in the domain of religion, there are also others which can be used in business and ethics. The majority of the words here are likely to be encountered in the written and spoken discourse of Muslims fairly often in various contexts.

It is modestly presumed that the booklet is another humble contribution to Islam-related English by the author.

ISLAMIC TERMS, MEANING AND USAGE

A

abaya/abaya- clothing worn by Muslim women in many countries so as not to reveal the contours of the body

The Qatari sportswoman wore the traditional black abaya when competing in archery. It is a common sight in the Middle East, Muslim women donning the abaya.

adab- the proper way of doing something

The adab that Muslims have to observe in war is to make sure that they do not destroy the sacred sites of their enemies, nor kill civilians, among others.

Muslims are guided by adab in many of the things they do.

adhan/azan- the call to the five daily obligatory prayers

Upon hearing the adhan, she got ready to say her prayers.

Have they said the azan already?

Ahl al Kitab- followers of the three revealed religions- Jews, Christians and Muslims

I wonder why there is so much animosity among the Ahl al Kitab.

Aidhiladha/ Eid ul-Adha- the day which marks the end of the haj

Slaughtered meat is distributed among the poor and relatives on Aidiladha.

The TV stations provided Islamic infotainment on Aidiladha.

akhirah- the hereafter

Our good deeds will speak for us in the akhirah.

Let us gain both the world and the akhirah.

akhlak- morals

Free intermingling between the sexes may affect their akhlak.

Our akhlak is not something we can treat lightly.

alim- a scholar

In India the meaning of alim is restricted to a Muslim theologian.

We have to treat alims with much decorum because of their scholarship.

Alhamdulillah- All praise be to Allah

I wondered what my husband would think if I wanted to embrace Islam. But

Alhamdulillah he agreed to read and know more about Islam.

His wife uttered “Alhamdulillah” upon hearing that the surgery was successful.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Allahu Akbar- God is the Greatest
Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar

.....
The azan was so clear and pleasant to wake up to.

amal- deeds

Our good amal on earth will be rewarded in the hereafter.
We must set a good example by our amal.

amal soleh- good deeds

Let us practice amal soleh in this world so that we'll be better off in the next.
It is our amal soleh that people will remember us for.

amanah- trust

Parents have no right to abuse their children as they are considered as amanah from Allah.
Finance institutions are entrusted with the amanah to protect their depositors' savings.

Ameen- supplication meaning "May Allah accept our invocation!"

When the imam made an invocation for the well-being of the country, the entire congregation responded with "Ameen" enthusiastically.
"May Allah bless us with good health and longevity!" Ameen!

Ansar- the people of Madinah who provided protection when the Prophet Muhammad and his companions fled Makkah

The Ansars provided initial help to Prophet Muhammad (saw) and the sahabah during the Hijrah, from Makkah to Madinah.

aql- reason

Aql has a significant role in Islam and it has to be aided by divine guidance.

aqidah- the basic articles of the Islamic faith

Living in predominantly non-Muslim societies may help to strengthen a Muslim's aqidah.
Seeking help at the shrines of awliahs will erode our aqidah.

Astaghfirullah- Islamic expression meaning "I seek forgiveness from Allah."

Using her prayer beads, she repeatedly said "Astaghfirullah" after the Maghrib prayer.

Ashurah- the tenth day of Muharram

Ashurah is celebrated on a large scale by Shia Muslims to mourn the tragic death of Husayn ibn Ali, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Assalamu Alaikum- May peace and blessings be upon you

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

At the gathering, the guests and host greeted each other by saying “Assalamu Alaikum.” It is not wrong to respond to a non-Muslim when he greets us by saying “Assalamu Alaikum.”

Asr- the salah prayer before sunset and after noon

On the road to Dubai, my husband stopped by a mosque to offer the Asr prayer.

Can we meet after Asr?

aurat/awrah- parts of the body which are not to be exposed

The chief minister of the Malaysian state of Kelantan, who is also considered a religious scholar, said that dancing was alright if it was done with the aurat covered and there was no intermingling of the sexes.

A woman sprinter from Bahrain who participated with her aurat covered at the Doha Asian Games made headlines after she won the gold medal in the 200 meters dash.

awlia- saints

It is alright to pay respects to the awlia by visiting their shrines, but it is tantamount to shirk if one worships their graves.

Awlia worship is common in India. It is not uncommon also to see Hindus at the durgahs of Muslim saints.

ayah (singular), **ayat** (plural)- a verse from the Holy Qur’an

Mobile phone users can read the ayat of the Holy Qur’an comfortably on the small screen.

There are many ayat in the Quran which seem to declare equality between male and female.

ayatollah- a highly respected Shia religious leader

The ayatollah impressed upon his Shia brethren that the Sunni were fellow Muslims and that their real enemies were the invaders and occupiers of their land.

The ayatollah’s views are highly regarded in Shia societies.

azab- torture

Before we think of committing any despicable sin, we should think many times of the azab in the akhirah.

The azab in hell has been well described, so is the pleasure in paradise.

B

baligh- a person who has reached puberty or maturity and assumes full responsibility under sharia

Child marriages are an affront to the institution of marriage as those involved are not baligh and therefore cannot assume marital responsibility.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

baraqa/barakah- a blessing

Consider your good health as baraqa and do good deeds to your fellow citizens who are less fortunate.

Fitrah which is an inborn faculty is a baraqa bestowed upon humankind.

Bismi Allah Al Rahman Al Rahim- meaning “In the name of Allah, the Benificent, and the Merciful,” this is said as a prelude to eating, drinking or any other permissible activity. The mother told the children not to forget to say ‘Bismillah’ before starting to eat. Before starting the engine he said, “Bismillah.”

burqa- outer garments worn by Muslim women to cover their body

Women in black burqas did their shopping at the marketplace.

The burqa discourages men from looking or admiring female beauty.

C

caliph/khalifa- Muslim ruler who had enormous influence over the Islamic world. During the caliphate system, disputes could be taken directly to the attention of the caliph.

It is said that latter day caliphs strayed from the teachings of Islam and this was another factor for their downfall.

caliphate- the political system of Islam, with the caliph as the head

The Ottoman caliphates were weakened, among other factors, by Muslims themselves cooperating with hostile Europeans.

Islamophobes believe that certain Muslims want to resurrect the caliphate system just as the Catholics have the Pope as their spiritual head.

chador- a long piece of clothing which covers the head and body, worn as a sign of modesty

Many Iranian women from all walks of life don the chador.

The chador may not be an attractive piece of clothing, but it doesn't certainly attract the gaze of men.

D

da'i- missionary

Sheikh Ahmed Deedat of South Africa was a very well known da'i who engaged many non-Muslim religious leaders in religious discourse.

A da'i must also know about other religions in order to participate in religious discourse.

da'wah- call to Islam

The da'wah effort in North America needs greater involvement of more indigenous Muslims.

With systematic and organized da'wah activities, Europeans would have a better understanding of Islam.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

deen- Islamic way of life

Muslims ought to follow the deen of Allah to establish a just, peaceful and prosperous society.

dhikr/zikir- remembrance of Allah

Dhikr helps us to realize peace of mind and relaxation.

Regular zikir makes us spiritually strong.

Dhuhr/Zohor- the second salah prayer

Before resuming her work after the lunch break, she performed the Zohor prayer in the staff prayer room.

dua/doa- personal supplication

He recited the surah Al-Fatihah before going to bed.

They read a doa for the deceased.

E

Eid- short for Eid ul-Fitr or Eid ul-Adha

I get gifts from my parents for Eid just as you do for Christmas.

Eid ul-Fitr- the religious festival that marks the end of the Ramadhan fasting month

Malaysian Muslims invite fellow Malaysians of all races to their open house on Eid ul-Fitr to share their joy.

Muslims tend to be so divided that they can't even agree on a common date for the Eid festivals.

Eid Mubarak- greeting on the occasion of the two Eid festivals

Eid Mubarak! How was your Eid?

F

Fajr- morning salah/prayer

"Wake up for your Fajr prayer, honey," her mom said.

After her Fajr prayers, she started getting ready to open the shop.

fardh- an obligatory action

Performing the hajj is a fardh on adults who can afford to do so physically, financially and mentally.

fatwa- a religious decree

A fatwa banning the deviationist activities of the outlawed organization was issued by the mufti.

The fatwa advised Muslims not to consume products which contained gelatin.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

fiqh- Islamic theology

As the framework of his hadith compilation, Imam Bukhari used headings which covered the whole range of fiqh.

fitnah- discord/slander

Sowing fitnah among people is so mean and foxy.

Don't spread fitnah about your colleagues. It's very sinful.

fitrah- inborn disposition towards virtue, knowledge and beauty

According to religious scholars, fitrah means that every child is born innately good, but it is the environment that determines whether the child remains good or otherwise.

G

gharar- speculation or uncertainty in finance

Gharar is prohibited in Islamic banking because it tends to favor one party.

H

Hadith/Hadeeth- sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

According to the ulama, there's a Hadith which says that if we conceal the shame of others, Allah will conceal our shame in the hereafter.

When I went to his room, he was reading a compilation of hadiths.

hafiz- a person who has memorized the Qur'an

Some mosques engage the services of a hafiz to lead the terawikh prayers in Ramadan.

There are madrasahs which train the students to become hafiz.

haj/hajj- a religious pilgrimage to Makkah

Those who intend to perform the hajj must get the right information and be well prepared.

Backpacker haj packages were introduced by a travel agency in Singapore.

hajat- intention

She performed solat hajat before attending the job interview to seek Allah's help to be successful.

When we are involved in charitable work, our hajat must be noble.

halal- permissible in Islam

Muslims need to practice a halal lifestyle, and not focus on halal products alone.

Halal income has baraka, unlike income that is derived in a non-halal manner.

Haram/haraam- strictly forbidden

Sex outside marriage is haram, there is no excuse for it.

It is haraam for women to wear heavy make-up.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

hidayah- guidance from Allah

She has received hidayah and has changed over a new leaf.

They are former drug dependents who have received hidayah and are now leading a productive life.

hijab- female headscarf

Muslim women who refuse to wear the hijab do not have a proper understanding of Islam.

Halima told her baseball coach that she would be wearing the hijab under her baseball cap.

Hijrah- the departure of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) with his companions from Makkah to Madinah

The Hijrah is not celebrated as a festival. The day which marks the beginning of the Muslim New Year gives the faithful a chance to take stock of the previous year and plan for the following year.

hijra- migration

Some Muslim women writers consider their migration to the west as a kind of hijra as it has given them a new freedom, that is, the freedom of expression.

hikmah- wisdom based on the will of Allah

Do you think there could be some hikmah behind the divorce?

I have failed my driving test, maybe there is hikmah in it.

hour-i- a beautiful maiden who becomes a devout male Muslim's companion in Paradise
Men who go to Jannah because of their good deeds on earth will have houris as companions.

hudud- penalties under Islamic law

The state government which was ruled by Islamists wanted to introduce hudud laws in the state.

Hudud laws are rarely enforced due to lack of consensus.

I

ibadah- act of worship

Producing Islamic literature which espouses moral values is considered ibadah.

Working longer than the stipulated hours is similar to an act of ibadah.

Iblis- Satan/Syaitan- the Devil

Iblis will try his best to mislead us, therefore we should not fall into his trap.

iftar- a meal eaten by Muslims after breaking their fast at sunset in the fasting month of Ramadhan.

An iftar gathering was held for all the employees of the company.

Iftar functions promote solidarity among the participants.

ihram- the state of pilgrims while wearing the special clothes for the hajj

The hajj pilgrims are expected to exercise great restraint during ihram.

ihsan- perfection/excellence

Ihsan is the responsibility of a Muslim to seek perfection or excellence in ibadah, work and social interaction.

ijtihad- interpretation

Muslim scholars must find a mechanism to narrow the differences between individual ijtihads.

Lay people must be careful about providing their own ijtihad.

ikhlas- sincerity

Those involved with charity work must do it with ikhlas, and not for publicity.

She helped her mother-in-law do the household chores with ikhlas.

imam- a religious /prayer leader

David approached the imam at the Islamic Center and asked him if he could become a Muslim.

The imam advised young Muslims in the city not to resort to violence on the issue of the deeply offensive cartoons.

iman- faith in Allah and His last prophet

His iman became stronger after his ordeal.

I want to die with my iman intact.

Insha Allah- if Allah wills it

I hope this website will prove to be informative to all our visitors, Insha Allah.

We shall come to your wedding, Insha Allah. Advance congratulations.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un- expression used when someone passes away, it means: We belong to Allah and to Him we shall all return

Noreen's condition became critical at the ICU and the doctor broke the inevitable news to us. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

iqamah- the second call to prayer

We'll pray in jemaah. Can you say the iqamah?

Isa- the Prophet to whom the holy book Injeel was revealed, known as Jesus to Christians

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

The Prophet Isa was endowed with many miraculous abilities.
Muslims do not recognize the portrait of Jesus as that of the Prophet Isa.

Isha- the final fifth salat prayer

Make sure you pray Isha before you go to bed, okay?

I'tikaf- the last ten days of Ramadan that worshippers spend in the mosque, according to their ability, in prayer and meditation

Zulfiqar decided to take ten days off his annual leave to observe the I'tikaf in the local mosque.

The I'tikaf is observed by devout Muslims.

J

Jahannam- Hell, the Hell-fire

The fear of Jahanam should be a motivation for us to stay away from sinful activities.

We must believe in both Jannah and Jahannam.

janaza/jenazaah- funeral prayer

The janaza for the dead leader was held in his birthplace, led by the local imam.

Attending a jenazaah prayer indicates respect for the dead person and serves to remind us of our own death.

Jannah- paradise

His goal in life is to be a good human being and go to Jannah.

The Jannah has been graphically described as a most luxurious place to be in.

jema'ah/jama'ah- community congregation

Performing the salah in jema'ah is more rewarding than praying individually.

He quickly rushed to the mosque so as not to miss praying in jema'ah .

jihad- 1) a holy war which Muslims participate in to defend their religion and dignity from non-Muslim occupiers of their land and those out to subjugate them

The Moro National Liberation Front which wanted Muslim Mindanao to be free from Manila waged a jihad against the Marcos regime.

2) a struggle or crusade

“The war against smoking is turning into a jihad against people who smoke” (Fortune), American Heritage Dictionary, 1996: 968.

jilbab- long, flowing baggy garments worn by Muslim women in some countries

In many Islamic societies, women wear the jilbab so as not to attract unnecessary attention from men.

jinn- invisible non-human creatures

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Our best defence against jinns who are used against us to wreak havoc is to have complete trust in Allah.

There are both good jinns and bad ones.

jubah/jubbah- a robe worn by women and men

Wearing the jubah and pants makes it easier for women pilgrims to move around while performing certain tasks during the hajj.

Youths wearing trendy clothes can also be attracted to Islam as it does not belong to the ulama alone with their turbans and jubah.

Wearing the jubah may give one a religious appearance.

Jumu'ah/Jumaat- Friday lunch time prayer

The Jumu'ah prayers were telecast live for the benefit of the womenfolk at home.

Jumaat prayers are wajib for men.

juz- one of the thirty parts of the Qur'an

How many juz has the uztazah taught you so far?

How many juz do you know by heart?

K

Ka'abah/Ka'aba- a cube-shaped building in Makkah in whose direction Muslims pray to their Creator

The hajj pilgrims went round the Ka'aba as part of their ritual.

Muslims all over the world face the Ka'abah when performing the solat.

kabul- acceptance of invocation

For our doa to be kabul, we need to invoke Allah with sincerity and piety.

We pray that your pilgrimage will be Kabul by Allah.

kadi/kadhi- religious authority

The kadi solemnized the marriage at the bride's residence.

The couple went to the kadhi's office to discuss their marital difficulties.

kafir- unbeliever (used in a non-friendly manner)

The Islamist forces were determined to drive out the kafirs occupying their beloved country.

Don't trust those kafirs. They have a hidden agenda.

kenduri- a feast given in conjunction with a religious/thanksgiving activity

When we arrived at the village, the folks there were preparing a kenduri.

A kenduri was held to commemorate their daughter's departure for university study.

khalifah- Allah's vicegerent on earth

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Human beings have been created as khalifah or Allah's representatives on earth, and they therefore ought to behave as such.

As Allah's khalifah, we have a responsibility towards our fellow human beings.

khalwat- close proximity between an unmarried couple

When conducting khalwat raids, there is no need for the religious police to bring unauthorized people with them as this would put the khalwat couples to great shame.

The widow and her neighbor were found guilty of khalwat at the shariah court.

khatib- speaker who delivers the Friday prayer sermon (khutbah)

The khatib made an impassioned plea to put an end to sectarian killings. He added that the Shia-Sunni tensions were being stoked by the cunning invaders to make Muslims kill each other.

The khatib used the khutbah to remind Muslims of the many weaknesses plaguing them.

khutbah- the Friday prayer sermon

The imam emphasized the importance of science and technology in his khutbah.

Some people in the congregation were not paying attention to the khutbah.

korban- sacrifice

The PM said that Muslims were encouraged to perform the korban as this would remind Muslims of the spirit of sacrifice.

The mother advised her children to appreciate the parents' korban for them.

kufr- disbelief in God

Seeking protection from supernatural beings is equivalent to kufr.

Visiting shrines of saints and requesting them to grant their requests as some Muslims do can lead them to kufr.

kulliyah- faculty in a university

Vacant academic positions are available in the following kulliyahs.

The kulliyah has received worldwide recognition for their contribution to interfaith understanding.

L

La ilaha illallah- There is no God but Allah.

All the persecution inflicted on Bilal, a famous muezzin in early Islamic history, could not stop him from saying La ilaha illallah.

Laylat al- Qadar- the much anticipated night in the last ten days of Ramadan

Muslims in the Subcontinent strongly believe that Laylat al- Qadar is on the night of the 27th day of fasting.

Laylat al- Qadar could be during any of the last ten days of Ramadhan, therefore Muslims must try to attend Teraweeh prayers every day of those ten days.

M

madhab- a school of thought for religious observance

Brother, which madhab do you follow?

There are four madhabs and a large number of Muslims follow the Hanafi madhab.

Madinah- a holy city in Saudi Arabia, next in importance to Makkah

The visiting foreign dignitary addressed his country's students studying at the University of Madinah.

A Malaysian company is involved in the setting up of the Knowledge Economic City (KEC) in Madinah.

madrasah- a religious educational institution

A madrasah is a place where children and adults learn to recite the Qur'an and learn about Islam.

Some madrasahs are unfortunately accused of encouraging terrorism.

Maghrib- the fourth salah prayer in the evening

He usually comes back from work around Maghrib time.

After Maghrib, she would watch the Al Jazeera news broadcast.

mahar- payment made at a marriage for the bride

In an Islamic marriage, it is mandatory for the bridegroom to give mahar to the bride.

It is regrettable that some Muslims in India demand dowry from the bride instead of offering mahar.

mahram- a relative of the opposite sex whom one cannot marry

In many Muslim households, except for the living room, other rooms may not be entered into by people who are not mahram.

The non-mahram who was seen entering the women's quarters was meted out a severe punishment.

makrouh/makruh- something which is not forbidden, but not liked

It's not makruh to brush one's teeth during Ramadan as some people may think.

maksiat- vice

According to some theologians, the source of maksiat comes from our sight.

Certain streets are known to be places which can lead people towards maksiat.

malaikah- angels

The malaikah watch over our every move and record our activities.

Munkar and Nakir are two malaikah who will question the dead in their graves.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Masha Allah- said whenever one witnesses something good: How wonderful are the works of Allah!

The islands in the Maldives are so breathtaking, Masha Allah!

masjid- mosque

After returning from school, the children went to the masjid for their Qur'an classes. The masjid committee conducted a donation drive for one of the needy residents.

Maulana- a title preceding the name of a respected religious leader

Maulana Ilyas from India is the founder of the tableegh movement which has today a worldwide following.

Maulana Maudoodi is a highly respected Islamic scholar.

Maulud Nabi- a celebration to commemorate Prophet Muhammad's birthday

Maulud Nabi is celebrated in various ways by Muslims all over the world. In Malaysia, for example, there are processions culminating in a motivational-cum-religious talk urging Muslims to lead their lives as the Prophet did.

maulvi- religious scholars who earn the title 'maulvi' after graduating from a seminary

The maulvis endorsed the political coalition as it included the Muslim League, an Islamist party.

mimbar- a pulpit in the mosque from where the khatib delivers the khutbah

The imam addressed the faithful in clear, intelligible language from the mimbar.

minaret- a tower atop a mosque from where the azan is heard

The muezzin called the faithful to perform their salat from the minaret.

The imposing minaret could be seen from many miles away.

Miraj/Isra- the night journey undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) during which time he was shown Heaven and Hell.

There was a religious gathering at the mosque in conjunction with Miraj.

The Miraj is a miracle which is not difficult to understand.

mualaf- a convert to Islam

The state mufti declared that the mualafs can retain their parents' (non-Muslim) names in documents.

Mualafs need to be treated with empathy and tolerance as they need time to accommodate themselves to their new religion.

mudharabah- profit-sharing savings plan

In mudharabah, a profit-sharing model, the policyholders earn profit on their investments only if the takaful company makes a profit.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

muezzin- the person who calls the faithful for the obligatory prayers
The adhan sounded beautiful. I felt calm and relaxed as I responded to the muezzin's call.
We invited the muezzin to recite the thanksgiving dua for our son who was going overseas for industrial training.

mufti- a high ranking religious authority
The mufti will bring up the controversial issue of apostasy to the attention of the Minister of Religious Affairs.
The mufti has a religious column in the newspaper where he deals with many contemporary issues related to Muslims.

mujahid- resistance fighter
The Rohingya mujahids could not last long against the well-trained and well-equipped Burmese soldiers.
The Chechens may be considered mujahids.

mujahideen- Muslim fighters engaged in jihad
The mujahideen have vowed to inflict heavy casualties on the invaders and occupiers of their land.
Mujahideens are not insurgents or militants as they are only defending themselves.

mukjizat- miracle
There are numerous Islamic stories related to the mukjizat performed by the prophets and also awliya.
Some people have been witnesses to certain mukjizat.

mullah- Muslim clergyman
Many English-speaking mullahs now participate in interfaith dialogues worldwide.
The mullah condemned the Danish cartoons insulting the Prophet.

mu'min- a male who possesses strong faith in Allah
mu'minah- a female who has strong faith in Allah
Whatever happens, let us live and die as mu'min and mu'minah.

munafiq- hypocrite
The munafiq may be more dangerous than the non-Muslim enemies because the former are the enemies from within and cannot easily be detected.
Keep an eye on him. He's a munafiq who can betray us to our competitors.

mungkar- evil deeds
Islam urges Muslims to prevent mungkar, but this has to be done without shaming the offenders.

Munkar and Nakir- the two angels who will visit a dead person in their grave
Munkar and Nakir will question the dead about their Lord, religion, Messenger, kiblah
and the ummah.

murtad- a person who leaves the Islamic faith
As he died a murtad, none of his Muslim family members turned up at his funeral.
The religious authorities should try to investigate the reasons why some Muslims go to
the extent of becoming murtad.

Muslimin- Muslim men

Muslimat- Muslim women

All Muslimin and Muslimat are invited to come in large numbers and take part in the
Maulud Nabi procession.

mut'ah- contract marriage practiced by the Shiites

A mut'ah marriage may be considered less negatively and seen as a solution to some
social problems within the society.

Many women may frown upon mut'ah.

N

nafs- one's self

The struggle with one's nafs is considered by some spiritual authorities a greater jihad
than waging a holy war.

naqib- male facilitator at an Islamic study circle

naqiba- a female facilitator at an Islamic study circle

The naqib/naqiba encouraged those present to express their views on the topic.

nasib- fate

From being extremely poor, she has become fabulously rich. Is this what we call nasib?
If we don't try hard, we cannot blame it on our nasib.

nasyid- devotional songs

The nasyid group comprising four females wearing proper Islamic attire has performed
all over the country.

Listening to nasyid is one way of understanding Islam in a relaxed manner.

nazar- a vow to fulfill something if the invocation is accepted

He fulfilled his nazar of donating 100 dollars to charity if he got admitted to a university.

nikmat- Allah's blessing

Let us love our rivers, they are Allah's nikmat.

Let us learn to appreciate Allah's nikmat.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

niqab- veil covering the face

A Muslim teaching assistant was sacked from a school in northern England for refusing to remove the niqab.

The number of women wearing the niqab is small.

P

pardah- the custom in some Muslim societies where women cover their faces so as not to be seen by strangers

The pardah is worn so that non-mahram will not be able to see the faces of the women.

“Never have artists been more separate, their inordinate fame, wealth, drug use have driven them into luxurious pardah.” (D. Keith Mano, American Heritage Dictionary, 1996: 1470).

Q

qada- divine judgment, usually associated with qadar

Muslims do not question qada as it may sometimes be beyond our comprehension.

qadar- destiny

As a Muslim, I believe in qadar, the principle of predestination as determined by God.

qari- male Qur’an reader

qariah- female Qur’an reader

The qari and qariah from Iran and Brunei were respectively declared the best Qur’an readers in the International Qur’an Reading Competition held in Kuala Lumpur recently.

qiblah/kiblah- the direction Muslims face during solah

Muslims must stop looking at the US and Europe as their qiblah for progress.

In many hotel rooms, the qiblah is indicated.

qiyamah/kiamat- return of the dead to face the Day of Judgment

Let us be constantly reminded of qiyamah so that we do not transgress, but behave in the way which is pleasing to Allah.

Qur’an- the revelation to mankind through the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

This software allows the user to read and hear the recital of the entire Holy Qur’an in the convenience of the user’s mobile.

qurban- sacrifice

Muslim relief organizations conducted a ‘Qurban Food Aid’ campaign to distribute qurban meat to the needy.

R

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

rakaat/rakah- a unit of solah

The Asr and Maghrib fardh prayers have four and three rakaats respectively.

Ramadan/Ramadhan- the Islamic month when Muslims have to fast from dawn till dusk

The advert served to remind Muslims to reflect on the meaning of fasting in Ramadan. Ramadhan is a month which has a lot of significance for Muslims.

Rasul- a prophet to whom Scripture was revealed

Nabi Musa, Isa and Muhammad (saw) are among the most revered Rasul in Islam.

rezeki- source of income for one's livelihood

Fishermen and their families work very hard to earn their rezeki.

riba- interest on money borrowed

Riba is not part of an Islamic banking system, therefore, mutually beneficial partnerships are forged to share the profit.

ruku- the bowing performed during salah

Elderly worshippers can avoid doing the ruku.

S

sabar/sabr- patience

You must have sabar, the doctors are doing all they can.

sadaqah- charity

Muslim Aid, an international relief organization, distributed slaughtered meat to the less fortunate as sadaqah.

In Islam, sadaqah is not limited to charity in the form of donating money and goods, but it can also involve giving up one's seat to a deserving person when using public transport and helping a visually impaired person to cross the street.

Shafi'i- one of the four madhabs, the second largest, next to the Hanafi madhab

A lot of Muslims in Malaysia follow the Shafi'i madhab. Many Muslims living along the coastal areas of India also follow the same school of thought.

sah- acceptable

The interest that Muslims earn from non-Islamic investments is not sah. It is better that such interest is given away to charity.

sahabah- companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

When the sahabah were involved in warfare, they were compassionate and not ruthless to their adversaries.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

sahabi- a companion of the Prophet, singular form of sahabah
The sahabi listened intently to what the Prophet had to say.

sahih- authentic and sound, reference to hadith
Hadith scholars are able to evaluate which hadith are sahih and which are not.

sahur/suhoor- early morning meal before the start of fasting in Ramadan
The university canteen will remain open for sahur.
I'm very sleepy. Can you help to wake me up for suhoor?

sajda- prostration during salah
The new convert was taught how to perform the salah and what to say during the sajda phase.

salaam- Islamic greeting
Before leaving the gathering they conveyed their salaam to each other.
Convey our salaam to your parents, will you.

salah/salat/solah/solat- prayer
Postponing the salah is allowed when an individual finds it unusually difficult to perform the daily obligatory prayers under certain circumstances.

Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam- abbreviated to (saw) it means: May Allah bless him and grant him peace, with reference to the Prophet Muhammad
Muslims are expected to utter Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam when they hear the Prophet's name mentioned, and write or abbreviate the expression after making references to him in writing.
The Prophet Muhammad loves those who utter Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam whenever his name is mentioned.

sawm- fasting in the month of Ramadan
Many Muslims observe sawm as it is obligatory for them.

shaikh- a spiritual master
The shaikh told his disciples that celibacy was not the way of Islam.

shahada/h- the affirmation of the Islamic faith that there is no God but Allah
As David wanted to convert to Islam, the director of the Islamic Center in his neighborhood taught him to say the shahada.
Before his execution, the captured leader recited the shahadah without any fear of death.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

shahid- a martyr

The imam who led the funeral prayers for the jihadist proclaimed that he had died a shahid.

The Islamist soldiers who died fighting the invaders were regarded as shahid by the locals.

sharia/shariah- code of conduct based on the Qur'an and Sunnah

The author has studied the extent to which shariah is applied, adapted and even neglected in Muslim societies.

Islamic banks and insurance companies invest the funds in shariah-compliant business activities.

The high-ranking official said the country's Islamic financial system is open to various shariah interpretations.

Shaytan- the Devil, Iblis

The Shaytan will try his best to make us go against Allah.

Shia/h, Shiite- a sect of Islam which attaches much importance to the family of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), especially Caliph Ali and his two sons Hasan and Hussain.

The King of Jordan has expressed concern about the rising Shiah influence in the Middle East.

The sectarian violence involving the Shiah and Sunni is most unfortunate as they are both Muslim.

shirk- associating other beings or things with Allah

It is considered shirk for Muslims to participate in the religious activities of non-Muslims, but not activities which are social and community-oriented.

A person's sins however serious may be forgiven by Allah, but not those related to shirk.

shura- consultation

There are similarities between the concept of shura and democracy as both are consultative.

sira- the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

The sira has been penned in many languages, including Tamil by Umar Pulaver.

soleh- obedient

Some of the characteristics of children who are soleh are they will be filial, respect the elderly and show consideration to the young.

Subhana Allah- an expression meaning: May Allah be praised!

The floods have finally subsided and life will slowly return to normal, Subhana Allah.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Subhanahu wa ta'ala (swt)- expression used after writing or mentioning Allah in spoken language

Allah (swt) is most Gracious and Merciful, we should always seek His Blessings.

Subuh- another name for Fajr prayer, the first of the five daily obligatory prayers
“Start your day by not missing the Subuh prayer,” the retiree told his children.

Sufi- a Muslim mystic

Sufi literature, such as those produced by Omar Khayyam, is not always easy to comprehend.

sukuk- Islamic savings bond

The demand for sukuk has been overwhelming due to the pitiful returns depositors are getting from their savings account at banks.

Sunnah- the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (saw)

The Sunnah of the Prophet is the perfect example for Muslims to follow.

The Qur'an and Sunnah are the sources of Islamic jurisprudence.

Sunni- the branch of Islam to which the majority of Muslims belong

Sunni and Shia Muslims do not have huge differences, but misguided and irresponsible elements are trying to keep them apart.

Sunni Muslims are found in greater numbers all over the world.

Surah- a chapter in the Qur'an

The Surah Al-Fatihah was recited for the colleague who had passed away.

surau- a place of worship, sometimes within a building, especially in Malaysia

Excuse me, is there a surau here?

Suraus have been built in new housing areas.

T

tabarru- mutual assistance

Takaful is based on the concept of tabarru, the main factor being friendship and caring for one another.

Tahajjud- optional, late night prayer which is considered as having much significance

He woke up in the middle of the night, prayed four raka'at of the Tahajjud prayer to invoke Allah to rid him of all the problems tormenting him.

tahlil- recitation of Qur'anic verses for the deceased

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

A tahlil session was held for her late grandmother who succumbed to cancer last week.

tafsir- Qur'anic interpretation

Tafsir is better left to those who know the religion very well.

tajwid- the proper way of reciting the Qur'an according to the correct pronunciation and intonation

The qari and qariah from Southeast Asian countries demonstrated excellent tajwid in the Qur'an reading competition.

takaful- insurance according to Islamic principles

Depositors who have \$150,000 and above as fixed deposit in the bank are provided with free takaful coverage.

takbir- a proclamation that Allah is great

On the morning of the Eid, the takbir was recited from the mosque in my village.

takdir- destiny

What has happened is takdir Ilahi, you must be strong for the sake of your children.

talaq- pronouncement of divorce

According to the man, he had pronounced talaq thrice in a mosque in the presence of two witnesses.

In Islam, although talaq is allowed it is one of the most detested things.

The shariah judge disallowed the two talaq pronouncements made earlier because there were no witnesses present.

taqwa- righteousness, goodness, piety

The most honored among human beings in the sight of God are those who practice the most taqwa.

tarbiyah- education and development

Much attention has to be given to the tarbiyah aspect of young Muslims living in non-Muslim societies.

tariqa- the Sufi path toward knowledge of God

In the hope of getting some peace of mind he joined a tariqa he was introduced to.

tasawwuf- Sufism

Tasawwuf is practiced by certain groups of Muslims to get closer spiritually to their Creator.

tawaf- going round the Ka'abah as part of the hajj pilgrimage

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

The pilgrims performed the tawaf with devotion.

tawbah/taubah- repentance

Allah keeps the door of taubah open to everyone at all times.

Uttering Astaghfirullah sincerely is a kind of taubah.

tawheed/tawhid- the declaration that Allah alone is God and that Muhammad is His Messenger

The people in the interior did not waver in their tawheed although they were tempted with many worldly things by the missionaries.

Tawrat/Torah- the revelation to Prophet Musa (saw)

Muslims believe in the Torah which was revealed to Prophet Musa (saw) just as they believe that there were some other prophets who received revelations.

tayamam- use of sand instead of water for ablution

The nomads performed their Asar solat in the desert by way of tayamam.

Teraweeh/Tarawih/Terawikh- additional prayers performed after Isha prayers in Ramadhan.

In the month of Ramadhan, Muslims eagerly participate in Teraweeh prayers because of the huge rewards in the hereafter.

The mosque committee engaged the services of a hafiz to lead the Teraweeh prayers.

tudung- headscarf worn by Muslim women

The popular talk show host wears a tudung and appears on television once a week.

Wearing a tudung does not in any way affect a female teacher's methodology of teaching.

Many highly educated women in Malaysia now wear the tudung willingly.

U

ukhuwah- friendship/solidarity

Attending social functions of friends and relatives serves to strengthen the ukhuwah.

The spirit of ukhuwah is slowly fading as we now have less time to assist the disadvantaged.

ulama- religious scholar/s

Turkey's top Muslim ulama complained to Pope Benedict XVI of a growing Islamophobia in the world.

The talk show host sometimes invites the ulama, along with others to participate in her program.

umma/ummah- worldwide Muslim community

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

The big disparity between the have and have-nots among the ummah can be reduced through zakah.

It is agonizing to see the ummah economically backward, militarily defenseless and technologically inferior.

umrah- a minor optional pilgrimage to Makkah

Since he was not healthy enough to partake in the hajj pilgrimage, he intended to perform the umrah when there wouldn't be that many pilgrims as in the hajj season.

The family decided to use the long school vacation to perform the umrah.

usrah- Islamic study circle

Since I come from a Buddhist-majority country I need to attend usrah regularly to attain a better understanding and practice of Islam.

Usrah gatherings promote solidarity among the faithful.

ustaz/ustadh- male prayer leader, Qur'an teacher

The ustaz led the congregation in performing the solat.

How do you find your ustaz? Does he explain clearly?

ustazah- female Qur'an teacher

She learnt to recite the Qur'an in her childhood from the ustazah in her neighborhood.

The ustazah taught fardhu ain classes to the women during weekends.

Usul al-fiqh- the sources of Islamic law

The methods of usul al-fiqh were developed over several centuries by religious and learned scholars.

Usul al-fiqh is based on two primary sources, namely, the Qur'an and the Sunnah

W

wahy- revelation

Islamicization of knowledge is an intellectual enterprise which integrates wahy with human knowledge.

wajib- obligatory

It is wajib for the children to take care of their helpless parents in their old age. Paying zakah is wajib on those who can do so.

wakalah- an Islamic insurance system

Under the wakalah model, the takaful operator earns a fee for rendering services, the liability for losses is borne by the participants.

wali- a saint

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

9 : 7 July 2009

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohammed Ali, Ph.D.

Islamic Terms in English Usage

Sultan Ariffin whose mausoleum is on the island of Pulau Besar off the coast of Malacca in Malaysia is celebrated as a wali.

Wallahu' alam- expression said at the end of giving one's opinions, means: surely Allah knows best.

Mut'ah marriages do not serve to enhance the dignity of women. Wallahu'alam.

wudu/wudhu/wuduk- ablution for saying the solah

The youth had never learnt how to do the wudu, so the muezzin had to show him how it was done.

Can I take my wudhu first before you use the bathroom?

Z

zakah/zakat- obligatory payment based on the amount of income a person makes

The Prime Minister said that zakat distribution to the deserving will alleviate their difficulties a great deal.

Zakat payment can now be made online with the bank's launch of the zakat payment service.

Employees in the public and private sectors can pay zakat through salary deduction and it is tax-deductible.

zalim- cruel and unjust

Employers who are zalim to their workers will be answerable to God.

Governments which are zalim will not last forever.

Zamzam- a well in Makkah from which holy water is obtained

Upon returning from the hajj pilgrimage our neighbors gave us some zamzam water.

We drank the zamzam water with piety.

zina- illicit sex

The danger of free intermingling between the sexes is it could lead to zina.

Zina is a sin even if it is consensual, but in Western societies, pre-marital or extra-marital sex is not treated with such opprobrium as in Muslim societies.

Zohor- second salat prayer

I usually have my lunch after saying the Zohor prayers.

Before getting back to work at 2, she went to the surau to perform her Zohor prayers.

Conclusion

English today is used worldwide in ways which are specific to nationalities and sub-groups. Muslims can use these Arabic religious expressions to reflect a universal Islamic identity. Non-Muslims interacting with them may also use them to promote inter-religious understanding between themselves. The English exemplified here, incorporating

Islamic terms may indeed qualify as a variety of English which is intelligible to Muslim speakers of English as a dominant or second language wherever they may live.

References

Abdur Rahman I.Doi. (1991). *Introduction to the Hadith*. Kuala Lumpur: A.S.Noordeen.

Haja Mohideen. (2007). "Islamic Terms in Contemporary English," in *English Today* Vol.23 (2), pp32-38.

Ismail Raji al Faruqi. (1995). *Toward Islamic English*. Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought.

List of Islamic terms in Arabic at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List-of-Islamic-terms-in-Arabic>. Retrieved on 30 September 2006.

Ni'mat Sidqi (1989). *Tabarruj: Beauty and the Modern Women (Some Reflections)*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Pustaka Fajar.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language Third Edition. (1996). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Haja Mohideen Bin Mohamed Ali, M.A. (TEFL), Ph.D.
Department of English Language & Literature
Faculty of Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia
P. O. Box 10
50728 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia
deeneduc@hotmail.com

