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SOME IMPORTANT ARABIC WORDS

The best introduction to any Islamic topic is some familiarity with Arabic technical terms related to it. Islam has a large assortment of such technical terms for every aspect of its doctrinal structure, and the doctrine of jihād is no exception. Knowledge of some general terms is also necessary for a clear understanding of Islam.

General Islamic Terms

Wahy : Revelation with a capital R. Every verse of the Koran is wahy. The one and only source book of wahy is the Koran.

Sunnah : Literally practice , in Islamic parlance it means practice of the Prophet regarded as canonical and co-equal with injunctions proffered in the Koran . The source book of Sunnah is the Hadis. It must be remembered that not every practice of the Prophet is Sunnah. His having nine wives at a time, for example, does not constitute Sunnah; but his practice of enslaving the children and wives of vanquished infidels is Sunnah par excellence. Again, the bloodless conquest of Mecca is not Sunnah, but the massacre of Banu Kuraizah is.

Sûrah : A chapter of the Koran.

Āyat : A verse of the Koran.

Hadīs : Literally a report , technically a report of some action or some saying of the Prophet regarded as Sunnah .

Ahādīs : Plural of hadīs.

Sharīat : Generally, anything derived from the Koran and the Hadīs. In the restricted sense used in this book it refers to the literature of Islamic schools of jurisprudence.

Kāfir : An infidel, a non-Muslim against whom jihād is permanently established.

Mushrik : A non-monotheist Kāfir or an idolater, a term of strong vituperation in the Koran.

Munāfiq : A Muslim not wholly devoted to the cause of Islam or a renegade lukewarm in jihād, a term of full-throated abuse.

Kitābî or Ahl-ul-Kitāb : Jews and Christians whose scriptures (Kitāb in Arabic), Taurāt (Old Testament) and Injīl (New Testament), are recognised by the Koran as wahy (=revelation), but superseded by the Revelation in Arabic.

Terms Relating to Jihād

Jihād : Literally effort or striving , doctrinally aggressive war for spreading Islam . The full Koranic expression is Jihād fi Sabilillah (that is, jihād in the way of Allah).

Mujāhid : A soldier engaged in jihād.

Ghazwah : Jihadic war undertaken by the Prophet in person.

Ghāzî : Literally warrior , technically a victorious, infidel-slaying soldier of Islam .

Shahîd : Literally witness , technically a martyr killed in jihād .

Ghanîmah : Literally good fortune , technically plunder accruing from the successful conclusion of jihād . It has two parts: (1) Plunder of the vanquished infidels' property; (2) Plunder of the vanquished infidels' women and children.

Ma Malakat ayman-u-kum : Literally that which your right hand possesses , technically infidel prisoners captured in jihād, in particular captive infidel women sold into slavery and used for concubinage .

Khums : Literally the holy one-fifth , technically the one-fifth of the jihadic plunder due to the Prophet or his latter-day representative .

Fai : The whole plunder accruing to the Prophet (or his representative) when the infidel army surrenders without a fight. Jizyah is a species of Fai.

Jizyah : The poll-tax extorted from infidels vanquished in jihād but suffered to reside in their dwellings without loss of limb or life. The tax has to be paid in person and in a posture of abject humility. According to the Hidāyah, Jizyah literally means retribution money for obstinately clinging to one's ancestral religion .

Kharājguzār : General expression for an infidel residing in an Islamic state indicating that he is a payer of the poll-tax .

Zimmî : Literally a person under tutelage , technically it indicates the status of the kharājguzār in an Islamic state. The status is that of a resident non-citizen wearing out his life in a condition of semi-slavery.

Important Ghazwahs Mentioned in this Study

1. Raid of Nakhla (Late 623 AD) - The first blood shed in the cause of Islam.
2. Battle of Badr (624 AD) - The first full-fledged war against the Koreish of Mecca.
3. Expulsion of Banu Kainuka (624 AD) - The first Jewish tribe evicted from Medina.
4. Battle of Uhud (625 AD) - Defeat and setback for mujāhids under the Prophet by the Koreish of Mecca.
5. Expulsion of Banu Nazir (625 AD) - The second Jewish tribe expelled from Medina. The plunder of their properties was reckoned Fai.
6. Jihād against Banu Mustalik (626-627 AD) The Mustalik were an Arab tribe.
7. Battle of the Ditch (627 AD) - Also called Battle of Ahzāb in which the besieging Koreish were repulsed from Medina by the Prophets superior generalship.
8. Destruction of Banu Kuraizah (627 AD) - The third Jewish clan of Medina consigned to wholesale slaughter, their women and children being sold for buying horses and arms.
9. Expedition of Hudaibiyah (628 AD) - Presented as a pilgrimage because the Koreish did not permit the Prophet and his horde to enter Mecca.
10. Conquest of Khaibar (628 AD) - Surprise attack mounted on a non-Medinese Jewish tribe, which was reduced to the status of the first kharājguzārs in Islam.
11. Conquest of Mecca (630 AD)
12. The Battle of Hunain (630 AD) - A battle fought after the conquest of Mecca and followed by the siege of Taif.
13. The Tabuk campaign (630 AD) - The last ghazwah led by the Prophet.