

*In the advent of Western Ideals there was a greater and more important question. Islamic society was different from Western society. Could it be possible to effect an all-round Westernization without altering the very nature of Islamic society? The Muslim state might reform its army upon modern lines, it might adopt the mechanical side of civilization with regard to transport, it might open special schools for training in certain professions and arts; it might even proclaim the equality of Muslims and non-Muslims – Islam had already proclaimed the rights of man in other lines a thousand years ago. But was it possible to alter the nature of Islamic society without altering Islam in itself?*

– Halide Edib Adivar (1930)

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## **Islam in the Modern World: A Glossary**

**Abbasid Caliphate:** The great dynastic state of the Islamic world (750-1258 C.E.), with its capital city at Baghdad; brought to an end by the invasion of the Mongols in 1258.

**caliph:** Literally the “successor” of the Prophet Muhammad for the Islamic umma (see umma).

**caliphate:** The reign of a particular caliph; or one of the two great dynastic states of classical Islam (see Umayyad Caliphate, Abbasid Caliphate).

**Dar al-Harb:** Literally the “House of War” (see jihad); a classical political ideal that described those areas where Islam was not yet fully “at home” (see Dar al-Islam) but which would eventually be brought into the Dar al-Islam.

**Dar al-Islam:** Literally the “House of Islam”; a classical political ideal that held that the world was divided between those areas where Islam was fully “at home” as opposed to those areas where this was not yet the case (see Dar al-Harb).

**dhimmi:** The “protected subjects” of the caliph, usually applied to the Jews and Christians in Islamic territories who were allowed to practice their religions in exchange for certain liabilities (e.g., increased taxation; see jizya).

**hadith:** Written collections of the “traditions” (sunna) of the Prophet Muhammad, containing his teachings and actions which offer the best model for living a righteous Muslim life. Although not scripture, the hadith are second in importance only to the Qur’an itself.

**hijra:** Muhammad’s migration from Makkah to Madinah in 622 C.E. This event marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar since it established the umma.

**jihad:** From the Arabic word meaning “to strive” or “to struggle,” jihad has multiple meanings. On an individual level, it means to strive to live a good Muslim life; on another level it can mean to engage in a righteous armed struggle to extend the Dar al-Islam.

**jizyah:** The special tax imposed upon dhimmis in exchange for religious toleration but also in part because they were exempted from military service.

**Qur’an:** In Muslim belief, the very Word of God as revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. For the teachings of Muhammad himself, see hadith.

**Rashidun:** The “Rightly-Guided Caliphs” who immediately succeeded the prophet Muhammad as leaders of the Islamic umma (632-661 C.E.); Sunnis accept four legitimate successors (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali) while Shi’ites assert that Ali was the only rightful successor.

**shari'a:** Although usually translated “law,” the word comes from the Arabic word meaning the “way to walk (towards water).” Thus it is better understood as a way of living in accordance with the divine will through (1) study of the Qur’an, (2) study of the hadith (see hadith); and (3) the application of analogical reasoning (ijtihād) as developed by scholarly reflection and precedence. A final element states that a properly considered decision receives the consensus of the entire umma.

**Shi’ites:** Muslims who contend that Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law Ali was the only legitimate successor to Muhammad, and that the line of succession continued through his male heirs.

**Sufis:** Muslims who utilize various mystical and esoteric practices; both Sunnis and Shi’ites may also be Sufis. Although very conservative Muslims may reject Sufism as a legitimate form of Islam, Sufis have been very influential as missionaries into southeast Asia and as powerful religious communities under the Ottomans.

**Sunnis:** Muslims who accept the legitimacy of the first three caliphs, as opposed to those who contended for the succession of Ali (see Shi’ites). The word itself means “traditional” or “orthodox,” and by the modern period Sunnis encompassed a very wide variety of practice from strict “fundamentalism” to more liberal modernism.

**Umayyad Caliphate:** The great dynastic state of the Islamic world (661-750) with its capital at Damascus that succeeded the period of the Rashidun and was succeeded by the Abbasid Caliphate.

**umma:** The idealized community of all Muslims, reflecting the idea that since God is one, the faithful must similarly be united (one community worshipping the one God).

### **Ottoman Glossary**

**devshirme:** The “youth levy” imposed upon Christians in Ottoman areas (c. 1390-1703) where young boys were given by their families to be raised as professional soldiers (see janissaries) or as bureaucrats in the service of the sultan.

**janissaries:** An elite corps of professional soldiers who served both as the personal bodyguard of the sultan and as guardians of the traditional order of the empire.

**millet:** A community based on religious affiliation and subject to its own laws.

**shaykh ul-Islam:** A position created by the sultans to serve as the nominal head of religious affairs for the Ottoman state.

**sultan:** “Supreme ruler.” Not equivalent to caliph although many sultans claimed both titles.