GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Adat*: Lit. ‘tradition’.

*Akida*: Brothers in faith.

*Akika*: Naming festival, celebrated on the eighth day after a child’s birth.

*Aksakal*: Elders of the *mahalla*.

*Al’-furq*: Separation. The term is used instead of *al’-kufur* (disbelief).

*Al’-wehra*: Unity. The term is used instead of *al’-imam* (belief).

*Ammma*: The common people.

*Asabiya*: A pre-Islamic notion of adhering to one’s own tribe, as demanded by spiritual links and blood ties. Modernizing theologians use this term to imply nationalism. In the opinion of orthodox theologians, this term refers to ‘accomplished facts’, hence also implying nationalism.

*Barakat*: The spiritual power of a sheikh, passed down by right of succession.

*Beshik-toi*: ‘Cradling ceremony’, connected with the birth of a child.

*Bid’a*: Innovation, or deviation. The same action may be certified as *bid’a* either as a condemnation or with approbation.

*Caliphate*: A political realization of the concept of Islamic unity. Historically, this was the form in which the Prophet Muhammad and his heirs ruled until the eleventh century. The principles of Muslim theologians played a large part in the development of ideas about Islamic unity and of the political organization of Islamic society: the secular and religious powers of the state were united in the figure of the caliph. In the views of many Islamic theologians, the period of the caliphates was a time of ‘ideal’ statehood.

*Dar-al’-harb*: In the Koran, the part of the world in which non-Muslims live.

*Dar-al’-Islam*: In the Koran, the part of the world in which complete domination by Islam has been realized.
Dar-al-suk: In the Koran, the part of the world in which Muslims enjoy the right of free worship, but do not exercise political power.

Daulat: State ownership of land.

Dehkan: A peasant.

Dervish: An initiated member of a Sufi brotherhood.

Duochi: Someone who offers prayers for alms.

Emir: A military leader. The title is also used to denote a ruler. In the religious-political movements of the late twentieth century, this title is used for the heads of militant groups.

Fakih: An expert in sharia law.

Fatwa: A decision or sanction made by a chief Islamic cleric, having the form of a question and an answer. From the nineteenth century onwards, the fatwa has had a political function, being used to punish 'miscreants'.

Fith: Lit. ‘deep understanding’. The Islamic doctrine of conduct and law (jurisprudence and non-sharia law).

Fundamentalism: The renaissance of conservative thought—an ideological trend which demands the revival of the origins of Islamic thought, and insists on the primacy of the Koran. In the pursuit of political goals, this trend tends to amalgamate with Islamism.

Gyap: A social ritual of hospitality for friends carried out in turn.

Haal: Divorce at the request of the wife. It is made on condition that an amount of property is settled on the husband.


Hadith: Narration about the life of the Prophet Muhammad, a secondary set of Islamic scriptures.

Halifa: Lit. ‘deputy’. A halifa may be either the head of a community in the absence of a religious figurehead, or else a murid who has been granted the right to recruit new members to the faith.

Hanaka: In Central Asia, hanaka were Sufi missionary centres which established strong links with rural communities. As a result of the cult of relic-veneration, hanaka tended to be established near to the graves of saints. Also used to describe the house near a shrine where pilgrims are given shelter, or else a mausoleum at the shrine.