Glossary

acar, rule or custom.
adat, custom, usage, customary law.
alam, standard.
asthana, a sacred structure, a shrine or grave of one or more saints but without the bodies of the saints being buried there.
azan, call to prayers.
Bakar Id, festival to commemorate Abraham’s (Ibrahim’s) offering to sacrifice his son Isaac (Ismail).
Bara Wafat, literally twelve days of sickness leading to death, hence also the name of the festival marking the sickness and death of Prophet Muhammad.
basant, spring season, so-called because of the predominance of mustard blooms in the fields.
basanti, bright yellow.
Bhagwan, Hindu word for God.
bhasa, language.
bhut, wandering spirit, restless soul of a murdered person.
bisram, rest.
burqa, loose garment covering the entire body and having veiled openings for the eyes, worn by Muslim women.
chaddar, covering, including shawl, mantle or sheet.
chillum, tobacco-cum-fire bowl, earthen pot used for smoking tobacco.
dargah, shrine.
derwesh, Sufi teacher, Muslim mendicant.
desh, country, region or locality.
dharma, the proper way of life, righteousness; duty prescribed by the sacred literature.
dhoti, loin cloth.
*din*, faith, religion (usually only with reference to Islam; *mazhab* is the more general word meaning religion.

*doli*, palanquin.

*dua*, private prayer.

*dul dul*, clay horse commemorating Imam Hussain’s horse.

*fatiha*, an offering to God, the Prophet or a Muslim saint, so-called because the first chapter of the Koran called surah fatiha is usually read as part of the ritual.

*golakh*, donation box.

*gotra*, a Hindu clan tracing descent from a common ancestor, usually a saint or sage.

*hadith*, report of a statement the Prophet is alleged to have made.

*hafliz*, one who can recite the Koran by heart.

*hajj*, pilgrimage, one of the religious duties of Muslims.

*hakim*, a practitioner of Graeco-Arab medicine.

*haram*, forbidden in Islam.

*haveli*, mansion.

*hijara*, eunuch.

*hookah*, water-pipe or ‘hubble bubble’, a popular form of smoking in rural areas.

*hujra*, cell.

*Id*, festival, holy day; there are several *Ids*, for instance *Id-ul-fitr* and *Id-ul-Zuha*, or *bakar-Id*.

*Idgah*, place where *Id* prayers are held.

*Id-ul-fitr*, festival marking the end of Ramadan.

*Itar*, perfume.

*jadu*, black magic.

*jagr*, landed estate.

*jati*, the effective endogamous unit in the caste system.

*jibbah*, garment.

*jizya*, capitation tax.

*jumma*, Friday, a day considered auspicious by Muslims.

*kafir*, misbeliever.

*kalima*, Muslim attestation of faith.

*kar*, work or occupation.

*karkun*, civil servant.

*Karma*, the law of action and causality.

*kasb*, skill.

*khadim*, literally a servant, hence also the keeper of a shrine.
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*khandan*, a group of families bearing a common name and enjoying more or less similar social status; a non-exogamous kin group of four to five generation's depth.

*khanqah*, Muslim hospice.

*kola gor*, family priest.

*kurs*, Tamil Muslim word for urs.

*kurta*, long shirt.

*lathi*, bamboo stick.

*leylatu-i-miraj*, the day the Prophet was invited to heaven.

*lingam*, phallic symbol.

*lungi*, sarong-like garment worn by men.

*maatam*, mourning.

*madarsah*, Islamic school.

*maduli*, amulet.

*maktab*, karanic school, usually attached to a mosque.

*mannat*, vow.

*mansabdar*, noble.

*mantra*, incantation.

*masjid*, mosque, Muslim house of prayer.

*mawlood*, religious discourse, usually by recitation, held to commemorate the birth anniversary of the Prophet as well as on other social occasions.

*mela*, fair.

*merca*, a poem of mourning, especially lamenting the massacre of Hussain and his companions.

*milad-e-nabi*, Prophet's birthday.

*milap*, meeting, reunion.

*mlechcha*, lowly, an outsider.

*moharram*, the festival to commemorate the tragedy of Kerbala.

*moulut*, book commemorating the Prophet, hence also a recitation in praise of the Prophet.

*moulvi*, Koranic college degree-holder, usually a priest.

*mufti*, a person learned in the Koran and Hadith and in Muslim works of law.

*mujawar*, keeper of a shrine.

*mumin*, believer.

*murid*, disciple or devotee.

*mushaira*, recitation of poetry.

*namaskar*, Hindu greeting.
namaz, prayer, the Islamic form of worship supposed to be performed five times daily.
nupak, impure.
naqara, large drum.
nari, umbilical cord, nerve.
nazrana, offering.
para, neighbourhood.
pawati, mother-to-be.
pehish imam, one who leads at prayers in a mosque.
pir, saint.
pirzada, lit. a descendant of a Pir; hence also a custodian of a shrine.
preta, wandering spirits.
purdah, veiling of women.
qadam-e-sharif, Prophet’s footprints.
qawwali, devotional singing.
quom, lit. nation, in colloquial Urdu the effective endogamous units in the Muslim social system.
Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar: the daily fast from dusk until sunset that is rigidly enjoined during the month.
roti, hard-baked cakes made from cream of wheat.
roza, fast.
sajjadanashin, a spiritual superior at a mosque or religious endowment such as a shrine.
salam, greeting.
samaj, society.
sawar, rider.
shab-e-barat, a kind of All Soul’s Day.
shahid, a martyr.
shastra, Hindu liturgical literature.
shirk, idolatory or the sin of establishing associates to God.
silsilah, a Sufi order.
stri-acars, married women’s rituals.
tabarruk, blessed food.
tasha, a flat drum with a metallic base.
tacwidh, amulet.
tazziya, a representation or model of the tomb of Hassan and Hussain.
thali, metal tray.
topi, cap.

umma, universal Muslim brotherhood.

upanayana, sacred thread.

urs, marriage, hence also the anniversary of a saint’s death
which is regarded as his union with God.

ustad, teacher.

varna, classification of Hindu society which places all castes
into four major categories, viz., Brahman, Kshatriya,
Vaishya and Sudra.

wali, protector.

yajaman, patron.

zakat, the compulsory tithe, which is one of the five pillars of
Islam.

zat, Urdu equivalent of jati.

ziyarat, pilgrimage.