• **Tariqah:** the path of discipline leading to knowledge of God, also a Sufi Order or group. *Tariqah* in Arabic literally means, “path,” and it denotes a Sufi brotherhood or order. The orders are governed by *shaykhs*, which are spiritual leaders that mentor Sufis.

• **Ulama:** the learned scholars and custodians of religious knowledge, who are well versed in the Quran. They are the primary interpreters of Islamic law. In Iran they are called *mullah* as well as other titles, the highest among which is that of *ayatollah*, meaning, “sign of God.”

• **Victor Turner:** author of the text “Betwixt and Between” in *The Forest of Symbols*. He is best known for his work on symbols, rituals, and rites of passage. His work is similar to that of Clifford Geertz, in that it is referred to as symbolic and interpretative anthropology.

• **Liminality:** according to Victor Turner, this is the transitional state between two phases, where individuals are “betwixt and between”; it is the state of being on the threshold of or between two different existential planes. These individuals did not belong to the society that they previously were a part of and they were not yet reincorporated into that society. Liminality is a limbo, an ambiguous period characterized by humility, seclusion, tests, sexual ambiguity, and communitas.

• **Pilgrimage:** a pilgrimage is a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith, although sometimes it can be a metaphorical journey in to someone's own beliefs.

• **Mysticism:** mysticism relates to things that deal with the deeply profound. A mystic experience is beyond words and cannot be understood by those who have not had a mystic experience themselves; therefore religious authority relies on the individual. The point of depicting one’s mystic experience is to encourage other people to find it, rather than to explain it. Mysticism is the notion of an experience that is inexplicable, and is connected to some sort of ultimate power.

• **Rite of Passage:** according to Victor Turner, rite of passage is a threefold structure, which includes a pre-liminal phase (separation), a liminal phase (transition), and a post-liminal phase (reincorporation). It is a ritual event that marks a person’s progress from one status to another. Rites of passage are often ceremonies surrounding events such as other milestones within puberty, coming of age, marriage and death. Initiation ceremonies such as baptism, confirmation and Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah are considered important rites of passage in their respective religions.

• **Axis Mundi:** a Latin term for the center of the earth. In religion or mythology, it is the world center and/or the connection between Heaven and Earth. It expresses a point of connection between sky and earth where the four compass directions meet. This spot functions as the world’s point of beginning.