

CLASS COPY

DUNE by Frank Herbert

Glossary of Terms

This is a list of terminology used in the fictional *Dune* universe created by Frank Herbert, the primary source being "Terminology of the Imperium", the glossary contained in the novel *Dune* (1965).

Dune etymology is classified into three domains of vocabulary, each marked with its own neology:

1. Names and terms related to the politics and culture of the Galactic Empire,
2. Names and terms characteristic of the mystic religious organization, somewhat similar to the Roman Catholic Church, of the Bene Gesserit,
3. The Fremen language, which is very similar to Arabic. Fremen share vocabulary for Arrakeen phenomena with the Empire, but use completely different vocabulary for Bene Gesserit-implemented messianic religion.

Due to the similarities between some of Herbert's terms and ideas and actual words and concepts in the Arabic and Hebrew languages — as well as the series' "Islamic undertones" and themes — a Middle Eastern influence on Herbert's works has been noted repeatedly.

A

- **Abomination** – Bene Gesserit term for one who is pre-born and thus susceptible to being taken over by the ancestral personalities in Other Memory.
- **Axlotl tank** – Biological tank in which gholas and mélange may be produced.
- **Arrakis** – the planet known as Dune; third planet of Canopus.

B

- **Bene Gesserit** – Secretive and powerful matriarchal order whose members possess extraordinary physical and mental powers.
- **Bene Tleilax (or Tleilaxu)** – Secretive and powerful patriarchal race known for their genetic manipulation technologies.
- **Buddislam** - Term for those religions derived from a syncretic fusion of denominations of Buddhism and Islam.
- **Butlerian Jihad** – Mankind's "crusade against computers, thinking machines, and conscious robots."

C

- **Carryall** – Aircraft used on Arrakis to "transport large spice mining, hunting and refining equipment."
- **Chakobsa** – Language of the Fremen of Arrakis, inspired by the Caucasian hunting language of the same name.
- **CHOAM (Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles)** – the "universal development corporation controlled by the Emperor and Great Houses with the Guild and Bene Gesserit as silent partners." This corporation essentially controls the economy of the known universe, with shares and directorships determining each House's income and financial leverage.
- **Cogitor** – One of several ancient philosophers whose brains are transplanted into fluid-filled canisters so that they can analyze the universe indefinitely.
- **Coriolis storm** – Sandstorms on Arrakis in which "winds across the open flatlands are amplified by the planet's own revolutionary motion to reach speeds up to 700 kilometres per hour."
- **Crysknife** – Weapon made from the tooth of a sandworm from Arrakis.
- **Cuttray** – "Short-range version of a lasgun used mostly as a cutting tool and surgeon's scalpel."
- **Cymek** – Type of cyborg; specifically, a human brain implanted into a large, weaponized machine body.

D

- **Damper, Ixian** – Portable device which hides words from anyone without the proper coded translator, and projects distortions that hide the precise movements of lips and the sounds of voices. It is described as a "black disc" buoyed midair by suspensors.
- **Deathstill** – Fremen device used to extract all moisture from a living or dead human or creature. This is traditionally done to reclaim precious water from the dead, who no longer require it; but in *Children of Dune* the device is used as a method of execution.

E

- **Elacca drug** – Narcotic produced from the "blood-grained" elacca wood of Ecaz; users' skin shows a characteristic carrot color. The drug's effect is to remove most of the will to self-preservation; commonly used to prepare slave gladiators for the ring.

F

- **Fedaykin** – /fiˈdaɪkɪn/ "Fremen death commandos; historically: a group formed and pledged to give their lives to right a wrong." In *Dune*, they are personally trained by, and fiercely loyal to, Paul Atreides. The term is derived from the Arabic Fedayeen.
- **Fremen** – "Native" inhabitants of Arrakis.
- **Fremkit** – Fremen desert survival kit. Notable contents include an inflatable stilltent, a sand snorkel, a thumper, and maker hooks.

G

- **Galach** – Universal language of the *Dune* universe.
- **Gom jabbar** – "Specific poison needle tipped with meta-cyanide used by Bene Gesserit Proctors in their death-alternative test of human awareness."
- **Great Convention** – "Universal truce enforced under the power balance maintained by the Guild, the Great Houses, and the Imperium. Its chief rule prohibits the use of atomic weapons against human targets."
- **Guild Navigator** – Mélange-mutated humans able to safely navigate interstellar space (using prescience) in ships called Heighliners.

H

- **Harvester** (also Harvester Factory or Crawler) – "Large (often 120 metres by 40 metres) spice mining machine ... [with a] buglike body on independent tracks."
- **Heighliner** – Enormous carrier starships used by the Spacing Guild for interstellar travel.
- **Holtzman effect** – Scientific phenomenon that makes (among other things) instantaneous space travel and defensive force shields possible.
- **Hunter-seeker** – "Ravaging sliver of suspensor-buoyed metal guided as a weapon by a nearby control console; common assassination device." Floating in mid-air, it kills by entering the body and following nerve pathways to vital organs. A hunter-seeker is employed in *Dune* in an assassination attempt on Paul Atreides.

I

- **Inkvine** – "Creeping plant native to Giedi Prime and frequently used as a whip in its slave pens. Victims are marked by beet-colored tattoos that cause residual pain for many years."
- **Ixian damper** – Portable device which hides words from anyone without the proper coded translator, and projects distortions that hide the precise movements of lips and the sounds of voices. It is described as a "black disc" buoyed midair by suspensors.

J

- **Jihad, Butlerian** – Mankind's "crusade against computers, thinking machines, and conscious robots."

K

- **Kanly** – "Formal feud or vendetta under the rules of the Great Convention carried on according to the strictest limitations.", derived from a word for a blood feud between Islamic tribes of the Caucasus.^{[10][3]}
- **Kralizec** – Long-foretold "Typhoon Struggle" or final "battle at the end of the universe".
- **Kwisatz Haderach** – "The Shortening of the Way" or "The one who can be two places simultaneously". Bene Gesserit label applied to "the unknown for which they sought a genetic solution: a male Bene Gesserit whose organic mental powers would bridge space and time."

L

- **Landsraad** – The Assembly of all nobles in the Imperium.
- **Lasgun** – Handheld energy weapon, technically a "continuous-wave laser projector;" also **lasegun**.
- **Little Maker** – The "half-plant-half-animal deep-sand vector of the Arrakis sandworm," whose "excretions form the pre-spice mass."

M

- **Mahdi** – "In the Fremen messianic legend, 'The One Who Will Lead Us to Paradise;'" applied to Paul Atreides by the Fremen when they determine that he is their messiah. The term is the same as that used in Islam for a messianic figure that will appear shortly before the Day of Judgment in Islamic eschatology.
- **Maker hooks** – "The hooks used for capturing, mounting, and steering a sandworm of Arrakis."
- **Melange** – Known colloquially as "the spice", a highly-addictive drug essential to space travel, extended life, and therefore to the survival of the universe.
- **Mentats** – Individuals trained as "human computers," their minds developed to staggering heights of cognitive and analytical ability.
- **Missionaria Protectiva** – An arm of the Bene Gesserit charged with spreading contrived myths, prophecies and superstition on primitive worlds so that the Bene Gesserit may later exploit those regions.
- **Muad'Dib** – "The adapted kangaroo mouse of Arrakis, a creature associated in the Fremen earth-spirit mythology with a design visible on the planet's second moon. This creature is admired by Fremen for its ability to survive in the open desert." In *Dune*, Paul Atreides takes "Muad'Dib" as his Fremen name, which takes on greater significance when he is perceived as a messiah.

N

- **Nullentropy** – Technology akin to the science fiction concept of stasis, in which the natural processes of time, such as decomposition, are ceased. In this way, perishable matter such as food and even human cells may be stored for millennia and remain undamaged.

O

- **Other Memory** – The combined ego and memories of all female ancestors, which a Bene Gesserit may be trained to access.^[4]
- **Ornithopter (or 'Thopter)** – "Aircraft capable of sustained wing-beat flight in the manner of birds;" one of the primary modes of transportation on the desert planet Arrakis.

P

- **Prana-bindu** – Training providing a Bene Gesserit with complete muscle control (*Prana nervature* relates to nervous system control).
- **Pre-spice mass** – The "stage of fungusoid wild growth achieved when water is flooded into the excretions of Little Makers. At this stage, the spice of Arrakis forms a characteristic 'blow,' exchanging the material from deep underground for the matter on the surface above it. This mass, after exposure to sun and air, becomes mélange."

Q

- **Qanat** – "Open canal for carrying irrigation water under controlled conditions through a desert."

R

- **Residual poison** – "Innovation attributed to the Mentat Piter De Vries whereby the body is impregnated with a substance for which repeated antidotes must be administered; withdrawal of the antidote at any time brings death."
- **Reverend Mother** – Bene Gesserit who has survived a ritual wherein she consciously transforms a toxic dose of mélange into a non-poisonous substance at the molecular level, thereby raising herself to a higher level of awareness and enabling her to access Other Memory.

S

- **Sandworm** – Giant sand-dwelling creatures native to Arrakis. Called *Shai-Hulud* by the Fremen and worshipped as deities.
- **Sapho** – "High-energy liquid extracted from barrier roots of Ecaz. Commonly used by Mentats who claim it amplifies mental powers. Users develop deep ruby stains on mouth and lips."
- **Sardaukar** – Ferocious "soldier-fanatics" of the Padishah Emperor, later disbanded by Leto II.
- **Sayyadina** – Among the Fremen, the Sayyadina ("Friend of God" in Chakobsa) is a priestess who has not yet passed within to become a Reverend Mother. When a Sayyadina undergoes the spice agony, another is then consecrated into the Sayyadina to continue the line of succession.
- **Shai-Hulud** – Fremen name for the sandworms of Arrakis.
- **Servo-receiver** – A communications device worn in the ear. In *Dune*, Shaddam wears one during the Battle of Arrakeen to receive updates on the battle.
- **Sietch** – Cave warren inhabited by a Fremen tribal community; in the Fremen language, "Place of assembly in time of danger."
- **Spacing Guild** – Powerful organization with a monopoly on space travel and transport due to their Navigators.
- **Spice** – Common name for mélange, a highly-addictive drug essential to space travel, extended life, and therefore to the survival of the universe.
- **Spice agony** – Fremen version of the ritual used by the Bene Gesserit to create Reverend Mothers, using the Water of Life instead of mélange.
- **Steersman** – Title given to Guild Navigators.
- **Stillsuit** – "Body-enclosing garment" of Fremen design which performs the "functions of heat dissipation and filtering bodily wastes," as well as retaining and reclaiming moisture.
- **Stilltent** – "Small, scalable enclosure of micro-sandwich fabric designed to reclaim as potable water the ambient moisture discharged within it by the breath of its occupants."
- **Suk School** – Prominent medical school whose doctors are the universe's most competent and trusted; those who have received the "Suk Imperial Conditioning" bear a diamond tattoo on their foreheads, wear their hair in a special silver ring, and are incapable of inflicting harm. However, the fallibility of Suk training is proven in *Dune* (1965) when Baron Vladimir Harkonnen and his twisted Mentat Piter De Vries manage to subvert this conditioning and coerce Suk Dr. Wellington Yueh into helping him in his attempt to destroy House Atreides.

- **Suspensor** – Any of a number of 'hovering' devices which utilize the "secondary (low-drain) phase of a Holtzman field generator" to nullify gravity "within certain limits prescribed by relative mass and energy consumption." In *Dune*, the obese Baron Harkonnen uses suspensors to support his massive weight. Hunter-seekers also use suspensor fields for propulsion, which make them slippery and hard to grasp.

T

- **Thinking machines** – Intelligent and sentient machines "created in the likeness of a human mind" and thus abolished in the Butlerian Jihad.
- **Thumper** – "Short stake with a spring-driven clapper at one end", placed in the sand to 'call' sandworms, who are attracted to vibration and sound.
- **Titans** – Ancient dictators whose brains were transplanted into fearsome, weaponized machine bodies to achieve immortality.
- **Tleilaxu (or Bene Tleilax)** – Secretive and powerful patriarchal race known for their genetic manipulation technologies.
- **Truthsayer** – Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother "qualified to enter truthtrance and detect insincerity or falsehood".

U

- **Umma** – "One of the brotherhood of prophets; a term of scorn in the Imperium, meaning any 'wild' person given to fanatical prediction."
- **Usul** – Fremen word, meaning "The strength at the base of the pillar." This is the secret "sietch name" (known only to his tribe) given to Paul Atreides upon his joining the Fremen.

V

- **Voice** – Training that allows the Bene Gesserit "to control others merely by selected tone shadings of the voice."

W

- **Wali** – The name the Fremen give to an untried youth.
- **Water of Life** – Toxic liquid exhalation of a drowning sandworm, used by Fremen Reverend Mothers in the spice agony.
- **Water rings** – Metal rings wore by Fremen women to indicate their household's possessed water.
- **Weirding way** – Fremen term for Bene Gesserit abilities, in particular the specialized martial art component of *prana-bindu*.
- **Whale fur** – Valuable commodity noted to be the original source of House Harkonnen's wealth. Princess Irulan is described wearing whale fur multiple times, including during her meeting with her fellow conspirators in *Dune Messiah*.

Y

- **Yali** – "A Fremen's personal quarters within the sietch."

Z

- **Zensunni** – Ancient religious sect, ancestors of the Fremen. (*See also Zen Buddhism and Sunni Islam.*)

MAP OF ARRAKIS (The Desert Planet)

