They seek to extinguish the [guiding] radiance of Allah with their mouths, and Allah refuses but to complete His radiance regardless of how abhorrent that is to those who disbelieve. It is He Who sent forth His messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may elevate it above all false beliefs, however abhorrent that is to those who ascribe partners to Him.”

Glossary Terms

Abrogation
Replacement of an earlier legalistic verse with a chronologically successive one. The latter supplants the rulings inherent in the former and, in certain cases, removes the former’s wording from the Qur’an as well.

Alif
The first letter of the Arabic alphabet and the first of three vowels. Although Arabic is by and large written phonetically, alif is an exception and the patterns for its usage are irregular at times.

Autographed copy
The first or original manuscript of a work, not that of a subsequent pupil or copyist.

Anṣār
Lit. “supporters”, the Muslims of Madinah who, pledging allegiance to the Prophet, joined the Muslim immigrants from Makkah in establishing the first Islamic state.

A.H.
Anno Hijri (in the year of the Hijra). In reference to the Prophet’s journey from Makkah to Madinah in the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal, 1 A.H., which heralded the beginning of the first Muslim state and, hence, of the Muslim calendar.

Adhān
The initial call to each of the five daily prayers, proclaimed by the mu’adhhdhin.

‘Adl
“Of righteous conduct.” Characterized by as-Suyūṭī as a mentally sound Muslim who has reached maturity, is free from the causes of indecency, and who observes the norms and standards of his community.

Allāh
The One God, the Everlasting. He has always been, has no progeny, and in His image nothing has been created.

Āyah
A verse of the Qur’an; can also be used more generally to mean any of Allah’s signs in the created universe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glossary Terms</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostasy</td>
<td>The desertion of one's religious faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Stone</td>
<td>A stone sent down from Paradise which the Prophet Ibrāhīm was directed to place in a corner of the Kaʿba. An object of deep reverence, the Black Stone remains in the Kaʿba to this day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.C.E.</td>
<td>Before Common Era, a customary substitute for B.C. (Before Christ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.E.</td>
<td>Common Era, a customary substitute for A.D. (Anno Domini, Year of the Lord). The modern Gregorian calendar was founded by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582; all dates prior to this are back projections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caliph</td>
<td>The title taken by the Prophet's successors as both heads of government and of religious affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collation</td>
<td>Critical comparison of texts or data, with a view to consolidating and noting similarities and differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codex</td>
<td>A manuscript volume, especially of a religious or classic text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comma Johanneum</td>
<td>A Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, introduced into the printed Greek NT in the 16th century (and thereafter into the <em>King James Version</em>, 1611), now recognized as spurious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companion</td>
<td>Any Muslim who was a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad, having seen or heard him at least once while professing the faith. The hypocrites of Madinah, and any who subsequently rejected Islam and died as apostates, are excluded from this definition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td>A list of religious texts officially recognized by members of that religion as authoritative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consontantal text</td>
<td>One that is devoid of vowels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creed</td>
<td>A statement of religious belief, a declaration of faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuneiform</td>
<td>Designating the wedge-shaped characters used in ancient Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian inscriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead Sea Scrolls</td>
<td>Manuscripts found at Qumran and Wadi Murabba'at near the Dead Sea, including fragmented scrolls of the Old Testament, other Jewish texts, and some Arabic fragments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diacritical dots/marks</td>
<td>Also known as <em>tashkīl</em> or <em>nuqat al-ʾinba</em>. A means of designating the inflection of letters within words, usually through the addition of supplementary symbols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Equal status&quot;</td>
<td>In the context of this work, ensuring that the various manuscripts one compares against each other are of equal analytic value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estrangelo</td>
<td>See Syriac.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exegesis</td>
<td>Explanatory or interpretive effort usually focused on a religious text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extant</td>
<td>Available, not lost. Usually in reference to ancient manuscripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>Moses, Aaron and the Israelites' escape from Pharaonic Egypt. Also the second book of the Old Testament, describing this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exile (Babylonian)</td>
<td>The period beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem and the Judean expulsion to Babylonia, and concluding with Cyrus' defeat of Babylonia and his decree permitting captive peoples to return to their lands (586-538 B.C.E.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasiq</td>
<td>A dissolve individual who flaunts his transgressions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatwa</td>
<td>A legal opinion issued by a jurist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqh</td>
<td>The corpus of Islamic jurisprudence, the science of implementing Islamic law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fīna</td>
<td>Anything with the capacity to test or test a Muslim's faith and behavior. Historically is also applied to the dissensions and tribulations experienced in early Islam, first of which was the assassination of Caliph 'Uthmān in 35 A.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid text</td>
<td>One that remains exposed to revisions, additions and deletions. Opposite of a fixed text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghazwa</td>
<td>(Pl., Ghazawāt.) A military expedition, though it also refers to expending energy for the spread of the faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospels</td>
<td>The first four books of the New Testament, composed anonymously, each of which presents an account of Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hadith
A report communicating a saying or deed of the Prophet Muhammad, as witnessed by his Companions who transmitted the details in turn to their pupils.

Hajj
Pilgrimage to Makkah, the fifth of Islam’s five pillars and a one-time obligation upon every believer who is physically and financially able to undertake it.

Huffaz
(Sing., Huffaz) Muslims who have memorized the entire Qur’an by heart.

Hejazi script
A back-slanting script which was the initial favorite for transcribing the Qur’an in the first century A.H.

Hijra
The migration, from Makkah to Madinah, of the Companions in general and of the Prophet specifically, signaling the birth of the first Muslim state (1 A.H./622 C.E.).

Hypocrites
During the Prophet’s residence in Madinah, a small sector of its residents who opposed him semi-secretly and who endeavored on repeated occasions to undermine or betray him.

Ilm
Knowledge in general; in Islamic studies it represents the religious sciences such as hadith, fiqh and tasit.

Imam
One who leads the congregation in prayer, or any religious instructor.

Islam
The name of the religion expounded in the Qur’an, it denotes submission to the One God.

Isnad
A chain of narrators relaying any given report, whether history or jurist rulings or folklore, though usually associated with hadith. Assessing the accuracy and trustworthiness of each link in the chain provides a basis for the report’s authenticity, without which the report is discarded.

Iqama
The second call to each of the five daily prayers, held just prior to the commencement of prayer.

al-Jarh wa at-Ta’dil
The science of narrators, a colossal biographical library to aid the muhaddithin in ranking the transmitters of hadith according to their reliability and truthfulness or lack thereof.

Jihād
To exert one’s efforts in the cause of Allah. Though it often alludes to the field of battle, it can also signify other endeavors that may or may not be battle-related (e.g. helping to finance a military campaign, striving for justice, fending off one’s own inappropriate whims and wants).

Jinn
Spirit creatures born of fire; can be virtuous or malevolent.

Juz’
One thirtieth part of the Qur’an. These demarcations allow those who seek to recite the whole in one month to pace themselves accordingly.

Ka’ba
Lit. “cube”. The Great Sanctuary built in Makkah by the prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl.

Karaite movement
A Jewish sect founded in the 8th century C.E., which rejected the rabbinical teachings of the Talmud and recognized only the Bible as the source of religious authority.

Kufic script
One of a number of angular scripts which rose to prominence and supplanted the ‘Hejazi as the predominant script for the Holy Qur’an. ‘Kufic’ has now become an umbrella term under which several angular scripts are catalogued.

Law of witness
The Qur’anic injunction, from verse 2:282, stipulating two male (or one male and two female) witnesses for transactions.

Manāzil
Demarcation of the Muṣḥaf into seven equal parts, to assist those seeking to finish the entire Book in a week’s time.

Masoretic text
The Hebrew text of the Old Testament after the incorporation of vowel signs and accent marks in early medieval times, devised to shield it from further changes.

Minuscule script
A cursive script using lower case Greek letters that came to prominence in the 9th century C.E.

Mishna
The Jewish Oral Law, housing the explanations necessary for application of the Written Law. Probably dates from the time when the latter was first promulgated to the people, though the current redaction is mostly the work of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi, c. 200 C.E.
Mu’aradha
The phrase used in hadiths for the annual recitations between the Prophet and the Archangel Jibril, with one initially reciting while the other listened, then vice versa.

Mufassal
The segment from Sura Qaf till the end of the Qur’an.

Muhaddishn
The traditional scholars of hadith.

Muhajirin
Lit. “immigrants”. The Makkah Muslims who migrated to Madinah, having been the first to champion the Prophet’s cause.

Multiple readings
The presence of more than one wording, wherein there is no uncertainty and each one is recognized as correct.

Muṣḥaf
(Pl., Masīḥaf.) Denotes a written copy of the Qur’an, which may be whole or partial (containing selec suras only).

Nestorian
A follower of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428-431 C.E.), who contended that the divine and the human existed as two distinct natures in Jesus. His doctrine was declared heretical by the Church in 431 C.E.

New Testament
The portion of the Bible that focuses on Jesus and his followers, including the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Revelation of Saint John.

Old Testament
Christian designation for the Jewish Scriptures.

Orientalism
In general terms, the study of the East. It is, to quote Edward Said, “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience” [Orientalism, p. 1].

Orthography
The study of spelling conventions.

Palimpsest
A parchment or tablet that has been written upon more than once; the previous text, imperfectly erased, remains partly visible.

“People of the Book”
Those hailing from a monotheistic tradition who were given Scriptures, the Jews and Christians.

Paleography
The description or deciphering of ancient writings. The term is used, in the context of this work, to signify the study of a language’s script (such as the shape of its letters and the usage of dots).

Pointing
Diacritical marks for indicating the pronunciation and intonation of a text.

Qāri’
(Pl., Qurrā’.) A professional reciter of the Qur’an.

Qira’at
The science of proper Qur’anic recitation; any reading must be traceable to the Prophet if it is to be authoritative.

Q (Gospel of Jesus)
The work originally composed by Jesus’ earliest followers.

Qur’an
The Holy Book and the most sacred text of Islam, containing the revelations that were communicated by Allah, through Archangel Jibril, to the Prophet Muhammad.

Rak’a
(Pl., Rakā’.) A unit of prayer (salat). Each of the daily prayers is composed of a predetermined number of rakā’.

Ramadhan
The ninth month of the Muslim calendar, the fasting of which (from dawn to dusk) constitutes Islam’s fourth pillar.

Reading Certificate
In the course of transmitting hadith (or other Islamic) manuscripts, this was a record supplying precise details of attendance and comprising an exclusive license for those listed within to read, teach, copy or quote from that book.

Recession
Textual revision based on a critical assessment of the sources at hand.

Revisionism
A school of thought that rejects the traditional and favors revising accepted theories and doctrines etc.

Riḥla
A journey; in the context of Islamic studies, traveling in pursuit of religious knowledge.

Ṣāḥib
A rigorously authentic hadith or a collection thereof.

Sajdah
Prostration, such as those performed in the course of regular prayers or after reciting certain verses of the Qur’an.

Semite
Any of the various peoples, ancient and modern, originating from southwest Asia and employing the Semitic
family of languages, including Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew, Arabic and several others.

Seventy Two

Also called "The Version of the Seventy" or LXX. A third century B.C.E. translation of the Old Testament into Greek, used both by Jews living in the Greek diaspora and by the early Christian community.

Seven dialects (ahlaj)[i]

A divine sanctioning of the Qur'ān in more than one dialect. This served as both an aid to Arab tribes that were unaccustomed to the Qurtaishí vernacular, and a way of illuminating various shades of meaning within particular verses.

Scribal error

An inadvertent divergence from the template being copied, by a scribe suffering from fatigue, faulty eyesight, sheer carelessness or other such factors.

Shari'a

Islamic law.

Skeletal dots

Dots appended to letters which otherwise share the same skeleton, to differentiate between them. Also known as nasqat al-jamān.

Successors

The Muslim generation immediately following the Companions. They in turn were followed by the Succeeding Successors.

Sūhūf

Lit. "sheets". Refers to the master volume of the Qur'ān that was prepared, on the basis of first-hand Qur'ānic fragments, during the reign of Caliph Abū Bakr.

Sunna

The way of the Prophet Muhammad. This, along with the Qur'ān, comprises the source of Islamic legislation and jurisprudence.

Sīra

A chapter of the Qur'ān, of which there are 114 of variable length. Each sīra is an independent unit, with no chronology or narrative passing over from one to the next.

Syriac

A dialect of Aramaic that was current in Syria from the 3rd century C.E. to the 15th.

Tafsīr

An exegesis (explanation or interpretation) of the Holy Qur'ān.

Talmud

Held by Orthodox Judaism to be the highest authority on all matters of faith, the Talmud is divided into the Mishna (Oral Law) and the Gemara (an expansion of the Mishna by means of commentary and explanation).

Tashahhud

Declaration of faith (bearing witness that there is no god but Allāh and that Muhammad is His messenger) during the course of prayers (salat).

Ten Commandments

The ten injunctions given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, constituting the fundamental moral code of Judaism. Also known as the Decalogue; see Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5.

Text type

A version of a known text, emanating from a particular time or place and bearing deviations which become representative of, and associated with, that version.

Tiberian System

Inspired by Arabic diacritical marks, this was an analogous system devised by the Masoretes of Tiberias to represent the intonations of the Hebrew Biblical text.

Thiqā

"Trustworthy." An indispensable trait that must apply to all transmitters of a hadith, if their report is to be regarded as genuine.

Torah

Jewish Law, though also used more generally to mean the Pentateuch (the first five books of the OT), the entire Old Testament or even all Jewish religious literature.

Traditionalism

The school of thought which largely adheres to, and works within the framework of, accepted theories and doctrines.

Tribe

The cornerstone of societal organization in Arabia in the pre- and early Islamic eras.

Trinity

The Christian doctrine of God as three Entities (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in one.

Uncial script

The formal book hand used for Greek manuscripts until its deterioration in the 9th century C.E., consisting entirely of capital letters and penned without the benefit of separation between words.

Umma

A nation or people, especially the Muslim community as a whole.
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