Glossary
Ahl al-Kitāb, literally ‘People of the Book’, refers to the followers of Divine Revelation before the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him).

Al-Ākhirah (After-life, Hereafter, Next World). The term embraces the following ideas:

1) That man is answerable to God;
2) That the present order of existence will some day come to an end;
3) That the real measure of success or failure of a person is not the extent of his prosperity in the present life, but his success in the Next.
4) That those who are reckoned good will be sent to Paradise whereas the evil-doers will be consigned to Hell; and
5) That when it happens, God will bring another order into being in which He will resurrect all human beings, gather them together and examine their conduct, and reward them with justice and mercy;

Amanah, (trusts) encompass all types of trust which either God or society or an individual places in someone’s charge.

Anṣār means ‘the Helpers.’ In Islamic parlance the word refers to the Muslim of Madīna who helped the Muhajurūn of Makka in the process of the latter’s setting down in the new environment.

Āyah (pl. āyāt), means a sign (or ‘token) which directs one to something important. In the Qur’ān the word has been used in four different senses: (1) sign or indication; (2) the phenomena of the universe (called āyāt of God for the reality to which the phenomena point is hidden behind the veil of
appearances); (3) miracles performed by the Prophets; and (4) individual units (i.e. verses) of the Book of God.

_Burāq_ was the name of the heavenly steed on which the Prophet (peace be on him) rode on his nocturnal journey from Makka to Jerusalem, and then to the heavens (For this nocturnal journey q.v. Mi‘raj).

_Din_ represents a key concept of the Qur‘ān. It is generally rendered as “religion” but this does not fully convey the real sense of the original. The Qur‘ān uses it to convey the idea of God’s sovereignty and man’s and all creation’s submission to Him (16:52); to the law of the land (12:76); to the _Sharī‘ah_ and the way of life based on acceptance of God’s sovereignty (3:83). It also conveys the idea of the law of repayment, rewarding or punishing man in the light of his response to the Divine Guidance (51:6). In short, it refers to a complete code of life, where in God’s sovereignty is accepted, and its demands and obligations fulfilled with a realization of complete accountability before the Lord.

_Faqih_, an expert of the science of Islamic laws (_fiqh_).

_Fiqh_, which literally means ‘understanding of a speaker’s purpose from his speech’, technically refers to the branch of learning concerned with the injunctions of the _Sharī‘ah_ relating to human actions, derived from the detailed evidence pertaining to them.

_Hadith_: the word _hadīth_ literally means communication or narration. In the Islamic context it has come to denote the record of what the Prophet (peace be on him) said, did, or tacitly approved. According to some scholars, the word
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*hadith* also covers reports about the sayings and deeds, etc. of the Companions of the Prophet in addition to the Prophet himself. The whole body of traditions is termed *Hadith* and its science 'Ilm al-*Hadith*'.

**Hijrah** signifies migration from a land where a Muslim is unable to live according to the precepts of his faith to a land where it is possible to do so. The *hijrah par excellence* for Muslims is the *hijrah* of the Prophet (peace be on him) which not only provided him and his followers refuge from persecution, but also an opportunity to build a society and state according to the ideals of Islam.

**Hurūf muqattā‘at** are a group of letters with which several *sūrahs* of the Qur‘ān open. The *muqattā‘at* were commonly used by the Arabs at the time of the advent of the Prophet (peace be on him) and hence they caused no agitation among the non-Muslim audience of that time. This literary style later fell into disuse and hence the commentators of the Qur‘ān have come to disagree regarding their exact signification. It is obvious however, that deriving guidance from the Qur‘ān does not depend on grasping the meaning of these letter.

**‘Ibādah** is used in three meanings: (1) worship and adoration; (2) obedience and submission; and (3) service and subjection. The fundamental message of Islam is that man, as God’s creature, should direct his ‘ibādah to Him in all the above-mentioned meanings of the term, and associate none in the rendering of it.

**Iblis** literally means 'thoroughly disappointed; one in utter despair’. In Islamic terminology it denotes *jinn* who refused
the commands of the God to prostate before Adam out of vanity. He also asked God to allow him a term during which he might mislead and tempt mankind to error. This term was granted to him by God where after he became the chief promoter of evil and prompted Adam and Eve to disobey God’s order. He is also called al-Shayṭān (Satan). He is possessed of a specific personality and is not just an abstract force.

_Ijmāʿ_ refers to the consensus of eminent scholars (mujtahidūn) of Islam in a given age. _Ijmāʿ_ comes next to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah as a source of Islamic doctrines.

_Ijtihād_, independent legal judgment on issues not settled in the Qur’ān or by the precept, example or saying of the Prophet. One qualified to make such judgment is called _mujtahid_.

_Imām_ signifies the leader, and in its highest form, refers to the head of the Islamic state. It is also used with reference to the founders of the different systems of theology and law in Islam.

_Injīl_ signifies the inspired orations and utterances of Jesus (peace be on him) which he delivered during the last two or three years of his earthly life in his capacity as a Prophet. The _Injīl_ mentioned by the Qur’ān should, however, not be identified by the four Gospels of the New Testament which contain a great deal of material in addition to the inspired statements of the Prophet Jesus (peace be on him). Presumably the statement explicitly attributed to Jesus (peace be on him) constitute part of the true, original _Injīl_. It is significant, however, that the statements explicitly
attributed to Jesus in the Gospels contain substantively the
same teachings as those of the Qur’án.

Islam is the way of life for mankind granted by God. It consists in
totally committing oneself to God and bringing one’s will
into complete harmony with God’s will. Literally the word
means both peace and submission – submission not in any
passive sense but as a positive act of committing oneself to
live in peace with God and bringing one’s likes and dislikes
and attitudes and behaviour into harmony with the Divine
Will.

Isnad (Chain of Transmitters). Each tradition in every collection
of traditions (till the end of the third century of the Hijra)
contains the chain of its transmitters – from the Prophet or
from a Companion or from a Follower down to the last
reporter or the compiler. The traditionalists called this chain
of transmitters an Isnád or authority. They attached great
importance to it, and considered it as an indispensable part
of a tradition. They tried to determine the relative value of
the reliability of the various Isnáds and of their different
classes.

Jahiliyah denoted all those world-views and ways of life which
are based on rejection or disregard of heavenly guidance
communicated to mankind through the Prophets and
Messengers of God; the attitude of treating human life –
either wholly or partly – as independent of the directives of
God.

Jihád (from the root J-H-D) means to strive and struggle. This
refers to any effort, mental, moral or physical, made to make
God's Word supreme. It covers a wide range of activities, from fighting with one's own evil promptings to being engaged in war for the cause of Islam. *Qitāl* (fighting and waging war), a word often used in the Qur'ān, is the highest form of *jihād*.

**Jinn** are an independent species of creation about which little is known except that unlike man, who was created out of earth, the *jinn* were created out of fire. But like man, a Divine Message has also been addressed to them and they too have been endowed with the capacity, again like man, to choose between good and evil, between obedience or disobedience to God.

**Khalīfa, pl. khulafā’** (literally successor) is a title that has been given to the Prophet Adam (2:30) and, by extension, to all mankind, and signifies that God has made mankind His own representative on earth, with limited authority to fulfill the commandments of God. This means that man has been entrusted with this mission as a kind of trial, for God to judge how he uses or misuses the freedom given to him and how much he keeps himself within the limits granted by God.

**Kufr** literally means 'to conceal'. This word has been variously used in the Qur'ān to denote: (1) state of absolute lack of faith; (2) rejection or denial of any of the essentials of Islam; (3) attitude of ingratitude and thanklessness to God; and (4) non-compliance with certain basic requirements of faith. In the accepted technical sense, *kufr* consists of rejection of the Divine Guidance communicated through the Prophets and Messengers of God. More specifically ever
since the advent of the last of the Prophets and Messengers, Muḥammad (peace be on him), rejection of his teaching constitutes kufr.

Li‘ān, is the legal procedure laid down in the Qur‘ān for the person who accuses his wife of indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse without producing the required evidence provided in that the wife denies the charge. In such a case, the husband will be spared the punishment of qadhf only if he takes the oath four times that his charge was true and follows it by invoking God’s curse on himself if he was lying. The accused wife, on the other hand, if she wishes to be spared the punishment for Zinā, would be required to back up her denial of the charge by taking four oaths and then invoking God’s wrath on herself if the husband was true in his accusation.

Ma‘anī, literally ‘meanings’, appears to have been the earliest major term used for the title of works of interpretations.

Mahram refers to those relatives whom it is prohibited to marry.

Mi‘rāj, literally meaning ‘ladder’, refers to the miraculous nocturnal journey of the Prophet (peace be on him) from Jerusalem, where he was taken during the night by God (Banī Isrā‘īl 17:1), to the heavens. The details of this nocturnal journey are mentioned in Ḥadīth.

Muḥšanāt means ‘protected women’. It has been used in the Qur‘ān in two different meanings. First, it has been used in the sense of ‘married women’, that is, those who enjoy the
protection of their husbands. Second, it has been used in the sense of those who enjoy the protection of families as opposed to slave-girls.

_Muttaqī_ is derived from its noun _taqwa_, which signifies God-consciousness, a sense of responsibility and accountability, dedication and awe – those things that prompt one to fulfill one’s duty. _Taqwa_, or heedfulness, is the main criterion by which God values the deeds of a Muslim (49:13).

_Nabī_, a word for which we have used the word Prophet as an equivalent, refers to a person chosen by God to whom He entrusts the task to warn people against that which would lead to their perdition and to direct them to the way that would lead to their felicity. Prophets are enabled to perform this task because of the special knowledge that is providentially made available only to them, because of the special power that is bestowed upon them by God (which is evident from the miracles they are enabled to perform), and because of the special ability to live a life of absolute probity. The function of a _nabī_ is close to, but not necessarily identical with, that of a _rasūl_ (q.v. ‘rasūl’).

_Ṣāliḥ_, from the root _Ṣ-L-H_ meaning to reconcile, to put things in order, signifies behaviour that is righteous, just and dignified. _ʿAmal ṣāliḥ_, honourable or righteous action, is often combined in the Qur’ān with _Imān_ and made a condition for success in this world, as well as in the hereafter.

_Ṣuḥuf_, sing. _ṣaḥīfah_, signifies the materials on which something is written; by extension, the word denotes the writing itself.
The word Şuĥuf, has generally been used in the Qur’ān in the sense of revealed scriptures. (See, for instance, ‘the earlier scriptures’, Ṭa Ḥa 20:133 and al-A‘lā 87:19; ‘the scriptures of Moses’ al-Najm 53:36; ‘in scriptures held in great honour’, Abasa 80:13; ‘the scriptures of Abraham and Moses’, al-A‘la 87:19; ‘the scriptures kept pure’, al-Bayyinah 98:2) The word şuĥuf has also been used in the Qur’ān with reference to the written words of the deeds of people which will be handed over to them on the Day of Judgment. (See al-Muddath-thir 74:52; al-Takwir 81:10).

**Rabb** has three meanings: (i) Lord and Master; (ii) Sustainer, Provider, Supporter, Nourisher and Guardian; and (iii) Sovereign and Ruler, He who controls and directs. God is Rabb in all three meanings of the term.

**Rahīm** is from the root ṟ ḥ m which denotes mercy. In the Qur’ān this attribute of God has been used side by side with Rahmān (which is also from the same root ṟ ḥ m). As such Rahīm signifies God’s mercy and beneficence towards His creatures. Moreover, according to several scholars, the word Rahīm signifies the dimension of permanence in God’s mercy.

**Rahmān** (literally ‘merciful’) is one of the personal names of God. According to scholars of the Arabic language and some commentators of the Qur’ān, the word has the nuance of intensity regarding Divine Mercy. Thus the word does not just signify the One Who has mercy; it rather denotes the One Who is exceedingly merciful; the One Who is overflowing with mercy for all.
**Rasūl,** (plural *rusul*), literally meaning ‘message-bearer’ has been used in the Qur'ān with reference both to the angels who bear God’s Message to the Prophets, and with reference to the Prophets who are entrusted with communicating God’s Message to His creatures. In its technical sense, the word *rasūl* is used in Islamic parlance in the latter sense. There is some disagreement among Muslim scholars as to whether the terms *Nabī* (Prophet) and *Rasūl* (Messenger) or equivalents, and which of the two – *nabī* or *rasūl* – has a higher status. The majority of scholars are of the opinion that while every *rasūl* (Messenger) is a *nabī* (Prophet), every *nabī* is not a *rasūl*; and that the Messengers (*rusul*), therefore, have a higher status and are entrusted with a greater mission than the Prophets.

**Ribā** literally means ‘to grow; to increase.’ Technically, it denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate in excess of the principal.

**Rūh al-Qudus** literally means ‘the spirit of holiness’. This appellation is exclusively used for the angel Gabriel. By using this appellation, the Qur'ān emphasizes that the message of the Qur'ān has been conveyed through the spirit which is free of all human weaknesses and imperfections.

**Ṣabr** is a comprehensive term having various shades of meaning. It implies (a) patience in the sense of being thorough, dedicated and devoted; (b) constancy, perseverance, steadfastness and firmness of purpose; (c) disciplined and planned effort with confidence and belief in the mission
itself; and (d) a cheerful attitude of acceptance and understanding under suffering and hardship and in times of strife and violence, and thankfulness to God in happiness, success and achievement.

**Shari'ah** signifies the entire Islamic way of life, especially the Law of Islam.

**Shaytān** (pl. shayāṭīn) literally means refractory, rebellious and headstrong. Although this word has generally been used in the Qur'ān for the satans amongst the jinn, it is also used occasionally for human being possessing satanic characteristics.

**Shirk** consists of associating anyone or anything with the Creator either in His being, or attributes, or in the exclusive rights (such as worship) that He has against His creatures.

**Shukr** means thankfulness. In Islam, it is a basic religious value. Man owes thanks to God for almost an infinite number of things. He owes thanks to God for all that he possesses – his life as well as all that makes his life pleasant, enjoyable and wholesome. And above all, man owes thanks to God for making available the guidance which can enable him to find his way to his salvation and felicity.

**Sunnah**, precepts and examples of the Prophet.

**Tābi'īn** (sing. Tābi'ī), Successors, are those who benefited and derived their knowledge from the companion of the Prophet (peace be on him).

**Tafsir** The word *Tafsir* is derived from the root ‘*fassara’*- to explain, to expound. It means ‘explanation’ or
‘Interpretation’. In technical language the word *Tafsîr* is used for explanation, interpretation and commentary on the Qur’ân, comprising all ways of obtaining knowledge, which contributes to the proper understanding of it, explains its meanings and clarifies its legal implications. The word *mufassir* (pl. *mufassirûn*) is the term used for the person doing the *tafsîr*, i.e. the ‘exegete’ or

*Ta’wil* ‘The word *ta’wil*, which is also used in this connection, is derived from the root ‘*awwâla*’ and also means ‘explanation, interpretation’. In technical language it similarly refers to explanation and interpretation of the Qur’ân. commentator’.

*Ummah* (literally ‘collectivity’, sharing the same origin or source) has been generally used in the Qur’ân to refer to all those who receive the message of a Messenger of God, or happen to be living in an age when the teachings of that Messenger are extant.

*Wahy* refers to Revelation which consists of communicating God’s Messages to a Prophet or Messenger of God. The highest form of revelation is the Qur’ân of which even the words are from God.

*Zakât* (literally “growth” and “purification”) is a compulsory monetary contribution paid by every Muslim possessing more than a certain amount of wealth. This results in the transfer of resources from the rich to the poor and to other welfare activities. *Zakât* is the third pillar (*rukhn*) of Islam. The term *ṣadaqa* (pl. *ṣadaqât*) also occurs in the Qur’ân and incorporates *Zakât* (9:60). *Ṣadaqa*, or charity is of two
kinds: (a) ʿَاََّدََٔٛا َتَتَأْوَوْعٴ (voluntary contribution) and (b) ʿَاََّدََٔٛا ِمَأْفَرُٔٓدَا (obligatory contribution). In the terminology of ʾقِهَ (jurisprudence), a clear distinction between ʿَاََّدََٔٛا and ُاَذَكََٔٛت is made, as ʿَاََّدََٔٛا generally refers to any kind of charity which is given for the sake of God, whereas ُاَذَكََٔٛت signifies the obligatory contribution which every “well-off” Muslim (ََٔٛذَحِب ُاَل-َنِٔٛسَاَرب) has to pay the Islamic state, in the absence of which individuals are required to distribute the ُاَذَكََٔٛت among its beneficiaries.

ُأَٛذَنَا means illegal sexual intercourse and embraces both fornication and adultery.