



A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

*To our grandchildren...*

# Q THE UR'AN

WITH REFERENCES TO THE BIBLE

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BIBLICAL REFERENCES  
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

ISBN: 978-0-9965924-4-4

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BOOK DESIGN  
[www.timmyroland.com](http://www.timmyroland.com)

COVER IMAGE  
[www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com)

*This translation of the Qur'an is dedicated to our grandchildren, half of them Muslim, half of them Christian. If we, as their adults, do not learn how to live, love and respect each other, and to pass this on to them and their parents, we will have allowed them to learn all the hate and fear that is so dominant in the world today.*

*It is said that people fear what they don't understand.*

*We pray that this translation of the Qur'an with references to the Bible will enable our grandchildren to share our understanding of the peaceful and inclusive Holy books of the religions claimed by more than half the people on the planet, both of which promote God's love and mercy to all human beings.*

Safi Kaskas & David Hungerford

# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<i>i</i>
<b>FOREWORD ONE</b> - MARK SILJANDER	<i>iii</i>
<b>FOREWORD TWO</b> - Dr. C. JONN BLOCK	<i>v</i>
<b>INTRODUCTION ONE</b> - SAFI KASKAS	<i>xi</i>
<b>INTRODUCTION TWO</b> - DAVID HUNGERFORD	<i>xviii</i>
<b>FROM REVELATIONS TO A BOOK</b>	<i>xxi</i>
The History of the Qur'an	
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<i>xxxiii</i>
The Translation Strategies	
 <b>QUR'AN</b>	
1 <b>AL FATIHA</b> The Opening	1
2 <b>AL-BAQARA</b> The Cow	2
3 <b>AL IMRAN</b> The Family Of Imran	31
4 <b>AN-NISA</b> Women	48
5 <b>AL-MAIDA</b> The Meal	65
6 <b>AL-ANAM</b> Livestock	80
7 <b>AL-ARAF</b> The Heights	94
8 <b>AL-ANFAL</b> Spoils of War	112
9 <b>AL-TAWBAH</b> Repentance	119
10 <b>YUNUS</b> The Prophet Jonah	131
11 <b>HUD</b> The Prophet Hud	140
12 <b>YUSUF</b> The Prophet Joseph	150
13 <b>AR RAAD</b> The Thunder	162
14 <b>IBRAHIM</b> The Prophet Abraham	167
15 <b>AI HÎJR</b> The Rocky Place	173
16 <b>AN NAHL</b> The Bee	178
17 <b>AL-ISRA</b> The Night Journey	188
18 <b>AL-KAHF</b> The Cave	197
19 <b>MARYAM</b> Mary	205
20 <b>TAHA</b> Taha	210
21 <b>AL-ANBIYA</b> The Prophets	219
22 <b>AL-HAJJ</b> The Pilgrimage	227
23 <b>AL-MU'MINUN</b> The Believers	235
24 <b>AN-NUR</b> The Light	241
25 <b>AL-FURQAN</b> The Differentiator	247
26 <b>ASH-SHUARA</b> The Poets	252
27 <b>AN-NAML</b> The Ants	261
28 <b>AL-QASAS</b> The Stories	268
29 <b>AL-ANKABUT</b> The Spider	276
30 <b>AR-RUM</b> The Byzantines	282
31 <b>LUGMAN</b> Luqman	288
32 <b>AS-SAJDAH</b> Bowing Down In Worship	292
33 <b>AL-AHZAB</b> The Parties	295
34 <b>SABA</b> Sheba	301
35 <b>FATIR</b> The Creator/Programmer	306
36 <b>YA SEEN</b> Yasin	311
37 <b>AS SAFFAT</b> The Ranks	315

# CONTENTS

3 8	<b>SAAD</b> The Letter Suad	321
3 9	<b>AZ ZUMAR</b> The Throngs	326
4 0	<b>GHAFIR</b> The Forgiver God	334
4 1	<b>FUSSILAT</b> Verses Made Clear	341
4 2	<b>ASH SHURA</b> The Consultation	346
4 3	<b>AZ-ZUKHRUF</b> Ornaments of Gold	352
4 4	<b>AD-DUKHAN</b> Smoke	358
4 5	<b>AL-JATHIYAH</b> Kneeling	361
4 6	<b>AL-AHQAF</b> Sand Dunes	365
4 7	<b>MUHAMMAD</b> The Prophet Muhammad	369
4 8	<b>AL-FATH</b> The Victory	373
4 9	<b>AL-HUJURAT</b> The Private Rooms	376
5 0	<b>QAF</b> The Letter Qaf	379
5 1	<b>ATH-THARIYAT</b> Scattering	382
5 2	<b>AT-TUR</b> The Mountain	385
5 3	<b>AN-NAJM</b> The Star	387
5 4	<b>AL-QAMAR</b> The Moon	390
5 5	<b>AR-RAHMAN</b> The Merciful-to-all	393
5 6	<b>AL-WAQIA'H</b> The Inevitable Calamity	396
5 7	<b>AL-HADEED</b> The Iron	399
5 8	<b>AL-MUJADILAH</b> The Dispute	403
5 9	<b>AL-HASHR</b> The Gathering	406
6 0	<b>AL-MUMTAHANAH</b> The Woman Tested	409
6 1	<b>AS SAFF</b> Solid Lines	412
6 2	<b>AL-JUMUAH</b> Friday	414
6 3	<b>AL-MUNAFIQUN</b> The Hypocrites	416
6 4	<b>AT-TAGHABUN</b> Mutual Neglect	418
6 5	<b>AT-TALAQ</b> The Divorce	421
6 6	<b>AT-TAHREEM</b> Prohibition	424
6 7	<b>AL-MULK</b> The Sovereignty	426
6 8	<b>AL-QALAM</b> The Pen	429
6 9	<b>AL-HAAQAH</b> The Hour of Truth	431
7 0	<b>AL-MAARIJ</b> The Gates of Ascent	433
7 1	<b>NUH</b> Prophet Noah	435
7 2	<b>AL-JINN</b> The Jin	437
7 3	<b>AL-MUZZAMMIL</b> The Enwrapped	439
7 4	<b>AL-MUDDASIR</b> The Enrobed	441
7 5	<b>AL-QIYAMAH</b> The Resurrection	443
7 6	<b>AL-INSAN</b> Human Being	445
7 7	<b>AL-MURSALAT</b> Those Sent Forth	447
7 8	<b>AN-NABA</b> The Announcement	449
7 9	<b>AN-NAZIAT</b> The Forceful Chargers	451
8 0	<b>ABASA</b> He Frowned	453
8 1	<b>AT-TAKWEER</b> The Folding	454
8 2	<b>AL-INFITAR</b> Torn Apart	456
8 3	<b>AL-MUTAFFIFEN</b> The Cheaters	457
8 4	<b>AL-INSHIQAQ</b> The Rapture	458
8 5	<b>AL-BURUJ</b> The Towering Constellations	459
8 6	<b>AT-TARIQ</b> The Knocking Star	461
8 7	<b>AL-ALA</b> The Most High	462
8 8	<b>AL-GHASHIYAH</b> The Overwhelming Event	463

# CONTENTS

8 9	<b>AL-FAJR</b> Daybreak	464
9 0	<b>AL-BALAD</b> The Town	466
9 1	<b>ASH-SHAMS</b> The Sun	467
9 2	<b>AL-LAYL</b> The Night	468
9 3	<b>AD-DUHA</b> The Morning Light	469
9 4	<b>ASH SHARH</b> The Relief	470
9 5	<b>AT-TEEN</b> The Fig	471
9 6	<b>AL-ALAQ</b> The Clinging Clot	472
9 7	<b>AL-QADR</b> The Night of Decree	473
9 8	<b>AL-BAYYINAH</b> The Clear Evedence	474
9 9	<b>AZ-ZILZAL</b> The Earthquake	475
1 0 0	<b>AL-AADIYAT</b> The Charging Warhorses	476
1 0 1	<b>AL-QARIAH</b> The Striking Calamity	477
1 0 2	<b>AT-TAKATHUR</b> Greed For More	478
1 0 3	<b>AL-ASR</b> The Late Afternoon	479
1 0 4	<b>AL-HUMAZAH</b> The Backbiter	480
1 0 5	<b>AL-FIL</b> The Elephant	481
1 0 6	<b>QURAYSH</b>	482
1 0 7	<b>AL-MAUN</b> Assistance	483
1 0 8	<b>AL-KAWTHAR</b> A River in Paradise	484
1 0 9	<b>AL-KAFIRUN</b> Those Who Deny the Truth	485
1 1 0	<b>AN-NASR</b> The Help	486
1 1 1	<b>AL-MASAD</b> The Palm Fiber	487
1 1 2	<b>AL-IKHLAS</b> The Purity of Faith	488
1 1 3	<b>AL-FALAQ</b> The Day Break	489
1 1 4	<b>AN-NAS</b> Human Beings	490

<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	493
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Q THE  
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work has evolved specifically over the past 6 years, but both authors have been brought to the place of creating this new translation of the Qur'an with references to the Bible through the influence of countless mentors who would be impossible to number. However, there have been specific members of a team that have come together, which seems to us, to have been hand-picked by God. Most notably our families who have given us encouragement and guidance, specifically Mrs. Eman Kaskas, Mrs. Maha Kaskas Osman, Mrs. Uta-Heide Hungerford, Dr. Lars Hungerford, and Mrs. Amanda Ward Hungerford.

Several individuals offered helpful advice and did meaningful research, including Dr. Charles Cohen, Dr. Sadiq Malki, Mr. Samuel Shropshire, Mr. Mohammad Jawhar Mahaba, and Mrs. Mary Wills Perry

Special thanks are due to Mr. Tim Gilman for book design and publication support and to Mrs. Jan Levin for copy editing.

# FOREWORD

NUMBER **ONE**

The clarion call of our most sacred holy books share one common cause; the tantamount task of reconciling the world to God, and men and women to each other. These scriptures serve to remind of us of man’s fallen nature throughout history, and our unquenchable necessity of a merciful and gracious God. Unfortunately for humankind, both past and present, is the obfuscation of the poetic power and reconciling work of the Qur’an. Current geopolitical events and radical extremists mar the Qur’an, giving rise to further misunderstandings and bloodshed. The path of peace, portrayed by the Prophet; further lost in translation.

It gives me pleasure, as I continue working in the struggle for peace, to write the forward to this new and vastly improved English translation of the Qur’an. I believe that as the world cries out for peace; we who promote faith, are obligated to provide the most accurate and understandable text possible. The time has come for Christians to read the Qur’an. And equally, the time has come for Muslims to understand their holy book through the lens of peace and its power for good in this tragic, violent world.

The first English translation of the Qur’an emerged in the 17th century, and present translations number in the dozens. “So,” you may ask, “Why the need for another translation?” English, like all translations, is a living language, changing and evolving. English translations of the Qur’an are stiff, archaic and fail to communicate common current verbiage. Interpretations complicate simple renderings and mystify meanings of the original text. And some translations emerged for specific purposes not altogether “pure and holy,” but with intentional bias for political or religious influence.

The Qur’an was one of the first major books compiled using 7th century classical Arabic. Its unique poetic style is highly praised and admired, and is the focal point of essays and elaborate study. Most of the estimated 1.5 billion Muslims live outside the Arabic-speaking Middle East, and at least 90 percent cannot read and/or understand this ancient Semitic writing. The original text might be likened to Shakespeare’s old English, recognizable, yet barely understood in the 21st century. In contrast, 700 million Muslims have a working knowledge of English,



## THE QUR'AN

with estimates of 2 billion English speakers worldwide. The significance of this translation is intentional: provide a 21st century Qur'an for a predominately English-speaking world.

In addition, meanings of ancient words and idioms are often lost or change over time. The Western linguistic mindset limits the meanings of words, while Semitic words relish their diverse and variable meanings. For example, *salaam*, commonly known as "peace," also means "to turn, submit, surrender, complete, and security." This challenge demands scrupulous translation techniques and scholarly review.

This translation is the culmination of years of laborious effort on the part of two accomplished professionals: Dr. Safi Kaskas, PhD, a Muslim from the Middle East, and Dr. David Hungerford, an orthopedic surgeon and Christian from the United States. Each contributed an amazing blend of culture, experience and faith traditions; while passionately pouring their lives and fortunes into an incomparable translation.

Moreover, the translation contains a critical element that makes it a standout publication. Years of painstaking scholarly research are presented in over 3,000 footnotes that stunningly reference hundreds of similar Bible verses. These footnotes explain commonly misunderstood and abused verses of the Qur'an, and awakens Christians and Muslims to vast areas of common ground existent within the Qur'an and Bible.

Drs. Kaskas' and Hungerford's underlying motivation for the translation and inclusion of extensive footnotes are not intended to promote a particular school of Islam or Christian apologetics. These exist in abundance. Their goal is to build bridges of better understanding, undermine radicalism and enlighten ignorance. This powerful instrument offers Muslims and Christians a fresh insight on the "straight path" to reconciliation with God and man, something sorely needed and missing from other translations.

Having sojourned with them during this exciting process, I can attest that this publication offers an excellent and overdue tool for study and reflection for the academic and the curious, regardless of education, background, age, or faith tradition. It is time the world had an accurate and understandable rendition of Islam's holy book for the modern English reader, accomplished by both a Christian and Muslim that incorporates thousands of heretofore missing links to the Bible.

A word of caution! Do not skip the Biblical footnotes that coincide with the Qur'an! You will appreciate the scriptural overlap, and their usefulness for reconciling peace!

Mark Siljander Phd.

iv

## FOREWORD

### NUMBER TWO

نسألك اللهم، برحمتك و قدرتك،  
أن تجعلنا ممن يعرف حقك،  
و يتبع رضاك، و يتجنب سخطك،  
و يسبح بأسمائك الحسنى،  
و يتكلم بأمثالك العليا.  
أنت الراحم الرحمان الرحيم.

We ask you, O God, by your mercy and your power,  
to put us among those who know your truth,  
and follow your will and avoid your wrath,  
and praise your beautiful names,  
and proclaim your sublime examples.  
You are the Compassionate, the Merciful.

- an anonymous second / eighth century Arab Christian<sup>1</sup>

*They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book are upright people, reading God's verses day and night as they bow down. They believe in God and the last day, order what is obviously right, forbid what is obviously wrong, and they are quick to do good deeds. They are righteous. The good they do will not be forgotten. God knows those who are mindful of Him.*

Q3:113-115

The Qur'an is, first and foremost, an ecumenical book. In fact, the word "Muslim" was not originally meant as a delineator of a new religion, but rather as an adjective to describe those who had submitted to the straight way of the Judeo-Christian tradition as by clarified by the Qur'an. Christian commentators on the early Islamic movement also did not think of Muslims as other-than-Christian for more than a hundred years. Muslims, according to the majority of early Christian commentators, were a kind of Christian, not unlike the Nestorians, Jacobites, and Chalcedonians. Subsequent land wars between Chalcedonians, Jacobites, Nestorians, and Muslims encouraged the development of Qur'anic interpretations that justified young men on one side to murder young men on the other. Thus, the polemical narratives appeared as the

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1 - This quote is from the author of the first Arabic Christian apology, which elsewhere I have given the title *On the Unified Trinity*. This particular text can be found in (Samir & Nielsen, 1994, pp. 67-68).

v

## THE QUR'AN

result of political ambition. However, the Qur'an, in its context, did not intend its later political hijacking.

The primary concern of the Qur'an is to correct those who wasted their worship on gods that did not exist, and to draw together those who worship the one true God of Abraham. It is a warner, a reminder, a reflective testament to those volumes of the book of God which came before it: including the *Torah*, the *Zabur*, and the *Injeel* (Q3:84). The Qur'an rallies its readers to recognise the latest and final messenger in a long tradition of earlier messengers, whose lives were similarly purposed to calling the faithful to submission to God's will.

A few years ago I completed an extensive study of the Qur'an in history. In the book, *The Qur'an in Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, I surveyed the major themes of the dialogue, including the corruption of scripture, the nature of Jesus, the crucifixion, the incarnation, and the nature of God. The first three centuries of Islam were compared to our most recent century to find out if any gains had been made in the conversation. What I found was that very often, the Qur'an in its original context disagreed heavily with both the dominant Christian and Islamic polemical interpretations of the text. The Qur'an, in its context, intends to draw faithful Muslims and Christians together. It is decidedly ecumenical in this intent.

Typically divisive revelations in the Qur'an are more likely than not corrections of historically extant heresies of its milieu. Though many potential candidates for Christian heresies as targets of Qur'anic rejection have been researched and dismissed over the years, still what is concretely known of Arabian Christianity at the time of the Qur'anic revelation was that it was neither Catholic nor Orthodox, strictly speaking. Nestorians, Jacobites, Chalcedonians, Arians, and Philoponians all vied for prestige as the dominant Christology of Arabian Christians. Yet the Qur'an carves away at the excesses in all of these. For example:

1. The Qur'an accuses the People of the Book of corrupting their interpretation of their scriptures, but not the texts (Q2:116-117), even though historical proof exists that the 4 *Ezra* text included in the Syriac Bible at the time was most certainly corrupted by Christians.
2. The historicity of the crucifixion of Christ is not a major issue in the Qur'an, yet while addressing Jews specifically, the Qur'an makes perfectly clear that they are not permitted to take any credit for having slain the Messiah (Q4:155-158). It is Jewish

vi

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

arrogance in their claim of having killed the Messiah that is under scrutiny, not the historicity of the event.

3. The Qur'an corrects the eating restrictions and Mariolatry of the Nazoraeans and adoptionism of the Nestorians (Q5:5,116).
4. The Qur'an corrects the Jewish equation of Ezra with the Christian view of Jesus (Q9:30).
5. The polytheists of the time believed that gods had sons and daughters. Some Christians in Southern Arabia also believed that Jesus was literally the biological offspring of God and Mary, that there were three separate Christian gods. Thus the Qur'an strictly forbids the genetic implications of the Son of God metaphor (Q112).
6. Perhaps most wisely, the Qur'an parses between the unacceptable tritheism of Abū ʿĀritha of Najrān while confirming and defending the Christian theology of Waraqa ibn Nawfal of Mecca (Q4:171, 5:73).

The Qur'an responds to a number of kinds of Christians, and in this endeavour, though there is no single "Qur'anic Christian" to speak of, there is still a kind of Qur'anic Christianity to which this book calls its audience. The Qur'an extends its ecumenical voice with surgical precision. Yet, unfortunately, that voice is too often lost in the momentum of exclusivity festering in the wake of a millennium of wars between Christians and Muslims.

The Qur'an is a strong enough bridge to mend the Christian-Muslim divide, when it is read according to its own view of itself, and its historical context is valued (Q2:62; 5:69). Yet there are some ambiguities that remain in its presentation. Those who believe the Qur'an to be the Word of God must accept those ambiguities as an intentional quality of revelation. Indeed the Qur'an says of itself that the unclear (*mutashābihāt*) verses are intentionally so (Q3:7). And if ambiguity is an intentional quality of revelation, then humble orthodoxy is the appropriate response. A humble orthodoxy allows for the intentional ambiguity of scripture to cover disputes on issues that lack clarity.

Where Christians and Muslims are divided, and cannot resolve their differences, the Qur'an prescribes an appropriate arena for combat. We are to compete with each other in good deeds:

To every community there is a direction to turn to, so compete to do good deeds wherever you may be. God will bring you all.

vii

## THE QUR'AN

God has power over all things. Q2:148

We have assigned to each of you a law and a way of life. If God had wanted, He could have made all of you a single community, but instead He is testing you by means of what He has revealed to you. So compete in doing what is good. You will all return to God, and He will clarify these matters about which You have differed. Q5:48

Social justice is a wonderful arena for competition, as Micah 6:8 encourages us, "O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." It is an appropriate response from the people of the book to accept this Qur'anic challenge. Very well then. Let us compete with one another in the care for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the marginalised (Q2:177; 4:35, 75, 135).

The World Council of Churches supports the "common pursuit of justice, peace and constructive action on behalf of the common good of all people."<sup>2</sup> Prince al-Hasan bin Talal of Jordan laments that, "In both communities, such negative feelings or attitudes towards the 'other' have been basically atavistic rather than rational in nature."<sup>3</sup> Yet historically, social justice tends to bring the communities together. When we look at the end result of social justice, sincere Muslims and Christians tend to produce similar fruit. Yet, "does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring" (James 3:11-12). Perhaps like fruit shares a common source.

When we speak of a common source, we must begin with a common God. In this endeavour, there is a lot of shared ground in the Christian challenge to describe One God in Three Persons with the Islamic challenge to describe One God in the Divine Names. As I noted elsewhere and could not summarise better here:

Theologically, there may be a decreasing distinction between the concepts of unity in plurality in God described as Trinity, or God described in his Most Beautiful Names. The manner in which these concepts are described by representatives of the two religious traditions has tremendous overlap. The mutual challenge of Nasr and Rahner, for example, is the explanation of plurality within God while maintaining monotheism. They

2 - World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations, 2001, p. 486

3 - Talal, 2000, p. 165

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

agree that one God is all that is outside of creation, and that all of creation comes from one God, and yet as soon as theologians open their mouths to add any description to God whether in terms of Person or Attribute, the description appears to be immediately deficient. Muslim and Christian theologians thus face a similar limitation that only silence from both can truly honour, what Rahner calls, "the ultimately forbidden goal," of rendering logically and intelligently the mystery of God.<sup>4</sup> Thus in silence under the recognition of the ultimate truth of monotheism, Muslims and Christians stand with a single perichoretic theology, for whatever else might be spoken about God out loud by either, betrays the transcendence of God in the theology of both. (Block, 2014)

Acknowledging the ambiguity inherent in our scriptures leaves room for ecumenical possibilities in relationship. Without syncretising, or transgressing either book, affirmation of the tremendous overlap in content is appropriate. This affirmation is finding its way into popular discourse. A well-known American Evangelical minister once prayed publicly:

Almighty God, our Father, everything we see and everything we can't see exists because of you alone. It all comes from you. It all belongs to you. It all exists for your glory! History is your story. The Scripture tells us, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" And you are the compassionate and merciful one toward everyone you have made.<sup>5</sup>

Based on Dr. Kaskas translation: *The Qur'an, A Contemporary Understanding*, this present book by Dr. Kaskas and Dr. Hungerford represents an ecumenical undertaking in line with the Qur'an's own heart. The Qur'an speaks of itself as a single volume in a multi-volume work. Thus, the extant previous books are appropriate providers of context for the Qur'an to confirm, remind, and clarify. It cannot confirm, clarify, or remind of what is not available. Yet, in the 1400 years since

4 - Rahner, 2010, p. 81

5 - Rick Warren in (Volf, 2011, p. 5). The first Biblical quote is from Deuteronomy 6:4, "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone." The sentence following contains an allusion to Psalm 145:8-9, "The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The Lord is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation." The phraseology of the last sentence quoted of Christian minister Rick Warren is an unmistakable employment of 'al-rahmān al-rahīm', a most common phrase of Islamic thought.

## THE QUR'AN

the Qur'an was revealed to us, never before has a Qur'anic translation into English been attempted along with cross-references to the previous books of which it speaks so highly. This work attempts to highlight the ecumenical nature of the Qur'an, and honour its view of itself as a reminder and confirmer of that which came before. But what is available of the previous books?

The *Torah* (five books of Moses) are the revelatory pillar of the Jewish community. The text referred to in the Qur'an is likely that which existed at the time of Muhammad and was available already in a number of languages. The Jews of Arabia would have held the *Torah* in Hebrew, and Christians held the same in Syriac.

There were multiple non-canonical gospels still in circulation during the Christological controversies of the 6th Century CE. Yet the *Injeel* mentioned in the Qur'an is not clearly defined, and thus the term was generally understood by its audience. It must therefore refer to whatever compendium of gospels were common to the Christians of the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Muhammad. Christians from Muhammad's home town of Mecca were likely Nestorian, while those of the Northern Ghassanids were Monophysite. The Southern Arabian Christians, based in Najrān and Ḥaḡār, with at least two bishops and six churches between them, were very likely caught up in the Philoponian Tritheist heresy.

Historians generally agree that although Arabic was commonly spoken, the liturgical language of Arabian Christians was most likely Syriac. In the pluralistic milieu of Arabia during the time of Muhammad, colloquial references to the evangel (Arabic: *Injeel*) would have therefore referred most likely to whatever collection of gospels appeared in the popular Peshitta Syriac Bible. These were not the whole collection of disputed gospels, but only the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Alternatively, the use of a singular term, *Injeel*, as a reference to the *evangel* in the Qur'an may indicate the Diatessaron, a Syriac synopsis of the four standard gospels that appeared in the second century CE. In either case, it is well agreed that the Diatessaron shares its content with the Peshitta.

The Qur'an confirms and reminds its audience of what came before it in the form of the previous books. The previous books, including the *Torah*, *Zabur*, and *Injeel*, form the liturgical context into which the Qur'an is intended to be read. The only glaring weakness in these authors' study is language. Language is a principle concern of the Qur'an, and thus the Hebrew and Greek originals of the *Torah* and *Injeel* should be taken as the authoritative texts, along with the Arabic of the Qur'an. It is

x

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

a weakness of our age that the common tongue is English, and a study of this kind is better offered in a common tongue.

The audience's knowledge of the content of the previous books is assumed by the Qur'an, which reminds its people that as the Word of God, these previous books are protected and cannot be changed (Q6:34). The idea that humans are capable of corrupting the message of the *Torah*, *Zabur*, and *Injeel*, despite God's own declaration of His protection over them, is as grievous and misguided as the Jewish claim that they had somehow usurped God's plan by killing His Messiah.

These authors have done an excellent job of employing the Qur'an in its original intent, as an ecumenical work. As this is the first known cross-referencing Qur'an of its kind, and it is presented in a language foreign to all of the original texts which it employs, certainly some margin of error will serve to entice further generations of Qur'anic scholars to sharpen these findings. In the meantime, this work should stand as an initial roadmap, highlighting the routes between the Qur'an and its self-delineated literary context. May the intrepid theologian and historian be equally blessed by this monumental work.

Personally, I freely embrace the intentional ambiguity of scripture as a buffer into which any of my concerns with this work would fit. I thank Dr. Kaskas and Dr. Hungerford for doing what was right to do over what was most comfortable, and I hope that as both a Christian theologian and a Qur'anic scholar, I learn as well as they have, to handle with care the sacraments of others. I am blessed by their scholarship, as well as their friendship.

Dr. C. Jonn Block - 2015

*When the field of the unthinkable is expanded and maintained for centuries in a particular tradition of thought, the intellectual horizons of reason are diminished and its critical functions narrowed and weakened because the sphere of the unthought becomes more determinate and there is little space left for the thinkable.*

- Mohammed Arkoun <sup>6</sup>

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6 - (Arkoun, 2006, p. 19)

xi



# INTRODUCTION

The year was 1967. I was still living in Beirut, Lebanon, and a close friend had given me the first English translation of the Qur'an that I had ever read. It was by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. I was very impressed with that translation and Ali's attempt to convey the musical rhythm and richness of the Arabic with poetic English versification. His translation opened my mind to a new understanding of the Qur'an within multiple linguistic and cultural dimensions. Later, I moved to the United States where I learned that the best way to communicate my ideas was to use the simplest and most direct language possible.

In the States, a journey started where I had wide exposure to the religious pluralism that exists there. I visited Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian and Catholic churches, among others. However, after 9/11, I found myself engaged with a national group of Evangelicals and a journey toward reconciliation started.

This project is a result of that journey. I started it with three goals in mind:

1. To have a simple, easy to read and understand English translation of the meanings of the Qur'an.
2. To have a translation that represents a fresh understanding of the original Arabic based on the presently available tools of knowledge.
3. To have a translation that will be a tool of reconciliation and not strive to emphasize the differences between Islam and the other Abrahamic religions (wall-building), but rather emphasize the commonalities (bridge-building).

## **The team**

A modern, easy to read and understand translation of the Qur'an was the initial part of the project. The second part was to find equivalent meaning in the Bible to relevant Qur'anic verses. While we were organizing to undertake this major endeavor, it did not escape us that

*xiii*

## THE QUR'AN

this work had never been done before. A large team with expertise was needed, but the previous experience that I and other senior team members had in the organization and implementation of large projects helped tremendously.

While I have been the main translator, I was not working alone. A group of Evangelical Americans who share the same goals were working with me, led by Dr. David Hungerford. Another group of Muslims were in Jeddah and were also working hard on a daily basis to see this idea become a reality.

Many times during the last few years of working on this project, I felt the hand of God directing me and bringing people along the way to specifically assist and help in needed tasks. The internet helped in many ways. I used it extensively, and engaged volunteer programmers to help compare the Arabic original with the meaning of verses by various commentators as well as several translations by specific translators. I also used it to create a virtual office, where the team's members met and discussed problems and moved forward. Team management was essential for the completion of this project in the limited time span we had. Many team members were working full time on the project, while others donated time as they were able.

Once the basic translation draft was completed, the team effort that was invested in finishing the work was truly international. People were in different places in the world working on the same document and striving to produce a good translation which would make a difference in the lives of their fellow human beings.

### Simplicity is not as simple as you think

Muslims who grew up reading the Qur'an always appreciated its flowing words, like a stream in the spring, when it's talking about believers, and its harshness when it's talking about idolaters and those who opposed God's messengers. I grew up listening to its rhythmic verses and always felt safe knowing God was there for me. I talked to Him while praying and He spoke back through the Qur'an. But as I started reading about westerners' reaction to the Qur'an, I learned that they have a problem with my favorite book.

They complained about the Qur'an. They had a problem with its origin, its organization, its structure and many had problems accepting any concept of post-biblical revelation. Others, who wanted to work with it, had problems understanding why it is not biographical or historical and most of all, why it is not linear.

So for me to claim that I wanted to present the Qur'an's meaning in a simple, easy to read and understandable English translation sounded straight forward only in theory. In practice, it was not. The Qur'an is not

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

a book like any other book with a beginning and an end. Its inner logic is different from what we've come to expect.

Muslims believe it is the Word of God revealed to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ over a period of 23 years. Its internal organization is a mystery to the western mind, especially when one realizes that the first verses received by Prophet Mohammad in 610 CE were:

*Recite in the name of your Lord who created - <sup>(01)</sup> Created the human being from a clinging substance. <sup>(02)</sup> Recite, and your Lord is the most generous <sup>(03)</sup> Who taught by the pen <sup>(04)</sup> taught human beings that which he knew not. <sup>(05)</sup>*

Yet they are placed at the beginning of chapter 96 Al-Alaq (The Clinging Form), while the last verse revealed to him shortly before his death in 632 CE, was verse 281 of the second chapter:

*Beware of a Day when you are returned to God and every soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and none will be wronged. <sup>(281)</sup>*

Muslim traditions hold that when the angel Gabriel brought down these revelations to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, he also told him where to place them, in a type of large puzzle, which was assembled over twenty-three years into the present form of a book which became the Qur'an.

However, to understand the Qur'an, one must realize that it was compiled not in the historic order the revelations were received but as God desired the message to be conveyed. These were only some of the issues we had to keep in mind before the translation started.

Another issue has to do with the identity of the principal speaker in the Qur'an. By the time an average Western reader realizes that it is, in fact, God speaking to His Prophet and not Mohammad ﷺ talking to us, another issue presents itself as one wonders why God is referring to Himself in so many different pronouns, often in the same sentence, such as "He", "We" or "I", with the corresponding changes of the pronoun from "His" to "Our" or "My", or from "Him" to "Us" or "Me" or "God." In the mind of a Western reader who is accustomed to reading the Bible, this lack of uniformity presents difficulties.

As Mohammad Asad says in his Forward to *The Message of The Qur'an*, "They seem to be unaware of the fact that these changes are not accidental, but are obviously deliberate, a linguistic device meant to stress the idea that God is not a 'person' and cannot, therefore, be really circumscribed by the pronouns applicable to finite beings."

Then Western readers may ask why "We," "Our" and "Us"? Is there more than one person within One God? The answer is a definite "No."

## THE QUR'AN

The “We” is the royal plural required in Arabic and Hebrew as a sign of respect.

Another issue is that in the original Arabic manuscripts from the seventh and the early eighth century there were no comas or periods indicating when a particular sentence begins and where it ends within a particular chapter. Other translations usually translate the verses in a continuous manner. This we decided, is part of the difficulty experienced by Westerners that does not exist when an Arab is reading the original Qur'an in Arabic. Reciting the Qur'an in Arabic on a regular basis for over 1450 years, the recitation was always subject to rules that are well set and known. Fathers taught their children to recite and then to read the Qur'an, using these same rules from the Prophet onward. So, we transformed what we do while reading the Arabic to the English translation. We grouped the verses dealing with the same subject together in a paragraph.

Then the problem of grammar and using the same tense in the same sentence came to mind. One of our American proofreaders brought to my attention that I was not using the same tense within a sentence and I should, because this is good grammar. I, of course, agreed and started to correct the sentence, then suddenly stopped. I usually either recalled the verse in Arabic before changing anything within the translation, or went back to the text if needed. Upon reflecting on what the Qur'an was saying, I realized that God is using past and future in the same sentence, which led me to think that either God does not understand grammar or He is communicating something that I need to understand. At that moment it simultaneously occurred to me that time for God is not the same concept that we have. We have past, present and future because we live on a planet. However, for God, time is very different. I realized at that moment that I needed to stick to the original Arabic in translating the verses which reflect that time is relative, rather than using English grammar rules. This, I can understand will bring criticism and drive some people crazy.

After considering all of this, we had to consider the geopolitical tension around the world in the post 9/11 era. Trying to present the Qur'an in a positive way is evidently a threat to a lot of people, including some Muslims, who are so fearful about Western intentions to the degree that they are weary of any attempt to change the status quo. Hearing about an attempt to compare the Qur'an and the Bible in order to emphasize commonalities will make some Muslims very suspicious, the same suspicion I experienced from some religiously fervent Americans and Europeans groups who would see it as an insult to the Bible when it is compared to the Qur'an. To many Western Christians in the U.S. and Europe, the Qur'an is the “book of the devil.” They see nothing good that can come out of it. They either want to burn it or ban its reading all

xvi

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

together. Some even warn of a “Chrislam” movement when they hear of Muslims speaking positively about Jesus.

I can now look back at my several years of hard work and smile. I will never be fully satisfied with the results because we're dealing with the translation of the words of God, the Qur'an, but I am convinced that here is a humble contribution toward simplifying the language and making the meaning more accessible to average readers.

### Seeing the Qur'an with fresh eyes

The second purpose of this translation is to convey a modern understanding of the Qur'an rather than a traditional, historic understanding. This translation is a translation of the meaning based on the translator's understanding. In fact, all translations represent the translator's personal reading and understanding and should be considered very personal and must be read as a subjective interpretation.

During the last fifty years human knowledge has expanded further than the entire knowledge accumulated throughout human history. It is only logical to read the Qur'an with fresh eyes and to understand it in view of all this new knowledge<sup>1</sup> that has become available to us.

When the Qur'an was revealed, it represented a new level of linguistic evolution. It was arranged in a composition that is different from all other texts that existed in Arabic. Early Muslims focused on its uniqueness and its linguistic miracle. However, we are suggesting that the authenticity of the Qur'an is confirmed today by modern scientific discoveries and not by its aesthetic impact only.

The Qur'an according to Prophet Mohammed ﷺ, is a continuous miracle. Its meaning will continue to unfold as our tools of knowledge expand and advance, allowing us to understand it more widely and with further depth.

### A tool of reconciliation

It is said that people fear what they don't understand. Most of the tension that exists in the West in the post 9/11 era is because Christians fear Muslims and their book, the Qur'an. This is because some translations by Westerners mislead rather than clarify what the Qur'an says. Let's take a look at N. J. Dawood's 1956, Penguin Classic. In that translation, “often Dawood mistranslates one single word to give it totally the opposite meaning. Dawood's translation is the one that

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1 - Hence we came to understand At-Tarig in chapter 86 not as the late night visitor, but the Pulsar. I even have its knocking sound on tape from NASA <http://vimeo.com/44284337>. And Sijjeen not as a place in Hell but as a locked in data base. Not like our data but like God's data that He, all praise be to Him, hinted its existence to us, but was impossible for my father to even imagine existing.

xvii

## THE QUR'AN

most non-Muslims site when they accuse the Qur'an, Islam or Muslims -- often with great conviction -- of having no option but to be fanatical, violent and depraved.”<sup>2</sup> Having said this, I should point out that some translations by Muslims do more harm to Muslims than any Western translator was ever able to do. Take for example “The Noble Qur'an in the English Language by Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan.” This translation reads more like a supremacist Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian polemic than a translation of the Qur'an. It was at one time the most freely distributed translation throughout the English-speaking world. People assumed that it had credibility, because it had the seal of approval from both the University of Medina and the Saudi Dar al-Ifta. However, as American Muslims grew more aware of its biased contents and supremacist attitude towards the People of the Book, they started rejecting it and refused to place it in many mosques.

I mean for this new translation to be a tool of reconciliation between Muslims and the followers of the other Abrahamic religions. In an environment of tension, working for reconciliation and peace is long overdue. If we are to prevent a much larger disaster from happening, we must work for a better understanding. My Islamic faith has taught me that it is my duty, and I hope the duty of every person of goodwill, to try to work towards peace and true reconciliation.

This same desire to work for peace led me to meet a group of Evangelicals working on a translation of the Qur'an for the purpose of using it as a tool of reconciliation and to bring both Muslims and Christians closer together.

We joined hands to become a team of believers, dedicated to mutual respect and peace among the followers of Christianity and Islam, devoted to create a new, simple translation of the Qur'an to accomplish the following objectives:

- To promote reconciliation.
- To be a bridge between believers in the God of Abraham.
- To promote mutual values.

Later, we were joined by Jewish scholars who were as dedicated to our vision as we. This translation emphasizes the common ground between the Qur'an and the previous books using references to the Bible passages<sup>3</sup> every time the Qur'an mentions prophets, people, events or subjects referred to in the Bible. To our knowledge, this is the first time such a comparison has been done since the birth of Islam and

2 - Reading the Qur'an: The Contemporary Relevance of the Sacred Text of Islam Hardcover by Ziauddin Sardar

3 - We used mainly the New Revised Standard Version Bible NSRV

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

the revelation of the Qur'an. We believe in the goodness of what we are doing, in serving God's purpose through serving other believers.

This, we are certain, will lead to a better understanding between believers as Christians and Jews will have a chance to see the Qur'an as a continuation of the same message. While Muslims, who have not been willing to examine the Bible for themselves, will have a chance to see the connection that historically exists in the progression of God's message to human beings. Moreover, the references to common prophets, people and events will help the reader to reflect on both as books of revelation.

If this translation succeeds in bringing the followers of the various Abrahamic religions closer together, it will accomplish its third major objective, a task that we think is long overdue.

Safi Kaskas  
October, 2015

The authors have worked together to produce a translation of the Qur'an into contemporary, easy to understand English. There are many English translations of the Qur'an from which to choose. However, there are none, to our knowledge, that are a collaboration of a native Arabic-speaking devout Muslim and a native English-speaking devout Christian. Dr. Kaskas is a Lebanese Muslim and I am an American Christian. Dr. Kaskas, who is a naturalized American, did the initial translation from Arabic to English. The two of us then sat side by side and optimized each verse, line by line, into contemporary, easy to understand English. This was no simple task. Many words in any language have more than one meaning. Also, there are some words in one language that simply do not have a corresponding single word in the target language, and which have to be translated by a phrase. A great deal of effort has been made to ensure that the meaning of the Arabic has been clearly translated into that same meaning in contemporary English.

The second phase of the project has been to choose verses from the Bible that correspond to the meaning of selected verses of the Qur'an. Many of the Biblical stories, from the lives of the Prophets, the life of Jesus, the Creation of the Universe and the beginning of mankind, the historical events recorded in the Bible and the attributes of God as expressed in the Bible, are repeated in the Qur'an. In our experience, many Christians and Muslims are completely unaware of the rich trove of common themes in these books which are considered Holy to more than half the people on the planet. Although some have a vague awareness of the 'common ground,' few are aware of the extent of the similarities. The selection of the verses has also been a combined effort of the two of



## THE QUR'AN

us and have been chosen for relevance within the context of the verse. No attempt was made to be all inclusive, for to do so the number of similar verses would have unnecessarily overwhelmed the text.

This work has taken several years and has been done with several purposes in mind. We have both a deep respect and love for each other as well as a respect for each other's faith communities. We both also have long and extensive histories of working to reflect our understanding of God's love and forgiveness both within and outside our faith communities. We are distressed at the current level of misunderstanding, distrust and outright hostility today between those who claim Abraham as their Patriarch, Jews, Christians and Muslims. We believe that part of the solution to those problems is to dispel the ignorance about the common ground between our respective Holy Books. We encourage English speaking Jews, Christians and Muslims to read this translation to develop a deeper understanding of the common heritage that we share, and to reach out to the other in a spirit of friendship and cooperation that our Holy Books command and which the current situation requires.

David Hungerford  
October, 2015

## FROM REVELATIONS TO A BOOK

### THE HISTORY OF THE QUR'AN<sup>1</sup>

#### The town of Mecca

According to Arabian traditions, and later confirmed by the Qur'an, the town of Mecca was established by the patriarch, Abraham, and his son, Ishmael. The location is not very far from the west coast of the Red Sea in a rocky valley with few agricultural resources.

There were at least two possible reasons for Abraham to have chosen that location to settle his son, Ishmael, in that arid valley. According to the Qur'an, he was directed by God to rebuild the small square building called the Ka'bah, the ancient house that was built by Adam for the sole purpose of worshipping God. Later, the well of Zamzam would appear.

As Mecca happened to be on the caravan route from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean, with its fresh water it naturally became a trading post where people could hear about the faith of Abraham. They could then carry it with them to wherever they were going. With the Ka'bah, the House of God, located in the center of town, Mecca became Arabia's most important place of pilgrimage for all Arab tribes.

As time went by, tribalism influenced the way Arabs worshiped God. The Meccans claimed descent from Abraham through Ishmael, and their place of worship, the Ka'bah, was still called the House of God, but in time the chief objects of worship became a number of idols placed inside. These were regarded as intercessors. Each tribe adopted an idol that was viewed as the protector of that individual tribe, and by the 4th century, large numbers of pilgrims from all over the Arabian Peninsula and beyond visited Mecca on an annual pilgrimage. But this was not only for religious reasons. People visited Mecca to celebrate, trade, recite poetry in poetry competitions, commit immoral acts, and worship the many idols inside and around the Ka'bah.

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<sup>1</sup> - The Qur'an. The early biographies; Ibn Hisham and Al-Tabari. Modern biographies; Mohammad Hussein Heikal.

## THE QUR'AN

### The birth of Mohammad

It was in the year 570 CE that Mohammad was born in Mecca. His father, Abdullah, belonged to the Hashimite family of Quraish. His mother, Aaminah, was a descendant from the same tribe. Returning with a caravan from Syria and Palestine, Abdullah stopped in Yathrib, an oasis to the north of Mecca, to visit relatives. There, he fell ill and died several months before his son's birth.

It was customary to send the sons of Quraish into the desert to spend their early childhood with Bedouin tribes. Apart from considerations of health, this represented a return to their roots, an opportunity to experience the freedom that accompanied the vastness of the desert.

Mohammad was taken by Halima of the Banu Sa'd tribe, and spent four or five years with her family, tending the sheep and learning the Arabic language from the Bedouins, whose speech was proper Arabic.

When he was six, not long after he had rejoined his mother, she took him on a visit to the town of Yathrib, where his father had died, and she herself fell ill with one of the fevers prevalent in that area, dying on the journey home. Mohammad now came under the guardianship of his grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib, chief of the Hashimite clan. When the boy was eight years old, Abdul-Muttalib died, and thus he entered the care of the new Hashimite chieftain, his uncle Abu Talib. During this time, the young Mohammad was still tending sheep. When he reached the age of nine, he was taken by his uncle on the caravan journey to Syria so that he could learn the art of trade, and to lead a caravan.

He continued working as a merchant, making a reputation for himself. Among the wealthy merchants of Mecca was a wealthy widow named Khadeeja. Impressed by what she had heard of Mohammad, who was now commonly known as *Al-Ameen* (the trustworthy). She employed him to be in charge of her trade to Syria. Being impressed by his confidence and success in the way he handled her trade, his atypical competence and personal charm, she asked him to marry her. By this time Mohammad was twenty-five, and Khadeeja was forty. Khadija bore Mohammad six children. All of their children but Fatema died during his lifetime.

For the next fifteen years or so Mohammad lived the life of a prosperous merchant. He was now a man of substance, respected in the community, admired both for his generosity and his wisdom. Yet he was spiritually troubled, and became increasingly so, as he approached middle age. He then developed one habit uncommon to merchants; from time to time he withdrew into the mountains surrounding Mecca to meditate and pray.

xxii

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

Mohammad was among the few who rejected the prevailing idol worship and longed for the faith of Abraham. Such seekers of the truth were known as *Hunafa'*, a word originally meaning "those who turn away" from idolatry. These people did not form a community, but rather each sought the truth by the light of their own inner consciousness. But with his continuous search for the truth, Mohammad increasingly felt the need to contemplate, and this led him to seek seclusion in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca. There he would retreat for days to think, reflect and meditate. It was there that he was undergoing preparation for the enormous task which would be placed upon his shoulders, the task of prophethood and to convey the last revelation of God to his people and the rest of humanity.

### The first revelation

The 7th day in the month of Ramadan that year (610 CE) was like any other day Mohammad spent in solitude in a cave high above Mecca. But that night changed his life. He had fallen asleep in the cave when he suddenly was awakened with an overwhelming feeling of a divine presence. An angel was there. Mohammad must have been terrified, especially when the angel enveloped him in a terrifying embrace so that it felt as though his very breath was being squeezed from his body. The angel gave him one command:

*"Iqra'!" ("Read!")* Mohammad protested in vain that he could not read. But the command was issued twice more, and each time he would feel he was reaching the end of his endurance, and he uttered the same response. Finally, the angel released him, and Mohammad found divinely inspired words pouring out of his mouth:

*"Recite in the name of your Lord who created; created the human being from a clinging substance. Recite! Your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught the human being that which he knew not." (Qur'an 96:1-5)*

So the angel was not asking him to read but to recite the words God puts in his mouth.<sup>2</sup> Thus began the magnificent story of God's last testament to humanity.

The encounter of an Arab, fourteen centuries ago, with a being from the realm of the unseen was an event of such momentous significance<sup>3</sup> that it would affect the lives of hundreds of millions of men and women,

2 - This might be what Deuteronomy 18:18 refers to "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18 - KJV). However, Christians do not believe it refers to Muhammad.

3 - This experience is mentioned in the Quran 53:4-9.

xxiii

## THE QUR'AN

building a great civilization and raising from the dust beauty and splendor previously unknown. The word, *Iqra'*, echoing around the valleys of the Hejaz, broke the mold in which the known world was cast; and this man, alone among the rocks, took upon his shoulders a burden which would have crushed the mountains had it descended upon them.

Mohammad had reached an age of maturity. The impact of this tremendous encounter may be said to have cleansed his soul. The man who descended from the mountain was like gold refined by the fire and was not the same man who had ascended it.

For the moment, however, he was terrified as a man pursued. As he tumbled down the mountain, he heard a great voice crying, "Mohammad! You are the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel!" He looked upwards, and the angel filled the horizon. Wherever he turned, the figure was there, inescapably present. He rushed home, running, falling, crawling and shaking, he cried to Khadeeja: "Cover me! Cover me!" She laid him down, placing a cloak over him, held him in her arms, soothing him and trying to calm him. As soon as he had recovered a little, he told her what had happened and shared his fears that he might be now possessed by a spirit. Mohammad was terrified. She held him close and comforted him:

*"Never! By God! God will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your relatives, help the poor, serve your guests generously, and assist those affected by calamities."*

*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

She saw in her husband a virtuous man — one who was honest and just, given to helping the poor. The first person on the face of the earth to believe in the Message entrusted to Mohammad was his own wife, Khadeeja. At once, she went to see an older male cousin, Waraqa, a *Haneef*, who had become a follower of Jesus and had studied the Scriptures. After hearing from her about Mohammad's experience, Waraqa recognized him from the prophecies of the Bible to be the awaited prophet, and he confirmed that what had appeared to him in the cave was indeed the angel Gabriel:

*"This is the Keeper of Secrets (Gabriel) who came to Moses."*

*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

The Prophet continued to receive revelations for the remainder of his life, memorized and written down by his companions on pieces of sheepskin and whatever else was available.

xxiv

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

### The scribes

The revelation of the Qur'an was not an isolated event in the Prophet's life. It was a constant stream of verses descending to him throughout the 23 years of his apostolic mission in Mecca and Medina. The Prophet appointed numerous companions of his to serve as scribes, writing down the latest verses as soon as they were revealed. The most notable among them were Zaid bin Thabit, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, Khalid ibn Al Waleed and Az Zubayr ibn Al Awwam.<sup>4</sup> For the most part, new verses would be written on bones, hide or parchment.

The scribes did not just write the new revelations, adding them next to the previous ones in chronological order, but they followed the Prophet's instructions. The organization of the revelations into verses and chapters and their order was revealed by God to His Prophet through the Archangel Gabriel known to Muslims to be the Holy Spirit. Gabriel himself told the Prophet where to place each verse and in which chapter. It was a process much like putting together a huge puzzle that took 23 years to complete. The final result is the book we know as the Qur'an. The logic followed in the structure and composition of the Qur'an is believed by Muslims to be God's logic.

### How the Qur'an is organized

With the death of the Prophet, the revelations<sup>5</sup> stopped. The last revelation shortly before his death was verse 281<sup>6</sup> of the second surah:

*"Beware of a day when you are returned to God and every soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and none will be wronged."*

Muslims found themselves alone without the Prophet to guide them, a new faith based on the Qur'an and the way the Prophet used to manage Muslims' affairs and daily events called (in Arabic) the Sunna.

The Qur'an is composed of 114 parts or chapters of unequal length. Each chapter is called a surah in Arabic, divided into units, referred to as ayas, literally 'signs' or verses in English. These verses are not standard in length, but Muslims believe Mohammad was directed by God as to where each begins and ends. The shortest of the chapters (*surahs*) has ten words, and the longest, which is placed second in the Qura'nic text,

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4 - Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Al-Isabah fee Tamyeez as-Sahabah*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1978; Bayard Dodge, *Mohammad* ﷺ M. Azami, in *Kuttab al-Nabi*, Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 1974, in fact mentions 48 persons who were used to write for the Prophet (p).

5 - Sahih Al Boukhari, *Al Manakib*, Hadith Ibn Abbas about the compilation of the Qur'an.

6 - Ibid

xxv

## THE QUR'AN

has 6,100 words. The first chapter, the *Al Fatihah* ("The Opening"), is relatively short having just twenty-five words. From the second chapter onward, the chapters gradually decrease in length, although this is not a hard and fast rule. The last sixty chapters take up about as much space as the second. Some of the longer verses are much longer than the shortest chapters. All chapters, except one, begin with *Bismillah hir-Rahman nir-Rahim*, ("In the Name of God, the Merciful to All, the Mercy Giver"). Each chapter has a name that usually refers to a key word within it. For example, the longest chapter, Al-Baqara, or "The Cow," is named after the story of God commanding the Jews to offer a sacrifice of a cow, which begins by God saying:

*When Moses told his people, "God commands you to sacrifice a cow," they said, "Are you making fun of us?" Moses answered, "God forbid that I should be so foolish." (Qur'an 2:67)*

Since the various chapters are of various lengths, the Qur'an was theoretically divided by scholars of the first century (Islamic calendar) into thirty roughly equal parts, each part being called a *juz'* in Arabic.

This organization of the revelations into chapters and verses was well-known to the companions.<sup>7</sup> Each Ramadan the Prophet would repeat after Gabriel or recite from memory the entire Qur'an in its exact order as instructed, in the presence of a number of his companions.<sup>8</sup> In the year of his death, he recited it twice.<sup>9</sup> Thereby, the order of verses in each chapter and the order of the chapters became reinforced in the memories of each of the companions present.

It is important to note that Mohammad would have the scribes read back the verses to him after writing them down so he could proofread them, making certain there were no errors.

To further ensure that there were no errors, Mohammad ordered that no one record anything else, not even his words, *hadith*, on the same sheet as the Qur'an. Regarding the sheets that the Qur'an was written down on, he stated, "And whoever has written anything from me other than the Qur'an should erase it." This was done to ensure that no other words were accidentally added to the text of the Qur'an.

As the companions spread out to various provinces with different populations, they took their recitations with them in order to instruct others.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the same Qur'an became widely retained in the

7 - Ahmad von Denffer, *Ulum al-Quran*, The Islamic Foundation, UK, 1983, p.41-42;  
Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Quran*, Leiden: Brill, 1937, p.31.  
8 - *Saheeh Al-Bukhari* Vol.6, Hadith No.519  
9 - *Saheeh Al-Bukhari* Vol.6, Hadith Nos.518 & 520  
10 - Ibn Hisham, *Seerah al-Nabi*, Cairo, n.d., Vol.1, p.199.

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

memories of many people across vast and diverse areas of land.

It is important to know, however, that the Qur'an was not primarily preserved by writing it down. Arabia in the 600s was an oral society. Very few people could read and write, thus huge emphasis was placed on the ability to memorize long poems. Before Islam, Mecca was a center of Arabic poetry. Annual festivals were held that brought together the best poets from all over the Arabian Peninsula. Exuberant attendees would memorize the exact words recited by their favorite poets and quote them years and decades later.

Thus, in this type of oral society, the vast majority of the companions learned and retained the Qur'an by memorizing it.<sup>11</sup> Its rhythmic nature made it easy to memorize.

The recitation of the Qur'an was not heard by just a few select companions. It was heard and memorized by hundreds of people, many of them travelers to Medina. Thus, chapters and verses of the Qur'an quickly spread during the life of the Prophet to all corners of the Arabian Peninsula. Those who had heard verses from the Prophet would go and spread them to tribes far away, who would also memorize them. In this way, the Qur'an achieved a literary status known among the Arabs as *tawatur*, or, reaching a consensus on authenticity when various recitations confirm one another. This meant it was so vastly disseminated to so many different groups of people, who all had the same exact wording, that it is inconceivable that any one person or group could have changed it. The entire Qur'an's authenticity is confirmed through correlated recitation (*mutawatir*), because it was widespread during the life of the Prophet through oral tradition. Ibn Hisham, in his famous biography of the Prophet, *Seerah Al-Nabi*, stated that the *Qur'an* we have with us today has been handed down orally by a large number of the Prophet's companions, with a consensus that this was the actual *Qur'an* that had been revealed to Mohammad.

### Collection after the death of the Prophet

As reading the Qur'an became widespread across the Islamic world, it was impossible for verses to be changed without Muslims in other parts of the world noticing and correcting them. Furthermore, after the Qur'an was completed near the end of the Prophet's life, Mohammad made sure that numerous companions knew the entire Qur'an by heart.

11 - Narrated *Qatadah*: I asked *Anas Ibn Malik*: 'Who collected the *Qur'an* at the time of Prophet?' He replied: 'Four, all of whom were from the *Ansar*: *Ubay Ibn Ka'ab*, *Mu'adh Ibn Jabal*, *Zayd Ibn Thabit* and *Abu Zayd*.' (*Bukhari, Kitab Fada'ilu'l-Qur'an*)



## THE QUR'AN

Shortly after the death of the Prophet, the first caliph, however, felt a need to have a central copy of the entire Qur'an for safe keeping. Abu Bakr, who ruled from 632 to 634 CE, feared that if the number of people who had the Qur'an memorized dwindled, the community would be in danger of losing the Qur'an.<sup>12</sup> As a result, he ordered that a committee be organized, under the leadership of Zaid bin Thabit,<sup>13</sup> to collect all the written pieces of Qur'an that were spread throughout the community. The plan was to collect them all into one central place that could be preserved and protected long after those who had memorized the Qur'an had died.

Zaid accepted verses only from people he knew to be trustworthy. He only accepted verses written on pieces of parchment that had been written down in the presence of the Prophet. In addition, there had to be witnesses who could attest to that fact. These fragments of the Qur'an that he collected were each compared with the memorized Qur'an itself, ensuring that there was no discrepancy between the written and oral versions.<sup>14</sup>

When the task was completed, a finalized collection of all the verses was assembled and presented to Abu Bakr, who secured it in the archives of the young Muslim state in Medina. Because of the numerous memorizers of Qur'an present in Medina at the time, it can be assumed with certainty that this copy that Abu Bakr had matched exactly the revelations that Mohammad had received. Had there been any discrepancies, the people of Medina would have raised the issue. There is, however, no record of any opposition to Abu Bakr's project or its outcome.

Later, this collection representing the entire Qur'an went to Omar Ibn Al Khattab, the second caliph (ruled from 23 August 634 to November 644 CE), who gave it to his daughter, Hafsa, the Prophet's widow, for safekeeping.

### The Mushaf of Uthman

During the caliphate of Uthman (644 to 656 CE), a new issue regarding the Qur'an arose in the Muslim community: pronunciation. During the life of the Prophet the Qur'an was revealed in seven different dialects, or, qira'as. The dialects differed slightly in their pronunciation of certain letters and words. These seven dialects were not an innovation resulting

12 - The main source of all accounts related to the collection of the Qur'an originate in Sahih Al Bukhari, Fadae'l Al Qur'an, section 6 named Jame'a Al Qur'an.

13 - Zayd ibn Thabit ( زید بن ثابت ) was the personal scribe of Muhammad and was from the Medina converts known as Ansar (Supporters). When Zayd was 15 years old, he was among those chosen by Muhammad to write down the verses of the Quran. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd\\_ibn\\_Thabit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Thabit)

14 - Sahih Al Bukhari 6: 315 | 9

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

from corruption of the Qur'an in later years, as their authenticity was mentioned by the Prophet and recorded in the Hadith compilations of Bukhari and Muslim,<sup>15</sup> and recognized by his companions. The reason for the different dialects was to make it easier for different tribes around the Arabian Peninsula to learn and understand the Qur'an.

During Uthman's reign, people coming into the Muslim world at its periphery, in places like Persia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and North Africa were beginning to learn the Qur'an. An issue arose for them when it came to pronunciation of words, as they would hear different Arabs pronouncing the same verses differently. Although the different pronunciations were sanctioned by the Prophet and there was no inherent harm in people reciting and teaching them, it led to confusion among new non-Arab Muslims.

Uthman responded by commissioning a group to come together, organize the Qur'an according to the dialect of the tribe of Quraysh (the Prophet's tribe), and spread that authorized copy throughout the world. Uthman's team (which again included Zaid bin Thabit) compiled a complete written codex of the Qur'an with sheets of vellum (known as a *mus'haf* – from the word for page, *sahifa*), based on firsthand manuscripts along with the memories of the best Qur'an reciters of Medina. This *mus'haf* was then compared with the copy that Abu Bakr commissioned, to make sure there were no discrepancies. Uthman then ordered numerous copies of the *mus'haf* to be made, which were sent to far off provinces throughout the world, along with reciters who would teach people to properly recite the Qur'an.

Because the Qur'an was now compiled and being reproduced on a regular basis, there was no need for the numerous fragments of verses that people had in their possession. He thus ordered that those fragments be destroyed so they could not be used in the future to cause confusion among the masses. Although some Orientalists use this incident to try to claim that there were some discrepancies that Uthman wanted to eliminate, that claim lacks any supporting evidence. The entire community in Medina, including numerous eminent companions such as Ali ibn Abi Talib, willingly went along with this plan. Had he been eliminating legitimate differences, the people of Medina would have surely objected or even revolted against Uthman, neither of which

15 - In Islamic terminology, the term hadith refers to reports of statements or actions of Muhammad, or of his tacit approval or criticism of something said or done in his presence. The two most accepted books on hadith are the two written by Imam Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad al-Bukhari known as *Sahih al-Bukhari* considered as one of the most *sahih* (authentic) of all hadith compilations. The other compilation of hadith known as *Sahih Muslim* is a collection of *hadith* compiled by *Imām Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Naysāburi*. His collection is considered to be one of the most authentic collections of the Sunnah of the Prophet.

## THE QUR'AN

happened. Instead, the *Mus'haf of Uthman* was accepted by the entire community as authentic and correct.

### The script of the Qur'an

The *Mus'haf of Uthman* lacked any diacritical marks (dots that differentiated the letters and vowel markings). The letters seen in his *mus'haf* are thus merely the basic Arabic letters.

Uthman sent reciters with his copies of the *mus'haf*, to teach the people, especially non-Arabs, the proper pronunciation and recitation of the Qur'an. However, we must remember that the main way the Qur'an was preserved was orally, and the written copies were only meant to be a supplement to oral recitation. If someone already had a verse memorized, the basic letters in a copy of Uthman's *mus'haf* served only as a visual aid when reciting.

Over time, during the mid-700s, the Muslim world became an empire. Cities flourished, and written documents became a necessity for the young empire's business. This was when diacritical marks began to be added to the *mus'hafs* throughout the world, and was done as the Muslim world shifted from an oral to a written society, to further facilitate reading from a copy of the Qur'an, and to eliminate errors.

According to tradition, it was for this reason that Muawiyah (602 – 680) of the Umayyad dynasty, ordered Ziad Ibn Abih, his *wālī* in Basra (governed 664–673), to find someone who would devise a method to transcribe correct reading. Ziad Ibn Abih, in turn, appointed Abu Al Aswad Al Du'ali (ca. 603CE – 688CE/69AH) for the task. Abu Al Aswad was a close companion of Imam Ali and, according to some traditions, he might have learned his system of dots to signal the three short vowels (along with their respective allophones) of Arabic from the Imam himself. This system of dots predates the *i'jām*, dots used to distinguish between different consonants.

Fragments from a large number of Qur'an codices from the 8th and 9th century CE that we have today were written originally with the Kufic script and dots were added later.

Later, on the orders of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, a Qur'anic text with diacritical marks was produced. This, to a certain extent, removed the difficulty of reading the Kufic script. Several difficulties, however, remained. The diacritical marks for vowels, for example, were for a time only dots. Instead of a *fathah*, a dot was placed at the beginning of the letter and, instead of *kasrah*, a dot below and, for a dammah, a dot above at the end of a letter. This led to ambiguity. It was not until Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi (718 – 786 CE) set about explaining the *maddah*, i.e., the lengthening of certain words, the doubling of letters,

xxx

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

the diacritical marks of vowelling and the pause, that the difficulty of reading script was finally removed.

The Qur'anic text most widely used today is based on the *Rasm Uthmani* (Uthmanic way of writing the Qur'an) and in the *Hafs* tradition of recitation, as approved by Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1922. This is, in fact, the Arabic text that we translated.

Today, all modern *mus'hafs* include diacritical marks on the basic letters along with vowel markings to make reading easier.

Finally, as part of my passion to verify the authenticity of the currently printed copies of the Qur'an, I spent years searching the early original scripts thought to be from the late 1st century / early 2nd century (AH).

Fragments from a large number of Qur'an codices were discovered in Yemen in 1972. They are now lodged in the House of Manuscript in Sana'a. I presently own a copy of this manuscript, thought to be the oldest copy of the Qur'an in existence.

One of the most famous of the Qur'an's manuscripts is the one kept in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, Turkey. It is an early manuscript of the Qur'an dated to the late 1st century / early 2nd century (AH). A number of copies were produced faithful to the original in every way in 2009, and I own one of them.

The third copy of an original manuscript that I own, is the one called the "Qur'ān Of 'Uthmān" that was displayed for some time at Al-Hussein Mosque, Cairo, Egypt, and thought by some people to be from 1st / 2nd Century (AH). However, paleographer Salāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid did not consider this manuscript to be from the time of caliph 'Uthmān. He said that, in all probability, it was a copy made on the order of the Governor of Egypt 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān, brother of Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (646-705). Therefore, it can be one of the oldest copies of the Qur'an written in Egypt in the second half of 1st century (AH).

A Qur'an fragment from the University of Tübingen Library has been dated to the 7th century - the earliest phase of Islam - making it at least a century older than previously thought. Expert analysis of three samples of the manuscript parchment concluded that it was more than 95 percent likely to have originated in the period 649-675 AD - 20 to 40 years after the death of the Prophet Mohammed. Such scientific dating of early Qur'an manuscripts is rare.

Perhaps the oldest certified manuscript of the Qur'an at this time is the one owned by the University of Tübingen in Germany. On 10.11.2014, it was announced that a Tübingen fragment was tested by the Coranica project, a collaboration between the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Paris, and the Berlin-Brandenburgischen Academy of

xxxi

## THE QUR'AN

the Sciences and Humanities, sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and France's Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR). The project investigates the Qur'an in the context of its historical background using documents such as manuscripts and information derived from archaeological excavations.

The fragment in question is one of more than 20 in the University Library Collection written in Kufic script, one of the oldest forms of Arabic writing. The manuscript came to the University in 1864 as part of the collection of the Prussian consul Johann Gottfried Wetzstein.

Analysis showed that the Tübingen University fragment was written 20-40 years after the death of the Prophet Mohammad.

It can be viewed online at: <http://tinyurl.com/p5aszvy>

xxxii

## METHODOLOGY

### THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

#### The translation strategies, methods and procedures

One of the troublesome problems of translation is the disparity among languages. The bigger the gap between the source and translation language, the more difficult the transfer of the message from the former to the latter. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the translation of the Qur'an from the original Arabic into English.

The difference between Arabic and English and the variation in cultures make the process of translating a real challenge. Among the problematic factors involved in such a translation is form, meaning, style, proverbs, idioms, etc. The concentration here will be mainly on the strategies and procedures used for understanding the Qur'an, translating its meaning and later finding equivalent meaning for its verses within the targeted translations of the Old and the New Testaments.

Typically, a translation is a simple process of transferring a written text from its source language to an equivalent written text in the target language. However, in order to do this successfully, the translator has to first understand the text in its source language. In this present case the task is not easy. The Qur'an, as an Arabic text, has gone through more than two hundred attempts to translate it into English, and none of them claims to or has been credited with capturing the meaning sufficiently.

Without going into an analysis of the other translations and their positive and/or negative contributions, here are the strategies, methodology and procedures used to produce this translation.

Our understanding of the Qur'anic Arabic is based on the following assumptions in order to develop our methodology.

- 1 - The Qur'an is a text written in classical Arabic language, so the only way we can effectively understand its meaning is through a proficient knowledge of classical Arabic.

xxxiii

## THE QUR'AN

- a) As a language, Qur'anic Arabic is the root of today's spoken Arabic, but far superior to it. In the Qur'anic Arabic the words used are fixed and will not change. But to understand a word, not only dictionaries or classical commentators are used, but a deliberate process of comparing the word in a verse to the same word in other verses is exercised. If a traditional commentator explained a certain word in a certain way, and this contradicted the way the Qur'an used this word in other verses, the Qur'anic understanding was used.
  - b) Regarding Arabic grammar, the set of rules that explain how words are used in Arabic was created after the revelation of the Qur'an. The rules had to conform to the Qur'an, and not the other way around. However, while translating the Qur'anic Arabic, English grammar rules had to be observed to the best of our ability in order to make the translation as communicative as possible.
  - c) It is the same for how verb tense is used in the Qur'an. In some verses God uses the present tense and then switches to future or present continuous tense. We understand that using the same tense is proper English, but tense has to do with time, and time is relative to living on the planet Earth. This is limiting to human beings, but not to God. However, English grammar rules were used to the best of our ability as stated above.
  - d) Qur'anic Arabic does not have synonyms. Every word used has a specific meaning. So while the attempt was made to render the exact contextual meaning of the original word, we also endeavored to be as faithful to the original by using specific terms and words. A translation of words such as *zalemeen* can be translated to mean "unjust" or "criminals," and not "evildoers" or "sinners" on some occasions, but can be translated as "wrongdoers" on others.
  - e) Each word and verse carry important meanings. If it appears that the meaning of a verse seems to be inconsequential, then the conclusion should be that the meaning of the word or verse has been misunderstood.
- 2 - Qur'anic Arabic did not historically or stylistically reflect the language of the 7th century CE. The revealed verses represented a new level of linguistic evolution. They displayed textual qualities that Arabs had not known before. They contained vocabulary of non-Arabic origins that their pre-Islamic poetry had not used. They were composed in a way that is different from the entire Arabic textual body of that period. So, while

xxxiv

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

referring to the Arabs' understanding of a specific word at the time of the Qur'an's revelation, it must be kept in mind that our own contemporary understanding of that word's meaning is evolving as our understanding of our environment is expanding. For example, when the 7th century Arabs heard for the first time *Surat At Tariq* (86 The Kicker), the word "kicker" used to mean to them a late night visitor as reflected by the early Qur'anic commentators. But since the verse refers to the kicker as a piercing star, they concluded the kicker to be the planet Jupiter because it shows up late at night and disappears during the day. Today we understand it to be a pulsating star.<sup>1</sup> In adding new discoveries to our knowledge, humans take part in constructing the new meaning of the Qur'anic language. To limit our understanding of the Qur'anic verses to the historical Arabic of the 7th century would mean a regression in our ability to understand our modern world and a return to a pre-modern understanding of the divine text.

- 3 - Before translating the text, it is necessary to read and understand a number of classical commentaries to acquire a better historic understanding of the text and reexamine differences in interpretations.

Many people assume that there is one authentic interpretation of the Qur'an. This is far from true. Even the closest companions of the Prophet differed early on in understanding various verses. In fact, no one interpretation can command the following of a majority of Muslims. Islam, in fact, does not have an institution in charge of such interpretation, and there is hardly any major issue on which Muslim scholars do not differ. These differences, more often than not, are due to traditional interpretations of the Qur'anic text based on various stories told by the Prophet's companions. They, also, may represent a later understanding by scholars when striving to find and represent new understanding. This practice was no longer allowed after the 12 th CE. Today scholars still base their understanding of the Qur'an on the same traditional interpretations, except when they are forced to catch up with obvious scientific discoveries.

- 4 - Historically, Arabs were astonished by the text's aesthetic and rhetorical beauty. We are, too. However, the Qur'an should not be considered simply as a historic, culturally-specific text,

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<sup>1</sup> - A celestial object, thought to be a rapidly rotating neutron star, that emits regular pulses of radio waves and other electromagnetic radiation at rates of up to one thousand pulses per second.

xxxv



## THE QUR'AN

but as an entity that exists in and by itself. Its text is fixed and does not change. Yet, human life is constantly changing. We gain more understanding of the same text through our gradual growth and our expanding knowledge. The Qur'an always allows its intelligent reader to understand it in a contemporary manner, especially if a dialectical relationship is established between the text and its reader. This relationship is usually more obvious when the Qur'an is read by an Arab in Arabic. This principle was kept in mind while translating, but only the reader can judge whether the translation is good enough to produce such results.

- 5 - The Qur'an explains the purpose of our existence on earth and the values needed to make that purpose meaningful. While doing this, it celebrates our unique human consciousness. It urges us repeatedly to think, reflect, observe and learn. Its basic message directs us to consider the existence of a Creator who is the primary cause beyond all existence through His innovative and intelligent creation. The purpose of our short life on earth, it tells us, is to exercise our freedom of choice. Freedom is essential for our existence on earth if we are to be responsible for our choices. The two basic choices we are urged to make are to recognize God as our Creator; to worship Him and to serve others. If we are free to choose and we opt to reject God as our Creator, reject the resurrection after death and the eternal life that will follow only to egotistically choose to put our own interest ahead of everyone else, we will go away from God. But if we chose to serve Him through serving others, we will draw nearer and nearer to Him. In the end, we are judged based on our choices and His mercy. An eternal life will await God-conscious people in Heaven, while those who have rejected God and spent their lives serving themselves instead of Him will end in an eternal Hell.
- 6 - The Qur'an does not contradict itself, and is not dependent on outside sources to explain its meaning. It is, in a sense, self-sufficient. One part of the Qur'an helps to explain another. Hence, when we translate a verse in a certain way, we should make sure that other verses affirm our understanding of that verse. If such evidence is lacking, or if, in fact, our translation is clearly contradicted by other verses, then we know that we have a false understanding. Considering its claim of divine origin, it is impossible to have contradictions amongst the various verses of the Qur'an. The distinguishing feature of a good interpretation is that verses in the Qur'an will contain an abundance of evidence to support them. However, there are instances where the Prophet ﷺ further expanded and explained certain verses with general

xxxvi

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

meaning regarding, for instance, acts of worship.

- 7 - The Qur'an teaches that Muhammad ﷺ was both a prophet and a messenger of God. So the Qur'an contains both the verses given to the Prophet, addressing the creation around us and universal laws, as well as verses of the Message given to him as a messenger addressing how to best worship God and how to live successfully alongside others on this planet.

The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ explained these verses in detail, especially those related to worshipping God. Hence, the way Muslims perform ritual prayers, fasting and all other acts of worship are practiced according to the example and teachings of the Messenger. They can't be changed. There are other verses the Prophet very wisely did not explain because he did not want us to be committed to a seventh century understanding of the world around us. For this reason, we look today to NASA to better understand the universe around us and not to a historic interpretation given by a companion or an early scholar.

- 8 - The translator of this book believes that the Qur'an is the indirect speech of God, verbally revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through the Archangel Gabriel (Holy Spirit). We regard it as the miracle given to Muhammad ﷺ to prove his prophethood. It is also a book of guidance to humanity. As such, we assume it corresponds and parallels the universe which is also the words of God materializing all around us. In order to understand our world, we need to grasp the meaning of both, the words of God as the universe and His revealed words. The more we understand one, the better we understand the other. As such, we are called by the Qur'an to reflect on the basic universal laws as we can observe them in the world around us. The Qur'an as a book of revelations should not contradict the reality around us and should not contradict reason. Therefore, we assume that the best way to understand the Qur'an is through sound, rational analysis. Hence, a new reading of the Qur'an based on the tools of knowledge available to us today should provide a better and deeper understanding beyond the existing traditional exegetical commentaries.

On the surface, this seems to contradict the fact that the Qur'an itself calls on us to believe in its divine origin based on faith and not reason. We are also called to believe in resurrection after death, the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell and Eternity. All this is what the Qur'an calls "*Ghaib*" translated as: what is beyond our senses and/or human perception. A believer is required to

xxxvii

## THE QUR'AN

accept these doctrines based on faith, defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrew 11:1).

- 9 - The Qur'an does not discriminate or generalize in its condemnation of any people. God describes Himself in the Qur'an as “the Just.” The principle of “*no soul will bear the burden of another*” (17:15) was mentioned in the Qur'an five times. Most classical commentators mentioned specific Jews or specific Christians addressed by a specific verse. We are taught to ask whether the pronoun *Al* (“the”) before the name is specific or general. As such, I understand most of what is mentioned in the Qur'an about “the Jews” or “the Christians” as concerning only those who were involved with a particular event -- not all Jews, or all Christians.

- 10 - The original text had no punctuation and was not divided into paragraphs. Early Muslims learned to recite the Qur'an from memory, the way they originally learned it from the Prophet.

Punctuation marks were added later, but Muslims knew instinctively where to stop. However, Westerners who are newly introduced to the Qur'an find it very hard to make sense of a text that is not organized the way they are used to seeing it.

Most translators did a continuous translation of the text of each chapter without paying attention to the difficulties non-Muslims face when they read it. We found it necessary to divide the text of each chapter into paragraphs following the meaning and the subject matter.

In addition, the Qur'an is not that easy to understand by the average Arab, let alone the average Westerner. While it has an inner logic in the way it tackles various issues, it will help to facilitate showing this inner logic by organizing references to the subject matter to help the reader understand.

Based on these assumptions, the following general principles for the methodology used for this translation were developed:

- 1 - The translation is done with the goal of accuracy, naturalness, and clarity.
- a) The meaning of the original text is translated
  - b) accurately, exactly.  
The meaning of ideas is translated. This is not a word-for-
  - c) word translation.
  - d) Meaning has priority over form.

xxxiii

## A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

- e) Naturalness of expression has priority over form.  
Translated materials sound natural and are readily understood by the reader. This includes word order, grammar, sentence length, idiomatic phrases and figurative expressions.
- f) Vocabulary is carefully chosen, with common words preferred over outdated ones with the goal of producing a translation that is clearly and correctly understood by all English speakers, especially the younger generation.

- 2 - After careful sociolinguistic research, the determination was made that our primary target reader is the average American who seeks knowledge. The language used reflects this choice. We used common English, used in everyday life. Other fringe audiences outside the U.S. are also considered, such as English-speaking people in Southeast Asia.
- 3 - When reviewing the Arabic text of the Qur'an, culture-bound terms and allusions usually taken for granted by Muslims familiar with Qur'anic terminology were defined, and Anglicized versions of names of people and places were used in order to better communicate the meaning.
- 4 - To give the closest approximation of the source language, it was necessary to opt for creating a glossary of words and concepts and to use some explanatory footnotes.
- 5 - Grammatical and syntactic structures do not often correspond between Arabic and English. It was often found misleading to maintain the same form as the Qur'anic source text. So, changes of form were often necessary. As many or as few terms as required to communicate the original meaning as accurately as possible were employed.
- 6 - The recognition early on was that the transfer into English should be done by English “mother-tongue” speakers. Therefore, a team of native-speaking Americans was recruited and worked with.
- 7 - The realization was understood that there was a need to test the translation as extensively as possible in the United States and among other English-speaking communities in other parts of the world in order to ensure that this Qur'an communicates the meaning clearly and naturally, keeping in mind the sensitivities and experience of our readers.

xxxix

8 - Monitoring for qualitative and stylistic errors in the text was done in the revision stage where several reevaluation attempts were done. Several qualified volunteers proofread and contrasted the translation with other existing translations of the identical text by other translators. The differences were looked into and identified. As the main translator, I made sure that what we currently have is closest to the original meaning.

A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING

# Q THE UR'AN

WITH REFERENCES TO THE BIBLE

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CHAPTER ONE

AL-FATIHA<sup>1</sup>  
THE OPENING

THE MECCA PERIOD

In the name of God,<sup>2</sup> the Merciful-to-all,<sup>3</sup> the Mercy Giver:<sup>4</sup> <sup>(01)</sup>  
Praise be to God<sup>5</sup>, the Lord of the Worlds,<sup>6</sup> <sup>(02)</sup>  
The Merciful-to-all, the Mercy Giver,<sup>(03)</sup>  
Master of the Day of Judgment.<sup>7</sup> <sup>(04)</sup>  
It is You we worship, and it is You we seek for help. <sup>(05)</sup>  
Guide us to the straight path,<sup>8</sup> <sup>(06)</sup>,  
The path of those whom You have blessed,<sup>9</sup> with whom You are not  
angry and who have not gone astray.<sup>10</sup> <sup>(07)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Fatiha is the first chapter of the Qur'an. It is also known as Fatihat al-Kitab (The Opening of the Book). Recitation of this Chapter is an obligatory part of *Salat* (daily prayer). Muslims memorize this chapter and recite it at the beginning of each of their five daily prayers and all other voluntary prayers they perform.

<sup>2</sup> The invocation, "In the name of God, the Merciful to All, the Mercy Giver," occurs at the beginning of every chapter, except chapter 9. At-Tawbah (Repentance), constitutes an integral, part of chapter 1 and is therefore numbered as the first verse of this chapter, but it is not counted in other chapters.

<sup>3</sup> Both the divine epithets; *rahman* and *rahim*, derive from the noun *rahmah*, which signifies "mercy," "compassion," "loving tenderness," and "grace." *Rahman* exemplifies the quality of abounding grace inherent in, and inseparable from, the concept of God's Being. Psalm 103:8, 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Qur'an mentions at least 99 attributes or beautiful names of God.

<sup>4</sup> *Rahim* is an intensive form of the verb which emphasizes that the quality of giving mercy is inherent in God's nature. *Rahim* expresses the manifestation of that grace (an attribute), and its effect upon His creation.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 25:4-6 Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.<sup>6</sup> Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old." Deuteronomy 6:4 . . . The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 4:8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' " Deuteronomy 10:14 Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 12:36 "I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter."

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 6:25 If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right."

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 7:12, 13 "If you heed these ordinances, by diligently observing them, the Lord your God will maintain with you the covenant loyalty that he swore to your ancestors; <sup>13</sup> he will love you, bless you, and multiply you."

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 6:9-14 "Pray then this way: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.' "

# AL-BAQARAH<sup>11</sup>

## THE COW

THE MEDINA PERIOD

In the name of God, the Merciful-to-all, the Mercy Giver:

Alef Lam Meem<sup>12 (01)</sup>

This is the Book that, without doubt, has guidance for those who are mindful of God;<sup>(02)</sup> who believe in the existence of what is beyond human perception, perform prayers, and contribute some of what We<sup>13</sup> have provided to them,<sup>(03)</sup> those who believe in what We revealed to you and what We revealed before you; they are certain of the hereafter.<sup>(04)</sup> Such people are guided by their Lord and are successful.<sup>(05)</sup> As for the unbelievers, it is all the same whether you warn them or not, they will not believe.<sup>(06)</sup> God has sealed their hearts and their hearing and covered their sight. They will have a terrible punishment.<sup>14 (07)</sup>

Some people say, "We believe in God and in the last day," but they are not believers.<sup>(08)</sup> They try to fool God and the Believers, but they fool only

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<sup>11</sup> The title of this chapter, the longest in the Qur'an, derives from the story narrated in verses 67-73. It is the first chapter revealed in its entirety after the Prophet's migration to Medina. Most of it dates to his first two years there, but verses 275-281 were revealed during the last months before the Prophet's death. Verse 281 is considered to be the very last revelation that he received.

<sup>12</sup> Here, and at the beginning of many chapters, are letters of unknown meaning called Al Muqatta'at. Numerous theories have been proposed, but there is no agreement at present on what they signify.

<sup>13</sup> "We" is employed throughout the Qur'an when God speaks. This usage is the "royal we." It does not imply that God is not one.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 25:41, 46 "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' . . . <sup>46</sup> And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life;" and Revelation 20:10 "And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

themselves and do not even realize it.<sup>(09)</sup> They have a sickness in their hearts,<sup>15</sup> and God has made them even sicker. They will have painful punishment<sup>16</sup> because of their lies.<sup>(10)</sup> When they are told, "Do not cause corruption in the land," they say, "But we are reformers!"<sup>(11)</sup> They are truly corrupters and do not realize it,<sup>(12)</sup> when they are told, "Believe just like other people have believed," they say, "Will we believe like fools?" They are the fools, but they do not know it.<sup>(13)</sup> If they meet believers, they say, "We have believed." But when they are alone with their devils, they tell them, "We are with you. We were only mocking them."<sup>(14)</sup> God will mock them, and will increase their arrogance as they stray.<sup>(15)</sup> They have sold guidance for error, what an unprofitable trade; they have not been guided.<sup>(16)</sup>

They are like one who lights a fire, and when it shines around him, God takes away their light and leaves them in darkness, where they are unable to see.<sup>(17)</sup> Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not return (to the path).<sup>17 (18)</sup> Or, they are like a cloudburst in the sky that has darkness, thunder, and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears because of the lightning bolts, afraid of death. God surrounds those who deny (the truth).<sup>(19)</sup> The lightning almost blinds them. Whenever it shines, they walk by its light. When it is dark, they stand still. If God had willed, he would have taken away their hearing and their sight. God has power over all things.<sup>(20)</sup>

People, worship your Lord who created you and those before you, that you may be mindful of God,<sup>(21)</sup> He, who spread out the earth for you and built the sky. He sent rain from the sky, and through it, brought forth fruits as provision for you.<sup>18</sup> So do not knowingly set up rivals for God.<sup>(22)</sup> And If you are in doubt concerning our revelation to our servant, bring a chapter like it and call your witnesses other than God, if you are telling the truth.<sup>(23)</sup> If you do not do that—and you never will—beware of Hell, whose fuel is people and rocks. It was prepared for the unbelievers.<sup>(24)</sup>

Give good news to the believers who do virtuous deeds; they will have Heavenly Gardens with flowing rivers.<sup>19</sup> Every time they are provided fruit from it, they will say, "This is similar to what we were provided before." It appears to them that they are given the same thing. There they will have perfectly pure spouses, (and there) they will be eternally.<sup>(25)</sup>

God is not reluctant to present a proverb about a mosquito or something bigger. Believers know that it is truth from their Lord, but the unbelievers say, "What does God mean by this?" It is a proverb that

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<sup>15</sup> Isaiah 1:4-5 Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, offspring who do evil, children who deal corruptly, who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged! <sup>5</sup> Why do you seek further beatings? Why do you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremiah 23:12 Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery paths in the darkness, into which they shall be driven and fall; for I will bring disaster upon them in the year of their punishment, says the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 3:17 "For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 5:45 "... so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."

<sup>19</sup> Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. <sup>2</sup> On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.



misguides many and guides many.<sup>20</sup> It misguides only the defiantly disobedient.<sup>(26)</sup> Those who break God's covenant after it is confirmed and sever what God commanded to be joined and corrupt the earth—they are the doomed.<sup>(27)</sup> How can you deny the truth in God when you were dead, and He made you alive? Then He will make you die, then make you alive, and then you will return to Him.<sup>(28)</sup> It is He who created everything on the earth for you, and then turned toward heaven, and He made them seven Heavens.<sup>21</sup> He has knowledge of all things.<sup>22 (29)</sup>

When your Lord told the angels, "I will place a steward<sup>23</sup> on earth," they said, "Will you put someone there who will corrupt it and shed blood, while we glorify, praise, and sanctify You?" He said, "I know things you do not know."<sup>(30)</sup> He taught Adam the names of everything and then showed them to the angels. He said, "Tell me the names of these if you are so sure of yourselves."<sup>(31)</sup> They said, "May You be exalted in your glory! We know nothing except what You have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, the Wise."<sup>24 (32)</sup> He said, "Adam, tell them their names." When he told them their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you show and what you hide."<sup>(33)</sup>

When we told the angels, "Bow down to Adam," they all bowed down, except for Iblīs,<sup>25</sup> who refused out of arrogance. He was one who denied the truth.<sup>(34)</sup> We said, "Adam, live with your spouse in the Heavenly Garden, and eat freely whatever you want, but do not come near this tree, or you will be unjust."<sup>(35)</sup> But Satan made them slip and caused them to be expelled from where they were, and We said, "Go down, you will be enemies to one another, and on earth you will have a temporary abode and livelihood."<sup>(36)</sup> Then Adam received word from his Lord, and He accepted his repentance. He alone is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Mercy Giver.<sup>26 (37)</sup> We said, "All of you go down<sup>27</sup> from it (the Garden). When my guidance comes to you, whoever follows my guidance will not have fear or grieve."<sup>(38)</sup> Those who deny the truth and reject our revelations are headed for Hell, where they will be eternally.<sup>(39)</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Matthew 13:10-11 Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"<sup>11</sup> He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

<sup>21</sup> The Arabic word *sama* means both "Heaven" or "sky." The number "seven" should be understood figuratively rather than literally, i.e., God has created many heavens. He has accomplished many acts of creation. As in Hebrew or Persian, Arabic often uses numbers to convey the sense of "multiplicity" rather than a specific number.

<sup>22</sup> 1 John 3:20 "... whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything."

<sup>23</sup> The word in Arabic is *khalifah*, sometimes translated "vicegerent." In Islamic political discourse, the term has taken on a number of meanings to refer to rulers who succeeded Prophet Muhammad's political authority. Here it denotes man's rightful supremacy on earth.

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 40 This entire chapter declares the greatness of God, including His omniscience (All-Knowing) and wisdom.

<sup>25</sup> *Iblīs* is the proper name given in the Qur'an to the heavenly being who rebelled and refused to obey God's order to bow down to Adam. He is later referred to as Satan.

<sup>26</sup> Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us. . . .

<sup>27</sup> means "to go down from a higher place or state of being to a lower , *lhbita* ,The Arabic word placeor state of being."

Children of Israel, remember my grace which I gave you. Fulfill your promise, and I will fulfill My promise, as I am the One you should revere.

<sup>(40)</sup> Believe in my revelation,<sup>28</sup> confirming the revelations that you already have.<sup>29</sup> Do not be the first to deny it, and do not barter away my verses for trivial gain, but be mindful of Me.<sup>(41)</sup> And do not mix truth with error or knowingly hide the truth.<sup>(42)</sup> Perform prayers, and pay the purifying alms, and kneel together with those who are kneeling.<sup>(43)</sup> As you read the Book, do you command others to be virtuous and yet forget yourselves? Don't you comprehend?<sup>30 (44)</sup> Seek help in endurance and prayers. (Doing this) is a burden, except for the humble,<sup>(45)</sup> who assume they will meet their Lord, and they will return to Him.<sup>31 (46)</sup>

Children of Israel, remember my grace which I gave you. I preferred<sup>32</sup> you above all mankind.<sup>33 (47)</sup> And beware of a day when no soul can benefit another soul, nor will any intercession be accepted on its behalf, nor will any ransom be accepted from it; nor will they be helped.<sup>(48)</sup> When We rescued you from Pharaoh's people, who subjected you to malicious punishment, slaughtering your sons and sparing only your women, it was a great trial from your Lord.<sup>34 (49)</sup> When We divided the sea for you, and rescued you and drowned Pharaoh's people as you watched,<sup>(50)</sup> when We appointed for Moses (Musa) forty nights, then you chose to worship the calf in his absence, and were unjust.<sup>35 (51)</sup> Afterwards, We pardoned you so that you might give thanks.<sup>36 (52)</sup>

We gave Moses the Book and (the *furqaan*) a standard<sup>37</sup> by which We judge right from wrong, so that you might be guided.<sup>(53)</sup> Then Moses told his people, "My people, you have sinned against yourselves by

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<sup>28</sup> The Qur'an.

<sup>29</sup> The Torah.

<sup>30</sup> Romans 2:3 Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God?

<sup>31</sup> Romans 14:12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

<sup>32</sup> "God preferred them by sending them prophets and revelation, but they often disobeyed."

See Qur'an 3:112

<sup>33</sup> Or, "the worlds."

<sup>34</sup> Exodus 14:31 Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

<sup>35</sup> Exodus 31-33 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin; they have made for themselves gods of gold. <sup>32</sup> But now, if you will only forgive their sin—but if not, blot me out of the book that you have written." <sup>33</sup> But the Lord said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book."

<sup>36</sup> Revelation 11:17 We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. Psalm 136:26 O give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever."

<sup>37</sup> The Arabic word, "*furqaan*," here translated as "standard," comes from the root "*faraqa*," "to differ, or to distinguish," and may refer to the Ten Commandments. In any case, it is something given to Moses and then to Muhammad.

worshipping the calf, so repent<sup>38</sup> to your Creator and then kill yourself.<sup>39</sup> That would be better for you in your Creator's sight. Then He turned to you, accepting your repentance. He is always forgiving,<sup>40</sup> the Mercy Giver.<sup>(54)</sup> Then you said, "Moses, we will not believe you until we see God clearly." Thunderbolts overtook you as you watched.<sup>(55)</sup> Then We resurrected you after your death, so that you might give thanks.<sup>41 (56)</sup> and We provided shade for you with clouds and sent manna and quail down to you (saying,) "Eat of the good things We have provided you."<sup>42</sup> They did not cheat us, but they cheated themselves.<sup>(57)</sup> And when We said, "Enter this village and eat freely whatever you want. But enter the door humbly, and say, 'Relieve<sup>43</sup> us from the burden of our sins.' We will forgive your sins and increase the rewards of those who do good."<sup>44 (58)</sup> Those who were unjust substituted words other than those given to them, so We sent down a plague from heaven on the unjust for their disobedience.<sup>45 (59)</sup>

When Moses prayed for water for his people, We said, "Strike the rock with your staff," and twelve springs broke forth from it.<sup>46</sup> All people knew their drinking place. Eat and drink from God's provision, and do not act unjustly on earth by spreading corruption.<sup>(60)</sup> When you said, "Moses, we will not put up with just one kind of food. Pray to your Lord for us. Let Him bring us herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions that grow from the earth for us."<sup>47</sup> He said, "Will you trade what is good for what is less? Go down to Egypt.<sup>48</sup> You can have all that you ask." Humiliation and misery struck them, and they incurred the wrath of God because they persistently

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<sup>38</sup> Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

<sup>39</sup> Exodus 32:27-29 He said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Put your sword on your side, each of you! Go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill your brother, your friend, and your neighbor."<sup>28</sup> The sons of Levi did as Moses commanded, and about three thousand of the people fell that day. <sup>29</sup> Moses said, "Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of a son or a brother, and so have brought a blessings on yourselves this day."

<sup>40</sup> Daniel 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him.

<sup>41</sup> "After your death." This is a sign from God to the people of Israel that He is the only one who gives or takes life. Even if some of them refused to kill themselves, God already made them to die.

<sup>42</sup> Psalm 105:40 They asked, and He brought quail, and gave them food from heaven in abundance.

<sup>43</sup> Or, humiliation or abasement or alleviation

<sup>44</sup> Isaiah 1:18 Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

<sup>45</sup> "Immorality" or "transgression."

<sup>46</sup> Exodus 17:6 "I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

<sup>47</sup> Numbers 11:1, 5, 6 Now when the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, the Lord heard it and his anger was kindled. <sup>5</sup> "We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;" <sup>6</sup> but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

<sup>48</sup> Numbers 14:3 "Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become booty; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

rejected His messages and killed prophets <sup>49</sup> contrary to all that is right. They were transgressors. <sup>(61)</sup> Truly those Believers in this message, as well as the Jews, <sup>50</sup> the Christians, <sup>51</sup> and the Sabeans, <sup>52</sup> whoever believes in God and in the Last Day and does righteous deeds will have their reward from their Lord, and will not have fear, nor will they grieve. <sup>53 (62)</sup>

When We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain over you, (We said), "Hold fast to what We give you, and remember what is in it, so that you may be mindful of God. <sup>(63)</sup> Even after that you turned away. If not for the grace and mercy of God towards you, you would have ended up being lost. <sup>(64)</sup> You know those of you who profane the Sabbath, <sup>54</sup> so We told them, "Be despicable apes." <sup>(65)</sup> We made them a warning for their time and for all times to come and a sermon for those that are mindful of God. <sup>(66)</sup>

When Moses told his people, "God commands you to sacrifice a cow," <sup>55</sup> they said, "Are you making fun of us?" Moses answered, "God forbid that I should be so foolish." <sup>(67)</sup> They said, "Pray to your Lord for us that He would clarify for us which kind." He said, "He says that it is a heifer, <sup>56</sup> neither old, nor virgin, but middle-aged, so do as you are told. <sup>(68)</sup> They said, "Pray to your Lord for us to clarify to us what color she should be." Moses said, "He says it is a yellow heifer, bright yellow-colored, pleasing to look at." <sup>(69)</sup> They said, "Pray to your Lord for us, to clarify which one she is. The heifers look alike to us. If God wills, we will be guided." <sup>(70)</sup> Moses said, "He says it is a cow never yoked <sup>57</sup> to plow the ground, or to water the furrows, whole and without blemish." They said, "Now you have spoken the truth." They almost missed the opportunity to sacrifice it. <sup>(71)</sup> When you

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<sup>49</sup> Matthew 23:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

<sup>50</sup> Or, those who repented and turned back to the truth. This refers to the Jews, probably when they repented after worshipping the golden calf idol (Surahs 2:54, 92, 7:138, 148-150.).

<sup>51</sup> The word "Christians" (in Arabic -*Maseheein*) is never mentioned in the Qur'an. Instead, the Qur'an mentions the word, "Nasara" which is historically equated by Muslim commentators to Christians, but its origins are not clear. Some have suggested that the word is derived from Nazareth, the town where Jesus was brought up, as it is implied in the Gospel; Matthew 2:23 and Acts 24:5. Others believe that it is because the Arabic word, "ansaar" (helpers/supporters) (root: *nasr*) refers to the followers of Jesus who are called supporters of God in the Qur'an (Surah 61:14, 3:52).

<sup>52</sup> Sabeans are mentioned only three times in the Qur'an (here, 5:69 and 22:17). They may have been followers of John the Baptizer, as some by that name still exist in Iraq today; a tribe of Christians in northern Arabia known for praying seven times a day; or the Mandeans. Whoever they are, they seem to have been monotheists.

<sup>53</sup> This verse promises all monotheists—Jews, Christians and Sabeans as well as Muslims—eternal comfort if they believe in God and the Last Day, and do good deeds.

<sup>54</sup> Ezekiel 20:21 But the children rebelled against Me; they did not follow my statutes, and were not careful to observe my ordinances, by whose observances everyone shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. Then I thought I would pour out my wrath and spend my anger against them in the wilderness.

<sup>55</sup> Numbers 19:2 This is a statute of the law that the Lord has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish and on which no yoke has been laid.

<sup>56</sup> Numbers 19:2 (Note that Numb. 19:2 does not specify an age.)

<sup>57</sup> Deuteronomy 21:3 The elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer that has never been worked, one that has not pulled in the yoke;

(Israelites) killed a person and fought about it, God brought to light what you hid. <sup>(72)</sup> So We said, "Strike the body with parts of the cow; in this way, God brings life from death and shows you his signs, so you might comprehend." <sup>(73)</sup> Then, after that, your hearts were hardened. They were as hard as stone or harder. For there are rocks from which streams gush forth, and some from which water flows when they split open, and others which fall down in awe of God. He is not unaware of what you do. <sup>(74)</sup>

Do you really hope that they will be true to you when some of them heard God's words, comprehended it and then knowingly altered it? <sup>(75)</sup> When they meet believers, they say, "We believe," and when they are alone by themselves, they say, "Do you tell them what God has disclosed to you so they dispute with you about it with your Lord?" Have you no sense? <sup>(76)</sup> Do they not know that God knows what they conceal and what they reveal? <sup>(77)</sup>

Some of them are illiterate, and know only a little of the Book. They are guessing. <sup>(78)</sup> How terrible it is to those who write the Book with their hands and then say, "This is from God," to sell it for a little money. <sup>(79)</sup> How terrible it is for them for what their hands have written, and how terrible for them what they have earned. <sup>(80)</sup> They said, "we will spend only a few days in Hell." <sup>(81)</sup> Have you made a covenant with God that He will not break? Or do you say what you do not know about God? <sup>(82)</sup> Truly, those who do evil and are caught in their sins will be in Hell eternally. <sup>(83)</sup> Those who believe and do good deeds will go to Heaven, where they will remain eternally. <sup>(84)</sup>

We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: <sup>(85)</sup> worship God alone, be good to parents, relatives, orphans and the poor, speak nicely to people, perform prayers and pay the purifying alms. <sup>(86)</sup> Then, all but a few of you turned away as you weren't interested. <sup>(87)</sup> We took your pledge; you do not shed one another's blood or drive one another from your homelands. Then you acknowledged it and witnessed it. <sup>(88)</sup> (Nevertheless), here you are, you kill one another and expel some of your own people from their homeland. You assist each other against your own in sin and hostility. But when they come to you as captives, you ransom them, though it is forbidden for you to expel them. Do you believe in part of the Book but not in the rest? What is the repayment for those of you who do that but humiliation in this world? And on the day of resurrection they will be sent to the severest punishment. <sup>(89)</sup> God is aware of what you do. <sup>(90)</sup> The punishment of those who trade this life for the hereafter will not be lightened, and they will not be saved. <sup>(91)</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> God's warning against those scholars who are responsible for corrupting the text of the Bible and misleading their followers to make money.

<sup>59</sup> This reference is particularly for Jews who believed that the Children of Israel would suffer only very limited punishment for their sins on the Day of Judgment, and would be quickly reprieved by virtue of their belonging to "the chosen people," a belief which the Qur'an rejects.

<sup>60</sup> Deuteronomy 6:25 "If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right."

<sup>61</sup> The word "zakat" before Islam, meant "charity."

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 25:46 "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

<sup>63</sup> Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

We gave Moses the Book and he was followed by other messengers and (We) gave Jesus (Esa), the son of Mary, all evidence of the truth, <sup>(64)</sup> and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. <sup>(65)</sup> Whenever a messenger comes to you with a message you do not like, you become arrogant calling some of them liars, and murdering some of them. <sup>(67)</sup> They said, "Our hearts are hardened." God has rejected them in their unbelief. How little they believe! <sup>(68)</sup> And when a Book came to them from God confirming what they have, <sup>(66)</sup> while they were themselves asking for help against the unbelievers, they did not believe the Book. Although they recognized (the truth), they denied it. God rejects the unbelievers. <sup>(69)</sup> They sell their souls for nothing of value, denying what God has revealed, out of resentment that God reveals his grace to whom he will of his worshipers. They angered God more and more. The unbelievers will have disgraceful punishment. <sup>(70)</sup>

<sup>(90)</sup> If they are told, "Believe in what God has revealed," they say, "We believe in what was revealed to us." They do not believe in what came afterward, though It is the truth confirming what they have already received. Say, "Why then do you murder God's prophets beforehand, if you are believers?" <sup>(88)</sup> <sup>(91)</sup> Moses came to you with clear signs, but then when he was away you chose to worship the calf <sup>(69)</sup> and were unjust. <sup>(92)</sup>

And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain <sup>(70)</sup> above you, saying, "Cling firmly to what we bring you and listen," they said, "We listened and disobeyed." Then, in their unbelief, their hearts were filled with the (worship of the) calf. Say, "It is dreadful what your faith commands you to do, if you are in fact believers." <sup>(93)</sup> Say, "If you have a clear and exclusive title to Heaven, you should long for death, if you are telling the truth." <sup>(94)</sup> They will not wish for it at all because of what their hands have done. God knows the unjust. <sup>(95)</sup> You will discover that they cling to life even more than the idol-worshippers. Any of them would desire to live a thousand years, but none will avoid punishment by living a long time. God sees what they do. <sup>(96)</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> John 1:17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

<sup>65</sup> Luke 4:1-2 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished.

<sup>66</sup> The Qur'an confirms the truth in "the Book" that existed in the days of Muhammad.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

<sup>68</sup> Luke 11:48-50 "So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. <sup>49</sup> Therefore also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute, <sup>50</sup> so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world.'"

<sup>69</sup> Exodus 32:1-4 When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." <sup>2</sup> Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

<sup>70</sup> Mount Sinai.



Say, "Those that are enemies to Gabriel should know that he has brought it (the Qur'an) down to your heart by God's permission, confirming what is already revealed and a guidance and good news to believers."<sup>(97)</sup> For anyone who is an enemy of God, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, God is the enemy of the unbelievers.<sup>(71) (98)</sup>

We have revealed clear verses and miracles to you. Only those who defy God would not believe them.<sup>(99)</sup> Whenever they make a covenant, some of them violate it. Most of them do not believe.<sup>(100)</sup>

And when a messenger from God comes to them confirming what they have, some recipients of the Book throw God's Book behind their backs as if they knew nothing of it.<sup>(72) (101)</sup> Instead they followed what the evil ones used to practice during Solomon's reign, not that Solomon himself was one who denied the truth; it was the evil ones who denied the truth. They taught people witchcraft and what was revealed in Babylon to the two angels, Harut and Marut, although these two never taught it to anyone without first declaring, "We are but a temptation to evil: do not deny (God's) truth." From these two, they learned what can separate a man from his wife, although they harm no one with it except by God's permission. They learned what harmed them, not what benefited them, knowing full well that whoever acquired (this knowledge) would have no share in the Hereafter. Surely, evil is the (price) for which they sold their souls, if only they realized that.<sup>(102)</sup> If they had believed and been God conscious, God would have rewarded them well, if they only knew it.<sup>(103)</sup>

Believers, do not say, "Listen to us." but rather say, "Have patience and listen to us." Those who reject the truth will have painful punishment.<sup>(73) (104)</sup> Neither those People of the Book<sup>(74)</sup> who deny the truth, nor the idol worshippers would like anything good to come down to you from your Lord. But God assigns his mercy to whom he wills.<sup>(75)</sup> God has boundless grace.<sup>(105)</sup> Any verse (from the previous Book) We cause to be abrogated or forgotten We will replace with one like it or better. Do you not know that God has power over all things?<sup>(76) (106)</sup> Do you not know that God owns the

<sup>71</sup> According to several authentic traditions, some of the learned men from among the Jews of Medina described Gabriel as "the enemy of the Jews," for three distinct reasons: firstly, all the prophecies of the misfortune which were to befall the Jews in the course of their early history were said to have been transmitted to them by Gabriel, who thus became in their eyes, a "harbinger of evil" (in contrast to the angel Michael, whom they regarded as a bearer of happy predictions and, therefore, as their "friend"); secondly, because the Qur'an states repeatedly that it was Gabriel who conveyed its message to Muhammad, whereas the Jews were of the opinion that only a descendant of Israel could legitimately claim divine revelation; and, thirdly, because the Qur'an - revealed through Gabriel - abounds in criticism of certain Jewish beliefs and attitudes, and describes them as opposed to the genuine message of Moses.

<sup>72</sup> The Qur'an is probably referring here to Deuteronomy 18:15-18, prophecies related to the coming of the Arabian Prophet (a prophet from among their brethren); prophecies, the Jews rejected.

<sup>73</sup> Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

<sup>74</sup> The term "People of the Book" is generally understood to mean Christians and Jews.

<sup>75</sup> Romans 9:15, 18 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomsoever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomsoever he chooses.

<sup>76</sup> Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

Kingdom of the heavens and the earth? Besides God, you have no helper or protector.<sup>(77) (107)</sup> Or do you want to ask your Messenger as Moses was asked previously? Whoever exchanges faith for unbelief has strayed from the straight path.<sup>(108)</sup> Even after truth became clear to them, many of the People of the Book, out of their selfish envy, wish they could turn you back to unbelief after you became believers. So forgive and forbear until God makes His will clear. God has power over all things.<sup>(78) (109)</sup>

Perform the prayers and give the purifying alms.<sup>(79)</sup> Whatever good you do here you will find later with God. God discerns what you do.<sup>(110)</sup>

They said, "Only Jews and Christians<sup>(80)</sup> will enter heaven." That is their wishful thinking. Say, "Present your proof if you are telling the truth."<sup>(111)</sup> Rather, whoever turns his face in submission towards God<sup>(81)</sup> while acting generously have their reward from their Lord, and will neither fear nor grieve.<sup>(82) (112)</sup> The Jews said, "Christians are without valid grounds," and the Christians said, "The Jews are without valid grounds," while they chant the Book. The ignorant speak similarly. God will judge between them on the day of resurrection concerning their differences.<sup>(83) (113)</sup>

Who could be more unjust than the one who forbids God's name to be mentioned in his places of worship and then tries to get them destroyed? They should be afraid to enter them. They will have shame in this world and terrible punishment<sup>(84)</sup> in the Hereafter.<sup>(114)</sup> To God belong the East and the West, and His face is wherever you turn. God is Infinite, All-Knowing.<sup>(85) (115)</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hosea 13:4 Yet I have been the Lord your God ever since the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior.

<sup>78</sup> Job 42:2 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

<sup>79</sup> The word "zakat" here probably means "charity."

<sup>80</sup> The word "Christians" (in Arabic - *Maseheein*) is never mentioned in the Qur'an. Instead the Qur'an mentions the word, "nasara," and it is historically equated by Muslim commentators to Christians, but its origins are not clear. Some have suggested that the word is derived from "Nazareth," the town where Jesus was brought up, as it is implied in the Gospel, (Matthew 2:23, Acts 24:5). Others believe that it is because the Arabic word, "ansaar," (helpers/supporters) (root: *nasr*) refers to the followers of Jesus who are called "supporters of God" in the Qur'an (61:14, 3:52).

<sup>81</sup> Lit., "who submits his face to God." Since the face of a person is the most expressive part of his body, it is used in classical Arabic to denote one's whole personality, or whole being. This expression, repeated in the Qur'an several times, provides a perfect definition of Islam, which is derived from the root-verb *aslama*, "he submits himself," - meaning, "self-submit (to God)." And it is in this sense that the terms, "Islam" and "Muslim" are used throughout the Qur'an.

<sup>82</sup> According to the Qur'an, salvation is not reserved for any particular "religion," but is open to everyone who consciously realizes the oneness of God, surrenders himself to His will and, by living righteously, gives practical evidence to this spiritual attitude.

<sup>83</sup> In other words, "God will confirm the truth of what was true (in their respective beliefs) and show the falseness of what was false (therein)," (Muhammad 'Abduh in *Manar* I, 428). The Qur'an maintains throughout that there is a substantial element of truth in all faiths based on divine revelation, and that their subsequent divergences are the result of "wishful beliefs" <sup>(111)</sup> and a gradual corruption of the original teachings. (See also Surah 22: 67-69.)

<sup>84</sup> Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

<sup>85</sup> Psalm 139:4-6 Even before there is a word on my tongue, O Lord, You know it completely.

<sup>5</sup> You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. <sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is so high, I cannot attain to it.

They said, "God has taken a son." May He be exalted in His glory. All things in the heavens and on the earth belong to Him.<sup>86</sup> All things devoutly obey His will,<sup>(116)</sup> the Originator of the heavens and the earth.<sup>87</sup> If He decrees something, he simply says to it, "Be,"<sup>88</sup> and It is.<sup>(117)</sup> and the ignorant said, "If only God would speak to us or give us a sign." Those before them spoke similarly.<sup>89</sup> Their hearts are similar. We have made signs clear to people who are certain.<sup>(118)</sup> We have sent you with the Truth as a bearer of good news and a warner. You will not be held accountable for those who are going to Hell.<sup>(119)</sup> The Jews and Christians will not be pleased with you until you follow their ways. Say, "God's guidance is the guidance." If you follow their whims, after having received knowledge, you will not have anyone to protect you from God or to help you.<sup>(120)</sup> Those to whom We gave the Book and read it the way it should be read, believe in it, and whoever denies It is a doomed.<sup>(121)</sup>

O Children of Israel, remember my grace which I gave you and that I preferred you above all People.<sup>(122)</sup> And beware of a day when no soul stands in for another. Ransom will not be accepted, nor will intercession benefit any of them, nor will any be helped.<sup>(123)</sup>

When God tested Abram with certain words and he fulfilled them, God said, "I will make you a leader of men." He said, "And (what about) my seed?"<sup>90</sup> He said, "My covenant does not extend to the unjust."<sup>(124)</sup>

We made the House<sup>91</sup> a destination and a sanctuary for people, and made the place where Abram stood a place of prayer. We commanded Abram<sup>92</sup> and Ishmael to purify My House for those who walk around it, the devout and those who kneel and bow down.<sup>93</sup> When Abram said, "Lord, make this town safe."<sup>94</sup> Provide fruit for its inhabitants who believe in God and the last day." He said, "I will let them who deny the truth have

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<sup>86</sup> Psalm 89:11 The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all that is in it—you have founded them. Deuteronomy 10:14 Although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it.

<sup>87</sup> "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," Isaiah 42:5, "Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes with it, who give breath to people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: Isaiah 45:18, "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos; he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other."

<sup>88</sup> Psalm 33: 9 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 11:16 Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven.

<sup>90</sup> Genesis 15:2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

<sup>91</sup> "al bayt" lit. "the House (of Worship)"- mentioned here is the Ka'bah in Mecca. Its foundation goes back by Arab tradition to Adam. The Qur'an teaches that it was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael as the first temple ever dedicated to the One God. Psalm 84:7 "As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Four rites are enumerated here: 1. to walk around the Ka'bah is the seven-fold circumambulation (tawaf) of the Ka'bah; 2. the Devout retire to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer (l'tikaf); 3. those who kneel assume the posture of bending the back in prayer (ruku'); 4. bow down, prostrate oneself to the ground in prayer (sujud). Cleanliness and purity are required for the sake of the devotees who undertake these rites.

<sup>94</sup> Hebrews 11:10 For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

pleasure for a short time, then I will force them into the punishment of Hell,<sup>95</sup> a dreadful destiny."<sup>(126)</sup>

When Abram and Ishmael constructed the foundations of the sanctuary,<sup>96</sup> (they prayed), "May Our Lord, accept this work from us. You hear all and know all."<sup>(127)</sup> Our Lord make us submit ourselves to you, and make from of our descendants a nation submissive to You. Show us how to properly worship You and accept our repentance, for You are the one who always accepts our repentance and are the Merciful-to-all.<sup>97</sup> May Our Lord send them a messenger from among them who recites your revelations, teaching them the Book and Wisdom, and purify them. You are the Almighty,<sup>98</sup> the Wise.<sup>99</sup>

Who but a fool would abandon Abram's faith? We have chosen him in this world, and in the hereafter; he is righteous.<sup>(130)</sup> When his Lord told him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds."<sup>(131)</sup> Abram commanded his sons to do the same as did Jacob, "Sons, your God is One, He has chosen this faith for you, so do not die unless you have submitted to Him."<sup>(132)</sup>

Or were you witnesses when Jacob was on his deathbed,<sup>101</sup> when he asked his sons, "What will you worship after I die?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers Abram<sup>102</sup> and Ishmael and Isaac. (He is) one God and We have submitted to Him."<sup>(133)</sup> That nation has passed away. They have what they deserve, and you have what you deserve. You will not be questioned about what they did.<sup>(134)</sup>

They said, "Become Jews or Christians, and you will be guided." Say, rather, "We will follow the faith of Abram, who turned away from all that is false,<sup>103</sup> and was not one who ascribed divinity to anything other than God."<sup>(135)</sup> Say,<sup>104</sup> (Prophet) "We believe in God and what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abram, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not distinguish between any of them, and we are submitted to Him."<sup>(136)</sup> If they believe as you believe, they are guided, but

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<sup>95</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:9 These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

<sup>96</sup> The Ka'bah and the Holy Sanctuary around it.

<sup>97</sup> Psalm 116:5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful. Psalm 103:8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

<sup>98</sup> Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength—who has resisted him, and succeeded?

<sup>99</sup> Proverbs 2:6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

<sup>100</sup> Psalm 47:2 For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a great King over all the earth.

<sup>101</sup> The death-bed scene is described in the Jewish tradition in Genesis 49 and Hebrews 11:21. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, "bowing in worship over the top of his staff."

<sup>102</sup> In classical Arabic, as in ancient Hebrew usage, the term "ab" ("father who raises") was applied not only to the direct male parent, but also to grandfathers, uncles, distant ancestors, as well as direct ascendants.

<sup>103</sup> "Haniif" is derived from the verb "hanafa": lit. - "he inclined towards a right state or tendency."

In pre-Islamic times, this term had a definitely monotheistic connotation, and was used to describe a man who turned away from sin and worldliness, and from all dubious beliefs, especially idol-worship.

<sup>104</sup> The command, "say" in Arabic, can be applied in the singular or plural form. It is usually a command to the Prophet Muhammad from God, at the beginning of a sentence or as a singular command. This is clear in the Arabic, but we opted to add Prophet in brackets for clarity.

if they turn away, they are in dispute. God will protect you from them, and He hears all and knows all.<sup>105 (137)</sup> This is God's identifying color, and who is better than God at giving us a color of identity? And it is He Whom we worship.<sup>(138)</sup>

Say, "Do you argue with us about God, when He is our Lord and your Lord? We have our works and you have your works, and we are sincere towards him.<sup>(139)</sup> Or do you say that Abram, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians?" Say, "Do you know more than God does?" And who is more wicked than the one who conceals a testimony with him from God? God is never unaware of what you do."<sup>(140)</sup> That nation has passed away. It has received what it deserves, and you will receive what you deserve. You are not accountable for what they did.<sup>106 (141)</sup>

Foolish people will say, "What turned them away from their former prayer direction?"<sup>107</sup> Say, "East and West belong to God. He guides whoever wants to be guided to a straight path."<sup>108 (142)</sup> We have made you a moderate nation,<sup>109</sup> so you may bear witness to humanity and the messenger may bear witness to you.<sup>110</sup> We made your former prayer direction only so that we could know who would follow the messenger and who would turn away from him. This change was too much to bear except for those whom God has guided. God will surely not lose sight of your faith. God is Compassionate and Merciful-to-all people.<sup>(143)</sup> We have seen you turning your face toward the heavens so We will certainly turn a prayer direction for you that will please you. So turn your face toward the Sacred Sanctuary in Mecca, and wherever you are, turn your faces toward it. Those who were given the Book know that it is the truth from their Lord. God is aware of what they do.<sup>(144)</sup> If you brought every revelation to those who were given the Book, they would not follow your prayer direction, and you will not follow their prayer direction, and some of them do not follow each others' prayer direction. If you follow their desires after knowledge has come to you, you will be unjust.<sup>(145)</sup> Those to whom we gave the Book know it as they know their children,<sup>111</sup> but a group of them knowingly hide the truth.<sup>(146)</sup> This is the truth from your Lord, so do not doubt.<sup>(147)</sup> To every community there is a direction to turn to, so compete to do good deeds

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<sup>105</sup> 1 John 3:20 . . . for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

<sup>106</sup> The Qur'an stresses that each person is responsible for his / her own deeds. In that sense, a child is not responsible for his father's sins.

<sup>107</sup> The change of the prayer direction for Muslims from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah in Mecca; the first temple historically dedicated to the One God. It was built around a 1000 years before the Temple in Jerusalem. See <http://tinyurl.com/z9otnc2>.

<sup>108</sup> Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

<sup>109</sup> "Moderate community" is a community that avoids extremes in either sides and keeps an equitable balance. It should be realistic in its appreciation of man's nature and capabilities, rejecting both over indulgence and exaggerated asceticism.

<sup>110</sup> "Your way of life is to be an example to all mankind, just as the messenger is an example to you." (Safi Kaskas) Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

<sup>111</sup> Or, sons.

wherever you may be. God will bring you all. God has power over all things.<sup>112 (148)</sup>

Wherever you go, turn your face toward the Sacred Sanctuary. This is the truth from your Lord. God is aware of what you do.<sup>(149)</sup> Wherever you go, turn your face toward the Sacred Sanctuary, and wherever you all are, turn your faces toward it, so that people should have no argument against you. Except for the unjust among them, do not fear them, but fear Me,<sup>113</sup> and I will complete my grace to you, so that you might be guided.<sup>114 (150)</sup> For this We sent one of your own people as a messenger reciting our revelations to you, purifying you, teaching you the Book and Wisdom, and teaching you what you didn't know.<sup>(151)</sup> So remember Me, and I will remember you. Thank Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.<sup>115 (152)</sup>

Believers, seek help through patience and prayers. God helps those who endure in hard times.<sup>116 (153)</sup> Do not say that those killed in God's path are dead; they are alive, though you do not realize it.<sup>(154)</sup> We will certainly send you trials of fear, hunger, and the loss of wealth, people and crops, so give good news to the steadfast,<sup>(155)</sup> who say when disaster strikes them, "We belong to God and to Him will return."<sup>117 (156)</sup> It is they who have their Lord's grace and mercy, and they are guided.<sup>(157)</sup>

Safa and Marwa<sup>118</sup> are among the rites of God. Whoever makes the Pilgrimage to the House, or performs the Umrah must stride between them.<sup>119</sup> Regarding those who voluntarily do good, God is grateful and All-Knowing.<sup>(158)</sup> Those who hide evidence of the truth and the guidance revealed after We made it clear to the people in the Book, those God will reject, and they will be rejected by others,<sup>(159)</sup> except for those who repent and make amends and declare the truth. I will accept their repentance. I am the Ever-Forgiving, the Merciful-to-all.<sup>(160)</sup> God will reject from His mercy those who denied the truth, who died in their unbelief, and they will be cursed by God, angels and all people.<sup>(161)</sup> They will be there (in Hell) forever, and their punishment will not be lightened, nor will they be relieved.<sup>(162)</sup> Your God is one God.<sup>120</sup> There is no God but Him,<sup>121</sup> the

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<sup>112</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:6 and said: "O Lord, God of our ancestors, are you not the God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand are power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you."

<sup>113</sup> Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

<sup>114</sup> Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>115</sup> Psalm 50:23 Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me; to those who go the right way I will show the salvation of God.

<sup>116</sup> Romans 12:12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, preserve in prayer.

<sup>117</sup> Romans 14:12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

<sup>118</sup> Ishmael was thirsty and crying. His mother Hagar was running between Safa and Marwa looking for water. Genesis 21:17 God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there."

<sup>119</sup> In celebration of God's mercy on Hagar and her son, Ishmael, where God made the water flow from the well of Zamzam, a few yards east of the Ka'bah. Millions of pilgrims visit the well each year while performing the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages, in order to drink its water.

<sup>120</sup> Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' "

<sup>121</sup> Exodus 20:3 you shall have no other gods before me.



Merciful-to-all, the Mercy Giver.<sup>122 (163)</sup> The creation of the heavens and the earth,<sup>123</sup> the difference of night and day, the ships that sail the seas to benefit people, the rain God sends down to give life to a lifeless earth and all kinds of creatures that He scattered over it, the directing of the winds and clouds that run a course between heaven and earth, are all signs to people who comprehend.<sup>124 (164)</sup> Still some people equate others to God, and they love them as only God should be loved. Believers, love God more than anything. If the unjust could only see, and they will see when suffering becomes their destiny that all power is God's<sup>125</sup> and that God is severe in punishment.<sup>(165)</sup> When those who were followed disown their followers and all see punishment and are at their wit's end,<sup>(166)</sup> the followers will say, "If only we had another chance, we would disown them just as they have disowned us." Thus God will make them bitterly regret their works. They will not leave Hell.<sup>(167)</sup>

People, eat of what is permitted and delicious on earth. Do not follow Satan's steps; he is clearly your enemy.<sup>(168)</sup> He commands you to do evil and to behave shamelessly, and to say things about God you do not know.<sup>(169)</sup> If they are told, "Follow what God has revealed," they say, "Rather We will follow what we found our fathers doing." even though their fathers did not understand anything and were not guided.<sup>(170)</sup> Unbelievers are like ones who call out to that which hears nothing more than a scream and a cry. They are deaf, dumb, and blind; they do not comprehend.<sup>(171)</sup> Believers, eat the good things we provided you, and thank God, if you truly worship Him.<sup>(172)</sup> He has forbidden you to eat dead animals, blood, pork, and meat offered in any name other than God.<sup>126</sup> If someone is forced to do so unwillingly and unintentionally, he does not sin. God is forgiving and Merciful-to-all.<sup>127 (173)</sup>

Those who hide part of what God has revealed in the Book and barter it away for a small price will consume nothing in their bellies except fire, and God will neither speak to them on the Day of Resurrection nor purify them. They will have painful punishment.<sup>128 (174)</sup> It is they who accept

<sup>122</sup> Isaiah 63:9 . . . it was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

<sup>123</sup> Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Isaiah 42:5 Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it." Isaiah 45:18 For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the Lord, and there is no other.

<sup>124</sup> John 11:40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

<sup>125</sup> Psalm 29:4 The voice of the Lord is powerful, The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

<sup>126</sup> Acts 15:29 "That you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." Leviticus 11:7, 39 The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs and is cloven-footed, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. <sup>39</sup>If an animal of which you may eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening.

<sup>127</sup> Psalm 57:1-2 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by. <sup>2</sup>I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.

<sup>128</sup> Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' "

misguidance in exchange for guidance, and punishment in exchange for forgiveness. Yet they have no tolerance for the Fire!<sup>(175)</sup> That is because God revealed the Book in truth, and those who differed about the Book are deeply divided.<sup>(176)</sup>

Righteousness is not a matter of turning your faces eastward or westward. Rather, righteousness is believing in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the prophets; giving money for the love of Him to relatives, orphans, the poor, stranded travelers, beggars, and to free slaves;<sup>129</sup> performing prayers, paying the purifying alms; keeping promises, and enduring misery and hard times in time of threat. It is they who have proved themselves true, and it is they who are mindful of God.<sup>(177)</sup>

Believers, just retribution is prescribed in the case of those killed: a free person for a free person, a slave for a slave, a female for a female. But if the aggrieved brother pardons the guilty person, then grant any reasonable demand and pay with kindness. This is a relief and mercy from your Lord. However, if anyone then goes beyond these limits, he will have painful punishment.<sup>130 (178)</sup> You who have understanding, there is life for you (by practicing) just retribution, so that you may continue to be mindful of God.<sup>(179)</sup> If any of you is close to death and leaves possessions, it is an obligation that he includes fairly his parents and relatives in a will. This is a duty for those who are mindful of God.<sup>(180)</sup> But whoever changes the terms after hearing, it is a sin on the one who changes it. God hears all<sup>131</sup> and knows all.<sup>132 (181)</sup> He who is concerned that the person leaving a will is deviating from fairness or sinning and then reconciles them, he does not sin. God is forgiving<sup>133</sup> and Merciful-to-all.<sup>134 (182)</sup>

Believers, God commanded fasting for you just as he commanded it for those who came before you so that you might be mindful of God.<sup>(183)</sup> Fast for a specific number of days, and if someone is sick or traveling, then alternate days. For those who can afford a redemption should feed a poor person. If someone voluntarily does good, it is goodness for him. Fasting is good for you, if you only knew.<sup>(184)</sup> The month of Ramadan is when the Qur'an was revealed, giving guidance to humanity, and clear messages of guidance and a standard for distinguishing right from wrong. Whoever lives to see this month should fast. Whoever is sick or traveling should fast on alternate days. God wants it to be easy for you, not hard, so you can complete the days you missed. So praise God for his guidance to you, and

<sup>129</sup> Mark 10:21 Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. "

<sup>130</sup> Proverbs 15:10 Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof will die.

<sup>131</sup> Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. 1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he will hear us.

<sup>132</sup> Psalm 44:21 would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.

<sup>133</sup> Daniel 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him.

<sup>134</sup> Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

give thanks.<sup>135</sup> (185) If My worshipers ask you about Me, I am near, answering the prayer of the one who prays to Me.<sup>136</sup> They should respond to Me and believe in Me in order to be guided.<sup>137</sup> (186)

Sex with your wives is permitted on the night of a fast. They are clothing to you and you to them.<sup>138</sup> God knows that you used to betray yourselves, so He turned to you and forgave you. So now, have sex with them, and seek what God has ordained for you. (You may) eat and drink until you can distinguish a white thread from a black one in the dawn, then complete the fast until night. Do not have sex with them while you are secluded in the places of worship.<sup>139</sup> These are God's boundaries. So don't go near them. This is how God shows people His messages so that they would be mindful of Him.<sup>187</sup> Do not abuse other people's wealth using wrong means, and do not bribe authorities in order to take possession of other people's wealth knowingly and sinfully.<sup>188</sup>

They ask you about new moons. Say, "They show times for people and for the Hajj." It is not right to enter houses from the back. Rather, righteousness is to be mindful of God and to enter houses through their front doors. Always be mindful of God,<sup>140</sup> so that you may succeed.<sup>189</sup> Fight in God's path<sup>141</sup> against those who fight you, but do not be aggressors,<sup>142</sup> for God does not love aggressors.<sup>190</sup> (If they start a fight) kill them wherever you find them,<sup>143</sup> and expel them from wherever they

<sup>135</sup> Psalm 34:1-3 I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

<sup>2</sup> My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. <sup>3</sup>O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

<sup>136</sup> Psalm 34:4-5, I sought the Lord, and he answered me, an delivered me from all my fears.

<sup>5</sup> Look at him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. Psalm 50:15, "Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." Psalm 120:1 In my distress I cry to the Lord, that he may answer me. Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; earch, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."

<sup>137</sup> Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

<sup>138</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:1-4 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." <sup>2</sup>But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup>The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup>For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

<sup>139</sup> 1 Corinthian 7:5 Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

<sup>140</sup> Psalm 7:17 I will give the Lord the thanks due his righteousness, and sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High.

<sup>141</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/jgsoox6>.

<sup>142</sup> The Qur'an allows self-defense but doesn't allow aggression.

<sup>143</sup> To understand the verses 2:190-3 and those it is referring to, it is important to understand its context. Ibn Abbas, the famous companion of the Prophet and Qur'anic exegete, says that this passage was revealed in reference to the Quraysh. The Quraysh tribe had persecuted the Muslims and tortured them for thirteen years in Makkah. They had driven Muslims out of their homes, seized their properties and wealth, and fought battles against them after the Muslims sought refuge in Madinah. The Muslims were apprehensive about another attack occurring during their sacred pilgrimage when fighting was prohibited for Muslims. This is why these verses were revealed to reassure the Muslims that they would be able to defend themselves against a Qurayshi attack during pilgrimage. Such fighting never actually took place between them and Quraysh, for a peace agreement was upheld and the pilgrimage was permitted.

expelled you. For oppression<sup>144</sup> is worse than murder. Do not fight them at the Holy Sanctuary unless they fight you in it. If they fight you, kill them. That is the reward of the unbelievers.<sup>191</sup> If they stop, God is forgiving<sup>145</sup> and Merciful-to-all.<sup>192</sup> Fight them until there is no more persecution and until all worship is devoted only to God. If they stop, there should be no aggression<sup>146</sup> except toward the unjust.<sup>193</sup> Fight back during the sacred month: violation of sanctity (calls for) just retribution. Whoever attacks you, attack them as you were attacked. Be mindful of God, and know that God is with those who are mindful of Him.<sup>194</sup> Spend your money in the path of God, and do not contribute to your own destruction, but do good. God loves those who do good.<sup>195</sup>

Do your Hajj<sup>147</sup> and the Umrah<sup>148</sup> for God. If you are prevented, then send what offerings for sacrifice are possible, and do not shave your heads until the offerings arrive. If one of you is sick or has a head injury, then one can be redeemed by fasting, giving the purifying alms or offering a sacrifice. When you are secure, whoever breaks one's purification between the Umrah<sup>149</sup> until the Hajj should offer whatever sacrifice one can; or, if one cannot, one should fast three days during the Hajj, and then seven when one returns, ten days in all. This (observance) is for those whose families are not present at the Sacred Sanctuary. Be mindful of God, and know that God is severe in punishment.<sup>196</sup>

The Hajj is in the prescribed months; for him who decides to perform the Hajj, there should be no vulgarity, bad behavior, or argument during the Hajj. God knows the good deeds you do, so do lots of them. And take provision for yourself. The best of all provision is being mindful of God. So be mindful of Me, you who have insights.<sup>197</sup> It is not wrong to seek your Lord's blessing. So when you flow down from (Mount) Arafat,<sup>150</sup> remember God at the sacred place. Remember Him as He guided you after you had gone astray.<sup>198</sup> Then surge onward with all the others, and ask God's forgiveness. He is forgiving and Merciful-to-all.<sup>151</sup> (199) When you have completed your rituals,<sup>152</sup> remember God at least as much as you remember your fathers, or even more. Some people say, "Our Lord, bless us in this world."<sup>153</sup> They have no share in the Hereafter.<sup>200</sup> Others say, "Our Lord, give us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter."

<sup>144</sup> The Arabic term used here is "*fitna*," which can mean enticement, inducement etc., meaning that this situation was a reaction to oppression.

<sup>145</sup> Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us.

<sup>146</sup> The phrase: "there should be no aggression," was explained by Ibn Abbas to mean, "Do not attack women, children, elderly, or anyone who is not fighting against you," and thus, harming any non-combatants is deemed a transgression against God Almighty.

<sup>147</sup> The Mecca pilgrimage, Hajj, takes place once a year, in the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah. For more details, see [tinyurl.com/gwq753s](http://tinyurl.com/gwq753s).

<sup>148</sup> Umrah can be performed at any time of the year. The pilgrims are required to walk seven times around the Ka'bah and seven times between As-Safa and Al-Marwah.

<sup>149</sup> Umrah means to perform *tawaf* round the Ka'bah and *sa'i* between the hills of Al Safa and Al Marwah. See Glossary.

<sup>150</sup> Or, "come down from (Mount) Arafat like a flood," here and in the following two usages.

<sup>151</sup> Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in loving kindness.

<sup>152</sup> Or, "your sacrifices."

<sup>153</sup> Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Protect us from the punishment of Hell.”<sup>(201)</sup> Those have the portion of blessings they deserve. God is swift in reckoning judgment.<sup>(202)</sup> Remember God on certain appointed days. Whoever completes the process in two days is not guilty, and whoever stays longer out of minding God will not be guilty. Know that you will be gathered to Him.<sup>154 (203)</sup>

Among the people there is a kind of person whose view of this life pleases you. He even calls God as witness to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of (your) opponents.<sup>(204)</sup> When he leaves you, he goes throughout the land, spreading corruption, destroying crops and animals. God does not like corruption.<sup>(205)</sup> If he is told, “Be mindful of God,” arrogance leads him to sin. He is headed to Hell, a dreadful destination.<sup>(206)</sup> Some people give their life away, desiring God’s pleasure. God is compassionate<sup>155</sup> to His worshipers.<sup>(207)</sup> Believers, enter wholeheartedly into submission to God, and do not follow the steps of Satan; he is clearly your enemy.<sup>(208)</sup> If you should stumble after clear signs have come to you, be aware that God is Powerful<sup>156</sup> and Wise.<sup>157 (209)</sup>

Are these people waiting to see God and the angels coming to them in a formation of clouds? At that point, the matter would already be over. All matters are referred to God.<sup>158 (210)</sup> Ask the Children of Israel how many times We brought them clear signs. If anyone alters God’s grace after having received it, God is stern in punishment.<sup>(211)</sup> This life has been made attractive to the unbelievers, and they ridicule the believers, but those who are mindful of God will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. God provides bountifully for all He wills.<sup>(212)</sup> Human beings were (once) all one nation. God sent prophets carrying good news and warnings, and with them He sent the Book in Truth to judge between people in matters on which they differ. Yet rivalry between those who received it led them to disagreement, even after having received clear signs. God willingly guided believers to the truth about which they differed. God guides whoever wants to be guided into a straight path.<sup>159 (213)</sup>

Or do you think you will enter Heaven without experiencing the trials of those who were before you? They experienced misery, hard times, and they were so shaken that even their messenger and the believers with him

<sup>154</sup> Isaiah 34:16 Seek from the book of the Lord, and read: Not one of these will be missing; None will lack its mate. For His mouth has commanded, And His Spirit has gathered them.

<sup>155</sup> James 5:11 Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

<sup>156</sup> Job 11:7 “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?”

<sup>157</sup> Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength—who has resisted him, and succeeded? —

<sup>158</sup> Psalm 95:7-9 For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice! <sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup> when your ancestors tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

<sup>159</sup> Psalm 25:4-6 Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. <sup>5</sup> Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. <sup>6</sup> Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

cried, “When will God’s help arrive?” Truly, God’s help is near.<sup>160 (214)</sup> They ask you (Prophet) what they should contribute. Say, “The possessions you contribute should be for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, and the stranded traveler.” God is fully aware of all the good you do.<sup>(215)</sup>

Fighting<sup>161</sup> is ordained for you, even though it repulses you. You may hate something that is good for you, or love something that is evil for you. God knows, but you do not.<sup>(216)</sup> They ask you about fighting during the sacred month. Say, “Fighting in it is a big offense. But turning people away from the path of God, denying Him, preventing access to the Sacred Sanctuary, and expelling its residents is a bigger offense to God because sedition is a bigger offense than murder. They will not stop fighting you as long as there is the possibility of turning you away from your faith. But if any of you denies the faith and dies in a state of unbelief, their deeds will come to nothing in this world and the Hereafter. They will be in Hell, where they will remain forever.<sup>(217)</sup> Those who have believed and journeyed and struggled in God’s path, they may hope for God’s mercy.<sup>162</sup> God is forgiving and Merciful-to-all.<sup>(218)</sup>

They ask you about intoxicants<sup>163</sup> and gambling.<sup>164</sup> Say, “There is great sin in them, and also some benefit for people. The sin is greater than the benefit.” They ask you what they should contribute. Say, “Whatever you can possibly give.” Thus God makes signs clear to you so that you might think about<sup>(219)</sup> this world and the Hereafter. They ask you about orphans, say, “Improving their lot in life is good.”<sup>165</sup> If you mingle your affairs with them, (they are) your brethren.” God knows the difference between one who corrupts and one who improves things. If God had wanted, He would have made things difficult for you. God is strong and wise.<sup>(220)</sup>

Do not marry idolatrous women until they believe;<sup>166</sup> a believing slave woman is better than an idolatrous woman even if she pleases you. And do not give your women in marriage to idolaters until they believe. A believing slave is better than an idolater, even if he pleases you. They

<sup>160</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

<sup>161</sup> The word “qital,” refers to physical fighting. Fighting is ordained for Muslims in order to defend themselves and their rights, as well as the rights of others. The obligation to physically defend one’s rights, and to establish justice is elaborated in this verse from the Qur’an: “How could you refuse to fight in God’s cause for the helpless men, women and children who are screaming, “Lord! Lead us towards freedom, out of this land of oppressors! Through your grace, give us a protector and a helper!” (Surah 4:75)

<sup>162</sup> Psalm 42 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help.

<sup>163</sup> Leviticus 10:8-10 And the Lord spoke to Aaron: <sup>8</sup> “Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. <sup>9</sup> You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.”

<sup>164</sup> Proverbs 13:11 Wealth hastily gained will dwindle, but those who gather little by little will increase it.

<sup>165</sup> gion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for James 1:27 Reli orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

<sup>166</sup> Deuteronomy 7:3 Do not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness?



(idolaters) invite (you) to Hell, whereas God calls for Heaven and forgiveness by His permission. He makes his signs clear to people so that they may remember. <sup>(221)</sup>

They ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is painful, so keep away from women during their menstruation, and do not approach them until they are purified. When they are purified, <sup>167</sup> you may approach them the way God has ordained you." God loves the repentant and the purified. <sup>(222)</sup> Your wives are a field for you, so go into your fields however you want and do beforehand all that is necessary, being fully mindful of God and knowing that you will meet Him. Give good news to the believers. <sup>(223)</sup>

Do not use your oaths to God as an excuse for not doing good, being mindful of God, and making peace between people. God hears all <sup>168</sup> and knows all. <sup>(224)</sup> God does not blame you for foolishness in your oaths, but only as your hearts deserve. God is forgiving and gentle. <sup>(225)</sup> To those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives, there is a waiting period of four months; if they change their minds, God is forgiving <sup>169</sup> and Merciful-to-all. <sup>170</sup> <sup>(226)</sup> If they insist on divorce, God hears all and knows all. <sup>(227)</sup> Divorced women will wait three menstruation periods (before re-marrying), for they are not allowed to hide what God has created in their wombs if they believe in God and the Last Day. Their husbands are entitled to take them back if they want to be reconciled. But, in accordance with justice, the rights of the wives (with regard to their husbands) are equal to the (husbands') rights with regard to them, <sup>171</sup> although husbands have a degree (of right) over them <sup>172</sup> God is almighty and wise. <sup>173</sup> <sup>(228)</sup>

Divorce is allowed twice, after which keep (your wives) kindly, or dismiss them generously. You (husbands) may not take back anything you have given them unless both of you fear that they may not be able to keep within the limits set by God. It is not then wrong for them if she buys her way out. These are God's limits, do not exceed them. Anyone who exceeds them is unjust. <sup>(229)</sup> If he divorces her (for the third time), she is no longer allowed to remarry him until she marries another husband. Then, if (the latter) divorces her, it is not wrong for them to return (to each other) if they think that they can observe God's limits. <sup>(230)</sup>

If you divorce (your) women, and their waiting term is complete, either take them back kindly or let them go kindly. Do not take them back in order

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<sup>167</sup> Leviticus 15:19 When a woman has a discharge of blood that is her regular discharge from her body, she shall be in her impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening.

<sup>168</sup> 1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

<sup>169</sup> Psalm 86:5 For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

<sup>170</sup> James 5:11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

<sup>171</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields to his wife.

<sup>172</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ.

<sup>173</sup> Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength—who has resisted him, and succeeded?

knows, and you do not. <sup>(232)</sup>

Mothers should nurse their children for two complete years if they wish to complete the nursing period. Their provision and clothing are, in fairness, the father's responsibility. <sup>174</sup> No soul should be burdened with more than it can possibly bear; neither should a mother be made to suffer because of her child, nor a father because of his child. An heir has similar duties. If both (parents) decide to separate, they will incur no sin. Nor will there be any blame if you decide to employ a wet nurse, provided you ensure the child's safety in a fair manner. But remain mindful of God, and know that God sees all that you do. <sup>(233)</sup>

Widows of those who die among you must wait four months and ten days (prior to remarrying). When they complete their waiting period, you are not to be blamed for what they may choose to do lawfully with themselves. God is aware of what you do. <sup>(234)</sup> You will not be blamed whether you publicly announce that you want to marry these women or decide to keep your proposal to yourself; God knows your intentions to propose to them. Do not make a secret arrangement with them, but speak decently to them, and do not confirm the marriage contract until the prescribed period is finished. And you should know that God knows what is in your soul, so be mindful of Him. Remember that God is most forgiving, most forbearing. <sup>(235)</sup>

There is nothing wrong with divorcing your wives before you have touched them or paid them their dowry, but make fair provision for them, the rich according to his means and the poor according to his. This is a duty for those who behave righteously. <sup>(236)</sup> If you divorce them before you touch them, but after you have given them their dowry, then let them have half of it, unless they renounce (their claim), or unless the one making the marriage-tie renounces it. Renouncing (the portion) is closer to being mindful of God. Do not forget the grace that is between you. God sees what you do. <sup>(237)</sup> Always be mindful of prayers <sup>175</sup> and perform the intermediate prayer and stand devoutly before God. <sup>(238)</sup> But if you fear danger, pray (whether you are) walking or riding, and remember God when you are safe again, because it is He Who has taught you what you did not know. <sup>(239)</sup>

Those of you who die and leave wives should have a will with a provision giving their widows a year without being driven from their homes. If they leave (on their own), you will not be blamed for what they may

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<sup>174</sup> i.e., the mother's food and clothing is the baby's father's responsibility.

<sup>175</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

reasonably choose to do with their lives. God is strong and wise.<sup>(240)</sup> Divorced women should be provided for adequately. This is an obligation on those who are mindful of God.<sup>(241)</sup> God thus makes his revelations clear to you, so that you might understand.<sup>(242)</sup>

Did you not see the thousands who left their homes to avoid death? God told them, "Die." Then he made them alive again. God is gracious to people, but most people do not give thanks.<sup>(243)</sup> Fight in God's path, and know that God hears all<sup>(244)</sup> and knows all.<sup>(244)</sup> Who will make a good loan to God which will be repaid by him many times over?<sup>(245)</sup> It is God who withholds, and it is He Who gives abundantly, and it is to Him you will return.<sup>(245)</sup>

Did you not see how, after Moses' time, the leaders of the Children of Israel told one of their prophets,<sup>(246)</sup> "Raise up a king for us,"<sup>(246)</sup> and we will fight in God's cause?" He said, "If it is God's will for you to fight, would you refuse? They answered, "Why should we not fight in God's cause when we and our children have been driven from our homelands?" Yet, when they were commanded to fight, all but a few of them turned away. God had full knowledge of the unjust.<sup>(246)</sup> Their prophet<sup>(247)</sup> told them, <sup>(247)</sup> "God has chosen Saul as your king." They said, "How can he be our king? We are more deserving of being king than he. He does not have a lot of money." He said, "God has chosen him over you, and has endowed him with knowledge and physical strength.<sup>(248)</sup> God gives his kingdom to whomever he wills."<sup>(248)</sup> God is Infinite, All-Knowing.<sup>(247)</sup> Their prophet told them, "The sign of his royal authority is that the Ark of the Covenant<sup>(249)</sup> will come to you, carried by angels, bearing inner peace from your Lord as well as

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<sup>176</sup> 2 Timothy 3:2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.

<sup>177</sup> 1 John 5:14 And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

<sup>178</sup> Proverbs 19:17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.

<sup>179</sup> Romans 14:12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

<sup>180</sup> 1 Samuel 8:5 and said to him, "You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations."

<sup>181</sup> 1 Samuel 8:19-20 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! but we are determined to have a king over us,"<sup>(20)</sup> so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles."

<sup>182</sup> Samuel.

<sup>183</sup> 1 Samuel 10:24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

<sup>184</sup> 1 Samuel 10:23-24 Then they ran and brought him from there. When he took his stand among the people, he was head and shoulders taller than any of them. Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one whom the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

<sup>185</sup> Daniel 2:37 You, O king, the king of kings—to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory.

<sup>186</sup> The Islamic scholar, Al Baidawi, mentioned that the sakina could be Tawrat, the Books of Moses. According to Al-Jalalan, the relics in the Ark were: the fragments of the two tablets, robes, shoes, mitres of Moses and the vase of manna. Al-Tha'alibi, in *Qisas Al-Anbiya* (The Stories of the Prophets), has given an earlier and later history of the Ark. See <http://tinyurl.com/qhxnkw>.

reminders of the family of Moses and Aaron.<sup>(248)</sup> If you believe, that is a sign for you."<sup>(248)</sup>

When Saul divided the troops,<sup>(248)</sup> he said, "God will test you at a river. Whoever drinks from it is not with me, and whoever does not taste it is with me, except for those who scoop up a handful." All but a few drank from it. When he and the believers crossed it together, they said, "We do not have any strength against Goliath and his troops today."<sup>(249)</sup> Those who thought they were about to meet God said, "How often small groups have defeated large groups by God's authority. God is with those who endure."<sup>(249)</sup> When they met Goliath and his troops, they said, "Lord, give us endurance and make our feet firm and save us from the unbelievers."<sup>(250)</sup> So, with God's approval, they defeated them. David killed Goliath,<sup>(250)</sup> and God gave him the kingdom and wisdom, and taught him what He willed. If God had not driven some back by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but God shows grace to people.<sup>(251)</sup>

These are God's revelations, which We recite to you (Prophet) in Truth. You are one of the messengers.<sup>(252)</sup> We preferred some of those messengers over others. God spoke to some, and He raised some in degree;<sup>(252)</sup> We gave Jesus, son of Mary clear signs, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.<sup>(252)</sup> If God had willed, those after them would not have fought each other after clear evidence of the truth had come to them, but they fought. Some of them believed, and others denied the truth. If God had willed, they would not have fought. But God does whatever He wants.<sup>(253)</sup>

Believers, contribute some of what We have provided you before a day comes when there is no bargaining,<sup>(254)</sup> nor friends, nor intercession. Those who have denied the truth are unjust.<sup>(254)</sup> God is the only god, the Eternal and Self-Sustaining. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He owns what is in the heavens and the earth. Who is he who intercedes with Him except with His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them. They know nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. The throne of His majesty covers the heavens and the earth, and protecting them does not tire Him. He is Most high and Tremendous.<sup>(255)</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Hebrews 9:4 (specifies what the reminders were) In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

<sup>188</sup> 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul chose three thousand out of Israel; two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; the rest of the people he sent home to their tents.

<sup>189</sup> 1 Samuel 17 the story of David and Goliath

<sup>190</sup> 1 Samuel 17:49-51 David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.<sup>(50)</sup> So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand.<sup>(51)</sup> Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

<sup>191</sup> Or, "honor" or "rank."

<sup>192</sup> Acts 10:38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

<sup>193</sup> Revelation 13:17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.



There is no compulsion in religion.<sup>194</sup> The difference between guidance and error has been made clear. Whoever rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped a firm, unshakable support. God hears all and knows all.<sup>(256)</sup> God protects believers and brings them out of the darkness of ignorance into enlightenment.<sup>195</sup> False gods are the protectors of the unbelievers, bringing them out of enlightenment into the darkness of ignorance. They will be eternally in Hell.<sup>(257)</sup>

Have you not considered the one who was given a kingship by God (and) then disputed with Abram about his Lord? Abram said, "My Lord gives life and causes death."<sup>196</sup> He said, "I also give life and death." Abram said, "God brings the sun from the East. So bring it from the West." The disbeliever was dumfounded. God does not guide unjust people.<sup>(258)</sup>

Or, (consider) the one who passed by a town which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How can God bring back those who were once alive here after their death?" God made him die for a hundred years, and then resurrected him. He said, "How long have you stayed?" He said, "A day or part of a day." He said, "You stayed for a hundred years. Look at your food and your drink. They have not gone bad. Look at your dead donkey. We will make you a sign for people. Look how We raise the bones, and then cover them with flesh."<sup>197</sup> When he saw it, he said, "I know that God has power over all things."<sup>198 (259)</sup>

Abram said, "My Lord, show me how you give life to the dead." God said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes I have, but assure my heart." God said, "Take four birds, kill them and cut them into pieces. Then put pieces of each on a mountain and call them."<sup>199</sup> They will come quickly to you. Know that God is Strong and Wise.<sup>200 (260)</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Following a commentary by Ibn Kathir, most Muslim scholars traditionally interpret this verse to prohibit forced conversion to Islam, but exclude apostasy from Islam, because punishment for apostasy, they say, is prescribed in hadith. There is a recent movement among Muslim scholars to accept this verse to be general and unlimited to any situation, regardless of time and place. The essence of Islam is freedom to choose. This verse guarantees this fundamental value forever.

<sup>195</sup> 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

<sup>196</sup> 1 Samuel 2:6 The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I, even I, am He; there is no god besides Me. I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and no one can deliver from My hand.

<sup>197</sup> Ezekiel 37:1-6 The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

<sup>198</sup> 1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.

<sup>199</sup> The word "them" that refers to the birds here is usually used for thinking, reasoning beings, so possibly the meaning is that God makes them obey his will as thinking, reasoning creatures can (and should).

<sup>200</sup> Psalm 24:8 Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

Those who contribute their money in God's way are like a seed that sprouts seven heads, in each of which are a hundred grains.<sup>201</sup> God grants such multiple increase to whom He wills. God is Infinite and All-Knowing.<sup>(261)</sup> Those who spend their money in God's way and then do not follow what they spend with reproach or harm will have a reward from their Lord.<sup>202</sup> They will neither fear nor grieve.<sup>(262)</sup> A kind word and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurt. God is Rich beyond need and Forbearing.<sup>(263)</sup> Believers, do not ruin your charitable deeds with reproach and harm like one who does not believe in God or the Last Day and contributes his money so people will see him.<sup>203</sup> He is like a rock with dirt on it that was rained upon heavily and became hard and bare. Such people can do nothing with what they earned. God does not guide disbelieving people.<sup>204 (264)</sup> Those who spend their money seeking God's pleasure and as an affirmation of their own faith are like a garden on a hill when heavy rain falls on it—it doubles its produce—and if heavy rain does not fall, there is dew. God sees what you do.<sup>(265)</sup> Do any of you want to have a garden with date palms and vineyards, with flowing rivers, having every kind of fruit, to then be overtaken by old age, with only weak children, and then a fiery whirlwind strikes it and burns it up? Thus God shows you signs so that you may contemplate.<sup>205 (266)</sup>

Believers, contribute some of the good things You have earned, and of what We have produced for you from the earth. Do not choose the worst of it to give in charity that you yourself would be reluctant to accept. Know that God is Rich beyond need and Praiseworthy.<sup>206 (267)</sup> Satan promises you poverty and orders you to commit immoral acts. God promises you His forgiveness and esteem. God is Infinite, All-Knowing.<sup>(268)</sup> He gives wisdom to whom He chooses, and whoever is given wisdom is blessed abundantly.<sup>207</sup> But only insightful people bear this in mind.<sup>(269)</sup> God knows what you contribute or what you vow. The unjust have no one to save them.<sup>(270)</sup> If you give charity visibly, it is good. But if you hide it while giving

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<sup>201</sup> Matthew 13:8 "Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." Matthew 13:23 "But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

<sup>202</sup> Proverbs 19:17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.

<sup>203</sup> Matthew 6:1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

<sup>204</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false

<sup>205</sup> Exodus 10:2 ". . . and that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I have made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them—so that you may know that I am the Lord."

<sup>206</sup> Deuteronomy 10:21 He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen.

<sup>207</sup> Matthew 13:45-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, <sup>46</sup> and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it." Ecclesiastes 7:11 Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.

to the poor, it is better for you,<sup>208</sup> and He will atone<sup>209</sup> for some of your sins. God is well aware of what you do.<sup>(271)</sup> It is not for you to guide them. God guides whomever He wills. What charity you give benefits you when you contribute only to please God.<sup>210</sup> Your contributions will be paid back to you, and you will not be cheated.<sup>211 (272)</sup> Give to the poor who are wholly committed to the path of God and who are unable to travel in the land. The unaware considers them rich because of their self-restraint. You will recognize them by their character traits. They are not always asking people to help them. God knows what you contribute.<sup>(273)</sup>

All those who contribute their money at night or during the day, both secretly and publicly, will receive a reward from their Lord. They will not be afraid, nor will they grieve.<sup>(274)</sup> Those who profit from usury<sup>212</sup> will rise up on the Day of Resurrection like someone tormented by Satan's touch because they say, "Selling is like usury,<sup>213</sup> but God allowed selling and forbade usury." So whoever stops when receiving his Lord's good advice may keep what was previously his, and his matter is with God. Those who return to (usury) will eternally be in Hell.<sup>(275)</sup> God condemns usury, while He blesses and multiplies charitable transactions. God does not love any sinful person who denies the truth.<sup>214 (276)</sup> Those who believe and do righteous deeds and perform their prayers and give the purifying alms have their reward from their Lord, and they will not fear or grieve.<sup>(277)</sup> Believers, always be aware of God, and quit what remains of usury, if you are believers.<sup>(278)</sup> If you do not, then be warned of a war from God and his Messenger; and if you repent, you may have your original capital. Wrong not, and you will not be wronged.<sup>215 (279)</sup> However, if the borrower has financial difficulties, then defer payment until circumstances are better, and it would be for your own good, if you fully understood, to forgive the entire loan.<sup>(280)</sup> Beware of a day when you are returned to God and every soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and none will be wronged.<sup>(281)</sup>

Believers, if you become indebted to each other for a stated term, put it in writing. Let a legal clerk draw it up between you. The clerk should not refuse to write as God has taught him. The one who owes should dictate and always be mindful of God, his Lord. No amount should be withheld

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<sup>208</sup> Matthew 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup> So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

<sup>209</sup> Or, "expiate."

<sup>210</sup> Or, "seek the face of."

<sup>211</sup> Proverbs 19:17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.

<sup>212</sup> Usury - a very high or abusive rate of interest.

<sup>213</sup> Exodus 22:25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

<sup>214</sup> Revelation 21:8 "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

<sup>215</sup> Luke 6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned."

from him. If the one who owes is foolish,<sup>216</sup> weak, or unable to dictate himself, let his legal guardian dictate and have it witnessed by two men, or, if there are not two, by one man and two women whom you approve as witnesses. If one of (the women) forgets, the other will remind her. Witnesses<sup>217</sup> should not refuse when they are called upon. Do not think it unimportant to write it down, whether a small or large amount, along with its specified terms. That is more equitable to God, more reliable for testimony, and more likely to preclude doubt, except when it is a current business (that) you manage among yourselves. (In that case), not writing it down is not wrong. Always have witnesses present whenever you trade with one another, and do not let any harm be done to either the legal clerk or witnesses. If you do, you will be sinning.<sup>218</sup> Be mindful of God, and God will teach you.<sup>219</sup> God knows everything.<sup>220 (282)</sup> If you are on a trip and do not find a scribe, then an earnest payment should be paid. If you entrust things to each other, the one to whom it was entrusted should fulfill his pledge. He should be mindful of God, his Lord. Do not hide the testimony. Whoever hides it has a guilty heart. God knows what you do.<sup>221 (283)</sup> To God belongs what is in the heavens and the earth.<sup>222</sup> Whether you reveal what is in your hearts or if you hide it, God will call you to account for it. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. God has power over all things.<sup>223 (284)</sup>

The Messenger believes in what was revealed to him by his Lord, as do the believers; they all believe in God, His angels, His Books and His Messengers. We do not distinguish between any of His Messengers. They said, "We have heard and obeyed. Our Lord, (we seek) Your forgiveness. To You is (our) destiny."<sup>(285)</sup> God does not burden a soul more than it can bear.<sup>224</sup> It has (the good) it has earned, and (the evil) it has incurred. Our Lord, do not blame us if we forget or err. Our Lord, do not make us bear a burden like those before us. Our Lord, do not make us bear what We have

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<sup>216</sup> Or, "ignorant."

<sup>217</sup> Deuteronomy 17:6 On the evidence of two or three witnesses the death sentence shall be executed; a person must not be put to death on the evidence of only one witness. 19:15 A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained.

<sup>218</sup> Or, "committing immorality."

<sup>219</sup> Isaiah 48:17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God, who teaches you for your own good, who leads you in the way you should go.

<sup>220</sup> 1 Samuel 2:3 Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

<sup>221</sup> Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

<sup>222</sup> Psalm 89:11 The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them.

<sup>223</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:6 . . . and said, "O Lord, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? In your hand are power and might, so that no one is able to withstand you."

<sup>224</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

no strength to bear.<sup>225</sup> Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our Master, so help us against the people who deny the truth.<sup>(286)</sup>

<sup>225</sup> Psalm 55:22 Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

AL-IMRAN  
THE FAMILY OF IMRAN<sup>222</sup>

THE MEDINA PERIOD

In the name of God, the Merciful-to-all, the Mercy Giver:  
Alef Lam Meem<sup>227 (01)</sup>  
God! There is no God but Him.<sup>228</sup> The Eternal, the Self-Sustainer.<sup>(02)</sup> He has sent down the Book<sup>229</sup> to you with the Truth to confirm what is available of other revelations, as it is He who sent down the Torah<sup>230</sup> and the Gospel<sup>(03)</sup> beforehand as guidance to people, and He revealed the Standard<sup>231</sup> by which we judge right from wrong. Those who do not believe God's signs will have severe punishment. God is Almighty<sup>232</sup> and capable of revenge.<sup>233 (04)</sup> Nothing on earth or in heaven is hidden from God.<sup>234 (05)</sup>

<sup>226</sup> The title "The Family of Imran" has been derived from verses 33 and 35, in this chapter. The chapter had been revealed in Medinah at the third year of the Hijra, but some of its verses (61) were revealed much later, during the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Hijra. The Chapter relates the story of Mary and Jesus, as well as of Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. They are all members of "The Family of Imran."  
<sup>227</sup> Here and at the beginning of many chapters there are letters of unknown meaning called Al Muquatta'at. Numerous theories have been proposed, but there is no agreement on what they signify yet.  
<sup>228</sup> Exodus 20:3 you shall have no other gods before me. The following verses also declare the oneness of God Mark 12:29, Deuteronomy 6:4, 2 Kings 19:15, Nehemiah 9:6, Isaiah 37:20, Isaiah 46:9, Zechariah 14:9, John 5:44  
<sup>229</sup> See *tanzil* in the Glossary.  
<sup>230</sup> The Law.  
<sup>231</sup> Or, "criterion." This word is only mentioned in seven verses (2:53, 185, 3:4, 8:29, 41, 21:48, 25:1), and not all of these verses refer to a book. It is not clear in this verse to whom it was revealed, but in 2:53 it is said to be revealed to Moses and in 21:48 to Moses and Aaron (Harun). 25:1 says "to his servant" and it is assumed to refer to Muhannad. Most probably it refers to the same Ten Commandments given to Moses.  
<sup>232</sup> Job 9:4 "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength."  
<sup>233</sup> Hebrews 10:30 "For we know the one who said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' " And again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' "  
<sup>234</sup> Jeremiah 23:24 Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord. Hebrews 4:12 Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Mark 4:22 "For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light."