



LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS

SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD



AL-QĀDĪ AL-QUDĀʿĪ

TRANSLATED BY TAHERA QUTBUDDIN

FOREWORD BY BISHOP PAUL HINDER

Humanitarian lessons and practical insights from the prophet of Islam

LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS

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LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS

Sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad

BY

AL-QĀḌĪ AL-QUDĀ'Ī



TRANSLATED BY

TAHERA QUTBUDDIN

FOREWORD BY

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VOLUME EDITOR

SHAWKAT M. TOORAWA



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dedicated with deepest gratitude to

my revered father

‘ālim-i āl-i Muḥammad

al-‘allāmah al-niḥrīr

al-da‘ī l-fāṭimī

Syedna Khuzaima Qutbuddin

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ABBREVIATIONS

AD	<i>anno Domini</i> = Gregorian (Christian) year
ah	<i>anno Hegirai</i> = Hijrah (Muslim) year
Ar.	Arabic
c.	century
ca.	<i>circa</i> = about, approximately
cf.	<i>confer</i> = compare
ch., chs.	chapter, chapters
D	al-Dūmī's commentary on <i>Kitāb al-Shihāb</i>
d.	died
ed.	editor, edition, edited by
e.g.	for example
fl.	flourished
fol., fols.	folio, folios
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> = in the same place
lit.	literally
M	al-Marāghī's commentary on <i>Kitāb al-Shihāb</i>
MS, MSS	manuscript, manuscripts
N	<i>Musnad al-Shihāb</i> , al-Salafī edition
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place
no.	number
p., pp.	page, pages
Q	Qur'an
R	al-Rāwandī's commentary on <i>Kitāb al-Shihāb</i>
r.	ruled

S	al-Sijilmāsi's commentary on <i>Kitāb al-Shihāb</i>
sic	<i>sic erat scriptum</i> = thus was it written
s.v., s.vv.	<i>sub verbo, sub voce</i> = under the word
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> = namely
vol., vols.	volume, volumes
Y	anonymous Yemeni commentary on <i>Kitāb al-Shihāb</i> dated 554/1159, MS #5

FOREWORD

BISHOP PAUL HINDER

On February 4th, 2019, at a historic meeting in Abu Dhabi, His Holiness Pope Francis signed a joint declaration *On Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* with His Excellency Ahmad el-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, in the presence of civic and religious leaders from all over the world who had participated on February 3rd and 4th in the Human Fraternity Meeting in Abu Dhabi.

On that memorable occasion, the Pope invited those gathered to consider the means of encounter between followers of different faith traditions, asking: “How do we nourish a fraternity which is not theoretical but translates into authentic fraternity? How can the inclusion of the other prevail over exclusion in the name of belonging to one’s own group?” The solution, the Pope suggested, was to be found in a sincere and authentic dialogue, with the “courage of otherness”—a recognition of the unique individuality and personality of the “other.” Among the necessary supports for such dialogue, he singled out education, reminding those gathered that “there is no genuine self-knowledge without the other.” Such self-awareness necessarily requires a reciprocal knowledge of history, culture, and faith between persons of different convictions and beliefs.

The wisdom of the Pope’s words is readily apparent when one considers the present state of encounter with Islam. Headlines and newscasts—often captive to the sensationalism of extremists—perpetuate reactions of fear and mistrust, and constitute formidable

obstacles to engagement between different faith traditions. But even the well-intentioned neophyte might be daunted by the immensity of the task of dialogue. Where, after all, does one begin when faced with the extraordinary diversity of the Islamic experience across cultures, continents and centuries—a diversity that has resisted attempts, from within and without, to reduce it to a mere monolith?

Central to every Islamic experience is the belief that a divine message has been conveyed to humanity in the Qur'an. Nonetheless, the translation of timeless truths into concrete behavior is fraught with difficulty, and thus it is perhaps not surprising that Muslims turn for guidance to the bearer of that message, whom the Qur'an itself identifies as the "beautiful model" (Q Aḥzāb 33:22). Over the centuries, the figure of the Prophet has attracted both the veneration of the devout and the vitriol of detractors. As a moral and spiritual paradigm for millions, his legacy is invoked to this day to confer legitimacy on everything from political regimes to social agendas and economic programs. For this reason, the discrete reports of the prophetic sayings and actions, the Hadith, do not simply enhance our understanding of a liminal figure and his followers during a particular historical period in a defined geographical location. They serve as a mirror to the self-understanding of compilers and communities looking to their history for insights into new situations, and are thus a testament to the shaping of societies through the legacy of the Prophet.

It is this experience that Dr. Tahera Qutbuddin has made broadly accessible through this English translation of al-Qāḍī al-Quḍā'ī's Hadith compilation *Light in the Heavens*. Dr. Qutbuddin's masterful rendering captures the sense of many of the frequently idiomatic references, facilitating the unfamiliar reader's introduction to the Hejaz of the seventh century. Here warriors and merchants intermingle, perfume vendors and blacksmiths provide analogies for virtuous and evil companions, the practical wisdom of the desert abounds, and the Arabian landscape supplies the vivid imagery that couches reflective insights on various aspects of daily life. It is a

society whose mores and systems of thought may initially bewilder a modern reader, a world where the same reality that occasions a frank admission that “warfare entails cunning” also enables one to perceive that “a true warrior battles his urges in order to obey God.” It is within this setting that we find a portrait of the nascent Muslim community with its beliefs, rituals and leadership, and are privy to concerns that continue to dominate intra-Islamic discourse today.

But it is not solely that which is unique to Islam which captures our attention, for there is much here that belongs to the common treasury of human knowledge. Virtuous behavior, honesty, diligence, truthfulness, kindness, and generosity take their place alongside pragmatic observations on the nature of human living. The pietistic setting that freely mingles religious injunction and seemingly common-sense, even mundane, reflection enables an appreciation of the deftness with which this common heritage has been assimilated into a larger tradition. “Worry causes aging” and “half of living well is planning well” are not simply counsels that might be comfortably included in any twenty-first-century self-help book, but also expressions hinting at the transitory nature of life and the importance of entrustment to God. In these, as in many of the sayings, succinctness does not come at the expense of substance. Time and again, the reader is confronted with insights that spring from a deep spiritual consciousness of the state of the human being before the Creator. “If you never sin, God will create a people who do, then forgive them and grant them paradise” is simultaneously a warning against hypocritical pride and a mystical reflection comparable to the Christian *felix culpa* in praise of divine forgiveness. Indeed, the motif of divine forgiveness—colorfully portrayed by another saying as extending “right up to the death rattle”—is abundantly attested to throughout the work. Here, as elsewhere, readers traverse over terrain familiar to the Abrahamic faiths, with aphorisms espousing shared themes beloved of Jewish and Christian sacred books and spiritual authors. Cautions reminiscent of the biblical prophetic tradition about avoiding covetousness or taking false oaths mingle

with spiritual counsels on the value of hidden piety and preference of the love of God above all else. Christians recognize common precepts about the rewards of renunciation for the sake of the divine message, and hear echoes of familiar prayers in the proclamation “God forgives those who forgive others.”

Such tender devotion and shared insights may astonish the credulous consumer of social media, whose principal exposure to Islam has been the grim, intimidating picture beloved of political pundits and controversial commentators. But to those who recall the position of Islamic civilizations at the nexus of East and West, the adroitness with which these diverse traditions have been integrated within an Islamic framework comes as no surprise. The life of al-Quḍāʿī himself is illustrative. No stranger to a religiously plural world as a Sunni Muslim between Shiʿi Fatimids and Christian Byzantines, the particular compilation of *Light in the Heavens* reflects his own engagement with his surroundings from within the heart of his own tradition. In focusing on the development of the virtues of the individual, the Prophetic tradition is transformed into a platform through which Muslims can enter into dialogue among themselves and with others, as they embark on the universal quest for those noble aspirations of “peace, justice, goodness, beauty, human fraternity and coexistence” common to humanity. This approach, that highlights both the commonalities between traditions and their distinctiveness, is doubly instructive for our contemporary efforts at mutual understanding.

At the core of *Light in the Heavens* lies the consciousness of one’s position as a member of created humanity in and before God, and the responsibilities toward creation that follow from this privileged status. Al-Quḍāʿī anticipates that call of the declaration *On Human Fraternity* that roots a “culture of encounter” in precisely this fundamental religious belief. When this attitude characterizes contact with “the other,” one is able to respect the shared traditions that are the heritage of humanity, and only thus properly appreciate the unique insights of one’s own perspective. The eradication of the

other, a policy that sadly finds embodiment in the actions of some modern Islamist movements towards their non-Islamic heritage, is not only a tragedy that stunts the flourishing of humanity but a self-injuring blow that strikes at one's roots. As the deliberately ethical orientation of al-Qudā'i's compilation suggests, tradition involves a recommitment to those fundamental ideals that inspire the human person—truth, justice, compassion, and virtue—not the resurrection of reductionist religious hegemonies.

Yet the fact that *Light in the Heavens* engages its readers in a distinctively Islamic vein is not simply an accidental feature of its pre-Enlightenment compilation. Many voices today advocate a cooperation solely on the basis of a modern rationalistic identity centered around agreed norms of human conduct. Religious belief either becomes a veneer to buttress existing ideals, or a nuisance and obstruction to be overcome. But in stripping away religious conviction, one touches upon the identity of individuals and communities and robs dialogue of the deep personal engagement that characterizes the faith of believers. In disavowing a “forced uniformity and conciliatory syncretism” when signing the declaration, Pope Francis affirmed the importance of religious traditions in establishing an authentic fraternity. Encounters between individuals who are rooted in the accumulated insights of generations (and not simply a truncated fundamentalism) prevent dialogue from devolving into simply facile agreement on peripheral issues. Rather, it enables all parties to grapple with the fundamental beliefs that seek to answer the perennial questions of humanity. Such engagement promotes an authentic appreciation of diversity that can truly contribute to human flourishing.

As an expanding global society progressively narrows the distance between communities, to remain isolated in fear and prejudice is to court confrontation. Fostering intellectual and spiritual kinship is therefore necessary now more than ever. This requires individuals and communities to question the basis of long-held assumptions and sincerely attempt to learn from the other. “Half of learning,”

observes one saying, “is asking good questions.” But questions that form the basis of interfaith encounters are neither purely abstract academic affairs, nor the sole domain of the scholarly elites. Rather—as *Light in the Heavens*’ popular and accessible orientation bears witness—such questions spring from the daily interactions of millions as they *live* out a crucial part of their identity. It is here, in its concrete embodiment in the lives of its adherents, that one can truly understand the Islamic experience. Immersion in this experience not only fosters intra-Muslim discourse on a variety of issues. It also spurs both Muslims and non-Muslims alike to ask the “good questions” that promote constructive conversations which enrich the global community, instead of falling into the simplistic caricatures and myopic misunderstandings that render others alien. By offering a readable window into the prophetic legacy that continues to determine the lived Muslim experience in every age, Dr. Qutbuddin has not only rendered accessible a field often perceived as inscrutable and intimidating, but also laid an important foundation for productive and authentic encounters between individuals—a true “culture of otherness.” For the cooperation across the centuries between transmitters, compiler and translator that produced this invaluable insight into the Islamic experience, we can be truly grateful.

Most. Rev. Dr. Paul Hinder, O.F.M. CAP.
Cathedral of St. Joseph, Abu Dhabi

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My late father Syedna Khuzaima Qutbuddin, leader of the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community and a venerable scholar, tutored me on the prophet Muḥammad's hadith regularly since childhood; throughout my work on this book, his blessings, and those of his successor, my brother Syedna Taher Fakhruddin, have been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. My mother, Sakina Aaisaheba, has always been a font of love, guidance and blessings.

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My husband Abdur-Zahir Mohyuddin is the best critical sounding board for all my professional activities. And my son Hyder always helps too—his sweet pride in his mother's work warms my heart.

To all, I am sincerely grateful.

جزاكم الله خيرا

INTRODUCTION

The prophet Muḥammad (d. 11/632) is regarded by Muslims as God's messenger to humankind. In addition to God's word—the Qur'an—which he conveyed over the course of his life as it was revealed to him, Muḥammad's own words—called *hadith*—have a very special place in the lives of Muslims. Many of Muḥammad's *hadiths* explicate the divine message and consequently form a natural companion to the Qur'an. They wield an authority second only to the Book of God and are cited by Muslims as testimonial texts in a wide array of religious, scholarly, and popular literature—such as liturgy, exegesis, jurisprudence, oration, poetry, linguistics, and much more besides. Preachers, politicians, and scholars alike rely on *hadith* to establish the truth of their positions, and laypeople cite them in conversations in their daily lives. These sayings disclose the ethos of the earliest period of Islam, the culture and society of seventh-century Arabia, and the literary milieu of the time. Since they also form an integral part of the Muslim psyche, they reveal the values and thinking of the medieval and modern Muslim community. Most importantly, they provide a direct window into the inspired vision of one of the most influential humans in history.

Collecting Muḥammad's words was a major preoccupation for scholars through the centuries, resulting in a profusion of compilations. The focus of most compilers was doctrinal and legal. They aimed to collect sayings that would guide the community in its practice, and the larger part of their compilations explicated rules of ritual worship and civic and criminal regulations. What is more,

they couched these sayings within the lengthy scholarly apparatus of authentication.

Among these abundant legally grounded and specialist-oriented collections, *Light in the Heavens* (*Kitāb al-Shihāb*), the compilation of the Fatimid chancery official, Egyptian Shāfiʿī judge, and Sunni Hadith scholar al-Qāḍī al-Quḍāʿī (d. 454/1062) stands out. Although its content overlaps with other collections, its overall conceptualization is distinctively pietistic, ethical, and pragmatic. The larger part of the collection's sayings are devoted to encouraging universal human values such as truthfulness, compassion, and courage, and conversely to discouraging immoral behaviors such as deception, arrogance, and oppression. Al-Quḍāʿī was a specialist of Hadith—and considered a trustworthy transmitter by his peers and by later scholars—but he compiled his book for the nonspecialist. Unlike other compilations, *Light in the Heavens* consists mainly of pithy one-liners containing just the hadith text; the authenticating chains of transmission and accompanying reports al-Quḍāʿī placed in a companion scholarly book, *Musnad al-Shihāb* (*The Transmissions of the Shihāb*). The accessibility and wide relevance of *Light in the Heavens* has resulted in its being used for centuries as a teaching text for children as well as adults, and many of its sayings are dearly familiar to individuals of different denominations and ethnicities—whether Shiʿī or Sunni, scholar or layperson, Arab, Persian, Turk, or South Asian.

PROPHET MUḤAMMAD: LIFE, LESSONS, AND LEGACY

Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, from the prominent clan of Hāshim of the Ḥijāzī tribe of Quraysh, was born in Mecca around AD 570.¹ Located between the two great empires of the Zoroastrian Sassanids in Persia and the Christian Byzantines in Syria, the majority of those living in the arid Arabian Peninsula at this time were pagan and nomadic; some settlements flourished around oases or wells, among them the shrine city of Mecca. Muḥammad's family, believed by Muslims to be descended from the prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) through his son Ishmael

(Ismāʿīl), served as guardians of the Kaaba, a sacred shrine built by Abraham. According to information preserved in the Muslim record, even in his childhood, Muḥammad stood out among the Meccans, who singled him out with the honorific title “The Trustworthy One.” Orphaned in infancy, he was brought up by his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, then by his uncle Abū Ṭālib, whom he accompanied on trade expeditions to Syria.

At twenty-five, he married Khadījah, a forty-year-old widow for whom he had served as trading agent. He had six children with her: two sons, Qāsim and ‘Abd Allāh, nicknamed al-Ṭayyib and al-Ṭāhir, who both died in infancy, and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthūm, and Fāṭimah, who survived into adulthood. After Khadījah’s death, Muḥammad’s concubine, an Egyptian Copt named Māriyah, bore him a son, Ibrāhīm, who also died in infancy. Muḥammad’s line continued through his youngest daughter, Fāṭimah, who married Abū Ṭālib’s son and Muḥammad’s ward, ‘Alī. ‘Alī later became the first imam for the Shi’a, and fourth caliph for the Sunnis. In a saying in this collection, Muḥammad says, “My kin are like Noah’s Ark—those who climb aboard are saved, those who waver are drowned” (§11.1).

Muḥammad was a thoughtful and quiet man who often went to the mountains outside Mecca to meditate. During one such visit to Mount Ḥirā’—at forty years of age, in ca. AD 610—he received what he believed was a revelation from God. The archangel Gabriel appeared before him and said, «Recite in the name of your lord, the creator.»² This was the first of many revelations, which would be memorized by believers and later compiled into the codex of the Qur’an. Muḥammad believed he had been charged as God’s messenger (*rasūl Allāh*) and selected as the seal of the prophets, a group which included major biblical figures such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. With the creed “There is no god but God” (*lā ilāha illā llāh*), he began to call others to the new religion of Islam (literally, “commitment [to God]”). He first approached Khadījah, then ‘Alī, who both accepted Islam, then ‘Alī’s brother Ja‘far. After a few years, he approached other

members of Quraysh who were close to him. Abū Bakr was one of the earliest converts and later became Muḥammad's father-in-law; after Muḥammad's death he would become the first Sunni caliph. Muḥammad also preached to the Arabians who came to Mecca for the annual pilgrimage. Slowly the numbers grew.

The revelations of the Meccan period, and Muḥammad's own orations from this time, were doctrinal and apocalyptic, calling to the worship of the one creator; urging humility, pious deeds, accountability for one's actions, and compassion for the disadvantaged; and warning of the imminent hereafter. In a saying in this collection, Muḥammad explains the exhortatory approach of his mission, stating: "I was sent with profound words" (§3.3). Using desert imagery and camel metaphors, these words painted rhythmic, vivid scenes of the delights of paradise and the agonies of hellfire. They elaborated on Muḥammad's miraculous night journey to Jerusalem, and his ascension through the seven heavens to the throne of God, where the five daily prayers were prescribed. They preached kindness to orphans, help to widows, and generosity to the needy. And they condemned idol worship, materialism, and common pagan Arabian practices such as female infanticide and blood vengeance.

Angered by Muḥammad's anti-establishment message, the Meccans began persecuting him and his followers. In AD 615, Muḥammad sent some of his vulnerable followers to Abyssinia across the Red Sea to seek refuge with the Christian Negus; they later rejoined the Muslims in Medina. In AD 616, the Meccans instituted a social boycott against Muḥammad's clan, demanding they turn him over, but Abū Ṭālib, patriarch of the Hāshim clan, refused; the boycott ended after a few months. In AD 619, both Abū Ṭālib and Khadījah died. Abū Lahab, another of Muḥammad's uncles, became the new leader of the Hāshim, and he deprived Muḥammad and the Muslims of clan protection. With his life in danger, Muḥammad began to look for a safe haven from which to preach his message. He approached the tribe of Thaḳīf in Taif, but they refused him shelter. Then in AD 621 a group from the northern oasis of Yathrib came to Mecca for the

pilgrimage and accepted Islam. The following year, AD 622, they came back in greater numbers, and invited Muḥammad to make their city his home. After thirteen years of preaching in Mecca, Muḥammad emigrated to Yathrib. The year would be counted as the first of the Hijri Islamic calendar (named for the Hijrah, or emigration), and the city would henceforth be known as the City of the Prophet, in Arabic Madīnat al-Nabī, commonly shortened to Madīnah (Medina).

In the year 1/622, with Muḥammad's arrival in Medina, a new phase began for Islam. Now at the head of a polity, Muḥammad occupied the additional roles of governor, legislator, and military commander. Medina was home to the pagan tribes of Aws and Khazraj, whose majority accepted Islam, and the Jewish tribes of Naḍir, Qaynuqā', and Qurayzah, whose majority remained Jewish. These tribes signed a pact of mutual defense and cooperation, designating themselves a unified community who pledged obedience to "God and Muḥammad." The Muslim tribes of Medina came to be known as the Allies, and those who migrated to Medina with Muḥammad or soon thereafter came to be known as the Emigrants. Both groups would be lauded by later Muslims for their service to Islam in its difficult early phase. Collectively, they are known as Muḥammad's companions, about whom he said, "My companions are like stars—those who follow them will be guided" (§11.2).

Muḥammad lived in Medina for the next, and final, ten years of his life.³ The Quraysh continued to menace him, and there were several military skirmishes between them, as well as larger pitched battles, including Badr, Uḥud, the Trench (or the Confederates), and lastly, the Conquest of Mecca. There were also disagreements within Medina between the Muslim and Jewish tribes. The latter, according to the Muslim sources, had plotted secretly with the Meccans against Muḥammad, and he subsequently expelled two tribes from the city and executed the members of a third. He also fought the Jews of Khaybar, a northward oasis, who had allied with the Meccans against him. Eventually, Muḥammad emerged victorious,

and by the end of the tenth year, the larger part of the residents of the Arabian Peninsula had accepted Muḥammad as their prophet.

In these years, Muḥammad prescribed further rites of worship and piety: the annual alms-levy, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. He exhorted kindness to parents and charity for all. He also legislated on civic affairs and criminal issues, giving rulings which were to become binding precedents. Preaching, guiding, and counselling, Muḥammad promoted consciousness of God, individual and collective piety, a strong moral fiber, social justice, and compassion for all God's creatures.

In 10/632, Muḥammad performed his only hajj to Mecca, what came to be known as "The Farewell Pilgrimage." According to the Shi'a, he publicly appointed 'Alī as his successor immediately afterward at a place called Ghadīr Khumm. Upon his return to Medina, Muḥammad fell ill, and a few months later, in the year 11/632, passed away at the age of sixty-three. In just twenty-three years, Muḥammad had integrated pagan Arabia into a dynamic community united under the banner of monotheistic Islam. Within two decades, Muslims would conquer Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, and North Africa. In twenty more years, they would reach Spain in the West and Central Asia and Sind in the East. Over time, with the efforts of teachers, savants, and mystics, Muḥammad's message would spread even further.

HADITH: TRANSMISSION, COLLECTION, AND TOOLS OF SCHOLARSHIP

Muḥammad's hadith include his many sermons and speeches, his answers to questions, his verbal responses to life situations, and also his deeds and gestures. There is a correspondingly rich history of hadith transmission and collection. And medieval Muslim scholars and modern academics have developed an extensive set of critical tools for their assessment.

Muḥammad lived in an oral milieu where writing was limited to important documents, and literary production was overwhelmingly that of the spoken word. The Qur'an describes him as "*ummī*,"

which according to some interpretations means “unlettered.” Other understandings differ,⁴ but whether Muḥammad was lettered or not, his words are the product of his oral milieu, and their orality is intrinsic to any discussion of their style and authenticity. The formal verbal productions of primarily oral communities are rooted in mnemonics-based aesthetics. They are permeated with stylistic devices that are a physiological aid to memorization. Like the Qur’an, and similar to orations and proverbs by others from this period, Muḥammad’s sayings are condensed, rhythmic, and visual. These rhetorical features—combined with the attested powerful memories of oral societies and the early Muslims’ compelling motivation to preserve the words of their adored prophet—ensured the continuity of Muḥammad’s teachings.

Muḥammad’s sayings were transmitted orally for about 150 years, relayed by word of mouth over several generations. Early transmitters narrated hadiths in divergent modes: Muḥammad’s deeds and gestures were transmitted in their gist, while his words were transmitted partly in their gist and partly verbatim, in a mode in between the meaning-based transmission of historical reports and the verbatim transmission of the Qur’an and poetry. Muḥammad’s family and close companions were the first narrators. The subsequent generation of Muslims, known as “followers,” and the generation after them, called “followers of the followers,” continued the work of preservation. Among these early hadith transmitters, we find master narrators who regularly taught hadith in the urban centers of Islam.

Over the century and a half of primarily oral transmission, we see a steady increase of concurrent written transcription. A fraction of Muḥammad’s words was written down during his lifetime and immediately after, in written collections of hadith called *ṣaḥīfah*.⁵ In the generation following, notebooks of hadith made their appearance. These notebooks were used as aide-mémoire, and master narrators from the followers and followers’ followers are reported to have transcribed hadith into such notebooks for use in their teaching sessions. Although some of the early Muslims were against

writing hadith for fear they may be confused with the text of the Qur'an, there were others who deemed it beneficial and they cited Muḥammad himself encouraging the practice.

Following the introduction of paper from China in ca. 132/750 and the corresponding burgeoning of writing in the third/eighth and fourth/ninth centuries, hadith (and other early verbal materials) were systematically transcribed in written books. Over the following centuries, some of these hadith collections attained canonical status. For Sunnis, the “six books”—of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/875), Abū Dā'ūd (d. 275/888), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), and the sixth either Ibn Mājah (d. 273/887) or, depending on the listing, Mālik (d. 179/796)—are trusted compilations. Two popular collections were put together by al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277, both translated into English).⁶ Al-Quḍā'ī's *Light in the Heavens* was another text with substantial currency. For the Twelver Shi'a, trusted compilations are those by al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940) and Ibn Bābūyah (d. 381/991), and two by al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1273), together known as the “four books.” For the Fatimid-Isma'īli Shi'a, the hadith citations of al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān (d. 363/974) are authoritative: *Sharḥ al-akhbār* for historical and doctrinal material, and *Da'ā'im al-Islām* for legal hadith. A significant Zaydī Shi'i work is *Musnad al-Imām Zayd*, attributed to Zayd ibn 'Alī Zayn al-Ābidīn (d. 122/740). There is some overlap in the contents of the Sunni and Shi'i collections, but there are also distinct differences.

Of the tens of thousands of sayings that have come down to us, a good number are likely genuine. But erroneous transmission, inaccurate copying, and deliberate fabrication to further sectarian or political agendas gave rise to a profusion of materials in which the chaff became mixed with the grain. Muslim scholars developed a complex set of tools and terms to assess a hadith's authenticity. One of the tools considered most effective by Sunni scholars was assessment of a hadith's “chain of transmission” (*isnād*), that is, the reliability of the sequence of narrators and the trustworthiness of each narrator.⁷ The stronger the chain of transmission, the stronger

the probability was of a saying being genuine. They categorize the material on the basis of this probability as sound, good, weak, and a few in-between categories. The Shi'a, in contrast, deem long *isnāds* and accompanying biographical verifications unnecessary and even misleading: as long as an imam or his appointee has attested to the genuineness of a hadith, it is considered authentic.⁸ Western scholarship on Hadith has proliferated since the late nineteenth century—the earliest works focused on “Hadith criticism,” while more recent works have inspected its myriad aspects.⁹ Modern Western scholars do not, however, appear to have written about *Light in the Heavens*.

AL-QĀḌĪ AL-QUḌĀ'Ī (D. 454/1062): CAREER AND BOOKS

The compiler of *Light in the Heavens*, al-Qāḍī al-Quḍā'ī, was a jurist of the Sunni-Shāfi'ī school of legal thought, and an eminent scholar of Hadith and history who flourished in Fatimid Cairo. His full name was Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Salāmah ibn Ja'far ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥakmūn al-Quḍā'ī (thus an affiliate of the clan of Quḍā'ah from the tribe of Ḥimyar). The biographical sources refer to him most frequently as “judge of Egypt” and “compiler of *Light in the Heavens*.”¹⁰

A senior government official for the Shi'ī Fatimids, al-Quḍā'ī performed several singular functions for them. He was judge over their Sunni subjects; he traveled in 447/1055 to Constantinople as Fatimid emissary to the Byzantine court;¹¹ and he served (indirectly) in their chancery, being scribe for a time for the vizier 'Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Jarjarā'ī (d. 436/1045). Although the sources do not mention specific interactions, al-Quḍā'ī would presumably have had contact with the eminent Fatimid scholar al-Mu'ayyad al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078), who was head of the chancery from 443/1051 to 448/1056.

Al-Quḍā'ī's scholarship was highly respected, especially in the collection and transmission of hadith. Sunni scholars deemed al-Quḍā'ī to be a “trustworthy” (*thiqah*) transmitter of hadith. His student Ibn Mākūlā (d. 475/1082) praised him, saying: “He has mastered many different sciences . . . I know none in Egypt who approach his stature.”¹² Writing a century later, the jurist al-Silafī

(d. 576/1180) said of him: “His fame absolves me from lengthy expositions . . . he is counted among the trustworthy and reliable transmitters.”¹³ An indication of al-Quḍā’ī’s eminence in the field of Hadith scholarship is the fact that he is cited in the chains of transmission of numerous well-regarded compilations.

Following Ibn Mākūlā and al-Silafī, several prominent medieval biographers chronicled al-Quḍā’ī’s career and writings.¹⁴ They tell us that al-Quḍā’ī heard and transmitted hadith in his homeland of Egypt, as well as during his travels in Syria en route to Constantinople, in Constantinople, and in Mecca and Medina, where he performed the hajj in 445/1053. They record the names of his teachers, including several distinguished scholars.¹⁵ And they tell us about his students, saying he transmitted hadith to men who would become well-known jurists in their own right.¹⁶ One student, Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Ḥumaydī (d. ca. 450/1058), declared that the “*Shihāb* turned me into a *shihāb*,” that is, a star.¹⁷

Al-Quḍā’ī produced thirteen¹⁸ major books on a wide range of subjects.¹⁹ Five are extant, namely:

1. *Light in the Heavens: Sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad* (*Kitāb al-Shihāb fī l-amthāl wa-l-mawā’iẓ wa-l-ādāb: alf kalimah wa-mi’atā kalimah min ḥadith al-nabī ṣallā-llāhu ‘alayhi wa-ālihī wa-sallam*, lit. Book of the blazing star containing aphorisms, counsels, and directions for refined behavior: 1,200 maxims from the hadith of the prophet). It has been published in several trade editions.
2. *The Transmissions of Light in the Heavens* (*Musnad al-Shihāb*), companion volume to *Light in the Heavens*, containing full chains of transmission and contextual anecdotes, published in two editions.
3. *A Treasury of Virtues: Sayings, Sermons and Teachings of ‘Alī* (*Dustūr ma‘ālim al-ḥikam wa-ma’thūr makārim al-shīyam min kalām amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, lit. A compendium of signposts of wisdom and a documentation of qualities of

virtue from the words of the commander of the faithful ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib), a collection of “words and eloquent sayings, wise maxims and counsels, directions for refined behavior, answers to questions, prayers and communions with God, and preserved verse and allegories” ascribed to Imam ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. It is a companion volume to *Light in the Heavens*, published in several editions, including a Library of Arabic Literature edition and translation.

4. *The Book of Reports about the Prophets, the History of the Caliphs, and the Rule of the Princes* (*Kitāb al-Inbā’ ‘an al-anbiyā’ wa-tawārikh al-khulafā’ wa-wilāyat al-umarā’*), also called *Al-Quḍā’i’s History: From the Creation of Adam to the Year 427 [1036]* (*Tārīkh al-Quḍā’i: min khalq Ādam ḥattā sanat 427 AH*), and also called *Springs of Information and Branches of Reports about the Caliphs* (*‘Uyūn al-ma’ārif wa-funūn akhbār al-khalā’if*), a book on the history of the prophets and caliphs up to the reign of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Zāhir. It has been published in several editions.
5. *Details of Reports and Gardens of Lessons* (*Daqā’iq al-akhbār wa-ḥadā’iq al-‘tibār*), a work of wisdom sayings, published in 1883.²⁰

The following eight works are lost:

1. *Institutions of Egypt* (*Kitāb Khīṭaṭ Miṣr*), also known as *Selected Reports of Institutions and Vestiges* (*Al-Mukhtār fī dhikr al-khīṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*), a book on the history of Egypt ascribed to al-Quḍā’ī by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1441), al-Qalqashandī (d. 820/1418), and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī (d. 874/1469), all of whom cite material from it.²¹
2. *Qur’an Commentary* (*Tafsīr*), in twenty volumes according to the modern scholar al-Ziriklī, first mentioned by al-Silafī, then by al-Maqrīzī, and cited by al-Qalqashandī.²²
3. *The Merits of al-Shāfi’i* (*Kitāb Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfi’i*), or *The Book of Reports about al-Shāfi’i* (*Kitāb Akhbār al-Shāfi’i*), a

hagiographical work on the merits of the founder of al-Qudā'ī's legal school, ascribed to him by Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1176).²³

4. *Compendium of Teachers (Mu'jam al-shuyūkh)*, a biographical listing of the scholars from whom al-Qudā'ī transmitted hadith, ascribed to him by Ibn 'Asākir.²⁴
5. *Book of Numbers (Kitāb al-'Adad)*, ascribed to him by Ibn 'Aṭīyyah (d. 541/1147) and Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183).²⁵
6. *Book of Beneficial Words (Kitāb al-Fawā'id)*, perhaps also on hadith, ascribed to him by Ibn Bashkuwāl.²⁶
7. *The Preacher's Pearl and the Worshipper's Treasure (Durrat al-wā'iẓīn wa-dhukhr al-'ābidīn)*, a work on preaching, ascribed to him by Ḥajjī Khalīfah (d. 1067/1657).²⁷
8. Ibn Mākūlā's notes from al-Qudā'ī's lectures, ascribed to him by al-Silafī.²⁸

Other titles that editors of al-Qudā'ī's various works have ascribed to him are variant titles of his *History*, which they list incorrectly as independent works.

LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS

The full title of *Light in the Heavens* is—in rhyming Arabic—*Kitāb al-Shihāb fī l-amthāl wa-l-mawā'iz wa-l-ādāb: alf kalimah wa-mi'atā kalimah min ḥadīth al-nabī ṣallā -llāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam*. It translates literally as “Book of the blazing star containing aphorisms, counsels, and directions for refined behavior: 1,200 maxims from the hadith of the prophet.” In some manuscripts, the work is titled *Shihāb al-akhbār*, “The blazing reports-star,” or *Al-Shihāb fī l-ḥikam al-nabawīyyah*, “The blazing star containing the wise sayings of the prophet,” or *Al-Shihāb al-nabawī*, “The prophet's blazing star.” It is usually mentioned by its shortened title, *Al-Shihāb*—“blazing comet,” “shining star,” or “luminous planet”;²⁹ the rendering as *Light in the Heavens* is an attempt to capture these various meanings in English.

The book overlaps to some degree with other well-known hadith collections. For each hadith cited in *Light in the Heavens*, the commentator al-Marāghī and the editors of *The Transmissions* list

additional sources, which include the major Sunni collections of Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāʿūd, Ibn al-Jawzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī; many of the *Shihāb*’s hadith are also found in Shiʿī works, such as the collections of al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān and al-Ṭūsī.

System and Substance

As a popular collection of the prophet Muḥammad’s sayings for the general reader, the system and substance of *Light in the Heavens*’ material are straightforward and accessible. In the introduction, al-Quḍāʿī tells us that he has arranged the sayings “uninterruptedly, one following the other, omitting the chains of transmission,” which he provides separately in the companion specialist book *The Transmissions*. “For simplified access and ease of memorization,” he continues, he has divided the sayings into seventeen “chapters based on similarity of lexical pattern,” for example, “Whosoever does X gets Y” and “Do X and you will get Y.” This is a relatively unusual method of organization for hadith compilations, but one routinely used in collections of classical Arabic proverbs and sayings—and *Light in the Heavens* contains largely aphoristic material.

The contents of the work are listed by al-Quḍāʿī in his introduction as “testaments, directions for refined behavior, counsels, and maxims” as well as “supplications attributed to the prophet in prayer.” Most are succinct one-liners extracted from longer texts of the prophet’s sermons and speeches, from answers to questions, from responses to real-life situations, and from anecdotes about his deeds and gestures. Contextual material is provided in *The Transmissions*, in commentaries of *Light in the Heavens*, in other hadith compilations and their commentaries, in biographical works on Muḥammad, and in historical works on early Islam.

Muḥammad’s words collected in *Light in the Heavens* preach humane behavior and consciousness of God, and urge the reader to prepare for the imminent hereafter.³⁰ They counsel repentance of sins and renunciation of worldly matters, and advocate virtuous action.

They offer practical advice on daily life issues, keen observations on human nature, and legal rulings on social and economic issues. In one chapter, they quote God directly speaking to humans. The themes, whether worldly or sublime, are couched within an Islamic pietistic framework, consonant with the teachings of the Qur'an.

Imagery is based on flora and fauna from the Arabian Peninsula, as well as cosmic and mundane objects and acts that reflect the lifestyle of the residents of early Islamic Mecca and Medina; numerous sayings also reference them literally. Camels, horses, sheep, dates, turbans, musk, vinegar, salt are all to be found, as are the blacksmith and the perfume vendor. Advice on detailed aspects of everyday life abound: "never skip dinner," "pay a worker his wages," and "wear white garments."

Doctrines and practices of Islam are also abundantly described: the mandatory rites of the daily prayer, the annual alms-levy, fasting, the hajj pilgrimage, and regular and melodious recitation of the Qur'an. Prophets are held up as exemplars. Exhortations to revere and be guided by Muḥammad's progeny, his pious companions, and the learned among the community pepper the collection.

The vast majority of the collection's sayings are devoted to promoting upright character: honesty, integrity, affection, compassion, contentment, scrupulosity, gentleness, harmony, modesty, courage, generosity, fortitude, gratitude, justice, simplicity, trustworthiness, moderation, and forgiveness, as well as giving in charity and seeking counsel. The traits and acts warned against include deception, untruthfulness, harshness, obscenity, drink, fornication, arrogance, aggression, hypocrisy, conceit, begging, and flattery. A large number of sayings advocate the seeking of knowledge and the cherishing of wisdom, and encourage the related traits and acts of careful planning, intellectual curiosity, and asking good questions.

Reception and Renown

Light in the Heavens is al-Quḍā'i's most celebrated work.³¹ Its approachable format and humane content made it popular almost

immediately after it was compiled, and the numerous extant manuscripts and their varied places of origin suggest the book's dissemination across the expanse of the Islamic world—from Spain in the West, through North Africa, Egypt, Turkey, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen, to India in the East. Al-Silafī and Ibn 'Asākir note its prominence in their biographies of al-Qudā'ī, saying the collection “has spread to the corners of the earth, becoming as clearly visible in the firmament as the blazing star after which it is named.”³²

I have identified sixty-eight commentaries and related works on *Light in the Heavens*, written in Arabic or Persian, with one in Turkish, in both medieval and modern times (see details of extant works in the bibliography).³³

Fifty-five of these are medieval works, dating from the late fifth/eleventh century through the twelfth/eighteenth century, and ranging widely in the authors' places of work and faith denominations. They include:

- twenty-four Arabic commentaries—including extant ones by Ibn Waḥshī (d. 502/1109), al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), al-Rāwandī (d. 537/1142), one anonymous (d. 554/1159), two by al-Sijilmāsi (fl. 7th/13th c.), Ibn al-Warrāq (n.d.), and Bābī (n.d.), and a lost commentary by the famed litterateur Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 636/1239);
- twenty-four Arabic response books that assess its *isnāds* (*takhrīj*), or offer an alphabetical rearrangement of its sayings (*tartīb*) or a supplement to it (*takmilah*), or use it as a model for their own hadith works—including extant ones by Ibn Shīrawayh (d. 509/1115), al-Uqlishī (d. 550/1155), al-Qal'ī (d. 629/1232), Abū l-Sa'ādāt (d. 634/1237), al-Ṣāghānī (d. 650/1252), al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1403), and al-Munāwī (d. 1030/1621), and a lost work by the well-known scholar al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505);
- seven Persian translations with commentaries—including extant ones by Ibn al-Qudā'ī (fl. ca. 5th/11th c.), Zakī (d. before 567/1171), one anonymous (fl. 8th/14th c.), and Baḥrānī (fl. 10th/16th c.).

In modern times, a total of thirteen related works have been published:

- four Arabic commentaries on *Light in the Heavens* by al-Kattānī, al-Marāghī, al-Dūmī, and Dīsī;
- seven Arabic response works, one each by al-Kattānī (again), al-‘Azzūzī, and al-Ḥujūjī, and four by al-Ghumārī;
- a translation into Persian by Farkhiyān, and one in French by Khawam; a third is underway in three languages simultaneously, English, Urdu, and Gujarati.³⁴

The varied denominational affiliations of the scholars who copied the work and studied it—as noted in the texts of the manuscript and in certificates of study jotted on them—reveals a broad interest across sectarian lines: Shi‘i scholars from all three major groups, Fatimid-Ismā‘īlī, Twelver, and Zaydī, studied the work as assiduously as Sunni scholars of all four major legal schools, Shāfi‘ī (which was al-Quḍā‘ī’s own), Mālikī, Ḥanafī, and Ḥanbalī, as well as of the lesser-known Zāhirī school.

Light in the Heavens played an important role in traditional Muslim education, particularly for young children and nonspecialists, but also for scholars, and it appears to have been a regularly featured text in madrasa curricula. For more advanced students of jurisprudence, a commentary seems to have been studied, particularly those of the Sunni Mālikī al-Sijilmāsī and the Twelver Shi‘i al-Rāwandī. The hadith specialists paid special attention to *The Transmissions*. The large number of manuscripts of *Light in the Heavens* and *The Transmissions*, and the numerous study certificates, colophons, commentaries, and *isnād*-assessments, also indicate that these were teaching texts read in numerous study circles in Egypt and elsewhere in the Islamic world.

Light in the Heavens was popular across the far reaches of the Islamic world, being studied by Hadith scholars in North Africa and Spain in the West, as well as Mecca in the center, and Iraq and Iran in the East. In Morocco under the Almohad dynasty (r. 514–667/1121–1269), the

Shihāb was among the hadith works prescribed for study.³⁵ Under the Marīnids (r. 642–869/1244–1465), the text’s fame continued to grow: Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390), the famous Mālikī Hadith scholar and Sufi shaykh who flourished in their realms, had memorized *Light in the Heavens* in its entirety.³⁶ Among the several hundred scholars who are named in the sources as having studied *Light in the Heavens* and *The Transmissions*—often with students of al-Quḍā’ī, or students’ students—several are from Spain, from cities such as Toledo, Seville, Granada, Almeria, Mallorca, and Valencia.³⁷ Additionally, twenty-four scholars with connections to Iran (notably Qazvin) are identified by al-Rāfi‘ī (d. 623/1226) as having studied and taught the *Shihāb*.³⁸ In Baghdad, the famous Ḥanbalī jurist, Hadith scholar, historian, and preacher Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) is reported to have transmitted *Light in the Heavens*.³⁹ In Cairo, it was taught to public audiences by al-Quḍā’ī and his students in the sixth/thirteenth century; three centuries later, the renowned Shāfi‘ī Hadith scholar, judge, and historian Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) also taught *The Transmissions* in Cairo to a scholar from the al-Azhar teaching establishment.⁴⁰

Ironically, an indication of the *Shihāb*’s fame comes from the mouth of a detractor, al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāghānī (d. 650/1252), a native of Lahore (in present-day Pakistan), who traveled across the Islamic world, and studied and taught in Ghazna, Mecca, Baghdad, and Delhi. In the introduction to his hadith compilation *Mashāriq al-anwār* (*Rising-places of Celestial Lights*), in which he combined the “sound” hadith collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, he lamented that people of his age studied hadith only from al-Uqlīshī’s *Al-Najm* (*The Star*), al-Nawawī’s *Forty Hadiths*, and from the “books of al-Quḍā’ī,” all collections that, according to him, mixed sound hadiths with weak ones.⁴¹ This, he said, is what led him to compile his own, more rigorous work. But he does not reject the *Shihāb* outright; in fact, he writes that he has included its sound sayings in his compilation.⁴²

It is fitting to conclude with the views of one medieval scholar and one modern savant, one a Sunni and one Shi'ī. The celebrated literary theorist ʿIyāḥ al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 636/1239), in his work titled *The Popular Aphorism (Al-Mathal al-sā'ir)*, advised aspiring chancery scribes to begin their study of hadith with al-Quḍā'ī's *Light in the Heavens*. Ibn al-Athīr was born in Turkey, and he lived in Damascus, where he served as vizier for Saladin and al-Malik al-Afḍal, and then in Mosul, where he was head of the chancery for the last Zangid ruler. He says:

The first [book] you should memorize of [prophetic] reports is *Light in the Heavens*. It is a short book, and all that is in it may be used, for it contains words of wisdom and manners. Once you have memorized it and are familiar with using it, as I have shown you here, you will have the capacity to deal with, and know, what [kinds of hadith] may be used and what may not. At that time, you can go on to study the *Ṣaḥīḥ* works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, [Mālik's] *Muwaṭṭa'*, [the work of] al-Tirmidhī, the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī, and other works of hadith.⁴³

More recently, Sayyidnā Ṭāhir Sayf al-Dīn (d. 1385/1965)—fifty-first *dā'ī* of the Ṭayyibī Fatimid-Ismā'īlīs, and a learned scholar and prolific author and poet from Surat in India—cites a large number of *Shihāb* hadith in his *Treasures of the Imam of the Pious (Khazā'in imām al-muttaqīn)*. In his preface to the selection, he echoes the language of al-Quḍā'ī's introduction describing Muḥammad's sayings, and entreats his readers to study them as follows:

Let us profit from this selection [of sayings] come to us from a prophet fortified with profound words and marvelous sayings. They shine in the sky of that [divine] knowledge which gives benefit in this world and the hereafter—as shining stars lighting up black darkness. For they derive from God's command, written in the Tablet by the Pen.⁴⁴

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Translating the prophet Muḥammad's hadiths, words revered by Muslims, poses several very real challenges to the translator. They are pithily succinct; they are buttressed by a multitude of contextual narratives, each supporting numerous interpretations; they are anchored in the beautifully cadenced rhythms of early Arabic; they draw on a vivid palette of cosmic and desert imagery; and the words and tempos are often specific to the linguistic milieu of seventh-century Arabia. A translator can only fall short, but I have done my best to produce a clear English rendering that preserves the substantive spirit and rhetorical texture of the original words.

Keeping these larger issues in mind—and in keeping with my approach in translating al-Quḍāʾī's collection of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's sayings—I strive for sentence-to-sentence translation, rather than word-to-word correspondence, as I find it serves the translation better to convey the essence of what is being said. Where appropriate, I have

- added words to unpack the dense Arabic—but only minimally, preserving any ambiguities in the original;
- modified syntax and morphology for an idiomatic English rendering;
- translated a single Arabic word differently in different places, depending on context;
- used lowercase for pronouns referring to God, and also for several other words commonly rendered in uppercase, such

as “the fire” (*al-nār*, i.e., hellfire) and “the garden” (*al-jannah*, i.e., the garden of paradise);

- used my own translations of Qur’anic verses, to maintain consistency and to highlight a given verse’s meaning in its context;
- omitted pious invocations attached to the name of God and the prophet Muḥammad (these are preserved in the Arabic); and
- following classical Arabic practice, retained the masculine gender in generic references to humans.

The presence of specialized terminology has been a particular challenge, since certain differences in language arise not just from differences in the signifier words, but more deeply, from differences in the concepts signified. To this end, I have translated selected technical religious terms differently from their conventional English rendering. For example, I often translate “Islam” as “commitment to God” (rather than “submission” to him); *taqwā* as “piety” or “being conscious of God” (rather than “fear of God”); and *zuhd* as “rejection of worldliness” or “indifference to the world” (rather than “rejection of the world” or “asceticism”).

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

- 1 The primary sources for Muḥammad's biography include Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, *The Expeditions*; al-Wāqidi, *The Life of Muhammad*; Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muḥammad*; al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vols. 6–9; al-Qāḍi al-Nu'mān, *Sharḥ al-akhbār*. The enormous number of modern studies include Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca and Muhammad at Medina*; Hamidullah, *The Life and Work of the Prophet of Islam*; Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*; Motzki, ed., *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources*; Rubin, ed., *The Life of Muḥammad*; Schoeler, *The Biography of Muḥammad*; Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*; Qutbuddin, "Muḥammad"; Fitzpatrick and Walker, eds., *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*; Crone, "What Do We Actually Know about Mohammed?"
- 2 Q 'Alaq 96:1.
- 3 In this period, Muḥammad wrote letters to the Sassanid, Byzantine, and Ethiopian rulers inviting them to Islam; see Hamidullah, ed., *Majmū'at al-wathā'iq al-siyāsiyyah*.
- 4 E.g., "ummi" is also interpreted as "belonging to the community (umma)" of prophets.
- 5 Two are extant: *Ṣaḥīfat Hammām ibn Munabbih* and *Ṣaḥīfat 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, both edited by Rif'at Fawzī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Cairo, 1985–86.
- 6 Khan, trans., *Gardens of the Righteous*; Cleary, trans., *The Wisdom of the Prophet*; Guezzou, trans., *A Treasury of Hadith*.
- 7 To help with authentication, a number of secondary genres became important, particularly biographical dictionaries, the earliest of these

- being Ibn Sa'd's *Great Book of Generations* [of hadith transmitters] (*Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*).
- 8 For the Twelver Shi'a after the death of their eleventh imam in 873/1469 and the immediate occultation of his infant son, the twelfth imam, biographical dictionaries gained increasing relevance, among them *Rijāl* works by al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī.
 - 9 Western scholarship on hadith includes works by Goldziher, Schacht, Şiddiqī, Kamali, Brown, Motski, and Musa; see details in the bibliography.
 - 10 E.g., al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 30:369 and *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 18:92; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4:212; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-kubrā*, 3:62.
 - 11 Ibn al-'Adīm (*Bughyat al-ṭalab*, 9:4167) narrates that al-Qudā'ī was invited to a meal with the Byzantine emperor, who was impressed when he saw him pick up a piece of bread that had fallen off the table and eat it, honoring the food, as, he said, "has been taught to us by our prophet Muḥammad." The emperor rewarded him handsomely.
 - 12 Ibn Mākūlā, *Kitāb al-Ikmāl*, 7:115.
 - 13 Al-Silafī, *Mashyakhat al-Rāzī*, 1:241–42.
 - 14 Al-Ḥabbāl, *Wafayāt*, 1:87; Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, *Fihrist*, 1:128; al-Sam'ānī, *Al-Ansāb*, 4:517; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq*, 53:167–70; Abū l-Fidā', *Al-Mukhtaṣar*, 2:190; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4:212, 523–24; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 30:368–70; al-Yāfi'ī, *Mir'āt al-jinān*, 3:75; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyyah*, 3:62–63; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, 2:267; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 3:293.
 - 15 Including Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Baghdādī ibn al-Qaṭṭān (d. 359/970), Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Jīzī al-Zajjāj (fl. 4th/10th c.), and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Kāṭib (d. 399/1009).
 - 16 Including Abū Naṣr ibn Mākūlā (d. 475/1082), Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Ḥumaydī (d. ca. 450/1058), 'Abd al-Jalīl al-Sāwī (fl. 5th/11th c.), Muḥammad ibn Barakāt (d. 520/1126), Sahl ibn Bishr al-Isfarā'īnī (fl. 5th/11th c.), and Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Rāzī (fl. 5th/11th c.).
 - 17 Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 33:283, and *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 19:124.

- 18 The catalog of a manuscript library in Kuwait attributes a fourteenth work titled *Ihyā' al-'ulūm* (*Revivifying the Branches of Knowledge*, Idārat al-Makhṭūṭāt wa-l-Maktabāt al-Islāmiyyah, catalog number 21561) to al-Quḍā'ī, an ascription that I have not yet been able to verify.
- 19 The earliest listing I have found of al-Quḍā'ī's books is Ibn 'Asākir's *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, 53:168–69, which lists the extant works *Light in the Heavens*, *The Transmissions*, *A Treasury of Virtues*, and *The Book of Reports*, and the lost works *The Merits of al-Shāfi'ī* and *Compendium of Teachers*.
- 20 Cited in a late source, Ismā'īl Pāshā, *Hadiyyat al-'arīfīn*, 6:70.
- 21 Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb*, 5:214; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4:523–24 and passim; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:5 and passim (twenty-nine references in all), and *Itti'āz*, 2:267 (al-Maqrīzī mentions al-Quḍā'ī's *Khiṭaṭ* numerous times in his own *Khiṭaṭ*, but oddly does not do so in his biographical entry on al-Quḍā'ī in the *Muqaffā*, 5:710–11); al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 3:334, 339, and passim; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Al-Nujūm al-zāhirah* 1:56, 4:47, and passim.
- 22 Al-Silafī, *Mashyakhāt al-Rāzī*, 1:241–42; al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, 5:710; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 3:279; al-Ziriklī, *Al-A'lām*, 7:16–17.
- 23 Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārikh madīnat Dimashq*, 53:168–69.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibn 'Atīyah, *Fihrist*, 1:128; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-Ṣilah*, 1:74.
- 26 Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-Ṣilah*, 1:132.
- 27 Ḥājji Khalifah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 1:745.
- 28 Al-Silafī, *Mashyakhah*, 1:242.
- 29 Lane, “SH-H-B,” *Lexicon*; it can also denote a firebrand, or a person who is sharp and penetrating.
- 30 In his French translation of *Kitāb al-Shihāb*, titled *Le Flambeau*, Khawam rearranges the collection thematically into the following chapters: (1) religion, (2) social relationships, (3) economic problems, (4) women, (5) respect for creation, (6) wealth and poverty, (7) daily life, (8) personal conduct, (9) the Qur'an, (10) politics, (11) the prophet speaking of himself, (12) the family, (13) supplications

invoked by the prophet, and (14) words spoken by God and reported by God's messenger.

- 31 Cf. al-Silafi, *Mashyakhat al-Rāzī*, 1:241; Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, *Fihris*, 1:128; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq*, 53:169; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4:212, 523; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 30:369; al-Yāfi'i, *Mir'āt al-jinān*, 3:75; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah*, 3:62; al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, 5:710; al-'Ukbarī, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 3:293.
- 32 Al-Silafi, *Mashyakhat al-Rāzī*, 1:242; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḫ madīnat Dimashq*, 53:169. Also, Ibn Abī l-Rabī' al-Qaysī (fl. 6th/12th c.) from Granada wrote in verse, "The *Shihāb* has merit above other books, for it transcribes the words of the Arabian prophet; containing luminous sayings of wisdom and counsel of warning and promise and refinement" (al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, 2:138).
- 33 A full list of extant and lost works is available in Online Material > Book Supplements on the LAL website: www.libraryofarabicliterature.org.
- 34 Translated by a team of scholars in Ahmedabad and Vadodara; the English translation is by Zulqarnain Hakeemuddin.
- 35 Cf. Ibn al-Abbār, *Al-Takmilah li-Kitāb al-Ṣilah*, 1:67, 75, 213, 224, 263.
- 36 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, 5:342.
- 37 E.g., Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-Ṣilah*, 1:35, 74, 132.
- 38 Al-Rāfi'i, *Al-Tadwīn* 2:468, 499, and passim.
- 39 Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 36:186.
- 40 Al-'Aydārūsī, *Ta'riḫ al-nūr al-sāfir*, 1:47.
- 41 Al-Ṣāghānī, *Mashāriq al-anwār*, 35–36. He also composed a book titled *Al-Durr al-multaqaṭ* in which he listed fifty-six hadith (about 4 percent of the total hadiths in *Kitāb al-Shihāb*) that he claimed were weak or fabricated.
- 42 Al-Ṣāghānī, *Mashāriq al-anwār*, 35–36. Jonathan Brown has traced the process whereby al-Bukhārī and Muslim's compilations were gradually canonized, and al-Ṣāghānī's work appears to have been part of that effort. See Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, 367–77. Abū l-Faḍl al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1403) in *Risālah fī-l-radd*

'*alā l-Ṣāghānī* refuted al-Ṣāghānī's assessment of the *Shihāb*, arguing for the soundness of the hadith that al-Ṣāghānī deemed weak.

43 Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Mathal al-sā'ir*, 1:128.

44 Sayf al-Dīn, *Khazā'in imām al-muttaqīn*, 76, 79–83; see also quotations from *Kitāb al-Shihāb* in his *Salsabīl ḥikam ghadaq*, 55–59.

LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS



AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate

God be praised! He is one, powerful and wise, the eternal and generous creator. He sent Muḥammad as a prophet, fortified with profound words and marvelous sayings, making him «a bringer of glad tidings and a warner»¹ for all people, «a caller» to him «with his permission, and a shining sun.»² May God bless him and also his progeny, from whom God stripped all forms of filth, and whom he made completely pure.³ 0.1

The prophet's words and his divinely inspired directions for refined behavior burnish the hearts of those who know God and cure the diseases of those who fear him. For they come from one whom God has protected from error, who has been singled out to receive clear exposition and wisdom, who calls to right guidance, makes the blind see, and never «speaks from a whim.»⁴ May God shower upon him the choicest blessings he has ever showered upon «his chosen servants.»⁵ 0.2

In this book, I have collected one thousand wise sayings from the sayings of the messenger of God—including testaments, directions for refined behavior, counsels, and maxims—whose forms and meanings are free of artifice and discord. Inspired by God, they are superior to the expressive discourse of the masters of expression. Distinguished by the guidance of prophecy, they are loftier than the sayings of the masters of eloquence. I have arranged these sayings 0.3

uninterruptedly, one following the other, omitting the chains of transmission. For simplified access and ease of memorization, I have divided them into chapters based on similarity of lexical pattern. I have subsequently added two hundred more sayings, to make twelve hundred in all.⁶ I end the book with supplications attributed to the prophet. The chains of transmission for each hadith I have collected in a separate book; they can be examined there.⁷

- o.4 I ask God—through his might and power—to let my efforts be directed to winning his acceptance, and to seeking his merciful gaze.



CHAPTER ONE

Acts are only worth the intentions that accompany them.	1.1
Keep what is said at gatherings private.	1.2
Advice is sought in trust.	1.3
A promise to give is binding.	1.4
A promise is a debt.	1.5
Warfare entails cunning.	1.6
Regret is a form of repentance.	1.7
Unity is mercy, dissent punishment.	1.8
Integrity is a form of wealth.	1.9
True faith is giving good counsel.	1.10
Virtue is wealth, ⁸ magnanimity piety.	1.11
Goodness is habitual, wickedness obstinacy.	1.12
Leniency brings dividends, harshness deficits.	1.13
Prudence is to expect the worst.	1.14
Offspring cause stinginess and timidity.	1.15

- 1.16 Obscenities offend.
- 1.17 The Qur'an is the real cure.
- 1.18 Supplication is the best form of worship.
- 1.19 Debt disfigures devotion.
-
- 1.20 Half of living well is planning well.
- 1.21 Half of discernment is affection.
- 1.22 Worry causes aging.⁹
- 1.23 The fewer children you have, the more affluent you will be.¹⁰
- 1.24 Half of learning is asking good questions.
-
- 1.25 Greet before conversing.
- 1.26 One's nature is influenced by the milk one has suckled.¹¹
- 1.27 Elders bring blessings.
- 1.28 The outcome is the essence of a deed.
- 1.29 Honor the book by reading it in full.¹²
- 1.30 Faith is bolstered by scrupulosity.
- 1.31 The pinnacle of wisdom is fear of God, and the prince of deeds scrupulosity.
- 1.32 The wealthy oppress when they delay payment and court hellfire when they beg.
-
- 1.33 To speak of favors received is to show gratitude.
- 1.34 Awaiting succor with fortitude is the best form of worship.
- 1.35 Fasting gives protection.

A chieftain is a guarantor for his tribe.	1.36
Gentleness is the pinnacle of wisdom.	1.37
The sage should seek out wise words wherever they may roam. ¹³	1.38
Goodness is beauty of character.	1.39
Youth is a time of madness.	1.40
Women are Satan's snares.	1.41
All sins converge in wine.	1.42
Wine is the mother of all abominations.	1.43
Embezzlement burns with a fire from hell.	1.44
Wailing for the dead is a practice from the dark ages. ¹⁴	1.45
Fornication bequeaths poverty.	1.46
To ogle is to fornicate with the eyes.	1.47
Fever is a scout sent by death.	1.48
Fever is a blaze from the inferno.	1.49
Fever is the believer's share of hellfire. ¹⁵	1.50
Contentment is wealth that is never used up.	1.51
Integrity brings sustenance, fraud brings poverty.	1.52
Late risers earn no pay.	1.53
An Arab's turban is his crown.	1.54
All good things converge in modesty.	1.55
Modesty brings nothing but good.	1.56
The mosque is where the pious live.	1.57

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- 1.58 Forgetfulness is the bane of learning.
- 1.59 Falsehood is the bane of conversation.
- 1.60 Foolhardiness is the bane of prudence.
- 1.61 Indolence is the bane of worship.
- 1.62 Injustice is the bane of bravery.
- 1.63 Keeping tally is the bane of generosity.
- 1.64 Conceit is the bane of beauty.
- 1.65 Waste is the bane of liberality.
- 1.66 Arrogance is the bane of a good pedigree.
- 1.67 Bragging is the bane of refinement.
- 1.68 Caprice is the bane of faith.

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- 1.69 The fortunate are those who have learned from others, the wretched have been wretched since the womb.
- 1.70 Repentance makes for atonement.

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- 1.71 The Friday prayer is the hajj of the poor.
- 1.72 Hajj is the jihad of the frail.
- 1.73 Being a good wife is a woman's jihad.
- 1.74 Making an honest living is a form of jihad.
- 1.75 Dying in a foreign land is a form of martyrdom.

-
- 1.76 Knowledge must not be withheld.
- 1.77 Those present see what the absent do not.

Those who prompt others to do good are rewarded in like measure.	1.78
The water carrier is the last to drink.	1.79
—	
Charity is any generous act.	1.80
Charity is kindness to others.	1.81
Charity is a kind word.	1.82
Protecting one's honor counts as charity.	1.83
Charity to family counts twice: as charity and as nurture.	1.84
Charity protects against a bad death.	1.85
Charity in secret assuages the lord's wrath.	1.86
Nurturing relatives brings long life.	1.87
Generosity protects against a horrible death.	1.88
A man can enjoy the shade of his charity till he sits in judgment.	1.89
Charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire.	1.90
Charity to the undeserving is like refusing to give at all. ¹⁶	1.91
—	
Penitence is as good as not sinning.	1.92
Judgment day will be ominously dark for the tyrant. ¹⁷	1.93
Too much hilarity kills the spirit.	1.94
Compassionate hearts will be rewarded. ¹⁸	1.95
God charges the learned to look after his creatures.	1.96
The pinnacle of wisdom is fear of God.	1.97

1.98 Paradise will be home to the generous.

1.99 Paradise is shaded by righteous swords.¹⁹

1.100 Paradise lies beneath your mother's feet.

1.101 Supplications made between the call and summons to prayer are never rebuffed.²⁰

1.102 An honest living is an obligation second only to worship.

1.103 A good woman makes few demands.

1.104 Believers are mirrors for each other.

1.105 Believers are brothers to each other.

1.106 Believers do not ask for much.

1.107 Believers are intelligent, astute, and cautious.

1.108 Believers are friendly and approachable.

1.109 Believers can be trusted with life and property.

1.110 Believers are generous and guileless, libertines are depraved and shameless.

1.111 Believers buttress and support each other.

1.112 The true believer among the faithful is like the head to the body.

1.113 Believers will be shaded by their charity on judgment day.

1.114 One mouthful is enough for the believer; the unbeliever craves seven.²¹

1.115 Believers are gentle and easygoing.

1.116 Winter is springtime for the believer.²²

1.117 Supplication is the believer's best weapon.

Ritual-prayer illumines the believer.	1.118
The world is prison for the believer, paradise for the unbeliever.	1.119
The sage should seek out wisdom wherever it may roam. ²³	1.120
A believer's intentions reach farther than his deeds.	1.121
A supplicant at the door is a gift from God to believers.	1.122
Death is a gift for believers.	1.123
Nights of prayer bestow honor on a believer, self-sufficiency gives him glory.	1.124
Knowledge is the friend of the believer, maturity his advisor, intelligence his guide, deeds his shepherd, gentleness his father, kindness his brother, and patience the commander of his armies.	1.125
Faith includes a jealous sense of honor.	1.126
Faith includes modesty.	1.127
Faith includes wearing old clothes.	1.128
Forbearance is half of faith, conviction the whole.	1.129
Faith has two halves: gratitude and forbearance.	1.130
Faith and wisdom hail from Yemen. ²⁴	1.131
Faith shackles aggression.	1.132
The ritual-prayer is the banner of faith.	1.133
A Muslim is someone whose tongue and hand no other Muslim fears.	1.134
A Muslim is brother to a Muslim—he neither oppresses him nor hands him over.	1.135
Muslims are a united front, like one hand.	1.136
Death is sufficient atonement for Muslims.	1.137

- 1.138 It is the duty of all Muslims to seek knowledge.²⁵
- 1.139 Blood, honor, and property are sacrosanct for every Muslim.
- 1.140 A Muslim's property is as inviolable as his life.
-
- 1.141 The true emigrant is one who rejects God's prohibitions.²⁶
- 1.142 A true warrior battles his urges in order to obey God.
- 1.143 The intelligent man curbs his urges and prepares for the afterlife.
The incompetent man follows every whim and urge yet still expects
God to fulfill his wishes.
-
- 1.144 Aided by his brother, one man is like many.
- 1.145 A man is swayed by what his friend believes.
- 1.146 A man keeps company with those he loves.²⁷
- 1.147 A man's religion is his real honor, intelligence his real virility, and
character his real breeding.
- 1.148 Commitment to God is commendable only when you avoid what
does not concern you.²⁸
-
- 1.149 People are like the teeth of a comb.
- 1.150 People are like quarries of gold and silver.²⁹
- 1.151 People are like a herd of a hundred camels—it is hard to single one out.³⁰
- 1.152 True wealth means not coveting another's property.
- 1.153 After faith, affability is the pinnacle of intelligence.
-
- 1.154 Every man is his own assessor.³¹
- 1.155 All that will be is at hand.

Every eye fornicates.	1.156
Everything, even incapacity and aptitude, depends on fate.	1.157
The man of learning thirsts for knowledge.	1.158
Everything has a foundation—discernment is the foundation of our religion.	1.159
Every dubious thing is forbidden—nothing dubious can be part of religion.	1.160
Each and every one of you is a shepherd accountable for his flock.	1.161
On judgment day, all deceivers shall have the extent of their deception advertised.	1.162
—	
On judgment day, cases of bloodshed will be judged first.	1.163
The ritual-prayer will be assessed first.	1.164
Good character will be placed in the celestial scale first.	1.165
Modesty and trustworthiness will be the first things to disappear from our community.	1.166
Trustworthiness will be the first part of faith to be lost, ritual-prayer the last.	1.167
—	
Love and hate are both hereditary.	1.168
Love of a thing makes you deaf and blind.	1.169
Gifts affect what you see and hear.	1.170
Goodness will be braided into your horses' forelocks until judgment day. ³²	1.171
Chestnut horses bring good luck.	1.172

1.173 Travel is a foretaste of the punishment.

1.174 Obeying women causes regret.

1.175 Words court disaster.

1.176 Fasting is one half of forbearance. There is levy on all things—the body's is fasting.

1.177 The supplication of a fasting person is never rebuffed.

1.178 Fasting in winter is easy pickings.

1.179 Clean teeth enhance a man's eloquence.

1.180 Eloquent speech makes a man beautiful.

1.181 The muezzin is given a task to perform, the prayer-leader has trust placed in him.³³

1.182 On judgment day, muezzins will stand tall.³⁴

1.183 I will intercede for my community's gravest sinners.

1.184 The Allies are my companions and confidants.³⁵

1.185 God's hand protects the congregation.

1.186 Silence shows wisdom, but few oblige.

1.187 God's sustenance finds his servants more unerringly than death.

1.188 Living thriftily is more profitable than certain trades.

1.189 Timid traders fail, bold traders succeed.

1.190 Kind employers profit, mean employers lose.

—	
This world's calamities are lighter than the hereafter's.	1.191
The grave is the first stopping place in your journey to the hereafter.	1.192
Fortitude is tested by the first shock.	1.193
Laying daughters to rest is an honorable deed. ³⁶	1.194
Death strikes between sixty and seventy years of age.	1.195
Members of my community live until they are between sixty and seventy. ³⁷	1.196
Deception and duplicity guarantee hellfire.	1.197
—	
Oaths are construed according to the requester. ³⁸	1.198
An egregious oath spawns sin or remorse.	1.199
Fraudulent oaths devastate the land.	1.200
False oaths deplete possessions and destroy livelihood.	1.201
—	
The greeting of our people is "Peace," our subjects' security. ³⁹	1.202
Knowledge that brings no benefit is like hoarded treasure.	1.203
Gratitude after eating is like forbearance during fasting.	1.204
—	
The pious draw near to God through ritual-prayer.	1.205
All that separates a man from unbelief is neglect of the ritual-prayer.	1.206
Prayer is to religion as the head to the body.	1.207
Ritual-prayer performed while sitting is worth half of one performed while standing.	1.208
The alms-levy is the trestle of Islam.	1.209

1.210 A man's perfume is intense in fragrance and discreet in color. A woman's perfume is discreet in fragrance and intense in color.

1.211 Playing in dirt is a child's delight.⁴⁰

1.212 Souls are like mustered armies: the similar come together and unite, the dissimilar part ways.

1.213 Truth comforts, falsehood disquiets.

1.214 The Qur'an is true wealth: no poverty with it, no wealth without.

1.215 Belief in destiny dispels troubles and grief.

1.216 Renouncing the world brings solace to heart and body, preoccupation with the world increases troubles and grief, and idleness hardens the heart.

1.217 Teacher and student are partners in the good.

1.218 Hands are burdened until they return what they have taken.⁴¹

1.219 Married couples can claim their offspring, adulterers can claim only their punishment—stones.⁴²

1.220 Tent dwellers must provide hospitality, house dwellers need not.⁴³

1.221 Every suppliant is deserving, even if he comes on a horse.⁴⁴

1.222 Is there a disease worse than stinginess?

1.223 Taking back your gifts is like dogs licking their vomit.

1.224 Looking at greenery improves your eyesight, as does looking at a beautiful woman.⁴⁵

1.225 On judgment day, my community's faces will glow and their limbs will gleam from their ablutions.

1.226 Women should clap, men should say "God be praised!"⁴⁶

The gaze is one of Satan's poisoned arrows.	1.227
Women, horses, and homes can be ill-omened.	1.228
—	
Most people take two blessings for granted—health and leisure.	1.229
Woe to the Arabs from an evil that has drawn near!	1.230
God apportions at will the traits of cowardice and boldness.	1.231
—	
Piety's treasures include concealing three things: suffering, illness, and almsgiving.	1.232
A man is fortunate to resemble his father.	1.233
A man is fortunate to have a beautiful character.	1.234
—	
Be generous in this world and be treated generously in the hereafter.	1.235
A trustworthy custodian, who willingly hands over what he is ordered to, earns the reward of the almsgiver.	1.236
The ruler is God's shadow on earth, a refuge for the wronged.	1.237
The only words uttered by Adam's children that count in their favor and not against them are commanding good, forbidding evil, and praising God.	1.238
Deliberation, moderation, steadfastness, and silence—these together make up one fraction of prophethood. ⁴⁷	1.239
Prophets are leaders, and scholars are masters—keeping their company brings benefits.	1.240
Boasting about something you do not have is like wearing two false garments. ⁴⁸	1.241
Washing your hands before eating dispels poverty; washing them after dispels dementia and keeps your eyes sharp.	1.242

- 1.243 Tellers of tales can expect malice; their audience can expect mercy.⁴⁹
- 1.244 Traders can expect sustenance; hoarders can expect damnation.
-
- 1.245 A long life in obedience to God is the greatest good fortune.
- 1.246 The greatest wretch is the one alive, not dead, at the last hour.
- 1.247 Those who provide for their families after death, but appear before their lord with only sins to account for, will wail the loudest.
-
- 1.248 The supplications of the wronged will be answered, but they will be accountable for their own sins.
- 1.249 Three kinds of supplications are never denied: a victim's, a traveler's, and a father's against his son.
- 1.250 Of every three judges, two are in hellfire, one in paradise.⁵⁰
- 1.251 Two traits are never encountered in a hypocrite: virtuous conduct and knowledge of religious practice.
- 1.252 Two traits never come together in a believer: parsimony and dissoluteness.
- 1.253 Two pairs of eyes will not be scorched on judgment day: eyes that shed tears in the dark of night from fear of God, and eyes that stay awake to guard God's path.
- 1.254 Two kinds of people never have enough: seekers of knowledge and seekers of worldly gain.
- 1.255 Old men resemble the young in their love of two things: long life and great wealth.
- 1.256 God hates four kinds of people: oath-swearing traders, arrogant beggars, dirty old lechers, and tyrannical rulers.

Three traits damn, three save. Giving in to greed, following whims, 1.257
and being full of oneself damn. Fearing God in private and public,
moderation in poverty and wealth, and dispensing justice in anger
and calm save.

In a mutual curse, the instigator remains at fault unless the victim 1.258
goes too far.

I will be the first of you to drink at the celestial pool. 1.259

The person who cares for the orphan and I will be as close as this in 1.260
paradise—*he held up his index and middle finger.*

I am the warner, death is the reaper, and the hour is determined. 1.261



CHAPTER TWO

- 2.1 Those who keep silent are saved.
- 2.2 God exalts those who are humble before him, and humbles those who are arrogant.
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- 2.3 God proves wrong those who swear they know his judgments.
- 2.4 God forgives those who forgive others.
- 2.5 God pardons those who pardon others.
- 2.6 God rewards those who bear hardship with fortitude.
- 2.7 God recompenses those who curb their anger.
- 2.8 God sustains those who are restrained and denies those who are wasteful.
-
- 2.9 Those who are called up for interrogation at judgment will be punished.
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- 2.10 Those who take to the desert become hardened.
- 2.11 Those who hunt to distraction become heedless.
- 2.12 Those who linger at a ruler's gates are tempted.

Those who are killed defending their property die martyrs. 2.13

Those who are killed defending their family die martyrs. 2.14

Those who are killed defending their faith die martyrs. 2.15

God afflicts those he wishes to bless. 2.16

God teaches knowledge of religious practice to those he wishes to bless. 2.17

God gives good character to those he wishes to bless. 2.18

Those who long for the garden hasten to perform good deeds. 2.19

Those who fear the fire are oblivious to desires. 2.20

Those who expect death are oblivious to ephemeral pleasures. 2.21

Those who renounce the world bear afflictions with serenity. 2.22

Those who die in a foreign land die martyrs. 2.23

God brings to their knees those who exult in many slaves.⁵¹ 2.24

If you deceive us you are not one of us. 2.25

If you attack us at night you are not one of us. 2.26

If you do not trim your mustache you are not one of us.⁵² 2.27

Those who introduce innovations into our faith are to be rebuffed. 2.28

Those who deliberate may hit the mark, those who rush may miss the mark. 2.29

Those who sow good reap felicity, those who sow evil reap remorse. 2.30

- 2.31 Those who are certain about the hereafter give generously.
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- 2.32 Those who wish to be noblest should remain devoted to God.
- 2.33 Those who wish to be strongest should trust in God.
- 2.34 Those who wish to be richest should rely on what God has more than on what they have.
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- 2.35 Those who are tempted to sin but refrain earn a reward.
- 2.36 Those whom God has favored should show it.
- 2.37 Those who wish to remain safe should remain silent.
- 2.38 Those who talk a lot err a lot, those who err a lot sin a lot, and those who sin a lot are well suited to the fire.
- 2.39 Those given a means of sustenance should adhere to it.
- 2.40 Those granted a favor should be grateful.
- 2.41 Ungrateful for a little, ungrateful for a lot.
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- 2.42 Those who console the afflicted will be recompensed in like measure.
- 2.43 Those who feed a person breaking fast will be recompensed in like measure.
-
- 2.44 God will be kind to those who are kind to my community.
- 2.45 Those who visit the sick will enjoy the fruits of the garden.
- 2.46 To pray against an oppressor is to have your wish granted.
- 2.47 To walk with tyrants is to commit a crime.

To emulate a group of people is to become one of them.	2.48
God provides sustenance for those who seek knowledge.	2.49
Those who do not benefit from their knowledge are harmed by their ignorance.	2.50
Those who are held back by their deeds are not urged on by their lineage.	2.51
To be appointed judge is to be slaughtered without a knife.	2.52
To transport your own goods is to be saved from arrogance.	2.53
Those who overburden themselves with their faith will find it overwhelms them.	2.54
On judgment day, those who discredit intercession will be denied it.	2.55
Those who are pleased by good deeds and pained by bad ones are true believers.	2.56
Those who fast continually have not fasted at all. ⁵³	2.57
Those who fear are cautious, and those who are cautious attain their goal.	2.58
Those who desire the glory of the hereafter forswear the vanities of this world.	2.59
The faces of those who pray much at night glow during the day.	2.60
Those who love worldly things are heedless of the hereafter. Those who love the hereafter are heedless of worldly things.	2.61
God denigrates those who denigrate his authority and honors those who honor it.	2.62
Approving of someone's deeds, good or evil, is the same as doing them.	2.63

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- 2.64 If someone asks you for help in God's name, give it. If someone asks you for something in God's name, grant it. If someone gives you an invitation, accept it. If someone does you a good deed, give good in return, and if you do not have the wherewithal, pray for him until you know you have compensated him.
- 2.65 Proceed slowly toward your ambitions.
- 2.66 Anyone whom God has granted sixty years of life has no excuse.
- 2.67 God forgives the lapses of those who wake up intending no one harm.
- 2.68 You cannot be guilty of slandering the shameless.
- 2.69 Transgressions that the transgressor is sorry for will be forgiven even if he does not ask for forgiveness.
- 2.70 He who fears God is feared by everyone, and he who does not, fears everything.
- 2.71 God longs to meet those who long to meet him. God has no wish to meet those who have no wish to meet him.
- 2.72 Those who conceal what they know when asked about something will wear a bridle of fire.
- 2.73 Set aside a secret store of good deeds if you can.
- 2.74 Take advantage of any opportunity to do good, for you do not know when that door will close.
- 2.75 God fills with belief and a sense of security those who curb rage when they could act upon it.
- 2.76 To savor true belief, you should love people only for the sake of God.
- 2.77 God will cast into the abyss those who gain wealth through rapine.
- 2.78 To be granted a share of gentleness is to be granted a share of good in this world and the next.

God takes such care of those who prefer his love to the love of people that they have no need of charity. 2.79

To distance yourself from the community by even a handspan is to remove the halter of Islam from your neck. 2.80

When those who distance themselves from the community and denigrate its leadership meet God, they will be refused his regard. 2.81

Those who refuse to fulfill the pledge of obedience will have no excuse on judgment day. 2.82

To leave the community is to die a pagan death. 2.83

If you wish to dwell in the center of the garden you should cleave to the community. 2.84

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God will forgive the lapses of those who accept returned goods. 2.85

On judgment day, God will forgive the lapses of those who do not attack the good name of others. 2.86

Those who separate mother from child will be separated from their loved ones on judgment day. 2.87

On judgment day, the white hair of those who grow old obeying God will turn to light. 2.88

In this world and the next, God will ease the lot of those who ease the lot of someone in penury. 2.89

On a day when the only shade is his, God will shelter beneath his throne those who grant a delay or write off the debt of a person in penury. 2.90

Those who are two-tongued in this world will be given two tongues of fire on judgment day. 2.91

Those who peer at their brother's correspondence without permission peer into the fire. 2.92

2.93 Command good with gentleness.

2.94 The wellsprings of wisdom will flow from the heart to the tongue of those who for forty mornings devote themselves completely to God.

2.95 Those who believe in God and the last day should honor their guests.

2.96 Those who believe in God and the last day should honor their neighbors.

2.97 Those who believe in God and the last day should say only good things or keep silent.

2.98 Paradise is guaranteed to those who guide others to accept Islam.

2.99 In this world and the next, God will safeguard those who safeguard a brother in his absence.

2.100 On judgment day, God will deliver from hardship those who deliver a brother from hardship in this world.

2.101 God will come to the aid of those who come to their brother's aid.

2.102 In this world and the next, God will conceal the faults of those who conceal their brother's faults.

2.103 God supports a man as long as he supports his brother.

2.104 God will build a house in paradise for those who build a mosque, even one as tiny as a bird's nest.⁵⁴

2.105 Those who seek and find knowledge get two rewards; those who seek but do not find it get one.

2.106 God will punish and humiliate those who boast of their good deeds by letting his creatures hear their boasts on judgment day.

Those who do good deeds only to receive worldly gain will receive no share of the hereafter. 2.107

Those who praise an act of generosity have shown gratitude; those who keep silent are ingrates. 2.108

Generosity should be requited. If it cannot be requited, it should be spoken of—to speak of it is to show gratitude for it. 2.109

On judgment day, I shall requite any unrequited act of generosity to a member of the ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib clan.⁵⁵ 2.110

To see someone’s shame and conceal it is like bringing a buried girl back to life.⁵⁶ 2.111

God will take complete care of those who devote themselves to God by sustaining them in ways they never imagined. God gives over to this world those who devote themselves to it. 2.112

Those who seek praise from their fellows by disobeying God will receive only their derision. 2.113

If you displease others by seeking to please God, then God will be pleased with you and will make others pleased with you. If you displease God by seeking to please others, then God will be displeased with you and will make others displeased with you. 2.114

Expect someone who dies doing good to receive good. Fear but do not despair for someone who dies doing evil. 2.115

God is too just to punish a second time servants who commit a sin in this world and are punished here. And he is too generous to reverse judgment on a sin he has concealed and forgiven in this world. 2.116

God will give no weight to good deeds performed in public by those who disobey him in private. 2.117

- 2.118 To pray beautifully when people are present and to pray defectively in private is to scorn the lord with your prayer.
- 2.119 The ritual-prayer gains you nothing from God but greater distance if it does not restrain you from indecency and misdeeds.⁵⁷
- 2.120 If you seek something through a misdeed you are less likely to get what you desire and more likely to get what you dread.
- 2.121 If your heart conceals a wish, good or evil, God will clothe you in it and identify you by it.
- 2.122 If you swear an oath and realize there is something better, you should expiate your oath and do the better thing.
- 2.123 If you are tested with daughters and do well by them, you will be shielded from the fire.
- 2.124 If you kill a sparrow for no reason, it will come to God's throne on judgment day, screaming, "Lord, ask this man: Why did he kill me for no reason?"
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- 2.125 To ask for money and hoard it is like picking up burning coal, whether you hoard a little or a lot.
- 2.126 If you ask and are not in need, you will be afflicted with headaches and stomach pains.
- 2.127 If you attend a meal uninvited, you go as a thief and leave as a plunderer.
- 2.128 On the day when every foot will slip, God will help across the bridge those who intercede with a ruler on behalf of their fellow Muslim for a worthy cause or to ease a hardship.
- 2.129 Gambling is like plunging your hand in the flesh and blood of swine.
- 2.130 Guests should perform voluntary fasts only with their hosts' permission.

God fills with security and belief the hearts of those who rebuke
devisers of heresy. 2.131

On the day of terror, God grants security to those who condemn
devisers of heresy. 2.132

To wake up safe and sound in your home, with enough food for the
day, is as good as owning the world. 2.133

If God wishes to assist a Muslim in authority, he gives him a pious
counselor who will remind him when he forgets and support him
when he remembers. 2.134

If a man deals with people without oppression, speaks without
lying, and does not break his pledges, then his virtue is complete
and his sense of justice evident. He is the sort of person they should
cherish as a brother, and slandering him is forbidden. 2.135

Those who safeguard what is between their jaws and between their
thighs enter the garden. 2.136

Those who attribute something to me falsely will have a seat in the fire. 2.137

Those who complain to others when struck with poverty will receive
no reward. 2.138



CHAPTER THREE

- 3.1 The garden is surrounded by torments, the fire by delights.
- 3.2 God's love is assured for those who curb their anger when provoked.
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- 3.3 I was sent with profound words.
- 3.4 I am aided by awe.
- 3.5 I was aided by the Şabā Wind, 'Ād was destroyed by the Dabūr Wind.⁵⁸
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- 3.6 Your lord is pleased with the youth who shuns immature behavior.
- 3.7 You get the ruler you deserve.
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- 3.8 On judgment day, people will be ranked according to the worth of their intentions.
- 3.9 On judgment day, false witnesses will be resurrected with their tongues in the fire.
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- 3.10 May God shower mercy on the man who keeps his tongue chaste.
- 3.11 May God shower mercy on the servant who speaks and succeeds, or who stays silent and safe.

May God shower mercy on those in my community who clean their mouths during ablution and after meals. 3.12

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God will grant believers sustenance only from unexpected sources.⁵⁹ 3.13

Poverty can almost be disbelief,⁶⁰ and envy can all but overpower destiny.⁶¹ 3.14

Knowing a lot of people is toilsome, not knowing so many means a life of peace. 3.15

Treachery and lying are not among the traits of the believer. 3.16

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You build what you shall not inhabit, you gather what you shall not eat, and you hope for what you shall not gain. 3.17

Many begin a day they will not complete, and await a morrow they will not attain. 3.18

I wonder at heedless men—they go not unheeded. 3.19

I wonder at men who seek worldly gains while death is seeking them out. 3.20

I wonder at men who laugh merrily, not knowing if they have pleased or angered God. 3.21

Those who acknowledge the abode of permanence yet strive for the abode of deception are a strange wonder indeed. 3.22

I wonder at believers—I swear God only ordains that which is good for them.⁶² 3.23

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The hour draws near, yet people become more and more greedy for this world, while it eludes their grasp more and more. 3.24

Men may age, yet two traits stay young: greed for wealth and greed for life. 3.25

3.26 Hearts are conditioned to love those who are kind to them and to hate those who are cruel.

3.27 For both the wretched and the blissful the pen has stopped writing. God has decreed four irrevocable things: form, character, lifespan, and sustenance.

3.28 God has decreed five things his servant cannot escape: deeds, lifespan, reputation, final resting place, and sustenance.

3.29 The pen has written down everything you will confront.

3.30 The worst people are the two-faced, showing one face here and another face there.

3.31 The pious will diminish, one generation after another, until only scraps and chaff remain—and God will pay them no heed.

3.32 You spy the speck in your brother's eye, yet ignore the plank in your own.⁶³

3.33 The worst form of treachery is to say to your brother something he believes to be true when you are actually lying.

3.34 We behave as though duties fall on others, not us, as though death is written for others, not us, as if the dead are travelers who will soon return. We carry their bodies to the grave and consume their wealth as though we will live forever. We forget all counsel and ignore every catastrophe.

3.35 Blessed are those whose own faults distract them from the faults of others, who spend their wealth without disobeying God, who associate with sensible and wise people, and who shun the depraved and sinful.

Blessed are those who possess humble hearts and beautiful character, who spend surplus wealth and suppress needless words, and who find that our established practice gives them enough latitude not to transgress into heresy. 3.36

Blessed are those guided to Islam who live a simple life of contentment. 3.37

Blessed are those who earn an honest living, whose hearts are pure, whose actions are noble, and from whom no one need fear any evil. 3.38

Blessed are those who act on their knowledge. 3.39

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Son of Adam, you have all you need—why do you seek that which will make you a tyrant? 3.40

Son of Adam, you are neither content with a little nor sated by a lot! 3.41



CHAPTER FOUR

- 4.1 Conciliate and be rewarded.
- 4.2 Travel and find health and wealth.
- 4.3 Be mild, not harsh. Inspire calm, not panic.
- 4.4 Draw people close and guide them aright.
- 4.5 Visit from time to time and affection will increase.
- 4.6 Tie up your camel and trust in God.⁶⁴
- 4.7 Charity begins at home.
- 4.8 Test people and you will come to hate them—be slow to trust.
- 4.9 Secure knowledge by writing it down.

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- 4.10 Lessen your burden of debt and you will live free. Lessen your burden of sin and you will be less terrified of death.
- 4.11 Careful where you sow your seed—what you reap might be poisoned.⁶⁵

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- 4.12 Abstain from immorality and you will be the best worshipper. Be content and you will be the most grateful.

Wish for others what you wish for yourself and you will be a true believer. Be a good neighbor to those around you and you will be a true Muslim. 4.13

Be a good neighbor to those around you and you will be a true Muslim.⁶⁶ Be a good companion to those who walk with you and you will be a true believer. Do what God has mandated and you will be a true worshipper. Be content with the share God has allotted you and you will truly be indifferent to the world. 4.14

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Be indifferent to the world and God will love you. Be indifferent to the possessions of others and they will love you. 4.15

Live in this world as an exile or a passerby, and think of yourself as dead and buried. 4.16

Forswear what causes doubt for what does not. 4.17

—

Help your brother both when he oppresses and when he is oppressed.⁶⁷ 4.18

Show compassion to your fellow humans on earth, and those in heaven will show you compassion. 4.19

Be kind to others and you will receive kindness. 4.20

Greet your family and its prosperity will increase. 4.21

Perform ablutions with care and live long. 4.22

Do not beg if you can avoid it. 4.23

Speak the truth even when it's bitter. 4.24

—

Remain conscious of God at all times. 4.25

Erase a bad deed with a good deed. 4.26

Be kind and respect people. 4.27

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- 4.28 Show concern for your relatives, even with a greeting.
- 4.29 Giving gifts increases affection.
- 4.30 Emigrating bequeaths honor to your children.⁶⁸
- 4.31 Forgive the noble their errors.
- 4.32 Give each other gifts—gifts remove rancor from the heart.
- 4.33 Seek goodness among the comely.
- 4.34 Give each other gifts—gifts remove hatred.
- 4.35 Give each other gifts and affection will grow.
- 4.36 Give each other gifts—gifts multiply affection and erase resentments.
- 4.37 Give each other gifts—gifts remove enmity.
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- 4.38 Convey my message, even a single verse of the Qur'an.
- 4.39 Narrate the stories of the Jews, there is no harm in it.
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- 4.40 Beware a believer's clairvoyance—he sees with God's light.
- 4.41 Beware an edifice built on unlawful gains—they are the foundation of its destruction.
- 4.42 Be generous with your children and teach them well.
- 4.43 Speak good words and you will reap a reward. Curb evil words and you will be safe.
- 4.44 Be careful where you put your seed.
- 4.45 Be ever mindful of death, the destroyer of pleasures.⁶⁹
- 4.46 Pause from time to time.⁷⁰
- 4.47 Wear a turban and your discernment will increase.⁷¹

Act, for the actions a person has been created to perform come naturally.⁷² 4.48

Marry affectionate, fertile women, so I can boast of our abundance to other prophets. 4.49

Eat before dawn—the pre-dawn meal brings blessings.⁷³ 4.50

Avert the punishment of the fire, even with the gift of a date.⁷⁴ 4.51

Fear greed—it annihilated those who came before. 4.52

Avoid debt, even a used toothbrush.⁷⁵ 4.53

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Strip women of finery and they will keep to the bridal pavilion.⁷⁶ 4.54

Be kind to women—they are ensconced in your homes. 4.55

—

Fortify your wealth by paying the alms-levy. 4.56

Heal the sick by giving charity. 4.57

Combat misfortune with prayer. 4.58

—

Pray when your heart is full—that is from God’s mercy. 4.59

Pray repeatedly to the font of majesty and generosity. 4.60

Seek sustenance from what is hidden in the earth.⁷⁷ 4.61

Free yourself as much as possible from the cares of the world. 4.62

Measure out your grain and it will bring you blessings.⁷⁸ 4.63

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Seek the generosity of the merciful in my community and live in their shelter. 4.64

Seek good your whole life and aspire to God’s glorious gifts of mercy—he grants them to whomsoever he chooses. 4.65

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- 4.66 Gather your water and God will gather your loved ones.⁷⁹
- 4.67 To pray when the pre-dawn light has spread brings the greatest reward.⁸⁰
- 4.68 Anoint yourself with earth—earth exudes compassion.⁸¹
- 4.69 Let people be—God will sustain them through each other.⁸²
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- 4.70 Strengthen your affairs by concealing them.
- 4.71 Strengthen your chances of realizing your dreams by concealing them.
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- 4.72 Size up a neighbor before buying a house, size up a companion before taking him on a journey.
- 4.73 Seek the cure—the one who created the illness created the cure.
- 4.74 Throw dirt in the face of flatterers.
- 4.75 Be kindly if you rule, and forgive your subjects their offenses.
- 4.76 Share your food with the pious and your wealth with believers.
- 4.77 Seek God's protection from greed—greed leads to disgrace.
- 4.78 Be moderate in seeking worldly things—they come naturally to those for whom they have been created.
- 4.79 Conduct your worldly affairs with integrity and work hard for the hereafter.
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- 4.80 Call out the peace greeting and you will know peace.
- 4.81 Greet with peace, feed others, foster ties with kin, and pray at night when others sleep. Do this, and you will enter paradise in peace.

Preserve my sanctity by honoring my companions, for they are the cream of my community. 4.82

Preserve my sanctity by honoring my progeny. 4.83

Seek advice from the intelligent and you will secure guidance. 4.84
Ignore them and you will secure only regret.

Come to your lord in repentance before you die, hasten to perform virtuous deeds before you are distracted, and secure your link to him by always being mindful of him. 4.85

Recoil from punishing the honorable except for criminal acts.⁸³ 4.86

Avert your eyes when generous people sin—God grasps them by the hand each time they stumble. 4.87

Visit the sick and follow the funeral bier—they will remind you of the hereafter. 4.88

Be satisfied in this world with no more provisions than are needed for a journey. 4.89

Take advantage of five things before the arrival of five others: youth before old age, health before illness, wealth before poverty, leisure before occupation, and life before death. 4.90

All of God's servants should take advantage of life to better the soul, and of the world to obtain the hereafter. They should make the most of youth before old age, and of life before death—after this, the only home is paradise or hellfire. 4.91

Live in this world as if you were a guest. 4.92

4.93 Make the mosque your home.

4.94 Train your heart to gentleness.

4.95 Meditate and weep often.

4.96 Do not follow your whims.

4.97 Honor witnesses—through them God protects your rights and dispels oppression.

4.98 Beware the prayer of the wronged—it is carried up to heaven by the clouds. For God says: I swear on my might and my glory, I will help you, even if you must wait a little.

4.99 Show compassion to three persons: a wealthy man who has been ruined, a powerful man who has been humbled, and a learned man mocked by fools and dullards.

4.100 Eat dinner, even if just a handful of dry dates—skipping dinner will age you.

4.101 Always look at the person who has less than you, not the one who has more, and you will value God's favors to you.

4.102 Remove harmful objects from a Muslim's path and you will be given ample reward.

4.103 Love your friend with some restraint, for the day may come when he is your enemy. Hate your enemy with some restraint, for the day may come when he is your friend.

4.104 I counsel you to be conscious of God—that is the pinnacle of faith.

4.105 Perform jihad—it is my community's time of monasticism.

4.106 Let what you know about yourself stop you from disparaging others.

4.107 Only let your tongue say good things—by doing this, you vanquish Satan.

Read the Qur'an only if you abide by its proscriptions—if you do not, you are not reading it at all. 4.108

Uphold the trust of those who give you something in trust, and do not breach the trust of those who breach yours. 4.109

Pay a worker before his sweat dries. 4.110

Hold fast to God's will and he will hold fast to you. 4.111

Hold fast to God's will and you will find him in front of you. 4.112

Invoke God in good times and he will remember you in hard times. 4.113

Know that whatever strikes you was never going to pass you by, and that whatever passes you by was never going to strike you. 4.114

Know that if the whole world were to come together to give you something God did not want you to have, they could not give it to you. And if they came together to deflect from you something God wanted to afflict you with, they could not. When you need to petition, petition God. When you need help, seek help from God. Victory comes with patience, deliverance comes after suffering, and «ease comes after hardship.»⁸⁴ Everything that is going to happen has already been recorded by the pen. 4.115

Live as you wish, you will surely die. Love whom you wish, you will surely leave them. Act as you wish, you will surely be paid back in kind. 4.116

Be generous to the worthy and unworthy alike. If your generosity falls on the worthy, good, they are worthy of it. If it falls on the unworthy, that is good too, for you are worthy of the act. 4.117

Do your worst, Calamity; you will soon dissipate. 4.118

- 4.119 Spend generously and do not fear poverty, for the lord of the throne will provide.⁸⁵
- 4.120 Give glad tidings to those who walk to the mosque in the dark of night: on judgment day they will be illumined to perfection.
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- 4.121 Marry a woman of faith—may your hands be filled with earth!⁸⁶
- 4.122 Do as many good deeds as you can—God will not tire till you tire.
-
- 4.123 Add a little extra when weighing out grain.
- 4.124 When those honored among their people come to you, honor them.
- 4.125 When visitors come to you, honor them.
- 4.126 Keep silent when roused to anger.
- 4.127 Tell your brother you love him.
- 4.128 When allegiance is given to two postulants, the second must be killed.⁸⁷
- 4.129 Be careful what you wish for, you do not know where it will take you.



CHAPTER FIVE

- Practice moderation and never know want. 5.1
- God never honors harshness, nor demeans forbearance.⁸⁸ 5.2
- Only the wretch is devoid of compassion. 5.3
- No believer has ever suffered for soliciting an opinion, nor met with success by relying on his own. 5.4
- Those who seek divine direction will not fail, those who seek good counsel will not regret, those who practice moderation will not want. 5.5
- Anyone who permits what the Qur'an forbids does not believe in it. 5.6
- There is no sustenance more sufficient for the believer than fortitude. 5.7
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- Failure to pay the alms-levy on one's wealth guarantees its destruction. 5.8
- Giving alms never reduces wealth. 5.9
- Whenever a man forgives a transgression, God increases his standing. 5.10
-
- I do not leave you any temptation more injurious than women. 5.11
- Even after seventy lapses a day, a penitent is still not a sinner. 5.12
- Whenever a believer gives alms in kindness, God watches over his children in kindness. 5.13

- 5.14 Those who flee the fire and those who seek the garden are never seen dozing.
- 5.15 Kindness always adorns, brutality always defiles.
- 5.16 God takes away the knowledge and manners of someone he means to demean.
- 5.17 God never sends an illness without sending its cure.
- 5.18 God graces his worshippers with nothing lovelier than chastity of belief and behavior.
- 5.19 As God's favors to his servants increase, their responsibility to others increase.
- 5.20 God does not conceal a servant's fault in this world only to shame him with it on judgment day.
- 5.21 When a youth shows respect to an elder because he is old, God ordains that people show him respect when he grows old.
- 5.22 Homes fill with happiness and then later with tears—joy is always followed by sorrow.
-
- 5.23 A person who neglects the flock God placed in his charge will be denied paradise.
- 5.24 A person who dies having deceived the flock God placed in his charge will be denied paradise.
- 5.25 No Muslim reaps greater reward than a virtuous counselor who obeys his leader and advises him for the sake of God.
- 5.26 Every believer has at least one sin he keeps coming back to, time after time, only stopping when he leaves the world.

The sun as it rises is accompanied by an angel at each side saying, 5.27
“God, grant swift reward to those who spend their wealth well, and
swift destruction to those who hold it back.”

Two hungry wolves do not wreak as much havoc in a flock of sheep 5.28
as love of glory and wealth do to a Muslim’s faith.

A good grasp of religion is how God is best worshipped. 5.29

No deed of obedience to God brings swifter reward than fostering 5.30
affection with kin. No deed of disobedience brings swifter punish-
ment than injustice.

Whenever someone opens the door to begging, God opens the door 5.31
to penury.

Expect from the world nothing but wealth that oppresses, poverty 5.32
that distracts, disease that corrupts, old age that debilitates, and
death that crushes.

Whenever hunger, fatigue, illness, injury, grief, or even anxiety 5.33
strike a believer, God erases his sins.

Beggars will meet God with their faces picked bare of flesh. 5.34



CHAPTER SIX

- 6.1 No believer is stung by the same snake twice.⁸⁹
- 6.2 Ingratitude to others is ingratitude to God.
- 6.3 Nothing repels fate like prayer, nothing increases life like virtue.⁹⁰
- 6.4 No one becomes prudent without stumbling, no one becomes wise without experience.

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- 6.5 There is no poverty more intense than ignorance.
- 6.6 There is no wealth more useful than intelligence.
- 6.7 There is no solitude more antisocial than conceit.
- 6.8 There is no support more robust than consultation.
- 6.9 There is no intelligence better than planning.
- 6.10 There is no lineage better than good character.
- 6.11 There is no restraint as successful as avoiding what is forbidden.
- 6.12 There is no worship better than reflection.
- 6.13 There is no faith better than modesty and forbearance.

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- 6.14 There is no orphanage after puberty.

There is no factionalism in Islam.	6.15
There is no bachelorhood in Islam. ⁹¹	6.16
There is no emigration after the conquest. ⁹²	6.17
—	
There is no belief without fidelity.	6.18
There is no faith without a covenant.	6.19
—	
Amulets are only effective against the evil eye or the scorpion's sting.	6.20
No estrangement should persist more than three days.	6.21
—	
No sin is grave if repented; no sin is small if repeated.	6.22
There is no worry worse than debt, no pain worse than sore eyes.	6.23
There is no poverty for those who recite the Qur'an, no wealth for those who do not.	6.24
—	
No goats lock horns over her. ⁹³	6.25
No precaution can avert fate.	6.26
A believer does not kill.	6.27
A woman cannot lead a group to success. ⁹⁴	6.28
A believer should not demean himself.	6.29
An upright man should not curse.	6.30
A two-faced man cannot receive God's trust.	6.31
—	
Only parents and just leaders deserve adulation.	6.32
Only the noble and the faithful deserve favors; only thoroughbreds deserve to be trained.	6.33

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- 6.34 Do not obey God's creatures if it means you will disobey God.
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- 6.35 Those feared by their neighbors will not enter paradise.
- 6.36 Rumor-mongers will not enter paradise.
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- 6.37 It is unlawful for a Muslim to terrorize another Muslim.
- 6.38 It is unlawful for a man to remain estranged from his brother more than three days.
- 6.39 It is unlawful for the strong and able or the wealthy to solicit alms.
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- 6.40 People are only punished when they have committed many crimes.⁹⁵
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- 6.41 A person's belief is right only when his heart is right, and his heart is right only when his tongue is righteous.
- 6.42 A person is only a believer when he wants for his brother the good he wants for himself.
- 6.43 A person only attains true belief when he knows that what struck him was never going to pass him by and what passed him by was never going to strike him.
- 6.44 A person attains perfect belief only through three modes of conduct: spending when funds are low, reckoning his actions justly, and wholeheartedly wishing peace on others.
- 6.45 You will only attain perfect belief when you restrain your tongue.
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- 6.46 God shows no mercy to those who show no mercy to others.

The man of learning only has his fill of learning when it is time for paradise. 6.47

No believer eats his fill while his neighbor goes hungry. 6.48

Things will get progressively worse, the world will turn its back on you more and more, and people will become more and more greedy. The hour will only afflict the most evil of people. 6.49

Jesus, the son of Mary, is the only messiah. 6.50

The hour will come when men are few and women many. 6.51

Every age will be worse than the one before. 6.52

On judgment day, God will conceal the faults of those who have concealed the faults of others. 6.53

There is no good in the companionship of a man who does not regard you the way you regard him. 6.54

Paradise is guaranteed to those who accept God's will and endure when they lose the precious gift of sight. 6.55

You can only become one of the virtuous if you forgo lawful things to guard against unlawful ones. 6.56

A faction from my community will uphold the truth until judgment day. 6.57

A man's soul is mortgaged to his debt until someone pays it off. 6.58

A man awaiting the ritual-prayer is already at prayer. 6.59

Do not gloat over your brother's misfortune lest God restore him to well-being and smite you instead. 6.60

- 6.61 Do not curse fate—God is fate.
- 6.62 Do not curse the ruler—he is God’s shadow on earth.
- 6.63 Do not curse the dead or you will pain the living.
- 6.64 Do not curse the dead for they have been called to account.
- 6.65 Do not reject your brother’s gift. If possible, reward him in kind.
- 6.66 Do not wipe your hand on the garment of someone you have not clothed.⁹⁶
- 6.67 Do not refuse a beggar even half a date.
- 6.68 Do not slander fellow Muslims and do not seek to expose them.
- 6.69 Do not rend another’s veil.
- 6.70 Do not belittle any form of charity.
- 6.71 Do not make a promise to your brother only to break it.
- 6.72 Do not wish for death when catastrophe strikes.
- 6.73 Approach death with trust in God’s reward.
- 6.74 Do not envy each other, bid against each other, hate each other, or shun each other. Servants of God, regard each other as brothers.
- 6.75 Do not be slanderers, flatterers, mudslingers, or sham devotees.
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- 6.76 Be impressed by a person’s actions only when you see how they play out.
- 6.77 Be impressed by a man’s adherence to Islam only when you know his true intentions.
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- 6.78 Do not slight me as if I were an afterthought, a mere travel cup.⁹⁷
- 6.79 Do not let fear of others prevent you from standing up for the truth.

A man should never be alone with a woman—Satan will make it a threesome. 6.80

Do not displease God by pleasing others, do not praise them for God's favors, and do not blame them for having something God did not give you. Covetousness will not bring God's sustenance to you, nor will someone's hatred drive it away. 6.81

Do not seek leadership—God will help you if you are given it unbidden, but will leave you to your own devices if you sought it. 6.82

The hour will come when children are disobedient, when drought scorches the earth, when the contemptible inundate the land, when the noble are few, when the young are insolent to their elders, and the contemptible insolent to the noble. 6.83

No man will be ruined if he seeks counsel. 6.84

Even evil and oppressive people will not be ruined if their leaders are rightly guided and give good guidance. 6.85

Beware of an action that requires an apology. 6.86

Beware of flattery—it is a form of slaughter. 6.87

Beware the accumulation of little sins—God is keeping count. 6.88

Beware of heated dispute—it exposes bad behavior and stifles good conduct. 6.89

Beware of beautiful flowers growing in dung heaps.⁹⁸ 6.90

Beware of debt—it distresses at night and humiliates by day. 6.91

Beware of giving voice to suspicions—they are the falsest words. 6.92

Beware the prayer of the wronged, even an unbeliever's. 6.93



CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 From eloquence comes magic.

7.2 From poetry comes wisdom.

7.3 From speech comes distress.⁹⁹

7.4 From the pursuit of knowledge comes ignorance.¹⁰⁰

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7.5 My community will receive mercy.

7.6 Maintaining relationships is part of faith.¹⁰¹

7.7 A good worshipper expects good of others.

7.8 The learned are the heirs of the prophets.

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7.9 Religion is accommodating.

7.10 God's religion is moderate and righteous.¹⁰²

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7.11 Fostering ties with kin is the duty quickest to earn reward.

7.12 Wisdom increases the noble in nobility.

7.13 Declaring the lawful unlawful is akin to declaring the unlawful lawful.

7.14 In the eyes of the worldly, nobility comes from wealth.

Honest claimants have a right to speak.	7.15
The dwellers of paradise are characterized by virtuous conduct.	7.16
The loveliest beauty is beauty of character.	7.17
A freedman is a full member of the tribe. ¹⁰³	7.18
—	
The dwellers of paradise are mostly simple folk.	7.19
Women will be in the minority in paradise.	7.20
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God grants assistance in accordance with a believer's needs.	7.21
God grants patience in accordance with a believer's tribulations.	7.22
—	
The best rendering of filial duty is continued benevolence to your father's loved ones after his death.	7.23
Satan courses through the veins of men like blood.	7.24
Those who thank people best thank God best.	7.25
Having wealth is a test, losing wealth is a test.	7.26
My community's punishment is levied in this world.	7.27
A sinner may be denied sustenance.	7.28
—	
God accepts oaths sworn by some of his servants in his name.	7.29
Some of God's servants intuit the essence of people.	7.30
Some of God's servants were created to help the needy.	7.31
—	
God never elevates anything without bringing it down.	7.32
A letter—like a greeting—deserves an answer.	7.33
Ambiguity circumvents lying.	7.34

7.35 The best food is bought with your honest earnings or your children's.

7.36 Begging is only permitted in dire poverty or excessive debt.

7.37 A few deeds done with knowledge count for much, many deeds done in ignorance count for little.

7.38 A good character can secure you as high a station as one who prays and fasts.

7.39 Every religion has its own ethic—our religion's primary ethic is modesty.

7.40 Everything has an honorable aspect—in sitting, it is to face Mecca.

7.41 Every community has its test—my community's is wealth.

7.42 Every traveler has a destination—the final destination is death.

7.43 Every worshipper begins with fervor and fervor always abates.¹⁰⁴

7.44 Every statement has a touchstone, every truth a reality.

7.45 Every ruler has a fortress—God's fortress is the sum of his prohibitions.

7.46 Every fast means a prayer granted.

7.47 Everything has a door—the door to worship is fasting.

7.48 Everything has a source—the source of piety is the hearts of those who know God.

7.49 Everything has a heart—the heart of the Qur'an is the surah of Yā Sīn.¹⁰⁵

7.50 Every prophet has one prayer sure to be granted. I have deferred mine—intercession for my community on judgment day.

7.51 A believer is rewarded for all expenditures, except on estates and mansions.

Envy consumes deeds just as fire consumes kindling. 7.52

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Most people are led to the fire by two orifices—their mouths and their genitals. 7.53

Most people are led to the garden by consciousness of God and beauty of character. 7.54

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Religion began as a stranger, and will return a stranger as before—blessed are the strangers!¹⁰⁶ 7.55

Seditions appear and crush believers—your only salvation is your learning. 7.56

The evil eye puts people in the grave and camels in the cooking pot. 7.57

On judgment day God will not look at those who swagger in finery. 7.58

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God loves gentleness in everything. 7.59

God is beautiful and loves beauty. 7.60

God loves those who beseech him. 7.61

God loves those who are virtuous, humble, and pious. 7.62

God loves the believer who makes an honest living.¹⁰⁷ 7.63

God loves the grieving heart. 7.64

God loves lofty and noble things, and detests paltry and mean ones. 7.65

God loves his concessions to be observed as well as his prohibitions. 7.66

God loves the eye that sees clearly when desire arises, and the mind that thinks lucidly when doubts descend. He loves liberality, even with a few dates, and he loves courage, even when killing a snake. 7.67

Your lord loves praiseworthy traits. 7.68

God loves the cheerful and easygoing. 7.69

7.70 God will accept your repentance right up to the death rattle.

7.71 God hates the devious and the cunning who avoid adversity thanks to their health and wealth.

7.72 God abhors fidgeting during the prayer, sex during the fast, and laughter at the graveside.

7.73 God forbids tittle-tattle, the squandering of wealth, and habitual solicitation.

7.74 God defends a Muslim's honor jealously, so he should too.

7.75 God only shows mercy to his servants who are merciful.

7.76 Give alms, and God will protect you from seventy brutal forms of death.

7.77 God helps his servant even through the sins he commits.

7.78 God even enlists the dissolute to support our religion.

7.79 God is pleased with those who offer praise after every bite and sip.¹⁰⁸

7.80 If God bestows a favor on his servant, he loves to have it show.

7.81 God causes knowledge to die not by plucking it from people's hearts, but through the deaths of the learned.

7.82 God gives this world to those who seek the hereafter, but will not give the hereafter to those who seek this world.

7.83 God is ashamed to turn away hands raised to him in appeal.

7.84 God gave me the earth as a place of worship and purification.

7.85 God drew together the whole earth so I could glimpse both East and West—truly, my community shall encompass it all.

7.86 God forgives my community its unworthy thoughts, as long as they are not spoken out loud or acted upon.

God is just and fair. He has made joy and happiness contingent on conviction and acceptance, and grief and sorrow the result of doubt and rejection. 7.87

God has ordained jealousy for women and jihad for men—those who accept God’s will and forbear will be rewarded as martyrs.¹⁰⁹ 7.88

God is close by the tongue of every speaker. 7.89

God accepts your deeds only when he is also pleased with your words. 7.90

God visits tribulation on a people he wishes to bless. 7.91

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On judgment day, the learned man who has not benefited from his learning will receive the severest punishment. 7.92

On judgment day, the man whose foul mouth is feared will be deemed the most evil. 7.93

On judgment day, the man who has squandered his share of the hereafter on increasing another’s share of the world will be deemed the most evil. 7.94

The most wretched of all are those for whom poverty in this world is followed by punishment in the hereafter. 7.95

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I fear three things for my community when I am gone: a scholar’s lapse, a tyrant’s rule, and a capricious whim. 7.96

You swarm like locusts and rush to the fire like moths. I hold you back by your shirttails. 7.97

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We do not appoint those who seek to govern. 7.98

If you give something up for God’s sake, he will give you something better. 7.99

7.100 Bringing joy to a fellow believer will assuredly win God's mercy.

7.101 Offering the peace-greeting and speaking with kindness will assuredly win God's mercy.

7.102 The world is sweet and green—God has offered it to you and is watching to see what you do.

7.103 Man's heart is inclined to follow many desires¹¹⁰—for the heart which follows them all, it is all the same to God which one causes his death.

7.104 Our religion is strong and durable, so press ahead, but gently—do not make worship a burden. A hasty traveler neither reaches his destination nor spares his camel's back.

7.105 Custom dictates that a man accompany his guest to the door.

7.106 The Hallowed Spirit whispered in my heart that no one will die before he has used up his lot, so fear God and be careful in what you seek.

7.107 *Among the first words people heard from the prophet were:* If you will not practice modesty, then do as you like.

7.108 Prayer is enough to keep you busy.

7.109 One who prays knocks at a king's door—keep knocking and you may well see the door open.

7.110 My lord commanded that with my words I should invoke him, in my silences I should reflect on him, and through my scrutiny I should learn about him.

7.111 Truly, I am a gift of mercy.

7.112 The cure for ignorance is inquiry.

The honorable know the honor due the honorable. ¹¹¹	7.113
I was sent to perfect noble behavior.	7.114
I fear leaders who will lead my community astray.	7.115
Deeds are judged by outcomes.	7.116
Women should clap. ¹¹²	7.117
Trial and tribulation are all that remain of the world.	7.118
Breastfeeding a hungry baby makes marriage unlawful. ¹¹³	7.119
Hearts can rust, like iron. <i>He was asked, "How can we burnish them?" and he replied:</i> By being mindful of death and reciting the Qur'an.	7.120
The road to the garden is steep.	7.121
The road to the fire is easy. <i>Or he said:</i> The road to worldly things is easy.	7.122



CHAPTER EIGHT

- 8.1 Hearing is not like seeing.
- 8.2 Denigrating a debauchee is not slander.
- 8.3 Farming usurped land earns no rights.
- 8.4 A believer does not flatter.
- 8.5 There is no atonement after death.

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- 8.6 If God has given you plenty and you still penny-pinch with your family, you are not one of us.
- 8.7 If you follow the practices of other faiths, you are not one of us.
- 8.8 If you do not intone the Qur'an, you are not one of us.
- 8.9 If you do not respect the elderly, show kindness to the young, command good, and forbid evil, you are not one of us.

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- 8.10 If you reconcile two people, you cannot be reckoned a liar—your words and exaggerations are for the good.
- 8.11 Worldly goods do not constitute wealth—true wealth is the wealth of the soul.
- 8.12 Throwing people to the ground does not make you strong—true strength belongs to those who can control their anger.

Nothing is dearer to God than supplication. 8.13

Nothing is punished faster than injustice. 8.14

A single believer is better than a thousand of anything. 8.15

The only possessions that are truly yours are the food you have consumed, the clothes you have worn out, and the alms you have given away. 8.16



CHAPTER NINE

9.1 A private invocation is best.

9.2 Adequate sustenance is best.

9.3 The lightest worship is best.

9.4 The most commodious assembly is best.

9.5 The best part of your religion is the most accommodating.

9.6 The most accommodating marriage is best.

9.7 The best alms are those given by the wealthy.

9.8 Beneficial deeds are best.

9.9 Guidance that is followed is best.

9.10 Conviction is the best thing a heart can have.

9.11 The best people are those who benefit others.

9.12 The best companion in God's eyes is the man who helps his fellows best.

9.13 Four is the best number for traveling, four hundred the best for a scouting party, and four thousand the best for an army.

9.14 The best of you are those who study and teach the Qur'an.

The best of you are those who are good to your family.	9.15
The best of you are those whose goodness is assured and from whom no one need fear any evil.	9.16
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Homes that shelter orphans are best.	9.17
A row of fecund date-palms and a fertile mare are the best wealth.	9.18
The privacy of the home is the best place for women to pray.	9.19
White garments are best.	9.20
Antimony is the best collyrium. ¹¹⁴	9.21
Young people who imitate their elders are best, and elders who behave like wanton youths are worst.	9.22
The front row is best for men to pray in, the back row the worst. The back row is best for women, the front the worst.	9.23
The hand that gives is better than the hand that takes. ¹¹⁵	9.24
Scarce but adequate is better than plentiful but distracting.	9.25
The world is full of delights—the best is a pious woman.	9.26
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Solitude is better than evil company, but virtuous company is better than solitude.	9.27
Good discourse is better than silence, but silence is better than evil discourse.	9.28
—	
Carrying through an act of charity is even better than embarking on it.	9.29
A few exemplary deeds are better than many dubious ones.	9.30
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The best of you are sinners who repent.	9.31

- 9.32 The best of you are those who promptly repay debts.
- 9.33 The best believers are content, the worst greedy.
- 9.34 The learned are the best in my community, and the levelheaded are the best of the learned.
- 9.35 The best in my community are those who rein in their anger.
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- 9.36 The greatest charity comes from the tongue.¹¹⁶
- 9.37 The greatest charity is to reconcile the estranged.
- 9.38 The greatest charity goes to estranged kin.
- 9.39 The greatest form of worship is to await succor.
- 9.40 My community's greatest form of worship is to recite the Qur'an.
- 9.41 Generosity to people around you is the deed most rewarded.
- 9.42 A true word to a ruthless ruler is the greatest form of jihad.
- 9.43 The greatest virtues—to offer friendship to those who cut their ties with you, to give gifts to those who disown you, and to forgive those who wrongs.
- 9.44 Discernment is the greatest form of worship, scrupulosity the best form of religion.
- 9.45 The virtues of knowledge are superior to worship.
- 9.46 There is no deed better than filling a hungry stomach.
- 9.47 Prostration to God in private is the best way for a worshipper to get close to him.
- 9.48 Good manners are the best gift parents can give children.
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- 9.49 God's most beloved servants conceal their piety.

God loves those who show indulgence, be they buyer or seller, payer or collector.	9.50
God's most beloved places are places of worship.	9.51
God's favorite deeds are those performed regularly, even the small ones.	9.52
Just leaders will be God's favorites and closest to his throne on judgment day.	9.53
We are all children of God, and God loves best those who most benefit his children.	9.54
No woman's ritual-prayer is dearer to God than one performed in the most private part of her home.	9.55
Swallow your anger when you are provoked and drink from the cup of forbearance when disaster strikes—this is most beloved of God.	9.56
Tears shed in awe of God, or blood spilled in his service, are most beloved of God.	9.57
How excellently will the Qur'an intercede for its reciters on judgment day!	9.58
What an excellent gift is sound advice!	9.59
What an excellent possession sturdy date-palms are in times of drought!	9.60
How excellent the honest wealth of an honest man!	9.61
How excellent is wealth spent in the service of piety!	9.62
How excellent are good omens!	9.63
How excellent a condiment is vinegar!	9.64
How excellent a cloister is a Muslim's home!	9.65

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- 9.66 The book of God is the truest discourse.
- 9.67 The righteous word is the firmest support.
- 9.68 The best guidance is given by prophets.
- 9.69 Martyrdom is the most honorable death.
- 9.70 Musk is the most fragrant perfume.
- 9.71 Salt is your principal condiment.
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- 9.72 An absent man's prayer for the absent is quickest to be answered.¹¹⁷
- 9.73 Men change heart more quickly than a pot comes to a boil.
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- 9.74 The truly excellent in my community are those who brush their teeth after meals.



CHAPTER TEN

“They claim . . .” is the worst horse to ride.	10.1
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Heresies are the wickedest things.	10.2
The worst blindness is the heart’s.	10.3
The worst excuse is made at the time of death.	10.4
The worst regret is on judgment day.	10.5
An orphan’s property is the worst thing to consume.	10.6
The vilest earnings come from usury.	10.7
A man’s worst traits is intense avarice or unrestrained cowardice.	10.8
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The worst form of blindness is error after guidance.	10.9
The greatest sins come from a lying tongue.	10.10
—	
Humans fill nothing viler than their stomachs.	10.11



CHAPTER ELEVEN

- 11.1 My kin are like Noah's Ark—those who climb aboard are saved, those who waver are drowned.
- 11.2 My companions are like stars—those who follow them will be guided.
- 11.3 My companions are like salt for the community—food only tastes good with salt.
- 11.4 My community is like rain—no one knows whether the first or last showers are best.
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- 11.5 A believer is like a honey-bee—what it eats is pure and what it produces is pure.
- 11.6 A believer and belief are like a horse and its tether—even if it strays, it always returns.
- 11.7 A strong believer is like a date-palm, a weak believer like a stalk of wheat.
- 11.8 A believer is like a stalk of wheat constantly buffeted by the wind, now upright, now blown to the ground. A disbeliever is like a pine tree, upright until it comes crashing down.
- 11.9 In their love and care for each other, believers are like one body: if one part is hurt, the rest is afflicted with fever and insomnia.

The heart is like a feather blown about by the wind. 11.10

Think of the Qur'an as a tethered camel—tied up it stays, let loose it runs away. 11.11

The hypocrite is like a ewe running back and forth between two flocks. 11.12

A woman is like a rib—if you try to straighten it, it will break. Be happy with it, for all its crookedness.¹¹⁸ 11.13

A virtuous companion is like a perfume vendor—even if he gives you no perfume, the fragrance will linger. 11.14

An evil companion is like a blacksmith—even if the fire's sparks don't burn you, the stench will linger. 11.15

Think of the ritual-prayer as a scale—give full measure, receive full measure. 11.16

I am in this world like a traveler who takes a nap in the shade of a tree on a hot day, then continues on his way. 11.17

Compared to the hereafter, this world is like putting your finger in the sea. See how much water you can draw! 11.18



CHAPTER TWELVE

- 12.1 God sweetens the good he wills for his servant.¹¹⁹
- 12.2 If God wishes a servant to die in a distant land, he creates a need for him to go there.
- 12.3 God protects his servant from worldly things when he loves him, just as you prevent some invalids from drinking water.
- 12.4 When anger inflames a ruler, Satan takes over.
- 12.5 A servant who serves his earthly master and worships his heavenly lord receives twice the reward.
- 12.6 When the end time draws near, death will pick the best in my community just as you pick succulent dates from a bowl.
- 12.7 A believer's suffering removes his sins just as a blacksmith's fire removes slag from iron.
- 12.8 When God almighty decrees what is fated, he deprives the intelligent of their intelligence until fate has run its course.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Well-being is all the illness you need.	13.1
Death is all the counsel you need.	13.2
Conviction is all the wealth you need.	13.3
Worship is all the occupation you need.	13.4
Neglecting to feed your family is sin.	13.5
Repeating everything you hear is sin.	13.6
Being trusted in matters of religion and affairs of the world is felicity.	13.7



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- 14.1 Many remember what they heard about far better than those who actually heard it.
- 14.2 Many convey their modicum of religious knowledge to those more knowledgeable.
- 14.3 Many convey their modicum of wisdom to those wiser.
-
- 14.4 Hear me! On judgment day, many who live a life of ease in this world will go hungry and naked. Hear me! On judgment day, many who go hungry and naked in this world will be granted a life of ease.
- 14.5 Hear me! Many who honor themselves abase themselves. Many who abase themselves honor themselves.
- 14.6 Hear me! Many short-lived pleasures bequeath long-lasting grief.
-
- 14.7 Many who pray all night gain only lack of sleep. Many who fast all day gain only hunger and thirst.
- 14.8 Many who eat and give thanks earn greater reward than many who fast and endure.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

If beggars never lied, those who refuse them would never be blessed.¹²⁰ 15.1

—

If you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep long.¹²¹ 15.2

If cattle knew death as men know it, you would never eat a fat animal.¹²² 15.3

—

If you heeded your life as it ticks away, you would come to despise the deceptions of hope. 15.4

God could send something to hurt a believer even if he hid in a burrow. 15.5

If God valued the world even a smidgen—the weight of a gnat’s wing—he would not allow disbelievers a single sip of water from it. 15.6

If a person owns two valleys brimful with wealth, he will still seek a third—man’s greed is sated only in death.¹²³ Still, God forgives the repentant. 15.7

If you placed complete trust in God, he would sustain you as he sustains the birds—in the morning their stomachs are empty, by evening their stomachs are full. 15.8

15.9 If you never sin, God will create a people who do, then forgive them and grant them paradise.

15.10 Even if you never sin, I fear something much worse for you. Vanity!
Vanity!



CHAPTER SIXTEEN: SAYINGS OF THE LORD REPORTED BY THE MESSENGER OF GOD

*God has said:*¹²⁴

I am as my servant thinks of me, and I am with him whenever he calls. 16.1

I pledge my love to those who love each other for my sake, who sit together for my sake, who use their wealth for my sake, and who visit each other for my sake. 16.2

“There is no god but God” is my citadel—those who enter it are safe from my punishment. 16.3

Intense is my anger against all who oppress those whose only help comes from me. 16.4

—

Make your taste bitter, world, for all those who love me—do not tempt them with your sweetness. 16.5

Serve those who serve me, world, and weary those who serve you. 16.6

—

Anyone who demeans those who love me challenges me to battle. 16.7

I waver most when taking the life of a believer who hates death. I hate to hurt him, but there is no other way. 16.8

-
- 16.9 Nothing draws my servant closer than renouncing the world. No form of worship is worthier than the mandatory rites.
- 16.10 None adorn themselves more beautifully than those who renounce the world. None draw closer than those who refrain from what I have forbidden. None worship more fully than by weeping in awe of me.¹²⁵
- 16.11 This is the religion I myself have chosen—only generosity and rectitude will do for it. Honor it by practicing them.
- 16.12 When I afflict my servant's health, wealth, or children, and he accepts this with exemplary fortitude, I will be too embarrassed to weigh his deeds or divulge his ledger on judgment day.
- 16.13 Grandeur is my robe, majesty my mantle—I shall hurl in the fire those who challenge me for either.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE FINAL CHAPTER CONTAINING THE PROPHET'S SUPPLICATIONS

- God, I seek refuge with you from knowledge without benefit, from a heart without humility, from a prayer unheard, and from an appetite unsated. I seek refuge with you from the evil of all four. 17.1
- God, I seek refuge with you from misleading or being misled, from demeaning or being demeaned, from tormenting or being tormented, from wronging or being wronged. 17.2
- God, grant me a speedy cure, fortitude to bear your trials, and passage from this world into your mercy. 17.3
- God, choose and single out what is good for me. 17.4
- God, you made me beautiful—make my character beautiful too. 17.5
- God, you are forgiving and love forgiving—forgive me my sins. 17.6
- God, forgive my sins—be they mistaken or deliberate, hidden or public, by omission or commission. 17.7
- God, make my soul mindful of you and cleanse it of sin—you cleanse it best, since you are its master and benefactor.¹²⁶ 17.8
- God, I seek your protection against my enemies' machinations, and your defense against their attacks. 17.9
- Through you I strive, through you I fight, through you I attack. 17.10
- God, grant me the protection you grant the newborn! 17.11

- 17.12 God, you made the first of the Quraysh taste your punishment, now let the last of them taste your favor.¹²⁷
- 17.13 God, bless my community when they venture out at first light.
- 17.14 To you, bestower of well-being, I deliver all my hopes.
- 17.15 Lord, accept my repentance, wash away my offense, and answer my prayer.
- 17.16 God, I ask you for a tranquil life, a pure death, and a return to you free from disgrace and dishonor.

This completes *Light in the Heavens*.

I offer praise to the one God.

I ask for his peace and blessings
upon our master Muḥammad, his honored prophet,
and upon Muḥammad's progeny.

NOTES

- 1 Q Baqarah 2:119, Saba' 34:28, Fāṭir 35:24, Fuṣṣilat 41:4.
- 2 Q Aḥzāb 33:46. In Qur'anic usage, *sirāj*, lit. "lamp," is most often metaphorically used for "sun"; see Q Furqān 25:61, Nūḥ 71:16.
- 3 Q Aḥzāb 33:33.
- 4 Q Najm 53:3.
- 5 Q Naml 27:59.
- 6 Rather than 1,200 sayings, al-Quḍā'ī's collection contains 1,200 clauses. Though none of the manuscripts use numbering, the *Musnad al-Shihāb* editors do so (al-Salafi: 911 sayings, 1,499 reports; al-Maḥallāwī: sayings not numbered, 1,383 reports). I disregard the 1,200 count, as it has no substantive bearing on the compilation.
- 7 Al-Quḍā'ī, *Musnad al-Shihāb*, ed. al-Silafi, Beirut, 1985; ed. al-Maḥallāwī, Beirut, 2011.
- 8 *Ḥasab* can mean both "virtue" and "lineage" (in the sense that good lineage is considered a virtue). S 1:96, R 73, Y 7, D 40, M 4n1.
- 9 Lit. "Half of aging is worrying."
- 10 Lit. "[Having] fewer children is one of two modes of affluence."
- 11 Two explanations are common: (1) that this has the same meaning as another hadith, "Do not have your child suckled by a woman who is foolish or has weak eyesight, for milk transmits these deficiencies"; or (2) that if the wet nurse has a bad character, her milk will pass it on to the child she suckles, even if the parents are good, moral people. R 84.
- 12 "Book" may refer to: (1) the Qur'an, or (2) any book of knowledge. The word *kitāb* can also mean "letter," and in this interpretation,

- khatm* (translated here as “full”) would mean “seal.” The hadith would then be translated as “Give your letter due honor by sealing it.” R 86.
- 13 Lit. “A wise word is the sage’s lost camel.” I.e., it belongs to him, and he should seize it wherever he finds it.
- 14 Lit. “the age of ignorance” (Ar. *jāhiliyyah*), a term denoting the pre-Islamic period in which most tribal inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula were pagan. Ignorance here is usually interpreted as ignorance of the one true God.
- 15 I.e., the suffering caused by fever serves as atonement for believers’ sins. R 99.
- 16 This hadith has been interpreted to mean either (1) that if a poor man gives away what little he has and so cannot feed himself and his family, he is wrong to do so, and will not be rewarded for his charity; or (2) that an alms-levy collector should not commandeer the choicest part of a taxpayer’s property, as this could lead to the taxpayer not paying any taxes the following year. R 122; M 19–20n4; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, s.v. ‘-D-Y.
- 17 Lit. “Oppression [will manifest as] darkness on judgment day.”
- 18 Lit. “Every burning liver reaps a rich reward.” Medieval Muslims—like the ancient Greeks—deemed the liver to be the seat of emotions.
- 19 I.e., those who are killed fighting for truth will be rewarded with paradise.
- 20 I.e., between the call (*adhān*) and summons (*iqāmah*) to the ritual-prayer is a propitious time for supplication.
- 21 Lit. “A believer consumes with a single gut . . .”
- 22 Muslims can fast easily in winter because of shorter days, and pray longer at night because of longer nights. Y 35–36.
- 23 Lit. “Wisdom is the sage’s lost camel.” I.e., it belongs to him, and he should seize it wherever he finds it.
- 24 Three explanations are provided by the commentators: (1) that it underscores the Yemenis’ speedy entry into the fold of Islam; (2) that the people of Medina were for the most part originally from Yemen; or (3) that the prophet actually meant Mecca and Medina, since the lands of Yemen include Tihamah and Hijaz, in which Mecca and

- Medina are located, or because the prophet spoke this hadith when he was in Tabuk, and Mecca and Medina lie between Tabuk and Yemen. Y 40, S 1:371, R 148–49, M 30n2.
- 25 Although the generic male term “all Muslims” includes both men and women, other compilers cite this hadith with a more explicit dual gender: “It is every Muslim man and woman’s obligatory duty to seek knowledge” (حُلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم ومسلمة). See al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, 1:83.
- 26 The term “emigration” refers to those who migrated with Muḥammad from Mecca to Medina. This hadith connects migration and rejection by punning: “emigrant” (*muhājir*) and “reject” (*hajara*) both derive from the same root *H-J-R*.
- 27 There are two dominant interpretations: The first is that one is resurrected in the hereafter with the person one followed in life, explained by the context, which is that the prophet asked a Bedouin, “What have you prepared for the hour?” and the man replied that he prayed little but loved those who prayed. Muḥammad then said, “You are with those you love.” The second is that a man’s heart is always with the person he loves. Y 44, R 160–61, S 375, M 34n3.
- 28 Lit. “A man’s Islam . . .”—*islām* means commitment [to God’s will].
- 29 I.e., people’s value stems from their inner morality; an alternative interpretation is that the value of what is inside them is known only by deep probing. R 163, S 1:382.
- 30 I.e., most people are ignorant and base, and it is hard to find a single righteous individual among any group; an alternative interpretation is that all are equal in the eyes of the law. R 163, S 1:383.
- 31 Alternatively, “Every man suffices for himself.” Y 46.
- 32 A reference to the importance of horses for the defense of the community. Y 48–49, S 1:392, M 40n4.
- 33 A prayer-leader is important because the validity of the congregation’s ritual-prayer depends on his not committing errors. Y 52, M 43n2.
- 34 Lit. “will have the longest necks.” According to al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān (*Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, 1:144), muezzins will have long necks on judgment

- day because they will gaze at God's mercy, in contrast to "criminals," who will be «hanging their heads before their lord» (Q Sajdah 32:12).
- 35 The Allies (*anṣār*) are the people of Yathrib/Medina who supported Muḥammad in the early years of Islam, when he migrated there from Mecca.
- 36 Muḥammad reportedly spoke these words to console himself for his daughter Ruqayyah's death in 2/624. S 1:406–7, Y 55, M 46n3.
- 37 I.e., the average lifespan. R 187–88.
- 38 This hadith means that when one party demands that the other take an oath in lieu of witness testimony, the oath will be construed in regard to the matter in dispute: in Islamic law, if a case cannot be resolved by the oral testimony of an eyewitness, the defendant is required to swear an oath to support his claim. The rule expressed in this hadith is designed to prevent the oath-taker from using ambiguous language to mislead the tribunal. I thank Joseph Lowry for his help in annotating this line.
- 39 [*Ahl*] *al-dhimmah*, lit. "protected people" and translated here as "subjects," refers in the classical period primarily to Jews and Christians.
- 40 Lit. "Dirt is children's springtime."
- 41 "What they have taken" is interpreted as meaning either (1) things borrowed or accepted in trust, or (2) things seized unlawfully. Y 61, S 1:418, R 197–98, M 52n2.
- 42 Lit. "The child belongs to the marital bed; the fornicator gets stones." The first part means that even if there is suspicion regarding a wife's fidelity, the children she bears are legitimate, and the man she may have fornicated with has no claims over the child. The second part is a reference to the fact that fornicators should be punished by stoning. The context for the hadith is that a man said, "O messenger of God, this is my son; I fornicated with his mother during the age of ignorance [i.e., before Islam]," and Muḥammad replied: "No claims can be made regarding the age of ignorance. Married couples can claim their offspring, adulterers can claim only their punishment—stones." R 198, Y 61, S 1:419–20, M 52–53n3.

- 43 The commentators all agree that this is because it is more practical and customary for the Bedouin than city dwellers to shelter guests. R 199, S 1:420, M 53n1.
- 44 I.e., do not assume someone has means just because he looks or behaves like he does. R 200.
- 45 Three explanations are given: (1) that looking at greenery and at a beautiful woman who is legal to you gives you pleasure and thus increases your eyes' sparkle, (2) that doing so increases your awe of the creator and brings a sparkle to your inner eye, and (3) that looking at greenery heals ophthalmia, or inflammation of the eye. R 201, S 1:423, M 53–54n5.
- 46 Speaking during the ritual-prayer invalidates it. This hadith refers either to the method of response if someone is addressed when they are performing the ritual-prayer, or to the method for alerting the prayer-leader to an error.
- 47 Lit. “one of twenty-six parts of prophethood.”
- 48 Commentators have explained the first part of the hadith as referring to either (1) someone who pretends to asceticism, worship, and restraint from dubious actions when his heart does not truly possess those qualities; or (2) a co-wife who, in order to cause distress, falsely boasts to another co-wife that their husband loves and cherishes her more (this saying being the prophet's response to such a co-wife who came to him to confess). The two false garments are explained as gross lies and false display, or garments worn one on top of another by a person bearing false witness who comes to the judge hoping his imposing demeanor will pressure the judge into accepting his testimony, or the two sleeves (one on top and one extra) attached to a person's garment on each side to give the impression that he is wearing two full garments, suggesting wealth. S 1:437; R 209; Y 67; M 58n3; al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 14:110; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥḥ al-bārī*, 9:318.
- 49 I.e., the deliberate or unwitting spreading of falsehoods by “tellers of tales,” popular preachers who embellish stories from the Qur'an,

- incurs God's wrath. The audiences are exonerated, since they listen with pure hearts and hope to learn. R 211, S 1:440, M 58–59n4.
- 50 The hadith continues: “The judge who will go to paradise knows the truth and judges by it. As for the two who will burn in hellfire—one knows the truth yet contravenes it in his judgment, the other passes judgment in ignorance.” R 213–14.
- 51 Alternatively, “Anyone who [tyrannizes others] using the strength of his multitude of slaves, God brings to his knees.” R 228, S 1:465.
- 52 Trimming the mustache was encouraged by Muḥammad. S 1:466.
- 53 Because this was not the practice of the prophet.
- 54 Lit. “. . . as the nest of a sandgrouse.”
- 55 ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was Muḥammad’s paternal grandfather.
- 56 A reference to the pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide condemned in the Qur’an. Q Takwīr 81:8–9: «When on judgment day the buried girl is asked: For what crime was she killed?» وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ {سُئِلَتْ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ}.
- 57 Reference to Q ‘Ankabūt 29:45: «Perform the daily prayer, for prayer restrains from indecency and misdeeds» {وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ}.
- 58 The East Wind, Ṣabā is a rain-bearing wind that blows toward the Kaaba; it is apparently so-called because it yearns (*taṣbū*) for the Kaaba. ‘Ād is the name of an ancient Arabian tribe said to have been destroyed by God with Dabūr, a fierce west wind said to blow away from—or have its back (*dubur*) to—the Kaaba. Muḥammad is said to have spoken these words after the Battle of the Confederates in 5/627, or the Battle of Badr in 2/624. S 1:530–31, R 275–76.
- 59 See Q Ṭalāq 65:2–3: «For anyone who is conscious of God, he grants a way out, and provides for him from an unexpected source [or «in a manner beyond expectation»]; and anyone who places his trust in God, he suffices» {حَيْثُ لَا يُحْسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ . . .}. S 1:535, R 280, M 100n3.
- 60 An indication of the first part’s ambiguity is the numerous explanations offered by commentators: (1) poverty pushes a person to do all kinds of things to obtain sustenance, many of which might be forbidden in Islam; (2) since poverty and wealth are decreed by God, a

- lack of acceptance of one's indigent state can be construed as a challenge to God; (3) "poverty" means "poverty of the heart," i.e., a lack of contentment; (4) "poverty" means "paucity of good deeds"; or (5) people look down on a poor man as they look down on a disbeliever. Cf. S 1:535–36, R 280–81, M 100–101n4.
- 61 For the second part, the following explanations are offered: (1) by his envy, the envier is challenging, or at the very least refusing to accept, God's decreeing of wealth for the person he envies; (2) the point is to censure envy, not to say that it can actually change God's decree; (3) envy is similar to "the eye" in terms of its evil effect; or (4) the envier tries to destroy the person he envies, and thus tries to overthrow God's decree. S 1:536–37, R 281, M 100–101n4.
- 62 The commentaries prefix a phrase to the hadith, which renders it "I wonder at a believer's displeasure with God's providence" (عَجِبًا لِلْمُؤْمِنِ لَا (يَرْضَى بِقَضَاءِ اللَّهِ ...)). R 283–84, S 1:541, M 103n1.
- 63 Cf. New Testament, Matthew 7:31.
- 64 'Amr ibn Umayyah asked Muḥammad, "O Messenger of God, shall I tie up my camel mare [to ensure she does not wander away] and have faith in God, or not tie her up and have trust?" He said: "Tie her up and trust in God." N 1:368.
- 65 An injunction against marrying an immoral woman, as her vices are likely to influence the character of her offspring. R 303, S 2:559–60, M 110–11n3.
- 66 The text addresses a companion of the prophet nicknamed Abū Hirr, who is more commonly known as Abu Hurayrah (d. 58/678).
- 67 I.e., help your brother by coming to his aid when he is being oppressed, and by stopping him from oppressing. It is worded in language deliberately similar to a slogan common in pre-Islamic times exhorting people to side with their tribal brethren whether they were in the right or in the wrong. R 306.
- 68 The command to emigrate is interpreted as an exhortation (1) to Muslims living in the time of the prophet to emigrate to his city, Medina, and (2) to Muslims living in any period to travel afar to seek knowledge and livelihood. R 312, M 115n1.

- 69 Lit. “Be ever mindful of the destroyer of pleasures.” The “destroyer of pleasures” is explained as death. R 317.
- 70 This is an exhortation against overdoing things, even good things, or an injunction to console oneself in hard times by remembering the coming joys of the hereafter. S 2:579–80, R 318, M 118n2.
- 71 In the sense that wearing dignified garments encourages dignity and self-control. S 1:318, R 317, M 118n3.
- 72 Muḥammad said: “For each person among you, God has decreed a seat in hellfire or paradise.” So he was asked, “Messenger of God, does that mean our fate is written and we should stop performing good deeds?” and he responded (this response is the *Shihāb* hadith), “Act, for the actions a person has been created to perform come naturally: The deeds of the blissful come naturally to them. The deeds of the wretched come naturally to them.” Then he recited, «As for one who gives to others, fears God, and believes in the truth of what is right, I shall pave his way to ease. But as for one who is stingy and unheeding, and denies what is right, I shall pave his way to hardship» (Q Layl 92:5–10). Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1891; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:2040.
- 73 A reference to the pre-dawn meal eaten during Ramadan.
- 74 An exhortation to charity, no matter how small. R 320, S 2:582–83, M 119n3.
- 75 An injunction against soliciting even for paltry things, such as a toothbrush (lit. a small stick of wood with a softened tip used for brushing teeth), or alternatively, for discarded mouth-rinsing water. S 2:569, R 321.
- 76 An injunction against women displaying themselves in fine clothes and jewels, presumably to unrelated males. R 321–22, S 2:583, M 120n2.
- 77 An echo of the Qur’anic verse «God extracts the hidden things from the skies and the earth» {الَّذِي يُخْرِجُ الْغُيُوبَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ} (Q Naml 27:25). The reference is to agriculture and/or mining, or to distant travels. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, s.v. *KH-B-*’; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. *KH-B-*’; R 325; S 2:585–86; M 121–22n4.

- 78 This means either (1) value food and do not waste, or (2) be precise and honest in buying and selling commodities, especially food items like grain and dates. R 325–26, S 2:588, M 122n2.
- 79 One interpretation is that the hadith is an exhortation to amity and brotherhood, specifically in the context of washing hands after eating: the person pouring the water should go to person after person until the basin fills up, and only then should he empty it out. This interpretation is supported by the preceding line of the hadith report, which says: “Do not take away the basin until it fills up.” Another interpretation is that the hadith is an exhortation to perform the ablution in a complete manner. N 1:408, R 328, S 2:589.
- 80 An exhortation to perform the dawn prayer in the latter part of the time slot designated for it. S 2:590, R 328–29.
- 81 Four interpretations are offered by the commentators: (1) a reference to the *tayammum*, an ablution performed with earth when water is unavailable; (2) an exhortation to perform the prostration (*sujūd*) in the ritual-prayer directly on the earth without using a prayer mat as an expression of humility; (3) an assertion that people will be buried in the earth; or (4) “the earth offers you compassion,” meaning that “she is your compassionate mother.” R 329; M 123n4; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, s.vv. *M-S-Ḥ* and *B-R-R*.
- 82 Interpreted as an injunction to city dwellers against taking unfair advantage of naive Bedouins in buying and selling goods. R 320–30, M 123–24n4.
- 83 The word translated as “criminal act” here is *ḥadd* (pl. *ḥudūd*)—a penalty prescribed by Islamic law for murder, theft, adultery, alcohol consumption, and bearing false witness.
- 84 Q Sharḥ 94:5–6.
- 85 The text addresses a companion of the prophet named Bilāl, exhorting him to spend on himself and his family and to trust in God to provide. R 347.
- 86 “May your hands be filled with earth” (تربت يدك) is interpreted as a prayer for one’s hands to be filled with good things, and is, as such, an apotropaic idiom—like “May no land offer you shelter!” (لا أرضك)—so worded

to ward off the evil eye. Note that the preceding line in fuller versions of the hadith reads: “Women are wed for their beauty, wealth, and lineage” (تُكْرَمُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِبَيْسِهَا وَلِمَالِهَا وَحُسْبِهَا). Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘arab*, s.v. *T-R-B*; R 349–50; M 135n1.

- 87 The commentators differ in their explanations: The Sunni al-Sijilmāsī says the command to kill a second claimant is not to be taken literally, but rather it means to “kill his fame” and to subdue him by not supporting him (S 2:622). The Shi‘i al-Rāwandī explains it in the context of the succession to Muḥammad as the community’s obligation to fight to support the rightful incumbent and Muḥammad’s appointed successor, ‘Alī (R 350).
- 88 The translation may also be rendered “God never empowers the ignorant or demeans the intelligent,” for the hadith’s two key terms (often used as a pair) are each bivalent: *jahl*=ignorance/harshness, *ḥilm*=intelligence/forbearance. Lane, *Lexicon*, s.vv. *J-H-L* and *H-L-M*.
- 89 Lit. “from the same snake pit twice.”
- 90 *Birr* (translated here as “virtue”) can also refer more particularly to filial piety.
- 91 Alternatively, this is explained as an exhortation to Muslims to perform the hajj pilgrimage. R 376; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Ṣ-R-R*.
- 92 A reference to Muḥammad’s conquest of Mecca in 8/629; the injunction is against emigration to Medina after the conquest of Mecca and the subsequent spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.
- 93 The commentators explain this hadith to mean that (1) after the conquest, no enemy will ever challenge the Muslims over Mecca, or that (2) no violence should rend Mecca’s sanctity, or that (3) no one would claim bloodwit for the Jewish woman killed for satirizing Muḥammad. R 378, S 2:646.
- 94 Jurists debate whether this is a blanket injunction against women holding positions of religious, political, juridical, and military leadership, or whether it is specific to the historical context of the prophet learning of a princess succeeding to the Sassanian throne. R 379, S 1:396.

- 95 *Yu'dhirū* (or *ya'dhirū*), more commonly denoting “to excuse,” is interpreted here as “committing many crimes.” R 385; S 2:652; M 155n2; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, s.v. ‘-DH-R; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. ‘-DH-R.
- 96 Commentators have offered several interpretations for this cryptic hadith: (1) do not use the services of someone who is not your beneficiary; (2) do not trust someone you have not tested; (3) do not take what does not belong to you; (4) do not meddle with the property of someone you have no jurisdiction over; or (5) do not oppress a believer, no matter how poor, for God, not you, gives him food and clothing. R 396, S 2:664–65, M 160–61n4.
- 97 Muḥammad himself is said to have explained, “As a man finishes loading up his belongings on his camel, his drinking cup often has some water left in it, so he drinks it up and casually tosses the cup on top of his equipage. . . . Place me at the beginning of your discourse, in the middle, and at the end.” N 2:89; R 401; S 2:668–69; M 164–65n4; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Q-D-H*.
- 98 Lit. “Beware of green plants . . .” Muḥammad was asked, “O Messenger of God, what is meant by plants growing on a dung heap?” And he replied, “A beautiful woman who comes from a foul source,” i.e., whose lineage is suspect. R 405, S 1:231–32, M 167n4, N 2:96.
- 99 Another possible interpretation is “Words are children,” i.e., words can be attributed to their speaker in the same way that children are attributed to parents. R 410, S 1:233 and 2:687, M 168n1.
- 100 This is explained as meaning that either (1) seeking knowledge can lead to ignorance when a scholar mixes what he knows with guesswork, or (2) certain kinds of knowledge—such as philosophy, astrology, “books of the ancients,” and music—are detrimental (the permissibility of studying these subjects was often a point of debate among Muslims). R 410, S 2:687–88, M 168n1.
- 101 The context is that an old woman often used to visit Muḥammad, who treated her with special kindness. When his wife ʿĀi’shah expressed surprise, he responded that she often used to visit his late wife Khadijah. N 2:102.

- 102 “Righteous” here translates *ḥanīfiyyah*, related to the Qur’anic *ḥanīf*, used of the prophet Abraham and by extension for the God-fearing. E.g., Q Baqarah 2:135.
- 103 Freedmen (*mawālī*, sing. *mawlā*) are former slaves; upon manumission they retained affiliation to their master’s tribe.
- 104 An exhortation to moderation in all things, even worship. R 421, S 2:712, M 176n4.
- 105 Yā Sīn is the name of the thirty-sixth surah of the Qur’an. In longer versions, the hadith continues: “By reciting it, he is credited with reciting the entire Qur’an ten times over” (كُتِبَ لَهُ بِقِرَاءَتِهَا الْقُرْآنُ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ). N 2:130.
- 106 The commentators explain that Islam began with few supporters, and at the end of time—after centuries of strength—it will again have few supporters. R 424, S 2:715–16, M 179n3.
- 107 Alternatively readable as “. . . those who work with their hands.”
- 108 Alternatively, “after every meal and draught.”
- 109 The commentators interpret the first part of the hadith as exhorting co-wives to practice fortitude in the face of jealousy. R 435.
- 110 Lit. “inclines into every valley.”
- 111 The word *faḍl*, translated here as “honor,” also means “generosity.”
- 112 Cf. earlier hadith §1.226.
- 113 Lit. “suckling is consequent upon hunger.” The commentators explain that suckling by a foster mother interdicts the child’s subsequent marriage as an adult to the woman who suckled (and to certain of her relatives), when the suckling was to satisfy the child’s hunger. If the suckling was occasional, no interdiction applies. R 446; M 183n4; Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. *J-W-‘*.
- 114 Antimony is a lustrous gray metalloid whose compounds have been used as cosmetics since ancient times. The Arabs used antimony as liner or salve for the eyes for cosmetic effect and for medicinal benefit.
- 115 Lit. “The hand on top is better than the hand below.”
- 116 In the *Musnad*’s hadith report, Muḥammad was then asked, “What is the tongue’s charity?” and he replied, “Intercession—by which you free

- a captive, prevent blood from being spilled, draw charity and generous gifts to your brother, and ward off his difficulties.” S 2:778, N 2:243.
- 117 Since the person one is praying for is absent, such a prayer is from the heart and far removed from hypocrisy. M 211n4.
- 118 The commentators say the hadith is (1) an exhortation to men not to argue with women, or (2) an assertion that women are intrinsically flawed. R 492, S 2:812, M 217n4.
- 119 Lit. “he infuses him with honey.” Two explanations are given: (1) that if God wishes something good for his servant, he makes people think well of him in life or after death, or (2) that he guides him to good deeds before he dies. R 499, S 2:814, M 218n3.
- 120 This is an exhortation to give alms to the indigent, although worded differently than other more direct exhortations (e.g., Q Ḍuḥā 93:10, and hadiths §1.221 and §6.67 in this volume). It warns that you will be punished if you ever refuse a mendicant; the only reason you may not be punished is if he lied about his need.
- 121 A reference to the Qur’anic verse «Let them laugh little and weep long, in recompense for what they have earned» فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَبُكَوْا كَثِيرًا {جزاء بما كانوا يَكْسِبُونَ} (Q Tawbah 9:82).
- 122 I.e., if cattle were aware, as men are, of the certainty of death, they would be too fearful to eat; thus, humans should not live complacently, but rather, they should perform good deeds in preparation for the imminent end. R 513.
- 123 Lit. “only when earth fills his belly.” R 514.
- 124 “Divine hadith” (Ar. *ḥadīth qudsī*) are words that issue from God and are reported by Muḥammad. They are distinguished from “prophetic hadith” (Ar. *ḥadīth nabawī*), which are Muḥammad’s own sayings, and also from the Qur’an, as they may not be recited as part of the ritual-prayer.
- 125 This text is addressed to the prophet Moses. According to ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-‘Abbās, Muḥammad said that “God spoke 140,000 hadiths to Moses, all in pious counsel.” N 2:328.

- 126 Muḥammad is said to have uttered this prayer after reciting the Qur'anic verse «God then prompted the soul to immorality or to consciousness of him» {فَالْهَمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا} (Q Shams 91:8). N 2:338.
- 127 Quraysh is the name of Muḥammad's tribe, who lived in Mecca and who were initially his bitter enemies.

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND TERMS

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib patriarch of the Hāshim clan of Quraysh and the prophet Muḥammad’s paternal grandfather.

Abraham (Ar. *Ibrāhīm*) a prophet in Islam, referred to frequently in the Qur’an, where he is said to have built the Kaaba, the “House of God” (Ar. Bayt Allāh), in Mecca. He is believed to be the forebear—through his son Ishmael (Ar. Ismā‘īl)—of the prophet Muḥammad.

Abū Hirr (d. 58/678) a companion of the prophet, more commonly known as Abū Hurayrah, who is reported to have narrated over five thousand hadiths.

‘Ād an ancient Arabian tribe mentioned in the Qur’an. Its people rejected God’s prophet Hūd and were consequently destroyed by a fierce, hot week-long wind.

Adam (Ar. *Ādam*) a prophet in Islam, the first human created by God. In the Qur’an, humankind is often referred to as “sons of Adam.”

Age of Ignorance (Ar. *jāhiliyyah*) a term denoting the pre-Islamic period in which the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula were idol worshippers. The word “ignorance” in this term is usually interpreted as ignorance of the one true God.

Allies (Ar. *aṣṣā’ir*) the people of Medina from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj who supported Muḥammad when he migrated there from Mecca. They are counted among the early companions.

alms-levy (Ar. *zakāh* or *ṣadaqah*) one of the “pillars” of Islamic practice, a mandatory duty for all Muslims. The annual levy on gold and silver is 2.5 percent.

Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ al-Ḥabashī (d. ca. 19/640) a companion of the prophet Muḥammad and one of the earliest converts to Islam. He was of Ethiopian origin, born into slavery in Mecca, and manumitted by Abū Bakr. He had a beautiful voice and served as Muḥammad's muezzin.

buried girl (Ar. *maw'ūdah*) a reference to the pre-Islamic practice of female infanticide condemned in the Qur'an (Q Takwīr 81:8–9).

children of Israel (Ar. *banū Isrā'il*) the Jews, followers of the prophet Moses, referred to frequently in the Qur'an. Stories of the biblical prophets told by the Jews, the *Isrā'īliyyāt*, are usually frowned upon by medieval Muslim scholars as a source of Qur'anic exegesis.

collyrium or kohl (Ar. *kuḥl*) a powder used to darken the eyelids, both as cosmetic and salve, usually consisting of finely powdered antimony.

companions (Ar. *aṣḥāb and ṣaḥābah*) the men, women, and children who had direct personal contact with the prophet Muḥammad. As key figures in the early history of Islam, they are the first transmitters of the statements and deeds of the prophet.

confederates (Ar. *aḥzāb*) the name given to the Meccans and their combined Jewish and polytheist allies who came together to fight Muḥammad in Medina in 5/627 in the Battle of the Confederates. It was also called the Battle of the Trench (Ar. *khandaq*), after the trench dug around the city to prevent the Meccan forces from entering. After a fortnight, the siege was abandoned, and the failure of the Meccan expedition greatly strengthened Muḥammad's position in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dabūr the name of the west wind, said to blow away from—or have its back (Ar. *dubur*) to—the Kaaba. According to the Qur'an, it is the wind that destroyed the ancient Arabian tribe of 'Ād.

dhimmī or ahl al-dhimmah (lit. “protected people”) non-Muslims living in an Islamic state who pay dues and offer loyalty to the state in exchange for its protection and services. In the classical period the term refers primarily to Jews and Christians.

divine hadith (Ar. *ḥadīth qudsī*) hadiths which are believed to be God's direct speech. They are to be distinguished from regular prophetic hadith (Ar. *ḥadīth nabawī*), which are Muḥammad's own words, and

also from the Qur'an. Unlike the Qur'an, divine hadith may not be recited as part of the ritual-prayer.

Emigrants (Ar. *muhājirūn*) those who migrated with Muḥammad to Mecca. Along with the Allies, they are revered by later Muslims for their service to Islam in its most difficult early years.

fasting (Ar. *ṣawm*) abstention from food, drink, and sex, from pre-dawn to sunset. Fasting during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month in the lunar Islamic calendar, is mandatory, but other optional fasts are also encouraged.

Friday prayer (Ar. *ṣalāt al-jum'ah*) the enjoined weekly congregational prayer, performed by Muslims at midday every Friday, usually in the main mosques of the city. It consists of listening to a two-part sermon and participating in a congregational ritual-prayer.

hadith (Ar. *ḥadīth*) or *prophetic hadith* (Ar. *ḥadīth nabawī*) often translated "traditions" of the prophet, these are reports of Muḥammad's words, deeds, and gestures. For Muslims, the corpus of hadiths holds a special position of authority and guidance, complementing the Qur'an.

hajj (Ar. *ḥajj*) the pilgrimage to Mecca mandated for every Muslim at least once in a lifetime. The hajj is performed in the month named for it, Dhu l-Hijjah, the twelfth in the Islamic lunar calendar. The hajj combines rituals performed by the prophet Abraham and the prophet Muḥammad.

Hallowed Spirit (Ar. *rūḥ al-quḍus*) Qur'anic reference describing the archangel Gabriel (Ar. *Jibrīl* or *Jibra'il*), who is also called the Spirit (*al-rūḥ*) and the Trustworthy Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*). He is said to have brought God's revelation to the prophets.

ḥanīf (pl. *ḥunafā'*) a person who inclines to righteousness by following the monotheistic religion of the prophet Abraham. The relative adjective *ḥanīfiyyah* is used to refer to the religion of Abraham, and is often described as a precursor to Islam.

Hijrah Muḥammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in AD 622, which is considered the first Hijri year. The Islamic calendar begins from this date.

ḥudūd (sing. *ḥadd*) corporal penalties prescribed by Islamic law for certain major transgressions, notably murder, theft, adultery, drinking alcohol, and bearing false witness.

imam (lit. “leader”) title of either the supreme leader of the Muslim community or an exemplary scholar or prayer-leader. In Shi‘i doctrine, the term denotes a man descended from the prophet Muḥammad through his daughter Fāṭimah and his son-in-law ‘Alī; for the Shi‘a, the imam is divinely guided and inherits Muḥammad’s role of spiritual and temporal leadership.

Jesus (Ar. *‘Īsā*) a prophet in Islam, referred to in fifteen different surahs and ninety-three verses in the Qur’an as the son of Mary, the Messiah (*al-Masīḥ*), the Word (*al-kalimah*) and the Spirit (*al-rūḥ*). In several hadiths, Jesus is also named as the true “Mahdī” who will come at the end of time and bring peace and justice to the world.

jihad (Ar. *jihād*) a righteous struggle against the forces of evil, the term can refer equally to battle with outside enemies or to combat one’s own base nature.

Kaaba (Ar. *Ka’bah*) a cubical structure in Mecca, the most famous sanctuary of Islam, and according to tradition built by the prophet Abraham. Muslims call it the house of God (Bayt Allāh): worshippers throughout the world face it in their daily prayer, and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims circumambulate it every year during the hajj and ‘*umrah* pilgrimages.

Khadījāh bint Khuwaylid (d. AD 619) a wealthy widow from the Asad clan of Quraysh, and the first wife of the prophet Muḥammad. Prior to their marriage, Khadijāh had employed Muḥammad as her trading agent. When Muḥammad received the call from God, she became the first Muslim, supporting him in the most difficult early years of his mission. She bore him two sons, who died in infancy, and four daughters, who lived to adulthood.

al-Mahdī (lit. “rightly guided one”) the title of the restorer of religion and justice, who, according to a widely held Muslim belief, will rule before the end of the world.

Mary (Ar. *Maryam*) the mother of Jesus and the daughter of ‘Imrān from the line of the prophet Abraham. She is accorded the highest status among women. A chapter of the Qur’an—Sūrat Maryam—is devoted to her.

Moses (Ar. Mūsā) a prophet in Islam, mentioned by name 136 times in the Qur'an, more than any other prophet. The Qur'an refers to his private conversations (*munājāt*) with God.

muezzin (Ar. mu'adhdhin) the person who recites the ritual call to prayer (*adhān*).

Noah (Ar. Nūḥ) a prophet in Islam. A chapter of the Qur'an—Sūrat Nūḥ—is devoted to him. In this surah as well as others, the Qur'an narrates the story of Noah's Ark.

qāḍī a judge.

quṣṣāṣ (sing. qāṣṣ) (lit. "tellers of tales") popular preachers who narrated stories of the prophets from the Qur'an, embellished with materials from other sources, including the so-called *Isrā'iliyyāt* from the Bible.

Qur'an (Ar. Qur'ān) the holy book of the Muslims, revealed by God to the prophet Muḥammad.

Quraysh the prophet's tribe. They lived in Mecca and were initially his bitter enemies, fighting him in the Battles of Badr, Uḥud, and Khandaq, where many were killed. When Muḥammad conquered Mecca in 8/630, they accepted Islam.

ritual-prayer (Ar. ṣalāḥ) the mandatory worship rite performed individually or in congregation five times a day by Muslims. It consists of prescribed sequences of bowings and prostrations to God, recitations of Qur'anic surahs, and supplications.

Ṣabā the name of the rain-bearing east wind that blows toward the Kaaba, apparently so called because it "yearns" (*taṣbū*) for the Kaaba.

salām (lit. "peace" and "well-being") term used by Muslims as a greeting.

Shi'a (lit. "followers," the shortened form of *Shi'at 'Alī*, or "followers of 'Alī") Muslims who believe that the prophet through divine revelation appointed 'Alī to lead the Muslim community after him as imam and, as such, that 'Alī was the rightful successor to Muḥammad in both his temporal and spiritual roles. Three major branches evolved: Twelver, Ismā'īlī, and Zaydī.

sunnah (lit. "well-trodden path to a watering hole") refers to the accepted practice of pious forbears, and when used without qualifiers, usually to Muḥammad's practice.

Sunni (lit. “emulator of the prophet’s practice”) Muslims who believe that Muḥammad died without appointing an heir, and who revere the first four leaders of the community as “Rightly Guided Caliphs.” The term “Sunni” emerged from the earlier, mainly political, appellation “people adhering to the sunnah and the majority group.”

surah (Ar. *sūrah*) chapter divisions in the Qur’an. There are 114 surahs in the Qur’an, varying between 3 and 286 verses.

weighing scales (Ar. *mīzān*) symbolic rendering of divine justice on the day of judgment as an instrument that measures the good and bad deeds of humankind.

Yā-Sīn the name of the thirty-sixth surah of the Qur’an, and its opening word and verse. Some exegetes say it means “O human,” while others say it is another proper name for the prophet Muḥammad.

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