

1 Foundations

Prophetic Revelation

The House of Islam rests on the threefold foundation of a sacred scripture, the prophetic sayings of Muhammad, and a sophisticated tradition of exegesis, or interpretation of the sacred texts. All aspects of Islamic faith and practice begin with the sacred scripture, the Qur'an ("recitation"), understood as the literal word of God revealed directly to Muhammad and, through him, to the community. Texts of two complete suras, or chapters, of the Qur'an, ar-Rahman (55, The Merciful) and Yusuf (12, Joseph), appear here in new translations.

Muslims regard Muhammad's own words and deeds as wholly distinct from those of the Qur'an and preserved in a large body of literature known as Hadith. They consider both Qur'an and Hadith to be divinely revealed; the major theological distinction is that although the content of the Hadith is ultimately from God, the precise words are those of Muhammad. A second major category of Hadith comprises sayings attributed to God but still considered distinct from the Qur'an. These "sacred hadith" appear almost exclusively in the context of Muhammad's sayings; for example: Muhammad is reported to have said that God said. . . . This chapter offers a small sample of hadith of both types; subsequent texts in this and later chapters include many more examples, including several hadith attributed to Shi'i Imams.

Muhammad's sayings provide a wealth of material helpful in the interpretation of scripture. The third section of this chapter offers two types of exegetical literature that make extensive use of prophetic traditions. Three different interpretations of Sura 1, Al-Fatiha, provide the entire text of a chapter, along with examples of different approaches to its interpretation. Then two of Islam's most influential religious scholars, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and Ibn Taymiya (d. 1328), analyze the principles behind the two major exegetical types, the relatively straightforward *tafsir* and the often esoteric *ta'wil*. Visual illustrations will focus on three themes: styles of calligraphy, sacred text in inscriptions on architecture generally, and epigraphy on the unique visual focus called the *mihrab*, or niche.

 TEXTS FROM THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an's 114 chapters (suras) offer a wide array of literary styles, lengths, tones, themes, and textures. Some of the earliest suras, dating from the first years of Muhammad's public ministry (610–615), are only a few verses in length—Sura 112, for instance: "Say: He, God, is one; God is everlasting; he does not beget and he is not begotten, and there is none like him"; or Sura 110: "When the help of God and victory arrive, and you see humankind entering God's religion in throngs, then break forth with praise of your Lord and seek his forgiveness, for he is ever turning back [to forgive]." After the community left Mecca for Medina in 622, the qur'anic texts gradually shifted in style and tone from more poetic and exhortatory to more prosaic, and in content from pedagogical narrative and apocalyptic imagery to regulatory and practical instruction.

The two complete suras that follow represent the early and later Meccan periods; both are particularly suitable for recitation even in translation. Surat ar-Rahman (55), presented first, needs to be read aloud to be appreciated, while Surat Yusuf (12) offers an excellent opportunity for group dramatization. It is the only sura dedicated entirely to a single narrative, and Joseph is the only one of the prophets whose story the Qur'an tells without interruption.

✱ Surat ar-Rahman, The Merciful

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From the litany of divine blessings in this expansive paean one gets a vivid sense of the earliest Muslim teaching about the creator and sustainer of all, about this world as a theater of God's revelation, and about the ultimate consequences of faith and unbelief. Intensity builds with the insistent refrain.

- 1 The Merciful
- 2 He taught the Qur'an.
- 3 He created the human being.
- 4 He taught him speech.
- 5 Sun and Moon follow their courses.
- 6 Creeping plants and trees both bow before Him.
- 7 He has raised up the heavens and set the Scale of Justice
- 8 [so firmly] that you cannot play it false.

- 9 Apply this scale with justice;
 you must not give short measure by this scale.
- 10 The earth God has set out for His creatures;
11 in it are fruits of every kind
12 and date palms packed with blossom,
 unwinnowed grain and fragrant herbs
13 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 14 He fashioned the human being like earthen ware from potter's clay;
15 He fashioned the jinn from fire with smokeless flame
16 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 17 He is Lord of the furthest points of the sun's rising
 and its setting
18 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 19 He has let the two great waters flow to a point of meeting,
20 yet between them rests a barrier they cannot breach
21 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 22 From them come forth pearls and coral
23 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 24 His are the ships on the sea with sails aloft like mountains
25 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 26 Everything upon the earth is to perish,
27 yet the face of your Lord will remain
 full of might and honor
28 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 29 Everything in the heavens and on earth is supplicant to Him;
 every day He is attentive [to them]
- 30 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 31 We have ample time to deal with you,
 you and your burdens
32 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
- 33 You, company of jinn and humankind,
 try, if you can, to enter the regions of heaven and earth,
 try to enter them!
 Enter them you shall not other than with the power

[We alone can give]

34 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

35 Smokeless flame and flameless smoke will be hurled against you;
no help shall reach you

37 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

38 Then when the heaven is sundered and glows rose like tanned hide

39 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

40 on that day neither human creatures nor jinn need be questioned of
their sins

41 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

42 Evildoers will be known by the marks they bear, then will they
be seized by
their feet and forelocks.

43 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

44 Here is the hell the evildoers denied.

They circle between it and scalding water

45 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

46 But for one who fears his encounter before his Lord
there are two gardens

47 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

48 in each of them boughs giving shade

49 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

50 in each of them two flowing springs

51 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

52 in each of them of every fruit two kinds

53 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

54 as they recline on couches, lined with

thick textured silk,

and the fruit of both gardens at hand hanging low

55 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

56 In them are maidens of modest gaze

neither man nor jinn having yet touched them

57 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?

58 their beauty like that of jacinth and coral

59 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 60 Can goodness receive aught but goodness?
 61 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 62 And below them both are two other gardens
 63 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 64 both of deep green
 65 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 66 In each of them two springs abundantly flowing
 67 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 68 In them are fruit, with date palms and pomegranates
 69 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 70 In them are virtuous women beautiful of face
 71 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 72 clear black their eyes, set apart in pavilions
 73 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 74 no man nor jinn having yet touched them
 75 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 76 reclining on green cushions and rich carpets
 77 —which then of your Lord's blessings can you deny?
 78 Blessed be the name of your Lord, full of grace and honor.

* Writing Sacred Text

A number of exquisite calligraphic styles developed during the early centuries of Islamic history, largely for the purpose of writing the sacred word. Kufic script, named after the Iraqi city of Kufa, was the first important style. Its chief distinguishing mark is bold, thick letters with flat bottoms that do not descend much below the horizontal line; Kufic's low profile lends itself to a horizontal format. Figure 2 displays the text of Qur'an 2:111–112. Noting that Christians and Jews assert that only they will be saved, the text picks up: "Say [to them]: Give proof if you are correct. On the contrary, anyone who surrenders wholly to God and does good will be rewarded in his Lord's presence, and no fear will beset them [and they will not grieve]." The small medallion in the middle of the page is a device used to indicate divisions in the text. Bold dots distinguish various otherwise similar consonants from each other. As later illustrations will show, Kufic

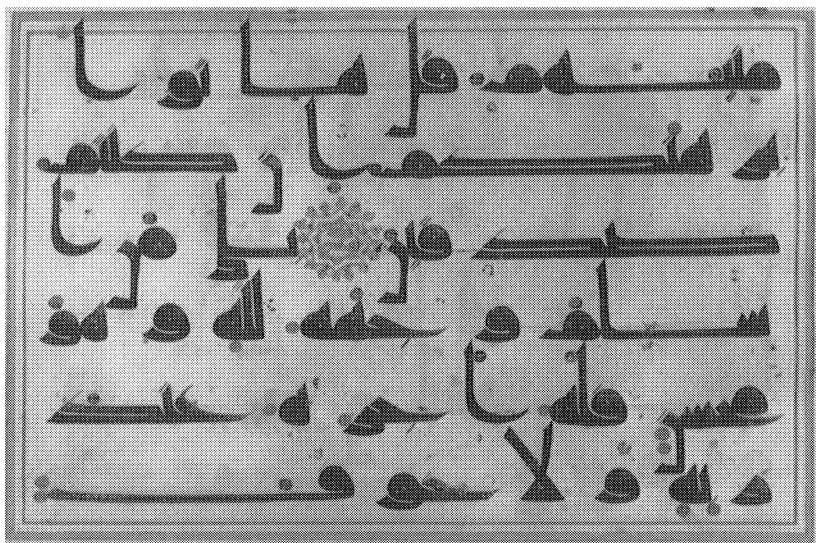


Figure 2. Ninth-century Qur'an page, possibly from Iraq. St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum, 32:1948.

script developed in a number of stylistic variations but retained its characteristic angularity.

More graceful cursive styles of script, whose elongated forms look best on pages of vertical format, developed alongside of Kufic. Figure 3 displays two of the many "rounded" scripts, showing the end of one sura (83:18–36) and the beginning of another (84:1–3). The Qur'anic text itself is written in *rayhani* script. The title panel below, in *tawqi'* script, reads, "Surat al-Inshiqaq [The Sundering], 25 verses, Meccan," and is followed by the phrase "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," which occurs at the head of all but one of the 114 suras. The small roundels in the text mark the ends of verses; the medallion in the right margin indicates one of the standard liturgical divisions of the Qur'an; and the small markings above and below the lines of text indicate vowels, added out of a concern for maximum accuracy in reciting the sacred text.

* Surat Yusuf

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This "literal" version of the twelfth sura of the Qur'an, "The Most Beautiful of Tales," is designed to convey a more accurate sense of the actual experience of

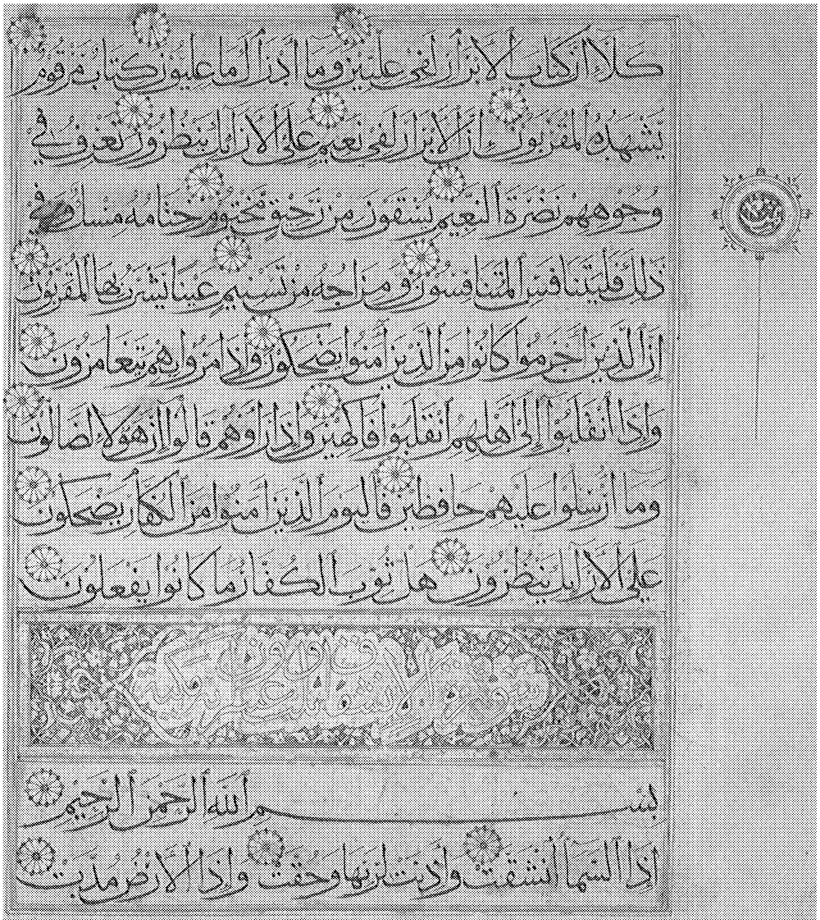


Figure 3. Fourteenth-century Qur'an page from Mamluk Egypt. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Pickering 69.149.

reading the Arabic text. Many of the most distinctive rhetorical, structural, and metaphysical features of the Qur'an become strikingly apparent when one studies this text in comparison with the long biblical narrative of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37–50).¹ One of the most difficult challenges in translating the Qur'an is to bring out the unifying themes, symbols, and vocabulary that are so evident to Arabic readers. To help convey this richness in English, the most important of what are essentially untranslatable spiritual terms have been

presented throughout in small capitals and in “literal” form, to remind readers of their mysterious, multivalent nature. The text lends itself beautifully to dramatic recitation, with parts read by four or more participants. The four basic “levels” or “frames” of discourse are indicated thus: I = Narrator; II = Divine “We”; III = Various Actors; IV = Inner “Asides.” Frame III can then be further divided among the various individual characters indicated.

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE ALL-LOVING, THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE

I. [1] Alif Lam Ra: Those are the SIGNS of the BOOK making-clear.

II. Indeed, We have sent It down, as a Qur’an [lit., recitation] in Arabic, so that you all might understand. We, We are recounting to you the most good and beautiful of tales through what We have inspired to you, this Qur’an—even though before It you were among the heedless ones.

I. When Joseph said to his father:

III. “O my dear father, I indeed, I have seen eleven planets and the sun and the moon: I saw them to me bowing down!”

I. [5] He said:

III. “O my dear son, do not recount your vision to your brothers, for they are devising a scheme against you. The Shaytan is indeed for INSAN* an enemy making-clear!”

III. [Jacob to Joseph? or possibly “We”/Narrator (to whom)?]: And that is how your RABB† picks you out, and causes you to KNOW‡ through

* Throughout Q, the term *insan* refers to the spiritual reality of every human being, the manifestation of the divine “Breath/Spirit of God” fully realized in the prophets and “friends of God”; always contrasted with the created, part-animal mortal form of “clay,” referred to as *bashar*.

† The term *rabb* is used over a thousand times in Q, usually as an emotionally charged form of address evoking our “personal,” most powerfully real and intimate existential relationship to some aspect of the divine. This Arabic root evokes images of a parent lovingly and devotedly “raising” or “taking care of” and educating a dependent child.

‡ “Knowing” as divinely inspired spiritual awareness (*‘ilm*); a central spiritual virtue in Q (used nearly nine hundred times). The different verb and noun forms of this term usually refer to direct (nonconceptual) human awareness of God and the spiritual world, of the inner nature of things and ultimate realities underlying the phenomenal and historical world; located in the Heart (*qalb*, *lubb*); term also intimately connected with the central symbolic families of images of Sight and Light.

FINDING THE INNER MEANING of what comes to be,* and fulfills His blessing upon you and upon the people of Jacob, as He fulfilled His blessing upon your two fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed your RABB is ALL-KNOWING, ALL-WISE.

I. [Narrator?/"We"?]: So in Joseph and his brothers there was surely a SIGN for those who question and plead. When they said:

III. "Now Joseph and his brother are more dearly beloved by our father than we, though we are a tight-knit bunch: Certainly our father is clearly gone astray!"

IV. [Who? Shaytan? One of the brothers?]: "Kill Joseph! Or toss him out on some earth, [so that] your father's regard may be left for you all alone. And after that you all can be a group DOING WHAT IS RIGHT!"[†]

I. [10] One of them, speaking, said:

III. "Don't kill Joseph, but throw him in the hidden depths of the well, [so that] some caravan may pick him up, if you all are indeed doing [what you propose]."

I. They said:

III. "O our father, why do you not have FAITH[‡] in us regarding Joseph, though surely we are sincerely meaning him well!? Send him with us tomorrow, [so that] he may run around and play. Certainly we are protecting him!"

I. He said:

III. "As for me, it does make me sad for you all to take him with you. And I am afraid that the wolf may eat him up while you all are heedless in regard to him!"

I. They said:

* *Ta'wil al-ahadith*: The first term of this key phrase means "taking (things) back to the First," to their ultimate source, while the second refers to whatever "comes to be."

[†] The Arabic root *s-l-h* ordinarily means whatever is "right," but the qur'anic usage consistently joins and precedes references to the "right things" (*as-salihah*) with the essential precondition of "having FAITH."

[‡] *Iman* refers to the condition of faith, inner peace and absolute assurance, implicit confidence and total trust, granted by God. Its most frequently mentioned "contents" or perceptions include the reality and presence of God, the angels, and all the divine "Books" and Messengers.

III. "If the wolf were to eat him up, while we're such a tight-knit bunch, then we would be the ones suffering loss!"

II. [15] Then when they took him with them and agreed together that they would put him in the hidden depths of the well, We inspired in him: "Surely you will inform them of this affair of theirs, while they are [still] unaware!"

I. And they came to their father in the night [or: night-blind, dim-sighted], crying. They said:

III. "O our father, we, we went off trying to get ahead of one another, and we left Joseph back with our possessions. So the wolf ate him up!"

IV. "But you don't have FAITH in us, even if we were SPEAKING TRUTHFULLY!"*

I. And they came with lying blood upon his shirt. He said:

III. "No, on the contrary: your souls[†] have seduced you into some affair!"

IV. "So SABR[‡] is beautiful. And it is God [alone] Whose Help must be sought against what you all describe!"

I. And a caravan came along. So they sent their water-man, and he let down his vessel. He said:

III. "O what GOOD NEWS! This is a young man!"[§]

I. And they kept him hidden, as trading goods.

II. But God is ALL-KNOWING of what they are doing.

* *Sidq* (along with related epithets such as *as-Siddiq*, later applied to Joseph) means acknowledging the truth of what is real—and therefore discerning the divine presence and intentions behind appearances.

† Like the English expression "the self," the Arabic term *nafs* has many meanings in Q. This passage and verse 53 below became the locus classicus for later Islamic references to the psycho-spiritual aspect of the *nafs* as the "carnal soul" manifesting the reprehensible qualities of the human animal (*bashar*, rather than *insan*).

‡ *Sabr*, exemplified in Q above all by Jacob, refers to faithful perseverance in allegiance to the divine Truth in the midst of difficult circumstances.

§ Ordinarily, the term *ghulam* means simply a boy or youth; however, in Q it usually refers to the spiritual state of a young future prophet, visible as such only to those family members, like Jacob here, who are specially inspired by God (Abraham, Mary, Zacharia). Likewise, the water-drawer's reference to his caravan's serendipitous "good news" (*bushra*) contains a similar irony: in Q that same Arabic root is always used more specifically (several dozen times) to refer to the divine "good news" brought by the prophets and Messengers.

I. [20] And they sold him for a cheap price, a number of dirhams—for they were among those considering him of little value. And the one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife:

III. “Honor his dwelling place. Perhaps he may be useful to us and we may adopt him as a son.”

II. And that is how We established a place for Joseph upon the earth, and so that We might cause him to KNOW through FINDING THE INNER MEANING of what comes to be.

I. [Narrator?/“We”?]: And God is prevailing in his affair—but most of the people do not know!

II. And then when he reached his mature strength We brought him WISE JUDGMENT* and [divine] KNOWING: That is how We reward the MUHSINUN.†

I. And the [woman] in whose house he was tried to entice him away from himself. She locked the doors and said:

III. “Come here!”

I. He said:

III. “May God protect [me]! He is my RABB, who has made good and beautiful my dwelling place. He does not cause the wrongdoers to truly flourish!”

I. Now she was longing for him, and he was longing for her, were it not that he saw the Proof of his RABB.

II. That is how [it was], so that We might keep away from him evil and indecency. He is indeed among OUR WHOLLY DEVOTED SERVANTS.‡

I. [25] So they each tried to reach the door first and she ripped his shirt in back, and at the door they met her master. She said:

* Divinely inspired wisdom (*hikma*), or the inspired right-judgment and spiritual authority (*hukm*) concerning particular circumstances that flows from such inspired Knowing, are mentioned as human spiritual virtues almost a hundred times in Q. See part 3 below for a discussion of wisdom in Surat Luqman.

† *Muhsinun* are “those who do *ihsan*,” one of the highest spiritual states, typified by the greatest prophets. Meaning literally “doing/making-what-is-good-and-beautiful,” its qur’anic usage stresses the deeper, divinely inspired awareness necessary to know concretely what is truly good-and-beautiful.

‡ The virtue of *ikhlas* refers to purity of intention, doing whatever one does entirely for God’s sake. In Q it is often connected specifically with the spiritual state of the prophets and Friends of God.

III. "What is the recompense for someone who intended evil for your family, if not that he be imprisoned or [receive] a painful torment!?"*

I. He [Joseph] said:

III. "She tried to entice me away from myself!"

I. And a witness from her people testified:

III. "If his shirt is ripped in front, then she spoke truthfully and he is among the liars. But if his shirt is ripped in back, then she has lied and he is among THOSE SPEAKING TRUTHFULLY."

I. So when he [her husband] saw his shirt was ripped in back, he said:

III. "This is from your [fem. pl.] scheming, for your scheming is indeed tremendous!"

"O Joseph, turn away from this!"

[To his wife]: "And you, seek forgiveness for your offense: surely you were among the erring ones!"

I. [30] And some women in the city said:

III. "The wife of the DEAR/MIGHTY ONE⁺ is trying to entice her young servant away from himself. He's made her fall madly in love. Indeed, we see she's clearly gone astray!"

I. So when she heard about those women's sly devising she sent to them and prepared for them a cushion, and she brought a knife to every one of them and said [to Joseph]:

III. "Come out before them!"

I. And when the women saw him they glorified him and they all cut their hands [in astonishment], and they said:

III. "God preserve [us]! This is no ordinary mortal*—this can only be a majestic angel!"

* *‘Adhab alim*: Used some seventy times in Q, this term means the sufferings or punishments of Gehenna and the "Fire"; the root referring to "prison" throughout this section (*s-j-n*) also refers to a fearful level of Gehenna in many key eschatological passages. Thus Zulaykha's threat here has powerful eschatological resonances that openly set the stage for a more symbolic, metaphysical "reading" of this drama and Joseph's predicament.

⁺ *Al-‘Aziz*: one of the more common divine Names in Q, appearing more than a hundred times. Joseph turns out to have this same semiregal title when he is later addressed by his brothers.

* *Bashar*, in contrast with the spiritual *insan*; cf. verse 5, and above, notes on pages 8 and 10.

I. She said:

III. "So there for you all is the one because of whom you were reproaching me! I did try to entice him away from himself, only he resisted."

IV. [To herself?] "But if he doesn't do what I order him to, he will most certainly be imprisoned, and then he will surely be among the lowly ones!"

I. He said:

III. "My RABB! Prison is more lovable to me than what they [masc. pl.] are calling me to—and if You do not turn their [fem. pl.] scheming away from me I will give in to them [fem. pl.] and become one of the ignorant and foolish ones!"

I. So his RABB did respond to him and turned their scheming away from him. Surely He is the ALWAYS LISTENING, the ALL-KNOWING. [35] Next, it appeared [right] to them [masc. pl.], after they had seen the SIGNS, to imprison him until a certain time.

And two young servants entered the prison with him. One of the two said:

III. "I am seeing myself squeezing out wine."

I. And the other one said:

III. "I am seeing myself carrying above my head a loaf of bread from which the birds are eating."

[Both of them]: "Inform us both about the INNER MEANING of it. For we see you among the MUHSINUN."

I. He said:

III. "There does not come to you two any nourishment that is bestowed as your SUSTENANCE,* but that I have already told both of you the INNER MEANING of it, before it comes to you both. That, for you both, is among what my RABB has caused me to KNOW. I have

* *Rizq* (sustenance) almost always refers to the universal divine activities of creating and bestowing all the forms of God's "grace" and "bounty," including much more than food and extending ultimately to the very existence of all creatures and forms of manifestation.

indeed forsaken the MILLA* of a group who do not have FAITH in God and who reject† THE OTHERWORLD!

“And I have followed the MILLA of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: it was not for us to associate any thing with God. That was through God’s favor for us and for [all] the people—and yet most of the people are not giving thanks!

“O two companions [or ‘masters’] of the Prison: Are disparate/separate lords [pl. of *rabb*] better—or God THE ONE, THE OVERPOWERING?!”

I. [40] [“We”? Narrator? Muhammad?]:‡ “What you all are worshipping/serving besides Him are nothing but names that you all have named, you and your fathers! God has not sent down for them any authority. Certainly the DECISIVE JUDGMENT is only for God! He commanded that you all not worship/serve any but Him alone: That is THE UPRIGHT RELIGION§—and yet most of the people do not know!”

III. [Joseph]: “O two companions of the Prison: As for one of you, he is pouring wine for his lord to drink. And as for the other one, he is crucified, so that the birds are eating from his head.¶ The matter has [already] been decreed which you are seeking to have me explain.”

* The term *milla* is usually used in Q specifically in connection with the particular monotheistic religious “way” or path of Abraham (or his descendants).

† The root *k-f-r*, here meaning to reject, cover over, or be ungrateful for, often denotes the contrary of faith and mindfulness, as well as of gratitude or thankfulness to God.

‡ The “addressees” here are in the indefinite plural rather than the explicitly dual form used repeatedly in the preceding verses, making it unclear who is speaking to whom or in what situation and time frame.

§ *Ad-din al-qayyim* (also in 9:36, 30:30, and 30:43) affirms the unchanging unity of “religion” (*ad-din*) as the proper relation between God and the human soul, the spiritual state of true “worship-and-divine-service” (*‘ibada*, on which see text by Madjid in part 2) exemplified by the prophets and Friends of God.

¶ The image of “pouring wine” for one’s Lord evokes the eschatological symbolism of “banquets” (fountains, cupbearers, etc.) in the heavenly Garden and the related symbolism of the divine “Court” that is continued in the next few verses. Similarly, symbolism involving birds often suggests the spiritual states of souls or other spiritual beings.

I. And he said to the one of the two who he suspected was being saved:*

III. "Mention/remember me in the presence of your lord [*rabb*]!"

I. Then the Shaytan made him forget mentioning/remembering his RABB, so he lingered in the Prison several years. And THE KING[†] said:

III. "Surely I am seeing seven fat cows that seven thin ones are eating, and seven green ears [of grain], and other dry ones. O you dignitaries,[‡] explain to me about my vision, if you are [capable of] interpreting the vision!"

I. They said:

III. "Mixed-up dreams! And we are not, with regard to FINDING THE INNER MEANING of dreams, among those who know."

I. [45] And he said, the one of the two who was saved and [only now] remembered after some time:

III. "I [intend to] inform you of its INNER MEANING, so send me out." [Then at the Prison he said]:

"Joseph, O you TRUTHFULLY SPEAKING ONE [*as-siddiq*]: Explain to us regarding seven fat cows that seven thin ones are eating, and seven green ears and other dry ones, so that I might return to the people, so that perhaps they might know!"

I. He said:

III. "You all plant for seven years, tirelessly. But of what you all have harvested, leave it on the ear except for a very little, from which you eat. Then there come after that seven hard ones eating up what you all have prepared for them, except for a very little from what you all are preserv-

* As in God's "saving" the prophets and the righteous in an explicitly spiritual or eschatological sense. Likewise, Joseph's parting words here clearly evoke the imagery of the eschatological intercession (*shafa'a*) of the prophets in the divine "Court" alluded to in Q and described in greater detail in many well-known hadith.

† "The King" or "Possessor" (*al-malik*) of all creation, is one of the most frequent of the divine Names. Curiously, this sura never mentions "Pharaoh" (*fir'awn*), the usually pejorative title for the Egyptian ruler in the rest of the stories of Q.

‡ *Al-mala'*: A term also used in Q (and the hadith) to refer to the highest angels or archangels around the divine "Throne."