

- ❖ Christians, especially heretic. Hence, while the influence of orthodox Christianity upon the Koran has been slight, apocryphal and heretical Christian legends, on the other hand, are one of the original sources of Koranic faith. (See Muir, op. cit. infra, 66-239; Tisdall, "The Original Sources of the Qur'an", London, 1905, 55-211.)
- ❖ Sabaism, a combination of Judaism, Manicheism, and old disfigured Babylonian heathenism.
- ❖ Zoroastrianism. On account of Persia's political influence in the north-eastern part of Arabia, it is natural to find Zoroastrian elements in the Koran.
- ❖ Hanifism, the adherents of which, called Hanifs, must have been considerable in number and influence, as it is known from contemporary Arabian sources that twelve of Mohammed's followers were members of this sect.
- ❖ Native ancient and contemporary Arabian heathen beliefs and practices. Wellhausen has collected in his "Reste des arabischen Heidentums" (Berlin, 1897) all that is known of pre-Islamic Arabian heathen belief, traditions, customs, and superstitions, many of which are either alluded to or accepted and incorporated in the Koran. From the various sects and creeds, and Abul-Fida, the well-known historian and geographer of the twelfth century, it is clear that religious beliefs and practices of the Arabs of Mohammed's day form one of the many sources of Islam. From this heathen source Islam derived the practices of polygamy and slavery, which Mohammed sanctioned by adopting them.

AUTHORSHIP, COMPILATION

It is generally admitted that the Koran is substantially the work of Mohammed. According to the traditionalists, it contains the pure revelation he could neither read nor write, but that immediately afterwards he could do both; others believe that even before the revelation he could read and write; while others, again, deny that he could ever do so. Thus it is uncertain whether any of the suras were written down by the Prophet himself or all delivered by him orally and afterwards written down by others from memory.

The Koran is written in Arabic, in rhymed prose, the style differing considerably in the various suras, according to the various periods of the Prophet's life. The language is universally acknowledged to be the

most perfect form of Arab speech, and soon became the standard by which other Arabic literary compositions had to be judged, grammarians, lexicographers, and rhetoricians presuming that the Koran, being the word of God, could not be wrong or imperfect.

Mohammed's hearers began by trusting their memories to retain the words of the revelation they had received from him. Later, those who could write traced them in ancient characters on palm leaves, tanned hides, or dry bones. After the Prophet's death all these fragments were collected. Zaid ibn Thabit, Mohammed's disciple, was charged by Abu Bekr, the caliph, to collect all that could be discovered of the sacred text in one volume. The chapters were then arranged according to their length and without regard to historical sequence. The revision made twenty years later affected details of language of the text.

The best and most accessible edition of the Koran is that of Flugel, "Al-Qoran: Corani textus Arabicus" (Leipzig, 1834 and since). Maracci's famous Latin translation of the Koran, with a refutation and commentary, is still unique and useful: "Alcorani textus universus" (Padua, 1698). The standard English versions are those of Sale (London, 1734) with a still useful introductory essay; Rodwel (London, 1861), arranged in chronological order; and Palmer in "Sacred Books of the East" (Oxford, 1880).

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Koran

The sacred book of the Muslims, by whom it is regarded as the revelation of God. Supplemented by the so-called *Hadith*, or traditions, it is the foundation of Islam and the final authority in dogma and belief, in jurisprudence, worship, ethics, and in social, family, and individual conduct.

The name *Koran*, or better *Qur'an*, from the Arabic stem *Qara'a*, "to read", "to recite", means the "Reading", the "Recitation", i.e. the "Book", *par excellence*. It is also called -- to select a few of many titles -- "Alkitab" (The Book), "Furquan" ("liberation", "deliverance", of the revelation), "Kitab-ul-lah" (Book of God), "Al-tanzil" (The Revelation). It consists of one hundred and fourteen suras or chapters, some being almost as long as the Book of Genesis, others consisting of but two or three sentences. It is smaller than the New Testament, and in its present form has no chronological order or logical sequence.

CONTENTS AND ANALYSIS

The Koran contains dogma, legends, history, fiction, religion and superstition, social and family laws, prayers, threats, liturgy, fanciful descriptions of heaven, hell, the judgment day, resurrection, etc. -- a combination of fact and fancy often devoid of force and originality. The most creditable portions are those in which Jewish and Christian influences are clearly discernible.

First Period

Suras 103, 91, 106, 101, 95, 102, 104, 82, 92, 105, rhapsodies, which may have been composed before Mohammed conceived the idea of a Divine mission, or of a revelation direct from Heaven.

Second Period (the opening of Mohammed's ministry)

Sura 96, the command to "recite in the name of the Lord"; sura 113, on the unity and eternity of the Deity; sura 74, the command to preach, the denunciation of one of the chiefs of Mecca who scoffed at the resurrection, unbelievers threatened with hell; sura 111, Abu Lahab (the Prophet's uncle) and his wife are cursed.

Third Period (from the beginning of Mohammed's public ministry to the Abyssinian emigration)

Suras 87, 97, 88, 80, 81, 84, 86, 90, 85, 83, 78, 77, 76, 75, 70, 109, 107, 55, 56, descriptions of the resurrection, paradise, and hell, with references to the growing opposition of the Koreish tribe.

Fourth Period (from the sixth to the tenth year of Mohammed's ministry)

Suras 67, 53, 32, 39, 73, 79, 54, 34, 31, 69, 68, 41, 71, 52, 50, 45, 44, 37, 30, 26, 15, 51, narratives from the Jewish Scriptures and from rabbinical and Arab legends; the temporary compromise with idolatry is connected with sura 53.

Fifth Period (from the tenth year of Mohammed's ministry to the Flight from Mecca)

Suras 46, 72, 35, 36, 19, 18, 27, 42, 40, 38, 25, 20, 43, 12, 11, 10, 14, 6, 64, 28, 22, 21, 17, 16, 13, 29, 7, 113, 114. The suras of this period contain some narratives from the Gospel, enjoy the rites of pilgrimage, refute the cavillings of the Koreish, and contain vivid descriptions of the resurrection, judgment, heaven, and hell, with proofs of God's unity, power, and providence. Gradually the suras become longer, some of them filling many pages. In the later suras of the fifth period Medina passages are often interpolated.

Last Period (suras revealed at Medina)

This period includes the following suras:

- ❖ Sura 98: on good and bad Jews and Christians.
- ❖ Sura 2, the longest in the Koran, is called the "Sura of the Cow" from the red heifer described in verse 67 as having been sacrificed by the Israelites at the direction of Moses. It is a collection of passages on various subjects, delivered during the first two or three years after the Flight. The greater portion relates to the Jews, who are sometimes exhorted and sometimes reprobated. Biblical and rabbinical stories abound. This sura contains the order to change the Qibla (or direction at prayer) a denunciation of the disaffected, citizens of Medina, injunctions to fight, permission to bear arms in the sacred months and much matter of a legislative character promulgated on first reaching Medina, with passages of a later date interpolated.
- ❖ Sura 3 belongs partly to the time immediately after the Battle of Behr. The Jews are referred to in terms of hostility. The interview with Christian

deputation from Najran (verses 57-63) is of a later date. Passages pertaining to the farewell pilgrimage are introduced with other (probably) earlier texts on the rites of pilgrimage.

- ❖ Sura 8 contains instructions on the division of spoil at Bedr. Some parts are in the old Meccan style and the Koreish are frequently referred to. In sura 47 war and slaughter are enjoined, and idolaters of Mecca threatened. In sura 62 the Jews are denounced for their ignorance; the Friday service is to take precedence of secular engagements. In sura 5 the Jews are reviled; the doctrines of the Christians are controverted; it contains also civil ordinances and miscellaneous instructions.
- ❖ Sura 59, on the siege and expulsion of the Banu Nadhir.
- ❖ Sura 4 entitled "women", from the large portion devoted to the treatment of wives and relation of sexes. There are also ordinances on the law of inheritance and general precepts, social and political. Idolatrous Meccans are to be shunned, and there are animadversions against the Jews. The "disaffected" are blamed for taking the part of the Jews.
- ❖ Sura 65: on divorce and kindred subjects, with some religious observations.
- ❖ Sura 63: menaces against 'Abdallah ibn Obey for his treasonable language on the expedition against the Banu Mustalick.
- ❖ Sura 24: vindication of 'Ayisha, with the law of evidence for conjugal unfaithfulness, and miscellaneous precepts.
- ❖ Sura 33, composed of portions covering the year A. H. 5. The marriage of the Prophet with Zeinab, wife of his adopted son, is sanctioned. There are various passages on the conjugal relations of Mohammed, the siege of Medina, and the fall of the Banu Qoreitza.
- ❖ Sura 57: injunctions to fight and contribute towards the expenses of war. The disaffected are warned. Christians are mentioned in kindly terms.
- ❖ Sura 61: on war; speedy victory is promised. -- The remaining auras belong exclusively to the last five years of the Prophet's life.
- ❖ Sura 48 refers to the truce of Hodeibia, and the prospect of victory and spoil to be obtained elsewhere.
- ❖ Sura 60: on the treatment of the women who, after the truce, came over from Mecca; idolaters of Mecca to be shunned.

- ❖ Sura 66: on the affair of Mohammed and the Coptic maid.
- ❖ Sura 49: blaming the profession of the Bedouin Arabs as insincere, chiding the deputation which called out rudely at Mohammed's door, and exhorting believers against distrust and uncharitableness among themselves.
- ❖ Sura 9 treats of the campaign to Tebuk (A. H. 9). It opens with the "release" promulgated at the pilgrimage of the same year and declares the antagonism of Islam to all other religions. All but Muslims are excluded from Mecca and the rites of pilgrimage. Idolaters are threatened with slaughter and slavery. War is declared against Jews and Christians until they are humbled and pay tribute. This sura is called "the crusade chapter", and in the early campaigns was often read on the field before battle.

DOCTRINE

The doctrine of the Koran may be classified under four categories:

- ❖ faith, or what to believe;
- ❖ practice or worship;
- ❖ ethics, or what to do and what to avoid;
- ❖ moral, historical, and legendary lessons taken from the canonical, but mostly apocryphal, Christian and Jewish Scriptures, and from contemporary and ancient Arabian heathenism.

SOURCES

The sources of the Koran can be reduced to six:

- ❖ The Old Testament (canonical and apocryphal) and the hybrid Judaism of the late rabbinical schools. During Mohammed's time the Jews were numerous in many parts of Arabia, especially around Medina. Familiarity's with them is undoubtedly responsible for many Old Testament stories alluded to in Koran. Later Judaism and Rabbinism are equally well represented (Geiger, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?", Wiesbaden, 1833; tr. Judaism and islam", Madras, 1898).
- ❖ The New Testament (canonical and apocryphal) and various heretical doctrines. On his journeys between Syria, Hijaz, and Yemen, Mohammed had every opportunity to come in close touch with Yemenite, Abyssinian, Ghassanite, and Syrian