



## الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



*Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;*

## Quran English Translation & Commentary

By

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### Appendix XI

#### The Abbreviated Letters

##### (Al Muqattaat)

1. An oath is an invocation of the name of Allah or of some person object held sacred by the person using the invocation, to witness the truth of a solemn affirmation and to emphasize that affirmation.
2. An adjuration is a solemn appeal to a person or persons to do some act to believe some important statement by the evidence of something great or sublime or remarkable or out of the ordinary.
3. On these subjects as thus defined, let us review the teaching of the Holy Quran.
4. Among the Pagan Arabs the use of oaths became so common that it almost ceased to have any solemn meaning.

On the other hand, when they wanted to suppress the rights of women or do some unjust acts, they would resort to an oath to do so, and then plead that they were bound by their oath when pressure was brought to bear on them to desist from their injustice.

Thus, they doubly dishonour oaths: they took the name of Allah lightly, and on the other hand, they made an oath an excuse for not doing what was right and just. It is much to be feared that our own contemporaries are not free from such forms of disrespect to Allah.

5. Such practices are condemned in the strongest terms in the Quran. "Make not Allah's name an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons" (2:224).

Perjury is condemned as deception which hurts both the deceiver and the deceived.

“Take not your oaths to practice deception between yourselves, with the result that someone’s foot may slip after it was firmly planted, and you may have to taste the evil consequences of having hindered men from the Path of Allah, and a mighty Wrath descend on you” (16:94).

See also 3:77.

You must not only fulfil your oaths, but you must fulfil all covenants, express or implied, and all your obligations of every kind, without reference to an oath: 5:1, note 682.

6. Considering the harm caused by thoughtless oaths, in which there was no intention to deceive or to do wrong. It is provided that they may be expiated for.

“Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation feed ten indigent persons...or clothe them, or give a slave his freedom. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths” (5:92).

See also 2:225 and 66:2).

7. Some examples may be cited of the false oaths which were used for deception.

The Hypocrites, “in whose hearts is a disease”, “swore their strongest oaths by Allah” that they would be with the Muslims, but treachery was in their hearts (5:55-56).

See also 24:53.

On the other hand, the oath of Joseph’s wicked brethren, “By Allah”, in speaking to their father, (12:85), seems to be a mere expletive, used lightly, and therefore worthy of condemnation.

8. In passages like the following, the oath seems to be emphatic and solemn as in a court of law:

12:66	By Joseph’s brethren, at Jacob’s request.
12:73	By Joseph’s brethren, to the Egyptians
21;57	By Abraham, to the Polytheists.
26:97	By the denizens of Hell, when they realize their wrong.
37:56	By the righteous one in heaven, when he realizes the great danger he escaped in life.
38:82	By the Power of Evil, who solemnly swears by the power of Allah.
46:34	By the denizens of Hell, when they realize the Truth.

9. In the following passages addressed by Allah to men, an appeal is made to man’s realization of Allah’s own greatness, goodness, and glory, or Allah’s special relationship to man as Creator, Cherisher, and Protector, to teach him the lesson of truth and right conduct.

In English phrase it might be rendered: “As I am thy Lord God, believe in Me and follow My Word.”

4:65	"By thy Lord" (they can have no real faith until...).
15:92	"By thy Lord" (We will call them to account).
16:56	"By Allah" (ye shall be called to account).
16:63	"By Allah" (We sent messengers).
19:68	"By thy Lord" (We shall gather them together).
34:3	"By my Lord" (said by the Prophet to assure men of the coming of the Hour of Judgement,
64:7	"
51:23	"By the Lord of heaven and earth" (this is the very Truth). See also 70:40 (paragraph 12 below).

10. Another way in which an appeal is made to men is by the evidence of the life of the Holy Prophet, whose truth and purity were known to them, or by the Holy Quran, whose wonderful power over men's hearts was a miracle which they witnessed before their eyes.

15:72	"By thy life" (to enforce the lesson of the unspeakable crime of Lu's people).
36:2	"By the Quran. Full of wisdom" (to show the Prophet's inspiration).
38:1	"By the Quran, full of admonition" (to show the error of the Unbelievers).
43:2	"By the Book that Makes things clear" (to show that Revelation and conformable to truth).
44:2	"
50:1	"By the Glorious Quran" (to quell the wonder of the ignorant).

11. Now we come to the great mystic passages in the Makkan Surahs, in which men are adjured to turn to the wonders of the spiritual world by striking phrases full of sublimity, full of mystery, full of symbolism, and using the wonders of the heavens and the earth by way of illustration.

They are the despair of the translator, because the words used are widely comprehensive, with little that is precise in them.

There are layers upon layers of meaning, and only the profoundest spiritual experience can probe their depths. An attempt has been made in the notes to analyze and explain some of their meanings. All that we can do here is to bring them together into juxtaposition, to help the earnest student.

They may be divided into three categories.

- those introduced by the words "La uqsimu" (I do swear or I do call to witness).
- those introduced by the particle **wa**, which is the general form of adjuration, and

- those, mainly concerned with the Judgement to come, which are introduced by the adverb "idha" (when).

12. **La Uqsimu** (with the first person singular) implies that special attention is drawn to something by a personal and beneficent God, and an appeal is made to His creature.

56:75	"The setting of the stars." Other glories may set, but not the glory of Revelation.
69:38	"What ye see and what ye see not." Revelation is good for both outer and inner life.
70:40	"The Lord of all points in the East and the West." Allah's Kindom extends everywhere.
75;1-2	"The Resurrection Day and the self-reproaching spirit." Evil should be eschewed.
81:15-18	"Planets, Night, and Dawn." Nature may vary, but Allah's Light is ever the same.
84:16-18	"The ruddy glow of sunset, the Night, the Moon." Man must travel from stage to stage.
90:1-3	"This City (of Makkah) and mystic ties." Man is created for toil and struggle, but Allah had given him guidance.

13. The great mystic Symbols or Signs, introduced by the particle **wa**, by which man is adjured to turn to the higher life, are rich in suggestive imagery, which loses part of its charm by any attempt at precise definition:

37:1	"By those who range themselves in ranks"
51:1-4	"By the (Winds) that scatter broadcast" etc.
51:7	"By the heaven with its numerous Paths" etc.
52:1-6	"By the Mount (of Revelation)" etc.
53:1	"By the Star when it goes down."
68:1	"By the Pen and by the Record which men write".
74:32-34	"By the Moon, the Night, the Dawn".
77;1-5	"By the (Winds) sent forth (to man's profit)" etc.
79:1-5	"By the (angels) who tear out" etc.
85:1-3	"By the Sky (displaying) the Zodiacal Signs" etc.
86:1	"By the Sky and the Night-Visitant (therein)".
86:11-12	"By the Firmament which returns (in its round), and by the Earth" etc.
89:1-5	"By the Break of Day", etc.
91;1-8	"By the Sun and its (glorious) splendour. By the Soul..." etc.
92:1-3	"By the Night as it conceals (light); By the Day as it appears in glory" etc.

- 93:1-2 "By the Glorious morning Light" etc.  
 95:1-3 "By the Fig and the Olive" etc.  
 100:1-5 "By the (Steeds) that run with panting breath" etc.  
 103;1 "By (the Token of) Time (through the Ages)".

14. The great mystic Symbols introduced by the adverb "when" (**idha**) do not in form belong to the category of Adjunctions, but their mystic meaning and imagery bring them within this category.

They refer to the end of the present order of things, and the inauguration of the new world of perfect spiritual values, but they need not necessarily be understood in a definite sequence of time such as we know it, for the spiritual world overlaps the material:

- 77:8-11 "When the Stars become dim" etc.  
 81;1-13 "When the Sun is folded up" etc.  
 82;1-4 "When the Sky is cleft asunder" etc.  
 84:1-3 "When the Sky is rent asunder" etc.  
 99:1-3 "When the Earth is shaken" etc.

15. Every Symbol is connected with the argument of the passage concerned, by way of metaphor or illustration.

See note 5798 to 74:32. the appropriate meaning suggested is explained in the notes to each passage as it occurs.

