



# QUR'ĀN

THE DILEMMA

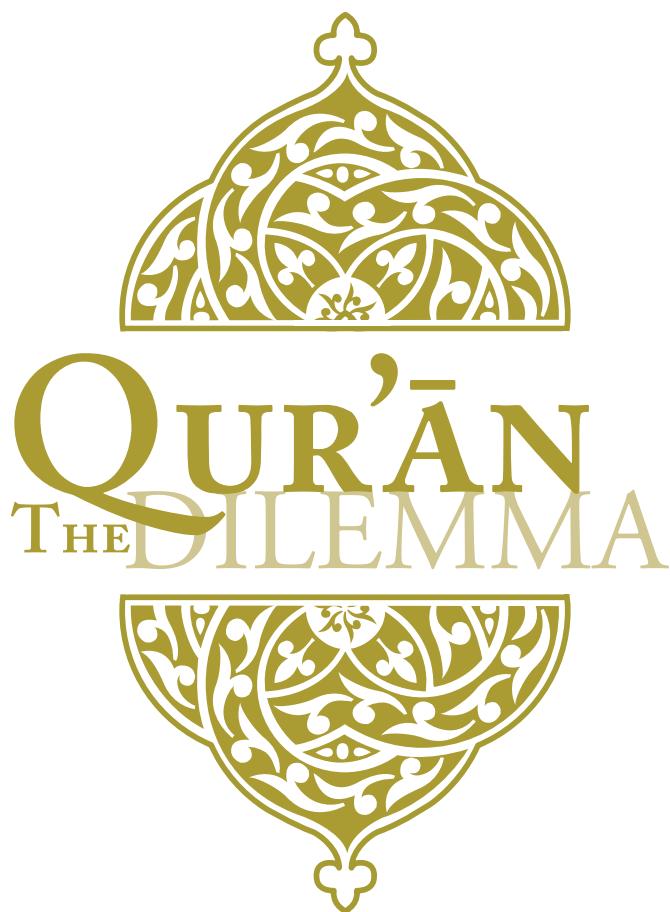


*Former Muslims Analyze  
Islām's Holiest Book*

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*Volume ONE*





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Islām's Holiest Book*

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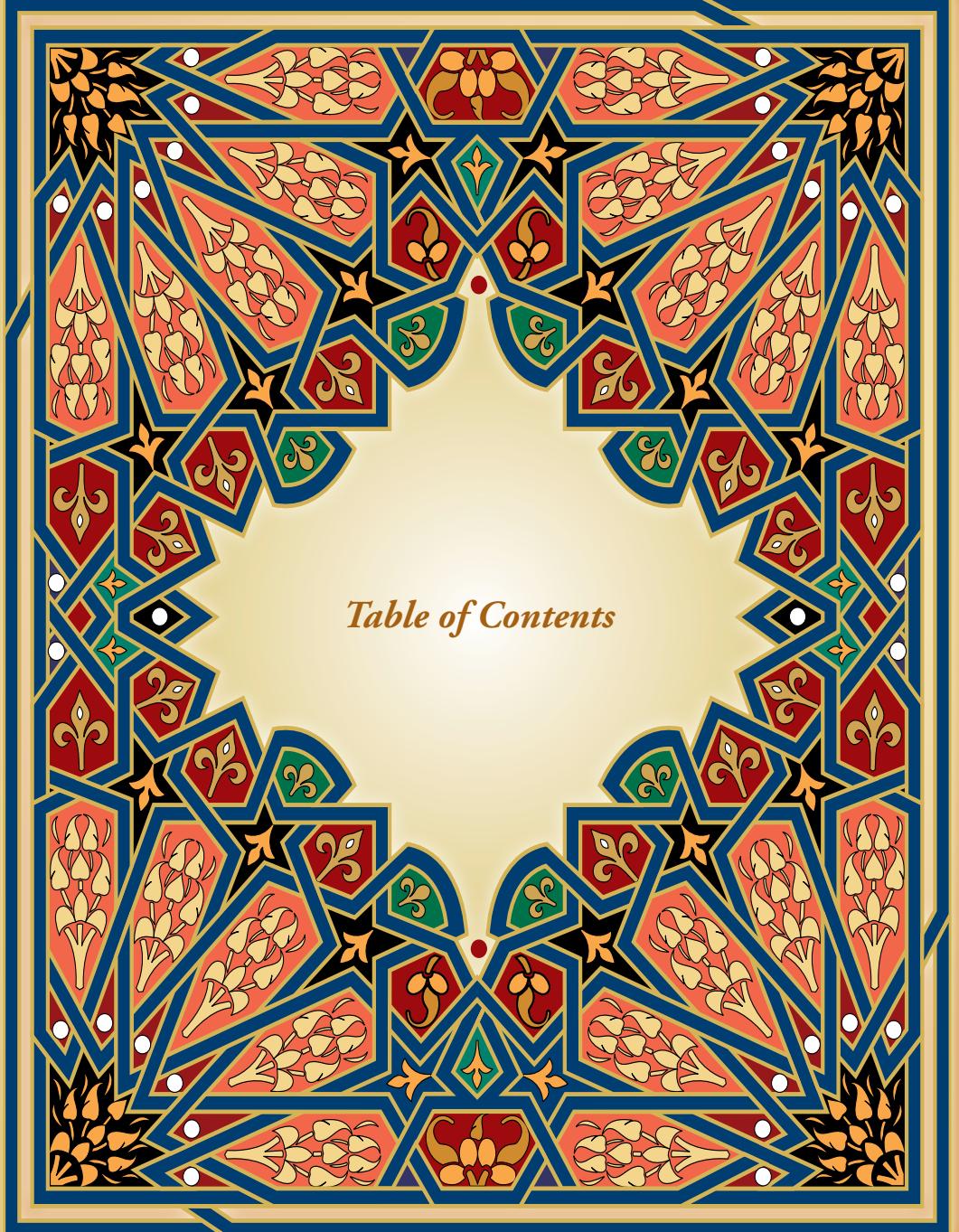
*Volume ONE*

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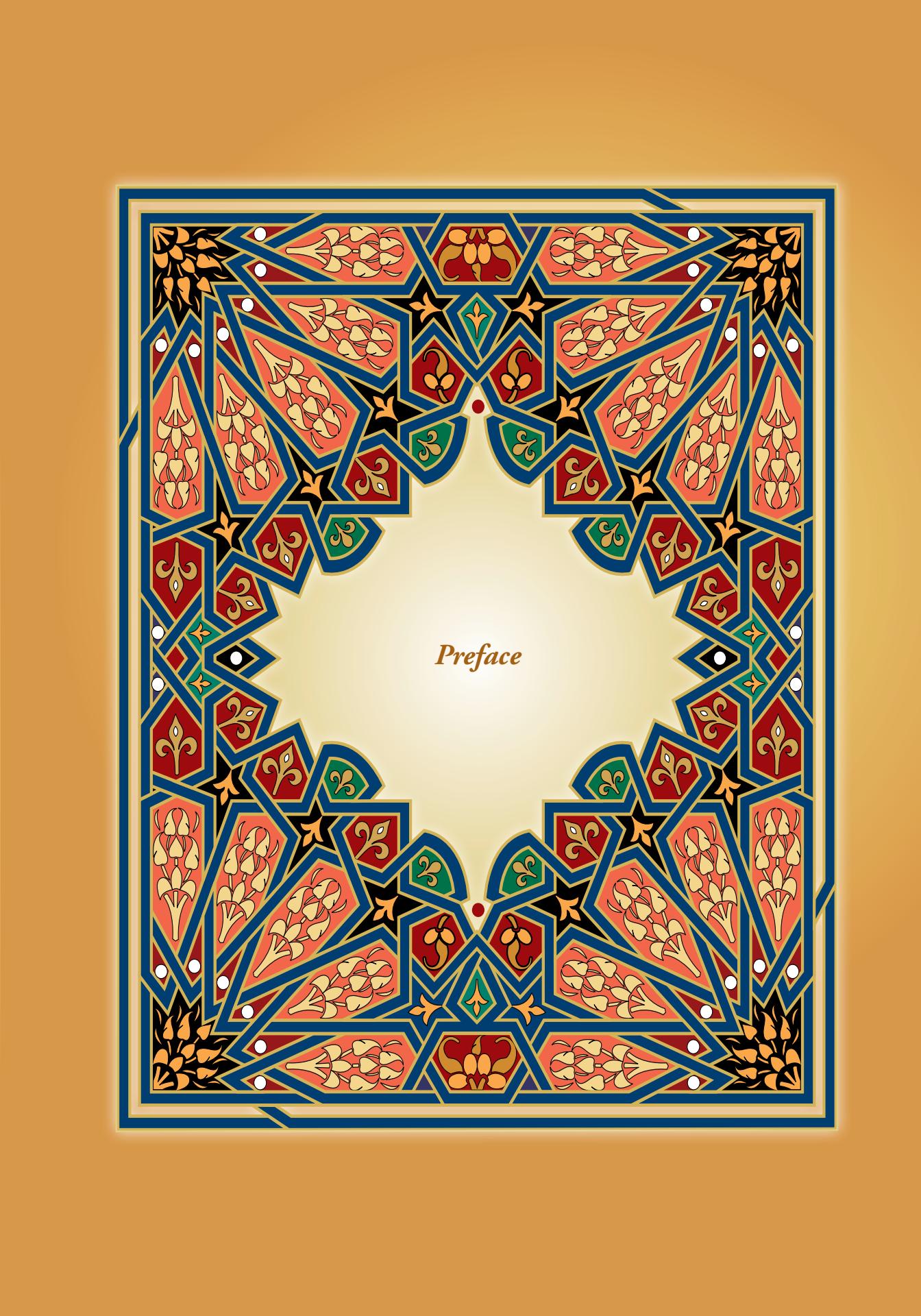
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*Preface*

## *Preface*

**A** book of terror or a book of peace? An inspired text or a political agenda? How is one to know the truth about the Qur’ān? Where does one even begin? How can an English-speaking reader ever hope to wade through the history, the translations, the sects, and the commentaries to begin making sense of the issues?

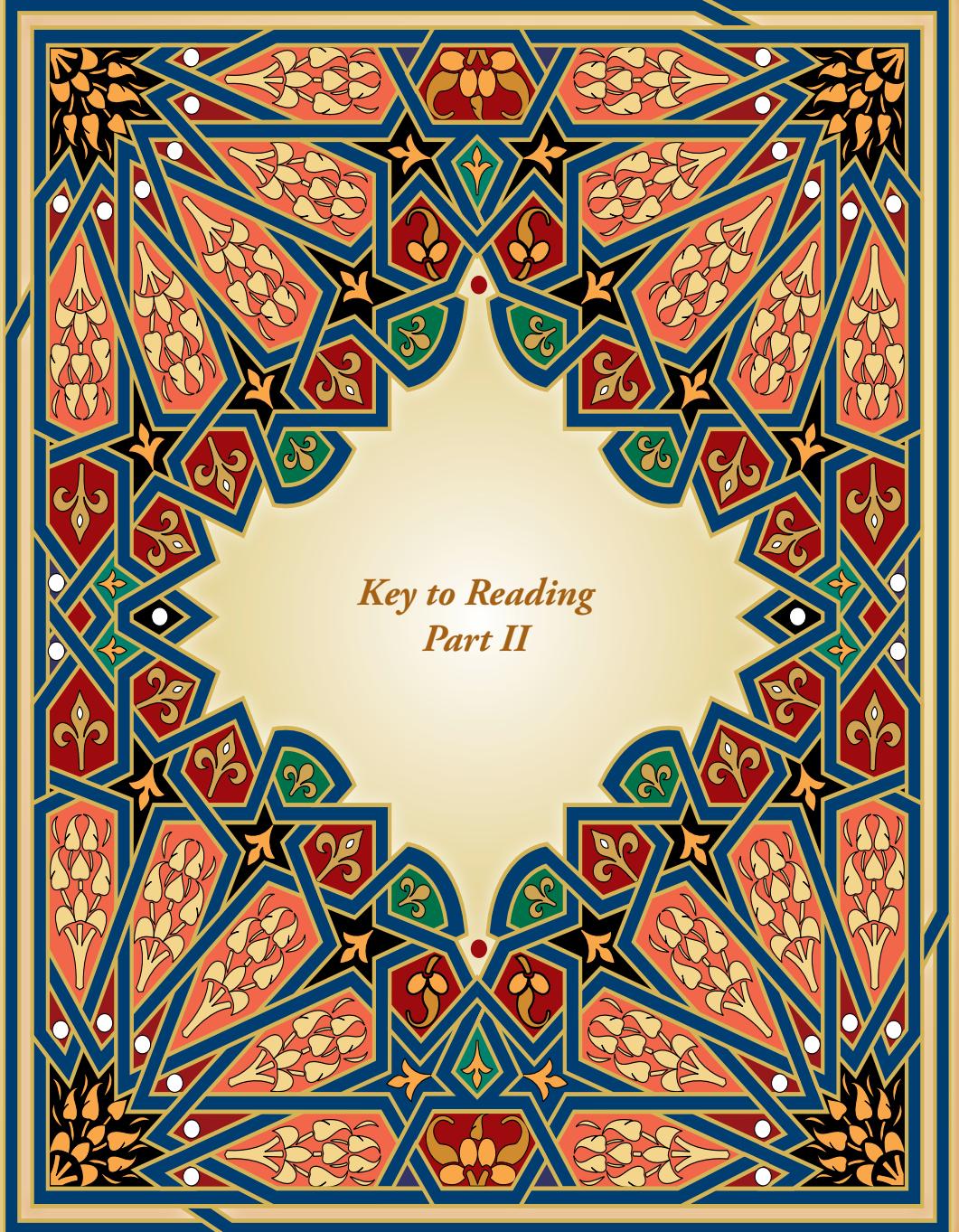
As the interest in Islām and the teachings of the Qur’ān has grown globally, the need to provide an objective tool to investigate the truth about Islām has become crucial. This in-depth scholarly work is that instrument. Translated from the Arabic, it allows English-speaking readers to see and study the Qur’ān through clear lenses not obscured by propaganda or missionary zeal. It also presents the text of the Qur’ān with parallel commentary, addressing important issues that Muslim scholars have wrestled with throughout the centuries, shedding light on their attempts to solve them and giving a rounded view of the various schools of thought.

This book is the fruition of ten years of planning and preparation. The idea of the book originated ten years ago, though the actual work on the manuscript—first written in Arabic—started seven years later and was published in 2010, followed by its English counterpart in 2011.

Both the Arabic book and its English translation represent the effort and production of many former Muslim writers, Islamic specialists, scholars, editors, researchers, and translators. Some members of this writing team have revealed their association with

PART I  
*Background  
of the Qur'an*

PART II  
*The Qur'ānic Text*



*Key to Reading  
Part II*

**g** <sup>104</sup> O ye who believe! say not 'ra'hma,' but say 'unzurna,' and hearken; for unto misbelievers shall be grievous woe.

**105** They who misbelieve, whether of those who have the Book or of the idolaters, would fain that no good were sent down to you from your Lord; but God specially favours with His mercy whom He will, for God is Lord of mighty grace.

**r** <sup>106</sup> Whatever verse we may annul or cause thee to forget, we will bring a better one than it, or one like it; dost thou not know that God is mighty over all?

**b**

**G**  **Q.2.104** 

It is recorded that the Anṣār said to Muḥammad, "ra'inā," which meant they wanted him to explain more to them. However, in this verse, Muḥammad commanded them to use the word *unzurnā* in its place, because he considered *ra'inā* to be Jewish slang for an expletive....

**B**  **Q.2.106** 

The text of this verse is mentioned in different forms:

- In the codex of Ibn Mas'ūd it is read as "we do not **hold back a verse or abrogate it, but we come with** one better than it or similar to it."
- It is also told that Ibn Mas'ūd read it as "we do not **make you forget a verse or abrogate it**...."

**R**  **Q.2.106** 

In the midst of the doctrinal controversy between Muḥammad and the Jews in Medina, the Jews noticed that Muḥammad was annulling, time and again, rulings that he had enacted....

## Color-coded Sections

As exemplified in the above illustration, three colors are used to help the reader identify and understand the three main sections:

- Sections with a green motif introduce commentary regarding the abrogation of the verse. (See **G**.) The text of the corresponding Qur'ānic verse (in the decorated box) will be underlined in green. (See **g**.)
- Sections with a blue motif introduce commentary that discuss the variant readings of the verse. (See **B**.) The text of the corresponding Qur'ānic verse will be colored blue. (See **b**.)
- Sections with a red motif introduce the critical analysis of the verse. (See **R**.) The text of the corresponding Qur'ānic verse will also be colored red. (See **r**.)

<sup>102</sup> And they follow that which **the devils** recited against Solomon's kingdom;—it was not Solomon who misbelieved, **but the devils** who misbelieved, teaching men sorcery,—and what has been revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut; yet these taught no one until they said, 'We are but a temptation, so do not misbelieve.' Men learn from them only that by which they may part man and wife; but they can harm no one therewith, unless with the permission of God, and they learn what hurts them and profits them not. And yet they knew that he who

Q 2.102 P

Most readers read it as rendered above, where the word *al-shayātīnu* ("the devils") is in the Arabic irregular (broken) plural form. However, there is a reading that says *al-shayātūn*. **V** They read it as *wa lakin al-shayātūn*—using the weaker *lakin* ("but") instead of the stronger *lakīna* ("but"), which is what the current Arabic Qur'ān reads—and keeping *al-shayātūn* according to the previous reading. This substitution of words presents a great grammatical difference in parsing words.

## Special Text

In the above illustration, the blue, italicized, and bold-faced text represents the reading in the current Arabic Qur'ān (see **Q**); its Palmer English translation is blue, bold faced, but not italicized (see **P**). Variant readings (with their English translations) will also be blue and italicized but not bold-faced (see **V**).

## Superscripts

The insertion of the superscripts <sup>D</sup> and <sup>N</sup> after words or phrases will be used as references for entries in the Selected Definitions (page 567) and Selected Proper Names (page 555), respectively.

## Conclusion

While reading, the reader is strongly encouraged to investigate different translations, keeping in mind the following questions: Who is the author of the Qur'ān? And, is the Qur'ān in its current form without errors?

## Introduction

This sūra's name, *al-Nisā'*, means "The Women."

The name comes from its many rulings about women, particularly in the initial verses (up to Q 4.34). Muslim scholars disagree about the date of this sūra. The majority believes that it was revealed after Q 3 and so dated it after the third year of the *Hijra* (AH 3/AD 622). Others suggest it was revealed in the fourth or the beginning of the fifth year of the *Hijra*, AH 4-5.<sup>1</sup> The scholar Wherry leans towards adopting this date because he considers that its revelation occurred the beginning of AH 4 to the middle or end of AH 5.<sup>2</sup> Still others date it between the end of the third and fifth year of the *Hijra*, AH 3-5, between the Battle of Uhud<sup>D</sup> and the Battle of the Trench.<sup>3</sup>

Some parts of this sūra clearly do not belong to the aforementioned time period, AH 3-5. For instance, we find the phrase, "*O ye folk!*" (Q 4.1, 133), which is considered a Meccan expression. It is probable, however, that this was indeed an early Medinan expression used by Muḥammad before he coined his new terms. The use here of "*O ye folk!*" leads some Muslims to say that this is a Meccan sūra (revealed in Mecca).<sup>4</sup> However, most Muslim scholars reject this position, as the sūra deals with events that occurred in Medina. Therefore, verses 1 and 133 are thought to have been added to the sūra at a later date.

We also find that some verses in this sūra belong to a period beyond the fifth year of the *Hijra*, AH 5. For example, Q 4.43—the verse mandating *al-tayamum* (performing the ritual washing with sand when no water is available)—came during the Raid of al-Muraysī', which occurred in AH 5 or 6. Verse 176, also known as the *kalāla* verse (governing the rules of inheritance), comes at the end of this sūra and is considered by some as the last verse of the Qur'ān to be revealed.<sup>5</sup> This chronology indicates that the sūra was not revealed at one time as a complete sūra but was instead patched together with verses from different time periods.

Overall, this sūra is concerned with three main issues:

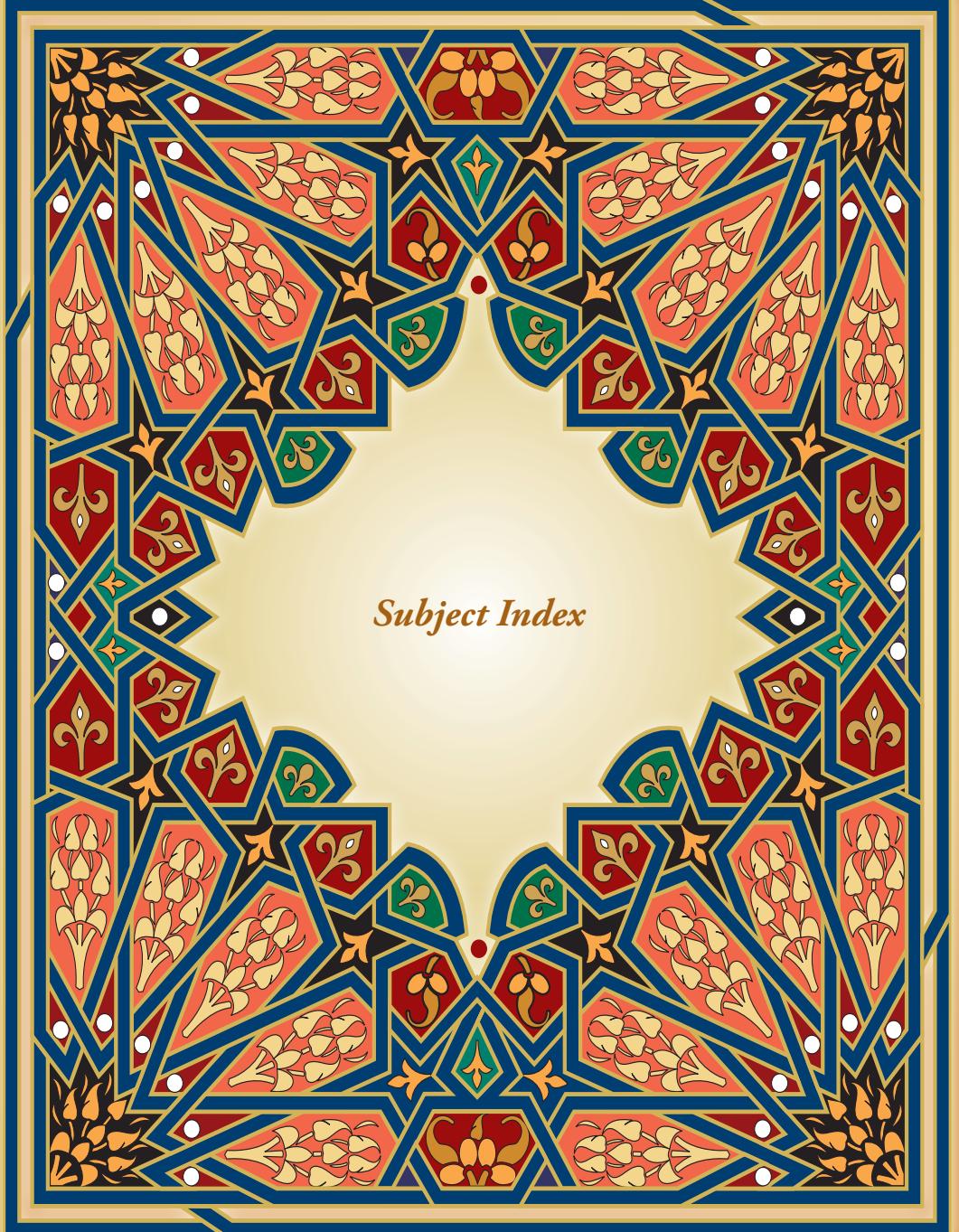
- Rules concerning women
- Aftereffects of the defeat at the Battle of Uhud
- Laws regarding inheritance and the care of orphans

The sūra also provides various admonitions to Muslims.

In dealing with the political situation after the Battle of Uhud, verses 44-55 and 155-158 introduce anti-Jewish rhetoric. Then verses 60-68, 81-83, 138, and 141-143 severely criticize Muḥammad's opponents (*al-munāfiqūn*, or "the hypocrites"). We also find that verses 74-78 and 84 encourage fighting. Moreover, verses 171-172 insult Christians. However, since the Qur'ān had not yet begun its campaign of accusations against Christians, these verses must have been added to the sūra at a later time.



PART III  
*Resources  
and References*



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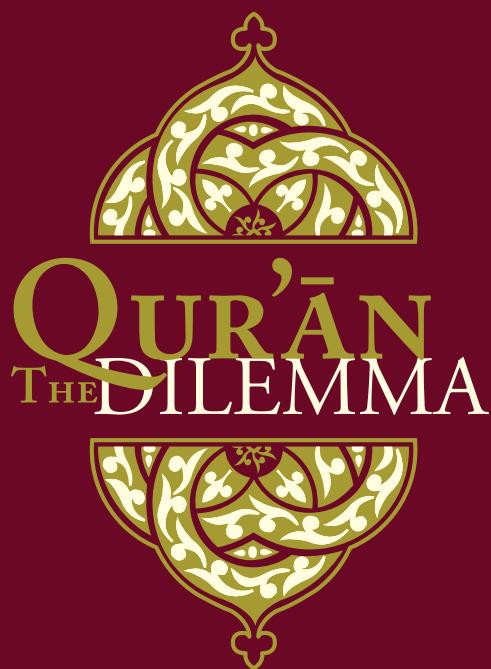
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