

# *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55), *Sūrat al-Aʿlā* (Q. 87) and *Sūrat al-Balad* (Q. 90) Translated into Cadenced, Rhyming English Prose

Shawkat M. Toorawa

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

## **Translation of Q AL-RAḤMĀN 55**

*In the name of God, Full of compassion, Ever compassionate*

<sup>1</sup>The Compassionate One, <sup>2</sup>Taught 'the Recitation', <sup>3</sup>Brought Humans into Creation, <sup>4</sup>Taught them Clear Expression.

<sup>5</sup>The Sun and Moon follow a fixed rotation, <sup>6</sup>and the plants and trees prostrate in adoration. <sup>7</sup>He raised the skies and has balanced all in true proportion, <sup>8</sup>that you not unbalance that proportion – <sup>9</sup>so be fair in your allocation and do not skew the proportion.

<sup>10</sup>He rendered the earth for the sake of His creation: <sup>11</sup>upon it are fruit and fronded palms, <sup>12</sup>aromatics and huskèd grain – <sup>13</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>14</sup>He fashioned Humans from clay, like an earthenware jar, <sup>15</sup>and fashioned the Jinn from the fire's ashless char – <sup>16</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>17</sup>Lord of the Sun's risings and settings twain – <sup>18</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>19</sup>Fresh water and salt water meet in concursion, <sup>20</sup>but they cannot overrun: between them is a separation – <sup>21</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>22</sup>Both of them pearls and corals contain – <sup>23</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

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<sup>24</sup>The mountainlike ships in the seas are of His domain – <sup>25</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>26</sup>Everything on the Earth shall wane, <sup>27</sup>but not the countenance of your Lord, Full of Majesty, Magnanimous: it alone shall remain – <sup>28</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>29</sup>Everyone on earth and in the heavens beseeches Him; all matters daily He ordains – <sup>30</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>31</sup>We shall soon have dealings with both you wearisome legions! – <sup>32</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>33</sup>O assembly of Jinn and Humans: if you are able to venture beyond the regions of the Heavens and the Earth, then do so; you shall not venture except by Divine power and permission – <sup>34</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>35</sup>Smokeless flames and flaming smoke will descend upon you, and you will have no protection – <sup>36</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>37</sup>And when the skies are torn apart and become like hide scorched crimson – <sup>38</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>39</sup>On that day, neither Jinn nor Humans will need to be asked about their transgression – <sup>40</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>41</sup>The guilty shall be known by distinguishing marks, then seized by forelock and feet twain – <sup>42</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>43</sup>This will be the very Hell-Fire denied by the guilty, those to blame, <sup>44</sup>running back and forth, between it and a Cauldron boiling aflame – <sup>45</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>46</sup>But for the one who fears standing before his Lord, are Gardens twain – <sup>47</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>48</sup>Which myriad trees contain – <sup>49</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>50</sup>Two springs flowing in each domain – <sup>51</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>52</sup>And in each place two of every fruit, of every description – <sup>53</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>54</sup>Both Gardens' fruits within reach of the righteous, reclining upon divans of silk brocade confection – <sup>55</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>56</sup>Residing there, companions of modest gaze, virginal, hitherto untouched by Jinn or Human passions – <sup>57</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>58</sup>Like rubies or coral gems of perfection – <sup>59</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>60</sup>Can the reward for Right Action be aught but Right Action? – <sup>61</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>62</sup>And beyond these two Gardens, Gardens twain – <sup>63</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>64</sup>Dense with dark vegetation – <sup>65</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>66</sup>With two springs that surge, that naught can constrain – <sup>67</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>68</sup>Abundant in them pomegranate, date palm, and fruit of the heavens – <sup>69</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?<sup>70</sup> – In them virtuous and lovely companions – <sup>71</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>72</sup>Dark-eyed beauties secluded in pavilions – <sup>73</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>74</sup>Virginal, hitherto untouched by Jinn or Human passions – <sup>75</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain? – <sup>76</sup>There the righteous recline on mottled carpets, on green cushions. <sup>77</sup>Which, then, of your Lord's wonders do you both deny in vain?

<sup>78</sup>Your Lord – Full of Majesty, Magnanimous – Blessèd be His name.

*Q AL-RAḤMĀN 55 Rhyme Words*

<sup>1</sup> <i>rahmān</i>	<sup>1</sup> Compassionate One	<sup>26</sup> <i>fān</i>	<sup>26</sup> wane
<sup>2</sup> <i>Qur'ān</i>	<sup>2</sup> Recitation	<sup>27</sup> <i>ikrām</i>	<sup>27</sup> remain
<sup>3</sup> <i>insān</i>	<sup>3</sup> Creation	<sup>28</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>28</sup> vain
<sup>4</sup> <i>bayān</i>	<sup>4</sup> Clear Expression	<sup>29</sup> <i>shān [sha'n]</i>	<sup>29</sup> ordains
<sup>5</sup> <i>ḥusbān</i>	<sup>5</sup> rotation	<sup>30</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>30</sup> vain
<sup>6</sup> <i>yasjudūn</i>	<sup>6</sup> adoration	<sup>31</sup> <i>thaqalān</i>	<sup>31</sup> legions
<sup>7</sup> <i>mīzān</i>	<sup>7</sup> proportion	<sup>32</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>32</sup> vain
<sup>8</sup> <i>mīzān</i>	<sup>8</sup> proportion	<sup>33</sup> <i>sulṭān</i>	<sup>33</sup> permission
<sup>9</sup> <i>mīzān</i>	<sup>9</sup> proportion	<sup>34</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>34</sup> vain
<sup>10</sup> <i>anām*</i>	<sup>10</sup> creation	<sup>35</sup> <i>yantaṣīrān</i>	<sup>35</sup> protection
<sup>11</sup> <i>akmām</i>	<sup>11</sup> palms	<sup>36</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>36</sup> vain
<sup>12</sup> <i>rayḥān</i>	<sup>12</sup> grain	<sup>37</sup> <i>dihān</i>	<sup>37</sup> crimson
<sup>13</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>13</sup> (deny in) vain	<sup>38</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>38</sup> vain
<sup>14</sup> <i>fakhhkḥār</i>	<sup>14</sup> jar	<sup>39</sup> <i>jānn</i>	<sup>39</sup> transgression
<sup>15</sup> <i>nār</i>	<sup>15</sup> char	<sup>40</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>40</sup> vain
<sup>16</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>16</sup> vain	<sup>41</sup> <i>aqdām</i>	<sup>41</sup> twain
<sup>17</sup> <i>maghribayn</i>	<sup>17</sup> twain	<sup>42</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>42</sup> vain
<sup>18</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>18</sup> vain	<sup>43</sup> <i>mujrimūn</i>	<sup>43</sup> blame
<sup>19</sup> <i>yaltaqiyān</i>	<sup>19</sup> concursion	<sup>44</sup> <i>ān</i>	<sup>44</sup> aflame
<sup>20</sup> <i>yabghiyān</i>	<sup>20</sup> separation	<sup>45</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>45</sup> vain
<sup>21</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>21</sup> vain	<sup>46</sup> <i>jannatān</i>	<sup>46</sup> twain
<sup>22</sup> <i>marjān</i>	<sup>22</sup> contain	<sup>47</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>47</sup> vain
<sup>23</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>23</sup> vain	<sup>48</sup> <i>afnān*</i>	<sup>48</sup> contain
<sup>24</sup> <i>a'lām</i>	<sup>24</sup> domain	<sup>49</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>49</sup> vain
<sup>25</sup> <i>tukadhhibān</i>	<sup>25</sup> vain	<sup>50</sup> <i>tajriyān</i>	<sup>50</sup> domain

## Q AL-RAḤMĀN 55 Rhyme Words (Cont.)

<sup>51</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>51</sup> vain	<sup>65</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>65</sup> vain
<sup>52</sup> zawjān	<sup>52</sup> description	<sup>66</sup> naḍḍājatān*	<sup>66</sup> constrain
<sup>53</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>53</sup> vain	<sup>67</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>67</sup> vain
<sup>54</sup> dān	<sup>54</sup> confection	<sup>68</sup> rummān	<sup>68</sup> heavens
<sup>55</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>55</sup> vain	<sup>69</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>69</sup> vain
<sup>56</sup> jānn	<sup>56</sup> passions	<sup>70</sup> ḥisān	<sup>70</sup> companions
<sup>57</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>57</sup> vain	<sup>71</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>71</sup> vain
<sup>58</sup> marjān	<sup>58</sup> perfection	<sup>72</sup> khiyām*	<sup>72</sup> pavilions
<sup>59</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>59</sup> vain	<sup>73</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>73</sup> vain
<sup>60</sup> iḥsān	<sup>60</sup> Action	<sup>74</sup> jānn	<sup>74</sup> passions
<sup>61</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>61</sup> vain	<sup>75</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>75</sup> vain
<sup>62</sup> jannatān	<sup>62</sup> twain	<sup>76</sup> ḥisān	<sup>76</sup> cushions
<sup>63</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>63</sup> vain	<sup>77</sup> tukadhhibān	<sup>77</sup> vain
<sup>64</sup> mudhāmmatān*	<sup>64</sup> vegetation	<sup>78</sup> ikrām	<sup>78</sup> name

Note that I have re-used 'twain' four times, and 'creation', 'contain' and 'domain' twice each. This is in keeping with the sura's tolerance of repeated rhyme. Also: an asterisk in the rhyme word lists denotes an absolute hapax.<sup>1</sup>

Translation of Q A<sup>c</sup>LĀ 87

*In the name of God, Full of compassion, Ever compassionate*

<sup>1</sup>The Name of your Lord Most High, *honour!* <sup>2</sup>Who created, and gave *measure*, <sup>3</sup>Who directed, and gave *order*, <sup>4</sup>And Who brought forth green *pasture*, <sup>5</sup>then made it chaff, made it *wither!*

<sup>6</sup>We shall teach you to recite, and you shan't *misremember* – <sup>7</sup>except what God wills. He knows every secret, every *disclosure*. <sup>8</sup>And We shall ease you toward what is *easier*.

<sup>9</sup>Go ahead and remind them – they may profit from the *reminder!* <sup>10</sup>Reminding will avail every *God-fearer*. <sup>11</sup>As for the wretched, they will *pass it over*, <sup>12</sup>they who will burn in the Great *Fire*, <sup>13</sup>where they will neither live, nor die *either!* <sup>14</sup>As for those who purify themselves, they indeed shall *prosper*, <sup>15</sup>shall invoke their Lord's name, and shall prayers *offer*.

<sup>16</sup>And yet, you prefer this life, worldly and *lower*, <sup>17</sup>when the Hereafter is everlasting, infinitely *better!* <sup>18</sup>This is made clear in what was sent *earlier*, <sup>19</sup>in the Scrolls of Abraham and in Moses' *Scripture*.

*Q A<sup>c</sup>LĀ 87 Rhyme Words*

<sup>1</sup> <i>a<sup>c</sup>lā</i>	<sup>1</sup> honour	<sup>11</sup> <i>ashqā</i>	<sup>11</sup> over
<sup>2</sup> <i>sawwā</i>	<sup>2</sup> measure	<sup>12</sup> <i>kubrā</i>	<sup>12</sup> Fire
<sup>3</sup> <i>hadā</i>	<sup>3</sup> order	<sup>13</sup> <i>yaḥyā</i>	<sup>13</sup> either
<sup>4</sup> <i>mar<sup>c</sup>ā</i>	<sup>4</sup> pasture	<sup>14</sup> <i>tazakkā</i>	<sup>14</sup> propser
<sup>5</sup> <i>aḥwā</i>	<sup>5</sup> wither	<sup>15</sup> <i>ṣallā</i>	<sup>15</sup> offer
<sup>6</sup> <i>tansā</i>	<sup>6</sup> misremember	<sup>16</sup> <i>dunyā</i>	<sup>16</sup> lower
<sup>7</sup> <i>yakhfā</i>	<sup>7</sup> disclosure	<sup>17</sup> <i>abqā</i>	<sup>17</sup> better
<sup>8</sup> <i>yusrā</i>	<sup>8</sup> easier	<sup>18</sup> <i>ūlā</i>	<sup>18</sup> earlier
<sup>9</sup> <i>dhikrā</i>	<sup>9</sup> reminder	<sup>19</sup> <i>Mūsā</i>	<sup>19</sup> Scripture
<sup>10</sup> <i>yaghshā</i>	<sup>10</sup> God-fearer		

Note that Q A<sup>c</sup>LĀ 87 has no hapaxes, absolute or otherwise.

**Translation of Q BALAD 90**

*In the name of God, Full of compassion, Ever compassionate*

<sup>1</sup>I swear, by this *settlement* – <sup>2</sup>and you are a dweller in this *settlement!* – <sup>3</sup>and by the offspring and its *parent*, <sup>4</sup>that We created Humanity in *predicament!* <sup>5</sup>Does it think that no-one shall have power over it or *intent?* <sup>6</sup>It boasts, ‘I have squandered wealth *abundantly.*’ <sup>7</sup>Does it think no-one shall be watching with *intent?*

<sup>8</sup>Did We not two eyes *bequeath*, <sup>9</sup>a tongue, lips and *mouth?* <sup>10</sup>And did We not guide it along one or other *path?*

<sup>11</sup>Yet it does not hazard the *Steep Direction*. <sup>12</sup>What will unmask for you the *Steep Direction?* <sup>13</sup>It is: a slave’s *manumission*; <sup>14</sup>or feeding, on a day of *famine*, <sup>15</sup>a closely related *orphan* <sup>16</sup>or a poor soul in *tribulation*. <sup>17</sup>It is to become of those who believe and enjoin upon each other forbearance and enjoin *compassion*. <sup>18</sup>These are the Right-hand *Companions*.

<sup>19</sup>But those who disbelieve in Our signs, those are the Left-hand *Companions* – <sup>20</sup>engulfed, inclosed *conflagrantly!*

*Q BALAD 90 Rhyme Words*

<sup>1</sup> <i>balad</i>	<sup>1</sup> settlement	<sup>11</sup> <i>c</i> <i>aqaba</i>	<sup>11</sup> Steep Direction
<sup>2</sup> <i>balad</i>	<sup>2</sup> settlement	<sup>12</sup> <i>c</i> <i>aqaba</i>	<sup>12</sup> Steep Direction
<sup>3</sup> <i>walad</i>	<sup>3</sup> parent	<sup>13</sup> <i>raqaba</i>	<sup>13</sup> manumission
<sup>4</sup> <i>kabad</i>	<sup>4</sup> predicament	<sup>14</sup> <i>masghaba*</i>	<sup>14</sup> famine
<sup>5</sup> <i>aḥad</i>	<sup>5</sup> intent	<sup>15</sup> <i>maqraba</i>	<sup>15</sup> orphan
<sup>6</sup> <i>lubadā</i>	<sup>6</sup> abundantly	<sup>16</sup> <i>matraba</i>	<sup>16</sup> tribulation
<sup>7</sup> <i>aḥad</i>	<sup>7</sup> intent	<sup>17</sup> <i>marḥama</i>	<sup>17</sup> compassion
<sup>8</sup> <i>c</i> <i>aynayn</i>	<sup>8</sup> bequeath	<sup>18</sup> <i>maymana</i>	<sup>18</sup> Companions

*Q BALAD 90 Rhyme Words (Cont.)*

<sup>9</sup> <i>shafatayn</i>	<sup>9</sup> mouth	<sup>19</sup> <i>mash'ama</i>	<sup>19</sup> Companions
<sup>10</sup> <i>najdayn</i>	<sup>10</sup> path	<sup>20</sup> <i>mu'sada</i>	<sup>20</sup> inclosing

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## NOTE

1 For a list of absolute hapaxes, see Shawkat M. Toorawa, ‘Hapaxes in the Qur’an: Identifying and Cataloguing Loan Words (and Loan Words)’ in G.S. Reynolds (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Qurʾān: The Qurʾān in Its Historical Context 2* (London: Routledge), forthcoming.