

YOUR Lord HAS *not* FORGOTTEN YOU

To the Non Arab Learning Qur'an

Umm
Zakiyyah

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by Umm Zakiyyah

**Your Lord Has Not Forgotten You:
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Arabic script of Qur'an from corpus.quran.com.

English excerpts from the Qur'an are taken from Saheeh International, Darussalam, and Yusuf Ali translations of meanings.

Published by Al-Walaa Publications
Gwynn Oak, Maryland USA

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Author's Note



My parents grew up Christian, and their journey to Islam began with the Nation of Islam (NOI), made famous by the late Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz), may Allah have mercy on him. Like so many original members of the NOI, my parents ultimately transitioned to orthodox Islam.

Consequently, I myself was blessed to grow up Muslim in a small African-American community in the Midwest. As could be expected, my parents, who were amongst the first-generation of Muslim “pioneers” in our community, didn’t have easy access to extensive resources for learning Arabic and Qur’an.

Because of this circumstance, my parents required me and my siblings to apply to the foreign language magnet program being offered at a public middle school and high school in the city. So, before leaving home to go to college (and ultimately get married), I was blessed to begin my Arabic studies at eleven years old and continue until I was sixteen. However, after this time period, I was unable to resume my Arabic studies—and begin my Qur’anic studies for the first time—until after I was a wife and mother.

During my journey of learning Arabic and Qur’an as an adult, I enrolled in programs in the United States and ultimately traveled to Egypt and lived in Saudi Arabia for more than seven years. Though I gained invaluable knowledge from my studies and travels, this path was not

without its hardships and moments of confusion and distress.

In this book (much of which is taken from a blog by the same title that I wrote in 2019), I share some of the lessons I learned on the challenging path of trying to learn the Book of Allah as a non-Arab.

I pray you find the reflections and insights here—as well as the journal prompts—beneficial and inspirational on your own path of seeking knowledge.

May Allah increase you in beneficial knowledge of His deen, may He make easy for you the path to Paradise, and may He write you down amongst His most beloved and sincere companions of the Qur'an until you meet Him.

Your sister in faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Umayy' or similar, with a long, sweeping flourish extending from the end.

August 30th, 2021

22nd of Muharram, 1443 AH

*For the students of life and soul still struggling to find their place
in the world.*

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*“O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord
(i.e. the Quran), and a healing for that which is in your breasts,
a guidance and a mercy for the believers.”*

—Qur'an (Yunus, 10:57)

1

My Spiritual Confusion



In some of my moments of spiritual confusion, I've wondered why so many of us are born into cultures and lands with no understanding of the Arabic language, yet we have the spiritual obligation to live by a divine Arabic Book and believe in and follow an Arab prophet and messenger (peace and blessings be upon him).

Today I think on this because the nature of this world incites so many questions for the human soul. Even when we've already taken the first step toward our Creator through humbly and resolutely declaring our lifelong commitment of submission to Him—via the *shahaadah* of Islam—we can still go through moments wherein our hearts are restless in confusion. In this state, our minds try to understand the ways of our Rabb, even as our hearts already believe in His wisdom and guidance.

Perhaps, this is what Allah is conveying to us in the Qur'an when He shares this story:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولِمَ تُوْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

“And [mention] when Abraham said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that

my heart may be satisfied.’ [Allah] said, ‘Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then put on each hill a portion of them, then call them. They will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.’”

—Al-Baqarah (2:260)

Sometimes the question in our heart is about the nature of life and death, and other times it is about something more intimately personal, like the trials we face in our individual lives or why Allah decreed certain parts of our lives to be a certain way.

For me, some of these questions were incited during my struggles in learning the Qur’an and Islamic spirituality, particularly as it relates to the central role of the Arabic language in this path of knowledge.

Self-Reflection

As it relates to the chapter reflections you just read, write freely from your heart. Or respond to this journal prompt: Have you ever felt spiritual confusion or disconnect in acts of worship due to your limited knowledge and understanding of the Arabic language? How did you work through this, or how are you working through this now?

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[illegible]

2

Why So Much Emphasis on Arabic?



While striving to learn a language that was foreign to me, I struggled to understand each part of the Salaah properly. I struggled to understand the true meaning of so many prophetic teachings that had been translated into English. I struggled to understand what was being recited from the Qur'an whenever I went to the masjid to pray, especially during Ramadan when the recitation was much longer than usual. And I struggled to understand what I myself was saying when I started to read and memorize the Qur'an on a regular basis.

Why is there so much emphasis on Arabic? I sometimes found myself asking.

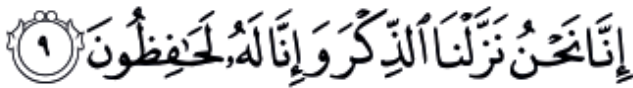
In the Qur'an, Allah says,



“Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand”

—Yusuf (12:2)

Regarding the preservation of this Arabic revelation, He says:



“Verily We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr*, and surely, We will guard it [from corruption].”

—*Al-Hijr* (15:9)

In the first *ayah*, Allah is making it clear that the choice of Arabic was not incidental. Rather it was for the deliberate purpose of inspiring true understanding of His revelation.

In the second *ayah*, He uses the eminent “we” pronoun, which in grammar is known as the royal “we” or the imperial “we” that is reserved for sovereigns such as kings and queens in this world. Here, the eminent “we” is singular as far as contextual meaning is concerned but plural as far as the grammatical structure is concerned.

From a semantic standpoint, the purpose of choosing the eminent “we” over the standard “I” in certain contexts is to emphasize the lofty status of the speaker over others in terms of existence, knowledge, and authority. In the world of human royalty, this imperial “we” is often used by monarchs when issuing a public decree to their subjects that cannot be disputed or opposed (e.g. “We have decided such-and-such...”).

In the second *ayah* above, Allah uses the Arabic version of this eminent “We” twice as a means of emphasizing His divine sovereignty. Then He tells us that He has revealed the *Dhikr*, and He uses this “We” again for a third time to let us know He has taken it upon Himself to guard His revelation from any corruption.

Self-Reflection

As it relates to the chapter reflections you just read, write freely from your heart. Or respond to this journal prompt: There is a quote inspired by the words of Hellen Keller that says, “The struggle of life is one of our greatest blessings. It makes us patient, sensitive, and connected to God. It teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.” In reflecting on this quote, what deeper wisdom and insight do you gain from the ayah: “Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur’an so that you may understand” (12:2), particularly if you struggle to understand Arabic?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Our Heartfelt Du'aa

O Allah! Put noor (the spiritual light of faith) in our hearts, such that we are guided upon the right path every day of our lives. And purify our hearts such that we are grateful for the favors that You continuously shower upon us, whether we are in ease or hardship. And O Allah, Ar-Rahmaan! Beautify for us the emaan in our hearts, and make Your Dhikr the most beloved gift to our souls in this world. And we beg You by Your Mercy to write us down amongst Your most sincere and dedicated Companions of Qur'an until we meet You!



Also By Umm Zakiyyah

If I Should Speak

A Voice

Footsteps

Realities of Submission

Hearts We Lost

The Friendship Promise

Muslim Girl

His Other Wife

UZ Short Story Collection

The Test Paper (a children's book)

Pain. From the Journal of Umm Zakiyyah

Broken yet Faithful. From the Journal of Umm Zakiyyah

Faith. From the Journal of Umm Zakiyyah

Let's Talk About Sex and Muslim Love

Reverencing the Wombs That Broke You: A Daughter of Rape and Abuse Inspires Healing and Healthy Family

Prejudice Bones in My Body: Essays on Muslim Racism, Bigotry and Spiritual Abuse

And Then I Gave Up: Essays About Faith and Spiritual Crisis in Islam

I Almost Left Islam: How I Reclaimed My Faith

The Abuse of Forgiveness: Manipulation and Harm in the Name of Emotional Healing

even if. bits and pieces from the heart of Umm Zakiyyah

No One Taught Me the Human Side of Islam: The Muslim Hippie's Story of Living with Bipolar Disorder

He Asked About Islam

Alone, But In the Company of Your Lord

Come Back To Allah, Dear Soul: Salaah Coursebook

Dear Soul, It's Time: A Journey of Coming Back To Allah

I'm Divorced Now: Heartbreak and Healing

What Did You Expect? Lessons on Spiritual Honesty
Dear Struggling Soul: Affirmations for Spiritual Self-Compassion
Nurturing the Nafs: Emotional Honesty for the Female Soul
Learning Love: Self-Care Journal
Salaah Is a Blessing, Not a Burden

About the Author

Known for her soul-touching books and spiritual reflections on the Qur'an and emotional healing, Umm Zakiyyah is a world-renowned author and soul-care mentor.

Umm Zakiyyah studied Arabic, Qur'an, Islamic sciences, *'aqeedah*, and *tafseer* in America, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia for more than fifteen years. She currently teaches *tajweed* (rules of reciting Qur'an), *tafseer* (explanation of the meaning of the Qur'an), and *tadabbur* (deep reflections on the Qur'an) via uzhearthub.com.

Daughter of American converts to Islam, Umm Zakiyyah (also known by her birth name Ruby Moore and her "Muslim" name Baiyinah Siddeeq) is the internationally acclaimed, award-winning author of more than twenty-five books, including novels, short stories, and self-help. Her books are used in high schools and universities in the United States and worldwide, and her work has been translated into multiple languages. Her work has earned praise from writers, professors, and filmmakers. Her novel *His Other Wife* is now a short film.

Dr. Robert D. Crane, advisor to former US President Nixon, said of Umm Zakiyyah, "...no amount of training can bring a person without superb, natural talent to captivate the reader as she does and exert a permanent intellectual and emotional impact."

Professor K. Bryant of Howard University said of *If I Should Speak*, "The novel belongs to...a genre worthy of scholarly study."

Umm Zakiyyah has a BA degree in Elementary Education, an MA in English Language Learning, and Cambridge's CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults).

In 2020, she founded an online university to share the life lessons she learned on her emotional and spiritual healing journey. For information on UZ courses, go to uzhearthub.com and uzuniversity.com

Connect with Umm Zakiyyah online: uzauthor.com

Instagram: [@uzauthor](https://www.instagram.com/uzauthor)

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YouTube: [uzreflections](https://www.youtube.com/uzreflections)