

OUR BEAUTIFUL QUR'AN *Journey*

COLLECTION OF SOUL REFLECTIONS



UMM ZAKIYYAH &
TADABBUR STUDENTS

Our Beautiful Qur'an
Journey
Collection of Soul Reflections

by Umm Zakiyyah
and Tadabbur students

**Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey:
Collection of Soul Reflections**

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Table of Contents

Section	Page
What Is Tadabbur?	5
Preface: Self-Love for the Female Soul	6
PART ONE: Awakening	10
1. The Unseen Beauty of Life and Soul <i>by Umm Zakiyyah</i>	11
2. Where Do I Fit In? <i>by Umm Jameelah</i>	16
3. 'Taqwaa, the Sweetness of Emaan <i>by Hajara Salihu</i>	18
4. I Didn't Know <i>by Kathryn Holmes-Adamu</i>	20
5. 'The Reality of This World <i>by Sabah Hassan Abdillahi</i>	22
6. Light Upon Light <i>by Hajara Salihu</i>	23
7. Something Was Missing Inside Me <i>by Umm Maryam</i>	25
8. 'The Sickness of Envy <i>by Sabah Hassan Abdillahi</i>	27
9. Finding My Way Back, a Haiku <i>by Sunny Majeedah</i>	29
PART TWO: Accountability	31
10. The Provision of the Pen <i>by Umm Zakiyyah</i>	32
11. Walk Away from Harming Your Soul <i>by Zarreen Jeri Zonjab-Malik</i>	34
12. Consciousness of Allah <i>by Sabah Hassan Abdillahi</i>	37
13. Allow the Qur'an To Complete You <i>by Layla Graham</i>	39
14. Fear Hypocrisy, Dear Soul <i>by Sabah Hassan Abdillahi</i>	41
15. Yaa Rabb, Cleanse My Heart <i>by Hajara Salihu</i>	43
16. Hypocrisy Taunts Me <i>by Umm Jameelah</i>	45
PART THREE: Sincerity	47

17. Finding Myself <i>by Umm Zakīyyah</i>	48
18. Who Is Allah? I Wondered <i>by Umm Katbeer</i>	51
19. Misguidance Looked Beautiful to Him <i>by Amatullah bint Abdullah</i>	53
20. Share a Special Moment with Me <i>by Kameelah Muslimah Kareem</i>	55
21. The Opening Chapter of My Faith <i>by Aminah Hamidullah</i>	58
PART FOUR: Hope in Allah	61
22. Glad Tidings for Imperfect Souls <i>by Umm Zakīyyah</i>	62
23. He Is Most Gracious, Most Merciful <i>by Sabah Hassan Abdillabi</i>	64
24. The Answer Is in the Book, Al-Qur'an <i>by Kathryn Holmes-Adamu</i>	66
25. I Am My Passion Project <i>by Layla Graham</i>	68
26. A Compassionate Note to Self <i>by Umm Maryam</i>	71
27. O Allah, I Have Wronged My Soul <i>by Amatullah bint Abdullah</i>	74
28. The Test <i>by Rasheedah Adisa</i>	77
29. How Merciful Is My Rabb! <i>by Hajara Salihu</i>	78
30. Thank You, Allah <i>by Umm Maryam</i>	81
CLOSING NOTES:	83
Tasting the Sweetness of Emaan	
31. Let Your Belief Split Seas <i>by Umm Zakīyyah</i>	84
About the Instructor and Founder of Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey (Tadabbur)	89
Special Thanks to Our Publishing Team	90
Also By Umm Zakīyyah	92
Glossary of Common Arabic and Islamic Terms	93

What Is Tadabbur?



The Arabic term *tadabbur* refers to sincere reflection or contemplation and is taken from the *ayah* in the Qur'an that has been translated to mean: “*Do they not then think deeply on the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up?*” (Muhammad, 47:24).

The Tadabbur program at Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey is taught by Umm Zakiyyah (along with carefully selected UZ Ambassadors and special guests) and is designed for students of all levels. The women who are selected for Tadabbur are committed to connecting to the Qur'an in a way that nourishes their emotional and spiritual health.

The goal of Tadabbur is to inspire lifetime commitment to Qur'an-centered personal improvement in our daily lives, and at Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey, our Tadabbur program is rooted self-love, self-honesty, and emotional health for the female soul; and the three principles of Tadabbur, as reflection in our weekly journal reflections, are sincerity, humility, and vulnerability.

Find out more at uzhearthub.com.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Preface

Self-Love for the Female Soul



Some time ago, after teaching Qur'an for many years, I cancelled all my classes. I needed some time for myself. I needed time and space to think. I needed to prioritize my own emotional and spiritual health. I also needed to reflect on why I felt that “something was missing” from so many Qur'an programs I'd grown accustomed to over the years.

During this time of self-reflection, I realized that a truly effective Qur'an program needs to be “heart and soul” centered and focused on more than rote memorization of Tajweed rules and recitation of only the words of Qur'an.

It needs to inspire the heart and nourish the soul—and it needs to reflect the beautiful spiritual journey that we are committing to when we study Allah's Book.

It was this realization that inspired Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey, a compassionate program for women offered via uzhearthub.com that supports the female soul on her journey through Tajweed, Hifdh, and Tadabbur.

When I decided to start the program, I told myself: *Even if only one woman joins, I will dedicate my time and resources to supporting her beautiful Qur'an journey, bi'idhnillaah.* At the time that I am writing this preface to our first book, by the mercy of Allah, we are a growing community of more than thirty women from all over the world.

In Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey, we come together to learn, memorize, and reflect on the Dhikr (the divine message and reminder) that Allah revealed as a gift of guidance to mankind till the end of time. He says:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

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

—*Al-Hijr* (15:9)

Our Merciful Rabb also says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

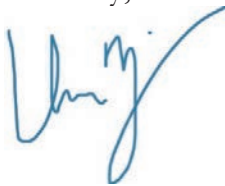
“Those who believe, and whose hearts find rest (and satisfaction) in the remembrance (dhikr) of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.”

—*Ar-Ra'd* (13:28)

It is the latter *ayah* that is at the heart of this book, a collection of soul reflections from the students of Tadabbur, taken from their weekly journals wherein they write a personal reflection on a Surah or ayah of the Qur'an. Each journal reflection is rooted in the three principles of our Tadabbur program: sincerity, humility, and vulnerability.

Additionally, at the heart of each of these reflections is the foundation of our program itself: self-love, self-honesty, and emotional health for the female soul. I pray our reflections touch your heart and inspire you to draw closer to your Merciful Rabb in this world and in the Hereafter.

Sincerely,



Umm Zakiyyah

September 3rd, 2021

26th of Muharram, 1443 AH

*For the imperfect, beautiful female soul striving to love herself and
never let go of faith in her Merciful Rabb.*

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

*“Do they not then think deeply on the Qur’an,
or are their hearts locked up?”*

—Qur’an (Muhammad, 47:24)

PART ONE
Awakening



1

The Unseen Beauty of Life and Soul

by Umm Zakiyyah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْم

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

“Alif. Laam. Meem. This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are muttaqoon (people of taqwa), who believe in the ghayb (unseen), establish the Salaah, and spend out of what We have provided for them.”

—*Al-Baqarah, 2:1-3*



I couldn't make it make sense, any of it. Everything I'd assumed about my life, my faith, and the community of Muslims just didn't make sense anymore. My existence as a female soul didn't even make sense anymore. At the time that I was battling this internal confusion, I wasn't just

going through a divorce. I was going through spiritual crisis.

Somewhere deep inside, I wanted to be Muslim, but I didn't know *how* to be. I didn't know if there was any place for me. I didn't know if I could ever get it right.

The truth is—and as I write these words, this isn't a feeling I'm particularly proud of—I was beginning to wonder if my Rabb Himself even *wanted* me as part of the ummah. It felt like everywhere I turned, those who claimed to be calling to His path were saying I wasn't on it.

No matter how hard I tried—and Allah knows I tried *hard*—I couldn't dress properly. I couldn't speak properly. I couldn't even *think* properly, particularly in the context of striving to be a good Muslim wife. “If you were truly a righteous woman,” a man told me once, “then you wouldn't even have *thoughts* that disagree with your husband, even if you submit to his decision in the end.”

Then there were those things that my Creator had decreed for me that were completely out of my control—like my skin color, my gender, and my American background. Yet all of these things were consistently treated as if they reflected some inherent flaw or sin within me.

And even amongst those things that were within my control, mentally and emotionally, I was losing the strength to keep up. It was all becoming so suffocating and overwhelming: the things that were expected of me, the things that were demanded of me, and the things that were being taken from me.

It feels like no matter how small I shrink myself, I wrote in my journal, I'm never small enough.

Naturally, all of this internal overwhelm affected my worship, as well as my spiritual connection to my faith and my Creator. Salaah became tremendously difficult for me,

and during this difficult time, I would often crawl to prayer and pray sitting down, I was so weak and depressed.

But I prayed.

And though I wasn't particularly motivated to read the Qur'an each day as had been my habit for years, I continued to read and recite from Allah's Book—even if I could muster only enough strength to read a single *ayah* or a couple of lines.

The truth is, despite everything that I was going through, reciting the Qur'an gave my heart comfort, and I didn't want to go a single day without it soothing my hurting heart. Moreover, it terrified me to think of the possibility of abandoning the Qur'an so much that Allah would remove from me my ability to recite with Tajweed and understand the Arabic.

Not only that. Deep down, I also hoped that this dark time would pass and I could find my way back to my Merciful Rabb somehow.

But I didn't see how.

I was even beginning to wonder if I'd misunderstood Islam itself all these years. Looking at the state of the Muslims and how so many mistreated women, Black people, and Americans and then used the *deen* itself to justify it, I began to ask myself, *Is it possible this is actually the deen? Is it possible that within the Qur'an itself was actual justification for this?*

I began to battle these doubts daily.

"This is the Book whereof there is no doubt..." I read in the Qur'an during this time.

But what about all these people using Allah's Book to harm and mistreat others? I wondered. How was it even possible that these people were rightly guided?

"...a guidance to those who are muttaqoon (people of taqwa)."

It was at these words that my heart momentarily stopped, and my mind became alert to a message that I'd never comprehended before: This Book is a source of guidance to only the people who have *taqwaa*—not to those who are merely “Muslim.”

SubhaanAllah.

You see, in the Qur'an and prophetic teachings, *taqwaa* refers to sincere and humble consciousness of the Creator that inspires daily soul care that protects you from committing any *dhulm* (oppression, abuse, mistreatment, or wronging the self or others)—except that you immediately repent, correct yourself, and redress any wrongs you've done to someone else.

In this way, *taqwaa* is a spiritual practice that consistently protects your soul from spiritual harm in this world and from any cause for being punished in the Hereafter.

“This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to the people of taqwaa...”

The words brought so much clarity to me, and I started to feel the doubts about my faith leaving bit by bit. But I still didn't know how to move forward with so much religious corruption and mistreatment all around me. Where do I even begin finding my place amongst people who claimed to share my faith but showed so little care and respect for me?

I had no idea. But still, I asked Allah to write me down amongst the people of *taqwaa*. I just couldn't imagine where I would even begin walking this path though, my heart was so broken spiritually.

“...[those] who believe in the ghayb (unseen).”

In that moment, these divine words hit my heart in a way they never had before, and it was as if my heart was saying to me: *Before this moment, you used to think of believing in the ghayb as only about believing in the unseen as it relates to concepts*

like Allah and His angels, or Paradise and Hellfire. But today, from this moment forward, as you strive upon taqwaa, you're going to have to believe in the unseen as it relates to the khayr (the spiritual goodness) of this ummah today, though your eyes do not see it and your mind does not perceive it. This is what it will mean for you to be amongst those who are guided by the Qur'an, whereof there is no doubt, and written down amongst the people of taqwaa—the only people who will truly experience and live by its merciful teachings.

Tears came to my eyes as I realized from the depths of my heart that my Merciful Rabb was showing me the way back to Him.

Through believing in the unseen beauty of my life and soul.

I just needed to hold onto my faith, keep up with my Salaah, and to be generous with the gifts and provision Allah had given me.

“...the people of taqwaa, [those] who believe in the ghayb, establish the Salaah, and spend out of what We have provided for them.”

O Allah, make me amongst them!

2

Where Do I Fit In?

by Umm Jameelah

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾

“[O Allah! Guide me upon] the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger, or of those who have gone astray.”

—*Al-Faatihah*, 1:7



SubhanAllaaah! Two paths. Actually three. Where do I fit in? Grace? Anger? Be honest with yourself. Where are you with Allah? What path do you want to take? Truly? A lot of questions, no definite answer. I am soiled with life. I've let it get the best of me. I've played around with time. Watching unnecessary things. Being lazy. Not trying to improve while I know I can.

I'm afraid of the unknown as well. What does wanting good feel like? Outwardly, I'm pretty positive, hoping I feel the goodness I'm protruding. Sometimes it's there, sometimes it's not. My bleeding heart. Rusted. Possibly sealed. *O Allah, aid me and help me back to you. Ameen.*

Do I aspire for goodness for my hereafter and a good standing with Allah? For real, sometimes I wonder if I even truly care because each cut is way too deep, and the aid lies right before my eyes. *O Allah, put me on your path of grace and*

keep me away from your anger and the path of the people and the jinn. Ameen!

But then again, I'm human and my feelings switch every day.

I want grace.

I want grace.

I want Allah.

3

Taqwaa, the Sweetness of Emaan

by Hajara Salihu

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

“[The people of *taqwaa* are those] who believe in the *ghayb* (unseen), establish the *Salaah*, and spend out of what We have provided for them. And [they are those] who believe in what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith].”

—*Al-Baqarah*, 2:3-4



T*aqwaa*. Having *taqwaa* is the sweetness of *emaan*.

If I live my life in accordance with the verses above, it flows into me and I am unbothered about my worries and grief because Allah is Al-Baseer (All-Seeing) and Al-Aleem (All-Knowing).

These verses remind me to take stock of my deeds and make *tambah*, to take responsibility for my actions and be hopeful of Allah’s mercy.

In any situation I find myself in, I need to believe in the certainty that Allah will come through for me just as He (Allah) made fire cool and safe for Ibrahim (Abraham,

peace be upon him) and split the sea for Musa (Moses, peace be upon him).

I may not be able to see what lies ahead for me, but I have to believe in the unseen and know that Allah is Ar-Raqeeb, the Ever-Watchful.

*O Allah, I am in total submission to Your will. I have believed in Your Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him).
Yaa Rabb, write me amongst Your believing servants who are upon the right guidance and successful.*

4

I Didn't Know

by Kathryn Holmes-Adamu

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لِّهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧﴾

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth a zeenah (beautification and adornment) for it so that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed.”

—*Al-Kahf*, 18:7



I didn't know.

What didn't I know?

I didn't know the answer.

I didn't know the answer to the question of why.

What question of why?

The answer for why HE created the adornments.

What adornments?

The adornment of wealth for those who have it.

The adornment of beauty for those who have it.

The adornment of knowledge for those who have it.

The adornment of good health for those who have it.

The adornments of status, education and position for all of those who have it.

But, as they say, “nothing is truly free”.

The answer for why HE created adornments is because it is a test, you see.

I didn't know that the why is to see who among us is best in deed.

So even if your relative, friend, or anyone else is blessed with uncountable adornments, just remember, each and every one of them is just that - a test.

A test or tests for you and me.

About the Instructor and Founder of Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey (Tadabbur)

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, including Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey (Tadabbur) go to uzhearthub.com and uzuniversity.com

Connect with Umm Zakiyyah online: uzauthor.com

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

Facebook: [ummzakiyyahpage](https://www.facebook.com/ummzakiyyahpage)

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

Special Thanks to Our Publishing Team

Executive Publisher: Umm Zakiyyah

She is an internationally acclaimed author, soul-care mentor, and founder of Our Beautiful Qur'an Journey at uzhearthub.com

Project Coordinator/Graphics: S. Majeedah

Affectionately called 'Sunny' for her bright and upbeat spirit, she chose Islam more than twenty years ago as a source of peace and a way out of a dark period in her life growing up in Baltimore. Today, she's a mom of five, CEO of a women's wellness center, outdoor enthusiast, and ongoing student of Qur'an and Tadabbur.

Assistant Project Coordinator: Layla Graham

Layla is an introverted millennial mother of two. She is *haafidhab* of Al-Qur'an and is also a Tajweed teacher. She is currently working towards two ijazahs *alhamdulillah*. Layla is also a certified early childhood Montessori guide, and an Al-Qa'idah An-Nooraniyah instructor. She runs a Qur'an blog on Instagram @alkitaab.almuneer and hopes to launch her business selling learning resources in the near future *bi'idhnillaab*: @primelearningresources on social media.

Editor-in-Chief: Aminah Hamidullah

She is the director and co-founder of Knowledge for Living, Inc., a non-profit 501C3, educational community organization. The organization serves as an educational organization providing training to low- and moderate-income communities.

She holds a BS Degree in Accounting and Finance with a minor in Economics and holds a Master's in Public Administration. She has completed post graduate studies in international finance with an emphasis in Islamic Banking.

Aminah has worked as Marketing Director for McDonald's Corporation, Recruiter and Advisor for the University of South Florida, VP for Bank of America, Financial Officer for SBA Business and Business Manager for the Muslim Academy of Central Florida.

Aminah has served as a member of the Mayor of Orlando Taskforce, and the Orlando police review board. She serves on the advisory board of Valencia College Peace & Justice.

She is an avid reader and is committed to a life of service.

Assistant Editor: Fatima Warshi

She is a psychology student aspiring to be a nurse. She chose this route because she has always loved asking individuals about their lives and the stories that made them into the people they are today. Psychology has given her insight and has aided her in understanding others.

Assistant Editor: Jasmin McClellan

Also known as Yasmin, she accepted Islam four years ago and is a twenty-five-year old mother of one. She is always looking for opportunities to better herself and her soul. She loves to learn, read, write occasionally, cook, and clean (and is a self-diagnosed as OCD in this). Overall, she's a fun, "goofy" Muslimah looking to learn to love her Lord, take care of herself and her family and ultimately be the best version of myself before returning to her Creator.

Images/Graphics Collector: Hajara Salihu

She is a lawyer based in Nigeria and is passionate about self-development and fostering interpersonal skills. She is the President/Co-founder of Al- Musaa'id foundation a non-profit organization working for the well-being and health of less privileged individuals. She seizes any opportunity she has to grow and better herself on the path of righteousness, fairness and honesty.

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

Your Lord Has Not Forgotten You: To the Non-Arab Learning Qur'an