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**Qur’anic Exegesis in Manding:
The Example of a Bamana Oral Commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān****

This chapter attempts to provide an overview of the practice of oral Qur’an exegesis in Mali, and more widely among Manding speakers in their own languages. It is based primarily on personal fieldwork. However, whenever possible, on the basis of the literature, comparisons will be made to other regions and peoples of West Africa. The social and cultural contexts in which Qur’an exegesis takes place, its doctrinal sources and clues as to its history, the specialised scholarly language that has been developed to express Islamic contents and some characteristic themes will be successively considered. The latter two topics will be illustrated through a commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55), collected from a Bamana-speaking scholar from the Segu area, presented in Bamana transcription and English translation. Together with a commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* (Q. 56), that has recently appeared, this is probably the first time that a longer Qur’an commentary, as enunciated orally in a West African language and in a close-to-customary setting, has been transcribed and published.¹

The appended commentary, collected in 1992 and of about fifty minutes’ duration, was one of the first recorded from this scholar of Somono lineage; a full *tafsīr* (totalling about ninety hours) was subsequently recorded, proceeding in the order of the Book, in 1994, 1996 and 1998.² All the commentaries were enunciated in the presence of his students, and, in most instances, also of some friends and neighbours. In line with a personal preference, he read out the Qur’anic text himself – a task that may also be assumed by a second person. In conformity with a frequent practice, during some recording sessions he had a ‘respondent’ (in Bamana: *naamunaamuna*, literally ‘yes-sayer’) who punctuated his discourse with words of encouragement, approbation and praise; this role was always assumed by a student.³

This *tafsīr* was chosen from a much larger corpus (comprising recordings both from Bamana-speaking scholars and ones with other language backgrounds) because, while representative in content and linguistic features, it is of exceptional stylistic merit – though in subsequent years, the scholar was to develop his artistry further still.⁴ All native speakers who attended the session, or who subsequently listened to the recording, were thrilled by its style; nearly all were moved by the religious message and declared their resolve to better abide by religious prescriptions in future. In recent years, the scholar has offered public *tafsīr* readings in Ramadan, and the present writer has recorded some of these also.

Several African languages have been used to gloss Qur’anic manuscripts, including the archaic Old Kanembu still used for scholarly purposes among the Kanuri people in Borno state (northern Nigeria); Fulfulde among the Fulbe people in the Futa Jallon region (Guinea) and in Niger; Hausa in northern Nigeria; and Soninke in Mali.⁵

* To the memory of Anees Khan, who first taught me to read the Qur’an.

In all West African cultures, as far as is known – though this has only been realised in recent decades – nearly all oral communication in the educational and scholarly spheres is effectuated in the local languages, whereas activities involving a written medium (both reading and writing) take place primarily or exclusively in Arabic. The oldest known surviving works by a West African scholar date to the late sixteenth century;⁶ the oldest known locally composed Arabic *tafsīr* dates to the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷

The breadth and depth of Islamic learning in West Africa has long been underestimated, some observers even claiming that most scholars in this region were unable to read with comprehension the documents in their own libraries.⁸ The data presented here demonstrate otherwise while drawing attention to a little-explored register of African languages. Although this paper stresses the application of the word-formation processes characteristic of Manding, as well as interchange among African languages, in the creation of specialised scholarly vocabulary, it should be noted that the various academic disciplines, including *tafsīr*, are usually designated by the Arabic terms.

Contemporary Social and Cultural Contexts

Qur'an commentaries are proffered in three main contexts in West Africa: as the ultimate subject of the traditional Islamic studies curriculum; ceremonially, in Ramadan; and in the form of brief citations in popular preaching.

As first noted by Renaud Santerre, with respect to northern Cameroon, the traditional Islamic studies curriculum involves two basic phases: an elementary one, devoted to the reading, recitation, copying and memorisation of the Qur'an; and the complementary or advanced phase, dedicated to the 'study of books'.⁹ The second phase is based on the oral translation, into the local languages, of Arabic works representative of the various disciplines of the traditional Islamic curricula.¹⁰ In most localities, full memorisation of the Qur'an was required prior to the 'study of books' (or all but the most elementary books). In some milieux, including among the Fulbe and Soninke generally, and among some Mandinka of The Gambia,¹¹ the ability to write the Qur'an from memory was also desired.¹² In a few places (including the cities of Dia in Mali and Kankan in Guinea), however, pupils could be admitted to higher studies as soon as they could correctly recite the Qur'an from a written text; the memorisation of only a few suras was required. In many localities in Mali (including Segou and San, and among the Songhay-speakers of Jenne, but not among the Fulbe and Soninke), where the ability to fully recite from memory was traditionally expected prior to a pupil's admission to complementary studies, this requirement is no longer enforced. Thus, depending on locality, ethnic and linguistic affiliations, the 'study of books' is typically undertaken at different ages: between the ages of thirteen and fifteen in Dia and Kankan, rarely before twenty among the Soninke and Fulbe of Mali.¹³

Fiqh (cultic obligations and jurisprudence) and *tawhīd* (theology) are the subjects most commonly studied in Mali. *Lughā* (lit. ‘language’), a term which (at least in Mali and northern Guinea) encompasses devotional and mystical poetry as well as non-religious compositions deemed useful for mastering the Arabic language, is also quite common. Then come *naḥw* (syntax) and *ṣarf* (morphology), that is, Arabic grammar; however, *naḥw* was only introduced into some localities quite recently.¹⁴ *Tafsīr* (Qur’anic commentary) is the ultimate and most advanced subject of the Islamic studies curriculum. *Balāgha* (rhetoric), *‘ilm al- arūd* (metrics), *ḥisāb* (arithmetic) and particularly *manṭiq* (logic) are rarer disciplines, generally viewed as ‘optional’; *ṭibb* (medicine) was studied in the past and is, perhaps, still exceptionally offered at present. The same range of disciplines, using many of the same classical and post-classical texts, is evidenced in other African regions.¹⁵ The *qirā āt* (canonical Qur’anic ‘readings’) are studied in some West African milieux, including that of the Fulbe of Jenne, but not, as far as could be ascertained, in other Malian nor in Manding milieux.¹⁶ On the other hand, Mali is characterised by several distinctive local and regional Qur’an recitation and chanting styles, correlating to the reciter’s city or village of residence, native language and ethnic or cultural identity. It has been reported that among the Fulbe of the Futa Jallon region (Guinea) and the Kanuri of Bornu there are two distinct phases in *tafsīr* study: a first phase dedicated to teaching students to paraphrase the literal meaning of the Qur’anic text in their own languages, and a second phase based on the detailed study of authoritative Arabic commentaries.¹⁷ This does not, however, appear to be the case in Mali, where all *tafsīr* study takes place late, after *fiqh*, theology, Arabic language and literature. In the past, in San, there was also an age requirement: scholars were not admitted to *tafsīr* study before the age of forty.

In the complementary phase, which includes the study of *tafsīr*, each lesson is typically designed for a single student, who thus progresses at his (rarely her) own pace, though other students may listen in.¹⁸ The student reads aloud the Arabic text (in this case the Qur’anic text), pausing at appropriate intervals to receive the teacher’s explanations, enunciated in a local language. As with other subjects, each lesson may take between ten and thirty minutes, depending on the amount of text that the teacher believes the student is capable of understanding and retaining in one session and revising prior to their next meeting. Thus, usually only a few verses (or even one long verse) will be presented in a given lesson. The student will subsequently reread the text (audibly or silently) in light of his teacher’s explanations, perhaps rehearsing them as well. However, these explanations are not memorised word for word.¹⁹ Invariably, in all places visited, the educational atmosphere was an open one: the student, and any persons present, could pose questions at any time during the lesson, whether about the text being explained or earlier passages.²⁰ A student who is able to use most of his time for study may complete his *tafsīr* course in one to two years. In Mali,

and Manding-speaking areas of Guinea and The Gambia, a student will usually concentrate on only one discipline – and one book – at a time.

Public Ramadan *tafsīr* sessions are offered only by the most esteemed, erudite scholars; indeed, the ability to organise and draw an audience for Ramadan readings is an important mark of community recognition. Scholars may either inaugurate a practice of public reading in Ramadan, or perhaps as happens more often in longer-Islamised areas, they may succeed an elder relative in this capacity. These ceremonial readings may take place at mosques or in the scholars' homes. They most usually occur in the morning, but some are held in the afternoon.²¹ One *juz* (i.e. one-thirtieth of the Qur'an) is interpreted every day, the final *juz* thus often being read the day following Ramadan or even later, during a special closing ceremony.²² In Dia, an ancient, now primarily Bozo-speaking city of the Masina (Mali),²³ three persons cooperate to produce a public reading: the youngest scholar reads from the Book, pausing appropriately; a second scholar reads out the corresponding commentary from the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*; while the most senior scholar delivers a commentary, based largely but not exclusively on the *Jalālayn*, in the local language. In Jenne, two scholars collaborate to produce a public commentary: one reads out the Qur'an, while the senior scholar provides a commentary in a local language; this was formerly the practice in Segou and San as well.²⁴ The Qur'an reading can be very musical, especially in Dia, where the three scholars first chant each verse together in a kind of chorus. The ritual and devotional character of these readings is underlined by the blessings pronounced at the beginning and end of each session. In Jenne, several members of the audience, who are recognised for their personal learning and piety, or that of their forbears, are called upon in turn to pronounce blessings, which are usually in Arabic but sometimes in a local language. Everywhere in Mali the interpretation of the final sections of the Qur'an, held after Ramadan, is followed by the serving of refreshments or meals to all present.

While men and older boys form the majority of the attendees at Ramadan *tafsīr* sessions, many older women also attend, as do some younger women (especially from the commentators' households) and even children, accompanying parents, grandparents or older siblings. Very exceptionally do women study *tafsīr*, but in some milieux, those who have done so sometimes hold public Ramadan *tafsīr* sessions.²⁵

Since their founding in the mid-twentieth century, *tafsīr* has also been taught at the modernising Islamic schools or madrasas.²⁶ However, madrasa programmes offer only a selection of suras and verses for study, not the whole of the sacred text. Nevertheless, they make the exegetical experience available to children and young people who, in the past, would have generally been excluded from it. *Tafsīr* is also a significant component of the increasingly popular religious education classes organised for women. Introduced primarily by Wahhabis, such classes have been emulated by Malikis, and are currently characteristic of Timbuktu, Jenne, Dia, Segou, San and Banamba (among other places).²⁷ Initially taught by

men, they may now be taught by either men or women. Among the Maninka of northern Guinea, elderly men, and especially women, who are unable to accomplish the pilgrimage may take a special *tafsīr* course: they listen, over several months to a year, to a commentary covering the whole Qur'an, as enunciated by a recognised scholar; they then receive a special title in the course of a ceremonial celebration.²⁸ Among the Fulbe of the Futa Jallon also, it is possible to receive a special title by attending such a *tafsīr* course.²⁹

From the mid-twentieth century, there have been numerous attempts to provide written, especially printed, commentaries on the Qur'an. The two most influential and prolific writers have been Souleymane Kanté (d. 1987), inventor of the *nko* script, in Guinea, and Modibo Diarra (b. 1957) in Mali. Kanté's Maninka *tafsīr* was eventually printed, and in time received the approbation of the authorities both in Saudi Arabia and at the al-Azhar in Cairo.³⁰ After several partial publications, Diarra issued a Bamana *tafsīr* of the full Qur'an in late 2011.³¹ Kanté's commentary seems to be largely based on those hitherto transmitted orally and thus mostly employs the standardised, traditional Maninka technical vocabulary, while that of Diarra appears to be to some degree a personal one, privileging casual, contemporary Bamana usage. Additional partial *tafsīrs* have been printed in Mali,³² while a partial French commentary printed in Guinea appears to be based on interpretations traditionally transmitted in Maninka.³³ Due to the change of medium, however, all these commentaries are characterised by a continuous, 'full text' discourse in Manding – spatially separated from that in Arabic, presented on facing pages – rather than the alternation and intertwining of the two languages characteristic of oral *tafsīr* sessions and much manuscript glossing.³⁴

Historical Background and Interrogations

It is not currently feasible to date the practice of oral translation of Arabic texts, and Qur'anic commentary in particular, into Manding. Unlike translations into Old Kanembu, and in a different way, Fulfulde, early written attestations have not yet been uncovered.³⁵ However, the study of Maninka glosses in a nineteenth-century Arabic manuscript does show that many elements of the Manding technical scholarly lexicon were in use by this time.³⁶

Medieval Arabic accounts suggest that much instruction in the Mali Empire (c. 616–1008/1220–1600) at its apogee was provided directly in Arabic, often by teachers of Arab or Berber extraction.³⁷ They furthermore imply that written and spoken Arabic were widely understood by the political and urban elite of that time.³⁸ On the other hand, they suggest that oral translation of the Friday and formal holiday sermons into Manding had been introduced by the mid-fourteenth century.³⁹ It may thus be hypothesised that Manding translational reading as an educational practice developed primarily in the later Mali Empire and afterwards, as a consequence of the loosening of political, commercial and other ties with North Africa and the Middle East.

Tafsīr in Mali today is clearly text-based, and among the available works two have a privileged status: the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, so-called after its two authors, the Egyptians Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459) and Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505); and its *Ḥāshiya* (meta-commentary) by the Egyptian Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (d. 1825). These two works constitute the core of the *tafsīr* teaching curriculum. Furthermore, they are the only ones used in the ceremonial Ramadan *tafsīr* sessions of Dia and Jenne. However, matters may not always have been so. On the one hand, it appears that although the *Jalālayn* has long been preeminent, a wider range of commentaries was available at some times and in some places. On the other hand, certain data imply that at other times or in other places, the teaching of *tafsīr* may have become partially disconnected from written works of reference – or from ones specifically consecrated to this subject.

There can be little doubt that the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was introduced into West Africa shortly after it was written, yet knowledge of it was not necessarily widely diffused nor was it maintained everywhere. The oral traditions, as well as written documents (including the teaching chains [*isnāds*] of the *ijāza* ‘licenses’, i.e. diplomas) of many scholarly lineages of the Senegambia, northern Ivory Coast, eastern Ghana and western Burkina Faso, attribute the introduction of this work, the *Muwat t ā* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/796) and the *Shifā* of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ b. Mūsā al-Yaḥṣubī (d. 544/1149)⁴⁰ to al-Ḥājj Salim Suware, the putative founder of the Jakhanke group of lineages. This group, now dispersed throughout West Africa, with significant concentrations in The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, northern Ivory Coast and the Futa Jallon region of Guinea, claims to have originated in Dia (Mali), then to have founded the village of Diakhaba (on the Bafing River in western Mali); it is still present in the latter and its surrounding area. On the basis of this and other elements, al-Ḥājj Salim Suware may be considered a late ninth/fifteenth-century figure.⁴¹

Moreover, Suyūṭī’s own autobiography and extant correspondence describe numerous contacts with West African travellers and scholars, and indicate that he gave his visitors in Cairo copies of his books to carry back to West Africa.⁴² The celebrated Timbuktu author Aḥmad Bābā (d. 1036/1627), in his *Nayl al-ibtihāj*, a biographical dictionary of scholars of the Maliki madhhab in both West and North Africa, indicates that several late ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth-century Timbuktu figures studied and/or corresponded with Suyūṭī and/or his disciples, and that the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was taught in Timbuktu at that time. The *Faṭḥ al-shakūr*, a biographical dictionary authored by Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr al-Bartilī (d. 1805), a Walata-born Moorish scholar,⁴³ mentions that Bābā himself taught the *Jalālayn*; it confirms that this work continued to be taught in Timbuktu and its region in the eleventh/seventeenth century.⁴⁴ The oral traditions of Pir, a major centre of learning in the Wolof country of present-day Senegal, indicate that the *Jalālayn* was expounded there in Ramadan by the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century; this knowledge may have been gained from Fulfulde-speaking scholars from Futa Toro (present-day northern

Senegal/southern Mauritania); at least one of the early Pir scholars is said to have taught in both Fulfulde and Wolof.⁴⁵

But this does not mean that knowledge of these books was then transmitted without incident, nor in all places. Thus, Jenne scholars concur that the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was first introduced into the city by a young man, a member of one of the town's scholarly lineages, who having studied elsewhere (in what is now a small Bamana-speaking village in the Masina) returned to Jenne in the opening years of the twentieth century.⁴⁶ Furthermore, they state that Ṣāwī's meta-commentary was introduced only in the 1940s, at about the time of the Second World War, by another young man who had gone away for his studies.⁴⁷ It follows that the elaborate Ramadan *tafsīr* readings in Jenne are a twentieth- and twenty-first-century phenomenon. Again, according to Jenne scholars, it was hadith, and particularly the *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn* compiled by Abū'l-Layth Naṣr b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. c. 373/983–4), that was read in Ramadan – as it still is, with great ceremony, by some Jenne scholars today.⁴⁸ Thus, it can be further inferred that in the course of the twentieth century, public ceremonial reading and commentary of the Qur'an gradually came to largely replace an earlier practice: the translational reading of hadiths.

Jenne scholars say that, even prior to the *Jalālayn*, *tafsīr* was studied, but without a book (or at any rate, specialised *tafsīr* books), and consisted largely in the interpretation of the meanings of the words of the Qur'anic text. This, too, was an in-depth form of *tafsīr*, with some information about the circumstances of revelation derived from the Qur'an exemplars themselves (i.e. from the sura headings) and available hadith collections. However, it was less rich in historical background information.⁴⁹

The *Ta rīkh al-sūdān*, a historical chronicle completed in Timbuktu c. 1065/1655, reports that the *Shifā* was ceremonially read in Ramadan in Jenne and Timbuktu in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa'dī (d. c. 1065/1655), the Timbuktu-born author of this famous chronicle, himself provided a public reading of the *Shifā* in a village near Jenne, at the inhabitants' request, in Ramadan 1048/January 1639. The Scottish explorer Mungo Park mentions in his *Travels* that it was read in the closing years of the eighteenth century in a small Malinke village of what is now south-western Mali.⁵⁰ Sa'dī furthermore reports that Muḥammad al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/870) *Saḥīḥ*, perhaps the most highly reputed of all hadith collections, was Ramadan reading in eleventh-/seventeenth-century Timbuktu and Jenne.⁵¹ The *Shifā* was still ceremonially read in Ramadan in Timbuktu in the 1960s.⁵² Both the *Saḥīḥ* and the *Shifā* are presently read during the month of fasting in the Moorish milieu of Mauritania.⁵³ Could it be that in a number of places, *tafsīr* came to replace hadith readings fairly recently?

According to a study based mainly on the oral traditions of the scholarly families of Kankan, in earlier times *tafsīr* was based on the study of dictionaries; this would seem to correspond to the lexical study mentioned by the Jenne traditions. However, by the beginning

of the twentieth century, specialised *tafsīr* works were used, including the *Jalālayn*, the commentary attributed to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās (d. c. 68/688, the cousin of the Prophet) and that of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373).⁵⁴

Scholars I have spoken to in the Segou area cannot say when current methods of oral teaching began, which suggests that they have been around for some generations and antedate colonisation. They state that the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* arrived first, while Ṣāwī’s meta-commentary became available considerably later, without, however, providing precise temporal indications. Yet, they too imply that there was a time before the *Jalālayn*, when Qur’an commentary was not based on specialised *tafsīr* books.

Almamy Maliki Yattara and several other older scholars (aged seventy to eighty in the 1990s) affirmed that they had studied *tafsīr* from their teacher’s words, without the aid of a book (though, as they further specified, they did not know whether or not the teacher himself referred to books). An elderly, highly erudite Fulfulde-speaking scholar of the Masina (aged about ninety when I met him in 2007) stated that until the past few decades *tafsīr* was a rare subject there. He specified (as Almamy had also claimed) that in the earlier twentieth century, Alfa Amadu [=Aḥmad] of the village of Tambéni, a scholar trained in northern Nigeria and Jenne, was the only person who taught this subject in the region. Perhaps the *tafsīr* these scholars studied was the kind of lexical commentary said to have once been characteristic of Jenne. Almamy does mention one book his teacher asked him to read as preparation for the study of *tafsīr* – *Khamsa farīda* (sic). However, upon further investigation, it appears that this is a work on religious obligations, suitable as an introduction to higher studies in general rather than *tafsīr* in particular.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the Malian collector of oral traditions, Amadou Hampâté Bâ (d. 1991), perhaps referring to a slightly later period, mentions the presence of at least two Qur’anic exegetes in this region.⁵⁶

Curiously, the sixteenth-/seventeenth-century scholar of Timbuktu Aḥmad Bābā and the eighteenth-/nineteenth-century scholar of northern Nigeria Abdallah ḍan Fodio (d. c. 1829) both state that they studied *tafsīr* with several teachers without mentioning any book titles, whereas they do provide detailed bibliographical lists concerning all other subjects.⁵⁷ Could it be that learning the best possible renderings of Qur’anic terms in the local languages from a qualified teacher took precedence over the study of a particular commentary? Or that translational explanation in the local language was a preliminary course to be eventually followed by the study of written commentaries?⁵⁸ In any case, it is not that these two famous scholars were unfamiliar with such commentaries: as mentioned, Aḥmad Bābā is said to have taught the *Jalālayn*, while ḍan Fodio cites several commentaries in the *tafsīr* he authored, including the one attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, that of Ibn Kathīr, and the *Jalālayn*.⁵⁹

Examination of the contents of the royal library of Segou reveals that it contains three copies of the *Jalālayn*; *Taḥbīr fī ilm al-Qur ān* by Suyūṭī; two copies of *al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān fī tafsīr al-Qur ān* by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī al-Jazā’irī (d. 873/1468); an

abridgement of *Madārik al-tanzīl* by ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Nasaḥī (d. c. 710/1310); *al-Dhahāb al-ibrīz fī tafsīr kitāb Allāh al- azīz*, the mystical commentary by Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Yadālī al-Daymānī (d. 1166/1753); *Diyā al-ta wīl fī ma‘ānī al-tanzīl* by Abdallah dan Fodio; as well as what appear to be further locally composed commentaries (including at least one that is substantial) and lesser-known North African works.⁶⁰ These in turn quote numerous classical and post-classical exegeses, including those by Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamaksharī (d. 538/1144), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. c. 671/1273).⁶¹

Alfred Le Châtelier (d. 1929), a military officer and Islamicist who toured France’s West African possessions in 1888, mentions that *Sūrat Maryam* (Q. 19) was the subject of particularly extensive, apparently locally composed, commentaries.⁶² He furthermore notes that a scholar from Sinsanni (also known as Sansanding; a Soninke-founded town with a long tradition of learning, situated about fifty kilometres from Segou) penned a widely circulated work about the mutual relations of the monotheistic religions, based on the statements of ‘the Jews of Timbuktu’.⁶³ Does this circumstance indicate an exceptional methodological or social openness, or is it a response to a dearth of standard works (or both)?

Paul Marty indicates, on the basis of the biographical data he collected, that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the *Jalālayn*, the *Lubāb* (perhaps meaning the work by Suyūṭī) and the *Diyā al-ta wīl* were studied in Dia, while the commentary of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Khāzin al-Baghdādī (d. 741/1340) and the *Jalālayn* were studied in Timbuktu.⁶⁴ Ṣāliḥ al-Fullānī (d. 1803), a native of the Futa Jallon who had studied with Moorish-trained Fulbe scholars in southern Mauritania and the Masina (Mali) as well as in Timbuktu, mastered several major *tafsīr* works, but much of this knowledge may have been obtained in the Middle East, especially Medina where he ultimately settled.⁶⁵

Examination of the contents of exegeses enunciated in Mali, and more generally in sub-Saharan Africa, brings out a further historical puzzle. In several languages, the interpretation of two key terms of the *basmala*, the divine names *al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm* (occurring also in numerous Qur’anic verses), are interpreted in a manner that corresponds precisely to a hadith attributed to the Prophet’s paternal cousin, ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Abbās. According to this hadith:

al-raḥmān [applies to] the Compassionate towards the upright and depraved [alike] in providing their sustenance and in averting evil from them, [whereas] *al-raḥīm* [applies] specially to the believers in forgiving them and making them enter paradise; this means that He will condone their sins in this life and forgive them in the hereafter and cause them to enter paradise.

(*al-raḥmān*) *al- ātif al-ā’l-barr wa’l-fājir bi’l-rizq lahum wa-daf al-āfāt anhum (al-raḥīm) khāṣṣa al-ā’l-mu minīn bi’l-maghfira wa-idkhālihim al-janna wa-ma anāhu*

*alladhī yasturu alayhim al-dhunūb fī'l-dunyā wa-yarḥamuhum fī'l-ākhirā wa-yudakkhiluhum al-janna.*⁶⁶

The interpretations of *al-raḥmān* and *al-raḥīm* are variously encoded in compound words (of which the appended commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* provides an example) or fixed formulae, which may furthermore be followed by additional explanations. Both the fixed character of these translations and the immense geographical expanse within which they are found suggest that these interpretations were introduced long ago.⁶⁷ Yet, Ibn 'Abbās is currently a teaching text in a few localities only;⁶⁸ it is presently known, but uncommon, in Mali. Could it be that this work – or one including citations from it⁶⁹ – had in earlier times figured more prominently in scholarly culture? If so, then interpretations derived from it could have been transmitted by word of mouth, or in numerous (and yet to be studied) locally composed, partial Qur'an commentaries. These shared interpretations do suggest – as does the comparative study of scholarly lexicons⁷⁰ – significant direct or indirect interchange among different language groups, covering a vast region of the sub-Saharan savannah, forest and desert-edge regions.

Except for this one point, it is difficult to infer, from oral *tafsīr* as currently performed, what earlier, less directly textbook-based commentaries might have been like. The remarks of Almany Maliki Yattara, who at my request listened to the commentary presented here shortly after it was collected, provide some clues. He noted that in the strictly oral *tafsīr* he had learnt in his youth, the reddish colour mentioned in Q. 55:37 was compared to that obtained upon boiling milk for a long time (perhaps a specifically pastoral, Fulbe interpretation). He also said that the interpretation of Q. 55:46 differed from what he had learned – that all the gardens were situated in the hereafter.

One may speculate as to why these three works – the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, the *Ḥāshiya* by Ṣāwī and the *Tafsīr* attributed to Ibn 'Abbās – have been so influential in West Africa, and indeed on the continent. Suyūṭī's immense prestige and his known personal, historical links with West African scholars have surely been major factors; so great was his prestige in some quarters that fictional accounts of his predictions and legal rulings were composed in order to justify the power and policies of Shaykhu Amadu (d. c. 1844), the early nineteenth-century founder of the theocratic kingdom of Masina (a Fulbe-dominated area comprised in what is now the administrative Region of Mopti, Mali).⁷¹ The *Jalālayn*'s very concision may have been an advantage. Not only did this facilitate learning, but it could be treated as an authoritative framework to be elaborated upon using other sources.⁷² As for Ibn 'Abbās, his authority was surely bolstered by his close kinship link to the Prophet.

The author of the appended commentary ventured to explain why Ṣāwī's work was so highly regarded. The author was a Maliki, and thus of the *fiqh* school long predominant in West Africa; moreover, he was a mystic, specifically of the Khalwatiyya, whose positions are quite close to those of the Tijāniyya, which came to be widely represented in West Africa and

in the Segu area in particular. The *tafsīr* is comprehensive, covering such topics as *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the historical circumstances of the revelation of the Qur’anic verses), grammar, and theological and legal explanations; furthermore, it includes an overview of, and numerous citations from, earlier commentaries.⁷³

In recent decades, many new *tafsīr* books have arrived in Mali, usually in printed form. Suyūṭī’s *Itqān fī ulūm al-Qur ān* and *Lubāb al-nuqūl fī asbāb al-nuzūl*, known earlier, are now widely available. *Kalimāt al-Qu rān*, a brief lexical work

, has been popular since the 1950s when it was first published. Among medieval commentaries, that of Ibn Kathīr is particularly popular, and in rare instances may be formally studied (after a first course based on the *Jalālayn* and the *Ḥāshiya*). The *al-Jāmi li-ahkām al-Qur ān* by Qurṭubī is also referred to, and the author of the appended commentary has imported a copy of Rāzī’s *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*. The *Safwat al-tafāsīr* of Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Sābūnī (b. 1930) is widely read, especially by students and younger scholars, as are various pamphlets and extracts emanating primarily from Saudi Arabia, but also from Iran, Egypt and North Africa. Interpretations drawn from these works may be expected to increasingly seep into the advanced studies curriculum, and also into the Ramadan readings, especially where (as in Bamako, Segu and San) the ceremonial aspect is less marked.

The question of the emergence of *tafsīr* in Manding must be distinguished from that of its emergence in Bamana in particular. The latter is presumably relatively recent (perhaps around the eighteenth century). The epoch at which the Bamana may have emerged as a distinct Manding sub-group, with its own cultural and linguistic identity, is itself unclear. It is not known whether the ‘Bambara’ mentioned in the great Timbuktu chronicles (with reference to the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries)⁷⁴ correspond to this group as known from other sources beginning in the late seventeenth century. Moreover, the Bamana have been considered, emblematically, non-Muslim, and both in their own and some other languages, the word *bamana* not only designates the members of certain cultural or ethnic groups, but may signify ‘practitioner of a traditional religion’. Indeed, according to a frequently heard folk etymology, the ‘ethnic’ name ‘Bamana’ means *ban Ma na*, ‘those who have refused the Lord’, that is, the uniquely sovereign God of Islamic belief. However, the area in which the city of Segu was founded includes many Muslim, Soninke and ‘Marka’ lineages and villages.⁷⁵ Both Biton Coulibaly (r. c. 1712–55) and Ngolo Diarra (r. c. 1766–87), two of its most notable early rulers, had Muslim advisers; the former had one of his sons instructed in the religion, while the second, though apparently remaining non-Muslim, had received some religious instruction himself. After the *jihād* led by al-Ḥājj Umar Tal (d. 1864) – the Tukolor, Fulfulde-speaking Tijani leader whose forces took control of the town in 1861 – Segu emerged as a major centre of Islamic learning. Many Malians today consider Segu, together with its suburbs and some neighbouring villages, the foremost seat of Islamic learning in their country.

Put otherwise, the emergence of Bamana as a language of religious explanation⁷⁶ may be related to two kinds of conversion: that of persons of Bamana identity to Islam, but also to the (possibly earlier) linguistic conversion of lineages of Soninke origin to Bamana speech.

Scholarly Language

Translational reading: Parsing and interpreting the Arabic text

All the commentaries discussed here, whether offered in the context of traditional advanced education, ceremonial Ramadan sessions, adult education or public preaching, involve ‘translational reading’, a process first clearly identified by the Japanese linguist and anthropologist Paul Eguchi with respect to Fulfulde in north Cameroon: the Arabic text is parsed into meaningful units as it is read aloud, then orally translated into the local language.⁷⁷ This basic paraphrase or translation may then be followed by additional explanations in the local language. Thus, brief sequences of words in Arabic and the target language alternate with each other in the stream of discourse – followed, in some instances, by a longer sequence in the target language. There is no break between the linguistic register employed in translation or paraphrase, and in ampler free commentary.

Where Bamana is the target language, the Arabic text is parsed into sequences consisting of one to a few script units (graphic words): one to four script units in the appended commentary (as may be seen, at a glance, from the transcription), one to three in a commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī'a* (Q. 56). Whereas the Arabic script unit is typically a subdivision of a sentence and only rarely a full sentence, the Bamana utterance produced may be a syntactic unit, a clause, or a full sentence; the product of several syntactic units or clauses is typically a well-formed sentence.⁷⁸ In translational reading, students and scholars generally attempt to respect the order of words in the Arabic text. Exceptionally, however, they may deviate from it so as to facilitate translation into the target language. The appended commentary includes an unusually large number of such deviations. Except in the initial recitation (without commentary), the refrain *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān* (translated by Arthur J. Arberry as: ‘O which of your Lord’s bounties will you and you deny?’) has had its word order modified. Furthermore, the initial conjunctive particle *fa-* is often omitted. On the other hand, scholars sometimes repeat words of the Qur’anic text, each time insisting on a different aspect of their meaning, and this is very much the case in the commentary under consideration. In addition, the scholar occasionally backtracks to further explain a verse he has already commented upon (e.g. vv. 8 and 41).

West African scholars are generally said to pronounce Arabic poorly; but while this may have once been true, for the past two decades at least this has not been the case of reputed scholars in Mali who have access to radio, the direct or indirect example of Arab visitors and of persons who have studied in Arab countries, and, for some, also satellite television. This scholar’s Arabic pronunciation is generally accurate. Nevertheless, in several

instances, the velar fricatives *khā* and *ghayn* (respectively voiceless and voiced; corresponding to sounds that do not exist in Manding) are pronounced like the voiceless velar plosive [k] (cf. respectively Q. 55:14, 15 and 70; Q. 55:8). This scholar may also assimilate the voiceless uvular plosive *qāf* to the voiced velar plosive [g].⁷⁹ Furthermore, when Arabic words are cited in isolation (though not in sustained, continuous reading), and *a fortiori* in Arabic loanwords, the final flexional vowel of nouns, corresponding to the declensional case endings, is unstable. On the other hand, Arabic also influences the pronunciation of Bamana, and, like some other scholars, this one sometimes conserves the voiceless glottal plosive *hamza*, *qāf* and geminated consonants in Arabic loanwords, while the voiced pharyngeal fricative ‘*ayn*’ may be softened to a *hamza*; examples include the recurrent *mu minin*, ‘believer(s)’ and *ta ala* (in the expression *Ala ta ala*, from the Arabic *Allāh ta ālā*, ‘God Most High’), *jahannam* (‘hell’) and *masreqi* (from *mashriq*, ‘East’).⁸⁰

Lexical and interlinguistic strategies

The longer-Islamised populations of Mali (including the Manding, Soninke, Bozo, Songhay and Fulbe) and more generally West Africa (including other Fulbe groups, the Hausa and the Kanuri) have developed large specialised vocabularies allowing them to express Islamic concepts in their own languages. Populations that have only recently begun converting to Islam in significant numbers, such as the Dogon and the Senufo, are currently developing such vocabularies. Presumably, the scholars creating these new vocabularies often model them upon those of the languages in which they have studied (usually, Fulfulde and Manding respectively).

So far, I have identified the following strategies in Arabic–Manding religious translation. There is the rendering, especially of abstract concepts, by:

- assigning a specialised or additional meaning to a Manding word;
- choosing a term that shares one of its meanings (especially, the rendering of Arabic words that have both abstract and concrete meanings by a Bamana word that shares the concrete meaning);
- using a derived noun;
- creating a compound, or compound and derived, noun (composition and derivation being highly productive word formation processes in Bamana and other forms of Manding);
- choosing the Manding word whose meaning is deemed to be closest, though not necessarily fully equivalent, to that of the Arabic word, and, in some instances, merely evokes it;
- enunciating a phrase or clause;
- attributing a specialised meaning to words characteristic of certain Manding languages or dialects only;

- borrowing from another African language, and especially from its specialised scholarly vocabulary.

Particularly common with respect to rendering concrete terms, though also used for abstract ones, is:

- utilising Arabic loanwords specific to scholarly discourse;
- phonetically adapting an Arabic term;
- or employing a European (French) loanword.

Sometimes, several strategies may combine in the coining of a single word or expression. While each may be illustrated from the appended commentary, for reasons of space only a few representative examples will be discussed here (see following section).

Specialised lexical items are standardised among Manding speakers over a large geographical area, while some, including both Arabic loanwords and ones formed from African roots, are shared by several West African languages.

While a significant percentage of the vocabulary of Manding and other West African languages is of Arabic etymology (or was transmitted through Arabic),⁸¹ the percentage of Arabic loanwords in scholarly discourse may be even higher; this includes both words drawn from ordinary discourse – Arabic loanwords figure among the commonest terms in the language – and ones restricted to, or primarily characteristic of, scholarly discourse. This high incidence may imbue scholarly discourse with a distinctive, pious aura, but also limits many auditors' comprehension.⁸²

In addition to Arabic loanwords, scholars' discourse may include citations of Arabic words and phrases. The appended discourse includes numerous examples, including three Qur'anic citations.⁸³ Isolated Arabic words may function as integral, necessary elements of Bamana sentences (without which the sentence would not be complete), as rhetorical ornaments for emphasis and as synonyms for Bamana words (including French loanwords). The appended discourse includes an address to the divinity, *yā Allāh, yā raḥmān* (suggested by, but not actually quoted from, Ṣāwī's meta-commentary); abstract concepts drawn from the academic disciplines (*ta wīl* [approximately, allegorical interpretation], *mubtada* [grammatical subject] and *khabaru* [grammatical predicate]), all in the preamble to the verse-by-verse commentary;⁸⁴ *jins* ('species'; v. 3); *huwa*, the third person masculine singular pronoun, in this case referring to God ('He'; v. 17); *li-wajhik* ('for you'; v. 27), as part of an explanation of the distinction between signified meaning (*ta wīl*) and literal meaning; the conjunction *hākadhā*, which is twice employed as a synonym reinforcing the Bamana locutions *a/o bè ten*, meaning 'it is so' (v. 64 and the first occurrence in the commentary on v. 46) and twice with inferential force, 'therefore', in lieu of Bamana words (the two further occurrences in the commentary on v. 46]). The Arabic *lā* ('No') is twice used to reinforce the

meaning already expressed by a Bamana phrase, and once as an integral part of the sentence, in lieu of a Bamana word (v. 39).

Like many scholars, the speaker generally eschews French loanwords in formal discourse. His interpretation of this sura, however, includes a fair number: nineteen roots, totalling twenty-one occurrences.⁸⁵ These include, as might be expected, designations for both natural and manufactured objects that are not, or have not until recently, been present in the local environment; in this particular commentary, they are often used concurrently with Arabic loanwords (cf. vv. 9, 68 and 76).

However, several abstract terms are also employed – in two instances, as technical terms. In commenting on the marvellous fruits of paradise (Q. 55:52), the scholar uses two French-derived terms *kalite* (from *qualité*, ‘quality’) and *fòromuw* (from *forme*, ‘form’), the first to signify ‘kind’ or ‘sort’, the second ‘shape’, ‘appearance’ or ‘aspect’. Both these French-derived terms, and a few others,⁸⁶ have become standard technical terms among traditionally trained scholars (including Soninke, Fulfulde, Bozo and Songhay, as well as Manding speakers) in Mali. However, both Arabic-derived and Manding synonyms exist, and the scholar employs several in this very passage.⁸⁷

Use of the French word ‘science’ (cf. v. 17) seems to stress that the revelation is fully compatible with the most modern thought, and indeed anticipated it. The expression *dis pur san* (*dix pour cent*, ‘ten per cent [interest]’; cf. v. 46) reflects the fact that nearly all formal, and many informal, financial transactions are conducted in French in Mali; the scholar also cites a related Arabic expression (*riba*, ‘interest’).⁸⁸

On six occasions the scholar uses French conjunctions. Although these are very common in both rural and urban Bamana speech, they are generally extremely rare with him, and indeed represent but a small fraction of the conjunctions he uses in this particular discourse (*donk, donc*, ‘therefore’, v. 15 (x2); *pasike, parce que*, ‘because’, v. 17; *mè, mais*, ‘but’, vv. 33 and 52; *ikomi, comme*, ‘like’, v. 64). They seem to be used for rhetorical effect, complementing a panoply of synonymous expressions.⁸⁹

Although listeners invariably admired the scholar’s style and were moved by his message, its lexical difficulties prevented all but fellow scholars from understanding it thoroughly. Most auditors grasped his general message, but not the exact meaning of certain passages (though some only realised this when questioned about their contents). Nevertheless, with few exceptions, they did not feel that their competence as Bamana speakers was in any way in question, claiming that the words and passages they had failed to understand were Arabic or, more rarely, French – though many are better categorised as Bamana or African words.⁹⁰

Examples from the specialised lexicon

The key concepts *al-raḥmān* ('the All-Merciful') and *al-raḥīm* ('the Compassionate') are most usually and completely expressed by the compound and derived words *diyènhinèlabòlentigi* and *laharahinèkèrèkèrèlentigi* (or, with nasalised pronunciation, *laharahinèkèrènkèrènnentigi*), respectively (cf. the commentary on the *basma*). These terms literally mean 'the Master of the all-encompassing mercy in this world' and 'the Master of the special mercy in the hereafter' – corresponding exactly (as noted above) to the hadith cited in Ibn 'Abbās' *tafsīr*. Their constituents are *diyèn*, from the Arabic *dunyā*, 'this world'; *lahara*, from the Arabic *al-ākḥira*, 'the hereafter'; *hinè*, from the Arabic *ḥanna*, 'pity', 'compassion' – all loanwords in very common use; *labòlen*, a doubly derived verb (root *bò*, 'to go out'), with the causative prefix *la-* and the suffix *-len*, translatable as a past or passive participle, meaning 'sufficient'; *kèrèkèrèlen* (or *kèrènkèrènnen*), a doubled verb (normally used in that form) meaning 'reserved' or 'put aside', and again, the suffix *-len/nen*; and *tigi*, a term frequently used in composition to designate the person that has a certain quality or who controls a certain object. The concept of *al-raḥmān* may also be rendered more briefly, by this and other scholars, using the compound words *hinemansa* and *hinerahmanmansa* (cf. v. 1); *mansa* means 'king' or 'ruler', but in composition it may also denote that which possesses a certain quality to the highest degree.

The concept of revelation (*anzala, nazzala, nuzūl . . .*) is rendered by the verbo-nominal *jigin* (four occurrences in the preamble following the *basma*), which shares the concrete meaning 'to descend' with the Arabic terms. This concept is systematically opposed to *wahi*, a loanword from the Arabic *waḥy*, designating the revelation or inspiration of the other scriptures recognised by Islam⁹¹ – thus illustrating the technicity of this scholarly lexicon.

Kelenmandiya (cf. v. 27), a compound and derived noun which renders the Arabic concept *waḥdāniyya* ('unity' or 'unicity of God'), is formed from *kelen*, 'one'; *mandi*, frequently used in composition to denote propensity or possession of a certain characteristic to a high degree; and *-ya*, a suffix that generally connotes a degree of abstraction, perhaps ultimately borrowed from Arabic.⁹²

The locution *asmā Allāh al-ḥusnā*, 'the most beautiful Names of God', is rendered as *tògòw barikamaw* (also in the preamble). *Tògò*, like *ism*, may designate the first or given name, while *barikamaw* is derived from *barika* (a very common loanword from the Arabic *baraka*), 'blessing'; the derivational suffix *-ma* connotes the possession of a given quality, while *-w* is the plural marker.⁹³ Thus, this Islamic concept emphasises what is perceived to be the most essential characteristic of the Names – their beneficence. One of these 'most beautiful names' (from the Qur'anic text itself) is cited in the discourse: *dhū'l-jalāl wa'l-ikram* (Q. 55:27 and 78) and is rendered into Bamana as *bonyètigi ani fonisireyatigi*, meaning 'Lord of Majesty and Bounteous favour' (or 'the Majestic and Most Generous') – from *bonyè*, 'greatness', a derived form of the adjective *bon*, 'big', 'great'; *fonisire*, 'generous' (a

primarily Muslim term, possibly borrowed from another language); and *tigi*; *ani* is a conjunction.

*Hèrè dafèn*w (cf. v. 70) is the conventional Bamana equivalent of *al-khalā iq al-khayrāt*, ‘the blessed creatures’, referring to the eternally youthful women and boys specially created by God for the felicity of the inhabitants of paradise. The term *dafèn* is a compound noun meaning ‘creature’ (see below); *hèrè* is an ancient and very common loanword from the Arabic *khayr*, ‘good(ness)’. Since in Bamana *hèrè* also means ‘peace’ and ‘happiness’, persons without specialised religious training understand the scholar’s statement less precisely to mean ‘there are creatures that provide happiness’.

The notion of *shirk* (‘polytheism’, associating anything with God) is alternately rendered by words linked in a clause, as in *fila kana kafo*, ‘Do not associate’; as a compound verb, *filankafo*; or as a compound and derived noun, *filankafoya* (all in the preamble). The constituents of these terms are: the noun *fila(n)*, ‘two’; the verbo-nominal *kafo*, ‘to unite’; *kana*, the negative imperative; and the suffix of abstraction *-ya*.

The Bamana word *boli*, ‘fetish’ or ‘power object’ (four occurrences, cf. v. 35), is used to render the Arabic *ṣanam*, ‘idol’. This example clearly shows that what is perceived as most essential about idols is their alleged efficacy, for unlike many of the objects which scholars may be familiar with from their readings, Bamana, and more generally Malian, power objects are not anthropomorphic.

The following recurrent technical terms are not understood by ordinary speakers.

- i) *Sindi* (also pronounced *sinti* or *sinsi*) is employed by most Bamana-speaking scholars to render the preposition *bi-*, corresponding to the first letter of the *basmala* (as in the appended commentary, cf. pp. 2, 22)⁹⁴ and is systematically used to render the Arabic *ḥ-d-th*, ‘to begin’, ‘form’ or ‘create’. It is often also used to render the root *n-sh-* (with similar meanings). The term *sindi* or *sinti* is found in Maninka and in some Bamana dialects only, with the meaning ‘to begin’ – in Bamana, uniquely with reference to incipient vegetal growth. The word is ultimately of Berber origin, but may have come into Manding from Songhay, where it is also used.⁹⁵ The compound and derived term *sindilifèn*, ‘creature’, is very common in scholarly discourse, though this particular commentary provides only one example (v. 24); *-li* is the nominalising particle and *fèn* is a noun frequently used in composition, meaning ‘thing’.

The Arabic *ḥ-d-th*, rendered by *sindi/sinti*, is systematically distinguished from the Arabic *kh-l-q* (‘create’), which is uniformly rendered into Bamana by the verbo-nominal *da* (‘to put’, ‘place’ and ‘create’) – thus again demonstrating the technicity of the Bamana scholarly lexicon.⁹⁶

- ii) *Dunge* is almost certainly an Arabic loanword (from the Arabic *dhū*, ‘possessor’), as may be inferred from the fact that it is regularly, almost

systematically, employed to render that term (and its various inflected forms); it may have come into Bamana from other West African languages, where it is also constitutive of the scholarly vocabulary (notably in Soninke and Songhay).⁹⁷ However, it has acquired several meanings and syntactic functions not found in Arabic. In ordinary (but sophisticated) speech, *dunge* means ‘companions of (a given person)’. In scholarly Bamana, it can furthermore denote membership in a set and connote duration.⁹⁸ Only persons with advanced religious training could understand the occurrences in this discourse: v. 11: *dhātu’l-akmāmi*, rendered as *ngònkunw dungew* (all things characterised by *ngònkunw*, fruit-bearing clusters; two occurrences); v. 12: *dhū’l-afī*, rendered as *ñenyenw dungew* (all rough-sheathed grains); v. 48, *jiribolo dunge*, ‘many tree branches continuously present’.

- iii) *Tana* (one occurrence in free discourse; see the commentary on v. 10) is systematically used to render the Arabic *ghayr*. This word, which may have come in through Soninke or Songhay, is probably ultimately an Arabic loanword, from *th-n-y*, ‘second’, ‘double’, though it is not currently perceived as such.⁹⁹
- iv) *Dundari*, a term also found in Soninke and Songhay, is understood in Segu and among Muslim Maninka but rarely in Bamako or by non-Muslims; it designates the arrogant and powerful, of whom Pharaoh is the emblematic example (v. 27).¹⁰⁰
- v) The connotations of the Bamana compound noun *hòrònmuso*, rendering the Qur’anic *ḥūr*, meaning the eternally youthful, woman-like creatures of paradise (Q. 55:72, and implicitly in vv. 56 and 58), are influenced by another Arabic loanword, *hòròn*, from the Arabic *ḥurr*, meaning ‘noble’ or ‘free’ (there is no difference of pronunciation in Bamana). Thus, the Bamana term stresses the moral qualities as well as the exceptional attractiveness of these women. (*Muso* is the ordinary Bamana term for ‘woman’.)
- vi) *Mafakoya* (to do slowly, deliberately, or lazily, while taking one’s time; v. 54) is one of several examples of Somono words and pronunciation in this discourse. It is widely understood by Manding-speaking Islamic scholars and by ordinary Somono, but not by ordinary Bamana speakers (even in Segu and its surroundings). In technical philosophical and theological discourse, it corresponds to the Arabic *mumkin*, pl. *mumkināt*, and expresses the concept of ontological possibility.¹⁰¹

The scholar claimed that the word *firisi*, which appears in the doubly derived form *firisiyalen* (through the addition of the suffixes *-ya* and *-len*) in the appended discourse (v. 76), is an old Bamana word meaning ‘green’; though, so far, I have not heard it used by other persons, and

it was not immediately understood even by his students, an early twentieth-century dictionary vindicates his interpretation.¹⁰²

Arabic loanwords that are not understood by ordinary speakers include designations for natural and manufactured objects (*alkaman*, *lintatu*, *marjana*, *rayhanu*, *rummanun*, *yakutu*, *abqari*, *rafrafu*), a spatial and geographical concept (*masreqi*, from *mashriq*, ‘the East’), specifically Islamic concepts (*jatiya*, *tawhiidi*, *tawil*, from the Arabic *dhāt*, ‘Essence’, *tawḥīd* and *ta wīl* respectively), another abstract concept (*jins*, ‘species’), as well as others concerning a diverse range of meanings (*hitaji*, *watuhu*, *yaakubaya*).¹⁰³ Surprising though it may seem, the Qur’anic expression *mithqāl dharratin*, here used in free discourse (cf. v. 9), is not only understood (in the sense of ‘the infinitesimally small’), but is so common in the Segu area that most ordinary speakers assume that it is of Bamana etymology.¹⁰⁴

Specific syntactic traits

Bamana scholarly discourse is also characterised by specific syntactic constructions; most of these are based on the semantic interpretation of the Arabic grammatical particles (*ḥarf*, pl. *ḥurūf*), including prepositions and intensifying particles (such as *inna*, ‘verily’, ‘indeed’), and of function words (such as the relative pronoun and substantive *mā*, ‘that’, ‘what’). However, rendering of the Arabic prepositions *li-* (‘to’) and *min* (‘from’) with the infinitival constructions *ka na* (literally: ‘to come’) and *ka bō* (literally: ‘to go out’ or ‘come from’) are the only examples encountered in the appended commentary.¹⁰⁵

Stylistic features

Although the scholar’s commentary is clearly erudite, his discourse also bears the marks of orality. This includes the recourse to a respondent, demonstrating the meaning of two terms through his gestures (cf. the commentaries on vv. 14 and 33) but also the extensive use of interjections, focalising and emphatic particles, ideophones, onomatopoeia, and the repetition of words and phrases.¹⁰⁶ Particularly remarkable is the description of the angels’ descent to Earth, in which the ideophone *sofusofusofu* is inspired by the Arabic term *ṣaff*, ‘row’, in Ṣāwī’s commentary (cf. *sofu*, v. 33). Moreover, the scholar amplifies the dialogues described in the Qur’anic verses and Ṣāwī’s commentaries, and apostrophises his audience directly, modulating his intonation in accordance with the themes of each passage.

The unusually rich morphology of the Bamana words employed in this discourse (i.e. the high incidence of compound, derived and multiply compounded and derived words) was noted by all native speakers; it appears to have contributed significantly to their aesthetic experience. While rich morphology is characteristic of Bamana scholarly discourse in general, it is particularly marked here.

The scholar draws both on the images and word plays of Bamana, and on ones that may be more characteristic of Arabic. Thus, in his commentary on v. 18, he adapts a Bamana

expression, describing how one person may come to fetch another, to the succession of the seasons (*ka fonènè ta a tètè ma*, ‘to take winter by the hand’). Elsewhere, for example in the commentary on v. 39, he may successively cite two different words, formed from a given root: *jalakilibaaw ka jalakili*, literally ‘blame of the blamers’, *kòròtigèlibaaw ka kòròtigèli*, literally ‘criticism of the critics’. Use of these polyptotons (*jinās al-ishtiqaq*) may owe something to Arabic examples or even rhetorical theory, which he has studied. There also seems to be a play on words of Arabic, French and Bamana etymology. The symbolism of fire, light and water are all very highly developed in this commentary.¹⁰⁷

Contents

Like most Malian commentaries, this one emphasises the believer’s moral, cultic and legal obligations, as well as his individual responsibility (a thoroughly Qur’anic theme). Yet it is doctrinally sophisticated, explaining the concepts of divine transcendence and unicity (cf. v. 27), the ontologically grounded obligation of worship (cf. v. 14) and the unceasing activity of the sole real Mover (cf. v. 29). It is highly reflexive, problematising and then analysing several Qur’anic, other Arabic (cf. preamble, vv. 20 and 27), and Bamana words and expressions,¹⁰⁸ and engages in formal grammatical analysis.

But perhaps the most striking feature of this commentary is its rational, argumentative character. Listeners are repeatedly asked to observe, reflect and meditate (vv. 17, 19 and 26). The various steps of the reasoning process are explicitly marked by numerous conjunctions and locutions denoting logical relationship. The passage that argues from the inevitability of death and the resurrection, and divine omnipotence, to the need for creatures to submit to their Creator has a syllogistic quality (cf. vv. 26–33); this is perhaps not surprising, given that some instruction in logical principles is included in every *tawhīd* course.¹⁰⁹ As indicated earlier, the citation of the French word ‘science’ (cf. v. 17) may serve to stress the rational nature of this discourse.

This commentary also aids the understanding of how, in a certain cultural context, the most familiar and fundamental experiences (such as breathing, cf. v. 16), the cycles of the day and the seasons (v. 17) can become elements that daily validate believers’ faith. It furthermore provides what may be an acceptable interpretation, to many in a society where it still exists, of the apparent efficacy, but also the limits, of non-monotheistic worship: the powers of ‘idols’ are not absolutely and totally denied, but are assimilated to a recognised Islamic category of beings – the non-Muslim followers of Iblīs, who are furthermore shown to be utterly subordinate to their Creator (v. 35).¹¹⁰ It has been debated whether the images of paradise should be understood as symbolic or also in a literal sense: listeners’ declarations clearly indicate that, to most, both interpretations are relevant.¹¹¹

At the same time, both these and other passages have a dramatic quality, further reinforced by the scholar’s intonation as he evokes sudden twists in the creatures’ fate – from

the haughty Pharaoh (cf. v. 26) to the ordinary person (v. 29). Like some Arabic commentaries and more than its immediate models, this one has substantial narrative content.¹¹² And like the stories that most interest Bamana audiences, it combines references to familiar sentiments and to exotic settings,¹¹³ including the pearl- and coral-bearing sea and ancient Near Eastern antiquity, but quintessentially, paradise.

This commentary raises, in acute form, the question of the influence of Islamic belief on ‘traditional’ religions, in an area where, as is being increasingly realised,¹¹⁴ they have long coexisted, and where some ‘traditionalist’ villages were formerly Muslim. Notions of the infinitesimally small and of creation *ex nihilo* are reported to have a considerable role in Malian traditional religions; is this a simple coincidence, or have they been influenced by Qur’anic concepts, including that of *mithqāl dharratin* (‘atom’)?

Conclusion

This partial exploration of an oral commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* shows that Bamana-speaking scholars have developed a methodology and a specialised vocabulary adequate for interpreting the meanings of the Qur’an as set out in recognised Arabic works. Though, by its very nature, this essay can provide a detailed demonstration only for Bamana (and, by implication, the Manding group of languages to which it belongs), there is reason to believe that similarly specialised, scholarly registers exist in other West African languages also – thus leading to a re-evaluation of these languages as instruments of intellectual discourse. While oral *tafsīr* is currently a flourishing educational and ceremonial practice in Mali, there are indications that in some places this has been primarily a twentieth-century development. The *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, its meta-commentary by Ṣāwī and the *Tafsīr* ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās have had a considerable impact on the contents of Malian and perhaps, more widely, African exegesis. The appended commentary will allow readers to directly access the doctrinal and ethical themes that this Malian scholar and his public view as most significant, while glimpsing his rhetorical artistry.

NOTES

¹ In 1933, Charles-Pierre-Martial Ardant du Picq (*La langue songhay: Dialecte dyerma* [Paris, 1933], pp. 94–7) published a Zarma rendering of several verses of *Sūrat al-Baqara* (Q. 2); this has been recently retranscribed, and translated for the first time, by Moulaye Hassane (‘Qur’anic Exegesis in Niger: A Songhay-Zarma Oral Commentary on *Sūrat al-Baqara*’, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013), pp. 201–3.) Zarma, spoken in Niger, is one of the closely related Songhay (or Songhay-Zarma) languages. John N. Paden (*Religion and Political Culture in Kano* [Berkeley, CA, 1973], pp. 298–305) has published,

in English translation only, a Hausa commentary on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* (Q. 1), Valentin Vydrine (‘Sur l’écriture mandingue et mandé en caractères arabes [mandinka, bambara, soussou, “mogofin”]’, *Mandenkan* 33 [1998], pp. 32–3) has published a Mandinka rendering of this sura, and Artem Davydov (‘On Souleymane Kante’s Translation of the Quran into the Maninka Language’, *Mandenkan* 48 [2012], pp. 14–16; also available at <http://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/PDF/Mandenkan48/48Davydov.pdf>), a Maninka rendering. The present writer (‘L’exégèse coranique [*tafsīr*] en milieu mandingue: Rapport préliminaire sur une recherche en cours’, *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara* 10 [1996], pp. 70–79) has published two Bamana ones, and more recently: ‘A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* (Q. 56): A Linguistic and Stylistic Analysis’, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013), pp. 147–74. Moulaye Hassane (‘La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne: Exemple du commentaire coranique à Saayi [Niger]’, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Paris IV, 1995) has transcribed and translated a full Songhay ceremonial commentary on *Sūrat al-Baqara*, which was collected in Say, Niger, under the aegis of Boubou Hama in Ramadan 1388 (1968). Excerpts from this commentary are also presented in Hassane’s above-mentioned article, pp. 193–201. Both Roman Loimeier, ‘Translating the Qur’an in Sub-Saharan Africa: Dynamics and Disputes’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 35, no. 4 (2005), pp. 403–23, and Tal Tamari and Dmitry Bondarev, Introduction and Annotated Bibliography’, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013), pp. 1–55, provide overviews of *tafsīr* practices in sub-Saharan Africa.

² Bamana, spoken primarily in Mali, is one of the closely related (and in most instances mutually comprehensible) Manding languages. Other Manding languages include Maninka (spoken in Mali, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and Mandinka (spoken in the Senegambia and Guinea-Bissau), together often referred to as Malinke; and Jula (also spelled ‘Dyula’; spoken in the northern Ivory Coast and in Burkina Faso). Some of these labels may have greater cultural than linguistic pertinence, however. The Malinke were the dominant element of the medieval Mali Empire (c. 1220–1600); Bamana states are more recent, the most important one being centred on what became the city of Segou (c. 1700–1890). ‘Somono’ is the autonym (as well as a heteronym) of a largely (but not exclusively) Manding-speaking group of water-folk, found along the Niger River from Dia (Mali) to Kankan (Guinea), with their greatest concentration in the Segou area. In this paper, the term ‘Bamana’ will be used whenever reference is made specifically to this population (or whenever no other data are available); the term ‘Manding’ will be used when a statement applies to several (but not necessarily all) regional subdivisions of this far-flung people. See more below, pp. 9–10 and 20–21.

³ It is traditional in Manding and several other West African cultures for a respondent to punctuate long, formal discourses (especially epic narration, storytelling and political speeches). *Naamu* is a loanword from the Arabic *na am* (yes), while *-na* is a suffix of agency; both *naamu* and the derived form *naamunaamuna* are very frequently employed in Bamana, and are in no way religiously connoted. The yes-sayer's interventions are usually one, sometimes two words long.

⁴ See Tamari, 'A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a'*', pp. 123–83.

This chapter draws on fieldwork about scholarly Islam carried out since 1992, primarily in Mali but also in Guinea and The Gambia (cumulating over three years specifically on this topic). This project has so far taken me to the following locations: Bamako and its periphery; Segou and its environs; San and its environs; Dia: primarily Bozo-speaking; the Fulbe country of the Masina; Touba, Cercle de Banamba: Soninke-speaking; Diakhaba (Cercle de Bafoulabé): Maninka-speaking; Jenne (=Djenné): Songhay-, Bozo-, Fulfulde-, and Bamana-speaking; Timbuktu: Songhay-, Moorish- and Tamasheq-speaking; the Mandinka country of The Gambia; and the Maninka country of northern Guinea. In addition to the Bamana *tafsīr* (about ninety hours of recording) of which an excerpt is presented here, a second full *tafsīr* was collected from another Bamana-speaking scholar in 1992 (about sixty hours), while a full Songhay *tafsīr* (about 110 hours) was collected in Jenne in 2011. Several partial *tafsīrs* were obtained in each of the following languages: Bamana, Maninka, Soninke, Bozo, Songhay, and Fulfulde. Oral commentaries of texts representative of the other disciplines of the Islamic curriculum have also been collected and are in the course of publication.

⁵ On the use of Old Kanembu, see the ongoing work of Dmitry Bondarev, 'The Language of the Glosses in the Bornu Quranic Manuscripts', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69, no. 1 (2006), pp. 113–40; idem and Abba Tijani, 'Performance of Multilayered Literacy: Tarjumo of the Kanuri Muslim Scholars', in Kasper Juffermans, Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Ashraf Abdelhay, eds, *African Literacies: Ideologies, Scripts, Education* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), pp. 118–46. On the use of Hausa, see Nikolay Dobronravin, '“Classical Hausa” Glosses in a Nineteenth-Century Qur'anic Manuscript: A Case of “Translational Reading” in Sudanic Africa?' *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013), pp. 84–122. Paul Marty records having seen interlinear Qur'an commentaries in Fulfulde in Futa Jallon (*L'Islam en Guinée: Fouta-Diallon* [Paris, 1921], pp. 353–4), while Moulaye Hassane reports that some scholars in Niger claim to own manuscripts with Fulfulde glossing, written by their ancestors ('La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne', vol. I, pp. 128–9; 'Qur'anic Exegesis in Niger', p. 186). Darya Ogorodnikova has identified, in the Arabic manuscripts collection of the Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (Paris), a copy of the well-known Qur'an commentary *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* bearing Soninke glosses (BULAC MS Arabic 112b). (Identification carried out in

the course of her work in the Old Mande Research Network and the related ‘Cognitive Layers in West African Islamic Manuscripts’ project, both operating under the aegis of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg. Concerning the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, see below, pp. 10–16). Furthermore, Samby Khalil Magassouba reports having seen several Qur’an commentaries with Soninke glosses (oral presentation at the Workshop of the ‘African Voices in Islamic Manuscripts from Mali’ project, CSMC, Hamburg, 24 October 2016). The oldest dated manuscript bearing Old Kanembu annotation is from 1080/1669 (see also Adrian D.H. Bivar, ‘A Dated Kuran from Bornu’, *Nigeria Magazine*, June 1960, pp. 199–205). However, examination of the linguistic features of these glosses suggests that the oral *tafsīr* from which they presumably developed may have emerged considerably earlier. The manuscript examined by Dobronravin dates to the nineteenth century. Composition in Fulfulde and Hausa using the Arabic or modified Arabic alphabet is believed to go back to the eighteenth, late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries respectively (see, e.g., Alfā Ibrāhīm Sow, *La femme, la vache, la foi: Écrivains et poètes du Foûta-Djalon* [Paris, 1966]; idem, *Le Filon du bonheur éternel: Oogirde malal par Tierno Mouhammadou Samba Mombéya* [Paris, 1971]; Mervyn Hiskett, *A History of Hausa Islamic Verse* [London, 1975]). Fulfulde and Hausa developed substantial written literatures in the course of the nineteenth century, whereas Old Kanembu has been and continues to be used exclusively for glossing and translation from Arabic. Although a European account states that in the late seventeenth century, in the Mandinka kingdom of Niimi (present-day Gambia), the local language was written in Arabic characters, rather few Manding documents in Arabic script – none earlier than the nineteenth century – have yet been identified or described. Most such documents consist in correspondence or in (usually brief) historical documents. See especially: (travel accounts) P[rosper] Cultru, ed., *Premier voyage du Sieur de La Courbe fait à la Coste d’Afrique en 1685* (Paris, Edouard Champion, Emile Larose, 1913), p. 191; Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouvelle relation de l’Afrique occidentale* (Paris, 1728), vol. IV, p. 354 – the relevant passage is based on the one in La Courbe’s travelogue (unacknowledged paraphrase); (correspondence) L[ouis]-G[ustave] Binger, *Essai sur la langue bambara parlée dans le Kaarta et dans le Bélédougou, suivi d’un vocabulaire* (Paris, 1886), pp. 31–5; (diverse uses of writing in Manding and other African languages) David E. Skinner, ‘Islam and Education in the Colony and Hinterland of Sierra Leone (1750–1914)’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976), pp. 499–520 (especially pp. 503–5); (histories) Matt Schaffer, ‘“Pakao Book”: An Introduction to Pakao Expansion and Social Structure by Virtue of an Indigenous Manuscript’, *African Languages* 1 (1975), pp. 96–123, idem, *Djinns, Stars and Warriors: Mandinka Legends from Pakao, Senegal* (Leiden, Brill, 2003) and Cornelia Giesing and Valentin Vydrin, *Ta:rikk Mandinka de Bijini (Guinée-Bissau): La mémoire des Mandinka et des Sòninkee du Kaabu* (Leiden, 2007). However, in 2012, Dobronravin

discovered numerous Soninke and some Manding glosses in nineteenth-century manuscript copies of Arabic religious texts conserved in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. His insight led to the establishment, at the end of that year, of the Old Mande Research Network alluded to above. This organisation is currently engaged, in conjunction with several related projects, in a systematic search for early Arabic-script documents in the Mande languages.

⁶ These are the legal decisions (*fatwā*) and biographical dictionaries authored (in Arabic) by the Timbuktu-born scholar Aḥmad Bābā (d. 1036/1627). See more on him below. See also Mahmoud A. Zouber, *Ahmad Bābā de Tombouctou (1556–1627): Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1977) and John O. Hunwick, comp., *The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa* (Leiden, 2003).

⁷ This is *al-Dhahab al-ibrīz fī tafṣīr kitāb Allāh al-azīz* by the Moorish scholar from Mauritania, Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtār al-Yadālī al-Daymānī (d. 1166/1753). With the exception of a few late twentieth-century works, the *Ḍiyā al-ta wīl fī maʿānī al-tanzīl* by Abdallah ḍan Fodio (=ʿAbd Allāh b. Fūdī; d. c. 1829) – the younger brother of the founder of the Sokoto caliphate, Uthman ḍan Fodio, and probably that state’s greatest scholar – is the only Qur’an commentary composed in sub-Saharan Africa to have been published (Cairo, 1961). See more below, pp. 15–16, n. 59.

⁸ Alphonse Gouilly, *L’Islam dans l’Afrique occidentale française* (Paris, 1952), pp. 221–8; J[ean]-C[laude] Froelich, *Les musulmans d’Afrique noire* (Paris, 1962), pp. 138–9, 168–82; John Weir Chamberlin, ‘The Development of Islamic Education in Kano City, Nigeria, with Emphasis on Legal Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1975, pp. 138, 157, 201–2, 206–7, 209, 213 and 224; Dinie Bouwman, ‘Throwing Stones at the Moon: The Role of Arabic in Contemporary Mali’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leiden, 2005, pp. 37–46, 80, 88, 170–77, 186 and 187.

⁹ Renaud Santerre, *Pédagogie musulmane d’Afrique noire: L’école coranique peule du Cameroun* (Montréal, 1973). However, Santerre assumed that instruction took place primarily in ‘classical Arabic’ (pp. 30–31, 57–8 and 126–8). The linguist Henry Tourneau (‘L’enseignement coranique dans une petite ville du Nord-Cameroun [Maroua]’, *Studi Magrebini* 1 [2003], pp. 209–18) has recently restudied the Muslim schools of Maroua, Cameroon, and confirmed most of Santerre’s other observations. This two-phase model of Islamic studies seems to apply in Mali and throughout West Africa and beyond, and thus probably originated in the ‘central’ Islamic lands. See, e.g., Ṭāhā Ḥusayn’s autobiographical account of his education in Egypt: *al-Ayyām* (Cairo, 1929 [Part I]; 1939 [Part II]); English tr. [Part I] by E.H. Paxton, *An Egyptian Childhood* (London, 1932); [Part II] by Hilary Wayment, *The Stream of Days: A Student at the Azhar* (Cairo, 1943); and the life history of a Moroccan jurist as collected by Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco: The Education of a Twentieth-Century Notable* (Princeton, NJ, 1985). The expression ‘study of books’ literally translates the terms used in several African languages to designate the second

phase, e.g. in Bamana, *kitabukalan*, as opposed to *kuranakalan* ('study of the Qur'an'); *kitab* ('book') and *kalan* ('read', 'recite' or 'study') are both Arabic loanwords. The Arabic term *majlis* ('assembly' or 'study circle') is also used in the languages of the region to designate higher studies. The analysis of traditional education presented here is condensed from Tal Tamari, 'Styles of Islamic Education: Perspectives from Mali, Guinea, and The Gambia', in Robert Launay, ed., *Islamic Education in Africa: Writing Boards and Blackboards* (Bloomington, IN, 2016), pp. 29–60.

¹⁰ Among the first authors to note this were Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: The Life and Times of the Shehu Usman Dan Fodio* (New York, 1973), pp. 35–6; Chamberlin, 'The Development of Islamic Education in Kano City'; Paul Kazuhisa Eguchi, 'Notes on the Arabic–Fulfulde Translational Reading in Northern Cameroon', *Kyoto University African Studies* 9 (1975), pp. 177–250; Hassane, 'La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne', vol. I, pp. 106–24; Geert Mommersteeg, 'Het domein van de marabout: Koranleraren en magisch-religieuze specialisten in Djenné, Mali', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Utrecht, 1996, chapter 4; Tamari, 'L'exégèse coranique (*tafsir*) en milieu mandingue'; Stefan Reichmuth, *Islamische Bildung und soziale Integration in Ilorin (Nigeria) seit ca. 1800* (Münster, 1998), p. 114. It has more recently been studied, specifically with reference to *tafsīr*, by Bondarev and Tijani, 'Performance of Multilayered Literacy'.

¹¹ The Mandinka were probably influenced by the example of the Soninke, from whom they received, until the end of the nineteenth century, most of their religious instruction.

¹² Mamadou Ndiaye (*L'Enseignement arabo-islamique au Sénégal* [Istanbul, 1985] pp. 46–57) analyses the Qur'an memorisation techniques of the Fulfulde and Wolof speakers of Senegal; Abubakar Mustapha ('The Contribution of Sayfawa 'Ulamā' to the Study of Islam c. 1086–1846 A.D.', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Bayero University, 1987) and Yahya Oyewole Imam ('The Tradition of Qur'anic Learning in Borno', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6, no. 2 [2004], pp. 96–102) analyse those of the Kanuri of northern Nigeria; and Salah M. Hassan (*Art and Islamic Literacy among the Hausa of Northern Nigeria* [Lewiston, NY, 1992], pp. 44–5, 79, 81, 92–5, 100–104, 107–11), those of the Hausa of northern Nigeria.

¹³ Among the Soninke, among whom many youths could consecrate all or most of their time to study, it was quite common to embark on this second phase of study at about age twenty. Among the pastoral Fulbe, who can generally devote only limited time, this could take place as late as thirty-five to forty. The Malian Fulbe scholar Almamy Maliki Yattara stated that he completed the memorisation of the recitation of the Qur'an at eighteen, and its writing out somewhat later (personal communication, 1985; see more below, n. 55) but this was and remains exceptional.

¹⁴ Oral traditions credit the saintly Alfa Bokar Karabenta (d. c. 1860) with introducing the study of *naḥw* to Dia (probably c. 1820) from the now-Bamana-speaking village of Shibila, situated about sixty kilometres northeast of Segou and fifteen kilometres northeast of Sinsanni (Sansanding). See Shinzo Sakai, ‘Alfa Boari Karabenta de Dia’, *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara* 8 (1994), p. 75, further confirmed by my own fieldwork in 2004 and 2008. For more general information about this figure and his historical significance, see Amadou Hampaté Bâ and Jacques Daget, *L’Empire peul du Macina (1818–1853)* (Paris, 1984; facsimile reprint of 1st edn [Bamako, 1955]), pp. 77–185, as well as Shinzo Sakai, ‘Traditions orales à Ja: Histoire et idéologie dans une ancienne métropole islamique’, in Junzo Kawada, ed., *Boucle du Niger: Approches multidisciplinaires, Vol. II* (Tokyo, 1990), pp. 211–53; idem, ‘La chute du royaume Jawara: Essai d’interprétation socio-historique’, in Junzo Kawada, ed., *Boucle du Niger: Approches multidisciplinaires, Vol. III* (Tokyo, 1992), pp. 287–312. *Naḥw*, though it has been studied in Jenne throughout the twentieth century, has the reputation of having been a rare subject, as is still the case today. Maria L. Grosz-Ngaté (‘Bambara Men and Women and the Reproduction of Social Life in Sana Province, Mali’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Michigan State University at East Lansing, 1986) has studied the Shibila area from anthropological and historical points of view. For more on the Sinsanni area, see below.

¹⁵ Major studies of Islamic education in West Africa include, in addition to those already mentioned, Lamin Sanneh, *The Jakhanke: The History of an Islamic Clerical People of the Senegambia* (London, 1979); 2nd rev. edn., *Jakhanke Muslim Clerics: A Religious and Historical Study of Islam in Senegambia* (Lanham, MD, 1989) (subsequent references are to the 1979 edition); Thierno Kâ, ‘L’Enseignement arabe au Sénégal: l’école de Pir-Saniokhor, son histoire et son rôle dans la culture arabo-islamique au Sénégal du XVIIIe au XXe siècle’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université de Paris IV, 1982; Mbaye Alassane Thiam, ‘L’histoire de l’enseignement et de la pédagogie coranique au Fuuta-Tooro. L’école de Cilon: Son histoire et son influence (XVIIIe–XXe siècle)’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université de Paris VII, 1987; and Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2014). Similar curricula obtained in northern Sudan, a Maliki region (see Issa Hassan Khayar *et al.*, eds, *Fakī Adam Ab-Tishēka: Autobiographie. Soudan* [Paris, 1984]), and even in Swahili East Africa – except that the *fiqh* works naturally corresponded to the legal schools predominant there (most usually Shāfi‘ī); see, e.g., Abdul Hamid M. El Zein, *The Sacred Meadows: A Structural Analysis of Religious Symbolism in an East African Town* (Evanston, IL, 1974) and Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860–1925* (London, 2003), pp. 61–4, 104–15, 127–9, 144–8, 177–87.

¹⁶ The Songhay of Niger, the Kanuri of northern Nigeria, and the Fulbe of Jenne and its area study Warsh and Qālūn (the two variants of Nāfi‘), and perhaps the other recognised *qirā āt*,

though this is yet to be verified. See Hassane, ‘La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne’, vol. I, pp. 115–17; Hamidu Bobboyi, ‘The ‘Ulama of Borno: A Study of the Relations between Scholars and State Under the Sayfawa, 1470–1808’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 1992, pp. 25–7, 45, 47–50 and 68–70.

¹⁷ Marty, *L’Islam en Guinée*, pp. 349, 351, 353–6; Mustapha, ‘The Contribution of Sayfawa ‘Ulamā’; Bobboyi, ‘The ‘Ulama of Borno’.

¹⁸ This tutorial principle appears to be common in West Africa. See especially Santerre, *Pédagogie musulmane d’Afrique noire*, pp. 124–8, and Louis Brenner, ‘Two Paradigms of Islamic Schooling in West Africa’, in Hassan Elboudrari, ed., *Modes de transmission de la culture religieuse en Islam* (Cairo, 1993), pp. 159–80.

¹⁹ This may be inferred from the following observations: (a) The student who rehearses his teacher’s explanations audibly may vary their verbal formulation. A very strong mental association is established between certain Arabic terms and their recognised equivalents in the local language. (b) However, a scholar will never, in my experience, produce two verbally identical interpretations of the same text. In particular, in successive renderings of the same 77-line pre-Islamic poem, produced at a two-year interval by the same Bamana-speaking scholar, only one hemistich (half-line) was identical (see Tal Tamari, ‘Un poème arabe en traduction bambara: La *Mu allaqa* d’Imru’ l-Qays’, in Bertrand Hirsch and François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, eds, *Les ruses de l’historien: Essais d’Afrique et d’ailleurs en hommage à Jean Boulègue* [Paris, 2013], pp. 441–87). (c) The recurring verse or ‘refrain’ of the appended sura (v. 13 *sqq.*) is translated in several verbally distinct ways. The oral performances of scholarly commentators are best compared to those of certain bards who improvise complex literary narratives on the basis of their mastery of the contents and the literary and linguistic codes, rather than deliver them from memory. Concerning bards in Manding culture, see e.g., John William Johnson, *Son-Jara: The Mande Epic. Mandekan/English Edition with Notes and Commentary*, 3rd rev. edn (Bloomington, IN, 2003; 1st edn. 1986).

²⁰ Cf. the comment by Dale Eickelman (*Knowledge and Power in Morocco*, pp. 94–5, 99–100) that in the 1920s and 1930s at the Yūsufiyya mosque university in Marrakesh, it was generally considered inappropriate to ask questions.

²¹ In contrast, Paden (*Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, pp. 298–305) reports that in northern Nigeria, the readings may take place at night.

²² A similar apportioning of the Qur’anic text is reported of the Songhay speakers (formerly Fulfulde speakers) of Say, Niger; see Hassane, ‘La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne’, vol. I, pp. 126–39 and idem, ‘Qur’anic Exegesis in Niger’, p. 189.

²³ Dia is generally identified with ‘Zāghā’, described by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. c. 770/1368), who visited the Mali Empire in 753–4/1352–3, as a city of scholars (see his *Riḥla* [‘Travels’],

translated in J.F.P. Hopkins and Nehemia Levtzion, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* [Cambridge, 1981], pp. 261 and 287). See also Bâ and Daget, *L'Empire peul du Macina (1818–1853)*, esp. pp. 177–86; Sakai, 'Traditions orales à Ja'; idem, 'La chute du royaume Jawara'; and Rogier Bedaux *et al.*, eds, *Recherches archéologiques à Dia dans le delta intérieur du Niger (Mali): Bilan des saisons de fouilles 1998–2003* (Leiden, 2005). However, the degree of linguistic and cultural continuity between the medieval and modern cities is quite unclear.

²⁴ And also in Say, Niger; see Hassane, 'La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne', vol. I, pp. 151–5; idem, 'Qur'anic Exegesis in Niger', pp. 187–8.

²⁵ I was told of one Dia woman (deceased in the 1980s) and one Jenne woman (deceased in 2007) who had taught the advanced curriculum, including *tafsīr*, to men in tutorials, and also commented on the Qur'an in Ramadan to a public composed of both men and women.

²⁶ These schools are so-called with reference to those of contemporary Arabic-speaking countries, themselves largely modelled on Western ones, rather than by allusion to the medieval institutions. Major studies of the madrasa in Mali include Louis Brenner, *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society* (Bloomington, IN, 2001); Ahmet Kavas, *L'Enseignement islamique en Afrique francophone: les médersas de la République du Mali* (Istanbul, 2003); Bouwman, 'Throwing Stones at the Moon'; and Emilie Roy, 'Educating Pious Citizens: Local Politics, International Funding, and Democracy in Bamako's Islamic Schools', Unpublished PhD Thesis, McMaster University, 2012. Local languages continue to play a major role in oral communication and explanation in these allegedly Arabic-medium institutions; see Tal Tamari, 'The Role of National Languages in Mali's Modernising Islamic Schools (*Madrassa*)', in Birgit Brock-Utne and Ingse Skattum, eds, *Languages and Education in Africa: A Comparative and Transdisciplinary Analysis* (Didcot, 2009), pp. 163–74.

²⁷ Contemporary women's religious education has been studied by Dorothea E. Schulz (*Muslims and New Media in West Africa: Pathways to God* [Bloomington, IN, 2012]) in Mali and by Ousseina D. Alidou (*Engaging Modernity: Muslim Women and the Politics of Agency in Postcolonial Niger* [Madison, WI, 2005]), and Adeline Masquelier (*Women and Islamic Revival in a West African Town* [Bloomington, IN, 2009]) in Niger.

²⁸ Boundiala Condé, 'L'Université traditionnelle coranique de Kankan, des origines à l'implantation coloniale', Unpublished Master's Thesis, Université de Kankan, 1992, p. 39; and information collected by the present writer during fieldwork in the Kankan area (2005, 2011).

²⁹ Roger Botte, 'Pouvoir du Livre, pouvoir des hommes: La religion comme critère de distinction', *Journal des Africanistes* 60, no. 2 (1990), pp. 37–51. In this region, the title *tafsiiru* was reserved for slaves and descendants of slaves who needed their master's

permission to take the course, whereas free men and women usually received the title *ceerno* (sometimes *neene* or *sonna* for women). The distinction between free and slave ancestry remains socially significant in the Futa Jallon.

³⁰ Major analyses of the *nko* movement include Jean-Loup Amselle, *Branchements: Anthropologie de l'universalité des cultures* (Paris, 2001); Dianne White Oyler, *The History of the N'ko Alphabet and Its Role in Mande Transnational Identity: Words as Weapons* (Cherry Hill, NJ, 2005). Specifically linguistic studies include Valentin Vydrine, 'Souleymane Kantè, un philosophe-innovateur traditionaliste maninka, vu à travers ses écrits en Nko', *Mande Studies* 3 (2001), pp. 99–131 and Davydov, 'On Souleymane Kante's Translation of the Quran into the Maninka Language', pp. 3–20.

³¹ Alhaji Modibo Jara, *Kuranε kɔrɔ. Bayɛɛmanen bamanankan na* ([Mali], 2007–11); revised one-volume edition, *Kuranεba an'a hayaw kòrò bayɛɛmanen bamanankan na* ([Mali], 2014). His *tafsīr* and other religious publications have been analysed in detail by Francesco Zappa, *L'islamizzazione della lingua bambara in Mali tra pubblicistica scritta e letteratura orale* (Rome, 2004); idem, 'Écrire l'Islam en bambara: Lieux, réseaux et enjeux de l'entreprise d'al-Hâjj Modibo Diarra', *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 147 (2009), pp. 167–86. ('Diarra' is the official French spelling of the Bamana name 'Jara'.)

³² Mori Konate (spelled 'Konaté' in French), *Kurane Fasari (bamanankan na)* [commentary on Q. 1 and 87-114] (Bamako, n.d.).

³³ El-Hadji Kabiné Diané, *Coran: Lumière du Créateur*, 7th edn (Conakry, 1981); 8th edn (Conakry, 1984).

³⁴ Except, of course, for those in *nko*, all the *tafsīrs* mentioned here employ Latin characters. Some commentaries written in Arabic script are, however, in private circulation.

³⁵ Concerning Old Kanembu, see note 5 above. For an analysis of a late seventeenth-century Arabic work that purports to present instruction on *tawhīd* that had initially been dispensed orally in Fulfulde, see Louis Brenner, *Réflexions sur le savoir islamique en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Bordeaux, 1985), pp. 57–60; idem, *West African Sufi: The Religious Heritage and Spiritual Search of Cerno Bokar Saalif Taal* (London, 1984; 2nd impression 2005), pp. 81–2; and Dorrit van Dalen, *Doubt, Scholarship and Society in 17th-Century Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden, 2016).

³⁶ The manuscript in question is BNF Arabic MS. 5670, identified by Darya Ogorodnikova in the context of the Old Mande Research Network/Cognitive Layers in West African Islamic Manuscripts project (analysis by the present writer). The BNF also has several other manuscripts with Maninka and Arabic glosses by the same scholar. Further study may permit more precise dating of this manuscript and determination of its geographical provenance. Although the document belongs to the Segu royal library transferred to France in 1890, a significantly earlier date of composition, in Senegambia, appears likely.

³⁷ See the remarks of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa on foreign scholars in the Mali Empire, translated in Hopkins and Levtzion, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, pp. 289–90, 294 and 298.

³⁸ In addition to the passages already cited, see also the mid-eighth-/fourteenth-century geographical and historical work of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349) (in *ibid.*, pp. 269–70). The Malian historian Boubacar Sega Diallo has developed a similar interpretation of bilingualism in the Mali Empire, on the basis of the medieval Arabic accounts (personal exchanges, 2008).

³⁹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, in *ibid.*, pp. 292 and 296.

⁴⁰ The *Muwat t ā* is a compilation of jurisprudence attributed to the eponymous founder of the Maliki *madhhab* (legal school). The *Shifā bi-ta rīf h uqūq al-Mus t afā* is a hadith-based devotional biography of the Prophet.

⁴¹ See particularly Ivor Wilks, ‘The Transmission of Islamic Learning in the Western Sudan’, in Jack Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 162–95; *idem*, ‘The Juula and the Expansion of Islam into the Forest’, in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, eds, *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, OH, 2000), pp. 93–115. Wilks’ dating has been strongly contested by Sanneh (*The Jakhanke*, pp. 23–31). In my view, it is supported not only by the inclusion of the *Jalālayn* among the three basic works, but by the fact that some Jakhanke lineages have ‘Fulbe Mande’ names – that is, ones specific to Fulbe established in Mande-dominated areas. According to oral traditions reported in one of the Timbuktu chronicles, the Fulbe only established themselves in the Masina area (which includes Dia) in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century (see ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī, *Ta rīkh al-sūdān*, ed. and tr. into French by Octave Houdas with the collaboration of Edmond Benoist [Paris, 1898–1900], Arabic text pp. 184–9/French translation pp. 281–8; English tr., John O. Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Saḍī’s Ta rīkh al-sūdān down to 1613 and other Contemporary Documents* [Leiden, 1999], pp. 237–43). See also Thomas C. Hunter, ‘The Development of an Islamic Tradition of Learning among the Jahanka of West Africa’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1977.

⁴² See especially John O. Hunwick, ‘Notes on a Late Fifteenth-Century Document Concerning “al-Takrūr”’, in Christopher Allen and R.W. Johnson, eds, *African Perspectives: Papers in the History, Politics and Economics of Africa Presented to Thomas Hodgkin* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 7–33; Elizabeth M. Sartain, ‘Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī’s Relations with the People of Takrūr’, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16, no. 2 (1971), pp. 193–8; *eadem*, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Cambridge, 1975), vol. I, pp. 40–52, vol. II, pp. 158–9.

⁴³ Concerning the history of Walata (home to numerous scholars, including Aḥmad Bābā’s ancestors and Muḥammad b. Mukthār al-Yadālī, whose *tafsīr* is discussed below), see

Timothy Cleaveland, *Becoming Walāta: A History of Saharan Social Formation and Transformation* (Portsmouth, NH, 2002).

⁴⁴ See Aḥmad Bābā al-Tinbukṭī, *Nayl al-ibtihāj bi-tat rīz al-dībāj* [work begun in Timbuktu, completed in Marrakesh in 1004/1596], ed. ‘Alī ‘Umar, 2 vols (Cairo, 2004), biographies no. 135 and 144, pp. 147–8 and 153–4; and also Muḥammad al-Bartilī, *Fatḥ al-shakūr fī ma rifat a yān ulamā al-Takrūr*, Arabic text ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kattānī and Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 2nd printing (Beirut, 2007), especially biographies no. 1, 5, 7, 52 and 127, pp. 27–8, 29–30, 31–7, 70–71 and 139–40; French translation by Chouki El Hamel, *La vie intellectuelle islamique dans le Sahel ouest-africain: Une étude sociale de l’enseignement islamique en Mauritanie et au Nord du Mali (XVIe–XIXe siècles) et traduction annotée de Fatḥ ash-shakūr d’al-Bartilī al-Walātī (mort en 1805)* (Paris, 2002), pp. 156–8, 161–5, 166–82, 229–31 and 319.

⁴⁵ Kâ, ‘L’Enseignement arabe au Sénégal’, pp. 64–70. According to the historian Jean Boulègue (*Les royaumes wolof dans l’espace sénégalais [XIIIe–XVIIIe siècle]* [Paris, 2013], pp. 282–7 and 308), this centre may have experienced a refounding and may go back much earlier than the mid-eleventh/-seventeenth-century date retained by its own oral traditions.

⁴⁶ According to these oral traditions, precisely in the year the Great Mosque (now a World Heritage monument) was rebuilt, that is, in 1907.

⁴⁷ Both the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and the *Ḥāshiya* were introduced in printed form. These print copies are still extant, their use now being largely restricted to the ceremonial Ramadan readings in the two descendant lineages.

⁴⁸ As in the *tafsīr* readings, blessings are pronounced at the beginning and end of each session; very elaborate blessings are enunciated, followed by refreshments, at a final closing ceremony.

⁴⁹ Jenne scholars employed the Arabic words *ta rīkh* (history, chronicle), *qiṣṣa* (tale) and *ḥikāya* (story), or similarly pronounced loanwords, to designate what is here termed ‘history’. Charles Monteil mentions neither *tafsīr* works nor *tafsīr* as a subject in his surveys of Islamic education in Jenne. Though his accounts can hardly be considered exhaustive, this does tend to confirm the accuracy of oral traditions as cited by the city’s present-day scholars. On the other hand, Monteil’s account suggests an explanation for the lesser diversity of books in Jenne: that it was emerging from a decades-long educational slump. See Charles Monteil, *Monographie de Djenné, cercle et ville* (Tulle, 1903), pp. 105–14; idem, *Une cité soudanaise: Djenné, métropole du delta central du Niger* (Paris, 1932), pp. 148–58. Paul Marty (*Études sur l’islam et les tribus du Soudan* [Paris, 1920], vol. II, pp. 253–5), on the basis of fieldwork undertaken almost two decades later, indicates that the *Jalālayn*, the *Lubāb* (of Suyūṭī or of al-Baghdādī?) and the *Ḍiyā al-ta wīl* were studied there.

⁵⁰ As noted by John O. Hunwick, *Sharʿa in Songhay: The Replies of al-Maghīlī to the Questions of Askia al-Ḥājj Muḥammad* (Oxford, 1985), p. 118n. The primary sources are: Saʿdī, *Ta rīkh al-sūdān*, pp. 29, 31, 37 and 297/French tr. pp. 49, 52, 61 and 450; English tr., *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, pp. 41, 44, 52 and 261n; Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (London, 1799), chapter 24, relating to the year 1797; ed. and intro. Kate Ferguson Marsters (Durham, NC, 2000), pp. 273–6 and 278–9. This passage from Park’s *Travels* is also analysed by Jan Jansen, ‘Habitation and Warfare Strategies in 19th Century Mande – a View from the *Kafu*’, in Allen M. Howard and Richard M. Shain, eds., *The Spatial Factor in African History: The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 261–289.

⁵¹ Saʿdī, *Ta rīkh al-sūdān*, pp. 48 and 297/French tr. pp. 79 and 450–51; English tr., *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*, pp. 69–70. The scholarly milieu of Timbuktu is studied by Elias N. Saad, *Social History of Timbuktu: The Role of Muslim Scholars and Notables, 1400–1900* (Cambridge, 1983).

⁵² Hunwick relates his personal experience of hearing the *Shifā* recited in the home of a well-known Timbuktu scholar in 1967. (*Shari ā in Songhay*, p. 118n.).

⁵³ Personal communication from Mohamed Lemine Hamady.

⁵⁴ See Condé, ‘L’Université traditionnelle coranique de Kankan’. However, since this author had limited knowledge of Arabic, his analysis of the Kankan curriculum needs to be treated with caution. As there is so little on these topics in the literature and, moreover, the French is sometimes unclear, I prefer to quote this thesis verbatim: “‘Tafsir kitab’: ce sont les trois œuvres de lexicologie pour mieux cerner le contenu des écrits coraniques’ (p. 31). (Said in reference to a list of the equipment of traditional schools) ‘Les trois tafsir-kitab’ (ibid., p. 34). “‘Tafsir’: Il signifie lexicologie. Ce sont les livres écrits par des docteurs islamiques. Ils relatent l’Histoire des Chapitres, des versets et leurs explications . . . les plus vieux importants qui sont enseignés à Kankan depuis le XVIIIe s. furent au nombre de trois. Tafsir Djalalaine, Tafsir Boun Abbas et Tafsir Khasir [= Ibn Kathīr] au début du XXe s.’ (ibid., p. 37). The ‘Kaïlmatou-Kourann’, also mentioned (ibid., p. 37), is probably the mid-twentieth century work popular in Mali (see below, pp. 19–20). An alternative interpretation of these passages is, therefore, that several specialised works of *tafsīr* have long been studied in Kankan, perhaps with emphasis on the lexical aspect. *Qiṣṣa*, or tales of the prophets, were furthermore studied as a separate subject (ibid., p. 32). It is not certain that research that could be conducted now – a quarter of a century later – would clarify these points, though of course it should be attempted.

⁵⁵ This book, cited under the title *Khamsa farīda* (*sic*), translated as ‘Five obligations’, is probably the same as the *Khamsūna farīda* (‘Fifty obligations’) listed as anonymous in the catalogue of the Mamma Haidara library of Timbuktu (MSS. 831, 3039, 3657 and 3767,

respectively described in vol. I, p. 457 and vol. IV, pp. 20, 322–3 and 375). The incipit of MS. 3657, quoted in the catalogue, does make it clear that, as stated by Almamy, it includes citations, and perhaps explanations, of Qur’anic verses. Again, obscurity of expression makes it necessary to quote the source in full. In the following, Alfa Amadu (or Amadou) of Tambéni addresses his prospective pupil: ‘Alors tu vas commencer par les *hamsa farīda* (les cinq obligations). C’est un livre qui montre comment il faut faire le tafsīr. Tu vas commencer par apprendre quelques versets qui sont très difficiles à commenter et traduire, et quand tu auras fini tu seras déjà en mesure de connaître et de commenter de nombreux passages du Coran.’ However, this was followed by a study of *al-Muqaddima al-izziyya*, an elementary *fiqh* manual, and the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī, a literary work in rhymed prose and verse reputed for its grammatical and lexical difficulties. Almamy’s teacher, furthermore, recommended this work as preparation for understanding the vocabulary of the Qur’an: ‘ce livre va t’aider beaucoup dans la maîtrise du Coran, de manière à ce que désormais plus un mot ne t’échappe!’ (Almamy Maliki Yattara and Bernard Salvaing, *Almamy*. Preface by Adame Ba Konaré [Brinon-sur-Sauldre, 2000–3], vol. I, p. 326; see also pp. 17–25, 309–28; vol. II, p. 19). Study of the *Maqāmāt* and other difficult literary works is still considered a desired preliminary stage to the study of Qur’anic exegesis. However, is the citation of a general work as a reference for *tafsīr* an indication that more specialised works were few in number or lacking? Alfa Amadu of Tambéni is also mentioned by Brenner (*Réflexions sur le savoir islamique en Afrique de l’Ouest*, pp. 16–18), who states that he died c. 1950. See more on the *Khamsūna farīda* in John O. Hunwick, comp., *The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden, 1995), p. 544.

⁵⁶ Bâ and Daget, *L’Empire peul du Macina (1818–1853)*, pp. 14–15. Many of these oral traditions were collected from 1953 to 1955.

⁵⁷ See Bartilī, *Faḥ al-Shakūr fī ma rifat a yān ulamā al-Takrūr*, biography no. 7, pp. 31–7; French tr., *La vie intellectuelle islamique dans le Sahel ouest-africain*, pp. 161–82; Zouber, *Ahmad Bābā de Tombouctou (1556–1627)*, esp. pp. 52–5; Mervyn Hiskett, ‘Material Relating to the State of Learning among the Fulani Before their Jihad’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 19, no. 3 (1957), pp. 550–78.; and Abd Allāh b. Fūdī [=Abdallah dan Fodio]. *Tazyīn al-waraqāt*, ed. and tr. Mervyn Hiskett. Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1963

⁵⁸ The accounts by Marty (*L’Islam en Guinée*, pp. 349–54) and Mustapha (‘The Contribution of Sayfawa ‘Ulamā’, pp. 74–80) suggest this for the Fulbe of Futa Jallon and the Kanuri of northern Nigeria respectively. However, so far, I have not personally encountered such an educational practice.

⁵⁹ See ‘Abd Allāh b. Fūdī [=Abdallah dan Fodio], *Ḍiyā al-ta wīl fī ma‘ānī al-tanzīl*, MS Arabe 5509, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, fols. 1b–337b and 339a–384b (Incomplete copy).

⁶⁰ *Faḥḥ Allāh fī sharḥ bismillāh* (MS Arabe 5737, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, fols. 1a–47b) is an interesting commentary on the *basmala*. Its author Ḥasan al-Barrī al-Mālikī may have been a Fulbe: al-Bar(r)i may correspond to the typical Fulbe clan name Bari. The *al-Dhahāb al-ibrīz* has been studied by Franck Leconte (‘Une exégèse mystique du Coran au XVIII^e siècle dans le sud-ouest de la Mauritanie [Al-Gibla]: *Ad-Dahab al-Ibrīz fī Tafsīr Kitāb Allāh al-Azīz* de Muḥammad ibn al-Muhtār al-Yadālī [1685–1753]’, Thesis for the Diplôme d’études approfondies, Université de Provence Aix-Marseille I, 1995). Concerning all these works, see Nouredine Ghali, Sidi Mohamed Mahibou and Louis Brenner, *Inventaire de la bibliothèque umarienne de Ségou (conservée à la Bibliothèque nationale – Paris)* (Paris, 1985). This catalogue and the numerised images of the manuscripts are also available on the Bibliothèque Nationale de France website, www.bnf.fr. See also the WAAMP (westafricanmanuscript.org) website, managed by Charles Stewart and Bruce Hall. However, its presentation of the Segou collection is marred by numerous errors (in particular, MS. 5701, fols. 1a–112b, listed as a commentary on *Sūrat Maryam* [Q. 19], is a partial copy of the Qur’an beginning with that sura).

⁶¹ John O. Hunwick (‘African Literature’, *EQ*, vol. I, pp. 32–5) as well as Bruce S. Hall and Charles C. Stewart (‘The Historic “Core Curriculum” and the Book Market in Islamic West Africa’, in Graziano Krätli and Ghislaine Lydon, eds, *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa* [Leiden, 2011], pp. 109–74) each provides short lists of the works they consider to be best represented in West African manuscript libraries.

⁶² Le Châtelier would later become a professor of Islamic studies at the Collège de France.

⁶³ Alfred Le Châtelier, *L’Islam dans l’Afrique occidentale* (Paris, 1899), p. 314. The study of *Sūrat Maryam* is also accorded especial importance by the Maninka of Kankan. The reference to the ‘Jews of Timbuktu’ probably concerns a disputation, held in 1859, between their leader, Rabbi Mordechai Aby Serour (d. c. 1886; he would later become Charles de Foucauld’s guide in Morocco), and officials of the theocratic Fulbe-dominated kingdom of Masina, shortly before it was conquered by the Tukolor forces of al-Ḥājj Umar Tal (d. 1864). These Moroccan-born Jews were present in Timbuktu and neighbouring Arawan, Mali, on and off from 1858 until at least 1895. Mordechai was reputed to know the Qur’an by heart and to be familiar with Islamic theology. See Jacob Oliel, *De Jérusalem à Tombouctou: L’odyssée saharienne du rabbin Mardochee* (Paris, 1998), esp. pp. 41–5.

⁶⁴ See Marty, *Études sur l’islam et les tribus du Soudan*, vol. II, p. 254 and annexes 8 and 10 (for comments on Dia); p. 87 (for comments on Timbuktu).

⁶⁵ Hunwick writes: ‘In the field of *tafsīr*, apart from the well-known commentaries of al-Bayḍāwī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī and al-Qurṭubī, he [Fullānī] had also studied the lesser known works of Ibn Juzayy, Ibn ‘Atiyya, al-Baghawī and al-Wāḥidī’ (John O. Hunwick, ‘Ṣāliḥ al-Fullānī [1752/3–1803]: The Career and Teachings of a West African ‘Ālim in Medina’, in Arnold H. Green, ed., *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Mohamed al-Nowaihi* [Cairo, 1984], p. 143). See also Stefan Reichmuth, ‘Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732–91) and the Africans: Islamic Discourse and Scholarly Networks in the Late Eighteenth Century’, in Scott S. Reese, ed., *The Transmission of Learning in Islamic Africa* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 132–3, 145, and Chanfī Ahmed, *West African Ulamā and Salafism in Mecca and Medina: Jawāb al-Ifriqī – the Response of the African* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 92–6, 101.

⁶⁶ This is the text of the hadith of ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tafsīr* [= *Tanwīr al-miqbās*], as printed in the margin of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi’l-ma thūr* (Beirut, 1980), vol. I, pp. 2–3. Mokrane Guezzou provides a slightly different translation (*Tafsīr Ibn Abbās: Great Commentaries on the Holy Qur’an*. Foreword by Yousef Waleed Meri [Amman and Louisville, KY, 2008], p. 1). Historical interpretation of the transmission of this exegesis in West Africa is made more complex by the large number of substantially differing hadiths attributed (in different works) to Ibn ‘Abbās. Cf. Guezzou, ‘Translator’s Introduction’, *ibid.*, pp. xii–xvii. Although hadiths attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās are highly regarded within the Islamic tradition, critical-historical researchers such as G.H.A. Juynboll generally consider that, as formulated, they are relatively late (see G.H.A. Juynboll, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās’, *ECH*, pp. 1–2).

⁶⁷ For the Bamana interpretation, see below, ‘A Commentary on *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (Q. 55): Bamana Transcription and English Translation’. The Fulbe of Mali interpret *al-rahmān* as *jomhinekubbō*, meaning ‘the Master of the all-encompassing mercy’, and *al-rahīm* as *jomhinekeriido*, meaning ‘the Master of the special mercy’ (Taken from my field notes). The Songhay of Say, Niger, interpret *al-rahmān* as *suuji yaamarante koy*, meaning ‘the All-Merciful’, and they provide the additional explanation that ‘The Mercy granted to all is that from which one benefits in this world’; they interpret *al-rahīm* as *suuji cerecerente koy*, meaning ‘the special Mercy’, and they explain that ‘The special mercy is granted at the Resurrection; only Muslims benefit from it’ (Hassane, ‘La transmission du savoir religieux en Afrique subsaharienne’, vol. I, pp. 152–3 and 161, and vol. II, p. 324; *idem*, ‘Qur’anic Exegesis in Niger’, pp. 188, 191, 193, 197. The oldest Hausa manuscript *tafsīr* to gloss the *basmala* (dated 1911) and the published Hausa *tafsīr* by the renowned Hausa exegete Nasiru Kabara (d. 1996) both have: *Muna farawa da sun(n)an Allah, magamin kyauta a duniya mai kebabben jin kai a lahira*, meaning ‘We begin with the name of Allah, the Assembler of benefit in this world and putting aside His mercy [for believers] in the hereafter’ (Excerpted

from a note on ‘Hausa *basmala*’ by Nikolay Dobronravin, dated 1 July 2013). Modern-day Tarjumo (Kanuri milieu, northern Nigeria) has *kâm rāhma amma-wa*, meaning ‘the One with universal mercy’ and *kâm kanjímálí hás-wa*, meaning ‘the One with specific compassion’. Printed Kanuri *tafsīr* provides the following gloss: *rama-má (ráma-nzá dunyâ-lan kanjiwá sámmásó-ro)*, meaning ‘the Merciful (His mercy is for all servants in the world)’ and *kanjímálí-ma (kanjímálí-nzá láira-be âm shíro dáksána bás-ro)*, meaning ‘the Compassionate (His compassion in the hereafter is only for those who stay in awe of Him)’ (Excerpted from a ‘Note’ by Dmitry Bondarev, dated 11 June 2013). Swahili scholars, too, seem to have been fascinated by this hadith. Thus, Abdullah Saleh Al-Farsy (d. 1982), who in 1969 became the first Sunni (Shāfi‘ī) Muslim to publish a full written Swahili rendering of the Qur’an, expresses Q. 1:1 thus: *Kwa jina la Mwenyezi Mungu Mwenye kuneemesha neema kubwa kubwa na Mwenye kuneemesha neema ndogo ndogo*. James D. Holway (‘The Qur’ān in Swahili: Three Translations’, *Muslim World* 61, no. 2 [1971], p. 106) explains this as follows: ‘Thus, *al-rahmān* becomes “he who is capable of bestowing grace”, “numerous large graces”, or “even the largest grace”, taking grace as a quantifiable item capable of plurality . . . *al-rahmān* is contrasted with *al-rahīm*, which is translated “he who bestows even the smallest grace” or “even the smallest individual blessing” (*kubwa* and *ndogo* meaning “large” and “small”, respectively).’ M.A. Ridai, ‘a Mombasa religious leader’ whose work was printed there in 1984, makes ‘a distinction between the mercy of Allāh shown to both good and evil here in this world and the mercy of Allāh granted in the hereafter only to those who are good’ (as quoted and translated by Justo Lacunza Balda, ‘An Investigation into Some Concepts and Ideas Found in Swahili Islamic Writings’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989, pp. 150 and 160).

⁶⁸ Including Kankan, Guinea (Condé, ‘L’Université traditionnelle coranique de Kankan’, p. 37).

⁶⁹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Nasaḥī (*Tafsīr al-Nasaḥī* [Cairo, 1948–52], vol. I, p. 6) cites the same hadith, without indicating any of its transmitters. Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī (*al-Jāmi li-ahkām al-qur ān* [Beirut, 1988], vol. I, pp. 74–6) cites several very closely related hadiths. Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (*Jāmi al-bayān an ta wīl al-Qur ān* [Cairo, 1957–69], vol. I, p. 127) and, following him, ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur ān al-aẓīm* (Beirut, 1982), vol. I, pp. 20–21) cite a hadith that conveys the basic idea that *al-rahmān* concerns the divine beneficence as it applies to all creatures, whereas *al-rahīm* specifically concerns the believers. The commentary on the *basmala* by Mālikī in the Segu library (*Faḥ Allāh fī sharḥ bismillāh*) quotes similar statements. Ibn ‘Abbās is repeatedly mentioned in the Segu library manuscripts, though I have not yet found this precise citation.

⁷⁰ Tal Tamari and Dmitry Bondarev, ‘Introduction and Annotated Bibliography’, pp. 18–19.

⁷¹ See especially William A. Brown, ‘The Caliphate of Hamdullahi, ca. 1818–1864: A Study in African History and Tradition’, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1969, and Nehemia Levtzion, ‘A Seventeenth-Century Chronicle by Ibn al-Mukhtār: A Critical Study of *Ta rīkh al-Fattāsh*’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, no. 3 (1971), pp. 571–93. Shaykhu Amadu and his successors’ attempts to transform the status of the Bozo fisherfolk (also noted by several nineteenth-century European travellers) has left long-term traces: in the Arabic of central Mali, including that employed by Bozo scholars, they are designated as *zanj* (pl. *zunūj*, ‘black slaves’) (Based on my field observations in the Masina, 2008).

⁷² This point is made by Andrea Brigaglia (‘Two Exegetical Works from Twentieth-Century West Africa: Shaykh Abu Bakr Gumi’s *Radd al-adhhān* and Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse’s *Fī riyāḍ al-tafsīr*’, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 15, no. 3 [2013], pp. 256, 258), with respect to the Wolof and Arabic *tafsīr* of the well-known Tijāniyya Sufi shaykh, Ibrāhīm Niasse.

⁷³ Concerning Ṣāwī’s life and achievements, see Gilbert Delanoue, *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l’Égypte du XIXe siècle (1798–1882)* (Cairo, 1982) vol. I, pp. 185–242, and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, ‘The Small World of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (1761–1825), an Egyptian Khalwatī Shaykh’, in Michael Kemper and Ralf Elger, eds, *The Piety of Learning: Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 103–144. Ṣāwī’s *Ḥāshiya* may have been brought into West Africa from Egypt, from Arabia where he obtained numerous disciples in the course of his three pilgrimages, or from the Maghreb where this work rapidly became popular.

⁷⁴ These are the *Ta rīkh al-sūdān* by Sa’dī and the *Ta rīkh al-fattāsh*, whose older portion is currently attributed to one Ibn al-Mukhtār, writing about 1075/1665. The *Ta rīkh al-fattāsh* received major additions in the nineteenth century. For textual criticism, see notably Levtzion, ‘A Seventeenth-Century Chronicle by Ibn al-Mukhtār’; Michel Abitbol, *Tombouctou et les Arma: De la conquête marocaine du Soudan nigérien en 1591 à l’hégémonie de l’Empire peulh du Macina en 1833* (Paris, 1979), p. 12; and Mauro Nobili and Mohamed Shahid Mathee, ‘Towards a New Study of the So-Called *Tarīkh al-fattāsh*’, *History in Africa* 42 (2015), pp. 37–73.

⁷⁵ Major studies of the Segu politics and region include Charles Monteil, *Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta* (Paris, 1977; 1st edn. Paris, 1924); David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal: The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1985); and Sundiata A. Djata, *The Bamana Empire by the Niger: Kingdom, Jihad and Colonization, 1712–1920* (Princeton, NJ, 1997). In this region, the term ‘Marka’ may refer either to Soninke speakers or to persons of Soninke origin who have adopted another language. Marty (*Études sur l’islam et les tribus du Soudan*, vol. IV) specifically discusses the development of Islam in this region; for the Somono and the Marka, see *ibid.*, pp. 47–143. Robert Pageard, *Notes sur*

l'histoire des Bambara de Ségou (Clichy, Pageard [c. 1960]) is a little-known but very valuable source. Stephen Albert Harmon, 'The Expansion of Islam among the Bambara Under French Rule: 1890 to 1940', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1986, also provides considerable information about Islamisation in the Segou area in the nineteenth century.

⁷⁶ To cite an expression introduced by Murray Last and Louis Brenner, 'The Role of Language in West African Islam', *Africa* 55, no. 4 (1985), pp. 432–46.

⁷⁷ Eguchi, 'Notes on the Arabic–Fulfulde Translational Reading in Northern Cameroon'. Although he hints at it only very briefly in his article (*ibid.*, p. 179, n. 2), it seems that Eguchi's application of this concept to the processes he observed in Africa was grounded in his experience of 'translational reading' in Japan, in which Chinese ideograms are read out in Japanese on the basis of their semantic values; see, for example, Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (Leiden, 1991) and David D. Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge, MA, 2011). Numerous parallels can be drawn between the Japanese and African procedures, including the modification of the word order of the source language during silent or oral reading to fit that of the target language.

⁷⁸ Analysis of the parsing process and the nature of the units produced in the target language is a focus of Tamari, 'A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* (Q. 56)', pp. 126–7 and 177 n. 18. This article showed that the seventy-eight verses of *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (with the exception of the refrain, which recurs thirty-one times) were parsed into 104 segments comprising a single script unit, forty-seven comprising two script units, fourteen comprising three script units, and six comprising four script units. The refrain was generally parsed into 1+3 script units (with the exception of v. 32). *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* was parsed into segments of one to three units. It should be noted that though single script units predominate, most words are parsed in the context of multiple-script-units. It should be furthermore remembered that even a single Arabic script unit is a complex entity, comprising at least one lexeme and one or more morphemes. For these and other reasons, therefore, as developed in that paper, this should not be assimilated to word-for-word translation.

⁷⁹ Example in Q. 56:49, in Tamari, 'A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* (Q. 56)', pp. 155 and 178, n. 27.

⁸⁰ Ordinary speakers usually pronounce the first three lexemes: *mumunin* or *muminin*, *taala* or *taana*, and *jahanama*; the last-cited term is not integrated into Bamana speech.

⁸¹ Maurice Delafosse (*La langue mandingue et ses dialectes [malinké, bambara, dioula]*, Vol. I: *Introduction, grammaire, lexique français-mandingue* [Paris, 1929], Vol. II: *Dictionnaire mandingue-français* [Paris, 1955], respectively pp. 120, 135–8 and pp. ii–iii) estimated that almost twenty percent of Manding roots consist in Arabic loanwords. Based on the considerable number of terms that have since been recognised as Arabic loanwords (Charles

Bailleul, *Dictionnaire bambara–français*. Arabic etymologies by Michel Lagarde, 3rd revised edn [Bamako, 2007]; Michel Lagarde, *Influences de l’arabe sur la langue bambara* [Falajè (Mali), 1988]; Tal Tamari, ‘La prose littéraire arabe en traduction bambara: Une *maqāma* d’al-Ḥarīrī’, in Ursula Baumgardt and Jean Derive, eds, *Paroles nomades: Écrits d’ethnolinguistique en hommage à Christiane Seydou* [Paris, 2005], p. 440, n. 16) and eadem, ‘Les œuvres orientales parmi les sources d’inspiration de la littérature orale ouest-africaine: Un “roman de chevalerie” arabe en traduction bambara’, *Journal des Africanistes* 83, no. 1 (2013), pp. 228–230), with more regularly coming to light, a higher figure appears plausible. The Malian linguist Hamidu Magassa advances a twenty-five percent estimate (personal communication).

⁸² See more below, pp. 28, 31–34, and the associated notes (especially n. 91 and n. 104).

⁸³ These are a partial citation of Q. 42:11; the formula *illā wa antum muslimūna* (occurring in both Q. 2:132 and Q. 3:102); and the expression *mithqāl dharratin* (recurring in five Qur’anic verses – Q. 4:40, Q. 10:61, Q. 34:22, Q. 99:7 and Q. 99:8). A fourth verse (Q. 51:56) is cited in Bamana translation only. Each of these citations is indicated in notes to both the transcription and the translation.

⁸⁴ Also in the preamble, the Arabic term *naḥw* (syntax) is integrated, with a slightly adapted pronunciation, to form a Bamana loanword (*nahawtigiw*, the ‘masters of syntax’, i.e. grammarians). The term *nahaw(u)*, in common use among Bamana-speaking scholars, is not, of course, understood by the general public.

⁸⁵ The French loanwords are, in alphabetical order: *basikili*; *dis pur san*; *donk* (x2); *dra*; *foromuw*; *garanaji*; *ikomi*; *jarden*; *kalite*; *mè* (x2); *pasike*; *payasi*; *peseli*, *peselikèlan* (x3); *rèzèn*; *siyènsi*; *tapi*. They originate in the following words and expressions respectively: *bascule*; *dix pour cent*; *donc*; *drap*; *forme*; *grenade*; *comme*; *jardin*; *qualité*; *mais*; *parce que*; *paillasse*; *peser*; *raisin*; *science*; *tapis*.

⁸⁶ Including *kulèr* (from the French *couleur*, ‘colour’), considered to be a synonym of *qualité* (‘quality’). It may also be glossed by the Arabic *lawn*, ‘colour’, or in some contexts, ‘sort’, and (though the term is only introduced when addressing auditors who have failed to understand the terms cited above), *parfèm*, from the French *parfum*. *Lawn*, *couleur*, *qualité* and *parfum* are all interpreted as synonyms, to mean ‘type’ or ‘kind’. This sense of equivalency may be due to the fact that French *parfum* refers to taste as well as smell, ‘flavour’ as well as ‘odour’ or ‘perfume’; it can therefore be used to differentiate a wide range of apparently similar items. Thus, the vocabulary of Bamana (and more generally Manding) *tafsīr* remains a dynamic system.

⁸⁷ These are *nòniya*, *sifaya* and *cogoya*. The first two are loanwords (of which *nòniya* is well understood in the Segou area) from the Arabic *nau* (‘variety’, ‘sort’) and *ṣifa* (‘characteristic’, ‘attribute’); *cogo* and *cogoya* (-ya is a suffix indicating a degree of abstraction, see more

below, pp. 30–31, 34, n. 93 are both common Bamana words indicating ‘manner’, ‘way of being or doing’. The scholar could have also employed the term *sawura* (from the Arabic *ṣūra*, pl. *ṣuwar*, meaning ‘appearance’, ‘form’).

⁸⁸ The scholar has never been to school and does not speak French. However, like so many other Malians, including perhaps especially Muslim scholars, he has achieved a fair comprehension of spoken French through everyday observation, radio and television. Moreover, when I recently noticed that he used a mobile phone programmed in French (rather than the Arabic preferred by most of his fellow scholars), he explained that as a child he had learned to read and write French from his school-going agemates. For many decades now, a large number of French words have been integrated (with adapted pronunciation) into ordinary Bamana usage, even in rural areas.

⁸⁹ Including *sabu* and *barisabu* (from Arabic *sabab*, ‘cause’), *nka* (‘but’) and the locutions *o kosòn* (‘because’), *o de kòrò ye* (‘that means’), *i n’a fò* (literally, ‘you would say’, ‘like’).

⁹⁰ While certain words and expressions were not understood (see discussion below), many more were misunderstood. For example, in the commentary on v. 19, *ci* was understood by some auditors as ‘to send forth’ and by others as ‘to split apart’ (the two lexemes are differentiated only by tone). With respect to v. 11, untrained listeners systematically confused *ngònkun*, ‘fruit cluster’, with *nkòku*, a designation for the water lily (whose seeds are edible). Fantastical etymologies were devised to explain *firisiyalen* (cf. v. 76, p. 34 below, and n. 36 and 103 including one involving a reinterpretation of the sentence: *na firisiyalen*, it was argued, came from the Bamana word *na*, ‘sauce’, and the French word *frais*, ‘fresh’: a fresh sauce, therefore one made from green leaves – some auditors having surmised that the intended meaning was ‘green’. In general, it seems that the incidence of specialised vocabulary in Bamana, and probably other West African languages, has been underestimated: discussions in Segou showed that only bards knew the meanings of certain words and expressions in a praise song recently composed there – even the persons being praised, and other regular listeners, did not (Tal Tamari, “‘Hady’: A Traditional Bard’s Praise Song for an Urban Teenager”, *Research in African Literatures* 38, no. 3 [2007], pp. 77–111).

⁹¹ The other scriptures recognised by Islam are the *Ṣuḥuf Ibrāhim* or ‘Leaves of Abraham’, generally believed to be lost; *Taurā* (Pentateuch); *Injil* (Gospels, or more broadly the New Testament); and *Zabūr*, ‘Psalms of David’ (though the text recognised by Islam differs from that of the Bible).

⁹² As pointed out by Francesco Zappa (‘When Arabic Resonates in the Words of an African Language: Some Morphological and Semantic Features of Arabic Loanwords and Calques in Bambara’, in Giuliano Lancioni and Lidia Bettini, eds, *The Word in Arabic* [Leiden, 2011], pp. 237–8), the suffix *-ya* corresponds closely, both in sound and meaning, to the Arabic relative adjective suffix *-iyy*, especially when followed by the *tā marbūṭa* ending to form

abstract nouns. *Ma*, a particle that marks the negative perfect in Bamana conjugation, may originate from the Arabic negation, *mā*.

⁹³ *Tògò* is also used to render the Arabic *ism* as used in grammatical discussions, in the sense of ‘noun’.

⁹⁴ However, some Bamana-speaking scholars, including Modibo Diarra, the author of a print *tafsīr*, prefer *daminè*, which signifies ‘to begin’ in ordinary speech. (See the rendering of the *Fātiḥa* by Jara, *Kuranε kɔrɔ*, vol. I, p. 8.) Yet, for subsequent suras and in the revised edition, *Kuranεba*, Diarra has chosen to further simplify the traditional renderings, translating the Arabic preposition *bi-* using the Bamana connective *ni*, ‘with’.

⁹⁵ This etymology was established by Lameen Souag (personal e-mail, dated 4 July 2016), who points out that most southern Berber languages have a root **nt*, which may be rendered transitive by the prefix *s-*, and that Songhay has borrowed a prefixed form of this verb. See the following bibliographical references. Berber: Karl-G. Prasse, Ghoubeid Alojaly and Ghabdouane Mohamed, *Dictionnaire touareg-français (Niger)* (Copenhagen, 2003), vol. II, p. 629; Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire touareg du Mali: Tamachek-anglais-français* (Paris, 2006), p. 497; Catherine Taine-Cheikh, *Dictionnaire zénaga-français présenté par racines dans une perspective comparative* (Cologne, 2008), pp. 407–8. Songhay: Auguste V. Dupuis (Yakouba), *Essai de méthode pratique pour l'étude de la langue songoi, ou songai, langue commerciale et politique de Tombouctou et du Moyen-Niger: Suivie d'une légende en songoi avec traduction et d'un dictionnaire songoi-français* (Paris, 1917), p. 191; Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay-anglais-français, Vol. I: Koyra chiini* (Paris, 1998), p. 220; *Vol. II: Djenné chiini*, p. 170; *Vol. III: Koroboro senni*, p. 279.

⁹⁶ There are twenty occurrences of *da* in its simple form: v. 3, v. 14 (x12), v. 15 (x5), v. 16, v. 33; six occurrences of the nominalised form *dali*: v. 3, v. 14 (x2), v. 15 (x3); seven occurrences of *dafèn(w)*, ‘creature(s)’: v. 10 (x2), v. 27, v. 33 (x2), v. 70 (x2); one occurrence of the compound and derived term *dalimansa*, ‘Lord of Creation’: v. 72; one occurrence of the compound noun *dakun*, ‘reason for creation’: v. 14.

⁹⁷ In Soninke, *dunge* functions as a suffix, meaning ‘member of’. See Mody Bathily, *Dictionnaire soninké-français, français-soninké* (Rouen, 2008), p. 74; Ousmane Moussa Diagana, *Dictionnaire soninké-français (Mauritanie)* (Paris, 2011), p. 46; Brad Smeltzer and Susan Smeltzer, *Lexique soninké-français-anglais. Soninke-French-English Dictionary*, SIL-Mali, www.sil-mali.org (accessed December 2012), p. 61. Songhay has both *dunke*, ‘habitual companion’ (Jeffrey Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay-anglais-français*, vol. II, p. 58) and the word *duu*, ‘to have’, ‘obtain’, which in turn has several derived forms. See Dupuis, *Essai de méthode pratique pour l'étude de la langue songoi*, p. 133; Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Concepts et conceptions songhay-zarma: Histoire, culture, société* (Paris, 1982), p. 122; Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay-anglais-français*, vol. I, pp. 79–80, vol. II, p. 58;

Youssouf Mohamed Haïdara, Youssouf Billo Maïga and Mahamadou Bagna Maïga, *Dictionnaire soṅay–français*, preface by Salikou Sanogo (Bamako, 2010), p. 83.

⁹⁸ Thus, an acquaintance who had engaged in lengthy religious studies explained this usage with the following example: *lemburuji dunge bè Masire ka firigo kòndò*, ‘There’s always lemonade in Massire’s refrigerator’, Massire being the friend in whose shop this discussion took place.

⁹⁹ *Tana* in Soninke is mentioned by Bathily, *Dictionnaire soninké–français, français–soninké*, p. 249; Diagana, *Dictionnaire soninké–français (Mauritanie)*, p. 205; and by Smeltzer and Smeltzer, *Lexique soninké–français–anglais*, p. 255. For Songhay, in which, according to a Songhay scholar of Jenne, it is the only term that may express this concept, it is cited by Dupuis (Yakouba), *Essai de méthode pratique pour l’étude de la langue songoi*, p. 197; Heath, *Dictionnaire songhay–anglais–français*, vol. I, p. 233, vol. II, p. 181, vol. III, p. 295; and Haïdara, Maïga and Maïga, *Dictionnaire soṅay–français*, p. 254. The etymology is proposed by Heath.

¹⁰⁰ Soninke has both the forms *dunderere*, ‘proud’, ‘braggart’, and *dunderaaxu*, ‘pride’; see Oudiary Makan Dantioko, *Dictionnaire soninké–français* (Bamako, 2003), pp. 52–3; Bathily, *Dictionnaire soninké–français, français–soninké*, p. 74; Smeltzer and Smeltzer, *Lexique soninké–français–anglais*, p. 61. Dupuis (*Essai de méthode pratique pour l’étude de la langue songoi*, p. 134) lists *dundarey*, ‘pride’, ‘to be prideful’ for the Songhay of Timbuktu; also repeatedly heard by the present writer in the Songhay *tafsīr* of Jenne. According to Amadou Hampâté Bâ (e.g. in Amadou Hampâté Bâ and Germaine Dieterlen, *Koumen: Texte initiatique des pasteurs peul* [Paris, 1961], pp. 54–5, 73 and 83), *dundari* is a Fulbe designation for God, considered with respect to some of His attributes, but more accurately, according to a Fulbe scholar from the Masina with whom I am acquainted, one of the Most Beautiful Names.

¹⁰¹ See Tal Tamari, ‘L’enseignement de l’unicité divine expliqué en bambara: Un commentaire oral sur la *Umm al-barāhīn* de Muḥammad as-Sanūsī’, *Islam et sociétés au sud du Sahara*, new series, 5, forthcoming.

¹⁰² Thus, in 1901, Maurice Delafosse (*Essai de manuel pratique de la langue mandé ou mandingue* [Paris, 1901], pp. 19 and 22) reported that *frisi*, meaning ‘light blue or green’, was one of the most common ‘adjectives’ in use in the Jula speech of the northern Ivory Coast (especially Bonduku). This word is also cited in the French-Manding vocabulary at the end of Delafosse’s *Langue mandingue*, vol. I, p. 663, and in his pluridialectal Manding dictionary, *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 206–8, as designating a particular hue of blue or green. The Segou scholar’s position is furthermore vindicated by the use of the term *filisiyalen* in a (possibly mid-nineteenth-century) Maninka commentary on an Arabic poem (BNF Arabic MS 5670, fols. 16–21), in the course of analysis by the present writer. The term *frisi*, which is of

uncertain etymology, also exists in Songhay. Dupuis (*Essai de méthode pratique pour l'étude de la langue songoi*, p. 145) cites *fildyi* or *firdyi*, 'green', while a recent Songhay dictionary by Haïdara, Maïga and Maïga, *Dictionnaire songay-français*, pp. 98 and 309, lists *firzi*, 'green, to be green' and several derived forms, contrasting with *wanzata*, 'dark green'.

¹⁰³ Arabic loanwords, or words in which at least one element is an Arabic loanword, include the following; meanings and etymologies are provided only when not given by Bailleul, (*Dictionnaire bambara-français*). Etymologies discussed in the body of this article or in the preceding notes are underlined; those mentioned in Lagarde, *Influences de l'arabe sur la langue bambara*, but not retained by Bailleul are followed by a page number. Abada; abqari – from the Qur'anic *abqariyyin*, 'multicoloured carpet or spread' (cited in Q.55:76 only, but also present in other corpora); Ala, Allahu; alijinè; alikiyama, alikiyamajòdon; alikurana – from *al-Qur ān*, Lagarde p. 5; alimami; alisilamè, alisilamèw; alkaman – from *al-qamḥ*, 'wheat', Lagarde p. 5; alyakutu – from *al-yāqūt*, 'rubies' (collective term); aya; ayiwa; balawu; bato, batojòn; bikiriya – from *bikr*, *bikriyya*, 'virgin', 'virginal'; bisimilala; daaba; dabali – from the Qur'anic *dabbara* (root *d-b-r*, form II), 'to conduct, to plan'; dibaaji – from *dībāj*, 'brocade', 'velvet'; diinè; dinyè; dòròmè – ultimately from Greek *drachme*; dungew – from the possessive *dhū* (see more in text); fasani – Malian scholars see a relationship to *fassara*, 'to explain' (root *f-s-r*, form II), a relationship to the root *f-ṣ-l*, 'to detail' or to the root *f-ṣ-ḥ*, 'to be eloquent, to state clearly' is also possible; fèsèfèsè – Malian scholars derive this from *fassara*, 'to explain'; Firawuna – from *fir aun*, 'Pharaoh'; hadamadenw; hakè; hakili; halaki, halakilibaa; haramu; hère; hinè, hinèmansa, hinèrahmanmansa; hitaji – from the root *ḥ-w-j*, form VIII, 'to need'; hòrònmusow; Iblisa – ultimately from Greek (via Latin) *diabolos*; jaga; jahanama, jahanamako; jamakulu; Jana – from *al-jānn*, a plural of the root *j-n-n*, interpreted in v. 15 (following Suyūṭī and Ṣāwī) as a proper name; janajakèlaw; jatiya – from *dhāt*, 'essence'; jiidi – from the root *z-y-d*, 'to add, increase' – the etymologies suggested by Bailleul p. 182 and Lagarde p. 9 (respectively from the roots *j-h-d*, 'to make an effort' and *j-d-d*, 'to be new', 'to strive') seem less likely; jinèw; jinsiya – from *jins*, 'kind, species, gender', perhaps a loanword from Latin *genus*; jufa – from *jīfa*, 'corpse; animal that has not been ritually slaughtered', Lagarde p. 9; jurumu, jurumutòw; kaafiriw; kalisiyalen – from *khalīṣ*, 'to be pure'; kurana, kurani; ladili, ladiliya – from *al-adl*, 'justice'; lafiya; lahara, laharadon, laharajòdon; lajaba – from *al-adhb*, 'to torment, to punish', Lagarde p. 11; larabukan; lintatu – from *al-ḥinṭa*, 'grains of wheat'; luulu, luuluw; mantonw – from *umma*, 'community'; marjana, marjanu – from *marjān*, 'corals'; masiba – from *muṣṭaba*, pl. *maṣā ib*, 'catastrophe', or one of its dialectal forms; masreqi – from *mashriq*, 'east'; mèlèkè; mu'mininw – from *mu min*, nominative plural *mu minūn*, oblique plural *mu minīn*, 'believer(s)'; nafòlò – perhaps from *nafal* or *nāfila*, 'booty, present'; nagasi, nagasili; nahawtigiw – from *nahw*, 'study of syntax'; nèema, nèemanen; nòniya – from *nau*, 'variety,

sort’; nòorò – from *nūr*, ‘light’, Lagarde p. 14; ntamaro; rafrafu – from the Qur’anic *rafrāf*, ‘cushions’ (cited in Q. 55:76 only, but also present in other corpora); rahimi – from *rahīm*, ‘the Merciful’; rahmanu – from *rahmān*, ‘the All-Merciful’; rayhanu – from *rayhān*, contextually Q. 55: 12) ‘flower, blossom’, more generally ‘aromatic plant’; riba – from *ribā*, ‘financial interest (on a loan)’; rummanun – from *rummān*, ‘pomegranate’; sababu, sabu, barisabu; sabati; sarakati; sariya; selila; sifa, sifaya; silamèw, silamèya; sitanèw; sofu – from *ṣaff*, pl. *ṣufūf*, ‘rank’, ‘row’; sujudi – from *sujūd*, the prostration in Muslim worship; sunna – from *sunna*, ‘the practice of the Messenger Muhammad’, the Sunni schools of Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence; sura; ta’ala, *ta ala* – from the root ‘lw or ‘ly, form VI, in the epithet *Allāh ta ālā*, often translated as ‘God Most High’; tawhiidi – from *tawhīd*, ‘affirmation of the unicity of God, theology’; tawilu – from *ta wīl*, ‘deep interpretation’; tuma – from the particle *thumma*, ‘then’; waati; wala – from *aw lā*, ‘or’, ‘or not’, Lagarde p. 17; wari – from the Qur’anic hapax *wariq*, ‘coined money’ (Q. 18:19); watuhu – from the root *w-ṭ-*, ‘to copulate’; ya – from the vocative particle *yā*; yaakubaya – from the root *q-w-y*, ‘to be strong’, with metathesis; yakutu – see above, *alyakutu*; yamaru. Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur ān* (Baroda, 1938; Leiden, 2007) is an important source concerning the Persian, Greek, Latin, North Semitic and Ethiopic etymons and cognates of Arabic words.

¹⁰⁴ This may be correlated to the importance of the notion of ‘the infinitesimally small’ in the region’s ‘traditional’ religions. With respect to the Dogon, see Marcel Griaule, *Dieu d’eau: Entretiens avec Ogotemmêli* (Paris, 1948; repr. 1975) (English translation: *Conversations with Ogotemmêli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* [London, 1965]), Fourth and Twenty-third Days (pp. 28 and 139–42 of the French edition); Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen, *Le renard pâle, Vol. I: Le mythe cosmogonique, Fascicule I: La création du monde* (Paris, 1965), chapter 1. With respect to the Bamana, see Germaine Dieterlen, *Essai sur la religion bambara* (Paris, 1951; new edn. Brussels, 1988), chapter 1 in the 1951 edition (especially pp. 28–30 in the 1988 edition); Youssouf Tata Cissé, “Signes graphiques, représentations, concepts et tests relatifs à la personne chez les Malinké et les Bambara du Mali”, in *La Notion de personne en Afrique noire* (Paris, 1973), esp. pp. 132–4. Were Islamic concepts used to reinforce and further develop local ones, or are they the source of these local concepts?

¹⁰⁵ *Ka* is the infinitive marker while *na* and *bò* are the root forms of these verbs. (However, it should be noted that Bamana conjugation is largely based on the use of particles; the verb is directly modified – receiving a suffix – only in the positive perfect.) Cf. the commentaries on Q. 55:10, three occurrences; Q. 55:46, one occurrence; Q. 55:15, three occurrences. These special syntactic traits are analysed at greater length in Tamari, ‘A Bamana Commentary on *Sūrat al-Wāqī a* (Q. 56)’, pp. 138–42, and eadem, ‘L’enseignement de l’unicité divine expliqué en bambara’.

¹⁰⁶ The stylistic significance of repetition in Manding oral literature has been excellently discussed by Ingse Skattum ('De Bakoroba Koné à Camara Laye: La répétition comme trait d'oralité dans la littérature mandingue traditionnelle et moderne', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oslo, 1991). Interjections include: *aa*, *dè*, *ha*, *haa*, *han*, *òo*, *wo*. Focalising particles include *dun* and *yèrè*. Emphatic particles include *de* and *sa*. Onomatopoeic expressions include *pa* (in the locution *pèrèn pa*, repeated three consecutive times), evocative of thunder, and *buru* (four consecutive times), evoking the sound of a large number of people moving about together (v. 37); onomatopoeia is, however, far more highly developed in some of the scholar's other commentaries.

¹⁰⁷ Denise Masson has attempted a detailed analysis of the symbolism of these three natural phenomena in the Qur'an (*L'eau, le feu, la lumière d'après la Bible, le Coran et les traditions monothéistes* [Paris, 1985]), while Heidi Toelle has analysed that of the four elements, earth, air, water, and fire (*Le Coran revisité: Le feu, l'eau, l'air et la terre* [Damascus, 1999]).

¹⁰⁸ Cf. the commentaries on Q. 56:26 and on the *Umm al-barāhīn*.

¹⁰⁹ Especially in explanations of Muḥammad b. Yūsuf as-Sanūsī's *Umm al-barāhīn*, but also of shorter, simpler introductory manuals (cf. Tamari, 'L'enseignement de l'unicité divine'). The Fulfulde oral system of theological instruction, or *kaḅḅe*, also appeals to logical concepts (see especially Brenner, *West African Sufi* and idem, *Réflexions sur le savoir islamique en Afrique de l'Ouest*).

¹¹⁰ Similar configurations appear in the Arabic medieval romance of *Sīrat Sayf b. Dhī Yazan*, as retold by another Bamana-speaking scholar to members of his religious study group. See Tal Tamari, 'Les œuvres orientales parmi les sources d'inspiration de la littérature orale ouest-africaine', esp. pp. 230–33.

¹¹¹ For a theoretical discussion of the Qur'anic text itself, see for example Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur'an: Themes and Style* (London, 1999). In Burkina Faso and Guinea also, it would seem, both dimensions are relevant. See Roger Botte, 'Stigmates sociaux et discriminations religieuses: L'ancienne classe servile au Fuuta Jaloo', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 34, nos. 133–5 (1994), pp. 109–36; Maud Saint Lary, 'J'épargne pour l'Au-delà': Le salut comme rhétorique de la réislamisation au Burkina Faso', *L'Homme* 198–9 (2011), pp. 227–46. In contrast, Paul Marty assumed that images of paradise were interpreted in an exclusively literal manner; see his *Études sur l'islam et les tribus du Soudan*, vol. IV, pp. 274–5; idem, *Études sur l'islam en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1922), pp. 281–4.

¹¹² Angelika Neuwirth, 'Qur'ānic Literary Structure Revisited: *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* between Mythic Account and Decodation of Myth', Sebastian Günther, 'Fictional Narration and Imagination within an Authoritative Framework: Towards a New Understanding of Ḥadīth'

and Wim Raven, ‘The Biography of the Prophet and its Scriptural Basis’, all in Stefan Leder, ed., *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1998), respectively pp. 388–420, 433–71 and 421–31) have recently reminded us of the narrative content of the Qur’an and hadith.

¹¹³ See, in addition to the oral adaptation of *Strat Sayf* just mentioned, that of Alexandre Dumas’ novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (Tal Tamari, ‘La littérature française en traduction bambara : l’exemple du *Comte de Monte-Cristo*’, *Journal des Africanistes* 80, nos. 1-2, 2010, pp. 151-175), esp. pp. 156-162.

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., Pascal James Imperato, *Buffoons, Queens and Wooden Horsemen: The Dyo and Gouan Societies of the Bambara of Mali* (New York, 1983); Paolo F. de Moraes Farias, ‘Pilgrimages to “Pagan” Mecca in Mandenka Stories of Origin Reported from Mali and Guinea-Conakry’, in Karin Barber and Paolo F. de Moraes Farias, eds, *Discourse and Its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts* (Birmingham, 1989), pp. 152–70; Mahir Saul, ‘Islam et appropriation mimétique comme ressource historique de la religion bobo’, *Journal des Africanistes* 67, no. 2 (1997), pp. 7–24; Tal Tamari, ‘Notes sur les représentations cosmogoniques dogon, bambara et malinké et leurs parallèles avec la pensée antique et islamique’, *Journal des Africanistes* 71, no. 1 (2001), pp. 93–111, and eadem, ‘Les religions au Mali, cent vingt ans de regard ethnographique’, in Françoise Le Guennec-Coppens, Marina Lafay and Elisée Coulibaly, eds, *Regards scientifiques sur l’Afrique depuis les indépendances* (Paris, 2016), pp. 239–62.

Bamana Transcription and English Translation

The transcription and translation include all elements of the scholar's discourse, including hesitations and repetitions, with the exception (in the translation only, after Q. 55:5) of certain occurrences of *a ko*, 'he, she, it said/it is said'. On the other hand, for reasons of space, and also because it was felt that, in a written representation, it would not significantly enhance understanding of the discourse situation, the respondent's remarks and exclamations have been omitted, in conformity with general practice.

In order to make apparent the parsing and translation process, Qur'anic citations are preserved in the transcription (but not the translation). The latter preserves only those Arabic words that are necessary for the comprehension of Bamana sentences, whether they appear as citations or function as integral parts of those sentences. Such Arabic words include both Qur'anic terms (usually, ones that are being cited for the second or third time) and non-Qur'anic words and expressions.

Verse numbers have been added in order to facilitate reading; they were not mentioned in the spoken discourse.

The Bamana transcription is in the orthography official for this language in Mali (simpler version: *è* and *ò* correspond to the open vowels *ε* and *ɔ*; tone is not marked).

Arabic transliteration conforms to the personal pronunciation of the scholar, reading from the Warsh *qirā a*.

To allow the reader who may not be familiar with Bamana access to the rhetorical structure of the appended discourse, the following graphic conventions have been observed:

Transcription:

Italics: Qur'anic words enunciated in the scholar's discourse;

Heavyset italics: Arabic words and phrases not drawn from the Qur'an;

Underlining: French words and loanwords.

Translation:

Italics: Qur'an citations embedded in Bamana sentences, as well as the English translations of Qur'anic words, when these are, very exceptionally, used for their meaning values in Bamana sentences (Q.55:2 and Q.55:7);

Heavyset italics: English translations of non-Quranic Arabic words *and phrases*, used for their meaning values in Bamana sentences;

Double quote marks “ ”: placed around Bamana words cited prior to definition and analysis, rather than employed as functional parts of a sentence.

In accordance with general practice, square brackets [] are used to indicate information implicit in the original discourse.

TRANSCRIPTION

Sūratu l-Raḥmān. nin ye *raḥmānu* sura kofòli ye.

al-rahmanu sura, ale jiginna ka kira to Maka. fò ni a kèra, aya min b'a kòndò, ni a nana a b'a fò yòrò min ka fò *yas aluhu man ft'l-samāwāti wa'l-arḍi*, o aya jiginna Madina. rahmani yèrè sura, aya min b'a kòndò, aya bi wolonfila ani segin wala wòorò. o de b'a kòndò. o bée ye a yèrè aya ye.

bi-smi'llāhi'l-raḥmān 'l-raḥīm. *bi-smi'llāhi*: an y'a sinsin ni Ala ta'ala tògòw barikamaw ye. *al-raḥmān*: Ala min ye diyènhinèlabòlentigi ye, *al-raḥīm*: laharahinèkèrèkèrèlentigi don. rahmani yèrè, a daminè ka kè ar-rahmani ye. fòlò kaafiriw, Ala kira y'a jiran k'a fò, ko fila kana kafo Ala la. maa kana a fò, ko Ala ye fila ye. barisa, Ala ko, a' kana filankafo ne ma, ne ye kelen de ye. òo! kira kèra sa, kira b'a fò min kè, ko, *yā Allāh, yā raḥmān*. o tuma, kaafiriw ko, ko, aa! ko a kèra fila ye. *Allāhu* ye Ala tògò ye, *al-raḥmān* fana. o tuma, ko kira, kira, e yèrè ko anw kana filankafo Ala ma, e dun ko *al-raḥmāni*. *al-raḥmāni* ye jumèn ye? o la, o tuma, Ala ye aya jigin, ka sura jigin a yòrò tògò la. Ala ko, k'a jiran k'a fò, *al-raḥmāni* tè filankafoya ye. ale tògò ye *al-raḥmāni*, o kosòn, a ko, *al-raḥmān*, ko rahmani yèrè, o kosòn nahawtigiw ko *al-raḥmāni* ye ko *mubtada u* don, kumadaminèyòrò, o tuma, a ka *khabaru* de bè nyini k'a d'a ma. o tuma, ko *al-raḥmān*. Allahu ko ten.

1. a ko *al-raḥmān*. a ko, hinèmansa ye. hinèrahmanmansa ye.
2. *allama*. ale ye dònnya di mògò ma min ka d'a ye, a y'o tigi dònnya *al-qur āna*. a y'o tigi dònnya kurana na. o de kòrò bè ten.
3. *khalāqa*. a ye dali kè. *al-insāna*. hadamadenw. *insānu*. hadamadenw jinsiya la. *insānu* ye jinsiya, a ye hadamaden *jins*, a ye jinsiya da.
4. *allamahu*. ni a ka sòrò k'a dònnya *al-bayāna*, kumakan na. a sòròla k'a dònnya kumakan na.
5. *al-shams*. a ko tile, *wa l-qamaru*, ani kalo, *bi-ḥusbānin*, olu fila, u bè boli ni jateminè de ye, jateya, an bè jate kè ni olu fila de ye. u fila bè boli, olu fila bè boli, o tuma, ni damajiran ye.
6. *wa'l-najmu*, a ko, ani *najmu*, o de ye dolo ye, minnunw bè ni . . . olu ye fènw ye, min bè ni saanakolo t'a la, kamii falenfènw na, u b'a fò ten, *al-najmu*. fèn min bè yen, ni saanakolo t'a la, a bè woyo ka taa ten. *wa'l-shajaru*. ani *shajaru*. *shajaru* ye mun ye? o de ye fèn ye, saanakolo bè fèn minnunw na, minnunw kòròtalen bè. a ko, nununw fila, fèn o fèn bè k'a fò, *yasjudāni*, olu fila bèe lajèlen de bè sujudi bin. *yasjudāni*, nununw fila bèe, a bèe bè sujudi bin Allahu ye. ka na fèn ye, fèn min bè yen, n'a kèlen bè k'o lanyini u fila la.
7. *wa'l-samā ā*. a ko, sangaba *rafa aha*. Allahu ye sangaba, a ye a sangaba kòròta, *wa waḍa a*, a ye sabatili kè *al-mīzāna*, a ye sabatili kè *al-mīzāna* ni ladiliya ye. mizanu bè yenni

nò, ni i ka fèn bilala a la, nyuman min bè bila a kònò, nyumanfèn, nyuman min bè bila a kònò, ani juguman min bè bila a kònò, i tè tònò k'a fò, k'i ka nyuman, k'a fò dò b'o jè, ko ka taa fèn fara i ka juguman kan, mun kosòn i ka minè o la, o tè. nin min dira i ma, o y'i ka sara de ye.

8. a ko, o tuma, *allā taṭakaw*. a ye pesilan bila. *allā taṭakaw fī'l-mīzān*.

9. *wa aqīmū'l-wazna bi'l-qisṭ wa-lā tukhsirū'l-mīzāna*,

10. *wa'l-arḍa waḍa ahā li'l-anām*.

11. *fihā fākihātun wa'l-nakhlu dhātu'l-akmām*.

12. *wa'l-ḥabbu dhū'l-aṣfi wa'l-rayḥān*.

13. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān?*

8. ko mizani bilala, ka mizani sabati, ka sumanikèlan jiran mun na? o kèra mun kosòn? *allā taṭakaw*, aw kana taa yaada, aw kana dansago kè. n'aw bè sumani kè, aw k'a kè ladiliya la. aw kana tònòni kè peselikèlan na. peselikèlan dira an ma mun na? dò ta kana taa dò fè. n'i bè sumani kè n'o ye, o tuma, i b'a dòn k'a fò a dafara wala a ma dafa. o tuma, i kana a dafabali di maaw ma, i kana dò ta dafalen minè, k'i ta dafabali di o tigi ma, o kana kè. k'a fò k'i b'o kè k'o kòrò ye ni ne m'o kè, ne tè na bò, o kèli de bè e to, o de b'a to i tè bò. barisa o min tora i fè, o dònni dònni min bè to i fè, ko e yèrè fè k'o de bè na a to, n'o tè ko ni e ma a kè ten ka e na bin, o tuma ni i y'o tigè mògòw kun, k'o dònni dònni fara nyòon kan, laharajòdon o de y'i binnan ye. barisabu k'a d'a kan, o min faralen don i ta kan, a tè to i kun, i ta tè. Ala b'a dòn. Ala ye mansa min ye, ladili don. Ala fana tè tònòlikèlaw dèmè. o tuma, i ye o maaw minnu tònò, a bè taa olu ka hakè bòosi i la, k'o di u ma. a mana caya e nyèna cogo o cogo, k'i hakili la k'i donna da la, i bòra da la dè. Ala ka anw kisi. o kosòn, ni i bè sumani kè, i k'a kè k'a tilen, i k'a kè ni tiyèn ye. o de, a ko, aw kana dansago kè, *fī'l-mīzāni*. aw kana dansago kè mizani na, fèn min ni peseli bè kè n'o ye.

9. *wa aqīmū*. aw ye tilenni kè. *'l-wazna*, aw ka peselikèlan, aw y'a tilen *bi'l-qisṭi*, ni ladiliya ye. aw k'a kè ni ladiliya ye, aw k'a tilen k'a nyè. *wa-lā tukhsirū'l-mīzāna*. *wa-lā tukhsirū* aw kana taa nagasili kè mògòw kun, *al-mīzāna*, aw kana taa peseli kè k'a nagasi mògòw kun. ni e bè taa fèn feere mògòw ma, baarakèla minnu y'u ka suman cè, ka na, ka n'a di e ma, i ka basikili la, e b'a ton a kan, ka sòrò k'a tigè, ko a t'a dòn. n'a t'a dòn, dònni ye Ala ta ye. mansa min ye e yèrè dònnya a nyè na, ka dònni bòosi nin na, o mansa kòni b'a dòn ka tèmèn e yèrè kan. o tuma, ni i y'a kè ka nin jè, Ala bè k'a fò ten de, ko *mithqāli dharratin*¹¹⁴ nyòonna. nyuman, o tè to a kèbaa ye. wa a fana a juguman, a tè to a kèbaa la. n'i y'a kè k'a nyè, a bè taa nyuman jir'i la. ni i y'a kè k'a tinyè, Ala don, fèn tè dògòya mansa min ka yeli ma, a nyè b'i la. ko tè bonyè mansa min ka fòli ma, a nyè b'i la, a sigilen bè k'i kònò. ni i bè k'a kè, ko a ka di i la dinyè na yan, kalanbaaw b'a fò ko a man nyi. i tulon bè a fòkan na, ko a man nyi. o de kèra i nyèna nsiirindakan ye, i bè yèlè o fòtuma na. aa! kasidon bè lahara dè. ko mizanu bilala.

10. *wa'l-arḍa*. ani dugukolo *waḍa ahā*, a ye dugukolo sabati, a y'o sabati mun na? *li'l-anāmi*. ka na dafènw. a y'o sabati ka na dafènw na, jinèw ni hadamadenw, ani hadamadenw ni jinèw fila tana, fèn minnu bè dugukolokò kan yan, a kèlen bè ka dugukolo bila ka na anw ye.

11. *fihā fākihātun*. mugamafènw bè dugukolo nin kò kan yan, anw bè fèn minnu dun. *wa'l-nakhlu*, ani ntamarosunw, ntamarow b'a la yan, *dhātu'l-akmām* fènw b'a la yan, minnu ye ngònkunw dungew ye, i n'a fò ntamarow ni npekuw bè cogo min. olu ye ngònkunw dungew ye.

12. *wa'l-ḥabbu*. ani fènkisèw b'a la, *dhū'l-aṣfi*, min ye nenyenw dungew ye, i n'a fò anw ka suman nununw, anw bè minnu wòrò ka bò u fara la. olu bè wele ko nenyèmafènw. olu falenyòrò ye dugukolokò kan yan. Ala kèlen bè k'o di anw ma yan. anw ka balo de bè bò olu la. *wa'l-rayḥān*. ani rayhanu, rayhanu, o ye toro nununw ye, ani fèn o fèn min ye toro ni u nyògònna ye, olu bèe lajèlen ka kan.

13. a ko o tuma, Ala bè ka kuma fò, a ko *tukadhdhibāni*, ya aw jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, yala aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa? aw Ma kèlen bè nèema minnu kè aw ye, yali aw bè sòsòli kè o jumèn de la? aw bè na fitiriwaleya kè wa? k'a fò, k'o tètè tinyè ye. a ko, *rahmāni* yèrè kurana kòndò, *al-rahmān*, k'a fò sisan, a ko *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān?* o tuma, a bi saba ni kelen, o de bè *al-rahmāni* kòndò.

14. a ko, Ala *kalaqa*, a ye dali kè, *al-insāna*, a ye dali kè Adama na. a ye Adama da mun na? a ye Adama da *min ṣalṣālin*, a ye Adama da ka bò bògò jalen na. bògò min ni i y'a kònkòn, i bè mankan mèn o la. Adama dala ka bò o de la. o bògò nin, n'i tun y'a bilalen ye, i b'a fò jumèn don? i b'a fò dè, *ka'l-fakhkhār*, i n'a fò bògò tobilen, ni i ye bògò tobi, k'a kè i n'a fò ntèkène, k'a tobi k'a ja k'a bila. Adama dara bògò min na, a tun bè i n'a fò o nyògònna de. ni i y'a kè tenni nò dòròn, i bè mankan mèn a la. a ko, anw k'a dòn, anw dara ka bò o de la. han! o kosòn, i kana waso, i k'i miiri. barisa n'i y'i waso, i bè ka taama, ka i sen kòròta ka cun, i bè ka cun min kan, i bòra o de la. i taasi k'i miiri. i bòra o min na fana, i bè na tila ka segin o la, i taasi k'i miiri. ni a' y'i segin a la, a' bè na tila k'i bò a la, i taasi k'i miiri. a bè na tila ka taa e nyininka, yala e ye mun kè? ne y'i da ka na, i ye mun kè? donk, a bè fèn dò de nyini i fè wo! i nakun y'o de ye, gansan tètè. a bè mun nyini i fè? ni i nana dinyè na yan, a ma sanu nyini i fè. a mago t'o la. sanutigi don. a ma wari nyini i fè, a mago t'o la. nyènafin bè Ala la, ko e nakun ye ko yaasa a ka to k'an filè, n'o tètè, a bè na bèe faa ka ban, n'a ye bèe faa ka ban, jònni bè na a nyènajè? a ma an da o kama. a ye an da mun kama? kòngòtò tètè, k'an bè ci kè k'a bè balo o la. o tètè. barisabu, yanni a ka anw da, ci tun tètè wo, foyi tun tètè yen, a ye ci nin de bò k'a di anw ma, k'o kè ka anw yèru dèmè. ni a ye anw faa ka ban tuma min na, cikèko t'a la, o tuma a bè na to kòngò la wa? *lā*, o tètè. Ala ye an da mun kama? a ye an da de, ko an ka bato kè.¹¹⁴ donk, o tuma, ni i nana dinyè na, i ka a bato. ni i kèra Ala batojòn ye, laharajòdon, i

nyininkali bè taa kè, fèn min bè na taa nyini i fè, o tuma o nyiniko bè nyè. i kana nyinè o kò. o de ye jòn dakun ye. o kosòn, i kana waso, i kana i yèrè bonyè.

15. *wa kalaqa*. a ye dali kè. a ye dali kè *al-jānna*. a ye dali kè Jana na, Jana k'o ye jinèw fa ye. jinèw fa, o ye jumèn ye? o ye Iblisa ye. a y'a da *min mārijin*, a y'a da ka bò tasuma la, ka bò mana na, *min nārin*, ka bò tasuma na. o tuma, tasuma min bè yen, ni a bè mana, a sisi kalisiyalen don, o de kòrò, o tuma, Iblisa dalen o la. Iblisa dara tasuma de la. o kosòn, jinèw, jinèw ye tasuma de ye. jinèw tasumalama de don. jinèw bée fa ye Iblisa ye. nin min kèra silamèw ye, olu bè wele ko jinè. ninw minnu kèra kaafiriw ye, olu ye sitanèw ye. u b'olu wele ten, ko sitanèw.

16. o tuma, *tukadhdhibāni*, ya jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā* yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, ni a' Ma nèema jumèn de ye sa? aw tun tè yen, a ye a' da. aw tun tè fèn ye, a ye a' kè fèn ye, ka an lakodòn, k'an se fèn na, an ka fèn kè, o ye hinè de ye. ka finyè minè k'a bila, o ye Ala bolo koba ye. a y'o kè anw ye. anw ye mun k'a ye? o tuma, mun ka kan? anw ka sòn o la. a bée n'a ta, anw bè ka a sòsò. yala, anw b'a sòsò nèema jumèn de la sa?

17. o tuma, Ala, *huwa* Ala, *rabbu'l-mashriqayni*, Ala de ye kòrònfilatigi don. fòlòfòlò, kabini fòlò, siyènsi tun ma sòn nin yòrò nin ma k'a fò ko kòròn fila. kurani de y'a fò. olu tun ma sòn a ma. ko yala, k'o bè se ka kè cogo di? mè a nana ye tuun, n'a fòra ko kòròn fila, mun don? i b'a sòrò sisan ni tilema sera, i bè na tile lajè, tile bè taa bò bùyòrò kura la. ni fonènè sera, i bè na tile lajè, i b'a sòrò tile taara bò bùyòrò kura la. o tuma, o fila don. tilematuma, a ka kòròn ye min ye, o bè yen, a bè taa yenkeya yen. pasike masreqi yèrè kòrò, ko yenkeyayòrò, a bè taa bò yòrò min na. o tuma, o ye tilema maa se, i b'a sòrò a bòlen bè nin fè. o tuma, ni tilema nana ban, ko anw bè na taa fonènè ta a tègè ma, i b'a sòrò tile munumununa, a bè na jò ten. o tuma, nin ye bùyòrò ye, nin ye bùyòrò ye. *wa rabbu'l-maghribayni*. ani tilebin fila, ani o tigi. n'a bòra nin na, a bè taa bin binyòrò min na, ani n'a bòra nin na, a bè taa bin binyòrò min na, o fila tè kelen ye. n'u bùyòrò fòra nyòdon kò, u binyòrò be taa fò nyòdon kò. mansa min y'o kè, o de ye Ala ye. o fila tigi de ye Ala ye.

18. *tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

19. *maraja*. Ma min ye cili kè *al-bahrayni*, a ye cili kè ba fila la, kògòji ani baji. kògòji tè se ka min, kògò de kèlen bè k'o goya. o tuma, baji, anw b'o min, o ka di. nka Ala kèlen bè k'a kè kògòji ni baji, u fila bè taa da nyòdon na ten, i bè taa i jò k'a filè, kala tè se ka don u ni nyòdon cè, nka olu fila bè nyòdon na. nka olu fila barilen don nyògòn na tenni nò. *yaltaqiyāni*, k'u fila bè nyòdon kumbèn mògòw ka nyè yeli la. ni i taara i jò k'a lajè, i b'a fò k'u fila bè dalen bè nyòdon na.

20. *barzakhun*. a ko, o tuma, *barzakhun*, a ko kumaniyanan, de balaminifèn, *barzakhun* kòrò ko sinsan. ni i ye sinsan da k'a bila sisan, fèn min bè sinsan kò fè, ani fèn min bè yanni nò, ni

yenfêta ko k'a bè na nin nò fê, o bè na ti sinsan na, o b'i jò yen. o tuma, ni yanninò ta ye yèrè ko k'a bè taa yen fê, o bè taa ti sinsan na, o b'i jò yen. *barzakh* kòrò ye tenni nò. ko *barzakh* de bè, o tuma, ji duman nin ni ji goman nin nyògòn cè. kògòji bè na, ka na tengun baji la, baji yèrè bè na tengun kògòji la, u fila bè woyo. baji tè woyo ka don kògòji kònò. kògòji yèrè tè se ka woyo ka don baji kònò. a ko, aw nyè b'o min na dè, ko o tuma *barzakhun* dò de bè u ni nyògòn cè, ni o tè, u bè don nyògòn na. anw b'o ye, o y'a ka sebaaya dò ye. a ko, *lā yabghiyāni*, olu fila dò kòni tè nyinini kè fewu ka fò k'u ka taa nyaamitò kèlen na. baji tè se k'a fò k'a bè taa nyaami kògòji la, kògòji yèrè fana tè se k'a fò k'a bè taa nyaami baji la. anw bè taa anw jò k'u lajè, anw nyè bè jumèn na u cè? ò! Ala ko, ko fèn min bè u ni nyògòn cè, a bè k'o de tògò fò, k'o tògò ye ko *barzakh*, *barzakh* de bè u ni nyògòn cè.

21. *tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinè ani hadamaden fila, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

22. *yukhrajū'l-lu lu*. luulu bè bò, *wā'l-marjānu*, ani marjana. luulu bè bò, ani marjana. *minhumā*, o bè bò ba fila nin na. luulu bè bò ba fila nin na. ba dò bè yenni nò, an ka nin ba nunnu, i b'a sòrò, a dòw luulu b'a kònò, kògòji, a bè ten. marjana nununw, u bè bò ji de kònò. olu bè bò nununw kònò. a b'o kè, o bèe bè kè ni Ala ka sebaaya ye.

23. *tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

24. *wā lahu'l-jāwar*, kurunbaw bè a fè, Ma nin fè. *al-munsha ātu*. kurunw minnunw bè yen, ni oluw ye sindilifèn ye. *fī'l-baḥr*, ba la. o kurunw nununw bonyè ni u janya, ni i y'u ye, *ka'l-lā m*, u bè i n'a fò kulu belebelew ni bonyè na ani kòròta la.

25. *tukadhdhibāni*. jinn ani hadamadenw, aw fila, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā* ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

26. *kullu man*, maa kelen o kelen, fèn kelen o kelen, a b'a fò ten, *kullu man*, fèn kelen o kelen, *alayhā* n'o bè dugukolokò kan, kabii nyènamafènw na, *fānin*, a bèe lajèlen ye halakilibaa ye. ni i y'i taasi k'i miiri, saya tè k'a fò hadamadenw dama don, saya tè k'a fò . . . ko anw b'an miiri, ko yala ni anw sara ka ban, k'a fò ko jinèw, ko olu ka sa ka ban, anw b'a fò ko sitanèw, u bè sa ka ban, olu salen kò ka ban, yala, o tuma, an ka na anw miiri, ko yala fèn jumèn bè na . . . fèn de bè na tò wa? *lā*, fèn tè to yan. ni bè fèn minnu na, ko anw bè olu dòn, k'a fò o tuma saya ye o dama de ye, anw ka dòn ta ye, anw bè se ka miiri, daabaw bè na fara anw kan. olu bè sa. anw ka sòn o ma. jiriw tè to yen. kuluw tè to yen. faraw tè to yen. dugukolo yèrè min filè, n'anw senw filè o kan, o tè to yen. barisa fèn dòw don. Ala ko ten. fèn o fèn bè yen, k'a fò ko ni de bè e la, a bèe lajèlen, a bèe bè faa. a si tè to yen fòlò. kunun mana kè tuma min na, a' bè sòrò ka segin.

27. *wā yabqā wajhu rabbika*. Muhammad, e Ma jatiya, o de bè to. n'a fòra ko *wajhu*, *wajhu* kòrò ye larabukan na, ko nyèda. *wajhu* kòrò ten. *laysa ka mithlihi shay un*.¹¹⁴ *laysa shay un: laysa*, foyi tè, *ka mithlihi*, i n'a fò, Mansa min nyòonna. o tuma, Ala ni anw ka ko bèe fòlen

don nyòon kò. pasike nyè bè fèn o fèn na, kòfèla b'ò la. ni i y'a ye ko nyè bè fèn o fèn na, kòfèla b'ò la. Ala bonyèna ka bò nyèdaya ma, Ala bonyèna ka bò kòfètigiya ma. kòdon fan tè Ala la, nyèsin fan tè Ala la. o tuma, Ala ka *wajhu* ye jatiya de ye, Ala yèrè. a bè fò jatiya. karisa ne ye nin kè, **li-wajhik**, n y'a kè e de kosòn. u b'a fò ten, larabukan na. ni i b'a fè k'a fò mògò ma, karisa n y'a kè i kosòn, i bè se k'a fò ten, n y'a kè e de kosòn. o tuma, ni a ko, o tuma, k'a fò, *wa yabqā wajhu rabbika*, o tuma, o b'a fò, tawilu de bè alikurana na. nin ye tawilu de ye. tawilu kòrò ye mun ye? fasani min bè na, n'a tè se k'a fò a yèrè yeko kan, an b'a fò nin lanyini ye mun ye? Ala ye nin fò, a y'a fò ka da mun kan? a y'a fò ka da nin de kan, nin de ko don. o ye nin ye. o ye tawilu ye alikurana kònò. ni i y'o yòròw ye alikurana kònò, u b'ò wele ko tawilu, o bè i ka tawhidi jiidi, o bè Ala kelenmandiya dònni jiidi jònw dusukun na. o b'a to danfara min bè jòn yèrè ni Ala cè, i b'a dòn, i b'i kumako dòn. kuma yèrè la jòn ni Ala ta'ala, aw bè na taa . . . kuma dò bè yen, aw bè na taa don nyòon kan, aw bè fara ka bò nyògòn na. ni i ye kuma min ye, o ye nin kuma nin ye. anw ye nyèdatigiw ye, Ala ye jatiya de ye. o kosòn, a bè wele ten. a ko, *wa yabqā*, fèn bèe bè na ban, *wa yabqā wajhu rabbika*, Muhammad, *wa yabqā wajhu rabbika*. èe Muhammad, Ma jatiya, o de bè na to yen. ni ni bèe bòra ka ban tuma min na, foyi tè yen tugun, Ala ta'ala bè na a ka mansaya se, a bè na jigin, ka n'a ka mansaya se, ka na n'a ye dinyè sangaba hakè fòlò la. ka sòrò ka na weleda kè dafènw na, a b'a sòrò bèe salen don. a ko, minnu ko, k'olu ye Ala ye, ko ka mògòw k'u bato, Firawuna, i bè min? Firawuna bè min? o tuma, Ala bè na wele kè dundariw la, ka na wele kè dinyèmaramansakèw la. ko, yala u bè min? jabibaa tè wo. bèe dadennen don. bèe dadennen don. Ma bè sòrò k'a f'u ye, ko o tuma, ko bi, fèn bèe banna sa fò ne yèrè Ala ta'ala. wa ne de bè yan, ne ye nin de fò wo, ne ye fèn min fò bi don de. foyi tè tugun. o tuma, Ala ka mansaya se, a sabatiyòrò filè. a ko, o tuma, e Ma jatiya bè to. *dhū'l-jalāl*. e Ma min ye bonyètigi ye, a ka bon fèn bèe ye. *wa'l-ikrām*, ani fonisireyatigi don, ka na mu'minunw ye. a ye nèema kè mu'minunw kan ni silamèya ye. olu sònna. u ye silamèya fòkan mèn, yòrò min, u sònna. Ala y'o nèema kè u ye, o ye fonisireya ye.

28. *tukadhdhibāni*, jinn ani hadamadenw, aw fila bè sòsòli kè *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

29. Ma nin. *yas aluhu man*. n ko, fènw min bè Ma nin deli, *fī'l-samāwāti*, fen minnu bè san na, *wa'l-arḍi*, ani dugukolo, o de kòrò ye, fèn bèe bè hitaji ka taa Ma nin ma. *kulla yawmin*, don kelen o kelen, waati o waati, *huwa*, Ma, *fī sha nin*, a bè ko kura la. Ma nin ka ko bè bange, don o don kabako ko dò, a b'ò bange. an b'a fò, èe nin yèrè bè kè bi tugun wa? Mansa min ka ko bè ten. a nyuman n'a juguman, Mansa min ka ko bè ten, a ka sebaaya la, fòlò la, kabini nyènamaya la ka taa se saya ma, ani bonyèna ani dògòya ma, ani jòn ka nafolotigiya ma ani fantanya ma, don o don, i n'o ye. e bòra dò fè yen, i n'o tun bè barokè la, a' ka baro duman, k'a fò ko sini ni Ala y'o jiran an na, an ka nyòon kurbèn yan. a bè na f'i ye, k'i ka taa k'o janajakèlaw bè sen na, k'u bè k'i kònò. i b'i dogo dò la o ka gèlèya fè, k'a fò n'a nyè dara

n kan, a bè na kuma dò fò n ye, o man di n ye, barisa se t'a ye. sòni e bè na i sigilentò ka i tulomada, ka fò k'o kèra fènbatigi dò ye. i bè dò ye, e bè jòn a na, sòni i bè na mèn k'o kèra mansakè ye. i bè dò ye, ka a fò ko e nyagalen don o la, k'o ye faama ye, sòni i bè n'a mèn k'a fòra k'o ka fanga tinyèna. mansa min ka ko n'a bè boli ten, don o don ko dò bè yen. tuma bèe, don o don, waati o waati, Mansa min ka konyè a bè ko kura dò la. o de ye Ala ka baara de ye.

30. *tukadhdhibāni*. jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila bè sòsòli kè *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

31. *sanafrughu lakum ayyuha'l-thaqalān*, ya aw giriyalenmafèn fila, jinn ani hadamaden ko don, anw bè na kèrèkèrèli kè aw ye. a dòròn, an bè na kèrèkèrèli kè aw ye don dò, ka na taa aw wuli ka jò, ka na fèsèfèsè, aw ka nyuman ani juguman na, n tè aw to yen.

32. *tukadhdhibāni. fa-tukadhdhibān*. o tuma, *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*. *tukadhdhibān*, jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, o tuma, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

33. *yā ma shara'l-jinni wa'l-ins, in istaṭa tumu an tanfudhū min aqṭāri'l-samāwāti wa'l-arḍi fa-nfudhū, lā tanfudhūna illā bi-sultānin*.

34. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān?*

33. Ala ko, *yā ma shara'l-jinni wa'l-ins*, nin b'a sòrò, anw bè kafo kènè kan, nin b'a sòrò, an sigilen bè, an bè kafo kènè kan, ni an sera kafo kènè kan tuma min, i b'a sòrò hadamadenw jòlen bè kènè kònò, hadamadenw jòlen bè kènè kònò. jinèw nalen bè ka na olu kooli. mèlèkè sòfu sòfu sòfu, mèlèkèw jòlen bè ka hadamadenw ni jinèw k'olu kooli. mèlèkèw kèlen bè k'u kooli sòfu sòfu sòfu. sòfu dòw b'u kooli k'u jò. sofu wèrè bè na, u bè na u kooli k'u jò, sofu wèrè bè na, u bè u kooli k'u jò. mèlèkè kelen dò bè na, n'o nana, o bè na hadamadenw bèe lajèlen minè, k'u bèe kè a tègè kònò, k'i kògò f'a la, k'i jò n'u ye ten. mèlèkè wèrè bè na o kò fè, o bè sòrò ka na hadamadenw bèe bila a tègè kònò ten, k'a tègèdenkòninin fila k'a kè ten. oluw n'o mèlèkè ninnu bèe lajèlen dara. o tuma, Ala bè weleda hadamadenw na, n'aw ko aw ka kekun, k'aw ka fèla ka bon, kuma o kuma tun mana fò aw ye, aw ko k'aw bè bòlan bò o la. wa an selen bè kènè min kan bi, n y'a kè, a filè, kènè de bè yan. i m'a kè, i y'a sòrò, fèelè, fèelè tè yan koyi! o tuma, fèn o fèn bè se ka tèmèn yan bi sa, i tèmènko, anw b'o de fò. o tuma, Ala bè na a fò dafènw ma sa, barisa ne y'a jiran aw la, aw tè se ka taa ka ne dan, n'aw sònna, o don, a' ka d'a la, n'aw ma sòn aw bè na n sòrò yan. wa aw nalen filè ka na ne sòrò kènè min kònò yan. o tuma, a bè na kuma. Ala bè na kuma, a ka sebaaya kumakan na. ka anw bila, anw ye jòn dèsetòw ye, ka sòrò k'an ka dèsetò jiran an na, nin min bè se, ka min kè. fèn tè yen, i bè se ka min kè wo. i bè se ka mun kè yen? i dèsetò. n'i tun bè se ka fèn kè, i tun tè na se yen dè. o de tun ka fisa i ma. e banna Ala la. n'i banna Ala la, o tuma i tun kana se yen, mu'minin ka kènè, e tun kana se yen. mè nyumankèbaa ni jugumankèbaa bèe jèrèlen don ka taa u jò, ka sòrò k'a ka sebaaya se jiran. Ala ko cogo di o la? a ko, *yā ma shara'l-jinni wa'l-*

ins, a ko, ya jinè jamakulu, *wa'l-ins*, ani hadamaden jamakulu, wa aw filè kafokènè kan sa dè! kuma min tun fòra aw ye ne ka kiraw fè, k'aw bè sa ka kunun, aw ko cogo di? yala aw m'a fò o don wa, ko: yala, ni anw kèra kolo ye, ka anw kè kolo mugumugulenw ye, ko yala anw bè na kunun fò ka anw kè dafèn kurakura ye wa? n ko, aw ye o de fò. k'o kunun de ye aw kamanagan. kira ye mun fò aw ye? kira m'a fò aw ka kè fèn ye, fèn min ka d'a ye, n'o ka gèlèn ka tèmèn kolo kan wa? a' ka kè fèn ye, n'o ka gèlèn ka tèmèn nègè kan wa? a' ka kè fèn ye, fèn min ka gèlèn ka tèmèn fara kan, k'a bè kunun wa? aw filè, o kènè kan yan dè! o tuma sa, a' filè kènè min kan yan, *in istāta tum*, ni aw ye sera, ni aw ye se nyini kè bi, *an tanfudhū*, ni aw bè fè k'aw bè se ka bò kènè nin kan yan, *min aqtāri'l-samāwāti*, n'a y'a sòrò bòsira bè min fè sangaba gèrèn na, *tanfudhū*, o tuma, ni aw bè se ka bò, aw ye bò dè. Ala bè nin fò kabakoya kosòn, barisa bòsira tè yen. fanw bèe datugura. a bè tila ka na fò, èe, a ko ne y'o min fò aw ye, *lā tanfudhūna*, wa aw yèru tè se, ko aw tè se ka tèmèn yan, tèmènsira tè aw bolo yan, maa si tè tèmèn yan bi, *illā bi-sulṭānin*, fò n'a kèra ni yaakubaya ye dè. o tuma, wa anw filè ko min na bi, wa se tè aw ye kènè kan yan. n bè aw nyininkali de, min ye nyuman kè, min ye juguman kè, n bè na aw nyininka o de la. nyumankèbaa ka nyuman, o bè di o ma yan. a' b'a ditò ye. jugumankèbaa ka juguman, i bè sara n'a ye yan, mògòw n'i saratò ye. boliyòrò tè yan. boliyòrò banna.

34. *tukadhdhibāni*, jinn ani hadamadenw, aw fila bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

35. Ma min, *yursalu*, n'o bè cili kè, *alaykumā*, aw fila kan, *shuwāzzun*, a ye cili kè aw kan, o tuma, tasumamana kalisiyalen na, *min nārin*, kabii tasuma na, min kalisiyalen don, *wa nuḥāsun*, ani sisi, a ye sisi ci aw kan, sisi min ni mana nin t'a la, *fa-lā tantaṣirāni*, aw fila koni tè se ka kumaniyani kè o la. a bè aw sama de ka taa n'aw ye kafo kènè kan. aw fila tè se ka kumaniyani kè o la. o kòrò ye mun ye? aw fila tè se ka dèmè sòrò, aw tè se k'aw yèrè kisi ka bò o ma. n'a y'a sòrò dèmèbaaw b'aw la, aw ka taa aw dèmèyòdonw wele jooona. Ala bè ka nin bèe fò, barisabu, a ko fila de kana kafo Ala la. yaasa, an k'a dòn, ni anw sera lahara, ni boliw ma anw tòorò, u tè anw nafa. ni boliw ma anw tòorò, u tè anw nafa. u ka hère tè yen. u tè se anw ma fewu. i ye boli min bato yan ani i ka sitanè min kèra sabu ye, k'i ta k'i fili, laharajòdon, Ala bè taa i n'o sitanè siri nyòdon na, aw fila bè taa aw da jahanama kònò. aw nyè bè nyòdon na yen. òo! i ka boli min n'i bè k'o bato, n'o y'i ka farakurun ni i ka jirikurun ye, i b'olu tintinnen sòrò jahanama kònò yen. i ko k'o y'i ma ye. e, e yèrè ye fèn min jiran k'o ye e ka Ala ye, a y'o minè k'o don jahanama kònò. o ka se ma se k'a tila. èe, e yèrè dun? sango e yèrè min tugura b'o nò fè, e bè taa min? e be i yèrè ye min? kabii o yòrò la jigiban ma na wa? kurani nakun ye, yanni o jigiban cè, anw k'anw labèn. kurani de bè na ka n'o kofò an ye, anw m'a ye koyi. nka a kèbaa de be k'a lakali, k'a b'a kè ten, a b'a kè ten. anw dalen o la, o de ye tinyè ye.

36. *tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

37. *fa-idha'nshaqqati's-samaw fa-kānat wardatan ka'l-dihāni*.

38. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

37. *fa-idhā*, tuma min na, 'nshaqqati'l-samā u, ni sangaba farala ka bò nyòon na, ka sangaba dayèlèn, mèlèkèw bè na jigin, ni lahara don sera, an bè na ye sangaba bè pèrèn pa! anw wulilen k'an jò tuma min, sangaba bè pèrèn pa! ni sangaba pèrèna pa, anw bè mèlèkèw jigintò ye ka bò a kònò, buru buru buru buru, u bè jigin ka dugukolo sègèrè. anw jòlen don. u bè jigin ka na, ka na bèe kooli ka taa bèn teberu. bèsira tè yen. o min bè ka fò, o de ye nin ye. ko tuma min na sangaba, n'a farala ka bò nyòon na, ka ti k'a kè bonda ye, o tuma an bè na ye mèlèkèw bè ka jigin a fè. *fa-kānat*, o tuma, a kèra *wardatan*, a bilenna, a bè i n'a fò, n'i y'a ye, i bè n'a fò ko fèn bilenman don, i n'a fò jirifeere bilenman bè cogo min na, o tuma a sangaba bè na kè bilenman ye, o cògòya la. *ka'l-dihāni*, o tuma, a yèrè bè i n'a fò wolo dogilen, wolobilen dogilen. aa, a ko, o don sirannyefènba ye. o don kòni, hadamadenw, jinn ani hadamadenw jòlen, o don, jasirako sifaya bèe lajèlen na bè kènè kan yen. i ma deli ka fèn min ye, i ma deli a la. jawuliko sifa bèe lajèlen bè na kènè kan yen. i bè na fènw ye o don, e yèrè hakili tè se ka jò fewu ka b'o kònò. o de kosòn alikiyama don, mògò ka kan ka siran a nyè. o de la, Ala b'a fò an ye ten, ko lahara ka gèlèn, o tuma aw kana a to, aw ka taa jò a kènè kan, o tuma, Ala kira mantonw, aw kana a to aw ka taa jò lahara kènè kan, *illā wa antum muslimūna*¹¹⁴? fò k'a sòrò aw ye alisilamèw de ye, f'a k'a sòrò aw ni Muhamadu bè nyògòn fè. n'aw y'a to aw ka se kènè nin kan ka sòrò aw tè silamèya diinè kan, ha, kènè nin, kènè nògòn tè dè. kènè nògòn tè. e ye Muhamadu manton de ye. n'i ye Muhamadu manton ye, i jija i ni Mahamadu ka sira, i b'o min nò fè, i b'o min tile la, i jija i n'a ka ye kènè kelen kan, a ka taa i wele. o tuma, n'o kèra lahara kafo kènè, a ka gèlèn, o tuma dò bè se ka nògòya e ye. barisa i n'o de tile bèna, a fòra ten. ko bèe bè taa wele. ko jamakulu kelen kelen bèe lajèlen de bè taa wele, n'a ka alimami ye. i ka alimami ye jònni ye? i ka kira. i ka kira ye jònni ye? i tile ni min tile bèna, o de y'i ka kira ye. o tuma, laharajòdon, n'i welela, a to i ka taa sòrò i tile ni i ka kira min tile bèna, i n'o tun bè nyòon fè. n'i n'o jèra nyògòn fè, o tuma laharajòdon nògòyada bè se ka kè e ye, e ka ko la. nka n'i n'o ma ye nyòon fè sa, ha, alikiyamajòdon jawuliko, a ka bon dè!

38. *fa-tukadhdhibān*. a ko, yala, aw jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila bè sòsòli kè de, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa? aw bè na fò, ko o tè tinyè ye de.

39. Ala ko, nin don, ni sangaba farala, ni mèlèkèw jiginna, *fa-yawma idhin lā yus alu an dhanbihi insun wa-lā jānnun*. a ko, *fa-yawma idhin*, o don la, *lā yus alu insun*, hadamaden kelen tè na nyininka, *wa-lā jānnun*, jinè kelen tè nyininka, *an dhanbihi*, o tuma, ka bò e kòtakèbaa ka jurumu ma, e ye wale jugu min kè, i yèrè de bè nyininka a la. karisa e ye nin kè wa? k'a fo k'i bè n'a fò ko nin de ye ne bila a la, ***lā!*** *pasike* o y'a ka tinyèni min kè, o ka

tinyèni kunko jòlen bè k'a yèrè kònò yen. mun y'i tugun a nò fè de bè? mun y'a to a y'a k'i la? e y'a k'a la mun na? o tètè koyi. mun ye e tugun a nò fè? mun y'i sòn a ka fòta ma? kira ye min fò i m'ò mèn wa? o tun tètè barakòndokuma ye koyi! kira ye kuma min fò dogodogolakuma tun tètè koyi. kira ye kuma min fò, ka a fò n b'i wele ka taa i dèn kèrèdanin fè, k'a f'i ye n'ò tètè a tètè se ka bò kènè kan, o tètè koyi. kira ye kuma min fò, dugukolo kòròn n'a tilebin ni banin ni baba, a sera a bèe la. kira fatura. a fatutò taara ka fèn min to i bolo, i m'ò ye wa? kira fatura. a fatulen kò dòn nibaa minnu bòra ka jò a kò fè, ka kè npanmuru ye, k'olu jò, ka jeni ni jalakilibaaw ka jalakili ye, ka jeni ni kòròtigèlibaaw ka kòròtigèli ye, ka fèn bèe lajèlen da u kan, u ko k'u bè kira ka kumakan de fò. k'u sèbèkòrò tètè, u b'ò de fò. olu de wulila ka fèn bèe lajèlen siri olu la, k'u kè maa lankolonw ye, k'u kè maa kunntanw ye, olu bè ka taama kiraw sendayòrò la, u ko abada, ni fèn o fèn ko a bè kuma wèrè fò, min b'u nyòni k'u bò u ka diinè kan koyi, nka kira de ko ten, Alahu de ko ten. wa anw b'ò de nò fè? yala o kuma, o tun ma fò e ye wa? o fòra e ye, e y'ò to yen, i tugunna i nisago de nò fè. o tuma, anw tètè taa maa wèrè nyininka, an bè e de nyininka. o ye laharajòdon cogoya ye. jinè tètè to, hadamaden tètè to. bèe bè nyininka i kunko de la, a nyuman n'a juguman.

40. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*, o tuma, yala jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

41. *yu rafu'l-mujrimūna bi-simāhum fa-yukhadhu bi'l-nawāṣī wa'l-aqdām*.

42. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

41. *yu rafu'l-mujrimūn*, a ko, laharadon ma se, jurumutòw bè na dòn. u bè dòn ni mun ye? u bè dòn *bi-simāhum*, u bè na dòn ni u taamashyen ye, u nyè finya. laharajòdon, n'i ye maa kunnango natò ye, n'i y'a nyèda ye, a nyèda natò ye, i b'a fò denmisenw bòtò, n'u kèlen bè ka finfin ta, k'a tereke, k'a bila, ka finfin tereke ka sòrò k'a ta k'a mun u nyèda la, k'u nyèda fin. a bè i n'a fò o sifaya, a bè i n'a fò jumèn? a bè i n'a fò yonbo, ka yonbo ta k'ò mun i nyèda la, laharajòdon n'i ni maa kunnangow bèna, i b'u dòn ka bò maa nyumanw nyè fè n'ò ye. i bè maa nyumanw ye, olu nyèda bè nòorò, u nyèda bè manamana, u bè yelenyelen. nka i bè na a sòrò maa kunnango minnu bè cè fè, olu nyèda labannen don k'olu kè finman ye. a bèe nyèda finnen don. o tuma, n'i y'ò ye, maa minnu na laharajòdon, kuma caman t'ò la, a dòn k'a fò, ha nin ye so nin maa dò ye. o ye Ala yèrè ka taamashyen ye. a dogolen tètè. ko dogolen tètè. a ko o don, *fa-yūkhadhu bi'l-nawāṣī*, maa kunnango nin a bè minè o don ni tensi ye. mèlèkèw jòlen don, u bè na u ta u tensi ma ten, n'u ye min t'a tensi ma, u bè firifiri k'i fili, yanni u ka t'i fili jahanama kònò. *wa'l-aqdām*, ani senbaraw, u bè dòw ta u sen ma, i n'a fò an bè syè minè a sen ma k'a kun suuli cogo min na, u bè dòw minè o cogoya la. dòw talen bè u kunsigi ma, i n'a fò n'i ye sonsan ta a tulo fila ma, o bè ka tacogo min na. òò! dòw talen bè u kunsigi ma, u tensi ma tenni nò. u bè mèlèkèw bolo, u bè sin n'u ye jahanama kònò, u be t'u kerun yen. a k'ò don, anw k'ò dòn, an k'an hakili to o don na dè. laharajòdon de bè ten.

42. *tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye.

41. Ma min bè taa kafoli kè, walejugukèbaa nununw kelen kelen bèe lajèlen, a bè t'u tensiw minè, k'u ta u senbaraw ma, k'u fili ka taa n'u ye, ka t'u kerun jahanama kònò. o tuma, n'u kerunna jahanama kònò tuma min na, i talen i tensi ma k'i fili ka taa bin jahanama kònò, i talen i sen ma k'i fili ka taa bin jahanama kònò, Ala bè na fèn min fò sa, i ka sòrò k'i tulomada k'o mèn.

43. a b'a fò, *hadhihi jahannamu'llatī yukadhdhibu bihā'l-mujrimūn*,

44. *yaṭūfūna baynahā wa bayna ḥamīmin ānin*.

45. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

45. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibāni*. o ye a ka kumakan ye.

43. o tuma, Ala b'i kanto, aa, a ko, ayiwa kotandiw, aw minnu ko, ko sa ka kunun tè tinyè ye, ko jahanamako tè yen, k'o tè tinyè ye. o tuma, wa ayiwa, aw fililen filè, aw taara aw tensi ma k'aw fili yòrò min na sa, aw t'o nyininkali kè sa, n'o ye yòrò min ye? aw senbara minènen sisan, k'aw firifiri ka taa aw kerun, aw binnen ye aw disi kan nin ye. wa n'aw ko jahanamako tè tinyè ye, k'aw tun ma d'a la, aw y'a tulomada. o tuma sisan, *hadhihi*, aw filè nin kònò dè, *jahannamu*. nin de ye jahanama ye, *allāti*, jahanama min, *yukadhdhibu bihā'l-mujrimūn*, nin walejugukèbaaw minnuw, ni u tun bè k'a fò u bè sòsòli kè jahanama kònò, ko tinyè tè, wa aw filè a kònò nin ye. ni a ka di wala a man di. ni a ka di wala a man di, o tuma, aw filè a kònò yan.

44. *yaṭūfūna, yaṭūfūna*, o tuma, o bè taama *baynahā*, a cè, *wa bayna ḥamīmin*, ani ji gonin ni nyògòn cè. u bè munumununi kè, ji gonin de b'u ni nyògòn cè. n'i ko, ko minnògò b'i la, haa minnògò bè ne na koyi, aw tè ji di yan wa? Ala b'a fò ni minnògò b'a la, a' ye ji gèrè a la. mèlèkèw bè yenni nò. 'a' tè na ni ji dò ye? a' ye na ni ji ye.' ji gonin bè na tugun i da la. i k'o min fòlò. o y'i bisimilala de ye. a ko, o jahanamè nin yèrè mana, *ānin*, a ka gèlèn dè.

45. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*, o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, aw fila bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

46. *wa li-man khāfa maqām rabbihi jannatāni*.

47. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

46. *wa jannatāni*, a ko, alijinè fila, diyèn ni lahara, diyèn ni lahara, u b'o wele ko alijinè fila. barisabu, ka d'a kan mun na? dinyè yèrè ye mu'minin ka . . . ni an ko dinyè, a ka di mu'minin na kè. dinyè nyènamaya, a ka di alisilamè la, barisabu ale ka balo kuntaala jan a b'a jiidì lahara. dinyè nyènamaya, o ye kaafiri ka balawu de ye. barisa mògò n'i ye walejugu caman kè, laharajòdon, i bè tòrò caman sòrò. n'i ye walejugu ncininin kè, laharajòdon, Ala ko ten, a ko o tè fèn fara . . . k'a b'i sara ni fèn ye, i ma fèn min kè, a t'o kè. i ka kèta, a bè taa i sara n'o de ye. o tuma, laharajòdon, kaafiri bè taa sara ni mun ye? kaafiri ka kaafiriya baara kèlen, a bè taa sara n'o de ye. o de bè taa a ka tòrò gèlèya jahanama kònò. o tuma mu'minin, n'o

balola a ka nyenamaya kònò yan, a bè hère la. barisa an ko ni tòorò y'a sòrò, o tòorò ye jurumu kafari ye. n'a ye nafolo sòrò, n'a ye jaga bò, jaga bè sèbèn a ye, laharajòdon, o sara b'a ye. n'a ye sarakati bò, **hākadhā**, o bè ten. o sara b'a ye. n'i selila, i kèra maa kunnandi ye. i selila, i sunna, i ye jaga bò a bòko ma, masiba ni balawu minnu bè yen, n'olu ka kan ka jigin, o tuma a sòn ncininin, an bè na mun ye? n'a ka di Ala ye, a bè balawu jigin dugukolokò kan, an b'a ye dugukolo bè yèrèyèrè. mògòw bè halaki. nin bèe tè lajaba dò ye Ala fè wa? o tuma, n'i kèra alisilamè ye ka tilen, Ala bè se ka nin bèe lajèlen nògòya, k'o bèe nyòni ka bò e kan. e ni nin sababu juguw, Ala bè olu kòdon i ma. o tuma, a bè olu minnu kè, nin bèe ye hère ye mu'mininw ye. e bè to lafiya de kònò. o tuma, o kosòn, a ko ten. a ko, *wa jannatāni*, alijinè fila bè yen, *li-man*, ka na mògò ye, *khāfa*, mògò min bè yen n'o siranna, *maqām rabbihi*, a siranna jò nyè, a Ma jònyònya nyè . . . a siranna, a bè na taa jò, a Ma ka yamaru nyèkuntilemma ka na fèsèfèsè. ale de siranna o nyè, o tuma, a ye Ala kota dabila. a ma Ala kota. fèn o fèn n'a fòra, ko, i kana nin kè, a fòra i kana mun kè? a fòra k'i kana dólò min. dólò ye haramu ye. **hākadhā**, a y'o dabila. a fòra, i kana joli dun, joli ye haramu ye. kurana aya nana i jò n'o ye. **hākadhā**, a y'o dabila. o ye kota ye. a fòra i kana **riba** dun. n'i ni maa jèra ka baara kè, aw ka baara kè jèlenya kan. **riba** ye mun ye? karisa ye dòròmè minè n fè, ni a saratuma sera i b'a kè fila ye. wala karisa, i ka dòròmè bè n na, n bè na a sara bi, nka an k'a to sini na. sini n'o sera n bè na o dis pur san, n b'o fara a kan. o ka kan ka bèn nin hakè nin ma. sini n'e y'i ka wari nyini ne bolo, ne bè nin hakè nin fara a kan, dònk o ye haramu ye. ni mògò min y'o minè k'o dun, Ala kèlen bè ka kuma jugu fò olu tigiw ma kurana kònò. o ye haramu ye. o tuma, anw kana o kè. maa kòròfò, o tuma nin bèe ye walejugu de ye. nin ye kota ye. ka taa i sigi i maa nyòon kò fè, e tè se ka kuma min fò a nyè na, a taalen kò tuma min, i bè na i sigi k'o fò. laharajòdon, i bè taa a segin a nyè na de. i y'a kè cogo min, o tuma, i y'a tònnyò, o kòrò ye, o ye kota dò ye. maa min sera ka nununw to yen, ka olu dabila, nin bèe ye Ala ta'ala kota ye. o tuma, mògò min ye o kotaw ye ka olu to, k'a dòn k'a fò, aa! nin man nyi, nin man ka kè, a sera k'i sòminè olu la, a ma o si kè. a kèra a ma jufa sogo dun; fèn min ma kantigè sariya la, a m'o dun. fèn min ye joli kurukutu ye, a m'o dun, o ye haramu ye. fèn min ye dólò ye, a m'o min, fèn min ye lèn ye, a m'o dun, a kan k'i sòminè ka bò nin bèe lajèlen ma, k'a fò ko nin ye haramu ye, o ye Ala kota baara ye, a sera k'i sòminè, ka kaari nin bèe lajèlen kò, kurani ko tenni nò. o tuma, n'o kèra, o tigilamaa, o tuma, o sara, ko alijinè fila b'o fè. alijinè kelen nin bè lahara wo. nka dinyè nbèndiya, o bè tila k'o de sòrò dinyè kònò yan.

47. *tukadhdhibāni*, o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn de ye sa?

48. *dhāwāta afnānin*. o tuma, a ko aw bè na taa don alijinè min na, min bè yen, o tuma, ni jiribolo dunge don. alijinè yèrè kònòna la, jardèn don, nakò foroba don. jiri nòniya sifaya bèe lajèlen b'a la. jiri bè yòrò min na, o de nèemanen don, o de ka di. pasike sumaya tè kòtigè

yen. alijinè kònòna sumaya de bè yen. n'i donna a kònò, a ka di. i bè don ka diya min ta, dò de bè na ka a fara o kan. n'o tè, k'a fò an bòra yòrò min na yen fè, k'i b'a fò k'o yòrò tun ka di ka tèmèn yan kan, o tè. n'i b'i terun ka taa alijinè la, i bè don a duman de la ka taa. goman tè ye a kònò. e maa don yòrò o yòrò, i b'a sòrò o bènnen i sago ma. ni i ye se kè e ye, e b'a fò, ko: aa, ko an k'a to ten dè. n'i taara nyè fè, i b'a fò jaa n tun mènne bè n yèrè kan. alijinè ko de bè ten. dan t'a la.

49. o tuma, *fa-tukadhdhibāni*, yala, aw jinn ani hadamaden, o tuma, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma kà nèema jumèn ye sa?

50. *fihimā aynāni tajriyāni*.

51. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibāni*.

50. a ko, o tuma alijinè fila nin, jinyè konyè fila bè a fila nin na, o konyè fila nin bèe lajèlen bè boli.

51. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

52. *min kulli fākihatin zawjāni. fihimā*.

53. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

52. *zawjāni*. a ko, *min kulli fākihatin zawjāni*. nòniya fila, nòniyaw. fènw minw bè yen, u kalite n'i y'u ye i b'a fò u ye kelen ye, u fòròmuw bòlen bè nyòon fè, alijinè ko de bè ten. n'i ye jiri dò ye, n'i ye dò wèrè ye, i b'a fò k'o ye nin sifaya ye. mè i b'a sòrò u cogoyaw tè kelen ye. o bè yòrò minnuw na, dinyè ta bè ten, lahara ta bè ten. o tuma, a ko bè fèn minnu na, duman, jalen, kènè ani jalen la, ani kumunman na ka bò o fila la. kabii an ka nyènamaya nin na, i n'a fò an ka lintatu bè cògò min na diya la. lintatu ye alkaman ye, i n'a fò olu bè cogo min. an b'olu ye yan cogo min, alijinè fana kònòna a bè ten.

53. a ko, o tuma, *fa-tukadhdhibāni*, yala, aw jinn ani hadamaden, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

54. *muttaki īn*. minnu b'a la ni olu ye, o tuma, u bè daamuta kè, *ālā furushin*, u bè daamuta kè dèbèn kan, k'u nònkònmannen don, u kèlen bè k'u da k'u mafakoya, k'u nònkònma dèbèn kan. o de kòrò u bè ka daamuta kè, *ālā furushin*, dèbèn kan. *batā inuhā min istabraqin*. istibraqu, o bè dèbèn minnu kònòna na, o ye fèn ye min bè yen n'a ka girin, kami dibaaji finiw na, fòlòfòlò mògòw, u ka labènfiniw don. o tuma, o kèlen bè ka fèn minnu kònòna don, i n'a fò n'i y'i ka dèbèn labèn k'a bila, i bè fini nyuman minnu fènsè a kan, i bè fini nyuman minnu fènsè a kan, fini minnu bè yen n'i y'o fènsè a kan, n'i yèrè farikolo dara a la, a tè i farikolo tòorò. a diya bè yèlèn i yèrè farikolo fè. o sifayaw ko don. a ko, o tuma, minnu kònònadonfèn bè i n'a fò payasi minnu b'a kan, olu bè i n'a fò o sifaya. *wa jannā*. ale kèlen bè ka fòrili kè, *al-jannatayni*, nakòforo fila nin jiridenw na. o tuma, a ko a fòrili yèrè, *dānin*, a ka surun. jòbaa, n'i jòlen bè alijènè kònò, i bolo b'i ka jiriden sòrò. n'i y'i sigi a b'i suuli ka bèn n'i ye. n'i y'i da, a b'i suuli ka bèn ni o ye.

55. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. yala, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

56. *fihinna*, a ko, o tuma, nin nakòforo nununw na sisan, *qāširātu'l-ṭarfi*, nyèfilèlikuntaasurunyabaa b'a kònò yen. nyèfilèlikuntaasurunya ye jumèn ye. hòrònmusow, hòrònmusow kankala janw, olu bè alijinè kònò, minnuw cè ka nyi. n'i y'u ye, i bè kabakoya u la. n'u dira cè min ma fana, u yèrèw t'i miiri ka b'o cè ma k'a fò k'u b'u nyèbò maa wèrè fè. *lā*, o tè. *qāširātu* kòrò ye ten, k'a fò u nyèfilèli, ko o de kuntaalasurunyaalen don. u kaarilen bè n'u cèw ye. Ala y'a di mògò minnu ma, ko nin ye i cè ye, u b'a fò nin ye ne cè ye. u sònnon b'o la. o hòrònmusow bè alijinè kònò. *lam yaṭmithhunna insun qablahum wa-lā jānnun*.

57. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

56. a ko, o hòrònmusow minnu bè alijinè kònò, ni e donna alijinè kònò, n'i bè na se u ma, i b'a sòrò olu ka bikiriya dafalen la. jinè ma e kòn u la yen. hadamaden ma e kòn a la, k'e bè na olu nò ta. o tè. Ala y'u dan dankoya min na, i b'a sòrò u b'o cogoya la.

57. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. o tuma, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

58. *ka-annahunna'l-yāqūtu wa'l-marjān*.

59. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

58. a ko, hòrònmusow minnu bè alijinè kònò, *ka-annahunna*, ni i ye hòrònmusow nununw ye, u farikolo saniyalen bè u kan cogo min na, k'u yèru dankoya ko o cènyè cogoya min na, n'i y'u ye, *al-yāqūt*, i b'a fò ko alyakutu don. yakutu ye luuluw ye. *wa'l-marjān*. ani marjanu. i b'a fò ko o don. n'i y'u ye, i b'a fò ko yakutu don, wali i k'a fò ko marjanu don, a cènyè kojugu fè. n'i y'u dalen ye, i t'a fò fèwu k'a fò ko nin ye mògò, fèn dò de dalen ye, k'a fò ko muso minnu ko nunnunw de don. a bè kè a nyèna ko luulu kurun dalen de don. u dalen cènyè kojugu fè, ani jèya min dalen bè u kan.

59. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. yala, jinn ani hadamaden, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa.

60. o tuma, *hal jazā u'l-iḥsān illā'l-iḥsān*.

61. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān*.

60. o tuma, *hal jazā u'l-iḥsān*. a ko, yala, hadamaden, yala, o tuma, nyuman de bè taa sara, ni fèn wèrè ye wa? o de kòrò ye de, ko *hal jazā u'l-iḥsān*, yala, nyuman sara kòni, èe! nyuman kòni tè taa sara foyi la, o de nyuman sara kòni ma kè dò wèrè ye koyi, *illā'l-iḥsān*, fò nyuman. n'i ye nyuman kè, nyuman de nin ka kan. ne Ala ye mu'mininw de bila ka na, ne ye bato de fò aw ye dugukolokò kan, ko aw ye bato kè, mu'mininw ye bato kè. o kosòn, o tuma, alijinè kònòna na, n ye nin kè k'u sara yen. nyumankèbaa ka sara, o ye nyuman de ye. ne ko, aw ka min kè, n'aw y'o kè, o tuma, aw ye nyuman kè, min to, aw y'o to. o tuma, n'o kèra, o toli yèrè, o ye nyuman dò ye Ala fè. o tuma, n'o kèra, nin ye olu tigiw sara ye alijinè kònò.

62. *wa min dūnihimā jannatāni*.

63. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān.*

62. o kò, o tuma, nununw, nin kofòlen nununw kèrèfèla yèrè la ko kura tugun, a ko nakòforo belebele bè yen, nakòforo fila.

63. o tuma, *tukadhdhibāni*, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

64. *mudhāmmatāni*. min b'a la, o tuma, nununw finyalen don kami a nakòforo nèema gèlèya fè, hinè bonyè kojugu: i y'a dòn, ni hinè bonyèna jiriforo la, i b'a sòrò fò jirifura bè kè ikomi i n'a fò a bè na kè finman ye. a b'a sòrò, hinè bonyèna kojugu. a ko *hākadhā*, a bè ten.

65. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*, yala, aw jinn ani hadamaden, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

66. *fihimā aynāni*, jinyè fila bè a la, *naḍḍākhatāni*, o jinyè fila nin, olu bè nyògòn gèn, u bè boli nyògòn nò fè, u t'i tigè fewu.

67. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. jinn ani hadamaden, yala aw fila, aw bè sòsòli kè *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā* ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye?

68. a ko, nakòforo fila nin na, *fihimā fākihatun wa nakhlun wa rummānun*.

69. *fa-bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā tukadhdhibān.*

68. nakòforo fila nin na, mугanmafènw, olu bè yen, npeku. olu ye mугanmafènw ye. *wa nakhlun*, ani ntamaro, *wa rummānun*, ani rummanu bè yen. rummanun ko rèzèn, dów ko garanaji, ninu bèe lajèlen bè a kònò yen. o bèe ye mугanmafènw ye.

69. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. yala, aw fila bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

70. *fihinna khayrātun. kayratun*. a ko, dafènw bè o kònò, o de ye hère ye, dafènw bè olu kònò, o nakòforo fila nin na, *hisānun*, minnuw nyèdaw cè ka nyi.

71. *wa-tukadhdhibāni*. yala, jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye.

72. *hūrun*. a ko, hòrònmusow, olu bè alijinè kònò, minnu nyèw finya ka fin, a ka gèlèn. a jèya, u nyèw jèya, o jèya ka gèlèn. o mògòw nununw fana, *maqṣūrātun*, olu muso nununw fana ye sutaralimafènw ye. *fī'l-khiyāmi*, u bè tirisiw kònò yen, alijinè kònò yen i munumunutò, i bè taa bò tirisidakabananw kan yen. n'i taara i kundon yen, i bè taa sòrò i sagolafèn dò dalen bè yen. dalimansa ka ko don, a b'i sòn de. i yaalatò i bè taa bò i sònfèn dò kan, min nèemanen don, n'o bilalen bè yen. i b'i kundon dòròn, i yèrè bè taa kabakoya o la. i b'a sòrò muso nyènama dò dalen bè. o dalen bè kalaka nyuman dò kan yen. e kundon, i ta don. kòseginko tè. o kosòn, Ala ka hinè, a ka bon. maa tè se ka Ala ta'ala ka hinè kafo k'i b'a jate ka ban. o muso nununw, olu fana u nyèfilèli kuntaala surunyalen don. u nyè tè bò maa wèrè fè. k'a fò anw b'a fò, yala, ha, an dira nin ma, an tè nin fè, o tè. ni e sera u ma ka ban, i b'a sòrò u ye e kanu. e kanu de bè olu la yen.

73. *wa-tukadhdhibāni*, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye sa?

74. a ko, muso nununw, *lam yatmithhunna insun*, hadamaden ma jè o musow fè, hadamaden ma u watuhu fòlò, *qablahum*, ka kòn u furukèw nyè. *wa-lā jānnun*. jinè yèrè ma u watuhu, ka kòn u furukèw nyè.

75. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. yala, jinn ani hadamaden, yala, aw fila bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, o tuma, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye.

76. *muttaki īn*. o tuma, u ye daamutabaaw ye, yenni nò. *alā rafrafin*, u bè na daamuta kè, rafrafu kan. *khudrin*. rafrafu min b'a la n'a firisiyalen don, o tuma tapi, ani kunkòròduurulanw, o de bè wele ten. *wa-abqariyyin*. ani abqari *hisānin*, min cè ka nyi. abqari, o ye dalan nyènada ye, i n'a fò dra, minnu bè yen, n'olu bè fènsè dèbèn kan. dòw b'a wele *abqariyyin*.

77. *fa-tukadhdhibāni*. jinn ani hadamaden, aw fila, yala, aw bè sòsòli kè, *bi-ayyi ālā i rabbikumā*, ni aw Ma ka nèema jumèn ye.

78. *tabāraka'smu rabbika*. èe Muhamadu, e Ma, a tògò hère cayara de! *dhī'l-jalāli*, min ye bonyètigi ye, *wa'l-ikrāmi*, ani nèema.

al-ḥamdu li'llāhi rabbi'l- ālamīn.

TRANSLATION

This is the explanation of *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*.

Sūrat al-Raḥmān was revealed while the Messenger was staying in Mecca, with the exception of the verse where it says *yas aluhu man fī'l-samāwāti wa'l-arḍi*.¹¹⁴ That verse was revealed in Medina. *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* has seventy-six, seventy-seven or seventy-eight verses. Those are its verses. All these are its verses.

We begin with the beautiful names of God Most High, the Lord of the superabundant compassion [granted all creatures] in this world, as well as of the compassion reserved [for believers] in the hereafter. *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* begins with [the word] *al-raḥmān*. The Messenger told the infidels of long ago not to associate anything with God, that they should not say that He is multiple. For God has declared: 'You should not associate anything with Me, I am unique'. Oh! But since the Messenger was saying *yā Allāh, yā raḥmān*, the infidels said 'Ah! He is twofold'. *Allāh* is a name of God, and so is *al-raḥmān*. Therefore, the [infidels] said: 'Messenger, you yourself said that we must not associate anything with God, yet you say *al-raḥmān*. Who is *al-raḥmān*?' Therefore, God revealed a verse, a verse concerning His very name, in order to make it clear that [uttering] *al-raḥmān* is not polytheism. *Al-raḥmān* is one of His names. That is why the grammarians say that *al-raḥmān*

is a subject – the starting point of speech – therefore, one should seek its predicate. Thus, it [the Qur’an] says *al-rahmān*. Thus has God spoken.

1. It says., the Most Compassionate, the King of exceedingly superabundant compassion.
2. He granted humankind such knowledge as He thought fit. He taught it, He taught it the Qur’an. Such is the meaning of this verse.
3. He created human beings, the human species. *Humans* are a species, He created the human *species*, He created the species.
4. Then, He taught humans speech, He taught them discourse.
5. It [the Qur’an] says, the sun and the moon both move in accordance with a calculation. Calculation – we calculate using these two. The two, these two, move in accordance with fixed limits.
6. And that is a star . . . [No,] those are things, those are plants that have no trunk – they are so designated.¹¹⁴ A thing that, not having a trunk, creeps or climbs. And *shajaru*. What does *shajaru* mean? It’s a thing that, having a trunk, rises upwardly. These two – all things of these two types – prostrate themselves before God. These two, all these, prostrate themselves before God – that is what is required of these two.
7. As for the firmament, God elevated it, He has elevated the firmament. He has established, He has established *the balance* with justice. There is a balance such that, if you place anything in it – the good that is placed in it, something good, the good that is placed in it, and the evil that is placed in it: don’t do the wrong of claiming that something has been removed from your good deeds and added to your evil ones, so as to trap you. It’s not like that. That which is given to you is indeed your salary.
8. He has established the balance.
8. The balance was established and consolidated, for what purpose was this measuring instrument shown? To what end? So that you do not become arrogant, so that you do not exceed the limits. When you measure, do it justly. Don’t commit fraud with the balance. Why was the balance given unto us? So that what belongs to one person won’t be attributed to someone else. If you use it, you know whether or not a measure is full. Therefore, don’t give incomplete measure, and don’t take someone’s full measure and give him your own incomplete one; don’t do that. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, ‘If I don’t do this, I won’t be able to manage.’ But that is precisely what will cause your downfall. Because that which you have kept back – the small amounts that you have accumulated, thinking that unless you do that you’ll become a loser – [but in reality,] if you cheat, thus accumulating [the product of your cheating] little by little, that will be the cause of your downfall on the Day of Judgement. Because, that is to say, that which you added to your share won’t stay with you, [for] it’s not yours, and God knows it. God is a just King, He doesn’t help cheaters. Therefore, He will remove what you have taken from those you have cheated, and give it to

them. No matter how much it is in your opinion and how successful you think you have been, in fact you have brought misfortune upon yourself. May God preserve us! Therefore, when you measure, do so honestly and truthfully. Do not commit fraud with the balance – the instrument used for weighing.

9. Set your balances correctly, set them justly. Do it justly, do it honestly. Don't reduce some persons' shares, don't reduce them in your weighing. If you sell something – for example, workers bring you their crop, so that you may place it on your scale – you stack it up, but remove some of it, thinking that they won't know. But even if they don't know it, God does. The King who has given you this knowledge while depriving someone else of it – that King knows it better than you. Therefore, if you remove something – God has so declared: even a tiny amount¹¹⁴ – good won't forsake its doer, neither will evil. If you measure well, He will show you goodness. If you do it dishonestly, [then know that] God exists. No thing is too small for His sight, He observes you. No thing is too great for His speech, He observes you, He awaits you. If you do it [cheat in business], thinking that it is to your benefit in this world – [remember that] scholars say it's bad. You hear them saying that it's wrong. You think it's a mere tale, you laugh when they speak, but ah! you will weep in the hereafter. He has established the balance.

10. And the Earth. He has established the Earth – why did He establish it? For the sake of creatures, He has established it for the creatures: jinns and human beings, and the other beings also – for the things that are present on Earth. He made the Earth for our sake.

11. There are succulent things on Earth – we eat them. There are date palms, bearing dates, and things whose fruit forms clusters, such as dates and 'wild grapes'.¹¹⁴ Those are [examples of] fruit clusters.

12. And things with seeds, rough-skinned ones, such as some of our crops – the ones we peel in order to remove their sheaths. We say these plants are rough-skinned. They grow from the ground. God has given them to us. We obtain our nourishment from them. And "rayhanu": "rayhanu" – that is, 'wild figs',¹¹⁴ and every thing that resembles them: all these are similar.

13. Then God spoke. He said: You jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny? Of the favours your Lord has conferred upon you, which do you deny? Will you be ungrateful, and say it isn't true? Which of these do you deny? This verse occurs thirty-one times in *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*.

14. God created, He created Adam. From what did He create him? He created Adam, He created him from dried mud. The kind of mud that, if you tap it, you hear a sound. Adam was created from that. If you saw some of this mud, what would you say it was? You would say that it's like baked clay. If you bake clay, modelling it into something like a potsherd, if you bake it and let it dry – Adam was made from that kind of mud. If you just do like this [taps on the wall], you will hear a sound. Therefore, we should know that we came from that. Ha!

Therefore, don't be vain – reflect. Because, if you are vain, and walk ostentatiously, raising and stamping your feet, that which you stamp on – you came from that. So meditate, reflect at length. That which you came from, you will also return to it. So meditate, reflect. When you (pl.) return [at the resurrection], you will [again] come out of it – so meditate, reflect. He will ultimately ask you: 'What did you do? I [=God] created you, what did you do?' Therefore, He wants something from you! You were created for a reason, it wasn't purposeless. What does He want from you? You came into this world. He doesn't want gold from you, He doesn't need it, He has plenty of gold. He doesn't want money from you, He doesn't need it. [Perhaps you suppose that] God is lonely, that He created you so that He could observe us [human beings]. That if it weren't for this, He would put an end to all things. But if He brought all to an end, who would divert Him? That's not why He created us. Why did He create us? He doesn't suffer from hunger, so that [He would create us in order that] we would cultivate and thus feed Him. No, that's not the reason. Because, before we were created, there was no agriculture, there was nothing – He gave us agriculture in order to help us. If He kills us off, there won't be any agriculture, but will He be hungry? *No*, that's not it. Why did God create us? He created us so that we may worship Him.¹¹⁴ Therefore, if you have come into this world, you should worship Him. If you become an adoring servant of God, then, when you are questioned on the Day of Judgement, that which is demanded of you, that interrogation will go well. Don't forget it: that is the reason for the creation of the servant [=human being]. Therefore, don't be vainglorious, don't be proud.

15. He created, He created, He created Jana, who is the father of the jinns.¹¹⁴ Who is the father of the jinns? He is Iblis. God created him, created him from fire, from flame, from fire. That is, from a fire that, when it blazes, produces a pure smoke. That means, Iblis was created from this, Iblis was created from fire. Thus, jinns are made of fire, jinns are fiery. Iblis is the father of all the jinns. Those who have become Muslims [from among the descendants of Iblis] are called “jinèw” [=jinns]. The infidels among them are devils, they are called “sitanèw” [=devils].

16. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny, do you deny? You didn't exist, He created you. You were nothing, He brought you into existence, so as to know us, so that we may be and act – that is a mercy. To inspire and expire [i.e. breathe] – that is a great feat of God, He did that for us. What have we done for Him? Therefore, what should we do? We should acquiesce in that. Yet we contest Him. So, which of His favours do we deny?

17. God, God is the Master of the two Orients. At first, at the very first, science did not accept the idea of the two Orients. Yet the Qur'an affirms it. They [the scientists of early times] would not accept it. They said, how can this be? But later it was understood that when the Qur'an says two Orients – what does it mean? If you observe the sun in the hot season,

[you notice that] it rises from a certain place. If you observe it in the cold season, it rises from another place. Thus, they [=the dawning places] are two. In the hot season, the Orient is at one spot, the sun rises there. Because the true meaning of Orient is the place of the rising sun, the place from which it rises. Therefore, when the hot season appears, you find the sun rising at one place. Then, when it is over, and we enter upon the cold season, you notice that the sun has changed position, it stations thusly. So here is one dawning place, and there is another one. And the two Occidents, their Master. If the sun rises at a certain spot, it sets at a certain other spot. But if it rises at another spot, it correspondingly sets at a different spot; the [setting places] are different. If the rising places are different, the setting places differ also. The King who has accomplished this, He is God. He is the Master of these two [Orient and Occidents].

18. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

19. God has sent forth, He has sent forth the two waters, seawater and fresh water. Seawater cannot be drunk, for salt has spoiled its taste. But we drink fresh water, it tastes sweet. But God has made seawater and fresh water, [often] they are contiguous, [and] if you observe them, [you realise that] nothing can be inserted between them – they are together, yet they are separated from each other. To the eye of the beholder, they seem to meet. If you go and observe them, you would say they are contiguous.

20. There is a barrier, a protective device. *Barzakhun* means ‘enclosure’. If you establish an enclosure, then that without it, and that within it – if that which is outside tries to break in, it comes up against the enclosure, it stops there. Furthermore, if that which is inside tries to go outside, it also comes up against the enclosure, it halts there. That is the meaning of *barzakhun*. Thus, there is a barrier between the sweet and the untasty waters. The seawater comes up to the river water, the sweet water comes up to the salt water, both are flowing. Yet the fresh water does not flow into the seawater, nor can the salt water flow into the river water. What we observe is a *barzakhun*. If not, they would come together. So we realise that this is one of His great powers. These two never mix together. The sweet water cannot mix with the salt water, the salt water too cannot mix with the sweet water. We may go and observe, what do we observe between them? Oh! God has declared that that which is between them is called a *barzakh*, it is so designated. There is a barrier between them.

21. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

22. Pearls come forth from them, and also corals. Pearls and corals come from them. They come forth from these two waters. Pearls come from these two waters. There is a body of water there – in some of these bodies of water, there are pearls. Such is the sea. As for

corals, they come from water. They come from these bodies of water. It is accomplished, all this is accomplished, by the power of God.

23. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

24. He has, this Lord has ships. These ships are created things¹¹⁴ in the sea. Such is the length and breadth of these ships that, if you saw them, you would say they are enormous mountains – so great and high.

25. Jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

26. Each and every person, every single thing, every single thing that is on Earth, all living things are destined to perish. If you reflect and meditate, [you will realise that] death is not the lot of humans only, death is not . . . We should reflect whether once we are dead, when the jinns have died, when the devils have died – we should reflect: which thing . . . whether anything will subsist? No, nothing will subsist. Things that have a soul – we know them – should we consider that death affects them alone? But if we reflect about what we know, we realise that death is also the lot of herd animals. They die. We must acquiesce in that. Trees don't subsist. Mountains don't subsist. Rocks don't subsist. The very earth on which we tread won't subsist. Because they are things, God has so decreed. Everything there is, every thing that has a soul, all will perish. None will subsist. But at the resurrection, you [human beings] will return.

27. Muhammad, the Essence of your Lord, that will subsist. In the Arabic language, *wajhu* means face. That is the meaning of *wajhu. laysa ka mithlihi shay un.*¹¹⁴ There is nothing that resembles the King – God is very different from everything else we talk about. Because each thing that has a front side also has a back side. You realise that every thing that has a front must also have a back. But God is too exalted to have a front, He is also too exalted to have a back. God has neither front nor back. Therefore, God's face is His Essence, God Himself. It is called His Essence. In the Arabic language, one can say: 'So-and-so, I have done this *li-wajhik*, I have done this for your sake.' That is how they speak. If you wish to tell a certain person, 'I have done this for your sake', you can express it in this manner, 'I have done it for you.' Therefore, concerning the expression *wa yabqā wajhu rabbika*, there is *ta wīl* in the Qur'an. This is an instance of *ta wīl*. What is the meaning of *ta wīl*? If we encounter a description that cannot apply to Him, we should ask: "What is the intended meaning?" God has said this to signify what? He has said it to signify this. That is what is involved. It is this. This is an instance of *ta wīl* in the Qur'an. These passages of the Qur'an are called *ta wīl*. They increase your understanding of *tawḥīd*, they increase knowledge of the unity of God in the hearts of the believers. They allow you to understand the difference between God and his servants, and how it is expressed. Discourse about God Most High and his servants, you will. . . this expression is apparently similar, in fact it is different. This is the kind of expression

that's involved. We have visages, but God is Essence. It [His Essence] is thus designated. Everything will come to an end, Muhammad. Oh Muhammad, the Essence of the Lord, that alone will subsist. When all souls have come to an end, when all has returned to nothingness, God Most High will manifest His Kingship, He will manifest it, He will manifest His Kingship in the lowest of the world's firmaments. He will summon the creatures, all of whom will be dead. He will declare: Those who have said that they are God, that people should worship them – Pharaoh, where are you? Pharaoh, where are you? Then, God will summon the arrogant, He will summon the kings of this world. But where are they? No one answers, all are silent, all are silent. The Lord will declare: Today, all things have perished, excepting Myself, God Most High. I am here, as I declared I would be. What I said would come to pass, it concerns today. Nothing has subsisted. Behold the Kingship of God established here. The Essence of your Lord will subsist. Your Lord who is so very great, who is greater than all things. He is Most Generous to the believers. He has favoured the believers by making them Muslims. They have submitted themselves to Him. As soon as they heard the discourse of Islam, they accepted it; that favour is an example of His generosity.

28. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

29. This Lord – I [=the scholar] say, those who beseech this Lord, whether they are in the sky or on the Earth. That means, all things depend on this Lord. On each day, and at every moment, He accomplishes something new. Every day, this Lord's activity is manifested, every day, He accomplishes some wondrous thing. We ask ourselves: 'Even today, this has come about?' This King is like that. Whether involving good or evil, this King is like that. His power concerns, firstly, bringing to life and putting to death, honour and humiliation, the richness or poverty of His servants [i.e. human beings]; every day, you see this. You have just left a certain person, you were having a conversation – a pleasant one – and you agreed that, God willing, you would meet again the following day. But soon you are told to come along, his mourners are present, they are waiting for you. You avoid a certain person because of his poverty. You say to yourself that if he sees you, he will tell you something displeasing, because he is poor. But in no time, you hear that he has become extremely wealthy. You see a certain person, whom you despise; in no time, you hear that he has become a king. You admire a certain person because he is powerful, but soon you hear that his power has come to an end. This King is like that – every day there is something new. At all times, every day, at every moment, this King accomplishes something new. Such is the work of God.

30. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

31. You two heavy ones – meaning jinns and human beings – We will grant you our full attention. Just so: on a certain day, We will consecrate our undivided attention to you, and resurrect you, and carefully examine the good and evil [that you have done]. We won't let you get away [without this examination].

32. Now then, jinns and human beings, now then, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

33. God has declared that when we reach the place of judgement, when we are there, in that assembly place, when we have reached the assembly place, we will find human beings standing there, human beings standing there. Jinns will come and encircle them. Row upon row of angels – standing angels will encircle the humans and jinns. Angels will encircle them in rows. Several ranks [of angels] will encircle them. Then an additional rank of angels will come, encircling the preceding ones, then yet another rank. Then a lone angel will appear. When he comes, he will place all the humans in the palm of his hand, and clasp it to his chest. Then another angel will come, he will place the humans in the palm of his hand, then [in the space] between his thumb and his index finger [gestures]. These, as well as all the other angels, were created. Then, God will summon human beings. ‘You (pl.) said that you are clever, that you are sly. Whatever you were told, you contested it. But here we are, today, in the assembly place: I made it – behold it! – it is an assembly place. [You (sing.) say] you didn’t do it [evil deed], [yet] you received it [punishment] – slyness, there is no room for slyness here! Therefore, whatever may enable you to leave this place today, that which will allow you to get out of it – that’s what We’ll say. Then, God will say to the creatures: ‘Indeed I told you (pl.) that you couldn’t escape Me; if you accepted this, then fine; but that if you didn’t accept it, you would find Me here. Behold yourselves, coming to meet Me in this assembly place!’ Then, God will speak, He will speak about His power. He will demonstrate our powerlessness to us, us helpless servants. ‘Whoever can do something, then do it!’ But you (sing.) can’t do anything here. What are you able to do here? You’re helpless. If you were capable of doing something, you wouldn’t be here. That would have been better for you. You refused God. If you refused God, then you should not come to the assembly place of the believers, you should not come there. But the good doers and the evildoers are all assembled there, to behold the demonstration of His mighty power. What will God say? He will say: ‘Oh hordes of jinns and human beings, behold yourselves in the place of judgement now! Concerning the words of my messengers unto you – that you (pl.) would die only to be resurrected – you said ‘How is this possible?’ Didn’t you say, at that time, ‘When we have become mere bones, when our bones have become powder, will we really wake to become new creatures?’ I [=God] say, indeed you said so. That resurrection worried you. What did the Messenger tell you? Didn’t the Messenger tell you that – in accordance with His will – you will become something more enduring than bones, tougher than iron, harder than rock? That you will be resurrected? Behold yourselves, here is the assembly place! Now then, behold yourselves in this assembly place! If you are able, if you can obtain this power today, if you would like, if you can leave this assembly place, if there is a way out through the firmament – then, if you can go out – do go out!’ God will say this so as to instil wonder,

because there is no way out. All the sides [of the assembly place] are closed. God will conclude by saying: 'I told you that you wouldn't be able to leave this place, that you would have no way out, that no one can leave today, except by a mighty power. Look at the situation you're in! You haven't the slightest power in this assembly place. I will interrogate you, the good doers and the evildoers. I am going to question you about that. The good of a good doer – he will be rewarded with it. You will see what you are given. The evil of an evildoer – you will receive it as your salary here, each person will receive his salary.' There is no place to flee, there are no longer any places of escape.

34. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

35. This Lord will send upon you, upon you two, a flame of pure fire, of pure fire. And smoke – He has sent smoke upon you, smoke that is not associated with any flame. You two won't be able to avoid it. He will drag you to the assembly place. You two won't be able to avoid it. What does this mean? You can't find any help, you can't save yourselves from this. If you have helpers, then call them quickly. God says all of this, because He had said that you must not associate anything with Him. Therefore, we should know that idols can neither aid us nor harm us in the hereafter. If the idols don't harm us, neither do they help us. They have no happiness there, they will never again have any power over us. The idols that you worshipped, the devils that were the cause of your being seized and flung [into hell] – on the Day of Judgement, God will bind you and the devils together, and you will both go and lie down in hell. You will gaze upon each other there. Oh! The idols that you worshipped, those of stone and those of wood, you will find them crushed down in hell. You said they were your lord! You yourself showed a thing, saying it was your god – but He took it and placed it in hell. It doesn't have the power to save itself. Then what about you? As for you, who followed this idol, to which place [in the hereafter] will you go? Where do you think you'll go? Isn't hope finished, in this place [where you are] now? The Qur'an was revealed so that we may prepare ourselves, before hope is ended. The Qur'an was revealed in order to remind us of this – we haven't seen this [i.e. the Last Judgement and the hereafter]. But its Maker tells us about it: it will come about in this way, it will be accomplished in this manner, thusly. We believe it, it is the truth.

36. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

37. When the firmament will be torn asunder, when it will be opened, angels will descend. On the Day of Judgement, the firmament will split apart. We will have been resurrected, the firmament will be torn asunder! Once the firmament has been rent asunder, we will see the angels descending numerous, one after the other, descending down to Earth. We shall be standing. They will descend and encircle us all, leaving not a single opening, there will be no escape route. That which was foretold – it is this. At the time the firmament is split apart, thus

becoming a gateway, at that time we will see angels descending. At that time, the firmament will redden – it will become like a red thing, like a red tree blossom. At that time, the firmament will become red – that’s what it’ll be like. At that time, it will become like tanned leather, like leather that has been tanned red. Ah! that will be a fearsome day! On that day, humans – jinns and humans – will be standing, and all sorts of frightening things will happen in the assembly place. You have never seen such things before, not ever. All sorts of terrifying things will come to the assembly ground. Their sight will make you lose all composure. That is why people must fear the Day of Resurrection. That is why God has told us that the hereafter is difficult. Therefore, you must not forget that you will have to stand in the place of judgement. Therefore, oh members of the Messenger’s community, don’t allow yourselves to go to the assembly place of the hereafter, *illā wa antum muslimūna*,¹¹⁴ unless you are Muslims, unless you and Muhammad are together. If you reach the place of judgement and you are not a Muslim – ha! it will be very difficult for you! That assembly place will not be easy on you! You belong to Muhammad’s community. Since you belong to Muhammad’s community, you should do your best to follow in his path. The messenger you follow, the one whose epoch you belong to, strive so that you may see each other in the same assembly place, so that he may call you. Although it’s rough in the assembly place, someone can help you: the messenger whose epoch coincides with yours, so states the Qur’an. All will be summoned. Each and every group, all without exception, will be summoned together with its imam. Who is your imam? Your messenger. Who is your messenger? The one whose epoch coincides with yours, that one is your messenger. Therefore, make it so that on the Day of Judgement, at the time you are summoned, you and your messenger are together. If you and he are together, then the Day of Judgement will be easier for you. But if you and he are not together, it will be terrifying, ha, truly terrifying!

38. You, jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny? Which ones aren’t true, according to you?

39. God has said that on that day, when the sky has been rent asunder and the angels have descended, He has said that, on that day, not a single human being, not a single jinn, will be questioned concerning your sins, you disobedient one. You yourself will be interrogated about your evil deeds. So and so, did you do this? Perhaps you intend to say that some other persons provoked you to it? **But no!** Because whomsoever has done wrong is personally responsible for that wrong. Why did you follow that person’s lead? Why did he do that to you? Why did you do that to him? It’s not like that. What made you follow him? Why did you accept what he said? Didn’t you hear what the Messenger said? His words weren’t whispered, they weren’t secret. The words the Messenger spoke – it’s not at all as if someone called you to an isolated spot, to tell you something that cannot be said in public – it wasn’t at all like that. The Messenger’s words were heard to the East, and West, and North, and South

– in all directions. The Messenger died. But, when he died, he left something for you – haven't you seen it [the Qur'an]? The Messenger, indeed, died. But after he died, scholars came forth, and became as a sword. They put up with the blame of the blamers, with the revilement of the revilers, with all the accusations proffered against them; they maintained that they were repeating the Messenger's words. They said that they absolutely refused [anything not in accordance with the Messenger's words]. They suffered all sorts of humiliations and accusations, they were derided as worthless, senseless persons, yet they followed in the Messenger's footsteps. They said: 'Never! Whomsoever said something contrary to the Messenger's words, that would push people away from their religion . . . But the Messenger spoke thus, God spoke thus, and that is what we follow.' Didn't the Messenger speak to you? It was said unto you, but you neglected it and followed your own desires. Therefore, we won't question any other person – we will question you. That is what the Day of Judgement will be like. Not a single jinn, not a single human will be left behind. Each being will be interrogated about his own deeds, both good and evil.

40. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

41. It will be easy to recognise the sinners on the Day of Judgement. How will they be recognised? They will be identified by their distinguishing marks. Their faces will be blackened. On the Day of Judgement, if you see an unfortunate person arriving, if you see his face – it's as if children had gone out, and taken charcoal, and rubbed it and left it on their faces – rubbed charcoal and spread it over their faces – in order to blacken them. You would say it's like that; you would say it's like what? You would say that it's like black dye, as if one had taken black dye and covered his face with it. On the Day of Judgement, this will enable you to distinguish the unfortunate persons you encounter from the good ones. As for the good people, their faces will be luminous, their faces will gleam and shine. But as for the unfortunate persons in their midst, their faces will have become black, entirely so. Therefore, if you see the people going to Judgement, there's no room for discussion, but you will know – ah! this one belongs to this dwelling [paradise or hell]. These are the distinguishing marks decreed by God Himself. There's no hiding it, not at all. On that day, the unfortunate ones will be seized by their forelocks. Angels will be standing about, they will grasp the unfortunate ones by the forelocks, then they will spin them about and throw them around, before flinging them into hell. And the feet – others will be seized by their feet, just as we grab a chicken by its legs and bend its head down – some will be seized in that fashion. Yet others will be seized by the hair, just as we grab a rabbit by its two ears; some will be seized in this fashion. Oh! Some will be seized by their hair – by their forelocks, in such a manner. They will find themselves in the angels' clutch; and these will direct them to hell and hurl

them into it. Concerning that day: we must know, we must remember it. The Day of Judgement will be like that.

42. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

41. The Lord who will call this assembly, He will cause each and every one of the evildoers to be seized by the forelocks or by the legs, and to be thrown – to be hurled – into hell. Then, when the evildoers have been flung into hell, you will be taken by your forelocks – or by your legs – and thrown down, falling into hell. You’ll listen carefully to what God will say then.

45. That’s what it [the Qur’an] says.

43. Then, God will address you, He will say: ‘You disobedient ones, you said that there is no resurrection, that there is no hell, that all this is untrue – now, behold your error.’ You were taken by your forelocks and thrown into this place, won’t you ask ‘What place is this?’ You are now taken by your feet, and spun around and flung down so that you fall on your chest, like that. So if you said that there is no hell, that you don’t believe in it – listen attentively. Now behold yourselves inside this – this is hell – the hell of the evildoers who denied [God], who said it wasn’t true. Now behold yourselves within it! Whether you like it or not, whether you like it or not, behold yourselves here, inside it.

44. They circulate between it and hot water. They move around in the midst of hot water. If you say you’re thirsty – ‘Oh, I’m so very thirsty, won’t you give me some water?’ – God will say, ‘If he’s thirsty, then bring him water’. Angels will be present. ‘Won’t you bring some drinking water? Please bring some water.’ The hot water will be poured down your throat. You’ll have to drink it – it’s your welcoming gift. The flames of hell are extremely hot!

45. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you – do you two – deny?

46. There are two paradises, one in this world and one in the hereafter, in this world and in the hereafter. They are called two paradises. Why? This world, for the believers . . . this world is pleasant for the believers. The life of this world is pleasant for the Muslim, because the span of his life in this world will be extended in the hereafter. But the life of this world is an ordeal for the infidels – because if you have many evil deeds, you will suffer great torment on the Day of Judgement. But if you have done only a little evil, on the Day of Judgement – God has so decreed – He won’t add anything [to your evil deeds]. As if He were going to salary you with something you didn’t do – He doesn’t do that. You will be paid with what you yourself have done. Therefore, on the Day of Judgement, what will the infidel’s salary be? An infidel’s infidel acts – these will constitute his salary; they will increase the torment he suffers in hell. In contrast, a believer is happy here, in this life. Because any suffering he may experience is merely the expiation for his sins. If he had wealth, and gave the tithe, this

tithe-giving will be written [down] for him [by his guardian angel], he will be rewarded for it on the Day of Judgement. If he gave alms – *thus*, thus – he will also be rewarded for it. If you prayed, you have become a fortunate person. If you prayed, fasted, and gave the tithe in the prescribed manner, then even though disasters and catastrophes must come to pass – as to his smallest gift, what will we see? If God so pleases, He will cause catastrophes to take place on Earth – we will see it shaking. People will perish. Are these not torments, inflicted by God? But if you are a righteous Muslim, God can make this easier for you, and push all these troubles away from you. All these bad things, God can turn them away from you. Therefore, despite all these, the believer will experience felicity. You will be at ease in the midst of all these [terrifying events]. Therefore, that’s what is said. There are two paradises for the person who has feared standing before his Lord, who has feared facing the Order of his Lord to be examined. He feared this, and therefore, he ceased disobeying God. He didn’t disobey Him. Whatever you are commanded to do – what are the things that you have been ordered not to do? You were commanded not to drink alcoholic beverages, they are forbidden; *therefore*, leave them. You were commanded not to consume blood, blood is forbidden, a Qur’anic verse came to bar you from it. *Therefore*, leave it, it is a form of disobedience. You were told not to take *interest*. If you and another person have associated to do business together, then do that business honestly. What is *interest*? If someone has borrowed a penny from me, then has to reimburse the double. Or I have borrowed someone’s penny, I am to pay it back today, but we put it off until the following day – and then I must add ten percent; the repayment is increased to that level. Tomorrow, when you ask me for your money, I must add that amount. But that is forbidden. In the Qur’an, God admonishes those who take interest. It’s forbidden; therefore, we must not do it. To talk about a person behind his back is also an evil deed, a form of disobedience. To talk behind a person’s back – you don’t dare say a certain thing to a person’s face, but once he has left, you say it. On the Day of Judgement, you will be made to repeat it in his presence. You have wronged that person, it is a form of disobedience. If a person has been able to leave all these, to abandon them – these are all forms of disobedience to God Most High. Thus, a person who has abandoned these forms of disobedience, who has realised – ah! they are not good, one must not do them! – and succeeded in controlling himself, so as never to do any of them. He didn’t eat the flesh of carcasses – that is, of animals that weren’t slaughtered in accordance with the prescriptions of the Sharia. He didn’t consume coagulated blood,¹¹⁴ it is forbidden, he didn’t drink alcoholic beverages, he didn’t eat pork. He must control himself so as to abandon all these, because they are forbidden, because they constitute acts of disobedience to God. He has succeeded in controlling himself, renouncing all of these, [because] the Qur’an has so decreed. Therefore, he who has acted thus – such a one will have two paradises as his recompense. One paradise is in the hereafter. But he will also experience pleasure in this world.

47. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

48. Upon entering paradise, you will find numerous tree branches always present. For the interior of paradise is a garden, a very large one. There are all kinds and varieties of trees. Wherever there are trees, it's cool and pleasant. It is always cool there. It's cool in paradise. If you enter, you will find that it is pleasant, and that the pleasantness increases continually. If this weren't so, you would be able to say that the spot you left was pleasanter than the present one – but it's not like that. The more you move about in paradise, the pleasanter it becomes. There isn't the slightest trace of unpleasantness in it. Wherever you go, it suits you perfectly. If it depended on you, you would say – 'Ah! Let's just leave it like this!' But, as you progress through paradise, you will regret not having reached each spot earlier. Paradise is like that. It's infinitely pleasant.

49. Now then, jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

50. The Qur'an says that there are two fountains in each of these two paradises; all flow continually.

51. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

52. Sorts, two sorts. If you observe [the vegetation of paradise], you would say there is only one variety [of each species], because the forms are similar – paradise is like that. If you see a tree, and then another one, you would say they are of the same variety. But in fact their characteristics are different. In accordance with their locations, the ones on Earth are of a fashion, and those of the hereafter of another fashion. There are sweet, dried, fresh, and dried, [and sweet] and sour varieties of each of these two types [=fresh and dried]. From the point of view of agreeableness, they are like the wheat we know in our present life. "Lintatu" means 'wheat'. The appearances of the [trees of paradise] resemble those of the ones on Earth.

53. Now then, jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

54. They are enjoying themselves; they are enjoying themselves, reclining on their elbows, on top of mats. Lazing on mats, they support themselves on their elbows. In other words, they enjoy themselves while lying on mats. These mats have a heavy stuffing, similar to the velvet that the people of olden times wore for their ceremonies. That's what's inside the mats. Now, if you prepare a mat and lay it down, you may spread a fine cloth over it. And if you do so, that cloth won't irritate your body when you lie down. [On the contrary,] its pleasantness will pervade your body. That's what's involved. Its filling is like that of a good mattress. He picks fruit, the fruit of these two gardens. The fruits are nearby for the picking. If you stand, if you are standing, you can reach the fruit with your hand. And if you are sitting, the tree bends down to your level. If you are lying down, the tree also bends down to your level.

55. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

56. The Qur'an says that within these gardens are ones whose gaze is restricted. Who are the ones whose gaze is restricted? Noble women – there are long-necked, noble women in paradise; they are beautiful. You will be amazed at the sight of them. When they are given to a certain man, they don't think of leaving him for another one. *No*, they're not like that. *Qāṣirātu* means that their gaze only ranges nearby. They renounce all other men. When God gives them to a certain man, saying 'This is your husband', they agree: 'This is my husband'. They accept that. These noble women are in paradise.

56. Concerning these noble women who are in paradise, if you enter paradise and approach them, you'll find that they're virgins. No jinn nor human has preceded you, leaving his trace. There's none of that. You'll find them as God has created them.

57. Now then, jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

58. As for the noble women of paradise: their bodies are so pure, and they have been created with such beauty, that if you saw them, you would say that they are rubies. Rubies are precious stones. And corals. You would say that that's what they are. If you saw them, you would say that they are rubies or corals, so marvellous is their beauty. If you saw them lying down, you would never say that they were persons. These are the women in question. You would believe them to be reclining pearls. They are marvellously beautiful as they lie down, so very fair-complexioned.

59. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

60. Now human beings, now then, will goodness be recompensed by [something] other than goodness? That is to say, shall the recompense of goodness – the recompense of goodness is nothing other than goodness. If you (sing.) have done good, then you merit the same goodness. I, God, have created the believers, and commanded you (pl.) to worship Me here on Earth. I ordered you to worship Me, believers must adore Me. Therefore, I made paradise in order to reward them there. The reward of the good doers is goodness. I [God] say, let all your acts be good; what [I've told you] to abandon – abandon it. Therefore, if you have done this, then the very ceasing [of forbidden acts] will be reckoned as a good by God. Those who have acted in this manner will obtain their reward in paradise.

62. Near these gardens which have just been described, are yet two other, enormous gardens.

63. Now then, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

64. These gardens are dark-coloured, because they are extremely pleasant and the compassion manifested in them extremely great. As you know, when the compassion manifested in an orchard has become great, the tree leaves become so dark that they are almost black. Compassion has become so very great. [The Qur'an] says that *it's like that*, like that.

65. You jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

66. There are two fountains there. These two fountains flow ceaselessly, pursuing each other – they never stop.

67. Jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

68. In these two gardens,

68. in these two gardens are succulent fruits – for example, ‘wild grapes’. They [‘wild grapes’] are succulent fruits. And dates, and pomegranates also. “Rummanun” means grapes – or pomegranates, according to others. All these are found in the gardens. All are [examples of] succulent fruits.

69. Which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

70. There are creatures there – the blessed creatures. There are creatures with beautiful faces in these two gardens.

71. Jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

72. There are noble women in paradise: the dark of their eyes is extremely dark, the white is extremely white. These persons – these women – are hidden, they are hidden in tents, there in paradise. If you walk about, you will come across these wonderful tents. If you peer into one, you will find the object of your desire lying there. The Lord of creation has so decreed, He is most generous. Walking about, you find one of your gifts – a most pleasant one – reclining. As soon as you peer into the tent, you will be amazed. You will find a good-looking woman lying there, on a comfortable bed. Step in, she’s yours. There’s no need to turn away. Thus, God’s compassion is great. A person can’t enumerate all the mercies of God Most High. These women, too, have restricted gazes, they don’t desire other men. It’s not as if these women said to themselves – ‘Ah! We have been given unto this man, but we don’t want him’. There’s none of that. When you approach these women, you find that they love you [sing.]. They love you indeed.

73. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

74. No human being has approached these women, no human being has copulated with these women, prior to their spouse. Nor has any jinn copulated with them, prior to their spouse.

75. Jinns and human beings, which of the favours of your Lord do you two deny?

76. They are enjoying themselves, they are enjoying themselves on carpets, on green carpets – that is, on rugs and pillows, called “rafrafu”. And beautiful bedspreads. “Abqari” means what is spread on a bed – for example, a sheet spread out on a mat. It’s called an *abqariyyin*.

77. Jinns and human beings, you two, which of the favours of your Lord do you deny?

78. Oh Muhammad, how great is the felicity of the name of your Lord, the Lord of majesty and bounteous favour.

[Closing formula] ***Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.***

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