

Free Qur'anic Studies

Open, evidence based search for the original meanings of the Qur'an, which is our common human heritage

About Community

Few people have ever denied the profoundness and continuing impact of the Qur'an on humanity since its first appearance. The story of the time of the first emergence of the Qur'an in Arabia soon became known only with some reference to it; the pre-Islamic world was named "the time of ignorance," Jahiliya, i.e., lacking the enlightenment and reformation of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is replete with exhortations against blind faith in ancestral traditions. It promotes questioning received information on the basis of its harmony with reason, universal truths, and natural evidence. It frequently reminds men of being equal and personally answerable as viceroys of Allah on earth, and they must fulfill the demands of that privileged status, including being independent, free, finding the truth, and abiding by it with an iconoclastic zeal.

Narrating the history of the beginning and growth of Islamic civilization, Ibn Khaldun wrote in his famous Muqaddamah, "Then the cities of Islam grew, and illiteracy disappeared from amongst the Arabs because of their constant occupation with the Qur'an." (A Reader on classical Islam by Francis E. Peters, Princeton University Press, 1994, page 240, Chapter 5)

Despite the knowledge of the above mentioned constructive role played by the Qur'an in the not too distant past, there is no resolve in the leading intellectual or political circles of the world today to find out why and how the Qur'an worked so constructively in the past to help us sort out something to live with it today, make informed judgments on issues of its problematic interpretations, or better yet, get some good lessons from it for our future.

On the other hand, the Advancing Rational Faith Academy has made a decision to look into why and how the Qur'an has been helpful in the past. Our focus remains on answering the fundamental question: What did the Qur'an mean to its original audience? We believe re-evaluating information about our past using the analytical tests of reason, proving its harmony with the primary evidence in an open deliberation environment is a sure method to gradually reach scholarly consensus. It has been very successful in the physical sciences, where all of humanity has been marching together to learn more about the world around us while enjoying the discoveries made along the way.

Despite our limited staff of all volunteers, we are in the process of providing more resources for the community to help learn and participate in the form of seminars, videos, and ebooks. Keep an eye out for many surprise additions coming soon!

Quote:

"The Quran may be the exclusive heritage of the Muslims, but, at the same time, it is also a theologically important part of the legacy of European history." Therefore, western academic research must begin to comprehend the knowledge culture formed around the Quran not just as a subject, but also as a hermeneutical challenge." Angelika Neuwirth, professor of Quranic studies Freie University, Berlin, Germany, 2010 Cologne



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