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A Short Praise of the Quran

مديح القرآن الصغير

Al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī • Yemen's manuscript tradition



Al-Wāsiṭī · Maqāmāt · BnF, Arabe 5847, f. 5v

English · Arabic text · Notes and sources

VOLUME XVII

Reading guide

The English text, commentary and sources are brought together in the first part. Documentary reproductions appear at the end of the volume. Historical illustrations accompany the text.

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Arabic quotations needed for the commentary remain beside their explanations. The continuous Arabic transcription follows in a separate part.

References to editions and manuscripts have been retained. Contents-page references and internal links point to the new pagination.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

About the work

Dating

Al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī, who died in 246 AH (860 CE), composed this praise in the ninth century. The editor dates one Sanaa copy to the sixth or seventh century AH, approximately the twelfth or thirteenth century CE.

Origin and preservation

The work was transmitted in Yemen. Jadbān's edition compares several manuscripts, including an unsigned copy from the library of the Great Mosque of Sanaa.

Summary

Al-Rassī evokes the Quran's light and the fruits harvested by those who follow its guidance. In rhymed prose, he reflects on what the Book expects of its reader. His praise then becomes a commentary on the Fātiḥa and revelation's first imperative, ‘Read’.

Detailed account and sources · p. 13

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Reading guide

What use is a Book that says it guides humanity? In the ninth century, al-Qāsim al-Rassī develops his answer in rhymed prose before discussing the Fātiḥa and the first command, ‘Read’. This volume translates the treatise from the basmala to the closing formula that gives its title.

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PART ONE

English translation

التَّرجمة الإنجليزية

01 · The Book's light and fruits

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Merciful. Praise be to God, who made complete the guidance offered in the Book He sent down. In mercy towards His servants, He sent them a noble, detailed explanation of it. Whoever finds sufficiency in it possesses the richest wealth. Whoever gathers the fruits of its guidance reaps the noblest harvest. No one tires of its fruit; no sick person remains ill with its remedy. Light for the eyes of seeing hearts, life for the understanding of purified souls, a companion in thought to every sage, rest for every generous soul, it tells truthful tidings and announces examples borne out by events. It brings certainty to minds led astray by doubt. It is the finest companion, the secret of wisdom's secrets, the key to all deliverance and mercy, the word of the most merciful of the merciful, the revelation of the Lord of the worlds, brought by the Trustworthy Spirit. What an author of revelation, what a messenger, what a revelation! He and what He revealed are beyond compare. He Himself took charge of it; His Spirit of holiness brought it. The Book is free from demons' insinuations and lies, from rebellious men's inventions and games. It escapes frailty, self-defeating arguments and the error of contradiction. Its verses support one another; the light of its proofs bears witness for each in turn. Its accounts do not belie one another, its lights do not extinguish one another. Its radiance is vast,

its field boundless, its rivers flow and carry life that saves. Spacious are its resting places and courtyards. Its light and proofs shine forth; it unites discernment and explanation. Its lights radiate and its secrets appear to its friends. From its own people, those entrusted with knowledge of it, it hides no secret. Through the firmness of its revealed teachings and the signs of its detailed verses, its radiance dispels uncertainty from their hearts. Glory be to Him who

gave it in His bounty and made its bond lead to Him! Great is the benefit He granted His servants through it. Through it, the Most High shows them every straight path. He gave them what no soul could give, however generous, however praised for its gifts. He offered them inexhaustible treasures and a gift whose equal no one, despite every effort, can find [the complement remains implicit in Arabic]. He placed the treasure of treasures within their reach and showed them the path to all deliverance and success.

He opened the gardens' gates to them, showed them the way to His approval, and told them of the high heavens, the low lands He spread beneath them and the spaces He opened between earth and sky. He taught them the creation of angels, jinn and humans, imparted every noble, hidden science, recounted past generations and named the rebellious peoples He destroyed for their sins. Every marvel, every noble prophetic account: He brought you its knowledge and wondrous tidings.

Hold fast, then, to your Lord's Book, may God guide you! Take a lesson from it: it is full of lessons. It contains beneficial knowledge and concise sayings: a little of them illuminates so many confused assertions. Explaining even its slightest indication can already heal. Follow its straight path; hold fast to it for as long as you live. It is the summit of summits, sight for those who cannot see, the firmest handhold connecting one to God and a breath among the breaths of right guidance. Heavenly, it was established on earth by God's mercy; through it He fixed His prescriptions for His servants. Good things are attained only through it; only its piercing stars dispel darkness. Whoever accompanies it finds a heavenly companion that knows no ignorance, a guide to every good that never strays, an intimate of whom companions never tire, a friend without treachery,

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a sincere counsellor who never deceives those who consult it; an intimate who never abandons those attached to it; a beloved who never hates those who love it. It turns to whoever approaches it. It commands goodness and piety, forbids what is

reprehensible and evil, never lies in its account and never abandons a friend who cries for help. It keeps its promises and honours those who seek strength in it. With it, its friends' argument never weakens; its beauty never fades. No return or repetition wears it out. Neither weakness nor corruption touches it. Even an unskilled tongue does not tire of uttering it; nothing equals its discernment. It once accompanied the Trustworthy Spirit and the angels close to God. It guided and enlightened them, increasing their certainty in God.

Let it guide you; make its path your path to God. Watch over it; do not reject it. Love rather than hate it: it does not love those who hate it and turns from those who turn from it. Its enemy is not guided to it; it blinds whoever feigns blindness. Only those who examine it see its radiance; only its people receive its guidance. It leads astray those who withdraw and binds the ignorant to their ignorance. Draw back, and it draws back; approach it, and it grants sight.

In this, God gave it many colours and branches. It guides and leads astray. It withdraws and approaches, makes hear and deafens, humbles and honours, gives and withholds. It is near and far, a buried secret and a truth known to all. At times it guides to itself those it has chosen, at others it leads astray those who refuse its guidance; it goes to those who approach it and withdraws from those who evade it. It makes those who listen hear,

and deafens those who turn away. It humbles its enemies and honours its friends, gives to those who accept its gift and refuses those who refuse guidance. It is near to those who accept it and far from those angered by its judgement. It reveals itself to its friends and hides from its enemies. Light of guidance upon light, discernment between uprightness and disorder, it knows better than anything else how to forbid and command, do justice and allow room for excuse. Its warning awakens sleepers; its command instructs the wise. Through its breath it gives life to the dead, yet only increases the death of those dead to it. Always just, never unjust, all it commands is measured. Its outward appearance is splendour and beauty; within, an abyss and a deep sea. No one masters the beauty of its lights; no one reaches the bottom of its depths. Whoever considers its surface sees the wonders of its comings and goings. Whoever enters within discovers its hidden beauties, the wonders of its knowledge and the delights of its

wisdom. Essence of every essence, a word that settles every dispute, its sentence proceeds from the Lord of lords. God deemed it sufficient to guide His friends and chose it for those He singles out for election. Through it the lamps of the right path shine, and the paths of piety appear clearly traced towards God. It is needed, yet needs nothing. Its lamp never ceases to shine. It teaches without being taught, corrects without being corrected. A faithful guardian, a clear arbiter, a noble Book and wise Reminder, it soothes and convinces, calls and makes itself heard. The brightest light, strongest bond, highest mountain, it rises unsurpassed. Never could any of its surahs receive [...]

its equal or its like. No discord is found in its account, decision or measure. It is a word of discernment and the root of all rightness. May God count both you and us among its people and protect us through its bond. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds. Blessings and peace upon Muḥammad the Prophet and his family.

To come to my purpose: we have seen in this Book what brings together all guidance and certainty; in it lies the first support of all religion. We recognised with complete certainty that we would attain neither uprightness nor the guidance sought except through it, its interpretation and the light with which God illuminates hearts. We examined it, seeking God's help. By His grace, we found in it the source of all guiding knowledge and saw gathered within it every good that leads to the goal. Nothing in this life equals its goodness; nothing else guides towards God's judgements. Whoever seeks elsewhere will never find what he seeks; whoever seeks through it finds the finest guidance. We took its path and sought its uprightness: what uprightness did we not find there, what path did we not follow! By God, nothing that can guide escapes it, and no one who seeks within it is disappointed. It lifted veils, revealed buried secrets, enabled the seeker to find what he sought and illuminated what was obscure for those who came to take a spark from it.

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Yet for a long time tyrannical kings have inflicted their distortions upon it, followed by scholars who lead a bewildered multitude. They turn it according to their passions, bend its meaning and cloak their alteration in a faulty interpretation. Its judgement is thus suspended and things change names: evil is called ‘benefit’ and unbelief in God ‘faith’. For them, guidance becomes error, those who know the Book become ignorant, the light of its wisdom becomes darkness and its piercing sight becomes blindness. They all but turn its fā’ into alif and, through ignorance of God, its alif into fā’. The seeker is deceived and the multitude turned from the straight path. We seek refuge in God from the blindness of the blind. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.

Had God not made His Book and its proofs manifest, had He not kindled its lamps, those who spread error would have destroyed its arguments through their alliance, and the uncomprehending unjust would have extinguished its lamps. But God refuses to let His light go out. He made it an ever-visible lamp for His friends. Hence His saying: ‘They wish to extinguish God's light with their mouths. But God intends to bring His light to fullness, however much the unbelievers detest it.’ [Quran 9:32.] With the help of God, the Most High, the Great, we hope, in the interpretation of His Book that we plan, to set out some of what He has taught us and describe something of the truth,

explaining it insofar as God grants us understanding at this moment. We shall rely on the clear Arabic language in which He sent it down. God made it the key that unlocks knowledge of the Book and the sign that leads to its wisdom. It can be opened only with its keys. If its meaning grows obscure, it can be discovered only by the light of its lamps. Listen, then, to its testimony and benefit from it. Know that we can set out only a little, even if we speak at length. However far our interpretation goes, a path will still lie ahead. Every interpretation calls in turn for an interpretation. However little is explained, it is already much. Every door opens onto other doors, and

threads join other threads. We shall say what God enables us to say and what we ask Him to teach us about His Book.

We shall begin with what we hope was the beginning God intended: the surah in which He commands His prophet to ask for guidance. The ordinary people of this community call it the Opening of the Book and of the Discernment. Some call it the Mother of the Quran. For anyone able to draw a conclusion, this is a sign that it was the first to descend. The author challenges the opinion, which he says some ignorant people defend without proof, that places first: 'Read in the name of your Lord who created, who created man from a clinging substance.' [Quran 96:1-2.]

Do you not see, he asks, how He says, 'Read what He gives you to read, in the name of your Lord who sent it down upon you'? He thus tells us that the Name by which He commands him to read had already been revealed before this surah: he must recite it first, then move to the surah after pronouncing it. If what he had already read were precisely what he was commanded to read, he would be commanded to perform an act already done, to utter words already spoken. The name of his Lord by which he was ordered to read is 'In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Merciful', placed at the head of every surah, at the beginning of every teaching. Praise be to God alone; may His blessings be upon our lord Muḥammad, the Prophet, and his family. Here ends the Short Praise, by the grace of God, the Subtle, the All-Aware.

NOTES AND SOURCES

Translation nuances

وجوه المعنى

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الهدى

Here the word denotes both the act of guiding and the path it leads to. ‘Guidance’, ‘guide’ or ‘straight path’ is used according to the construction.

الروح الأمين

‘The Trustworthy Spirit’ retains the Quranic expression (26:193) and the play on revelation's messenger.

ونفي شكوك حيرة الارتياب

A variant given notably for ج (Sanaa) on page 31 would mean ‘and the dispelling of doubts that trouble the hesitant’. The main text, ويقين شكوك حيرة أولي االلباب, speaks of the certainty that minds regain.

Arabic text · Translation

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الفرقان

‘Discernment’, also a designation of the Quran. The author plays on the Book's name and its function of distinguishing good from evil.

حبل

‘Bond’, literally ‘rope’. The image emphasises what the believer clings to.

باب / سبب

‘Door’ can represent a subject or chapter. Sabab means a bond or means. The translation retains the succession of images.

Arabic text · Translation

03 · Reading in God's name

تحريف

‘Alteration’ may concern words or their import. Here the detailed examples concern distorted meanings, culminating in the image of two letters interchanged.

أمّ القرآن

Literally ‘Mother of the Quran’: it may mean foundation, source or principle. The author uses it to argue about the order of revelation.

اقرأ

‘Read’ or ‘recite’. The text makes reading depend on invoking the Name, thus distinguishing two moments in the recitation.

Arabic text · Translation

DOCUMENTATION

Introduction and sources

The manuscript designated ج by ʿAbd al-Karīm Aḥmad Jadbān comes from the library of the Great Mosque of Sanaa. The editor describes 328 pages without a date or copyist's name and proposes the sixth or seventh century AH. This estimate concerns the copy; the author died in 246 AH (860 CE).

The Arabic text follows Jadbān's edition (vol. II, pp. 31-39), based on several copies, including those from Sanaa. Copy ج is explicitly cited in this short work's variants. Titles in brackets come from the edition. A spelling on page 32, توره, is understood as نوره in the translation.

The rhythm of the Arabic prose rests on paired verbs and rhyming clause endings. The translation retains the contrasts and images without trying to reproduce every rhyme. The view of which surah was revealed first is explicitly the author's.

Textual sources

ʿAbd al-Karīm Aḥmad Jadbān (ed.), Majmūʿ kutub wa-rasāʾil al-imām al-Qāsim, vol. II, pp. 29-39. Dār al-Ḥikma al-Yamāniyya, 1422 AH.

Description of the Great Mosque of Sanaa manuscript, siglum ج, vol. I, pp. 171 and 175-176.

Return to the first passage

PART TWO

Original Arabic text
النص العربي

01 · The Book's light and fruits

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي جعل الهدى فيما نزل من كتابه مكمّلا ، ونزل برحمته للعباد منه بيانا كريما مفصّلا ، فيه لمن استغنى به أغنى الغنى ، ولمن اجتنى ثمرات هداه أكرم مجتنى ، لا يجتوي عن جناه أبدا مجتو ، ولا يدوى مع شفائه أبدا مدو ، نور أعين القلوب المبصرة ، وحياة ألباب النفوس المطهرة ، إلف فكر كل حكيم ، وسكن نفس كل كريم ، وقصص الأنباء الصادقة ، ونبأ الأمثال المتحققة ، ويقين شكوك حيرة أولي الألباب ، وخير ما صحب من الأصحاب ، سر أسرار الحكمة ، ومفتاح كل نجاة ورحمة ، قول أرحم الراحمين ، وتنزيل رب العالمين ، نزل به الروح الأمين ، فأي منزّل سبحانه ونازل وتنزيل ، لقد جل سبحانه وتنزيله عن كل تمثيل ، وطهر وتقدس ـ إذ وليه بنفسه ، ونزل به روح قدسه ـ عن قذف الشياطين وأكاذيبها ، وافتراء مردة الآدميين وألاعيبها ، فأحكم عن خطل الوهن والتداحض ، وأكرم عن زلل الاختلاف والتناقض ، فجعل بآياته

مترافدا ، وبضياء بيناته متشاهدا ، غير متكاذب الأخبار ، ولا متضايق الأنوار ، بل ضحيان النور،

فيحان الأمور ، سيحان الأنهار بالحياة المنجية ، واسع الأعطان والأفنية ، ساطع النور والبرهان ، جامع الفصل والبيان ، فأنواره بضيائه زاهرة ، وأسراره لأوليائه ظاهرة ، فما إن يواري عن أهله الذين استودعوا علمه من سرائر سريرة ، ولا يدع ما وضح من توره في قلوبهم من مشكلة حيرة ، بعزائم حكماته المنزلة ، ودلائل آياته المفصّلة .

فسبحان من جاد به طولا ، وجعل سببه به موصولا. لقد أجلّ سبحانه به المنة على العباد ، ودلهم به تبارك وتعالى على كل رشاد ، فجاد لهم سبحانه بما لا تجود به نفس وإن عظم جودها ، وكبر في الجود بالعطايا المحمودة محمودها ، لقد . جاد لهم منه بكنوز لا تبلى ، وأعطاهم به عطيّة لا يجد لها واجد وإن جهد ، فبذل لهم به منه كنز الكنوز ، ودلهم به على كل نجاة وفوز ،

فتح لهم أبواب الجنان ، وهداهم به سبيل الرضوان ، ونبأهم فيه عن نبأ السماوات العلى ، وما مهد تحتهن من الأرضين السفلى ، وما فتق من الأجواء ، بين الأرض والسماء ، وعن

خلق الملائكة والجن والإنس فقد نبأهم ، وعن كل علم كريم مكنون فقد به أتاهم ، قصّ به عليهم أخبار القرون الماضية ، وأخبرهم فيه بمن أهلك بذنبه من الأمم العاتية ، فكل عجيب من الأشياء ، أو قصة كريمة من قصص الأنبياء ، فقد أوصل فيه علمها إليكم ، وأورد عجيب نبأها به عليكم.

فعلى كتاب ربكم هداكم الله فاقتصروا ، وبه فهو ذو العبرة فاعتبروا ، ففيه نوافع العلم ، وجوامع الكلم ، التي يستدل بقليلها على كثير من ملتبس قال وقيل ، ويستشفى من علمها بتفسير أدنى ما فيها من دليل.

فسبيل قصده فاسلكوا ، وبه ما بقيتم فتمسكوا ، فهو ذروة الذرى ، وبصر من لا يرى ، وعروة الله الوثقى ، وروح من أرواح الهدى ، سماويّ أحله الله برحمته أرضه ، وأحكم به في العباد فرضه ، فلا يوصل إلى الخيرات أبدا إلا به ، ولا تكشف الظلمات إلا بثواقب شهبه ، من صحبه صحب سماويا لا يجهل ، وهاديا إلى كل خير لا يضل ، ومؤنسا لقرنائه لا يملّ ، وسليما لمن صحبه لا يغلّ ،

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ونصيحا لمن ناصحه لا يغشّ ، وأنيسا لمن آنسه لا يوحش ، وحبيبا لمن حابّه لا يبغض ، ومقبلا على من أقبل عليه لا يعرض ، يأمر بالبر والتقوى ، وينهى عن المنكر والأسواء ، لا يكذب أبدا حديثا ، ولا يخذل من أوليائه مستغيثا ، إن وعد وعدا أنجزه ، أو تعزّز به أحد أعزه ، لا تهن لأوليائه معه حجة ، ولا تبلى له ما بقي أبدا بهجه ، ولا يخلقه كرّ ولا ترداد ، ولا يلمّ به وهن ولا فساد ، ولا يعي به وإن لكن لسان ، ولا يشبه فرقانه فرقان ، ومن قبل ما صحب الروح الأمين ، والملائكة المقربين ، فكان لهم هاديا ومبينا ، وازدادوا به من الله يقينا.

فاتخذوه هاديا ودليلا ، واجعلوا سبيله لكم إلى الله سبيلا ، حافظوا عليه ولا ترفضوه ، واتخذوه حبيبا ولا تبغضوه ، فإنه لا يحب أبدا له مبغضا ، ولا يقبل على من كان عنه معرضا ، ولا يهدى إليه من عاداه ، ومن تعامى عنه أعماه ، ولا يبصر ضياءه إلا من تأمّله ، ولا يعطي هداه إلا أهله ، من ضل عنه أضله ، يقلّد جهله من جهله ، إن أدبر عنه أدبر ، أو أقبل عليه بصّر.

جعله الله يتلوّن في ذلك بألوان ، ويتفنن فيه على أفنان ، فهو الهادي المضل ، وهو المدبر المقبل ، وهو المسمع المصم ، وهو المهين المكرم ، وهو المعطي المانع ، وهو القريب

الشاسع ، وهو السر المكتوم ، وهو العلانية المعلوم ، فمرّة يهدي إليه من اصطفاه ، ومرّة يضل من أبى قبول هداه ، ومرّة يقبل على من أقبل إليه ، ومرة يدبر عن من التوى في الهدى عليه ، ومرّة يسمع من استمع منه ،

ومرّة يصم من أعرض عنه ، ومرّة يهين الأعداء ، ومرّة يكرم الأولياء ، يعطي من قبل عطاه ، ويمنع من أبى قبول هداه ، يقرب لمن ارتضاه ، ويشسع عمن سخط قضاه ، يعلن لأوليائه ويظهر ، ويكتتم عن أعدائه ويستر ، نور هدى على نور ، وفرقان بين البرّ والفجور ، أرشد زاجر وآمر ، وأعدل مقسط ومعذّر ، يوقظ بزجره النّوماء ، ويعظ بأمره الحكماء ، ويحيي بروحه الموتى ، ولا يزيد من مات عنه إلا موتا ، يعدل أبدا ولا يجور ، وكل أمره فقدر مقدور ، ظاهره ضياء وبهجة ، وباطنه غور ولجّة ، لا يملك حسن أنواره ، ولا يدرك باطن أغواره ، فمن ظهر لظاهر مناظره ، رأى أعاجيبه في موارده ومصادره ، ومن بطن لمستبطنه ، رأى مكنون محاسنه ، من غرائب علمه ، وأطائب حكمه ، لباب كل لباب، وفصل كل خطاب ، وحكمه من حكم رب الأرباب ، اكتفى به منه في هداه لأوليائه ، واصطفى به من خصّه الله سبحانه باصطفائه ، فمصابيح الهدى به ، تزهر واهجة ، وسبل التقوى به إلى الله تلوح ناهجة ، يحتاج إليه ولا

يحتاج ، سراجه أبدا بنوره وهّاج ، يعلّم ولا يعلّم ، ويقوّم ولا يقوّم ، فهو المهيمن الأمين ، والفاصل المبين ، والكتاب الكريم ، والذكر الحكيم ، والرضى المقنع ، والمنادي المسمع ، والضياء الأضوى ، والحبل الأقوى ، والطود الأعلى ، الذي يعلو فلا يعلى ، ولا يؤتى لسورة من سوره ...

أبدا بمثل ولا نظير ، ولا يوجد فيه اختلاف في خبر ولا حكم ولا تقدير ، فصل كل خطاب ، وأصل كل صواب.

فجعلنا الله وإياكم من أهله ، وعصمنا وإياكم بحبله ، والحمد لله رب العالمين ، وصلى الله على محمد النبي وأهله وسلم تسليما.

وبعد : فإنا لمّا رأينا ـ فيه من جوامع الهدى واليقين ، وكان الهدى واليقين به مقدّمة معتصم كل دين ـ علمنا متيقنين ، وأيقنّا مستيقنين ، أن لن نصيب رشدا ، ولن ننال مطلوب هدى ، إلا به وعن تفسيره ، وبما نوّر الله القلوب به من تنويره ، فنظرنا عند ذلك فيه ، واستعنا بالله عليه ، فوجدناه بمنّ الله لكل علم من الهدى ينبوعا ، ورأينا به كل خير في الهدى مجموعا ، فلا خير في الحياة الدنيا كخيره ، ولا يهتدى لأحكام الله بغيره ، من طلب الهدى في غيره لم يجده أبدا ، ومن طلبه

به وجد فيه أفضل الهدى ، فقصدنا قصده ، والتمسنا رشده ، فأيّ رشد فيه وجدنا؟! وإلى أيّ قصد منه قصدنا؟! تالله ما غابت عنه من الهدى غائبة ، ولا خابت لطالب فيه خائبة ، لقد كشف ستور الأغطية ، وأظهر مكنون سرّ الأخفية ، فأوجد مطلوب ملتمسها ، وأبان ملتبس مقتبسها.

03 · Reading in God's name

على ما بلي به قديما من تلبيس ملوك الجبابرة ، وأتباعها من علماء العوّام المتحيّرة، في توجيهها له على أهوائها وتصريفه ، وتأويلها له بخطئها على تحريفه ، حتى عطّل فيهم قضاؤه ، وبدّلت لديهم أسماؤه ، فسمّيت الإساءة فيه إحسانا ، والكفر بالله إيمانا ، والهدى فيه عندهم ضلالا ، وعلماء أهله به جهالا ، ونور حكمه ظلما ، وبصر ضيائه عمى ، بل حتى كادت أن تجعل فاؤه ألفا ، وألفه للجهل بالله فاءا ، تلبيسا على الطالب المرتاد ، وضلالة من العامة عن الرشاد ، فنعوذ بالله من عماية العمين ، والحمد لله رب العالمين.

فلو لا ما أبدى الله سبحانه من كتابه وحججه ، وأذكى سبحانه من تنوير سرجه ، لأباد حججه ـ بتظاهرهم ـ المبطلون ، ولأطفأ سرجه الظلمة الذين لا يعقلون ، ولكن الله سبحانه أبى له أن

يطفى ، وجعله سراجا لأوليائه أبدا لا يخفى ، ولذلك ما يقول سبحانه : (يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِؤُا نُورَ اللهِ بِأَفْواهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكافِرُونَ) [التوبة : ٣٢].

ولعلنا ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي الكبير ، وبالله نستعين على ما هممنا به لكتابه من التفسير ، أن نضع مما علّمنا الله فيه طرفا ، وأن نصف فيه من وصف الحق وصفا ،

نبين عنه بما يحضرنا فيه الله من التبيين ، ونعتمد فيه على ما نزّله الله به من هذا اللسان العربي المبين ، فإن الله جعله مفتاح علمه ، ودليل من التمسه على حكمه ، فلا يفتح أبدا إلا بمفاتيحه ، ولا تكشف ظلمه إن عرضت في فهمه إلا بمصابيحه ، فعنه فاستمعوا ، وبه وفيه فانتفعوا ، واعلموا أنّا لن نضع من ذلك إلا قليلا وإن أكثرنا ، وأنّا وإن بلغنا من تفسيره كل مبلغ فلن نمسك عنه إلا وقد قصّرنا ، وإن لكل تفسير منه تفسيرا ، وإن قلّ تفسيره كثيرا ، ولكل باب منه أبواب ، وكل سبب فقد تصله الأسباب ، إلا أنا سنقول في ذلك بما يحضرنا الله فهمه ، وما نسأل الله أن يهبنا في كتابه علمه.

ونبدأ من تفسير كتاب الله بما نرجو أن يكون الله به بدأ ، من تفسير السورة التي أمر نبيّه أن يسأله فيها الهدى ، وسماها

عوام هذه الأمة فاتحة الكتاب والفرقان ، وقال بعضهم : اسمها أمّ القرآن ، وذلك مما يدل من يستدل ، على أنها أول ما نزل ، لا كما يقول بعض جهلة العوامّ بغير ما دليل ولا برهان ، أن أول ما نزل من القرآن : (اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ) [العلق : ١ ـ ٢].

ألا ترى كيف يقول : اقرأ ما يقريك ، باسم ربك الذي نزل عليك ، فأخبر جلّ ثناؤه أن قد نزّل عليه قبلها ، الاسم الذي أمره أن يقرأ به فيها ولها ، وأن يقدمه في القراءة عليها ، ثم يصير بعد القراءة به إليها.

ألا ترى أنه لو كان ما قد قرأ ، هو ما أمر عليهالسلام أن يقرأ ، لكان إنما أمر بفعل تامّ مفعول ، وقول قد تقدم مقول. وإنما اسم ربه الذي أمر أن يقرأ به بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، الذي قدّم به في صدر كل سورة عند أول كل تعليم.

والحمد لله وحده ، وصلواته على سيدنا محمد النبي وعلى آله ، تم المديح الصغير ، بمنّ الله اللطيف الخبير.