



# Quran for Peace

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# Why Quran for peace?

This book deals with the subject of learning about the concept of “*islam*” from the Quran. Surprisingly, this simple subject is quite revolutionary. A survey of the literature would reveal that it is in fact unusual to learn about the concept of “*islam*” from the Quran. Almost all of the sources rely on later traditions. Based on the preconceptions and distortions of later traditions, many people may think that they already know all there is to know about the Quran and the concept of *islam*. Therefore, in this introduction some brief examples will be provided to demonstrate that the vast majority of people, including most so-called Islamic scholars, do not grasp the meaning of basic concepts in the Quran as much as they think.

The first example deals with a term widely used in the media. We all heard about the organization named Al-Qaeda, which has become a notorious symbol of the ideology of “Extreme Islamic Jihad”. This ideological reach shows in the fact that the majority of global terrorist threats, even when not claimed by “Al-Qaeda”, are usually claimed by a group that is “Al-Qaeda affiliated” or “Al-Qaeda inspired”. When experts are asked about the translation of some of the most prominently featured Arabic words in the media such as *al-qaeda*, one typically gets confused answers. A seemingly right but contextually wrong answer one would occasionally get is that the word *al-qaeda* means “the base”. This wrong answer is often given even by native Arabic speakers. So being a native Arabic speaker is usually of no help. When trying to find the most correct meaning of any word, the context needs to be considered. As we will see, the meaning of “the base” is not the correct meaning in the context of *jihad*.

The Quran provides the supposed ideological foundation of extremist fundamentalist groups such as Al-Qaeda. Therefore, this is where we need to look for the meaning of the term *al-qaeda* in the context of *jihad*. The word *al-qaeda* is the feminine form of the masculine *al-qaed*, with the Arabic definite article “al” pre-posed. In Arabic, the masculine and feminine have the same meaning. Depending on the context, using the feminine may add the sense of a collective classification. For example, the feminine words “al-sunna” and “al-shia” denote the collective classification of individuals comprising the two major sects, Sunni and Shia. By looking at the various forms of the word *qaed* in the scripture that fundamentalists appeal to, we can easily find out the word’s appropriate meaning in the context of *jihad*. So let’s start by listing the Quranic occurrences of the word and its derivatives in the context of *jihad*.

In chapter 4, passage 95, in the context of *jihad* (which in Arabic literally means “striving”), we hear about two contrasting groups, those who strive in the cause of god and those who sit idle:

**4:95. The believers who sit idle (al-qaedun); except those disabled; are not equal with those who strive (al-mujahidun) in the cause of god with their money and lives. God has preferred**

**those who strive (al-mujahidin) with their money and lives over those who sit idle (al-qaedin) by a grade; and to both god has promised goodness; and god has preferred the strivers (al-mujahidin) over those who sit idle (al-qaedin) with a great reward.**

As can be seen from Quran 4:95, the word al-qaed (someone who is sitting idle) is in fact the antonym of al-mujahid (someone who strives). So, ironically, al-qaeda is the opposite of al-mujahida (a striving entity) and it actually means "an idle entity". More confirmation of this meaning is in passage 9:46, which talks about a group of people described as "the hypocrites":

**9:46. Had they (the hypocrites) really intended to come out (to strive), they would certainly have made preparation for it; but god was averse to their being sent forth; so he made them lag behind, and they were told, "Sit idly (iqaedu) with those who are sitting idly (al-qaedin)."**

Above, we see that the hypocrites who pretend to be striving but in reality have no intention of striving are classified among al-qaedin (plural of al-qaed). In passage 9:83, we see a continuation of the same theme and conversation with the hypocrites:

**9:83. If god brings you back to any group of them, and they ask your permission to come out, say: "You will never come out with me, nor fight an enemy with me. You preferred sitting idly the first time, so sit idly with those who are useless."**

Again, we see in 9:83 the clear condemnation of the hypocrites as those who prefer to sit idly as opposed to really strive. Furthermore, 9:83 and 9:46 suggests a pragmatic identification of the hypocrites as those who claim to be striving but are actually the ones who are sitting idly. Accordingly, a group made out of hypocrites is one who claims to be actively striving but is actually the one who is sitting idle (al-qaeda). We see the same pattern in 9:86 and 9:90:

**9:86. When a chapter comes down, enjoining them (the hypocrites) to believe in god and to strive along with his messenger, those with influence among them ask you for exemption, and say: "Leave us behind with those who sit idly."**

**9:90. And those who made excuses from among the dwellers of the wilderness came to ask for permission, and those who denied god and his messenger sat idly. A painful retribution will afflict those of them who rejected.**

As before, the passages describe the hypocrites as those who want to be with those who sit idly (al-qaedin). In 9:90 we are told that those who denied god and his messenger are

among those who sat idly (qaed). People familiar with the ideas expounded in the Quran know that denial of god and his messenger is strongly condemned throughout the Quran. We also see the same contrast between those who strive and those who sit idly used in the Quran for previous people such as the people of Moses:

**5:24. They said: “O Moses, we will never enter it as long as they are in it, so go you and your lord and fight, we are sitting idly (qaedun) here!”**

Such contrast of the group sitting idle (al-qaeda) to one who strives is not only found in the Quran, but surprisingly the same theme can be found in the Bible. The idea in passage 5:24 bears a striking resemblance to the one presented in the following Biblical passage:

**Numbers 32:6. And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here?**

Another related form is used in the Quran with the meaning of “hinder”. This can be seen in passage 7:16:

**7:16. He (the devil) said: “With what you have caused me to be misled, I will hinder (aqaedan) for them (humankind) your straight path.”**

Above we hear the passage recount the devil’s boasting that he will hinder humankind from the path of god. In this case, we see the term qaed in its first person intensified future tense verb form (aqaedan) used to mean “will intensely hinder”. So in the Quran, the devil is portrayed to be al-qaed or the hinderer of the god’s path.

In a couple of other contexts in the Quran, another form of the term qaed is used with the connotation of “stopping” or “stopped”. For example in 24:60, we hear about elderly women who stopped having sexual drive described as (qawaed). In 2:127 and 16:26 this same form (qawaed) is used to talk about structures that stop a building from moving. This is where the secondary meaning of “the base” (of a building or structure) was derived from. So generally speaking, in the Quran the term al-qaeda has the meaning of “the idle”, “the hinderer”, and “the stopped”. Specifically, in the context of striving (jihad) it is always used to mean the direct opposite of jihad. So the name Al-Qaeda, which for almost the entire world has come to symbolize extreme Islamic Jihad actually means the exact opposite of what the common noun jihad (striving) means. Moreover, extremists who associate with Al-Qaeda boast to be pious fundamentalist devotees, but in the Quran, hypocrites, those who deny god and his messenger, and even the devil himself are associated with this term!

Whoever chose this name for an outfit that is supposed to carry out “extreme Islamic Jihad” is exposed as clueless about the Quran and the easily verifiable connotations of the word *al-qaeda* in the context of jihad in its passages. Whoever so-called Muslim who

supposedly believes in the Quran and chooses to associate with or even in the least bit root for such outfit is equally as clueless. So here we have a clear example of billions of people, including so-called experts, scholars, Islamic clergy and native Arabic speakers, who are shockingly ignorant of the meaning of such a simple word in the Quran.

Another glaring example of a simple Arabic word that is widely misunderstood is the word “allah”, which is indisputably the most important word in the Quran. This misunderstanding can be easily seen in the fact that most translations treat the word "allah" as a meaningless proper name that is not translated. You can see this gross misunderstanding in the first line of the first page of most translations such as the popular translations below:

**YUSUFALI: 1:1. In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful**

**PICKTHAL: 1:1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

**SHAKIR: 1:1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The word “allah” (الله) includes the Arabic definite article “al”. This is evident by the fact that in Arabic all words with the definite article have the initial letter Alif (A) deleted when pre-posed with the Arabic “li” (for) preposition, as we can see, for example, in the passage immediately following the previous passage:

**1.2: Gratitude is to the god/“lilah” (لِلَّهِ) the lord of the worlds.**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Had the “al” in “allah” not been the definite article then the letter “A” wouldn’t have been deleted and it would have been “li-allah” (لِاللَّهِ).

Moreover, since the next letter after the definite article is an “L”, both the letters “A” and “L” are deleted. This is due to the fact that in Arabic we cannot have three consecutive letters “L”. For example, when the word “al-la’eb/the playing” (اللاعب) is pre-posed with the preposition “li”, it becomes (لِلاعب) and not (لِللاعب).

Most Arabic speakers treat the word "allah" as a meaningless Arabic proper name that shouldn’t be translated and thus don’t even know that it actually has the definite article and it means “the god”. So they end up using it in ungrammatical sentences that are actually nonsensical in Arabic. For example, they will pray and say “ya allah” when in Arabic it is ungrammatical and ridiculous just like saying “ya alragul” (O the man). In Arabic you should add the device “ayuha” (you) before definite words. So we say “ya ayuha alragul” (Literally: O you the man). However, in Arabic “ayuha” is not a respectful way to address someone. So in the Quran we find the word “allahum” used instead to convey the same meaning only in the case of the god when he is addressed in the second person.

Take also passage 6:3 where "al-ilah" (the god) is clearly intended:

**6:3. wa huwa allah fi al-samawati ...**

**6:3. And he is the god in the heavens ...**

Logically, pointing devices such as "huwa" are not used with proper names in this manner. Taking the word "allah" in 6:3 as a proper name without translation makes the passage ungrammatical and reduces it to nonsense. It is as absurd as saying "he is John of the house" as opposed to "he is the man of the house". Unfortunately, in this case most translators have disregarded grammar and common sense as we can see in the translations of 6:3 below.

**YUSUFALI: And He is Allah in the heavens and on earth. He knoweth what ye hide, and what ye reveal, and He knoweth the (recompense) which ye earn (by your deeds).**

**PICKTHAL: He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth. He knoweth both your secret and your utterance, and He knoweth what ye earn.**

**SHAKIR: And He is Allah in the heavens and in the earth; He knows your secret (thoughts) and your open (words), and He knows what you earn.**

If even professional linguists and expert translators make such fundamental logical and linguistic errors then it is no wonder that many people in the world wrongly believe "allah" to be the proper name of an Arab deity and not the common universal concept of the (definite) god. This is the same god of Abraham and all the previous messengers, who never spoke Arabic or even heard of this future, yet to develop, Arabic language. So the word "allah" is a common noun that has meaning like the god's other attributes that are routinely translated such as "the merciful" (الرحيم) and should be translated between languages. It literally means "the god" in English.

Nothing presented here is amazing or extraordinary. The information presented here is mundane and easily verifiable by anyone. The Quran is probably one of the most widely available books in print and it has been translated into many languages. So people in all corners of the world can easily verify this information for themselves. So now the question becomes if billions of people, including so-called experts, scholars, and so-called Islamic clergy got such basic and clear concepts wrong then how about other less basic concepts?

This is what this book will try to answer in the next pages. It is hoped that the answers found in the course of this journey would help correct widely held and age-old misunderstandings and perhaps, in a small way, change our world for the more peaceful.