

QS 40 Q 55

55.1 The All-Merciful!
55.2 He taught the Qur'an,
55.3 He created man,
55.4 He taught him eloquence.
55.5 Sun and moon move in measured order;
55.6 Stars and trees bow down;
55.7 The sky He raised, and established the balance,
55.8 So that you do not infringe the balance,
55.9 But measure in fairness, and not short-change the balance.
55.10 The earth He laid out for the living,
55.11 Wherein are fruits and palms in clusters,
55.12 Grains on stalks, and sweet-scented flowers.
55.13 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.14 He created man from thin clay, like earthenware,
55.15 And created the *Jinn* from shimmering flame.
55.16 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.17 Lord of the two Easts and the two Wests!
55.18 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.19 He brought the two seas together, but as they meet,
55.20 Between them is a barrier they do not trespass.
55.21 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.22 From both come forth pearl and coral.
55.23 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.24 To Him belong running ships, galleons, plowing the sea like mountain-tops.
55.25 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.26 All who are upon it shall perish,
55.27 And there remains the face of your Lord, Majestic and Noble.
55.28 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
55.29 All in the heavens and earth beseech Him;
He is ever engaged upon some matter.

55.1 Le Tout Miséricordieux.
55.2 Il a enseigné le Coran.
55.3 Il a créé l'homme.
55.4 Il lui a appris à s'exprimer clairement.
55.5 Le soleil et la lune [évoluent] selon un calcul [minutieux].
55.6 Et l'herbe et les arbres se prosternent.
55.7 Et quant au ciel, Il l'a élevé bien haut. Et Il a établi la balance,
55.8 afin que vous ne transgressiez pas dans la pesée:
55.9 Donnez [toujours] le poids exact et ne faussez pas la pesée.
55.10 Quant à la terre, Il l'a étendue pour les êtres vivants:
55.11 il s'y trouve des fruits, et aussi les palmiers aux fruits recouverts d'enveloppes,
55.12 tout comme les grains dans leurs balles, et les plantes aromatiques.
55.13 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.14 Il a créé l'homme d'argile sonnante comme la poterie;
55.15 et Il a créé les djinns de la flamme d'un feu sans fumée.
55.16 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.17 Seigneur des deux Levants et Seigneur des deux Couchants!
55.18 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.19 Il a donné libre cours aux deux mers pour se rencontrer;
55.20 il y a entre elles une barrière qu'elles ne dépassent pas.
55.21 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.22 De ces deux [mers] sortent la perle et le corail.
55.23 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.24 A Lui appartiennent les vaisseaux élevés sur la mer comme des montagnes.
55.25 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
55.26 Tout ce qui est sur elle [la terre] doit disparaître,

55.30 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.31 We shall apply Ourselves to you, you two great masses of creation!

55.32 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.33 Species of *Jinn* and humans, if you can make your escape,
From the regions of the heavens and earth, escape!

You shall not escape except by divine authority.

55.34 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.35 Hurlled upon the two of you shall be flames of fire and brass,
And none shall come to your aid.

55.36 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.37 When the sky is split,
Turning rose-colored like leather;

55.38 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.39 That Day none shall be questioned regarding their guilt,
Neither human nor *Jinn*.

55.40 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.41 Sinners shall be known by their outward visage,
And they shall be seized by forelocks and feet.

55.42 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.43 Here is the hell that sinners deny!

55.44 They shall wander between it and water, fiercely boiling.

55.45 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.46 But to him who fears the encounter of his Lord are two gardens,

55.47 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.48 Both covered with foliage.

55.49 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.50 In it are two running springs.

55.51 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.52 In it are, of every fruit, two kinds.

55.53 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?

55.27.[Seule] subsistera La Face [Wajh] de ton Seigneur, plein de majesté et de noblesse.

55.28 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.29 Ceux qui sont dans les cieux et la terre L'imploront. Chaque jour, Il accomplit une oeuvre nouvelle.

55.30 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.31 Nous allons bientôt entreprendre votre jugement, ô vous les deux charges [hommes et djinns].

55.32 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.33 O peuple de djinns et d'hommes! Si vous pouvez sortir du domaine des cieux et de la terre, alors faites-le. Mais vous ne pourrez en sortir qu'à l'aide d'un pouvoir [illimité].

55.34 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.35 Il sera lancé contre vous un jet de feu et de fumée [ou de cuivre fondu], et vous ne serez pas secourus.

55.36 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.37 Puis quand le ciel se fendra et deviendra alors écarlate comme le cuir rouge.

55.38 Lequel des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.39 Alors, ni aux hommes ni aux djinns, on ne posera des questions à propos de leurs péchés.

55.40 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.41 On reconnaîtra les criminels à leurs traits. Ils seront donc saisis par les toupets et les pieds.

55.42 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.43 Voilà l'Enfer que les criminels traitaient de mensonge.

55.44 Ils feront le va-et-vient entre lui (l'Enfer) et une eau bouillante extrêmement chaude.

55.45 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.46 Et pour celui qui aura craint de comparaître devant son Seigneur, il y aura deux jardins;

55.47 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.48 Aux branches touffues.

55.54 They recline on couches, their mattresses of brocade,
 With the fruit of the two Gardens close to hand.
 55.55 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.56 Therein are spouses, chaste of glance,
 Undeclared before them by humans or *Jinn*.
 55.57 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.58 As if they were rubies or coral.
 55.59 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.60 Can the reward of goodness be other than good?
 55.61 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.62 Below these two are two other Gardens,
 55.63 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.64 Adumbral.
 55.65 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.66 In them are two fountains, ever gushing.
 55.67 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.68 In these two are fruits, palms and pomegranates.
 55.69 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.70 In them are maidens, virtuous and beautiful.
 55.71 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.72 Dark-eyed, confined to pavilions.
 55.73 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.74 Undeclared before them by humans or *Jinn*.
 55.75 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.76 They recline on green cushions, and sumptuous rugs.
 55.77 So which of your Lord's blessings will the two of you deny?
 55.78 Blessed be the name of your Lord, Majestic and Noble!

55.49 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.50 Ils y trouveront deux sources courantes.
 55.51 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.52 Ils contiennent deux espèces de chaque fruit.
 55.53 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.54 Ils seront accoudés sur des tapis doublés de brocart, et les fruits des deux jardins seront à leur portée (pour être cueillis).
 55.55 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.56 Ils y trouveront [les houris] aux regards chastes, qu'avant eux aucun homme ou djinn n'aura déflorés.
 55.57 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.58 Elles seront [aussi belles] que le rubis et le corail.
 55.59 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.60 Y a-t-il d'autre récompense pour le bien, que le bien?
 55.61 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.62 En deçà de ces deux jardins il y aura deux autres jardins.
 55.63 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.64 Ils sont d'un vert sombre.
 55.65 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.66 Dans lesquelles il y aura deux sources jaillissantes.
 55.67 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.68 Ils contiennent des fruits, des palmiers, et des grenadiers.
 55.69 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.70 Là, il y aura des vertueuses et des belles.
 55.71 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.72 Des houris cloîtrées dans les tentes,
 55.73 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?
 55.74 qu'avant eux aucun homme ou djinn n'a déflorés.

55.75 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.76 Ils seront accoudés sur des coussins verts et des tapis épais et jolis.

55.77 Lequel donc des bienfaits de votre Seigneur nierez-vous?

55.78 Béni soit le Nom de ton Seigneur, Plein de Majesté et de Munificence!

سورة الرحمن

الرَّحْمَنُ (1) عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ (2) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ (3) عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (4) الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (5) وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (6) وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (7) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (8) وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (9) وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (10) فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (11) وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ (12) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (13) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (14) وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ (15) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (16) رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (17) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (18) مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ (19) بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ (20) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (21) يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (22) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (23) وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ (24) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (25) كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِهَا فَاِنَّ (26) وَيَبْقَى وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (27) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (28) يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ (29) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (30) سَنَفَعُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّفْلَانِ (31) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (32) يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَعْظَمْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ (33) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (34) يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شَوْاظٌ مِنْ نَارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ (35) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (36) إِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ (37) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (38) فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ (39) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (40) يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأُقْدَامِ (41) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (42) هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ (43) يَطوفونَ فِيهَا وَبَيْنَ ذَيْنِ حَمِيمٍ أَنْ (44) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (45) وَلَمْ يَخَفْ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ (46) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (47) دَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ (48) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (49) فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ (50) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (51) فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ (52) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (53) مُتَكَبِّرِينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَانَتْهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ (54) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (55) فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّهُنَّ إِسْنٌ قَبْلَهُنَّ وَلَا جَانٌّ (56) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (57) كَاتِبَتُنَّ الْبَاقِرَاتِ وَالْمَرْجَانِ (58) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (59) هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (60) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (61) وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٌ (62) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (63) مُدْهَامَتَانِ (64) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (65) فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّخَتَا (66) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (67) فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَانٌ (68) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (69) فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ (70) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (71) حُورٌ مَقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ (72) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (73) لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّهُنَّ إِسْنٌ قَبْلَهُنَّ وَلَا جَانٌّ (74) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (75) مُتَكَبِّرِينَ عَلَى رُفْرَفٍ خُضِرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ (76) فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ (77) تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (78)

Dye

Du point de vue de la *Formgeschichte*, on peut dire que cette sourate a beaucoup des caractéristiques d'un psaume – et on devrait même parler d'un *psaume coranique*. Les vv. 1–32 développent le thème des bienfaits de Dieu (thème ô combien présent dans les Psaumes), et les versets suivants des considérations eschatologiques.

La présence d'un refrain (vv. 13, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77) indique-t-elle la possibilité d'un chant alterné ? On remarque par ailleurs, à partir du v. 46, la présence de deux versions d'un même propos. Outre, bien sûr, les répétitions du refrain, nous avons

des reprises évidentes entre les versets suivants : 46/62, 48/64, 50/66, 52/68, 54/76, 56/70 (le fait qu'il soit question de « jardins » juste avant me semble favoriser le sens de « fruits » sur celui de « vierges », mais cela reste à discuter), 58/72, 60/76. Ce n'est pas le seul exemple dans le Coran où deux récits parallèles, à certains égards redondants, sont conservés (cf. Q 18:9–16). Quelles conclusions peut-on en tirer concernant l'histoire de la composition du texte ? Normalement, la présence de deux traditions parallèles dans un ouvrage indique, avec une certaine probabilité, que le texte concerné a fait l'objet de révisions, soit parce que deux traditions originellement indépendantes ont été combinées, soit parce que le rédacteur de la tradition parallèle la plus récente a choisi d'intégrer sa composition à la tradition originale.

Concernant le duel du v. 13, si souvent répété : l'hypothèse la plus simple me semble être celle d'un duel avec valeur d'augmentatif, comme le note Blachère (1956: 568) et cela s'accorde bien avec la rime en *-ān* de la quasi-totalité de la sourate (sauf vv. 24, 27, 41, 72 et 78, avec une rime en *-ām*, mais cela ne rompt pas la continuité de la rime ; noter cependant vv. 14–15, rime en *-ār*, 17, rime en *-ayn*, et 43, rime en *-ūn*). L'autre hypothèse, fondée sur le v. 33, explique ce duel par une référence conjointe aux hommes et aux *ǧinn*s.

El-Badawi

The combination of rhyme (the dual *fa'lān*, *fu'lān* form and similar nouns) and refrain (*fa-bi-ayy ālā'i rabbikumā tukaddibān*) make this *sūra* unique. Only Q 77, which is much shorter, makes use of a refrain (*waylun yama'idin li-l-mukaddibin*); and only Q 53:55 comes close to the wording of Q 55's refrain.

The epistemological sequence in vv. 1–4 is meaningful: *al-raḥmān*→*al-Qur'ān*→*al-insan*→*al-bayān*. The parallelism (*taṭābuq*) of the remaining verses is striking, e. g., mankind and *ǧinn*; the two seas; inhabitants of hell and paradise; two gardens etc. On *ḥūr 'in* see my comments on Q 44. For further analysis of Q 55 in light of Psalm 136 see Neuwirth 2010.

Pregill

Spectacularly evocative of the Psalms in structure and theme; see especially Neuwirth's analysis comparing it to Ps 136 in particular (2010: 215–223). The *sūra* epitomizes the approach to the psalmic tradition found in Qur'ānic discourse: it is referential, even reverential, but stridently revisionist as well, as the classic images and themes of the Psalter are rendered into a new linguistic register and adapted to a new context. I would add only that it is worth considering both how the Qur'ān may be evoking the Psalms themselves and how the forms of engagement with the Psalms found in older literary forms that preceded the Qur'ān may have had some impact on it as well. Antiphonal compositions are a hallmark of various branches of late antique Christian literature, and here, as elsewhere, what we might call the

Qur'ān in its "psalmic mode" should be analyzed carefully for signs of mediation through or resonance with psalmic forms in Syriac, Greek, Ethiopic, et al.

Reynolds

The *mizān* of v. 7 seems to be a cosmic balance by which God will measure the deeds of souls on the Day of Judgment. This would match the larger theme of the *sūra*, namely the signs of God's majesty. Q 57:25(a) (cf. Q 42:17), however, explains that God has sent down this "balance" with the prophets: "Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice." Here "balance" seems to refer to the (divine) judgment/authority given to the prophets. In v. 9 of our *sūra* this balance seems to be offered to all people. In other words, here the Qur'ān does not mean to teach merchants how to act in the market (as Paret would have it: "vielmehr das Gewicht setzt, so wie es recht ist, und Waage nicht fälscht [so daß der Kunde zu wenig Ware erhält]"). Instead the Qur'ān means to admonish all humans – all of whom are vicegerents (or *ḥalifas*) of God and given the power to judge – to judge well (as God does).

The *sūra* as a whole presents reasons to believe in the Qur'ān's God – both because nature attests to Him and because of the pleasures of paradise that will be the lot of believers, or the torments of hell that will be the lot of unbelievers. Its articulation of these reasons is shaped beautifully here with the refrain. On the other hand God does not appear especially merciful (as the title of the *sūra* might suggest). It is not so much bounties/favors of which this *sūra* speaks but rather His wondrous signs – and those who deny these signs will suffer the torments of hell.

Tesei

The two seas mentioned at v. 19 are elsewhere described as two cosmic bodies of sweet and salt water (Q 25:53, 27:61, 35:12). Considering the late antique cultural context, it is clear that these two seas correspond to the waters that according to the Biblical cosmology are located above and below the firmament (cf. Gen 1:6–8). In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Ephrem explains that the lower waters became salty "when they were gathered into seas on the third day," while the upper waters remained sweet and did not become bitter "for they had not been left on the land to become stagnant" (1994: 82–4). Furthermore, in his description about the creation of the firmament Narsai states: "Oh balance which divided the great water cistern and gathered it in two seas (*tryn ymmy*n), in the heaven and in the deep!" (1968: 528).

The Qur'ān never mentions the presence of the firmament to divide the two seas (which is however implied) but it rather refers to different partitions between them: the *barzah* in Q 25:53 and 55:20; the *ḥiḡr maḥḡūr* in Q 25:53; the *ḥāḡiz* in Q 27:6. The term *barzah* occurs elsewhere (Q 23:99–100) to designate an obstacle that prevents the dead from returning to the world of the living (see commentaries on QS 22). Thus

in the Qur'ān the term *barzaḥ* has the twofold function of cosmological and eschatological ban. Quite the same situation can be observed about the notion of *ḥiḡr maḥḡūr*. In fact, Q 25:22 states that *ḥiḡr maḥḡūr* are the words the angels say while barring the way to Paradise to sinners. Thus, as well as the *barzaḥ*, the *ḥiḡr maḥḡūr* seems to have the twofold function of cosmological and eschatological partition. It is also notable that while the two seas are said to be separated by these partitions, elsewhere the Qur'ān states that they also meet somewhere. This place is called *maḡma' al-baḥrayn* (Q 18:60–65) and within the Qur'ānic cosmology it holds a special connection with the water flowing out from Paradise (cf. Tesei 2014a). Therefore, it seems that the zones connected to the two cosmic seas occupy a central place within the Qur'ānic “eschatological cosmology.”

Younes

For the word *ālā'*, variously translated as *favours*, *blessings*, *bounties*, *boons*, or *benefits*, lexicons list *alan* (الان), *ilan* (الان), or *ilyun* (الان) as the singular counterpart (Badawi and Abdel Haleem 2008: 41). This singular form about which there seems to be a good amount of uncertainty, judging by the three alternative forms, may have been specifically created to explain *ālā'*. For one thing, it seems to be completely absent in the language outside of the context of Qur'ānic *ālā'*. For another, its morphological structure is unique among Arabic nouns.

If we start with *ālā'* and look for other nouns in the Qur'ān that have the same morphological structure we find the two words *ābā'* “fathers,” used 64 times (*ibid.*: 7) and *ānā'* “times, hours,” used three times (*ibid.*: 60). The singular forms of these two words are *'ab* and *'ān*, respectively.

This suggests that the singular form of *ālā'* is most probably *al* or *āl*, which in turns suggests a connection with the Semitic *el* or *al* “deity.” The refrain of Q 55 *fa bi'ayyi ālā'i rabbikumā tukaddībān* could accordingly be understood as “Which of the deities of your Lord do you deny?”

This may also explain the phrase *il yāsīn* in Q 37:130 around which there is a great deal of uncertainty (see Tabarī 2005, X: 523–25). If *il* were understood to stand for *el* (same spelling), then the phrase would mean *yāsīn's* God or *yāsīn's* Lord.

Zellentin

In line with the comments by El-Badawi and Pregill: The psalms can be seen as the core of the rabbinic and the Syriac liturgy in several ways. The Jewish prayer book, indirectly attested to already in Late Antiquity, uses the psalms repeatedly in its liturgy for the daily prayers, for Shabbat or specific holy days. The usage is closely connected to the use of Psalms in the Palestinian Hebrew literature called *Piyut*, perhaps priestly inspired poems that address liturgical, ecclesiastical, and political issues of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire. Likewise, the East Syrian rite prominently incorporates the Psalms in its daily and holy day prayers. The antiquity of the rite is of course

difficult to fathom both in the rabbinic and in the Syriac tradition, yet the conservative nature of liturgies often allows us to extrapolate a late antique basis wherever there are clear medieval attestations. Psalms, hence, were a genre that in many ways was alive in the time of the Qur'ān, and its continuation of the tradition by no means constitutes an innovation or even derivation from Jewish and Christian practice— the one quite likely innovation is the Qur'ān's liturgical use of Arabic rather than Hebrew and Aramaic.