



P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

*The Koran*

## THE COW

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

ALIF *lām mīm*. This Book is not to be doubted. It is a guide 2:1  
for the righteous, who believe in the unseen and are  
steadfast in prayer; who give in alms<sup>1</sup> from what We gave  
them; who believe in what has been revealed to you<sup>2</sup> and  
what was revealed before you, and have absolute faith in the  
life to come. These are rightly guided by their Lord; these  
shall surely triumph.

As for the unbelievers, it is the same whether or not you  
forewarn them; they will not have faith. God has set a seal  
upon their hearts and ears; their sight is dimmed and  
grievous punishment awaits them.

There are some who declare: 'We believe in God and the  
Last Day,' yet they are no true believers. They seek to  
deceive God and those who believe in Him: but they  
deceive none save themselves, though they may not perceive  
it. There is a sickness in their hearts which God has 2:10  
aggravated: they shall be sternly punished for the lies they  
ever told.

When they are told: 'You shall not do evil in the land,'  
they reply: 'Surely we are doing only what is good.' But it is  
they who are the evil-doers, though they may not perceive it.

And when they are told: 'Believe as the people believe,' they  
reply: 'Are we to believe as fools believe?' It is they who are  
the fools, if they but knew it!

When they meet the faithful, they declare: 'We, too, are  
believers.' But when alone with their devils they say to  
them: 'We follow none but you: we were only mocking.'  
God will mock them and keep them long in sin, ever  
straying from the right path.

Such are those that barter guidance for error: they profit  
nothing, nor are they on the right path. They are like one 2:17  
who kindled a fire, but as soon as it lit up all around him

1. Or 'give to the cause'.      2. Muḥammad.

God put it out and left him in darkness: they do not see.  
 2:18 Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will never return to the right path.

Or like those who, beneath a dark storm-cloud charged with thunder and lightning, thrust their fingers into their ears at the sound of every thunder-clap for fear of death (God thus encompasses the unbelievers). The lightning almost snatches away their sight: whenever it flashes upon them they walk on, but as soon as it darkens they stand still. Indeed, if God pleased, He could take away their hearing and their sight: God has power over all things.

You people! Serve your Lord, who has created you and those who have gone before you, so that you may guard yourselves against evil; who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a dome, and has sent down water from the sky to bring forth fruits for your sustenance. Do not knowingly set up other gods beside God.

2:23 If you doubt what We have revealed to Our servant, produce one chapter comparable to it. Call upon your idols to assist you, if what you say be true. But if you fail (as you are sure to fail), then guard yourselves against the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the unbelievers.

Proclaim good tidings to those who have faith and do good works. They shall dwell in gardens watered by running streams: whenever they are given fruit to eat they will say: 'This is what we used to eat before,' for they shall be given the like. Wedded to chaste spouses, they shall abide therein for ever.

God does not disdain to make comparison with a gnat or with a larger creature. The faithful know that it is the truth from their Lord, but the unbelievers ask: 'What could God mean by this comparison?'

By such comparisons God confounds many and enlightens many. But He confounds none except the evil-doers, who  
 2:27 break His covenant after accepting it, and put asunder what He has bidden to be united, and perpetrate corruption in the land. These will surely be the losers.

How can you deny God? Did He not give you life when you were dead, and will He not cause you to die and then restore you to life? Will you not return to Him at last? He created for you all that the earth contains; then, ascending to the sky, He fashioned it into seven heavens. He has knowledge of all things. 2:28

When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am placing on the earth one that shall rule as My deputy,' they replied: 'Will You put there one that will do evil and shed blood, when we have for so long sung Your praises and sanctified Your name?'

He said: 'I know what you know not.'

He taught Adam the names of all things and then set them before the angels, saying: 'Tell Me the names of these, if what you say be true.'

'Glory be to You,' they replied, 'we have no knowledge except that which You have given us. You alone are all-knowing and wise.' 2:32

Then said He: 'Adam, tell them their names.' And when Adam had named them, He said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth, and know all that you reveal and all that you conceal?'

And when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam,' they all prostrated themselves except Satan, who in his pride refused and became an unbeliever.

We said: 'Adam, dwell with your wife in Paradise and eat of its fruits to your hearts' content wherever you will. But never approach this tree or you shall both become transgressors.'

But Satan lured them thence and brought about their banishment. 'Get you down,' We said, 'and be enemies to each other. The earth will for a while provide your dwelling and your sustenance.'

Then Adam received commandments from his Lord, and his Lord relented towards him. He is the Relenting One, the Merciful.

'Get you down hence, all,' We said. 'When My guidance is revealed to you, those that follow My guidance shall have 2:38

*'God is the light of the heavens and the earth . . .*

*God guides to His light whom He will'*

The Koran is universally accepted by Muslims to be the infallible Word of God as first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel nearly fourteen hundred years ago. Its 114 chapters, or *sūrahs*, recount the narratives central to Muslim belief, and together they form one of the world's most influential prophetic works and a literary masterpiece in its own right. But, above all, the Koran provides the rules of conduct that remain fundamental to the Muslim faith today: prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca and absolute faith in God.

N. J. Dawood's masterly translation is the result of his lifelong study of the Koran's language and style, and presents the English reader with a fluent and authoritative rendering, while reflecting the flavour and rhythm of the original. This edition follows the traditional sequence of the Koranic *sūrahs*.

'Across the language barrier Dawood captures the thunder and poetry of the original' *THE TIMES*

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