

How Islamist Extremists Quote the Qur'an

Jeffrey R. Halverson
R. Bennett Furlow
Steven R. Corman

Report No. 1202 / July 9, 2012

This research was supported by a grant (N00014-09-1-0872) from the Office of Naval Research



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

The CSC is a research unit of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a strategic initiative of the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University. It promotes advanced research, teaching, and public discussions of the role of communication in combating terrorism, promoting national security, and improving public diplomacy. For additional information visit our website at <http://csc.asu.edu>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Islamist extremists make heavy use of the Qur'an (Islam's most sacred text) in their strategic communication. This study analyzed the most frequently cited or quoted verses in the Center for Strategic Communication's database of over 2,000 extremist texts. The texts date from the years 1998 to 2011, and originate primarily from the Middle East and North Africa. Taking this data as a starting point, we provide a qualitative analysis of the historical contexts and core narrative components of the cited passages.

The results confirm certain common assumptions about extremist readings of the Qur'an. There is a disproportionate use of surahs (chapters) from the later Medinan over the earlier Meccan period – only one of the top ten most frequently cited surahs of the Qur'an is Meccan. The Medinan surahs also fall within a certain historical window representing the onset and completion of military conflict between the earliest Muslims and the “pagan” clans of Mecca and their allies.

Other findings in the report raise questions about the veracity of claims often made by analysts. The most surprising is the near absence of the well-known “Verse of the Sword” (9:5) from the extremist texts. Widely regarded as the most militant or violent passage of the Qur'an, it is treated as a divine call for offensive warfare on a global scale. It is also regarded as a verse which supersedes over one hundred other verses of the Qur'an that counsel patience, tolerance, and forgiveness.

We conclude that verses extremists cite from the Qur'an do not suggest an aggressive offensive foe seeking domination and conquest of unbelievers, as is commonly assumed. Instead they deal with themes of victimization, dishonor, and retribution. This shows close integration with the rhetorical vision of Islamist extremists.

Based on this analysis we recommend that the West abandon claims that Islamist extremists seek world domination, focus on counteracting or addressing claims of victimage, emphasize alternative means of deliverance, and work to undermine the “champion” image sought by extremists.

INTRODUCTION

This report quantitatively analyzes how Islamist extremists use the Qur'an in their messaging. To do so, we compiled data from the Islamist extremist text database created by the Center for Strategic Communication (CSC) at Arizona State University, which contains over 2,000 texts. The full range of texts date from 1998 to 2011, but the majority of them date from 2007 to 2011. The database includes the statements and proclamations of well-known Islamist extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda or al-Shabaab, as well as anonymous posters on online extremist message forums.¹

All texts in the database have gone through a reliable coding process. Each paragraph in each text was categorized by CSC analysts. One coding category is “verse,” referring to any verse from a religious text. Another category that often contains verses is “exposition.” Qur'anic verses were collected from this coded data in the CSC database and catalogued to identify how Islamist extremists utilize the Qur'an.

We cataloged 1,511 verse invocations. If a specific verse was used in multiple texts, the number of times it was used (including multiple times in a single text) was recorded. Guided by the quantitative data, we provide a qualitative analysis with attention to historical contexts and the core narrative components of those passages. Finally we provide some implications for specialists tasked with counter-messaging.

THE SURAHS

The Qur'an (“the recitation”) is the most sacred text of Islam, regarded as the divinely preserved Speech of God (*Allah*) and the final revelation to humanity. Muslims believe that the text was miraculously dictated through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) over a period of some twenty-two years in ancient tribal Arabia. It is divided into 114 *surahs* (chapters) that are classified by Muslims as either Meccan or Medinan, depending on where Muhammad lived when he conveyed the revelations. Meccan surahs, dating from 610-622, are thematically different than the later Medinan surahs, dating from 622-632, when sociopolitical content, including the subject of warfare, became a prominent element. The surahs of the Qur'an do not appear chronologically in the text; rather a surah is arranged roughly by the number of verses it contains, from longest to shortest. It does not convey a linear “historical” narrative the way the Torah or the Gospels do. Rather, it reads as a sermon that references or recounts elements (or fragments) of stories, (many of which can also be found in the Torah or the New Testament) to support and illustrate different messages for the audience.

Our analysis of the coded content in the CSC extremist text database found that Islamist extremists cite the following surahs most frequently (in rank order):

- Surah Nine, *Surat at-Tawbah* (“The Repentance”)
- Surah Three, *Surat al-Imran* (“Family of Imran”)
- Surah Four, *Surat an-Nisa* (“The Women”)
- Surah Two, *Surat al-Baqarah* (“The Cow”)
- Surah Eight, *Surat al-Anfal* (“The Spoils of War”)
- Surah Five, *al-Ma’ida* (“The Table Spread”)
- Surah Twelve, *Yusuf*
- Surah Twenty-Two, *al-Hajj* (“The Pilgrimage”)
- Surah Forty-Seven, *Muhammad*
- Surah Sixty-One, *al-Saff*, and Surah Thirty-Three, *al-Ahzab* [tie]

All of the most frequently cited surahs are Medinan, except for one.

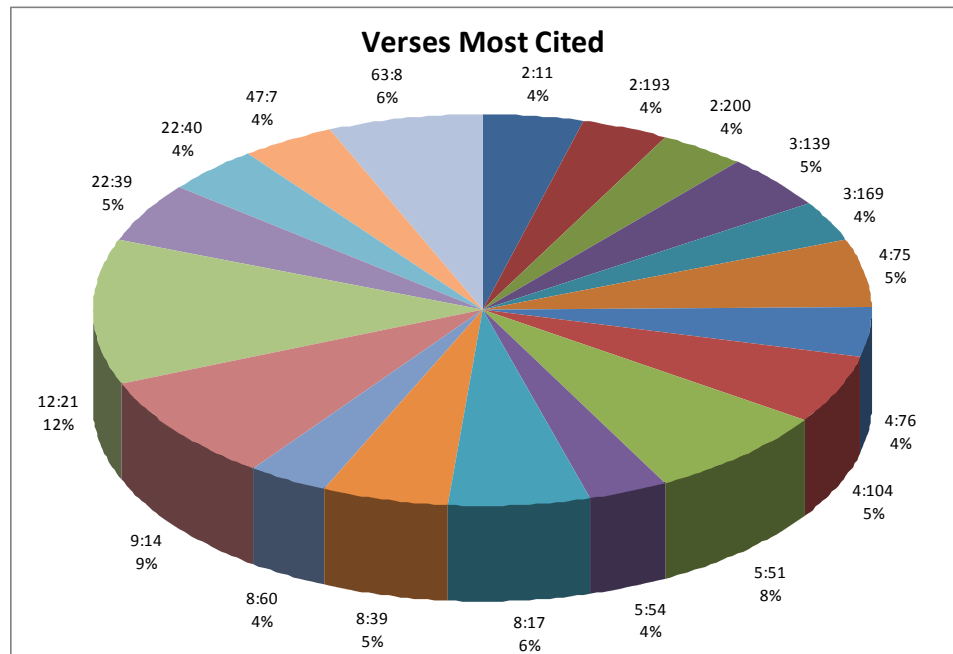
Given that most of the above surahs are among the longest in the entire Qur’an, it is reasonable to expect that these would be cited more often than other surahs. However, that explanation is misleading. For example, it should be noted that extremists cited Surah Nine (129 verses) five times as often as the longer chapter, Surah Six (165 verses), or that Surah Three (200 verses) was cited more than four times as often as the slightly longer chapter, Surah Seven (206 verses). The distinction in these cases appears to be the fact that the commonly cited surahs (Three, Nine) are Medinan, while the less cited surahs (Six, Seven) are Meccan.

In fact, it should be noted that all of these surahs, except for Surah Twelve (*Yusuf*), are Medinan. The reason why Surah Twelve is the exception to this trend is due largely to the frequency with which a portion of a particular verse is invoked, namely the later part of verse (*ayah*) 12:21, which is the number one most cited verse (see next section). It states: “God has full power and control over His affairs, but most among mankind know not.” This is an exhortation commonly invoked in the extremist texts, affirming that God’s plan is firmly in place amidst the chaos and suffering of war. It is used almost exclusively to conclude a section of a text.

THE VERSES

Another way of looking at extremists’ use of the Qur’an is to examine individual verses that are frequently invoked. As we note below, there are some frequently cited verses that do not come from frequently cited surahs. The most frequently cited verses (or portions of verses) of the Qur’an (listed according to frequency) are shown in Figure 1. The Appendix gives the text and a synopsis of each of these verses.

Figure 1. Qur'an Verses Most Cited by Extremists



As Figure 1 shows, three of the fourteen most frequently cited verses are found in Surah Four (4:104, 4:75, and 4:76). Only one of the verses is found in Surah Two, despite the fact that it is the longest chapter in the Qur'an with 286 total verses.

Surah Four, *Surat al-Nisa*, is Medinan and most sections of it date from 625. It addresses a number of the concerns and trials of the besieged Medinan Muslim community after the Battle of Uhud. This includes the subject of caring for widows and orphans left behind by slain Muslims. The verses frequently utilized by extremists from this surah address subjects such as enduring hardships and the importance of fighting against the unjust unbelievers who oppress men, women, and children. Verse 4:104 comforts and exhorts the believers to endure their struggles with hope. Meanwhile, verse 4:75 exhorts the believers to defend the weak against oppression, specifically women and children who are crying out for aid.

Interestingly, only one verse (3:139) from the second most cited chapter, Surah Three (*Surat al-Imran*), made the list of most cited verses. That verse states: "So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for ye must gain mastery if ye are true in faith." The fact that only one verse made our list, even though the chapter was the second most cited, suggests that a wide array of useful verses are found in Surah Three, rather than the presence of a small number of prominent ones (as is the case in Surah Twelve). The chapter is Medinan and dates from 625 after the Battle of Uhud, where the

Verses from the most frequently cited surah address enduring hardships and the importance of fighting against the unjust unbelievers who oppress men, women, and children.

Muslims were defeated. It juxtaposes lessons learned from the Muslim victory at Badr in 624 with the harder lessons of the Muslim defeat at Uhud. For instance, verse 3:102 encourages perseverance in the face of despair, stating: “Fear God as He should be feared and die not except in a state of Islam [i.e. as a Muslim].” The verse 3:169 furthermore consoles the Muslims, distraught after the death of their coreligionists at Uhud, by stating: “Think not of those who are slain on the path of God (*fi sabil Allah*) as dead. Nay! They are alive with their Lord receiving sustenance!” This is one of the most important verses regarding martyrdom in the Qur’an.

SURAT AT-TAWBAH

As noted previously, Surah Nine, *Surat at-Tawbah*, is the most frequently cited chapter of the Qur’an by Islamist extremists. It is a notable surah for many reasons. For one, it is the only surah in the Qur’an that does not begin with the *basmalah* invocation, namely *bismillah ar-rahman ar-raheem* (“In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful”). The reason for this omission is unknown, but Islamic scholars typically offer one of two explanations. Only one of these is relevant to this analysis: The *basmalah* invocation emphasizes God’s mercy, but *Surat at-Tawbah* is about God’s wrath and severity, so the *basmalah* was deliberately omitted to stress the point.

Within this surah, we find the aforementioned “Verse of the Sword” (9:5). It states:

But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish prayers and pay the alms, then open the way for them: for God is Forgiving, Merciful.

Surat at-Tawbah was conveyed by Muhammad to his followers in approximately 630, amidst the culmination of the tribal city-state wars between Medina and Mecca. Note the reference to the “forbidden months,” referring to Arab tribal custom of not fighting during certain months of the year. The phrase “wherever you find them” is also notable, as the heart of Mecca (even in its pagan days) was a *haram* or sanctuary in which no bloodshed (not even animals or plant life) could occur.

Zealous scholars of the Qur’an have employed a radical notion of *naskh* or abrogation regarding verse 9:5. Based on the fact that it is one of the last Medinan revelations, these scholars argue that it abrogates, or cancels out, all prior verses in the Qur’an that counsel patience, forgiveness, and peace. This is an interpretive exercise on the part of the scholars however, and

differences of opinion abound. Nevertheless, it is a verse which analysts² (see e.g. Jenkins 2008, Roshandel and Chadha 2006) understandably and frequently cite in explaining the phenomenon of violent Islamist extremism.

There were only 3 citations of the “Verse of the Sword” among the over 2,000 coded extremist texts reviewed.

Yet our analysis revealed only 3 citations of the “Verse of the Sword” among the over 2,000 coded extremist texts reviewed, despite the fact that many other verses from *Surat at-Tawbah* were invoked. In fact, the most frequently cited verse from this surah in the extremist texts was verse 9:14. This is a most interesting discovery. The verse states: “Fight them and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers.” This verse is often used at the beginning of a specific type of content, namely “victorious battle” stories.³ These are simply stories where a successful attack against the unbelievers (e.g. Americans) is described.

The following is an example of verse 9:14 cited at the onset of a victorious battle story:

God Almighty said: “Fight them, and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers” [9:14]. A brave squad from the men of the 1920 Revolution Brigades, one of the groups of the Jihad and Change Front, of the Unified Committee of the Factions of Authorization, detonated an explosive device against a convoy of the American occupation forces on the Kirkuk-Al-Duz highway, in northern Iraq, destroying an American Hummer, and killing and wounding all occupants on board.⁴

As in this example, the verse is typically cited and followed by a story, as if demonstrating the fulfillment of God’s Word.

Note that verse 9:14 uses the word *adhub*, meaning to “punish” or “chastise,” and later the word *shafa*, meaning to “cure” or “heal.” The verbs used in 9:14 indicate an assumption that the Muslims have been wronged and wounded by the unbelievers. Thus, violent action is presented as retaliatory. Another extremist example emphasizes the point further, stating:

America knows only the language of force as the only way for putting a stop to it and making it take its hands off Muslims and their causes. America does not know the language of dialogue, or that of peaceful coexistence, appeals, or denunciation and condemnation! Only blood deters America. “Fight them, and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame. Help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers.” [9:14]⁵

The fact that the extremist texts utilize this verse instead of the infamous “Verse of the Sword” is telling. It indicates the existence of a deliverance story form, an observation that falls firmly in line with the themes observed in other frequently cited verses.

ANALYSIS

Islamist extremists utilize direct citations from the Qur’an to provide solace for the suffering and to legitimize certain actions in response to Muslim grievances.

The most frequently cited Qur’anic verses identified in this study suggest that Islamist extremists favor content that falls within three core thematic categories: exhortations (e.g. 12:21, 63:8, 3:102), battle imperatives (9:14, 4:75, 22:39), and affirmations of faith (e.g. 8:17, 4:104, 3:139). These thematic categories correspond with our observation regarding the surprising verse selection from *Surat at-Tawbah*. Extremists do not favor the “Verse of the Sword,” which encourages all-out war against unbelievers. Instead they appear to invoke specific verses of the Qur’an that support a promise of deliverance.

Halverson, Goodall, and Corman⁶ identified the *deliverance story form* as one of the key structures underlying master narratives of Islamist extremism. It is a literary structure in which “the community, people, or nation of the protagonist struggles in a precarious existence and must be delivered from those conditions.” David and Goliath is a deliverance story that is probably familiar to most readers.

The community’s distress results from the action of a threatener (e.g. Goliath), the antagonist in the story. The role of the protagonist in this story form is fulfilled by a champion, prophet, or savior archetype (e.g. David), who delivers the community from their plight. Extremist communications frequently summon Muslims to assume these archetypal champion roles for themselves. In other cases, an existing extremist, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, may be cast in this role and the communication calls on others to support or rally behind him.

A classic example of a Muslim narrative that utilizes a deliverance story form, as well as a champion archetype, is the re-conquest of Jerusalem from the Crusaders by the great Saladin in 1187. Indeed, the broader master narrative of the Crusades is one of the most prominent motifs of Islamist extremist communications. It is often used as a framework for contemporary events and conflicts. The direct citations from the Qur’an we have detailed in this report appear to correlate with this tendency.

We find that, rather than encouraging a culture of naked aggression, Islamist extremists utilize direct citations from the Qur’an to provide solace for the suffering and to legitimize certain actions (particularly

terrorism) in response to Muslim grievances. As the aforementioned prominence of 9:14 indicates, extremist communication emphasizes the need to rectify a sense of dishonor, shame, and suffering at the hands of threateners (i.e. nonbelievers). The conscious decision to quote directly from the Qur'an for these specific ends is therefore significant. It must be addressed by those seeking to counter their messages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our analysis carries four practical implications for strategic communication to counter violent extremism.

Abandon claims that Islamist extremists seek world domination. A search on Google reveals hundreds of pages making claims about the impending takeover of the world by Islamists. For instance, James Arlandson claims:

Thus, in the words of these two visible terrorists [bin Laden and al-Zawahiri] the ultimate goal of Islam is to spread the message and ways of Allah around the world because Islam is the gift of God, the greatest seal and capstone of inferior Judaism and Christianity. How is this goal best manifested and carried out? In following the Quran and sharia (Islamic law), which expresses God's will and ways in a pristine form. Ultimately, violent and non-violent radicals want religious world domination.⁷

More objective analysts regard these claims as alarmist. Robert Pape⁸ is blunt:

The idea that Islamic fundamentalism is on the verge of world domination and poses a realistic threat to impose Islamic law in the United States and Europe is pure fantasy. Some radicals may harbor such delusions. Some fearmongers may use such delusions to whip up hysteria. But they are delusions nonetheless (pp. 244-245).

Michael Scheuer concurs with Pape's assessment, arguing that calls for world domination are merely *pro forma*, and the extremists' true objective is the Middle East.⁹

Consistent with this idea, our analysis indicates that the "Verse of the Sword," which is most consistent with the violent spread of Islam and the most often quoted in the above referenced web pages, is nearly absent from extremist rhetoric.

*Continued claims of
planned world
domination play
into extremists’
“clash of
civilizations” story
and undermine
Western credibility.*

Members of the target audience, the contested populations of the Muslim world, realize that extremists are not really preaching world conquest. Continued claims to the contrary, by both official and unofficial sources, only play into a “clash of civilizations” narrative that benefits the extremist cause. These claims also undermine the credibility of Western voices, because the audience knows that extremist arguments are really about victimage and deliverance.

Focus on counteracting or addressing claims of victimage. Given that extremist arguments are really about victimage and deliverance, one means of counteracting them is to address claims of victimage. Of course, where these claims are true, they should be acknowledged and addressed. Otherwise, when claims of harm are demonstrably false, they can possibly be disputed factually. However, there are limits to this strategy. Attempted corrections can simply reproduce and strengthen the frame of the original argument.¹⁰ Another strategy is to emphasize cases where the West has come to the aid of Muslims (or attempted to do so), as in the cases of Kosovo and the various Arab Spring conflicts. Finally since Qur’an verses are used as analogies to present day events to justify violent behavior, it may be possible to undermine the analogies themselves.¹¹

Emphasize alternative means of deliverance. Another strategy is to direct attention to existing grievances and promote alternative means for resolving them. Even if one accepts the premise that Muslims are in need of deliverance, it does not follow that violence is the preferred means of achieving it. Here again, the Arab Spring conflicts provide a rich reservoir of such alternatives (e.g. nonviolent new media campaigns). Late last year the State Department’s Digital Outreach Team posted a video on YouTube¹² mocking Ayman al-Zawahiri using clips from an al-Qaeda video where he claims “there is no hope to remove the corrupt regimes in Muslims countries except by force. And there is no chance to bring about change through peaceful action. Let anyone who disagrees give me a single example.” These quotes were intercut with scenes from the Arab Spring protests in Egypt.

Work to undermine the “champion” image sought by extremists. Extremists use a deliverance narrative to position themselves as the champion that can deliver the community from evil. However, as we have argued elsewhere, extremists do little that is champion-like. They have not unseated any apostate rulers, and their victims are overwhelmingly likely to be Muslims. A study by the Combating Terrorism Center¹³ estimated that between 2006 and 2008, al Qaeda linked militants were 38 times more likely to kill a Muslim than a Westerner. A string of recent reports by UNAMA¹⁴ estimate that two-thirds to three-fourths of civilian deaths in Afghanistan are caused by anti-government forces. So there is an argument to be made that even if one believes that violent action is

required to deliver Muslims, Islamist extremists are not competent to occupy the role of champion.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Texts in the CSC database are selected for their likelihood of containing stories, and do not represent a comprehensive inventory of extremist texts. However, there is no reason to believe the sample is biased in such a way as to misrepresent the distribution of Qur'an quotes in extremist texts in general.
- ² See Jenkins, G. (2008) *Political Islam in Turkey: Running west, turning east?* New York: Palgrave Macmillan and Roshandel, J. and S. Chadha (2006) *Jihad and International Security*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ³ Lundry, C., Corman, S.R., Furlow, R. B., & Errickson, K. W. (2012). Cooking the books: Strategic inflation of casualty reports by extremists in the Afghanistan conflict. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 35(5), 368-381.
- ⁴ "1920 Revolution Brigades Claims US Convoy Attack on Kirkuk-al-Duz Highway Iraq," *Open Source Center*, Sept 5, 2010; content originally released in Arabic on the *Hanin Network Forums*.
- ⁵ Shaykh Sulayman Abu-Ghayth, "Ghayth Notes Right To Use Chemical Germ Weapons Against US," *Open Source Center*, June 8, 2002; content originally released in Arabic.
- ⁶ Halverson, J. R., H. L. Goodall and S. R. Corman (2011). *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ⁷ Arlandson, J. M. (undated). The ultimate goal of Islam. *Answering Islam*. Available from http://answeringislam.org/Authors/Arlandson/ultimate_goal.htm
- ⁸ Pape, R. (2005). *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*. New York: Random House.
- ⁹ Scheuer, M. (2006). *Marching Toward Hell: America and Islam after Iraq*. New York: Free Press.
- ¹⁰ Nyhan, B. & Reifler, J. (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior*, 32(2), 303-330.
- ¹¹ Corman, S. R. (2006). Weapons of mass persuasion: Communicating against terrorist ideology. *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, 53(3), 93-104. <https://pfpc Consortium.org/journal-article/weapons-mass-persuasion-communicating-against-terrorist-ideology>
- ¹² <http://youtu.be/7hKqFUaPk4c>
- ¹³ Fishman, B., Brachman, J., & Felter, F. (2009, July). The power of truth. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Available at <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-power-of-truth>
- ¹⁴ See <http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4652>

APPENDIX

This list represents the verses (or portions of verses) of the Qur'an most frequently cited by Islamist extremists. They are listed in order of frequency with the most frequently cited first. For each item, we give the surah and verse, followed by an English translation (*italics*), then our analysis of important features of the verse.

12:21: *God has full power and control over His affairs, but most among mankind know not.* Partial verse taken from a discussion of the Prophet Joseph (Yusuf), affirming God's control of events amidst perceived injustices.

9:14: *Fight them and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers.* A call to battle amidst a discussion of the plots and aggression of the pagans (*mushrikin*) in Mecca against the Muslims; dates from ca. 630.

5:51: *Take not the Jews and Christians for your trusted guardians; they are but trusted guardians to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for aid) is one of them. Verily God does not guide unjust people.* Late Medinan verse repudiating the deviations of the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) and affirming the autonomy of Islam and the Muslims as a distinct nation of believers.

63:8: *Honor belongs to God and His Messenger and to the believers; but the hypocrites know not.* A partial verse dating from ca. 626 addressing claims by the leader of the Hypocrites in Medina that his supporters are the more honorable group.

8:17: *It is not ye who slew them; it was God: When thou threw (dust), it was not thy act, but God's, in order that He might test the believers with a gracious trial from Himself.* A reference to the Prophet throwing dust at the onset of the Battle of Badr in 624. Abdullah Yusuf Ali notes that the act was "symbolical of [the arrogant enemy] rushing blindly to their fate [i.e. defeat]."¹⁵

4:75: *And why should you not fight in the cause of God and [the cause] of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)? Men, women, and children, whose cry is: 'Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee one who will protect.'* A call for battle aimed at those among the Muslims who were reluctant to fight against the Meccans.

4:104: *Slacken not in following up the enemy; if you are suffering hardships, they are suffering similar hardships; but you have hope from*

God, while they have none. A verse acknowledging the hardships endured in the wars against Mecca, but distinguishing the Meccan pagans, whose actions were useless, from the believers, who had hope in God to help them endure.

8:39: *And fight them on until there is no more discord and religion (or the way) is for God (alone).* One of the early Medinan verses that granted the Muslims permission to fight against the pagan Meccans, leading to the Battle of Badr in 624.

22:39: *To those (people) against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; and verily God is Most Powerful for their aid.*

The first verse granting Muslims permission to fight the Meccans; the *hijra* or migration to Medina in 622 was the final effort by the Muslims to escape Meccan persecution.

3:139: *So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: for you must gain mastery if you are true in faith.* This Medinan verse followed the defeat of the Muslims at Uhud in 625. It counsels the believers to remain steadfast in their faith; victory will come (as it did in 630).

2:11: *When it is said to them [the hypocrites]: ‘Do not make mischief on the earth;’ they say: ‘Why, we only want to make peace!’* A Medinan denunciation of those who subvert the believers from within and disobey God’s commands with false claims of seeking peace or justice.

4:76: *Those who believe fight in the cause of God, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight against the associates of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.* A Medinan verse stressing the binary distinction between the believers and the unbelievers (good versus evil).

22:40: *Those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of justice, for no cause except that they say; ‘Our Lord is God.’ . . . God will certainly aid those who aid His cause.* A continuation of verse 22:39 [see above].

47:7: *O you who believe! If you aid (the cause of) God, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly.* A Medinan verse given amidst a call for battle that promises God’s assistance and reward to the believers for their sacrifices.

¹⁵ Ali, Abdullah Yusuf (2001). *The Qur’an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an, Inc.