



Aslamu alaykum

I pray this message reaches you in the best of states, in the Mercy of Allah Most High, and in His protection.

I write to invite you to join the IEQ-100, a global group of 100 individuals and institutions supporting one of the most important contemporary works of Islamic scholarship in English: *The Integrated Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* (IEQ). IEQ is the only encyclopedia of the Qur'an in any Western language being produced by an international team of Muslim scholars. By becoming a member of the IEQ-100, you will participate in the historic legacy of supporting Islamic scholarship that has produced an enchanting and glorious tradition of knowledge that continues to benefit humanity.

The IEQ Project was conceived in 2007 at the Center for Islamic Sciences (CIS). Following extensive discussion and meetings, an international team of Muslim scholars from around the world started to produce text in 2009. When Volume 1 was published in 2013, it received unprecedented praise and endorsements; Volume 2 will be published in 2018, in sha Allah. (See endorsements at: <http://iequran.com/project/endorsements.php>)

The IEQ Project responds to three global realities:

- i. **Linguistic disconnect with the Qur'an:** Today, eight out of every ten Muslims have no direct access to the foundational Book of their faith. This linguistic disconnect has uprooted a vast majority of Muslims from the spiritual spring of their well-being and sound intellectual and moral grounds. It has also produced upheavals of unprecedented nature and left them seeking and searching for answers to questions which will help them to live Islam in this age of science. No translation of the Qur'an can replace what has been lost; only an encyclopedia based on 1400 years of Islamic scholarship can help to reconnect Muslims with a deeper understanding of the message of the Qur'an.
- ii. **There is no comprehensive resource for a serious seeker:** For both Muslims and non-Muslims, over-arching questions have been thrust on center stage and there is no authentic and fully-sourced reference work on the Qur'an that provides answers to the "burning questions" of our times: What does the Qur'an say about women, marriage, family, children, neighbors, jihad, war and peace? What does the Qur'an say about modern scientific discoveries and theories? Only a full-length treatment of these topics—drawing on all verses and related material from the rich Islamic tradition—written in an encyclopedic style can provide authentic answers to these questions.
- iii. **Three hundred years of misrepresentation of Islam and the Qur'an by the Orientalists**—aptly described by S. Pervez Manzoor as "a project born of spite, bred in frustration and nourished by vengeance, the spite of the powerful for the powerless, the frustration of the rational towards the 'superstitious' and the vengeance of the orthodox against the non-conformist"—needs an urgent corrective. Among recent examples of such biases is the 2005 five-volume *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an* (EQ), published by Brill Academic Publishers. It restates many claims originally made by the 19th-century orientalism, such as:
 - a. "Gibb is certain that the doctrine of the last judgment in the Qur'an was derived from Christian sources, especially from the writings of the Syriac Christian Fathers and monks" (EQ III, 144a);
 - b. "Muhammad seems to have worried about the dearth and inaccuracy of the data available to him. This becomes particularly clear in the discussion of the history of the Seven Sleepers where the Prophet had to acknowledge

the lack of chronological information. He worried about the uncertainty of the length of time they spent sleeping in the cave. They themselves did not know it, and the indicated precise number of 309 years is also uncertain” (EQ II, 433b);

- c. Brills' encyclopedia of the Qur'an depicts the *Mothers of Believers*—as the Qur'an calls the wives of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace—as a power-hungry lot, who “reviled each other and each other's fathers and did so even in his presence; such backbiting and bragging matches are reported between Zaynab bt. Jahsh and Āisha, Umm Salama and Safiyya, and Āisha and Safiyya... their jealousy of Māriya was so intense that the Prophet had to assign her a dwelling in a loft he owned that was at some distance from his established wives' living quarters (EQ V, 525). (For more examples of misrepresentation, see two reviews of Brill's *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* at <http://www.cis-ca.org/muzaffar/rev.html>).

Against this historic background, and responding to the urgency of contemporary global realities, the *Integrated Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* presents a trove of knowledge about the Qur'an and its exegetical tradition. Held to a high standard of academic rigor, IEQ draws on a wide range of traditional Muslim sources, including *tafsīr*, Hadith collections and commentaries, classical lexicons, biographical dictionaries, works of jurisprudence, Prophetic biographies, treatises on spiritual and moral psychology, and universal histories.

IEQ fills a critical gap as currently no encyclopedic work presents the integrated message of the Qur'an through authentic Islamic sources. Encyclopedias are generational undertakings and they continue to influence future scholarship, therefore, we hope that with Divine succor and your contribution we can complete the remaining volumes. Once completed, 585 alphabetically arranged entries of IEQ will become the only authentic source covering all concepts, persons, places, events, and things mentioned in the Qur'an. (Please visit, www.iequran.com; audio-visual presentations are at <http://www.iequran.com/project/ppt.php>.)

This letter seeks your support to streamline the publication of the remaining volumes. As a first step, our goal is to secure financial support for Volume 3 (approximately 600 pages, covering letters E-H). This Volume will bring the project to its half-way point.

Members of the IEQ-100 group

- donate a minimum of \$2500.00 each year for the next two years; donations are due by Ramadan 1439/May 2018 and Ramadan 1440/May 2019;
- will have life-time online access to the digital version of IEQ (<http://online.iequran.com/>);
- will receive tax deductible receipts. Please note that CIS is a registered charity in Canada and has a 501(c)(3) status in the United States; this project does not qualify for zakat funds;
- will have their names included in the *IEQ Legacy Book*, which will be published after the completion of the English language version, in sha Allah.

Your contribution to the project is especially critical at this time as we attempt to fast-track the production of the remaining volumes. I pray that our endeavors to serve His Book are accepted by Allah Most High and He grants us *tawfiq* to complete this project. Please send your completed pledge form to one of the addresses given below.

Was-salam



Muzaffar Iqbal
(President CIS and General Editor IEQ)