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Documents on Prisoners of War

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DOCUMENT NO. 2

THE QUR'AN (KORAN)
(610-632 A.D.)

SOURCE

The Holy Qur'an (Maulawi Sher'Ali trans.)

NOTE

The Qur'an, or Koran, is the record of the revelations received by Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam, from Allah (God) during the period from 610 to 632 A.D., first at Mecca (610-622 A.D.) and then, after the flight from Mecca (the "Hijira" or "Hejira"), at Medina (622-632 A.D.). It is the Holy Book of the Muslim religion. While in many respects it was as implacable as the Bible, it contained admonitions which served as a basis for humanitarian interpretations by Muslim scholars long before such an attitude is to be found in the works of Christian scholars. (See DOCUMENT NO. 3).

EXTRACTS

47:5. And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, bind fast the fetters — then afterwards either release them as a favor or by taking ransom — until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. . . .

76:9. And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner.

[A tradition quotes the Prophet Muhammad as saying:

Prisoners are your brethren. It is the grace of God that they are in your hands. Since they are at your mercy, treat them as you would treat yourself as regards food, clothing, and shelter. Do not demand of them a labour which exceeds their strength; help them rather in what they have to do.]