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KORAN MANUSCRIPT

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The Koran is the Muslims' holy scripture. Its central message is the concept of God's unity and omnipotence, but certain chapters (*suras*) can moreover be read as direct instructions for Muslims on how to lead a righteous life. A passage in this spread illustrates the Koran's precision, for example in dictating correct behavior to aging parents.

“Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.’”

(*Sura* 17, verses 23-24)

Korans are found in both scroll and codex form – a book like today's volumes – with pages and a spine. This manuscript, bound in leather and with decorations in gold, is a typical example of a privately owned Koran from the Ottoman Empire. Korans come in all sizes. Mosque Korans, intended for recitation, are very large. Koran manuscripts the size of a matchbox or even smaller have served as amulets, while miniature Korans were taken along on journeys.

