FROM AN ARABIC MANUSCRIPT, written in Persia, consisting of chapters of the Koran, known as Suras, and Daily Prayers. Such selections from the Koran were popular, and the most famous calligraphers and illuminators were frequently commissioned by devout Muslims to exert their skill in producing fine copies. This manuscript is undated, but it is evidently early 19th Century. The writing is in a bold Naskhi, not unlike that of the preceding example, and is typical of modern Persian calligraphy. The illuminations, while not comparable to the minute work of earlier periods, show fine restraint and are in perfect accord with the devotional character of the book. In Muhammadan countries it is the custom to hold the paper on the left knee, not on a table. The "qalam" (which by the way is made from a reed that grows in the marshes between the Tigris and the Euphrates), is trimmed to a square nib, like an exaggerated "J" pen, and this is split like the quill or steel pen of the West. The slant of the nib determines the style of the writing, just as its breadth decides the size; but on a page of uniform character the skilled scribe requires but one "qalam" for each color employed. Add to this equipment one or more bottles of ink, paper, a penknife, an ivory nibber, and a mat to sit on, and all requirements are met—that is, all but infinite patience and the most intensive training. Of the many points in technique to be mastered, one example must suffice, viz., that the perfection of the individual curves and long strokes depend upon the scribe’s holding his breath so as to keep the body motionless and the arm steady.
لا يعلمون ولا يشعرون
في السماء بوجودكم وذوقكم
للمؤمنين وخوفهم من
كل شيطان يفسد فيهم
استغرق السمع كالشعبة
شهاب مبين والآتي
مذده لها وعينها في رواج
وأبتسموا فيها من كل شجاعة
مؤذونون وجعلنا كفرها

فقطع عاله نبي الدين فبعث
المائكة كلهم أجمعون
الله ينال مكانته أن يكون مع
المتوفين قال يلني لالله
ألا تكرمون مع المتوفين
قال كرا الحسن لا بيمين يشير
خلفته من صلابة من حميم
مسنودًا قال فاخرج بهدا
وأتان رجيعًا وان علوا
أِنَّكَ رَبِّي هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ
وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكَ
الإِنْسَانَ بِرَسْلٍ إِلَيْهِ
الْحَكِيمَ مَسْتَوْىٍ وَأَبْجَان
خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ عَلَبٍ مِّنْ نَارٍ السَّمَّاء
وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبِّي لِلْمُلَكِ لَا يَكُونُ
خَالِقًا بَشَرًا مِّن صَلَصَالٍ يَوْمٍ
جَمِيعًا مَّسْتَوْىٍ فَوَأَدَسَّ نَوْعًا
وَقَسَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُسْتَقِيمِينَ
مِنْكُنَّ وَقَلَدْ عَلَّمُنَا الْمُسْتَقِيمَينَ