

A GUIDE FOR INFIDELS & BELIEVERS

# KORAN CURIOUS



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*This book is dedicated to the memory of those innocents whose lives were murderously cut short, as a result of an Islamic extremist misinterpreting and twisting the words of the Koran. As Westerners, we are not at war with Islam. For Muslims, your prophet never imagined his later followers would wish to wage war against us.*

# Acknowledgments

Writing a book is one of the most self-centered tasks any person could hope to undertake. When you're not reading and researching, you're writing. When you're not writing, you're gathering your thoughts. You become completely myopic in what it is you hope to achieve, constantly worrying if you've done the narrative justice. With this in mind, I offer my deepest gratitude to those closest to me, who have had to deal with me while my mind was perpetually chasing the words and thoughts for this book. I love you all.

# Foreword

So, what do Americans know of Islam? Well, most know very little or nothing at all. This shouldn't come as any great surprise, especially when one considers Americans know so little about their own majority faith, Christianity. For instance, more than 75% of Americans identify themselves as being of the Christian faith, yet biblical literacy remains embarrassingly low. In *God Hates You. Hate Him Back* I cite a study published by Politics Daily titled, 'Why a Year of the Bible Would Horrify its Sponsors', which demonstrated the following hilarious statistics:

- More than 50% don't know that Genesis is the first book of the Bible.
- More than 50% can't name even name one of the Gospels.
- More than 60% can't name at least 5 of the 10 commandments.
- More than 20% think Moses was one of Jesus' disciples.
- More than 50% of high school seniors think Sodom and Gomorrah were a married a couple.

Simply, if a majority of a predominantly Christian America has misconceptions and a lack of understanding of its own faith, what chance are they of getting right it when it comes to the predominant religion of countries that many can't locate on an atlas?

John L. Esposito, Director, Prince Alwaleed bin Talai Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and author 'The Future of Islam', says, "Today's historic changes, the death of Osama bin Laden and the Arab Spring offer an opportunity to redress anti-Islam and anti-Muslim bias (Islamophobia) and to reaffirm that American Muslims, like other mainstream Americans, desire a secure and democratic America. Despite the fact that American Muslims have had years to explain that neither they -- nor their religion -- sanction terrorism."

In the past decade, all major polls have consistently shown American public opinion of Islam plummeting. The furor over the proposed Islamic center (Park 51) in New York City resurfaced hostility toward Islam and Muslims. According to the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, large minorities said they could not think of anything positive to say about Islam. In one study, 38 percent of Americans have an unfavorable view of Islam, compared to 30 percent who reported a positive view. Another study conducted by *The Washington Post* found Islam's unfavorable image creeping up to 49 percent among Americans.

This fear and hostility has been reinforced by the American public's basic ignorance and misunderstanding of Islam: The Pew Forum's September 2010 survey of religion literacy found that only about half of Americans know that the Quran is the holy book of Islam. Esposito adds, "Mainstream American Muslims have too often been equated inaccurately with terrorists and people who reject democracy. Muslim Americans cherish the freedoms guaranteed by the American Constitution as much as others and, as the Gallup World Poll of 35 Muslim countries reported, like all Americans, majorities of Muslims globally desire democracy and freedom and fear and reject religious extremism and terrorism."

Now, if you think Christians are biblically illiterate and willfully ignorant of scripture (most likely intentionally so, because that way they can pretend the Old Testament God really didn't command all those inconveniently morally repulsive laws), then consider Muslims lag even further behind in Koranic literacy. No doubt a product of high-level illiteracy rates in the Arab-Muslim world. According to the 2007 World Factbook, for example, Mexico has a higher literacy rate than one of the most modern and developed nations in the Middle East, Bahrain.

Compare the literacy rates between those Arabic nations on the left versus those non-Arabic nations on the right:

### **Country Literacy Country Literacy**

Bahrain 86.5% Chile 95.7%

Saudi Arabia 78.8% Mexico 91%

Iraq 74.1% Vietnam 90.2%

Yemen 52.3% China 90%

Syria 52.3% Guatemala 69.1%

Morocco 52% Laos 67.7%

Further problematic is the fact that written Arabic, as found in the Koran, is not a lingua franca. Similarly, Latin was, for many years for many languages, a working language for many, but a mother tongue to none. In this sense, Arabic is extremely colloquial, hence a Moroccan Arab speaking to someone from Niger, may use the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) but their insert of colloquial terms may make the conversation as productive as a Cockney Londoner speaking with a Long Island truck driver. Ok, so what does the equivalent use of "wouldyamind putting a fiver in ya sky-rocket?" have to do with a written static text such as the Koran? Well, unlike written English (with the exception of vowel differences between UK English and U.S English) these regional variances of the language creep into the writing.

Further, it has been my anecdotal experience, having lived Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, for the past decade, that an overwhelming majority of believers, who I come in contact with, possess only a superficial understanding of the Islamic scriptures. In other words, while most are familiar with the central tenets and key passages of the Koran, most remain ignorant of the historical context. In fact, shortly after the assassination of Osama Bin Laden, Ebrahim Moosa, a professor of religion and Islamic studies at Duke University, highlighted Islamic religious illiteracy when he commented on the deceased leader of Islamic terrorism: "We know that (Bin Laden) was never exposed to orthodox Islamic teachings. The writings of ideologues in the Muslim Brotherhood influenced Bin Laden heavily. He takes scriptural imperatives at their face value and believes this is the only instruction and command God has given him - unmediated by history, unmediated by understanding, unmediated by human experience. Now that's a difference between Muslim orthodoxy and what I would call uber- or hyperscripturalists,"

We also need to be cognizant of the fact that there are various political and special interests

groups within the United States whose interests are served by keeping Americans in the dark and confused when it comes to understanding the Koran and Islam. Now here comes a big can of worms. First of all, it's a badly maintained secret that politico operatives on the far right, and their ideologue cronies, are seasoned pros at whipping up fear of an external enemy. Knowing it drives white Christian voters to the polling booths on Election Day. Glenn Greenwald of the Huffington Post observed in an editorial published shortly after the Juan Williams firing from NPR:

*“Beyond the general need to ensure that Americans always fear an external Enemy, there are multiple functions which this specific Muslim-based fear-mongering fulfills. The national security state -- both its public and private arms -- needs the “Muslims as Threat” mythology to sustain its massive budget and policies of Endless War. The surveillance state -- both its public and private arms -- needs that myth to justify its limitless growth. Christians who crave religious conflict; evangelicals who await the Rapture; and Jews who were taught from birth to view the political world with Israel at the center, that the U.S. must therefore stay invested in the Middle East, and that “the Arabs” are the Enemy, all benefit from this ongoing demonization.*

*Beyond that, nationalists and militarists of various stripes who need American war for their identity, purpose and vicarious feelings of strength and courage cling to this mythology as desperately as anyone. Republicans gain substantial political advantage from scaring white and Christian voters to shake with fear and rage over the imminent imposition of sharia law in America. And political officials in the executive branch are empowered by this anti-Muslim fear campaign to operate in total secrecy and without any checks or accountability as they bomb, drone, occupy, imprison, abduct and assassinate at will.”*

One such group is the all too powerful Israel lobby group, AIPAC. (American Israeli Public Affairs Committee) Now it's evident that a cornerstone of their strategy has been to keep the American public inflamed with debates over 'mosques at Ground Zero' and the like, subliminally leading us to believe we share a common enemy with Israel. Moreover, it's a tactic that has worked with breathtaking success. Take the aftermath of 9/11 as one such example. Israel's public relations machine via AIPAC worked tirelessly to include its colonial war with Yasser Arafat's Palestinians into the same narrative as the United States' battle against global terrorism.

Award winning UK Independent journalist Robert Fisk wrote on 30 March 2002:

*“How much longer can Ariel Sharon pretend that he's fighting in the ‘war against terror’? How much longer are we supposed to believe this nonsense? How much longer can the Americans remain so gutlessly silent in the face of a vicious conflict which is coming to obscuring the crimes against humanity of 11 September? Terror, terror, terror. Like a punctuation mark, the words infect every Israeli speech, every American speech, almost every American article.”*

To further underscore the manipulation of American discourse that AIPAC partakes, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, co-authors of *'The Israel Lobby and U.S Foreign Policy'*, observe:

*“In essence, American policy makers had to be shown that it made good strategic sense for the United States to try to rid the Middle East of Israel’s foes, which were also said to be America’s foes. As one would expect, Israel and key groups in the lobby began working together to turn this opportunity into a reality. Their efforts succeeded. The Bush administration eventually embraced the lobby’s views about the new threat environment and rejected the alternative paradigm. Not only did the United States gradually adopt Israel’s policy preferences toward the Palestinians, Iran, and the rest of the region, it also adopted many of Israel’s justifications for these policies. American and Israeli leaders began to sound as if they were speaking from the same page.”*

While the above few paragraphs may read as ‘hit and run’ – an entire book would be required to delve into the role AIPAC, and the like, play in shaping the court of public opinion, but I felt it important to briefly mention the varying forces at play whenever the topic of Islam is raised in the West. Again this by no means excuses what are some of the more troubling aspects of the Islamic faith, and we will come to those later, but fallacies and misconceptions regarding Islam within the United States are to be expected. I hope this book dispels some of those myths and provides better understanding on all sides.

So what do Muslims really think? As absurd as such a question appears on the surface, one such exhaustive study spent six years and more than 50,000 interviews in uncovering some kind of consensus on collective attitudes towards the West. Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton commissioned his company to undertake this enormous study.

*Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed (Gallup Press; March 2008) sheds new light on this complex question. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, U.S. public officials seemed to have no idea whether or not many Muslims supported the bombings. This troubled Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton, who felt that “no one in Washington had any idea what 1.3 billion Muslims were thinking, and yet we were working on intricate strategies that were going to change the world for all time.” Clifton commissioned his company to undertake the enormous job, making it the largest and most comprehensive study of its kind.

What the data reveals may well shock you as you gulp down your infidel flavored Budweiser:

1. Muslim and Americans are equally likely to reject attacks on civilians as morally unjustifiable.
2. Large majorities of Muslims would guarantee free speech if it were up to them to write a new constitution AND they say religious leaders should have no direct role in drafting that constitution.
3. Muslims around the world say that what they LEAST admire about the West is its perceived moral decay and breakdown of traditional values – the same answers that Americans themselves give when asked the question.
4. When asked about their dreams for the future, Muslims say they want better jobs and security, not conflict and violence.
5. Muslims say the most important thing Westerners can do to improve relations with their societies is to change their negative views toward Muslims and respect Islam.

The research also suggests that conflict or “clash of civilizations” is not inevitable and any likely clash has more to do with U.S. and Israel policy rather than religious principles.

Obviously this runs against everything the political right, particularly the Bush Administration, who led us to believe the Muslim world hates us because we enjoy the fruits of democracy, of which a majority of Muslims don't even know what democracy is, but based on recent events in the Middle East, the Arab Spring, they evidently crave it. The Muslim world couldn't care less if our television advertisements include images of women in bikinis or frat guys chugging tequila on Spring break. If they hate us, it's because our airbases are in the Holy Land, Saudi Arabia, our sanctions against Iraq in the 90s killed tens of thousands of children, and thirdly – the big daddy of them all, but no one wants to talk about it – our unconditional and uncritical support of Israel.

Steven Kull, director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes and author of “Feeling Betrayed: The Roots of Muslim Anger at America,” says from Morocco to Indonesia, Muslims “are singing from the same song sheet” of feeling oppressed by an America that cares more about oil and siding with Israel than truly supporting the democratic aspirations that have flowered during the recent Arab Spring.

Kull presented his key at the Brookings Institution, which published the book that draws upon five years of polling, focus groups and visits to Muslim majority countries. Although Kull conducted the research from 2006 to 2010, before the current pro-democracy uprisings, his results track with the most recent polls conducted by the Pew Research Centre.

Kull's offered four key takeaways from his research that should prove challenging for U.S. policymakers. According to him, a majority of Muslims:

- Feel threatened by U.S. military force and share a belief that “the United States pushes people around [and] abuses its power.” The presence of American troops across the region is interpreted as “a scheme to steal oil” that smacks of colonialism. While most Muslims do not approve of al Qaeda's violent tactics, a large majority agree with its goal to rid Islamic countries of U.S. forces.
- Believe the United States is hostile to Islam and wants to impose its own secular culture or Christian religion on Muslim countries. Many took George W. Bush's post-9/11 vow to launch a “crusade” against terrorism literally, interpreting it in the millennial-old historic context of a religious war.
- Resent U.S. support for Israel and believe America's goal is to expand the geographic borders of the Jewish state. Many see Israel as a proxy for U.S. hegemony in the region, and most don't believe the establishment of a Palestinian state is a U.S. goal. The exception: six in 10 Palestinians say the United States does want to see them with their own state.
- Are convinced the United States has undermined democratic movements in the Middle East in favor of propping up authoritarian regimes. While recent events may supersede that finding, Kull also found solid majorities say Islamist groups like Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood should be encouraged to organize political parties and take part in democratically elected governments.

Moreover, Robert Fisk warns that Western media is guilty of lulling us into a false sense of good versus evil when it comes to critiquing Israel versus Palestine. Newspapers distort reality with clichéd headlines, such as “Arab *terrorists threaten* Israel” played against “Israel *security chiefs warn* Arafat”. Fisk says, “we ask can Arafat *control* his own people, when the Israelis ask the same question. Yet when a Jewish settlers' group killed two

Palestinian civilian men and a baby, we did not ask if Sharon could control his own people.” Now, the objective of this book is not to denounce certain aspects of Israel’s foreign policy, despite the temptation that provides. My goal, however, is to provide you with a better understanding of Islam via providing a deeper understanding of Muhammad’s biography held side-by-side with the relevant passages of the Koran, while also being cognizant of Western media fed prejudices. Hopefully, this will lessen the fear and mistrust we have of the Islamic faith and Muslims in general and then we can begin to address the tenets of Islam that are in conflict with our Western democratic values in a manner without the myths and misconceptions.

Now, this is the book I was certain I’d never write. While I had tackled Judaism and Christianity in my earlier works, I had believed Islam to be off limits due to a combination of two factors: my writing style, which is generally a no-holds barred, give-em both barrels approach, and the fact the Islamic world is, under normal circumstances, not as forgiving as the West when it comes to challenging all things holier than thou. But the more I delved into the subject matter I began to understand that the story of Muhammad, and the themes contained within the Koran, could be told in a manner that is not only informative and enlightening for atheists and non-Muslims, but equally sensitive and informative for Muslims alike. Why? Well, the life and times of Muhammad makes for a great story to tell. This was a man who led a remarkable life – a life of love, heartache, sorrow, war, peace, revolution, hope, fear, conquest – a man who changed the world in ways he would never have envisaged in his wildest dreams at the time when he and his Muslims were facing extinction from a military force that outnumbered them 3:1; a man whose military victories against all odds unified an entire corner of the globe, gave the Arabs a unified language, and changed mathematical thought; a man who became the first to provide legal status and rights to women, and obligations to those captured in warfare. At least from a historical perspective, what’s not to love of such a story?

Interestingly, another thing occurred to me towards the end of my research, and not just a little thing for I rarely concede such a thing. What thing am I talking about? Well, the thing that occurred to me was that until now I had been wrong for criticizing the Koran in terms of citing random passages in isolation to suit my argument against Islam. And it’s on this point my atheist literary colleagues share equal culpability. Although, however, this is not to concede that much of Islam’s values and beliefs shouldn’t trouble our twenty-first century Western democratic sensibilities, because there are numerous problematic aspects of the faith today – namely a lack of a central authority, an absence of reformation, and the difficulty of reconciling seventh century tribal values and morals with the modern world – but this book is not intended to be a critique of Islam in the twenty-first century, the point I’m making is one cannot understand the Koran without first understanding the historical context of the respective verses. For example, there are passages that Sam Harris, *End of Faith*, points to within the Koran that he uses as a “ha, gotcha” verse. He quotes numerous verses including: “Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, and well provided for by their Lord; pleased with his gifts and rejoicing that those they left behind, who have not yet joined them, have nothing to fear or to regret. God will not deny the faithful their reward.” [3:169] Now, in isolation we can use this against Islam, as Muhammad appears to be pronouncing an endorsement for martyrdom, carte blanche. What Harris doesn’t say, however,

is that Muhammad recited this particular verse in the days prior to facing annihilation, because he had learned the Meccans were planning on laying siege on Medina with the purpose of finishing off the Muslims once and for all. Essentially, Muhammad had to raise the will of his men to defend the city at all costs, for the Quraysh of Mecca intended to execute every Muslim man, woman, and child should the city's defenses fall. Moreover, he would never have envisaged that 1,500 years later, men would read this verse and use it for justification to hijack a jetliner and fly it into a building filled with innocent people. Specifically, Muhammad was referring to a specific actual historical event, and it should be read like a military General priming his troops for battle against a determined attacking foe. Obviously, this doesn't vindicate everything laid out in the Koran, but to understand the life and experiences of Muhammad, then one can gain a better understanding of why Muhammad said the things he said, when he said them. If you're a Muslim, however, you believe God provided Muhammad with these words.

Similarly when we look at the issue of apostasy, an Islamic law that prescribes the death penalty for men who leave the faith, there is no verse in the Koran that can be ascribed to this, which is something that came as a big surprise to me. So as you can see, there is a basket full of misconceptions and misunderstandings about Islam, for the same reason there are misconceptions about the Bible. Naturally, due to the fact very few bother or are sufficiently educated to actually read it. But as I've alluded to earlier, reading the Koran in isolation is not adequate to understanding it, and this is what distinguishes it from learning the Bible.

You see, when it comes to understanding Judaism and Christianity, everything you need to know can be found in the one book, the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. What I'm trying to say is we don't have any external and independently verifiable accounts of the lives of Abraham, Moses, David, or even Jesus. More specifically, with the exclusion of Saint Paul, we don't know who any of the actual biblical authors were. For example, we have no clue as to the respective identities of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They could've been bong-smoking Greeks from Mykonos, and we'd have no way telling otherwise. The same can be said for whoever authored Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Kings, and so on and so forth.

When it comes to Islam, however, we do know who authored the oral version of the scriptures, divinely inspired or otherwise, and that author was Muhammad. Now, Muhammad wasn't a fictional character whose life is void of independently verifiable eyewitness accounts. He was a man of history, a man who shaped history with his own deeds, as opposed to Jesus who shaped civilization via the things other people, who never met him or met the people who met him, claimed he had said. Big difference! Therefore because Muhammad qualifies as a historical character, and it was he who authored the Koran, one must judge the words of the Muslim Holy Book in a deeper analytical light. Not to do so, makes you equally guilty as Islamic extremists in taking the words out context.

As you can see, Islam is a highly complex religion, thus not only do most Americans have difficulty grasping the fundamentals of the faith, equally, a great majority of Muslims have difficulty understanding it in a contextual sense, also. So let's now set the record straight.

Map of modern day Saudi Arabia that shows the key cities of interest during Muhammad's time.



# CHAPTER 1: ARABIA IN THE 6<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Before we examine who Muhammad was, it is important to understand the lay of the land, I mean land. So let's take a journey back to Arabia at the start of the fifth century. (Insert flute music and magic carpet ride here)

The country that is Saudi Arabia today looks pretty much how it was 1,500 years ago: dry, arid and sparsely populated. Geographically, the Arabian Peninsula is approximately one-third the size of the continental United States. Before the birth of the prophet Muhammad, the interior was dotted only with the occasional oasis, which offered the nomadic tribes a life source of food and water not found in nine-tenths of the waterless and vegetation-less wastelands. These scattered palm-fringed villages, built around their respective waterholes, were centers of commerce for the nomadic Bedouins, who would be driven from place to place in their search for life sustaining pastures for their flocks.

During this century, the Codex Sinaiticus, the first full collection of the Old and New Testament manuscripts (estimated to have been written in the century prior) was handed down. This was significant, because now Christianity, having been decriminalized in the fourth century, also had its own book. It had joined Judaism as a 'bookish' religion, standing the two faiths of Abraham apart from the pagan faiths of that time.

Christianity was now the bona fide faith of the Roman Empire and Team Jesus was quick to disparage and harass people of other faiths. After a few more ecumenical councils (conference of head bishops of the whole Christian Church to discuss and settle matters of Christian doctrine and practice), the Codex Sinaiticus became the Holy Bible and the faithful turned it loose on the world, with mass conversions occurring across the entire Empire.

With the Gospel John's charge of deicide laid against the Jews included in the New Testament, the people of Bible Version One, the Jews, fled to all corners of the Arabian Peninsula to escape Christian persecution. Effectively, this period and these events marked the end of the Period of Enlightenment and the commencement of the Dark Ages. Christianity had fired its opening salvos in what would be a long murderous rampage against any persons who disbelieved that a Palestinian Jew from a town no one had ever heard of at that time, Nazareth, had died for mankind's sins on the cross.

With the Middle East a battlefield between the Roman and Persian Empires; and internal battles within Christianity between the Church of the East (Nestoria) and the Church in Rome; among all this social and political upheaval there was, in fact, an oasis of sorts, a place where Christians weren't slaughtering Jews, and Jews weren't committing reprisal attacks against the new spin-off version of Judaism, Christianity. This place was a series of towns and cities along a trade route that still exists to this day, criss-crossing what is largely Saudi Arabia today. Starting at one end at the Mediterranean, extending right down to the Yellow Sea at the other, some of these towns include cities we know now, including Mecca, Medina, and Taif. Of these cities, Mecca was the largest and most important for commerce. It was here that

Muhammad, a Bedouin, was born.

Mecca stood at the centre of the Arabian caravan trade and was, more importantly to the Bedouins, the spiritual capital of the peninsula. So who were, or still are, the Bedouins?

Well, the Bedouins are a predominantly desert-dwelling Arab ethnic group with a history that goes as far back as the ancient Hebrews. In fact, the Arabic word *Bedu*, from which the name Bedouin is derived, is a somewhat simplistic nickname, meaning “inhabitant of the desert”, and refers generally to the nomads of Arabia, the Negev, and the Sinai.

Whenever I close my eyes and conjure an image of a Bedouin tribesman, I evoke images of men in flowing robes, walking the crests of windswept sand dunes. Or when Samantha hits on that wealthy Arab dude in ‘Sex In the City 2’. But I digress.

There’s a famous Bedouin saying that goes “*Me against my brother, My brothers and me against my cousins, then my cousins and me against strangers.*” This illustrates perfectly the hierarchy of loyalties within a tribe or nuclear family. Even today, disputes are settled and justice maintained by this framework. You will see later what importance Muhammad placed on preserving the tribal system, through creating a just community for all its players.

Each individual family unit (known as a tent) typically consisted of four adults (a married couple plus his and/or parents) and several children. A community would form when several of these tents would link and travel together (known as goum). These groupings were often linked together by patriarchal lineage and eventually became bigger as children were born, and new acquaintances with needed skill sets attached themselves to the tribe. Each tribe was led by a Sheikh (elder). Karen Armstrong in her book, *A History of God*, says of tribal dynamics:

“To ensure the survival of the tribe, the sayyid shared its wealth and possessions equally and avenged the death of a single one its people by killing a member of the murderer’s tribe. It is here we see the communal ethic most clearly: there was no duty to punish the killer because an individual could vanish without trace in a society like pre-Islamic Arabia. Instead, one member of the enemy tribe was equivalent to another for such purposes. The vendetta or blood feud was the only way of ensuring a modicum of social security in a region where there was no central authority, where every tribal group was a law upon itself and where there was nothing comparable to a police force. If a chief failed to retaliate, his tribe would lose respect and others would feel free to kill its members with impunity.”

Ok, so back to the storyline – Muhammad was born to a Bedouin tribe and, more specifically, to the Quraysh clan of Mecca. But more on that later!

The Bedouins were highly religious but lacked a unifying religious system, although Mecca remained the centre of their orb when it came to religious matters. In fact, Mecca was home to a litany of pagan gods, as many as three hundred and sixty different idols of worship; an overwhelming majority of these idols were rock god deities. These pagan gods met all kinds of natural phenomenon the spirit world potentially threw their way, representing desert winds, rainfall, soil, mountain peaks, sunshine, water springs, and fertility. These respective deities were represented at the shrine in Mecca, the Kaaba, as unshaped god stones.

This now brings us to the Kaaba itself, which remains the central shrine of Muslim worship today, the place where these rock deities were worshipped. The Meccans believed touching these rocks brought them closer to the gods. As far as the Kaaba itself is concerned, it is a box-like temple, which sits smack bang in the centre of the ritual space. Specifically, it’s a large masonry structure in the shape of a cube. Made of granite, it stands upon a 10-inch marble

base and is an impressive 43 feet height, with sides measuring 36 feet.

In her book, *Islam: A Short History*, Karen Armstrong writes:

*“(The Kaaba) was extremely ancient even in Mohammed’s time, and the original meaning of the cult associated with it had been forgotten, but it was still loved by the Arabs, who assembled each year during the Hajj pilgrimage from all over the peninsula. They would circle the shrine seven times, following the direction of the sun around the earth; kiss the Black Stone embedded in the wall of the Kaaba, which was probably a meteorite that had once hurtled to the ground, linking the site to the heavenly world.....the ideal of community was central to the cult of Kaaba. All violence was forbidden in Mecca and the surrounding countryside at all times. This had been a key factor in the commercial success of the Quraysh, since it enabled Arabs to trade there without fear of reprisals of vendetta violence.....Officially, the shrine was dedicated to Hubal, a Nabatean deity, and there were 360 idols arranged around the Kaaba, probably representing the days of the year.”*

Now, if you were to time travel back to Mecca at the start of the sixth century, a Meccan may tell you the Kaaba was built by Abraham of the Old Testament, as there were many Jews and Christians who resided in the city in that period. Another local may tell you that the three hundred and sixty rock gods represented each of the respective Arabian tribes. A third may tell you that it fell from the sky. Essentially, the Kaaba was whatever you wanted it to be and everyone at that time was cool with that. Today, however, Muslims believe Abraham of the Old Testament placed it there. The black stone is located in the eastern corner of the Kaaba and is approximately 12 inches in diameter and is surrounded by a silver frame. As far as the origin of this black stone is concerned, Muslims believe it fell from the heavens in the form of a meteorite, but that’s yet to be confirmed.

Of all the rock god deities, two became the most prominent. The most popular became the moon goddess Allat. As a matter of fact, she’s still worshipped in Wicca today. The second most important deity was Al-Uzza, a god believed to be responsible for good fortune. Although, bear in mind that the worship of Al-Uzza involved throwing a virgin into the fire as a form of human sacrifice, so it wasn’t much lucky for her. However, the supreme all-powerful paternal god who looked over all other rock gods was Al-Lah, or Allah, which simply means ‘the God’.

Inside the Kaaba, the holy of holies, where all kinds of sacred objects were held, represented the varying religions of the day. Some scholars hold that the holy of holies even contained an icon of the Virgin Mary and a portrait of monotheism’s granddaddy, Abraham.

Similar to the religious beliefs held by the majority of their neighbors in the north, and just as the Old Testament told of the ancient Israelites carrying the Ark of the Covenant onto the battlefield as a source of procuring Yahweh’s military power, the Meccans did likewise with their most revered rocks.

Now, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, as we know today via Islamic tradition, began as an annual pagan ritual. Tribes from all over Arabia would travel to Mecca for a month long religious celebration. Mecca would be a buzz of activity for this period, held every autumn, and all forms of vendettas, blood feuds, and warfare would be suspended for the duration of the pilgrimage. In fact, worshippers at the Kaaba, so as to demonstrate they weren’t packing heat, would strip their clothes off and offer their prayers in the buff. What is even more

interesting is we know that Christians who lived within these Arabic communities would also participate in the pilgrimage.

It's an interesting exercise to compare the pagan pilgrimage to Mecca in the pre-Islam era with the practice of the religion today. Prior to the success and conquest of the prophet Muhammad, the pagans would pray towards the shrine in Mecca several times per day. They would also make the pilgrimage to the city, run around the Kaaba seven times and throw stones at the devil. They fasted for one month, which began with the appearance of the crescent moon and ended when the crescent moon reappeared. Also remembering the supreme fatherly god was Al-Lah, who was a moon god.

Now if we examine Islam today we find that Muslims bow in prayer towards Mecca; they make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and walk around the Kaaba seven times while throwing stones at the devil, and the fasting of Ramadan begins and ends with the start and finish of then crescent moon.

Mind = blown? Ok, let's carry on.

So without an organized and centralized religious authority, with pagans, Jews, and Christians living side-by-side in worship of their respective gods, who were the powerbrokers of Mecca at this time? Well, it was the Quraysh, who were the most wealthy and influential tribe of Bedouins in Mecca. The Quraysh organized themselves into syndicates of merchants and businessmen. Significantly, they held financially lucrative trade agreements with envoys of the neighboring Byzantine and Persian Empires. Moreover, because the pilgrimage to Mecca brought an enormous amount of religious tourism trade to the city, the equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce had charged the Quraysh with protecting the religious shrine, the Kaaba. More significantly, it was to the Quraysh the infant Muhammad was born.

# CHAPTER 2: MUHAMMAD IS BORN

It was the year 570 CE, the “year of the Elephant”, which is claimed by Islamic scholars to denote the invasion by Yemeni forces responsible for partly smashing the Kaaba, that a young Quraysh woman, Aminah, announced to her husband, Abdallah, she was bearing child. Sadly, Abdallah would pass away six months prior to the birth of his son; the cause of his death is unknown. Without a husband, Aminah knew she’d struggle to support herself, let alone a newborn, and she sought out family members who were in want of an additional child. None were forthcoming, however, but it didn’t take long for word to reach a recently out of work wet nurse. For many Bedouin women living in Mecca, the employment of wet nursing offered a comparatively good income, as the wealthier Quraysh often fostered out their children for the first two years of their lives, so as they could tend to the never ending cycle of pregnancy and child rearing without the rigorous burden of tending to the very young of their families. At the same time Muhammad’s mother was in search of a foster mother, a wet nurse by the name of Halimah was without a foster child and, by definition, unemployed.

Halimah, however, was reluctant to take the responsibility of this particular newborn as she had learned of the passing of Aminah’s husband, and therefore knew the financial reward would be minimal. Halimah said she’d discuss the offer with her husband, who later agreed to take care of baby Muhammad, telling his wife, “Perhaps he will be a blessing to us.” In the days soon after taking delivery of their newborn baby project, they packed up their possessions and rejoined their Bedouin tribe, the Beni Saad, on their caravan journey north.

The first six years of Muhammad’s life were spent in the desert under the care of his foster mother and her family. Like all nomadic tribes of southern Arabia, Halimah and her family would move their livestock in search of new pastures. Once found, the families’ tent would be pitched among the tribe’s tents, usually 50-100 feet apart, and in clusters of no more than a dozen. Within each tent it was customary for the women and children to share one half of the center divide, while the men occupied the other. There were no shortage of children, and Muhammad would develop close bonds with his numerous step-cousins in the wonderment of the desert wilderness.

Years after Muhammad’s death, however, stories of the miraculous would enhance and add philosophical spin to this opening period of the prophet’s life. Biographers would report that Halimah miraculously began to reproduce milk from her breasts after a long period without, as did the family’s pet donkey. Another purported miracle, one that Muhammad later denied, was said to have occurred one night while the 6-year-old future prophet slept. Halimah’s natural son told her that two angels dressed in white robes performed heart surgery on Muhammad, removing a blood clot using white purifying snow. Apparently, this miraculous event was enough to freak Halimah the hell out, and soon after she returned the boy to his natural mother, Aminah.

His return to Mecca would’ve been sad on two accounts. Firstly, being separated from his Bedouin stepfamily and childhood friends, and secondly, his reunion with his mother was only temporary as she suddenly fell ill and died. All told, Muhammad knew his mother for less than a year. The day after her burial, Muhammad would find a new home. This time, with his

paternal grandfather, Abu al-Muttalib.

In many ways this was a small slice of good fortune for the boy, and it would help place him in good stead later as a young man, as Abu al-Muttalib was not only the sheikh of his clan, but also a dominant and well respected figure within Mecca. Biographers of the prophet report of the closeness that was the bond formed between grandfather and grandson, claiming in unison that Muhammad was the favored of all Abu al-Muttalib's grandchildren. For instance, it is said that Muhammad would be carried on his grandfather's shoulders each time he'd make a trip to the Kaaba.

This period of joy wouldn't last long, however, as childhood tragedy would strike again, with Abu al-Muttalib passing away when Muhammad was only eight years of age. Handed onto an uncle, Muhammad would have a fourth parental guardian in the first decade of his life. Abu Talib was the only surviving full-brother of Muhammad's own father, Abdullah. But what political and commercial power his grandfather had, his uncle certainly lacked. Abu Talib was a camel herdsman of modest wealth who traveled the length and breadth of the peninsular. For Muhammad, there'd be no free camel rides. He'd have to learn and earn his keep, and that he did. Staying a camel herdsman for the next thirty years of his life.

In sixth century Arabia, the camel was the Rolls Royce of the desert. (Presumably the goat was the Pinto) A man was nothing without a camel or camels. They were the ultimate status symbol, and the health and multitude of your camels, determined how successful you'd be in attracting a similarly wealthy and attractive wife. A man's camels protected him against hunger, debt, blood feuds, and criminal punishment. They could be sold and used to settle any squabble or dilemma. The camel was loved and praised so incredibly so that of the seven surviving poems from pre-Islamic Arabia, one must decipher if the author is praising his lover or the camel.

Abu Talib would teach Muhammad everything there was to know about camels, and there was a lot. A herdsman would have to know how to tie them up at night, so they didn't wander off; he'd have to learn how to wean a young camel off its mother's milk; how to configure a saddle; know when to rest them; how to mend their sores; know what was suitable for them to eat and what was dangerous. One of the great travel writers of the African continent during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Egyptian Hassanein Bey. On camels in Arabia he wrote: "Nothing is more important than the condition of your camels. Not only must they be fat and well nourished from the start, but they must be allowed to drink their fill with deliberation and permitted to rest after the drinking." The young Muhammad would learn not only the art of camel management, but also the ways of the desert: from finding waterholes to taking shelter from the violent sand storms; from finding new pastures to avoiding snake pits. No one likes a snake pit. Now, these were just the requisite skills of managing a camel or two, but Abu Talib was in the camel caravan business, which meant organizing and managing dozens of camels for perilous desert crossings.

Muhammad first accompanied Abu Talib on such a crossing at the tender age of nine, helping his uncle lead a caravan from Mecca to Syria. This particular caravan would carry Meccan merchandise to be sold in Syria, and then return procured Syrian merchandise to Mecca. As such, the camel caravan was to Arabia, what our shipping logistics are today. It was the lifeline that kept Mecca in business and the society functioning and the Koran declares such, "For the protection of the Quraysh: their protection is their summer and winter journeyings."

(Koran 106:1)

The most tradable commodities in those days were leather, textiles, and incense. In fact, incense was big business, and the primary pleasant smelling stuffs were those allegedly (not likely) offered to baby Jesus by the magi: frankincense and myrrh. In fact, it is estimated that at incense's zenith, more than 4,000 tons of the stuff was exported from Arabia each year. Enough to make even a modern day cocaine cartel blush! What is important here, however, is Muhammad had to have had an intimate knowledge of buying, selling, negotiating these goods at market places throughout the peninsula. In the early days he would've watched on as his uncle haggled with vendors from Jerusalem or Damascus, listening to all the different dialects and accents. No doubt a great period for the prophet in acquiring a worldly knowledge.

Significantly for Muhammad, he would meet a great number of varying Arab cultures as the caravans passed through different territories. He met different tribes, and of great significance he came into contact with Jews and Christians. Presumably, it was here that Muhammad had his first real introduction to the stories of the Old Testament and the fanciful mythology of Jesus. Stories that must have thrilled a young boy from southern Arabia! After all, what kid even today isn't gob smacked by the story of Noah's Ark, a talking snake, and zombies? My kids were impressed with these stories and they own an Xbox. As we will see later, these biblical stories would be drawn upon when Muhammad recited the Koranic scriptures, that's if you don't believe the fundamental Islamic belief that the words were handed to him directly via God's proxy, the archangel Gabriel. Initially, the Meccans didn't believe him, as they accused Muhammad of not only learning the Christian mythology from others but also of constructing the Koran in collusion with Jewish or Christian travelers. Specifically, he was charged with authoring the Koran with the help of a Roman blacksmith who lived on the outskirts of Mecca. The charge must have had some legitimacy to it, for it warranted a response from the prophet. He refutes the claim in Sura 16, verse 103:

"We know indeed that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear."

Effectively, this is Muhammad defending the charge of plagiarism by using an analogy much like this: How could a Korean immigrant who didn't know a lick of English author the work of Shakespeare's *Othello*? But more on this later!

The caravan journey from Mecca to Syria was, for Muhammad, a travel through time, and he says as much in the following verse of the Koran: "Ways of life have passed away before you. Travel in the land and see what was the end of those who listened not to God's messengers." (3:137) This verse is a direct reference to towns and civilizations that appear in the Bible but were communities no longer in Muhammad's day. Their departing would be used later by the prophet as illustration that God punished those civilizations, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, who ignored the word of God, and as a result were now nothing more than ruins and tumbleweed.

Of particular interest to the youthful Muhammad was the Old Testament cities of Moab and Ammon. Ancient tradition holds that these cities descended from the biblical prophet Lot, the guy who gave up his daughters to be pack raped by a salivating crowd of gang rapists rather than hand over his two male guests. Conveniently, unlike the biblical narrative, the stories of Lot's drunken incestual sexual relations with his drunken daughters are omitted from the Koran. Now, the link to Lot is important to Arabs because he was the nephew of Abraham, the

patriarch of Arab and Jewish monotheism, and thus lineage to Lot gives them direct lineage to the revered Abraham and his son, Ishmael. This Arab belief is somewhat supported by biblical text. For instance, there is a reference to the men of Midian “wearing gold earrings because they were Ishmaelites”, which is contained within the story of Gideon’s war in the Book of Judges. More significantly, the Bible says the Midianite kings entered the field of battle with their camels wearing crescents (the symbol of Islam today) around their necks:

“Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Rise yourself and fall upon us, for as the man is, so is his strength.” And Gideon arose and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and he took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.” (Judges 8:21)

For Muslims, the most important event in Muhammad’s adolescence and late teens was an event that was said to have taken place when Muhammad was still ten years of age while traveling with his uncle along the caravan route that led to a town called Bostra. There, in the town, was a Christian monk named Bahira. In fact, the town of Bostra was more or less a cell filled with all sorts of supposed holy men and eccentrics. Anyway, this Bahira character believed that the time of “the great Comforter”, as forewarned by the Gospel of John, would appear soon.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”—John 14:26.

One day while sitting on a strand of rock with his arms reached towards the sky, in prayer to Jesus, Bahira spotted a caravan approaching in the distance, the caravan driven by Muhammad and his uncle Abu Talib. Suddenly, a brilliant white light shone on the approaching Meccans and the monk ran from his prayer spot and headed excitedly towards the approaching strangers. He greeted all the travelers and merchants, shaking hands and looking each one firmly in the eye. After greeting all, or so he thought, the monk was disappointed. Nothing special was featured on any of the strangers. Dejectedly he asked, “Is this everyone or have you left someone behind?” The men answered, “This is all of us”, they answered, “save only for a boy, the youngest of all.” Bahira asked they introduce the boy to him, and Muhammad was summoned from his mount. As soon as the monk laid eyes on Muhammad, he knew he was the one. Bahira lifted the shirt from Muhammad’s back and on his skin was a welt, which Bahira identified as fulfillment of some kind of prophecy. The monk became frantic, “this is the one”, he yelled. Quickly, excitement turned into mild panic, however, and Bahira turned to Abu Talib and said, “Take your nephew back to his country and guard him against the Jews, for, by God, if they see him and find about him what I know, they will do evil to him. A great future lies before this nephew of yours.” There are literally countless versions of this story told throughout Islam today, and the versions vary wildly depending on which Islamic sect or nation is retelling it.

Essentially, this is all that is known of Muhammad’s childhood through to his early twenties. What we do know, however, is quite telling, as it depicts a man who saw much outside the confines of Mecca’s walls; a man who listened to and heard thrilling stories and fables told by people other than his own; a man who saw the business world up close, experiencing the machinations between buyer and seller; a man who began to see the world in terms of good versus evil and reward versus punishment. At twenty-one years of age he had earned the title *al-Ameen*, which means ‘the trusty’, for his skilful and honorable management of the caravans.

He was now a man with a reputable reputation and he was ready for the next step in his life.

# CHAPTER 3: THE BOY BECOMES THE MAN

Life in the Arabian Desert was a harsh and often cruel existence. If respective tribes weren't waging a battle of survival against the hostile climactic extremities, they were waging war on one another, settling blood feuds or undertaking revenge killings. From the comfort of our 21<sup>st</sup> century Western privileged lounge rooms, it is easy to refer to this ancient society as tribally barbaric, but vigilante justice served these people well. It ensured no crime went unpunished, and retribution for grieving families was swift and uncomplicated. Although some matters between rival tribes were resolved by mediation and arbitration, both the Bedouins and the urban populace of Mecca and Medina often resolved their differences by means of warfare, as a method for maintaining social order and justice.

Effectively, the collective military power of the tribe, combined with the fierce loyalties that existed within each clan, and the sharing of bloodguilt and the obligation of exacting revenge, provided each individual their own security from external threats. Essentially, the tribe was a unit or law upon itself, and it regarded every other tribe as an enemy, unless they had established alliances or treaties to protect one another from larger threats. In order to survive in this landscape, it was essential that one affiliated with a tribe. In other words, for those who fell outside the security of the tribe, he or she would be without protection and, therefore, vulnerable to any number of fates the human mind can imagine.

This is the culture Muhammad grew up within. It was a warrior culture and he was now a man, and would have to do his share of sword wielding, which meant performing executions when the situation so required. We will cover many of his astounding military successes in later chapters, but before we examine the bitterness of war, let's keep my wife happy with a tale of romance, for love preceded war for the prophet.

First loves rarely end up being happily ever after, so I am told because I don't watch or read anything slightly on the 'chick flick' side of the DVD aisle, and this was certainly the case for our star. Muhammad's first love was the cousin he had spent most his childhood with. She was the daughter of his father's brother, Abu Talib. Muhammad was now in his twenties, he had one or two camels of his own, which was on the modest side of middle class, and he steeled himself to ask his uncle for his daughter's hand in marriage. But alas for Muhammad, Abu Talib had already promised her to a well-connected young man of the Beni Makhzum clan. The prophet was devastated. He had believed in his heart that his first cousin was the love of his life, but she was being betrothed to another because his rival suitor had more money, which left Muhammad with no honey. I'm so sorry!

Courageously, however, Muhammad was pragmatic about his love loss, and he understood the math. If he wanted an attractive bride, he would have to acquire a substantial camel herd, so he devoted the proceeding years to building his reputation in that field.

In the year AD 595, which was two years after his first romantic heartbreak, Cupid's arrow would find him again. A wealthy widow by the name of Khadijah, who was fifteen years Muhammad's senior, had learned of his reputation for trustworthiness and for delivering

merchandise on time. Khadijah asked Muhammad if he would be interested in transporting and selling some goods for her in Syria. Muhammad said he would, and a fee for his service was negotiated. On the day before he was to lead the caravan with her goods on the long road to Syria, Khadijah brought to him her manservant, Maysara, offering him as an assistant for the journey and transaction.

Unbeknownst to Muhammad, however, Khadijah had ulterior motives for sending one of her slaves. She was sending him to detail every thing Muhammad said or did on the journey to and fro Syria, for the single purpose she was sweet on the handsome twenty-five year old camel herder.

So who was Khadijah? Well, she was the daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad, a successful businessman whose significant wealth was inherited by her, and she successfully continued and preserved the family's fortune. The people of Mecca regarded her and her family as people of impeccable character, and she was well known for her treatment of the poor. As you can imagine, she was well sought out by would-be suitors, but like Muhammad, she had been unlucky in love, as both her former marriages had ended in the death of her respective husbands.

When Muhammad returned to Mecca from Syria on behalf of Khadijah, he delivered to her a full account of all monies received for her goods, which happened to be double what she expected. She was delighted. Of greater interest to her, however, was the report her slave would submit, which ultimately offered an extremely positive account of Muhammad's honesty and smarts. In fact, Maysara had even included in his report that Muhammad even seemed somewhat god like, and that a holy men had recognized him as some kind of prophet. Khadijah had made her mind, she wanted to seek Muhammad's hand in marriage but she couldn't make the approach herself as this was not only uncustomary, but a face-to-face refusal would've caused both her and he as loss of public face. Instead, Khadijah would engage the services of an intermediary. The opening moments of the meeting between Muhammad and Khadijah's matchmaker didn't go so smooth, however, as Muhammad expressed that while he was interested, he didn't have the financial means to pay for a dowry. The intermediary told him he wouldn't need to worry himself with such concerns, as Khadijah was already independently wealthy.

Shortly after, Muhammad and Khadijah met for dinner at her house. There she explained to him, "I love you for many reasons: you are well centered, not being a partisan among the people for this or that; you are trustworthy and have a beauty of character and I love the truth of your speech."

Despite what seemed like a conveniently orchestrated marriage for Muhammad, he fell madly and deeply in love with his wife, and despite the wealth she brought to the union, he continued to live the simple life he had been accustomed to as a merchant. On the day of their marriage it was his uncle Abu Talib who delivered the sermon:

"All praise is due to Allah, who has made us the progeny of Ibrahim and who made us the custodians of His House and the servants of its sacred precincts, making for us a House sought for pilgrimage and a shrine of security, and He also gave us authority over the people. This nephew of mine Muhammad cannot be compared with any other man: if you compare his wealth with that of others, you will not find him a man of wealth, for wealth is a vanishing shadow and a fickle thing. Muhammad is a man whose lineage you all know, and he has

sought Khadijah bint Khuwaylid for marriage, offering her such-and-such of the dower of my own wealth.”

What often comes a surprise to non-Muslims is the fact that Muhammad’s marriage to Khadijah remained wholly and solely monogamous, and he never took another wife while she was alive. Moreover, he sired a total of six children with her, two boys who died as infants, and then four girls – Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah. It is also said that couple treated their slave children as though they were their own. In fact, one slave boy, Zayd, even refused the offer of freedom because he wished to remain living in their household.

In the years that followed, life developed into something of a comfortable routine, he would attend to business and she to her work and care for the poor. Now that Muhammad was modestly wealthy via his marriage to Khadijah, he began to spend much of his days, when not attending to his children, in contemplation of religion, morality, and philosophy. He spent much time with the elders of Mecca, as his standing in the community was well respected. His profile shot to further prominence during one particular philosophical conflict whereby the Quraysh had agreed to rebuild the Kaaba shrine. The sticking point, however, was determining which tribe or clan should have the high honor of replacing the sacred god stone, the pinnacle of the shrine. Muhammad stepped forth and suggested the god stone be hoisted on a blanket, with each of the tribes and clans nominating a leader to hold the blanket. Muhammad’s recommendation was accepted and he was lauded for his insightfulness and wisdom.

This event resulted in Muhammad being invited to join a select group of religious thinkers in the city, known as the *hanif*, which translated, means the ‘seekers’. Significantly, the hanif had rejected polytheism, which was firmly the religion du jour at that time. Their main point of interest was the all powerful god stone Allah, and they were keen to encompass the Jewish and Christian God of Abraham with the most powerful god of polytheism. Conversely, what troubled them the most about polytheism was the never-ending blood sacrifices in honor of the pagan gods at the shrine and the female infanticide, as girl babies were routinely sacrificed.

Western scholars of Islam remain somewhat skeptical that Muhammad was in fact a member of the hanif, as it seems far too convenient for the overall biography of the prophet, but I don’t believe it has too much bearing on the narrative anyway, as the key point to understanding the religious landscape of this period is to know that there was indeed a great spiritual restlessness in Mecca and throughout Arabia. It didn’t help matters that whenever traveling Arabs met with Jewish and Christian counterparts from the Persian and Byzantine empires, they were taunted for being left out of God’s divine plan. Specifically, the Jews and Christians had their own holy books, which provided a path to one great god, but the Arabs didn’t. Not only were they without a unifying religion or religious text, they were still worshipping rocks, and the Jews and Christians never stopped reminding them of this. For many Arabs, it felt as if they were a lost race, forever exiled from the faster paced civilizations of the north.

What is further interesting is that Muhammad, at least initially, did not harbor similar feelings of antagonism towards Judaism and Christianity. In fact, he speaks with great affection for the Virgin Mary and Jesus throughout the Koran, although a few specific events, which we will cover later, made him somewhat, at least momentarily, hostile towards a certain few Christians and Jews in particular. This is not to suggest that Muhammad admired everything about the twin pair of monotheistic beliefs, as he was troubled by King David’s behavior as recorded in the Old Testament, and the deep divisions and schisms within Christian

denominations troubled him greatly. Later he would refer to Jews and Christian as “peoples of the book”, but he firmly believed they had strayed from the guidance of the prophets and, therefore, from God.

At this point Muhammad was now aged forty years of age and Arabia was about to be introduced to a new religion, Islam.

# CHAPTER 4: REVELATION

Now begins the second half of his life, the half that would irreversibly change Arabia and the rest of the world in ways he'd have never imagined in his wildest fantasies. If you close your eyes and picture Muhammad imagining the year AD 2001, given it was then AD 610 in Mecca, you can see how unforeseen to him the idea 19 hijackers, mostly Saudi, would take his words to justify using planes as missiles for the death and destruction of innocent civilians in a land far away and in a country he had never heard of. Having now read so much of Muhammad, that thought is breathtakingly remarkable and helps reminds us that despite religions humble beginnings, it has now moved beyond its expiry date. But that's a whole other can of whoop ass.

As we had covered in the previous chapter, Muhammad had now begun his journey down the spiritual highway, as evident with his claimed involvement with the hanif, and his contribution in settling a highly contentious religious dispute concerning the Kaaba. Moreover, Muhammad had become a deeply contemplative character and would spend a significant part of each day in meditation and prayer.

During the pagan holy month of Ramadan, Muhammad would take his family to spend time in the hills and caves on the outskirts of the city. In normal times, these locations would be off limits due to fear of attack from bandits and warring rival clans, but because it was Ramadan, all blood feuds were suspended for the entire month.

The family would pitch their campsite deep in the hills, which offered respite from the heat and sun, and each afternoon Muhammad would wander off to spend some quiet time alone in a nearby cave. The previous twelve months had been a particular restless period for Muhammad as he had become concerned with the societal ills of Mecca. He saw corruption, inter-religious jealousies, and a class system that ensured the poor stayed poor, and that the disadvantaged would remain exploited by the more powerful Quraysh. He had much to mull over this particular holy month and on the seventeenth night of Ramadan in AD 610, an alleged event that would shake the world took place in a dark and dusty cave on the outskirts of Mecca.

So there he is mulling over the things that concerned him, and in deep meditation he loses track of time. The sun has set and he knew his wife and children would be worried. Propping himself to stand, a sudden massive burst of light stuns his eyes. He is knocked to the ground and covers his face, believing he is witnessing some kind of strange solar eclipse. Muhammad is now short of breath, and terrified. Is this the end of the world, he wonders? Thoughts of his beloved family flashed before his eyes, but his terror is suddenly interrupted by a towering voice. The deep arresting voice commanded him, "RECITE". But Muhammad could not comprehend what was happening; let alone what he was being asked. The source of the voice moved closer as if putting his entire body in some kind of invisible vice like grip. At that moment a piece of silk with words on it was thrust upon his chest. "RECITE", said the voice again. Muhammad looked at the silk and then cried, "But I cannot read. I am illiterate." In fact, Muhammad couldn't read a single word, so whenever he'd execute contracts, for example, he'd have others read to him what was written. The voice, growing impatient, yelled, "RECITE", once more. Muhammad looked at the silk and the following words flowed from his

lips:

*“Recite in the name of your Lord who created,  
Created man from blood coagulated!  
Recite for your Lord is Most Generous,  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught what they did not know unto men.” (Koran 96:1-5)*

Instantaneously, these words became a part of him. He could recite them without reading them. Later these words would become the first recitation of the Koran. But this didn't make Muhammad any less confused. He had so many questions, questions that would not be answered by the voice, such as who is his Lord? Had he become demonically possessed? And due to the rhyming nature of the poem, had he suddenly become a poet?

Still trembling, the voice spoke again. But this time it addressed him by name: “O Muhammad! O Muhammad, you cannot protect yourself from the Evil One. Only the One who hears all and knows all can protect you. Invoke God but before you mention God by his loftiest name, say, “I seek refuge from Satan, the Accursed, in the name of the One who hears all and knows all.” Before you repeat the words I have given you from the Lord, say: “In the name of God, Full of Compassion, Ever Compassionate!” Then silence. The voice departed.

What the hell was he supposed to do now, he thought? Who should he speak to? He called out to the voice, but nothing was there. Panicked, he bolted from the cave and ran screaming down the mountain. Halfway down, however, a booming voice that filled the valley spoke out to him again, but this time the voice had a face, a man's face. Muhammad froze where he stood. It was an angel and it said, “O Muhammad, you are the apostle of God, and I am Gabriel.” Muhammad tried to look away but the face still appeared before him. He would then cover his face, but the angel's face would still appear before him. While this was taking place, Muhammad's wife, Khadijah, had sent scouts out to look for him. Finding him alone and visibly terrified, they took him back to the camp. Once there, Muhammad fell into his wife's lap, crying and curled in the fetal position.

In many respects this story mirrors that of the story of the prophet Jonah in the Old Testament, whereby Jonah resists the initial call to service by fleeing to the coastline to escape by boat. A second encounter, however, convinces him to take the call of celestial duty. Whether this coincidence is a matter of convenience is for you to determine. I'm not saying anything.

Once he taken hold of himself, however, he retold to Khadijah what had taken place that afternoon. She looked into his eyes and proclaimed, “In the name of the One who enfolds the soul of Khadijah, I can dare hope that you have chosen to be the prophet for this people.” Thus making her the first Muslim. The second convert would be her well-respected cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal. Still unbeknownst to the three at this stage, however, Islam had now begun, but not before a long period of silence ensued. In fact, after this blinding revelation of AD 610, a period of two years total divine silence followed. He was left with only the haunting experience and that initial poem he had recited to fill his spiritual thoughts. For two years he had no idea of his purpose or what it was he was to do next. For now the Muslims numbered Muhammad and his immediate family, and that was it. But then, suddenly, the voice returned like an old friend from out of nowhere. It told Muhammad to recite the following verse:

*“By the Glorious Morning Light,*

*And by the Night when it is still,-*

*Thy Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is  
He displeased.*

*And verily the Hereafter will be better for thee than  
the present.*

*And soon will thy Guardian-Lord give thee (that wherewith) thou shalt be well-pleased.*

*Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter  
(and care)?*

*And He found thee wandering, and He gave thee guidance.*

*And He found thee in need, and made thee independent.*

*Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness,*

*Nor repulse the petitioner (unheard);*

*But the bounty of the Lord - rehearse and proclaim!*

*May Allah Have Mercy on us all.” (Koran 93: 1-11)*

The second recitation wouldn't be as terrifying as the first, but his biographers would note that he would remain prone and in a state of utter physical exhaustion after receiving each. Muhammad would say, "Never once did I receive a revelation without thinking my soul had been torn away from me." He would also reveal of the revelations, "sometimes coming unto me like the reverberations of a bell, and that is the hardest upon me, the reverberations abate and when I'm aware of their message." Much later, Muhammad would confess that the only miracle he ever performed was the reciting of the Koran.

From this point, the recitations became more regular. What is important to note now, however, is that the Koran didn't become a written text until several hundred years after Muhammad's death. Remember, Muhammad was illiterate, and therefore he would commit each verse to memory, as did his immediate family. While this ultimately results in the Koran being a horribly laborious read, (it's a mind numbing read), lacking the captivating story telling and poetry of the Bible, the Koranic recitations were never meant to be read, they were meant to be said. In fact, Muslim scholars are forthcoming in confessing that the Koran, when read in Arabic, loses nine-tenths of its power. Even today it is one of the greatest honors that could befall upon a young Muslim man, the ability to recite all 114 chapters (suras) of the Koran, and schools (madrassas) are dedicated to teaching this pursuit.

It had now been five years since Muhammad had received his first revelation from up high, and while he was now convinced there was only one god and that god be the biblical god, Allah, he remained reluctant to spread the word beyond those very close to him, which included his immediate family and some of his aunts, while his uncles remained utterly indifferent if not openly hostile. The first non-family member to convert to this then miniscule faith was an influential merchant of Mecca, by the name of Abu Bakr. This small group of devotees would meet at Muhammad's home every morning and evening to take part in-group prayer.

Muhammad's silence wouldn't last, however, as the angel appeared to him at some point in AD 615 and told him to take his message public. Like the reluctant prophets of Moses and Jonah, Muhammad argued that he was not a skilled orator and that people would ridicule him, with the probability there would be reprisals against him and his family. The angel told him to pull himself together and that this was now his holy obligation. Muhammad agreed to the mission but told the angel he would start cautiously at first, but despite his caution, things couldn't have got off to a worst start.

He hatched a plan to invite forty close colleagues, people he knew in business and community affairs, and who were all members of his clan. As his male guests dined, Muhammad stood to speak. He told them that an angel visited him in a cave five years earlier, and had spoken to him regularly ever since. He outlined that he had been commanded to serve the God of Abraham, Allah, and that it was God's demand that all Arabs turn their backs on pagan worship and serve the one true god. He stopped speaking and noticed his guests were completely silent, but not in a good way. Presumably, Muhammad stood again to ask, "Are there any questions?" I guess we can assume a collective reply of, "Questions? Are there any questions?" because all forty guests stormed out of his house in complete and utter disgust. Needless to say it wasn't the start Muhammad was hoping for, and worst, a whisper campaign began shortly thereafter that he had gone completely bonkers.

Now, there are a number of reasons why Muhammad's launch party fell flat with his guests. First and foremost, however, was the fact that the Quraysh believed the idea of life after death to be beyond absurd, and that that was a belief shared only by those crazy Christians, who they thought were Charlie Sheen crazy. (Or if Charlie Sheen and Mel Gibson had a baby. That kind of crazy.) Anyway, the whole idea of life beyond an earthly existence was preposterous to Arabs. To them, any place beyond the ether was reserved exclusively for the gods – it was a realm roped off to mere mortals. Muhammad, however, spoke to the dinner party about perpetual servitude to one god and that every individual's deeds would be weighed and considered on a Day of Judgment before Allah. But the deeds Muhammad referred to were specifically obedience of laws found in the Old Testament, such as 24/7 obedience to the laws of Moses i.e. dietary laws, sexual laws, blasphemy laws, and ritual laws. The Quraysh, however, believed many of these laws were outdated, and could not accept the fact that virtues they valued would count for naught, such as lineage, wealth, and position in society.

Another reason they rejected the idea Muhammad could be some kind of prophet from the god Allah is it didn't make any sense to them that a god would choose someone of such relative modest stature. Surely, they discussed, a god would choose someone of the absolute highest standing within the Arab community, and not someone who was illiterate and who had only come into financial success through marriage. Another concern was Muhammad's call for prayer. While the pagans did engage in worship, it was more of the, "I'm sacrificing this cow, you make it rain" kind. Interestingly, Muhammad's uncle Abu Talib even remarked that his nephew's ritual of prayer, which involved his backside being higher than his head, to be demeaning and laughable.

As you can see, Islam, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year since Muhammad received his first revelation, was stuck in idle gear, and things would get worst before they got better. In AD 616, Muhammad received word from God that he should publicly denounce the worship of false idols. In other words, Muhammad would have to tell the pagan worshiping Arabs that not only should they

cease the practices of their religious belief, but also paganism should be outlawed, and moreover, they will be punished with fire and brimstone. Well, you can imagine how well that went down, can't you? Most likely like a holocaust joke at a Bar Mitzvah, probably. When the Quraysh of Mecca learnt that this was what Muhammad was now preaching, the proverbial hit the fan at high velocity. The blowback was swift and furious. Clashes between a dozen of Muhammad's supporters and an angry mob of Quraysh clansman turned violent, and several were killed from both sides. Instantly, the entire city of Mecca turned against Muhammad. Until now they had tolerated the strange beliefs of the then self-titled prophet, but now vehement opposition was set against him. For a number of Meccans who had converted to Islam, the change in climate had caused them to suddenly renounce their faith. Muhammad's followers went from a couple dozen to one dozen almost over night.

Civic summits were held to decide on what should be done with Muhammad. What was agreed upon was that a delegation of sheikhs should make an approach to Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle, with the purpose of convincing him to remove the clan protection of his nephew. In other words, they wanted to assassinate him but without the risk of igniting blood-feud reprisals. Abu Talib shared similar concerns. He was unhappy in the path Muhammad had chosen too, but he was blood, and blood would guarantee their bond. Muhammad refers to this event in the following verse of the Koran, whereby he quotes the sheiks:

"Your nephew has cursed our gods, insulted our religion, mocked our way of life and accused our forefathers of error. Either you must stop him or you must let us get at him."

The Quraysh were now infuriated. Something had to be done, but what or how? A few months later, the sheiks approached Abu Talib again, but this time in a little less mood for conciliation or negotiation. They threatened they would kill the entire Beni Hashim clan if he couldn't reel in Muhammad's public proclamations of anti-paganism. Abu Talib took their threats seriously and went to visit Muhammad at his home. He urged him to go quiet for a while, at least until the dust had settled. Muhammad resisted, telling his uncle, "Even if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left on condition that I abandon this course, I would not abandon it." Abu Talib saw the conviction in his nephew's eyes, and while he didn't agree with his worldview, he would defend his right to hold and express it.

Abu Talib's backing protected Muhammad against physical attack for now, but it did not stop the leaders of the city putting in place a trade boycott against all Muslims and their businesses. The Quraysh harassed the Muslims where they could, accusing them of selling out their history and their fellow Arabs. Fortunately for Muhammad, however, he had some money and therefore the exclusion from trade didn't hurt him as bad as it did his small band of followers. In fact, a few of them had no other alternative but to leave their homes to become beneficiaries of Muhammad's generosity. Still, these must've been demoralizing times for Muhammad, as he was now treated as public enemy number one, a pariah in his hometown. The Koran provides some insight into how frustrating and upsetting these days must have been, for Muhammad describes an encounter he had with a neighbor who called him a "deceiver": "He shall roast at a flaming fire and his wife, the carrier of the firewood, upon her neck a rope of palm-fiber." (Koran 111:1-5) Them fighting words, no doubt!

The trade boycott really began to bite and Muhammad was unable to offer protection for everyone, so he sent a group of Muslims, twelve men and five women, to what is now Ethiopia. The following year, another dozen or so Muslim refugees from Mecca joined them.

A year later still, the Muslim community living in forced exile grew to be a number of more than 200. This made the Quraysh even more concerned, as they believed Muhammad was merely biding his time to return these refugees back to Mecca to join him in rising up against them. The Quraysh decided they would send an envoy to Abyssinia to meet with the king, with the objective of persuading him to eliminate his Meccan guests. The twist in this story, however, is the king had become a recent convert to Christianity. The Quraysh knew this in advance, so they told the king the Meccan Muslims had blasphemed against Jesus Christ while they were still in Mecca. The king asked the Muslims if the allegation was true. A nephew of Muhammad stepped forward to answer the charge, and he recited a verse from the Koran that demonstrated admiration and acknowledgement of Jesus, while also laying praise on the Virgin Mary:

*She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.*

*She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear God."*

*He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.*

*She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?"*

*He said: "So (it will be): Thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us': It is a matter (so) decreed."*

*So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place.*

*And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree: She cried (in her anguish): "Ah! would that I had died before this! would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!"*

*But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm-tree): "Grieve not! for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee;*

*"And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree: It will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee.*

*"So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to (God) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into not talk with any human being'" (Koran 19:17-26)*

The king and his court heard this and were suitably wooed. The king turned to the Quraysh envoy and told them they should leave immediately. The Muslim refugees had won the right to remain protected guests of Abyssinia. Back in Mecca, however, the squeeze tightened upon Muhammad and his gradually growing number of followers. Without the ability to trade and with very few friends, the Muslims of Mecca formed their own ghetto within the city. This enabled them to share resources, thus helping them survive the victimization thrust upon them. Meanwhile, the religious rituals that we now identify as exclusively Muslim were starting to

take shape, from prayer to the order and maturation of the Koran, of which the numerous verses were becoming rote learned by all who had adopted the faith. Essentially, while they were still being persecuted, the faith was still growing in these harsh conditions, and would take some giant steps forward very shortly.

# CHAPTER 5: MUHAMMAD FLEES MECCA

Despite the Muslims ability to rally around one another in their now oppressed ghetto of Mecca, the reality was that after two years of being boycotted by the city, food shortages began to take hold. Further, the boycott had been extended to banning Muslims from joining caravans, and it was the caravans that gave access to trade and currency. Moreover, Mecca's actions had not been confined to non-violent punitive actions, as a number of slaves who had converted to Islam were kidnapped and tied to trees, left to burn in the blazing sun. These murders deeply angered and saddened Muhammad, but ultimately the boycott would claim the life of someone much closer and dearer to him, his wife Khadija.

In AD 619, the death of his beloved wife of 24 years would become known as the Year of Sorrow, for the devastation it wrought upon Muhammad. For their entire marriage, Muhammad had stayed exclusively monogamous. To their friends and family, theirs had been a perfect union. Together they had given life to their four surviving daughters, and she had served as loyal confidant and counselor. Further, she was the first person to acknowledge him as a prophet. Edward Gibbon in his book, *'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'*, wrote:

*“During the 24-years of their marriage, Khadija’s youthful husband abstained from the right of polygamy, and the pride or tenderness of the venerable matron was never insulted by the society of a rival. After her death, the Prophet placed her in the rank of four perfect women, with the sister of Moses, the mother of Jesus, and Fatima.”*

Further tragedy would befall Muhammad soon after he buried his wife in Jannatul Mualla cemetery, Mecca, as his uncle and guardian Abu Talib fell ill and died in the same year. While Muhammad's faith had caused he and his uncle to become distant, his death would pose a great security threat to him, as his passing would leave Muhammad without a protector or clan leader who could avenge his death if he were attacked, which always served as a deterrent to those who plotted against him. Muhammad was now exposed and vulnerable, and no chieftain in Mecca was willing to serve as his patron.

Now without a clan leader, confrontations against Muhammad became increasingly regular. He was spat upon. He had dung flung at him and his and children, and on another occasion he had the intestines of a dead sheep smeared in shit thrown on him. The prophet knew it would only be a matter of time before things would become dangerously bleak, but there was no place to run and no place to hide.

In desperation, Muhammad rode on horseback to the neighboring city of Taif, which was a solid two-day trip away. His objective was to seek a sanctuary for him and his Muslims, away from the increasing hostility of Mecca. The meeting was a total failure, however, and the chiefs of Taif ridiculed him for his claims of prophethood. One of the elders told him, “What makes you so special? You're a nobody!” While another said, “if God sent you, then I will smash the Kaaba.” Dejected, Muhammad began on his return journey to Mecca.

Two hundred and fifty miles away in a town then called Yathrib, which later changed its name

to Medina, that city's chiefs were discussing the social woes of their society. The main problem they faced was in how to bring the city's religious violence into some kind of order. The people of Medina had found it impossible live in peace together. There were several Arab tribes who had converted to Judaism, others that had converted to Christianity, and there were three clans of Jewish descent. What made Medina unique in southern Arabia is a majority of the population believed in monotheism, as opposed to the majority of Meccans who were polytheists.

The chieftains of Medina had heard stories of Muhammad. They had heard he was preaching a blend of combined Judaism and Christianity, but in a way targeted specifically towards Arabs. So they decided to send an envoy to Mecca to meet with Muhammad, under the cover of the hajj (pilgrimage) of AD 620. After a number of meetings and discussions, the Medina envoy all became converts to Islam, and they promised Muhammad they would defend him against anyone who attacked him or his Muslim converts.

For the first time Muhammad was starting to see a glimmer of hope. The new pact with Medina would ensure no harm would come to him. It was during this period Muhammad was invited to have dinner at the house of one of his cousins. After dinner he felt restless and anxious, and he asked if he could be excused from the table. He then felt a force pulling him towards the Kaaba. There he walked several times around the shrine, before falling asleep in a nearby shelter. As he slept, he felt the painful jolts of a horse kicking him in the stomach. Suddenly awoken, Muhammad was startled by the sight of a Pegasus. The Archangel Gabriel appeared and told him to throw his legs over the saddle of the winged horse named Buraq. The horse bolted, literally, straight up into the night sky on a journey that covered the caravan routes of his younger days; the ruined cities of the Old Testament; and then onto the revered city of Jerusalem, "the farthest mosque". (Masjid al-aqsa) Once there Muhammad was welcomed by a host of biblical prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, who told him he must continue his efforts to bring the Arabs to God. You can imagine the difficulty Christians have in believing Jesus told Muhammad to continue preaching Islam, but I digress. From what is now the Dome on the Rock, Jerusalem, Muhammad ascended into heaven. Gabriel gave him a whirlwind tour of the heavenly realm including the fires of hell, and this was the moment he saw his ultimate mission clear. I mean who wouldn't be impressed, right? Gabriel told him this was his reward for his perseverance to now, and that greater rewards lay in waiting should he unite Arabia under the obedience of God. Muhammad was elated. It was the motivation and inspiration he needed after a decade of hardship that included being ostracized, the loss of his wife and friends, and humiliation.

The Islamic world remain divided as to whether or not this mystical event was merely a spiritual or dream like metaphor, or if it were an actual physical happening. I guess that depends on each individual's faith. Al Tabari, who was one of Muhammad's first biographers, believed it to be an actual event and he gave the following account:

*"In heaven he saw 70,000 heads, each head having 70,000 mouths, each mouth having 70,000 tongues, each tongue speaking 70,000 languages; and every one involved in singing God's (Allah's) praises."*

As for me I think I will lean towards the dream side of the aisle, in case you were asking. But it doesn't matter what I think. Let's see what others of that time thought of Muhammad's night flight.

Rejuvenated, Muhammad stood in the centre of the shrine in Mecca and called upon the entire city to hear of what he had to say. Over the course of the next few hours, the entire city had gathered. Muhammad began to speak, and what he told them was a full account of his winged horse journey to Jerusalem that previous evening. He gave his account and then silence. And then more silence, some vacant glances among the crowd, and then wild fits of laughter broke out. Literally, 20,000 people were on their backs laughing that any person would have the audacity to mutter such a fanciful story. His enemies, however, were exultant, for now he had proved beyond a shadow of a doubt he had lost his mind. They were determined more than ever to finish him once and for all, and a bounty was placed on his head for any person willing to murder him.

The euphoria of his night flight had been rubbed away by the realization that he was now considered little more than a punch line in his own town. Further, Muhammad learned of a bounty placed on his head. Timely, the chieftains of Medina reached out to him and pleaded he come to them in order to lead their city, which now seemed intent on destroying itself. Muhammad had little other alternative and he agreed. The assassins were closing in and it was only for a sneaky piece of planning did Muhammad escape Mecca unharmed.

The year was now AD 622 and not a single Muslim remained living in Mecca. They were safely reunited with the Abyssinian refugees, and Arabia's first theocracy was about to be implemented thus beginning the Islamic era. With a safe haven for all Muslims, Muhammad could begin his preparations for waging war on the unbelievers of Mecca. Now, this is a point we all need to be clear on and it's essential to understanding Islam in its entirety. You see, the Meccans and the Quraysh wished to continue practicing their pagan religious beliefs. Muhammad, however, was on a mission to convert them. For the previous decade he had been on the defensive, quietly reciting the Koran, building his converts, but now with a base, he would turn this all around by going on the offensive. Islam means surrender and he had no intention of leaving the Meccans to their own spiritual wishes. He believed it was his divine duty to conquer and convert them, but for now his immediate priority was securing his position in Medina. Payback and submission would come later.

# CHAPTER 6: MUHAMMAD IN MEDINA

The Muslims hastily departed Mecca several days before Muhammad and Abu Bakr. This was a part of an elaborate ploy to fool their would-be assassins. Several days had passed and the Muslims and the chieftains of Medina were becoming increasingly fearful the prophet had met a violent end. On the third day, however, a garrison guard spotted their horses approaching and he signaled the alarm. The entire city was elated and they greeted Muhammad in much the same way as the Bible narrates the alleged triumphant return of Jesus to Jerusalem upon horseback.

The arrival of Muhammad signified the official renaming of Yathrib to Medina, meaning ‘the city of the prophet’, and the city would later become the model for a perfect Islamic society. But now came the arduous task of reuniting the citizens of the city after years of religious squabbling and violence.

First of all, Muhammad had to build his new home, which would also serve as somewhat of a community center, thus becoming the world’s first mosque (*masjid*: place of prostration).

The masjid was a simple building made from sun-fired mud bricks and included an enclosed courtyard where Muslims met to discuss all social, political, and military issues. In the centre of the courtyard was the kiblah, which pointed in the direction of Jerusalem, so the Muslims knew which way to bow towards during prayer. Along the edge of the courtyard were a series of rooms that housed Muhammad’s numerous wives, which now leads us to a hot button topic that those of anti-Islamic persuasion love to point to when fingering Muhammad.

Ok, it had now been more than a year since the passing of Khadija, when one of his household staff recommended he take another wife. Two potential suitors were offered to him, Sawdah and Aisha. Rather than choose between them, Muhammad took both to be his newly wedded wives. Sawdah was a thirty-year-old widow, and Aisha a child of just seven years of age. Ok, so let’s discuss this moral landmine field.

Well, by our twenty-first Western civilization moral standards, Muhammad’s marriage to an eight year old is an open-shut case of pedophilia. We define a pedophile as any person who sexually seduces a child below the age of legal consent, typically sixteen years or younger. But we’re not talking about twenty first century Western civilization moral standards, but rather the moral standards of the Middle East 1,500 years ago. In biblical times, men consummated marriages with a girl as soon as she reached the age of menstruation, which is often at +/- 12 years of age. Thus by our standards, men of the Bible, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon, equally qualify for the title pedophile. Child brides remain a fact of life even today in some Islamic societies, and within some Mormon communities, and as a matter of fact it remained lawful for a man to marry a nine-year-old girl in Iran as little as a decade ago. The Ayatollah once stated that if it was good enough for Muhammad, then it’s good enough for me. In ‘*Voices Behind the Veil*’ it tells of today’s Taliban who marry off their daughters as young as eight years of age.

Now, Muslims will defend Muhammad’s marriage to Aisha by claiming he did not consummate or sleep with her until she reached the age of sexual maturity, presumably twelve or older. But is that true? Well, we can find that answer in the *hadith*. The hadith is a

collection of authoritative writings concerning Muhammad and are, for all intensive purposes, of equal importance alongside the Koran when guiding the practice of Islam. So what does the hadith say about Muhammad's marriage to his nine-year-old bride?

*“Narrated Hisham's father: Khadija died three years before the Prophet departed to Medina. He stayed there for two years or so and then he married 'Aisha when she was a girl of six years of age, and he consummated that marriage when she was nine years old.”*  
-Bukhari vol.5 book 58 ch.43 no.236 p.153.

*“Narrated 'Urwa: The Prophet wrote the (marriage contract) with 'Aisha while she was six year old and consummated his marriage with her while she was nine years old and she remained with him for nine years (i.e. till his death).* -Bukhari vol.7 book 62 ch.60 no.88 p.65

*“A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) reported: Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) married me when I was six years old, and I was admitted to his house at the age of nine. She further said: We went to Medina and I had an attack of fever for a month, and my hair had come down to the earlobes. Umm Ruman (my mother) came to me and I was at that time on a swing along with my playmates. She called me loudly and I went to her and I did not know what she had wanted of me. She took hold of my hand and took me to the door, and I was saying: Ha, ha (as if I was gasping), until the agitation of my heart was over. She took me to a house, where had gathered the women of the Ansar. They all blessed me and wished me good luck and said: May you have shared in good. She (my mother) entrusted me to them. They washed my head and embellished me and nothing frightened me. Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) came there in the morning, and I was entrusted to him.”* -Sahih Muslim vol.2 book 8 ch.548 no.3309 p.715-716

*“A'ishah said : The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) married me when I was seven years old. The narrator Sulaiman said : Or six years. He had intercourse with me when I was nine years old.”* -Sunan Abu Dawud vol.2 book 5 ch.700 no.2116 p.569

*“A'ishah said : I used to play with dolls. Sometimes the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) entered upon me when the girls were with me. When he came in, they went out, and when he went out, they came in.”* -Sunan Abu Dawud vol.3 book 36 ch.1769 no.4913 p.1373

Thus according to Aisha's own words, as recorded in the hadith, “He (Muhammad) had intercourse with me when I was nine years old.” Here, as you can see, if we applied our moral subjectivity, then indeed he was sexual criminal. However, if you don't believe in a moral giver i.e. God, then there's no such thing as moral objectivity. In other words, our definition of what constitutes moral or immoral behavior changes over time (and I'm just tip-toeing around this whole moral relativity argument) and, therefore, what we find morally repugnant today was, in fact, deemed morally acceptable 1,500 years ago i.e. slavery, honor killings, and human sacrifice to name a few such examples. In Muhammad's era, marrying an underage girl was regarded as morally kosher, as was the selling of your daughter into sexual slavery as stipulated in the book of Deuteronomy. Now my point isn't to justify or excuse Muhammad for breaking the hymen of a nine-year-old, it's just to illustrate that one must judge him

against the morals of that time.

Later, Muhammad would take an additional two wives, who were both widowed during wars Muhammad later fought against the Meccans. In this sense, Muhammad never exploited the misogynistic laws for his own sexually polygamous benefit. The wives he took in were outcasts and the misfortunate, and he saw it as his duty to care and provide for them. Once more remembering that it was expected of Arabian leaders and the wealthy of that period to house a harem of women. In fact, a number of Muhammad's friends would often criticize him for the leniency he showed his wives and for the way he sought their counsel on religious and political matters. In regards to polygamy, Muhammad made it Islamic law that men and women are equal partners before God, but a man may marry up to a maximum of four wives at any one time. But this polygamy law was not without purpose, he made this decree at the time the Muslim men were being killed in skirmishes fighting the Meccan military, and their deaths meant the surviving wives would be without care. Moreover it was Muhammad who led the charge for the emancipation of women. In fact, the Koran gave women rights of inheritance and divorce hundreds of years before women in what is now Europe would receive similar entitlement. When critics of Islam point to the veiling of women as an example of blatant sexism and demonization of women, this was not something Muhammad decreed, and something that came centuries after his death by Islamic revisionists.

With Muhammad's house becoming the centre of Islam within Medina, his example of charity and anti-materialism won him practically all of the pagan population of the city to his religious faith. The numbers who called themselves Muslim was now in the few thousands, but the Jews and Christians remained aloof towards him. This disappointed him greatly, as he had looked forward to working closely with both Abrahamic faiths because he believed they were the Muslim's equals as "people of the book." In fact, Muhammad streamlined Islam to be in synch with Judaism by instituting communal prayer on Friday afternoons, and a fast on the Jewish Day of Atonement. Some of the Jews from the smaller clans welcomed Muhammad, and they would tutor him on the stories of the Old Testament, but the vast majority treated him with private scorn. Nevertheless, Muhammad remained confident he could convert the Jewish clans of Medina to Islam, and he had some initial success with a handful of former Jews accepting Islam. Muhammad's pride in this achievement is demonstrated in the following Koranic verse:

*"Think if this Koran is indeed from God and you reject it; for an Israelite has vouched for its divinity and accepted Islam." (Sura 46:10)*

These converts would become far and few between, however, and the Jews, in particular, began to publicly deride and taunt Muhammad for his lack of biblical knowledge. They couldn't accept the notion God would send a prophet who was not only illiterate but was also ignorant of the Jewish bible, the Torah. Seventeen months after arriving in Medina, Muhammad had enough of their teasing, and he made a profoundly massive theological changing decision to point the kiblah away from the Temple in Jerusalem and towards the Kaaba in Mecca. From this point onwards, Muslims would bow towards Mecca rather than the home of Judaism. Effectively, this change would be construed as a declaration of independence; Islam was turning its back on the Jewish and Christian faiths, and was beginning to establish its own identity.

In less than two years, Muhammad had successfully transformed Medina. Despite the fact the

Jews and Christians continued to patronize him, he had converted the remainder of the city, and in doing so, he had put an end to the civil strife and substantially grown the Muslim population in encouraging every Muslim family to produce as many offspring as they could. There now would be a new pressing challenge to address immediately, the Muslims of Medina would need commerce and trade. Medina was an agricultural town and the emigrants from Mecca were not farmers, they were merchants. Muhammad knew he had to come up with a solution fast or face revolt. His solution? War.

# CHAPTER 7: WAR WITH MECCA

The Meccans had made it impossible for the Muslims to work the caravan trade routes, and Muhammad knew that if any of his Muslims were found isolated from the security of Medina, they would be attacked and killed. This, combined with the Muslims lack of farming knowledge, left very few available options for the Muslims to earn a living. At this time Muhammad had declared war on Mecca. However, it was not a struggle for prestige, wealth, or empire, but for the advancement of God's word and his prophethood. The Koran specifies his war objective:

*“Fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for God.” (Sura 8:39)*

Moreover, Muhammad knew he had not yet assembled a military large enough to take Mecca by sheer force, but he also knew where he could hit them hardest – the caravans. Not only was this a brilliant military strategy but it also would serve as a means to resolve Medina's economic woes, as seized caravans would provide war booty. Muhammad assembled a small raiding party in December of AD 623 and gave them instructions on where and how to hit a caravan he knew would be traveling on the route to Yemen, at an oasis that links Mecca to Taif. Significantly, Muhammad gave his followers two specific orders: Firstly, avoid killing anyone, as this would result in a vendetta. Secondly, wait until the day after the holy month of Rajab. Well, his men failed on both orders. Some Meccan merchants were killed and they executed their attack on the last day of Rajab. When his followers brought home the caravan's treasure, Muhammad was appalled they had disobeyed his directive, but he took responsibility because he was their leader. Muhammad prayed for guidance from above and the following reply came back from one of God's prayer envoys:

*“They ask you about war in the holy month.*

*Tell them:*

*“To fight in that month is a great sin.*

*But a greater sin in the eyes of God is*

*To hinder people away from the way of God,*

*And not believe in Him,*

*And to bar access to the Holy Mosque,*

*And to turn people out of its precincts.*

*And oppression is worst than killing.*

*They will always seek war against you*

*Till they turn you away from your faith,*

*If they can.*

*But those of you who turn back on their faith*

*And die disbelieving*

*Will have wasted their deeds*

*In this world and the next.*

*They are the inmates of Hell,*

*And abide there forever.” (Koran 2:217)*

This was Muhammad’s way of saying killing in a religious month is bad but it’s not as bad as hindering people from the way of God. This would be a passage that radical Islamic terrorists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would use to convince their combatants to wage attacks against Western targets during the month of Ramadan.

This attack would also create a new enemy for Muhammad, as the three Jewish tribes of Medina became determined to kill him, and as such they formed an alliance with Mecca. Muhammad learned of the plot and he expelled one of the clans, the Qaynuqah and the Nadir, to the Jewish settlement of Khaybar. The clans, however, proved to a more dangerous proposition for Muhammad, however, as they could join Mecca’s forces without him knowing of their mobilization. This is exactly what happened when Muhammad led the Muslims into a major engagement against the Meccans at the Battle of the Trench, or known by its more appropriate name, The Siege of Medina. But another, the Battle of Badr, would first precede that engagement.

Badr was the first large-scale engagement between the two rival militaries. Muhammad received intelligence that a caravan was on its way from Palestine to Mecca. He sent three hundred and fifty of his men to intercept the caravan at the wells of Badr. Muhammad led his small army on camel and horseback, but unbeknownst to him, the Meccans learned of the Muslim plan, and they sent out a force three times superior, numbering more than 1,000 warriors. The Meccans diverted the caravan away from the wells and replaced them with their soldiers, and then waited in ambush. However, an advance Muslim scout spotted the trap and reported back to Muhammad. The Muslims looked to their leader and asked whether they should return to Medina. Muhammad walked away to gather his thoughts. When he returned, he said to his men, “We attack!” With their swords held outstretched above their heads, they charged the Meccan lines. The battle was vicious hand-to-hand combat, and the Meccans had not only underestimated the fighting skill of the Muslims, they were completely overwhelmed by their willingness to sacrifice themselves with such ferocity. It didn’t take long for the Meccan lines to break, and from that point on it became a massacre. Most of the Meccans fled, but those who were captured were either sold for a ransom fee or were executed.

This was a huge victory for Muhammad and word spread that the Muslims were a force to be reckoned with, and many non-Muslims began to believe that Muhammad, based on securing victory against overwhelming odds, might indeed be a man of God. Moreover, it strengthened his position in Medina. Returning home, Muhammad honored the fallen as martyrs and told their respective widows they would now be in paradise for defending the word of God. Medina was delirious with joy.

The mood in Mecca couldn’t have been starker, however, as their noses had been bloodied by

greatly inferior numbers, and they were further humiliated that the person who they despised most, had defeated them so comprehensively. For the next two years, the Meccans perfected a plan to lay siege on Medina with the purpose of razing the city to the ground and all its inhabitants with it. Further, they wanted Muhammad's head on a stick.

In January 625, Mecca, seeking retribution for the Muslim attack on their caravan, sent an army of 4,000 men to Medina. The Quraysh were hell bent on ending Muhammad and his Muslims once and for all, and the Meccans weren't alone, as the three Jewish clans, the clans expelled from Medina by Muhammad, joined Mecca's fighting force. It was a ten-day foot march from Mecca to Medina, which meant forward scouts were able to report back to Muhammad that the Quraysh army was headed their way. When the Meccans moved within sight of the city, the Muslim warriors countered by moving to the slopes of a nearby mountain, Uhud, in an effort to gain the higher ground. The Meccans pursued them and hostilities commenced, but like Badr, the Muslims quickly gained the ascendancy due to their ferociousness and fighting vigor. Suddenly, however, things turned quickly from good to bad when a number of Muhammad's men fled in cowardice. For a brief moment this left Muhammad exposed and a blow to the head felled him. Word spread quickly that the prophet had been killed and the Meccans were elated, but the fog of war had provided them with incorrect information, as Muhammad had suffered only minor injuries. The leader of the Quraysh forces, Abu Sufyan, called out to the Muslims to surrender or face immediate extermination. Muhammad sent a lieutenant to deliver a reply, "God is most high and most glorious. We are equal: our dead are in paradise, yours in hell, and by God, you have not killed the Prophet. He is listening to us even as we speak!"

Surprisingly, Abu Sufyan decided to withdraw his forces, presumably he had underestimated the Muslim casualties, and he called an end to the fighting for that day and withdrew his troops back to Mecca. This military blunder by Abu Sufyan was another pivotal moment for why Islam has survived today, for had he continued his rout of Muhammad's warriors, he would've successfully demolished Medina and executed the prophet, and Islam would now only read as a historical footnote. Instead, Muhammad's reputation continued to grow throughout the region and his name was heard throughout the Middle East.

With the Meccans withdrawn, the casualties his army had suffered shocked Muhammad, and he vowed revenge against his former city. But it wouldn't be long before Mecca would put him on the defensive again. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 627 the Meccans would send a fighting force of 10,000 men to Medina as the mother of all battles. Greatly outnumbered, Muhammad would prove his military leadership prowess by encircling the city with a trench. From this trench, the Muslim warriors would fight, thus nullifying the advantage the Meccans had with their cavalry. After twenty-seven days of fighting, the siege of Medina was locked in a stalemate. In desperation and as an act to boost the moral of the attackers, the Meccans called a truce and offered their two best warriors, Amr Abd Wudd and Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, to duel the Muslim's two best fighters. The Muslims accepted the duel, and opposing forces took a respite from fighting to watch these four gladiators battle it out to the death. The Muslims were victorious, the entire city of Medina shouted, "Allah Ahkbar" (God is great), in unison.

The Meccans were now exhausted and underfed, victory seemed impossible. The will and fortitude of the Muslims had overwhelmed their opponents yet again, and as they retreated, Muhammad was able to trap and encircle the Qurayzah, the Jewish clan who joined forces

with Mecca, before executing seven hundred of them and selling their families as slaves. This sent other Jewish and pagan clans an unmistakable message: that Muhammad wasn't to be messed with, and again his prestige skyrocketed throughout Arabia.

Karen Armstrong, *'Islam: A Short History'*, makes the point that Islamic extremists and those who point to Koranic passages as examples of anti-Semitism, are guilty of taking these particular verses out of context. In Koranic passages that do show any hostility towards the Jews, he is not referring to the Jews or Judaism in general, but rather is specifically addressing the three Jewish clans who formed alliances with Mecca with the purpose of killing him.

Conversions to Islam were now taking place en masse throughout towns and cities everywhere in southern Arabia. Although Muhammad reminded his followers he was but a mere messenger, his reputation had reached an almost god like altitude.

# CHAPTER 8: THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO MECCA

In the spring of 628, and with Muhammad and Islam's popularity growing, the prophet believed he was ready for the ultimate victory party, a triumphant return to the city of his birth, Mecca. The Meccans had tried unsuccessfully to annihilate him and his followers for more than a decade now. They had placed boycotts on him; they had threatened him; they had paid assassins; and they had waged full-scale war against him, and each time he rose victorious. These military victories combined with the merciless revenge killing of the Jewish clan at the Battle of the Trench, and the reverence his followers laid upon him (one non-Muslim tribal chieftain observed, "I have visited Chosroes, King of Persia, at his court, the Roman Caesar in Constantinople and the Negus of Abyssinia in his own country, but never have I seen a king treated by his subjects with the veneration which Muhammad receives from his companions"), made Muhammad believe he could take Mecca without bloodshed, thus beginning his peace offensive.

With one thousand followers dressed in long white robes, Muhammad approached Mecca during the hajj of 628. Mostly unarmed, as pilgrims were forbidden to carry weapons during the religious holiday, the Muslims would be at the mercy of the Quraysh. Sure enough, his long time adversaries received word of his approaching and they sent out a patrol to attack him before he reached the outskirts of the city. Muhammad evaded them, however, and took refuge with a Bedouin tribe in Hudaybiyyah. Camped there for three days, Muhammad waited developments. The Quraysh chieftains were surprised and impressed by Muhammad's non-violent actions and they offered him a ten-year peace treaty. This meant Muslims could travel to the shrine and Kaaba whenever they chose, and it meant the Muslims and Meccans could never attack one another. Although a majority of the Muslims wanted to enact violent retribution against their long time provocateurs, and they had the might to do it, Muhammad's gesture to sign a peace accord won him even more followers throughout the land, thus ensuring Islam was well and truly an unstoppable force.

The influx of new followers did little to comfort the disgruntlement of the old followers, however, as they took this treaty to be a backhanded slap across the face. They had lost brothers, sons and fathers during the military campaigns against Mecca, and they believed this treaty dishonored their memories. More importantly, however, the treaty prevented the Muslims from engaging in their prime business activity, the raiding of caravans. Muhammad's treaty effectively put an immediate end to this enterprise. The prophet sensed he was facing a mutiny of sorts, and thus he addressed them with what he said had been another recitation from the angel. The following verse is found in Sura 48:

*We have bestowed upon you (O Messenger) a great victory.*

*"Whereby GOD forgives your past sins, as well as future sins, and perfects His blessings upon you, and guides you in a straight path. Additionally, GOD will support you with an unwavering support. He is the One who places contentment into the hearts of believers to*

*augment more faith, in addition to their faith. To GOD belongs all forces of the heavens and the earth. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise. He will certainly admit the believing men and women into gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. He will remit their sins. This is, in the sight of GOD, a great triumph.*

*And He will requite the hypocrite men and women and the idol worshipping men and women, for they have harbored evil thoughts about GOD. Their evil will backfire against them. For GOD is angry with them, condemns them, and has prepared for them Gehenna. What a miserable destiny!*

*To GOD belongs all the forces in the heavens and the earth. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise. We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, and a warner. That you people may believe in GOD and His messenger, and reverence Him, and observe Him, and glorify Him, day and night.” (Koran 48:2-9)*

This recitation was sufficient to lift the spirits of his weary warriors, and they returned to Medina exultant in the belief that God was looking out for Muhammad, and that the prophet was correctly relaying the Lord's orders. Ten weeks later in Medina, Muhammad would further buoy his follower's spirits in announcing he had drawn up a plan to attack the Jewish settlement of Khaybar. Muhammad took a force of 1,000 men, which seemed a paltry number given that they would be facing up to 10,000 enemy soldiers and fortified walls. Muhammad believed a small and mobile infantry would allow the Muslims to hit and run in small platoons in somewhat of a guerilla style engagement. Khaybar's strength was also its weakness, however. It was a fortified city but was a series of hamlets rather than a centralized town surrounded by perimeter defensive positions.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 629 the Muslims launched their offensive but they met stiff resistance from the Jewish archers who picked off more than 50 of Muhammad's men in the first five days of fighting. It appeared as if the city was indeed impregnable, but then came a stroke of luck. A Jewish soldier was taken prisoner and interrogated. He revealed that the weakest hamlet of the city was the fort of Naim. Moreover, if they were to capture that fort, they would be able to seize a large stockpile of weapons. A platoon was sent in and the fort fell as easily as predicted by the prisoner. To their further good fortune, Naim possessed a ballista, which was a rock-hurling catapult. They repositioned the ballista to fire upon the mud-brick walls of the other hamlets, allowing the Muslim raiders to send the Jews into chaos. The Muslims cut off access to the town's water wells and the city of Khaybar had fallen to Muhammad. Certainly, an astounding military success, by any war historian's measure.

Muhammad told the residents of Khaybar that no harm would befall them should they hand over all of their possessions to the Muslims. Soon after the agreement, the Jews approached Muhammad with a request they could continue to farm their land on the condition they forfeit fifty percent of their produce to the Muslims each year. Muhammad agreed to the terms, thus making it the precedent for Islamic Law in determining the status of non-Muslims living under Muslim rule.

The divvying up of the spoils of war continued with Muhammad taking the widow of a slain Jewish commander to be his wife, and then later learning that the city contained hidden treasure. The fact that the Jewish Rabbi had not forfeited the treasure was a breach of the terms of the settlement, and Muhammad had the Rabbi tortured and beheaded.

In 630, Muhammad led the Muslims for their first hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, as guaranteed by the terms of the treaty with the Quraysh. Thousands of Muslims followed Muhammad into the shrine, as the Meccans looked on the passing parade in awe of his now vast following. The prophet walked right up to the black stone, touched it and then made seven circuits of the Kaaba, and seven runs between the hillocks of Safa and Marwah. Muhammad then led the thousands of his followers in communal prayer and the Meccans couldn't help be impressed by not only the discipline of his followers, but their reverence of the Kaaba and sacred stone. For the next few days, the Muslims stayed as guests in the city and this gave those Muslims who were originally from Mecca to reunite with family and former friends. But the terms of the treaty included that the Muslims could stay for only three days and would have to return to Medina. They did exactly that, winning many more converts along the way.

A short while later, in 630, the Meccans violated the treaty by attacking one of Muhammad's tribal allies. In return, Muhammad marched onto Mecca with a force of 10,000 soldiers. Mecca was caught completely off guard and little if any resistance was encountered. Entering the city, Muhammad had his warriors fanned out across the city and gave the order they should fight only if attacked. With the residents held in a virtual lockdown, Muhammad entered the Kaaba and destroyed all of the pagan idols, all three-hundred-and-sixty of them. He then stood atop the Kaaba and addressed his army, "Praise be to God, who hath fulfilled His promise and helped his slave and routed the clans." The words of Muhammad's address reached all the residents of the city and soon he would offer them a moratorium to convert to Islam. In all but a few cases, the entire city pledged their faith to Islam, and their lives were spared. There were some not shown any clemency or mercy, however, as Muhammad had with him a list of names. If your name was on this list it meant you were an enemy of Islam and you were to be executed. The total number beheaded included six men and four women.

Muhammad was home. He had the keys to the city and Islam was now the religion of southern Arabia's biggest. His next objective would be to convert the rest of the peninsular, and he began with the city of Taif. The city that more than fifteen years ago had refused to offer him protection when the Meccans plotted to kill him. It was payback time but the city of Taif was equally spoiling for a fight, having learned Muhammad had destroyed the idol that venerated the goddess Al-Lat, who the people of Taif worshipped.

It was only two weeks after Muhammad had taken Mecca that he mobilized his military to lay siege on Taif. But Taif was arguably the most well defended city in southern Arabia. As the Muslim soldiers approached, they were easy pickings for the city's archers. Muhammad withdrew his troops and was alarmed by the casualty count. His advisors warned the city was impenetrable. Muhammad took heed and called off the siege, electing to pursue an economic war against Taif, rather than a military course of action. With Mecca and Medina now part of the Islamic caliphate, Taif was effectively cut off from the trade routes, which quickly sent the city down the path of economic ruin. Thus it wasn't long before Taif sent an envoy to meet with Muhammad who agreed to let them live without persecution should they convert to Islam, which they did. Muhammad then sent his own delegation to Taif where he demolished all idols or monuments honoring the false gods. The entire southern part of Arabia was now an Islamic theocracy, and Muhammad set his eyes on the goal of unifying the entire Arab peninsular.

One-by-one, cities converted to Islam, for they had for many years prior to his arrival in their

towns, learned of his mystique and power. They had seen the transformation he made to the cities in the south, how he had ended centuries of tribal conflict by unifying the region under a single banner, Islam. Places like Oman, Yemen, and Muscat announced their conversions in 630 and 631. All in all, Muhammad had personally led his soldiers into thirty-two military campaigns and ordered another twenty-one attacks. Now, a majority of Muslims are of the view that Muhammad fought only when he was attacked. They also argue that he was the first military leader in history to lay down rules for humane combat, and that he was always meticulously careful in limiting the loss of civilian life. It's important to remember that in those times defeating an enemy meant completely annihilating the inhabitants of the opposition's society. Equally, it would be disingenuous to deny the fact Islam was spread by the sword, as Khaybar, Taif, and Mecca were forced into submission or faced further military and economic attack.

Muhammad had successfully launched his Islamic Empire, but what is interesting is the fact that he never sent rulers to oversee each member city or state. For example, he was satisfied to let the Yemenis rule themselves, so long as they continued to pay their tithe or tax. Moreover, Muhammad never envisaged a global proselytization or conversion to Islam. He saw Islam purely as a branch of the Old Testament faiths, designed exclusively for Arabs.

In early 632 Muhammad told his closest followers he had received a premonition of his death, and that his passing into the next life would be soon. On 20 February 632 he led a huge throng of followers from Medina to Mecca for one final pilgrimage to the shrine. It was his actions on this pilgrimage that established the ritual of the Hajj forever. On the first evening he circled the Kaaba seven times. On the next day he threw seven stones at a stone column in remembrance of Abraham's rejection of the Devil. On the third day Muhammad shaved his hair and returned to the Kaaba to circle it seven more times, and to run seven times between the hillocks of Safa and Marwah.

On the final day of the pilgrimage, Muhammad gave his farewell sermon, and it is a speech that, in my opinion, surpasses Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Although I don't believe Jesus ever said or wrote those words because it is my sense he was not a historical person, given we have not a single independently verifiable eyewitness account of his life, but now I'm paraphrasing sections of my second book, *'Jesus Lied. He Was Only Human'*. So, anyway, here is Muhammad's beautifully delivered farewell to his followers and a message for mankind:

*"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present today.*

*O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no-one, so that no-one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury, therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep.*

*You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib[Muhammad's uncle] shall henceforth be waived...*

*Beware of Shayṭān for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.*

*O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.*

*O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in zakat, Perform hajj if you can afford to.*

*All mankind is from Adam and Hawwā', an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.*

*Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.*

*O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qu'ran and my Ahlul-Bayt, and if you follow these you will never go astray.*

*All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people”*

Seventeen days later, Muhammad, at home in Medina, came down with a blinding fever. His wives attended to him and thousands of followers kept a round-the-clock vigil outside his home. Muhammad knew he was on his last legs and on the tenth day of his illness he dragged his aching and exhausted body into the room of his favorite wife, Aisha. She led him to her bed, he kissed him on the forehead, he first looked into her eyes, and then pass her, before whispering, “Lord, grant me pardon.” He then closed his eyes and fell into an eternal sleep.

# EXPLORING THE KORAN

The Koran remained memorized and recited by Muhammad and his faithful while the prophet was alive. It would be more than two hundred years after his death before the 114 chapters (suras) and 6,236 verses (ayats) became available in the printed form, and no one truly knows how refined or modified the printed words we have today really are.

Suras are classified as either Meccan or Medinan, depending on where Muhammad was when the relevant sura was revealed to him. The sura titles are derived from a name or topic discussed in the text, or from the first words of the sura itself. Generally, longer suras appear earlier in the Koran, while the shorter ones appear later. Thus the sura arrangement or compilation order has nothing to do with the chronological order of the revelations. Significantly, each sura, with the exception of the ninth, begins with the phrase, ‘In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.’”

If you are a Muslim, you believe the Koran was gradually revealed from God (Allah) to Muhammad verbally via the archangel Gabriel over a period of twenty-three years, commencing in 610, when he was forty years of age, and concluding in 632, the year of his passing.

Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last prophet and therefore the Koran remains the unalterable and final word of God, and that the Koran of today is the same as the Koran revealed to Muhammad 1,400 years ago.

# SURA 1: THE OPENER

This sura contains a mere seven verses and, for a lack of a better analogy, it is to Muslims what the Lord's Prayer is to Christians. But on steroids! Devout Muslims will recite the Al-Fatiha up to seventeen times a day. Al-Fatiha translates as 'the Opener'.

The sura in full reads:

*[1:1] In the name of GOD, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*[1:2] Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe.*

*[1:3] Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*[1:4] Master of the Day of Judgment.*

*[1:5] You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help.*

*[1:6] Guide us in the right path:*

*[1:7] the path of those whom You blessed; not of those who have deserved wrath, nor of the strayers.*

According to Muhammad, these were the very first words the angel Gabriel told him to recite and write. It's placement within the order of suras is significant too, as it demonstrates that Muhammad saw himself as only a messenger, prophet, or servant of God – and that he believed it important to convey to his followers that he should not be regarded as some kind of deity.

Muslims view 'The Opener' as the prayer from God's servant, Muhammad, and the Koran is the answer from God to his prayer.

# SURA 2: THE COW

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The second sura is the Koran's longest, comprising of two hundred and eighty six verses, including the single longest verse in the book. (2:282)

Scholars regard it as a Medinan sura, meaning it was revealed to Muhammad during the first two years after the Hajj. The Hajj, in this instance, being the journey of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in 622. Thus making 622 the first year of the Islamic calendar. Therefore, when scholars say it was written within the first two years after the Hajj, what they're really saying is it was written in the years 622-624 C.E.

'The Cow' addresses a wide range of topics, including many decrees of Islamic law. It also retells the biblical stories of Adam, Abraham and Moses. Also, Muhammad urges the pagan worshipers and the Jews to embrace Islam.

The first half of this sura is addressed to the Jews of Medina, who refuse to accept Muhammad as a prophet. Hence, he puts forth his argument as to why they should accept him on his word. The second half is addressed to the Muslims of Medina, and prescribes to them how it is they should live their lives as devout Muslims. Essentially, Muhammad submits the following instructions to ensure the survival of the Muslim community there:

1. The Community should work diligently and with utmost zeal to propagate its ideology, so as to recruit as many people as possible.
2. Work hard to prove to non-Muslims their respective religion is wrong
3. The Community should tend assistance to its weakest i.e. orphans and homeless
4. The Community must be ready and willing to suppress and defeat any external enemy who come armed with a different ideology
5. The Community should eradicate evil vices such as gambling, alcohol, and unscrupulous business practices.

## VERSES 1 - 20

These introductory verses proclaim the Koran to be the Book of Guidance. Further, it stipulates the articles of faith: belief in Allah, prophethood, and Life-after-death. Muhammad also groups mankind into three categories: Believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites. Specific verses include:

*[2:2] This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous;*

*[2:6] As for those who disbelieve, it is the same for them; whether you warn them, or not warn them, they cannot believe.*

*[2:7] GOD seals their minds and their hearing, and their eyes are veiled. They have incurred severe retribution.*

## VERSES 21 – 29

These nine verses concern themselves with submission; the submission to Allah, and for those who submit, they will be rewarded in Paradise.

*[2:21] O people, worship only your Lord - the One who created you and those before you - that you may be saved.*

*[2:24] If you cannot do this - and you can never do this - then beware of the Hellfire, whose fuel is people and rocks; it awaits the disbelievers.*

### **VERSES 30 – 39**

Muhammad revises the biblical story of Adam’s fall from grace; of his life in Eden; and of his succumbing to Satan. The prophet narrates the Genesis mythology for the purpose of demonstrating bad stuff happens when Muslims stray from God.

*[2:35] We said, “O Adam, live with your wife in Paradise, and eat there from generously, as you please, but do not approach this tree, lest you sin.”*

### **VERSES 40 - 120**

Muhammad addresses the Jews (“Children of Israel”) of Medina throughout the following eighty verses. He is highly critical of the fact he believes they’ve deviated from the original scriptures i.e. the commandments delivered to them by their prophet Moses. He criticizes them for worshipping the Golden Calf and uses this to illustrate their turning away from God. Interestingly, he references Israel’s covenant with God, and believes it is the Muslim’s duty to honor it:

*[2:40] O Children of Israel, remember My favor, which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill your part of the covenant, that I fulfill My part of the covenant, and reverence Me.*

*[2:41] You shall believe in what I have revealed herein, confirming what you have; do not be the first to reject it. Do not trade away My revelations for a cheap price, and observe Me.*

*[2:63] We made a covenant with you, as we raised Mount Sinai above you: “You shall uphold what we have given you strongly, and remember its contents, that you may be saved.”*

*[2:64] But you turned away thereafter, and if it were not for GOD’s grace towards you and His mercy, you would have been doomed.*

*[2:65] You have known about those among you who desecrated the Sabbath. We said to them, “Be you as despicable as apes.”*

The historical context of the above verse refers to the establishment of the Muslim community in Medina. As we know, Muhammad saw himself as a kind of reformer of both Judaism and Christianity. He saw himself as a then modern day Moses, but with the specific objective of bringing the Arabs to God. But the Jews never accepted him as anything other than a quasi cult leader. Now, in the above verses, was he calling all Jews “apes”? No, he wasn’t. He was specifically referring to the Jewish clan of Medina, who had joined forces with the Meccans to

annihilate him in the Siege of Medina.

Jesus makes the first of his twenty-five cameos in the Koran in the following verse. Muhammad considered Jesus to be a Messenger of God, who was sent to guide the Jewish people with an updated memo (Testament) from God. Throughout the Koran, Muhammad actually teaches Muslims to revere and honor Jesus. Effectively, Muhammad believes he is equal to Jesus, sent with the same message but for a different audience. Interestingly, the Koran alleges that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified, but rather he had ascended to heaven.

*[2:87] We gave Moses the scripture, and subsequent to him we sent other messengers, and we gave Jesus, son of Mary, profound miracles and supported him with the Holy Spirit. Is it not a fact that every time a messenger went to you with anything you disliked, your ego caused you to be arrogant? Some of them you rejected, and some of them you killed.*

### **VERSES 121 – 141**

Muhammad tries to convince the Jews of Medina he has received the same guidance and instructions as the prophets before him, including Abraham and Moses, and therefore, they should follow him as a prophet.

The following verse underpins precisely the manner in which Muhammad saw his duty, to bring the word of God to the Arab speaking populace:

*[2:129] “Our Lord, and raise among them a messenger to recite to them Your revelations, teach them the scripture and wisdom, and purify them. You are the Almighty, Most Wise.”*

Further, Muhammad explains that Christians and Jews may continue the practicing of their faith.

*[2:136] Say, “We believe in GOD, and in what was sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs; and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and all the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters.”*

### **VERSES 142 – 152**

When the Jews of Medina continued to mock him and refuse him as a prophet, Muhammad, in turn, gave Islam its independence from Judaism in moving the direction of Muslim prayers away from the Temple in Jerusalem, and towards the Kaaba in Mecca.

*[2:144] We have seen you turning your face about the sky (searching for the right direction). We now assign a Qiblah that is pleasing to you. Henceforth, you shall turn your face towards the Sacred Masjid. Wherever you may be, all of you shall turn your faces towards it. Those who received the previous scripture know that this is the truth from their Lord. GOD is never unaware of anything they do.*

### **VERSES 153 – 251**

In this large chunk of verses, practical measures are prescribed to Muslims in order to better

follow Muhammad's guidance. In many ways it reads as a 'How to be a Good Muslim'. Dispensing laws, rules, and regulations for drinking, money lending, gambling, political discourse, and inter-faith relations. Further, he denounces paganism in all forms. It is in these verses that we also encounter the philosophy of jihad, and Muhammad stipulates justifications for attacking opponents of their faith.

*[2:190] You may fight in the cause of GOD against those who attack you, but do not aggress. GOD does not love the aggressors.*

*[2:191] You may kill those who wage war against you, and you may evict them whence they evicted you. Oppression is worse than murder. Do not fight them at the Sacred Masjid, unless they attack you therein. If they attack you, you may kill them. This is the just retribution for those disbelievers.*

*[2:216] Fighting may be imposed on you, even though you dislike it. But you may dislike something which is good for you, and you may like something which is bad for you. GOD knows while you do not know.*

Muhammad also references the time his soldiers disobeyed his orders in attacking a caravan during a holy month.

*[2:217] They ask you about the Sacred Months and fighting therein: say, "Fighting therein is a sacrilege. However, repelling from the path of GOD and disbelieving in Him and in the sanctity of the Sacred Masjid, and evicting its people, are greater sacrileges in the sight of GOD. Oppression is worse than murder." They will always fight you to revert you from your religion, if they can. Those among you who revert from their religion, and die as disbelievers, have nullified their works in this life and the Hereafter. These are the dwellers of Hell, wherein they abide forever.*

Muhammad makes it clear that it is an abomination for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman. More liberal scholars argue that Muhammad was fine with the idea of Muslim men marrying Jews or Christians ("people of the book"), but when we examine the context of this against the contents of the hadith, it is apparent that Muhammad gave permission for his followers to marry the "people of the book" only at such time when Islam was the dominant religion in the region. But never in any circumstance is it ok for a Muslim to marry a polytheist or pagan believer.

*[2:221] Do not marry idolatresses unless they believe; a believing woman is better than an idolatress, even if you like her. Nor shall you give your daughters in marriage to idolatrous men, unless they believe. A believing man is better than an idolater, even if you like him. These invite to Hell, while GOD invites to Paradise and forgiveness, as He wills. He clarifies His revelations for the people, that they may take heed.*

When it comes to divorce, Muhammad stipulates the following terms:

*[2:229] Divorce may be retracted twice. The divorced woman shall be allowed to live in the same home amicably, or leave it amicably. It is not lawful for the husband to take back anything he had given her. However, the couple may fear that they may transgress GOD's law. If there is fear that they may transgress GOD's law, they commit no error if the wife willingly gives back whatever she chooses. These are GOD's laws; do not*

transgress them. Those who transgress GOD's laws are the unjust.

*[2:231] If you divorce the women, once they fulfill their interim (three menstruations), you shall allow them to live in the same home amicably, or let them leave amicably. Do not force them to stay against their will, as a revenge. Anyone who does this wrongs his own soul. Do not take GOD's revelations in vain. Remember GOD's blessings upon you, and that He sent down to you the scripture and wisdom to enlighten you. You shall observe GOD, and know that GOD is aware of all things.*

## **VERSES 252 – 260**

These verses concern themselves with the rewards of belief and the punishment of non-belief.

*[2:257] GOD is Lord of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into the light. As for those who disbelieve, their lords are their idols; they lead them out of the light into darkness - these will be the dwellers of Hell; they abide in it forever.*

## **VERSES 261 – 283**

These verses warn and prohibit against the evil of lending money that is attached to interest. Moreover, he stresses the importance of acting ethically and honestly with all business transactions.

*[2:282] O you who believe, when you transact a loan for any period, you shall write it down. An impartial scribe shall do the writing. No scribe shall refuse to perform this service, according to GOD's teachings. He shall write, while the debtor dictates the terms. He shall observe GOD his Lord and never cheat. If the debtor is mentally incapable, or helpless, or cannot dictate, his guardian shall dictate equitably. Two men shall serve as witnesses; if not two men, then a man and two women whose testimony is acceptable to all. Thus, if one woman becomes biased, the other will remind her. It is the obligation of the witnesses to testify when called upon to do so. Do not tire of writing the details, no matter how long, including the time of repayment. This is equitable in the sight of GOD, assures better witnessing, and eliminates any doubts you may have. Business transactions that you execute on the spot need not be recorded, but have them witnessed. No scribe or witness shall be harmed on account of his services. If you harm them, it would be wickedness on your part. You shall observe GOD, and GOD will teach you. GOD is Omniscient.*

## **VERSES 284 - 286**

The sura finishes with a prayer.

*[2:286] GOD never burdens a soul beyond its means: to its credit is what it earns, and against it is what it commits. "Our Lord, do not condemn us if we forget or make mistakes. Our Lord, and protect us from blaspheming against You, like those before us have done. Our Lord, protect us from sinning until it becomes too late for us to repent. Pardon us and forgive us. You are our Lord and Master. Grant us victory over the*

*disbelieving people.”*

# SURA 3: THE FAMILY OF IMRAN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sura was revealed to Muhammad in Medina during the third year of the hajj.

So who was Imran? Well, he is said to have been the father of Mary. Yes, that Mary, the purported mother of Jesus.

This sura was recited in four parts:

1. Verses 1 – 32: shortly after the Battle of Badr.
2. Verses 33 – 63: after meeting with the Christians of Najran in the 9<sup>th</sup> year after the Hajj.
3. Verses 64 – 120: written soon after the opening verses.
4. Verses 121 – 200: written after the Battle of Uhd.

Now, in reading this sura, it's important to revisit its context. We recall the Battle of Badr, where the Muslims of Medina defeated the Quraysh of Mecca. Well, the joy of victory on the battlefield didn't last long, however, as word spread throughout Arabia that the Muslims were a force to be reckoned. To this end, the Muslims felt their existence and future was perilous, and naturally this caused great anxiety.

Furthermore, the Jewish clans of Medina began to openly refute Muhammad, and even went so far as to signal the Meccans they were willing to join them in any reprisal attacks against Muhammad's Muslims. This was a breach of the treaty the prophet had signed with the Jewish clans, and Muhammad had them exiled. Unsurprisingly, Mecca rallied its forces for another attack on Mecca a mere twelve months after the defeat at Badr. Muhammad took three thousand of his men to battle the Meccans at Uhd, but on the march to the battlefield, more than 300 men (hypocrites) deserted Muhammad's army. So the Muslims were not only dealing with external enemies but also from saboteurs within.

## **VERSES 1 - 32**

The introductory verses contain the usual proclamations of God's might and fury, revelation, and rewards for believers.

*[3:2] GOD: there is no god except He; the Living, the Eternal.*

*[3:3] He sent down to you this scripture, truthfully, confirming all previous scriptures, and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel*

*[3:4] before that, to guide the people, and He sent down the statute book. Those who disbelieve in GOD's revelations incur severe retribution. GOD is Almighty, Avenger.*

In verse 28 Muhammad warns Muslims not to make friendships with non-Muslims.

*[3:28] The believers never ally themselves with the disbelievers, instead of the believers. Whoever does this is exiled from GOD. Exempted are those who are forced to do this to avoid persecution. GOD alerts you that you shall reverence Him alone. To GOD is the ultimate destiny.*

## **VERSES 33 – 65**

Contained within these verses is an invitation to Christians to submit to Islam. Muhammad chastises the Jews for their mocking of Jesus, while simultaneously ridicules the notion of Jesus' divinity.

*[3:45] The angels said, "O Mary, GOD gives you good news: a Word from Him whose name is 'The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary. He will be prominent in this life and in the Hereafter, and one of those closest to Me.'*

*[3:46] "He will speak to the people from the crib, as well as an adult; he will be one of the righteous."*

*[3:47] She said, "My Lord, how can I have a son, when no man has touched me?" He said, "GOD thus creates whatever He wills. To have anything done, He simply says to it, 'Be,' and it is.*

*[3:48] "He will teach him the scripture, wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel."*

*[3:49] As a messenger to the Children of Israel: "I come to you with a sign from your Lord - I create for you from clay the shape of a bird, then I blow into it, and it becomes a live bird by GOD's leave. I restore vision to the blind, heal the leprous, and I revive the dead by GOD's leave. I can tell you what you eat, and what you store in your homes. This should be a proof for you, if you are believers.*

## **VERSES 66 – 101**

Muhammad specifically invites the Jews to forgo their "sinister ways" of plotting against him, and to accept him as a true prophet of God.

*[3:66] You have argued about things you knew; why do you argue about things you do not know? GOD knows, while you do not know.*

*[3:67] Abraham was neither Jewish, nor Christian; he was a monotheist submitter. He never was an idol worshiper.*

*[3:71] O followers of the scripture, why do you confound the truth with falsehood, and conceal the truth, knowingly?*

## **VERSES 102 – 120**

Muhammad warns the Muslims to learn the mistakes made by the Jews, as told in the Bible. They must be ever vigilant against succumbing to temptation and idolatry.

*[3:110] You are the best community ever raised among the people: you advocate righteousness and forbid evil, and you believe in GOD. If the followers of the scripture believed, it would be better for them. Some of them do believe, but the majority of them are wicked.*

*[3:111] They can never harm you, beyond insulting you. If they fight you, they will turn around and flee. They can never win.*

*[3:112] They shall be humiliated whenever you encounter them, unless they uphold GOD's covenant, as well as their peace covenants with you. They have incurred wrath from GOD, and, consequently, they are committed to disgrace. This is because they rejected GOD's revelations, and killed the prophets unjustly. This is because they disobeyed and transgressed.*

## **VERSES 121 – 175**

Muhammad reviews the Battles of Badr and Uhd, as means of reassuring the Muslims that despite the numerous enemies pitted against them, God never fails to deliver their enemies to their swords.

*[3:123] GOD has granted you victory at Badr, despite your weakness. Therefore, you shall observe GOD, to show your appreciation.*

*[3:124] You told the believers, "Is it not enough that your Lord supports you with three thousand angels, sent down?"*

*[3:125] Indeed, if you steadfastly persevere and maintain righteousness, then they attack you suddenly, your Lord will support you with five thousand angels, well trained.*

*[3:151] We will throw terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved, since they set up besides GOD powerless idols. Their destiny is Hell; what a miserable abode for the transgressors!*

## **VERSES 175 – 189**

These verses are more or less repetition of verses 109 – 120 and are voiced to give confidence to the Muslims.

*[3:185] Every person tastes death, then you receive your recompense on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever misses Hell, barely, and makes it to Paradise, has attained a great triumph. The life of this world is no more than an illusion*

## **VERSES 190 - 200**

A reminder of celestial rewards and punishments.

*[3:197] They only enjoy temporarily, then end up in Hell; what a miserable destiny!*

*[3:198] As for those who observe their Lord, they have deserved gardens with flowing streams; they abide therein forever. Such is the abode given to them by GOD. What GOD possesses is far better for the righteous.*

# SURA 4: THE WOMEN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The Arabic name of this chapter is ‘An-Nisa’, meaning, you guessed it, ‘The Women’.

This sura is the third longest of the Koran, containing a total of one hundred and seventy six verses, and is considered to be another of the Medinan inspired revelations.

As the title of the sura suggests, this revelation deals mostly with matters relating to women and their rights and obligations i.e. clothing, marriage, and family matters. Of particular interest is Muhammad’s recommendation for dealing with “rebellious women”.

Written between the third and fifth year after the hajj to Medina, we do know that a vast majority of it was penned following the battle of Uhd. It was here that Muhammad lost sixty of his men, and the question arose as to what should happen to their inheritance of these martyrs and the rights of the orphans left behind. This discourse relates specifically to the first twenty-eight verses.

As always, the only way to properly understand the Koran is to be aware of the social, military, and political terrain that Muhammad faced at the time of his revelations. If you understand that, then you understand why he said the things he said.

Muhammad’s chief concern was to bring the Medina community, now called the Muslims, into social, moral, and economic order. Standing in the way of his objectives was opposition from the Jewish clans, who were now openly denouncing Muhammad as a false prophet, despite his efforts to convince them otherwise. Further, small numbers of Muslims began to convert back to their pagan beliefs. So when we put all of that into the mix, you can see the pressures Muhammad faced when he spoke.

## **VERSES 1 – 35**

As the Muslims were in a state of perpetual war, Muhammad provides instructions for the distribution of inheritance, the rights of orphans, the marriage of war widows, laws of marriage, and advice for maintaining a happy household.

*[4:2] You shall hand over to the orphans their rightful properties. Do not substitute the bad for the good, and do not consume their properties by combining them with yours. This would be a gross injustice.*

*[4:7] The men get a share of what the parents and the relatives leave behind. The women too shall get a share of what the parents and relatives leave behind. Whether it is a small or a large inheritance, (the women must get) a definite share.*

*[4:8] During distribution of the inheritances, if relatives, orphans, and needy persons are present, you shall give them there from, and treat them kindly.*

*[4:12] You get half of what your wives leave behind, if they had no children. If they had children, you get one-fourth of what they leave. All this, after fulfilling any will they had left, and after paying off all debts. They get one-fourth of what you leave behind, if you had no children. If you had children, they get one-eighth of what you bequeath. All this,*

*after fulfilling any will you had left, and after paying off all debts. If the deceased man or woman was a loner, and leaves two siblings, male or female, each of them gets one-sixth of the inheritance. If there are more siblings, then they equally share one-third of the inheritance. All this, after fulfilling any will, and after paying off all debts, so that no one is hurt. This is a will decreed by GOD. GOD is Omniscient, Clement.*

*[4:22] Do not marry the women who were previously married to your fathers - existing marriages are exempted and shall not be broken - for it is a gross offense, and an abominable act.*

*[4:23] Prohibited for you (in marriage) are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, the sisters of your fathers, the sisters of your mothers, the daughters of your brother, the daughters of your sister, your nursing mothers, the girls who nursed from the same woman as you, the mothers of your wives, the daughters of your wives with whom you have consummated the marriage - if the marriage has not been consummated, you may marry the daughter. Also prohibited for you are the women who were married to your genetic sons. Also, you shall not be married to two sisters at the same time - but do not break up existing marriages. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

When it comes to the treatment of women, opponents of Islam commonly cite this verse:

*[4:34] The men are made responsible for the women, and GOD has endowed them with certain qualities, and made them the bread earners. The righteous women will cheerfully accept this arrangement, since it is GOD's commandment, and honor their husbands during their absence. If you experience rebellion from the women, you shall first talk to them, then (you may use negative incentives like) deserting them in bed, then you may (as a last alternative) beat them. If they obey you, you are not permitted to transgress against them. GOD is Most High, Supreme.*

## **VERSES 36 – 42**

Muhammad passes on what he believes are lessons for living a good life, such as the importance of charity and generosity; and warns against the meanness of being overly frugal.

*[4:36] You shall worship GOD alone - do not associate anything with Him. You shall regard the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, the related neighbor, the unrelated neighbor, the close associate, the traveling alien, and your servants. GOD does not like the arrogant show-offs.*

## **VERSE 43**

This solitary verse deals with the offering of *salat*, meaning ritual prayer, which is of supreme importance for Muslims, as indicated by the fact that its status is included as one of the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and of the Ten Practices of the Shia denomination.

Salat is a ritual prayer with certain rules and obligations, and moreover, it's considered obligatory for all adult Muslims. To perform salat, Muslims must be in a state of ritual purity.

*[4:43] O you who believe, do not observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) while intoxicated,*

*so that you know what you are saying. Nor after sexual orgasm without bathing, unless you are on the road, traveling; if you are ill or traveling, or you had urinary or fecal-related excretion (such as gas), or contacted the women (sexually), and you cannot find water, you shall observe Tayammum (dry ablution) by touching clean dry soil, then wiping your faces and hands therewith. GOD is Pardonner, Forgiver.*

## **VERSES 44 – 57**

Muhammad further addresses the Jewish clans of Medina.

*[4:47] O you who received the scripture, you shall believe in what we reveal herein, confirming what you have, before we banish certain faces to exile, or condemn them as we condemned those who desecrated the Sabbath. GOD's command is done.*

*[4:56] Surely, those who disbelieve in our revelations, we will condemn them to the hellfire. Whenever their skins are burnt, we will give them new skins. Thus, they will suffer continuously. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.*

*[4:57] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, we will admit them into gardens with flowing streams; they abide therein forever. They will have pure spouses therein. We will admit them into a blissful shade.*

## **VERSES 58 – 72**

A reminder to Muslims they're now God's chosen people and it's vital they behave in such a manner.

*[4:69] Those who obey GOD and the messenger belong with those blessed by GOD - the prophets, the saints, the martyrs, and the righteous. These are the best company.*

## **VERSES 73 – 100**

Muhammad warns the Muslims about displaying cowardice or weakness of any kind. He makes the point that if you're fit and able, then there's no excuse for not fighting in the name of Islam. He also prohibits the killing of Muslims by fellow Muslims, and that martyrs will be rewarded in paradise.

*[4:74] Those who readily fight in the cause of GOD are those who forsake this world in favor of the Hereafter. Whoever fights in the cause of GOD, then gets killed, or attains victory, we will surely grant him a great recompense.*

*[4:75] Why should you not fight in the cause of GOD when weak men, women, and children are imploring: "Our Lord, deliver us from this community whose people are oppressive, and be You our Lord and Master."*

*[4:76] Those who believe are fighting for the cause of GOD, while those who disbelieve are fighting for the cause of tyranny. Therefore, you shall fight the devil's allies; the devil's power is nil.*

*[4:93] Anyone who kills a believer on purpose, his retribution is Hell, wherein he abides forever, GOD is angry with him, and condemns him, and has prepared for him a terrible retribution.*

*[4:94] O you who believe, if you strike in the cause of GOD, you shall be absolutely sure. Do not say to one who offers you peace, "You are not a believer," seeking the spoils of this world. For GOD possesses infinite spoils. Remember that you used to be like them, and GOD blessed you. Therefore, you shall be absolutely sure (before you strike). GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[4:95] Not equal are the sedentary among the believers who are not handicapped, and those who strive in the cause of GOD with their money and their lives. GOD exalts the strivers with their money and their lives above the sedentary. For both, GOD promises salvation, but GOD exalts the strivers over the sedentary with a great recompense.*

### **VERSES 101 – 103**

Muhammad discusses the importance of observing ritual prayer, salat, even on the battlefield. The point being that prayer is of double importance when faced with fear and/or danger.

*[4:102] When you are with them, and lead the Contact Prayer (Salat) for them, let some of you stand guard; let them hold their weapons, and let them stand behind you as you prostrate. Then, let the other group that has not prayed take their turn praying with you, while the others stand guard and hold their weapons. Those who disbelieved wish to see you neglect your weapons and your equipment, in order to attack you once and for all. You commit no error, if you are hampered by rain or injury, by putting down your weapons, so long as you remain alert. GOD has prepared for the disbelievers a shameful retribution.*

### **VERSE 104**

Be merciless with the enemy on the battlefield.

*[4:104] Do not waver in pursuing the enemy. If you suffer, they also suffer. However, you expect from GOD what they never expect. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.*

### **VERSES 105 – 135**

In these verses, Muhammad stresses the importance of maintaining justice. That justice is the vital thread in maintaining a strong and vibrant Islamic community.

*[4:135] O you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe GOD, when you serve as witnesses, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives. Whether the accused is rich or poor, GOD takes care of both. Therefore, do not be biased by your personal wishes. If you deviate or disregard (this commandment), then GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

## **VERSES 136 – 175**

Muhammad reminds Muslims to remain vigilant against the hypocrites and unbelievers. The hypocrites were those Muhammad accused of publicly declaring Islam but were unwilling to make sacrifices for it.

*[4:137] Surely, those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe, then disbelieve, then plunge deeper into disbelief, GOD will not forgive them, nor will He guide them in any way.*

*[4:138] Inform the hypocrites that they have incurred painful retribution.*

# SURA 5: THE FEAST

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The Arabic title of this chapter is 'Al-Maida', meaning "the table" or "the feast".

Containing one hundred and twenty verses, this sura was recited by Muhammad in Medina, somewhere between the sixth and seventh year after the migration. Surprisingly, the central topic of 'the Feast' is less to do with food or diet, and much to do with the respective missions of Jesus and Moses, as well as Muhammad's claim his message from God is being corrupted and distorted by non-believing Jews and Christians.

The introductory verses, however, concern themselves with Muhammad's return to Mecca, alongside 1500 of his Muslim brothers in AH 6. They had come not to make war, but to perform the 'Umrah' at the Kaaba. What is 'Umrah'? It is a ritual whereby Muslims, and pagans before them, would circle the Kaaba seven times in a counter-clockwise direction, while chanting their prayers. Muhammad encouraged his followers to perform this at least one time every year, although not compulsory.

The Quraysh learned of Muhammad's approaching and sent out a patrol to attack him on the outskirts of Mecca. Muhammad took evasion in a neighboring town, and in the days that followed, they offered Muhammad a peace treaty, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which allowed him to return to perform the Umrah in the following year.

Significantly, the Muslims were now in their sixth year of establishing themselves as an Arab society. They had successfully constructed mosques in several villages outside of their home in Medina, and their dress and behavior made them immediately identifiable as Muslims. Moreover, Islamic law was in full swing and Muhammad's successes, socially and militarily, were being trumpeted throughout the land. Moreover, the Treaty of Hudaibiyah signaled an end to the constant skirmishing with the people of Mecca. This political breakthrough allowed Muhammad to spread his message and increase the rate of Islamic conversion at unprecedented rates.

## **VERSES 1 – 10**

Muhammad makes it clear that Muslims must be totally obedient in following all of God's laws (Mosaic law) regarding prayer, diet, sex, and justice.

*[5:3] Prohibited for you are animals that die of themselves, blood, the meat of pigs, and animals dedicated to other than GOD. (Animals that die of themselves include those) strangled, struck with an object, fallen from a height, gored, attacked by a wild animal - unless you save your animal before it dies - and animals sacrificed on altars. Also prohibited is dividing the meat through a game of chance; this is an abomination. Today, the disbelievers have given up concerning (the eradication of) your religion; do not fear them and fear Me instead. Today, I have completed your religion, perfected My blessing upon you, and I have decreed Submission as the religion for you. If one is forced by famine (to eat prohibited food), without being deliberately sinful, then GOD is Forgiver, Merciful.*

*[5:4] They consult you concerning what is lawful for them; say, “Lawful for you are all good things, including what trained dogs and falcons catch for you.” You train them according to GOD’s teachings. You may eat what they catch for you, and mention GOD’s name thereupon. You shall observe GOD. GOD is most efficient in reckoning.*

*[5:5] Today, all good food is made lawful for you. The food of the people of the scripture is lawful for you, [and your food is lawful for them]\*. Also, you may marry the chaste women among the believers, as well as the chaste women among the followers of previous scripture, provided you pay them their due dowries. You shall maintain chastity, not committing adultery, nor taking secret lovers. Anyone who rejects faith, all his work will be in vain, and in the Hereafter he will be with the losers.*

## **VERSES 11 – 26**

Muhammad warns the Muslims they must not follow the wrongdoings of their predecessors, the Jews and Christians. In learning from their mistakes, the Muslims will advance their rewards in God’s kingdom.

It is here Muhammad implores the Arab Jews and Christians to give up their ways and to embrace Islam as the one true faith.

*[5:14] Also from those who said, “We are Christian,” we took their covenant. But they disregarded some of the commandments given to them. Consequently, we condemned them to animosity and hatred among themselves, until the Day of Resurrection. GOD will then inform them of everything they had done.*

*[5:15] O people of the scripture, our messenger has come to you to proclaim for you many things you have concealed in the scripture, and to pardon many other transgressions you have committed. A beacon has come to you from GOD, and a profound scripture.*

*[5:19] O people of the scripture, our messenger has come to you, to explain things to you, after a period of time without messengers, lest you say, “We did not receive any preacher or warner.” A preacher and warner has now come to you. GOD is Omnipotent.*

## **VERSES 27 – 32**

Muhammad uses the story of Cain and Abel as a metaphor for the Medinan Jews’ plot to kill him.

*[5:27] Recite for them the true history of Adam’s two sons. They made an offering, and it was accepted from one of them, but not from the other. He said, “I will surely kill you.” He said, “GOD accepts only from the righteous.*

*[5:28] “If you extend your hand to kill me, I am not extending my hand to kill you. For I reverence GOD, Lord of the universe.*

## **VERSES 33 – 40**

Here Muhammad prescribes punishments for those who wage war against the Muslims. Believers are urged to remain vigilant against those who transgress.

*[5:33] The just retribution for those who fight GOD and His messenger, and commit horrendous crimes, is to be killed, or crucified, or to have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides, or to be banished from the land. This is to humiliate them in this life, then they suffer a far worse retribution in the Hereafter.*

*[5:37] They will want to exit Hell, but alas, they can never exit there from; their retribution is eternal.*

## **VERSES 41 – 50**

Further chastisement for the Arab Jews and Christians, who Muhammad believes deviated from their respective Torah and Gospels. Muhammad urges Muslims to deal with the people of these faiths, as God would i.e. punish them.

*[5:41] O you messenger, do not be saddened by those who hasten to disbelieve among those who say, “We believe,” with their mouths, while their hearts do not believe. Among the Jews, some listened to lies. They listened to people who never met you, and who distorted the words out of context, then said, “If you are given this, accept it, but if you are given anything different, beware.” Whomever GOD wills to divert, you can do nothing to help him against GOD. GOD does not wish to cleanse their hearts. They have incurred humiliation in this world, and in the Hereafter, they will suffer a terrible retribution.*

## **VERSES 51 – 69**

Muhammad urges Muslims not to make alliances with anyone other than fellow Muslims. He warns Muslims that the unbelievers and the people of other faiths will try to corrupt their beliefs, and lead them away from the righteous path.

*[5:51] O you who believe, do not take certain Jews and Christians as allies; these are allies of one another. Those among you who ally themselves with these belong with them. GOD does not guide the transgressors.*

*[5:55] Your real allies are GOD and His messenger, and the believers who observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they bow down.*

*[5:66] If only they would uphold the Torah and the Gospel, and what is sent down to them herein from their Lord, they would be showered with blessings from above them and from beneath their feet. Some of them are righteous, but many of them are evildoers.*

## **VERSES 70 – 86**

Muhammad claims Christians have misinterpreted Jesus’ message and turned him into a god. Muhammad believed Jesus was merely a prophet.

*[5:73] Pagans indeed are those who say that GOD is a third of a trinity. There is no god*

*except the one god. Unless they refrain from saying this, those who disbelieve among them will incur a painful retribution.*

*[5:75] The Messiah, son of Mary, is no more than a messenger like the messengers before him, and his mother was a saint. Both of them used to eat the food. Note how we explain the revelations for them, and note how they still deviate!*

## **VERSES 87 – 108**

Muhammad describes further laws and regulations regarding vices and temptations.

*[5:90] O you who believe, intoxicants, and gambling, and the altars of idols, and the games of chance are abominations of the devil; you shall avoid them, that you may succeed.*

*[5:93] Those who believe and lead a righteous life bear no guilt by eating any food, so long as they observe the commandments, believe and lead a righteous life, then maintain their piety and faith, and continue to observe piety and righteousness. GOD loves the righteous.*

## **VERSES 109 -119**

Muhammad foretells of a future conversation that will occur between him, the other Apostles, and God on Judgment Day. Its purpose is to warn Muslims against losing their faith or their morality.

*[5:109] The day will come when GOD will summon the messengers and ask them, “How was the response to you?” They will say, “We have no knowledge. You are the Knower of all secrets.”*

*[5:119] GOD will proclaim, “This is a day when the truthful will be saved by their truthfulness.” They have deserved gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. This is the greatest triumph.*

# SURA 6: THE CATTLE

*In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

“The Cattle”, or as it’s translated in Arabic, “An-’am”, was recited by Muhammad in Mecca. In fact, this is the first of the suras to be recited. Containing one hundred and sixty five verses, it is named as such with the purpose of mocking the pagans for their animal sacrifices.

It was too early for the prophet to foresee how successful his mission would ultimately become, and it was during these early years opposition became most active against his claims. In fact, opposition against Muslims in Mecca became so violent and untenable that dozens fled to Abyssinia and then later to Medina.

The main topics dealt within this sura include the reward-punishment model for the afterlife; how to overcome objections of those who mock Islam; and warnings to the unbelievers.

## VERSES 1 – 12

Muhammad opens with a barrage of warnings against all those who continue to doubt his authenticity and mission. He warns unbelievers, Christians and Jews to either submit to Islam or face the same fiery damnation as the atheists and pagans.

*[6:4] No matter what kind of proof comes to them from their Lord, they turn away from it, in aversion.*

*[6:5] Since they rejected the truth when it came to them, they have incurred the consequences of their heedlessness.*

*[6:6] Have they not seen how many generations before them we have annihilated? We established them on earth more than we did for you, and we showered them with blessings, generously, and we provided them with flowing streams. We then annihilated them because of their sins, and we substituted another generation in their place.*

## VERSES 13 - 24

These verses deal with refuting claims made against Muhammad.

*[6:14] Say, “Shall I accept other than GOD as a Lord and Master, when He is the Initiator of the heavens and the earth, and He feeds but is not fed?” Say, “I am commanded to be the most devoted submitter, and, ‘Do not be an idol worshiper.’”*

*[6:19] Say, “Whose testimony is the greatest?” Say, “GOD’s. He is the witness between me and you that this Quran has been inspired to me, to preach it to you and whomever it reaches. Indeed, you bear witness that there are other gods beside GOD.” Say, “I do not testify as you do; there is only one god, and I disown your idolatry.”*

*[6:20] Those to whom we have given the scripture recognize this as they recognize their own children. The ones who lose their souls are those who do not believe.*

## VERSES 25 – 32

Muhammad describes what Hell will be like for those who continue to reject him.

*[6:26] They repel others from this (Quran), as they themselves stay away from it, and thus, they only destroy themselves without perceiving.*

*[6:27] If only you could see them when they face the hellfire! They would say then, “Woe to us. Oh, we wish we could go back, and never reject our Lord’s revelations, and join the believers.”*

## VERSES 33 - 73

Muhammad’s mission is the main theme of these verses. Why he is here. What he hopes to achieve, and the limitations of his powers.

*[6:34] Messengers before you have been rejected, and they steadfastly persevered in the face of rejection. They were persecuted until our victory came to them. Such is GOD’s system that will never change. The history of My messengers thus sets the precedents for you.*

*[6:42] We have sent (messengers) to communities before you, and we put them to the test through adversity and hardship, that they may implore.*

*[6:48] We do not send the messengers except as deliverers of good news, as well as warners. Those who believe and reform have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.*

*[6:50] Say, “I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of GOD. Nor do I know the future. Nor do I say to you that I am an angel. I simply follow what is revealed to me.” Say, “Is the blind the same as the seer? Do you not reflect?”*

*[6:57] Say, “I have solid proof from my Lord, and you have rejected it. I do not control the retribution you challenge me to bring. Judgment belongs with GOD alone. He narrates the truth, and He is the best judge.”*

## VERSES 74 – 90

In the preceding verses, Muhammad has articulated his role. In the following verses, he compares himself to Abraham, as means of appealing to Arabs, who believed they were descendents of.

*[6:74] Recall that Abraham said to his father Azar, “How could you worship statues as gods? I see that you and your people have gone far astray.”*

*[6:79] “I have devoted myself absolutely to the One who initiated the heavens and the earth; I will never be an idol worshiper.”*

*[6:84] And we granted him Isaac and Jacob, and we guided both of them. Similarly, we guided Noah before that, and from his descendants (we guided) David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. We thus reward the righteous.*

*[6:89] Those were the ones to whom we have given the scripture, wisdom, and prophethood. If these people disbelieve, we will substitute others in their place, and the new people will not be disbelievers.*

*[6:90] These are the ones guided by GOD; you shall be guided in their footsteps. Say, "I do not ask you for any wage. This is but a message for all the people."*

## **VERSES 91 – 157**

Further verses relating to Muhammad's claim of prophethood, and the validity of the Koran.

*[6:91] They never valued GOD as He should be valued. Thus, they said, "GOD does not reveal anything to any human being." Say, "Who then revealed the scripture that Moses brought, with light and guidance for the people?" You put it down on paper to proclaim it, while concealing a lot of it. You were taught what you never knew - you and your parents. Say, "GOD (is the One who revealed it)," then leave them in their heedlessness, playing.*

*[6:92] This too is a blessed scripture that we have revealed, confirming the previous scriptures, that you may warn the most important community and all those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter will believe in this (scripture), and will observe the Contact Prayers (Salat).*

*[6:154] And we gave Moses the scripture, complete with the best commandments, and detailing everything, and a beacon and mercy, that they may believe in meeting their Lord.*

*[6:155] This too is a blessed scripture that we have revealed; you shall follow it and lead a righteous life, that you may attain mercy.*

*[6:156] Now you can no longer say, "The scripture was sent down to two groups before us, and we were unaware of their teachings."*

# SURA 7: THE HEIGHTS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited in Mecca, this sura includes two hundred and six verses. “The Heights” translates as Al-A’raf in Arabic. What, who, or where is A’raf? Well, it’s somewhat like the Christian theology’s purgatory. It’s a place between Heaven and Hell, a mythical fortress or prison that forms as a waiting place on Judgment Day. It is from A’raf the good guys are sent to the gardens of Paradise, and the infidel and sinners are sent to the fires of Hell.

Primarily, this sura is an address to the nay saying Meccans who continued to reject him and his religion. He warns the Meccans that should they continue to disprove of Islam, and in doing so, rejecting God, then wrath would surely fall upon them. Muhammad also warns the Jews it’s high time they accept him as the equal of Moses. He foretells that Islam’s growth in Arabia will become a source of conflict for them and they now have a final opportunity to accept his prophethood, or face later consequences. Moreover, he again reminds the Jews that they’ve strayed from Moses’ message and laws, and if they don’t get in step, then the “fiery abode” awaits.

Other important matters addressed within include sins such as heresy, cheating, and homosexuality.

## **VERSES 1 – 10**

The opening verses are an invitation from Muhammad to all believers and nonbelievers to either accept him and his message or face the consequences in the afterlife.

*[7:3] You shall all follow what is revealed to you from your Lord; do not follow any idols besides Him. Rarely do you take heed.*

*[7:4] Many a community we annihilated; they incurred our retribution while they were asleep, or wide-awake.*

## **VERSES 11 – 25**

Using the downfall of Adam as an analogy, Muhammad warns his followers that the dark force, Satan, waits with tempting vices on every street corner.

*[7:11] We created you, then we shaped you, then we said to the angels, “Fall prostrate before Adam.” They fell prostrate, except Iblees (Satan); he was not with the prostrators*

*[7:22] He thus duped them with lies. As soon as they tasted the tree, their bodies became visible to them, and they tried to cover themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Their Lord called upon them: “Did I not enjoin you from that tree, and warn you that the devil is your most ardent enemy?”*

## **VERSES 26 – 53**

Muhammad conveys that there are two choices one can make, either follow the temptations of Satan, or adhere to God's instructions contained within the Koran, and the reward/punishment model that ensues.

*[7:29] Say, "My Lord advocates justice, and to stand devoted to Him alone at every place of worship. You shall devote your worship absolutely to Him alone. Just as He initiated you, you will ultimately go back to Him."*

*[7:30] Some He guided, while others are committed to straying. They have taken the devils as their masters, instead of GOD, yet they believe that they are guided.*

*[7:40] Surely, those who reject our revelations and are too arrogant to uphold them, the gates of the sky will never open for them, nor will they enter Paradise until the camel passes through the needle's eye. We thus requite the guilty.*

*[7:41] They have incurred Hell as an abode; they will have barriers above them. We thus requite the transgressors.*

## **VERSES 54 – 58**

Muhammad reminds all that the Koran is God's guidance, and because God is the giver of life, his laws should be strictly obeyed.

*[7:53] Are they waiting until all (prophecies) are fulfilled? The day such fulfillment comes to pass, those who disregarded it in the past will say, "The messengers of our Lord have brought the truth. Are there any intercessors to intercede on our behalf? Would you send us back, so that we change our behavior, and do better works than what we did?" They have lost their souls, and their own innovations have caused their doom.*

*[7:54] Your Lord is the one GOD, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. The night overtakes the day, as it pursues it persistently, and the sun, the moon, and the stars are committed to serve by His command. Absolutely, He controls all creation and all commands. Most Exalted is GOD, Lord of the universe.*

## **VERSES 59 – 102**

Muhammad articulates the greatness of God and warns the Meccans for their false worship of idol gods, using the fallen biblical cities as examples. He also specifies further laws for his Muslims.

*[7:75] The arrogant leaders among his people said to the common people who believed, "How do you know that Saaleh is sent by his Lord?" They said, "The message he brought has made us believers."*

*[7:76] The arrogant ones said, "We disbelieve in what you believe in."*

*[7:77] Subsequently, they slaughtered the camel, rebelled against their Lord's command, and said, "O Saaleh, bring the doom you threaten us with, if you are really a messenger."*

*[7:78] Consequently, the quake annihilated them, leaving them dead in their homes.*

*[7:80] Lot said to his people, “You commit such an abomination; no one in the world has done it before!*

*[7:81] “You practice sex with the men, instead of the women. Indeed, you are a transgressing people.”*

*[7:82] His people responded by saying, “Evict them from your town. They are people who wish to be pure.”*

*[7:83] Consequently, we saved him and his family, but not his wife; she was with the doomed.*

*[7:84] We showered them with a certain shower; note the consequences for the guilty.*

## **VERSES 103 – 174**

Muhammad tells the Muslims the story of Moses and how God punished the Egyptians for failing to heed his message.

*[7:103] After (those messengers,) we sent Moses with our signs to Pharaoh and his people, but they transgressed. Note the consequences for the wicked.*

*[7:104] Moses said, “O Pharaoh, I am a messenger from the Lord of the universe.*

*[7:105] “It is incumbent upon me that I do not say about GOD except the truth. I come to you with a sign from your Lord; let the Children of Israel go.”*

*[7:106] He said, “If you have a sign, then produce it, if you are truthful.”*

*[7:107] He threw down his staff, and it turned into a tremendous serpent.*

*[7:127] The leaders among Pharaoh’s people said, “Will you allow Moses and his people to corrupt the earth, and forsake you and your gods?” He said, “We will kill their sons, and spare their daughters. We are much more powerful than they are.”*

*[7:128] Moses said to his people, “Seek GOD’s help, and steadfastly persevere. The earth belongs to GOD, and He grants it to whomever He chooses from among His servants. The ultimate victory belongs to the righteous.”*

*[7:129] They said, “We were persecuted before you came to us, and after you came to us.” He said, “Your Lord will annihilate your enemy and establish you on earth, then He will see how you behave.”*

*[7:130] We then afflicted Pharaoh’s people with drought, and shortage of crops, that they may take heed.*

*[7:132] They said, “No matter what kind of sign you show us, to dupe us with your magic, we will not believe.”*

*[7:133] Consequently, we sent upon them the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood - profound signs. But they maintained their arrogance. They were evil people.*

## **VERSES 175 – 198**

Muhammad warns Hell awaits those who hear or read the words of the Koran, only to reject its authority later.

*[7:176] Had we willed, we could have elevated him therewith, but he insisted on sticking to the ground, and pursued his own opinions. Thus, he is like the dog; whether you pet him or scold him, he pants. Such is the example of people who reject our proofs. Narrate these narrations, that they may reflect.*

*[7:177] Bad indeed is the example of people who reject our proofs; it is only their own souls that they wrong.*

*[7:178] Whomever GOD guides is the truly guided one, and whomever He commits to straying, these are the losers.*

*[7:181] Among our creations, there are those who guide with the truth, and the truth renders them righteous.*

*[7:182] As for those who reject our revelations, we lead them on without them ever realizing it.*

## **VERSES 199 – 206**

How Muslims should treat those who reject the teachings and guidance passed from God to Muhammad.

*[7:199] You shall resort to pardon, advocate tolerance, and disregard the ignorant.*

*[7:202] Their brethren ceaselessly entice them to go astray.*

*[7:203] If you do not produce a miracle that they demand, they say, “Why not ask for it?” Say, “I simply follow what is revealed to me from my Lord.” These are enlightenments from your Lord, and guidance, and mercy for people who believe.*

# SURA 8: THE SPOILS OF WAR

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Containing seventy-five verses, “Al-Anfal” (“The Spoils of War”) was recited by Muhammad in Medina shortly after the Battle of Badr.

In the introductory chapters of this book, we discussed how victory at Badr provided Muhammad’s leadership of Medina with a certain amount of legitimacy. Thus, this sura serves as somewhat of a boast that God had raised up Muhammad glorious in battle and that Allah was truly on the side of the Muslims. Surely, victory over the very people who had laughed him out of Mecca in his early days must have come like sweet summer rain to Muhammad, and it is evident in these verses.

The Battle of Badr was waged between Muhammad’s chief protagonists, the Quraysh of Mecca, and the prophet’s army on March 13, 624. Until that time, battles between the Muslims and the Meccans had been confined to the odd skirmish here and there. Badr was the first time the two sides met in a large-scale engagement.

Despite the comparative wealth of Mecca and its superior military might, Muhammad’s season caravan stalkers and renegades broke the Meccan defensive lines, killed or captured their top lieutenants, resulting in a Meccan retreat in a little more than a few hours after hostilities began.

Word spread throughout Arabia that an irresistible force had arrived, and a steady flow of conversions to Islam began. Having said that, we must take into consideration that at the time of this sura’s writing, Islam was still in its infancy. Yes, peoples throughout Arabia were beginning to hear of Muhammad’s Muslims in Medina, but they had not yet established themselves as a cultural phenomenon at this stage. In other words, Muslims were yet to be identifiable by their clothing, nor by their cultural, social, and political practices. Further, they were continually mocked and taunted by the Meccans, who believed they were militarily and socially superior to the Muslims of Medina. One Islamic scholar said that prior to the Battle of Badr, Islam was merely a religion and a state, but after the battle it came became the state religion, then later the state itself.

## **VERSES 1 – 41**

Shortly after securing the Meccan’s loot and prisoners, Muhammad declares these to be not the “Spoils of War”, but rather as the “Bounties of Allah.” Of significant importance is the fact that Muhammad believes that the purpose of war is not so much as to procure treasures and physical assets, but as a means of eliminating opposition to the establishment and spread of Islam.

Interestingly, Muhammad then says that the “Bounties of God” seized in battle belong to God and his messenger i.e. him, and that he alone should be the sole executor of the treasures.

*[8:1] They consult you about the spoils of war. Say, “The spoils of war belong to GOD and the messenger.” You shall observe GOD, exhort one another to be righteous, and obey GOD and His messenger, if you are believers.*

*[8:7] Recall that GOD promised you victory over a certain group, but you still wanted to face the weaker group. It was GOD's plan to establish the truth with His words, and to defeat the disbelievers.*

*[8:8] For He has decreed that the truth shall prevail, and the falsehood shall vanish, in spite of the evildoers.*

*[8:9] Thus, when you implored your Lord to come to the rescue, He responded to you: "I am supporting you with one thousand angels in succession."*

*[8:13] This is what they have justly incurred by fighting GOD and His messenger. For those who fight against GOD and His messenger, GOD's retribution is severe.*

*[8:14] This is to punish the disbelievers; they have incurred the retribution of Hell.*

*[8:17] It was not you who killed them; GOD is the One who killed them. It was not you who threw when you threw; GOD is the One who threw. But He thus gives the believers a chance to earn a lot of credit. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.*

*[8:30] The disbelievers plot and scheme to neutralize you, or kill you, or banish you. However, they plot and scheme, but so does GOD. GOD is the best schemer.*

*[8:41] You should know that if you gain any spoils in war, one-fifth shall go to GOD and the messenger, to be given to the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien. You will do this if you believe in GOD and in what we revealed to our servant on the day of decision, the day the two armies clashed. GOD is Omnipotent.*

## **VERSES 42 – 54**

Muhammad believes the Battle of Badr was schemed by God to prove to the Muslims that he is on their side. Muhammad writes that Satan is all around but belief and servitude to God will protect the believers at all times.

*[8:42] Recall that you were on this side of the valley, while they were on the other side. Then their caravan had to move to lower ground. Had you planned it this way, you could not have done it. But GOD was to carry out a predetermined matter, whereby those destined to be annihilated were annihilated for an obvious reason, and those destined to be saved were saved for an obvious reason. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.*

*[8:46] You shall obey GOD and His messenger, and do not dispute among yourselves, lest you fail and scatter your strength. You shall steadfastly persevere. GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.*

*[8:50] If you could only see those who disbelieved when the angels put them to death! They will beat them on their faces and their rear ends: "Taste the retribution of Hell.*

## **VERSES 55 – 59**

Muhammad declares that all treaties, or military coalitions formed with foreign or outside

forces, should be honored. If the other party breaks the treaty, however, then they're to be dealt with mercilessly.

*[8:55] The worst creatures in the sight of GOD are those who disbelieved; they cannot believe.*

*[8:56] You reach agreements with them, but they violate their agreements every time; they are not righteous.*

*[8:57] Therefore, if you encounter them in war, you shall set them up as a deterrent example for those who come after them, that they may take heed.*

## **VERSES 60 – 66**

Muhammad declares Muslims should always be ready and prepared for war.

*[8:60] You shall prepare for them all the power you can muster, and all the equipment you can mobilize, that you may frighten the enemies of GOD, your enemies, as well as others who are not known to you; GOD knows them. Whatever you spend in the cause of GOD will be repaid to you generously, without the least injustice.*

*[8:65] O you prophet, you shall exhort the believers to fight. If there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they can defeat two hundred, and a hundred of you can defeat a thousand of those who disbelieved. That is because they are people who do not understand.*

## **VERSES 67 – 71**

Muhammad gives instructions for dealing with captured enemy combatants.

*[8:67] No prophet shall acquire captives, unless he participates in the fighting. You people are seeking the materials of this world, while GOD advocates the Hereafter. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.*

*[8:68] If it were not for a predetermined decree from GOD, you would have suffered, on account of what you took, a terrible retribution.*

*[8:69] Therefore, eat from the spoils you have earned, that which is lawful and good, and observe GOD. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

## **VERSES 72 – 75**

Muhammad stresses the importance of Muslims standing side-by-side one another, no matter who the enemy.

*[8:72] Surely, those who believed, and emigrated, and strove with their money and their lives in the cause of GOD, as well as those who hosted them and gave them refuge, and supported them, they are allies of one another. As for those who believe, but do not emigrate with you, you do not owe them any support, until they do emigrate. However, if they need your help, as brethren in faith, you shall help them, except against people with*

*whom you have signed a peace treaty. GOD is Seer of everything you do.*

*[8:73] Those who disbelieved are allies of one another. Unless you keep these commandments, there will be chaos on earth, and terrible corruption.*

*[8:74] Those who believed and emigrated, and strove in the cause of GOD, as well as those who hosted them and gave them refuge, and supported them, these are the true believers. They have deserved forgiveness and a generous recompense.*

# SURA 9: THE REPENTENCE

Containing one hundred and twenty nine verses, “The Repentance” was recited not long after the peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah. While the peace treaty had enabled Muhammad to propagate his religion unimpeded, he still had his detractors who were waiting for an opportunity to destroy the fledgling faith.

Islam’s growth brought on a new enemy, however. The Christians living at the southern edges of the Roman Empire, adjacent to Syria, began to hanker for a showdown, as a way of testing who had the one true faith. A Christian terrorist group ratcheted up tensions by killing an Islamic delegation of 15 members in a town called Zat-u-Talah. Word of this atrocity reached Muhammad, and he assembled an army of 30,000 soldiers to exact merciless vengeance. Now, depending on whom you believe, Islamic scholars maintain that the Roman Caesar, upon learning of Muhammad mobilizing his forces against Roman citizens, prepared to deploy a massive force of his own, now known as the Campaign of Tabuk.

As you can imagine, the stakes were extraordinarily high. Should the Romans annihilate 30,000 Muslims, which surely they had the capability to do, then Islam would’ve imploded, and Muhammad’s detractors would’ve seized this as evidence he was not who he claimed to be, a prophet from God. Should he defeat the Romans, however, his allure and prestige would’ve been elevated to divine levels not yet seen. Naturally, the enemies of Muhammad plotted to supply the Christian clans and tribes with military arsenal, while those loyal and sympathetic to Muhammad, did what they could to assist him with his preparations. No one was left on the sideline; this was shaping to be another defining moment for Islam.

The definitive battle was to take place in Tabuk. But when Muhammad’s army arrived for battle, Caesar’s army never showed. Not surprisingly, Muhammad trumpeted this as a great moral victory. He had defeated the great Roman Empire without shedding a drop of blood. We may never know why the Romans never showed, or whether or not they had any plans of tackling an Arab revolutionary who posed no threat to their commerce or trade in the first place, but what we do know is this: The Campaign of Tabuk further elevated Muhammad’s status and Islam’s claim as the one true religion throughout Arabia.

## VERSES 1 – 12

Muhammad outlines the sanctity of treaties established with non-Muslim tribes, while articulating justifications for breaking them.

*[9:1] An ultimatum is herein issued from GOD and His messenger to the idol worshipers who enter into a treaty with you.*

*[9:4] If the idol worshipers sign a peace treaty with you, and do not violate it, nor band together with others against you, you shall fulfill your treaty with them until the expiration date. GOD loves the righteous.*

*[9:5] Once the Sacred Months are past, (and they refuse to make peace) you may kill the idol worshipers when you encounter them, punish them, and resist every move they make. If they repent and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity*

*(Zakat), you shall let them go. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[9:6] If one of the idol worshipers sought safe passage with you, you shall grant him safe passage, so that he can hear the word of GOD, then send him back to his place of security. That is because they are people who do not know.*

## **VERSES 13 – 37**

Muhammad urges Muslims to accept the necessity of waging war for God. It is their highest religious duty and excuses for not fighting are not accepted. In particular, Muhammad warns Jews and Christians who seek to undermine Islam.

*[9:13] Would you not fight people who violated their treaties, tried to banish the messenger, and they are the ones who started the war in the first place? Are you afraid of them? GOD is the One you are supposed to fear, if you are believers.*

*[9:14] You shall fight them, for GOD will punish them at your hands, humiliate them, grant you victory over them, and cool the chests of the believers.*

*[9:20] Those who believe, and emigrate, and strive in the cause of GOD with their money and their lives, are far greater in rank in the sight of GOD. These are the winners.*

*[9:29] You shall fight back against those who do not believe in GOD, nor in the Last Day, nor do they prohibit what GOD and His messenger have prohibited, nor do they abide by the religion of truth - among those who received the scripture - until they pay the due tax, willingly or unwillingly.*

*[9:30] The Jews said, “Ezra is the son of GOD,” while the Christians said, “Jesus is the son of GOD!” These are blasphemies uttered by their mouths. They thus match the blasphemies of those who have disbelieved in the past. GOD condemns them. They have surely deviated.*

## **VERSES 38 – 72**

Muhammad makes it explicitly clear that only those Muslims who actively take part in war against non-believers and hypocrites will inherit the rewards in paradise. Muhammad implores believers that there are no excuses for refusing to take part in jihad against those who threaten Islam’s hegemony and existence.

*[9:41] You shall readily mobilize, light or heavy, and strive with your money and your lives in the cause of GOD. This is better for you, if you only knew.*

*[9:44] Those who truly believe in GOD and the Last Day do not ask your permission to evade the opportunity to strive with their money and their lives. GOD is fully aware of the righteous.*

*[9:45] The only people who wish to be excused are those who do not really believe in GOD and the Last Day. Their hearts are full of doubt, and their doubts cause them to waver.*

*[9:66] Do not apologize. You have disbelieved after having believed. If we pardon some of you, we will punish others among you, as a consequence of their wickedness.*

*[9:68] GOD promises the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women, as well as the disbelievers, the fire of Hell, wherein they abide forever. It suffices them. GOD has condemned them; they have incurred an everlasting retribution.*

## **VERSES 73 – 90**

Muhammad addresses the hypocrites (those Muslims in Medina who are Muslim in name only but secretly plot against him), and prescribes how they should be treated.

*[9:73] O you prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern in dealing with them. Their destiny is Hell; what a miserable abode!*

*[9:74] They swear by GOD that they never said it, although they have uttered the word of disbelief; they have disbelieved after becoming submitters. In fact, they gave up what they never had. They have rebelled even though GOD and His messenger have showered them with His grace and provisions. If they repent, it would be best for them. But if they turn away, GOD will commit them to painful retribution in this life and in the Hereafter. They will find no one on earth to be their lord and master.*

*[9:77] Consequently, He plagued them with hypocrisy in their hearts, till the day they meet Him. This is because they broke their promises to GOD, and because of their lying.*

*[9:84] You shall not observe the funeral prayer for any of them when he dies, nor shall you stand at his grave. They have disbelieved in GOD and His messenger, and died in a state of wickedness.*

## **VERSES 91 – 110**

In the following verses, Muhammad addresses those Muslims who chose not to join him on his campaign to Tabuk, or were unable to due to ill health. Obviously, those who elected to stay are dealt with severely.

*[9:91] Not to be blamed are those who are weak, or ill, or do not find anything to offer, so long as they remain devoted to GOD and His messenger. The righteous among them shall not be blamed. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[9:92] Also excused are those who come to you wishing to be included with you, but you tell them, “I do not have anything to carry you on.” They then turn back with tears in their eyes, genuinely saddened that they could not afford to contribute.*

*[9:93] The blame is on those who ask your permission to stay behind, even though they have no excuse. They have chosen to be with the sedentary. Consequently, GOD has sealed their hearts, and thus, they do not attain any knowledge.*

*[9:94] They apologize to you when you return to them (from battle). Say, “Do not apologize; we no longer trust you. GOD has informed us about you.” GOD will see your*

*works, and so will the messenger, then you will be returned to the Knower of all secrets and declarations, then He will inform you of everything you had done.*

*[9:95] They will swear by GOD to you, when you return to them, that you may disregard them. Do disregard them. They are polluted, and their destiny is Hell, as a requital for the sins they have earned.*

*[9:100] As for the early vanguards who immigrated (Muhajerin), and the supporters who gave them refuge (Ansar) and those who followed them in righteousness, GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. This is the greatest triumph.*

## **VERSES 111 – 118**

Muhammad salutes those who followed him to Tabuk.

*[9:112] They are the repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the meditators, the bowing and prostrating, the advocates of righteousness and forbidders of evil, and the keepers of GOD's laws. Give good news to such believers.*

*[9:117] GOD has redeemed the prophet, and the immigrants (Muhajireen) and the supporters who hosted them and gave them refuge (Ansar), who followed him during the difficult times. That is when the hearts of some of them almost wavered. But He has redeemed them, for He is Compassionate towards them, Most Merciful.*

*[9:118] Also (redeemed were) the three who stayed behind. The spacious earth became so straitened for them, that they almost gave up all hope for themselves. Finally, they realized that there was no escape from GOD, except to Him. He then redeemed them that they may repent. GOD is the Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

## **VERSES 119 – 129**

Muhammad provides general instructions to the Muslims with the purpose of offering better guidance.

*[9:120] Neither the dwellers of the city, nor the Arabs around them, shall seek to stay behind the messenger of GOD (when he mobilizes for war). Nor shall they give priority to their own affairs over supporting him. This is because they do not suffer any thirst, or any effort, or hunger in the cause of GOD, or take a single step that enrages the disbelievers, or inflict any hardship upon the enemy, without having it written down for them as a credit. GOD never fails to recompense those who work righteousness.*

*[9:122] When the believers mobilize, not all of them shall do so. A few from each group shall mobilize by devoting their time to studying the religion. Thus, they can pass the knowledge on to their people when they return, that they may remain religiously informed.*

# SURA 10: JONAH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Jonah, or “Yunus” in Arabic, was recited in Mecca and named after the biblical prophet Jonah. Muhammad viewed himself as an equal to the biblical prophets, and he draws comparisons between them and himself.

While the actual date of this recitation is unknown, it is widely accepted that Muhammad received this revelation during the final few years of his life, while in Mecca.

This sura includes all the usual proclamations of God’s might, fury, mercy, and wonder. Muhammad reminds Muslims that God created the heavens and the earth, and for this they owe their gratitude. More accurately, it reads as a very long invitation to obey God and in doing so; receive the just rewards in the afterlife.

## VERSES 1 – 71

Muhammad proclaims that the planets, animals, and vegetation are all signs of God’s power. The righteous accepts this and praise God for it, while the “companions of the fire” turn away from these signs. Muhammad also declares the Meccan religion (paganism) as a lie against God.

*[10:3] Your only Lord is GOD; the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. He controls all matters. There is no intercessor, except in accordance with His will. Such is GOD your Lord. You shall worship Him. Would you not take heed?*

*[10:4] To Him is your ultimate return, all of you. This is GOD’s truthful promise. He initiates the creation, then repeats it, in order to reward those who believe and lead a righteous life, equitably. As for those who disbelieve, they incur hellish drinks, and a painful retribution for their disbelieving.*

*[10:5] He is the One who rendered the sun radiant, and the moon a light, and He designed its phases that you may learn to count the years and to calculate. GOD did not create all this, except for a specific purpose. He explains the revelations for people who know.*

*[10:13] Many a generation we have annihilated before you when they transgressed. Their messengers went to them with clear proofs, but they refused to believe. We thus requite the guilty people.*

*[10:26] For the righteous, the reward will be multiplied manifold. Their faces will never experience any deprivation or shame. These are the dwellers of Paradise; they abide therein forever.*

*[10:27] As for those who earned sins, their requital is equivalent to their sin. Humiliation is their lot, and no one beside GOD can protect them. Their faces will seem overwhelmed by masses of dark night. They will be the dwellers of Hell; they abide therein forever.*

*[10:37] This Quran could not possibly be authored by other than GOD. It confirms all previous messages, and provides a fully detailed scripture. It is infallible, for it comes from the Lord of the universe.*

*[10:68] They said, "GOD has begotten a son!" Be He glorified. He is the Most Rich. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. You have no proof to support such a blasphemy. Are you saying about GOD what you do not know?*

*[10:69] Proclaim: "Those who fabricate lies about GOD will never succeed."*

## **VERSES 72 – 75**

Noah warned his people, and they ignored him.

*[10:71] Recite for them the history of Noah. He said to his people, "O my people, if you find my position and my reminding you of GOD's revelations too much for you, then I put my trust in GOD. You should get together with your leaders, agree on a final decision among yourselves, then let me know it without delay.*

*[10:72] "If you turn away, then I have not asked you for any wage. My wage comes from GOD. I have been commanded to be a submitter."*

*[10:73] They rejected him and, consequently, we saved him and those who joined him in the ark; we made them the inheritors. And we drowned those who rejected our revelations. Note the consequences; they have been warned.*

## **VERSES 76 – 109**

Moses warned his people, they ignored him.

*[10:75] Then we sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his group, with our proofs. But they turned arrogant; and were transgressing people.*

*[10:90] We delivered the Children of Israel across the sea. Pharaoh and his troops pursued them, aggressively and sinfully. When drowning became a reality for him, he said, "I believe that there is no god except the One in whom the Children of Israel have believed; I am a submitter."*

## **VERSE 100 – 110**

Muhammad warns the Meccans that on Judgment Day, God will ask him to testify against them, and he won't hesitate in assisting them to their eternal doom.

*[10:100] No soul can believe except in accordance with GOD's will. For He places a curse upon those who refuse to understand.*

*[10:103] We ultimately save our messengers and those who believe. It is our immutable law that we save the believers.*

*[10:104] Say, "O people, if you have any doubt regarding my religion, I do not worship what you worship beside GOD. I worship GOD alone; the One who will terminate your lives. I am commanded to be a believer."*

*[10:105] I was commanded: "Keep yourself devoted to the religion of monotheism; you shall not practice idol worship."*

# SURA 11: HUD

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

“The Hud” was recited in Mecca immediately after the previous sura (Jonah).

Containing one hundred and twenty three verses, much of the content is a series of stories concerning an array of prophets, and how it was they warned, respectively, the people of their time that God’s punishment would reign if they failed to fall into line.

So who is Hud? Well, Hud doesn’t feature in the Bible, but you can think of his story as an Arabic version of Noah’s. According to Muhammad, God sent Hud as diplomatic envoy to an Omani tribe somewhere between the third and fifth century. His message was simple: repent and submit to God or suffer the consequences of a “dreadful doom” that would surely follow. Like the story of Noah, God saved the believers, and the unbelievers were “accursed in the world”.

## VERSES 1 - 4

Muhammad outlines his concerns for the non-believing Meccans.

*[11:1] A.L.R. This is a scripture whose verses have been perfected, then elucidated. It comes from a Most Wise, Most Cognizant.*

*[11:2] Proclaiming: “You shall not worship except GOD. I come to you from Him as a warner, as well as a bearer of good news.*

*[11:3] “You shall seek your Lord’s forgiveness, then repent to Him. He will then bless you generously for a predetermined period, and bestow His grace upon those who deserve it. If you turn away, then I fear for you the retribution of an awesome day.”*

## VERSES 5 – 24

Muhammad outlines what he believes are the sins of the Meccans and why it is that they must repent. Further, he claims that in denying his revelations, they’re lying against God.

*[11:7] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days - and His (earthly) domain was completely covered with water - in order to test you, to distinguish those among you who work righteousness. Yet, when you say, “You will be resurrected after death,” those who disbelieve would say, “This is clearly witchcraft.”*

*[11:8] And if we delay the retribution they have incurred - for we reserve it for a specific community - they say, “What is keeping Him?” In fact, once it comes to them, nothing can stop it, and their mocking will come back to haunt them.*

*[11:18] Who are more evil than those who fabricate lies about GOD? They will be presented before their Lord, and the witnesses will say, “These are the ones who lied about their Lord. GOD’s condemnation has befallen the transgressors.”*

*[11:20] These will never escape, nor will they find any lords or masters to help them*

*against GOD. Retribution will be doubled for them. They have failed to hear, and they have failed to see.*

## **VERSES 25 – 48**

Similar to the previous sura, Muhammad repeats the story of Noah, who pleaded with his people to repent and accept God.

*[11:25] We sent Noah to his people, saying, “I come to you as a clear warner.*

*[11:26] “You shall not worship except GOD. I fear for you the retribution of a painful day.”*

*[11:27] The leaders who disbelieved among his people said, “We see that you are no more than a human being like us, and we see that the first people to follow you are the worst among us. We see that you do not possess any advantage over us. Indeed, we think you are liars.”*

## **VERSES 49 – 60**

Like the biblical prophets, Hud pleads with his people to cease living in sin and with injustice. The people ignore him and bad events follow, except for him. This again is a repeat of the previous sura.

*[11:50] To ‘Aad we sent their brother Hood. He said, “O my people, worship GOD; you have no other god besides Him. You are inventing.*

## **VERSES 61 - 68**

Similar to the stories of Noah and Hud, Saleh, acting on God’s orders, instructs the people of Thamud to repent their evil ways. The believers are saved, and the nonbelievers are extinguished by a “blast from heaven.”

*[11:61] To Thamoud we sent their brother Saaleh. He said, “O my people, worship GOD; you have no other god beside Him. He initiated you from the earth, then settled you in it. You shall seek His forgiveness, then repent to Him. My Lord is always near, responsive.”*

*[11:62] They said, “O Saaleh, you used to be popular among us before this. Are you enjoining us from worshipping what our parents are worshipping? We are full of doubt concerning everything you have told us.”*

*[11:66] When our judgment came, we saved Saaleh and those who believed with him by mercy from us, from the humiliation of that day. Your Lord is the Most Powerful, the Almighty.*

*[11:67] Those who transgressed were annihilated by the disaster, leaving them in their homes, dead.*

*[11:68] It was as if they never lived there. Indeed, Thamoud have rejected their Lord.*

*Absolutely, Thamoud have incurred their annihilation.*

## **VERSES 69 – 83**

It is within these passages that Muhammad confirms the biblical account of homosexuality being the crime of Lot's people. As in the Bible, Abraham pleads for the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to be spared but God denies the request for clemency. Instead, God sends two angels dressed as men, who are eventually raped, despite Lot offering his daughters to the Sodomite rapists.

*[11:77] When our messengers went to Lot, they were mistreated, and he was embarrassed by their presence. He said, "This is a difficult day."*

*[11:78] His people came rushing; they had grown accustomed to their sinful acts. He said, "O my people, it would be purer for you, if you take my daughters instead. You shall reverence GOD; do not embarrass me with my guests. Have you not one reasonable man among you?"*

*[11:79] They said, "You know well that we have no need for your daughters; you know exactly what we want."*

*[11:80] He said, "I wish I were strong enough, or had a powerful ally!"*

*[11:81] (The angels) said, "O Lot, we are your Lord's messengers, and these people cannot touch you. You shall leave with your family during the night, and let not anyone of you look back, except your wife; she is condemned along with those who are condemned. Their appointed time is the morning. Is not the morning soon enough?"*

*[11:82] When our judgment came, we turned it upside down, and we showered it with hard, devastating rocks.*

*[11:83] Such rocks were designated by your Lord to strike the transgressors.*

## **VERSES 84 – 95**

God sends Shu'aib to Midian with the same message of Hud, Noah, and Saleh i.e. believers are saved and the nonbelievers "were seized by a punishment from heaven, and lay overturn in their homes in the morning as though they had not dwelt there at all."

*[11:84] To Midian we sent their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, worship GOD; you have no other god beside Him. Do not cheat when you measure or weigh. I see that you are prosperous, and I fear for you the retribution of an overwhelming day.*

*[11:94] When our judgment came, we saved Shu'aib and those who believed with him, by mercy from us. As for the evil ones, they were struck by a disaster that left them dead in their homes.*

*[11:95] It was as though they never existed. Thus, Midian perished, just like Thamoud had perished before that.*

## **VERSES 96 – 99**

The remaining verses discuss the general theme of Noah once more, with occasional references to Moses. The harsh punishment is explained as “We did not wrong them; they wronged themselves.” Other gods are decried as false, powerless, and useless. Believers are commanded to walk the straight path and follow God, and those who disbelieve will suffer in Hell.

*[11:96] We sent Moses with our signs and a profound authority.*

*[11:97] To Pharaoh and his elders. But they followed the command of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh’s command was not wise.*

*[11:98] He will lead his people on the Day of Resurrection, all the way to Hell; what a miserable abode to live in!*

*[11:99] They have incurred condemnation in this life, as well as on the Day of Resurrection; what a miserable path to follow!*

## **VERSES 100 – 108**

A prophecy of what will take place on Judgment Day.

*[11:105] The day it comes to pass, no soul will utter a single word, except in accordance with His will. Some will be miserable, and some will be happy.*

*[11:106] As for the miserable ones, they will be in Hell, wherein they sigh and wail.*

*[11:107] Eternally they abide therein, for as long as the heavens and the earth endure, in accordance with the will of your Lord. Your Lord is doer of whatever He wills.*

*[11:108] As for the fortunate ones, they will be in Paradise. Eternally they abide therein, for as long as the heavens and the earth endure, in accordance with the will of your Lord - an everlasting reward.*

## **VERSES 109 – 123**

Repent your sins and wait for Judgment Day.

*[11:111] Your Lord will surely recompense everyone for their works. He is fully Cognizant of everything they do.*

*[11:112] Therefore, continue on the path you have been enjoined to follow, together with those who repented with you, and do not transgress. He is Seer of everything you do.*

*[11:113] Do not lean towards those who have transgressed, lest you incur Hell, and find no allies to help you against GOD, then end up losers.*

*[11:123] To GOD belongs the future of the heavens and the earth, and all matters are controlled by Him. You shall worship Him and trust in Him. Your Lord is never unaware of anything you do.*



# SURA 12: JOSEPH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Remember Joseph from the Old Testament, the favored son of his father, mistreated by his brothers, but with a really cool coat? Well, that's this guy.

Recited in Mecca in the years prior to Muhammad fleeing to Medina, when the Meccans were still unsure as to whether kill, exile or imprison him, it is apparent that the Jews plotted with the Quraysh to expose Muhammad as a fraud. The unbelievers put the following question to him: "Why did the Israelites go to Egypt?" It was a classic 'gotcha question'. Muhammad had never written or talked about anything that addressed that question, even though it is mentioned in the Bible. Thus, they expected it would demonstrate Muhammad had no idea of the detailed history of Abraham's people and, therefore, this would prove him a charlatan. Muhammad, however, baffled his detractors yet again – and gave a detailed narrative of Joseph and his dreamcoat.

The other key topic of discussion contained within this Sura is Muhammad warns the unbelievers that time was running out for them to convert. In other words, despite their refusal and obstinacy in recognizing his mission, the Muslims will ultimately prevail.

## **VERSES 1 – 3**

Muhammad reminds the Meccans as to the nature of his mission.

*[12:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[12:1] A.L.R. These (letters) are proofs of this profound scripture.*

*[12:2] We have revealed it an Arabic Quran, that you may understand.*

*[12:3] We narrate to you the most accurate history through the revelation of this Quran. Before this, you were totally unaware.*

## **VERSES 4 – 105**

The story of Joseph begins with his dream. Ultimately, he is betrayed by his brothers and taken away into slavery in Egypt. There he attains great prominence in interpreting the Pharaoh's dream. He returns to his brothers, years later and thus commences the Israelites bondage in Egypt.

## **VERSES 106 – 111**

Muhammad concludes this sura with a reminder of God's wrath for the non-believers and that the Koran is his ultimate word.

*[12:106] The majority of those who believe in GOD do not do so without committing idol worship.*

*[12:107] Have they guaranteed that an overwhelming retribution from GOD will not*

*strike them, or the Hour will not come to them suddenly, when they least expect it?*

*[12:108] Say, "This is my path: I invite to GOD, on the basis of a clear proof, and so do those who follow me. GOD be glorified. I am not an idol worshiper."*

*[2:111] In their history, there is a lesson for those who possess intelligence. This is not fabricated Hadith; this (Quran) confirms all previous scriptures, provides the details of everything, and is a beacon and mercy for those who believe.*

# SURA 13: THE THUNDER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Containing only forty-three verses, “The Thunder” was revealed to Muhammad shortly after the migration to Medina. More or less the same time as he had recited the respective suras of “Joseph” and “Hud”.

While the sura has nothing to do with lightning and thunder, it is somewhat symbolic, as its message is to warn of God’s coming judgment. A further point of interest is it’s evident that while the unbelievers continued to plot against Muhammad, the Muslims called upon Muhammad to perform some kind of miracle to help prove his prophethood, for once and for all. Muhammad, however, rejects their plea and replies that he is not God, and if they keep their faith, God will reveal all. Patience!

Muhammad implores his followers to study these scriptures, and that the only way to earn God’s compassion on Judgment Day is to live as a pious Muslim.

## **VERSES 1 – 6**

Muhammad explains that God is the sovereign Lord and his judgment reigns over all.

*[13:2] GOD is the One who raised the heavens without pillars that you can see, then assumed all authority. He committed the sun and the moon, each running (in its orbit) for a predetermined period. He controls all things, and explains the revelations, that you may attain certainty about meeting your Lord.*

*[13:5] If you ever wonder, the real wonder is their saying: “After we turn into dust, do we get recreated anew?” These are the ones who have disbelieved in their Lord. These are the ones who have incurred shackles around their necks. These are the ones who have incurred Hell, wherein they abide forever.*

## **VERSES 7 – 43**

The remaining verses of this sura are addressed directly to the believers. It’s Muhammad’s plea to Muslims to stay the course, despite the fact that Meccans continue to enjoy financial success; despite the fact he hasn’t given his followers a miracle or sign; despite the fact the non-believers continue to mock him and the Islamic belief; Muhammad promises Muslims that God will square the ledger in the afterlife.

*[13:7] Those who disbelieved say, “If only a miracle could come down to him from his Lord (we will then believe).” You are simply a warner - every community receives a guiding teacher*

*[13:26] GOD is the One who increases the provision for whomever He wills, or withholds it. They have become preoccupied with this life; and this life, compared to the Hereafter, is nil.*

*[13:35] The allegory of Heaven, which is promised for the righteous, is flowing streams,*

*inexhaustible provisions, and cool shade. Such is the destiny for those who observe righteousness, while the destiny for the disbelievers is Hell.*

*[13:38] We have sent messengers before you, and we made them husbands with wives and children. No messenger can produce a miracle without GOD's authorization, and in accordance with a specific, predetermined time.*

*[13:43] Those who disbelieved will say, "You are not a messenger!" Say, "GOD suffices as a witness between me and you, and those who possess knowledge of the scripture."*

# SURA 14: ABRAHAM

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited by Muhammad in Mecca before the migration to Medina.

Named after the founder of the three monotheistic faiths, although having little to do with God's first prophet, this sura continues the themes of those preceding. In other words, it was written at a time when the Meccans continued to threaten the Muslims with exile because of their beliefs.

Muhammad complains that his role is a "thankless" one, but despite this his message remains steadfast and true. The nonbelievers may continue their non-belief only at their own peril, for judgment and the fire looms.

## VERSES 1 – 4

A brief salutation to the authority of the Koran and God.

*[14:4] We did not send any messenger except (to preach) in the tongue of his people, in order to clarify things for them. GOD then sends astray whomever He wills, and guides whomever He wills. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.*

## VERSES 5 – 8

Muhammad returns to the Moses narrative.

*[14:5] Thus, we sent Moses with our miracles, saying, "Lead your people out of darkness into the light, and remind them of the days of GOD." These are lessons for every steadfast, appreciative person.*

## VERSES 9 – 23

Muhammad returns to using all the prophets before him as a metaphor for the thanklessness and rejection he faces today. But reminds his support base that he, and Islam, will ultimately prevail, as did Moses, Noah, Abraham, Hud, etc.

*[14:9] Have you not heard about those before you - the people of Noah, 'Aad, Thamoud, and others who came after them and known only to GOD? Their messengers went to them with clear proofs, but they treated them with contempt and said, "We disbelieve in what you are sent with. We are skeptical about your message; full of doubt."*

*[14:10] Their messengers said, "Do you have doubts about GOD; the Initiator of the heavens and the earth? He invites you only to forgive your sins, and to give you another chance to redeem yourselves." They said, "You are no more than humans like us, who want to repel us from the way our parents used to worship. Show us some profound authority."*

*[14:11] Their messengers said to them, "We are no more than humans like you, but GOD*

*blesses whomever He chooses from among His servants. We could not possibly show you any kind of authorization, except in accordance with GOD's will. In GOD the believers shall trust.*

*[14:13] Those who disbelieved said to their messengers, "We will banish you from our land, unless you revert to our religion." Their Lord inspired them: "We will inevitably annihilate the transgressors.*

*[14:23] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they will be admitted into gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever, in accordance with the will of their Lord. Their greeting therein is: "Peace."*

## **VERSES 24 – 30**

Muhammad mocks non-Muslims for their false religions and earthly desires and pursuits.

*[14:28] Have you noted those who responded to GOD's blessings by disbelieving, and thus brought disaster upon their own families?*

*[14:29] Hell is their destiny, wherein they burn; what a miserable end!*

*[14:30] They set up rivals to rank with GOD and to divert others from His path. Say, "Enjoy for awhile; your final destiny is Hell."*

## **VERSES 31 – 41**

Abraham's god is the one and only god. Praise him or perish.

*[14:35] Recall that Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a peaceful land, and protect me and my children from worshipping idols.*

*[14:36] "My Lord, they have misled so many people. As for those who follow me, they belong with me. As for those who disobey me, You are Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

## **VERSES 42 – 52**

Muhammad warns the nonbelievers that come Judgment Day, it is too late to repent and convert.

*[4:42] Do not ever think that GOD is unaware of what the transgressors are doing. He only respites them until a day where the eyes stare in horror.*

*[14:44] You shall warn the people of the day when the retribution comes to them. Those who transgressed will say, "Our Lord, give us one more respite. We will then respond to Your call and follow the messengers." Did you not swear in the past that you will last forever?*

*[14:48] The day will come when this earth will be substituted with a new earth, and also the heavens, and everyone will be brought before GOD, the One, the Supreme.*

*[14:49] And you will see the guilty on that day chained in shackles.*

*[14:50] Their garments will be made of tar, and fire will overwhelm their faces.*

# SURA 15: THE STONELAND

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

In Arabic, “the Stoneland” translates as Al-Hijr, a mythical town much like the Bible’s Sodom that was wiped out by God as punishment for that city’s rejection of his word. Scholars presume this sura was revealed to Muhammad while in Mecca during the final year of his life.

There are no new revelations here, and no further elaboration of Islamic law – only further admonishment of those who continue to doubt him. Moreover, he tells his followers that the non-believers, who ridicule him, will meet a similar fate as those who were annihilated by God in Sodom and Gomorrah.

## **Verses 1 – 18**

Muhammad opens with a terse warning to the Meccans. He reminds them his Muslims have successfully annihilated all those who have dared stand up to them.

*[15:2] Certainly, those who disbelieved will wish they were submitters.*

*[15:3] Let them eat, enjoy, and remain blinded by wishful thinking; they will find out.*

*[15:4] We never annihilated any community, except in accordance with a specific, predetermined time.*

*[15:5] The end of any community can never be advanced, nor delayed.*

*[15:16] We placed galaxies in the sky, and adorned it for the beholders.*

*[15:17] And we guarded it against every rejected devil.*

*[15:18] If any of them sneaks around to listen, a mighty projectile will chase him back.*

## **VERSES 19 – 25**

Muhammad implores Muslims to praise God for the bounties he has provided them.

*[15:20] We made it habitable for you, and for creatures you do not provide for.*

*[15:21] There is nothing that we do not own infinite amounts thereof. But we send it down in precise measure.*

*[15:22] And we send the winds as pollinators, and cause water to come down from the sky for you to drink. Otherwise, you could not keep it palatable.*

## **VERSES 26 - 48**

Muhammad warns the Meccans that in denying him and Islam, they’re dancing with the Devil, and he has a room booked for them in Hell.

*[15:32] He said, “O Iblis (Satan), why are you not with the prostrators?”*

*[15:33] He said, “I am not to prostrate before a human being, whom You created from aged mud, like the potter’s clay.”*

*[15:34] He said, “Therefore, you must get out; you are banished.*

*[15:35] “You have incurred My condemnation until the Day of Judgment.”*

#### **VERSES 49 – 84**

Muhammad narrates the Sodom & Gomorrah story again, as a warning to the Meccans.

*[15:61] The messengers went to Lot’s town.*

*[15:73] Consequently, the disaster struck them in the morning.*

*[15:74] We turned it upside down, and showered them with devastating rocks.*

#### **VERSES 85 -99**

Muhammad invites the Meccans to finally submit to the authority of the Koran and him.

*[15:86] Your Lord is the Creator, the Omniscient.*

*[15:87] We have given you the seven pairs, and the great Quran.*

*[15:88] Do not be jealous of what we bestowed upon the other (messengers), and do not be saddened (by the disbelievers), and lower your wing for the believers.*

*[15:89] And proclaim: “I am the manifest warner.”*

*[15:99] And worship your Lord, in order to attain certainty.*

# SURA 16: THE BEE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Written in Mecca prior to the migration to Medina, this sura contains one hundred and twenty eight verses – and its title doesn't represent anything in particular, other than for the purpose of identifying it from other chapters.

At the actual time of this scripture, persecution of the Muslims in Mecca was at its peak. In many instances, Muslims had fled to neighboring towns to escape the taunts and prejudice against them. Therefore, the tone of this sura is of significant venom, targeted directly to all those who have rejected his mission.

Muhammad lashes out at polytheism and those who claim the Koran is simply his words and not of any divine revelation, while also offering comfort to his followers who have fled their homes.

## **VERSES 1 – 18**

God has created the earth and all its treasures with Muslims in mind.

*[16:2] He sends down the angels with the revelations, carrying His commands, to whomever He chooses from among His servants: "You shall preach that there is no other god beside Me; You shall reverence Me."*

*[16:3] He created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose. He is much too High, far above any idols they set up.*

*[16:10] He sends down from the sky water for your drink, and to grow trees for your benefit.*

*[16:14] And He committed the sea to serve you; you eat from it tender meat, and extract jewelry which you wear. And you see the ships roaming it for your commercial benefits, as you seek His bounties, that you may be appreciative.*

## **VERSES 19 – 22**

Muhammad spells out the evil of polytheism.

*[16:20] As for the idols they set up beside GOD, they do not create anything; they themselves were created.*

*[16:21] They are dead, not alive, and they have no idea how or when they will be resurrected.*

*[16:22] Your god is one god. As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts are denying, and they are arrogant.*

## **VERSES 23 – 29**

God will punish the nonbelievers on Judgment Day

*[16:25] They will be held responsible for their sins on the Day of Resurrection, all of them, in addition to sins of all those whom they misled by their ignorance. What a miserable load!*

*[16:28] The angels put them to death in a state of wronging their souls. That is when they finally submit, and say, "We did not do anything wrong!" Yes indeed. GOD is fully aware of everything you have done.*

*[16:29] Therefore, enter the gates of Hell, wherein you abide forever. What a miserable destiny for the arrogant ones.*

### **VERSES 30 – 34**

Muslims will be rewarded in paradise.

*[16:30] As for the righteous, when they are asked, "What do you think of these revelations from your Lord," they say, "Good." For those who lead a righteous life, happiness; and the abode of the Hereafter is even better. What a blissful abode for the righteous.*

*[16:31] The gardens of Eden are reserved for them, wherein rivers flow. They have anything they wish therein. GOD thus rewards the righteous.*

### **VERSES 35 – 42**

Muhammad claims that while polytheists have clever arguments for defending the virtues of their faith, they are still liars.

*[16:35] The idol worshipers say, "Had GOD willed, we would not worship any idols besides Him, nor would our parents. Nor would we prohibit anything besides His prohibitions." Those before them have done the same. Can the messengers do anything but deliver the complete message?*

*[16:36] We have sent a messenger to every community, saying, "You shall worship GOD, and avoid idolatry." Subsequently, some were guided by GOD, while others were committed to straying. Roam the earth and note the consequences for the rejectors.*

*[16:37] No matter how hard you try to guide them, GOD does not guide the ones He had committed to straying. Thus, no one can help them*

*[16:39] He will then point out to everyone all the things they had disputed, and will let those who disbelieved know that they were liars.*

### **VERSES 43 – 47**

The Koran is the one true message.

*[16:43] We did not send before you except men whom we inspired. Ask those who know*

*the scripture, if you do not know.*

*[16:44] We provided them with the proofs and the scriptures. And we sent down to you this message, to proclaim for the people everything that is sent down to them, perhaps they will reflect.*

#### **VERSES 48 – 54**

God is all-wonderful. Worship him at all times, not only when in times of distress.

*[16:48] Have they not seen all the things created by GOD? Their shadows surround them right and left, in total submission to GOD, and willingly.*

*[16:52] To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth and therefore, the religion shall be devoted absolutely to Him alone. Would you worship other than GOD?*

*[16:53] Any blessing you enjoy is from GOD. Yet, whenever you incur any adversity you immediately complain to Him.*

*[16:54] Yet, as soon as He relieves your affliction, some of you revert to idol worship.*

#### **VERSES 55 – 57**

Muhammad warns of the Mecca's false teachings.

*[16:55] Let them disbelieve in what we have given them. Go ahead and enjoy temporarily; you will surely find out.*

*[16:56] They designate for the idols they set up out of ignorance, a share of the provisions we bestow upon them. By GOD, you will be held accountable for your innovations.*

#### **VERSES 58 - 60**

Muhammad warns the Muslims not to be bigoted against baby girls.

*[16:58] When one of them gets a baby girl, his face becomes darkened with overwhelming grief.*

*[16:59] Ashamed, he hides from the people, because of the bad news given to him. He even ponders: should he keep the baby grudgingly, or bury her in the dust. Miserable indeed is their judgment.*

*[16:60] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter set the worst examples, while to GOD belongs the most sublime examples. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.*

#### **VERSES 61 – 83**

God is the creator of everything, so why would you worship other gods who have achieved nothing?

*[16:63] By GOD, we have sent (messengers) to communities before you, but the devil adorned their works in their eyes. Consequently, he is now their lord, and they have incurred a painful retribution.*

*[16:64] We have revealed this scripture to you, to point out for them what they dispute, and to provide guidance and mercy for people who believe.*

*[16:73] Yet, they worship beside GOD what possesses no provisions for them in the heavens, nor on earth, nor can provide them with anything.*

## **VERSES 84 – 117**

Judgment Day is coming. Muslims will be rewarded and the nonbelievers will perish.

*[16:84] The day will come when we raise from every community a witness, then those who disbelieved will not be permitted (to speak), nor will they be excused.*

*[16:86] And when those who committed idol worship see their idols, they will say, “Our Lord, these are the idols we had set up beside You.” The idols will then confront them and say, “You are liars.”*

*[16:87] They will totally submit to GOD on that day, and the idols they had invented will disown them.*

*[16:98] When you read the Quran, you shall seek refuge in GOD from Satan the rejected.*

*[16:99] He has no power over those who believe and trust in their Lord.*

*[16:100] His power is limited to those who choose him as their master, those who choose him as their god.*

## **VERSES 118 – 127**

Engaging with Jewish righteousness. Abraham is the model worshipper for Muslims

*[16:120] Abraham was indeed an exemplary vanguard in his submission to GOD, a monotheist who never worshipped idols.*

*[16:121] Because he was appreciative of His Lord’s blessings, He chose him and guided him in a straight path.*

*[16:122] We granted him happiness in this life, and in the Hereafter he will be with the righteous.*

*[16:123] Then we inspired you (Muhammad) to follow the religion of Abraham, the monotheist; he never was an idol worshiper.*

# SURA 17: THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited in Mecca during the final year of Muhammad's life, 'The Children Of Israel' takes its name from the first verse, which tells the story of the Muhammad's night journey to "the farthest Mosque" and Jerusalem. While the city of Jerusalem is not mentioned by name anywhere in the Koran, it is identified in various hadiths.

It had now been twelve years since Muhammad had founded Islam, and he had overcome a litany of obstacles in making it this far. But despite the spread of his religion throughout Arabia, the Muslims still faced many challenges. First and foremost being the open hostility of the Meccans, despite the treaty established a few years earlier.

Like several of the suras before it, Muhammad extends a final invitation to the Meccans and pagans to convert. If not, they faced annihilation from his soldiers or the fires of hell on Judgment Day. Either way, the Muslims will prevail.

Muhammad also lays out further instructions for creating a harmonious Islamic society.

## VERSE 1 - 8

Muhammad describes his mystical night journey.

*[17:1] Most glorified is the One who summoned His servant (Muhammad) during the night, from the Sacred Masjid (of Mecca) to the farthest place of prostration, whose surroundings we have blessed, in order to show him some of our signs. He is the Hearer, the Seer.*

*[17:4] We addressed the Children of Israel in the scripture: "You will commit gross evil on earth, twice. You are destined to fall into great heights of arrogance.*

*[17:5] "When the first time comes to pass, we will send against you servants of ours who possess great might, and they will invade your homes. This is a prophecy that must come to pass.*

*[17:6] "Afterwards, we will give you a turn over them, and will supply you with a lot of wealth and children; we will give you the upper hand.*

*[17:7] "If you work righteousness, you work righteousness for your own good, but if you commit evil you do so to your own detriment. Thus, when the second time comes to pass, they will defeat you and enter the masjid, just as they did the first time. They will wipe out all the gains you had accomplished."*

## VERSES 9 - 10

The Koran is a sign from God.

*[17:9] This Quran guides to the best path, and brings good news to the believers who lead a righteous life, that they have deserved a great recompense.*

*[17:10] As for those who disbelieve in the Hereafter, we have prepared for them a painful retribution.*

## **VERSES 11 - 22**

Everyone is destined for the Day of Judgment.

*[17:13] We have recorded the fate of every human being; it is tied to his neck. On the Day of Resurrection we will hand him a record that is accessible.*

*[17:14] Read your own record. Today, you suffice as your own reckoner.*

*[17:15] Whoever is guided, is guided for his own good, and whoever goes astray does so to his own detriment. No sinner will bear the sins of anyone else. We never punish without first sending a messenger.*

## **VERSES 23 – 29**

Muhammad prescribes the life Muslims should live.

*[17:23] Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship except Him, and your parents shall be honored. As long as one or both of them live, you shall never say to them, “Uff” (the slightest gesture of annoyance), nor shall you shout at them; you shall treat them amicably.*

*[17:24] And lower for them the wings of humility, and kindness, and say, “My Lord, have mercy on them, for they have raised me from infancy.”*

*[17:25] Your Lord is fully aware of your innermost thoughts. If you maintain righteousness, He is Forgiver of those who repent.*

*[17:26] You shall give the due alms to the relatives, the needy, the poor, and the traveling alien, but do not be excessive, extravagant.*

*[17:27] The extravagant are brethren of the devils, and the devil is unappreciative of his Lord.*

## **VERSES 40 - 64**

Muhammad rebukes the reasons the Meccans have rejected him.

*[17:41] We have cited in this Quran (all kinds of examples), that they may take heed. But it only augments their aversion.*

*[17:42] Say, “If there were any other gods beside Him, as they claim, they would have tried to overthrow the Possessor of the throne.”*

*[17:43] Be He glorified, He is much too exalted, far above their utterances.*

*[17:46] We place shields around their minds, to prevent them from understanding it, and*

*deafness in their ears. And when you preach your Lord, using the Quran alone, they run away in aversion.*

*[17:47] We are fully aware of what they hear, when they listen to you, and when they conspire secretly - the disbelievers say, "You are following a crazy man."*

*[17:58] There is not a community that we will not annihilate before the Day of Resurrection, or inflict severe retribution upon them. This is already written down in the book.*

## **VERSES 65 – 72**

Don't turn away from God when the going gets good.

*[17:67] If you are afflicted in the middle of the sea, you forget your idols and sincerely implore Him alone. But as soon as He saves you to the shore, you revert. Indeed, the human being is unappreciative.*

*[17:69] Have you guaranteed that He will not return you to the sea another time, then send upon you a storm that drowns you because of your disbelief? Once this happens, we will not give you another chance.*

## **VERSES 73 – 96**

Muhammad states the importance of prayer and righteousness.

*[17:78] You shall observe the Contact Prayer (Salat) when the sun declines from its highest point at noon, as it moves towards sunset. You shall also observe (the recitation of) the Quran at dawn. (Reciting) the Quran at dawn is witnessed.*

*[17:79] During the night, you shall meditate for extra credit, that your Lord may raise you to an honorable rank.*

## **VERSES 97 -100**

Muhammad speaks out against the Meccans.

*[17:97] Whomever GOD guides is the truly guided one. And whomever He sends astray, you will never find for them any lords and masters beside Him. We will summon them on the Day of Resurrection forcibly; blind, dumb, and deaf. Their destination is Hell; whenever it cools down, we will increase their fire.*

*[17:98] Such is their just retribution, since they rejected our revelations. They said, "After we turn into bones and fragments, do we get resurrected into a new creation?"*

## **VERSES 101 - 104**

Muhammad describes himself as an Arabic Moses.

*[17:101] We supported Moses with nine profound miracles - ask the Children of Israel. When he went to them, Pharaoh said to him, "I think that you, Moses, are bewitched."*

*[17:102] He said, “You know full well that no one can manifest these except, obviously, the Lord of the heavens and the earth. I think that you, Pharaoh, are doomed.”*

## **VERSES 105 – 111**

The suras of the Koran should be released slowly so as to facilitate memorization.

*[17:105] Truthfully, we sent it down, and with the truth it came down. We did not send you except as a bearer of good news, as well as a warner.*

*[17:106] A Quran that we have released slowly, in order for you to read it to the people over a long period, although we sent it down all at once.*

*[17:107] Proclaim, “Believe in it, or do not believe in it.” Those who possess knowledge from the previous scriptures, when it is recited to them, they fall down to their chins, prostrating.*

# SURA 18: THE CAVE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited by Muhammad in Mecca, the title comes from the opening few verses of the sura. What makes this sura stand out from others, however, is he uses non-biblical stories as parables and metaphors for his prophethood.

This sura contains one hundred and ten verses.

## VERSES 1 - 8

Opening statement that the Koran is from God and he challenge to the Meccans to accept it because of the signs that Allah gives. He also warns Christians they're wrong.

*[18:1] Praise GOD, who revealed to His servant this scripture, and made it flawless.*

*[18:2] A perfect (scripture) to warn of severe retribution from Him, and to deliver good news to the believers who lead a righteous life, that they have earned a generous recompense.*

*[18:3] Wherein they abide forever.*

*[18:4] And to warn those who said, "GOD has begotten a son!"*

## VERSES 9 - 26

Muhammad tells the story of the People of the Cave, which tells of a group of young monotheistic men who lived in fear of persecution. They fled the city together, and took refuge in a cave where they fell asleep. God caused them to remain sleeping for 309 years, and when they woke the surrounding area had become monotheistic as well.

*[18:9] Why else do you think we are telling you about the people of the cave, and the numbers connected with them? They are among our wondrous signs.*

*[18:10] When the youths took refuge in the cave, they said, "Our Lord, shower us with Your mercy, and bless our affairs with Your guidance."*

*[18:11] We then sealed their ears in the cave for a predetermined number of years.*

*[18:12] Then we resurrected them to see which of the two parties could count the duration of their stay therein.*

*[18:17] You could see the sun when it rose coming from the right side of their cave, and when it set, it shone on them from the left, as they slept in the hollow thereof. This is one of GOD's portents. Whomever GOD guides is the truly guided one, and whomever He sends astray, you will not find for him a guiding teacher.*

*[18:18] You would think that they were awake, when they were in fact asleep. We turned them to the right side and the left side, while their dog stretched his arms in their midst.*

*Had you looked at them, you would have fled from them, stricken with terror.*

*[18:19] When we resurrected them, they asked each other, “How long have you been here?” “We have been here one day or part of the day,” they answered. “Your Lord knows best how long we stayed here, so let us send one of us with this money to the city. Let him fetch the cleanest food, and buy some for us. Let him keep a low profile, and attract no attention.*

*[18:20] “If they discover you, they will stone you, or force you to revert to their religion, then you can never succeed.”*

*[18:25] They stayed in their cave three hundred years, increased by nine.*

## **VERSES 27 - 44**

Muhammad tells of the Parable of Two Men. This story discusses two men who had both been given blessings from God, but one wronged his soul by saying that none of it could ever be taken away from him. At the end of the parable God destroys what he had given the man.

*[18:32] Cite for them the example of two men: we gave one of them two gardens of grapes, surrounded by date palms, and placed other crops between them.*

*[18:33] Both gardens produced their crops on time, and generously, for we caused a river to run through them.*

*[18:34] Once, after harvesting, he boastfully told his friend: “I am far more prosperous than you, and I command more respect from the people.”*

*[18:37] His friend said to him, as he debated with him, “Have you disbelieved in the One who created you from dust, then from a tiny drop, then perfected you into a man?”*

*[8:39] “When you entered your garden, you should have said, ‘This is what GOD has given me (Maa Shaa Allah). No one possesses power except GOD (La Quwwata Ellaa Bellaah).’ You may see that I possess less money and less children than you.*

## **VERSES 60 - 82**

Muhammad tells the story of Moses traveling to gain knowledge from another servant of God.

*[18:60] Moses said to his servant, “I will not rest until I reach the point where the two rivers meet, no matter how long it takes.”*

*[18:61] When they reached the point where they met, they forgot their fish, and it found its way back to the river, sneakily.*

*[18:62] After they passed that point, he said to his servant, “Let us have lunch. All this traveling has thoroughly exhausted us.”*

*[18:63] He said, “Remember when we sat by the rock back there? I paid no attention to the fish. It was the devil who made me forget it, and it found its way back to the river, strangely.”*

*[18:64] (Moses) said, "That was the place we were looking for." They traced their steps back.*

## **VERSES 83 – 92**

Muhammad tells of a story of a man who traveled from one end of the earth to the other.

*[18:83] They ask you about Zul-Qarnain. Say, "I will narrate to you some of his history."*

*[18:86] When he reached the far west, he found the sun setting in a vast ocean, and found people there. We said, "O Zul-Qarnain, you can rule as you wish; either punish, or be kind to them."*

*[18:87] He said, "As for those who transgress, we will punish them; then, when they return to their Lord, He will commit them to more retribution."*

*[18:88] "As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they receive a good reward; we will treat them kindly."*

## **VERSES 93 – 102**

Muhammad tells of a story about Gog and Magog, which will be the final sign before the end of the world.

*[18:94] They said, "O Zul-Qarnain, Gog and Magog are corruptors of the earth. Can we pay you to create a barrier between us and them?"*

*[18:95] He said, "My Lord has given me great bounties. If you cooperate with me, I will build a dam between you and them."*

*[18:96] "Bring to me masses of iron." Once he filled the gap between the two palisades, he said, "Blow." Once it was red hot, he said, "Help me pour tar on top of it."*

*[18:97] Thus, they could not climb it, nor could they bore holes in it.*

*[18:98] He said, "This is mercy from my Lord. When the prophecy of my Lord comes to pass, He will cause the dam to crumble. The prophecy of my Lord is truth."*

*[18:99] At that time, we will let them invade with one another, then the horn will be blown, and we will summon them all together.*

*[18:100] We will present Hell, on that day, to the disbelievers.*

## **VERSES 103 – 110**

Muhammad urges Muslims to stay the course.

*[18:103] Say, "Shall I tell you who the worst losers are?"*

*[18:104] "They are the ones whose works in this life are totally astray, but they think that they are doing good."*

*[18:105] Such are the ones who disbelieved in the revelations of their Lord and in meeting Him. Therefore, their works are in vain; on the Day of Resurrection, they have no weight.*

*[18:106] Their just requital is Hell, in return for their disbelief, and for mocking My revelations and My messengers.*

*[18:107] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they have deserved a blissful Paradise as their abode.*

# SURA 19: MARY

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sura is named after Mary, the mother of Jesus, although it's not about her specifically. It is a Meccan sura comprising ninety-eight verses, and is reference to the early Muslims who fled from Mecca and went to Abyssinia (a Christian kingdom). The Christian king (Negus) gave them protection. The Meccans sent an envoy there to demonstrate the Muslims were blasphemers against Christ, so as they would retract their protection. The king approached the Muslims to ask if the Meccan claim against them was true. Muhammad's nephew told him it was a false accusation and, as evidence, he recited from this sura, which specifically honors Jesus as a prophet.

## Verses 1 – 11

Muhammad provides a brief summary of the life of the prophet Zechariah and John the Baptist.

*[19:2] A narration about your Lord's mercy towards His servant Zachariah.*

*[19:3] He called his Lord, a secret call.*

*[19:7] "O Zachariah, we give you good news; a boy whose name shall be John (Yahya). We never created anyone like him before."*

*[19:8] He said, "My Lord, will I have a son despite my wife's sterility, and despite my old age?"*

*[19:9] He said, "Thus said your Lord: 'It is easy for Me to do. I created you before that, and you were nothing.'"*

## Verses 12 – 15

Muhammad provides a brief summary of the life of John the Baptist.

*[19:12] "O John, you shall uphold the scripture, strongly." We endowed him with wisdom, even in his youth.*

*[19:13] And (we endowed him with) kindness from us and purity, for he was righteous.*

## Verses 16 – 35

Muhammad provides a summary of the Virgin Mary and Jesus.

*[19:16] Mention in the scripture Mary. She isolated herself from her family, into an eastern location.*

*[19:17] While a barrier separated her from them, we sent to her our Spirit. He went to her in the form of a human being.*

*[19:18] She said, “I seek refuge in the Most Gracious, that you may be righteous.”*

*[19:19] He said, “I am the messenger of your Lord, to grant you a pure son.”*

*[19:20] She said, “How can I have a son, when no man has touched me; I have never been unchaste.”*

*[19:21] He said, “Thus said your Lord, ‘It is easy for Me. We will render him a sign for the people, and mercy from us. This is a predestined matter.’ “*

*[19:22] When she bore him, she isolated herself to a faraway place.*

*[19:23] The birth process came to her by the trunk of a palm tree. She said, “(I am so ashamed;) I wish I were dead before this happened, and completely forgotten.”*

*[19:27] She came to her family, carrying him. They said, “O Mary, you have committed something that is totally unexpected.*

*[19:28] “O descendant of Aaron, your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother unchaste.”*

*[19:29] She pointed to him. They said, “How can we talk with an infant in the crib?”*

*[19:30] (The infant spoke and) said, “I am a servant of GOD. He has given me the scripture, and has appointed me a prophet.*

*[19:31] “He made me blessed wherever I go, and enjoined me to observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat) for as long as I live.*

*[19:34] That was Jesus, the son of Mary, and this is the truth of this matter, about which they continue to doubt.*

*[19:35] It does not befit GOD that He begets a son, be He glorified. To have anything done, He simply says to it, “Be,” and it is.*

## **Verses 36 – 40**

Muhammad offers a rebuke to the Meccans

*[19:36] He also proclaimed, “GOD is my Lord and your Lord; you shall worship Him alone. This is the right path.”*

*[19:37] The various parties disputed among themselves (regarding the identity of Jesus). Therefore, woe to those who disbelieve from the sight of a terrible day.*

*[19:38] Wait till you hear them and see them when they come to face us. The transgressors on that day will be totally lost.*

## **Verses 41 – 57**

Muhammad invokes the memories of the Jewish prophets.

*[19:41] Mention in the scripture Abraham; he was a saint, a prophet.*

*[19:51] Mention in the scripture Moses. He was devoted, and he was a messenger prophet.*

*[19:52] We called him from the right side of Mount Sinai. We brought him close, to confer with him.*

*[19:53] And we granted him, out of our mercy, his brother Aaron as a prophet.*

*[19:54] And mention in the scripture Ismail. He was truthful when he made a promise, and he was a messenger prophet.*

*[19:55] He used to enjoin his family to observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat); he was acceptable to his Lord.*

*[19:56] And mention in the scripture Idris. He was a saint, a prophet.*

## **Verses 58 – 98**

Further addresses to the Meccans.

*[19:73] When our revelations are recited to them, clearly, those who disbelieve say to those who believe, “Which of us is more prosperous? Which of us is in the majority?”*

*[19:74] Many a generation have we annihilated before them; they were more powerful, and more prosperous.*

*[19:83] Do you not see how we unleash the devils upon the disbelievers to stir them up?*

*[19:84] Do not be impatient; we are preparing for them some preparation.*

*[19:85] The day will come when we summon the righteous before the Most Gracious in a group.*

*[19:86] And we will herd the guilty to Hell, to be their eternal abode.*

# SURA 20: TA HA

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura named after the first two letters of the first verse. These are the mystery letters of the Koran that are placed at the beginning of some suras, but no one is really sure of their purpose.

Most of this sura concerns itself with Moses and how it was that God worked himself through him to help his people, which obviously form a parallel for Muhammad's mission.

## **Verses 1 - 8**

Muhammad restates his mission and the purpose of the Koran.

*[20:2] We did not reveal the Quran to you, to cause you any hardship.*

*[20:3] Only to remind the reverent.*

*[20:4] A revelation from the Creator of the earth and the high heavens.*

*[20:5] The Most Gracious; He has assumed all authority.*

## **Verses 9 – 48**

Muhammad narrates the story of Moses and the Burning Bush.

*[20:9] Have you noted the history of Moses?*

*[20:10] When he saw a fire, he said to his family, "Stay here. I have seen a fire. Maybe I can bring you some of it, or find some guidance at the fire."*

*[20:11] When he came to it, he was called, "O, Moses.*

*[20:12] "I am your Lord; remove your sandals. You are in the sacred valley, Tuwaa.*

*[20:13] "I have chosen you, so listen to what is being revealed.*

*[20:14] "I am GOD; there is no other god beside Me. You shall worship Me alone, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) to remember Me.*

## **Verses 49 -82**

Muhammad narrates the story of Moses in Pharaoh's court.

*[20:49] He said, "Who is your Lord, O Moses."*

*[20:50] He said, "Our Lord is the One who granted everything its existence, and its guidance."*

*[20:51] He said, "What about the past generations?"*

[20:52] He said, “The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a record. My Lord never errs, nor does He forget.”

[20:53] He is the One who made the earth habitable for you, and paved in it roads for you. And He sends down from the sky water with which we produce many different kinds of plants.

[20:60] Pharaoh summoned his forces, then came.

[20:61] Moses said to them, “Woe to you. Do you fabricate lies to fight GOD and thus incur His retribution? Such fabricators will surely fail.”

[20:70] The magicians fell prostrate, saying, “We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses.”

[20:79] Thus, Pharaoh misled his people; he did not guide them.

[20:80] O Children of Israel, we delivered you from your enemy, summoned you to the right side of Mount Sinai, and we sent down to you manna and quails.

[20:81] Eat from the good things we provided for you, and do not transgress, lest you incur My wrath. Whoever incurs My wrath has fallen.

[20:82] I am surely Forgiving for those who repent, believe, lead a righteous life, and steadfastly remain guided.

## **Verses 83 – 98**

Muhammad narrates the story of Moses and the golden calf.

[20:86] Moses returned to his people, angry and disappointed, saying, “O my people, did your Lord not promise you a good promise? Could you not wait? Did you want to incur wrath from your Lord? Is this why you broke your agreement with me?”

[20:87] They said, “We did not break our agreement with you on purpose. But we were loaded down with jewelry, and decided to throw our loads in. This is what the Samarian suggested.”

[20:88] He produced for them a sculpted calf, complete with a calf’s sound\*. They said, “This is your god, and the god of Moses.” Thus, he forgot.

[20:89] Could they not see that it neither responded to them, nor possessed any power to harm them, or benefit them?

[20:90] And Aaron had told them, “O my people, this is a test for you. Your only Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me, and obey my commands.”

[20:91] They said, “We will continue to worship it, until Moses comes back.”

[20:97] He said, “Then go, and, throughout your life, do not even come close. You have an appointed time (for your final judgment) that you can never evade. Look at your god that you used to worship; we will burn it and throw it into the sea, to stay down there

*forever.”*

*[20:98] Your only god is GOD; the One beside whom there is no other god. His knowledge encompasses all things.*

### **Verses 99 – 114**

Muhammad warns those who reject the Koran.

*[20:99] We thus narrate to you some news from the past generations. We have revealed to you a message from us.*

*[20:100] Those who disregard it will bear a load (of sins) on the Day of Resurrection.*

*[20:114] Most Exalted is GOD, the only true King. Do not rush into uttering the Quran before it is revealed to you, and say, “My Lord, increase my knowledge.”*

### **Verses 115 – 135**

Muhammad urges the Meccans to turn to God.

*[20:124] “As for the one who disregards My message, he will have a miserable life, and we resurrect him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind.”*

*[20:125] He will say, “My Lord, why did you summon me blind, when I used to be a seer?”*

*[20:133] They said, “If he could only show us a miracle from his Lord!” Did they not receive sufficient miracles with the previous messages?*

*[20:134] Had we annihilated them before this, they would have said, “Our Lord, had You sent a messenger to us, we would have followed Your revelations, and would have avoided this shame and humiliation.”*

*[20:135] Say, “All of us are waiting, so wait; you will surely find out who are on the correct path, and who are truly guided.”*

# SURA 21: THE PROPHETS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura containing one hundred and twelve verses, Muhammad makes the point that the biblical prophets before him preached the same message, to serve God. He summarizes the respective stories of Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Job, Ishmael, and Solomon – and how it was they there were saved by God from falling to idolaters and unrighteous people.

## **Verse 1 – 29**

Muhammad denounces the paganism of the Meccans and the blasphemy of Christians.

*[21:2] When a proof comes to them from their Lord, that is new, they listen to it heedlessly.*

*[21:3] Their minds are heedless. And the transgressors confer secretly: “Is he not just a human being like you? Would you accept the magic that is presented to you?”*

*[21:11] Many a community we terminated because of their transgression, and we substituted other people in their place.*

*[21:15] This continued to be their proclamation, until we completely wiped them out.*

*[21:16] We did not create the heavens and the earth, and everything between them just for amusement.*

*[21:17] If we needed amusement, we could have initiated it without any of this, if that is what we wanted to do.*

*[21:18] Instead, it is our plan to support the truth against falsehood, in order to defeat it. Woe to you for the utterances you utter.*

## **Verses 30 - 47**

Everyone faces Judgment Day. Muhammad warns the Meccans that while they might ridicule him now, they will pay dearly later.

*[21:34] We never decreed immortality for anyone before you; should you die, are they immortal?*

*[21:35] Every soul will taste death, after we put you to the test through adversity and prosperity, then to us you ultimately return.*

*[21:39] If only those who disbelieve could envision themselves when they try to ward off the fire - off their faces and their backs! No one will help them then.*

*[21:40] Indeed, it will come to them suddenly, and they will be utterly stunned. They can neither avoid it, nor can they receive any respite.*

*[21:41] Messengers before you have been ridiculed, and, consequently, those who ridiculed them incurred the retribution for their ridiculing.*

### **Verses 48 – 71**

Muhammad discusses Abraham's battle against idolatry

*[21:51] Before that, we granted Abraham his guidance and understanding, for we were fully aware of him.*

*[21:52] He said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are devoting yourselves?"*

*[21:53] They said, "We found our parents worshipping them."*

*[21:54] He said, "Indeed, you and your parents have gone totally astray."*

### **Verses 72 – 92**

Muhammad provides a summary of a host of prophets who battled with the unrighteous people of their day.

*[21:74] As for Lot, we granted him wisdom and knowledge, and we saved him from the community that practiced abominations; they were wicked and evil people.*

*[21:75] We admitted him into our mercy, for he was righteous.*

*[21:76] And, before that, Noah called and we responded to him. We saved him and his family from the great disaster.*

*[21:77] We supported him against the people who rejected our revelations. They were evil people, so we drowned them all.*

*[21:79] We granted Solomon the correct understanding, though we endowed both of them with wisdom and knowledge. We committed the mountains to serve David in glorifying (God), as well as the birds. This is what we did.*

### **Verses 93 – 112**

Addresses the Meccans for ignoring his message.

*[21:98] You and the idols you worship besides GOD will be fuel for Hell; this is your inevitable destiny.*

*[21:99] If those were gods, they would not have ended up in Hell. All its inhabitants abide in it forever.*

*[21:100] They will sigh and groan therein, and they will have no access to any news.*

*[21:101] As for those who deserved our magnificent rewards, they will be protected from it.*



# SURA 22: THE PILGRIMAGE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Containing seventy-eight verses, the “Pilgrimage” is a Meccan sura. Its central theme addresses the issue of the Meccans denying the Muslims access to perform pilgrimage in Mecca. Bearing in mind Muhammad banned non-Muslims performing the pilgrimage after he had seized control of the city in 622.

## Verses 1 -24

Muhammad prophesizes the Day of Doom, end times, is coming. It is a warning to bow before God and to forego the Devil.

*[22:7] And that the Hour is coming, no doubt about it, and that GOD resurrects those who are in the graves.*

*[22:9] Arrogantly he strives to divert the people from the path of GOD. He thus incurs humiliation in this life, and we commit him on the Day of Resurrection to the agony of burning.*

*[22:10] This is what your hands have sent ahead for you. GOD is never unjust towards the people.*

*[22:19] Here are two parties feuding with regard to their Lord. As for those who disbelieve, they will have clothes of fire tailored for them. Hellish liquid will be poured on top of their heads.*

*[22:20] It will cause their insides to melt, as well as their skins.*

*[22:21] They will be confined in iron pots.*

*[22:22] Whenever they try to exit such misery, they will be forced back in: “Taste the agony of burning.”*

## Verses 25 – 41

Muhammad addresses the ban against the Muslims.

*[22:25] Surely, those who disbelieve and repulse others from the path of GOD, and from the Sacred Masjid that we designated for all the people- be they natives or visitors- and seek to pollute it and corrupt it, we will afflict them with painful retribution.*

*[22:26] We appointed Abraham to establish the Shrine: “You shall not idolize any other god beside Me, and purify My shrine for those who visit it, those who live near it, and those who bow and prostrate.*

*[22:27] “And proclaim that the people shall observe Hajj pilgrimage.\* They will come to you walking or riding on various exhausted (means of transportation). They will come*

*from the farthest locations.”*

*[22:28] They may seek commercial benefits, and they shall commemorate GOD’s name during the specified days for providing them with livestock. “Eat there from and feed the despondent and the poor.”*

*[22:29] They shall complete their obligations, fulfill their vows, and visit the ancient shrine.*

*[22:30] Those who reverence the rites decreed by GOD have deserved a good reward at their Lord. All livestock is made lawful for your food, except for those specifically prohibited for you. You shall avoid the abomination of idol worship, and avoid bearing false witness.*

*[22:39] Permission is granted to those who are being persecuted, since injustice has befallen them, and GOD is certainly able to support them.*

*[22:40] They were evicted from their homes unjustly, for no reason other than saying, “Our Lord is GOD.” If it were not for GOD’s supporting of some people against others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and masjids-where the name of GOD is commemorated frequently- would have been destroyed. Absolutely, GOD supports those who support Him. GOD is Powerful, Almighty.*

## **Verses 42 – 56**

Muhammad reminds the Muslims that the prophets who came before him were equally denied.

*[22:42] If they reject you, the people of Noah, ‘Ad, and Thamud have also disbelieved before them.*

*[22:43] Also the people of Abraham, and the people of Lot.*

*[22:44] And the dwellers of Midyan. Moses was also rejected. I led all those people on, then I called them to account; how (devastating) was My requital!*

*[22:45] Many a community we have annihilated because of their wickedness. They ended up in ruins, stilled wells, and great empty mansions.*

## **Verses 57 – 62**

God will reward those who accept Muhammad as a prophet.

*[22:57] While those who disbelieved and rejected our revelations have incurred a shameful retribution. Striving in the Cause of God*

*[22:58] Those who emigrate for the sake of GOD, then get killed, or die, GOD will surely shower them with good provisions. GOD is certainly the best Provider.*

## **Verses 63 – 78**

Muhammad warns Muslims not to second-guess God.

*[22:65] Do you not see that GOD has committed in your service everything on earth? The ships run in the ocean by His command. He prevents the heavenly bodies from crashing onto the earth, except in accordance with His command. GOD is Most Kind towards the people, Most Merciful.*

*[22:66] He is the One who granted you life, then He puts you to death, then He brings you back to life. Surely, the human being is unappreciative.*

*[22:75] GOD chooses from among the angels messengers, as well as from among the people. GOD is Hearer, Seer.*

*[22:76] He knows their past and their future. To GOD belongs the ultimate control of all matters.*

*[22:77] O you who believe, you shall bow, prostrate, worship your Lord, and work righteousness, that you may succeed.*

# SURA 23: THE BELIEVERS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is a late Meccan sura, most likely given in the days prior to the migration to Medina. The central theme is the believers will be saved.

## Verses 1 – 22

Muhammad encourages Muslims to be vigilant in carrying out their religious and charitable duties, and those who do will be most rewarded.

*[23:1] Successful indeed are the believers;*

*[23:2] who are reverent during their Contact Prayers (Salat).*

*[23:3] And they avoid vain talk.*

*[23:4] And they give their obligatory charity (Zakat).*

*[23:5] And they maintain their chastity.*

*[23:6] Only with their spouses, or those who are rightfully theirs, do they have sexual relations; they are not to be blamed.*

*[23:7] Those who transgress these limits are the transgressors.*

## Verses 23 – 49

Muhammad tells Muslims how all prophets were rejected at first.

*[23:23] We sent Noah to his people, saying, “O my people, worship GOD. You have no other god beside Him. Would you not be righteous?”*

*[23:24] The leaders who disbelieved among his people said, “This is no more than a human like you, who wants to gain prominence among you. Had GOD willed, He could have sent down angels. We never heard of anything like this from our ancestors.*

*[23:25] “He is simply a man gone crazy. Just ignore him for awhile.”*

*[23:26] He said, “My Lord, grant me victory, for they have disbelieved me.”*

*[23:27] We then inspired him: “Make the watercraft under our watchful eyes, and in accordance with our inspiration. When our command comes, and the atmosphere boils up, put on it a pair of every kind (of your domesticated animals), and your family, except those condemned to be doomed. Do not speak to Me on behalf of those who transgressed; they will be drowned.*

*[23:43] No community can advance its predetermined fate, nor delay it.*

*[23:44] Then we sent our messengers in succession. Every time a messenger went to his community, they disbelieved him. Consequently, we annihilated them, one after the other, and made them history. The people who disbelieved have perished.*

## Verses 50 – 118

The unbelievers will be punished.

*[23:65] Do not complain now; you have given up all help from us.*

*[23:66] My proofs have been presented to you, but you turned back on your heels.*

*[23:67] You were too arrogant to accept them, and you defiantly disregarded them.*

*[23:68] Why do they not reflect upon this scripture? Do they not realize that they have received something never attained by their ancestors?*

*[23:69] Have they failed to recognize their messenger? Is this why they are disregarding him?*

*[23:101] When the horn is blown, no relations among them will exist on that day, nor will they care about one another.*

*[23:102] As for those whose weights are heavy, they will be the winners.*

*[23:103] Those whose weights are light are the ones who lost their souls; they abide in Hell forever.*

*[23:104] Fire will overwhelm their faces, and they last miserably therein.*

*[23:105] Were not My revelations recited to you, and you kept on rejecting them?*

*[23:106] They will say, “Our Lord, our wickedness overwhelmed us, and we were people gone astray.*

*[23:117] Anyone who idolizes beside GOD any other god, and without any kind of proof, his reckoning rests with his Lord. The disbelievers never succeed.*

*[23:118] Say, “My Lord, shower us with forgiveness and mercy. Of all the merciful ones, You are the Most Merciful.”*

# SURA 24: THE LIGHT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is a middle Medinan sura, recited approximately five years after the migration. Containing sixty-four verses, Muhammad outlines to his Islamic community the path of light, or righteousness, for an honorable life.

## Verses 1 – 10

Muhammad addresses adultery.

*[24:2] The adulteress and the adulterer you shall whip each of them a hundred lashes. Do not be swayed by pity from carrying out GOD's law, if you truly believe in GOD and the Last Day. And let a group of believers witness their penalty.*

*[24:3] The adulterer will end up marrying an adulteress or an idol worshiper, and the adulteress will end up marrying an adulterer or an idol worshiper. This is prohibited for the believers.*

*[24:4] Those who accuse married women of adultery, then fail to produce four witnesses, you shall whip them eighty lashes, and do not accept any testimony from them; they are wicked.*

*[24:5] If they repent afterwards and reform, then GOD is Forgiver, Merciful.*

*[24:6] As for those who accuse their own spouses, without any other witnesses, then the testimony may be accepted if he swears by GOD four times that he is telling the truth.*

## Verses 11 – 26

Dealing with false accusations and rumors.

*[24:11] A gang among you produced a big lie. Do not think that it was bad for you; instead, it was good for you. Meanwhile, each one of them has earned his share of the guilt. As for the one who initiated the whole incident, he has incurred a terrible retribution.*

*[24:12] When you heard it, the believing men and the believing women should have had better thoughts about themselves, and should have said, "This is obviously a big lie."*

*[24:13] Only if they produced four witnesses (you may believe them). If they fail to produce the witnesses, then they are, according to GOD, liars.*

*[24:16] When you heard it, you should have said, "We will not repeat this. Glory be to You. This is a gross falsehood."*

*[24:17] GOD admonishes you that you shall never do it again, if you are believers.*

*[24:21] O you who believe, do not follow the steps of Satan. Anyone who follows the steps*

*of Satan should know that he advocates evil and vice. If it were not for GOD's grace towards you, and His mercy, none of you would have been purified. But GOD purifies whomever He wills. GOD is Hearer, Knower.*

## **Verses 27 – 46**

Muhammad articulates laws for civility, chastity, marriage, and justice.

*[24:27] O you who believe, do not enter homes other than yours without permission from their inhabitants, and without greeting them. This is better for you, that you may take heed.*

*[24:31] And tell the believing women to subdue their eyes, and maintain their chastity. They shall not reveal any parts of their bodies, except that which is necessary. They shall cover their chests, and shall not relax this code in the presence of other than their husbands, their fathers, the fathers of their husbands, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, other women, the male servants or employees whose sexual drive has been nullified, or the children who have not reached puberty. They shall not strike their feet when they walk in order to shake and reveal certain details of their bodies. All of you shall repent to GOD, O you believers, that you may succeed.*

*[24:32] You shall encourage those of you who are single to get married. They may marry the righteous among your male and female servants, if they are poor. GOD will enrich them from His grace. GOD is Bounteous, Knower.*

## **Verses 47 – 64**

God is the light. Muhammad is the guide.

*[24:52] Those who obey GOD and His messenger, and reverence GOD and observe Him, these are the triumphant ones.*

*[24:55] GOD promises those among you who believe and lead a righteous life, that He will make them sovereigns on earth, as He did for those before them, and will establish for them the religion He has chosen for them, and will substitute peace and security for them in place of fear. All this because they worship Me alone; they never set up any idols beside Me. Those who disbelieve after this are the truly wicked.*

*[24:56] You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and obey the messenger, that you may attain mercy.*

*[24:62] The true believers are those who believe in GOD and His messenger, and when they are with him in a community meeting, they do not leave him without permission. Those who ask permission are the ones who do believe in GOD and His messenger. If they ask your permission, in order to tend to some of their affairs, you may grant permission to whomever you wish, and ask GOD to forgive them. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

# SURA 25: THE CRITERION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The name “The Criterion” refers to the Koran itself as the decisive factor between the Good and the Evil. The meaning of this word is to distinguish between good and bad.

It is a middle period Meccan sura, containing seventy-seven verses, and its central theme concerns the unbelievers in Medina and his opponents in Mecca.

## Verses 1 – 29

Muhammad rebukes Mecca’s objections.

*[25:4] Those who disbelieved said, “This is a fabrication that he produced, with the help of some other people.” They have uttered a blasphemy and a falsehood.*

*[25:5] They also said, “Tales from the past that he wrote down; they were dictated to him day and night.”*

*[25:6] Say, “This was revealed by the One who knows the Secret in the heavens and the earth. He is Forgiving, Most Merciful.”*

*[25:10] Most blessed is the One who can, if He wills, give you much better than their demands - gardens with flowing streams, and many mansions.*

*[25:11] In fact, they have disbelieved in the Hour (Day of Resurrection), and we have prepared for those who disbelieve in the Hour a flaming Hell.*

*[25:27] The day will come when the transgressor will bite his hands (in anguish) and say, “Alas, I wish I had followed the path with the messenger.*

*[25:28] “Alas, woe to me, I wish I did not take that person as a friend.*

## Verses 30 – 55

Muhammad claims the evidence for God is overwhelming. He uses the tribulations of Moses, Aaron, Noah, and others.

*[25:35] We have given Moses the scripture, and appointed his brother Aaron to be his assistant.*

*[25:36] We said, “Go, both of you, to the people who rejected our revelations,” and subsequently, we utterly annihilated the rejectors.*

*[25:37] Similarly, when the people of Noah disbelieved the messengers, we drowned them, and we set them up as a sign for the people. We have prepared for the transgressors a painful retribution.*

*[25:38] Also ‘Aad, Thamoud, the inhabitants of Al-Russ, and many generations between them.*

*[25:39] To each of these groups, we delivered sufficient examples, before we annihilated them.*

*[25:40] They have passed by the community that was showered with a miserable shower (Sodom). Did they not see it? The fact is, they never believed in resurrection.*

*[25:52] Therefore, do not obey the disbelievers, and strive against them with this, a great striving.*

*[25:53] He is the One who merges the two seas; one is fresh and palatable, while the other is salty and undrinkable. And He separated them with a formidable, inviolable barrier (evaporation).*

*[25:54] He is the One who created from water a human being, then made him reproduce through marriage and mating. Your Lord is Omnipotent.*

### **Verses 55 – 77**

Perseverance will be rewarded.

*[25:69] Retribution is doubled for them on the Day of Resurrection, and they abide therein humiliated.*

*[25:70] Exempted are those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life. GOD transforms their sins into credits. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[25:71] Those who repent and lead a righteous life, GOD redeems them; a complete redemption.*

*[25:72] They do not bear false witness. When they encounter vain talk, they ignore it.*

# SURA 26: THE POETS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited by Muhammad in Mecca, “The Poets” is one of the longest suras in the Koran, featuring two hundred and twenty-seven verses

Muhammad talks about the various prophets and their tribes. Also, how the disbelievers were destroyed after threatening prophets with death, which is meant as a warning shot against the Meccans, who he knew were plotting to assassinate him.

Muhammad also addresses the Meccans who were asking they he prove his claims by giving them some sort of sign or miracle.

## **Verses 1 – 9**

Muhammad addresses those Muslims who are asking him to perform a sign so that they might convert their friends and family.

*[26:3] You may blame yourself that they are not believers.*

*[26:4] If we will, we can send from the sky a sign that forces their necks to bow.*

*[26:5] Whenever a reminder from the Most Gracious comes to them, that is new, they turn away in aversion.*

*[26:6] Since they disbelieved, they have incurred the consequences of their heedlessness.*

*[26:7] Have they not seen the earth, and how many kinds of beautiful plants we have grown thereon?*

*[26:8] This should be a sufficient proof for them, but most of them are not believers.*

## **Verses 10 - 68**

Muhammad draws upon the story of Moses’ meeting with the Pharaoh.

*[26:10] Recall that your Lord called Moses: “Go to the transgressing people.*

*[26:12] He said, “My Lord, I fear lest they disbelieve me.*

*[26:15] He said, “No, (they will not). Go with My proofs. We will be with you, listening.*

*[26:16] “Go to Pharaoh and say, ‘We are messengers from the Lord of the universe.’*

*[26:57] Consequently, we deprived them of gardens and springs.*

*[26:58] And treasures and an honorable position.*

*[26:59] Then we made it an inheritance for the Children of Israel.*

*[26:63] We then inspired Moses: “Strike the sea with your staff,” whereupon it parted. Each part was like a great hill.*

*[26:64] We then delivered them all.*

*[26:65] We thus saved Moses and all those who were with him.*

*[26:66] And we drowned the others.*

*[26:67] This should be a sufficient proof, but most people are not believers.*

*[26:68] Most assuredly, your Lord is the Almighty, Most Merciful.*

### **Verses 69 – 100**

Abraham and his struggle with his people's idolatry.

*[26:69] Narrate to them Abraham's history.*

*[26:70] He said to his father and his people, "What is this you are worshipping?"*

*[26:71] They said, "We worship statues; we are totally devoted to them."*

*[26:72] He said, "Can they hear you when you implore?"*

*[26:73] "Can they benefit you, or harm you?"*

*[26:74] They said, "No; but we found our parents doing this."*

*[26:75] He said, "Do you see these idols that you worship.*

*[26:76] "You and your ancestors.*

*[26:77] "I am against them, for I am devoted only to the Lord of the universe.*

*[26:78] "The One who created me, and guided me.*

*[26:79] "The One who feeds me and waters me.*

### **Verses 101 – 122**

Noah and his struggle with the unbelievers.

*[26:105] The people of Noah disbelieved the messengers.*

*[26:117] He said, "My Lord, my people have disbelieved me.*

*[26:118] "Grant me victory against them, and deliver me and my company of believers."*

*[26:119] We delivered him and those who accompanied him in the loaded ark.*

*[26:120] Then we drowned the others.*

*[26:121] This should be a lesson, but most people are not believers.*

### **Verses 123 – 140**

The story of the prophet Hud.

[26:124] *Their brother Hood said to them, “Would you not be righteous?*

[26:125] *“I am an honest messenger to you.*

[26:126] *“You shall reverence GOD, and obey me.*

[26:136] *They said, “It is the same whether you preach, or do not preach.*

[26:137] *“That affliction was limited to our ancestors.*

[26:138] *“No retribution will ever befall us.”*

[26:139] *They thus disbelieved and, consequently, we annihilated them. This should be a lesson, but most people are not believers.*

### **Verses 141 – 159**

The story of the prophet Saleh.

[26:142] *Their brother Saaleh said to them, “Would you not be righteous?*

[26:143] *“I am an honest messenger to you.*

[26:144] *“You shall reverence GOD, and obey me.*

[26:153] *They said, “You are bewitched.*

[26:154] *“You are no more than a human like us. Produce a miracle, if you are truthful.”*

[26:155] *He said, “Here is a camel that will drink only on a day that is assigned to her; a day that is different from your specified days of drinking.*

[26:156] *“Do not touch her with any harm, lest you incur retribution on an awesome day.”*

[26:157] *They slaughtered her, and thus incurred sorrow.*

[26:158] *The retribution overwhelmed them. This should be a lesson, but most people are not believers.*

### **Verses 160 - 175**

The story of Lot.

[26:160] *The people of Lot disbelieved the messengers.*

[26:165] *“Do you have sex with the males, of all the people?*

[26:166] *“You forsake the wives that your Lord has created for you! Indeed, you are transgressing people.”*

[26:167] *They said, “Unless you refrain, O Lot, you will be banished.”*

*[26:168] He said, "I deplore your actions."*

*[26:169] "My Lord, save me and my family from their works."*

*[26:170] We saved him and all his family.*

*[26:171] But not the old woman; she was doomed.*

*[26:172] We then destroyed the others.*

*[26:173] We showered them with a miserable shower; what a terrible shower for those who had been warned!*

## **Verses 176 – 191**

The story of Shuaib.

*[26:176] The People of the Woods disbelieved the messengers.*

*[26:177] Shu'aib said to them, "Would you not be righteous?"*

*[26:178] "I am an honest messenger to you.*

*[26:179] "You shall reverence GOD, and obey me.*

*[26:181] "You shall give full measure when you trade; do not cheat.*

*[26:182] "You shall weigh with an equitable scale.*

*[26:183] "Do not cheat the people out of their rights, and do not roam the earth corruptingly.*

*[26:184] "Reverence the One who created you and the previous generations."*

*[26:185] They said, "You are bewitched.*

*[26:186] "You are no more than a human being like us. In fact, we think you are a liar.*

*[26:187] "Let masses from the sky fall on us, if you are truthful."*

*[26:188] He said, "My Lord is the One who knows everything you do."*

*[26:189] They disbelieved him and, consequently, they incurred the retribution of the Day of the Canopy. It was the retribution of an awesome day.*

## **Verses 192 – 209**

The validity and power of the Koran.

*[26:198] If we revealed this to people who do not know Arabic.*

*[26:199] And had him recite it (in Arabic), they could not possibly believe in it.*

*[26:200] We thus render it (like a foreign language) in the hearts of the guilty.*

*[26:201] Thus, they cannot believe in it; not until they see the painful retribution.*

*[26:205] As you see, we allowed them to enjoy for years.*

*[26:206] Then the retribution came to them, just as promised.*

*[26:207] Their vast resources did not help them in the least.*

*[26:208] We never annihilate any community without sending warners.*

*[26:209] Therefore, this is a reminder, for we are never unjust.*

### **Verses 210 – 227**

Muhammad urges his followers to convert their friends and family.

*[26:214] You shall preach to the people who are closest to you.*

*[26:215] And lower your wing for the believers who follow you.*

*[26:216] If they disobey you, then say, “I disown what you do.”*

*[26:217] And put your trust in the Almighty, Most Merciful.*

# SURA 27: THE ANTS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Revealed to Muhammad in the years prior to the migration, 'The Ants' contains ninety-three verses. The central discourse is that those who submit to the Koran and God will prosper. To underscore this he narrates the biblical story of Solomon.

## Verses 1 – 6

Opening address to believers and unbelievers.

*[27:2] A beacon, and good news, for the believers.*

*[27:3] Who observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they are, with regard to the Hereafter, absolutely certain.*

*[27:4] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, we adorn their works in their eyes. Thus, they continue to blunder.*

## Verses 7 – 14

Moses.

*[27:7] Recall that Moses said to his family, "I see a fire; let me bring you news therefrom, or a torch to warm you."*

*[27:8] When he came to it, he was called: "Blessed is the One (who is speaking from) within the fire, and those around it." Glory be to GOD, Lord of the universe.*

*[27:9] "O Moses, this is Me, GOD, the Almighty, Most Wise.*

*[27:10] "Throw down your staff." When he saw it moving like a demon, he turned around and fled. "O Moses, do not be afraid. My messengers shall not fear.*

## Verses 15 - 44

Solomon and David.

*[27:15] We endowed David and Solomon with knowledge, and they said, "Praise GOD for blessing us more than many of His believing servants."*

*[27:16] Solomon was David's heir. He said, "O people, we have been endowed with understanding the language of the birds, and all kinds of things have been bestowed upon us. This is indeed a real blessing."*

## Verses 45 – 53

The story of Saleh.

*[27:45] We have sent to Thamoud their brother Saaleh, saying, “You shall worship GOD.” But they turned into two feuding factions.*

*[27:46] He said, “O my people, why do you hasten to commit evil instead of good works? If only you implore GOD for forgiveness, you may attain mercy.”*

*[27:47] They said, “We consider you a bad omen for us, you and those who joined you.” He said, “Your omen is fully controlled by GOD. Indeed, you are deviant people.”*

*[27:48] There were nine gangsters in the city who were wicked, and never did anything good.*

*[27:49] They said, “Let us swear by GOD that we kill him and his people, then tell his tribe, ‘We know nothing about their death. We are truthful.’”*

*[27:50] They plotted and schemed, but we also plotted and schemed, while they did not perceive.*

*[27:51] Note the consequences of their plotting; we annihilated them and all their people.*

## **Verses 54 -60**

The story of Lot.

*[27:54] Lot said to his people, “How could you commit such an abomination, publicly, while you see?”*

*[27:55] “You practice sex with the men, lustfully, instead of the women. Indeed, you are ignorant people.”*

## **Verses 61 – 93**

The main objection the pagan Meccans had against Muhammad’s message was his belief in the afterlife. Here Muhammad addresses their disbelief.

*[27:66] In fact, their knowledge concerning the Hereafter is confused. In fact, they harbor doubts about it. In fact, they are totally heedless thereof.*

*[27:67] Those who disbelieved said, “After we turn into dust, and also our parents, do we get brought out?”*

*[27:74] Your Lord fully knows what their chests hide, and what they declare.*

*[27:75] There is nothing in the heavens and the earth that is hidden (from God); everything is in a profound record.*

*[27:76] This Quran settles many issues for the Children of Israel; issues that they are still disputing.*

*[27:77] And most assuredly, it is a guide and mercy for the believers.*

*[27:78] Your Lord is the One who judges among them in accordance with His rules. He is*

*the Almighty, the Omniscient.*

*[27:79] Therefore, put your trust in GOD; you are following the manifest truth.*

*[27:89] Those who bring good works (in their records) will receive far better rewards, and they will be perfectly secure from the horrors of that day.*

*[27:90] As for those who bring evil works, they will be forced into Hell. Do you not get requited for what you did?*

# SURA 28: THE STORIES

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Revealed to Muhammad in Mecca prior to the migration, 'The Stories' contains eighty-eight verses, and is essentially concerned with rebuking the Meccan's specific objections to his prophethood.

The sura includes two discourses: the life of Moses in the first half, and the legitimacy of the Koran and his message in the second.

## Verses 1 – 14

Moses' birth and childhood.

*[28:3] We recite to you herein some history of Moses and Pharaoh, truthfully, for the benefit of people who believe.*

*[28:7] We inspired Moses' mother: "Nurse him, and when you fear for his life, throw him into the river without fear or grief. We will return him to you, and will make him one of the messengers."*

*[28:8] Pharaoh's family picked him up, only to have him lead the opposition and to be a source of grief for them. That is because Pharaoh, Hamaan, and their troops were transgressors.*

*[28:9] Pharaoh's wife said, "This can be a joyous find for me and you. Do not kill him, for he may be of some benefit for us, or we may adopt him to be our son." They had no idea.*

*[28:10] The mind of Moses' mother was growing so anxious that she almost gave away his identity. But we strengthened her heart, to make her a believer.*

*[28:14] When he reached maturity and strength, we endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. We thus reward the righteous.*

## Verses 15 – 50

Moses' life as an adult.

*[28:15] Once he entered the city unexpectedly, without being recognized by the people. He found two men fighting; one was (a Hebrew) from his people, and the other was (an Egyptian) from his enemies. The one from his people called on him for help against his enemy. Moses punched him, killing him. He said, "This is the work of the devil; he is a real enemy, and a profound misleader."*

*[28:18] In the morning, he was in the city, afraid and watchful. The one who sought his help yesterday, asked for his help again. Moses said to him, "You are really a trouble maker."*

*[28:19] Before he attempted to strike their common enemy, he said, “O Moses, do you want to kill me, as you killed the other man yesterday? Obviously, you wish to be a tyrant on earth; you do not wish to be righteous.”*

*[28:20] A man came running from the other side of the city, saying, “O Moses, the people are plotting to kill you. You better leave immediately. I am giving you good advice.”*

*[28:21] He fled the city, afraid and watchful. He said, “My Lord, save me from the oppressive people.”*

*[28:22] As he traveled towards Midyan, he said, “May my Lord guide me in the right path.”*

*[28:25] Soon, one of the two women approached him, shyly, and said, “My father invites you to pay you for watering for us.” When he met him, and told him his story, he said, “Have no fear. You have been saved from the oppressive people.”*

*[28:26] One of the two women said, “O my father, hire him. He is the best one to hire, for he is strong and honest.”*

*[28:27] He said, “I wish to offer one of my two daughters for you to marry, in return for working for me for eight pilgrimages; if you make them ten, it will be voluntary on your part. I do not wish to make this matter too difficult for you. You will find me, GOD willing, righteous.”*

*[28:43] We gave Moses the scripture - after having annihilated the previous generations, and after setting the examples through them - to provide enlightenment for the people, and guidance, and mercy, that they may take heed.*

*[28:44] You were not present on the slope of the western mount, when we issued the command to Moses; you were not a witness.*

## **Verses 51 – 88**

Submit to the words of the Koran and obey God.

*[28:51] We have delivered the message to them, that they may take heed.*

*[28:52] Those whom we blessed with the previous scriptures will believe in this.*

*[28:53] When it is recited to them, they will say, “We believe in it. This is the truth from our Lord. Even before we heard of it, we were submitters.”*

*[28:58] Many a community we annihilated for turning unappreciative of their lives. Consequently, here are their homes, nothing but uninhabited ruins after them, except a few. We were the inheritors.*

*[28:59] For your Lord never annihilates any community without sending a messenger in the midst thereof, to recite our revelations to them. We never annihilate any community, unless its people are wicked.*

*[28:83] We reserve the abode of the Hereafter for those who do not seek exaltation on earth, nor corruption. The ultimate victory belongs to the righteous.*

*[28:84] Whoever works righteousness receives a far better reward. As for those who commit sins, the retribution for their sins is precisely equivalent to their works.*

*[28:85] Surely, the One who decreed the Quran for you will summon you to a predetermined appointment. Say, "My Lord is fully aware of those who uphold the guidance, and those who have gone astray."*

*[28:86] You never expected this scripture to come your way; but this is a mercy from your Lord. Therefore, you shall not side with the disbelievers.*

*[28:87] Nor shall you be diverted from GOD's revelations, after they have come to you, and invite the others to your Lord. And do not ever fall into idol worship.*

# SURA 29: THE SPIDER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The main point of interest in this sura is the fact that half of it was recited in Mecca, and the other half shortly after the migration to Medina.

Containing sixty-nine verses it perpetuates the theme of prophets who were wronged by their people, but ultimately God destroyed those people who transgressed.

## **Verses 1 – 13**

Muhammad warns against fair weather friends and that everyone's faith will be put to the test.

*[29:2] Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test?*

*[29:3] We have tested those before them, for GOD must distinguish those who are truthful, and He must expose the liars.*

*[29:10] Among the people there are those who say, "We believe in GOD," but as soon as they suffer any hardship because of GOD, they equate the people's persecution with GOD's retribution. But if blessings from your Lord come your way, they say, "We were with you." Is GOD not fully aware of the people's innermost thoughts?*

*[29:11] GOD will most certainly distinguish those who believe, and He will most certainly expose the hypocrites.*

## **Verses 14 - 40**

Lessons from the prophets.

*[29:18] If you disbelieve, generations before you have also disbelieved. The sole function of the messenger is to deliver (the message).*

*[29:24] The only response from his people was their saying, "Kill him, or burn him." But GOD saved him from the fire. This should provide lessons for people who believe.*

*[29:25] He said, "You worship beside GOD powerless idols due to peer pressure, just to preserve some friendship among you in this worldly life. But then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown one another, and curse one another. Your destiny is Hell, wherein you cannot help one another."*

*[29:26] Lot believed with him and said, "I am emigrating to my Lord. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise."*

*[29:27] We granted him Isaac and Jacob, we assigned to his descendants prophethood and the scriptures, we endowed him with his due recompense in this life, and in the Hereafter he will surely be with the righteous.*

## **Verses 41 – 44**

The parable of the spider.

*[29:41] The allegory of those who accept other masters beside GOD is that of the spider and her home; the flimsiest of all homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew.*

*[29:42] GOD knows full well that whatever they worship beside Him are really nothing. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.*

## **Verses 45 – 69**

Submit to Islam.

*[29:46] Do not argue with the people of the scripture (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) except in the nicest possible manner - unless they transgress - and say, "We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you, and our god and your god is one and the same; to Him we are submitters."*

*[29:58] Those who believe and lead a righteous life, we will surely settle them in Paradise, with mansions and flowing streams. Eternally they abide therein. What a beautiful reward for the workers.*

*[29:64] This worldly life is no more than vanity and play, while the abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if they only knew.*

*[9:66] Let them disbelieve in what we have given them, and let them enjoy temporarily; they will surely find out.*

# SURA 30: THE ROMANS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura containing sixty verses, 'The Roman's refers to a war waged between the Byzantine armies and the neighboring Persians. Essentially it is a prophecy, forecasting the Christian win over the Persian Zoroastrians, which is used as an illustration to show that monotheism trumps polytheism.

## Verses 1 – 6

Muhammad makes his prediction.

*[30:2] Certainly, the Romans will be defeated.*

*[30:3] In the nearest land. After their defeat, they will rise again and win.*

*[30:4] Within several years. Such is GOD's decision, both in the first prophecy, and the second. On that day, the believers shall rejoice.*

## Verses 7 – 19

Muhammad states the reasons for his prophecy.

*[30:6] Such is GOD's promise - and GOD never breaks His promise - but most people do not know.*

*[30:7] They care only about things of this world that are visible to them, while being totally oblivious to the Hereafter.*

*[30:10] The consequences for those who committed evil had to be evil. That is because they rejected GOD's revelations, and ridiculed them.*

*[30:12] On the Day when the Hour comes to pass, the guilty will be shocked.*

*[30:13] Their idols will have no power to intercede on their behalf; on the contrary, they will disown their idols.*

## Verses 20 – 29

Muhammad states reasons for proof in God.

*[30:20] Among His proofs is that He created you from dust, then you became reproducing humans.*

*[30:21] Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquility and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think.*

*[30:22] Among His proofs are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors. In these, there are signs for the knowledgeable.*

*[30:23] Among His proofs is your sleeping during the night or the day, and your working in pursuit of His provisions. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who can hear.*

*[30:24] Among His proofs is that He shows you the lightning as a source of fear, as well as hope, then He sends down from the sky water to revive a land that has been dead. In these, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand.*

## **Verses 30 – 60**

Muhammad states the usual elements for staying on the path of righteousness, including ignoring fair weather worshipers, learning from the fallen biblical cities, and loyal obedience.

*[30:33] When adversity afflicts the people, they turn to their Lord, totally devoting themselves to Him. But then, as soon as He showers them with mercy, some of them revert to idol worship.\**

*[30:41] Disasters have spread throughout the land and sea, because of what the people have committed. He thus lets them taste the consequences of some of their works, that they may return (to the right works).*

*[30:43] Therefore, you shall devote yourself completely to this perfect religion, before a day comes which is made inevitable by GOD. On that day, they will be shocked.*

*[30:44] Whoever disbelieves, disbelieves to the detriment of his own soul, while those who lead a righteous life, do so to strengthen and develop their own souls.*

# SURA 31: LUKMAN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Also known as ‘Lukman the Wise’, it is a Meccan sura and contains only thirty-four verses. The central objective of this sura is to remind Muslims that God protects those who remain steadfast in their prayers and who give their wealth to those who are needy. There is plenty of debate as to the identity of Lukman, some Muslims believe he was a prophet, while others claim he is just a character for purpose of narrative.

## Verses 1 – 11

A message to the Muslims to observe prayer and give to charity.

*[31:3] A beacon and a mercy for the righteous.*

*[31:4] Who observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and as regards the Hereafter, they are absolutely certain.*

*[31:5] They are following the guidance from their Lord, and they are the winners.*

*[31:8] Surely, those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved the gardens of bliss.*

## Verses 12 – 20

Lukman.

*[31:12] We have endowed Luqmaan with wisdom: “You shall be appreciative of GOD.” Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those who turn unappreciative, GOD is in no need, Praiseworthy.*

*[31:13] Recall that Luqmaan said to his son, as he enlightened him, “O my son, do not set up any idols beside GOD; idolatry is a gross injustice.”*

*[31:18] “You shall not treat the people with arrogance, nor shall you roam the earth proudly. GOD does not like the arrogant showoffs.*

*[31:19] “Walk humbly and lower your voice - the ugliest voice is the donkey’s voice.”*

## Verses 21 – 34

The correct method for praising God.

*[31:22] Those who submit completely to GOD, while leading a righteous life, have gotten hold of the strongest bond. For GOD is in full control of all things.*

*[31:32] When violent waves surround them, they implore GOD, sincerely devoting their prayers to Him alone. But as soon as He saves them to the shore, some of them revert.*

*None discards our revelations except those who are betrayers, unappreciative.*

*[31:33] O people, you shall reverence your Lord, and fear a day when a father cannot help his own child, nor can a child help his father. Certainly, GOD's promise is truth. Therefore, do not be distracted by this life; do not be distracted from GOD by mere illusions.*

# SURA 32: THE PROSTATION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited in Mecca during the early days of Muhammad's conversion, 'The Prostration' contains a mere thirty verses. It is addressed to the Muslims concerning the Hereafter, the Koran, and his prophethood.

## Verses 1 – 6

The legitimacy of the Koran.

*[32:2] The book is, without a doubt, a revelation from the Lord of the universe.*

*[32:3] They said, "He fabricated it." Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord, to warn people who never received a warner before you, that they may be guided.*

## Verses 7 – 11

The origins of Man.

*[32:7] He is the One who perfected everything He created, and started the creation of the human from clay.*

*[32:8] Then He continued his reproduction through a certain lowly liquid.*

*[32:9] He shaped him and blew into him from His spirit. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains; rarely are you thankful.*

*[32:10] They wonder, "After we vanish into the earth, do we get created anew?" Thus, as regards meeting their Lord, they are disbelievers.*

*[32:11] Say, "You will be put to death by the angel in whose charge you are placed, then to your Lord you will be returned."*

## Verses 12 – 30

Muhammad describes the beauty of Paradise, and it is there for the taking, for those who convert.

*[32:17] You have no idea how much joy and happiness are waiting for you as a reward for your (righteous) works.*

*[32:19] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they have deserved the eternal Paradise. Such is their abode, in return for their works*

*[32:25] Your Lord is the One who will judge them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding everything they disputed.*

*[32:26] Does it ever occur to them how many generations we have annihilated before*

*them? They now live and walk in their ancestors' homes. This should provide sufficient proofs. Do they not hear?*

# SURA 33: THE COALITION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

‘The Coalition’ is a Medinan sura and contains seventy-three verses. The sura includes references to a number of the military campaigns Muhammad waged against the Meccans. Like all suras, it is important the reader understand the external pressure on Muhammad at the time of the recitation. People were trying to annihilate him.

## Verses 1 – 4

Muhammad tells the Muslims to stay devoted to God and his prophet.

*[3:1] O you prophet, you shall reverence GOD and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.*

*[33:2] Follow what is revealed to you from your Lord. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you all do.*

*[33:3] And put your trust in GOD. GOD suffices as an advocate.*

*[33:4] GOD did not give any man two hearts in his chest. Nor did He turn your wives whom you estrange (according to your custom) into your mothers. Nor did He turn your adopted children into genetic offspring. All these are mere utterances that you have invented. GOD speaks the truth, and He guides in the (right) path.*

## Verses 5 – 6

Do not change your names.

*[33:5] You shall give your adopted children names that preserve their relationship to their genetic parents. This is more equitable in the sight of GOD. If you do not know their parents, then, as your brethren in religion, you shall treat them as members of your family. You do not commit a sin if you make a mistake in this respect; you are responsible for your purposeful intentions. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[33:6] The prophet is closer to the believers than they are to each other, and his wives are like mothers to them. The relatives ought to take care of one another in accordance with GOD’s scripture. Thus, the believers shall take care of their relatives who immigrate to them, provided they have taken care of their own families first. These are commandments of this scripture.*

## Verses 9 – 27

Muhammad tells the Muslims to stay courageous during battle and that God will never leave them to die on the battlefield.

*[33:9] O you who believe, remember GOD’s blessing upon you; when soldiers attacked*

*you, we sent upon them violent wind and invisible soldiers. GOD is Seer of everything you do.*

*[33:10] When they came from above you, and from beneath you, your eyes were terrified, your hearts ran out of patience, and you harbored unbefitting thoughts about GOD.*

*[33:11] That is when the believers were truly tested; they were severely shaken up.*

*[33:16] Say, “If you flee, you can never flee from death or from being killed. No matter what happens, you only live a short while longer.”*

*[33:17] Say, “Who would protect you from GOD if He willed any adversity, or willed any blessing for you?” They can never find, beside GOD, any other lord and master.*

*[33:18] GOD is fully aware of the hinderers among you, and those who say to their comrades, “Let us all stay behind.” Rarely do they mobilize for defense.*

*[33:21] The messenger of GOD has set up a good example for those among you who seek GOD and the Last Day, and constantly think about GOD.*

*[33:22] When the true believers saw the parties (ready to attack), they said, “This is what GOD and His messenger have promised us, and GOD and His messenger are truthful.” This (dangerous situation) only strengthened their faith and augmented their submission.*

## **Verses 28 – 35**

Muhammad addresses the wives of the Muslim soldiers.

*[33:32] O wives of the prophet, you are not the same as any other women, if you observe righteousness. (You have a greater responsibility.) Therefore, you shall not speak too softly, lest those with disease in their hearts may get the wrong ideas; you shall speak only righteousness.*

*[33:33] You shall settle down in your homes, and do not mingle with the people excessively, like you used to do in the old days of ignorance. You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and obey GOD and His messenger. GOD wishes to remove all unholiness from you, O you who live around the Sacred Shrine, and to purify you completely.*

## **Verses 36 – 48**

Muhammad addresses those who accused him of making a mistake in marrying a divorcee.

*[33:36] No believing man or believing woman, if GOD and His messenger issue any command, has any choice regarding that command. Anyone who disobeys GOD and His messenger has gone far astray.*

*[33:37] Recall that you said to the one who was blessed by GOD, and blessed by you, “Keep your wife and reverence GOD,” and you hid inside yourself what GOD wished to proclaim. Thus, you feared the people, when you were supposed to fear only GOD. When*

*Zeid was completely through with his wife, we had you marry her, in order to establish the precedent that a man may marry the divorced wife of his adopted son. GOD's commands shall be done.*

*[33:38] The prophet is not committing an error by doing anything that is made lawful by GOD. Such is GOD's system since the early generations. GOD's command is a sacred duty.*

## **Verses 49 – 62**

Marriage laws.

*[33:49] O you who believe, if you married believing women, then divorced them before having intercourse with them, they do not owe you any waiting interim (before marrying another man). You shall compensate them equitably, and let them go amicably.*

*[33:50] O prophet, we made lawful for you your wives to whom you have paid their due dowry, or what you already have, as granted to you by GOD. Also lawful for you in marriage are the daughters of your father's brothers, the daughters of your father's sisters, the daughters of your mother's brothers, the daughters of your mother's sisters, who have emigrated with you. Also, if a believing woman gave herself to the prophet - by forfeiting the dowry - the prophet may marry her without a dowry, if he so wishes. However, her forfeiting of the dowry applies only to the prophet, and not to the other believers. We have already decreed their rights in regard to their spouses or what they already have. This is to spare you any embarrassment. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[33:51] You may gently shun any one of them, and you may bring closer to you any one of them. If you reconcile with any one you had estranged, you commit no error. In this way, they will be pleased, will have no grief, and will be content with what you equitably offer to all of them. GOD knows what is in your hearts. GOD is Omniscient, Clement.*

*[33:52] Beyond the categories described to you, you are enjoined from marrying any other women, nor can you substitute a new wife (from the prohibited categories), no matter how much you admire their beauty. You must be content with those already made lawful to you. GOD is watchful over all things.*

## **Verses 63 – 73**

Muhammad warns of end times and the punishment for those who abandon him.

*[33:63] The people ask you about the Hour (end of the world). Say, "The knowledge thereof is only with GOD. For all that you know, the Hour may be close."*

*[33:64] GOD has condemned the disbelievers, and has prepared for them Hell.*

*[33:65] Eternally they abide therein. They will find no lord, nor a supporter.*

*[33:66] The day they are thrown into Hell, they will say, "Oh, we wish we obeyed GOD, and obeyed the messenger."*

*[33:67] They will also say, “Our Lord, we have obeyed our masters and leaders, but they led us astray.*

*[33:68] “Our Lord, give them double the retribution, and curse them a tremendous curse.”*

# SURA 34: SHEBA

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sura takes its name from verse fifteen in which the word Sheba appears. Scholars are not entirely sure of its recitation date but most lean towards it being an early Meccan sura.

What is apparent, however, is it had its genesis during the period shortly after the migration when the Muslims were facing fierce opposition from Mecca and from among the Jewish clans in Medina.

## **Verses 1 – 9**

Muhammad gives praise to God and then addresses the naysayers within Medina and the unbelievers in Mecca.

*[34:1] Praise be to GOD - to whom belongs everything in the heavens and the earth; all praise is also due to Him in the Hereafter. He is the Most Wise, the Cognizant.*

*[34:3] Those who disbelieve have said, “The Hour will never come to pass!” Say, “Absolutely - by my Lord - it will most certainly come to you. He is the Knower of the future. Not even the equivalent of an atom’s weight is hidden from Him, be it in the heavens or the earth. Not even smaller than that, or larger (is hidden). All are in a profound record.”*

*[34:7] Those who disbelieve have said, “Let us show you a man who tells you that after you are torn apart you will be created anew.*

*[34:8] “Either he fabricated lies about GOD, or he is crazy.” Indeed, those who disbelieve in the Hereafter have incurred the worst retribution; they have gone far astray.*

## **Verses 10 – 20**

Muhammad warns the Muslims that evil spirits and the Devil are conspiring against them.

*[4:14] When the appointed time for his death came, they had no clue that he had died. Not until one of the animals tried to eat his staff, and he fell down, did the jinns realized that he was dead. They thus realized that if they really knew the unseen, they would have stopped working so hard as soon as he died.*

*[34:20] Satan found them readily fulfilling his expectations. They followed him, except a few believers.*

## **Verses 21 – 54**

Muhammad stresses the importance of heeding the words of the Koran.

*[34:43] When our proofs were recited to them, perfectly clear, they said, “This is simply a man who wants to divert you from the way your parents are worshipping.” They also*

said, *“These are fabricated lies.”* Those who disbelieved also said about the truth that came to them, *“This is obviously magic.”*

*[34:44] We did not give them any other books to study, nor did we send to them before you another warner.*

*[34:46] Say, “I ask you to do one thing: Devote yourselves to GOD, in pairs or as individuals, then reflect. Your friend (Rashad) is not crazy. He is a manifest warner to you, just before the advent of a terrible retribution.”*

*[34:47] Say, “I do not ask you for any wage; you can keep it. My wage comes only from GOD. He witnesses all things.”*

*[34:48] Say, “My Lord causes the truth to prevail. He is the Knower of all secrets.”*

# SURA 35: FATIR

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The word Fatir appears in the very first verse of the sura and it is from here it gets its name. Recited by Muhammad during the middle years of his time in Medina, the sura reveals the growing internal antagonizing he was faced with from those Muslims he called “hypocrites” and the Jewish clans.

It is an invitation to embrace him and his message or God will punish them for eternity in the hereafter.

## **Verses 1 – 9**

Muhammad addresses the unbelievers with a stern warning.

*[35:4] If they disbelieve you, messengers before you have been disbelieved. GOD is in control of all things.*

*[35:5] O people, GOD’s promise is the truth; therefore, do not be distracted by this lowly life. Do not be diverted from GOD by mere illusions.*

*[35:6] The devil is your enemy, so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his party to be the dwellers of Hell.*

*[35:7] Those who disbelieve have incurred a severe retribution, and those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved forgiveness and a great recompense.*

## **Verses 10 – 30**

Muhammad exhorts the greatness of God and the weakness of idols.

*[35:10] Anyone seeking dignity should know that to GOD belongs all dignity. To Him ascends the good words, and He exalts the righteous works. As for those who scheme evil works, they incur severe retribution; the scheming of such people is destined to fail.*

*[35:13] He merges the night into the day, and merges the day into the night. He has committed the sun and the moon to run for a predetermined period of time. Such is GOD your Lord; to Him belongs all kingship. Any idols you set up beside Him do not possess as much as a seed’s shell.*

*[35:14] If you call on them, they cannot hear you. Even if they hear you, they cannot respond to you. On the Day of Resurrection, they will disown you. None can inform you like the Most Cognizant.*

*[35:19] The blind and the seer are not equal.*

*[35:20] Nor are the darkness and the light.*

*[35:21] Nor are the coolness of the shade and the heat of the sun.*

*[35:27] Do you not realize that GOD sends down from the sky water, whereby we produce fruits of various colors? Even the mountains have different colors; the peaks are white, or red, or some other color. And the ravens are black.*

*[35:28] Also, the people, the animals, and the livestock come in various colors. This is why the people who truly reverence GOD are those who are knowledgeable. GOD is Almighty, Forgiving.*

## **Verses 30 – 45**

Muhammad philosophizes that in life, there are winners and losers.

*[35:39] He is the One who made you inheritors of the earth. Subsequently, whoever chooses to disbelieve does so to his own detriment. The disbelief of the disbelievers only augments their Lord's abhorrence towards them. The disbelief of the disbelievers plunges them deeper into loss.*

*[35:40] Say, "Consider the idols you have set up beside GOD; show me what on earth have they created." Do they own any partnership in the heavens? Have we given them a book wherein there is no doubt? Indeed, what the transgressors promise one another is no more than an illusion.*

*[35:43] They resorted to arrogance on earth, and evil scheming, and the evil schemes only backfire on those who scheme them. Should they then expect anything but the fate of those who did the same things in the past? You will find that GOD's system is never changeable; you will find that GOD's system is immutable.*

# SURA 36: YA SIN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

In Arabic, “sin” is often interpreted as indicating human or man, but the prefix, “Ya”, means it is more than likely referring to the prophet Muhammad.

Consisting of eighty-three verses, this is a Meccan sura, which covers much of what has already been presented in the Koran, specifically, the argument for God’s existence.

## Verses 1 – 12

The Koran’s purpose is to warn the believers and unbelievers.

*[36:2] And the Quran that is full of wisdom.*

*[36:5] This revelation is from the Almighty, Most Merciful.*

*[36:6] To warn people whose parents were never warned, and therefore, they are unaware.*

*[36:12] We will certainly revive the dead, and we have recorded everything they have done in this life, as well as the consequences that continue after their death. Everything we have counted in a profound record.*

## Verses 13 – 25

The penalty to those who have ignored the warning.

*[36:13] Cite for them the example of people in a community that received the messengers.*

*[36:14] When we sent to them two (messengers), they disbelieved them. We then supported them by a third. They said, “We are (God’s) messengers to you.”*

## Verses 26 – 59

Muhammad describes Paradise and illustrates the signs of God.

*[36:26] (At the time of his death) he was told, “Enter Paradise.” He said, “Oh, I wish my people knew.*

*[36:27] “That my Lord has forgiven me, and made me honorable.”*

*[36:28] We did not send down upon his people, after him, soldiers from the sky; we did not need to send them down.*

*[36:36] Glory be to the One who created all kinds of plants from the earth, as well as themselves, and other creations that they do not even know.*

*[36:37] Another sign for them is the night: we remove the daylight therefrom, whereupon they are in darkness.*

*[36:38] The sun sets into a specific location, according to the design of the Almighty, the Omniscient.*

*[36:39] The moon we designed to appear in stages, until it becomes like an old curved sheath.*

*[36:40] The sun is never to catch up with the moon - the night and the day never deviate - each of them is floating in its own orbit.*

*[36:46] No matter what kind of proof is given to them from their Lord, they consistently disregard it.*

## **Verses 47 – 83**

The Devil and powerless idols are the alternative to God.

*[6:60] Did I not covenant with you, O Children of Adam, that you shall not worship the devil? That he is your most ardent enemy?*

*[36:63] This is the Hell that was promised for you.*

*[36:64] Today you will burn in it, as a consequence of your disbelief.*

*[36:65] On that day we will seal their mouths; their hands and feet will bear witness to everything they had done.*

*[36:74] They set up beside GOD other gods, perhaps they can be of help to them!*

*[36:75] On the contrary, they cannot help them; they end up serving them as devoted soldiers.*

# SURA 37: THE ARRANGERS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

‘The Ranks’ is a Meccan revealed sura, comprising one hundred and eighty two verses. Its message to the disbelievers of Mecca is clear: God will punish those who mock the prophet.

## Verses 1 – 26

Muhammad gives praise to God before lambasting the unbelievers for their mockery and doubting.

*[37:4] Your god is only one.*

*[37:5] The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and everything between them, and Lord of the easts.*

*[37:19] All it takes is one nudge, whereupon they (stand up) looking.*

*[37:20] They will say, “Woe to us; this is the Day of Judgment.”*

*[37:21] This is the day of decision that you used to disbelieve in.*

*[37:22] Summon the transgressors, and their spouses, and the idols they worshipped*

*[37:23] beside GOD, and guide them to the path of Hell.*

## Verses 27 – 34

Muhammad prophesizes the Meccans will turn on each other, once they realized they held one another back from the truth.

*[37:27] They will come to each other, questioning and blaming one another.*

*[37:28] They will say (to their leaders), “You used to come to us from the right side.”*

*[37:29] They will respond, “It is you who were not believers.*

*[37:30] “We never had any power over you; it is you who were wicked.*

*[37:31] “We justly incurred our Lord’s judgment; now we have to suffer.*

## Verses 35 – 74

Muhammad forewarns that following the Day of Judgement, those in Paradise will visit the unbelievers in Hell to mock them, and that the Muslims will celebrate together in the afterlife.

*[37:50] They will come to each other, and confer with one another.*

*[37:51] One of them will say, “I used to have a friend.*

*[37:52] “He used to mock: ‘Do you believe all this?’*

*[37:53] “‘After we die and turn into dust and bones, do we get called to account?’”*

*[37:54] He will say, “Just take a look!”*

*[37:55] When he looks, he will see his friend in the heart of Hell.*

*[37:56] He (will go to him and) say, “By GOD, you almost ruined me.*

*[37:57] “If it were not for my Lord’s blessing, I would have been with you now.*

*[37:60] Such is the greatest triumph.*

*[37:61] This is what every worker should work for.*

*[37:62] Is this a better destiny, or the tree of bitterness?*

*[37:63] We have rendered it a punishment for the transgressors.*

*[37:64] It is a tree that grows in the heart of Hell.*

*[37:65] Its flowers look like the devils’ heads.*

*[37:66] They will eat from it until their bellies are filled up.*

## **Verses 75 – 154**

Muhammad returns to summarizing the history of the prophets, including Abraham, Noah, Lot, and Moses. These verses are repeats from early suras, so we will leave it there.

## **Verses 155 - 182**

Muhammad addresses the unbelievers.

*[37:164] Each one of us has a specific job.*

*[37:165] We are the arrangers.*

*[37:166] We have duly glorified (our Lord).*

*[37:171] Our decision is already decreed for our servants the messengers.*

*[37:172] They are surely the victors.*

*[37:173] Our soldiers are the winners.*

*[37:174] So disregard them for awhile.*

*[37:175] Watch them; they too will watch.*

*[37:176] Do they challenge our retribution?*

*[37:177] When it hits them one day, it will be a miserable day; they have been sufficiently warned.*

# SURA 38: THE SAD

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is one of the earliest suras recited by Muhammad, with some scholars estimating it was revealed to him in the fifth year after he claimed to have met with the archangel.

Interestingly, the verses refer to the illness of his uncle Abu Talib, whose death left Muhammad without the protection from a tribal chief

## Verses 1 – 23

Muhammad invites the Meccans to join the Muslim ranks or suffer the consequences befallen to those unbelievers before them.

*[38:1] S. (Saad), and the Quran that contains the proof.*

*[38:2] Those who disbelieve have plunged into arrogance and defiance.*

*[38:3] Many a generation before them we annihilated. They called for help, in vain.*

*[38:4] They wondered that a warner should come to them, from among them. The disbelievers said, "A magician, a liar.*

*[38:12] Disbelieving before them were the people of Noah, 'Aad, and the mighty Pharaoh.*

*[38:13] Also, Thamoud, the people of Lot, the dwellers of the Woods (of Midyan); those were the opponents.*

*[38:14] Each of them disbelieved the messengers and thus, My retribution was inevitable.*

*[38:15] These people can expect a single blow, from which they never recover.*

## Verses 24 – 42

Muhammad highlights the exemplary piety of the biblical David and Solomon.

*[38:24] He said, "He is being unfair to you by asking to combine your sheep with his. Most people who combine their properties treat each other unfairly, except those who believe and work righteousness, and these are so few." Afterwards, David wondered if he made the right judgment. He thought that we were testing him. He then implored his Lord for forgiveness, bowed down, and repented.*

*[38:25] We forgave him in this matter. We have granted him a position of honor with us, and a beautiful abode.*

*[38:30] To David we granted Solomon; a good and obedient servant.*

*[38:31] One day he became preoccupied with beautiful horses, until the night fell.*

*[38:32] He then said, "I enjoyed the material things more than I enjoyed worshipping my*

*Lord, until the sun was gone.*

*[38:33] “Bring them back.” (To bid farewell,) he rubbed their legs and necks.*

*[38:34] We thus put Solomon to the test; we blessed him with vast material wealth, but he steadfastly submitted.*

*[38:35] He said, “My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingship never attained by anyone else. You are the Grantor.”*

*[38:36] We (answered his prayer and) committed the wind at his disposal, pouring rain wherever he wanted.*

*[38:37] And the devils, building and diving.*

*[38:38] Others were placed at his disposal.*

*[38:39] “This is our provision to you; you may give generously, or withhold, without limits.”*

### **Verses 43 – 88**

God will reward the believers and punish the unbelievers.

*[38:49] This is a reminder: the righteous have deserved a wonderful destiny.*

*[38:50] The gardens of Eden will open up their gates for them.*

*[38:51] Relaxing therein, they will be given many kinds of fruits and drinks.*

*[38:52] They will have wonderful spouses.*

*[38:53] This is what you have deserved on the Day of Reckoning.*

*[38:55] As for the transgressors, they have incurred a miserable destiny.*

*[38:56] Hell is where they burn; what a miserable abode!*

*[38:57] What they taste therein will be hellish drinks and bitter food.*

*[38:58] And much more of the same kind.*

*[38:59] “This is a group to be thrown into Hell with you.” They will not be welcomed (by the residents of Hell). They have deserved to burn in the hellfire.*

# SURA 39: THE TROOPS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Believed to be a pre-migration Meccan sura, 'The Troops' is almost entirely an address to the Quraysh. Muhammad commands the unbelievers to repent and accept Islam as God's true word.

## Verses 1 – 10

Muhammad implores the Meccans to forfeit their belief in false idols.

*[39:3] Absolutely, the religion shall be devoted to GOD alone. Those who set up idols beside Him say, "We idolize them only to bring us closer to GOD; for they are in a better position!" GOD will judge them regarding their disputes. GOD does not guide such liars, disbelievers.*

*[39:4] If GOD wanted to have a son, He could have chosen whomever He willed from among His creations. Be He glorified; He is GOD, the One, the Supreme.*

## Verses 11 – 22

Follow the word of God.

*[39:17] As for those who discard the worship of all idols, and devote themselves totally to GOD alone, they have deserved happiness. Give good news to My servants.*

*[39:18] They are the ones who examine all words, then follow the best. These are the ones whom GOD has guided; these are the ones who possess intelligence.*

## Verses 23 – 37

The Koran and the Hadith are from the highest authority.

*[39:23] GOD has revealed herein the best Hadith; a book that is consistent, and points out both ways (to Heaven and Hell). The skins of those who reverence their Lord cringe therefrom, then their skins and their hearts soften up for GOD's message. Such is GOD's guidance; He bestows it upon whoever wills (to be guided). As for those sent astray by GOD, nothing can guide them.*

*[39:27] We have cited for the people every kind of example in this Quran, that they may take heed.*

*[39:28] An Arabic Quran, without any ambiguity, that they may be righteous.*

## Verses 38 – 75

Muhammad addresses Hell versus Paradise; righteousness versus evil; believers versus

unbelievers.

*[39:60] On the Day of Resurrection you will see the faces of those who lied about GOD covered with misery. Is Hell not the right retribution for the arrogant ones?*

*[39:61] And GOD will save those who have maintained righteousness; He will reward them. No harm will touch them, nor will they have any grief.*

*[39:65] It has been revealed to you, and to those before you that if you ever commit idol worship, all your works will be nullified, and you will be with the losers.*

*[39:66] Therefore, you shall worship GOD alone, and be appreciative.*

# SURA 40: THE BELIEVER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura containing eighty-five verses, 'The Believer' is an address to the Muslims of Mecca to hold firm their beliefs, despite the economic and social hardships the Quraysh had forced upon them as a result of the trade boycott. Effectively, Muhammad tells his followers that while their opposition has all the wealth and power, their power is purely earthly; whereas the Muslims' power is eternal in paradise.

## Verses 1 – 9

An opening prayer for the believers.

*[40:2] This revelation of the scripture is from GOD, the Almighty, the Omniscient.*

*[40:3] Forgiver of sins, acceptor of repentance, strict in enforcing retribution, and possessor of all power. There is no other god beside Him. To Him is the ultimate destiny.*

*[40:4] None argues against GOD's revelations except those who disbelieve. Do not be impressed by their apparent success.*

## Verses 10 – 22

A poem that appeals to the greatness of God.

*[40:12] This is because when GOD ALONE was advocated, you disbelieved, but when others were mentioned beside Him, you believed. Therefore, GOD's judgment has been issued; He is the Most High, the Great.*

*[40:13] He is the One who continuously shows you His proofs, and sends down to you from the sky provisions. Only those who totally submit will be able to take heed.*

*[40:14] Therefore, you shall devote your worship absolutely to GOD ALONE, even if the disbelievers dislike it.*

*[40:15] Possessor of the highest ranks, and Ruler of the whole dominion. He sends inspiration, bearing His commands, to whomever He chooses from among His servants, to warn about the Day of Summoning.*

## Verses 23 – 45

Muhammad draws on the narratives of the former prophets as a metaphor for the struggles he faces in bringing the Muslims to God.

*[40:26] Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Moses, and let him implore his Lord. I worry lest he corrupts your religion, or spreads evil throughout the land."*

*[40:27] Moses said, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord, from every arrogant one*

*who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.”*

*[40:28] A believing man among Pharaoh’s people, who was concealing his belief, said, “How can you kill a man just for saying, ‘My Lord is GOD,’ and he has shown you clear proofs from your Lord? If he is a liar, that is his problem, and if he is truthful, you benefit from his promises. Surely, GOD does not guide any transgressor, liar.*

*[40:29] “O my people, today you have kingship and the upperhand. But who will help us against GOD’s judgment, should it come to us?” Pharaoh said, “You are to follow only what I see fit; I will guide you only in the right path.”*

*[40:30] The one who believed said, “O my people, I fear for you the same fate as the previous opponents.*

*[40:31] “The opponents of Noah, and ‘Aad, Thamoud, and others who came after them. GOD does not wish any injustice for the people.*

*[40:32] “O my people, I fear for you the Day of Summoning.*

## **Verses 46 – 65**

Muhammad urges the Muslims to convert their friends and family before it’s too late.

*[40:49] Those in the hellfire will say to the guardians of Hell, “Call upon your Lord to reduce the retribution for us, for even one day.”*

*[40:50] They will say, “Did you not receive your messengers who delivered to you clear messages?” They will reply, “Yes we did.” They will say, “Then implore (as much as you wish); the imploring of the disbelievers is always in vain.”*

*[40:51] Most assuredly, we will give victory to our messengers and to those who believe, both in this world and on the day the witnesses are summoned.*

*[40:64] GOD is the One who rendered the earth habitable for you, and the sky a formidable structure, and He designed you, and designed you well. He is the One who provides you with good provisions. Such is GOD your Lord; Most Exalted is GOD, Lord of the universe.\**

*[40:65] He is the Living; there is no god except He. You shall worship Him alone, devoting your religion absolutely to Him alone. Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe.*

## **Verses 66 – 85**

Muhammad claims he too was once an idol worshipper, but thankfully he saw the light and it is now his responsibility to save his people from the fires of Hell.

*[40:66] Say, “I have been enjoined from worshipping the idols you worship beside GOD, when the clear revelations came to me from my Lord. I was commanded to submit to the Lord of the universe.”*

*[40:73] They will be asked, “Where are the idols you used to worship,*

*[40:74] “beside GOD?” They will say, “They have abandoned us. In fact, when we worshipped them, we were worshipping nothing.” Thus does GOD send the disbelievers astray.*

*[40:75] This is because you used to rejoice in false doctrines on earth, and you used to promote them.*

*[40:76] Enter the gates of Gehenna, wherein you abide forever. What a miserable destiny for the arrogant ones.*

*[40:84] Subsequently, when they saw our retribution they said, “Now we believe in GOD ALONE, and we now disbelieve in the idol worship that we used to practice.”*

*[40:85] Their belief then could not help them in the least, once they saw our retribution. Such is GOD’s system that has been established to deal with His creatures; the disbelievers are always doomed.*

# SURA 41: THE MADE PLAIN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The title of this Meccan sura gets its name from the third verse, which reads, “A Book whose verses (signs) are made plain.”

Comprising only fifty-four verses, it was recited during the time the Quraysh were becoming agitated by the growing number of Muslims within Mecca.

There are new laws prescribed within this sura, only a repetition of previous themes, such as reward for the believers versus punishment for the unbelievers.

## **Verses 1 – 12**

Muhammad addresses the Quraysh, telling them his followers’ minds are made up and Islam is here to stay.

*[41:2] A revelation from the Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*[41:3] A scripture whose verses provide the complete details, in an Arabic Quran, for people who know.*

*[41:4] A bearer of good news, as well as a warner. However, most of them turn away; they do not hear.*

*[41:5] They said, “Our minds are made up, our ears are deaf to your message, and a barrier separates us from you. Do what you want, and so will we.”*

*[41:6] Say, “I am no more than a human being like you, who has been inspired that your god is one god. You shall be devoted to Him, and ask His forgiveness. Woe to the idol worshipers.*

## **Verses 13 – 32**

Warning to unbelievers.

*[1:13] If they turn away, then say, “I am warning you of a disaster like the disaster that annihilated ‘Aad and Thamoud.”*

*[41:18] We always save those who believe and lead a righteous life.*

*[41:19] The day will come when the enemies of GOD will be summoned to the hellfire, forcibly.*

*[41:20] Once they get there, their own hearing, eyes, and skins will bear witness to everything they had done.*

## **Verses 33 – 54**

A somewhat random discourse, covering the Hereafter; and for Muslims to be wary of friends

who will try to lead them from belief.

*[41:41] Those who have rejected the Quran's proof when it came to them, have also rejected an Honorable book.*

*[41:42] No falsehood could enter it, in the past or in the future; a revelation from a Most Wise, Praiseworthy.*

*[41:49] The human being never tires of imploring for good things. And when adversity befalls him, he turns despondent, desperate.*

*[41:50] And when we bless him after suffering some adversity, he says, "This belongs to me. I do not believe that the Hour will ever come to pass. Even if I am returned to my Lord, I will find at Him better things." Most certainly, we will inform the disbelievers of all their works, and will commit them to severe retribution.*

*[41:51] When we bless the human being, he turns away, and drifts farther and farther away, and when he suffers any affliction, he implores loudly.*

*[41:52] Proclaim: "What if this is truly from GOD, then you decide to reject it? Who are farther astray than those who decide to oppose this?"*

# SURA 42: COUNSEL

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Comprising of only fifty-three verses, ‘Counsel’ stands out because it is here where Muhammad forbids Islam breaking into sects. Naturally, the irony being that that is precisely what happened to Islam in the years after his death, with the establishment of Shia and Sunni Islam. Muhammad prohibited against sectarianism, however, because he had seen firsthand what negative effect that had on Christianity throughout Arabia. He believed sectarianism tore that religion apart as it divided people, and without unity a faith would be subject to extinction from oppressive forces.

This sura was recited in Mecca and therefore it also addresses those who claim Muhammad is setting himself up to be a god. He rebukes that claim by telling them he is only a messenger.

## Verses 1 – 12

Muhammad gives thanks to God.

*[42:7] We thus reveal to you an Arabic Quran to warn the central community and all around it, and to warn about the Day of Summoning that is inevitable. Some will end up in Heaven, and some in Hell.*

*[42:11] Initiator of the heavens and the earth. He created for you from among yourselves spouses - and also for the animals. He thus provides you with the means to multiply. There is nothing that equals Him. He is the Hearer, the Seer.*

*[42:12] To Him belongs absolute control of the heavens and the earth. He is the One who increases the provision for whomever He wills, or reduces it. He is fully aware of all things.*

## Verses 13

Do not divide Islam into sects.

*[42:13] He decreed for you the same religion decreed for Noah, and what we inspired to you, and what we decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: “You shall uphold this one religion, and do not divide it.”*

## Verses 14 – 17

A message to Jews and Christians.

*[42:15] This is what you shall preach, and steadfastly maintain what you are commanded to do, and do not follow their wishes. And proclaim: “I believe in all the scriptures sent down by GOD. I was commanded to judge among you equitably. GOD is our Lord and your Lord. We have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no argument between us and you. GOD will gather us all together; to Him is the ultimate destiny.”*

*[42:16] Those who argue about GOD, after receiving His message, their argument is nullified at their Lord. They have incurred condemnation, and have deserved a severe retribution.*

*[42:17] GOD is the One who sent down the scripture, to deliver the truth and the law. For all that you know, the Hour (Day of Judgment) may be very close.*

### **Verses 18 – 36**

Muhammad warns the Muslims to not give into falsehoods.

*[42:21] They follow idols who decree for them religious laws never authorized by GOD. If it were not for the predetermined decision, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, the transgressors have incurred a painful retribution.*

*[42:32] Among His proofs are the ships that sail the sea with sails like flags.*

*[42:33] If He willed, He could have stilled the winds, leaving them motionless on top of the water. These are proofs for those who are steadfast, appreciative.*

*[42:34] He can annihilate them, as a consequence of their own works. Instead, He overlooks many (of their sins).*

*[42:35] Those who argue against our proofs will find out that they have no basis.*

### **Verses 37 – 53**

Traits of the believers.

*[42:37] They avoid gross sins and vice, and when angered they forgive.*

*[42:38] They respond to their Lord by observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Their affairs are decided after due consultation among themselves, and from our provisions to them they give (to charity).*

*[42:39] When gross injustice befalls them, they stand up for their rights.*

*[42:40] Although the just requital for an injustice is an equivalent retribution, those who pardon and maintain righteousness are rewarded by GOD. He does not love the unjust.*

*[42:41] Certainly, those who stand up for their rights, when injustice befalls them, are not committing any error.*

*[42:42] The wrong ones are those who treat the people unjustly, and resort to aggression without provocation. These have incurred a painful retribution.*

# SURA 43: ORNAMENTS OF GOD

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Comprising eighty-nine verses, ‘Ornaments of God’ is a Meccan sura written around the time the Quraysh were plotting to kill Muhammad. The central theme is essentially an all out verbal rebuke of the unbelievers and polytheists of Mecca.

## Verses 1 – 14

Muhammad gives glory to God and outlines the path to redemption.

*[43:3] We have rendered it an Arabic Quran, that you may understand.*

*[43:4] It is preserved with us in the original master, honorable and full of wisdom.*

*[43:12] He is the One who created all kinds, in pairs (male and female), and He created for you ships and livestock to ride.*

*[43:13] As you rest on top of them, you shall appreciate such a blessing from your Lord, and say, “Glory be to the One who subdued this for us. We could not have controlled them by ourselves.*

*[43:14] “We ultimately return to our Lord.”*

## Verses 15 – 25

Muhammad chastises the Quraysh for their discrimination against baby girls.

*[43:16] Has He chosen from among His creations daughters for Himself, while blessing you with sons?*

*[43:17] When one of them is given news (of a daughter) as they claimed for the Most Gracious, his face is darkened with misery and anger!*

*[43:18] (They say,) “What is good about an offspring that is brought up to be beautiful, and cannot help in war?”*

*[43:19] They claimed that the angels, who are servants of the Most Gracious, are females! Have they witnessed their creation? Their claims are recorded, and they will be asked.*

*[43:20] They even said, “If the Most Gracious willed, we would not have worshipped them.” They have no basis for such a claim; they only conjecture.*

## Verses 26 – 47

Muhammad uses the story of Abraham as a metaphor for his struggles with idol worshipers, while also mocking the Meccans for their love of material wealth.

[43:26] Abraham said to his father and his people, “I disown what you worship.

[43:27] “Only the One who initiated me can guide me.”

[43:28] This example (of Abraham) was rendered an everlasting lesson for subsequent generations; perhaps they redeem their souls.

[43:29] Indeed, I have given these people and their ancestors sufficient chances, then the truth came to them, and a clarifying messenger.

[43:31] They said, “If only this Quran was sent down through another man from the two communities (Mecca or Yathrib) who is prominent!”

[43:32] Are they the ones who assign your Lord’s mercy? We have assigned their shares in this life, raising some of them above others in ranks, in order to let them serve one another. The mercy from your Lord is far better than any material they may hoard.

[43:33] If it were not that all the people might become one (disbelieving) congregation, we would have granted everyone who disbelieves in the Most Gracious mansions with silver roofs, and stairs upon which they could climb.

[43:34] Their mansions would have impressive gates, and luxurious furnishings.

[43:35] Also many ornaments. All these are the temporary materials of this lowly life. The Hereafter - at your Lord - is far better for the righteous.

## **Verses 48 – 89**

Muhammad draws parallels between his mission and that of Moses’ and Jesus’.

[43:57] When the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people disregarded it.

[43:58] They said, “Is it better to worship our gods, or to worship him?” They said this only to argue with you. Indeed, they are people who have joined the opposition.

[43:59] He was no more than a servant whom we blessed, and we sent him as an example for the Children of Israel.

[43:60] If we willed, we could have made you angels who colonize and reproduce on earth.

[43:61] He is to serve as a marker for knowing the end of the world, so you can no longer harbor any doubt about it. You shall follow Me; this is the right path.

[43:62] Let not the devil repel you; he is your most ardent enemy.

[43:63] When Jesus went with the proofs, he said, “I bring to you wisdom, and to clarify some of the matters in which you dispute. You shall reverence GOD and obey me.

[43:64] “GOD is my Lord and your Lord, you shall worship Him alone. This is the right path.”

# SURA 44: SMOKE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

With the trade boycott causing the Muslim community in Mecca such hardships, some of his senior followers urged Muhammad to pray for some guidance, so as to alleviate their fears. This recitation was a product of those prayers.

Comprising only fifty-nine verses, 'Smoke' is a Meccan sura.

## **Verses 1 – 12**

Muhammad begins by glorifying God's power. It contains a prophetic description of a day, described as occurring before the Day of Judgment, in which the sky fills with a great smoke. The smoke is prophesied to cause enough chaos that people will cry out to Allah for reprieve.

*[44:7] Lord of the heavens and the earth, and everything between them. If only you could be certain!*

*[44:8] There is no other god beside Him. He controls life and death; your Lord and the Lord of your ancestors.*

*[44:9] Indeed, they are doubtful, heedless.*

*[44:10] Therefore, watch for the day when the sky brings a profound smoke.*

*[44:11] It will envelope the people; this is a painful retribution.*

*[44:12] "Our Lord, relieve this retribution for us; we are believers."*

## **Verses 13 – 42**

God doesn't hesitate to annihilate wrongful peoples.

*[44:13] Now that it is too late, they remember! An enlightening messenger had come to them.*

*[44:14] But they turned away from him, saying, "Well educated, but crazy!"*

*[44:15] We will relieve the retribution for awhile; you will soon revert.*

*[44:16] The day we strike the big stroke, we will avenge.*

*44:25] Thus, they left behind many gardens and springs.*

*[44:26] Crops and a luxurious life.*

*[44:27] Blessings that they enjoyed.*

*[44:28] All these we caused to be inherited by other people.*

*[44:29] Neither the heaven, nor the earth wept over them, and they were not respited.*

*[44:30] Meanwhile, we saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating persecution.*

### **Verses 43 – 59**

Muhammad addresses both the unbelievers and the Muslims.

*[44:43] Surely, the tree of bitterness –*

*[44:44] will provide the food for the sinful.*

*[44:45] Like lye, it will boil in the stomachs.*

*[44:46] Like the boiling of hellish drinks.*

*[44:47] Take him and throw him into the center of Hell.*

*[44:51] The righteous will be in a secure position.*

*[44:52] Enjoying gardens and springs.*

*[44:53] Wearing velvet and satin; close to each other.*

*[44:54] We grant them wonderful spouses.*

*[44:55] They enjoy in it all kinds of fruits, in perfect peace.*

*[44:56] They do not taste death therein - beyond the first death - and He has spared them the retribution of Hell.*

# SURA 45: THE KNEELING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura containing only thirty-seven verses, Muhammad mocks the Meccans for their blasphemous beliefs.

## **Verses 1 - 27**

Muhammad addresses blasphemy.

*[45:6] These are GOD's revelations that we recite to you truthfully. In which Hadith other than GOD and His revelations do they believe?*

*[45:7] Woe to every fabricator, guilty.*

*[45:8] The one who hears GOD's revelations recited to him, then insists arrogantly on his way, as if he never heard them. Promise him a painful retribution.*

*[45:9] When he learns anything about our revelations, he mocks them. These have incurred a shameful retribution.*

*[45:25] When our revelations are recited to them, clearly, their only argument is to say, "Bring back our forefathers, if you are truthful."*

*[45:26] Say, "GOD has granted you life, then He puts you to death, then He will summon you to the Day of Resurrection, which is inevitable. But most people do not know."*

## **Verses 28 – 37**

Kneeling.

*[45:28] You will see every community kneeling. Every community will be called to view their record. Today, you get paid for everything you have done.*

*[45:29] This is our record; it utters the truth about you. We have been recording everything you did.*

*[45:30] As for those who believe and work righteousness, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. This is the great triumph.*

# SURA 46: THE DUNES

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited in Mecca during the middle years prior to the migration, 'The Dunes' is only thirty-five verses long and is centrally concerned with warning the Meccans to cease their practice of worshiping false gods.

## Verses 1 – 20

Muhammad forewarns that the pagans will wish to abandon their idol gods when face with the Day of Judgment, but by then it will be too late.

*[46:5] Who is farther astray than those who idolize beside GOD idols that can never respond to them until the Day of Resurrection, and are totally unaware of their worship?*

*[46:6] And when the people are summoned (on the Day of Judgment), their idols will become their enemies, and will denounce their idolatry.*

*[46:9] Say, "I am not different from other messengers. I have no idea what will happen to me or to you. I only follow what is revealed to me. I am no more than a profound warner."*

*[46:10] Say, "What if it is from GOD and you disbelieved in it? A witness from the Children of Israel has borne witness to a similar phenomenon, and he has believed, while you have turned arrogant. Surely, GOD does not guide the wicked people."*

*[46:11] Those who disbelieved said about those who believed, "If it were anything good, they would not have accepted it before us." Because they were not guided to it, they said, "This is an old fabrication!"*

*[46:12] Before this, the book of Moses provided guidance and mercy. This too is a scripture that confirms, in Arabic, to warn those who transgressed, and to give good news to the righteous.*

## Verses 21 – 35

Muhammad cites examples where other cities wished to convert but left it too late.

*[46:20] The day will come when those who disbelieved will be introduced to the hellfire: "You have wasted the good chances given to you during your worldly life, and you rejoiced in them. Consequently, today you incur a shameful retribution as a requital for the arrogance you committed on earth without any basis, and for your evil works."*

*[46:21] Recall that the brother of 'Aad warned his people at the dunes - numerous warnings were also delivered before him and after him: "You shall not worship except GOD. I fear for you the retribution of a great day."*

*[46:22] They said, "Did you come to divert us from our gods? We challenge you to bring (the retribution) you threaten, if you are truthful."*

*[46:23] He said, “The knowledge about this is with GOD; I only deliver to you what I was sent to deliver. However, I see that you people are ignorant.”*

*[46:24] When they saw the storm heading their way, they said, “This storm will bring to us much needed rain.” Instead, this is what you challenged (Hood) to bring; violent wind wherein there is painful retribution.*

*[46:25] It destroyed everything, as commanded by its Lord. By morning, nothing was standing except their homes. We thus requite the guilty people.*

# SURA 47: MUHAMMAD

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sura was revealed to Muhammad in the years after the migration to Medina, and mistakenly, its verses are often taken out of context when used in arguments against Islam, as many of these verses relate to waging war with unbelievers. In context, however, one must bear in mind that Muhammad was forced to flee Mecca because the Quraysh intended to kill him, but once in Medina, they had no intentions of letting the Muslims live there in peace and harmony. In fact, they pursued and attacked him there. Thus this sura is Muhammad's call to his people to defend themselves, and therefore should be read imagining a warrior leader priming his troops for battle.

## **Verses 1 – 17**

Muhammad addresses the Muslims in regards to their enemy, the Quraysh.

*[47:2] Those who believe and work righteousness, and believe in what was sent down to Muhammad - which is the truth from their Lord - He remits their sins, and blesses them with contentment.*

*[47:3] This is because those who disbelieve are following falsehood, while those who believe are following the truth from their Lord. GOD thus cites for the people their examples.*

*[47:4] If you encounter (in war) those who disbelieve, you may strike the necks. If you take them as captives you may set them free or ransom them, until the war ends. Had GOD willed, He could have granted you victory, without war. But He thus tests you by one another. As for those who get killed in the cause of GOD, He will never put their sacrifice to waste.*

*[47:5] He will guide them, and bless them with contentment.*

*[47:6] He will admit them into Paradise, that He described to them.*

*47:8] Those who disbelieve incur misery; He causes their works to be utterly in vain.*

*[47:9] That is because they hated what GOD revealed and consequently, He nullifies their works.*

*[47:10] Did they not roam the earth and see the consequences for those before them? GOD destroyed their works; all disbelievers will suffer the same fate.*

*[47:11] This is because GOD is the Lord of those who believe, while the disbelievers have no lord.*

## **Verses 18 – 23**

Muhammad forewarns that looming battle will expose the hypocrites and fair weather Muslims for who they are.

*[47:20] Those who believed said: “When will a new sura be revealed?” But when a straightforward sura was revealed, wherein fighting was mentioned, you would see those who harbored doubts in their hearts looking at you, as if death had already come to them. They were thus exposed.*

*[47:21] Obedience and righteous utterances are expected of them. If only they showed confidence in GOD, when mobilization was called for, it would have been better for them.*

*[47:22] Is it also your intention that as soon as you leave you will commit evil and mistreat your relatives?*

*[47:23] It is those who incurred a curse from GOD, whereby He rendered them deaf and blind.*

### **Verses 24 – 38**

Take comfort from the words of the Koran, the enemy has no equivalent.

*[47:24] Why do they not study the Quran carefully? Do they have locks on their minds?*

*[47:25] Surely, those who slide back, after the guidance has been manifested to them, the devil has enticed them and led them on.*

*[47:26] This is because they said to those who hated what GOD has sent down, “We will obey you in certain matters.” GOD fully knows their secret conspiracies.*

*[47:27] How will it be for them when the angels put them to death? They will beat them on their faces and their rear ends.*

*[47:28] This is because they followed what angered GOD and hated the things that please Him. Consequently, He has nullified their works.*

*[47:34] Those who disbelieve and repel from the path of GOD, then die as disbelievers, GOD will never forgive them.*

*[47:35] Therefore, you shall not waver and surrender in pursuit of peace, for you are guaranteed victory, and GOD is with you. He will never waste your efforts.*

# SURA 48: THE VICTORY

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Comprising only twenty-nine verses, ‘The Victory’ was recited by Muhammad shortly after signing the Peace Treaty with the Meccans in 628. For the previous six years, the Quraysh had banned the Muslims from entering the holy shrine, and had waged several major military campaigns against him, so for Muhammad, this was huge victory.

## Verses 1 – 9

Muhammad trumpets his success.

*[48:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[48:1] We have bestowed upon you (O Messenger) a great victory.*

*[48:2] Whereby GOD forgives your past sins, as well as future sins, and perfects His blessings upon you, and guides you in a straight path.*

*48:5] He will certainly admit the believing men and women into gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. He will remit their sins. This is, in the sight of GOD, a great triumph.*

*[48:6] And He will requite the hypocrite men and women and the idol worshipping men and women, for they have harbored evil thoughts about GOD. Their evil will backfire against them. For GOD is angry with them, condemns them, and has prepared for them Gehenna. What a miserable destiny!*

## Verses 10 – 15

Muhammad claims his victory is proof he is God’s messenger.

*[48:10] Surely, those who pledge allegiance to you, are pledging allegiance to GOD. GOD approves their pledge; He places His hand above their hands. Those who violate such a pledge, commit the violation to their own detriment. As for those who fulfill their pledge with GOD, He will grant them a great recompense.*

*[48:11] The sedentary Arabs who stay behind will say, “We have been preoccupied with our money and our families, so ask forgiveness for us!” They utter with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say, “Who can protect you from GOD, if He willed any adversity for you, or if He willed any blessing for you?” GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[48:12] You secretly believed that the messenger and the believers will be defeated and never come back to their families, and this was firmly established in your hearts. You harbored evil thoughts and turned into wicked people.*

*[48:13] Anyone who refuses to believe in GOD and His messenger, we have prepared for*

*the disbelievers a hellfire.*

## **Verses 16 – 29**

Our victory will inspire future Arab generations to conquer those who oppress us.

*[48:18] GOD is pleased with the believers who pledged allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts and, consequently, He blessed them with contentment, and rewarded them with an immediate victory.*

*[48:19] Additionally, they gained many spoils. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.*

*[48:20] GOD has promised you many spoils that you will gain. He thus advanced some benefits for you in this life, and He has withheld the people's hands of aggression against you, and has rendered this a sign for the believers. He thus guides you in a straight path.*

*[48:25] It is they who disbelieved and barred you from the Sacred Masjid, and even prevented your offerings from reaching their destination. There were believing men and women (within the enemy camp) whom you did not know, and you were about to hurt them, unknowingly. GOD thus admits into His mercy whomever He wills. If they persist, He will requite those among them who disbelieve with a painful retribution.*

*[48:26] While those who disbelieved were enraged, and their hearts were filled with the pride of the days of ignorance, GOD blessed His messenger and the believers with peaceful contentment, and directed them to uphold the word of righteousness. This is what they well deserved. GOD is fully aware of all things.*

# SURA 49: THE APARTMENTS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This 18 verse Medinan sura is a call to the Muslims to maintain unity. That no force can conquer them should they remain a house united. Thus Muhammad implores the Muslims to be generous and civil to one another. Much of it is to do with civility and social order.

## Verses 1 – 5

Always obey God and his messenger.

*[49:1] O you who believe, do not place your opinion above that of GOD and His messenger. You shall reverence GOD. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.*

*[49:2] O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the prophet, nor shall you shout at him as you shout at each other, lest your works become nullified while you do not perceive.*

## Verses 6 – 9

Don't perpetuate rumors without investigating the facts first.

*[49:6] O you who believe, if a wicked person brings any news to you, you shall first investigate, lest you commit injustice towards some people, out of ignorance, then become sorry and remorseful for what you have done.*

*[49:7] And know that GOD's messenger has come in your midst. Had he listened to you in many things, you would have made things difficult for yourselves. But GOD made you love faith and adorned it in your hearts, and He made you abhor disbelief, wickedness, and disobedience. These are the guided ones*

## Verses 10 – 18

All Muslims are part of one family.

*[49:10] The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy.*

*[49:11] O you who believe, no people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you mock one another, or make fun of your names. Evil indeed is the reversion to wickedness after attaining faith. Anyone who does not repent after this, these are the transgressors.*

*[49:12] O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a little bit of suspicion is sinful. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead brother. You certainly abhor this. You shall*

*observe GOD. GOD is Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

# SURA 50: KAF

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Named after the first letter of this early Meccan sura, 'The Kaf' comprises 58 verses and deals primarily with the Hereafter. Islamic tradition holds that a young Muslim woman was unable to recite this sura to memory because she had difficulty in believing there'd be an afterlife, which is something a majority of Arabs, prior to Muhammad, did not believe. This sura is addressed to the Muslims in regards to Paradise.

## Verses 1 – 45

It is a single address to the woman's concerns regarding the Hereafter.

*[50:2] They found it strange that a warner from among them came to them! The disbelievers said, "This is really strange.*

*[50:3] "After we die and become dust; this is impossible."*

*[50:4] We are fully aware of anyone of them who gets consumed by the earth; we have an accurate record.*

*[50:16] We created the human, and we know what he whispers to himself. We are closer to him than his jugular vein.*

*[50:17] Two recording (angels), at right and at left, are constantly recording.*

*[50:18] Not an utterance does he utter without an alert witness.*

*[50:19] Finally, the inevitable coma of death comes; this is what you tried to evade.*

*[50:20] The horn is blown; this is the promised day.*

*[50:21] Every soul comes with a herder and a witness.*

*[50:22] You used to be oblivious to this. We now remove your veil; today, your vision is (as strong as) steel.*

*[50:31] Paradise will be offered to the righteous, readily.*

*[50:32] This is what was promised to every repentor, steadfast.*

*[50:33] They revered the Most Gracious, in their privacy, and came wholeheartedly.*

*[50:34] Enter it in peace; this is the Day of Eternity.*

*[50:41] Prepare for the day when the caller calls from a place that is near.*

*[50:42] When they hear the inevitable cry; that is the day you come out.*

# SURA 51: THE SCATTERING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sixty-verse sura is said to have been recited at the same time as the sura before it, as it deals mostly with the Hereafter and little to do with outright hostility against the Meccans, who had not yet targeted Muhammad so vigorously at this stage.

## **Verses 1 – 60**

Reads a single address regarding Paradise and rewards for the believers.

*[51:5] What is promised to you will surely come to pass.*

*[51:6] The Day of Judgment is inevitable.*

*[51:7] Despite the perfectly created sky.*

*[51:8] You continue to dispute the truth.*

*[51:9] Deviating therefrom are the deviators.*

*[51:10] Woe to the falsifiers.*

*[51:11] In their blundering, they are totally heedless.*

*[51:12] They question the Day of Judgment.*

*[51:13] The day they are presented to the fire.*

*[51:14] Taste the retribution; this is what you used to challenge.*

*[51:15] The righteous have deserved gardens and springs.*

*[51:35] We then delivered all the believers.*

*[51:36] We did not find in it except one house of submitters.*

*[51:37] We set it up as a lesson for those who fear the painful retribution.*

*[51:38] In Moses (there is a lesson). We sent him to Pharaoh with manifest proofs.*

*[51:39] But he turned away, in arrogance, and said, "Magician, or crazy."*

*[51:40] Consequently, we punished him and his troops. We threw them into the sea, and he is the one to blame.*

*[51:47] We constructed the sky with our hands, and we will continue to expand it.*

*[51:48] And we made the earth habitable; a perfect design.*

*[51:49] We created a pair (male and female) of everything, that you may take heed.*

*[51:50] You shall escape to GOD. I am sent by Him to you as a manifest warner.*

*[51:58] GOD is the Provider, the Possessor of all power, the Supreme.*

*[51:59] The transgressors have incurred the same fate as their previous counterparts; they should not challenge.*

*[51:60] Woe to those who disbelieved from the day that is awaiting them.*

# SURA 52: THE MOUNTAIN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This Meccan sura comprises forty-nine verses and was revealed to Muhammad at a time when the Meccans began to become more openly hostile towards him. The sura reads as two discourses. The first, deals with the Hereafter, and the second an address to the Quraysh chiefs who claimed he was merely a poet or a sorcerer.

The Mountain that Muhammad refers to the Old Testament's Mount Sinai.

## Verses 1 – 28

A narration of Paradise and its rewards.

*[52:7] Your Lord's requital is unavoidable.*

*[52:8] No force in the universe can stop it.*

*[52:9] The day will come when the sky will violently thunder.*

*[52:10] The mountains will be wiped out.*

*[52:11] Woe on that day to the disbelievers –*

*[52:17] The righteous have deserved gardens and bliss.*

*[52:18] They enjoy what their Lord has reserved for them; their Lord has spared them the retribution of Hell.*

*[52:19] Eat and drink happily, in return for your works.*

*[52:20] They relax on luxurious furnishings, and we match them with beautiful spouses.*

*[52:21] For those who believed, and their children also followed them in belief, we will have their children join them. We never fail to reward them for any work. Every person is paid for what he did.*

*[52:22] We will supply them with fruits and meats that they love.*

*[52:23] They will enjoy drinks that are never polluted, and never sinful to drink.*

*[52:24] Serving them will be servants like protected pearls.*

*[52:25] They will meet each other and reminisce among themselves.*

## Verses 29 – 49

Muhammad is the messenger of God and the unbelievers should accept him.

*[52:29] You shall remind the people. With your Lord's blessing's upon you, you are neither a soothsayer, nor crazy.*

*[52:30] They may say, "He is a poet; let us just wait until he is dead."*

*[52:31] Say, "Go on waiting; I will wait along with you."*

*[52:32] Is it their dreams that dictate their behavior, or are they naturally wicked?*

*[52:33] Do they say, "He made it all up?" Instead, they are simply disbelievers.*

*[52:34] Let them produce a Hadith like this, if they are truthful.*

*[52:35] Were they created from nothing? Are they the creators?*

*[52:36] Did they create the heavens and the earth? Indeed, they have no certainty.*

*[52:37] Do they possess the treasures of your Lord? Are they in control?*

*[52:38] Do they climb a ladder that enables them to listen? Let their listeners show their proof.*

# SURA 53: THE STAR

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This sura is considered one of the earliest. Here Muhammad addresses the legitimacy of his prophetic visions and his divine authority.

## **Verses 1 – 18**

Muhammad claims his visions of the Archangel are true.

*[53:1] As the stars fell away.*

*[53:2] Your friend (Muhammad) was not astray, nor was he deceived.*

*[53:3] Nor was he speaking out of a personal desire.*

*[53:4] It was divine inspiration.*

*[53:5] Dictated by the Most Powerful.*

*[53:6] Possessor of all authority. From His highest height.*

*[53:7] At the highest horizon.*

*[53:8] He drew nearer by moving down.*

*[53:9] Until He became as close as possible.*

*[53:10] He then revealed to His servant what was to be revealed.*

*[53:11] The mind never made up what it saw.*

*[53:12] Are you doubting what he saw?*

*[53:13] He saw him in another descent.*

*[53:14] At the ultimate point.*

*[53:15] Where the eternal Paradise is located.*

*[53:16] The whole place was overwhelmed.*

*[53:17] The eyes did not waver, nor go blind.*

*[53:18] He saw great signs of his Lord.*

## **Verses 19 – 28**

Idols are worthless.

*[53:19] Compare this with the female idols Allaat and Al-'Uzzah.*

*[53:20] And Manaat, the third one.*

*[53:21] Do you have sons, while He has these as daughters?*

*[53:22] What a disgraceful distribution!*

*[53:23] These are but names that you made up, you and your forefathers. GOD never authorized such a blasphemy. They follow conjecture, and personal desire, when the true guidance has come to them herein from their Lord.*

## **Verses 29 – 44**

Choose friends from among the believers only.

*[53:29] You shall disregard those who turn away from our message, and become preoccupied with this worldly life.*

*[53:38] No soul bears the sins of another soul.*

*[53:39] Every human being is responsible for his own works.*

*[53:40] And everyone's works will be shown.*

*[53:41] Then they will be paid fully for such works.*

*[53:42] To your Lord is the final destiny.*

# SURA 54: THE MOON

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

If we recall the first five years of Muhammad's calling, you will remember he spoke only of the Koran's words to immediate family and a close circle of friends. Well, this fifty-five-verse Meccan sura was revealed shortly after he gave his first public address, the one whereby he was ridiculed and mocked by almost the entire city.

## Verses 1 – 12

The unbelievers refuse to hear the signs and see the proofs.

*[54:1] The Hour has come closer, and the moon has split.*

*[54:2] Then they saw a miracle; but they turned away and said, "Old magic."*

*[54:3] They disbelieved, followed their opinions, and adhered to their old traditions.*

*[54:4] Sufficient warnings have been delivered to alert them.*

*[54:5] Great wisdom; but all the warnings have been in vain.*

*[54:6] Ignore them; the day will come when the caller will announce a terrible disaster.*

## Verses 13 – 55

The story of Noah's Ark, and Sodom & Gomorrah.

*[54:13] We carried him on a watercraft made of logs and ropes.*

*[54:14] It ran under our watchful eyes; a reward for one who was rejected.*

*[54:15] We have set it up as a lesson. Does any of you wish to learn?*

*[54:16] How terrible was My retribution after the warnings!*

*[54:17] We made the Quran easy to learn. Does any of you wish to learn?*

*[54:18] 'Aad disbelieved. Consequently, how terrible was My retribution after the warnings.*

*[54:19] We sent upon them violent winds, on a day of continuous misery.*

*[54:20] It tossed the people around as if they were decayed palm tree trunks.*

*[54:33] The people of Lot rejected the warnings.*

*[54:34] We showered them with rocks. Only Lot's family was saved at dawn.*

*[54:35] We blessed him and his family; we thus reward the appreciative.*

*[54:36] He warned them about our requital, but they ridiculed the warnings.*

*[54:37] They negotiated with him about his guests; we blinded them. Suffer My retribution; you have been warned.*

*[54:38] Early the next morning, a devastating retribution struck them.*

# SURA 55: THE MERCIFUL

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

The main theme of the sura is the importance of giving manifestation and fruits to the attribution of God's mercy and grace, which is evident right from the beginning, till the very end.

'The Merciful' is a Meccan sura comprising seventy-eight verses and reads as a single address.

*[55:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[55:1] The Most Gracious.*

*[55:2] Teacher of the Quran.*

*[55:3] Creator of the human beings.*

*[55:4] He taught them how to distinguish.*

*[55:5] The sun and the moon are perfectly calculated.*

*[55:6] The stars and the trees prostrate.*

*[55:7] He constructed the sky and established the law.*

*[55:17] Lord of the two easts and the two wests.*

*[55:18] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:19] He separates the two seas where they meet.*

*[55:20] A barrier is placed between them, to prevent them from transgressing.*

*[55:49] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:50] Two springs are in them, flowing.*

*[55:51] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:52] Of every fruit in them, two kinds.*

*[55:53] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:54] While relaxing on furnishings lined with satin, the fruits are within reach.*

*[55:55] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:56] Their beautiful mates were never touched by any human or jinn.*

*[55:57] Which of your Lord's marvels can you deny?*

*[55:58] They look like gems and coral.*

# SURA 56: THE INEVITABLE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Recited by Muhammad in Mecca, 'The Inevitable' is an address to the disbelievers who harbor suspicions about the Hereafter, as they didn't believe in the philosophy that human existence continued beyond the earthly realm. They regarded the idea of heaven or paradise as little more than wishful thinking.

## **Verses 1 – 6**

Muhammad forewarns that the Day of Judgment will come.

*[56:1] When the inevitable comes to pass.*

*[56:2] Nothing can stop it from happening.*

*[56:3] It will lower some, and raise others.*

*[56:4] The earth will be shaken up.*

*[56:5] The mountains will be wiped out.*

*[56:6] As if they never existed.*

## **Verses 7 – 56**

Muhammad says on that Day of Judgment, people will be divided into three classes: (1) The foremost in rank and position; (2) the common righteous people and (3) those who believe in paganism and polytheism. He then describes how these three classes will be punished or rewarded.

1<sup>st</sup> class:

*[56:7] You will be stratified into three kinds.*

*[56:8] Those who deserved bliss will be in bliss.*

*[56:9] Those who deserved misery will be in misery.*

*[56:10] Then there is the elite of the elite.*

*[56:11] They are those who will be closest (to God).*

*[56:12] In the gardens of bliss.*

*[56:13] Many from the first generations.*

*[56:14] Few from the later generations.*

*[56:15] On luxurious furnishings.*

*[56:16] Enjoying everything, they will be neighbors.*

*[56:17] Serving them will be immortal servants.*

*[56:18] With cups, pitchers and pure drinks.*

*[56:19] They never run out, nor do they get bored.*

*[56:20] Fruits of their choice.*

*[56:21] Meat of birds that they desire.*

*[56:22] Beautiful mates.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Class:

*[56:27] Those of the right side, will be on the right side.*

*[56:28] In lush orchards.*

*[56:29] Fragrant fruits.*

*[56:30] Extended shade.*

*[56:31] Abundant water.*

*[56:32] Many fruits.*

*[56:33] Never ending; never forbidden.*

*[56:34] Luxurious furnishings.*

*[56:35] We create for them mates.*

*[56:36] Never previously touched.*

3<sup>rd</sup> Class:

*[56:41] Those of the left, will be on the left.*

*[56:42] In misery and inferno.*

*[56:43] Even their shade is hot.*

*[56:44] Never cool, never tolerable.*

*[56:45] They used to be rich.*

*[56:46] They insisted on the great blasphemy.*

## **Verses 57 – 74**

Muhammad states the proofs he has for there being life after death.

*[56:57] We have created you, if you could only believe!*

*[56:58] Have you noted the semen that you produce?*

*[56:59] Did you create it, or did we?*

*[56:60] We have predetermined death for you. Nothing can stop us*

*[56:61] from substituting new generations in your place, and establishing what you do not know.*

*[56:62] You know about the first creation. Do you not remember?*

*[56:63] Have you noted the crops you reap?*

*[56:64] Did you grow them, or did we?*

## **Verses 75 – 96**

Muhammad addresses the unbeliever's suspicion that the Koran is not the authentic word of God.

*[56:75] I swear by the positions of the stars.*

*[56:76] This is an oath, if you only knew, that is awesome.*

*[56:77] This is an honorable Quran.*

*[56:78] In a protected book.*

*[56:79] None can grasp it except the sincere.*

*[56:80] A revelation from the Lord of the universe.*

*[56:81] Are you disregarding this narration?*

*[56:82] Do you make it your business that you disbelieve?*

*[56:83] When the time comes and it (your soul) reaches your throat –*

*[56:84] you will then look around.*

*[56:85] We are closer to it than you are, but you do not see.*

# SURA 57: IRON

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is a Medinan sura given to the Muslims during a state of war, sometime during the interval between the Siege of Medina and the Truce of Hudaibiyah.

In these twenty-nine verses, Muhammad implores the Muslims to fight against those who threaten to annihilate them. He tells them that devotion to God requires more than just prayer and words, and that if they're to survive, then they must be willing to sacrifice for their community or die.

## Verses 1 – 10

Muhammad gives glory to God.

*[57:1] Glorifying GOD is everything in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.*

*[57:2] To Him belongs the kingship of the heavens and the earth. He controls life and death. He is Omnipotent.*

*[57:3] He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Outermost and the Innermost. He is fully aware of all things.*

## Verses 11 – 29

Muslims must make sacrifices and do everything to strive for the survival of their community and religion.

*[57:11] Distinguished from the rest are those among you who spend before the victory and strive. They attain a greater rank than those who spend after the victory and strive. For each, GOD promises salvation. GOD is Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[57:12] The day will come when you see the believing men and women with their lights radiating ahead of them and to their right. Good news is yours that, on that day, you will have gardens with flowing streams. You will abide therein forever. This is the great triumph.*

*[57:13] On that day, the hypocrite men and women will say to those who believed, "Please allow us to absorb some of your light." It will be said, "Go back behind you, and seek light." A barrier will be set up between them, whose gate separates mercy on the inner side, from retribution on the outer side.*

*[57:20] Know that this worldly life is no more than play and games, and boasting among you, and hoarding of money and children. It is like abundant rain that produces plants and pleases the disbelievers. But then the plants turn into useless hay, and are blown away by the wind. In the Hereafter there is either severe retribution, or forgiveness from GOD and approval. This worldly life is no more than a temporary illusion.*

*[57:28] O you who believe, you shall reverence GOD and believe in His messenger. He will then grant you double the reward from His mercy, endow you with light to guide you, and forgive you. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

# SURA 58: THE DEBATE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

Comprising of twenty-two verses, 'The Debate' is a Medinan sura that deals with the social issues faced by Muhammad and the Muslims in the first years after the migration there.

## **Verses 1 - 6**

Muhammad warns against Muslims creating their own rules and regulations that go against the laws of Islam.

*[58:1] GOD has heard the woman who debated with you about her husband, and complained to GOD. GOD heard everything the two of you discussed. GOD is Hearer, Seer.*

*[58:2] Those among you who estrange their wives (by declaring them as forbidden in sex) as their mothers know full well that they are not their mothers. Their mothers are the women who gave birth to them. Indeed, they are committing a blasphemy and a falsehood. GOD is Pardoner, Forgiver.*

*[58:3] Those who estrange their wives in this manner, then reconcile thereafter, shall atone by freeing a slave before resuming their sexual relations. This is to enlighten you. GOD is Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[58:4] If you cannot find a slave to free, you shall fast two consecutive months before resuming sexual relations. If you cannot fast, then you shall feed sixty poor people. You shall believe in GOD and His messenger. These are GOD's laws. The disbelievers have incurred a painful retribution.*

## **Verses 7 – 10**

Muhammad lambasts the hypocrites who spread false rumors about him.

*[58:8] Have you noted those who were enjoined from conspiring secretly, then insist on conspiring? They conspire to commit sin, transgression, and disobedience of the messenger. When they come to you, they greet you with a greeting other than that decreed by GOD. They say inside themselves, "GOD will not punish us for our utterances." Their only requital is Gehenna, wherein they burn; what a miserable destiny.*

*[58:9] O you who believe, if you have to confer secretly, you shall not confer to commit sin, transgression, and to disobey the messenger. You shall confer to work righteousness and piety. You shall reverence GOD, before whom you will be summoned.*

*[58:10] Secret conspiracy is the devil's idea, through which he seeks to hurt those who believed. However, he cannot hurt them against GOD's will. In GOD the believers shall trust.*

## Verses 11 – 22

Muhammad urges Muslims to stay righteous; to observe prayer; pay their charity tax; and to disown non-Muslim friends.

*[58:12] O you who believe, when you wish to confer with the messenger, you shall offer a charity (to the poor) before you do so. This is better for you, and purer. If you cannot afford it, then GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[58:13] If you failed to give to charity before conferring, then repented thereafter, GOD accepts your repentance. You shall observe the contact prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and obey GOD and His messenger. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[58:14] Have you noted those who befriended people with whom GOD is angry? They neither belong with you, nor with them. They deliberately swear lies!*

*[58:15] GOD has prepared for them a severe retribution. Miserable indeed is what they used to do.*

*[58:16] They used their oaths as a means of repelling from the path of GOD. Consequently, they have incurred a shameful retribution.*

*[58:17] Neither their money, nor their children will help them against GOD. They have incurred the hellfire, wherein they abide forever.*

*[58:18] The Day will come when GOD resurrects them all. They will swear to Him then, just as they swear to you now, thinking that they really are right! Indeed, they are the real liars.*

*[58:19] The devil has possessed them, and has caused them to disregard GOD's message. These are the party of the devil. Absolutely, the party of the devil are the losers.*

# SURA 59: THE BANISHMENT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

‘The Banishment’ is a Medinan sura comprising twenty-four verses. It is here Muhammad discusses the reasons behind the expulsion of the Jewish tribe, Banu Nadir, from the Muslim city of Medina.

## Verses 1 – 6

Muhammad explains why the Jewish tribe was forced to leave.

*[59:2] He is the One who evicted those who disbelieved among the people of the scripture from their homes in a mass exodus. You never thought that they would leave, and they thought that their preparations would protect them from GOD. But then GOD came to them whence they never expected, and threw terror into their hearts. Thus, they abandoned their homes on their own volition, in addition to pressure from the believers. You should learn from this, O you who possess vision.*

*[59:3] If GOD did not force them to leave, He would have requited them in this life (even worse than forcing them to leave). In the Hereafter He will commit them to the retribution of Hell.*

*[59:4] This is because they opposed GOD and His messenger. For those who oppose GOD and His messenger, GOD is most strict in enforcing retribution.*

## Verses 7 – 24

Muhammad tells the Muslims that the seized property of the exiled Jews is the spoils of war and should be seen as a gift from God.

*[59:7] Whatever GOD restored to His messenger from the (defeated) communities shall go to GOD and His messenger (in the form of a charity). You shall give it to the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien. Thus, it will not remain monopolized by the strong among you. You may keep the spoils given to you by the messenger, but do not take what he enjoins you from taking. You shall reverence GOD. GOD is strict in enforcing retribution.*

*[59:8] (You shall give) to the needy who immigrated. They were evicted from their homes and deprived of their properties, because they sought GOD’s grace and pleasure, and because they supported GOD and His messenger. They are the truthful.*

*[59:9] As for those who provided them with a home and a refuge, and were believers before them, they love those who immigrated to them, and find no hesitation in their hearts in helping them. In fact, they readily give them priority over themselves, even when they themselves need what they give away. Indeed, those who overcome their natural stinginess are the successful ones.*

*[59:12] In fact, if they were evicted, they would not have gone out with them, and if anyone fought them, they would not have supported them. Even if they supported them, they would have turned around and fled. They could never win.*

*[59:13] Indeed, you strike more terror in their hearts than their fear of GOD. This is because they are people who do not comprehend.*

# SURA 60: SHE WHO IS TO BE EXAMINED

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is a Medinan sura comprising a mere thirteen verses. 'She Who Is To Be Examined' deals with two incidents. The first relates to a letter sent by a Meccan spy in Medina, who informed the Quraysh chiefs Muhammad planned to attack them. The second refers to problems that occurred after the Truce of Hudaibiyah, which indicates this sura was recited after the truce and before Muhammad's conquest of Mecca.

## **Verses 1 – 9**

Muhammad warns there are traitors within the Muslim community of Medina, and unbelievers who are trying to sabotage their safety.

*[60:1] O you who believe, you shall not befriend My enemies and your enemies, extending love and friendship to them, even though they have disbelieved in the truth that has come to you. They persecute the messenger, and you, just because you believe in GOD, your Lord. If you mobilize to struggle in My cause, seeking My blessings, how can you secretly love them? I am fully aware of everything you conceal, and everything you declare. Those among you who do this have indeed strayed off the right path.*

*[60:2] Whenever they encounter you, they treat you as enemies, and hurt you with their hands and tongues. They want you to disbelieve.*

## **Verses 10 – 13**

Muhammad warns against making friends with unbelievers, and gives instructions to families in the event of war.

*[60:8] GOD does not enjoin you from befriending those who do not fight you because of religion, and do not evict you from your homes. You may befriend them and be equitable towards them. GOD loves the equitable.*

*[60:9] GOD enjoins you only from befriending those who fight you because of religion, evict you from your homes, and band together with others to banish you. You shall not befriend them. Those who befriend them are the transgressors.*

*[60:10] O you who believe, when believing women (abandon the enemy and) ask for asylum with you, you shall test them. GOD is fully aware of their belief. Once you establish that they are believers, you shall not return them to the disbelievers. They are not lawful to remain married to them, nor shall the disbelievers be allowed to marry them. Give back the dowries that the disbelievers have paid. You commit no error by marrying them, so long as you pay them their due dowries. Do not keep disbelieving wives (if they wish to join the enemy). You may ask them for the dowry you had paid, and they may ask for what they paid. This is GOD's rule; He rules among you. GOD is Omniscient, Most Wise.*

*[60:11] If any of your wives join the enemies' camp, and you are forced to fight, you shall force the enemy to compensate the men who lost their wives, by giving them what they spent on their wives. You shall reverence GOD, in whom you believe.*

*[60:12] O you prophet, when the believing women (who abandoned the disbelievers) to seek asylum with you pledge to you that they will not set up any idols besides GOD, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor fabricate any falsehood, nor disobey your righteous orders, you shall accept their pledge, and pray to GOD to forgive them. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[60:13] O you who believe, do not befriend people with whom GOD is angry, and who are hopelessly stuck in disbelief; they are just as hopeless as the disbelievers who are already in the graves.*

# SURA 61: BATTLE ARRAY

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is a Medinian sura comprising only fourteen verses, and was recited by Muhammad in Medina, shortly after the Battle of Uhud.

It is addressed to the Muslims of weak and wavering faith.

## **Verses 1 – 4**

God wants you to fight for him.

*[61:3] Most abominable in the sight of GOD is that you say what you do not do.*

*[61:4] GOD loves those who fight in His cause united in one column, like the bricks in one wall.*

## **Verses 5 – 7**

Muhammad warns the Muslims not to doubt him like the way the Israelites doubted Moses.

*[61:5] Recall that Moses said to his people, “O my people, why do you hurt me, even though you know that I am GOD’s messenger to you?” When they deviated, GOD diverted their hearts. For GOD does not guide the wicked people.*

*[61:7] Who is more evil than one who fabricates lies about GOD, and he is being invited to Submission? GOD does not guide the evil people.*

## **Verses 8 – 13**

Muhammad predicts Islam will dominate all religions, including Christianity and Judaism.

*[61:8] They wish to put out GOD’s light with their mouths. But GOD insists upon perfecting His light, in spite of the disbelievers.*

*[61:9] He has sent His messenger with the guidance and the true religion, and will make it dominate all religions, in spite of the idol worshipers.*

*[61:10] O you who believe, let Me inform you of a trade that will save you from painful retribution.*

*[61:11] Believe in GOD and His messenger and strive in the cause of GOD with your money and your lives. This is the best deal for you, if you only knew.*

# SURA 62: THE ASSEMBLY

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Medinian sura comprising eleven verses, 'The Assembly' is a call for all Muslims to participate in Friday congregational prayer.

*[62:9] O you who believe, when the Congregational Prayer (Salat Al-Jumu'ah) is announced on Friday, you shall hasten to the commemoration of GOD, and drop all business. This is better for you, if you only knew.*

*[62:10] Once the prayer is completed, you may spread through the land to seek GOD's bounties, and continue to remember GOD frequently, that you may succeed.*

*[62:11] When some of them come across a business deal, or some entertainment, they rush to it and leave you standing! Say, "What GOD possesses is far better than the entertainment or the business. GOD is the best Provider."*

# SURA 63: THE HYPOCRITES

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This Medinan sura comprises eleven verses and is addressed to the hypocrites of Medina who continue to conspire against him while pretending to be Muslim.

*[63:1] When the hypocrites come to you they say, "We bear witness that you are the messenger of GOD." GOD knows that you are His messenger, and GOD bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.*

*[63:2] Under the guise of their apparent faith, they repel the people from the path of GOD. Miserable indeed is what they do.*

*[63:3] This is because they believed, then disbelieved. Hence, their minds are blocked; they do not understand.*

*[63:4] When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies; beware of them. GOD condemns them; they have deviated.*

*[63:5] When they are told, "Come let the messenger of GOD pray for your forgiveness," they mockingly turn their heads, and you see them repel others and act arrogantly.*

# SURA 64: MUTUAL DECEIT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This Medinian sura comprises eighteen verses and is an invitation to join Islam. Also, Muhammad emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral behavior.

*[64:7] Those who disbelieved claim that they will not be resurrected! Yes indeed, by my Lord, you will be resurrected, and you will be held accountable for everything you have done. This is easy for GOD to do.*

*[64:8] Therefore, you shall believe in GOD and His messenger, and the light that we have revealed herein. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.*

*[64:9] The day will come when He summons you to the Day of Summoning. That is the Day of Mutual Blaming. Anyone who believes in GOD and leads a righteous life, He will remit his sins, and will admit him into gardens with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. This is the greatest triumph.*

*[64:11] Nothing happens to you except in accordance with GOD's will. Anyone who believes in GOD, He will guide his heart. GOD is fully aware of all things.*

*[64:12] You shall obey GOD and you shall obey the messenger. If you turn away, then the sole mission of our messenger is to deliver the message.*

# SURA 65: DIVORCE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This twelve-verse Medinan sura stipulates the laws governing divorce. While these laws fall short by our 21<sup>st</sup> century Western standards, Muhammad was the first to provide women with legal rights.

*[65:1] O you prophet, when you people divorce the women, you shall ensure that a divorce interim is fulfilled. You shall measure such an interim precisely. You shall reverence GOD your Lord. Do not evict them from their homes, nor shall you make life miserable for them, to force them to leave on their own, unless they commit a proven adultery. These are GOD's laws. Anyone who transgresses GOD's laws commits an injustice against himself. You never know; maybe GOD wills something good to come out of this.*

*[65:2] Once the interim is fulfilled, you may reconcile with them equitably, or go through with the separation equitably. You shall have two equitable witnesses witness the divorce before GOD. This is to enlighten those who believe in GOD and the Last Day. Anyone who reverences GOD, He will create an exit for him.*

*[65:4] As for the women who have reached menopause, if you have any doubts, their interim shall be three months. As for those who do not menstruate, and discover that they are pregnant, their interim ends upon giving birth. Anyone who reverences GOD, He makes everything easy for him.*

*[65:6] You shall allow them to live in the same home in which they lived with you, and do not make life so miserable for them that they leave on their own. If they are pregnant, you shall spend on them until they give birth. If they nurse the infant, you shall pay them for this service. You shall maintain the amicable relations among you. If you disagree, you may hire another woman to nurse the child.*

# SURA 66: THE FORBIDDING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This Medinian sura comprises twelve verses and tells of a story whereby one of Muhammad's wives, presumably Aisha, had breached his confidence in retelling something he had told only her in secret. The sura's purpose is to then warn against gossip.

*[66:3] The prophet had trusted some of his wives with a certain statement, then one of them spread it, and GOD let him know about it. He then informed his wife of part of the issue, and disregarded part. She asked him, "Who informed you of this?" He said, "I was informed by the Omniscient, Most Cognizant."*

*[66:4] If the two of you repent to GOD, then your hearts have listened. But if you band together against him, then GOD is his ally, and so is Gabriel and the righteous believers. Also, the angels are his helpers.*

*[66:5] If he divorces you, his Lord will substitute other wives in your place who are better than you; submitters (Muslims), believers (Mu'mins), obedient, repentant, worshipers, pious, either previously married, or virgins.*

*[66:6] O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from the Hellfire whose fuel is people and rocks. Guarding it are stern and powerful angels who never disobey GOD; they do whatever they are commanded to do.*

*[66:12] Also Mary, the Amramite. She maintained her chastity, then we blew into her from our spirit. She believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures; she was obedient.*

# SURA 67: THE KINGDOM

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising thirty verses, 'The Kingdom' preaches the infinite power of God and warns that those who reject the teachings of the prophets will be punished in Hell.

*[67:2] The One who created death and life for the purpose of distinguishing those among you who would do better. He is the Almighty, the Forgiving.*

*[67:6] For those who disbelieved in their Lord, the retribution of Gehenna. What a miserable destiny.*

*[67:7] When they get thrown therein, they hear its furor as it fumes.*

*[67:8] It almost explodes from rage. Whenever a group is thrown therein, its guards would ask them, "Did you not receive a warner?"*

*[67:9] They would answer, "Yes indeed; a warner did come to us, but we disbelieved and said, 'GOD did not reveal anything. You are totally astray.' "*

*[67:10] They also say, "If we heard or understood, we would not be among the dwellers of Hell!"*

*[67:11] Thus, they confessed their sins. Woe to the dwellers of Hell.*

# SURA 68: THE PEN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising fifty-two verses, 'The Pen' glorifies God's justice and the coming Day of Judgment. Interestingly, Muhammad rebukes those who claim the Koran is just a book of "tales from the past. "

## Verses 1 – 28

Muhammad praises the believers for staying on the path to righteousness.

*[68:2] You have attained a great blessing from your Lord; you are not crazy.*

*[68:3] You have attained a recompense that is well deserved.*

*[68:4] You are blessed with a great moral character.*

*[68:5] You will see, and they will see.*

*[68:6] Which of you are condemned.*

*[68:7] Your Lord is fully aware of those who strayed off His path, and He is fully aware of those who are guided.*

*[68:8] Do not obey the rejectors.*

*[68:9] They wish that you compromise, so they too can compromise.*

*[68:10] Do not obey every lowly swearer.*

*[68:11] A slanderer, a backbiter.*

*[68:12] Forbidder of charity, a transgressor, a sinner.*

*[68:13] Unappreciative, and greedy.*

*[68:14] Even though he possessed enough money and children.*

*[68:15] When our revelations are recited to him, he says, "Tales from the past!"*

## Verses 29 – 52

Muhammad addresses the unbelievers.

*[68:41] Do they have idols? Let their idols help them, if they are truthful.*

*[68:42] The day will come when they will be exposed, and they will be required to fall prostrate, but they will be unable to.*

*[68:43] With their eyes subdued, humiliation will cover them. They were invited to fall prostrate when they were whole and able.*

*[68:44] Therefore, let Me deal with those who reject this Hadith; we will lead them on whence they never perceive.*

*[68:45] I will give them enough rope; My scheming is formidable.*

# SURA 69: THE INEVITABLE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising of fifty-two verses, 'The Inevitable' tells the story of cities destroyed in the past because they ignored the words of their respective prophets.

*[69:4] Thamoud and 'Aad disbelieved in the Shocker.*

*[69:5] As for Thamoud, they were annihilated by the devastating (quake).*

*[69:6] As for 'Aad, they were annihilated by a persistent, violent storm.*

*[69:7] He unleashed it upon them for seven nights and eight days, violently. You could see the people tossed around like decayed palm trunks.*

*[69:8] Can you find any trace of them?*

*[69:9] Pharaoh, others before him, and the sinners (of Sodom) were wicked.*

*[69:10] They disobeyed the messenger of their Lord. Consequently, He requited them a devastating requital.*

*[69:11] The flood was devastating, so we carried you on the floating (ark).*

*[69:25] As for him who is given his record in his left hand, he will say, "Oh, I wish I never received my record.*

*[69:26] "I wish I never knew my account.*

*[69:27] "I wish my death was eternal.*

*[69:28] "My money cannot help me.*

*[69:29] "All my power is gone."*

*[69:30] Take him and shackle him.*

*[69:31] Burn him in Hell.*

*[69:32] In a chain that is seventy arms long, tie him up.*

*[69:33] For he did not believe in GOD, Most Great.*

# SURA 70: THE STEPS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising forty-four verses, Muhammad recited 'The Steps' at a time when Quraysh opposition to him was indifferent, and had not yet turned potentially violent. Muhammad convinces Muslims that the Hereafter is true and eternal paradise awaits those who heed his message.

*[70:19] Indeed, the human being is anxious.*

*[70:20] If touched by adversity, despondent.*

*[70:21] If blessed by wealth, stingy.*

*[70:22] Except for the worshipers.*

*[70:23] Who always observe their contact prayers (Salat).*

*[70:24] Part of their money is set aside.*

*[70:25] For the poor and the needy.*

*[70:26] They believe in the Day of Judgment.*

*[70:27] They reverence their Lord's requital.*

*[70:28] Their Lord's requital is not taken for granted.*

*[70:32] And the believers keep their word; they are trustworthy.*

*[70:33] Their testimony is truthful.*

*[70:34] They consistently observe their contact prayers (Salat) on time.*

*[70:35] They have deserved a position of honor in Paradise.*

# SURA 71: NOAH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of twenty-eight verses, 'Noah' tells of the biblical story as a warning against those who reject his message.

[71:1] *We sent Noah to his people: "You shall warn your people before a painful retribution afflicts them."*

[71:2] *He said, "O my people, I am a manifest warner to you."*

[71:3] *"To alert you that you shall worship GOD, reverence Him, and obey me."*

[71:4] *"He will then forgive you your sins and respite you for a predetermined period. Most assuredly, GOD's appointment can never be delayed, once it is due, if you only knew."*

[71:21] *Noah said, "My Lord, they disobeyed me, and followed those who were even more corrupted when blessed with money and children."*

[71:22] *"They schemed terrible schemes."*

[71:23] *"They said, 'Do not abandon your gods. Do not abandon Wadd, Suwaa', Yaghouth, Ya'ooq, and Nasr.'*

[71:24] *"They misled many. Therefore, let the wicked plunge deeper into loss."*

[71:25] *Because of their sins they were drowned and assigned to the hellfire. They found no helpers to protect them from GOD."*

[71:26] *Noah also said, "My Lord, do not leave a single disbeliever on earth."*

[71:27] *"For if you let them, they will only mislead your servants and give birth to nothing but wicked disbelievers."*

# SURA 72: JINN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of twenty-eight verses, 'Jinn' refers to the spirits who inhabit the earth, as opposed to the angels who reside in the sky. In other words, angels are on the side of good, whereas jinns are a member of the axis of evil.

## Verses 1 – 18

Muhammad warns of the jinns who will lead people to blasphemy.

[72:5] “ *We thought that neither the humans, nor the jinns, could possibly utter lies about GOD.*”

[72:6] “ *Human beings used to seek power through jinn beings, but they only afflicted them with a lot of adversity.*”

[72:7] “ *They thought, just like you thought, that GOD would not send another (messenger).*”

[72:8] “ *We touched the heaven and found it filled with formidable guards and projectiles.*”

[72:9] “ *We used to sit there in order to spy. Anyone who listens is pursued by a powerful projectile.*”

[72:10] “ *We have no idea if something bad is intended for the inhabitants of Earth, or if their Lord wills to redeem them.*”

[72:11] “ *Some of us are righteous, and some are less than righteous; we follow various paths.*”

## Verses 19 – 28

Muhammad's covenant with God.

[72:19] *When GOD's servant advocated Him alone, almost all of them banded together to oppose him.*

[72:20] Say, “*I worship only my Lord; I never set up any idols beside Him.*”

[72:21] Say, “*I possess no power to harm you, nor to guide you.*”

[72:22] Say, “*No one can protect me from GOD, nor can I find any other refuge beside Him.*”

[72:23] “*I deliver GOD's proclamations and messages.*” *Those who disobey GOD and His messenger incur the fire of Hell, wherein they abide forever.*

[72:24] *Once they see what is awaiting them, they will find out who is really weaker in*

*power, and fewer in number.*

# SURA 73: THE ENFOLDED

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of only twenty verses, 'The Enfolded' is an appeal to Muslims to accept their mission to spread Islam and to oppose those who attack the faith or the prophet. Also significant is Muhammad encourages Muslims to recite the Koran to heart by meditating and using its words in prayer every night.

## **Verses 1 – 8**

Reciting the Koran brings you closer to God.

*[73:2] Meditate during the night, except rarely.*

*[73:3] Half of it, or a little less.*

*[73:4] Or a little more. And read the Quran from cover to cover.*

*[73:5] We will give you a heavy message.*

*[73:6] The meditation at night is more effective, and more righteous.*

*[73:7] You have a lot of time during the day for other matters.*

## **Verses 9 – 20**

The disbelievers will be punished.

*[73:11] And let Me deal with the rejectors, who have been generously blessed; just give them a little time.*

*[73:12] We have severe punishments, and Hell.*

*[73:13] Food that can hardly be swallowed, and painful retribution.*

*[73:14] The day will come when the earth and the mountains will quake, and the mountains will turn into a weightless pile.*

*[73:15] We have sent to you a messenger, just as we sent to Pharaoh a messenger.*

*[73:16] Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger and, consequently, we punished him severely.*

# SURA 74: THE ENWRAPPED

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura, 'The Enwrapped' comprises fifty-six verses and is more or less a ridicule of Quraysh materialism. Essentially, Muhammad chastises them for not thanking God for the wealth they've achieved, for it is God that permitted them to become successful.

[74:12] *I provided him with lots of money.*

[74:13] *And children to behold.*

[74:14] *I made everything easy for him.*

[74:15] *Yet, he is greedy for more.*

[74:16] *He stubbornly refused to accept these proofs.*

[74:31] *We appointed angels to be guardians of Hell, and we assigned their number (19) (1) to disturb the disbelievers, (2) to convince the Christians and Jews (that this is a divine scripture), (3) to strengthen the faith of the faithful, (4) to remove all traces of doubt from the hearts of Christians, Jews, as well as the believers, and (5) to expose those who harbor doubt in their hearts, and the disbelievers; they will say, "What did GOD mean by this allegory?" GOD thus sends astray whomever He wills, and guides whomever He wills. None knows the soldiers of your Lord except He. This is a reminder for the people.*

[74:35] *This is one of the great miracles.*

[74:36] *A warning to the human race.*

[74:37] *For those among you who wish to advance, or regress.*

[74:38] *Every soul is trapped by its sins.*

[74:39] *Except for those on the right.*

[74:40] *While in Paradise, they will ask.*

[74:41] *About the guilty.*

[74:42] *"What brought you to this retribution?"*

[74:43] *They will say, "We did not observe the contact prayers (Salat).*

[74:44] *"We did not feed the poor.*

[74:45] *"We blundered with the blunderers.*

[74:46] *"We disbelieved in the Day of Judgment.*

[74:47] *"Until certainty came to us now."*

# SURA 75: THE RESURRECTION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising forty verses, 'The Resurrection' is concerned with the Day of Judgment.

## **Verses 1 – 15**

The Day of Judgment forewarned.

*[75:1] I swear by the Day of Resurrection.*

*[75:2] And I swear by the blaming soul.*

*[75:5] But the human being tends to believe only what he sees in front of him.*

*[75:6] He doubts the Day of Resurrection!*

*[75:10] The human being will say on that day, "Where is the escape?"*

*[75:11] Absolutely, there is no escape.*

*[75:12] To your Lord, on that day, is the final destiny.*

## **Verses 16 – 40**

Muhammad explains that becoming a righteous Muslim means learning the Koran to memory. Only then will the words of God be in your heart.

*[75:16] Do not move your tongue to hasten it.*

*[75:17] It is we who will collect it into Quran.*

*[75:18] Once we recite it, you shall follow such a Quran.*

*[75:19] Then it is we who will explain it.*

*[75:20] Indeed, you love this fleeting life.*

# SURA 76: MAN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Medinan sura of only twenty verses, the central message of 'Man' is to remind Muslims of the central purpose of their life on earth, that being to obey God, so as they can reside for eternity in paradise.

*[76:2] We created the human from a liquid mixture, from two parents, in order to test him. Thus, we made him a hearer and a seer.*

*[76:3] We showed him the two paths, then he is either appreciative, or unappreciative.*

*[76:4] We prepared for the disbelievers chains, shackles, and a blazing Hell.*

*[76:9] "We feed you for the sake of GOD; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks.*

*[76:10] "We fear from our Lord a day that is full of misery and trouble."*

*[76:11] Consequently, GOD protects them from the evils of that day, and rewards them with joy and contentment.*

*[76:12] He rewards them for their steadfastness with Paradise, and silk.*

*[76:23] We have revealed to you this Quran; a special revelation from us.*

*[76:24] You shall steadfastly carry out your Lord's commandments, and do not obey any sinful disbeliever among them.*

*[76:25] And commemorate the name of your Lord day and night.*

*[76:26] During the night, fall prostrate before Him, and glorify Him many a long night.*

*[76:27] These people are preoccupied with this fleeting life, while disregarding - just ahead of them - a heavy day.*

# SURA 77: THE SENT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising fifty-verses, 'The Sent' is primarily concerned with explaining the Hereafter to the early Muslims.

*[77:4] Distribute the provisions.*

*[77:5] Deliver messages.*

*[77:6] Good news, as well as warnings.*

*[77:7] What is promised will come to pass.*

*[77:8] Thus, when the stars are put out.*

*[77:9] The sky is opened up.*

*[77:10] The mountains are blown up.*

*[77:11] The messengers are summoned.*

*[77:12] That is the appointed day.*

*[77:13] The Day of Decision.*

*[77:14] What a Day of Decision!*

*[77:15] Woe on that day to the rejectors.*

*[77:16] Did we not annihilate the earlier generations?*

*[77:17] Then we made others follow them?*

*[77:18] This is what we do to the criminals.*

# SURA 78: THE NEWS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of forty verses, the theme of 'The News' is identical to the previous, concerning itself with the Hereafter.

*[78:17] The Day of Decision is appointed.*

*[78:18] The day the horn is blown, and you come in throngs.*

*[78:19] The heaven will be opened like gates.*

*[78:20] The mountains will be removed, as if they were a mirage.*

*[78:21] Gehenna is inevitable.*

*[78:22] For the transgressors; it will be their abode.*

*[78:23] They stay in it for ages.*

*[78:24] They never taste in it coolness, nor a drink.*

# SURA 79: THOSE WHO DRAG FORTH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of forty-six verses, 'Those Who Drag Forth' is essentially a repetitive theme of the previous two suras, with rewards and punishments stated for the believers and infidels.

*[79:1] The (angels who) snatch (the souls of the disbelievers) forcibly.*

*[79:2] And those who gently take (the souls of the believers) joyfully.*

*[79:3] And those floating everywhere.*

*[79:4] Eagerly racing with one another –*

*[79:5] to carry out various commands.*

*[79:6] The day the quake quakes.*

*[79:7] Followed by the second blow.*

*[79:8] Certain minds will be terrified.*

*[79:9] Their eyes will be subdued.*

*[79:25] Consequently, GOD committed him to the retribution in the Hereafter, as well as in the first life.*

*[79:26] This is a lesson for the reverent.*

*[79:27] Are you more difficult to create than the heaven? He constructed it.*

*[79:28] He raised its masses, and perfected it.*

*[79:29] He made its night dark, and brightened its morn.*

*[79:30] He made the earth egg-shaped.*

*[79:31] From it, He produced its own water and pasture.*

*[79:32] He established the mountains.*

*[79:33] All this to provide life support for you and your animals.*

*[79:34] Then, when the great blow comes.*

*[79:35] That is the day when the human will remember everything he did.*

*[79:36] Hell will be brought into existence.*

*[79:37] As for the one who transgressed.*

*[79:38] Who was preoccupied with this life.*

[79:39] *Hell will be the abode.*

# SURA 80: HE FROWNED

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising forty-two verses, 'The Frowned' tells the story of a blind man named Ibn Umm Maktum, who approached Muhammad with a question about Islam. The prophet didn't like the question and dismissed him, but later that evening God sent down this sura. Muhammad claims God told him he had wronged, and that the Lord holds rich people in no higher esteem than the disadvantaged.

*[80:1] He (Muhammad) frowned and turned away.*

*[80:2] When the blind man came to him.*

*[80:3] How do you know? He may purify himself.*

*[80:4] Or he may take heed, and benefit from the message.*

*[80:5] As for the rich man.*

*[80:6] You gave him your attention.*

*[80:7] Even though you could not guarantee his salvation.*

*[80:8] The one who came to you eagerly.*

*[80:9] And is really reverent.*

*[80:10] You ignored him.*

*[80:11] Indeed, this is a reminder.*

*[80:12] Whoever wills shall take heed.*

*[80:13] In honorable scriptures.*

*[80:14] Exalted and pure.*

*[80:15] (Written) by the hands of messengers.*

*[80:16] Who are honorable and righteous.*

*[80:17] Woe to the human being; he is so unappreciative!*

*[80:18] What did He create him from?*

*[80:19] From a tiny drop, He creates him and designs him.*

*[80:20] Then He points out the path for him.*

*[80:21] Then He puts him to death, and into the grave.*

*[80:22] When He wills, He resurrects him.*

*[80:23] He shall uphold His commandments.*

*[80:24] Let the human consider his food!*

*[80:25] We pour the water generously.*

# SURA 81: THE FOLDED UP

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of twenty-nine verses, Muhammad condemns the pagans for their practice of female infanticide.

*[81:1] When the sun is rolled.*

*[81:2] The stars are crashed into each other.*

*[81:3] The mountains are wiped out.*

*[81:4] The reproduction is halted.*

*[81:5] The beasts are summoned.*

*[81:6] The oceans are set aflame.*

*[81:7] The souls are restored to their bodies.*

*[81:8] The girl who was buried alive is asked:*

*[81:9] For what crime was she killed?*

*[81:10] The records are made known.*

*[81:11] The heaven is removed.*

*[81:12] Hell is ignited.*

*[81:13] Paradise is presented.*

*[81:14] Every soul will know everything it brought.*

# SURA 82: THE CLEAVING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of nineteen verses, 'The Cleaving' promises the Day of Resurrection, a day when all righteous souls will assemble in paradise.

*[82:13] Surely, the pious have deserved bliss.*

*[82:14] While the wicked have deserved Hell.*

*[82:15] Will incur it on the Day of Judgment.*

*[82:16] They never leave it.*

*[82:17] Awesome is the Day of Judgment.*

*[82:18] What a day; the Day of Judgment!*

*[82:19] That is the day when no soul can help another soul, and all decisions, on that day, will belong to GOD.*

# SURA 83: THOSE WHO STINT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising thirty-six verses, 'Those Who Stint' is an address to the first Muslim converts regarding the Hereafter. Muhammad makes the point that every action a person makes is recorded and he or she will have to give account on the Day of Judgment. Interestingly, Muhammad targets the immorality of unscrupulous business practices.

*[83:1] Woe to the cheaters.*

*[83:2] Who demand full measure when receiving from the people.*

*[83:3] But when giving them the measures or weights, they cheat.*

*[83:4] Do they not know that they will be resurrected?*

*[83:5] On a tremendous day?*

*[83:6] That is the day when all people will stand before the Lord of the universe.*

# SURA 84: THE SPLITTING ASSUNDER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising twenty-five verses, Muhammad provides details of the Day of Judgment whereby everyone will be questioned about their deeds in this world.

*[84:6] O humans, you are irreversibly heading for a meeting with your Lord.*

*[84:7] As for the one who receives his record in his right hand,*

*[84:8] His reckoning will be easy.*

*[84:9] He will return to his people joyfully.*

*[84:10] As for the one who receives his record behind his back,*

*[84:11] He will be ridden with remorse.*

*[84:12] And will burn in Hell.*

*[84:13] He used to act arrogantly among his people.*

*[84:14] He thought that he will never be called to account.*

*[84:15] Yes indeed, his Lord was Seer of him.*

*[84:16] I solemnly swear by the rosy dusk.*

*[84:17] And the night as it spreads.*

*[84:18] And the moon and its phases.*

*[84:19] You will move from stage to stage.*

*[84:20] Why do they not believe?*

*[84:21] And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not fall prostrate.*

*[84:22] This is because those who disbelieved are rejecting (the Quran).*

# SURA 85: THE STARRY

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of twenty-two verses, the central theme of 'The Starry' is Muslims must be willing to sacrifice their lives for their faith, and he uses the story known as the 'People of the Ditch' as a metaphor, which refers to a Christian tribe who willingly walked into a ditch of fire, sacrificing their lives, rather than renouncing their faith to the then King of Yemen. Muhammad's message is no matter how strident the opposition they face, they must stick together, and ultimately God will reward his people for it.

*[85:4] Woe to the people of the canyon.*

*[85:5] They ignited a blazing fire.*

*[85:6] Then sat around it.*

*[85:7] To watch the burning of the believers.*

*[85:8] They hated them for no other reason than believing in GOD, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy.*

*[85:9] To Him belongs the kingship of the heavens and the earth. And GOD witnesses all things.*

*[85:10] Surely, those who persecute the believing men and women, then fail to repent, have incurred the retribution of Gehenna; they have incurred the retribution of burning.*

*[85:11] Surely, those who believed and led a righteous life, have deserved gardens with flowing streams. This is the greatest triumph.*

# SURA 86: THE BRIGHT STAR

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of seventeen-verses, 'The Bright Star' describes the creation of man. Muhammad also claims that each Muslim is watched over by a heaven sent guardian.

*[86:1] By the sky and Al-Taareq.*

*[86:2] Do you know what Al-Taareq is?*

*[86:3] The bright star.*

*[86:4] Absolutely, everyone is well guarded.*

*[86:5] Let the human reflect on his creation.*

*[86:6] He was created from ejected liquid.*

*[86:7] From between the spine and the viscera.*

# SURA 87: THE MOST HIGH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of nineteen verses, 'The Most High' gives glory to God and promises the Hereafter for Muslims.

*[87:1] Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High.*

*[87:2] He creates and shapes.*

*[87:3] He designs and guides.*

*[87:4] He produces the pasture.*

*[87:5] Then turns it into light hay.*

*[87:6] We will recite to you; do not forget.*

*[87:7] Everything is in accordance with GOD's will; He knows what is declared, and what is hidden.*

# SURA 88: THE OVERSHADOWING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

One of the earliest of all suras, comprising twenty-six verses, it was recited at a time when Muhammad had yet given any public addresses, confining his messages to those of his family and close friends. The central theme is of God's glory and the Hereafter.

*[88:1] Are you aware of the Overwhelming?*

*[88:2] Faces on that day will be shamed.*

*[88:3] Laboring and exhausted.*

*[88:4] Suffering in a blazing Hellfire.*

*[88:5] Drinking from a flaming spring.*

*[88:6] They will have no food except the useless variety.*

*[88:7] It never nourishes, nor satisfies hunger.*

*[88:8] Other faces on that day will be full of joy.*

*[88:9] Satisfied with their work.*

*[88:10] In an exalted Paradise.*

# SURA 89: THE DAYBREAK

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura of thirty verses, 'The Daybreak' describes the destruction of disbelieving peoples, such as the Egyptians who held the Israelites in slavery.

Muhammad also chastises the Meccan's love for money and their mistreatment of the poor.

[89:6] *Have you noted what your Lord did to 'Aad?*

[89:7] *Erum; the town with tall buildings.*

[89:8] *There was nothing like it anywhere.*

[89:9] *Also Thamoud, who carved the rocks in their valley.*

[89:10] *And Pharaoh who possessed might.*

[89:11] *They all transgressed in the land.*

[89:12] *They spread evil throughout.*

[89:13] *Consequently, your Lord poured upon them a whipping retribution.*

[89:14] *Your Lord is ever watchful.*

[89:15] *When the human being is tested by his Lord, through blessings and joy, he says, "My Lord is generous towards me."*

[89:16] *But if He tests him through reduction in provisions, he says, "My Lord is humiliating me!"*

[89:17] *Wrong! It is you who brought it on yourselves by not regarding the orphan.*

[89:18] *And not advocating charity towards the poor.*

[89:19] *And consuming the inheritance of helpless orphans.*

[89:20] *And loving the money too much.*

# SURA 90: THE SOIL

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising twenty verses, 'The Soil' is a statement of man's position in the world and the world in relation to man. Muhammad makes the case that man must choose between good and evil, so as to determine his eternal fate.

*[90:4] We created the human being to work hard (to redeem himself).*

*[90:5] Does he think that no one will ever call him to account?*

*[90:10] Did we not show him the two paths?*

*[90:11] He should choose the difficult path.*

*[90:12] Which one is the difficult path?*

*[90:13] The freeing of slaves.*

*[90:14] Feeding, during the time of hardship.*

*[90:15] Orphans who are related.*

*[90:16] Or the poor who is in need.*

*[90:17] And being one of those who believe, and exhorting one another to be steadfast, and exhorting one another to be kind.*

*[90:18] These have deserved happiness.*

*[90:19] As for those who disbelieved in our revelations, they have incurred misery.*

*[90:20] They will be confined in the Hellfire.*

# SURA 91: THE SUN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising fifteen verses, 'The Sun' tells of cities destroyed because they ignored God's prophets.

*[91:8] Then showed it what is evil and what is good.*

*[91:9] Successful is one who redeems it.*

*[91:10] Failing is one who neglects it.*

*[91:11] Thamoud's disbelief caused them to transgress.*

*[91:12] They followed the worst among them.*

*[91:13] GOD's messenger said to them, "This is GOD's camel; let her drink."*

*[91:14] They disbelieved him and slaughtered her. Their Lord then requited them for their sin and annihilated them.*

# SURA 92: THE NIGHT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

‘The Night’ is one of the first suras to be revealed to Muhammad. Comprising only twenty-one verses, it contrasts two types of people, the charitable and the miserly.

*[92:3] And Him who created the male and the female.*

*[92:4] Your works are of various kinds.*

*[92:5] As for him who gives to charity and maintains righteousness.*

*[92:6] And upholds the scripture.*

*[92:7] We will direct him towards happiness.*

*[92:8] But he who is stingy, though he is rich.*

*[92:9] And disbelieves in the scripture.*

*[92:10] We will direct him towards misery.*

*[92:11] His money cannot help him when he falls.*

*[92:12] We provide the guidance.*

*[92:13] We control the Hereafter, as well as this life.*

*[92:14] I have warned you about the blazing Hellfire.*

# SURA 93: THE BRIGHTNESS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

‘The Brightness’ is considered to be the second sura revealed to Muhammad. We know there was a lengthy period between Muhammad receiving the first sura and then receiving the second. In fact, he doubted he’d ever receive another, which was until this one broke the long silence.

The sura in its entirety is:

*[93:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[93:1] By the forenoon.*

*[93:2] By the night as it falls.*

*[93:3] Your Lord never abandoned you, nor did He forget.*

*[93:4] The Hereafter is far better for you than this first (life).*

*[93:5] And your Lord will give you enough; you will be pleased.*

*[93:6] Did He not find you orphaned and He gave you a home?*

*[93:7] He found you astray, and guided you.*

*[93:8] He found you poor, and made you rich.*

*[93:9] Therefore, you shall not forsake the orphan.*

*[93:10] Nor shall you reprimand the beggar.*

*[93:11] You shall proclaim the blessing your Lord has bestowed upon you.*

# SURA 94: THE OPENING

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising only eight verses, 'The Opening' shows Muhammad struggling to understand the mission of his prophethood.

*[94:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[94:1] Did we not cool your temper?*

*[94:2] And we unloaded your load (of sins).*

*[94:3] One that burdened your back.*

*[94:4] We exalted you to an honorable position.*

*[94:5] With pain there is gain.*

*[94:6] Indeed, with pain there is gain.*

*[94:7] Whenever possible you shall strive.*

*[94:8] Seeking only your Lord.*

# SURA 95: THE FIG

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura comprising of only eight verses, 'The Fig' refers to the laws handed to Moses atop of Mount Sinai. Muhammad tells Muslims these are the laws they must follow.

*[95:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[95:1] By the fig and the olive.*

*[95:2] Mount Sinai.*

*[95:3] And this honored town (Mecca).*

*[95:4] We created man in the best design.*

*[95:5] Then turned him into the lowliest of the lowly.*

*[95:6] Except those who believe and lead a righteous life; they receive a reward that is well deserved.*

*[95:7] Why do you still reject the faith?*

*[95:8] Is GOD not the Most Wise, of all the wise ones?*

# SURA 96: THE BLOOD

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is the sura believed by Muslims to be the first recitation of Muhammad at the Cave in Hira.

*[96:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[96:1] Read, in the name of your Lord, who created.*

*[96:2] He created man from an embryo.*

*[96:3] Read, and your Lord, Most Exalted.*

*[96:4] Teaches by means of the pen.*

*[96:5] He teaches man what he never knew.*

*[96:6] Indeed, the human transgresses.*

*[96:7] When he becomes rich.*

*[96:8] To your Lord is the ultimate destiny.*

*[96:9] Have you seen the one who enjoins.*

*[96:10] Others from praying?*

*[96:11] Is it not better for him to follow the guidance?*

*[96:12] Or advocate righteousness?*

*[96:13] If he disbelieves and turns away.*

*[96:14] Does he not realize that GOD sees?*

*[96:15] Indeed, unless he refrains, we will take him by the forelock.*

*[96:16] A forelock that is disbelieving and sinful.*

*[96:17] Let him then call on his helpers.*

*[96:18] We will call the guardians of Hell.*

*[96:19] You shall not obey him; you shall fall prostrate and draw nearer.*

# SURA 97: POWER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

'The Power' is one the earliest suras and consists of only five verses.

*[97:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[97:1] We revealed it in the Night of Destiny.*

*[97:2] How awesome is the Night of Destiny!*

*[97:3] The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months.*

*[97:4] The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by their Lord's leave, to carry out every command.*

*[97:5] Peaceful it is until the advent of the dawn.*

# SURA 98: CLEAR EVIDENCE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

One of the first suras addressed to the pagans and polytheists.

*[98:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[98:1] Those who disbelieved among the people of the scripture, as well as the idol worshipers, insist on their ways, despite the proof given to them.*

*[98:2] A messenger from GOD is reciting to them sacred instructions.*

*[98:3] In them there are valuable teachings.*

*[98:4] In fact, those who received the scripture did not dispute until the proof was given to them.*

*[98:5] All that was asked of them was to worship GOD, devoting the religion absolutely to Him alone, observe the contact prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat). Such is the perfect religion.*

*[98:6] Those who disbelieved among the people of the scripture, and the idol worshipers, have incurred the fire of Gehenna forever. They are the worst creatures.*

*[98:7] Those who believed and led a righteous life are the best creatures.*

*[98:8] Their reward at their Lord is the gardens of Eden with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Such is the reward for those who reverence their Lord.*

# SURA 99: THE EARTHQUAKE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura of only eight verses, 'The Earthquake' refers to the calamity that will trigger the end of times.

*[99:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[99:1] When the earth is severely quaked.*

*[99:2] And the earth ejects its loads.*

*[99:3] The human will wonder: "What is happening?"*

*[99:4] On that day, it will tell its news.*

*[99:5] That your Lord has commanded it.*

*[99:6] On that day, the people will issue from every direction, to be shown their works.*

*[99:7] Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.*

*[99:8] And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.*

# SURA 100: THE CHARGERS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura comprising only eleven verses, Muhammad uses this sura to warn the unbelievers that although they're weak in numbers and military strength now, a time will come when they will conquer their oppressors.

*[100:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[100:] By the fast gallopers.*

*[100:2] Igniting parks.*

*[100:3] Invading (the enemy) by morning.*

*[100:4] Striking terror therein.*

*[100:5] Penetrating to the heart of their territory.*

*[100:6] The human being is unappreciative of his Lord.*

*[100:7] He bears witness to this fact.*

*[100:8] He loves material things excessively.*

*[100:9] Does he not realize that the day will come when the graves are opened?*

*[100:10] And all secrets are brought out.*

*[100:11] They will find out, on that day, that their Lord has been fully Cognizant of them.*

# SURA 101: THE BLOW

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura that refers to the Day of Judgment.

*[101:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[101:1] The Shocker.*

*[101:2] What a shocker!*

*[101:3] Do you have any idea what the Shocker is?*

*[101:4] That is the day when the people come out like swarms of butterflies.*

*[101:5] The mountains will be like fluffy wool.*

*[101:6] As for him whose weights are heavy.*

*[101:7] He will lead a happy (eternal) life.*

*[101:8] As for him whose weights are light.*

*[101:9] His destiny is lowly.*

*[101:10] Do you know what it is?*

*[101:11] The blazing Hellfire.*

# SURA 102: DESIRE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura that warns believers against forming schisms and disagreements among each other.

*[102:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[102:1] You remain preoccupied with hoarding.*

*[102:2] Until you go to the graves.*

*[102:3] Indeed, you will find out.*

*[102:4] Most assuredly, you will find out.*

*[102:5] If only you could find out for certain.*

*[102:6] You would envision Hell.*

*[102:7] Then you would see it with the eye of certainty.*

*[102:8] Then you will be questioned, on that day, about the blessings you had enjoyed.*

# SURA 103: THE AFTERNOON

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura that encourages Muslims to remain righteous and steadfast.

*[103:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[103:1] By the afternoon.*

*[103:2] The human being is utterly lost.*

*[103:3] Except those who believe and lead a righteous life, and exhort one another to uphold the truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast.*

# SURA 104: THE BACKBITER

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura that condemns those who slander and worship wealth.

*[104:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*[104:1] Woe to every backbiter, slanderer.*

*[104:2] He hoards money and counts it.*

*[104:3] As if his money will make him immortal.*

*[104:4] Never; he will be thrown into the Devastator.*

*[104:5] Do you know what the Devastator is?*

*[104:6] GOD's blazing Hellfire.*

*[104:7] It burns them inside out.*

*[104:8] They will be confined therein.*

*[104:9] In extended columns.*

# SURA 105: THE ELEPHANT

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura that refers to the year of Muhammad's birth.

*[105:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[105:1] Have you noted what your Lord did to the people of the elephant?*

*[105:2] Did He not cause their schemes to backfire?*

*[105:3] He sent upon them swarms of birds.*

*[105:4] That showered them with hard stones.*

*[105:5] He made them like chewed up hay.*

# SURA 106: THE QURAYSH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura urging followers to serve God.

*[106:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[106:1] This should be cherished by Quraish.*

*[106:2] The way they cherish the caravans of the winter and the summer.*

*[106:3] They shall worship the Lord of this shrine.*

*[106:4] For He is the One who fed them after hunger, and provided them with security after fear.*

# SURA 107: RELIGION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Medinan sura urging Muslims towards charitable deeds.

*[107:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[107:1] Do you know who really rejects the faith?*

*[107:2] That is the one who mistreats the orphans.*

*[107:3] And does not advocate the feeding of the poor.*

*[107:4] And woe to those who observe the contact prayers (Salat) –*

*[107:5] who are totally heedless of their prayers.*

*[107:6] They only show off.*

*[107:7] And they forbid charity.*

# SURA 108: THE ABUNDANCE

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura urging Muslims to remain morally upright, so as they may enjoy their rewards in paradise.

*[108:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[108:1] We have blessed you with many a bounty.*

*[108:2] Therefore, you shall pray to your Lord (Salat), and give to charity.*

*[108:3] Your opponent will be the loser.*

# SURA 109: UNBELIEVERS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura addressed to the pagans.

*[109:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[109:1] Say, "O you disbelievers.*

*[109:2] "I do not worship what you worship.*

*[109:3] "Nor do you worship what I worship.*

*[109:4] "Nor will I ever worship what you worship.*

*[109:5] "Nor will you ever worship what I worship.*

*[109:6] "To you is your religion, and to me is my religion."*

# SURA 110: TRIUMPH

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

This is believed to be the final sura recited by Muhammad prior to his death.

*[110:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[110:1] When triumph comes from GOD, and victory.*

*[110:2] You will see the people embracing GOD's religion in throngs.*

*[110:3] You shall glorify and praise your Lord, and implore Him for forgiveness. He is the Redeemer.*

# SURA 111: THORNS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

An early Meccan sura addressed to the man who publicly denounced Muhammad as a deceiver.

*[111:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[111:1] Condemned are the works of Abee Lahab, and he is condemned.*

*[111:2] His money and whatever he has accomplished will never help him.*

*[111:3] He has incurred the blazing Hell.*

*[111:4] Also his wife, who led the persecution.*

*[111:5] She will be (resurrected) with a rope of thorns around her neck.*

# SURA 112: ABSOLUTENESS

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura urging Muslims to stay pure to Islam.

*[112:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[112:1] Proclaim, "He is the One and only GOD.*

*[112:2] "The Absolute GOD.*

*[112:3] "Never did He beget. Nor was He begotten.*

*[112:4] "None equals Him."*

# SURA 113: THE DAYBREAK

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura, which has Muhammad asking for protection from the Devil.

*[113:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[113:1] Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak.*

*[113:2] "From the evils among His creations.*

*[113:3] "From the evils of darkness as it falls.*

*[113:4] "From the evils of the troublemakers.*

*[113:5] "From the evils of the envious when they envy."*

# SURA 114: MEN

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

A Meccan sura urging Muslims to ignore the temptations offered to them by unbelievers and evil spirits.

*[114:0] In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[114:1] Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of the people.*

*[114:2] "The King of the people.*

*[114:3] "The god of the people.*

*[114:4] "From the evils of sneaky whisperers.*

*[114:5] "Who whisper into the chests of the people.*

*[114:6] "Be they of the jinns, or the people.*